

In Europe and all over the world, mass violence and genocide have been a structural feature of the 20th century. Our research programme, Corpses of Mass Violence and Genocide, aims at questioning the social legacy of mass violence by studying how different societies have coped with the first consequence of mass crime: the mass production of cadavers. What status and what value have indeed been given to corpses? What symbolic, social, religious, economic or political uses have been made of dead bodies in occupied Europe, the former Soviet Union, Bosnia, Spain and also Rwanda, Argentina or Cambodia, both during and after the massacres? Bringing together the perspectives of social anthropology, law and history, and raising the three main issues of destruction, identification and (re) conciliation, this research team conducted by anthropologist Élisabeth Anstett and historian Jean-Marc Dreyfus, will enlighten how various social and cultural treatments of dead bodies simultaneously challenge common representations, legal practices and morality. The programme outputs should therefore open and strengthen the field of genocide studies by providing new theoretical tools for a better understanding of mass violence and its aftermath. This research programme, which has started in February 2012 and will develop over four years, is funded by a grant from the European Research Council.

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SEARCH AND IDENTIFICATION OF CORPSES AND HUMAN REMAINS IN POST-GENOCIDE AND MASS VIOLENCE CONTEXTS



2nd ANNUAL & INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP
OF THE RESEARCH PROGRAMME
CORPSES OF MASS VIOLENCE AND GENOCIDE

9th, 10th & 11th September 2013

University of Manchester (UK)

Room 4/5, Staff House



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SEARCH AND IDENTIFICATION OF CORPSES AND HUMAN REMAINS IN POST-GENOCIDE AND MASS VIOLENCE CONTEXTS

Following a first conference in Paris in September 2012 focusing on the treatment of corpses in the phase of destruction, this second annual meeting of the research programme "Corpses of mass violence and genocide" aims to explore another post-killing severe manipulation of the bodies : addressing their search and identification. The beginning of the 21st century has already experienced many occurrences of this phenomenon, be it the opening of mass graves from the Spanish Civil War, the identification of corpses by the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, the long-standing search for disappeared political detainees in Argentina or the large-scale exhumations pursued in Rwanda. Whether bodies have been destroyed through industrial processes, mutilated, buried individually or collectively or even reburied in secondary or tertiary sites, the search and identification of these victims remains are undertaken in various circumstances and raise a wide range of questions.

The conference organisers have therefore gathered multidisciplinary contributions dealing with the search and recovery of bodies in various contexts of mass crimes, focusing in particular on the twentieth century. Studies will deal with a variety of geographical areas (Europe, Africa, America and Asia) and focus on the methods and processes involved in the search and identification of victims, as well as the motivations and interests behind these pursuits aiming at understanding what is at stake in conducting exhumations and human remains identification. From understanding these historical objectives, can we learn as much about the 'searcher' as we can about the 'searched'?

Monday 9th September 2013

14.00-15.30

introductory address by Elisabeth Anstett (CNRS, France)
& Jean-Marc Dreyfus (University of Manchester, GB)

Key note speech: Tony Platt (San Jose State University, USA) "Bitter Legacies: A War of Extermination, Grave Looting, and Culture Wars in the American West"

16.00-18.00

Methods for exhumation

Chair and discussant : Tim Thompson (Teesside University, UK)

- Luis Fondebrider (Equipo Argentino de Antropología Forense, Argentina), "Searching for the Disappeared: Argentinean Forensic Anthropology in a Global Perspective"
- Francisco Ferrandiz & Luis Rios (CCHS-CSIC, Spain), "Scientific Rituals in Contemporary Spanish Civil War Exhumations"
- Isaac L. Baker & Brittany Card (Harvard Humanitarian Initiative, USA), "Identification of Alleged Mass Grave Sites through Remote Sensing"

Tuesday 10th September 2013

9.00-10.30

What is at stake in DNA analysis?

Chair & discussant : Belen Rodriguez Cardoso (Banco Nacional de Datos Genéticos, Argentina)

- Ernesto Schwartz-Marin (University of Manchester, UK) & Arely Cruz, "Articulating Forensic Science, DNA Databases and Kinship as a Civic Response to Everyday Disaster in Mexico and Colombia"
- Victor Toom (Northumbria University, UK), "Collapse of the Twin Towers: Bodily Remains, Next of Kin and Forensic Identification Mechanisms"

11.00-12.30

Exhumations and their agents

Chair & discussant : Luis Fondebrider (EAAF, Argentina)

- Admir Jugo & Senem Skulj (International Commission on Missing Persons), "Ghosts of the Past: The Competing Agendas of Forensic Work in Identifying the Missing across Bosnia and Herzegovina"
- Rémi Korman (École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales, France), "Search and Identification of Corpses from the Rwandan Genocide since 1994: Rwandan and international agents"

14.00-15.30

Exhumations post-WW2

Chair & discussant : Jean-Marc Dreyfus (University of Manchester, UK)

- Anna Galinskaya (Museum of Great Patriotic War - Byelorussia), "The Work of the Soviet Extraordinary State Commission (ChGK) in Byelorussia: the Case of Maly Trotsnets"
- Gabriel Finder (University of Virginia, USA), "Depicting the Exhumation and Reburial of Holocaust Victims in Yizkor Books"

16.00-18.00

Screening of "Earth Promised Sky", a 52' documentary film (2003) by Sabina Subasic devoted to the search and identification of victims of Bosnian War.

Day and night, Shida tirelessly draws portraits of her five sons, currently reported missing. Like thousands of other women in Srebrenica, she lives in her dreams and takes part in the protests demanding that justice be done. For the first time in History, a large-scale initiative has been launched to search for the 27,731 people who went missing during the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina. "Earth promised Sky" portrays the painful process of searching for and identifying the bodies through the personal accounts of Eva, Amor and Jasna. They attempt to go beyond the horror of it all by returning human beings their dignity and doing them justice.

Screening followed by a round table with Sabina Subasic (film director),

Sévane Garibian (Université de Genève, Suisse) and Elisabeth Anstett (CNRS, France)

Wednesday 11th September 2013

9.00-10.30

Exhumations, peace building & state legitimacy

Chair & discussant : Jon Shute (University of Manchester, UK)

- Nicky Rousseau (University of the Western Cape, South Africa), "'The Political Lives of Dead Bodies' and 'The Disciplines of the Dead': the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Exhumation of Human Remains and Echoes from the Past"
- Rachel Hatcher (University of Saskatchewan, Canada), "Forests of Bodies: How Exhumations Make Legible and Extend the Reach of the State in Guatemala"

11.00-12.30

Exhumations and politics

Chair & discussant : Elisabeth Anstett (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, France)

- Karel Berkhoff (NIOD Institute for War, Holocaust and Genocide Studies, The Netherlands), "Bykivnia: How Grave Robbers, Activists, and Foreigners Ended Official Silence about Stalin's Mass Graves near Kiev"
- Viceslav Bitjutsky (Memorial, Russian Federation)" Exhumation of Goulags' Mass Graves in the Voronej Region"

14.00-15.30

Exhumations and territories

Chair & discussant : Caroline Fournet (Gröningen University, The Netherlands)

- Caroline Bennett (University of Kent, UK), "Embodied and Contested Spaces of Mass Graves in Cambodia"
- Frances Tay (University of Manchester, UK), "Multiple Exhumations in Malaysia"

15.30-16.00

Conclusive remarks and perspectives

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