

International Workshop for general staff officers

on dealing with the past of Auschwitz burdened by violence

A cooperation between the Maximilian Kolbe Foundation and the Zentrum für ethische Bildung in den Streitkräften (zebis) [Centre for ethics education in the armed forces]

*21 – 25 November 2012, Oswiecim, Poland
Centre for Dialogue and Prayer*

Idea for the project

Within the framework of the workshop, 20 general staff officers from Poland and Germany are invited to enter a joint process of learning on dealing with the experience of violence and its consequences in the analysis of the present significance of Auschwitz, and to express their willingness to reflect on the subject matter in a way which is appropriate to the ethical seriousness of the use of violence.

Analyzing Auschwitz and its consequences – beyond the concrete case – gets an exemplary meaning for dealing with violence experience and its after-effects in general. Auschwitz stands for experiences having a lasting effect on the identity of our societies and on the identity of Europe. The different ways Auschwitz is remembered in the different contexts reflects the complexity of violent incidents.

At the same time the tensions created by the severe violence experience continue to exist in the different forms, contents, functions and ways Auschwitz is remembered by the various European societies. People must learn to understand this disposition to violence which has considerable explosive force. Only then it can be overcome and the prerequisites for a common European identity can be created which assimilates the differences without abolishing them.

The workshop wants to invite the participants to jointly visualize the experiences made in connection with Auschwitz and to reflect on the different perspectives and contexts of experience and interpretation contributed by the participants.

Special attention is to be turned to the specific challenge of a military remembrance culture when dealing with violence experience. Soldiers in particular bear responsibility for dealing with means of violence. In addition, they are especially exposed to the effects of violence. The joint workshop of general staff officers from Germany and Poland is to be a sign of the endeavours to find a common military identity.

Programme

Wednesday 21 November

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| 03:30 p.m. | Introduction into the subject matter and the workshop
<i>Dr. Jörg Lüer, Maximilian-Kolbe-Foundation</i>
<i>Dr. Veronika Bock, zebis</i>
Introduction of the participants |
| 06:00 p.m. | Dinner |
| 07:00 p.m. | Remembering Auschwitz as an international challenge
<i>Andrzej Kacorzyk, Vice Director of Auschwitz-Birkenau Memorial Site</i> |

Thursday 22 November

The camp

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| 07:30 a.m. | Holy Eucharist |
| 08:00 a.m. | Breakfast |
| 09:00 a.m. | Guided tour through the basic camp Auschwitz I |
| 01:00 p.m. | Lunch |
| 02:00 p.m. | Guided tour through Birkenau |
| 06:00 p.m. | Dinner |
| 07:00 p.m. | Exchange in small groups and plenary session |

Friday 23 November

Violence experience: Survivors and offenders

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| 07:30 a.m. | Holy Eucharist |
| 08:00 a.m. | Breakfast |
| 09:00 a.m. | Meeting with survivors of Auschwitz
<i>Jozef Pacynski</i>
<i>Karol Jerzy Tendera</i> |

Stefan Lipniak

- 11:30 p.m. Coffee/ tea break
- 01:00 p.m. Lunch
- 02:00 p.m. Visit of Marian Kolodziej exhibition
Rev. Dr. Manfred Deselaers
- 03:30 p.m. Coffee/ tea break
- 04:00 p.m. The lasting impact of traumatised. Psycho-social dealing with severe violent experiences
Prof. Dr. Harald J. Freyberger, University Greifswald
Discussion in plenary
- 06:30 p.m. Dinner
- 08:00 p.m. Becoming an offender – being an offender.
Experiences with stories of offenders
Prof. Dr. Dr. Phil C. Langer, University Frankfurt
Discussion in plenary

Saturday 24 November

Dealing with history as a challenge

- 07:30 a.m. Celebration of the Eucharist
- 08:00 a.m. Breakfast
- 09:00 a.m. Remembrance and the present time. On dealing with the tension-filled diversity of remembrance.
- Remembering Auschwitz and World War II in France, Germany and Poland
Dr. Rafał Żytyniec, Polish Academy of Science Berlin
Dr. Jörg Lüer, Maximilian-Kolbe-Foundation
Prof. Dr. Etienne Francois, Free University Berlin
Discussion in plenary
- 11:00 p.m. Coffee/ tea break
- 01:00 p.m. Lunch
- 02:30 p.m. Military remembrance cultures between cults of sacrifice and glorification of violence. Perspectives of a joint European culture of remembrance
Dr. Ulrich Schlie, Political Director at the German Ministry of Defense
Discussion in plenary
- 05:00 p.m. Act of commemoration at Auschwitz Memorial

08:00 p.m. Festive dinner

Sunday 25 November

07:30 a.m. Holy Eucharist

08:00 a.m. Breakfast

 Departure

Conference languages: Polish and German in plenary. English in working groups.