

REMEMBRANCE AND SOLIDARITY

studies

IN 20TH CENTURY EUROPEAN HISTORY

Violence in 20th-century European History:
Commemorating, Documenting, Educating

Theoretical Issues of Violence

The Triviality of Violence in Europe
in the 20th Century

Remembrance and Oblivion of Violence:
Contradictory Perspectives



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REMEMBRANCE AND SOLIDARITY

STUDIES IN 20TH CENTURY EUROPEAN HISTORY

EDITED BY
Florin Abraham and Réka Földvárné Kiss



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EDITORS' PREFACE

Florin Abraham and Réka Földváryné Kiss

Violence is a phenomenon specific to humankind from its beginning to its end. The 20th century brought the horror of carnage on an industrial scale such as that inflicted during the two world wars, the Holocaust and the Gulags. The extent and forms of political violence raised profound questions concerning the very nature of being human. The normalization of the unimaginable or the so-called 'banality of evil' conceptualized by Hannah Arendt oriented philosophic reflection and socio-historical research towards understanding the causes of the industrialization of death during the 20th century. This led to the emergence of a transdisciplinary research field with extensive results: political violence. The first research field is that of ideas (ideologies) analysis, as concepts that can determine the dehumanization of individuals, so that the most atrocious forms of violence can be directed against civil populations, women and their children or, in the case of terrorism, against random innocent victims. The second major research direction concerns the evaluation of socio-political institutions and mechanisms in which the illegitimate violence employed by states or other types of actors (terrorists, for example) is exercised. Finally, a third research field, inspired by sociology, psychiatry or criminology, aims to understand the manner in which individuals contribute to political violence, as perpetrators or victims.

In a vast, complex and contradictory thematic environment, with various historical and civilizational contexts, we wanted to offer readers some reflections and studies relating to political violence during the 20th century in Europe. From a great number of proposals, the journal's editors selected only a few. We also wanted to include some of the valuable academic contributions presented to the public during events organized by the European Network Remembrance and Solidarity (ENRS). Thus this issue of the journal includes two distinct categories: studies and essays. In the first category we have included eight research papers with varying thematic and conceptual-methodological content. The editors have intentionally brought together a very diverse thematic programme in order to emphasize the complexity and multiple perspectives from which the phenomenon of violence can be studied.

The first study belongs to Christian Wevelsiep; the author tries to understand 20th-century European violence from a phenomenological perspective. The German researcher does not provide final answers to issues such as the relation between totalitarianism, ethics and memory, but he does give a good introduction to these subjects.

From general aspects with theoretical features, we encourage the reader to make the transition towards positivist history with Polish historian Karol Kalinowski's study dedicated to the repression of the Catholic Church in occupied Warsaw during the Second World War. Based on numerous archival sources, his research emphasizes the complexity of the forms of violence involved in this episode of the war.

The way in which violence is reflected in museums and literature is the object of two interesting studies. First, Siobhán Doyle analyses the memorialization of James Connolly (1868–1916), socialist and revolutionary leader, at the National Museum of Ireland. The author describes in detail the process of memorialization and the multiple difficulties that hinder past reconstructions using the tools of museology. Secondly, Petra James, an expert in comparative literature, gives an insightful analysis of 'enforced disappearance', a common feature of 20th-century dictatorships and totalitarian political regimes, by comparing various representations found in novels and short stories published in Central Europe after 1989. The research of Mykola Makhortykh also uses the method of comparison in his fascinating case study that relates to an episode of the Second World War: the Battle of Kyiv in 1943 that has been interpreted differently and conflictingly by different national editions of the Wikipedia online encyclopaedia.

Two authors from the Balkans also examine the phenomenon of violence. In the first study, Afrim Krasniqi offers a historical and political viewpoint of the way in which the party-state exercised control over Albanian society during the communist period. The second study, written by Ivana Polić, gives us an analysis with strong emotional implications for readers of the way children were used in war propaganda by the Croatian and Serbian media during the Yugoslav Wars (1991–95).

Öykü Gürpınar provides the last study; using a very detailed comparative analysis, she reveals the differences of approach in the France, Armenia and Turkey educational processes concerning a tragic event, the Armenian Genocide.

The second category is the synthesis of the most important lectures presented at the European Remembrance Symposium, 'Violence in 20th-century European history: commemorating, documenting, educating' in Brussels in 2017. From an always fresh and stimulating sociological perspective, Michel Wieviorka presents 'Theoretical issues of violence: defining violence and types of violence in the 20th century'. Combining different professional experiences, Arnold Suppan (Austria) and Andrzej Nowak (Poland) each try to show what unites and what differentiates the violence phenomenon in Western and Eastern Europe in the 20th century. North American sociologist Jeffrey K. Olick presents his own reflections concerning the multiple relationships between memory and violence, in order to arrive at the apparently paradoxical conclusion that 'memory itself' can be a form of violence'.

The structure of the current issue of the journal closely reflects the ENRS's values: a tolerant, pluralist and inclusive evaluation of the past that respects and protects the victims' dignity; encouraging thematic and methodological diversity; accepting contributions not only from researchers from member states of the ENRS but also from several other countries; and aiming as far as possible to present a gender balance among the proposals accepted for publication.

We would like to thank the whole team of the ENRS Institute, especially the project manager Zhanna Vrublevska, whose perseverance has kept the schedule on track.

Florin Abraham and Réka Földváyiné Kiss
Bucharest and Budapest, February 2018

I. ARTICLES

A CLUE TO WHAT IS MISSING: A PHENOMENOLOGY OF 20TH-CENTURY VIOLENCE

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ABSTRACT

In order to understand a century of violence, we need to recognise the 20th century as an epoch of fundamental loss. This was a century of genocides and one in which subjects were systematically abused. We could call this situation and the industrial production of death an absurd misunderstanding. Understanding or non-understanding: it is the knowledge of the facts and the examination of the faults that inform our impression of the last century. On this occasion fundamental questions of history have been picked out as central themes and a specific approach has been chosen for the historiography and memoria.

Introduction

The violence of the 20th century has reduced people to impotence and vulnerability. Anne Applebaum described a haunting scene in the context of the Gulags:

The prisoner who ran our barracks received me with the cry: Run and look under your pillow! My heart almost stopped: Did I finally receive my bread ration? I rushed to my bed and ripped off the pillow. Below were three letters from home [...] It had been six months since I last received anything. Spontaneously I felt boundless disappointment. Then the horror seized me. What had become of me when a piece of bread was more important than letters from my mother, my father, my children [...] I burst into tears (Applebaum 2003, 332).

What we read in these records is the logic of terror, the countless stories of the experience of violence in the age of totalitarianism. We understand this

power, if we consider it at the centre of our basic human situation, if one designates force as something that reduces a human being to ‘its minimum, the bare body, its nakedness, its trembling, its hunger and the sheer will to survive’ (Metz 2010, 283). It is hard to understand humans when we look at the traditions, the excesses and the absurd futility of power that comes from above, that is the upper echelons of society. So how can we best understand the 20th century and how can we best approach the stories of that century?

In other words, have we correctly understood the 20th century? With its extreme violence, its totalitarian excesses and all its destructive power? From a historical point of view, we may affirm this question. The great antagonisms of the past century, fascism and communism, are the subject of innumerable investigations. The years 1914, 1917, 1933 and 1939 – it is not only the data that shape historical consciousness but also the ciphers of violence. A trace of negativity runs through history: we speak of the ‘Great War’ or world civil wars between worldviews; with regard to the great catastrophes – the Holocaust, Holodomor, Auschwitz and Hiroshima – we know that at that time, there were breaks in history, in civilization, that could not be avoided. We have understood the history of the 20th century, in the sense of historical representation and memory of events, but have we understood history in a much deeper way? Different depths of understanding have to be integrated. There is a superficial understanding that relates to the existence of documents, texts and traditions. ‘Something’ is maintained in the historical archive and preserved for the historical curriculum, such as school education and public *memoria*. In contrast, there are the deeper efforts at understanding that cause greater difficulties. Something in the process of remembering history is beyond comprehension, somehow it does not want to fit into the historical transitions, something seems to be missing. From this point of view, the 20th century remains a permanent puzzle, considering the loss of the subjectivity of modernity, the self-negation of Europe, the loss that could be lamented on all human levels, linguistically, culturally, morally, politically and in relation to notions of civilization.

The following considerations, of course, are not simply aimed at a form of restoration. To summon morality, to regain reason, to revive the political subject after his supposed death – all this would be too simplistic. Understanding the century of violence entails a method of interpretation

that identifies the 20th century as a period of great loss. As is well known, there were many abuses and genocides, a loss of the world expressed in the possession and consumption of the subject. This specific loss of subject, the scheduled production of death, the reduction of generic members to their usefulness – all this may be called a great, grotesque misunderstanding. Understanding and unwillingness to understand, knowledge of what is happening and insight into its deficiency characterize our view of the past century. Because border issues of history are addressed here, a specific access to the *memoria* has to be chosen. With the help of a phenomenological framework, aspects are to be addressed that continue to occupy consciousness. In the present case, this phenomenology leads from ‘below’ to ‘above’ without artificially separating the levels. The understanding of history begins with the questions of the theory of history, with the descriptions of the world’s civil wars, which were conceived in the 19th century, and the fundamental problem of political religions. However, these efforts do not start by looking at the overall story of the event, but instead attention is directed downwards: to the levels of understanding that take place in the lower, inferior and small references that affect the common people. At this level, of course, the historical questions are just as great: the integration of evil, guilt and responsibility, understanding and unwillingness to embrace this inter-existential level (that is, in contrast to the tradition of Heidegger’s phenomenology), the value of which is to be shown for the *memoria*.

Broken story

How can you tell the story of the 20th century? Out of the multitude of problems that appear at first glance, one stands out that is only seemingly ‘theoretical’ in nature: how to turn a broken story into meaningful, coherent history. Which understanding of history, which leading categories, which expectations can be read together? The history of the 20th century is therefore a broken one, because in it the histories of human history were expressed, but it is also because it lost the long-term images of history and the certainties that bore them. Can this lost history be won back, can historical power be rekindled? Not in the sense that the future drafts of the past enable orienting patterns of action (Hölscher 2009, 212 ff.). Not in the positivist sense could the past be seamlessly transformed into the present and the future. The story is primarily possible only under the guidance of the negative, that is, the only way of making it meaningfully narratable. But even that only names a methodical formalism. The theoretical as well as a practical problem persist: that history is contested history, especially

the history of the 20th century. That it disintegrates into a wide variety of historical images, making it almost impossible to speak of or understand one integrated history. Historical images drift apart if they are subjected to a preference of their own, if the historically cultural meaningful relationships are divided into a collection of limited stories.

One way of countering this danger lies in the attempt to transfer history to a great third party: it was the guiding concepts of divine omnipotence, later of reason, that could maintain history in a unified context. This story was meaningful and in a certain way unquestionable. It was the great guarantors who promised a transcendental unity; a path that is blocked today for a variety of reasons. It is a story that not only implies unbroken continuity, but also looks upwards. A conception of history that, among other things, lacks the necessity of anthropological integration. Let us stay with this juxtaposition of 'above' and 'below'. Characteristic of transcendental history was the foundation of the historical in something that was supernatural.

In contrast, history 'from below' is considered an approach that understands history 'from above' as man-made. But this point of view is not free of problems: social problems, when different points of view no longer connect with each other, and temporal problems, when the present dominates the heart of the existential basic situation and takes absolute priority over the past. The problem refers to a 'missing link' between concrete experiences in human life and history that exists in a different, autonomous sphere. To put it simply: there is tension between internal and external perspectives and past and present orientations. These are historical issues that have been known for some time. They certainly cannot be excluded here, but they should be avoided if possible.

History, as it is understood here, is subject to hermeneutical reason, a philosophy which first and foremost addresses the fundamental question of an anthropological self-understanding: how a human world is possible, how we insert history into our understanding of the world, just as we as individuals express meaning through our ways of life. These include the sense criteria of everyday life: the question of guilt, sacrifice, responsibility, the existence and challenge of evil as well as the pursuit of non-violence. Some of these motifs, which characterize the historical consciousness of the 20th century in a particular way, are discussed below.

Anthropological symbols: suffering, evil and violence

What remains of the 20th century is to be described in simple terms: the countless deaths, the immeasurable suffering and, finally, the violent events that historical research reports in detail. What remains controversial is the interpersonal conflicts, the extent of any guilt, actions and acts, perpetration and involvement. Aspects of the basic human condition are known to have been thoroughly discussed and explored: the extent to which there are specific attitudes to the past – with the goal of catharsis, coping or repressing the fact that there are national or cultural peculiarities of dealing with history and that certain learning processes are ignited by such forms of remembering. However, it is always about an existential and a inter-existential dimension in which aspects of guilt and responsibility, perspectives of suffering and indulgence are addressed. It must be asked to what extent can the comprehensible desire to extract unambiguity from these anthropological aspects be satisfied. Therefore, two levels of historical consideration would have to be identified: the level of heroic and sacrificial discourse and a phenomenological level on which the transferability of a singular experience becomes ‘thematic’.

Talking about heroes and sacrifice marks the first, upper level of history. Tales about heroes were the focus of older historical cultures. They praised the founders of the state and its leaders, elevated historical figures and simply recounted the lofty mission of great men. This form of remembrance changed profoundly in the 20th century. The image of the hero faded, but also the concept of victim was subject to change. Among aspects of heroic remembrance such as disinterestedness, personal sacrifice, fearlessness and resilience, the victim stood for the specific experience of suffering. Suffering is, of course, an extremely broad concept: we are aware of momentary physical and psychological injuries, we endure permanent situations of injustice, we may be ready to make an active sacrifice or we may be forced to suffer helplessly. The memory of the historical suffering and the historical injuries are therefore never completely objective; they stand on the ground of the singular totality, a situation of finality and uniqueness. The strong difference between the two levels is a legacy of the 20th century. At the level of official remembrance, it is all about appropriate forms, representations, the who and the how of memory – but at the level of the existential experience there remains the reserve of an individual world experience that cannot simply be forced into official *memoria*.

On closer inspection, there are different levels of abstraction of the *memoria*. How can they be conveyed, to what extent do they convey meaning, enable or force learning? How does memory anchored in daily existence stand in relation to social groups, collective memory and scientific reflection? How can we combine these levels? How can they be brought together in a meaningful unity? Do these levels merge seamlessly or do they have their own validity, which makes politics with history so difficult to analyse (Reichel 1995, 11–21)? Undoubtedly, social and group memories have a character of obligation. Members of a community are bound together by special narratives and meaningful actions; they learn orientation by placing them in temporal relationships. A common image of history, quasi-sacred places of memory or rituals cultivate the social memory. Whether these ties go hand in hand with transfiguration or exaggeration, or whether they simply occupy a highly valued educational-policy space, is an open question. As a ‘medium of temporalization’ (Reichel 1995, 13), social memory opens up horizons of a we-consciousness, an anchoring in time. It can extend beyond its own time and bridge a wide variety of time relationships.

More complicated and controversial, however, is the question of how and with what goal should one turn to a past, which is connected with the deepest guilt and inflictions of violence and suffering. As you know, high expectations are ignited in the culture of remembrance. The past should not simply be visualized, but uncovered with all ruthlessness. A serious examination of the burden of the past is considered an enlightenment and educational ideal. Although it serves as a catharsis and a process of purification, the insights are still very painful. The way to truth and reconciliation led German memory past the criticism of it being thought’s final word (the so-called *Schlussstrich* debate). The future will only be clear, if we seriously face up to a bad past. This, of course, is not to be denied. An objection by Reinhart Koselleck is nevertheless to be considered that departs from the level of official memory policy (see Koselleck 2010, 241–54, 254–69). We recognize an anthropological ambivalence when we engage with the level of primary experience and allow the dignity of the individual experience of suffering. As a one-time reminder of their finality and their incompatibility, can these aspects be easily translated into learning processes? Is a successful step possible from a one-time reminder of schooling and lessons learned from history? Koselleck denies this possibility with good reason. These considerations are not directed against the necessity of enlightenment and memory, but against the instrumentalization of the

intrinsic value of suffering. A memory exercise does not work in your own experience. Self-experiences cannot be replaced or retrieved with habitual re-enactment. Koselleck marks a threshold here that identifies the signature of the 20th century to the same extent: we can recall the suffering of the past and illuminate the events, but we must, with equally good reasons, consider the inexplicability of a particular experience. This is a thought that turns a little against the zeitgeist of the *memoria*. Collective memories here remain in a twilight because they suggest something that creates a false image: that individual experiences can be integrated into a collective and thereby gain a higher level of validity. Collectives with shared memories, according to Koselleck, are a fallacy.

In other words, it is the dignity of one's own experience that needs to be preserved between memory and history. Of course, social conditions, linguistic, mental, religious or political apply to these primary experiences. There are parts of language and traditions that have always shaped each individual's own experience. However, they do not contradict the fundamental unrepeatability of self-experience. Because violent memories are 'not just stored in the brain, not just in memory: they capture the heart, kidneys, bile, intestine, all muscles and all nerves, and not just metaphorically speaking' (Koselleck 2010, 255). Literally experiences are burnt into the body and tie the bearer back to that experience. They disappear with death and escape unbridled mediation. This could well be described as the special legacy of the 20th century: below the level of top-level politics with memory, we recognize – in the lowest, vulnerable references – the unmanageable, nontransferable stubbornness of history in inter-existential relations. To speak of the memory of the 20th century's violence, we have to link a historical with a fundamental anthropological approach: if finite irretrievability, the uniqueness of an existential event, is overlooked, history loses an essential part of itself. Aspects of defencelessness and the powerlessness of the deceased are among the experiences that convey much more about the finite totality of the existential orientation space of history than any source can ever say. And the consequence of such a story would be nothing more than the realization that the story consists of primary sense situations that are not easily broken up into individual pieces.

One of the peculiarities of an inter-existentially mediated world is the question of how we can grasp moral criteria of responsibility, guilt and entanglement, not least how we can visualize the existence of evil within

the world. Even in this strongly moralized context, it is helpful to embed the historical aspects in factual and anthropological conditions. One of the greatest difficulties of remembering what happened in the age of totalitarianism is the fact that people were confronted with human abysses that were difficult or impossible to describe with language. The radical caesura associated with the horror of the Second World War is considered to be the low point of history. In the last phase of totalitarianism, as Hannah Arendt wrote in 1955, an absolute evil was revealed (Arendt 2002, 29–40). The attempt to understand failed in this confrontation with reality when we tried to approach things with conventional categories of reason. This was a shock that Hannah Arendt shared with those who faced the horrors of the past without reservation. The diagnosis of the age of totalitarianism was that in the radicality of the negative revelation another time had come: experiences of evil with a metaphysical quality and insights with the taste of bitter ashes (also on the aspect of the culture of remembrance, see Assmann 2013, 180 ff.). A lot has been written about this. The difficulty remains of how we can create a transition from the past to the present. The problem is that a language which suffices in pictorial and transcendental constructions looks down on the basic human situation from an exalted, metaphysical point of view. The opposite direction is the measure here: we can speak of evil when we visualize the authenticity of the factual situation. As well as the experiences of fear or guilt, there are inter-existential figures of meaning. We move – in the existential sense – within the ‘limits of the possibility of constituting fragile beings’ (Rentsch 1999, 165). Meaning and fulfilment are closely related to threat and danger; solidarity is a sign of possible failure and freedom in principle opens up the possibility of evil.

It is important to preserve this view of the factuality of the common world, if we refer to the problem of acting in a space of violence. Also with this ‘topic’ the conditions are not easy. The initial question was based on doubts and lacked an understanding of how the acts of violence in the sweep of the Second World War could ‘happen’. Arendt spoke of the banality of evil; others of ordinary men who appeared to be without scruples when executing extreme, excessive acts of violence. The mystery seized by psychology and sociology from different angles evidently lay in the transition from a situation of normality to the exceptional situation in which everything became possible. It creates an anthropological puzzle for which different answers become available. The obvious answer is also the supposedly simplest one: it is easier for the observers of what is happening away from the

events, both linguistically and emotionally, to assume that you are engaged in the violence of perversion, cynicism, brutality or illness. Violence is kept at a distance if you put the shock of the possible excesses of violence into a framework of interpretation that consists in nothing but indignation and lack of understanding. In contrast, modern source research shows that the background beliefs of the soldiers were time-typical framings – a frame, that consists of beliefs, ideologies and cultural meaning. So it was not so much psychological aberrations, morbidity and perversion that were at work as individual forces. It was the frame of reference of a time that made things seem ordinary, normal or necessary (Welzer, Neitzel and Gudehus 2011). Such findings, which remain controversial, equate to deep insecurity.

The paradoxical task of an impossible explication still exists, not only in view of dark pasts. How can violent acts be explained in areas of violence that occur in the past and present, in exceptional situations of war, or simply in very remote areas? In this respect, the events of the 20th century, in their mystery, are acute in the present. In other words, we cannot condemn the violence of the past century from a secure standpoint as something remote from us, but have to keep an eye on the ambivalences of violence. On the one hand, in our judgments, we can rely on moral certainties that categorically differentiate between right and wrong, violence and non-violence. On the other hand, we always have to visualize the shades and facets of violence in social fields. Twentieth-century violence is proof that violence and injury, anonymity and individuality, normality and singularity must be regarded as interwoven phenomena. The shock produced by the violence of totalitarianism was accompanied by a shock in social ontology: the capacity for killing has become differentiated. Injuring or killing someone is closely linked to an act of violence in which individual and collective forces must first be determined. This does not mean giving up individual accountability and overlooking the responsibility of the individual. But in the spaces of violence, fields of injury are divided, in which finer differences become visible, in which central and peripheral violence occurs. Structural violence goes hand in hand with the concrete violation of claims, rights and physical integrity.

The answer to the question of violence in the age of totalitarianism is, from the point of view of phenomenology, that the threatened and vulnerable individual finds his place in a social field ‘which is also a field of violence’ (Waldenfels 2000, 17). Responsibility and imputability also exist in this field, but beyond that there is a ‘diverse spectrum of irresolute perpetration

and complicity' (Waldenfels 2000, 18). In other words, totalitarianism has provided evidence that modern violence cannot be traced back to the interests and intentions of the agents alone, that violence does not go into polarization. The clear sense-figures of morality, selflessness and martyrdom fade. By contrast, during the violence of the 20th century, the mechanics and operative logic of violence took hold.

The 20th century: understanding and the denial of understanding

It is precisely this dimension – the denial of understanding – that makes the handling of history so difficult. The big question of whether we have understood the 20th century suggests that the most intensive efforts at understanding would be needed to bridge the gap between the centuries. But such efforts fail when they simply ignore the persistent distortions and irritations, biographical disruptions and individual dislocations, and ultimately also the changes in social values. There is silence in the face of sadness, shame in the face of factual guilt; there is a void in the face of loss of value. Out of this speechlessness, no 'lessons of history', whatever you associate with it, result. Mechanisms of the denial of understanding are ignited by such speechlessness, which can become a hermeneutic subject – an enigmatic topic, which has yet to be solved. Therefore, not understanding is not just a failed attempt, a mere failure, but it describes an attitude, a conscious attitude to a past: that which is not ours is not allowed to be ours. Historical hermeneutics touches on the very limits of historical understanding that were established in the 20th century and continue to exist today as curricular, pedagogical and social phenomena. A deliberate historical refusal to understand has its own dignity, reasons and motives. The contemporaneity of the 21st century is marked by a sense of unease about parts of its own past that are beyond comprehension. It is a lack of understanding that cannot be framed in a positive factual context. It lingers with every 'reconstruction' of what happened, through doubt, discomfort and dissonance. Something resistant that goes beyond the simplest history lessons (Hölscher 2009, 226 ff.).

Because at this point, it's not about the gap between the times that do not want to match, not just mentalities with specific breaks. That which is misunderstood has its own philosophical dignity. It illustrates the gap we must bridge in all our efforts to understand history in general. The intention to understand the violence of the 20th century is thus a 'case' for hermeneutics to the same extent as it is for history. After all, when in the past the

unreasonableness of an event, even when violent ‘madness’ and startling futility are revealed, the question remains how against this recognition horizons of expectation, hope and bravery can persist unscathed. From this point of view, history and hermeneutics are in a peculiar tension. It unites the idea that the experiences of history, no matter how disturbing, puzzling and remote, are directed to linguistic processing. The above-mentioned hermeneutics of non-understanding is also integrated into a linguistic framework: as a world-experience of human existence. The tension, of course, is that although we can reinterpret historical experiences, experiences of violence, of suffering using anthropological terms, human history is thus gripped in the polarity of friend and foe, domination and bondage, killing and dying, as Reinhart Koselleck wrote (Koselleck 2000, 97 f.). But the basic question of humanistic science remains: whether it simply picks up the rubble of history, looks at the flow of tradition, whether it simply responds to the predetermined story, or whether its task is not the unattainable interpretation of meaning that history demands from all understanding. In this context, Hans Georg Gadamer speaks of the superiority of what should be understood (Gadamer 2000, 115 ff.).

This turns the considerations at the same time to a difficult issue. As mentioned in the introduction, it is about conveying a perspective of the story from below with the supposedly ‘great story’, history in the context of great narratives, overarching structures. But how can the transition from the level of self-experiences and inter-existential forms to that larger context succeed? A particular difficulty has to be addressed: when things are oversimplified. Heidegger had famously tried to conquer the conditions of possible history through the existential analysis of human existence. It was a philosophically highly significant attempt to understand history ‘from below’ out of the temporality and limits of existence. But it led to a difficult anthropologization and at the same time moved into political semantics, which today appears hermetically sealed. Out of concern for their own existence, political imperatives were formed, which called for the assumption of a folkish inheritance, the readiness for death of a fated community. And even if one does not want to understand philosophical reflection as a political command, this definition of the analysis of existence testifies to the inherent violence of the time.

But the reflection of history from the analysis of existence is blocked for understandable reasons. The path we take in the future is based on other

assumptions. It is not on condition of a deathwish that the horizon of the historical becomes clearer – this was obviously Heidegger’s understanding. He analysed existence in the face of the individual death. But alone in the process of asking and merging we can come closer to the horizon in Gadamer’s sense. It is not the thinness of existence that establishes the conditions of possible history, but the realization that the times of history are, from the outset, interpersonal. The story is not due to one, single existence. The basic idea of an existential analysis, to obtain a knowledge from the self-interpretation of existence, only succeeds if one surrenders to the inter-existential question of the horizon of history. It is well known that the 20th century has raised a multitude of such questions that extend to the present day. One such moment will be discussed in the conclusion, which refers to the past and what is not perfect in the present: the moment of crisis.

The world in a state of crisis

The 20th century was one of extremes (Hobsbawm 1994), an epoch of the long shot, a time of humanitarian catastrophes. This violence has been examined from a historical perspective from all angles. Have we learned from history as was assumed in previous times? The overriding question we attach to history goes beyond the horizon of a century. It focuses on the overarching moments, the state of a crisis that is not reserved for a specific time. It draws attention to the state of permanent crises that existed in the early modern era and in all subsequent epochs. Their appearances and forms have changed. Of course it seems difficult to see what extent the crises of the present time directly lead back to the past and whether we should not look at the world as in a state of permanent crisis. This would, of course, be a miserable finding, but one that demands a theory of history. It is the polar tensions that seem to drive history forward with granite hardness. You have to look beyond the 20th century to be able to classify it. European history has become world history; from a philosophical point of view, European society has captured the entire history of the world over a long process. This turning point began in the 18th century; it began at the moment of self-empowerment of a bourgeoisie who wanted to free themselves from the confines of the absolutist state. This connection, which Reinhart Koselleck formulated in an ingenious way as early as 1959, cannot be misinterpreted (Koselleck 2013). It is not thought that the devaluation of morality and the denial of the violence of the 20th century owes its origin here. But that only in the environment of the Enlightenment could a motive unfold that could extend to all subsequent times.

Bourgeois society ‘created’ a world of experience with an open horizon, it arose from curiosity and will-power to self-knowledge – all strong motives. But this society had to break open an old world and mentally reoccupy a new one from within. The negation of the *ancien regime* created a new subject: humanity. This should reoccupy the future from the European point of view. It should reclaim history, guarantee progress and create unity. It had to fail in the sense that at the same time it achieved the release of morality. The demolition of the absolutist order of structure went hand in hand with the appeal to humanity. A utopian idea that should have an impact on tensions and extensive crises. The era of ideological wars was ushered in with this process: the 18th century led to the release of utopian modernity, which continued first in the ideological wars, later in the totalitarianisms of the 20th century. This idea is therefore important because it emphasizes the connection between utopian philosophy of history and revolutionary violence, between criticism and crisis – moments of history that reach into the present. The moment of tension is at the moment of release from a shell – the absolutist state failed because it had to make its policy without considering the moral interests of its citizens. The emancipation of the bourgeoisie, however, led to ideological conflicts that point to an anthropological aspect: morality contains an inherent difference (Koselleck 2013, 5). The inherent gradient of morality is the moment that is anthropologically questionable, and at the same time it acts as an enduring motive in the history of violence.

It is important to emphasize here that the specific perspective of history that Koselleck represents cannot be attributed to a defining and thus instrumental motive. The conceivable question as to whether, by way of example, the French Revolution ‘produced’ totalitarianism leads us straight past the basic idea that Koselleck followed. Rather, it is the view that the formal basic structures of history is guiding our perception here: starting from the perspective of acting and suffering people, their experiences and expectations, categorical distinctions can be singled out, which we recognize again as friendship and enmity, bondage and historical domination. They are, as it were, anthropological presuppositions that condition, facilitate and drive forward the long-term formal structures of history. The 20th century, like all history, is marked by a surplus. When limits to the passionate opposition of a friend or foe become sharper, or ‘when inescapable death is outbid by death or self-sacrifice, when the relation between above and below leads to enslavement and irretrievable humiliation, or to exploitation and class struggle’ (Koselleck 1989, p 660), only then is the irretrievable difference

between past reality and language revealed. At this point it shows how it is possible to tell the story of the 20th century as a story from below while not ignoring the great unresolved questions of history. The diversity of the experiences of violence and the variety of broken perceptions cannot initially be captured in a great overarching narrative. On the contrary, historiography asks for the repressed, secret, forgotten and suppressed experiences that, as specific stories of suffering, will always remain imperfect.

Starting from the concrete space of experience and suffering, we experience moments of permanence in the repetitive structures of history that open our view to political action. What makes up this view is well known and must always be repeated: the anti-totalitarian thrust aimed at the philosophy of history with a totalitarian claim. The idea of 'making history' has made a fatal career as a totalitarian idea as well as an impulse for concrete action, which we can only reconstruct. It was the ideological constructions of history that conditioned the absurd project of social and man-making beyond any human measure. In other words, in an epoch when people no longer regarded God as the supreme creator, mankind itself became the creator and leader of history, but also the destroyer, not only in totalitarian politics. These totalitarian conditions point, as it were, to the decline of politics, to the collapse of the moral as well as to the concrete worlds of experience, for which language always succeeds in creating subsequent constructions. Therefore, results are derived from history that are viewed sceptically. It is difficult to 'learn' from history – if we understand history as concrete experience in which the power of language cannot fully emerge, if we understand history as an object from whose structures we should derive guidelines for political action. The figure of the *Historia Magistra Vitae* has lost its radiance for the historian. Nothing can be learned from history, but from the sets of experience, the unique words, deeds and events that give us a clear view of the conditions of possible history. And perhaps it is just that scepticism still has its validity as a drive and a critical motive today.

Summary

Have we understood the 20th century? In its extreme violence, with its totalitarian excesses, with all its destructive power? From a historical point of view, we may affirm this question. The great antagonisms of the past century, fascism and communism, are the subject of innumerable investigations. As we have seen, the years 1914, 1917, 1933 and 1939 have become the ciphers of violence. The phenomenology of violence in the 20th century

has moved in this case from ‘above’ to ‘below’. (1) The understanding of history begins first with the great questions of the theory of history; (2) the descriptions of the global civil wars that were already conceived in the 19th century and (3) the basic problem of political religions. (4) However, the reflections gradually direct attention to the levels of understanding that take place in the lower, inferior and small references in a common world, on an inter-existential level, which is far removed from the abstract views of any structural theory. At this level, too, the questions of history are large: aspects of the integration of evil, guilt and responsibility, understanding and unwillingness to embrace this inter-existential level, the value of which for the *memoria* is to be shown.

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'I'LL SHOOT EVERY PRIEST': VIOLENCE AGAINST THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN WARSAW DURING THE OCCUPATION, ACCORDING TO THE TESTIMONIES GIVEN TO THE CENTRAL COMMISSION FOR THE INVESTIGATION OF GERMAN CRIMES IN POLAND

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ABSTRACT

This article deals with the German repression of the Catholic Church in occupied Warsaw from 1939 to 1945, derived from the testimonies of victims and witnesses of Nazi terror recorded by the Central Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland. The text seeks to show the many types of violence employed as well as the vast number of victims they caused – the church hierarchy, priests, nuns and the laity. This history of repression follows from initial arrest of priests in October 1939 to the culmination of German violence against the Church during the Warsaw Uprising.

Witnesses of totalitarianism

‘At the start of 1940 we confessed in secret, since the Germans prohibited confession and communion. Arrested priests heard confession, whereas Holy Communion was given in such a manner that a priest brought [...] hosts and one of the female prisoners called Mynka brought them upstairs where priests administered them. The prison chapel was only used for mass in March and April; afterwards, the Germans prohibited mass and, after some time, turned it into a room for research,¹ recalled official Janina Kozak, who was arrested by the Gestapo during the first months of the war and imprisoned at Pawiak prison.

‘There were approximately 50 of us in a room sized 2½ by 5 metres. The SS-men placed their machine guns in front of its doors after which two of them began to throw hand grenades at the people pressed inside and then began shooting. All of them fell to the ground [...]. Lured by groans one of the SS-men ran into the room and began to kill off those still living with a revolver. He walked over the corpses, stood with his feet on my back and, seeing that I was still alive, shouted: “Der ist noch zu frisch” [He is still too fresh]. He shot at my head, but missed. The bullet grazed an ear, blood poured out, and the German, without checking whether I was alive, stopped aiming at me [...]. I heard from people living near our home that one of the SS-men replied, in response to a question on what happened to the priests: “Ich werde jeden Priester niederschießen” [I’ll shoot each priest]. This entire campaign appeared to only be intended to destroy the civilian population because there could not be any motives of a military nature,’² recalled Fr. Aleksander Kisiel, who survived a German massacre in August 1944 at a Jesuit seminary at ul. Rakowiecka.

