

**Tuesday August 10 16.30-18.00 Room 17**

**Visual Art Representation And Movie Demonstration of Deaf  
Jewish Community Members as Methodological and  
Philosophical Tools in Current German or Holocaust  
Education**

Mark Zaurov

There are very rare historical studies about the Holocaust, especially about Deaf Jewish tragedies in the German Deaf educational field and Deaf History research. The distance of more than half a century generates the gap between "information" and "knowledge". Many teachers and deaf leaders cooperated together with Nazis against Deaf Jews and deaf native but this topic has not been studied sufficiently. As Deaf people are visually oriented because of their mother language, sign language, there are opportunities to teach them via visual samples about this era. The method of visual samples can be also used in the regular educational system to teach people more about the double cultural minority, the Deaf Jewish community. Two following modes of teaching Deaf using visual samples are presented below:

One can use movies and/or art pictures as samples of visual medium. Films of 1910s/1920s reflected the political, social and cultural conflicts and tensions of the times in numerous ways. For example, there is a German movie called "Verkannte Menschen" ("Unrecognized people", produced by the UFA) of 1930 in which the representatives of German Deaf community like artists, dentists etc. have been shown as well as the attitude of "normal" society towards them. In addition, one can see there many Deaf Jews including pupils of the famous Israeli Deaf School (ITA) in Berlin (1873-1942). Most of them perished later during the Holocaust although they were integrated in the German Deaf Community.

Another way is to demonstrate several art paintings of Deaf Jewish artists who experienced their "holocaust" or "pogrom" shock feelings and took this as a subject matter in their art. On the example of pictures of two extraordinary Deaf Jewish artists we can see how they depicted this awful world full of

mortal danger. Here is an opportunity to “communicate” with the (deaf) audience and to teach them as we live in a century in which the visual media plays a significant role for the young generation. The artworks show us how both artists expressed their experiences as Deaf Jewish persons. The term of deaf feeling called "Deafhood" (introduced by Ladd) is here important. The modern artist R. Kitaj also supposed that Jewishness could be a present in art as it in life. Picture making is a form of communication.

Culture serves the purpose of identity formation; it introduces people to a range of theoretical debates as well as informs them about specific areas of twentieth-century events. Science, Literature and Art are so called "high culture". And what about the visual Deaf Art, especially Deaf Jewish Art, its subject matter, intention and tools which could qualify it to be considered Deaf Jewish? The question of Deaf Jewish identity in modern art continues to raise its head. As Deaf persons we have specific perception and observation of the world, so we have probably an own expression in art. And exactly this specific visual art representational method in pictures and movies can help us not to forget the past horror and never to repeat it.

**Mark Zaurov** is a Fellow of the Fredrich Ebert Association and President of the Deaf Jewish Association in Germany.