

## **CBEES Advanced seminar 12 September: Why Are We Not Finished With Hitler Yet?**

Speaker: Dr Barbro Eberan, author and journalist, Hamburg

When? 13.00-15.00

Where? Room MA755, Södertörn University

Abstract:

"In my thesis *Luther? Friedrich, der Große? Wagner? Nietzsche?...* 'Wer war an Hitler schuld?' ("Who was guilty of Hitler?" /Stockholm and Munich 1983). I analyzed the discussions held in occupied Germany 1945-1949 about the questions "How could it happen?" and "Who was guilty of the racist crimes that were committed in the Third Reich?". In *"Varför är vi inte färdiga med Hitler än?"* ("Why are we not finished with Hitler yet?") /Stockholm 2002) I made my research known to a Swedish public.

This spring 2011 appeared my latest book *Var Hitler en demon? Tysk-europeisk historia i skuggan av nazismen* ("Was Hitler a demon? German-European history in the shade of Nazism"). There I present a survey of European history from the outbreak of World War I until today with the focus on Germany. I also analyze Hitler's function as a mythical figure in our culture – during his lifetime and after his death.

The book is divided into four parts:

Part 1 deals with the world-war-period (1914-1945) and analyses Hitler's career and development with reference to the historical background. Part 2 shows the different attitudes of the four Allies, of the German emigrants and of the population in Germany to the question of guilt – during the war and in the first years after the end of the war. Part 3, the largest part, gives a survey of the development in postwar Germany from the outbreak of the Cold war 1947 till today. The historical events are described and put into a global context. Short biographies of outstanding politicians, authors and filmmakers are presented. The differences between the two German states are analyzed. It is shown that their different attitudes to the question of postwar-Germany's responsibility for the crimes committed in the Third Reich have caused problems in the relationship between East- and West-Germans after the reunification in 1990 – and still do. The last chapter discusses the role the question of guilt plays in Germany today. Part 4 is about Adolf Hitler. First I describe his life and present the debate among the specialist about controversial questions. Then I analyze the role Hitler has played in postwar-Germany up till today and present the exhibition "Hitler und die Deutschen" in Berlin this winter. Finally I try to find an answer to the question why his heritage plays such an important role in our Western Christian culture.

In my lecture I will present the essential contents of my book and illustrate them with many maps, photos, drawings and other documents. I will focus on the discussion about the question of guilt in postwar-Germany and analyze the role it plays in united Europe today."

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