

INTERNATIONAL PROJECT  
FACING THE PAST. PUBLIC HISTORY FOR A STRONGER EUROPE

## CALL FOR PAPERS

### EDITED VOLUME

# TURNING POINTS OF PUBLIC HISTORY IN EUROPE SINCE 1945

**Deadline for abstracts:** December 20, 2023

**Deadline for draft chapters:** July 1, 2024

**Conference opportunity:** Summer 2024, Luxembourg

**Editors:** Prof. Violeta Davoliūtė (*Vilnius University*) and Prof. Felix Ackermann (*Fernuniversität in Hagen*)

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The ways in which the past is preserved, commemorated, communicated, and taught can support – or hold back – social and political development. The development of digital technologies and social media has enabled the spread of disinformation about the past, increasing historical enmity and social animosity. But these same technologies may also democratize historical practices to include, empower, and engage citizens in critical debates about the past.

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This edited volume is produced in the framework of Europast, a Horizon Europe Twinning project (2022-2025) coordinated by Vilnius University with the participation of Leibniz Centre for Contemporary History in Potsdam, Germany (ZZF), the Centre for European Studies at Lund University in Sweden (LU), and the Centre for Contemporary and Digital History in Luxembourg (C2DH).

Europast approaches public history as a normative practice that seeks to engage citizens in the co-production and communication of the past in a manner that a) strengthens social cohesion, resilience, and democracy, and b) maintains ethical and professional standards of truth-telling in the representation of the past. In the real world, however, these norms are seldom achieved in full.

This volume aims to generate a critical survey of how public history was practiced across Europe since 1945, through an assessment of how controversial anniversaries have been commemorated. History teachers, museum curators, social activists, and politicians frequently evoke historical turning points or controversial anniversaries as a means of invoking and presenting the past to engage and influence constituencies in the present.

Scholars in the fields of history, memory, cultural studies, communications, international relations, and related fields are invited to submit paper proposals addressing questions relating to the commemoration of a turning point in history since 1945 like:

- **Origins:** How, when, and why did the campaign(s) to focus attention on a turning point or anniversary arise?
- **Agency and scope:** Who initiated the campaign, who opposed it, what were their motivations, the politics of inclusion and exclusion, and the role of gender? Public vs. private? Was the campaign initiated and sustained by the state or society? Academic involvement? Which role did scholars play in producing knowledge and shaping the narrative structures applied in the campaigns at stake?
- **Development and entanglements:** How did representations of this turning point evolve over time, at the national, transnational, and global levels?
- **Impact and engagement:** What were the results of the campaign(s) relative to the intentions of the primary agents? How were various constituencies targeted and/or engaged?
- **Materiality and media:** What role was played by monuments, public spaces, communications technologies and policies (censorship, press, radio and TV, social media, digitalization)?

While the turning point in question can be any date in the past (i.e., the birth of Solidarność in 1980, the liberation of Auschwitz in 1945, the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact in 1939, the signing of the Treaty of Trianon in 1920, the Treaty of Riga in 1921, the Christianization of Rus' in 988, etc.), **contributors should analyze how the anniversary of this date was represented in a public history campaign conducted after 1945.** Comparative and transnational studies along an East-West or national-European axis are especially welcome.

Studies based on archival research and interviews with public history practitioners, social activists, and political decision-makers are especially welcome.

Taken together, the volume intends to provide an interdisciplinary assessment of how various approaches to public history since WWII, public and private, national and transnational, have achieved or failed to achieve their cultural and political objectives.

In addition to publishing a chapter in the edited volume, **participating authors will be invited to participate in the Europast midterm conference** (Summer 2024 in Luxembourg) **and/or the final conference** (Spring 2025 in Vilnius). The dissemination of research will also be supported through workshops, conferences, and media engagements organized by Europast.

For more information about the edited volume, please visit **[europast.vu.it](http://europast.vu.it)**