



**CALL FOR PAPERS**  
to Mark the 70th Anniversary of the End of World War II

**I. International Conference**  
**ERC Project “JudgingHistories”**  
**Professor Dan Diner, Principal Investigator**

**“World War II in an Age of Globalization –  
A Reappraisal”**

**November 22-24, 2015**  
**The Hebrew University of Jerusalem**  
**Mt. Scopus**

What does it mean to write a history of World War II in the age of globalization? Can one bring histories and memories associated with the war in continental Europe together with the experiences in East Asia or North Africa? Meeting the challenge of composing such an encompassing history of World War II, the conference brings two essentially important aspects into focus: first, topographically to interrelate the two theaters of war – the European continental and the Asian-Pacific domain. Second, to scrutinize and probe into the memories of war and the discourses that emerged in retrospect.

The first endeavor will allow exploring the range and scope of the war’s global character, while highlighting differences and frictions in alliances – i.e. reconsidering the history of events. The second inquiry will open up questions of judgment concerning the character of violence, death, and suffering executed and sustained, evoking morally permeated discourses of comparison, analogy, and meaning. While the Holocaust emerges at the center of European continental moral and historical understanding and judgment, signifying a rupture in civilization, an epistemological crisis in understanding, so to speak, the exigent question arises as to whether Western categories of historical comprehension may claim universal validity.

*Topographically*, the conference will privilege queries of entanglement and paradoxical constellations which have been less attended to in the European master narratives of WWII. Considering a “*peripheral*” perspective for the history of events as especially insightful, the Japanese intrusion into Manchuria in 1931 will serve as a point of departure, culminating in the Japanese-Soviet border war in summer 1939 and its European repercussions, arriving eventually at the division of the war’s two theaters: the European-continental and Asian-Pacific. Proceeding from the “rape” of China, the fall of Fortress Singapore in 1942 will allow focusing on British India as a conflicting political environment where Allied war efforts and anti-colonial struggle mesh in a paradigmatic constellation. That will open a window onto insightful continuities leading from the war to the post-war era of decolonization. From India the gaze will range on to the Middle East and North Africa, where the British imperial strategy will require special concern – entangling exertions in the struggle against the Axis Powers and the imperial-colonial presence in the region. Special consideration will be given to the battle of El-Alamein, the fate of Jewish-Palestine and the perceptions of Arab public opinion in real time as well as in retrospect.

*Epistemologically*, the conference intends to focus on questions of historical comprehension and moral judgment. Core issues are iconic events which have inscribed themselves into universal memory as well as into particular memorial cultures, mostly of a contested character. Embarking from the Jewish Holocaust as a foundational event in European and Western perception as ultimate evil, other events claim an iconic meaning of suffering and disaster. This relates to the Japanese “art of war” in East Asia, especially in China, the calamitous famine in Bengal, caused by natural circumstances and the blunder of British colonial policy. Furthermore, the French case during and after the war, could add to complete the reappraisal of WWII and its aftermath in the colonial and postcolonial environment.

Papers focusing more on the *topographical* aspect of the conference should address issues of entanglement and continuation by reevaluating the temporal and spatial boundaries of WWII as a global event and examine points of division and connection between the different theaters of war. Papers that center on *epistemological* issues are asked to address different depictions and memories of violence, survival, and death while considering them as particular cases within a possible universal view, with preference to explorations of the diverse contexts of the war and their association with colonial questions and processes of decolonization. All in all, we aim to investigate the antipodal existential experiences of WWII that evoked conflicting memories. Such a perspective could enable us to reconstruct a universally convincing and

valid understanding of WWII as a foundational event in European and global history and thus render possible common judgments while re-determining the meaning of “History” as a “collective singular” (Reinhart Koselleck).

The following topics should act as a general orientation (but topics of the papers are not restricted to them):

- Connection and disconnection of the European continental and Asian-Pacific theaters of war
- Similar and distinct experiences of collective suffering and violence (mass killings, hunger, colonial clashes, war crimes, sexual violence, genocide, annihilation, etc.)
- Meanings and metaphors of death and dying (“good/bad” or “pretty/ugly” death, heroism, sacrifice, etc.)
- Images of corpses and treatment of the dead
- Views from the colonies and Post-Colonial views on the Holocaust

**We would like to invite you to send a proposal for a paper addressing the theme of the conference to [judghist@mail.huji.ac.il](mailto:judghist@mail.huji.ac.il). Deadline for proposal submission is April 30, 2015. The proposal should state your main argument, not exceeding two pages.**

Suitable participants will be contacted and will be kindly asked to provide an abridged version of their paper (around 5 pages) by October 30, 2015. The short papers will be circulated among all participants two weeks before the beginning of the conference. In order to enable a fruitful discussion, the presentations should not exceed 20 minutes.

Travel costs (economy) and the costs of accommodation in Jerusalem (3 nights) will be covered for all conference participants from abroad.

Conference participants may be invited to submit their presentations for publication in the project’s publication series “JudgingHistories”.

With best wishes,

Dr. des. Lutz Fiedler and Dr. Kobi Kabalek

Postdoctoral Fellows

ERC Project “JudgingHistories”