

Cfp

Jahrestagung der Historischen Kommission für die böhmischen Länder 2025

Organizer:

- Arbeitsgruppe Visuelle Medien im deutsch-tschechischen Kontext

in cooperation with

- Deutsches Polen-Institut, Darmstadt
- Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, Arbeitsbereich osteuropäische Geschichte
- Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Rheinland-Pfalz
- Universität Wien, Institut für Osteuropäische Geschichte

“The Germans” in Czech(oslovak) and Polish film

Location: Johannes Gutenberg-Universität Mainz, Germany

Date: June 26–27, 2025

Application deadline: **February 28, 2025**

“The Germans”, as individuals or (constructed) group, are the subject of Czech(oslovak) and Polish films of various genres in many different ways. They are protagonists, antagonists, supporting or background actors, or explicitly or implicitly absent, left out. However, they not only take on these roles in the film, but also take over functions that have an influence on the respective societies and their collective memory. During the socialist era, the state and its restrictions also had a significant influence on the content and themes of film productions. According to Andrzej Dębski, the image of Germans in Poland fulfilled a substitute function, as the “evil Russian” could not be shown. German themes thus represented, among other things, a catalyst or mirror for inner-Polish and Polish-Jewish themes.¹ Petr Koura showed that only from 1989 onwards the black-and-white image of the evil, brutal Nazi, who only articulated himself by means of short barked commands such as “Go, go” or “Hands up”, as portrayed in Czechoslovakian feature films after 1945, was broken up.² The “images of the Germans” in the film as a national minority, inhabitants of the neighbouring state, or occupiers changes with the domestic and foreign political conditions.

For the conference at hand, not only content analyses of films are of particular interest, but also the press and audience reactions to films, as well as the representations of the “Germans” or events closely connected to the Germans or German (and also Austrian) history these films contain.

¹ Andrzej Dębski: Obraz Polski i Polaków w filmie niemieckim oraz Niemiec i Niemców w filmie polskim po 1945 r. In: Interakcje. Leksykon komunikowania polsko-niemieckiego, URL: www.polska-niemcy-interakcje.pl/articles/show/36 (06.09.2024).

² Petr Koura (Vortrag): Die Entwicklung des Bildes der Deutschen im tschechoslowakischen Film nach 1945. Siehe: Helena Srubar, Tagungsbericht: Film im Herzen Europas. Deutsch-Tschechische Filmbeziehungen im 20. Jahrhundert, In: H-Soz-Kult, 21.02.2008.

The conference aims to encourage reflections on images and audiovisual narratives about “the Germans” in Czech(oslovak) and Polish filmmaking. More specifically, we would like to look at the past two decades since the two East Central European states joined the EU in 2004 and the PiS party's time in government in Poland (2015-2023). Which groups and types of Germans and “the German” with their specific characteristics and content-related functions appear in Czech and Polish productions during this period? What conclusions can be drawn about the social discourses on “the Germans” and “the German” in the two countries?

Contributions to the conference can be submitted on content-related aspects of filmmaking in the German-Czech(oslovakian) or German-Polish context and their reception, such as the construction of national stereotypes, dealing with specific role models and aspects of conflict and coexistence, the applied master narratives, the film genres used, the representation of historical and/or political events and persons, relationships at all levels (personal to state), the focus on or omission of various topics.

As introduction to the topic, the film “Alois Nebel” (director: Tomáš Luňák; CZ/D 2011, 81 min) will be shown on the evening before the conference (June 25th). The participants will have the chance to discuss the film with the Czech author Jaroslav Rudiš, on whose graphic novel character the film “Alois Nebel“ is based.

Submission details:

Those researchers who would like to register for the conference with a presentation proposal are asked to submit an abstract (approx. 300 words) and a short biographical note. The documents should be sent to Dr. Hildegard Schmoller (hildegard.schmoller@univie.ac.at) and Dipl.-Kulturwirtin Theresa Langer-Asam (theresalanger@gmx.de) by February 28, 2025. The conference languages will be German and English.

The organizer will cover accommodation and travel costs for the speakers.

Contact

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