

## Call for Papers

### **Displaced Persons in Post-War Germany: A Cold War Issue Paris, Goethe Institute, 23-25 May 2013**

*Partners: Unité Mixte de Recherche Identités, Relations internationales et civilisations de l'Europe (UMR IRICE, Centre National de la Recherche-Paris I-Paris IV) and Goethe Institute, Paris; with the support of the Centre interdisciplinaire d'études et de recherches sur l'Allemagne (CIERA)*

The conference is devoted to a discussion of the current state of knowledge and of new perspectives on the study of post-war European population displacements. For the past twenty years, new approaches to the "aftermath of war" and to the beginnings of the Cold War, as well as the growing availability of archival documentation (including Soviet and East European sources) have profoundly reshaped historians' understanding of this topic. Recent publications and current research show that considerable progress has been made in clarifying the "DP question" from various perspectives: from an international perspective to German contexts down to the level of the DP camps themselves.

Displaced Persons constituted a specific category among the millions of uprooted Europeans at the end of the World War II. The majority of the eleven million forced laborers, survivors of Nazi camps, and other victims of the Third Reich were repatriated within a few months after the German capitulation. However, in early 1946, one million Displaced Persons still remained in occupied Germany. They represented a great variety of individual fates. Eastern Europeans fleeing the Red Army's advance and the imposition of communist regimes, as well as Holocaust survivors and victims of anti-Semitic post-war pogroms all rushed to the West. The DPs not only raised legal and humanitarian issues; they also challenged the emerging geopolitical and ideological post-war constellation, especially on the German territory. But as the Soviet Military Administration in Eastern Germany considered the repatriation completed as early as the autumn of 1945, the Western zones of occupation became the main geographical theater of the DP question.

The conference will address the following topics:

1) Displaced Persons as a subject of international tensions and negotiations during the transition from the aftermath of World War II to the beginning of the Cold War. The gradual renunciation of forced repatriation and the establishment of new structures for the DPs quickly provoked fierce controversy between the powers occupying Germany. Although they tried to solve the repatriation question through international agreements concluded in the first half of 1945, the Western Allies and the Soviet Union disagreed on the DPs' fate from mid-1945 on. To what extent were the international decisions taken earlier implemented or avoided? How did the Western Allies, the Soviet Union and the Eastern European states adapt to the challenges raised by the DPs, to the evolving repatriation rules and practices, and to the return of specific categories of Displaced Persons such as war criminals? How did they cope with the economic, demographic, migratory, political, ideological issues carried by some DPs' refusal to return to their homeland? What positions did they develop when faced with the institutionalization of the asylum and the refugee status?

To what extent did international debates and confrontations determine the interactions between the various actors involved in the D.P. question on German territory? The conference is to identify the various individual and collective actors involved in the DP question, their strategies and relations, such as: the Western occupying powers, the Soviet and East European

representatives, the international organizations (UNRRA, later the IRO), the DP representatives, the ICRC, confessional associations, etc. How did they respond to the multiple and sometimes competing issues surrounding DPs? Finally, we would like to focus on a comparative analysis: Did the policies of the Western Allies within their respective occupied zones converge? Conversely, did the governments of East European countries adopt a common strategy to encourage repatriation? Examples from other geographical areas (Austria, Benelux, Scandinavia, etc.) are also welcome and would help to define the European dimension of the DP issue.

2) The impact of international issues on the Displaced Persons themselves. To what extent did international debates shape the DPs' criteria of (self-) identification or differentiation? While nationality, intimately tied to the UNRRA's choice of grouping DPs, constitutes a well-studied element of the configuration of groups, what about social, political or religious factors? The extreme diversity of the DPs' war experiences (former Polish forced laborers, Baltic and Ukrainian populations fleeing Stalinism and the re-annexation of their countries, Jewish victims of persistent anti-Semitism in the Eastern European countries) was reinterpreted in view of the international political developments and increasing tensions. How did the combination of these factors allow for the formation of alliances, competition, or hierarchies among DPs? Could the DP camps and communities be considered a "Cold War microcosm"? Attention will also be given to the perspectives and self-expressions of the Displaced Persons and their representatives, and to the formation of a culture in exile. Papers devoted to individual and collective life trajectories – highlighting the phenomenon of emigration, or the lesser-known process of returning back home – are also welcome.

3) The D.P. issue in the context of the geopolitical, political, and social challenges arising from the imperative of Germany's reconstruction. What relationships, interactions, or tensions existed between DPs and the various categories of the German population (who already faced the arrival of twelve million German expellees and refugees)? Here, the conference will focus on the following aspects: Personal, professional, intellectual, and political interactions, as well as economic exchanges and family reconfigurations, that took place between Germans and DPs, and that delineated the degree of integration of DPs in German society. The consequences of the radical upheaval resulting from the defeat of Nazi Germany will be also studied: Did the presence of the Allies, the new rulers over the German territory, impact inter-ethnic relations in postwar Germany? Did the process of dealing with war criminals influence the practice of de-nazification? How did the Soviets evaluate the punishment of Nazi collaborators who were among the refugee population in the Western zones, and how did they respond to this issue? Did the question of DPs serve as an pretext for regimes in Eastern Europe to maintain their repatriation missions in Western Germany?

**Submission deadline: 30 June 2012**

Proposals should be submitted by e-mail to the following address: [conference.dp@gmail.com](mailto:conference.dp@gmail.com). They should include a brief description of the paper topic (1-2 pages) and list the sources to be used. Additionally a short CV, including the main publications, is required. Ph.D. students and young scholars are particularly encouraged to submit proposals.

The conference program will be finalized by the end of September 2012. Oral presentations should not exceed 20 minutes. All the speakers are required to send an abstract (15,000 to 20,000 characters; listing the sources and summarizing the current state of the research) to the discussants at least three weeks prior to the conference.

The organizers will be able to reimburse traveling and accommodation expenses for as many participants as possible.

The conference languages are French, English, and German. Some of the presentations may be published (articles must not exceed 40,000 characters).

International Scientific Committee: Daniel Cohen, Corine Defrance, Juliette Denis, Catherine Gousseff, Wolfgang Jacobmeyer, Julia Maspero, Pavel Polian, Joachim Umlauf

French Organizing Committee: Corine Defrance, Juliette Denis, Julia Maspero, Joachim Umlauf