A resident of Powiśle Czerniakowskie in Warsaw, Kazimierz Ceglarek, recalled an episode related to the Warsaw Uprising: ‘I don’t remember the date, but it was after the surrender of Śródmieście, in the ruins of a factory at ul. Solec 53, we removed the body of a priest hung in his robe with an AK armband from among steel rods in the destroyed building (I do not know the surname, but recognized him as a chaplain-insurgent from our neighbourhood).’³

Janina Kozak was able to receive Holy Sacraments, since hundreds of arrested Polish Catholic priests passed through Pawiak prison during the war and exercised their priestly ministry even in conditions of extreme oppression. At a Jesuit seminary, SS-men murdered sixteen fellow seminarians of Fr. Aleksander Kisiel on the second day of the uprising. Pallottine Józef Stanek, one of many of the clergy who served the underground as a chaplain for the Home Army, was hung. During a mass in Warsaw on 13 June 1999, Pope John Paul II declared him a blessed of the Catholic Church among a group of 108 Polish martyrs murdered during the Second World War.

Accounts of terror

Metanarrations, statistics and lists of martyrs mean more when combined with individual stories of specific persons, particularly if told by witnesses and participants of events (Kozłowski and Stefanek 2017, 18). There is an

invaluable and interesting account of violence employed by the totalitarian Third Reich against Polish citizens during the Second World War in the files of the Central Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland. Since 1945 the Central Commission has collected materials documenting German crimes committed during the war.⁴ A key resource for studying the history of the occupation was thereby created. I wish to cite records of witness testimonies from this vast collection, the source material on which I will base this article. They constituted part of the evidence in cases brought against Nazi criminals. These are minutes compiled by the Central Commission, its regional delegations and the Supreme National Tribunal, that worked together with the commission before which these trials were held.⁵

The long-standing discussion on the credibility of personal accounts does not negate the immense investigative value of these materials (Madajczyk 2017, 28). Investigators are sensitive to the fact that testimony was given at a time when the foundation for the communist system was being laid in Poland. The political situation may have induced some witnesses to conceal certain information for fear of repression by the communist apparatus of coercion. On the one hand, reservations are raised over the extent to which witnesses wanted to or were able to speak about their traumatic experiences. On the other hand, the interviewed persons were direct witnesses or participants of the events they recount and the submission of testimony immediately after the war had the advantage that the facts were still fresh in their memory (Gumkowski 1962, 8).

In summing up the above, we feel that it may prove interesting to view the violence of the Germans against the Catholic Church during the occupation from the perspective of the Central Commission files. Although an attempt may be made on the basis of numerous testimonies collected by the commission to reconstruct the image of Polish religiosity during the occupation, we will focus on the course and forms of German repression of the Church as well as on the martyrology of the Catholic clergy⁶ and the laity. We will focus on the Roman Catholic Church, its clergy and laity if sources show that oppression took place owing to religion. The territorial scope of our studies is limited to Warsaw and the surroundings linked to the capital through their common wartime fate as the 'Warsaw ring of death', for example, Palmiry or Pruszków with Dulag 121. The story of occupied Warsaw comprised a key position in work of the Central Commission (Madajczyk 2017, 31). It focuses on the case files of Ludwig Fischer, the

head of the Warsaw District of the General Government. I am interested in the entire period of the German occupation of the Polish capital from 30 September 1939 to 17 January 1945 with particular emphasis on the most important event during those years – the Warsaw Uprising. It can be stated from the Church's perspective that this article concerns not only the Warsaw archdiocese, but also the area surrounding the city together with selected parishes close to Warsaw at that time. These include, for example, the suburban Warsaw parish of St Thérèse of the Child Jesus that is linked to the 1944 Warsaw Uprising.

It is also worth noting that testimony collected by the Central Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland may constitute a source to study repression not only of the Catholic Church and its faithful, but also the persecution of other Christian denominations in Poland such as the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession, as well as the largest non-Christian religion of the second Republic, Judaism.

Occupation

Pre-war Warsaw was a city with a variety of traditions. It was not only a centre of Polish statehood and a focal point for the Jewish population in Europe, but also a key location in the life of the Catholic Church during the Second Republic. The city population on 1 January 1939, according to City Hall's estimates, numbered 1,289,500 residents. The same source, the city administration, stated that 67 per cent of residents were of the Catholic faith (Warsaw ... 1939, 15).⁷ Obviously, the start of the war precipitated various human migrations or movements. Historians estimate that 1,275,000 people resided in Warsaw when the occupation began. Undoubtedly, more than one-half of them were Catholics. At the start of the Uprising the population was approximately 1,100,000 (Szarota 1988, 67–74), whereby the proportion of Catholics residing in Warsaw increased due to the Holocaust of the Jews. These statistics show that while Catholics were the predominant inhabitants of the Polish capital, Warsaw also included a large number of other creeds and religions in its demographic structure. A look at the organizational structure of the Church also shows the significance of Warsaw for Polish Catholicism. It included the Metropolitan Curia with all its offices, the Apostolic Nuncio, the seat of various institutes or associations (for example, the Higher Religious Culture Institute, the Catholic Action Institute, the Marian Guild and the Catholic Union 'Caritas'), the Archdiocese Museum and Archive, a seminary, as well as a Theology Department

at Warsaw University (Wysocki 1982, 274). The city had 36 parishes, 24 subsidiary and seminary churches, as well as 104 chapels, and 12 men's and 18 women's religious orders had their monasteries in Warsaw. At local seminaries, 135 graduates prepared for the priesthood. Immediately before the war the entire archdiocese had 721 chaplains and 222 monastic priests (Compendium ... 1939), most of whom served in Warsaw. The archdiocese was headed by Archbishop Stanisław Gall and after his death in 1942 by Bishop Antoni Szlagowski.⁸

In testimonies submitted before the Central Commission I found no information on German violence against the Church during the defence of Warsaw in September 1939. Witnesses, even the clergy, did not mention any bombing of churches in the capital, victims or resulting destruction. Warsaw capitulated on 28 September 1939. Official entry of the Wehrmacht into the city took place on 1 October, even though German forces actually appeared in the city a day earlier. The initial arrests among the clergy in Warsaw on 3 October 1939 were a foretaste of imminent terror. In accordance with prevailing practice, the German security apparatus took hostages from among the clergy in the first days after occupying a given city (Fijałkowski 1983, 74). From 100 to 300 priests fell victim to round-ups in the capital. They were incarcerated at Pawiak, the Mokotów prison, and the detention centre at Daniłowiczowska. Those arrested faced no specific charges, were not questioned and for the most part were released within several weeks. On releasing the priests, the occupiers instructed them that they needed to be loyal to the new order, as stated in a speech by Helmut Otto, then Reich Commissar for the city of Warsaw: 'Leave the care of the motherland to the German authorities, who will account for it before God, and you, chaplains, only take care of your good God and ecumenical affairs.'⁹

Adolf Hitler issued a decree on 12 October 1939, which was binding from 26 October 1939, in which he established the General Government headed by Hans Frank. Kraków was its administrative capital, whereas Warsaw was reduced only to the level of the seat of the occupation authorities of one of several General Government (GG) districts. Ludwig Fischer was governor of the Warsaw district during the entire occupation. GG authorities launched a certain Church policy expressed in the contemptuous motto of Governor Frank: 'if Catholicism is a poison, then Poles should have this poison' (Piotrowski 1956, 459). The Germans sought to mould the Catholic Church in the GG into an obedient tool to serve their political and economic

aims. Priests were to influence the faithful by calling on them to adopt a loyal position towards occupying authorities or to encourage them to work for the Reich. In exchange, mass and other services could be held together with other Holy Sacraments. Monasteries and seminaries were not closed. Religion could also be taught in schools. However, realizing that Catholicism was one of the historic foundations of Polish identity, the Germans embarked on a systematic weakening of the Church and religion. In the first stage they sought to extinguish Polish identity and leave 'the final solution to the Church issue' until after the war.

A series of accounts by clerics¹⁰ well illustrates German repression of an administrative nature whereby the Warsaw Church met during the occupation until the start of the Uprising. From the perspective of the Polish clergy, it was quite extensive and intense. Religious freedom was severely curtailed. It was prohibited to conduct processions outside a church, to hold funerals or to use church bells (which, in time, were requisitioned). Certain religious songs, for example, 'Dear Mother', could not be sung because their melody recalled 'God, Save Poland'. An order was given to remove the words 'Mother of God, Queen of the Polish Crown' from liturgical prayers and to generally delete everything that recalled Polish identity from songbooks, missals and other church books, including the mention of Holy Patrons of Poland. Administratively, the celebration of holidays was transferred from workdays to Sundays. Holidays of a patriotic nature, such as on 3 May, 15 August and even 10 October in gratitude for the Victory in Chocim, were banned.

All religious associations of a public nature were dissolved and their assets confiscated. All Marian Guilds, for example, were liquidated in this manner. A general prohibition of the publication of religious texts was issued, while printing and binding equipment was confiscated. Monasteries and seminaries were barred from accepting new members. Studies for theological academic institutions were forbidden. All personnel files on chaplains and clerics were taken from the Warsaw Metropolitan Curia for the surveillance of the clergy.

A racial policy contrary to the usual principles of the Catholic Church was introduced, which limited religious services. Polish priests could not administer to either Germans or the *Volksdeutsche* (German origin). A ban was imposed on adjudicating all cases in an archbishop marital court in which at least one of the parties had German nationality. The authorities removed all Poles from the masses for Catholic soldiers, even if only several German soldiers

were present. The acceptance of Protestants into the Catholic Church was prohibited. It was also prohibited to baptise persons of Jewish origin and harsh penalties were imposed for such a breach. The Warsaw Curia was not allowed to correspond on church matters with diocese members residing in territories annexed to the Reich.¹¹ An order was given to priests to use the pulpit to encourage the Polish population to leave for work in Germany.

According to priests recounting the above restrictions, the Warsaw District authorities issued orders on Church affairs either through the Metropolitan Curia or directly to parishes or monasteries. Fr. Professor Zygmunt Kozubski, acting as a plenipotentiary for the Warsaw Archbishop for matters relating to public authorities, recalled a meeting with GG functionaries: 'The behaviour of German officials towards me as a representative of the clerical leadership was always impolite, frequently brutal and combined with threats.'¹² The Germans were able to justify their arbitrary actions towards Polish Catholicism as it was legally vulnerable, since the concordat concluded between the Holy See and the Second Republic, in the view of the Nazis, ceased to bind due to the absence of one of its parties, the Polish state (Łażewski 2013, 293).

Repression

The above-noted imprisonment of the clergy at the start of the occupation in Warsaw was carried out as a deterrent, albeit somewhat chaotically. After a certain time nearly all priests were released. Arrests, which commenced in late autumn 1939, were more systematic and related to the extermination efforts conducted by the Germans. Releases were increasingly rare. Repression could be grouped in the following manner due to its reasons and purposes: efforts to liquidate the Polish intelligentsia, punishment for anti-German activity, reprisals and acts as deterrents (Sziling 1988, 190). The Central Commission's accounts provide a highly diverse picture of these events. Many accounts show a certain moment or element of such repression. Some of the witnesses were arrested, others saw colleagues imprisoned and one witness recalls a well-known priest who was murdered. Some witnessed the repression of people who they did not personally know. After the war, Czesław Rychlik, an electrical technician working in the complex of Parliament buildings next to where executions were held, recalled: 'In the winter of 1940, I saw, among others, how a nun was shot in the Parliament garden. She was wearing her habit. It could not be seen from under the hood on her head whether she was an old or young woman.'¹³ I will recreate a sense of this period of oppression from various excerpts.

Arrests of clergy that began in November 1939 were part of the campaign to destroy the Polish intelligentsia. Many priests involved in political or social organizations before the war or who worked in education were imprisoned. In Warsaw, for example, Fr. Professor Franciszek Roslaniec, an outstanding Bible specialist and dean of the Catholic Theology Department at Warsaw University, was arrested.¹⁴ Some chaplains, after being incarcerated at Pawiak, were murdered during mass executions in Palmiry outside Warsaw. In 1940, this fate, among others, befell Fr. Prefect Jan Krawczyk, a doctor of theology and parish priest in Wilanów; Fr. Marceł Nowakowski, priest at the Holy Saviour parish in Warsaw and pre-war parliamentary deputy; and Fr. Zygmunt Sajna, parish priest in Góra Kalwarii, who was tortured at Pawiak.¹⁵

Pawiak was the primary site in Warsaw where the imprisoned clergy, practising faithful and non-Catholics experienced violence inflicted by the occupier. After its takeover by the German Security Police and Security Service of the District of Warsaw, Pawiak became the largest political prison in occupied Poland. The Gestapo banned official religious practices and persons sentenced to death were denied last rites. The prison chapel was converted into a room to torture detainees. Religious life went underground, as recounted by Janina Kozak, who was cited in the first paragraph of this article. There were, however, cynical attempts to exploit the religiosity of prisoners on the part of the Gestapo. Fr. Stanisław Mystkowski, himself imprisoned for nine months at Pawiak, faced a situation when a German official approached a barely alive beaten-up member of the resistance movement and, falsely claiming to be a Catholic priest, encouraged him to 'confess'. When he began to ask about political and non-spiritual matters, the battered Pole realized that this was a ruse.¹⁶

The prison at ul. Dzielna was an execution ground for many clerics. Warsaw University Professor Mieczysław Michałowicz recalled:

Immediately upon being brought to Pawiak, we heard a beating in the cellars. Fr. Archutowski was pummelled for being a priest. Cellmates expressed sympathy when he was finally thrown back into the cell. Then, an SS-man brought everyone out into the corridor and ordered us to jump up and down like a frog. Fr. Archutowski's robe was taken off and put on the Jew, Bąbel, and prisoners were ordered to kiss his hand.¹⁷

The theme of torture, beating, kicking, degradation and inhuman interrogation is reiterated in numerous accounts. German functionaries, at times merciless, were also capable of showing a different face, that of corruption. Fr. Jan Rzymelka, priest at the Holy Cross parish in Warsaw and previously a co-worker of Wojciech Korfanty in the elections in Upper Silesia was sought by the Gestapo. Germans were bribed with 19,000 zloty and the priest was released after a two-day investigation. In reality, this did not at all mean that the Gestapo was no longer interested in such a person: Fr. Rzymelka was arrested nine months later and imprisoned at Pawiak.¹⁸

A characteristic issue, as is evident from the testimonies, was the German hatred for male monastic orders. Arrests were systematically made at monasteries, which nearly annihilated several of them from Warsaw through deportations to concentration camps. Salesians, Capuchins and Vincentians (the Congregation of the Missionary or Lazarists) were particularly persecuted. The activity of monks who remained in the city was constantly being restricted and a considerable part of their property was requisitioned. Pijar Augustyn Mańkowski particularly recalled the nighttime interrogations at Pawiak: 'I was not asked about anything at all during this questioning, but directly told that I was hostile towards the German nation and that I taught youth and preached in this spirit.'¹⁹ In 1941 all Capuchins at the seminary at ul. Miodowa were arrested. Most of them were shipped to the KL Auschwitz concentration camp.²⁰ On 7 February 1944 the Germans arrested all priests and brothers at houses of the Congregation of the Missionary at Krakowskie Przedmieście and Salesian priests at ul. Lipowa. The imprisoned Salesian priest Józef Oleksy found that: 'since the Germans did not find anything that could incriminate us politically, I have the impression that the entire campaign was aimed at destroying the clergy.'²¹ After an intervention by Bishop Szlagowski several fathers and brothers from both monasteries were released over time, yet most clergymen were transported to concentration camps in Gross-Rosen and Sachsenhausen where many lost their lives.

Students over the age of sixteen at the Salesian handicrafts school shared the fate of the teachers who were arrested and deported. There were no mass arrests among Warsaw Jesuits, but the Germans confiscated printing equipment with which the esteemed socio-cultural periodical *Przegląd Pomoczący* was published. The previously mentioned Fr. Aleksander Kisiel summarized church policy of the occupier during that time: 'I have the

impression that in their political acts, the Germans wanted to create the appearance of a certain religious freedom that actually did not exist. We lived in a state of relentless terror.²²

During the occupation, the Germans also had one more tool for violence: propaganda. It had a dual form – on the one hand, it sowed hatred towards the Church, yet, on the other hand, it sought to exploit the Church for its own purposes. As we have seen priests were ordered to use the pulpit to encourage people to leave for work in the Reich, and they were also ordered use their position to appease the public mood. With the worsening military situation on the Eastern front, the Nazis sought to win over the Catholic clergy through anti-communist slogans. In 1943 Governor Fischer proposed that Bishop Szlagowski issue a pastoral letter against Bolshevism. He also pressured priests to publicly denounce the killing of Germans by the resistance movement. Bishop Szlagowski did not fall prey to vague promises of improving the plight of Poles and refused to meet the occupier's demands.²³ The disconsolate Fischer stated that the Warsaw Church – as with the Kraków Church under the guidance of Archbishop Adam Stefan Sapieha – was conducting an opportunistic policy in relation to the wishes of the German authorities. Also, lower-ranking officials called on priests with similar propositions. Pressed to hold an anti-Bolshevik rally, Fr. Chrościcki skilfully responded 'that he does not engage in politics'; after all, since the start of the occupation, German authorities had demanded that the Church did not engage in politics.²⁴

Tragic Uprising

The pinnacle of German violence against the Church was during the Warsaw Uprising (1 August–2 October 1944). The Warsaw Church suffered its greatest casualties at that time (Jacewicz and Woś 1977, 345). Most testimonies submitted to the Central Commission with regard to the persecution of the Church deals with the Uprising. In contrast to many episodes in the years before the occupation, specific events during the time of the 1944 Uprising are simultaneously described in the records of numerous witnesses. Violence at this time was bloodier and had more faces. The clergy and faithful perished in planned massacres in neighbourhoods and through 'spontaneous executions' against the walls of bombed churches. As Home Army chaplains, priests were killed during massacres while attending the wounded, who they did not want to leave behind while serving on the front line, or during the murder of entire monastic communities. Compared with the clergy, both

before and during the Uprising, the nuns were the most repressed group and sacrificed the largest number of people.

The first large-scale massacre of the clergy took place on the second day of the Uprising at the Jesuit monastery at ul. Rakowiecka in Mokotów. An SS-unit arriving at the building accused the clergy of shooting at the German soldiers. There is no evidence to support this accusation. SS-men took away the head of the monastery, Fr. Edward Kosibowicz, allegedly to elicit further explanations. He was shot in the head at Pole Mokotowskie. The remaining Jesuits and lay people who hid in the monastery were looted and locked in the cellar. They were then fired on by machine guns and then a shower of grenades killed off the wounded. Approximately forty people, including eight fathers and eight brothers of the Society of Jesus, were murdered in the monastery, whereas fourteen people, mostly the wounded, managed to survive. After the execution, the Germans plundered and set the monastery on fire.²⁵

A massacre of residents in the borough of Wola took place at the start of the Warsaw Uprising. Its victims included Redemptorists from the monastery at ul. Karolkowa. Units of Heinz Reinefarth seized this area on 6 August 1944. The Germans then brought more than twenty Redemptorists to the Kirchmayer and Marczewski Factory at ul. Wolska 79/81 and murdered them one by one with shots to the rear of the head. Several other seminary residents also perished or disappeared without a trace during that time. The Wola massacre took the lives of thirty Redemptorists (fifteen fathers, nine coadjutor brothers, five clerics and one novice cleric).²⁶ Macabre events also took place in other parts of the borough. The chaplain of Wola Hospital, Fr. Kazimierz Ciecierski, was shot,²⁷ seven serving Benedictine nuns were murdered at the St Lazarus Hospital²⁸ and Fr. Tadeusz Jachimowski, chief chaplain of the Home Army,²⁹ was executed in unclear circumstances. In turn, Fr. Mieczysław Krygier, parish priest at St Lawrence's Church, was killed at the base of the altar during a Holy Mass that he was officiating.³⁰ Fr. Bernard Filipiuk, who survived a mass execution at ul. Górczewska 32 without even being wounded, had more luck.³¹ Also spared was Bishop Karol Niemira, who lived in Warsaw during the war after being expelled from his diocese in Pińsk. The Germans nevertheless beat him and sent him to forced labour.³²

During the Ochota massacre, several priests were murdered by units of the Russian Liberation Army who were collaborating with the Germans. They included the outstanding logician, Fr. Jan Salamucha, chaplain of

the Ochota defenders, who refused to withdraw with the insurgents and stayed with the wounded.³³ In Śródmieście, Fr. Stanisław Trzeciak, parish priest at St Anthony's Church, who was well known for his civic activities, was shot.³⁴ In Żoliborz, Fr. Hieronim Brzozowski went pleaded with the Germans to halt a massacre of the population. The soldiers ceased firing and released the civilians, but after a certain time they murdered the priest.³⁵ Four priests, thirty-five nuns and approximately a thousand laymen were killed during battles in the Old Town following the bombardment of the Convent Church.³⁶ In Powiśle, the Dominican priest Michał Czartoryski, who gave spiritually support to the wounded as they died, was shot during a field-hospital massacre.³⁷ During the pacification of Czerniakow, SS-men hung the Pallotine priest Józef Stanek, mentioned at the beginning of this article, after taking him prisoner.³⁸ It is claimed that twenty-one priests were killed during the Uprising, according to probably incomplete data, not including monastic chaplains (Jacewicz and Woś 1977, 345).

The cessation of fighting did not signify the end of the losses inflicted on the Warsaw Church. After the Uprising, the Germans conducted a campaign of planned destruction and burnt the city. Most historic churches in the capital were destroyed, including St John's Archcathedral, which was blown up. Libraries and church vaults were looted, particularly of artworks and valuable liturgical objects. The destruction of the material assets of Polish and Catholic culture in the autumn of 1944 was continuation of German actions, which had commenced in 1939, to steal and confiscate Church property.³⁹

Balance sheet

An important element of contemporary historiography is a look at 'the brief 20th century' (1914/1918–1989/1991) through the prism of mass violence and suffering. The Central Commission files are a good source for such a perspective. We find evidence in the analysed material of the correctness of certain conclusions drawn through such a methodological approach. We see focused and strategic planning and various means of coercion: the state machinery of the Third Reich fought the Church forcefully over the course of more than five years. The vast majority of the murdered clergy or laity were civilians who were not taking part in armed struggle. Methods of killing and inflicted suffering were conducted on an industrial scale, having maximum effectiveness as its purpose, for example, through deportation to concentration camps. The Nazis idealized violence, thus Catholics along with other Poles had to endure a legitimized form of terror justified by racist

ideology. This entire evil that the Church suffered, particularly during the Warsaw Uprising, was subject to trivialization.

The files show that the Germans applied the same methods of repression and extermination to both the clergy and the remainder of society in Warsaw: arrests, executions and deportations. Complex and overlapping causes for the persecution of the clergy are evident; they were not only clergy but also had Polish nationality or were members of the national elite. The clergy was repressed for its faith and that the Nazi terror apparatus had a predilection towards the Catholic clergy for ideological reasons. Another element of the Third Reich's systemic anti-Catholic policy and repression of the Church was an attack on Polish nationality. Everyone suffered: the hierarchy, the diocesan clergy, members of monasteries and the laity. Intense persecution of male monastic orders has already been noted, but little can be gleaned from Commission files on repression levelled against convents. The testimonies show us an unimaginable series of coercive measures employed by the occupying Germans; they were of an administrative, ideological and primarily physical nature. Materials show that the Gestapo oppressed the Catholic Church the most until August 1944, whereas the SS assumed this role during the Uprising. It is also worth noting that witnesses in their testimonies on the Church very seldom speak of its involvement in the resistance movement. Therefore, other sources must be sought to study the reprisal aspect of anti-German activity.

The fate of the Church in occupied Warsaw and the tragic balance sheet of losses show the strong imprint of Nazism in the physiognomy of Polish Catholicism and the entire nation. However, the survival of the Church despite this oppression brings a universal message of hope.

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Karol Kalinowski is a graduate of the History Institute at Warsaw University (2013). From 2011 to 2016 he worked at the John Paul II and Primate Wyszyński Museum in Warsaw, where he was secretary of a team working on its exhibitions. Since 2016 he has worked in the Programme Section of the Witold Pilecki Centre for Totalitarian Studies in Warsaw, where he co-produces the website 'Records of Terror'. Karol Kalinowski is a participant of the doctoral seminar of Prof. Paweł Skibiński. He also writes for the monthly W Sieci Historii [In the history network]. His academic interests focus on the history of the Church in the 19th and 20th centuries.

ENDNOTES

- 1 National Remembrance Institute (hereafter: IPN) GK case no. 196/63: Trial of Ludwig Fischer, vol. V, 78–79 (testimony of Janina Kozak).
- 2 IPN GK case no. 196/67: Files in the indictment of Ludwig Fischer and others, vol. XIII–XIV, 225–27 (testimony of Fr. Aleksander Kisiel).
- 3 IPN GK case no. 182/59: Investigative materials on German crimes committed during the Warsaw Uprising in Mokotów, GISZ and at Aleja Szucha 12/14. Minutes from witness testimony, reports from on-site inspections, correspondence, 177 (testimony of Kazimierz Ceglarek).
- 4 Due to the efforts of the Witold Pilecki Centre for Totalitarian Studies, files of the Central Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland are available online on the portal 'Records of Terror' (<http://www.zapisyterroru.pl>). The collection presently numbers nearly 3,500 accounts given before the Central Commission and is constantly growing. Testimony is published on the portal in two language versions – Polish and English.
- 5 Presently, all of these archives combined into a single resource are available at the National Remembrance Institute (case numbers starting from IPN GK).
- 6 Interestingly, the classic five volume work on this subject called *Martyrology of the Polish Roman Catholic clergy under Nazi occupation 1939–1945* authored by Frs. Wiktor Jacewicz and Jan Woś did not utilize archival resources from the Central Commission for the Investigation of German Crimes in Poland. This may be explained by the fact that this work appeared in the 1970s during a time of conflict between the Catholic Church and the communist state of which the Central Commission was formally a part.
- 7 Data for 1931, whereby subsequent years of the Second Republic did not clearly change the proportion of denominations. In statistics for 1938, the Archbishop Curia in Warsaw counted 639,464 Roman Catholics in the city. Another 105,500 persons who resided in parishes, according to church structure in the deanery outside Warsaw, yet within city limits, should be added to this number. This concerns, for example, parishes in Bielany or Okęcie (Compendium ... 1939).
- 8 The long-standing Warsaw ordinary, Cardinal Aleksander Kakowski, died in 1938 and his position was not filled on the outbreak of the war. Archbishop Gall headed the archdiocese as a vicar capitular and was appointed an apostolic administrator in 1940 by Pope Pius XII. Bishop Szlagowski headed the archdiocese as a vicar capitular.
- 9 IPN GK case no. 196/72: Minutes of the Main Trial in the form of a stenogram (transcript of the court proceedings) in the case of Ludwig Fischer and others dated 17, 18 and 19 December 1946, vol. II, 274 (testimony of Fr. Stanisław Mystkowski).
- 10 IPN GK case no. 196/67: Files in the indictment of Ludwig Fischer and others, vol. XIII–XIV, 209–10 (testimony of Fr. Julian Chrościcki), 219–20 (testimony of Fr. Jan Paszyna), 223–24 (testimony of Fr. Aleksander Kisiel), 238–40 (testimony of Fr. Zygmunt Kozubski) and from the IPN GK case no. 196/72: Minutes of the Main Trial in the form of a stenogram in the case of Ludwig Fischer and others dated 17, 18 and 19 December 1946, vol. II, 276–77 (testimony of Fr. Stanisław Mystkowski).
- 11 A part of Warsaw Archdiocese territory in the region of Kutno and Sochaczew fell within the zone of the Reich zone Warta lands and within the area of Nowy Dwór in the Ciechanów region, thus, outside the borders of the General Government.

- 12** IPN GK case no. 196/67: Files in the indictment of Ludwig Fischer and others, vol. XIII–XIV, 236 (testimony of Fr. Zygmunt Kozubski).
- 13** IPN GK case no. 196/62: Fischer Trial; vol. III–IV, 39–40 (testimony of Czesław Rychlik).
- 14** IPN GK case no. 196/67: Files in the indictment of Ludwig Fischer and others, vols XIII–XIV, 237 (testimony of Fr. Zygmunt Kozubski). Fr. Rosłaniec, after passing through various prisons, was brought to the KL Sachsenhausen concentration camp and later to Dachau, where he was murdered in 1942. Pope John Paul II beatified him in 1999 as a Catholic martyr of the Second World War.
- 15** IPN GK case no. 196/72: Minutes of the Main Trial in the form of a stenogram in the case of Ludwig Fischer and others dated 17, 18 and 19 December 1946, vol. II, 274–75 (testimony of Fr. Stanisław Mystkowski) and IPN GK case no. 196/67: Files in the indictment of Ludwig Fischer and others, vols XIII–XIV, 237 (testimony of Fr. Zygmunt Kozubski). Ks. Sajna perished during the AB Campaign of genocide conducted against Polish political and intellectual elites. In 1999, he was declared blessed by Pope John Paul II.
- 16** IPN GK case no. 196/72: Minutes of the Main Trial in the form of a stenogram in the case of Ludwig Fischer and others dated 17, 18 and 19 December 1946, vol. II, 280 (testimony of Fr. Stanisław Mystkowski).
- 17** IPN GK case no. 196/66: Files in the indictment of Ludwig Fischer and others; vols IX–XII, 203 (testimony of Mieczysław Michałowicz). Ks. Archutowski is erroneously named 'Arkutowski' in a handwritten script; the above citation was corrected as a slip of the pen.. The superior of the Warsaw Seminary, after imprisonment at Pawiak, was deported to the concentration camp in Majdanek, where he died in 1943. In 1999 Pope John Paul II beatified Fr. Roman Archutowski.
- 18** IPN GK 182/149: Concentration camp Gross-Rosen (minutes of a witness's testimony), 57 (testimony of Fr. Jan Rzymekko).
- 19** IPN GK case no. 196/83: Files of the Kraków Regional Commission to Investigate German Crimes on the criminal case of a former Commandant of the concentration camp Oświęcim-Brzezinka, 47–48 (testimony of Fr. Augustyn Mańkowski). In 1940, he was sent to KL Auschwitz I. He was able to survive and wrote a well-known brochure after the war entitled 'Behind the wires of the Auschwitz concentration camp'.
- 20** IPN GK case no. 196/67: Files in the indictment of Ludwig Fischer and others, vols XIII–XIV, 220–21 (testimony of Fr. Jan Paszyna).
- 21** IPN GK case no. 196/67: Files in the indictment of Ludwig Fischer and others, vols XIII–XIV, 234 (testimony of Fr. Józef Oleksy).
- 22** IPN GK case no. 196/67: Files in the indictment of Ludwig Fischer and others, vols XIII–XIV, 224 (testimony of Fr. Aleksander Kisiel).
- 23** IPN GK case no. 196/67: Files in the indictment of Ludwig Fischer and others, vols XIII–XIV, 240–42 (testimony of Fr. Zygmunt Kozubski).
- 24** IPN GK case no. 196/67: Files in the indictment of Ludwig Fischer and others, vols XIII–XIV, 210 (testimony of Fr. Julian Chrościcki).
- 25** IPN GK case no. 182/35 vol. 2: The Warsaw Uprising in the Old Town, Mokotów, Gisz, Ochota and Śródmieście – minutes of witness testimony, accounts, maps. Copies of minutes of the testimony of witnesses of Nazi crimes in Mokotów, 127–29 (testimony

of Fr. Karol Sawicki), 130–32 (testimony of Fr. Aleksander Kisiel), 133–134 (testimony of Fr. Hugo Kwas), 137–40 (testimony of br. Felicjan Korsak).

26 IPN GK 196/73: Minutes of the Main Trial in the form of a stenogram in the case of Ludwig Fischer and others dated 20. XII, 21. XII, 30. XII. 1946; vol. III, 91–94 (testimony of Fr. Jan Igielski); IPN GK 196/67: Files in the indictment of Ludwig Fischer and others; vol. XIII–XIV, 256–58 (testimony of Fr. Jan Igielski); IPN GK 166/1100 vol. 5: Files on Nazi crimes during the Warsaw Uprising and the destruction of Warsaw, 384–86 (testimony of Stanisław Jaworski), 387 (testimony of Fr. Jan Igielski).

27 IPN GK 166/1100 vol. 5: Files on Nazi crimes during the Warsaw Uprising and the destruction of Warsaw, 212–13 (testimony of Anna Wielowiejska).

28 IPN GK 166/1100 vol. 5: Files on Nazi crimes during the Warsaw Uprising and the destruction of Warsaw, 226–28 (testimony of Salomea Strzębała).

29 IPN GK 166/1100 vol. 5: Files on Nazi crimes during the Warsaw Uprising and the destruction of Warsaw, 323 (testimony of Fr. Wacław Murawski).

30 IPN GK 166/1100 vol. 5: Files on Nazi crimes during the Warsaw Uprising and the destruction of Warsaw, 396–98 (testimony of Marianna Smolińska).

31 IPN GK 166/1100 vol. 5: Files on Nazi crimes during the Warsaw Uprising and the destruction of Warsaw, 162–71 (testimony of Fr. Bernard Filipiuk).

32 IPN GK 166/1100 vol. 5: Files on Nazi crimes during the Warsaw Uprising and the destruction of Warsaw, 33–38 (testimony of Wacław Szlachet).

33 IPN GK 182/35 vol. 6: The Warsaw Uprising in the Old Town, Mokotów, GISZ, Ochota and Śródmieście – minutes of witness testimony, accounts and maps. Materials on Nazi crimes committed in Wola, 20–21 (testimony of Fr. Władysław Kwaśniewski), 74–76 (testimony of Maria Lachert).

34 IPN GK 182/102: The Warsaw Uprising, Old Town – minutes of the testimony of witnesses of the murder of elderly persons at ul. Przyrynek 4, St Stanisław home and City Shelter Church of the Blessed Virgin Mary, 12–13 (testimony of Fr. Stanisław Lewarski).

35 IPN GK 182/40: The Warsaw Uprising. Minutes from a questioning of witnesses of Nazi crimes committed against residents of a building at ul. Dembińskiego 2/4 (in Marymont, Warsaw), 28–29 (testimony of Stanisław Taran).

36 IPN GK 182/35 vol. 1: The Warsaw Uprising in the Old Town, Mokotów, GISZ, Ochota and Śródmieście – minutes of witness testimony, accounts, maps, 25 (testimony of br. Benigno Murlinkiewicz).

