

Eric Hobsbawm

2003 Balzan Prize for European History since 1900

For his brilliant analysis of the troubled history of twentieth-century Europe and for his ability to combine in-depth historical research with great literary talent.

Reconstruction in the Immediate Aftermath of War: a Comparative Study of Europe, 1945-50

School of History at Birkbeck College, University of London

Adviser for the General Balzan Committee: Keith Thomas

Eric Hobsbawm's Balzan research project, entitled "Reconstruction in the immediate aftermath of war: a comparative study of Europe, 1945-50", was established at Birkbeck College, University of London. It was directed by David Feldman (Birkbeck College), and Mark Mazower (Columbia University), and it comprised a programme of research projects undertaken by two postdoctoral fellows, Jessica Reinisch and Elizabeth White, as well as four workshops and a final conference.

The project began in the academic year 2004-2005 and research activities ended in 2007. Both postdoctoral fellows on the project, Jessica Reinisch and Elizabeth White, have now permanent university positions, the former at Birkbeck College and the latter at the University of Ulster. Postdoctoral researcher Jessica Reinisch worked on "The reconstruction of the public health system in Germany up to 1949". Securing public health was a key component in reconstruction, and the issue of public health has generally received only superficial treatment in the literature on German reconstruction. Reinisch pursued a comparative analysis of reconstruction in the different German occupation zones, and her research contributed to our understanding of post-war reconstruction in a comparative perspective. Postdoctoral researcher Elizabeth White worked on "The return of Soviet citizens evacuated to the Urals, Central Asia or Siberia". This work looks both at the experience of return and at the attempts of the soviet state to administer and control the re-evacuation and to use it as a form of social engineering. Whereas evacuation was a major theme in Soviet historiography, little work has been done on the return process. At the same time, the particular history of return in the Soviet Union presents one instance of a theme that the reconstruction project explores comparatively in a variety of national contexts. Over the course of the programme four workshops and a final conference were held at Birkbeck College. These were attended by an international array of scholars from all over Europe and from the United States.

The first workshop, on *Comparing Europe's Reconstructions*, was held on 28 October 2005. Participants: Nicolas Atkins (Reading), Zhanna Bogdanovich (Birkbeck), Martin Conway (Oxford), Ralph Desmarais (Imperial), David Feldman (Birkbeck), Sheldon Garon (Princeton), Peter Gatrell (Manchester), Yoram Gorlitzki (Manchester), Neil Gregor (Southampton), Jan Gross (Princeton), Eric Hobsbawm (Birkbeck), Simon Kitson (Birmingham), Carl Levy (Goldsmiths), Frances Lynch (Westminster), Mark Mazower (Columbia), Catherine Merridale (Queen Mary), Alan Milward (Cabinet Office), Shaun Morcom (Birkbeck), Philip Nord (Princeton), Jessica Reinisch (Birkbeck), Jan Rueger (Birkbeck), Naoko Shimazu (Birkbeck), Ben Shephard (Oxford), Timothy Snyder (Yale), Nigel Swain (Liverpool), Johannes-Dieter Steinert (Wolverhampton), Penny Summerfield (Manchester), Frank Trentmann (Birkbeck), Adam Tooze (Cambridge), Jay Winter (Yale), Elizabeth White (Birkbeck), Waqar Zaidi (Imperial).

The other three workshops involved the following participants:

Relief and Rehabilitation in the Immediate Aftermath of War, June 2006. Rod Bailey (Imperial War Museum), John Barber (Cambridge), Polly Basak (Wellcome Trust), Virginia Berridge (LSHTM), Sanjoy Bhattacharya (Wellcome Trust), Richard Bessel (York), Daniel Cohen (Rice), Ralph Desmarais (Imperial), David Feldman (Birkbeck), Matthew Frank (Sheffield Hallam), Katerina Gardika (Athens), Peter Gatrell (Manchester), Christian Goeschel (Cambridge), Eric Hobsbawm (Birkbeck), Simon Kitson (Birmingham), Rowan MacAuslan (Birkbeck), Anthony McElligott (Limerick), Emily Mayhew (Imperial), Mark Mazower (Columbia), Christopher Read (Warwick), Jessica Reinisch (Birkbeck), Jan Rueger (Birkbeck), Silvia Salvatici (Teramo), Rainer Schulze (Essex), Ben Shephard (Oxford), Naoko Shimazu (Birkbeck), Iain Smith (Warwick), Frank Snowden (Yale), Johannes-Dieter Steinert (Wolverhampton), Penny Summerfield (Manchester), Pat Thane (SAS/ICBH), Flora Tsilaga (Kings), Paul Weindling (Oxford Brookes), Elizabeth White (Birkbeck), Waqar Zaidi (Imperial).

