

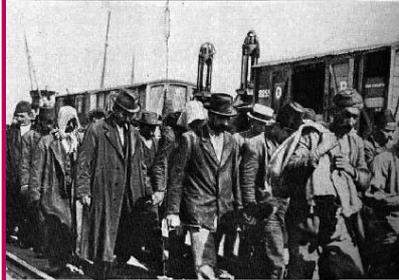
Mountains of Moses

Revolt, resistance and rescuing of the victims of mass extermination in the 20th century

June 18-20



2012
Prague



Czech
Republic





Introduction

nine gates

The conference recalls and analyses more closely important occurrences of revolt, resistance and rescuing of the victims of mass extermination in the 20th century.

The name of the conference (Mountains of Moses) refers to the revolt during the genocide of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire (according to the place where the resistance took place, the Mountain of Moses, Musa Dagh).

The conference is organized by the Archaeology of Evil Research Centre as part of the NINE GATES Festival 2012.

The mission of the Centre is to reflect causality and motives of historical genocides and mass violence on the basis of comparative interdisciplinary research, to gather specific primary and secondary data on genocides and mass murders during the world history, and to ex-

plore new ways of dissemination of research results. Long-term objective of the Centre is to introduce and establish the Genocide Studies discipline in the Czech Republic.

Objectives of the conference are as follows:

- To introduce the scope and method of Genocide Studies in the Czech Republic
- To analyze historical events of revolt, resistance and rescue of the victims of mass extermination/genocides in the 20th century with regard to the relevant historical context
- To compare selected historical events on the basis of common aspects

Conference Program

Day 1

Monday, June 18

20:00

Location: Viola Theatre, Národní 7, Prague 1

Opening ceremony

LIVES? OR VICIOUS CIRCLES?

New thematic performance of Czech poet Pavel Zajíček (PZ) and DG 307 band

Day 2

Tuesday, June 19

09:45

**Location: Protestant Theological Faculty,
Černá 9, Prague 1**
Morning session

Welcome Notes

10:00

Keynote Lecture

Genocide Studies Today: An Overview and Analysis

Paul A. Levine, Hugo Valentin Centre, Uppsala University, Sweden

10:40

Discussion

11:00

Documentary

The Armenian Genocide

2006, directed by Andrew Goldberg

12:00

Lunch Break

13:00

Afternoon session

Presentation

The Musa Dagh (Mountain of Moses) Resistance to the Armenian Genocide

Vahram Shemmassian, California State University, Northridge, United States

Conference Program

- 14:00** Discussion
- 14:30** Break
- 14:45** Documentary
Nanjing Massacre
- 15:10** Presentation
Nanjing Safety Zone: The Rescue of Citizens during the Massacre in Nanjing
Zhang Boxing and Li Jiangyong, Nanjing Massacre Museum, China
- 16:30** Discussion
- 17:00** Movie
The Great Dictator
1940, directed by Charlie Chaplin

Day 3

Wednesday, June 20

**Location: Protestant Theological Faculty,
Černá 9, Prague 1
Morning session**

- 10:00** Presentation
The Rescue of Jews by Spanish Diplomats during the Holocaust: Facts, Myths and Memory Politics
Alejandro Baer, Institute of Sociology
of the Ludwig Maximilians-Universität Munich, Germany
- 11:00** Discussion
- 11:30** Break

Conference Program

- 11:45** Presentation
Raoul Wallenberg's Rescue Activities in Budapest: Myth, or History?
Paul A. Levine, Hugo Valentin Centre, Uppsala University, Sweden
- 12:45** Discussion
- 13:15** Lunch Break
- Afternoon session**
- 14:00** Video Presentation
Revolt in the Sobibor camp
Stanislav Motl, independent journalist, Czech Republic
- 14:15** Documentary
Living Dead (Živý mrtvý)
2009, author Stanislav Motl, directed by Pavel Dražan
- 15:15** Break
- 15:30** Presentation
**Underground Activity and Revolt of Prisoners
from the Sonderkommando KL Auschwitz**
Igor Bartosik, Museum Auschwitz Birkenau, Poland
- 16:30** Discussion
- 17:00** Closing Discussion of the Conference



Profiles of performers and lecturers

nine gates

Pavel Zajíček is Prague-born poet, lyricist, musician and artist. In 1973 he established the experimental underground music group DG 307 (with whom, with several breaks, he has continued to perform to this day), and three years later, in a fabricated trial, he was sentenced to one year in prison for disorderly conduct. In 1980 he emigrated first to Sweden and later to the USA, where he worked predominantly in the visual arts. After the November revolution (1989) he lived alternately in New York and Prague, and since 1995 he has been living permanently in Prague.