37 IPN GK 182/80: The Warsaw Uprising 1944. Powiśle, 27 (testimony of Henryk Dziewięcki). Fr. Czartoryski was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1999.

38 IPN GK 182/35 vol. 1: The Warsaw Uprising in the Old Town, Mokotów, GISZ, Ochota and Śródmieście – minutes of witness testimony, accounts, maps, 157 (testimony of Małgorzata Damięcka).

39 IPN GK case no. 196/72: Minutes of the Main Trial in the form of a stenogram in the case of Ludwig Fischer and others dated 17, 18 and 19 December 1946, vol. II, 276 (testimony of Fr. Stanisław Mystkowski) and IPN GK 196/67, Files in the indictment of Ludwig Fischer and others; vol. XIII–XIV, 247–51 (testimony of Feliks Skowroński).

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JAMES CONNOLLY'S BLOODSTAINED VEST: MEDIATING DEATH AND VIOLENCE IN COMMEMORATIVE EXHIBITIONS

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ABSTRACT

The actions surrounding the display of images and artefacts in museums – collection, conservation, research and exhibition – are bound up with how the past is presented and remembered. These conditions and decisions relating to exhibitions are largely invisible to viewers who are confronted with the apparent completeness of an exhibition display. By conducting a historical and visual analysis of the bloodstained vest of political leader James Connolly, this article uncovers how this artefact has become a relic of historical violence due to the way in which particular aspects of its configuration, form and trajectory have been manipulated in order to elicit powerful emotional responses from the exhibition's viewers.

... I have done nothing but see
in the National Museum of Ireland
the rusty red spot of blood,
rather dirty, on the shirt
that was once worn on the hero
who is dearest to me of them all ...
(MacLean 1971, 270–71)

Sorley MacLean's poem 'National Museum of Ireland', written in 1971, contemplates the display of the bloodstained shirt of political leader James Connolly that he wore during the 1916 Rising. The shirt has been on display in the National Museum of Ireland (NMI) in several exhibitions and has been subject to considerable attention and research.¹ Another bloodstained

item of Connolly's clothing – his vest – is part of the NMI collection and was displayed publicly for the first time in 2016 as part of their centenary commemorative exhibition. Connolly's vest, which is soiled with a bloodstain on the back of the left arm, marks the location of one of the wounds he received during this 20th century conflict.

As discussed by Mary M. Brooks, 'garments that protected, shaped and presented the body in life can become surrogate bodies in the museum, evoking and memorialising the absent wearer' (Brooks 2017, 20). The way in which the vest is carefully laid out in the exhibition display, creates a feeling that the vest has been untouched since Connolly last wore it and heightens its symbolic potency. This symbolism is created by the way the garment is folded in half with the arms crossed at the front. Positioning the folded arms in this way resembles the positioning of the arms of a deceased body and congeals the transfiguration of Connolly from a citizen, who took up arms with a view to achieving independence, into a martyr who gave the ultimate sacrifice for his country.

Brooks also contends how careful judgements when exhibiting garments is essential as artefacts must be comprehensible as dress in order to carry the meaning selected for a specific display context, whether as a work of art, a design statement or, in this case, as a representation of its previous wearer (Brooks 2017, 22). The positioning of the vest in the display case differs from other pieces of clothing in the exhibition. Rather than putting the vest on a life-size mannequin at eye level like all of the other forms of clothing within the exhibition, the vest has been folded and placed in a glass counter-top display case. This has been done for two reasons; firstly, in order to explicitly expose the bloodstain; and secondly, to evoke the absence of the deceased body it represents.

This article centres on James Connolly's bloodstained vest – a valuable material artefact of the 1916 Rising, which was loaned to the NMI by his family in 1941. With its display in the 'Proclaiming a Republic: The 1916 Rising' exhibition, this biographic relic has become symbolic as a tangible link to the death of a principal figure in Ireland's political history. By examining this artefact through the institutional processes of acquisition, preservation and exhibition, this article demonstrates how ordinary objects can foster particular historical understandings when they are authenticated and mediated within the museum environment. Using grounding principles of visual

culture, museology and material culture to undertake a visual analysis of this artefact and its display, I direct attention to the visual processes employed when representing death in exhibitions and raise questions about the ways in which exhibition displays can perpetuate particular aspects of violent events.

James Connolly and the 1916 Rising

The 1916 Easter Rising is regarded as ‘the most controversial event in modern Irish history’ (McGarry 2010, 8). The conflict lasted for six days during which militant Republicans sought to seize political power from Britain, and declared – though unsuccessfully in the short term – an independent state (Brück and Godson, 2015, 1). At the time, the public perception of the Rising was hostile due to the unpredictability and chaotic nature of the rebellion from the outset.² As noted by David Fitzpatrick, the determination of the leaders to stage a rebellion marked by honour and chivalry was inevitably sullied by cases of brutal or cowardly conduct, callousness towards civilians, and looting; but the leaders emerged after the surrender with impressive dignity to meet their fate (Fitzpatrick 2016, 82–83).

James Connolly (1868–1916), socialist and revolutionary leader, is a significant figure in the story of the Rising and in the history of modern Ireland. Connolly was instrumental in establishing the Citizen Army in 1913 and during the Rising he commanded military operations. As Commandant General of the Republic’s forces, he fought in the city centre where the majority of the battles took place until surrendering on 29 April. Connolly received several injuries during the six days of fighting with the most severe shattering his left ankle. He was court-martialled and was the last one of the fifteen leaders to be executed by firing squad. He was shot dead in Kilmainham Gaol on 12 May 1916 and was survived by his wife and six children.

The execution of the leaders of the Rising without trial caused widespread public consternation, encouraged sympathy and swayed public opinion in favour of the rebel forces. Darragh Gannon contends that the beatification of the dead of 1916 persisted through the publishing of obituary biographies of those who had been killed as a result of the Rising, along with photographs of the widows and children left behind that evoked natural sympathy (Gannon 2016, 218). Jack Elliott also notes how in the aftermath of the 1916 Rising, there was a proliferation of images of the executed leaders that circulated widely in newspapers and on pieces of mass-produced ephemera. These visual and material representations of the executed leaders

played a particular role in shaping sympathetic and intelligible narratives of the conflict and created a familiarity with the appearance of the leaders (Elliott 2015, 91–95).

In a time when the visualization of the conflict was limited to newspapers and material artefacts, tangible entities became extremely significant in 'the construction of both personal and official histories' (Brück and Godson, 2015, 1). In April 1917, a three-day gift sale comprising of relics of the Rising and souvenirs of other Irish rebellions was held in support of Republican relief organizations. Many of the items auctioned that day eventually made their way into the MMI's Easter Week Collection, such as leader Éamonn Ceannt's imitation ancient Irish costume worn when playing the Irish warpipes before Pope Pius X in 1908. Connolly's wife Lillie donated a pair of his gloves to the auction but their whereabouts today is not known. Material and artefacts within the Easter Week Collection associated with Connolly are mainly ephemeral, consisting of leaflets promoting his lectures, communicative documents used during the Rising and handwritten postcards and letters. Given the limited nature of his material legacy, the NMI are immensely restricted in how they represent Connolly through artefacts.

National Museum of Ireland (NMI)

The NMI has a long history of hosting exhibitions commemorating the 1916 Rising with its first in 1932. In the years following the inaugural exhibition, the NMI collected materials and objects bound together only by their association with the Rising and established what is known as the 'Easter Week Collection' – the first thematic collection in the institution. The NMI still stands apart as the pioneer in hosting 1916 exhibitions and its collection built around this pivotal event in Irish history set the stage for the preservation and presentation of the material culture of Ireland.

The 'Proclaiming a Republic: The 1916 Rising' exhibition that opened in March 2016 is the NMI's eighth exhibition on the subject and has been the centrepiece of the NMI's centenary programme. Housed in the Riding School at the Department of Decorative Arts and History, Collins Barracks in Dublin, this exhibition has been described as revealing 'the physicalities of life in Ireland before, during and after the events of Easter Week in the form of three hundred objects, articles and images' (Gannon, 2016, xvi). Artefacts, which have visible traces of use because of the conflict, have been mobilized by curators throughout the exhibition in order to accentuate the

distress and physicalities of war. Many of these artefacts are everyday materials, which have become extraordinary because of their association with this significant event in Ireland's political history and illustrate how ordinary lives and actions collided during the conflict. Artefacts such as a crucifix hit by a stray bullet, a sign from the front of the burnt-out General Post Office (GPO) and James Connolly's bloodstained vest are examples of ordinary objects whose storytelling ability is enhanced because they have visible evidence of the physicalities of violence.

Many of the exhibited objects have never been on public display before while others, such as the flags that flew over the rebel garrisons around Dublin city, were specially conserved for this display. Through the combined effect of the objects, words and imagery of the period, visitors follow the stories of those caught up in the events of that momentous week – civilians, combatants and survivors alike.

The exhibition is laid out in a series of ten zones: introduction, the proclamation of the Irish Republic and early 20th-century Ireland; establishing the rebel garrisons and the British countermoves; surrender and the scenes of destruction; courts martial and execution; widows and orphans; deportation and imprisonment; commemorating the Rising through the last 100 years; Art Ó Murnaghan's national memorial; the legacy of 1916 and a resource room. The narrative ordering of the exhibition content presents episodes of the conflict semi-chronologically meaning that visitors get a general sense of the chronology of events, but this arrangement also allows visitors to make their own narrative connections between the different zones. For example, in the centre of 'Zone 3: Establishing Rebel Garrisons and the British Countermoves', there is a large glass case displaying the Irish Republic flag that flew from the GPO during the Rising. The flag was captured by British soldiers after the surrender, kept as a war trophy and entered the Royal Collection of King George V of England.³ A large-format digital photograph of British soldiers with the captured flag immediately after the Rising features prominently on a display panel in 'Zone 4: Surrender and the Scenes of Destruction'. The displays do not refer to one another, encouraging viewers to connect both artefact and image autonomously.

Visual, auditory and kinaesthetic learners are catered for using object displays, text panels, graphics, interactive touch screens, soundscapes, audio recordings and short film. Speakers in the main exhibition area play a looped audio

soundtrack, which contains noises of a street scene overwhelmed by explosions and guns. The overall mood of the soundtrack creates a sensory environment, which summons feelings of chaos and provides context for the exhibition. This soundscape is most prominent in 'Zone 3: Establishing Rebel Garrisons and the British Countermoves' but is phased out gradually so that 'Zone 5: Courts Martial and Execution' achieves a reverential mood for viewers to reflect silently and 'empathise with the executed leaders' (Heise and Tandem Design 2015). This is an intentional curatorial strategy implemented in order to promote intimacy and contemplation in this section of the exhibition.

'Zone 5: Courts Martial and Execution'

As discussed by Jane Tynan, 'notions of tragic heroism dominate the memory of the Rising' – a narrative which also emerges in the 'Courts Martial and Execution' section of the exhibition (Tynan 2015, 32). This section of the exhibition details the last moments of the executed leaders of the 1916 Rising individually, by describing their last meetings with families and displaying artefacts, which were in their possession before they met their death by firing squad in the yard in Kilmainham Gaol. A generous graphic area introduces the executions, interprets the reaction of the public and the swing in public opinion that followed. The curators and exhibition designers have positioned this section in a particular way so that it is possible for visitors to bypass the display of last letters and objects if they choose. This positioning represents the exhibition makers' consciousness of the sensitive nature of the death-related content on public display. The possible bypassing of this section is not made explicit on display panels or in a disclaimer, so that visitors can come to their own decisions on how to deal with the complex nature of displaying artefacts closely associated with death and more specifically, execution.

The central feature of this section is a long bespoke display case, where each execution is treated separately with its own grouping of objects. The 'last objects' are housed within the case, with the associated last letter and death certificate viewable within a drawer positioned directly underneath the case. Visitors can listen to dramatized readings of each of the last letters on a bank of listening pods that helps them to 'decipher the letters of the often difficult to read handwriting and understand the emotions behind the words' (Heise and Tandem Design, 2015). The objects belonging to the leaders include a button from Michael Hanrahan's uniform, which he gave to his sisters during their last visit to him, rosary beads given by Joseph Plunkett

to firing squad member Sergeant W. Hand before his execution and a silver cigarette case inscribed by John MacBride during Easter Week. The object that materially represents Connolly in this section is his bloodstained vest. As Albano has outlined, by displaying such artefacts as biographical material evidence, not only is something about the objects themselves revealed, but information about those who acted on them is also uncovered (Albano 2007, 17). The aim of this display strategy is to produce a human connection between the exhibited artefacts and the viewer.

James Scott asserts how the perception of objects can be influenced heavily by what surrounds them in displays (Scott 2015, 500). The difference between Connolly's vest and the other objects on display within the 'Courts Martial and Execution' section of the exhibition is that the majority of artefacts representing the other leaders were gifted to visitors before they met their death, indicating a conscious effort to leave a material legacy of their last moments. This gifting of artefacts by the leaders before their executions is an example of what Guy Beiner refers to as 'prememory' – 'the anticipations and expectations of those who are committed to predetermine how history will be remembered' (Beiner 2016, 34). Unlike the other leaders who bequeathed material artefacts to trusted individuals during their final visits from family and final moments with others in Kilmainham Gaol, Connolly did not intentionally leave a 'prememory' personal possession.⁴ The bloodstained vest was among Connolly's possessions, which were returned to his family after his death along with his watch and wallet.⁵ Perhaps if Connolly had bequeathed his watch or wallet during the final visit with his wife and daughter, curators of the exhibition may have selected those objects to represent his last moments instead of a piece of clothing that he possibly last wore two weeks prior to his execution. The watch and wallet were not donated to the museum by the Connolly family, but were instead kept as private relics of his last possessions. In fact, the vest and undershirt are the only material artefacts in the NMI collection that were donated by Connolly's family and which can be tangibly associated with his execution.⁶

That said Connolly's execution was different to that of the other leaders due to the severity of the injuries he had sustained during Easter Week. Upon arrival at Kilmainham Gaol, Connolly was removed from the ambulance in a stretcher and unlike the other leaders who were positioned on wooden boxes pending the gunshots from the firing squad, Connolly was strapped to a chair where he sat in an extended position with his head falling backwards.⁷

It is unlikely that Connolly wore this vest during his execution as it was stated by witnesses that he was wearing only his pyjamas prior to execution and had lost a lot of blood after the shots were fired, meaning that the bloodstains on the vest do not correspond with the details of his death.⁸ However, the display of the vest in relation to the other last objects on display and the selective information in the accompanying display label suggest that the curators may, in fact, intend visitors to *assume* it was worn by Connolly during his execution. While many of the other artefacts describe how they were distinctly used or gifted during the leaders' final moments with their loved ones, the information accompanying Connolly's vest makes no reference to the visit but instead focuses on the injuries he received during Easter Week and how the vest was deposited in the National Museum.

Display texts in museums can provide a basic starting point for directing viewers towards the politics of exhibition – the unseen features of artefacts such as their creation, acquisition and historical background. Considering that many of the other leaders' biographies detail their final moments prior to execution and display material evidence of those moments, the avoidance of this description in Connolly's case may represent a conscious curatorial strategy, which is implemented in order to heighten the emotional strength of the vest. Examining such aspects of display outlines the importance of considering the invisibility of the construction of exhibition displays and exposes the extent to which museums control visitors' engagement with the past. Focusing on the institutional acquisition of the vest after Connolly's death can be seen as a selective manipulation of certain attributes of the artefact in order to correspond with other artefacts on display and to validate the NMI's role in displaying this contested personal possession, despite the original owner's unwillingness to engage in material acts of 'prememory'.

Historical configuration of the vest

On Thursday, 27 April 1916, surrounded by burning buildings and a hail of gunfire and artillery shelling, James Connolly led 30 volunteers out into a street to erect a barricade at the rear of the GPO, which was the insurgent's headquarters for the duration of the Rising. A few minutes later, Connolly returned to the building and asked the medical orderly, Jim Ryan, if he could speak to him somewhere in private. Behind a screen, Connolly took off his coat and revealed a flesh wound in his arm where he had just been shot. After having the wound dressed, he told Ryan: 'Not a word about this to anyone' and returned outside to the fighting (Nevin 2005, 654).

This sequence of events uncovers three aspects that affect the display of the vest in the museum environment. Firstly, the witness accounts of Connolly's injury correspond with the configuration of the bloodstain, authenticating the description presented by the NMI in the exhibition display. Secondly, it reveals reluctance on the part of Connolly for his injuries to become common knowledge and demonstrates how the eventual trajectory of personal artefacts often goes beyond the control of their owners.⁹ Finally, they reveal how an everyday artefact can be transformed into a tangible link and a symbolic representation of a first-hand experience of a violent conflict in Irish history.

After his execution, Connolly's daughter Nora recalled going to Dublin Castle to retrieve some of his personal items:

We went to the Castle after that, to claim his watch, his wallet, or anything they might have belonging to Daddy. We thought there might be a chance of getting his uniform; but we did not. We only got his underclothes; and they were marked with his blood, where he had been hit by a sniper. I have given them to the Museum also.¹⁰

Nora's wish to retrieve her father's uniform accentuates the emotional weight that is attached to personal items of clothing, particularly in the absence of their wearer. Nora loaned the bloodstained vest and undershirt to the Easter Week Collection in 1941, where they remain in the care of the NMI. The transfer of these items from a private collection to a national collection in a public institution shows an awareness, on the part of the Connolly family, of the significance and potential value of such soiled artefacts.

As outlined by Annie E. Coombes, the way an object is used, how it is moved around and its very survival is an indication of value and meaning (Coombes 1988, 89). The display label states that 'The vest, along with the shirt he wore over it, was returned to his family after execution and his daughter Nora, kept it until she deposited in the National Museum.' This selective information gives viewers an insight into the actions surrounding the collection and acquisition of this artefact; and offers an understanding of the range of actions that take place in order for an object to become part of a museum collection and subsequent display. There is limited information available in the NMI archives on the vest and undershirt aside from the dates of donation and a request some years later from Connolly's other daughter

Ina to view the items.¹¹ The preservation of the vest by the wearer's family and the NMI memorializes and authenticates Connolly's presence in the violent battles of the 1916 Rising.

Form and style of the vest

Eastop and Brooks have outlined the importance of leaving stained textiles untouched as the stains often 'contain' considerable historical and cultural evidence (Eastop and Brooks 1996, 688). It is a specific event in Irish history – the 1916 Rising: Connolly being shot for the first time – which caused its eventual configuration and the reason why this artefact was collected as a historic relic, loaned to the museum, conserved and now on display to the public. Like many other soiled historical artefacts, the form and style of this artefact is configured by an unintentional event – that is, the vest only looks the way it does by accident (residue of blood from a flesh wound after a stray bullet hit Connolly). Furthermore, the vest was not intended by its user to be made visible as presumably it would have been worn underneath his uniform and as already mentioned, the wearer hoped to keep his injury secret. Instead, it was the subsequent custodians of the vest – Connolly's family – who deliberately collected and donated his bloodstained underclothes as evidence of the experience and conditions of the 1916 Rising. As the vest has remained in the care of the NMI since it was loaned in 1941, it is their institutional practices of collection, conservation and curation that now control the cultural visibility of the vest after Connolly's death.

As discussed by Jane Tynan, the peculiar dynamics of the Rising demanded an equivocal attitude to uniform (Tynan 2015, 31). The rebel leaders for example, wore uniforms that were dark green in colour and distinct from the other Volunteer uniforms. However not all of the insurgents were noted for their elegant appearance. Due to financial hardship, lack of military experience and the chaotic unfolding of events, the majority of participants in the fighting had a casual and unmilitary appearance (Tynan 2015, 29).

Connolly was described as wearing 'a green Volunteer uniform with rings on his arm, and a wide-awake hat' (Nevin 2005, 665). His daughter Ina elicited the delight she felt the first time seeing her father in his green Volunteer uniform: 'How splendid he looked! How pleased I was to see him in the uniform of Ireland's green! Wouldn't mother be proud of him if she could get one glance of him?'¹²



James Connolly's vest marked with a bloodstain from one of the wounds he received during the 1916 Rising.

This image is reproduced with the kind permission of the National Museum of Ireland (HE:EWL.292.2).

Connolly's 'splendid' appearance was not maintained in the aftermath of the conflict as he was brought to Kilmainham Gaol to meet his death wearing 'his pyjamas only'.¹³ His material legacy in the 'Proclaiming a Republic' exhibition is reflective of the unheroic image chosen to represent the Rising, which as Tynan has asserted 'features what appears to be a working class man wearing civilian clothes' (Tynan 2015, 33).¹⁴ This vest has agency as material culture as it communicates either the physical body or presence of its owner and signifies his personal identity through its traces of use, general wear and tear and personal style. The proximity to the body it represents is intensified by the presence of a visible bodily residue, which is exposed by the particular positioning of the vest in the display case.

Conclusion

The actions surrounding the display of images and objects in museums – collection, conservation, research and exhibition – are bound up with how

the past is presented and remembered. These conditions and decisions of exhibition display are largely invisible to viewers who are confronted with the apparent completeness of an exhibition display.

Conducting a historical and visual analysis of this bloodstained vest has uncovered how particular aspects of this artefact have been manipulated in order to be appropriate alongside other artefacts within the exhibition. Other than representing his clothing and reinforcing the casual heroism of the Rising, Connolly's vest was not crucial to the theme of the 'Courts Martial and Execution' section of the exhibition. Instead its significance lies in the particular positioning of the artefact in the display case in order to make the bloodstain fully visible. This mode of display intentionally gives the vest a heightened sense of tangible connection to the violence of the Rising in an attempt to elicit powerful emotional responses from the exhibition's viewers.

SIOBHÁN DOYLE

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ENDNOTES

1 The shirt has been on display in the 'Soldiers and Chiefs' exhibition at the NMI since 2006 and was featured in the *History of Ireland in 100 Objects* initiative which began as a column in *The Irish Times* by Fintan O' Toole and culminated in an illustrated book, website and series of stamps. This collection of one hundred objects was selected to illustrate Ireland's history and in doing so, directed readers to where each object was on public display.

2 The Rising was originally scheduled to take place on Easter Sunday, 23 April 1916 but Eoin MacNeill issued a cancellation of 'manoeuvres' which led to the non-participation of many potential rebels. The countermand was only partly successful and caused confusion, especially outside Dublin. Consequently there was no Rising in Cork or Limerick. The dissidents delayed their plans by 24 hours and launched the Rising on Easter Monday, 24 April 1916.

3 The flag was returned by the British state to the Taoiseach Sean Lemass as gesture of reconciliation in 1966. Lemass formally presented the flag to the NMI in the hope that

it would be 'preserved as one of the important relics of that important event of Irish history and as a source of inspiration to all who come to this museum'. ('Exhibition Tells Story of the Rising: Post Office Flag on View', *Irish Times*, 13 April 1966, 11.)

4 Connolly gave a copy of his Court Martial statement to his daughter Nora during the final family visit the night before his execution, which is on display in the pull-out drawer underneath the glass display case.

5 Bureau of Military History (1949): Witness Statement of Nora Connolly-O'Brien (WS286). <http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie/reels/bmh/BMH.WS0286.pdf#page=1>. Accessed 6 November 2017.

6 The items were originally on loan to the NMI from 30 April 1941 and include a portrait of James Connolly and a shirt and vest worn by James Connolly when he was wounded during Easter Week 1916. Both are stained with his blood. The loan register lists the lender as Nora Connolly O'Brien (daughter of James Connolly), 39 The Rise, Glasnevin, Dublin. NMI Archives: NMIAS.AI.EWL.0097.003.00034. Accessed 3 November 2017.

7 Bureau of Military History: Witness Statement of Peter Paul Gilligan (WS170). <http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie/reels/bmh/BMH.WS0170.pdf#page=1>. Accessed 6 November 2017.

8 Bureau of Military History: Witness Statement of 2nd Lieutenant R.C. Barton (WS0979). <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B9JG21-1AMNPUTNhNGoxRFFqNnc>. Accessed 16 January 2017.

9 Despite returning to duty immediately after receiving the wound on his arm dressed, Connolly received a much more severe injury to his ankle shortly afterwards that immobilized him for the remainder of the conflict, and up until his execution two weeks later.

10 Bureau of Military History (1949): Witness Statement of Nora Connolly O'Brien (WS286). <http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie/reels/bmh/BMH.WS0286.pdf#page=1>. Accessed 6 November 2017.

11 NMI Archives: NMIAS.AI.EWL.0097.003.00034 (9). Accessed 3 November 2017.

12 Bureau of Military History (1954): Witness Statement of Ina Connolly Heron (WS0919) <http://www.bureauofmilitaryhistory.ie/reels/bmh/BMH.WS0919.pdf>. Accessed 6 November 2017.

13 Bureau of Military History: Witness Statement of 2nd Lieutenant R.C. Barton (WS0979). <https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/0B9JG21-1AMNPUTNhNGoxRFFqNnc>. Accessed 16 November 2017.

14 Tynan, Jane (2015) 'The Unmilitary Appearance of the 1916 Rebels', in *Making 1916: Material and Visual Culture of the 1916 Rising*, ed. Lisa Godson and Joanna Bruck. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press.

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THE TRAUMA OF 'ENFORCED DISAPPEARANCE' AS A TOPIC IN CENTRAL EUROPEAN FICTION AFTER 1989

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ABSTRACT

The article analyses various literary representations of one of the common features of 20th-century dictatorships and totalitarian political regimes: the 'enforced disappearance'. The study focuses on several Central European novels and short stories (German, Czech, Slovak and Polish) published after 1989. The methodological framework adopted here is that of cultural memory and trauma studies that have lately received systematic scholarly interest in Central Europe (Kratochvil 2015; Lysak 2015). The study draws on the works of Paul Ricoeur (French), Michel de Certeau (French), Jacques Derrida (French), Berber Bevernage (Belgian), Alexander Etkind (Russian) and Stef Craps (Belgian), especially on the way they define and interpret trauma and the 'work of mourning'. The mechanisms of the 'work of mourning' function also on a collective level and are one of the ways of dealing with a traumatic past.

Literature has played an important role in the debates on the legacy of communist dictatorships in post-communist Central Europe since 1989, and historical topics have flourished in Central European literatures. We propose to interpret them as specific ways of coming to terms with the legacy of the traumatic past of the 20th century in Central Europe, especially the long-term collective trauma caused by Nazi and communist dictatorships.

We want to address the concept of '*lieux de mémoire*' [places of memory], its limits and dangers as it is discussed (among others) by the philosopher Paul Ricoeur (1913–2005) in his major contribution to this theoretical debate *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli* [*Memory, History, Forgetting*] (Ricoeur 2000; English

trans. 2004). Furthermore, we will pay attention to the recurring patterns that keep appearing in contemporary Central European literatures. Indeed, in our previous research, we discovered recurrent patterns and structures that allow us to read many of these texts as commemorative rituals and the 'work of mourning' (we draw on the Freudian terminology here) for traumatic elements of the 20th century in Central Europe. The work of Paul Ricoeur inspires us to transpose the Freudian model of trauma and mourning (used in the psychoanalysis of an individual) onto the processes put in motion in national and other communities. As our topic focuses on the connection between literary representations of history and psychoanalysis, we should mention the crucial research of the French thinker Michel de Certeau (1925–86). He was directly addressing the link between literature, historiography and psychoanalysis in several of his studies, especially *L'Écriture de l'Histoire* [The Writing of History] (1975) and *Histoire et psychanalyse* [History and Psychoanalysis] (1987). We will also call on the works of the philosopher Jacques Derrida (1930–2004) and his concept of the 'spectral', 'haunting' past and the works of scholars that Derrida's work inspired in their reflections on historical trauma and literature: those of Berber Bevernage, Stef Craps and Alexander Etkind.

We will focus on concrete examples of such texts, dealing with the traumatic aspects of 20th-century Central Europe, especially with the topic of enforced disappearance. More specifically on novels dealing with the memory of the German presence in Central Europe and post-Second World War expulsions. This topic keeps coming back as an almost obsessive theme in German, Polish and especially Czech post-1989 literature. A link to psychological trauma seems evident with this reoccurring theme.

The authors we will pay special attention to in our interpretations will be W.G. Sebald, Paweł Huelle, Pavel Vilikovský, Jiří Kratochvíl, Kateřina Tučková, Radka Denemarková and Jakuba Katalpa. All these authors and their works have received constant attention from literary theoreticians and the public. They have been awarded important literary prizes and have been taking part in the public debate on historical and social issues in their respective countries. Some of the books have been adapted for theatre or cinema. Each novel offers a critical evaluation of an individual's encounter with dictatorship, of the massive expulsions of populations after the Second World War (especially that of the Germans from Central Europe) or of the Holocaust, topical issues and challenging topics linked to the

collective memory of today's European society¹ and even more so in post-communist countries.

Enforced disappearance

'Enforced disappearance' has become an official term in international law. The United Nations (UN) established a committee on enforced disappearances that issued an official text entitled 'International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance', which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 2006 and enforced from December 2010.² Enforced disappearance is considered a crime and, in certain circumstances, defined in international law as a crime against humanity. The convention stipulates, among other things, 'the right of any victim to know the truth about the circumstances of an enforced disappearance and the fate of the disappeared person, and the right to freedom to seek, receive and impart information to this end'.³ It is this need and right to 'know the truth' and 'seek, receive and impart information' about the disappeared that is at the core of the literary works considered in the present article. As Berber Bevernage explains, the notion of the right to seek the truth was pioneered in the Inter-American Court of Human Rights with cases on enforced disappearance. Furthermore, it was included in two reports by UN special rapporteurs Louis Joinet and Diane Orentlicher.⁴ The right to know, Joinet explains:

is not simply the right of any individual victim or closely related persons to know what happened, a right to the truth. The right to know is also a collective right, drawing upon history to prevent violations from recurring in the future. Its corollary is a 'duty to remember', which the State must assume, in order to guard against the perversions of history that go under the names of revisionism or negationism; the knowledge of the oppression it has lived through is part of a people's national heritage and as such must be preserved (Bevernage 2018).⁵

The enforced disappearance causes trauma to the survivors; trauma that is both personal and collective. As stated by editors of a recent collective monograph on trauma studies, the theory and concept of trauma is still evolving (Bond, Craps, Vermeulen, 2017). Indeed, trauma officially gained the status of a disease in the Western world in 1980, when it was rape, military combat, earthquake, aeroplane crash or torture. Later, various long-term

stress factors were added, such as witnessing or learning of one's family or friends being exposed to serious danger (Bond, Craps and Vermeulen, 2017).

There are several aspects that justify the interpretation of the literary texts within the methodological framework of trauma studies. The plots of the texts are constructed around an absence that implicitly points to a traumatic disappearance. The disappearance further infers a missing, disappeared body (with clear hints of its previous maltreatment or torture). The disappearance might concern an individual or a whole group. The topic of enforced disappearance can even serve as metonymy of a dictatorship or a totalitarian regime. The disappeared groups represented in the texts of our corpus might be Jews (systematically exterminated during the Second World War as one of the consequences of totalitarian fascist ideology), the bourgeois middle classes (as an integral part of the Soviet application of the Marxist theory of the class struggle in the Soviet Union and in countries of the Eastern Bloc), or the Germans expelled from Central and Eastern Europe after the Second World War. All these motifs and topics can be found in the studied texts. Thanks to the crucial work of Paul Ricoeur *L'Histoire, la mémoire, l'oubli* (Ricoeur 2000), we can apply the Freudian model of trauma and mourning on the mourning mechanisms of groups and communities. Indeed, the texts are constructed as mourning rituals, revealing the mourning processes described by Freud and Ricoeur. Furthermore, the contributions of Berber Bevernage (Bevernage 2012), Alexander Etkind (Etkind 2013) and Stef Craps (Craps 2013) help us to see the specificities of trauma as they are expressed in the literary texts of contemporary Central European authors.

Literary texts as 'places of memory'?

We would like to reflect on the problematic aspects, dangers and limits of the concept of 'places of memory' (*lieux de mémoire*) introduced in the 1980s by the French historian Pierre Nora. The concept is indeed closely related to our topic. Nora directed a large research project published in three volumes between 1984 and 1992 under the same title, *Lieux de mémoire* [Places of Memory]. His ambition was nothing less than describing the basic elements that, in his opinion, constitute French national identity.

The present paper is inspired, among others, by the methodology and theoretical concepts of Paul Ricoeur as he developed it in his book *La mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli* [Memory, History, Forgetting] (Ricoeur 2000; English translation 2004). Our starting point is Ricoeur's commentary on the work of Pierre Nora and

on the concept of 'places of memory'. Ricoeur pinpoints the major dangers and limits of Nora's concept and shows that Nora himself changes his way of perceiving the 'places of memory' and that, during the preparation of the successive volumes, Nora already realizes the potential abuse of his concept:

Nora himself complains of a similar assimilation of the theme of the 'places of memory' by 'commemorative bulimia (that) has all but consumed all efforts to control it' (Ricoeur 2004, Kindle loc. 609).⁶

The destiny of these *Lieux de mémoire* has been a strange one. The work was intended, by virtue of its conception, method, and even title, to be a counter-commemorative type of history, but commemoration has overtaken it ... What was forged as a tool for maintaining critical distance became the instrument of commemoration par excellence (Ricoeur 2004, Kindle loc. 1404).⁷

The concept of 'places of memory' has been very successful and has been widely used in Central and Eastern European Studies after 1989. It has been applied also in studies dedicated to contemporary literature of this region (see for example Smorag-Goldberg and Tomaszewski 2013). Nevertheless, one needs to keep in mind that the concept of 'places of memory' can be used as a tool for commemorative needs for various interest groups that do not aim at historical objectivity. The notion of the problematic aspects of memory was also one of the major motivations for Ricoeur's work as he himself admits in the introduction:

Public preoccupation: I continue to be troubled by the unsettling spectacle offered by an excess of memory here, and an excess of forgetting elsewhere, to say nothing of the influence of commemorations and abuses of memory – and of forgetting. The idea of a policy of the just allotment of memory is in this respect one of the avowed civic themes (Ricoeur 2009, Kindle loc. 51).

In countries that have been undergoing essential geopolitical changes, as is the case for Central European post-communist countries, the question of public memory and commemorations is an important one. Indeed, the commemorative strategies are an integral part of the identity-creating process.

The fragile national identity of the new geopolitical units is also projected on the way society deals with its memory. As Ricoeur notes, the fragility of identity opens possibilities for the manipulation of memory (Ricoeur 2000, 579). This is the reason why this study focuses more on the aspects of trauma expressed in literary texts than on the way they deal with memory and commemoration.

