

Never Again

Hiroshima, Auschwitz and the
Politics of Memory

Ran Zwigenberg

(Associate Professor, Pennsylvania State University)

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Room 301, 3F, Building 10,
Sophia University

tragedy, and to this day, are strongly influencing the way the aftermath of Fukushima in Japan and other disasters worldwide are dealt with.

Ran Zwigenberg is an Associate Professor at Pennsylvania State University. He received his PhD in history at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York (2013), after which he spent a year as a Post Doctoral Associate with the Council on East Asian Studies at Yale University (2013-14) and is currently a visiting scholar at Hiroshima City University as a JSPS fellow. His research focuses on modern Japanese history, with a specialization in memory and intellectual history. His forthcoming manuscript *Hiroshima: The Origins of Global Memory Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 2014) deals comparatively with the commemoration and the reaction to the Holocaust and the atomic bombing of Hiroshima. In addition, Zwigenberg published on issues of war memory, atomic energy and survivor politics. His current research focuses on the connections between the medical profession, especially psychiatrists, and the anti-nuclear and peace movement in Hiroshima and globally.

Lecture in English / No prior registration necessary

On February 6, 1963, Hiroshima's main newspaper, the *Chūgoku Shinbun*, published an account, under the somber title "Exchanging Mementos of Death," detailing an exchange of A-bomb and Holocaust relics between a Hiroshima peace delegation and an Auschwitz survivors' organization. The exchange, which took place on the site of Auschwitz-Birkenau, also included actual ashes and bones of Auschwitz victims, given to the Japanese by their Polish hosts. This symbolic encounter, in which the dead were literally conscripted in the service of the politics of the living, serves as the focal point of my recent manuscript. Examining the peculiar history in Hiroshima and abroad, which led to this encounter and followed it, this talk will concentrate on the narratives of sacrifice and victimization that were central to the postwar reimagining of the A-bomb survivors as symbols of resistance and as moral authorities in the Japanese and international peace movements, and to the wider connections of this history to that of victims of the Holocaust. Focusing on the idea of *fukkō* (復興) and narratives of resurgence and reconstruction that followed WWII in both Japan and Holocaust affected countries, this talk examines how painful memories were integrated in national and communal narratives and the way these narratives affected the way survivors in various locations understood their positions vis-a-vis society. These developments had a huge impact on our ideas of trauma and