

Call for Papers

"1945-2015: German-American Encounters in Bavaria"

Regensburg, 11-13 June 2014

Organizers: Dr. Birgit M. Bauridl, PD Dr. Ingrid Gessner, Prof. Dr. Udo Hebel; American Studies, University of Regensburg

Hosted by: Regensburg European American Forum (REAF)

Venues: University of Regensburg, Flossenbuerg Concentration Camp Memorial Site, The City of Regensburg.

The conference takes the 8th of May 2015, the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe, as one date serving as a potent memory trigger that highlights the convergence of past, present, and future, of time, space, bodies, and ideas. The 70th anniversary, as possibly the last decadal anniversary to see the participation of contemporary witnesses, most forcefully marks a starting point for processes of memory and commemoration looking back to victims and traumas, to collective and individual histories and narratives generated by the war. The 70th anniversary points to the diverse settings of this crucial moment, to the spaces becoming German-American contact zones, and to the emerging sites of multiple political, cultural, and social negotiations. The 70th anniversary focalizes a key moment of German-American encounters in which instants of wartime clashes, liberations, and visions of future interactions converge.

The conference focuses on the space(s) of Bavaria in order to explore the dynamics of German-American encounters between 1945 and 2015. It proposes to view this specific region as one particular local realm which, as a contact zone between Germans and Americans, nevertheless becomes the stage and mirror of transnational processes. It intends to not only scrutinize much-discussed sites of encounter such as Munich, Nuremberg, or Dachau but insists on drawing attention to local sites often overlooked in scholarship. Thus, the conference conceives a debate of sites such as Flossenbuerg, Berchtesgaden, the Armed Forces Recreation Center Obersalzberg, the Dokumentationszentrum Obersalzberg (1999-), the Amerikahaus Munich and Dokumentationszentrum, the Grafenwoehr Training Area and Military Community, Nuremberg, etc.

The conference takes place at the University of Regensburg, in the former Deutsch-Amerikanisches Institut (DAI) in the city of Regensburg as well as at the Flossenbuerg Concentration Camp Memorial Site. It features keynote addresses by Werner Sollors (Harvard U), Stephan Bierling (U Regensburg), Volker Depkat (U Regensburg), and Heike Paul (FAU Erlangen) as well as special contributions by curators, (outreach) experts, and academic scholars.

We invite additional papers that view the 'Bavarian' region—or exemplarily apply a larger European-American scale—as a prism of transnational processes ranging from bombings to liberation to occupation to denazification to cultural politics/diplomacy in the postwar years to continued interactions and military/civil presences; and which scrutinize actual, corporeal encounters between Germans and Americans as well as encounters between diverse American and German cultural, ethnic, political, and regional identities and their negotiations, representations, commemorations, and diverse visions.

To submit a paper proposal, please send a short abstract (<500 words; pdf) and a short CV (<2 pp.; pdf) including your email, address, and affiliation to reaf@uni-regensburg.de by 30 March 2015.