Trauma, the work of mourning and the haunting past

In our analysis, we use the parallel that Paul Ricoeur draws between the work of mourning (*le travail de deuil*) as it is described by Freud and used in psychoanalysis and the work of memory (*le travail de souvenir*) and of forgetting in the collective memory of communities and societies, especially in connection to traumatic collective memory:

It is the bipolar constitution of personal and community identity that, ultimately justifies extending the Freudian analysis of mourning to the traumatism of collective identity. We can speak not only in an analogical sense but in terms of a direct analysis of collective traumatisms, of wounds to collective memory. The notion of the lost object finds a direct application in the 'losses' that affect the power, territory, and populations that constitute the substance of a state. Mourning behaviours, from the expression of affliction to complete reconciliation with the lost object, are directly illustrated by the great funeral celebrations around which an entire people is assembled. In this way, we can say that such mourning behaviours constitute a privileged example of the intersecting relations between private and public expression. It is in this way that our concept of a sick historical memory finds justification a posteriori in this bipolar structure of mourning behaviours (Ricoeur 2009, Kindle loc. 1214).⁸

The traumatic collective memory and traumatic 'losses' mentioned by Ricoeur correspond to losses put forward in numerous novels by Central European authors after 1989. The burden of history, its taboos and deformations constitute central preoccupations of the literary texts that we analyse. However, the Freudian 'complete reconciliation with the lost object' that Ricoeur refers to does not seem to happen in these texts, which maintain the haunting presence of the lost object.⁹ Indeed, the recent contributions

to the classical works of trauma studies (we mean works by Cathy Caruth, Marianne Hirsch or Dominick LaCapra) address the limits of the Freudian model (we mean Western, modernist concept of mourning) according to which a successful work of mourning is when the mourning person totally reconciles themselves with their loss. Historian Berber Bevernage (Bevernage 2012) and literary theoretician Stef Craps (Craps 2013) both draw on Jacques Derrida and his *Specters of Marx* (1993, English translation 1994) while addressing the limits of the Freudian model of mourning.¹⁰ Indeed, Derrida proposes against Freud's model of a concept of '*demi-deuil*' (semi-mourning).¹¹ Both Craps and Bevernage bring evidence from Western and non-Western examples of mourning (be it personal or that of a community) that do not correspond in their practice to the Freudian ideal model of the final and utter 'dismissal' of the lost/grieved object. Instead, the traumatized individuals and communities maintain a certain way of contact and spectral presence of the grieved object, person or past. It goes with the observations of Derrida in *Specters of Marx* who claims that the possibility of a just future (when we talk about traumatic pasts of communities or nations) depends on our readiness 'to learn to live with ghosts' and 'thinking the possibility of the spectre'. Berber Bevernage, inspired by Derrida, uses the term 'haunting past' in order to describe the reality of people and communities dealing with historical trauma. Instead of being able to draw a thick line over a traumatic past, the communities are faced with the necessity of coming to terms with a 'haunting past', which maintains its presence in the everyday lives of its members.¹² Bevernage's book pleads for a different approach to history. Inspired by Michel de Certeau and his *L'Écriture de l'Histoire* [Writing history] and in accord with current tendencies in historiography, Bevernage questions certain concepts of modern historiography. Many theoreticians have dealt with the link between artistic creation, historiography and the work of mourning:

a close relationship exists between the writing of history and the work of mourning. Dominick LaCapra, for example, analyzes post-holocaust historiography by using the psychoanalytical concepts of 'working through' and 'acting out', and he has proposed that the German *Historikerstreit* should be interpreted as a form of collective mourning. Jörn Rüsen argues that in relation to the traumatic character of the experiences of the last century, the writing of history can be conceived as a 'procedure of mourning'. [...] I agree with LaCapra, Rüsen, and Domanska that a close

relationship exists between mourning and historiography, and I think that these authors are right when they argue that a lot can be learned about the writing of history by analyzing it from the perspective of the practice of mourning or the discourse on death (Bevernage 2012, 147, Kindle loc. 3595).

It is in this sense that we adhere to Bevernage's comment:

one can analytically distinguish between at least two profoundly different concepts of mourning and death that relate to different notions of historicity: namely, a modern (mostly Western) concept of mourning and a non-modern (but not necessarily non-Western) concept of mourning. The most important difference between the relatively young modernist theory of mourning and the much older and much more widespread non-modern concept of mourning, I will argue, can be found in different ways in which they relate the notions of 'loss' and 'absence' (Bevernage 2012, 148, Kindle loc. 3614).

This seems to be the recurrent pattern of the representation of history in the chosen corpus. The texts are full of ghosts and spectres of the past. The characters are incapable of drawing a thick line over the past that maintains a haunting presence and interferes with the lives of the characters.

The expulsion of Germans: whose trauma is that?

In the case of 'German memory', we suggest drawing again on the parallel made by Paul Ricoeur between the process of personal and collective 'work of mourning'. The events linked directly or indirectly to the expulsion of Germans from Central Europe after 1945 and the loss of German cultural heritage can be viewed from this perspective: the loss that must be worked through during the process of mourning. The obsessive reoccurrence of the topic of German memory in post-1989 Polish (see Huelle, Chwin, Tokarczuk), German (see Reinhard Jirgl or Uwe Johnson) and especially Czech literature (Jiří Kratochvíl, Jáchym Topol, Kateřina Tučková, Radka Denemarková and Jakuba Katalpa) seems to prove the importance and extent of this collective trauma. It is important to note that contemporary Central European writers focus almost exclusively on the topic of expulsions and not on numerous other aspects of the long history of the Germans' presence in the culture, politics and economics of Central Europe. Interestingly enough,

this omission is mirrored in the works of Czech historians. Those who focus their research on Czech-German relationships, work mostly on the post-Second World War period and the topics related to the expulsions. It is, of course, connected to the fact that Central and Eastern European historiography has undergone important changes since 1989 primarily thanks to the opening of numerous important archives that were inaccessible before 1989. It is nevertheless interesting to note that the highly relevant and significant period of Czech-German tension and armed clashes between 1918 and 1923 when many German-speaking inhabitants of the Sudeten region contested (sometimes armed) their inclusion in post-First World War Czechoslovakia.

It is surprising to discover that the Germans represented in Czech contemporary novels are mostly depicted as positive characters or as (innocent) victims described in a way that inspires compassion. This approach, whereby the honouring of a certain memory causes the amnesia of other memories, leads inevitably to certain distortions. As Václav Maidl states in his study, if we look at the literary representations of German-speaking characters and the German environment over the last 200 years, their image in Czech literature is mostly negative (Maidl 1998). For Kateřina Tučková especially, her novel *The Expulsion of Gerta Schnirch* has a performative function. It is her 'duty of memory' and 'duty of commemoration' that she claims to honour in the prologue because she has the impression that the political representatives do not do fulfill these duties sufficiently well. We can thus legitimately ask the question whether both historians and the writers do not take part in a process of consciously creating a new Czech post-1989 'European' identity, forming what Berber Bevernage designates as 'reconciliation historiography' or 'shared history':

Bridging can happen negatively through levelling attempts to expose myths of conflicting parties or it can happen through the construction of so-called positive histories which stress common traditions, shared values and cultural exchanges in the past. Bridging reconciliation historiographies are also often referred to as shared histories. Yet, the term 'shared history' is often used more broadly among scholars and practitioners focusing on reconciliation and can refer to at least three potential aspects of reconciliation historiographies: it can refer to shared methodological procedures or shared authorship, to a focus on shared events, values or actions in the past, or

to the construction of a single 'common' narrative which claims evenhandedly to represent the different perspectives of conflicting parties (Bevernage 2018).

These questions, however, need more space and thought than is possible within the scope of this study. But we can certainly argue that texts of contemporary Central European writers reveal much more of the circumstances of the time of the writing of the novels than about the actual historical subjects they try to present and assess.

If we apply Ricoeur's adaptation of Freud's psychoanalysis to the collective wounded memory, Ricoeur justifies this methodological transfer (as we have already stated) by the fact that Freud himself alluded to 'situations that go far beyond the psychoanalytic scene, in terms of both the work of remembering and the work of mourning' (Ricoeur 2004, Kindle loc. 1203). Furthermore, 'all of the situations referred to in the psychoanalytical treatment have to do with *the other*, not only the other of the "familial novel", but by the psychosocial other and the other, as it were, of the historical situation' (Ricoeur 2004, Kindle loc. 1203).

The link between personal work of mourning and collective sick memory is alluded to in the very title of one of the analysed novels – Jakuba Katalpa's novel *The Germans: Geography of Loss* (2012). The process of personal mourning for the loss of a mother of one of the central characters (Klara, the mother, left for Germany after the Second World War and left her baby behind in Czechoslovakia) stands here for the collective mourning for the expelled German minority (or maybe more for the act of expulsion?). Katalpa's novel can thus be seen as a literary transposition of a commemorative mourning ritual. Klara, the main character, of Katalpa's novel, comes closest to the idea of a 'pure' German among all the Czech contemporary novels that deal with the topic of expulsions. She is born in Germany to a wealthy family and hardly questions Germany's political orientation under Hitler. She is a teacher and refuses to intervene for one of her Jewish students when she asks for help. After a series of personal tragedies (the death of her fiancé among others), she decides to accept a placement as a teacher in the Sudeten region. She works with German-speaking children but is seen as a stranger by the local Sudeten Germans. She becomes pregnant and is welcomed at the end of the war by the family of one of her Czech friends in Prague. She gives birth to a boy and finally decides, under circumstances

that are never totally explained in the novel, to leave the baby behind when she has to depart from Czechoslovakia as a German. The boy, Kurt, is then adopted by the family that welcomed Klara and the fact of his adoption is revealed to him by his foster mother when he becomes an adult and father of three children himself. The boy is the father of the narrator of the novel. After her father's death, she decides to find out the truth about her real grandmother and she meets Klara's two daughters in Germany. She even meets Klara, an old woman in an old people's home. Klara has Alzheimer's disease and cannot help the narrator with her quest for the 'truth'.

Jiří Kratochvíl draws a link between personal psychological trauma and a collective one in most of his novels. The metaphor of schizophrenia that structures his first novel *Medvědí román* (*Bear's Novel*, 1985, 1990) covers both a mental breakdown of one of the central characters and a schizophrenic psychological split of people living under communist dictatorship. His novel *Slib* (*The Pledge*, 2009), which features as one of its themes the expulsion of Germans from Brno, has a subtitle: *The Requiem for the 1950s*. The topic of expulsions in Kratochvíl's novels is always closely connected to the questioning of the legacy of communism.

One of the dangers of obsessive insistence on the topic of expulsions as the central moment of German memory in Central Europe is the distortion of history by the feeling of the 'duty to remember' or 'duty of commemoration (memory)' as we have already stated. Ricoeur talks about the '*devoir de mémoire*' (duty of memory) and going back to Nora's '*lieux de mémoire*', he evokes the potential 'abuse of commemoration' (Ricoeur 2000, 528).

We therefore argue that the representation of the expulsion of Germans always closely reflects the communist dictatorship in Central Europe.¹³ Indeed, in all analysed texts, the authors choose to present history from (or even before) the Second World War until very recent times (often up until now). In relation to the expulsion of Germans and dealing with Germans, 1945 is often interpreted like a first step in the establishment of communist rule in Central Europe (this is most strongly present in Kratochvíl's writings). The trauma of the communist past is being projected onto the topic of the expulsions of Germans. Paradoxically, the texts focus more on the Czech collective historical trauma than on the suffering of the Germans. The vision of history thus seems to fall into a narrow frame of a national trauma that it finds difficult to overcome. We conclude this part by stating

that even in the case of literary representations of German memory and especially of the expulsions, the process of mourning at work in the novels is not so much about the loss of the German community but about the long-term legacy of communism in Central Europe.

The trauma of the enforced disappearance and the figure of absence

Common to the analysed works is the use of a subjective and individual perspective to represent the enforced disappearance. In Central Europe, under both Nazi and communist regimes people were made to 'disappear', often leaving their families without news as to their fate. The enforced disappearance is often represented by an absence. There is an absent body, an absent person, whose loss is being mourned. Austerlitz's trauma in Sebald's novel (Sebald 2001) of the same name stems from the disappearance and the absence of his parents and from the lack of any precise information concerning their death. Austerlitz is a Jewish child born in Prague and sent to safety by his parents thanks to one of the trains heading from Prague to England during the Second World War. In the course of his investigation in the 1990s, he finds out that his Czech-Jewish mother was sent to the Theresienstadt concentration camp and very probably died in a killing facility in Poland. This was most likely the fate of his father too, who went to France and was sent from Paris to one of the concentration camps in the south of France where he disappears without trace. Nevertheless, Austerlitz learns nothing certain about their fate nor can he find the place of their burial. The whole book thus seems to be constructed around this traumatic loss and absence.

In Huelle's novella *Mercedes Benz* (2001), the two dictatorships (fascist and communist) and their treatment of people are juxtaposed, making the parallels between the use of enforced disappearance by both dictatorships deliberate and evident. The whole family of the central character, the Jewish photographer Chaskiel Bronstein, meets a 'terrible end', 'in a mass death-pit near Buczyna' (Huelle 2001, 101). The Jewish brothers Baczewski, whose 'vodka and liqueur factory' is 'bombed by the Luftwaffe' (Huelle 2001, 95), die from 'no less cruel death', 'in the Donbas mineshafts' (Huelle 2001, 101) in 1940 after having been deported by the Soviets. Their deaths are thus emblematic of the end of Jewish civilization in Eastern Europe during the Second World War and the way Jews have been targeted both by the Nazi and Soviet dictatorships (topics difficult to address in Polish fiction or historiography before 1989). As we will see, it is their disappearance that is interpreted as a major force behind the creation of *Mercedes Benz*.¹⁴

In Pavel Vilikovský's novel *The Autobiography of Evil* (2009) the major character of the first part of the text, Jan Karsten, after being kidnapped by the Czechoslovak secret police during his tentative escape to Austria, decides to commit suicide when he realizes that he has adopted the same behaviour as his tormentors. He kidnaps a girl whom he believes to be the daughter of one of the agents (which she is not) and holds her prisoner. Finally, he decides to let her go. Nevertheless, his decision to stick to his humanity leads to his suicide as he does not see any other outcome of the situation he finds himself in. His body is disposed of and his family is never informed about his final fate. The disappearance and absence of his father shapes the life of his son, the central character in the second part of the novel. At the end of Vilikovský's novel, Igor talks about the book he plans to write. Writing about the mysterious disappearance of an unknown woman dating back to the 1970s might be seen as compensating for the impossibility of discovering the truth about the disappearance of his own father. It is at the same time an act of mourning over the absent body and the missing story of his disappeared father.

In Kratochvíl's novel *The Pledge* (2009), the beloved sister of architect Modráček dies after being interrogated by the Czechoslovak secret police in the early 1950s. Having not been allowed to see the body of his dead sister, he does not believe that she committed suicide as the police claim. He vows to avenge his sister's death and to punish the policeman, Láška, whom he believes to be responsible for his sister's death. Modráček captures Láška and holds him prisoner in his underground prison alongside more and more people who could endanger his secret and destroy his plan for vengeance. At the end of the book, Láška's daughter appears and talks about the mysterious and never-explained disappearance of her father that haunted her and her mother their whole lives. The book is thus conceived by the author as a requiem for the victims of the Stalinist era of 1950s Czechoslovakia, represented in Kratochvíl's text by his mother (herself a victim of the communist persecution to whom the book is dedicated and who appears as a minor character in the novel), Modráček's sister, and the policeman Láška, unjustly imprisoned and punished.

The motif of traumatic disappearance also appears in the novels that deal with German memory. In Kratochvíl's novel *Uprostřed noci zpěv* [In the midst of the night a song] (1989), the Germans are represented intriguingly by a couple of lesbian women who are ostracized by everyone – their Czech

neighbours as well as the other Germans; they finally die during the expulsion process and their absence haunts the memory of one of the main characters of the novel, Petr, for the rest of his life.

In her novel *The Expulsion of Gerta Snirch* (2010), Kateřina Tučková tells the life story of Gerta Snirch, a girl from Brno, born to a mixed Czech-German family.¹⁵ After the war, she is included in the 'death march' of Brno Germans destined for expulsion. Gerta finally avoids the expulsion and comes back to her hometown. Her life seems to be returning to normal as she attempts to rebuild her life with her teenage love who had become a committed communist in the meantime. Nevertheless, her life is finally shattered when her lover disappears at the moment of the show-trial with the communist leader Rudolf Stránský and his collaborators in 1952. It is this traumatic disappearance that seems to shape Gerta's life most profoundly. Each text is characterized by the absence of bodies; the people simply disappear, making the process of mourning, if not impossible, at least extremely difficult.

'State-sponsored violence' and the tortured bodies

The trauma of those left behind is magnified by unverifiable images of torture. Enforced disappearance can hardly be dissociated from political violence and torture. It is the 'state-imposed violence' that Berber Bevernage uses as part of the title of his book. Michel de Certeau wrote a decidedly relevant text on the subject '*Corps torturés, paroles capturés*' [Tortured bodies, captured speech] included in the volume *Histoire et psychoanalyse* (1987). He claims that violence is systemic in the imposition of social order, especially in dictatorships: 'Totalitarian violence needs credibility and, scientifically, it strives to produce the ersatz with living bodies' (Certeau 1986).¹⁶

The frequent use of metonymy in the studied texts might be connected to the theme of torture, as Alexander Etkind remarked in his book *Warped Mourning* when he spoke about prevailing features of post-1989 Russian literature: 'In this process, the metonymical poetics of magical historicism emulate the "piecemeal" logic of torture, which also manipulates parts of the body with the aim of changing the whole truth, integrity, and history' (Etkind 2013, Kindle loc. 4329).

This might be also the reason why the main characters in novels dealing with the memory of expulsion of the Germans are subjected to horrible violence.

Female Germans are often subjected to rape, physical torture and abuse. As if this violence suffered by individual examples of Germans was to stand in for the suffering and violence inflicted on the expelled German community.

The haunting past and rituals of mourning

How is the absence of the disappeared personified in the texts? Very often old photographs are used as a link to the missing era, person or community. Sebald and Huelle even incorporate black-and-white photos directly into their books, Huelle using authentic photographs from his family's archive. When in 1992 Austerlitz finds his former nanny in Prague, she shows him two photographs from before 1939 (the time of Austerlitz's early childhood), possibly depicting Austerlitz's parents. While looking at the photos, Austerlitz affirms that it seems as if the pictures had their own memory and were remembering the dead and those who survived (Sebald 2001, 266). When Austerlitz tries to find some traces of his parents in the archives in Prague, he also watches one of the films made in Teresienstadt. Austerlitz describes the music that accompanies the film as a funeral march coming from the 'subterranean world, through the most nightmarish depths' (Sebald 2001, 356). This description is a direct reference to the underworld of the dead and the phantoms of classical antiquity. In the archives, Austerlitz also finds a photo of a woman who might be his mother but he says that she looks rather like a phantom.¹⁷ Sebald's writing illustrates perfectly Derrida's semi-mourning and Derrida-inspired Bevernage's term 'haunting past'.

Indeed, photography has a close link to memory, trauma, death and forgetting¹⁸ – it also shows the limits and failings of photography to bring back the disappeared. Especially in Sebald's work, the figures in the photos look rather like ghosts (Lachmann talks about phantasma and simulacrum, Derrida about spectres and revenants) and the found pictures problematize rather than facilitate the process of mourning (Sebald 2001, 117).¹⁹ As Carolin Duttlinger puts it:

it is the latency and the transience of the photographic image, rather than its permanence and stability, which serve as a model for the process of memory, as the image of neither photography nor memory can be grasped or arrested, and are hence both prone to disappearance. Photography is thus figured as a model not for the permanence of memory but for the phenomenon of forgetting (Duttlinger 2004, 158).

Whereas Sebald stresses in his use of photography the haunting character of the past, Viličkovský and Huelle are more affirmative about the charm of old photographs and their capacity to perpetuate objective memory. Igor, the protagonist of Viličkovský's novel, contemplates the significance of the photography and what impresses him most is the lasting trace of a human life that photography saves even after the death of the portrayed person (Viličkovský 2009, 147). In Huelle's *Mercedes Benz*, when the narrator's grandfather, Karol, understands that Poland is subject to the double invasion of Hitler's Germany and of the Soviet Union, he reacts in a surprising way – on his return from the eastern part of Poland invaded by the Russians, he starts to sort out family photographs:

When he got home at last, instead of reporting for work at the now German factory, he spent days on looking through old photographs, putting his archive in order, writing the missing dates and names of people and places on their cardboard backing. As he unrolled it again, this particular reel of time already felt like something very different from a catalogue of ordinary memories; it felt as if those moments captured in the past by the cold shutter of his Leica now made up a completely new volume that he'd never intended to create, consisting of chance moments, twists and turns of light, bits and pieces of matter and voices that stopped sounding long ago; it was like a suddenly open, secret gate, revealing a previously unknown vista to the astonished passer-by, a wonderful spectacle of phantoms of time and space, swirling like golden pillars of dust in a dark old granary (Huelle 2005, 96).

Photography functions in Huelle's work as witness to history. At the same time it also works as means of transmitting cultural memory. The fact that Karol buys his rolls of film and photographic paper from the Jewish photographer Chaskiel Bronstein is particularly important. Karol pays the last visit to Chaskiel just after having sorted out the family photographs. On this occasion, the Germans have already closed down Chaskiel's shop and Karol learns that Chaskiel's family was sent to the ghetto. On leaving, Chaskiel gives the last rolls of film to Karol to show him his gratitude. With the means of capturing images (the rolls of film), he also transmits to Karol the duty to remember. Indeed, the memories from the past in Huelle's book come back to life through photos that accompany the book (alongside the

poster of Chaskiel's shop, making the link between history and literature explicit). Writing is then an act of invocation of phantoms from the past through a kind of funeral ritual (Huelle 2001, 145). The commemorative aspect of Huelle's text is thus evident.

The patterns of mourning that transpire from these texts have a clearly cathartic function – writing becomes a funeral ritual and at the same time a commemorative act (with all the dangers Ricoeur warns against). The Jewish photographer Chaskiel of Huelle's story cannot share the story of the life and death of the Polish Jewish community, but with the remaining films delegates the task to Karol who transmits the duty of remembering and the transmission of cultural memory to his grandson (the author of *Mercedes Benz*). The text of *Mercedes Benz* is evidence of the fulfilled pledge to the narrator's grandfather. And we can assume that it is the collection of photos sorted by Karol before his stay in the concentration camp and later transmitted to the narrator that serves as the starting point to the text of *Mercedes Benz*: 'when I got home and sat at the table, I spread out the small set of photographs from Chaskiel Bronstein's company envelope, and the first sentence rolled out all by itself' (Huelle 2001, 154). The texts thus have the cathartic and 'memorial' function assigned to literature by Renate Lachmann:

At the beginning of memoria as art stands the effort to transform the work of mourning into a technique. The finding of images heals what has been destroyed: The art of memoria restores shape to the mutilated victims and makes them recognizable by establishing their place in life. Preserving cultural memory involves something like an apparatus for remembering by duplication, by the representation of the absent through the image (phantasma or simulacrum), by the objectification of memory (as power and ability, as a space of consciousness, or as thesaurus), and by the prevention of forgetting through the retrieval of images (the constant recuperation of lost meaning) (Lachmann 2008, 302).

Writing as therapy to historical and personal trauma is present also in Denemarková's book. The main character, Gita Lauschmann, dies in the middle of the process of writing her memoirs that would say and explain 'everything'. Her last thoughts are 'not yet': 'But indeed, I am not ready yet, not

even close to ready, I do not feel like dying yet, I haven't brushed my teeth yet, I am not properly dressed, I haven't said everything yet ...'²⁰

Time has run out for Gita and prevented her from finishing her story. In Denemarková's book the trauma of the past maintains its haunting presence and the wish to know the truth and to arrive at a total reconciliation with the loss is not totally fulfilled (as it is implied in models of trauma and mourning commented by Bevernage and Craps).

The narrator of Katalpa's *The Germans* chooses to overcome the trauma and the depression that haunted the life of her father (and the whole family) after the revelations concerning his biological mother. If we go back to Ricoeur's comparison of the individual work of mourning in psychoanalysis, Kurt, the father, chooses the sadness of *acedia* (lack of care), whereas his daughter goes through the work of mourning towards life (through the work of sublimation), very much in the sense of the short epilogue that Ricoeur adds at the end of his book:

Under history, memory and forgetting.
Under memory and forgetting, life.
But writing a life is another story.
Incompletion (Ricoeur 2004, Kindle loc. 7535).²¹

Indeed, her success at the work of mourning is due to her acceptance of the incompletion of this reconciliation and thus of the work of mourning: 'I turn the envelope in my fingers. It came from Germany, so it is clear that it constitutes another piece of our investigation, information as useless as the previous one. What should interest us now does not lie in the past.'²²

The narrator receives a letter from Germany that could give her some new information. But instead of opening it and going back to the past and the wounded, sick memory (as Ricoeur calls it), she chooses life and goes out to join her little daughter who is playing in the garden, accepting the incompletion of her quest for the truth.

Conclusion

All the interpreted texts have a common topic: the enforced disappearance (of an individual or that of a whole community). As we have shown, these literary works also share descriptions of historical trauma and the

mechanisms of the work of mourning. 'The haunting past' maintains its disturbing presence and does not allow the Freudian-ideal final reconciliation with the lost object or past. The successful work of mourning seems to depend rather on the capacity to accept its incompleteness and to learn to live with the spectres of the past (as suggested by De Certeau, Ricoeur, Derrida, Bevernage, Craps and Etkind).

As we have disclosed, the texts only partly become '*lieux de mémoire*', places of remembrance of the dictatorships of Central Europe and its victims. Indeed, the authors put topics that have been taboo for decades into the public realm through artistic representation. These texts are rather literary transpositions and representations of historical traumas and their possible mourning mechanisms. Indeed, we have shown the tricky limits of Pierre Nora's concept of '*lieux de mémoire*' as it is discussed by Paul Ricoeur. Indeed, the reserve expressed by Nora himself and shared by Ricoeur of memory being consumed and dissolved in commemoration seems to be justified in relation to these interpreted texts. By its nature, literature can be used as a tool for subjective depictions of history and contemporary writers are taking part in debates on highly sensitive political and social issues (such as the Holocaust and massive expulsions). It seems that (often unintentionally) the writers might put themselves in the service of various 'memory activists'. In extreme cases, far from giving 'objective' descriptions of national history, they are not only not participating in the noble cause of the struggle against politically imposed amnesia of the communist past but might be taking part in promoting other, new political causes. The mourning in these texts could often bring back memories and reveal a point of view of a specific social group that particularly suffered under communist rule in Central Europe – for example, that of the bourgeois elites of the interwar period (the texts of Huelle and Kratochvil are the best representations of this perspective). This topic is certainly worth further analysis and examination.

The analysed literary texts show clearly common ways of expressing collective mourning. They reveal a more general pattern of dealing with the collective past, especially a traumatic one. However, this mourning is far from objective and expresses clear subjective bias. It is even more evident in the literary texts dealing with the memory of the German past. Indeed, even if the texts might be considered to a certain extent as 'places of memory' (as problematic as this concept might be), they are not so much places of memory as expressions of personal and historical traumas of the

20th century in Central Europe. As writers have focused almost exclusively on the issue of post-Second World War expulsions from the long-standing history of the German presence in Central Europe, we feel entitled to ask whether we are not dealing here with the mourning process for the cleansed national memory? The novels dedicated to the memory of the German past would thus be less about the mourning of the loss of the cultural legacy of the lost German community and more about a way of coming to terms with the legacy of dictatorships of the 20th century in Central Europe, especially that of communism.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 Claus Leggewie, 'Seven Circles of European Memory', Eurozine, 20 December 2010.
- 2 'International Convention for the Protection of all Persons from Enforced Disappearance'. Accessed 10 December 2017: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CED/Pages/ConventionCED.aspx>.
- 3 Ibid.
- 4 The right to truth was eventually included in a resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 16 December 2005: 'Basic Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Remedy and Reparation for Victims of Gross Violations of International Human Rights Law and Serious Violations of International Humanitarian Law.' Accessed 8 February 2018: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/RemedyAndReparation.aspx>.
- 5 'Question of the impunity of perpetrators of human rights violations (civil and political)' (final report prepared by Louis Joinet pursuant to Sub-Commission decision 1996/19)

[26 June 1997]. Accessed 6 January 2017: <https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/G97/129/12/PDF/G9712912.pdf?OpenElement>.

6 Ricoeur 2000, 528.

7 Ricoeur 2000, 523.

8 Ricoeur 2000, 95.

9 Ricoeur intuitively senses that the Freudian model is not absolutely satisfactory. He writes further: 'as for reconciliation with the loss itself, this will forever remain an unfinished task' (Ricoeur 2009, Kindle loc. 1365). It is also interesting to note that the final epilogue (in form of a short poem) of the book finishes with the word '*l'inachèvement*' (incompletion).

10 Derrida's work is today considered as one of those marking the so-called 'spectral turn' in humanities in 1990s (see especially Peeren and Del Pilar Blanco 2013 and Peeren 2014 and Del Pilar Blanco 2014).

11 "I claimed, moreover, that the spectral figure of the desaparecido and the idea of wandering ancestral spirits have to be interpreted as reflections of particular conceptions of historicity." (Bevernage 2012, 148; Chapter 'History and the Work of Mourning', Kindle loc. 3607.)

12 Bevernage is basing his conclusion on field research in South Africa, Sierra Leone and Argentina. See also the works by Esther Peeren on spectrality and the scholarship produced after the 'spectral turn' in humanities in 1990s.

13 To give one example, the main character of Tučková's novel *The Expulsion of Gerta Schnirch*, finally escapes expulsion and comes back to her hometown Brno. Life seems to be returning to normal and she is about to reconstruct her life with her teenage love, who has become an important member of the communist party. Nevertheless, her life is finally shattered when her lover disappears at the moment of the show trial with the communist leader Rudolf Slánský and his collaborators in 1952.

14 The research on the parallels between Nazism and Soviet totalitarianism were taboo in Soviet historiography before 1989 but some writers, such as Grossmann (*Life and Fate*), have addressed this question (see Etkind 2013, Kindle, chapter 'Soviet hauntology'). Central European writers address this topic in their writings and it is clearly visible in the texts by Kratochvíl and Huelle.

15 According to Tučková the character is based on a real person and the story is inspired by the personal diary of this woman that the author was able to access.

16 De Certeau 2016, 343.

17 See also Jan Ceuppens, 'Seeing Things: Spectres and Angels in W.G. Sebald's Prose Fiction', in J.J. Long and Anne Whitehead (eds), *W.G. Sebald, A Critical Companion*, 190–202 (Edinburgh, 2004, 2006), and Anne Fuchs, 'Die Unerlösheit der Geschichte: Der Film als Fantom' [History impossible to solve: Film as Phantom], in *Die Schmerzesspuren der Geschichte: Zur Poetik der Erinnerung* [To the Poetics of Remembering], in W.G. Sebald's *Prosa*, 62–67.

18 See also the famous texts on photography by Walter Benjamin, Roland Barthes or Susan Sontag.

19 From the vast bibliography on the use of photography by Sebald, see in particular Carolin Duttlinger, 'Traumatic Photographs: Remembrance and the Technical Media in W.G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*', in J.J. Long and Anne Whitehead (eds), *W.G. Sebald, A Critical*

Companion, 155–71, and Alexandra Tischel, 'Aus der Dunkelkammer der Geschichte. Zum Zusammenhang von Photographie und Erinnerung in W.G. Sebalds Austerlitz', in Michael Niehaus, Claudia Öhlschläger (eds), *W.G. Sebald, Politische Archäologie und melancholische Bastelei* [W.G. Sebald. Political Archaeology and melancholic DIY] (Berlin, 2006), 31–45.

20 Denemarková 2009, 230.

21 Ricoeur 2000, 257.

22 Katalpa 2012, 416.

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CONTROL THROUGH FEAR – THE ENEMY AT THE GATES: THE CASE OF ALBANIA

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ABSTRACT

One of the main features of the communist regime in Albania (1944–90) was the rule through intimidation and the psychosis of the ‘enemy at the gates’. More than two generations grew up and lived under such psychosis. Over the years they took such a situation for granted, by making it an essential part of their language, lifestyle, thought and vision for the future. The system of collective intimidation, ‘the enemy at the gates’ turned into a system of the rule of law. It was anchored in laws and punishments used against any critical form of resistance to the regime. In such society happiness, sovereignty, survival and success were only considered possible in a closed, isolated system guarded by vigilantes who monitored and rejected of any kind of external influence. This paper analyses the evolution of the concept of the ‘enemy’ and the system of establishing a feeling of permanent fear emanating from the top (systemic authorities) towards the bottom (citizens), through official political discourse. It looks at how these notions ‘succeeded’ and how they influenced the political formation of society. It discusses the dynamics of the creation of a collective consciousness based on the primacy of survival.

Introduction

A large part of Albania’s modern political history (1945–90) unfolded under the heavy shadow of one-party rule, marked by the uncontested control of a sole leader over the party. Albanian politics of that period showed markedly totalitarian traits, shaped by the syndrome of perpetual anxiety over perceived internal and external threats. The regime built up a system capable of using violence and triggering fear, able to eradicate potential threats identified among suspect groups and individuals.

The relationship between state and citizen was built on a widely shared understanding of the state as an all-powerful entity, ultimately embodied in the dictator and his inner circle. It was able to claim and ultimately wield total control over society as a whole and on individual citizens who had no role to play in decision-making and a sacred duty to accept orders, guidance and instructions. The fear-instilling system was functional and effective. It was anchored in the constitution through severe limitations on civil rights, through complementary legislation on surveillance, through state propaganda and through a far-reaching control over an individual's private life, family, community, workplace, career advancement and religious beliefs.

As Arendt wrote, 'totalitarian ideologies aim to transform human nature itself, since the human condition of plurality is the greatest obstacle standing in the way of the realization of an ideologically consistent universe [...] since tyranny destroys the public realm of politics and is therefore anti-political by definition' (Arendt 2002). Nevertheless, the state of 'isolation' and 'impotence' experienced by the individual in tyrannical forms of government springs from the destruction of the public realm of politics whereas the mobilization of the 'overwhelming, combined power of all others against its own' does not eliminate entirely a minimum of human contact in the non-political spheres of social intercourse and private life. Thus, if the fear-guided actions of the subject of tyrannical rule are bereft of the capacity to establish relations of power between individuals acting and speaking together in a public realm of politics, the 'isolation' of the political subject does not entail the destruction of his social and private relations. Therefore, in all nontotalitarian forms of government, the body politic is in constant motion within set boundaries of a stable political order, although tyranny destroys the public space of political action (Ngjela, 2003, 21).

