



Japanologie Frankfurt am Main

Vortrag Prof. Dr. Ran Zwigenberg (Pennsylvania State University): "Survivors: Hiroshima, the Holocaust and the Rise of Global Memory Culture"

Fritz Bauer Institut, Gesellschaft zur Förderung judaistischer Studien und Judaistik der Goethe-Universität in Kooperation mit der Japanologie / IZO

On February 6, 1963, Hiroshima's main newspaper, the *Chūgoku Shinbun*, published an account, under the somber title "Exchanging Mementos of Death," detailing an exchange of A-bomb and Holocaust relics between a Hiroshima peace delegation and an Auschwitz survivors' organization. The exchange, which took place on the site of Auschwitz-Birkenau, also included actual ashes and bones of Auschwitz victims, given to the Japanese by their Polish hosts. This symbolic encounter, in which the dead were literally conscripted in the service of the politics of the living, serves as the focal point my recent manuscript. Examining the peculiar history in Hiroshima and abroad, which led to this encounter and followed it, this talk will concentrate on the narratives of sacrifice and victimization that were central to the postwar reimagining of the A-bomb survivors as symbols of resistance and as moral authorities in the Japanese and international peace movements, and to the wider connections of this history to that of victims of the Holocaust. The "survivor", my book argues, developed historically as a transnational category that drew on many sources, both within what came to be known as Holocaust discourse and outside of it, in Japan in the case of A-bomb survivors and elsewhere. The convergence of both histories, in the late sixties and seventies led to the formation of survivorhood as an expansive, universal category that was used beyond the confines of the two cases of mass-killings.

Ran Zwigenberg is an Assistant Professor at Pennsylvania State University. He received his PhD in history at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (2013). He spent a year as a Post Doctoral Associate with the Council on East Asian Studies at Yale University (2013-14) and is currently a visiting scholar at Hiroshima City University as a JSPS fellow. His research focuses on modern Japanese history, with a specialization in memory and intellectual history. His forthcoming manuscript *Hiroshima: The Origins of Global Memory Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 2014) deals comparatively with the commemoration and the reaction to the Holocaust and the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. In addition, Zwigenberg published on issues of war memory, atomic energy and survivor politics. His current research focuses on the connections between the medical profession, especially psychiatrists, and the anti-nuclear and peace movement in Hiroshima and globally.

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[Rise of Global Memory Culture](#)

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