

Summaries

Norman Aselmeyer, Cholera and Death. Experiences of Epidemics and Concepts of Death in Workers' Autobiographical Texts

During the entire 19th century cholera was a disease of the poor. The victims of the last European outbreak of cholera in Hamburg in 1892 were almost exclusively workers. Both contemporaries and historians mainly blamed the lack of hygiene standards, which they even interpreted as fatalism of death. Using the Hamburg cholera epidemic as an example, the article explores the subject dimension of the disease and the medical practice of workers. It focuses on an agent-centred perspective in order to broaden the understanding of the excess mortality among working class population by referring to workers' autobiographical texts. The analysis of these memoirs shows that the workers' reaction to the disease was geared to health protection and based on traditional practices instead of academic medicine. Representations of death are particularly important in this respect; they can explain the alleged lack of concern and the indifference. The excess mortality among workers during the cholera epidemic cannot be attributed to a fatalism of death but a number of reasons caused by structural and institutional inequalities as well as milieu-specific attitudes, which found expression in workers' reservations towards academic medicine and in specific concepts of death.

Michael Becker/Dennis Bock, »Musulmen« and Prisoner Societies. On the Social History of Nazi Concentration Camps

The term »Musulmen« referred to prisoners in Nazi concentration and extermination camps at the borderline between life and death. Whereas Musulmen are omnipresent in survivors' testimonies, historical research has, so far, largely ignored them. The starting point of the contribution is the observation that texts on Musulmen often follow a widespread master narrative portraying them as passive, isolated and without a chance of survival. In contrast to that, documents and material this article refers to show Musulmen as self-willed agents, who actively influenced their situation in the camps. Using literary texts, archived survivors' testimonies and court records, it will be shown that these different representations refer to the antagonistic social reality of prisoners' societies. Musulmen's experiences of concentration camps were much more complex than research has hitherto acknowledged. This angle also offers a promising research approach on prisoner societies in general. By taking the perspective of marginalised prisoner groups, the article both addresses this desideratum and critically rereads previous research results. It illustrates that the term »Musulman« is to be understood as a relational category. It also argues that several agents of the prisoner societies took part in a continuous process of »Musulmanisation« of other prisoners, which was of pivotal importance for the (re)structuring of social relations among the prisoners. The category »Musulman« was cross-cutting all other categories of the social structure of prisoner societies. Distancing oneself from »Musulmanised« prisoners helped ensure one's own social identity. Based on a microscopic analysis of spatiotemporal parts of reality, social processes within prisoner societies are reconstructed and the analysis of »Musulmen's« action practices is put into context of current research on concentration camps.

Moritz Buchner, Civilised Mourning? Emotions as Criteria of Difference in Bourgeois Italy (1870–1910)

The article takes a 1874 lithograph of a funeral ceremony in South Italy as a starting point and shows that the Italian bourgeoisie defined »appropriate« mourning by distinguishing it from »uncivilised« emotional attitudes. Three fields of differentiation, which determined the polarity between bourgeois urban and traditional rural forms of mourning, will be examined: a rationalistic concept of death shaped by biological and medical considerations; a model of socialisation based on individual, but family-embedded feelings; and the moralisation of emotions from the perspective of the body paralleled by a reinterpretation of painful feelings which were attributed a positive role according to traditional Catholic interpretation. Finally, the contribution discusses to what extent this caused an antagonistic relation to death and mourning and how it influenced bourgeois practices of mourning.

Ann Katrin Düben, »So that the Entire Burial Site in Bockhorst Will Vanish«. The Cemeteries of the Emsland Camps Dead and the Politics of Remembrance in the Federal Republic of Germany (1945–1970)

When in 1933 the Nazis started to establish a series of labour, punitive and POW camps in the Emsland district, they also set up cemeteries in close vicinity of the camp sites to bury the deceased inmates. The article explores the post-history of these burial sites and starts from the assumption that until the 1960s the official coming to terms with the Nazi past almost exclusively focused on the remembrance of the dead. Thus the cemeteries for the dead inmates were central for the conflictual history of remembrance of the Emsland camps. Using the burial site of Bockhorst-Esterwegen as a case example, the contribution explores the scope of action of protagonists and their antagonists in the field of the politics of remembrance. It shows that both denials of the past at local level and interventions against these denials paralleled national trends in the Federal Republic.