No other state in the socialist bloc was able to conceive and apply such extreme measures as in Albania, and none was as effective in eliminating dissidence, in prohibiting religion in the Constitution, and in ultimately cutting itself off from both East and West. Two generations were born and lived under this psychotic regime. As the years went by, the nature of the regime was taken for granted. Its existence and functioning was internalized. It became part of the way people lived, spoke and thought about the past, present and future.

The 'enemy at the gates' system of collective control through fear evolved into a method of ruling through pervasive violence that was sanctioned in

legal acts and practical measures targeting each and every form of possible and actual dissidence against the regime. Under such a system, the quest for personal happiness was overridden by the need for survival: a personal life was only possible inside a closed shell that refused to be influenced by the outside world. The fall of the regime in 1990 and the establishment of the multi-party system were understood as a departure from the regime of fear, where people could meet and speak openly.

The old concept of ‘the enemy’, as mostly associated with Western Democracy, was then superseded by the concept of ally, friend, partner and unconditional supporter of the Euro-Atlantic integration process.

‘The enemy’ as a constitutional principle and as a basis of legitimacy

Communist Albania’s prevailing concept of ‘the enemy’ was related first and foremost with the relationship between the individual and the Party¹ and with the connection between the individual, state and society. The only official Albanian dictionary of that time (dictionary of today’s standard Albanian [FGJSH], 1980, 53)) describes the entry ‘enemy’ as ‘the person who stands against the interests of the class, party, motherland and socialism, by fighting and acting against them’.²

This definition is to be also found in previous academic and official papers and documents, in the official media, in public discourse and in the notes and documents of the Political Bureau, Albania’s Communist Party’s highest decision-making body from 1948 to 1990. The Communist Party’s sources mention several types of ‘enemies’, among the most notable we can list are ‘the enemy of the party’, ‘the enemy of the people’, ‘the class enemy’, ‘enemy of the people’s rule’. Marking individuals as ultimate enemies, should they engage in activities marked as harmful to ‘the interest of the [working] class and of the party’, is indicative of the core philosophy that sustained Albania’s communist system.

Under charges of ‘hostile activity’, implying acts or opinions and perceptions opposed to the Party, the communist regime executed 5,157 citizens; 9,052 more citizens died in prison; 17,990 citizens underwent prolonged imprisonment sentences; and 30,383 citizens were exiled in conditions similar to labour camps, bringing the total number of people subjected to political persecution to 65,582. With an effective population of just 1.1 million inhabitants, this resulted in 5.9 per cent of the population or 10.2 per cent of

citizens over eighteen years of age being subjected to political persecution. Officially Albania had twenty-three political prisons and forty-eight labour camps for political detainees.

The ascent to power of the communists in Albania was later exemplified in the Constitution of 1945. It was consolidated in the Constitutions of 1950 and 1976, and supported by several pieces of secondary legislation. According to the political programme of Albania's Communist Party of 1948, and to the Constitution of the Republic of Albania of 1950:

in the present historical era, the Communist Party (of Albania) mobilizes and guides the working class, the peasants, and all of the country's workmen, in their struggle against the remainders of the fascism, feudalism, bourgeoisie and reactionaries, to uphold the country's independence and territorial integrity, to advance democracy and the people's rule, to rebuild and to industrialize the country, to build up its electrical power grid, to develop the state sector and the cooperatives to raise the economic, cultural and technical level of knowledge of the working class and of the whole population (Labour Party of Albania [LPA] 1950).

The Statute of the Communist Party stated the following basic criterion with regard to its members: 'to protect the party and its unity from the attacks of internal and external foes' (LPA 1948, 520).

This definition creates a relationship of interdependence between the concept of the struggle against the 'internal enemies', including the 'bourgeois' identified as the urban middle and upper class, the 'remainders of feudalism' consisting of the landed gentry, 'the reactionaries' implying religious communities in general and Roman Catholics in particular, and 'the remainders of fascism', consisting of the individuals and the families of those directly or indirectly involved with the state administration under the German and Italian occupation in the period 1939–44.

The total war waged against the above categories, which back in 1948 represented the most educated strata of Albanian society, was justified with the struggle 'to preserve national independence and territorial integrity' and 'rebuild the country'. Further to punishing or disciplining critics of the

regime, the party would argue that it had ‘eliminated’ enemies of Albania’s independence and progress. This alibi seemed to work well during Albania’s post-Second World War state of exception that saw the final establishment and consolidation of communist rule further to the total eradication and suppression of any effective threat to the new regime. After that, it seemed to have been accepted without any reservation, as all dissenting voices were already effectively suppressed.

The concept of the enemy as a hallmark of ‘class struggle’, in the sense of boundless class warfare waged against all those holding differing opinions, was sanctioned in the Constitution with the following wording (Constitution ... 1976): ‘The Socialist Republic of Albania is a country ruled by the dictatorship of the proletariat, as the expression of the interests of all workers’; ‘the leading ideology being Marxism–Leninism’; ‘poised to continuously advance the revolution, the class struggle, towards the final victory of socialism over capitalism, and towards the ultimate establishment of and communism.’

Article 55 of the Constitution prohibits the establishment ‘of any organization of fascist, anti-democratic, religious or anti-socialist nature. Fascist activity, any type of anti-democratic and religious propaganda, and the instigation of racial and national hatred shall be prohibited.’

The Constitution and the Criminal Code entailed over seventy articles sanctioning the death penalty over several criminal offenses (Repishti 2017). Offences such as ‘activity directed against the party’, ‘emigration from the country’, ‘economic sabotage’, ‘religious practices’ and the establishment of organizations outside the Labour (Communist) Party were subject to harsh sanctions, further detailed in secondary legislation and in other specific measures, such as the unifying decision of 1968 to suppress the Ministry of Justice. The decision remained in force until spring 1990, leaving Albania without a Ministry of Justice for twenty-two years.

The execution of these extreme political and ideological decisions was entrusted to an extended network of informers built around the secret police, also known as *Sigurimi* – State Security. The State Security as approved by the Political Bureau (Decision no. 30 1954) aimed to create a system of total surveillance of Albania’s citizens, including low profile enemies of the Party, for the purpose of protecting the leader and the party ‘from internal and external enemies’.

The surveillance was carried out by the departments of the Ministry of Interior in conjunction with ‘voluntary cooperation groups’, consisting of party loyalists and members of its auxiliary organizations. The structure had a vertical line of command and a horizontal extension, covering all inhabited areas and production facilities. It controlled all mailing services, all correspondence between citizens, especially the correspondence of families with convicted and exiled members. Over one third of the Albanian citizens were covered by personal surveillance files.

‘The enemy’ as a mechanism of persecution and control

The concept of social class, entailing a regime ‘of workmen and countrymen’ in charge of ruling over the rest of the social classes is found in different forms in the Soviet models and in the ideologies of other socialist countries all over the Eastern Bloc. In Albania the class concept was at the very foundation of the country’s legal framework and at the heart of public discourse. It was the source of all legal and administrative acts. The classification of citizens into two large categories – party loyalists and enemies – marked the line of division between a totalitarian regime and the alternatives to it. The singularity of Albania’s communist regime has been widely debated, also with regard to the question whether ‘class struggle’ was ‘properly’ borrowed as a system of reference from the October Revolution, or whether it was mostly adapted to the social reality where the Albanian communists had to operate.

The critical thesis maintains that ‘class struggle’ was ‘misused as an alibi for paying lip service to the totalitarian structure’, therefore ‘the destructive war waged against the individual in Albania was wrongly referred to as class struggle ... the very definition of class struggle is an expression coming from a totalitarian mind set ... there was no class struggle in Albania, rather a war of all against all’ (Klosi 1993, 57).

As discussed by Lefort, ‘the attack against the enemies of the people was launched in the manner of a disease prevention campaign: the integrity of the body depends on the elimination of the parasites feasting upon it’ (Lefort 1994, 115). The communist regime came into being precisely through the quest for the total elimination of all potential resistance. In 1944 and 1945 Albania’s communists undertook extreme measures (arrests, executions and long sentences of imprisonment of twenty to a hundred years) against all individuals with a potential to provide political representation. They

indiscriminately attacked high-profile political opponents, minor political associations, influential local religious leaders and the whole of the liberal elite of their time. In 1945 the communists embarked upon a far-reaching ‘agrarian reform’ that wiped out the well-to-do farmers, and created a loyal social group of peasants entitled to the use of land, totally dependent on the decisions taken by the regime. In 1948 Albania passed a law on the forced expropriation of all cattle stock (Law no. 598 1948). That law paved the way to the establishment of farming cooperatives. Those who resisted its implementation, or those found to have hidden the cattle subject to expropriation, were considered as ‘saboteurs and reactionaries’, liable to be sentenced to up to ten years’ imprisonment.

The same approach was followed with the law on the confiscation of agricultural products, with the adoption of the system of extraordinary taxation for retail traders and with the decision to confiscate monetary values saved outside financial institutions. The professed goal of the regime was ‘to crush the resistance of political opponents, to expropriate the upper class ... to safeguard the victories of the revolution’ (Omari 1977, 119). A decision of the Political Bureau identified eighteen cases that qualified an individual as ‘a hostile kulak’, liable to be put under surveillance, have their possessions confiscated and be deprived of freedom.

The description of ‘kulaks’ includes the following: ‘he/she has a nice house and extensive property’, ‘he is very active in the bazaar’, ‘he used to lend money at interest’, ‘he was connected to the regime of [King] Zog’, ‘he is opposed to the modernization of agriculture’, ‘he acted as if he were the most important and the most intelligent man in the village’, ‘he is a double-crosser’, ‘he has family connections with rich families’, ‘he opposes womens’ participation in social life’. The same methods of classification applied to other types of enemies: religious enemies, enemies in the fields of arts and culture, enemies in the fields of sport, economy, army and so on.

The branding as an enemy affected all leaders of religious communities, urban elites, important landowners in northern Albania, and those individuals with connections in Western Europe. This eclectic mix of individuals fell into the category of ‘enemy of the people’. This category was periodically expanded to include persons holding public functions, subsequently denounced as ‘saboteurs’ and ‘collaborationists’, especially if they failed to achieve the objectives set by the central planning committee. When the

works to drain the Maliq swamp failed to be completed in 1946 within the given deadline, the communist regime arranged a ten-day trial that served to execute all the technical experts of the project, including a pregnant woman. They were accused of ‘sabotage’ and of being ‘US and British spies’. Over seventy former students of the Harry Fultz College in Albania met tragic deaths, imprisonment and confinement.

A unique case is given by the arrest, trial, sentencing and execution within the timeframe of only seventy-two hours of twenty-two well-known intellectuals in February 1951, accused of ‘hostile acts’ and ‘involvement with foreign espionage’. The review of their files in 1991 showed that the Political Bureau had decided to set an example, and to this end, it brought together and evaluated a list consisting of 170 intellectuals from different locations. At the end of the meeting, the Bureau set apart twenty-two people to be killed, and the decision was passed to the secret service, the Prosecutor’s Office and to the state police for immediate execution. Such acts of terror were meant to establish and perpetuate a climate of fear, in which every single individual would sense that his life and his survival were out of his control.

The politically motivated attack against the concept of the independence of the individual was only the first ring in a long chain of measures geared towards conditioning him, his family, friends and colleagues. If a person were to be sentenced on political charges, he would automatically relinquish his rights of citizenship including the right to vote. His family would be included in the list of those to be possibly sent to exile, in conditions very similar to the Soviet Gulags or to the Nazi labour camps. Their property could be seized at any time. The very fact of being a family member, a friend or a relative of a person found to be an enemy of the people would automatically make them guilty.

The courts decided which individual was guilty, while the decision to send his family into exile was taken by a select committee of the Ministry of Interior. Often no prior consultations with those affected were deemed necessary.

The concept of wholesale persecution and collective punishment was adequately anchored in the legal framework of that time. The legal practice of sending persons into exile started in 1949 with the first decree issued against the families of political opponents (Decree no. 649, 1949, art. 3). In 1979 the law on exile was supplemented with additional elements, laid out

in a decree of the Presidium of the People's Assembly (Decree no. 5912, 1979). More concretely: 'The punishment by exile as an administrative measure can be given against Albanian citizens, foreign citizens and stateless persons of more than 14 years of age, have the capacity to act and are dangerous to the social order of the Republic of Albania ... exiling may be also applied against the relatives of the persons who have escaped abroad'. The law further established that 'relatives' are the 'spouses, children, parents, brothers and sisters, and other persons living together with the person or who were under his custody'.

'The enemy' as an alibi for personal power

The justification for committing crimes 'for public interest' and 'in the name of the people' was widely in line with the regime's Bolshevik model, which taught that 'the dictatorship of the proletariat was to be considered as similar to a terrorist formation. The Bolsheviks considered themselves as chosen by God to bring about peace, development and equality in a world dominated by crime, therefore crime was to be fought by crime, yet crime was to be perpetrated only for a higher purpose' (Ngjela 2011, 193). In line with these teachings, dictator Enver Hoxha was keen on acting resolutely against 'the enemy'.

He ordered the imprisonment and execution of seventeen high-level politicians and maximum sentences against seventy important statesmen, founders of Albanian independence in 1912, former prime ministers, ministers and intellectuals, including the spouse of his own sister, Bahri Omari. The execution of Hoxha's brother-in-law was not linked to any specific accusation or crime. It is to be rather understood as an attempt to show to everybody that the same standard applied to everyone, including the close relatives of the high party officials, who dared to criticize the dictator.

In the period 1944–48 Albania entered into a preferential relationship with Yugoslavia. As a result of this, hundreds of individuals, including high party officials, critical of the political control wielded by the Yugoslavs, were prosecuted and found guilty as internal enemies. From 1948 to 1961 upon severing its links to Yugoslavia, Albania aligned itself to the USSR. The rule remained the same: whoever was found to be a critic of the Soviets was sentenced to from four to seven years of imprisonment. After the interruption of the relationship with the USSR, and further to Albania's alignment with Communist China (1966–75), the rule was applied once again: whoever was

found to be critical of China was to be punished, those who were considered to be pro-Russian or trained in Moscow were prosecuted and punished.

After the interruption of the relations with China (after 1975), those who made a career during Albania's Chinese alignment had to pay a high price. Some ministers were executed, including the ministers of defence, economy and industry. The highest profile case was related to the forced suicide of the communist Prime Minister Mehmet Shehu in 1981. He was declared as an enemy of the state after his death. The engagement of Shehu's son with a girl from a family with a 'bad political biography' was used by the communist regime to 'prove' that Prime Minister Shehu had passed over to the enemy camp. Further to Shehu's suicide and to the execution of several ministers, including the minister of interior and the minister of health, their families were arrested or exiled, and some of the close relatives, including the wife of the former prime minister were executed, on charges related to 'treason' against the party and the people. Each of the waves of massive retribution relied on the same official justification: the need to punish the enemies of the people, spies and traitors.

The punishments were followed by hefty propaganda campaigns aimed at proving the treason of those punished and at providing information on their alleged efforts 'to overthrow the rule of the people and to eliminate the highest leaders of the state' (Pipa 2010, 98). A wealth of archived documents and research studies of this period seems to prove the thesis that there was no actual involvement of Albanian politicians or political groupings with foreign governments. Their punishment mostly came as a result of the dictator's fear of possible contacts between his high officials with important allied states (Yugoslavia, USSR, China etc.) that might threaten his leadership. It is clear that the war against such 'enemies' was instrumentalized by the dictator, always looking for ways to ensure his personal and unilateral grip on power. This also explains the system of fluid alliances and Albania's subsequent self-isolation from both the East and the West, and the escalation of the periodic campaigns of 'class struggle' against 'the enemy'.

This thesis is corroborated by the increased number of sentences after the early fifties, a period in which virtually no actual 'enemies' were left. Precisely in this timeframe, a new wave of punishments against all types of perceived enemies (informers, rival political formations, intellectuals critical of the regimes, dissidents, agents coming from outside Albania) was launched.

According to the official figures, from 1949 to 1953, 2,611 people escaped from Albania, or 0.3 per cent of the total population (Xhafer 2013, 187). After 1954, when Albania was able to almost fully seal its borders, it started to send growing numbers of its ‘enemies’ to exile inside its territory. In the period 1954 to 1957, the average number of families sent to exile was 300 to 500. After the break in relations with the USSR, in the period 1954 to 1957, the number of families sent to exile increased considerably, reaching 1,200 to 1,300 families per year. The same situation repeated itself after the break with China in the seventies.

Control through fear in Albania

When Dictator Hoxha died in April 1985, his obituary noted that under his leadership ‘Albania was safe’, implying that his death might turn Albania into an unsafe place. Far from being an intentionally made hint, this deliberation was closely related to a mentality created in the course of many years, according to which Albania was permanently being threatened by an impending invasion by its foes. The key slogans from this isolationist period were: ‘We build socialism with a pickaxe in the one hand and with a gun in the other’, ‘We dance on the face of danger’, ‘The enemy holds us at gunpoint, but we aim at him with a cannon’. In his memoirs, author Agim Mero mentions that in the mid-sixties, after the break with the Soviet Union, Albania’s communist regime started to bring into circulation slogans such as: ‘We will pour molten lead into the mouths of those who dare rise up against us’, or ‘We will eat grass rather than surrender’ (Mero 1997, 65). Both slogans seem to confirm the ‘enemy at the gates’ thesis, as they appeal to the ultimate sacrifice in the struggle against the enemy.

During the second half of the seventies, the Albanian communist regime built over 700,000 bunkers, as an extreme measure of protection against ‘the enemy’. The construction of the concrete pillboxes was treated as a matter of absolute priority. The pressure on the technicians and on the engineers was extreme. Quality was ‘an absolute requirement, and that was ensured to the detriment of other projects’ (Mero 1997, 129). The coastline was viewed as a potential landing area for enemy forces. Special bunkers were constructed along the whole of it. The dictator stopped all major infrastructural projects, because highways might eventually be used as airstrips for invading US armies.

In addition to fortifying its defences against its external foes, Albania waged an internal war against its religious institutions. The Labour Party was proud

of its ‘systematic struggle against religion, which is a reactionary ideology and opium for the people’.³ It boasted that under its leadership, ‘people rose up in towns and in the countryside, asking for the final removal of all churches, mosques and all holy places’. The religious structures were forced to relinquish their functions, and most of the religious buildings were converted into ‘Cultural Centres’. The madness of extreme isolation was in parallel with the establishment of a system of permanent vigilance, to which all citizens were called to contribute. The former secretary of the Communist Youth in the mid-seventies, and later himself a victim of the purges made by the system, Agim Mero noted that ‘under the slogan “one citizen – one soldier” all eligible Albanians had to toil in permanent military drills. Women had to perform military drills with wooden rifles and to train in hand-to-hand combat’ (Mero 1997, 129).

All students, workers and intellectuals had to perform obligatory biannual military drills. Most of the academic staff were sent to work for periods ranging from one to three years in the agriculture or industry sector, so as to strengthen their revolutionary ties with the peasants and the working class. Albania refused to have contact with most Western democracies. Albania’s football teams refused to play against certain Western teams, and had to pay the penalties imposed by the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) and the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA).

The system of control through fear was as brutal as it was effective. The regime undertook some steps to ease its controls in 1990. It passed legislation that changed the sanctions in force against migration from the death penalty to prison terms from three to seven years. Nonetheless, thirty-three citizens, mostly young, were killed at the border by army units and state security service. In some cases the bodies of those killed at the border were paraded across city centres so as to strike terror and fear into the population, especially among those hoping to leave the country. The relatives of the victims were not allowed to organize their burials, and their friends were prosecuted.

The system was both forthright and pervasive. Mero writes: ‘the regime was a huge and intricate machine, structured in parallel state and party structures ... a small leadership is at the top, but around and below there were many smaller pyramids of power extending down to the smallest village. They

reached out from the ministries down to the most minuscule production units, from the army's chief of staff down to the women's military unit of the neighbourhood, from the central committee of the party down to the kindergartens which had their own children's units. Guidance and instructions were passed down from the very top to the lowest structure; everybody was held accountable for their implementation' (Mero 1997, 127). Children in the kindergartens were frequently asked what their parents talked about at home. Potentially sensitive information was passed to the security service for further investigation that could lead to arrests and imprisonments.

The security service applied similar methods in primary and high schools. For a period stretching over forty-six years, university studies were considered a political prerogative and were not linked to the talents and capacities of the applicants. No students were admitted from the families marked by the regime with 'bad biography'. Weekly 'political updates' were held in all state institutions, factories, universities, schools and farms. Voluntary surveillance groups were established everywhere, in addition to combat teams, to be activated in case of invasion. All correspondence, especially all letters addressed to relatives living abroad were screened by the security services. The mail could go through only after a special clearance was issued by a special office. The lack of means of communication (personal computers, private or public phones, private cars, etc.) prevented citizens from accessing information from the outside world. That made official propaganda the only access point for the information coming in from outside the Albanian communist bubble.

At present post-communist Albania can only draw on a limited number of studies of the communist period, and even less so regarding the system of control through fear of that time. Presiding over a small country with a tiny population, highly incriminated by long years of collusion with the communist regime, Albania's elite choose to adopt a conciliatory approach best described by its new slogan: 'everyone suffered – everyone was guilty.' This served to ease the tensions between the victims and their persecutors. There exist highly diverging views regarding the nature of the communist regimes around the world, and to the concepts laid out by Arendt and Huntington in this regard. It can be maintained that the definition of the key feature of a personal dictatorship as 'the system that locates the source of power in the vicinity to the leader and to those having his trust and support' is well suited

for Albania (Huntington 2011, 72). Nonetheless, most researchers describe the Albanian system as an advanced model of totalitarian rule, by arguing that the key to totalitarianism is to be found in fear rather than in brute force' (Danaj 2012). The Albanian version of 20th-century totalitarianism is best seen as a violent political regime of a single political party incapable and unwilling to accept any form of organized opposition and/or dissent, whereby the state controls the totality of societal space.

Old tyrannies only succeeded in destroying the political and organizational capacities of their opponents; they were not able to seek and destroy the networks of personal and private relationships. They did not invalidate the 'personal self', in the sense of the personality of each individual, which is exactly what happened under the totalitarian experience. Arendt's description is evocative of another rendering of the Albanian model of totalitarianism, under which the party fully identified with the state 'as a demon that numbed the minds and souls of the people, by convincing them that it would never leave. It stretched over everything, took control of the remote corners of private lives, through surveillance and pressure, through tension and fear that reached out to everyone' (Ngjela 2013, 21).

'The enemy' as an obstacle to reform

Albania was the only European country that refused to sign the Helsinki Final Act of 1975 because of its constant guard against the Western and Eastern 'enemy'. Back in 1948 Albania had refused to publish the UN Human Rights Charter of 1948 for its citizens. Not until 1991 did Albania become a member of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), sign the Helsinki Final Act and publish the UN Human Rights Charter.

As the continent's only atheist and anti-religious country, Albania adopted a system of propaganda that denigrated each and every element, symbol and memory of religious association. A very striking example is the treatment Albania reserved for Mother Teresa. Albanians inside Albania only learned about her winning the Nobel Peace Prize in 1979 in the late 1980s. She was considered *persona non grata* by the regime because she belonged to a Christian denomination, wore religious dress and was supported by governments on unfriendly terms with the Albanian communist regime. At the close of the 1980s Albania's political agenda remained the same, despite the initiation of several Euro-Atlantic processes aimed at changing the economies and politics of the countries of the Eastern Bloc. The endeavours of some

Western European countries to re-establish relations with Albania were met by an opaque wall of hostility of communist officials, who argued that the country's constitution prohibited political and economic relations with the enemy.

The fall of the Berlin Wall amplified the pressure felt by the Tirana government. Nonetheless it continued not to confront the inevitability of the change to come. Its best alibi continued as before: 'the external enemy', the danger to which Albania would be exposed if it were to open itself, even partially, to the wider world. The regime held Albania to be 'the world's only truly free country, independent of US imperialism and Soviet social-imperialism, free from the Treaty of Warsaw and free from NATO ... so we should continue to be watchful so as to retain and protect our victories' (Alia 2010). The regime considered any demand for political pluralism as a hostile act. It described pluralism as a threat to the state and to its identity, since 'Albania's independence and freedom are perpetually threatened. Hence, the difference of opinion and opinions directed against those of the Labour Party threaten the future of the motherland, its very freedom and independence' (Alia 2010, 364).

In a meeting held with Albanian intellectuals only four months prior to the change of the political regime, the communist leader Ramiz Alia reiterated that Albania was 'a special case', compared to other Eastern Europe countries. He precluded the request for the introduction of changes in the system, by maintaining this to be a demand stemming from the enemies of Albania.

Conclusion

Control through fear, resulting in systematically applied pressure made up of continuous threats stood at the very foundation of communist regime in Albania. Two generations of Albanians were the helpless victims of an arbitrary despotic system that considered human life as state property. The system of control through fear managed to eradicate all potential for internal resistance. Through total self-isolation it avoided any possible external influences. Differently from the rest of the Eastern European countries, especially from the East German system of 'the exchange of prisoners for hard currency', or the Polish model of religious faith and Solidarity, the Albanian model constitutes the most extreme model of isolation and state violence.

Class struggle, a war against God, the fight against external influences and isolation from the possible permanent dangers coming from Western, and then later Eastern, enemies triggered a psychosis for survival among Albanians, exposed to the permanent struggle against the ‘enemy at the gates’. This study refers to the constitution, the legal framework of Albania’s communist era and to the most typical traits of the political decision-making of the regime to argue that the concept of the enemy was instrumentalized to legitimize a highly personalized type of one-man, one-party rule, highly hostile to the very idea of openness towards the outside world.

The ‘enemy at the gates’ and the ‘enemy inside us’ were prime instruments of psychological terror – they were primary mechanisms of control and also the means for providing alibies to eliminate all potential criticism towards the party and its leading clique. These concepts dominated political discourse and guided the deliberations of official propaganda. They were the primary source of reference for the slogans crafted for wide public dissemination and instrumental in distorting the people’s collective historical memory. When Albanians parted ways with communism, they also parted ways with the system of control through fear.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 The Labour Party of Albania was, as enshrined in the Constitution, ‘the only leading force for the state and society’ from 1944 to 1990.
- 2 Academy of Sciences of the Socialist Peoples’ Republic of Albania (2014). Dictionary of Contemporary Albanian Language, Tirana, Albania.
- 3 Joint Declaration of the Central Committee of the People’s Labour Party and of the Council of Ministers of the Peoples’ Republic of Albania, 29 April 1967.

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TESTING THE LIMITS OF MANIPULATION: CHILDREN AS A PROPAGANDA TOOL IN SERBIAN AND CROATIAN MEDIA DURING THE YUGOSLAV WARS (1991–95)

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ABSTRACT

The violent break-up of Yugoslavia, which began in the early 1990s, was undoubtedly influenced by the war propaganda aimed towards the nationalistic goals of all the sides involved. This article is focused on the analysis and comparison of one specific aspect of propaganda employed by the main pro-regime media in Serbia and Croatia, whose conflict marked the beginning of Yugoslavia's dissolution: that is of the misuse of children as a warmongering instrument. The research examines different ways in which the manipulation of children as victims was used in Croatian and Serbian media and also its consequences, especially the role it played in shaping the actions of the warring parties. While Serbian media focused on the past by emphasizing the genocidal nature of Croats in the Second World War and the need to avenge Serb victims, especially children, Croatian media presented Croatian children as personifications and ambassadors of the 'newly born' Croatian collective national body, which was suffering from Serbian aggression. While standard histories of ethnic conflicts, nationalism and post-war transitions focus mainly on adult actors, this project seeks to shed light on the importance of children as both subjects and agents in the conflict-ridden areas of the Balkans, including their centrality to the transition from communism to democracy, to the wars that marked that shift, and to post-communist nation building, which remains contentious and in a state of flux to this day.

As future leaders of the nation, children have undoubtedly been a group of immense importance for political elites as part of the modern nation-building process. This was particularly the case in the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, whose statesmen and peoples took pride in the fact

that they liberated the country from the Axis through the communist-led, popularly supported Partisan movement in the Second World War. Furthermore, Yugoslavia soon became the only communist state in Europe to break with the Soviet Union and establish itself as neutral. The official socialist Yugoslav line presented the country as an ideal model of multi-ethnicity, with six ethnic groups (Serbs, Croats, Slovenes, Macedonians, Slavic Muslims and Montenegrins), five official languages (Serbo-Croatian, Slovenian, Macedonian, Magyar and Albanian) and three official religions (Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Islam). Therefore, the leaders of the state knew it was important to mobilize young generations for support of specific goals and ideals of the Yugoslav socialist federation and for nurturing interethnic tolerance among its different ethnic and religious groups.

In 1991, however, with the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, a violent ethnic war erupted between Croatia and insurgent Croatian Serbs supported by Serb-dominated Yugoslav People's Army (YPA). It began to tear the country apart. Within a decade, a series of conflicts resulted in seven independent states.¹ From the very beginning, the pro-regime media in the countries involved played an essential part in shaping public opinion on the war (Thompson 1994, 1). Even though the communist regime in Yugoslavia was not as restrictive as in Eastern Bloc countries when it came to the notion of media freedom, by the time the dissolution of Yugoslavia had begun, the media in Croatia and Serbia were already firmly controlled by the conservative right-wing political elites who embraced exclusive ethnonational political programmes. One element that made the Yugoslav Wars unique is the fact that they took place on the brink of the 21st century, the age that saw mass media culture thrive in Southeastern Europe. Given the extent of media coverage and ordinary citizens' access to television, newspapers and radio, viewers could literally follow its day-to-day course, and were exposed to gruesome scenes from the war in a way unseen before in Southeastern Europe. In addition to this, 'patriotic journalism' and war propaganda contributed to the state-of-war psychosis in which it was extremely difficult to differentiate between fact and misinformation.

How do we define propaganda? According to Professors of Communications Garth Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, it is 'the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist' (Jowett and O'Donnell 2012, 7). They further subclassify propaganda into

white (acknowledged source, accurate information), grey (source and/or information may or may not be verified) and black (false or conceived source, incorrect information) (Jowett and O'Donnell 2012, 17–20). These classifications will be of importance for this study when comparing the media in Serbia and Croatia, the two largest and most regionally dominant of the former Yugoslav states, and two of the parties most deeply engaged in ethnic conflict during these wars.

The research proposed here will demonstrate how children were used to justify ethnic warfare and the notion of ethnic exclusivity, one of the most important strategies of nation building in post-Yugoslav Croatia and Serbia. The evidence indicates that both Croatian and Serbian pro-nationalist media overexaggerated the role of children as victims and, through manipulation and misinformation, sought to enhance the overall public sentiment of animosity and rancour towards the 'other side'. Nevertheless, the message conveyed in such a way differs slightly in its purpose. Serbian media, while mainly resorting to grey and black propaganda, constantly overemphasized the genocidal nature of the Croats and the parallelism with their crimes committed during the Second World War against Serbs and their children. On the other hand, Croatian media used children to a lesser extent through white propaganda, and with a predisposition towards centring on the present; Croatian children were seen as critical and representative of the 'finally united' Croatian collective national body (referring to the establishment of the independent nation-state in 1991), which fell victim to Serbian aggression and needed international recognition.

The connection between ideology and childhood indoctrination has recently been receiving more scholarly attention, especially among scholars working on topics concerning the processes of nation building and political culture in the late 19th- and 20th-century. However, most of these works deal with Western Europe, the United States, the former Soviet Union and Latin America, places where the nation-building process, when compared to Southeastern Europe at least, seems better established and successful.² As for Southeastern Europe, and the region of the former Yugoslavia specifically, one notices the predominance of one type of approach that has left us with, at best, only a very incomplete understanding of children's central place in the cultural, social and political upheaval that marked the region. Recent historiography has produced numerous child-centred studies covering the period of the Yugoslav Wars (1991–95). However, such

works focus exclusively on the problems of children's war trauma and the process of rehabilitation.³ The contribution of my project lies precisely in its different approach: instead of looking at the more familiar subject of the after-the-fact personal experiences of children who suffered through the war, I am turning to the new question of how those who had taken control of post-Yugoslav societies in Croatia and Serbia after the collapse of communism used that suffering to manipulate the masses and motivate them to enthusiastically participate in the warfare.

The study revolves around selected themes and concepts crucial to the understanding of the methods and effect of utilizing children as propaganda tools by Serbian and Croatian media. The first one focuses on Serbian media, while also providing an overview of the general situation regarding its tendencies of communicating information to the Serbian public from 1991 to 1995. The second section is equally structured, but it offers an insight into the problem from the Croatian media's perspective. Finally, the two sides are compared, with a special emphasis on similarities and differences when it comes to the intentions and techniques behind the employment of such propaganda and its consequences on the relationship between the two countries and their position within the European community.

War for the sake of Serb children

The Yugoslav Wars, marked by the worst atrocities and war crimes seen in Europe since the Second World War, were initiated by Serbia and its ultra-radical nationalist leader Slobodan Milošević, who took over the Serbian Communist Party in 1987. With the enormous military power of the Yugoslav People's Army, Milošević proclaimed himself to be the representative of the largest ethnic group in Yugoslavia (Thompson 1994, 51). The aim was to reunite all ethnic Serbs in one state, and this inevitably included the 'liberation' of large territories of Croatia and Bosnia where Serbs represented the majority or the significant minority, and also expel non-Serbs in order to annex those territories to 'historical Serbia' (Brosse 2003, 14–15). Serbian media contributed to the Yugoslav disintegration more than any other state in the federation; Serbian leadership and the insurgent Serbs in Croatia did not accept the Croatian declaration of independence in June 1991, and the war was to be fought only if the public embraced the idea that it was done to preserve the very existence of all Serbs, and was therefore a justified and divine mission (Thompson 1994, 51).

During the 1990s, Radio Television Serbia (RTS) and newspapers *Politika* [Politics], *Politika express* [Political Express] and *Večernje novosti* [Evening News] became the main organs of pro-regime propaganda in the state. In order to control the media institutions and their managers and staff and eliminate the possibility of any critique of the regime, those in power introduced heavy taxes for printing and the distribution of independent newspapers, and refused to issue broadcasting licences for television and radio channels outside Milošević's influence. Journalists who refused to practice the official, 'patriotic' style of reporting were openly labelled as traitors, and publicly intimidated by death threats and pressure to resign their posts (Thompson 1994; Brosse 2003; Vekarić 2011).