Displacement and Replacement in the Aftermath of War, 1944-1948, September 2006. Pamela Ballinger (Bowdoin College), Antony Beevor (Birkbeck), Richard Bessel (York), Daniel Cohen (Rice University), Gustavo Corni (Trento), Matthew Frank (Sheffield Hallam), Orlando Figes (Birkbeck), Peter Gatrell (Manchester), Loukianos I. Hassiotis (Thessaloniki), Panikos Panayi (De Montfort), Daniel Pick (Birkbeck), Jessica Reinisch (Birkbeck), Lucy Riall (Birkbeck), Eduard Mühle (Münster), Irena

Salenice (Daugavpils), Silvia Salvatici (Teramo), Rainer Schulze (Essex), Nik Wachsmann (Birkbeck), Marie Sevela (CRJ-EHESS, Paris), Naoko Shimazu (Birkbeck), Johannes-Dieter Steinert (Wolverhampton), Elizabeth White (Birkbeck), Nick Stargardt (Oxford), Tara Zahra (Harvard).

Planning, Production and Reconstruction in Post-war Europe, June 2007. John Gillingham (University of Missouri, St. Louis), Jacek Kochanowicz (Warsaw University), Katherine Lebow (University of Virginia), Mark Mazower (Columbia University), Alan Milward (LSE), Kiran Patel (Humboldt University), Waqar Zaidi (Imperial College London).

The final conference, dedicated to *Post-War Reconstruction in Europe* was held on June 2008. Participants: Richard Bessell (York), Fred Cooper (New York University), Jan Gross (Princeton), Toby Haggith (Imperial War Museum), Mark Harrison (Warwick), Harold James (Princeton), Pieter Lagrou (Université Libre de Bruxelles), Suzanne Langlois (York University, Toronto), Mark Mazower (Columbia), Silvio Pons (University of Rome, Tor Vergata), Peter Romijn (Amsterdam), Remco Raben (Netherlands Institute for War Documentation), Jessica Reinisch (Birkbeck), Emma Rothschild (Harvard), Ben Shephard (Bristol/Oxford), Anders Stephanson (Columbia), Jakob Tanner (Zürich), Adam Tooze (Cambridge), Nick White (John Moores University, Liverpool).

Dedicated website: www.balzan.bbk.ac.uk

Publications:

- Feldman, D., M. Mazower, J. Reinisch (Editors), *The Reconstruction of Europe*, Oxford University Press, (forthcoming, 2011).
- Reinisch, J., *Public Health in Germany under Allied Occupation*, Rochester University Press, (forthcoming, 2010).
- Reinisch, J., *Comparing Europe's Post-war Reconstructions: First Balzan Workshop, Birkbeck College, London, 28 October 2005*, "History Workshop Journal", 61, 299-304, 2006.
- Tsilaga, F., *Relief and Rehabilitation in the Immediate Aftermath of War, Second Balzan Workshop, Birkbeck College, London, 16 June 2006*, "History Workshop Journal", 63, 371-374, 2007.
- White, E. and J. Reinisch (Editors), *The Disentanglement of Populations: Migration, Expulsion and Displacement in Postwar Europe*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, (forthcoming, 2011).

- Zaidi, W., *Planning, Production and Reconstruction in Postwar Europe, Fourth Balzan Workshop, Birkbeck College, London, 26 June 2007*, "History Workshop Journal", 65, 279-284, 2008.

- *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol. 43, No. 3, July 2008 (Special issue).

Statements by the Prizewinner and by David Feldman:

The Balzan Prize Committee has not merely been generous to me, but has given me the wonderful opportunity to be generous to my younger colleagues on a scale I could never have dreamed of. I understand this is a recent innovation in the Prize. I welcome it. It is surely in the spirit of Eugenio Balzan and I am deeply grateful for this entirely unexpected double generosity. "Bounty", that is to say generosity, said Dr. Samuel Johnson, the famous English eighteenth century scholar and critic, "always receives part of its value from the manner in which it is bestowed." Nobody could have bestowed it in a manner more welcome to scholars than the Balzan Foundation. I thank you, not only on my behalf, but in the name of those who will, I hope, be able to share through me in your benefaction. Eric Hobsbawm (Berne, 07.11.2003)

We feel the programme of research has been highly successful and will produce a lasting contribution to our understanding of this crucial period of European history. Everyone involved is very grateful to the Balzan Foundation and to Professor Hobsbawm for giving us the opportunity to carry out this work. David Feldman (2009)