

LECTURE 19: THE TRANSITION TO THE POSTWAR PERIOD

I. Final Timeline

- Web option: Returned to you on Thursday; corrected electronic versions due by Mon., 3/19, 5pm. *Your grade will only be complete once you have proofread and confirmed the published version.*
- Exam option: Electronic corrected version (using Word's Tools>Track Changes feature) due by Monday, 3/19, 5pm. Exam handout on Thursday; word-limited take-home due by Thu, 3/22, 3pm.

II. Q8 Discussion

- Three "narrative turning points" in Ernst Bromberg's life story:
- "Special path" model that best fits with Bromberg's narrative:

III. Chaos at the end & "preemptive obedience"

- Commandant Kramer of Belsen to SS administration in Berlin, March 1, 1945
 "You informed me by telegram of 23rd February, 1945, that I was to receive 2,500 female detainees as a first consignment from Ravensbrück. I have assured accommodation for this number. The reception of further consignments is impossible, not only from the point of view of accommodation due to lack of space, but particularly on account of the feeding question. [I]t was decided that the camp could not hold more than 35,000 detainees. In the meantime this number has been exceeded by 7,000 and a further 6,200 are now on their way. As a result all barracks are overcrowded by at least 30%. ... In addition to this question, a spotted fever and typhus epidemic has now begun, which is spreading every day. The daily mortality rate, which was still in the vicinity of 60-70 at the beginning of February, has now attained a daily average of 250-300 and will increase further in light of the prevailing conditions."

IV. Three Postwar Myths

- Ignorance: "We didn't know!"
- Victimization: "Good Germans" were victims of "bad Nazis"
- Resistance: Inasmuch as we knew, we opposed the Nazi regime.

V. Mayor of Dachau, November 9, 1945:

Ladies and gentlemen!

How peaceful life once was here! Dachau, once the epitome of rural stolidity and earthiness, closely bound to its artists and their noble cultural efforts for more than a century! To mention only a few of the names that carried Dachau's reputation into the world: Christian Morgenstern, ... Karl Spitzweg, Wilhelm Leibl, Lovis Corinth, [Max] Slevogt, ... That was once our Dachau!

But then non-local sadists came and settled on the outskirts of our city, and with horror and fear we had to watch as they defiled the name Dachau in the eyes of the entire civilized world.

For twelve long years the concentration camp weighed like a nightmare upon us.

At the beginning sparse reports about the inmates of the camp leaked out to us. but after construction was complete the hermetic isolation left us with only dark premonitions about the fates and human suffering behind the concrete walls topped with barbed wire.

Dante's saying should have been written over the gate: "lasciate ogni speranza, voi, che entrate!" [Abandon all hope, you who enter!]

We know that since 1940 alone at least 28,000 people died a miserable death. the lists show that 220,000 passed through the camp.

And the name of our beloved Dachau is associated with all of these cruelties!

But the real Dachau was different!

Today, with pure hearts and clean hands this "other Dachau" commemorates all of the victims whose blood has soaked our native soil and whose ash covers the paths within the camp.

You dead, however, who have been taken up by our native soil, rest there in peace! your memory shall not only be honored by a monument of stone, but we will carry it in our hearts as long as the heavens allow us to breathe the air of freedom, and allow the sun of peace to shine.