Dr. Paul A. Levine is Associate Professor/Docent of Holocaust history at Uppsala University's "Hugo Valentin Centrum". He received his doctorate from Uppsala University in 1996 with his dissertation, "From Indifference to Activism; Swedish Diplomacy and the Holocaust 1938- 1944". Levine is co-author of "Tell ye your Children, a book about the Holocaust in Europe, 1933- 1945", which has now been distributed or purchased in almost

two million copies in Sweden, Germany, Portugal, Finland, France, Russia, Latvia, Estonia, Norway, Denmark, and Japan.

For over 20 years, Dr. Levine has lectured on Raoul Wallenberg, Sweden and the Holocaust, and Holocaust memory and pedagogy in North America, Israel, and most widely throughout Europe to both academic and public audiences. His most recent publication is a major study of Raoul Wallenberg, entitled "Raoul Wallenberg in Budapest; Myth, History and Holocaust".

Dr. Vahram Shemmassian is Associate Professor and the Director of the Armenian Studies Program in the Department of Modern and Classical Languages and Literatures at the California State University, Northridge. He holds a Ph.D. in History from the Universi-

ty of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). His dissertation is titled "The Armenian Villagers of Musa Dagh: A Historical-Ethnographic Study, 1840-1915." Prof. Shemmassian has conducted extensive research in thirty-five governmental and non-governmental archives in the United States, Europe, the Middle East, and Armenia, gathering data on such areas of interest as the Armenians of Musa Dagh and the Sanjak of Alexandretta, as well as Armenian Genocide survivors in the Middle East at the end of World War I. He has published many scholarly articles, delivered lectures at community events and in universities and participated in international symposia and conferences. In the summer of 2010 the Ministry of Diaspora of the Republic of Armenia awarded Dr. Shemmassian the "William Saroyan" medal for his contributions to the promotion and preservation of Armenian culture in the Diaspora.

Mr. Zhang Boxing graduated from Chinese Department of Nanjing Normal University, he was the president of Nanjing Massacre History Association from 2006 to 2011. Mr. Zhang Boxing was engaged in historical study of the Nanjing massacre, editor of a series of books about Nanjing massacre including list of victims in Nanjing massacre, list of soldiers in Nanjing Defending Battle, English materials about Nanjing massacre and publications in Nanjing Press. Mr. Zhang Boxing is honor president of Nanjing Massacre History Association.

Mr. Li Jiangyong graduated from Nanjing University of Economics, worked in Memorial Hall of the Victims in Nanjing Massacre by Japanese Invaders, mainly engaged in the service of complex construction and maintenance of the museum and other related works of Nanjing Massacre research institute.

Dr. Alejandro Baer is visiting professor at the Institute of Sociology of the Ludwig Maximilians-Universität Munich, Germany. His research focuses are: Social Memory Studies, Jewish Studies (focus 20th century Spain), Empirical Research on Anti-Semitism, Sociology of Culture and Religion and Qualitative Research Methodologies. His publications include, in addition to numerous articles and chapters in English and German, the books "Holocausto: Recuerdo y Representación" (Madrid, 2006) and "El testimonio audiovisual: Imagen y memoria del Holocausto" (Madrid, 2005). He is co-author with Jacobo Israel of the collection "España y el Holocausto: Historia y testimonios" (Madrid, 2007). Alejandro Baer curated the exhibition, "Visas for Freedom: Spanish Diplomats and the Holocaust" (2008).

Mr. Stanislav Motl is a Czech TV and radio reporter, investigative journalist and documentary maker. His radio program "A Boy and the Stars", telling a story of a young Jewish boy, Petr Ginz who published together with his friends a magazine called Vedem in the Terezin ghetto, has received the prestigious 2010 AIBs International Media Excellence Award as the Best investigative documentary. Mr. Motl is the author of books about historical events such as the Nazi era and the Holocaust.

Dr. Igor Bartosik is a Ph.D Historian from the Museum Auschwitz Birkenau and a researcher of devices of the mass extermination in KL (concentration camp) Auschwitz. He is giving lectures during conferences organised by the International Center for Education about Auschwitz and the Holocaust and the International Summer School for Teachers of the Jagiellonian University. Dr. Bartosik is the author of the book of interviews with the Sonderkommando prisoner Henryk Mandelbaum "I Was at the Auschwitz Crematorium".



Abstracts of presentations

Genocide Studies Today: An Overview and Analysis by Paul A. Levine, Hugo Valentin
Centre, Uppsala University, Sweden

One scholarly generation ago, academics in Holocaust studies rarely spoke with colleagues in the then new field of genocide studies. Some maintained that the Holocaust was the „only“ genocide in modern history, while others pointed to the methodological difficulties which permeated the then nascent field of genocide studies. Today the situation is vastly different, and it is now largely implausible for one field not to have constant and fruitful exchange with the other. This lecture will briefly explore the „histories“ of the two fields, their conflicts and areas of growing comity, and what the future might hold for these two dynamic and multi-disciplinary scholarly fields, both of which have high and still growing social relevance.