One aspect of propaganda to which the media in Serbia undoubtedly introduced a new dimension during the war in Croatia (and later Bosnia) was the manipulation and (re)invention of myths related to Serbian people's history and national identity. The most prominent were those connected to the genocidal crimes committed against the Serbs by the extremist groups of Croats during the Second World War, as well as the defeat by the Ottoman Turks at the Battle of Kosovo in 1389. Therefore, the resurrected Serbian identity was endangered by the 'other' identities that had suppressed it in the past: Croatian, Bosnian (refers to Muslims, in relation to Turks) and Albanian (given the demands of Albanians for autonomy in Kosovo). The public was constantly reminded about those bloody episodes, which resulted in the collective spread of animosity and prejudices towards the denominated 'others', and the children's role was crucial in accomplishing this goal.

Starting from 1990, Serbian media were filled with reports about exhumations and reburials of Serb victims killed in Croatia and Bosnia by the members of the Croatian Ustasha (Ustaša) movement in the Independent State of Croatia during the Second World War.⁴ For instance, in August 1991, RTS broadcast a lengthy report concerning the exhumation of the Serb 'martyrs' from a mass grave discovered in Prebilovci, a small village in the south of Herzegovina. According to the report, those victims were ruthlessly executed by the Ustashas, and the viewers could see their remains being transferred to coffins and buried properly. A separate part of the report consists of a landscape that shows a pile of very small, children's skulls, which are then zoomed in on so as to leave the viewers no room for doubt about to whom they belonged. Dramatic music accompanying the video clip contributes to the heavy atmosphere, while the speech of

Dobrica Ćosić, one of the most prominent Serb intellectuals at the time, reminded viewers of the ‘unbearable burden of the tragedy of the Serbian people’ (RTS 1991).

Establishing parallels between the Croatian political leadership in the 1990s and that of the pro-fascist Croatian state, led by Ante Pavelić in collaboration with Adolf Hitler in the Second World War, was one of the widely used strategies of intimidating the Serbian ethnic community and ‘inducing’ the desired attitude and sentiment towards the ‘enemies’. Croats began to be collectively called ‘Ustashas’ in the Serbian media, and what needed to become ingrained in people’s minds is the fact that history repeats itself and that the genocidal nature of the Croats was about to be manifested again by reiterating all those monstrous actions from the past. More importantly, the message of the above-mentioned television report was supposed to convince the Serbs that even their offspring would not be spared by the Croats’ newly awakened thirst for blood (Denich 1994).

In this context, it was the Serb children who emerged as symbols of the collective Serbian trauma and represent the ‘Holy Crusade’ for the Serbian ‘Promised Land’. Extremely morbid accounts of alleged atrocities against them were perpetually served to the public in Serbia, and were not restricted to reports on commemorations and reburials only. For instance, the regional newspaper *Otadžbina* [Homeland], published within the territory of the Republic of Serbian Krajina,⁵ contained a separate section entitled ‘Genocide Against Serbs (1941–45)’. On 13 May 1995, the poem ‘The Memory of Little Milena’ by Mirko Rakić appeared on the page of this section. It laments the death of a Serbian girl who was ‘impaled by the Ustasha cut-throats’. A picture of a baby girl is added to the text to make the readers’ reaction even more emotionally driven. Numerous similar testimonies of Serb children’s sufferings under the Ustasha regime found their place on television or in the press, and very explicit and suggestive language like the one in Rakić’s poem helped in creating specific symbolic narratives that glorified the sacrifice and the collective woes of the Serb peoples. The goal of such messages was to mobilize as many volunteers as possible for the war cause, and the personal motivation for many of the recruits joining Serbian troops frequently had to do with their children’s well-being and the fear they might suffer the same fate as Serb children forty-five years earlier (RTS 1991).⁶ ‘Liberation’ was at the centre of the political vocabulary of Serbian leaders, who knew how to play the role of liberators. They would

visit schools and orphanages in Croatia and promise to protect Serb children from the rampaging Croats, and their speeches would be broadcast and closely analysed.⁷ Therefore, even though burying past crimes was part of maintaining interethnic harmony in the multiethnic Yugoslav federation, as socialist Yugoslavia disintegrated, the Serbian and Croatian nationalist movements based on ethnic exclusivity returned these episodes to their centre-stage position (Denich 1994; Pavlaković 2013).

The case that best illustrates the extent and consequences of Serbian black propaganda unravelled in the Croatian city of Vukovar in November 1991, when Croatian forces surrendered and the YPA and other Serbian paramilitary units established control over the city. On 20 November the international news agency Reuters released information that the massacred bodies of forty-one Serbian children between five and seven years of age had been found in an elementary school basement. The news came from a Serbian freelance photographer Goran Mikić, allegedly a witness to the crime. The case became the focal point of the RTS evening news on that same day. Invited as the guest speaker, Mikić claimed he had seen the dead children's bodies, but brought no additional evidence (Brosse 2003, 7–8). Consequently, a special forensic team consisting of medical experts from Belgrade was sent to Vukovar to look for evidence. They ransacked houses, schools, basement shelters and kindergartens, but found no traces of dead children (Baljak and Hedl 2006).

A public retraction from the YPA and Reuters was made on 21 November in the RTS evening news programme in which, ironically, war analysts discussed the connection of the murders of children in Vukovar with those by the Ustashas in the Second World War, forcing the presenter to apologise to the viewers. Serbia's 'most credible' paper *Politika* also published the rebuttal on 23 November, but merely as a succinct statement in the back of the issue (Brosse 2003, 8).

Although the story was quickly retracted, the timing of its release and its widespread coverage in the Serbian media inevitably played a part in subsequent retaliations against Croats. The Ovčara massacre, considered one of the worst atrocities in Europe after the Second World War, is especially relevant in this context. Between 20 and 21 November, at a dairy farm in Ovčara near Vukovar, more than 260 people (mostly war prisoners and patients and staff from the Vukovar hospital) were executed by members

of the Serb militia (Nazor 2011; Ingraio and Emmert 2012). Renaud de la Brosse, an expert on political communication, considers this a case of not only black but also unlawful propaganda that violates human rights and international law for political purposes (Brosse 2003, 11–12). Also, the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia acknowledged the testimony of Vesna Bosanac, the head of the Vukovar hospital, who believed that the news about the children massacre was deliberately released to justify the Ovčara crime and subsequent retaliations (Bosanac 1998).

Unverified information involving children was also often disseminated by personalities who enjoyed a high reputation among the Serbian public. In the second half of 1991, RTS broadcast a speech of the Serbian bishop Filaret, who appears behind a table on which lies a small skull, and acquaints the viewers with ‘one more instance of the Ustashas’ ruthlessness’.

The Ustashas came to a Serbian village near Kukuruzari and captured a small [Serbian boy] Ilija and forced his mother to watch his throat being cut ... The mother ran after them and begged for her dead child, but they refused, and instead carried him away and burned him. This skull is all that’s left ... (Lalić 1999)

It was no secret that bishop Filaret was a passionate supporter of Milošević’s political programme. He was not only actively engaged in helping Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia, but he also assisted Serbian military and paramilitary troops (Ognjević 2004). Despite the fact that the authenticity of this story was never acknowledged, he, himself, was supposed to represent a ‘credible’ and ‘sacred’ mouthpiece of the Serbian nation. Involving children provoked strong emotional reactions and dehumanized the foe as much as possible.

Media lynching and extortion were one of the most frequently employed strategies of patriotic journalists in Serbia and including crimes against children guaranteed their ‘success’. One of the most notorious such cases concerned Davor Markobašić, a Croatian guardsman who was accused by the Serbian press of butchering Serb children in Vukovar and making necklaces out of their fingers, although there was no evidence except for hearsay (Vekarić 2011, 193–202). His name and address were published in the press, and his wife was killed on an Ovčara farm by gunshots to the stomach and vagina; she was pregnant, and was murdered because of the rumours

that stigmatized her husband as a slaughterer and rapist of Serb children (Došen 1998). There are numerous other examples of openly denouncing individuals for purportedly committing crimes against children. In his book, Deputy War Crimes Prosecutor in Serbia Bruno Vekarić mentions the testimony of one of the prisoners in the Serbian internment camp: Begejci. On his internment, Serbian soldiers removed a knife from his pocket that they considered was the weapon with which he supposedly killed five or more Serb children who were later said to be found in his bathtub. He was labelled a murderer of children (Vučenić 2003, cited in Vekarić 2011, 223).

Cases like this indicate the psychological influence of child-centred propaganda on the minds and actions of those directly engaged in warfare and treatment of the enemy. Even though in most cases it was not possible to confirm the credibility of the information in any way, the manner in which these messages were conveyed had a tremendous impact on the Serbian public, especially troops on the Croatian fronts, and it served the purpose of favouring Milošević regime's warmongering agenda.

'My father is a Croatian Guardsman'

In May of 1990 the Croatian Democratic Union (CDU), a new conservative right-wing party led by Franjo Tuđman, won the elections in the Socialist Republic of Croatia (at the time still part of Yugoslavia) with a surprisingly large number of votes. It based its programme on 'the right of the Croatian people for self-determination and state sovereignty' (*Nova Hrvatska* 1990, 9–11, cited in Denich 1994, 377). More importantly, the new Croatian nationalism excluded Serbs as one of the 'constituent nations' of Croatia (which was the case during the Titoist regime) and changed its status to that of a 'minority'. Although the Croatian constitution from 1990 granted national minorities the right to assert their nationality and linguistic and cultural autonomy, the coexistence of Serbs and Croats was looked on as abnormal. Also, the extreme Serbian nationalism that resonated with the large number of Serbs in Croatia only intensified Croatian nationalist impulses that had been suppressed for a long time (Denich, 1994, 377–83).

Croatian nationalism, just like Serbian, had its roots and 'justifications' in myth and history. The new government's rhetoric rested on the narrative that Croatia had been oppressed under foreign monarchs for too many centuries, and that Croatian people almost always were forced to sacrifice their identity and faith. The definition of war was very straightforward: Croatia

had at last achieved independence and had to defend its national body and protect its territory and freedom against the aggressor (Thompson 1994).

Up until 1990, Croatian media were known for their objectivity and multi-perspectivity, which is not surprising given the country's different regional identities. When the CDU came to power, however, it seized the monopoly over the main television and press headquarters. Croatian National Television (CRT) and newspapers *Večernji list* [Evening Courier] and *Vjesnik* [Herald] became the most important CDU mouthpieces. 'Patriotic journalism' in Croatia actually mirrored that of Serbia: loyal CDU people (all of them being Croats) ascended to the chief positions of the state apparatus as well as the main pro-regime media headquarters. Journalists who criticized the new government (and the majority of Serb journalists) were intimidated or instantly replaced with those ready to go along the 'patriotic' line, and independent or private media were continuously sabotaged and forced to stop their broadcasting or distribution (Thompson 1994; Kurspahić 2003, Malović and Selnow 2001).

In the eyes of the CDU leaders, children occupied a very important role in the process of nation building. Unlike Serbian media that used children, first and foremost, to remind the public about crimes from the past, children in Croatian propaganda assumed a very present role. They personified the victimhood of the national corpus suffering from Serbian aggression and also acted as ambassadors and future leaders of the new country on the European political map that sought recognition from Europe and the world.

To begin with, children represented one of the crucial 'pillars' of the CDU's political campaign. Apart from being victims in need of protection, they also symbolized the future or, better yet, young citizenry who deserved to grow up in an independent Croatia, one which would not 'suffer for Yugoslav and Serbian interests'. As the generation of vital importance for nation building, they appeared in political campaign speeches, videos, concerts and posters, while President Franjo Tuđman acted as the nation's 'fatherly figure' and protector. One of the electoral campaign posters from 1990 shows the president carrying two little girls in his arms, while the message says 'The Safe Future of Croatia'.⁸ In another interesting pre-election video from 1992, Tuđman explains to a young boy that, throughout his life, he was punished for his political views (referring to his imprisonment for advocating Croatian autonomy and independence from Yugoslavia and, more importantly,

against Serbian expansionism). The young boy answers by acknowledging the role of the president in the achievement of a free and independent Croatia and stating that he knows they [Croats] need to liberate the country from the occupier, and that his dad is also contributing by fighting on the front (*Globus* 1992, 18, 39, cited in Senjković 2002, 140–41). Hence, he represents both the newly established state and its future endangered by the occupiers.

Indeed, by the end of 1991, when nearly one-third of Croatian territory was occupied by the rebel Serbs and YPA, victimhood and suffering became the central themes of Croatia's political vocabulary. As quintessential war victims, children fit this concept well, and their hardships were 'usable' for two purposes: openly denouncing the enemy and appealing to the international community to recognize Croatian independence and its 'suffering body'. The media, when it came to children, relied on visual imagery much more than the written word. Countless reports centred on the hazards Croatian children had to confront in the war zones, and newspapers were filled with images of youngsters hiding in shelters or saying goodbye to their fathers heading to the fronts, ready to put their lives on the line for their sons and daughters' well-being. As with Serbian media, texts of this kind frequently referred to those responsible for children's tragedies and trauma and, in doing so, journalists continually overgeneralized and exaggerated. For example, on 12 May 1991 the newspaper *Vjesnik* published an article by Marijan Vogrinec who in his political commentary wondered:

How to understand that today, on the verge of the 21st century, in the country we thought was a homeland of civilized people, Croatian mothers ... do not let their children go to school, because they ... might get hurt ... or kidnapped and held hostage by horrifying beardos? (*Vjesnik* 4)

The derogatory term at the end refers to the members of Serbian paramilitary units called Chetniks, notorious for having long beards, and who, as in this case, were literally portrayed as monsters. Some of the other common terms used to denominate the other side were, for instance, 'Serbs', 'Chetniks', 'monsters', 'bands of savages', 'Yugo-communists', 'non-humans' and 'pure evil'. This was especially effective during the interviews of refugee children on national television during the second half of 1991, when reporters asked the children who they thought caused their hardships. The collective stigmatization of the enemy was present in both Serbian and Croatian media.

The period between 1991 and 1995 was also marked by the production of numerous patriotic song collections, performed by many prominent artists and perpetually broadcast on national television and radio. Children were one of the most frequent ‘elements’ of such songs, and their mention or appearance incited viewers’ emotions and maternal instincts. One of the most famous war songs was ‘Hrvatine’ [Croats] by Đuka Čaić. In the music video, one of the song lines, ‘Čuvaj oče majčicu, ognjište i sestricu’ [Father, protect mother, home and little sister], is depicted by the scene of a mother and child hidden in a shelter, and then a Croatian soldier carrying a baby in his lap (saving its life). However, ‘Hrvatine’ never reached the popularity of ‘Stop the War in Croatia’ by Tomislav Ivčić, a singer actively engaged in supporting the CDU Party, whose anti-war song became a symbol of Croatia’s victimhood worldwide. Accompanied by a children’s choir, he is asking Europe (in English) to ‘stop the war in the name of children’, but also to ‘let Croatia be one of Europe’s stars’. If we look at children in this context, besides appealing to Europe to act in the name of the younger generation, they also take on the responsibility of ambassadors of their young, newborn country, and therefore assume an active participatory role rather than only being passive victims. This need to demonstrate the Europeaness of Croatia was one of the crucial goals of the political elites in the early 1990s, and the international audience could hardly be left indifferent to the plight of Croatian children.

To accomplish the desired effect, exhibitions like those of children’s drawings (usually depicting YPA tanks and fighter aircraft with red stars destroying homes with Croatian flags or other national symbols, and crying parents and children) were staged not only in Croatian museums but, more importantly, abroad, in countries like Germany, Switzerland or Austria.⁹ Since these were often organized and/or financed by the Croatian Ministry of Education and other state institutions, reports of such events as well as charity and humanitarian concerts for children funded from abroad were reviewed in the press and shown on television. Furthermore, these drawings were also printed on postcards or food boxes intended for Croatian guardsmen on the fronts, where they were received with great enthusiasm (Šigir 1993, 46–47; Senjković 2002, 35, 45–46). Croatian war posters included images of inconsolable mothers and children in exile, and the message on them was very clear-cut: the aggressor was ‘Serbia and the Yugo-communist army’ (Reljanović 2010).



Figure 1
Poster 'My father
is a Croatian
Guardsmen too'.

This image is
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the kind permission
of the Croatian
History Museum.

One of the most conspicuous posters (Figure 1) shows a small boy fully dressed in dark green Croatian military uniform and wearing a headband decorated with the Croatian coat of arms (chessboard emblem); he is standing with his right arm raised while his fingers form the internationally recognized V for victory sign (Reljanović 2010, 244–245). The message reads: 'I moj tata je hrvatski vojnik' [My father is a Croatian Guardsman too]. The concept behind this poster resembles that of the famous British war poster from the First World War: 'Daddy, what did YOU do in the Great War?' by Savile Lumley.

Although the poster designers claimed they were 'not produced as a result of a programme within the scope of a powerful and organized propaganda machine' (Reljanović 2012, 19), its primary purpose was to contribute to enhancing war mobilization. Interestingly, connecting children to Croatian national symbols, such as a coat of arms, flags or military uniforms and insignia worn by Croatian fighters (see boy on poster), was a very popular tendency in the pro-regime press and television, particularly in communicating with an audience beyond the state itself. By portraying a child who, again, stands for the universal war victim as well as a young citizen and patriot aware of his country's struggle for freedom, it managed to bridge the two dimensions that Croatian political elites needed to do to promote the Croatian cause, both locally and internationally.

Conclusion

This study has shown that the use of children as an instrument of war propaganda represented one of the main strategies of the 'most productive' pro-regime media in Serbia and Croatia during their conflict between 1991 and 1995. Both incorporated children into the victim-centred war propaganda; their nationalist political leaders claimed the right of their states to victory by reiterating notions of victimhood, defence and protection, ingrained in different mythological and historical explanations and justifications.

A dominant view of Serbian history that emerged after 1986 was that of a 'heroic, long-suffering nation, struggling for centuries against invaders and annihilation'; this specifically referred to the Ottoman Turks and the massive extermination of Serbs by members of the Croatian Ustasha movement in the Second World War. Therefore, engagement in the war against secessionist Croatia became a chance for Serbian revenge. On the other

hand, Croatian nationalism was very much fuelled by the contemporary expansionist ‘Greater Serbian threat’ posed by Milošević, even though it was also rooted in the ‘long-time oppression by foreign rulers’. The aim of the propaganda was to convince the public that Croatia must be defended from Serbian aggression and, more importantly, aided by the European powers who would recognize its independence. Hence, while Serbia and its parastate the Republic of Serbian Krajina found itself isolated in the attempt to create Greater Serbia, Croatia turned to Europe, claiming its right to become a fully fledged member of the European Union (UE).

Both Serbian and Croatian media exaggerated and overgeneralized children’s victimhood to gain the sympathies of the public by depicting the children’s vulnerability and helplessness. In-depth analysis highlights the three common ‘functions’ of children in both cases. First, children’s suffering was an effective instigator of war mobilization. Secondly, both propaganda systems used children as an embodiment of the nation and its peoples’ ‘sacrifice for the long-awaited freedom and reaffirmation’. Lastly, even though children do personify the future of a particular nation (if we look at this idea from the perspective of a natural course of the life cycle), this notion was constantly overstated in the midst of the war atmosphere to the point that its real meaning became distorted by the propaganda. The three aspects mentioned are by no means a novelty in the history of modern war propaganda; since the First and, notably, the Second World War, children have played a vital part in the mass propaganda machinery. Nevertheless, the priority was mostly given to their role as soldiers or members of massive children’s organizations such as Hitler Youth or Komsomol (All-Union Leninist Communist League of Youth). This was not the case in post-Yugoslav Croatia and Serbia, the leaders of which created their own nationalist agendas within the turbulent fall of communism and new European geopolitical reality.

When it comes to methods of dissemination through visual, audio and printed media, such as videos, photographs, war posters, war songs and newspaper articles, Serbian propaganda involving children was notorious for its unscrupulousness. It consisted of techniques such as extortion, media-lynching, spreading false information, the falsification of sources and/or a general lack of credible sources. Many of the cases described can therefore be considered unlawful and/or a combination of grey and black propaganda. Croatian child-focused propaganda was not as transparent as Serbian, but rather subtly infiltrated into white propaganda machinery

organized to maintain the status of the ‘victim of aggression’ that ‘pays the price for its independence’. Croatian media relied more on visual images than the written word, and connected children in contexts related to their inextricable connection to national Croatian political and military symbols. Consequently, their role as ambassadors of the newly independent state was much more active than that of Serbian children, who were treated exclusively as passive victims.

The consequences of such well-elaborated and widespread child-centred propaganda were no less fatal for Serbian and Croatian societies than the war itself. The psychological element at the core of this mechanism of propaganda led many to embrace the concept of war as existential and interethnic. The often exaggerated victimization of children no doubt intensified during the war. It remains a burning issue to this day; one of the barriers that still prevents the normalization of relations between Croatia and Serbia has to do with education and textbooks, and the way in which the two sides interpret this conflict and who the victims are. Ultimately, it all has to do with educating the younger generations and future leaders of these nations.

Finally, the development of their national identities in the 1990s, and especially the role of children in it, helps us better understand the current positions of Croatia and Serbia in the contemporary European order, with the former being the newest member of the European Union, and the latter, because of its isolation, finding itself wavering between an EU–NATO partnership and its traditional ally, Russia. This project is also significant to the understanding of the workings of ethnicity and nationalism in Europe as a whole, where recent events, such as those in Ukraine or the European reactions to the refugee crisis, have shown us that ethnonational exclusivities, once thought to be disappearing in the face of the European Union, are only becoming more important with the rise of an ethnonational right wing. Finally, the project has a global significance, as it explores the potential of media and new communication technologies for both using and indoctrinating children in the service of nationalism, patriotism, chauvinism and other regime-driven political purposes.

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ENDNOTES

1 The term Yugoslav Wars refers to a series of conflicts: Ten-Day War in Slovenia (May-June 1991), Croatian War of Independence (1991–95), Bosnian (1992–95), Croat-Bosniak (1992–94), and Serbia-Kosovo (1998–99) conflict.

2 See Katriona Kelly, *Children's World: Growing Up in Russia, 1890–1991* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2007); Anna Saunders, *Honecker's Children: Youth and Patriotism in Eastern Germany, 1979–2002* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2007); Tara Zahra, *Kidnapped Souls: National Indifference and the Battle for Children in the Bohemian Lands, 1900–1948* (London: Cornell University Press, 2008).

3 See Joseph Kerrigan and William Novick, eds., *Healing the Heart of Croatia* (New York and Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1998); Vjekoslav Šaravanja, *10,000 djece bez roditelja u Domovinskom ratu* [10,000 Parentless Children of the Homeland War] (Slavonski Brod: Obiteljski centar župe Duha Svetoga, 2001); Neven Šikić, Miomir Žužul and Ivan Fattorini, eds., *Stradanja djece u domovinskom ratu* [Suffering of children in the homeland war] (Jastrebarsko, Zagreb: Naklada Slap and Klinika za dječje bolesti Zagreb, 1994).

4 The term Ustasha (Ustaša) refers to the members of the pro-Fascist organization active before and during WWII in Croatia, which supported the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia (1941–45) as a Nazi satellite state (encompassed Bosnia and Herzegovina, part of Serbia and modern day Croatia). As part of creating ethnically pure Croatia, hundreds of thousands of people were executed or expelled, particularly Serbs, Jews and Roma.

5 The Republic of Serbian Krajina existed from 1991 to 1995 as a Serbian state within the territorial boundaries of the Republic of Croatia, but it was never recognized internationally.

6 See, for instance, interviews by RTS from August 1991.

7 See, for example, issues of *Politika* between 1991 and 1992.

8 Available at the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb.

9 See, for instance, *Djeca u ratu i poslije rata: izložba dječjih likovnih radova* [Children during and after the war: exhibition of children's art works] (Osijek: Galerija likovnih umjetnosti, 1992); *Ich Habe Angst: Ausstellung der Zeichnungen der Kroatischen Kinder* [I am afraid: exhibition of Croatian children's drawings] (Zagreb: Hrvatski školski muzej, 1992); *Papir, boje, kist i rat: izložba likovnih iskaza hrvatske djece o Domovinskom ratu* [Paper, colours, brush and war: exhibition of Croatian children's artistic expressions about the homeland war] (Zagreb: Hrvatski školski muzej, 1992); *Sanjam o miru / I Dream of Peace* (Zagreb: UNICEF and Croatian School Museum, 1992/93).

10 Square brackets in the reference list and endnotes contain author's translations of titles originally written in other languages, mostly Croatian or Serbian.

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REMIATING VIOLENCE: SECOND WORLD WAR MEMORY ON WIKIPEDIA

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ABSTRACT

The article examines how memory of past violence is remediated online and how its remediation interacts with contemporary collective traumas in post-socialist countries. For this purpose, it examines how a single episode of the Second World War – the Battle of Kyiv of 1943 – is represented and interacted with on Wikipedia. Using web content analysis, the article traces the evolution of narratives of past violence in different language versions of the encyclopedia and explores how the current conflict in Ukraine affects the refashioning of Second World War memory in digital media.

Remediating violence: Second World War memory on Wikipedia

The impact of remediation – that is, the process of refashioning existing media formats in new media (Bolter and Grusin 1999, 45) – on individual and collective remembrance is one of the trending subjects in the field of memory studies.¹ Mass media play a key role in representation of the present and the past alike, as the German sociologist Niklas Luhmann noted (Luhmann 2000, 102). Instead of being ‘passive and transparent conveyors of information’ (Erl 2008, 3), they set the agenda for current and future acts of remembrance and determine how the past is represented and understood. Consequently, the transition of memories between different media has significant impact on the dynamics of remembrance, which, as memory scholars Astrid Erl and Ann Rigney note, is increasingly dependent on media technologies and circulation of media products (Erl and Rigney 2009, 3).

The growing interest towards remediation of memory has resulted in a number of academic works that examine interactions between digital media and traumatic memories in the post-socialist states.² The importance of this particular area is related to the disproportionate politicization of cultural

remembrance that leads to frequent ‘memory wars’ (Blacker, Etkind and Fedor 2013) among the regional actors as well as the significant impact of digital media on transformation of the local memory landscape (Rutten and Zvereva 2013). Remediation of the traumatic past – in particular, Second World War memory – has also become intertwined with media coverage of the Ukraine crisis, which started in 2013 with anti-government protests in Kyiv that led to the ousting of President Viktor Yanukovych in 2014, followed by the annexation of Crimea by Russia and the conflict between the Ukrainian government and pro-Russian insurgents in Eastern Ukraine, often known as the war in Donbass. A number of scholars (Gaufman 2015; Siddi 2017) note extensive use of Second World War memory for explaining and interpreting the crisis on mainstream and digital media. However, until now the impact of current collective traumas, such as the war in Donbass, on the remediation of past violence in the region remains a pressing but understudied subject.

The article addresses this shortcoming by examining how a single Second World War episode – the Battle of Kyiv of 1943 – is represented and interacted with on Wikipedia. Not only is this episode an important milestone in the Second World War, it is also a recurring source of historical controversy between Ukraine and Russia. By exploring how traumatic memories of this event are conveyed on Wikipedia, which is both the world’s largest online encyclopedia and one of the most popular websites in the post-socialist space,³ this article strives to trace the evolution of narratives of past violence online and to explore how the current conflict in Ukraine affects the remediation of Second World War memory in the post-socialist countries.

Wikipedia and cultural memory: literature review

Remediation of war memories is not a recent phenomenon and can be traced back at least to the middle of the 19th century, when the media coverage of wars and conflicts was increasingly adapted for mass consumption (Keller 2001, 251). The development of information and communication technologies led to the intensification of this process in 1960s and 1970s, when it brought a ‘memory boom’ (Winter 2011) that transformed Second World War memory, in particular Holocaust remembrance. A few decades later, as media scholars Andrew Hoskins and Ben O’Loughlin argue, the distribution of digital technologies resulted in a new memory boom that radically changed the remembrance of contemporary conflicts (Hoskins and O’Loughlin 2010, 131). Not only did they enable ‘a far greater intensive and

extensive connectivity' between the forms, agents and discourses of memory (Hoskins 2009, 40), but they also opened up new possibilities for memory production and circulation, distinguished by low costs and a potentially high impact (de Cesari and Rigney 2014, 12).

The digital memory boom affected not only recent traumatic memories, but also the ones that have already experienced the process of memorialization in the pre-digital time. A number of studies suggest that the distribution of digital commemorative practices has had a significant impact on the remembrance of conflicts, such as the Second World War.⁴ The consequences of the remediation of older memories of violence through digital media remain, however, a subject of scholarly debate. The existing works offer contrasting assessments that vary from the formation of more inclusive narratives of conflicts that challenge hegemonic interpretations of the past (Trubina 2010) to the propagation of mutually exclusive interpretations of traumatic historical episodes that ignite disagreements between their adherents (Nikiporets-Takigawa 2013).

Wikipedia is one of the digital platforms, the impact of which on collective remembrance is widely recognized both in post-socialist countries and worldwide. Christian Pentzold, a German communication scholar, argues that production of Wikipedia articles can be viewed as process of the 'discursive construction of the past', which involves a transition from communicative memory that is debated on the encyclopedia's discussion pages to cultural memory that takes the form of encyclopedia's articles (Pentzold 2009, 264). A number of studies argue that the platform can be viewed as a transnational space that facilitates the production of a fundamentally pluralistic historical knowledge (Hardy 2007), or as a digital forum that sustains consensus-building vis-à-vis contentious pasts (Dounaevsky 2013). Yet others theorize the site as an online platform that enforces hegemonic memory narratives (Luyt 2011) or a mnemonic battleground on which different views of the past clash (Rogers and Sendjarevic 2012).

The interactions between Wikipedia and Second World War memory in the post-socialist space has attracted significant scholarly attention in the recent years;⁵ however, the existing assessments of the encyclopedia's impact on war remembrance in the area paint different pictures. Helene Dounaevsky, a communication scholar, argues that Wikipedia facilitates creation of 'a special type of historical knowledge' which is characterized by uncertainty

and polyphonism that challenge hegemonic interpretations of the Second World War (Dounaevsky 2013). By contrast, an interdisciplinary team of researchers demonstrates in their study of Stepan Bandera, a leader of the Ukrainian nationalist movement in 1940s and 1950s, that different versions of the encyclopedia tend to transmit local narratives of Second World War (Fredheim, Howanitz and Makhortykh 2014), thus promoting a 'linguistic point of view' of the past (Massa and Scrinzi 2013). The current study attempts to investigate further the platform's impact on the complex memory landscape of the region and examine how its interaction with Second World War memory is affected by the ongoing Ukraine crisis.

Battle of Kyiv: historical background

In autumn 1943, Soviet troops approached Kyiv, the former capital of Soviet Ukraine, which was seized by the Germans two years earlier. At the end of September, Soviet units managed to capture a number of bridgeheads on the German-controlled right bank of the River Dnieper; the largest of those were the Lyutezh and Bukrin bridgeheads. In the weeks that followed, the Red Army made several attempts to seize the city; however, none of them were successful, due to the heavy losses sustained while crossing the River Dnieper and the difficult terrain on the right bank. Soviet losses were particularly high at the Bukrin bridgehead, originally envisioned as a primary bridgehead for capturing Kyiv.

The unsuccessful October operations led the Soviet High Command to relocate Soviet forces to the Lyutezh bridgehead, from where a massive offensive was staged on 3 November. This operation was preceded by another attack from the Bukrin bridgehead on 1–2 November; according to the Ukrainian historian Victor Korol, this distracting manoeuvre resulted in huge losses among Soviet ranks (Korol 2003). The rapid advancement of the Soviet troops from the Lyutezh bridgehead, however, proved to be unexpected for the German command and on the morning of 6 November – the anniversary of the October Revolution and the most important state holiday in the Soviet Union – Soviet forces recaptured the Ukrainian capital.

The successful actions of the Red Army during the Battle of Kyiv had a profound impact on the course of the war. The capture of Kyiv led to the destabilization of the German front and a rapid Soviet advance in 1944; furthermore, it had great ideological significance, and was used to the fullest by Soviet propaganda (Shulzhenko and Tykhonenko 2013). The propaganda,

however, omitted the high losses suffered by the Red Army, estimations of which vary from 133,000 (Gorelov and Grutsyk 2013) to 270,000 (Levitas 2012) dead and wounded. Today, however, a number of Ukrainian scholars argue that the high death toll was a consequence of the Soviet High Command's intent to liberate Kyiv for the anniversary date of the October Revolution (Korol 2005, 22), which spurred the massive mobilization of Ukrainian men who were often sent to battle unprepared and – according to a few testimonies – insufficiently armed (Koval 1999, 95–96).

After the end of the war, the Battle of Kyiv quickly became an integral part of the Great Patriotic War myth, which would later be instrumental in the creation of a common public identity in the Soviet Union. During the Khrushchev period, 6 November became an official holiday – the Day of the Liberation of Kyiv – and the actions of the Red Army were unequivocally praised in Soviet historiography (Hrynevych 2005). A number of monuments commemorating the battle appeared in Kyiv in the post-war period; however, the majority of them were dedicated to the Soviet High Command, whereas the sacrifices of rank-and-file soldiers remained largely ignored. While in the late 1970s a few monuments dedicated to ordinary soldiers appeared in the Ukrainian capital, these monuments usually commemorated soldiers who were fighting at the Lyutezh bridgehead; in contrast, the Bukrin bridgehead, where the bloodiest clashes took place, remained forgotten (Makhortykh 2014).

While in Ukraine the annual Soviet-style celebration of the liberation of Kyiv continued after the dissolution of the Soviet Union, a number of Ukrainian scholars (Ginda 2010; Korol 2003; Koval 1999) started questioning existing interpretations of the event. The revision of the Soviet narrative made it possible to integrate those traumatic memories that had been left out of the glorious story of the liberation into the public discourse of the Second World War; yet, a number of scholars note that the rewriting of history in Ukraine led to the formation of new myths, which emphasized the martyrdom of the Ukrainian people (Jilge 2008; Portnov and Portnova 2010). In the case of the Battle of Kyiv, this shift toward 'competing victimhood' (Jilge 2008) resulted in the deglorification of the event and the propagation of a view of the battle as a Soviet crime against the Ukrainian people (Korol 2005) or even an instance of genocide (Ginda 2010).

