

Narratives of Violence

A major international conference on *Narratives of Violence*, conceived by the International Consortium for Research on Antisemitism and Racism (ICRAR), and hosted by the Jewish Studies Program at Central European University, will be held in Budapest, Hungary, on June 16-18, 2014.

Anti-Jewish violence has been central to the narration and construction of a distinctly Jewish past, present and future. The destruction of the Temple in ancient times, the Crusades and blood libels of the middle ages, the pogroms of turn of the century Poland and Russia and the near destruction of European Jewry in the middle of the twentieth century all continue to reverberate in contemporary Jewish culture. Indeed, perceptions and interpretations of anti-Jewish violence play a crucial role in shaping the ways many Jews see themselves and their place in the world.

Jews are not the only ethnic or religious community whose sense of past and present is deeply influenced by the memory of violence and martyrdom. The Armenian and Roma genocides remain central to the histories and historical memories of their respective communities, and slavery and anti-black violence are central to contemporary African-American concepts of community and history. Increasingly, sexual violence is woven into feminist history and the historical narrative of LGBT communities.

Though *Narratives of Violence* will attempt to examine this phenomenon through an emphasis on the Jewish experience, the comparative angle will be of great importance in both the conference and the edited volume that will follow. Specifically, we are interested in exploring the ways in which violence against religious groups, ethnic groups and visible minorities, as well as against women and sexual minorities, has been incorporated into larger political projects and into the subsequent construction of real or imagined communities.

Among the questions we will ask: How have different narratives of anti-Jewish violence been imagined, constructed, and memorialized in various places and times? How have authors, artists and other agents of Jewish collectivity and memory instrumentalized these narratives towards a variety of social, political and religious goals? Looking more broadly, we hope to understand what the analysis and deconstruction of these narratives of anti-Jewish violence can tell us about the nature of ethnic, religious and national communities since the Middle Ages. More specifically, we will ask what the comparison of these narratives with those of other communities can tell us about the deeper connections between narratives of violence and the construction of communities, as well as the integration of the memory of violence into regnant conceptions of society, self and other.

Our approach is interdisciplinary, and we welcome proposals for papers from scholars of all fields, including history, literature, cultural studies, and the social sciences. We envisage panels on some of the following (intertwined) themes:

- Representations of violence in elite and popular culture (film, television, folklore, music, literature, visual arts, internet)
- Historiographical trends (use of oral history, documentation, historical commissions, genocide studies, and gender studies)
- Religious portrayals and memorialization (matyrologies, liturgy, religious ritual/ceremony)

Ideological trends (violence in national narratives, political narratives, museums, monuments, lieux de mémoire)

Speakers will be provided with accommodation and meals in Budapest as well as support toward their travel costs.

Paper proposals of 200-300 words, together with a brief CV, should be sent to ICRAR@bbk.ac.uk by November 1, 2014.

All proposals will be peer reviewed by a select committee of ICRAR members. For more information on ICRAR, see: <http://www.pearsinstitute.bbk.ac.uk/research/research-partnerships/international-consortium-for-research-on-antisemitism-and-racism/>

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