The Musa Dagh (Mountain of Moses) Resistance to the Armenian Genocide by Va-

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hram Shemmassian, California State University, Northridge, United States

During the Armenian Genocide in the Ottoman Empire, begun in 1915, between 1,000,000 and 1,500,000 Armenians perished as a result of deportation, exposure, starvation, diseases, outright massacre, drowning, burning, assimilation through slavery, forced religious conversions, marriages and absorption of children into Muslim households. The abrupt, forced end of the millennia-old Armenian civilization in its cradle became known as the first genocide of the twentieth century.

The presentation will review and analyze the most successful resistance of Armenians taking place at Musa Dagh (Mountain of Moses), an Armenian community in Ottoman northwestern Syria. Their saga captured the

imagination of Prague-born writer Franz Werfel, who wrote a novel entitled *The Forty Days of Musa Dagh*. It became a household name worldwide, especially among Jews in Europe as well as in Palestine, because the story's fortunate ending—rescue by the French Mediterranean navy to safer Egypt—gave them hope for survival.

Nanjing Safety Zone: The Rescue of Citizens during the Massacre in Nanjing by Zhang Boxing and Li Jiangyong, Nanjing Massacre Museum, China

In 1928, the Chinese Nationalist Government moved the capital of China from Beijing to Nanjing. On September 18, 1931, Japan created the so-called „September 18 Incident“ as a pretext to occupy three provinces in Northeast China, thus igniting the fire of a world war. On November 11, 1937, after securing control of Shanghai, the Japanese army advanced towards Nanjing from different directions. In early December, the Japanese troops were already in the outskirts of Nanjing.

With the approach of the Japanese troops, the capital Nanjing was threatened with a catastrophe. Citizens of Nanjing as well as foreign residents were leaving in a hurry. However, more than 20 Westerners decided to stay behind regardless of their embassies' advice to evacuate. They decided to set up an international rescue organization "The International Committee for Nanjing Safety Zone" in the hope that there would be a sheltering place for the people who did not manage to evacuate when the war broke out. During that particular period, 25 refugee camps were set up in the Zone. At the maximum, they accommodated as many as 250,000 refugees.

The lecture will analyze the establishment, role and significance of the Nanjing Safety Zone in the context of Sino-Japanese War

and acts of main organizers of Nanjing Safety Zone: John Rabe, M. Searle Bates, John G. Magee, Minnie Vautrin, George A. Fitch and others.

The Rescue of Jews by Spanish Diplomats during the Holocaust: Facts, Myths and Memory Politics by Alejandro Baer, Institute of Sociology of the Ludwig Maximilians-Universität Munich, Germany

The close ties that Spain maintained with Germany throughout the war permitted some Spanish diplomats to grant protection to the victims. Depending upon each case, they interceded with local authorities, issued protective documents and urged the Madrid government to be more lenient in its visa policy. The Franco government did not adopt an official policy to protect these Jews (not even those holding Spanish nationality); however, some of its representatives abroad acted on their own, by humanitarian motives, risking their careers.

The role of these diplomats in saving Jews from the Nazis was later used as an argument by the Franco government to try to escape from the isolation to which the international community had condemned Spain after the war. The myth that Franco helped the Jews during the Holocaust is sustained in Spain until today.

Raoul Wallenberg's Rescue Activities in Budapest: Myth, or History? by Paul A. Levine, Hugo Valentin Centre, Uppsala University, Sweden

Though a relatively minor figure in Holocaust history, the symbolism of Raoul Wallenberg, and the Swedish rescue mission in Budapest the second half of 1944 has achieved almost unprecedented symbolic and moral significance in Holocaust memory. But is most people's understanding of what Wallenberg

actually did in Budapest based primarily on myth, or on historical fact?

This lecture will explore both aspects of Walenberg today, exploring the fascinating but often troubling relationship between myth and history. This relationship is of particular importance for the field of Holocaust studies, and eventually that of genocide studies as well.

Underground Activity and Revolt of Prisoners from Sonderkommando KL Auschwitz
by Igor Bartosik, Museum Auschwitz Birkenau, Poland

Sonderkommando was a group of prisoners forced by SS to the terrible work at crematoria. In spite of the terrible living conditions they fought the SS: through documentation

of the crimes, escape trials and sabotage. The lecture will be focused on revolt of the Sonderkommando from 7/10/1944 in Auschwitz-Birkenau. The history of Sonderkommando will be presented with background information: creating the commando in 1942, the number of prisoners, work and standard of living, as well as the general problem of the resistance against SS, as in the first attempt of revolt in November or December 1942.

The unknown documents, as well as photographs from the area of the camp which are connected with the history of Sonderkommando will be shown. The lecture will compare the revolt of the Sonderkommando KL Auschwitz with resistance in other centres of the extermination: Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka and Chelmno.