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| Institution: University College London |
| Unit of Assessment: 28 – Modern Languages and Linguistics |
| Title of case study: Ordinary lives in the German dictatorships: Public understanding of and education on the Third Reich and the German Democratic Republic |
| <p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>The research has had an impact on public understanding of the contested German past. Pathways include public lectures, radio broadcasts, newspaper coverage, and the production of two documentary films as well as A Level source materials and school textbook chapters. The reach has included diverse audiences in Europe, the USA, Australasia and elsewhere. It has improved the knowledge and understanding of students and teachers in the UK, professionals involved in public history activities in Germany and interested members of the public. In the Rhineland, it has led to changes in how the legacies of former officials are commemorated. The research has been of particular personal significance to people variously grappling with the continuing legacies of Nazism and the Holocaust, and the East German dictatorship.</p> |
| <p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Mary Fulbrook's research at UCL German has focussed on the ways in which people are both shaped by the historical periods into which they are born, and in turn contribute to sustaining, challenging and transforming the regimes through which they live. She has concentrated particularly on the German dictatorships of the twentieth century.</p> <p>Fulbrook's AHRC-funded (2002–06) research project on the German Democratic Republic (GDR) developed a more complex paradigm than that of the widely prevalent and politically useful but theoretically problematic notion of 'totalitarianism'. Fulbrook and her team argued (for example [a], [b] below) that, in contrast to dichotomous approaches focussing on 'state' versus 'society', or 'regime' versus 'people', it is crucial to explore transformations of social attitudes and behaviour, and the ways in which East Germans were actively involved in a 'participatory dictatorship'.</p> <p>Her research on generations in Germany from 1905 to 1995 [c], sought to bring together the levels of historical events and structures with patterns of behaviour and culturally filtered subjective experiences, analysed from the perspective of social generations. This research analysed the experiences of different age cohorts across the century, but focussed on two: the first 'war youth generation', born in the first decade of the twentieth century, many of whom proved to be crucial carriers of Nazism (and a small minority of whom were among the founding fathers of the GDR); and the '1929ers', born in the later years of the Weimar Republic and socialised primarily under Nazism, but who in an extraordinary historical twist became the most reliable and committed supporters of the subsequent communist dictatorship, the GDR. By analysing the lives of selected individuals facing challenges distinctive to their generations, this project developed a new interpretation of experiences of living through the Third Reich and GDR, and, more generally, a new historical approach as 'history from within'.</p> <p>In <i>A Small Town near Auschwitz: Ordinary Nazis and the Holocaust</i> [d], Fulbrook explored the development of Nazi racist policies and genocide in Będzin, a small town and county in Eastern Upper Silesia, just 25 miles north of Auschwitz. Some 85,000 Jews were deported through the linked ghettos of Będzin-Sosnowiec; almost all the Jewish citizens of Będzin, around half the total population of this town, were murdered as a result of Nazi oppression; yet it has virtually escaped the attention of historians. Moreover, the role of mid-level civilian functionaries in creating the preconditions for the Holocaust has only recently become the subject of historical research. Civilian administrators have also almost entirely escaped public conceptions of 'perpetrators', who are generally seen as those engaged in direct physical acts of violence rather than the behind-the-scenes administration of ghettoization and policies of stigmatisation, exploitation, expropriation and starvation. Fulbrook's research focused primarily on the role and later self-representations of the <i>Landrat</i> (chief executive or principal civilian administrator) of Będzin, Udo Klaus, who went on to a successful postwar career in the West German civil service as the first Director of the Rhineland Regional Council. Based on a range of sources, including private letters from the <i>Landrat's</i> wife during the war, contemporary archival sources, the records of subsequent legal investigations, the <i>Landrat's</i> 1980 memoirs, and survivor testimonies and oral history interviews, the book explores</p> |

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the implications of 'systemic violence' and the role of German civilian administrators as 'Hitler's willing functionaries'. It also reflects on the character of later memories, in an effort to probe beyond the familiar focus on acts of physical violence and atrocities, and on the subjective role of the historian in confronting this history.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

[a] Mary Fulbrook, *The People's State: East German Society from Hitler to Honecker* (Yale University Press, 2005). Available on request.

