



Information in english language for the conference in Bonn, June 3 - 5, 2005

## 60 years after 1945 With the Deaf History into the Future

The 60th anniversary of the end of the war is a unique occasion for recollection and reconciliation. Throughout this year various commemorative events and conferences will be held everywhere.

World War II came to an end in Europe on May 8, 1945 when the Germans signed the capitulation in the presence of the four victorious powers France, England, the USA and the Soviet Union. It was liberation from the Nazi tyranny over Germany and the world. The capitulation meant the end of the 12-year-long "Third Reich" that threw the world into World War II and resulted in about 60 million deaths.

Under the control of the communist Soviet Union, a socialist one-party state was established in East Germany, the GDR (German Democratic Republic). With the support of the Western alliance the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) was able to develop into a democratic and successful state. The crash of communism in Eastern Europe and the peaceful revolutions, one of which in East Germany in 1989 that lead to the reunification of Germany, are part of the end of the eventful 20<sup>th</sup> century.

At present the European Union is joined together in Western and Eastern Europe like never before in history. Talking to each other and confidence in the future are so necessary, because the idea of the "growing together of Europe" is part of our life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The association „Kultur und Geschichte Gehörloser e.V.“ (Culture and History of Deaf People of Germany) would like to run a conference on this occasion and to consider the situation of deaf people in Germany in particular. We invited several deaf historians and lecturer to the conference in Bonn in June 3 - 5, 2005. They will present their research and discuss it with the audience. Furthermore, a special contemporary witness, the president of the German Deaf Association and a chairperson of the Deaf Association from East Germany are also invited.

The conference will take place in Bonn's quarter of Tannenbusch at the Gustav Heinemann Haus, a well-known meeting place for people with and without disablement (see [www.ghh-bonn.de](http://www.ghh-bonn.de)). The room accommodates up to 300 people and the restaurant offers good catering on both days.

KuGG has reserved many rooms in the partner hotel "Acora" and the hotel IBIS (more information is available on the registration form). For all of us and the audience this will be a memorable event full of history. For participants unacquainted with sign language interpreters will translate into spoken language.

After the opening of the conference on Friday afternoon Helmut Vogel and Jochen Muhs will give an overview of the **end of World War II 60 years ago**.

A contribution by Mark Zaurov about the **Holocaust and deaf Jews** will follow. After having occupied nearly the whole of Europe, the Nazis organised the mass murder of the European Jews. The Holocaust with its death of 6 million Jews is one of the biggest crimes of humanity.

We will learn something about the **life of deaf French people during World War II** from Marie-France Percevault and Bernard Truffaut from France - they will report several French studies about World War II and Nazi-Germany. In connection to this the film "Hanna" by the International Visual Theatre from Paris will be shown on Friday evening. The film will take approximately one hour.

On Saturday morning the focus will be on the history of the Deaf in the GDR and in the new German member states. At first, Dr Hans-Uwe Feige will present the **history of the Deaf Association in the GDR from the foundation in 1957 to 1989**. At the time of foundation the association was called „Allgemeiner Deutscher Gehörlosen-Verband“ (General German Deaf Association), later it was renamed to „Gehörlosen- und Schwerhörigenverband“ (Association of the Deaf and Hearing Impaired).

Afterwards, Martin Domke will give a review of his **life in the GDR and his experience as chairman of the Regional Deaf Association of Saxony after the reunification**. Following the collapse of the GDR deaf people had to adjust to many things, just as other people did.

After lunch break there will be an interesting highlight of the conference with Friedrich Waldow. Helmut Vogel will give an introduction of the **life and work of Friedrich Waldow and of the Deutsche Gehörlosen-Zeitung** on occasion of his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Friedrich Waldow's first home town was Stettin in Pomerania (now belonging to Poland), where he was born in 1915. Since 1950 Friedrich Waldow is living in West Germany, at first with his family in Mülheim on the Ruhr, and later in Essen. He found his life's work in publishing the German Deaf Newspaper, and this has not changed until this day. After the introduction, Friedrich Waldow will make himself available for questions from the audience.

Then, Gerlinde Gerkens will give a talk about her **life in Federal Republic of Germany and her experience with her work in the association until her post as the president of the German Deaf Association**. She is the first woman of altogether eight presidents in the history of the German Deaf Association. During the past two decades Gerlinde Gerkens has lived through a great deal, especially during her commitment for the recognition of sign language.

Finally, there will be a **panel discussion**, in which all lecturer will present their insights and ideas that they gathered from the conference for the future, concluding with an informal discussion with the audience.

During the conference an **art exhibition** with paintings by **Rudolf Werner**, the famous deaf artist, will be on display. His paintings show the change in deaf people's self-confidence during the last two decades. On Saturday night there will be a **quiz** with quizmaster Herbert Christ. Similar to the charity event in 2003 in Hamburg and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference in 2004 in Heidelberg, there will be once more some surprises.

On Sunday morning guided tours will be organised of the excellently designed **House of History of the Federal Republic of Germany** that is situated on the Museums' Mile in Bonn.

The Bonn Conference should be appreciated as a contribution by the organiser „Kultur und Geschichte Gehörloser e.V.“ to the remembrance of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the war. We are hoping that this conference will be a beginning of common research and documentation projects within the KuGG. We are convinced that these projects will turn into valuable contributions for both, the deaf community and the public.

Poster, programme and registration form are available on our website [www.kugg.de](http://www.kugg.de) and can be ordered at [symposium2005@kugg.de](mailto:symposium2005@kugg.de). Furthermore, an organisational agency is set up for queries and information by post and telephone at the JOCE agency commissioned by the KuGG, with fax: ++49 - (0)40 - 5945 2725 or telephone: ++49 - (0)40 - 5945 2724 - for further information, please, refer to the registration form.

We are looking forward to being able to welcome you at the conference! "Auf Wiedersehen" in Bonn!  
Helmut Vogel, Chairman of Kultur und Geschichte Gehörloser e.V.

Translation by Uta Sassenberg