

Media Release, 20 August 2020

Borderlines – Basel 1933–1945

The new exhibition at the Barfüsserkirche by Basel Historical Museum is dedicated to Basel during the years in which Germany was ruled by the National Socialists (Nazis). Having been postponed on account of the Covid-19 pandemic, it will now run from 21 August 2020 to 28 March 2021. To mark the show's opening, visitors will enjoy free admission to the Barfüsserkirche on the weekend of 22/23 August.

Borderlines – Basel 1933–1945 was to have opened on 8 May, the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe. The years of Nazi rule in Germany (1933–1945) and the Second World War (1939–1945) had a significant impact on life in Basel and the surrounding region. Yet cross-border relations remained a fact of life throughout this period. The exhibition takes a critical look at the ambivalent attitudes to Nazism and complex relations to Nazi Germany not just of the people of Basel, but also of local businesses and institutions and the Swiss authorities.

One special area of interest is the treatment of refugees and cantonal and national refugee policies. Another important subject is the political climate within Basel itself and the economic ties to Germany maintained by businesses both large and small. The exhibition also sheds light on the special challenges facing Basel's Jewish residents. The defence of Switzerland's distinctive cultural identity and its influence on the country's self-image during those years is also examined, as is everyday life during the war. The exhibition recounts the fortunes of specific individuals as well as exploring borderline cases of all kinds, whether geographical, personal, legal or ethical, and so provides plenty of food for thought on how we handle the past.

Alongside objects from the museum's own collection, the show features items on loan from fifteen private and ten institutional lenders. Some forty individuals, institutions, and companies kindly provided visual materials such as photos and videos. Especially interesting is the film footage of the building of the German border fence in the summer of 1942. The programme of events was developed in collaboration with a wide range of cultural organizations and institutions. The exhibition is being supported financially by sixteen foundations as well as grant-giving bodies at both cantonal and national level. Especially worthy of mention is Basel Historical Museum's close collaboration with the Dreiländermuseum Lörrach that forms part of the cross-border Interreg project "Die Dreiländersammlung":

<https://www.regbas.ch/de/foerderprogramme/projekte-interreg-oberrhein/die-dreilaendersammlung/>

The exhibition is flanked by a wide-ranging programme of events, including tours in German, English and French, Wednesday matinees, workshop talks and events with our cooperation partners. Owing to the uncertainty occasioned by the Covid-19 pandemic, all tours and events will be published exclusively online at: <https://www.hmb.ch/aktuell/programm/>

The exhibition lends itself to incorporation in secondary and vocational school curricula and Basel Historical Museum has developed special formats for school classes at these levels. It has also created a teachers' information dossier with detailed information on what the museum itself has to offer as well as possible preparatory and follow-up activities. This dossier can be downloaded at the following website: <https://www.hmb.ch/fileadmin/a/hmb/dateien/pdf/HMB-Grenzfaelle-Dossier-fuer-Lehrpersonen-Version-20200721.pdf>

The tie-in book published by the Christoph Merian Verlag is lavishly illustrated and aimed at a broad readership: Grenzfälle – Basel 1933–1945, edited by Patrick Moser and Alexandra Heini for Basel Historical Museum, Christoph Merian Verlag, Basel 2020, hardback, 284 pages, 19 x 24 x 3 cm, ISBN 978-3-85616-916-9, CHF 39.–.

Free visits on the opening weekend

Owing to the Covid-19 pandemic, Basel Historical Museum has decided to forego a big opening event. On the opening weekend of 22/23 August 2020, however, visitors will be able to view the exhibition in the Barfüsserkirche free of charge, naturally observing the museum's Covid-19 protection concept.

For photos and additional information on the exhibition:

www.hmb.ch/service/presse

Further information:

Andreas Mante, Head of Communications, andreas.mante@bs.ch, +41 61 205 86 25
<https://www.hmb.ch/en/news/exhibitions/borderlines/>

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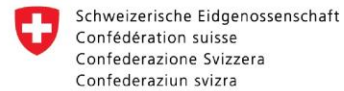
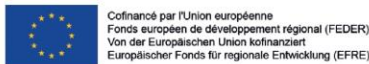
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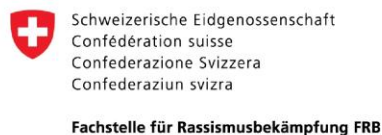


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