



Task Force For International Cooperation On Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research

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Vienna Conference on Contemporary Concepts in Memorial Studies



What role do places of memory, particularly memorial sites, have in conveying relevant and action-guiding knowledge about the period of National Socialism, in particular for the global migrating community?

What is the appearance of future of memorial work in Austria and worldwide? These questions were addressed at the international conference "The Holocaust and Beyond. Learning from History in Concentration Camp Memorials", which took place in Vienna from September 15 to 17, 2011. The conference was sponsored by the

Austrian Academy of Sciences along with the Austrian association GENDENKDIENTST in cooperation with the Institute for Contemporary History at the University of Vienna and the Foundation "Topography of Terror" in Berlin.

The conference, which was attended by many experts from a wide range of national and international contexts, focused on the fundamental discussion on how education in memorial sites may be approached in a contemporary manner. Various approaches to Holocaust education, human rights education, genocide prevention and historical-political education were examined, and their intentions as well as modalities for their implementation were explored.

The event was well-attended and offered many inspiring perspectives on the work of education. Already during the opening phase, the central axiom was articulated: we need a way of teaching history that will "move" future generations.

As all of these questions present themselves in the context of memory - that is, not only in terms of the historical event of the mass atrocities of National Socialism, but also in terms of the aftermath- it will be imperative to convey the singular nature of these particular crimes into universally oriented education programs. Approaches from human rights education and genocide prevention should not disrespect the specific nature of specific memorial sites, nor should memorial studies satisfy themselves with conveying history alone.