

**International Conference:**  
***Criminality and Madness in Modern Germany***  
**May 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>**  
**The Hebrew University-Jerusalem**

Mosse Exchange Fellows Ofer Ashkenazi, Udi Greenberg, and Jonathan Lewy have organized a conference that reflects their research interests, and their experiences at Mosse Fellows at the Hebrew University, and the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The Conference “*Criminality and Madness in Modern Germany*” will take place at the Goethe Institute in Jerusalem and on Mt. Scopus, the Hebrew University on Sunday and Monday, the 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> of May, 2007. Scholars from Europe, the United States, and Israel will present papers at the conference.

The most recent research conducted on crime and insanity from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century until the end of the Third Reich will be presented, with emphases on the German obsession with definitions of crime, the difference between reality and fantasy, and the thin line between the deranged and the criminal. Among the topics to be presented at the conference: Crime in Adolf Hitler’s army unit in the First World War; Human rights and psychiatry in German prisons; Encouragement for the denunciation of criminals in the media during the Weimar years; Insanity and Crime in German Popular Culture; and more.

The Richard Koebner Minerva Center for German History at the Hebrew University in collaboration with the Mosse Program and the Goethe Institute – Jerusalem are sponsoring the conference.

**For further details, and the full conference program, please check the conference’s web page at: [http://koebner.huji.ac.il/conference5\\_2007.asp](http://koebner.huji.ac.il/conference5_2007.asp)**

The conference organizers are **Mosse Exchange Fellows** who will also be presenting conference papers:

**“Insanity, Hallucinations, and Prisoners’ Passions in 1920’s Germany”**

**Ofer Ashkenazi explores how filmmakers in Germany from the beginning of the century depicted the hidden reality behind the prison walls.** In most films, prisoners were portrayed as those who were most susceptible for confusing reality and fantasy, and so experienced homosexual liaisons in prison regardless of their sexual orientation. “The films represent a reality in which the differences between the sexes and the sexual orientations of the prisoners were blurred,” explains Ashkenazi. “These films, which were quite successful before Hitler’s rise to power, allowed the portrayal of ‘normal’ society, outside the prison’s walls, with a clear set of order and boundaries. On the other hand, these films allowed the German audience to see for themselves how easy it was to transgress between a sane reality and a mad and hopeless fantasy.”

**“Rape, Murder, and Media in Weimar Germany”**

**Udi E. Greenberg will present a paper on how the German media portrayed murder and rape cases, which attracted unprecedented public attention.** With the introduction of the new media--radio and cinema--the police tried to cooperate with journalists and ask the public for help with hunting down criminals and solving

crimes. Greenberg explains, “The media exposure caused both policemen and criminals to attain the status of celebrities in Germany. As a result of appeals by the police, thousands of citizens reported what they considered criminal behavior. Known phenomena today of the relationship between police-crime-media appeared long before the Nazi rise to power with countless baseless denunciations. Contrary to common belief, this phenomenon was not particular to a totalitarian regime and had already existed in the democratic Weimar republic.

#### **“Drugs in the Third Reich”**

**Jonathan Lewy will present his research on drug policies in the National Socialist regime. Addicts were treated with “kid gloves”, and authorities refrained from persecuting drug users and addicts.** To take a known example, Hermann Goering, at one point the second man in the Reich, was an opiate addict; but this fact did not pose a problem for the regime. In spite of the Nazis obsession with a clean society the Nazi authorities treated drug addiction and drug crimes with relative indifference. In fact, the German drug laws in the 1930’s and 40’s were more lenient than the American or Israeli laws of today. Unlike Jews, Communists and alcoholics, drug users and addicts did not suffer from persecution in Nazi Germany, no strict control was imposed on them, and some known addicts even reached high positions in the party and government. The reason for this stems from a different understanding of crime and criminal behavior by the Nazis, which was based on different precepts than are employed today.