Anna-Maria Götz, Between Status, Prestige and Distinction. Family Graves of the Bourgeoisie and Changes of the Funeral System during the 19th Century

The monumental burial sites of the bourgeoisie from around 1900 are sources immensely rich in meaning for social history. The establishment of large central cemeteries created sufficient space to replace previous mass and multi-layered graves with single graves. The bourgeoisie in particular could afford prestigious and individually designed burial sites. The emerging funeral and remembrance industry helped designing public graves as private memorials. Grave figurines as the centre of burial sites played an important role in this respect. They were either expensive and unique pieces of commissioned art produced by renowned sculptors or cheap, mail-ordered mass products. The size of the monument, the price of the material and the location of the grave indicated the social status of the grave owner. This already shows the refined distinctions and the desire of the grave owners to stage these distinctions on the cemetery beyond death. Several thousands of funeral figurines were put up in Europe between 1880 and 1910. A selection of three examples from Paris, Hamburg and Vienna illustrates the interplay between status, prestige and distinction, which shaped the bourgeois funeral culture of the 19th century across the borders.

Florian Greiner, »The Right Way of Dying«. Popular Knowledge on Death from the 1970s

The article examines popular advice literature on »Dying and Mourning« from the early 1970s to the 1990s. It focuses on authors, contents and readers as well as on strategies of popularising the knowledge on death in the Federal Republic. It also explores the relation

between scientific expertise and popular practical knowledge as well as the role of religion and the Church. According to its key assumption these publications indicate an accelerated removal of the taboo initiated by a new group of public »experts of death« and a change in social attitudes of dying and mourning. It shows that the rationalisation of death promoted by the advice literature can be interpreted as the basic pattern of a »scientisation of dying«. In this context a »good death« is constructed as objective that allows dying in peace and with dignity and reduces the financial, mental and time-wise burden on the family. The advice literature also criticises the alleged repression of death and advocates the reintegration of dying and mourning as integral parts of the everyday life.

Nina Janz, On Heroes and the Dead. The Fallen Soldiers of the *Wehrmacht* during the Second World War

More than 20 million soldiers got killed during the Second World War. The *Wehrmacht* glorified the almost five million German fallen through propaganda, parades and heroic stories, but also established an extensive network of information and registration offices for the dead and their graves. Funeral troops and so-called grave officers were assigned to grant every soldier a »dignified« grave and remembrance. However, the *Wehrmacht* faced a lot of difficulties to salvage, identify and bury every fallen soldier. Often, there was not enough time, material or physical energy to bury the dead according to *Wehrmacht* regulations. Dead soldiers had to be left behind in battle and could not be salvaged. Weather conditions such as severe frost and snow made it difficult to dig out graves; bodies were mixed up, reports on graves got lost and it was not always possible to give sufficient information on the fate of the soldiers to their relatives. While the soldiers died far away from family and home, their deaths were glorified as »heroic deaths for the fatherland«. Once a year, on Remembrance Day (the former National Day of Mourning), they were remembered. *Wehrmacht* and NSDAP commemorated the fallen and their contribution »to the fatherland« with parades, march music and wreath-laying ceremonies at the *Neue Wache* in Berlin. Instead of grief, these events exhibited pride, confidence in sure victory and readiness for war. They were an organised, staged public display of the soldiers' »heroic death« – starting with the burial site to parades and glorifications of the soldier's death on Remembrance Day.

