



Centre commémoratif
de l'Holocauste à Montréal

Montreal Holocaust
Memorial Centre

Teaching the Holocaust and Other Genocides: Opportunities, challenges and successes
October 27, 2010 at the Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre

Call for Papers

The **Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre** is organizing a training day for teachers to be held at the Centre (5151, Côte-Ste-Catherine, Montreal) on October 27, 2011. This year's theme is "Teaching the Holocaust and Other Genocides: Opportunities, challenges and successes". The goal is to discuss the theoretical and educational issues raised by the use of a comparative approach to teach about the Holocaust and other genocides and offer best practice tools to educators.

Although any historical phenomenon is unique, it is sometimes necessary, for a better understanding, to use comparison with other similar phenomena. This helps to identify patterns, similarities or differences and promotes general learning. That being said, how can we ensure that the uniqueness and complexity of an event is maintained along with the search for universal principles?

The comparison of historical events has an undeniable potential in education. However, "in the educational field, this work implies a reasoned and controlled use of the activity of comparison, which consists of making an inventory of the differences and similarities, while remaining attentive to the dangers of anachronism and teleology" (Heimberg, 2007, free translation). How can we develop a reasoned and controlled comparative approach in addressing genocides of the 20th and 21st centuries?

This issue is even more important with the increasing popularity of this approach in the teaching of genocides, among teachers around the world and particularly in North America, as a means of facilitating human rights education (Eckmann, 2010). However, while popular, this approach calls to question both its possibilities and its potential pitfalls. For example, how is it relevant to simultaneously study several genocides? What are the motives or reasons that justify such an approach? Does comparison really allow for a better understanding of the phenomena? If so, under what conditions? How do we avoid anachronism and teleology? How does one avoid the deviation from a reasoned analysis towards the comparison of suffering or towards an exacerbation of ethnic tensions? Does this approach allow for reflection on current issues of human rights?

We are also looking to learn about the successes of teachers in the classroom. What are these winning practices? What learning can we expect from this approach? How does the comparative teaching of multiple genocides contribute to critical thinking and to the struggle for human rights and societal improvement? What are the necessary conditions for the success of such teaching in



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terms of material, knowledge, etc.?

The **Montreal Holocaust Memorial Centre** invites education specialists, educators and teachers to submit their proposals for workshops (250 words) for this training day before April 29, 2011, 17:00 by email to sabrina.moisan@mhmc.ca or fax 514-344-2651 and mention "Teachers Conference" in the subject line.

For more information, contact Sabrina Moisan at the following telephone number: 514-345-2605 ext 3025.