[b] Mary Fulbrook (ed.), *Power and Society in the GDR, 1961–1979: The 'Normalisation of Rule'?* (Berghahn, 2009). Submitted to REF2; also available on request.

[c] Mary Fulbrook, *Dissonant Lives: Generations and Violence through the German Dictatorships* (Oxford University Press, 2011). Submitted to REF2.

[d] Mary Fulbrook, *A Small Town near Auschwitz: Ordinary Nazis and the Holocaust* (Oxford University Press, 2012) Joint winner, Fraenkel Prize in Contemporary History. Submitted to REF2.

[e] Mary Fulbrook and Andrew Port (eds.), *Becoming East Germans: Socialist Structures and Sensibilities since Hitler* (Berghahn, 2013). Submitted to REF2; also available on request.

Key grants:

Mary Fulbrook (PI). *Reverberations of War: Communities of Experience and Identification in Germany and Europe since 1945*. AHRC 2010–15 £848,828.00 Led to results available in [e].

Mary Fulbrook *Generations in twentieth-century Germany*. Leverhulme Trust Three-year Major Research Fellowship. 2006-09 £126,206. Led to [c] and [d].

Mary Fulbrook (PI) *The 'Normalisation of Rule'? State and Society in the GDR, 1961–1979* AHRC 2002-06 £281,106. Graded end of grant report evaluated as 'Outstanding' by the AHRC Panel. Led to [a] and [b].

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Recent German history continues to arouse strong emotions. Fulbrook's work on the German dictatorships has contributed to enhanced understanding among a range of beneficiaries, including regional government representatives, students in secondary, further and higher education, families of survivors and perpetrators, and members of the public nationally and internationally.

Fulbrook's research has reached an international public audience, and in doing so has increased public engagement with an important but little discussed topic: not only the experiences of victims, but also the role of functionaries in keeping the machinery of the Third Reich running, as well as later self-representations. This impact was conveyed through the publication of a widely read book, substantial media appearances (including on television and radio and in newspapers) reaching several million people between 2012 and July 2013 alone [1].

In the few months between publication (September 2012 in the UK, December 2012 in the USA) and July 2013, *A Small Town near Auschwitz*, sold 5,145 copies worldwide (hardback and ebook). It received acclamatory reviews in the international literary press. *The New York Review of Books* called it a 'milestone in Holocaust historiography' (20 June 2013; circ. 135,000). The *Times Literary Supplement* (15 February 2013, circ. 100,000) suggested that 'few bring the professional and the personal into such compelling conjunction'. Jonathan Yardley, reviewing what he called 'this fine book' in the *Washington Post* (1 December 2012, digital and print daily readership 474,767), says that the account is 'absolutely necessary to an understanding' of the events and their wider significance. The *Methodist Recorder* (8 March 2013, 22,000) stated the book had relevance for understanding the human capacity for 'complicity in evil acts' [1].

The reach of this engagement was widened through radio programmes in several countries, including BBC Radio 3 Night Waves (27 September 2012; 1.9m weekly station listeners); City Talk 105.9 (24 October 2012: 60,000); Radio City 97.7 (24 October 2012; 428,000) Newstalk Radio, Dublin (237,000 daily listeners);. Circulation figures for newspaper coverage, in addition to the above, include: *The Guardian* (digital and print monthly readership 8.95 million), *The Observer* (223,588); *BBC History magazine* (80,009); *Who Do You Think You Are? Magazine* (22,642);

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Camden New Journal (69,323). Cross-media posting further widened visibility e.g. the *Washington Post* review was posted on the Auschwitz Museum Twitter feed (1 December 2012, 3,256 followers) and included in the American Society for Yad Vashem's bi-monthly journal *Martyrdom and Resistance* (January-February 2013). An interview with Marshall Poe for the 'New Books in History' website was downloaded 34,500 times between December 2012 and July 2013.

