

Confronting Violent Pasts and Historical (In)Justice

Sixth Annual Conference of the Historical Dialogues, Justice, and Memory Network

NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust, and Genocide Studies, Amsterdam

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The legacy of genocide, gross human rights violations, mass political violence, and historical injustice has been arguably laid bare through a whole range of mechanisms: official apologies, vetting, international criminal tribunals, national, or local legal proceedings, truth commissions, official commemorations, restitution, revising school history curricula, establishing monuments and museums, and hybrid trials. Each of these mechanisms seeks to contribute in their own way to accountability, reconciliation, the historical record, victims' rights, and competing 'truths'. As the international ad-hoc trials -- often instigated in the immediate aftermath of, or during conflict -- wind down, we enter a new phase of evaluating the efficacy of these and other institutionalized means of confronting the violent past. We can now begin to assess their impact on the societies from which the perpetrators and/or victims emerged. And what about societies that maintain official amnesia or actively repress the memory of violence with regard to historical injustices? Is there a right timing for addressing the violent past? Should and could historians and historical dialogue play a more instrumental role in these processes?

We would welcome paper or panel proposals from researchers, scholars and practitioners addressing the abovementioned topics and/or reflecting on the following questions: What can we learn about the causes, processes and consequences of mass political violence and genocide from the records produced by transitional justice mechanisms, what kind of history is being written in the courts, how does the trial model influence testimony, how does the truth commission model influence testimony, what role can archives play in confronting a violent past and historical (in)justice, what role can education and remembrance play in interpreting the past for the public at large?

Finally, papers are invited that explore the theoretical and empirical relationship between memory (individual, societal or international) and violent pasts, with a particular focus on the issue of the legitimacy and efficacy of justice, accountability, and reconciliation mechanisms.

The Historical Dialogues, Justice, and Memory Network (www.historicaldialogues.org) is coordinated by an international Steering Committee and the Alliance for Historical Dialogue and Accountability (AHDA), at the Institute for the Study of Human Rights (ISHR) at Columbia University.

The host for the Sixth Annual Conference, the NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, is an institution of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences. The NIOD conducts advanced research, university teaching, contributes to the public debate, and houses the main collection on the German Occupation in the Netherlands.

The deadline to submit abstracts has passed. If you are interested in information about attending the conference, or have questions about presenting, please e-mail: aanmelden@niod.knaw.nl.