These radical revisions of the existing narrative of the glorious liberation turned the Battle of Kyiv into one of the problematic issues in

Ukrainian–Russian memory relations. Despite significant challenges to the Great Patriotic War narrative in early 1990s, the cultural memory of Second World War in Russia experienced significantly fewer changes than in Ukraine. The revival of the Soviet war narrative in Russia in the beginning of the 2000s further contributed to the rise of memory wars between the two countries, especially concerning the question of Soviet war crimes. This memory warfare was not limited to academic historiographies and, instead, became increasingly present in political debates in Ukraine and Russia; these debates became more intense during the Ukraine crisis, when the Battle of Kyiv was referenced as a predecessor of the Russian aggression against Ukraine (Fed’ko 2017; Lebid’ 2017).

Sections, edits, and posts: methodology

In order to investigate how Wikipedia is used for remediating past violence, I examined articles that deal with the capture of Kyiv in Ukrainian (‘Bytva za Kyiv (1943)’), Russian (‘Kievskaiia Nastupatelnaia Operatsiia’), Polish (‘Bitwa o Kijów (1943)’), and English (‘Battle of Kiev (1943)’), versions of Wikipedia. The former three versions are the largest Eastern European versions of the encyclopedia (‘List of Wikipedias’) and are of particular relevance for the process of remediation of the past in the region (Fredheim, Howanitz and Makhortykh 2014; Makhortykh 2017). The reason the English version is included is that it relates to its unique position as a global memory platform that hosts the most diverse community of editors (Rogers and Sendjarevic 2012).

For the implementation of my analysis, I used versions of all the articles as retrieved on 1 December 2017: I started by comparing the ways both historical episodes are framed in different language versions of Wikipedia. Similarly to earlier studies (Rogers and Sendjarevic 2012; Božović, Bošković and Trifunović 2014; Fredheim, Howanitz and Makhortykh 2014), I conducted a web content analysis of selected components of the Wikipedia articles: titles, tables of content, images and categories. These components are not only concise enough to be easily compared, but they also provide a brief summary of the article’s content (titles and images), clarify the structure of the article’s narrative (table of contents) and reveal the article’s position in the larger Wikipedia structure (categories).

Having compared how the Battle of Kyiv is represented in Wikipedia, I then explored how the encyclopedia’s users interact with those patterns.

While many of earlier studies (Ferron and Massa, 2011; Keegan, Gergle and Contractor 2011) rely mostly on passive forms of user interaction (that is, viewings), I focused on active forms of interaction, such as edits and comments on the articles' 'Talk' pages, that have higher interpretative value (Rogers and Sendijarevic 2012; Luyt 2015). Based on these data, I compared the dynamics of interactions with the articles in different language versions in order to examine how contemporary collective traumas – such as the conflict in Eastern Ukraine – influence interactions with Second World War memory in post-socialist countries.

Battle of Kyiv on Wikipedia: findings

Representation

Titles. All Wikipedia articles have a title that describes the main subject of that article and distinguishes one article from another ('Wikipedia: Article Titles'). It would seem reasonable to assume that different language versions of Wikipedia would use the same name for articles on the same subject: however, as also in an earlier studies of the memory of the Srebrenica massacre in Wikipedia (Rogers and Sendijarevic 2012) and the Second World War in Ukraine (Makhortykh 2017), a comparison of the respective titles for the Battle of Kyiv articles – translated into English – pointed to the existence of certain variations, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. The titles of articles in different language versions of Wikipedia

Version	English	Polish	Russian	Ukrainian
Title	Battle of Kiev (1943)	Battle for Kyiv (1943)	Kyiv offensive operation	Battle for Kyiv (1943)

Three out of four articles used the title 'Battle of/for Kyiv', the informal name for the Kyiv offensive operation that took place between 3 and 13 November 1943. The official name – 'Kyiv offensive operation' – was used for the Russian version of the article, whereas in the other three languages the informal name was preferred, with the additional indicator of '1943' used to distinguish it from the article about the Battle of Kyiv of 1941. While these distinctions were not as significant as in other cases – such as, the capture of Lviv by Germans in 1941 (Makhortykh 2017) – the presence of disagreements on such a basic level can be the first indicator of the differences in the representation of the Battle of Kyiv between the various language versions.

Table of contents. The tables of contents in Wikipedia consist of article headings that clarify and organize that article's content better ('Wikipedia: Writing Better Articles'). Each heading points to a particular topic that is discussed in the article: therefore, the table of contents can be used as a source of semantic information, which, as media scholars Richard Rogers and Emina Sendjarevic note, can be particularly useful for investigating differences in representation of the same event across different versions of the encyclopedia (Rogers and Sendjarevic 2012).

A comparison of the tables of contents from the Battle of Kyiv articles showed that the Ukrainian and Russian versions had a similar structure, consisting of three parts: an introduction/background to the battle, how it played out and the battle's aftermath. The English and Polish articles, instead, elaborated on the course of the battle by dividing it into several stages – for example, the preparatory stage, the capture of Kyiv and the Rauss counterattacks – and assigned independent sections for each of these stages. Unlike the former two articles, the structure of the English/Polish articles implied that the seizure of Kyiv consisted of several stages, and that Soviet troops encountered heavy resistance from the Germans. These differences can be explained both by the variations in the articles' scope (with the Russian/Ukrainian articles being focused exclusively on the Kyiv offensive operation) and the focus on successful Soviet operations in the Russian/Ukrainian versions that ignored the subsequent Soviet defeats in the course of the German counterattacks.

However, despite similarities in structuring the narrative, the Russian/Ukrainian and English/Polish versions often allotted different meanings to the same sections. For instance, the section about the battle's course in the Ukrainian article mentioned several unsuccessful Soviet attacks from the Bukrin bridgehead, whereas the Russian Wikipedia ignored them by focusing on the successful actions at the Lutezh bridgehead. The focus on the glorious aspects of the battle in the Russian article was supplemented with a detailed discussion of the losses incurred by the German side. Such a discussion was absent from the Ukrainian article; in contrast, it alone noted that German forces burned down parts of Kyiv before their retreat, describing how Soviet troops captured the 'almost empty and burning city' ('Bytva za Kyiv (1943)').

The discrepancy between the narratives of military victory and human suffering was also traced in the case of the English and Polish articles.

The ‘Soviet preparations’ section in the English article briefly mentioned ‘serious trouble’ (‘Battle of Kiev (1943)’) encountered by the Red Army at the Bukrin bridgehead before switching to the successful operations at the Lutezh bridgehead. Similarly, despite mentioning the successful German counterattacks, the English article emphasized the glorious achievements of the Soviet side in the Battle of Kyiv. In contrast, the Polish article dedicated significant attention to the failed operations of the Red Army at the Bukrin bridgehead and mentioned the high death toll among the Soviet soldiers. This feature connects the Polish article with the Ukrainian one: both dedicated significant attention to the price of the Soviet victory in the Battle of Kyiv.

Images. In her work on visual images and 9/11, Kari Anden-Papadopoulus, a communication scholar from Sweden, notes that the pictorial turn in today’s culture increasingly affects the way traumatic memories are represented (Anden-Papadopoulus 2003, 101). The articles on the Battle of Kyiv were also accompanied by a selection of images, even while these images were not numerous and presented little variety. The largest number of images – eight – was found in the Polish article, whereas the Ukrainian and English articles included three images each and the Russian article included only two images. Some of these images were recurrent across several articles: for instance, the photo of victorious Soviet soldiers marching across ruined Khreschatyk was used in all versions except the Ukrainian one. Other common images included an image of Soviet troops before the battle (the Ukrainian and Polish articles) and German tanks preparing for the counterattack (the English and Polish articles).

The use of individual images followed the patterns of representation mentioned in the earlier section on the articles’ table of contents. In addition to the image of victorious Soviet soldiers, the Russian article showed an image of the Soviet military reward that was introduced to mark the capture of the Ukrainian capital; the central position of this image promoted the interpretation of the event as a Soviet triumph and put the main emphasis on the glorious aspects of the battle. A similar stance was observed in the English article, which used the image of Soviet military plans for the article’s opening; together with the images of Soviet soldiers in post-battle Kyiv and German tanks in Zhytomyr, it emphasized the military aspects of the Battle of Kyiv and promoted its interpretation in line with the Soviet narrative.

By contrast, the Ukrainian and Polish articles featured the image of Soviet troops preparing for the Battle of Kyiv. The black-and-white photo showed Soviet soldiers building rafts to cross the River Dnieper; a wooden sign displaying the words ‘*Daesh’ Kien!*’ [For Kyiv!] in the background provided the context for the image. Unlike the visuals used in the other two versions, this image showed exhausted-looking men, photographed in the midst of combat preparations, thus instilling a sense of uncertainty in the reader and directing attention to the less glorious aspects of the Battle of Kyiv. This purpose was further advanced with images of a post-war memorial and a mass Soviet grave at the Bukrin bridgehead that promoted the interpretation of the battle as a episode of collective suffering. The Polish article did not include images of Soviet graves; instead, in addition to the above mentioned image of combat preparations, it showed a selection of images made during the battle, including the ones of Soviet soldiers crossing the Dnieper. Such a broad selection of images not only made the Polish article more informative, but also expanded its focus beyond the Soviet victory-centred narrative of the Russian and English articles.

Categories. According to Wikipedia’s own definition, ‘[t]he central goal of the category system is to provide navigational links to all Wikipedia pages in a hierarchy of categories which readers ... can browse and quickly find sets of pages on topics that are defined by those characteristics’ (‘Wikipedia: Categorization’). Wikipedia categories allow for the grouping of existing articles into thematic sets, on the basis of the essential characteristics of their subjects; consequently, categories constitute an important source of lexical and semantic information in Wikipedia (Zesch, Gurevych and Mühlhäuser 2007) that can provide a perspective on the differences pertaining to a particular event across various language versions.

I have grouped the existing categories into two sets, based on their semantics, as shown in Table 2. The first set – temporal indicators – includes categories related to the chronological attribution of the event, whereas the second set – thematic indicators – includes categories related to the actual description of the event. This division allows us to differentiate between categories that are of lesser importance for subject exploration (based on the assumption that the use of time categories only marginally affects representations of the Second World War) and more semantically relevant, thematic categories, that are of particular interest for the current analysis.

Table 2. Categories in Wikipedia articles

	English	Polish	Russian	Ukrainian
Temporal indicators	Conflicts in 1943, 1943 in the Soviet Union, 1943 in Ukraine, 20th century in Kiev, November 1943 events, December 1943 events	Battles in 1943	Year 1943 in USSR, November 1943, Conflicts of 1943	Conflicts of 1943, October 1943, November 1943, 3 November, 6 November, 13 November
Thematic indicators	Battles and operations of the Soviet–German War, Battles of the Second World War involving Germany, Battles involving the Soviet Union, Battles and operations of the Second World War involving Czechoslovakia, Czechoslovakia–Soviet Union relations, Military history of Kiev, Ludvík Svoboda	Eastern Front (Second World War), Operations of the Red Army during the Second World War, History of Kyiv, Battles of the Second World War	Kyiv operation (1943), Great Patriotic War operations, Battles in Ukraine, Kyiv in the years of the Great Patriotic War	Eastern European theatre of the Second World War, Battle for the River Dnieper, Operations and battles of Soviet–German war, Battles for Kyiv, Battles in Ukraine, Battles in USSR, German battles, Soviet battles

The examination of thematic categories points to certain differences between language versions. The Russian article was the only one to use the ‘Great Patriotic War’ category in classifying the article: this subjective definition, which is steeped in Soviet war mythology, was much less neutral than the ‘Soviet–German War’ or ‘Second World War’ categories used in other articles. By contrast, the other articles used less biased and more informative categories. The English version was particularly extensive in its selection of categories and attempted to give due recognition to all the parties involved in the battle: besides the Red Army and the Germans, which were mentioned in the other articles, it added Czechoslovakia, by referring to Ludvík Svoboda’s brigade, which participated in the battle on the Soviet side.

Together with the analysis of other elements of Wikipedia articles, the study of categories indicated a number of differences between the various

language versions. The differences were particularly pronounced in the case of the Russian and Ukrainian articles: the former presented the Battle of Kyiv in line with the glorious Soviet narrative, whereas the latter put greater emphasis on the suffering of Soviet soldiers during the battle. The English and Polish articles with their more pronounced encyclopedic stance were located in-between these two poles with the English version aligning itself with the Soviet victory narrative and the Polish one being closer to the revisionist Ukrainian version. While the existence of such divergent views of the past is well recognized in public memories of post-socialist states, their transfer to digital space questions the validity of claims about the positive transformation of conflicted memories into more inclusive discourses of the past through digital media (Trubina 2010; Dounaevsky 2013).

Interaction

General dynamics. As mentioned earlier, edits and discussion posts are the major indicators of user activity in Wikipedia. Editing is the most basic feature of Wikipedia, and, arguably, the most important one. The term covers a wide range of user activities: from correcting mistakes to making useful additions and improving articles in numerous other ways ('Wikipedia: Tutorial/Editing'). Similarly to edits, discussion posts are usually produced by editors, who communicate with each other through 'Talk' pages. The 'Talk' pages are intended to facilitate communication among editors who want to discuss certain changes to an article. Large amounts of posts can serve as an indicator of controversies related to the article in question – in particular, disagreement among editors on references or on the neutrality of other editors ('Wikipedia: A Researcher's Guide to Discussion Pages').

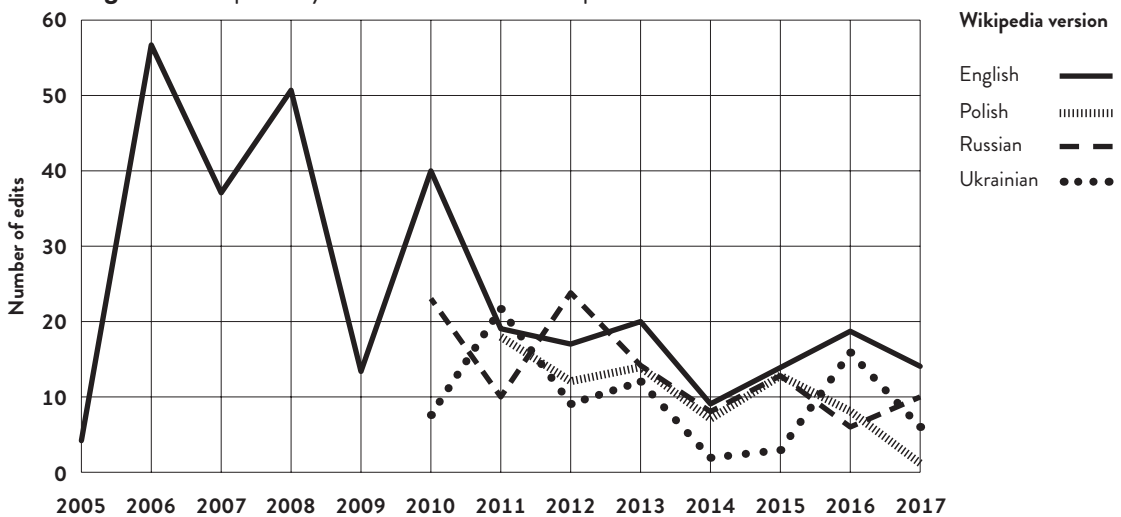
As Table 3 demonstrates, different versions of Wikipedia showed different dynamics relating to user interaction. In contrast to the Wikipedia articles about recent traumatic events such as mass protests (Ferron and Massa 2011) or terrorist attacks (Pentzold 2009), the articles about the Battle of Kyiv indicated a limited amount of active participation on the part of users. The English article included the largest number of edits and discussion posts, followed by the Russian one. The Ukrainian and Polish articles were the least edited and had the fewest comments; a discussion page was actually absent for the Ukrainian article.

Table 3. Numerical summaries of user interactions with Wikipedia articles

	English	Polish	Russian	Ukrainian
Edits	311	73	108	78
Posts	33	1	7	0

One possible explanation for these distinctions between representation of more recent (for example, the Arab Spring) and less recent (for example, the Second World War) traumatic memories on Wikipedia is the lack of real-time memorialization in the latter cases. Unlike memories of recent events, which are converted into Wikipedia articles ‘within minutes’ (‘Wikipedia: About’) of their occurrence, Second World War memories do not appear spontaneously, but are documented according to existing sources. In the case of the Battle of Kyiv, the transition between communicative and cultural memory has already taken place; this, however, does not mean that various online communities will interpret it in the same way. The lack of discussion and minimal amount of edits in the Ukrainian Wikipedia may be taken as an indicator of a consensus on this particular episode of the past, originating from a greater familiarity with the history of the Second World War in Ukraine. The opposite situation can be found in the English Wikipedia, where users are less familiar – and less burdened – with that particular past and, therefore, feel freer to explore and discuss it.

Figure 1. Temporal dynamics of edits of Wikipedia articles



The examination of temporal dynamics of editing activity points out a number of similarities between the Wikipedia articles on the battle. As Figure 1 demonstrates, the process of editing for all versions was the most intensive in the period of two to three years following the creation of the respective article. After this time, the user activity tends to drop; the occasional peaks of activity were usually related to the event's anniversaries. Examples of such peaks include 2013, when the seventieth anniversary of the Battle of Kyiv was celebrated in Ukraine and Russia, and 2015, when the seventieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War was commemorated. Both events attracted significant attention of mainstream media in post-socialist countries, in particular Russia; by contrast, the lesser attention towards these events in Anglophone mainstream media can explain the lack of significant changes in user interaction patterns in the English article.

The dynamics of editing also shows the impact of the contemporary traumas on the remediation of Second World War memory on Wikipedia. The beginning of the conflict in Eastern Ukraine in 2014 marked the decrease in editing activity in all versions; such an effect can be explained by the switch of user attention towards the ongoing conflict that overshadowed earlier traumatic memories (in particular, its 'hot' phase in summer 2014). In the following years, the scope of editing activity approached the pre-2014 level; however, the majority of edits made in this period were the minor ones. The only exception was observed in the Ukrainian article, when in 2016 an attempt was made to add a detailed description of the battle's background, including additional information about the Soviet losses at the Bukrin bridgehead. These observations indicate that the Wikipedia narratives of Second World War largely remained stable throughout the Ukraine crisis and that the influx of contemporary collective traumas could have a conserving effect on them.

Verbal interactions. The 'Talk' pages in Wikipedia offer 'the ability to discuss articles and other issues with other Wikipedians' ('Wikipedia: Tutorial/Talk Pages'); consequently, the use of these pages often facilitates communication among editors who want to discuss changes to specific articles. As already noted in the earlier section, the amount of verbal interactions in relation to the Battle of Kyiv was not found to be significant. Furthermore, it is worth noting that the majority of verbal interactions occurred before the beginning of the Ukraine crisis in 2013: the Russian article on Kyiv was most

actively discussed in November 2013, but a few weeks before the outbreak of the crisis, in relation to the seventieth anniversary of the seizure of city by the Red Army.

The analysis of the ‘Talk’ pages indicated a number of differences in the narrative strategies employed in the different Wikipedia versions in dealing with historical controversies. In the case of the Russian and English articles, these controversies mostly relate to counting the fatalities on both the Soviet and German sides. In the Russian article, a number of editors expressed dissatisfaction with the article’s tally of fallen Soviet soldiers, which they considered too high. For instance, an anonymous editor who called himself Andrey left the following comment on 3 December 2012: ‘So, that means the Germans lost 389 soldiers in the Battle for Kyiv? It is just nonsense, sorry. As always, we heighten our losses and decrease theirs ... How did they lose then?’ (‘Obsuzhdenie: Kievskaiia Nastupatelnaia Operatsiia’). Similarly, another user, D2306, criticized in a post from 3 July 2013, the use of German sources for estimating casualties on the German side: ‘There are some smartasses who found a website with ten-day casualty reports for Wehrmacht and now think that is it, so they cite those reports everywhere as an ironclad fact. They do not care to compare their theories with actual facts’ (‘Obsuzhdenie: Kievskaiia Nastupatelnaia Operatsiia’).

This kind of emotional response to the Russian article was contrasted with the more reserved reactions in the English article. While there, too, the question of fatalities, as well as of the decisiveness of the battle, ignited discussions, these were approached differently. For instance, the user Counterstrike69 initiated a discussion on the matter by posting the following question on 8 March 2007: ‘Any ideas on the casualties on both side?’ (‘Talk: Battle of Kiev [1943]’). Such a formulation contrasted with more subjective statements by editors of the Russian version, who were less interested in the number of casualties *per se* than why the encyclopedia presented Soviet fatalities as greater than those from the German side. Similarly, the discussion of the decisiveness of the battle initiated by the user Kurt opened with a call for ‘civilized discussion’ able to clarify whether or not the Battle of Kyiv should be referenced as a decisive combat operation (‘Talk: Battle of Kiev [1943]’).

These differences in the way the same episode was approached in various Wikipedia versions had immediate consequences for the interactions between

editors. In the Russian article, the majority of comments left on the ‘Talk’ page were strong statements leaving little space for discussion; consequently, instead of dialogue, the Russian ‘Talk’ page mostly hosted a collection of isolated monologues. Under these circumstances, the idea of a collaborative production of the past seems dubious; instead, the content of the article itself seemed to be more dependent on the decisions of a few editors who were not particularly interested in debating their views on the event with others. By contrast, the English ‘Talk’ page actually hosted some discussions that included attempts to accommodate different points of view and reach a degree of consensus in relation to the traumatic past.

Conclusions

My observations suggest that the evolution of narratives of past violence in different language versions of Wikipedia are largely driven by existing cultural constructs – first and foremost, by the specific national memories of wars and conflicts. The presence of profound differences in the ways the Second World War is remembered in post-socialist states, in particular Ukraine and Russia, translates into rather divergent representations of the Battle of Kyiv. The Russian Wikipedia, for instance, promotes an interpretation that is steeped in the narrative of the Great Patriotic War; by contrast, the Ukrainian and, to a certain extent the Polish versions, rely on more revisionist trends in war historiography. These differences permeate Wikipedia narratives on different levels, varying from visual images deployed in the articles to descriptive categories that bring different parts of the encyclopedia into an interconnected whole; together, these elements promote images of the past that indicate significant differences in the ways the Second World War is remembered.

The patterns of interaction with the Wikipedia articles point to the complex interplay between public remembrance and digital media in post-socialist countries. The rise of interest in Second World War narratives on Wikipedia, coinciding with the anniversaries of the respective historical episodes, can be viewed as evidence that today the line between offline and online developments is increasingly blurred. Similarly, the post-2014 changes in the interaction with Second World War memory on Wikipedia can be explained by the impact of the ongoing Ukraine crisis as Wikipedia users’ attention turned from memories of past violence to the ongoing collective traumas. Under these conditions, the Wikipedia narratives of the Battle of Kyiv demonstrated a degree of stability that contrasted with

recurrent instrumentalization of Second World War memories in mainstream media in the course of the Ukraine crisis; the latter observation suggests that online memory cultures can be less volatile and susceptible to change than might have been expected from ever-changing digital environments.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 See, for instance, works by Erll and Rigney 2009a; Erll 2011; Garde-Hansen, Hoskins and Reading 2009; Garde-Hansen 2011; and Neiger, Meyers and Zandberg 2011.
- 2 See, for example, works by Rutten, Fedor and Zvereva 2013, Trubina 2010, Bernstein 2016, Makhortykh 2017.
- 3 According to the Alexa data, Wikipedia is the sixth most popular website in Ukraine ('Top Sites in Ukraine'), eighth most popular website in Poland ('Top Sites in Poland'), and tenth most popular website in Russia ('Top Sites in Russia').
- 4 Examples include works by Trubina 2010, Nikiporets-Takigawa 2013, Bernstein 2016 and Makhortykh 2017a.
- 5 See, for instance, works by Dounaevsky 2013, Fredheim, Howanitz and Makhortykh 2014 and Makhortykh 2017.

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TEACHING THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE: A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF NATIONAL HISTORY CURRICULUMS AND HISTORY TEXTBOOKS IN TURKEY, ARMENIA AND FRANCE

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ABSTRACT

In an attempt to explore the different historiographical and pedagogical approaches to the Armenian Genocide, from denial to recognition, from contextualization to historicism, from nationalism to human rights, this paper focuses on the national history curriculums of three countries (Turkey, Armenia and France). These three countries were selected in order to demonstrate the variety of historiographies according to the different socio-political and ideological contexts. In this sense, there exist two levels of comparison: i) the general approach towards history education, along with human rights education, framing the national history curriculum, the publications and instructions of the Ministry of Education determining its implementation; ii) peculiarities concerning the case of the Armenian Genocide (1915–16), involving the given historical context, its ideological position and interpretation, and its dis/connection to the claimed stance. By this comparative analysis, the paper aims to revisit the problems of the divergence concerning the education of history, particularly in the case of crimes against humanity.

Introduction

The link between the nation-states and the education of history has been one of the much-discussed issues. From nationalist ideologies to political expediencies, from the consolidation of national identity to the formation of ideal citizens, from grand historical narratives to pedagogies of moral

values, the nation-states are often criticized for controlling and influencing the education of history in line with their interests. Within this frame of reference, the instruction of contested and sensitive historical events represents one of the essential controversies, revealing the political intentions behind educational practices. In an attempt to comparatively analyse the different approaches to the Armenian Genocide, this paper explores the different historical narratives, contextualizations and political stances of three countries (Turkey, Armenia and France), through their national history curriculums, as well as their history teaching plans and exemplary history textbooks. For this purpose, the paper consists of three sections. First, a brief overview of the curriculums of each country is presented regarding their development and transformation, along with the intentions affecting their regulation and implementation. Second, the position of the Armenian Genocide within the national curriculums and history teaching plans is illustrated, accompanied by the political stances of each country towards the issue. Last but not least, the way the Armenian Genocide is taught in history textbooks is comparatively analysed in relation to their explanation of the causes and conditions resulting in the decision of deportation and its implementation, as well as the consequences and long-term effects that can be traced up to the present.

History education and the curriculum

The curriculum is the core of education: it consists of guidelines responding to questions such as ‘what should be taught, to whom, under what circumstances, how, and with what end in mind’ (Null 2011, 5). Curriculum is what signifies i) aims and objectives of education, ii) subjects, iii) their distribution at different levels of education, iv) educational materials and their content, v) teaching methods. In this regard, school curriculums are of the utmost importance in the formation of ‘ideal’ citizens, their apprehension of certain moral values, civic rights and duties, fundamental knowledge and, naturally, the history of their nation.¹

History first appeared in the national curriculums in the 19th century when public education systems were more or less established in many countries – almost at the same time that history became a modern academic discipline. This early inception within the educational system also showed the significance of history in terms of the formation of future citizens (Carretero and Bermudez 2012, 634). Concerning the role of history in relation to the construction of national identity, there are three different approaches: the ‘romantic’ promotes social cohesion, the ‘empirical’ stresses the transmission

of historical knowledge, and the ‘civic’ concentrates on the development of civic competence (Carretero, Asensio and Rodríguez-Moneo 2012, 4). To give an individual a sense of belonging to a nation and to promote his or her self-identification as a citizen of that nation and the awareness of the responsibilities it enforces, historical knowledge and a consciousness of a common past plays an essential part.

As it is the curriculum-makers who determine which subjects should be emphasized and which should be excluded or ignored, how to represent historical events, people, facts and in which context, the curriculum is also a reflection of what constructs the national unity of a particular ‘present’ (Brehm 2014, 319). The national curriculum consolidates a uniform identity administered to all students and leads to the quest of establishing a single ‘grand narrative’ that would eliminate alternative narratives and compel the teaching of a precise interpretation of the past (Ahonen 2001, 190). However, since the circumstances that define the national unity tend to change given the politics of a certain time, so does the curriculum. Therefore, the history curriculum is one of the most unstable components of education, continuously altered depending on the transformations that occur in the socio-cultural and historical-political conditions of a specific country (Brauch 2017, 597). Consequently, a comparison of national history curriculums in Turkey, Armenia and France requires taking into account the country-specific circumstances and their transformation over time.

Approaches to national histories: comparing curriculums

To start with, in Turkey, the national history curriculum has undergone several major reforms that are mostly invoked by three political stances: nationalism, Islamism and a democratic initiative. Nationalism, as the first and foremost, contains ideological shifts and escalations that are marked by the socio-political context of the era. The 1930s witnessed the establishment of nationalist ideology of Kemalism, which introduced a series of reforms to depart from the Ottoman legacy, in particular its religious character, in order to embrace Western values, based on six founding principles of the Turkish Republic: populism, secularism, revolutionism, nationalism, republicanism and statism (Zürcher 2005, 181). In this period, as an extension of the efforts to demolish the claims of other nations over national territory, the ‘Turkish History Thesis’ claimed the roots of the Turkish nation were deeply established in Anatolia, where its early civilizations and inhabitants were originally Turk (Akpınar et al. 2017, 14). By the 1960s, as the first military

coup in the history of the Republic took place, the nationalist tone of its history education was principally influenced by a political attempt to balance Islam and modernization, that is, the emerging ‘Turkish-Islam synthesis’, and the main objective of national education was identified as a means of forming ‘self-sacrificing and virtuous citizens who are loyal to their family, nation, country, Turkish revolutions and ideals’ (Akdağ and Kaymakçı 2011, 858). After the 1980 coup, the ‘Turkish-Islam synthesis’ became the dominant ideology in educational practices. As a result, the life and principles of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881–1938), the founder of the Turkish Republic, were integrated into the curriculum, along with religion – that is, Sunni Islam – becoming a compulsory subject in order to educate moral values; it reflected an attempt to reconcile Kemalism with Islam, by stripping it of its traditional connotations, particularly that of secularism (Nohl 2008, 36).

From this perspective, it can be argued that the second political stance, that of Islamism, eroded the emphasis on secularity that had been perceived as one of the pillars of national education in Turkey. Hence, the Islamization of education constitutes one of the central disputes that can be traced back to the 1950s, a period marked by the emergence of Imam Hatip schools that specialized in religious education and the training of imams (Kafadar 2002, 354). This political stance is particularly enhanced by the many educational reforms in the 2000s, initiated by the governments formed by the AKP (Justice and Development Party), the conservative political party that has been in power since 2002. Aside from the consolidation of many existing religious aspects of the national curriculum and the introduction of new elective courses, such as *Kur’an-ı Kerim* [Qur’an], *Hız: Muhammed’in Hayatı* [Prophet Muhammad’s Life] and *Temel Dinî Bilgiler* [Fundamentals of Religion], these reforms also seek to establish an Islamized approach to citizen formation (Kaya 2015, 58). One significant example would be the association of moral values with religious content, explaining ‘tolerance’ with ‘Muhammad’s “tolerant attitude” towards the Christians of Yemen’ or ‘human rights’ with the ‘farewell sermon [*khubta*] of the prophet’, followed by the argument that human rights are integral to and guaranteed by Islam (Türkmen 2009, 391, 395).

Though currently replaced by an Islamized context, the introduction of global citizenship and the education of universal values was actually an extension of Turkey’s drive for membership to the European Union (EU), and therefore the educational reforms at the beginning of 2000s prescribed a transformation of the overall system to adhere to EU standards. The

democratic initiative simultaneously has marked this period and has been mirrored in education as well. As the long-ignored minorities of Turkey – Kurds, Armenians, Assyrians, Alevis, etc., as well as oppressed groups such as lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transsexuals and intersexuals (LGBTIs) – have started to voice their demands for equality and recognition, elective courses in several local languages have been introduced, textbooks have been partially cleared of discriminatory statements, and subjects concerning human rights and democracy have been added to the curriculum (Çayır 2014, 2–5; Akdağ and Kaymakçı 2011, 860–61). Despite these developments, a certain Islamized version of the Kemalist nationalism still persists, and thus, the curriculums and the textbooks ‘still portray Turkey as a country that is homogenous, monolingual, and mono-religious’ (Çayır 2014, 115).

For Armenia, the conditions leading to the educational reforms can be categorized not in the sense of the chronological transformations in political stances, but rather in terms of extending existing approaches towards educational policy: that is, of constructing a post-Soviet national identity through creating a sense of citizenship, aligning with international educational standards and the educating the diasporic communities. In the 1990s, with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the emergence of an independent Republic of Armenia, the reforms bore a twofold objective in shaping the curriculum: to remove Soviet ideology from education and to redefine what it meant to be Armenian. However, this did not necessarily mean that the legacy of Soviet Armenian education was excluded from the history education of the newly independent Republic. On the contrary, though ‘stripped of communist internationalism and saturated with nationalism’, the historical narrative more or less remained similar: ‘starting with ethno-genesis, followed by the struggle for national liberation and culminating, this time, in independent nationhood’, instead of the development of class consciousness directed towards communism as it was during the Soviet period (Akpınar 2017, 43).

It is also important to stress that, as asserted by the historian Ronald Suny, Armenian nationalist thinking has had a complex evolution that can be dated back to the late 18th century. It persisted even during the Soviet period, when Armenian historians successfully fought against the denationalization of their history. The nationalist tone of the historical narrative was contextualized and consolidated by using repetitive themes such as the antiquity of the Armenian people, the continuous occupation of its indigenous ‘homeland’ and the perpetual struggle for survival and freedom despite betrayals, invasions

and being abandoned by the Great Powers (Suny 2001, 885–87). Nevertheless, the attempt to construct a post-Soviet Armenian identity and the desired rupture from Armenia's Soviet past required concrete strategies, which were founded in the transition to Western/European educational standards that would introduce the concept of global citizenship. The hopes of gaining acceptance to European Union, along with guidance and support of multiple international organizations, extensively influenced the educational reforms of the post-Soviet transition process by including democratic values such as tolerance, human rights and openness into the national curriculum (Terzian 2010, 166). Nonetheless, these global and national contexts surrounding the educational system have resulted in the development of a dual policy: the primordial myths of Armenian History, such as the Armenian Church, coexist with concepts of tolerance and civic practice (Terzian 2010, 169).