René Schlott, Deaths at the Berlin Wall. Events and Remembrance

Between 1961 and 1989, 138 people died at the border installation around West Berlin. The number of deaths at the Berlin Wall continuously dropped every decade of its 37-year-long existence. According to the biographies gathered by the research project »Deaths at the Berlin Wall« from 2005 to 2009, the »typical victim of the wall« was a single man without children, aged 25, trained as a skilled worker. The reasons of the refugees to leave the GDR were manifold: some wanted to continue their university studies in West Berlin, which had been interrupted by the building of the Wall, others were concerned that their exit visas would be denied. Apart from social historical aspects the contribution focuses on the strict regulations of GDR authorities of how to deal with the fatalities at the Wall, which mostly resulted in a cover up of the events. In the heated political atmosphere of the divided city, where both blocs faced each other directly in the Cold War, every known fatality at the Wall was immediately politicised and instrumentalised by both sides – even beyond the fall of the Wall in 1989. After the German reunification official GDR remembrance disappeared, whereas West German commemoration rituals continued to exist as stereotypes of remembrance for the whole of Germany. The year 2009 finally marked the shift from a dichotomic to a multi-perspective form of remembrance and thus a caesura in

commemorating the history of death under the extreme circumstances of the German division.

Lu Seegers, The Dead Father in Family Memory. Germany and Poland after 1945

Losing the father as a war victim was commonplace in Europe during the Second World War. Whereas roughly 2.5 million children lost their fathers as soldiers of the *Wehrmacht*, most non-Jewish Polish men died as being persecuted by German or Soviet occupation troops or as members of the Polish army (*Armia Krajowa*). 1.1 million children are said to have been semi-orphans or orphans in Poland after 1945. The contribution explores how sons and daughters in West and East Germany, born between 1935 and 1945, interpreted the war death of the father in retrospect. Also, interpretations of some Polish semi-orphans are examined in order to add a European perspective. Based on 40 autobiographical interviews with men and women from West and East Germany as well as from Poland born between 1935 and 1945, the article analyses individual children's perceptions of war death and its meaning and interpretation in different biographical periods of life. The interviews allow to shed light on changed family relationships after the death of the father, on individual interpretations of the loss and its role in family memory in Germany and Poland.

Henning Türk, Bourgeois Foundations as Practices of Commemoration and Social Harmonisation ›From Above‹ after the Revolution of 1848/49. Donations and Foundations of the Jordan Family in Deidesheim

Using a local study on bourgeois foundations during the 19th century, the article explores the »commemoration of the dead by the living« (Michael Borgolte). Based on the foundations in the small town of Deidesheim in Rhenish Palatinate between the March Revolution and the foundation of the German Reich in 1870/71, it will be illustrated how political, social and religious aspects of giving and donating merged. The bourgeoisie attempted to give a deeper meaning to the deaths of close relatives by setting up foundations. They were supposed to offer a way to circumvent death, which was increasingly perceived as meaningless. At the same time, foundations and donations legitimised the local leading social and economic position of the bourgeoisie. Also, foundations allowed to realise a liberal philosophy in terms of public hygiene, welfare and education at a local level.

Sebastian Weinert, »Death« as Argument. Strategies of Popular Hygienic Education from Late Imperial Germany until the Early 1960s

Around the turn of the 20th century popular hygienic – or health – education saw an enormous increase in importance, as clearly indicated by the large hygiene exhibitions such as the First International Hygiene Exhibition in Dresden in 1911 and the »GeSoLei« exhibition (*Ausstellung für Gesundheitspflege, soziale Fürsorge und Leibesübungen*; Exhibition of Public Health, Social Welfare and Physical Exercise) in Düsseldorf in 1926. It was the objective of the popular educators to influence health relevant attitudes of the people by popularising medical and scientific knowledge and directly approaching the audience. »Death« played a pivotal role here. The fear of death – or the other way round: the hope of a longer life – was explicitly mentioned and instrumentalised by the popular educators. The article explores how from late Imperial Germany until the early 1960s popular hygienic education used »death« as an argument. It illustrates changes and continuities of dealing with »death« during this period and within this specific field of popularising science.