Between November 2012 and July 2013 Fulbrook also delivered public talks at home and abroad, including two of the biggest UK literary festivals at Oxford and Hay-on-Wye where audience numbers averaged some 400 and included members of the general public, along with historians, educators and people with personal connections to the Holocaust. Other events were organised by: the Pears Institute for the Study of Antisemitism; Spiro Ark; the Wiener Library; and the Institute for Jewish Studies. In New York, Fulbrook was invited to speak to public audiences at the Jewish Book Council in May 2012; Queens New York Jewish Community Council on 28 March 2013; and the Fraternal Order of Bendiner-Sosnowicer on 31 March 2013, where survivors and members of families from the Będzin area were present [4].

The significance of this impact was as diverse as the audiences. Individuals from both Jewish and non-Jewish backgrounds around the world have emphasised how much the book has affected their understanding of themselves, their families and communities. In the German press, for example, an open letter to Fulbrook in a Rheinland newspaper thanked her for both enlightening the writer about the 'the big question of how it was ever possible for the "Third Reich" to have developed in what was a "Kulturnation"' as well as making aspects of the writer's own troubled relationship with his 'ordinary perpetrator' father more comprehensible. Fulbrook has also received many personal e-mails. One German wrote: 'On a personal level it was a veritable eye opener of how we as a family have rationalised my own grand-father's role in the fascist system'. An American wrote: 'Most importantly, you have made me ask myself a very uncomfortable question. Where in 2012 are our blinkers?' A child of survivors wrote that this is 'a personal and important book that should generate a lot of discussion about the German organizational structure that allowed the murder of our Polish Jewish families to happen with bureaucratic precision and antiseptic decision-making. And then convinced themselves that they were innocent.' Many more could be quoted [5].

Fulbrook's research also contributed to changing the way in which the legacy of a German administrator was commemorated by his successors. Central to Fulbrook's research [d] was the complicated legacy of Udo Klausa (the former Nazi civilian administrator of Będzin and the first post-war Director of the Rhineland Regional Council (LVR) in North-Rhine Westphalia 1954–1975). On 30 May 2012 Fulbrook delivered a public lecture at Düsseldorf University to an audience including current representatives of the Rhineland Regional Council. As a result of Fulbrook's research the Rhineland Regional Council withdrew from their website an adulatory biography of Klausa and amended their public exhibitions [6].

Research on the GDR also reached a wide public through panel events and media presentations, leaving an online legacy in podcasts and transcripts. These ranged from an event with the President of the Humboldt University Berlin, through small discussions with former dissidents and Christians in a church in East Berlin, to an interview with Geraldine Doogue on 'Saturday Extra', Australian Broadcasting Corporation's Radio National, 7 November 2009 (weekly audience 126,000). The significance of Fulbrook's work on 'perfectly normal lives' in the GDR for German self-understandings and public debates is reflected in both popular and scholarly reviews, including the prestigious daily *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (14 Jan 2009), the Göttingen Institute for Research on Democracy (18 May 2010) and the Institute for Civic Education [7].

Fulbrook's research has influenced the teaching of modern German history in secondary schools, and been used to develop widely used educational resources. In 2007, she released a documentary film on the GDR, *Behind the Wall: 'Perfectly Normal Lives' in the GDR*, based on the AHRC-sponsored collaborative research project and using archival material, location footage, and oral history interviews. 1,000 copies of the film were distributed and it has been adopted for teaching and extracurricular purposes in universities and public education centres in the USA, Europe and the UK, such as Queen Mary University of London (QMUL); benefits for learning outcomes include the 'appeal to students to learn about individual experience via filmed interviews' [8]. Sections of the film were also adopted as teaching materials for the OCR A Level history

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syllabus.

