

## **IC MEMO REPORT 2014**

### **CONFERENCE OF IC MEMO OF SEPTEMBER 15-17, 2014**

**In**

#### **The Falstad Centre Norway**

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#### Introduction

The Falstad Centre is memorial museum located in the head quarter of a former Nazi concentration camp. Falstad is situated about 40km north of the city Trondheim. Trondheim is today the connection with the outside world, having an international airport and an excellent harbor for oceangoing ships. From a historical point of view the gothic cathedral of Nidaros and the Archbishop's Palace are probably the most impressive medieval buildings of northern Europe; the long row of old storehouses flanking both sides of the Nidelva river are also demonstrating the political and the economic roles of this city in northern Europe / Norwegian history.

More directly connected to the recent history are the long Nazi occupation of the city from the beginning of the occupation of Norway to the day of the capitulation, the major submarine bases of the Third Reich Marine, the harsh treatment of the civilians through the Gestapo, and the extermination of the Jewish community (five survived the Auschwitz deportation).

The three days of the meetings, September 15-17 were divided in three parts: the annual meetings of IC memo on the first day, then on the second a day of lectures, and to conclude with an excursion to Trondheim on the last day.

Following is the minute of these three days.

#### **September 15**

##### **First day: Annual Meetings of IC memo**

A meeting of the Board of IC memo took place that afternoon.

A major aim of this board is to increase the number of museums and institutions being member of IC memo. A brochure was developed by the Board to present to museums and institutions working in the field of memorials of totalitarian victims, and to invite them to join the committee.

The location of the next Annual Meetings was also discussed. The board had two propositions, one in Munich, Bavaria and the other in the Balkans. More information is needed.

In the late afternoon we had then three hours of lectures. After the welcome of the Director of the Falstad Center, Jon Reitan the organizer of the conference gave a paper on the History and Memory of the Center, it was followed by a presentation of the massacres of July 22, 2011 in Oslo and on the island of Utöya perpetrated by the Norwegian terrorist Anders Behring Breivik. A total of dead from the attacks, and set deep wounds in Norway. Different memorials have been erected and more are in preparation. Commented was also the fact that these memorials are erected within a very short time after the tragic events, this in opposition to the Holocaust memorials which were established 30 or more years after the horror ended.

In the forests surrounding the former concentration camp executions had taken place and mass graves have been discovered, we went in the evening to a monument commemorating the victims.

## **September 16**

### **Second day: Conference**

A large number of high school students joined our little group (20 persons) of IC memo members, so that the audience was about 50 persons for this second day.

Dr. Clifford Chanin from The 9/11 Memorial Museum spoke about the extraordinary success of the museum which opened last May, and had three months after opening over one million visitors. The Ground Zero site itself was opened to the public for the tenth anniversary in 2011 and have been visited by millions. The museum was created to remember both the victims (2,977 killed in 2001) and those involved in rescue. The firemen are presented as heroes in the museum show. The museum is supposedly designed "to recall memories without causing distress".

The second paper of this session was given by Bernhard Purin, Director of the Jewish Museum Munich, who spoke about the project of a memorial to the carnage of the Munich Olympics 1972. Here is a new example of a terrorist attack which had no commemorative monument and because of the opacity and intricacy of the events (September 5-6, 1972) is even today difficult to account for. And the project of memorial, even of a simple stone with the names of the victims is controversial.

The ill prepared German security forces couldn't rescue the Israeli hostages, eleven were killed. Five of the Black September perpetrators perished as well as a West German police officer.

In both cases of terrorism perpetrated on European soil presented at this conference, the police hasn't being described in the media as heroic rescuers like for the firemen in the case of the 9/11 tragedy. Discussion about how far the point of view of the terrorists can be presented in the museum, and if the terrorists should remind anonymous or be called by their proper names.

Roundtables and extensive discussions with the speakers continued the day long. In a noted paper on teaching history in a transnational context Dr. Mare Oja shared with the audience her experience on the European level of history teachers, simplification of history is not adequate answer, but a honest and objective exhibition of the facts.

## **September 17, 2014**

### **Third day: Tour in Trondheim**

In an office of the city we were briefed about the project of the city to erect a monument for the victims from Trondheim killed on Utöya. Controversial are the attitude of the family of the victims, the general public, and the position of the officials from the state and the cities.

We were then guided through the Jewish Center, where we visited the synagogue, the library and the museum. The Jewish community is relatively new in Norway, is related to the change of the law (1851) granting Jews the permission to settle in Norway, so the first Jews arrived in Trondheim in 1880. Most of the Jewish inhabitants of Trondheim escaped to Sweden when the German occupied Norway, nevertheless 135 remaining Jews were deported to Auschwitz; 5 of them survived the Holocaust. Today 120 Jews are living in Trondheim.