

The Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies

# REPORT

*Second conference of the Global Consortium on Bigotry and Hate*

Villa Grande, Oslo, December 12-13, 2019



## ***Bigotry and Hate: Local and Global Perspectives, December 12-13, Oslo, Norway***

The second conference of the Global Consortium on Bigotry and Hate was hosted by the Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies (HL-senteret) and took place in Oslo, Norway on December 12-13, 2019.

The conference brought together participants from seven countries and four continents. These included: Professor Alexander Hinton and Professor Nela Navarro, Center for the Study of Genocide and Human Rights at Rutgers University, New Jersey (USA); Professor Adam Muller, Peace and Conflict Studies Program, University of Manitoba (Canada); Professor Daniel Feierstein, Center for Genocide Studies, UNTREF, Buenos Aires (Argentina); Ilya A. Altman and Maria Gileva, International Center for Holocaust and Genocides Studies at Russian State University of the Humanities - RGGU (Russia); Dr. Valery Engel, International Expert Forum, Paris (France); Professor Tali Nates, Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Center (South Africa), as well as organizers Research Professor Alexa Døving, Research Fellow Vibeke Moe, Project Coordinator Christopher Gambert and Research Fellow Birgitte Haanshuus, from the Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies (HL-senteret), Oslo (Norway).

Over the next five years, the Consortium will continue to hold similar conferences dealing with the global spread of hate and intolerance in its various forms. The goal is to build a community of scholars that will provide the research and intellectual tools to combat these trends.

The aim of the second conference of the Global Consortium was two-fold: providing participants with a situated understanding of key issues pertaining to bigotry and hate in a Norwegian/Scandinavian context, as well as offering comparative insight into broader local, national and global trends. Below follows a short description of the key issues from the program.

Following introductory remarks by Guri Hjeltnes, Director of the Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies and Alex Hinton, Director of the Center for the Study of Genocide and Human Rights at Rutgers University in New Jersey (USA) and one of the founders of the Consortium, the opening session explored conceptualizations of race and ethnicity in contemporary Norway. Ivar Bjørklund, Professor in Cultural Science at UiT - Arctic University of Norway, presented on the historical and contemporary challenges of discrimination and assimilation facing the Norwegian Sámi population (Bigotry and ideology – the Sámi experience), while Mette Andersson, Professor of Sociology at the Department of Sociology and Human Geography, University of Oslo, spoke on the conceptualization of “race” in a Norwegian context (What about skin-color? The concept of race and racism in Norway).

The afternoon session concentrated on the ideology and expression of hate in the context of a Norwegian contemporary far-right context. Professor in Political Science Anders Ravik Jupskås gave a presentation on far-right “offline” mobilization, and argued that the



Norwegian far-right scene is highly inspired by and dependent on transnational trends. Alexa Døving, researcher at the Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies, presented research on online conspiracy talk (Bringing the enemy closer to home – conspiracy talk on Norwegian Facebook-groups) and Research professor Terje Emberland, researcher at the Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies and expert witness at the Anders Behring Breivik trial, spoke on the ideological development of the Norwegian far-right (The SS phantasies of Anders Behring Breivik).

After the open part of the conference was over, members of the consortium discussed the aim of finalizing the upcoming conference schedule. The day ended with a public lecture by renowned historian Deborah Lipstadt detailing considerations surrounding the trial of Adolph Eichmann (*On The Eichmann Trial*).

The second day of the conference was dedicated to the exploration of manifestations of bigotry and hate around the world. During the morning session Professor Tali Nates at the Johannesburg Holocaust and Genocide Center contextualized the work undertaken by the Museum and how they made exhibitions with a comparative angle on genocide as well as how they developed educational programs. (Hate of the ‘other’ in post-Apartheid South Africa), Professor Daniel Feierstein, Center for Genocide Studies, UNTREF, Buenos Aires presented on the recent rise of far-right movements in a Latin American context (Fascism in Latin-America, ); Dr. Valery Engel, International Expert Forum presented on contemporary European expressions of group focused enmity (Racism of the today’s Europe), and Professor Alexander Hinton at Center for the Study of Genocide and Human Rights at Rutgers University spoke on the various strands of far-right ideology and mobilization in the United States (White Genocide and White Hate in the U.S).

The afternoon session provided further insights and discussion of comparative perspectives on bigotry and hate. Professor Nela Navarro also from the Study of Genocide and Human Rights at Rutgers University (USA) chaired a panel discussion on How to combat bigotry and hate. Participants in the panel were Professor Adam Muller from the Peace and Conflict Studies Program at the University of Manitoba (Canada), Dr Ilya A. Altman and Maria Gileva from the International Center for Holocaust and Genocides Studies at Russian State University of the Humanities and Educator Peder Nustad, Project Director of *Dembra* – Democratic Readiness to combat racism and antisemitism.

The panel discussion was followed by a closed session for Consortium members to discuss how to continue the work of the consortium and goals for the future. Here Consortium members built upon the perspectives raised over the course of the conference to discuss various strategies and possible avenues for engagement and collaboration. Among some of the strategies discussed were continued focus on comparative perspectives with the aim of identifying and describing common mechanisms underlying current iterations of global bigotry and hate.

Consortium members discussed the possibility of using this grounded knowledge to create general policy guidelines and to provide local and national policy makers and stake-holders with theoretical and practical resources for preventing and combating bigotry and hate in local and national contexts. Consortium members also showed interest in sharing and collaborating

with regards to the development of pedagogical tools and methodologies. The possible development of a book or other published materials was also raised.

The conference was concluded with a guided tour by Research Professor Anton Weiss Wendt of the permanent exhibition on the Holocaust in Norway at the Norwegian Center for Holocaust and Minority Studies, before the Consortium members travelled to the Nobel Peace Center for a presentation and guided tour.

Reflections on the composition of the Consortium:

The Consortium brings together a broad group of experts with a variety of overlapping and mutually engaging fields of expertise and professional engagement. Among the Consortium members are academics and pedagogues affiliated with universities as well as researchers, experts and museum specialists affiliated with private research institutions. The focus of the Consortium members spans from the investigation of contemporary expressions of hate and bigotry to the research of historical instances of genocide around the world.

Strategic considerations:

While these varied perspectives inform each other, the Consortium might be best served by a more conscious acknowledgement of the diversity of institutional and theoretical perspectives represented among its members. While consciously seeking common ground in order to explore comparative global and historical perspectives, it is important not to lose sight of the unique perspectives represented in the group. While shared sessions should continue to be a key component of the Consortiums work, in the spirit of cross pollination, the Consortium might also benefit from exploring the potential for more specialized discussions organized in light of diverging institutional methodologies (pedagogy vs research) as well as diverging academic sites of interest (historical perspectives vs contemporary trends). This could be accomplished by offering shared and parallel session during conferences, or by dedicating the respective conferences more explicitly to a particular focus or theme.

Some questions to consider while looking forward to the next meeting:

- Should we engage in some form of conceptual developments (is there a need to clarify central concepts or perhaps develop new ones?)
- Should we organise working groups / discussion forums according to different forms of outcome (maybe a publication group and an education group, or maybe an outreach group?)
- Should we try using the homepage / online arena as a place to share ideas and publications?