Fulbrook was requested to write chapters 5 and 6 in *Dictatorship and Democracy in Germany 1919–1963* (Heinemann: OCR History A Level, 2008), and collate research-based sources for the accompanying LiveText materials and CD Rom. These materials were based on Fulbrook's GDR research, and constituted a major section of the module 'Germany under Democracy and Dictatorship' in the OCR History A Level Board's revised syllabus. Since its adoption in 2008, over 6,500 copies have been sold and the newly revised materials have been positively reviewed by secondary educators for The Historical Association [9].

Between 2008 and 2013 Fulbrook delivered 15 lectures in Sovereign Education programmes around the UK to audiences averaging 200-300 A level students and teachers. Sovereign Education state that her presentations 'have always been a highlight for the students and their teachers' and that students and teachers 'are aware of the valuable contribution she has made to their A level understanding and performance'. Indeed, 'many go away inspired to continue their studies in history at university'. Their evaluation records cite an 'animated and enthusiastic speaker who engaged the students with a good range of useful, relevant material and ideas' [10].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

[1] An estimate of around 12 million can be calculated from all known media viewership and listenership figures, available on request.

Sales figures corroborated by Academic and Trade Department, Oxford University Press.

NYRB, 20 Jun 2013: <http://bit.ly/1cCD3IN> and circulation: <http://bit.ly/15OJt5M>; Jane Caplan, 'Balancing Acts', *Times Literary Supplement*, 15 Feb 2013; *TLS* circulation: <http://bit.ly/18t86pO>; *Washington Post*, 1 Dec 2012: <http://wapo.st/16kVXzf>; circulation: <http://bit.ly/1d3aOpl>. *Methodist Recorder* circulation: <http://bit.ly/1i2c89N>.

[2] Radio station audiences: BBC3 <http://bit.ly/19QIX81>; City Talk <http://bit.ly/1flGwte>; Radio City <http://bit.ly/H5NwCb>; Newstalk Radio, Dublin: <http://bit.ly/18a71io>.

Newspaper articles and readership: *The Guardian*, 16 September 2012: <http://bit.ly/1c2k5P0>; readership: <http://bit.ly/1au9Ex5>; *The Observer*: <http://bit.ly/19RoVXz>; for *BBC History Magazine* and *Who do you think you are? Magazine* see 'PPA Marketing Combined Circulation Chart', 14 Feb 2013, available online; <http://bit.ly/19eDGH3>. *Washington Post* review reprinted in: <http://bit.ly/19Yalwn> [PDF]. NBH interview: <http://bit.ly/16qAmqM>.

[4] Examples of talks at festivals: <http://bit.ly/1flJeyX>; Bendin-Sosnowicer Fraternal Order: <http://on.fb.me/1c2n21U>.

[5] Open letter (2 Jan 2013): <http://bit.ly/1flJmyk>; Personal e-mails: examples available on request.

[6] Statement provided by the Director, Landschaftsverband Rheinland. Changes in presentation of Udo Klausa's contribution described in news article in *Neue Rheinische Zeitung* 1 Dec 2012: <http://bit.ly/H8fpIV>.

[7] Interview in a Cologne newspaper: *Kölnischer Stadt Anzeiger*: <http://bit.ly/18tdo4E>. GDR podium discussion at Humboldt University: <http://bit.ly/19Rrr05>. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 14 Dec 2009: <http://bit.ly/19Qr489>; <http://www.hu-bildungswerk.de/onlinearchiv/themen-ddr-geschichte.pdf>.

[8] For example, a syllabus and statement from a QMUL lecturer on use of *Behind the Wall* is available on request. GDR Museum recommendation of film: <http://bit.ly/16kZtJP>.

[9] OCR syllabus: <http://bit.ly/GU8kMn> [PDF], p. 46. Historical Association Review: <http://bit.ly/19YcHkf>. Sales corroborated by Product Manager, History, Pearson PLC.

[10] Statement from Sovereign Education confirming reception of Fulbrook's lectures to secondary school students.