One final link that also intersects the global and national dimensions in the Armenian context would be the diaspora. Since the Armenian Genocide caused the Armenian people to be dispersed to all over the world, maintaining Armenian heritage has been a primary concern for both the diasporic institutions (political organizations, churches, schools, etc.) as well as the newly founded independent Armenian state. On an emotional level, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the Armenian diaspora has hoped to reunite with the homeland, and support its transition to an independent nation-state. Nonetheless, the Armenian governments' policies towards the diaspora, the disagreements on national priorities and the definition of the nation itself have complicated the situation and raised concerns (Ishkanian 2005, 138–39). Instead, at the beginning of the 2000s, the notion of nation was redefined in terms that exceeded the political and territorial frontiers of the state, and accordingly, merged the diaspora and the state into one nation: national unity was re-established as Armenia became a trans-nation (Barseghyan 2007, 294). This was also echoed in the educational reforms with regards to the 'preservation of national identity'; as described in the State Programme for Education of 2011–15: 'the educational system of the Republic of Armenia is bound to support the activities of educational centres of the Armenian Diaspora [...] thereby creating conditions for uniting the globally dispersed Armenian potential' (Government of Armenia 2011, 16), and as suggested by the Ministry of Education and Science, history textbooks in several foreign languages were produced for the Sunday schools of the diaspora, in order to ensure that the national identity could be preserved through Armenian education (Movsisyan 2016, 3).

In France, where the national education is arguably excessively centralized (Baqués 2006, 105; Egéa-Kuehne 2003, 329), the educational system contains a tension caused by two polarized points of view: on the one end, there is the 19th-century heritage of a national identity and republican values, on the other, there is European identity and citizenship. In the course of the 19th century, France was one of the 'historical nations' whose history was documented in archives, causing a 'revolution' in historiography whereby writing history depended on archival documents. Thus, at the beginning, it was their history that was written and taught (Wallerstein 2004, 5). Education, deemed 'secular, compulsory, and free' was an essential part of the French Republican tradition, with a national curriculum enforced on every future citizen, no matter what their social class or where they lived.

As one of the national priorities, education had – and is still argued to have – a critical role in transmitting both historical knowledge and a sense of being French (Corbett 1996, 5). From this perspective, from the 19th century onwards, the teaching of history has been a tool for political socialization, creating French citizens by inculcating them with the republican values of democracy, freedom and equality, but at the same time imposing respect for the established order and their glorious ancestors (Lantheaume 2003, 125). As of the beginning of the 21st century, the French curriculum still put a great emphasis on national identity, and social cohesion is perceived as loyalty to essential principles of the Republic, especially that of human rights, highlighting the intolerance of racism and discrimination (Osler and Starkey 2001, 287–301). Be that as it may, since the 1980s, the reforms to the French curriculum have increasingly encouraged a sense of European identity (Baqués 2006, 106). With the institutional formation of the European Union in the last decades of the 20th century, the tendency to Europeanize the educational systems and develop the European dimension in education has resulted in a reevaluation of European history throughout the century with the aim of emerging a European consciousness. Yet, this approach has not necessarily lead to the abandonment of a nationalist perspective; instead, in the case of France, it has meant a reinterpretation of national identity as an open concept compatible with European identity. Hence, as Europe became the focus of French national education, the curriculum reforms then cultivated a sense of dual citizenship, that of both national and European (Legris 2010, 139–43).

What is striking in three of the cases is the compliance to a trend that appeared in the second half of the 20th century, whereby international

educational standards were adopted and a global citizenship perspective developed.² However, as illustrated in this section, in spite of the reforms enacted in order to meet with these criteria, a certain inclination to uphold the national values and national identity as the fundamental basis of citizen formation still persists in Turkey and Armenia, as well as in France, which results in a duality of national and global policies towards educational systems.

The Armenian Genocide in the educational frame: a brief comparison of history textbooks

One of the important outcomes of the evolution in educational systems in the second half of the 20th century can be pinpointed to the appearance of the history of the present, relying upon a disciplinary knowledge of the contemporary world, most particularly that relating to memory. Since the Second World War there has been an immense rise in human rights issues triggering memory activism, fuelled by the duty to remember and to ensure that a crime against humanity, such as the Shoah, would ‘never again’ be possible. From the 1970s, despite the enduring nationalist element in educational policies, human rights education became a principal theme, along with the memories of victims (Meyer, Bromley and Ramirez 2010, 113). Even though, from a neutral point of view, teaching the Armenian Genocide would fit into this picture, the curriculums and textbooks of each country imply that it remains much more problematic and does not easily fit into the political agendas of Turkey, Armenia and France.

In terms of curriculum design, both Turkey and Armenia have official decrees on the Armenian Genocide. In the case of Turkey, as an extension of the struggle against the ‘alleged genocides’, on 14 June 2002 the Board of Education and Instruction ordered different grades at primary and secondary schools to be taught about all the issues concerning the claims of the Armenians, along with those of the Greeks and the Assyrians, through the terms set out by the Ministry of National Education in decrees 272–73 (Ministry of National Education 2002). The teaching plans for the history courses for the tenth grade (that is, at the age of fifteen) show that the issue is taught thematically, including but not limited to, the treatment of non-Muslim minorities in Ottoman Empire, Armenian revolts and atrocities, the role and intentions of the Great Powers in these revolts, the necessity of the decision to expel Armenians, intentions behind the terrorist acts of Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA), the definition of the concept of genocide and its comparison with Armenian

claims (Ministry of National Education 2011, I–VI). The history textbooks, produced or approved by the Ministry, present the issue exactly as it has been regulated by these decrees, as a subject of ‘the Ottoman Empire in the First World War’, under the subchapter ‘the Caucasian Front’, hence providing a detailed picture of the ‘Turkish thesis’³ (Tüysüz 2017, 201–8).

In the case of Armenia, with the order N925 A/C, approved by the Ministry of Education and Science on 9 July 2013, the optional course entitled ‘History of the Armenian Question’ was regulated for eleventh grade (that is, at the age of sixteen) as an introductory course on the subject. As explained in the appendix of the order, the aim of this course is to teach the Armenian Question, that is, ‘the national liberation struggle of the Armenian people for the sake of restoring the national statehood in its historical homeland and creating a free, independent, and united Armenia’, which also includes the Armenian Genocide as a subject (Ministry of Education and Science 2013, 3). According to the standards and teaching plans of history in secondary education, the Armenian Genocide is taught in the eleventh grade as a part of the compulsory Armenian History courses. The teaching plan traces the Armenian Genocide chronologically: starting with the mass murders in Western Armenia at the end of 19th century, escalating to the Young Turks’ policy in line with the Hamidian programme of the destruction of Armenians, and reaching to a total act of genocide in 1915, during the First World War. The themes also include the role of the Great Powers, the trial and punishment of those responsible, the Armenian’s ‘heroic’ self-defence and the process of recognition of the Armenian Genocide (Ministry of Education and Science Centre for Educational Programmes 2008, 17–18). This approach is evident in the history textbooks of the eleventh grade, particularly under the chapter ‘Armenia and the Armenian People during the Years of the First World War’ (Melkonyan et al. 2015, 246–68).

In the case of France, a law that recognized the Armenian Genocide was enacted in 2001, therefore increasing its visibility in history education (Falaize and Mériaux 2006, 12). The French curriculum does not contain any direct reference to the Genocide, except from one phrase appearing in the History/Geography programme for the third class of the fourth cycle (corresponding to ninth grade in a twelve-year education system, that is, at the age of fourteen) concerning the First World War during which ‘combatants and civilians suffer extreme violence, as witnessed particularly by the genocide of the Armenians in 1915’ (Ministry of National Education 2015, 315).

The history textbooks of this grade dedicate two pages to the Armenian Genocide under the title ‘Europe, a Major Front of Total Wars (1914–1945)’, within the context of ‘the brutalization of society’ during the First World War (Blanchard and Mercier 2016, 46–47).

The secondary-education history textbooks of all three countries that cover the First World War discuss the Armenian Genocide to some extent, yet with a different narration of the historical events. Within the framework of this paper, in order to provide an accessible comparison, the different ways of teaching the Armenian Genocide is primarily discussed through the previously cited history textbooks.⁴

Escalation of events

An important subject preceding the Genocide narration is Armenian–Ottoman relations. To be precise, before the chapters concerning the First World War, history textbooks of both Turkey and Armenia briefly examine the situation of the Armenians in the Ottoman Empire, yet with different interpretations. The Turkish history textbook explains that, during the empire, the Armenians had flourished in every possible way – economically, socially, culturally, if not politically – thanks to the Ottoman policies towards non-Muslim minorities, particularly emphasizing the ‘harmony’ of Armenian–Ottoman relations, treating the Armenians as loyal subjects [*millet-i sadıka*] (Tüysüz 2017, 72–73). Whereas the Armenian history textbook does not accept any possibility of coexistence, instead reviewing Armenian–Ottoman relations in terms of discrimination, oppression and the occupation of Western Armenia, while showing the Ottoman efforts as attempts to deceive Armenians. Describing the Ottoman Empire as ‘backward’, the narration accentuates the necessity of a liberation movement, with a certain stress on the destiny awaiting the Armenians (Melkonyan et al. 2015, 182–205). In the French history textbook, there is no reference to the conditions of the Armenians, with only one phrase expressing that they were living as a minority in the Eastern parts of the empire (Blanchard and Mercier 2016, 46).

Regarding the Armenian involvement in warfare, the central subject consists of Armenian political movements and their actions during the First World War. Both the Armenian and Turkish textbooks confirm that the Armenians of the Caucasus sided with the Russians. In the Armenian case, participation is presented as a ‘voluntary movement’, whereby the support

of Russian military forces would bring about the liberation of Western Armenia. Though there existed different political positions amongst Armenians towards the war and the voluntary movement,⁵ the comprehensive interpretation of the textbook suggests that the movement stands as a triumphant part of the history of the Armenian struggle for liberation (Melkonyan et al. 2015, 250–53). From the perspective of the Turkish textbook, the Armenian actions are depicted as ‘separatist revolts’ against the Ottoman Empire, aided by the Entente Powers with the aim of expelling the Ottomans from the war. Therefore the Armenians, who were ‘backstabbing’ the Ottoman army, are accused of becoming one of the reasons for the empire’s failure on the Caucasian Front (Tüysüz 2017, 201). The French history textbook, once again, does not mention the Armenian involvement in the war, however, but it does remark on the military defeats of Ottomans and the tensions within the governance of the empire as the reasons for genocide (Blanchard and Mercier 2016, 46).

Decision, implementation and consequences

The narration of the genocidal process can be compared from this sequence of events: the decision of deportation, the stages of implementation and the consequences. From the perspective of the Turkish history textbook, because of the Armenian revolts and treachery, the Ottoman ruling elite had to take the decision to ‘deport’⁶ only after every other measure – such as the enactment of martial law or the arrests of separatist Armenians – had failed to provide a satisfactory outcome. Demonstrating the four articles of the deportation law, the decision was justified by only targeting those who had disturbed peace, who has fought with weapons and rebelled against the authorities, and who had conspired or betrayed the country. Moreover, the textbook also criticizes the representation of the deportation in Western media, followed by a long explanation about the measures adopted for the protection of the deportees (Tüysüz 2017, 203–4). The French history textbook chooses to show the decision to deport with a *communiqué* of Talaat Pasha, then minister of the interior, ordering the deportation of Armenians with the exception of the sick and the disabled, and the arrest of those who disobeyed. The *communiqué* presented also cites the prohibition of Armenians to sell their property and real estate, as their exile is only temporary⁷ (Blanchard and Mercier 2016, 46). The Armenian history textbook recounts a more politicized picture of the Genocide, concentrating principally on the Young Turk policies towards Armenians. According to this perspective, the political aspect of the Genocide was a consequence of Sultan Abdülhamid

II's plan, devised long before the war,⁸ to build a new homeland for the Turks that territorially involved Western Armenia. The economic factor at play was the confiscation of Armenian wealth and property in order to provide capital for the state (Melkonyan et al. 2015, 255–56).

Concerning the stages of implementation, all three history textbooks demonstrate a certain timeframe for the beginning, development and conclusion of the event. In the Turkish textbook, the precautions against Armenian uprisings start in April 1915 with the arrests of those involved, intensify with the enactment and exercise of the deportation law and conclude in October 1915, when the state decided to suspend the deportations, convinced that the objective had been achieved (Tüysüz 2017, 203–5). The French textbook, with a small timeline and a map illustrating the acts of violence against Armenians, presents the start of the Genocide with the arrests of Armenians in April 1915, followed by two waves of deportations, the first between May and July 1915 and the second between the end of 1915 and the summer of 1916⁹ (Blanchard and Mercier 2016, 46). The Armenian textbook also acknowledges the commencement of the process with the arrests of the Armenian leaders, however on a different date, October 1914. Following the entry of the Ottoman Empire into the First World War, able Armenian men were first recruited into the Ottoman army to be ultimately eliminated, and then the Armenians on the Caucasian Front were massacred. By April 1915, the arrested Armenians had been hung, signifying the beginning of massacres in every region. The Armenian response to the planned massacres was self-defence, which extended the genocidal process until the end of 1916 (Melkonyan et al. 2015, 258–9).

As for the consequences, the Turkish history textbook offers plenty of numbers, as a matter of fact, it almost resembles a balance sheet. According to the textbook, out of 1.3 million Armenians living in Ottoman territory, 413,067 were deported, 400,000 to 500,000 were not, 383,000 deportees reached the final destination, 350,000 to 500,000 voluntarily 'immigrated' to the Caucasus, thus estimating a 'casualty' of 57,000 Armenians during the overall process (Tüysüz 2017, 205). In the French textbook, for which the main objective seems to be demonstrate the suffering of Armenians, the number of murdered Armenians is estimated between 1.2 and 1.5 million, without any reference to the total number of Armenians living under the Ottoman Empire, nor to the other consequences of the Genocide (Blanchard and Mercier 2016, 46). In the Armenian textbook, the narrative

about regional massacres and self-defensive actions gives precise numbers. However, the number is eventually rounded up to 1.5 million victims out of 2.5 million, which also signifies the official claim. Furthermore, the textbook examines the consequences of the Genocide in a much broader sense: the destruction of Western Armenian civilization, which is portrayed as a great loss not only for Armenians but also for the whole world; the continuation of economic and cultural genocide, that is, the annihilation of Armenian cultural heritage, a process that continues up to the present day, not only in Turkey but also in Azerbaijan; the emergence of the Armenian diaspora and the destiny of the survivors, including those who were forced to convert to Islam; and the effects of the Genocide on the following generations of the Armenian nation (Melkonyan et al. 2015, 259, 262–63).

Table 1. Comparison of the Factual Differences in Textbooks

	Turkey	Armenia	France
Context within the First World War	Caucasian Front	Caucasian Front	Mass violence and brutalization
Armenian involvement in warfare	Armenian separatist revolts	Armenian voluntary movement for liberation	–
Reasons	Failure on the Caucasian Front because of Armenian treachery	Confiscation of Armenian properties (economics), Young Turk policies (politics)	Military defeats of Ottomans, tensions within the state
Decision	Deportation	Massacres and Genocide	Deportation and Genocide
Stages	Arrests of Armenians involved in revolts Deportations End of implementation	Arrests of Armenians Recruitment of Armenian men Massacres on the Caucasian Front Hanging of Armenian leaders Massacres in every region Armenian self-defense	Arrests of Armenians First wave of deportations Second wave of deportations
Period	April 1915 to October 1915	October 1914 to end of 1916	April 1915 to summer 1916
Consequences in numbers	57,000 casualties out of 1.3 million Armenians	1.5 million Armenians victimized out of 2.5 million	1.2 to 1.5 million Armenians murdered

Claims and Genocide definition

The aftermath of the Genocide constitutes an important interruption of the chronological narrative in both the Armenian and Turkish textbooks; rather they continue with different stages of recognition and/or denial, with conflicts lasting up until the present.¹⁰ The Turkish textbook jumps to the conclusion of the First World War and the treaties signed in order to establish the present territorial boundaries – a topic that is actually examined elaborately in the succeeding chapter – as means to demonstrate the irrelevance of the Armenian claims over territory, particularly according to the internationally acknowledged Treaty of Lausanne. Moreover, the textbook argues that the Armenians developed their scheme against Turkey as a strategy to protect national consciousness and prevent further the assimilation of Armenians in the diaspora. In this context, a four-stage plan was introduced to enforce the recognition of the Genocide, leading to monetary compensation and territorial restitution. For this purpose, Armenians founded terrorist organizations, such as Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA), to attract international attention to the Armenian cause by killing Turkish diplomats and their families. After the independence of Armenia, the conflicts became an issue for the foreign policies of both countries, this time marked by the attempts of the Armenian lobby to influence the international community (Tüysüz 2017, 205–8).

The Armenian textbook pursues another route towards the recognition process. The aftermath of the Genocide is discussed through international reactions towards the issue, including testimonies, publications, journals, reports and condemnations of the massacres by political figures. As the first step to recognition, the textbook notices the trials of Young Turks in 1919 by Turkish court-martials, which sentenced the perpetrators to death for their crimes against Armenians. Yet, the textbook implies, since the perpetrators had already fled the country, the punishment was not carried out by Turkish authorities or the Entente Powers, but by self-sacrificing Armenians with operation 'Nemesis', inspired from the Greek mythological goddess of retribution, which sought the assassinations of all those responsible for the Armenian Genocide. Stating that the recognition process has entered a new phase after the Second World War, the textbook affirms the rise of international recognition of the Genocide and the persistence of Turkey's denial, an aspect that still, after a hundred years, determines political relations between two countries (Melkonyan et al. 2015, 262–67).

Since all three textbooks provide a definition of ‘genocide’, one convenient comparison would be the purpose behind the introduction of the concept. For the Turkish and the Armenian cases, the objective seems quite obvious: the former to denounce the claims of genocide and the latter to proclaim it. The Turkish textbook, citing the definition from the UN Convention, asserts that the deportation did not aim at Armenians *per se*, rather those who threatened the security on the Caucasian Front, adding the fact that the intention was not their extermination, because if it were the case, then the Ottoman ‘state’ would not have made the effort to deport them, but just would have murdered the Armenians where they were (Tüysüz 2017, 208). In the Armenian textbook, the invention of the concept by Raphael Lemkin (1900–59) is explained by his overview of the Armenian case, and a full legal description of the concept is cited, along with five acts defining an event as genocide. Since the Turks carried out all of the five actions, the textbook declares the legitimacy to address the events as ‘genocide’ in accordance with the UN Convention (Melkonyan et al. 2015, 264–65). For the French textbook, however, the objective remains ambiguous, since the definition appears as an exercise in words, and the self-evaluation questionnaire demands students to count three factors that justify the events to be described as an ‘extermination’ rather than a ‘genocide’¹¹ (Blanchard and Mercier 2016, 46–47).

Conclusion

The comparison of different approaches to teaching the Armenian Genocide clearly shows that history education continues to be exposed to political influence. In the cases of Armenia and Turkey, the instruction of the Armenian Genocide confirms the countries’ political stances towards the issue: Turkey, in denial, attempts to construct an interpretation of the historical events that refutes the claims of genocidal intentions, whereas Armenia interprets the historical significance of the Genocide in their struggle for national independence. That being said, it is important to remember that, within the framework of history education in Armenia, the Genocide holds a fundamental part of the centuries-long battle against foreign occupation and the national struggle for liberation, which persists as the central theme in the national history curriculum (Akpınar et al. 2017, 45). While in the case of Turkey, the historical significance of the Genocide cannot be viewed without considering contemporary conflicts, hence its historical contextualization contains only the elements that affirm the official thesis. Additionally, given the fact that the Turkish stance tends to alter over time

depending on the political state of affairs or the allegations, the historical narrative evolves accordingly.

The French approach towards teaching the Armenian Genocide might appear intriguing in respect to the historical neutrality of the country. However, the French position seems to involve a lot of political, historiographical and pedagogical confusions. It is political because the position tends to fluctuate according to political influence and international diplomatic relations, as demonstrated in the comparisons of the 2012 and 2016 editions of the same history textbook. Historiographical because, as ascertained by Sophie Ferhadjian in her analysis of how to teach the Armenian Genocide, the attempt is to explain the issue without addressing the essential historical context such as the history of the Armenians, the rise of nationalism in the 19th century or the Eastern Question as well as the Armenian Question (2006, 4–5). Pedagogical because, as stated by Falaize and Mériaux, multiple constraints characterize its instruction: the authors of the textbooks do not have a comprehensive knowledge of the issue; the time and place devoted to it within teaching plans are very limited; it lacks documentation to prove it as ‘genocide’, and thus the civic aim of introducing such ‘brutalization’ of society is in vain (Falaize and Mériaux 2006, 13). In this regard, including the Armenian Genocide in the French history curriculum does not seem to have any intention other than to illustrate an example of mass violence preceding the Shoah.

Briefly, the comparison of national history curriculums and history textbooks of the aforementioned countries suggest that the teaching of disputable and sensitive historical events still remains problematic. The primary concern appears not to teach about this crime against humanity in order to raise consciousness and responsibility, but to use it either to consolidate national identity as in case of Armenia, or to confirm a political position as in case of Turkey, or to reaffirm republican values with a de-contextualized example of mass violence as is the case of France.

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ENDNOTES

- 1 According to Anderson, nation is an imagined community in the sense that i) its members lack face-to-face interaction with most of the other members, ii) and yet it assumes a horizontal comradeship amongst its subjects, iii) these communities are distinguished from one another depending on the manner they are imagined, iv) thus, the limits of a nation define the boundaries of where one nation ends and another begins (Anderson 2006, 6–7). In this regard, Anderson asserts that nationalism indeed accords with the evolution of educational systems, since schools and universities (re)produce the most preeminent imagination of a national community (Anderson 2006, 71).
- 2 It is essential to underline the fact that in the context of French education what is perceived to be ‘European’ citizenship corresponds to ‘global’ citizenship in the contexts of Turkey and Armenia. However, in the case of France, since the values of the republic are considered as ‘universal’, this duality is assumed to be complementary instead of conflictual. Nevertheless, this does not absolve French education from its nationalist tendencies, especially regarding the colonial past and confrontation with it (Lantheaume 2003, 138).
- 3 According to Gürpınar, the ‘Turkish Thesis’ on the Armenian Genocide constitutes a complex combination of three distinct approaches: a right-wing version, a left-wing version and a centrist version. Diverging in their justification of Ottoman response to Armenian militancy, the three versions also follow a concurrent path in the development of the official thesis. The right-wing version contextualizes the issue in terms of ethnic conflicts and nationalist movements, accusing Armenians of treachery and savagery, while the left-wing version emphasizes the imperialist hegemony of the era, targeting Armenian separatism through its collaboration with the Great Powers, and thus becoming the servant of imperialism. Finally, the centrist version claims a state-centric argument, denouncing the Armenian revolts as disobedience to state sovereignty (Gürpınar 2016, 221).
- 4 It is also important, at this point, to point out the fact that each country has a different policy towards textbook production. In Turkey, textbooks are produced either directly by the Ministry of National Education or by private publishers, also the Ministry can set up an independent commission to write a draft or order the purchase of existing textbooks. In any case, the textbooks are subjected to inspection and approval of the Ministry of National Education before being circulated (Akpınar et al. 2017, 19). In France, however, the production of textbooks is highly regulated by a very competitive market whose primary actors are private publishers where the only constraint is to follow the national programmes (Baquès 2007, 127). Armenia stands somewhere in between, having both the market-oriented system and the central commission for the selection of textbooks. In this regard, the textbooks are produced by the private publishing houses to be enlisted for the competition held by the Ministry of Education and Science, and the results are declared as the authorized textbooks of the following academic year (Zolyan and Tigran 2008, 17).
- 5 The textbook dedicates a whole page for the four positions apropos the voluntary movement. According to the textbook, Hunchakians, linking Armenian’s autonomy to victory,

openly declared for the Entente Powers, while the Dashnakians advised Armenians to fulfil their military duties to the country of which they are subjects, resulting in a divided position depending on the region; in Western Armenia they called for the maintenance of neutrality, whereas in the Caucasus they supported reunion with Russian troops. Bolshevik Armenians, as a representative of the diasporic opposition, alleged the war as unjust and disclaimed the Armenian struggle for liberation (Melkonyan et al. 2015, 254).

6 The Turkish history textbook addresses the events only as ‘deportation’, in fact the word ‘genocide’ is only used with the adjective ‘alleged’ in front of it.

7 What is most thought-provoking is the fact that this document, originally found in the Ottoman Archives, is frequently employed by the denialists for the rejection of genocidal intentions, as it implies the ‘return’ of the Armenians. The 2012 edition of the same history textbook prefers to give reference to the testimonies of Henry Morgenthau, which includes a quotation from Talaat Pasha explaining the deportation decision (Blanchard, Veber and Lozac’h 2012, 42). A discussion concerning the French history textbooks might help explain the reasons for such a transformation. According to an article published on a Franco-Turk website, the instruction of the Armenian Genocide in these history textbooks lacked historical objectivity and trustworthy historical evidence such as archival documents and ignored historiographical developments on the issue, therefore bypassing the Turkish position in a way that would provoke the Turkish diaspora and complicate diplomatic relations (Houssay 2014).

8 Reference to Hamidian massacres as a contextual precedent of the Genocide also appears in other Armenian history textbooks, with a specific emphasis on the ‘Turkish way of resolving issues, and that is through massacres’ (Akpinar et al. 2017, 56).

9 A curious point revealed in the comparison between the Turkish and the French textbooks would be the fact that the date considered as the completion of implementation by the former is viewed as the beginning of a new phase by the latter. Indeed, the Turkish history textbook does not mention at all what has befallen Armenians between the end of 1915 and December 1918, when a law was enacted permitting the return of Armenians (Tüysüz 2017, 205).

10 Once again, the French history textbook reports neither the conflicts, nor the recognition process concerning the Genocide. Be that as it may, the 2012 edition of the same history textbook mentions the recognition of the Armenian Genocide by both the United Nations and France, as well as the denial of Turkey (Blanchard, Veber and Lozac’h 2012, 42).

11 Another interesting comparison between the 2012 and 2016 editions of the French history textbook would be the approach to the concept concerning the Armenian case. The former redirects the reader to another page for the definition of ‘genocide’, which is to be found in the chapter dedicated to the Shoah, also in the self-evaluation questionnaire the activity is to develop arguments that justify the events in 1915–16 as ‘genocide’ (Blanchard, Veber and Lozac’h 2012, 42–43, 78).

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II. LECTURES

FROM THE SYMPOSIUM
'VIOLENCE IN 20TH-CENTURY
EUROPEAN HISTORY:
COMMEMORATING,
DOCUMENTING, EDUCATING'
IN BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, 2017

THEORETICAL ISSUES OF VIOLENCE: DEFINING VIOLENCE AND TYPES OF VIOLENCE IN THE 20TH CENTURY

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This is a lightly edited transcript of a lecture given at the symposium 'Violence in 20th-century Europe: Commemorating, Documenting, Educating' in Brussels, Belgium on 6 June 2017.

I am a sociologist. I am not an historian. But I consider that social science should be multidisciplinary and that sociologists should not be too distant from history nor historians too far from sociology. We are dealing today with the 20th century, but we cannot begin such a meeting without mentioning what happened in England recently, that is, the terrorist attack in London on 3 June 2017. It is not only the 20th century that has had to deal with violence, terrorism and so on, so I would like to say something about this.

Let me start with the word violence. Although it is one of the main and constant issues in social science, I do not know of any scientific definition that really sums up a concept that we can all accept. Many definitions have been proposed. The same word for violence along with other words that describe many other issues are used in social science *and* in daily life, the media and politics. When one uses the same vocabulary in two different contexts – the world of social science and the world of daily life – there are always problems and some ambivalence because one never knows exactly what is at stake.

So to be more precise I will not deal with all forms of violence: I will focus mainly on physical violence, when violence clearly aims to modify the physical integrity as well as the intellectual or moral integrity of a person or a group. Sociologists and political scientists are well acquainted with the famous statement by the German sociologist Max Weber about the state having a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence. However, here I will not

deal with state violence. Nor will I deal with another interesting issue, which is what some social scientists call 'symbolic violence'. No, I will focus on the physical and the concrete, with an emphasis on political forms of violence.

There are many different ways to analyse violence and we can distinguish three main approaches.

There is an academic and intellectual tradition that considers violence to be a reaction to a situation, as an expression, a modality of a crisis. When, for instance, workers lose their jobs suddenly because a factory is going to close down, they may shoot at car tyres, attack the managers and so on. It is a reaction to a crisis. When peasants say, 'We do not want to pay' or 'We cannot pay more taxes and will become violent', it is a reaction to a crisis or to a change in their situation. Experts sometimes call this 'relative deprivation' as it depends on certain frustrations that may lead to violence.

The political thinker and sociologist Alexis de Tocqueville was an advocate of such a philosophical or sociological theory. When Tocqueville analysed the French Revolution, he noticed that the majority of the people participating in it were not poor and were far removed from power. However, those in the thick of the situation where large changes were occurring felt a deep sense of crisis. The crisis could be economic, social, political or cultural. In the 1960s and 1970s this kind of approach was very important in the literature of political science but it soon became clear that the concept of relative privation was not that useful.

At this point a second approach became popular. Violence is not a reaction to a crisis caused by a change in a situation and that it is, on the contrary, a tool, a resource, which participators use, in order to achieve certain goals. In this kind of analysis, violence is instrumental. For example, 'I kill you because I want your money' is very rational. So some analysts insist on this instrumentality with the idea that violence can be individual, but also – which is much more interesting – by insisting on the collective dimension of this kind of phenomenon. Instrumental violence, for instance, appears when a social movement tries to become a political actor in order to enter a political system. Charles Tilly, the founding father of the so-called 'resource mobilization theory', is a well-known name in the fields of history and sociology. He shows how violence is a resource that is mobilized by an individual or a collective of actors in order to achieve certain goals. There

can be different goals, but in literature you will mainly find analysis that describes political goals.

Let me give you a personal example of this way of dealing with violence. I was living in Washington, DC, in the mid-1980s and I was looking into the way American specialists proposed anti-terrorist measures. Anti-terrorism was big business in Washington, DC, and the people we were working with were proposing many different possibilities and possible hypotheses based on intelligent ideas on what instrumental decisions could be taken by terrorists. They were trying to envisage biological terrorism, chemical terrorism, nuclear terrorism and so on. And then one day terrorists outthought them, getting on planes with business class tickets, wearing very respectable clothes and carrying some small knives and this was September 11th. A very instrumental way of acting, and the experts who were trying to eliminate violence were not able to imagine the way terrorists could define their strategies. I give this example to illustrate the point that these violent perpetrators were partly rational. They were not crazy people. Sometimes you may be able to find some pathology or craziness, but terrorists are more calculating and strategic in their goals than we might expect. So at that stage we have two very different and opposing ways of thinking. On the one hand, violence is reactive and, on the other hand, it is calculating, strategic and instrumental.

The third approach is very different. It considers that violence has something to do with culture and with personality. In order to understand why people act violently, one must know something about their historical background: about the general culture into which they were born, about their family and their childhood. A famous example is given in *The Authoritarian Personality*, a classic book written by the philosopher Theodor Adorno, who during Nazism left Germany for the United States. Adorno and his colleagues claimed that if you wanted to understand how anti-Semitism could lead to extreme violence, you had to know about the way people were brought up. You had to know about education and you had to know about primary socialization. This is the idea: some cultures, educational systems and family influences prepare some personalities to be more violent than others. And, of course, this idea can be used in order to understand Nazism.

This approach is not that easy to use for analysing violence for a very simple reason. If you deal with young people who were born in the later years of the 19th century and if you want to understand Nazism, anti-Semitism and

the extermination of Jews forty or fifty years after that, you have to forget all that happened between the time when these young people were living with their parents, and the moment when they act, half a century later. You jump and you forget history, politics and so many other factors that have changed society in the meantime. Another limit in this kind of approach is that it presumes that everything is more or less decided when people are young, and that people cannot change or avoid becoming violent.

So this kind of cultural approach focusing on personality has limited use. At this stage let me summarize my first remarks on three main classical approaches in social science. Each of them can be useful but each has its limits. It is not necessarily frustration that makes people act, nor is it necessarily a strategic or instrumental way of thinking that makes people act. You cannot say people who commit suicide act in a very rational way, it is more complex than that. And it is not only family, education and so on that make people violent. These are useful explanations but not enough to complete a general analysis of violence.

Now let me be a bit provocative: I would like to compare conflict with violence. Usually when one reads or hears the word conflict, violence springs to mind. Some people speak of 'armed conflicts' or 'violent conflict' in order to deal with war, civil war or guerilla warfare. The idea of conflict is usually connected with the idea of violence, so that people have come to talk about 'conflict resolution'. Conflict resolution means bringing violence to an end. So while the idea of conflict is usually connected with the notion of violence, I would like to distinguish, and maybe contrast, these two ideas. In my vocabulary at least, when I say 'conflict', I mean a conflictual relationship between actors – a relationship that can at one moment become institutionalized or lead to some negotiation. So if conflict means making way for a relationship where negotiation is possible, where institutionalization is possible, then maybe conflict can counteract violence.

I mean here that I do not think that there is an end to violence when there is no more use of force. There is an end to violence when people say: 'now we can debate and we can negotiate and we can institutionalize the differences between your point of view and my point of view.' It is a huge thing, which I will not deal with here. It is true that in many cases you may find conflict and violence at the same time. These are, for instance, situations where actors who could become partners in negotiation use violence instead.

But generally speaking, and I will give one or two examples, the more people are able to transform violence into negotiation, institutionalization, debate and conflictualization without violence, the better.

My first example is taken from the history of the working class movement in a number of countries. Let me select the French case. It sometimes started with violence, from the workers and sometimes from the masters of industry or from state opponents. And violence stops when you have a strong movement, able to negotiate. In the French case there was anarchist terrorism at the end of the 19th century; people were killing, planting bombs and so on, in the name of the poor and the excluded. Some time in 1894 or 1895 it stopped exactly when the first main trade union was created – la Confédération générale du travail – when the first Bourses du travail [labour exchanges], places where people could organize trade unions, were created. Why? Because trade unions firmly say that violence is not good, they prefer to exert strong pressure in order to achieve certain goals, such as transforming the conditions of workers. This case is absolutely clear: when the working class movement became strong and was able to negotiate and discuss, there was no more terrorism. I do not say violence stopped, of course, but there was no longer the need for such extremism.

A second historical example demonstrates the opposite: the end of the working class movement. The case of left-wing Italian terrorism appeared when the working class movement was in decline and no longer able to negotiate and transform its demands into debates. At that moment violence intensified and terrorism became more prevalent. I should be more precise but my general idea is that if we want to prevent this kind of violence, we must take into account the possibility, or not, of conflict in a society. When the working class movement was collapsing, more room was made for tensions.

Now I would like to make some remarks about the history of social science during the later years of the 20th century. Generally speaking, in the 1960s and 1970s, social science was dominated by what we could call structuralism: the idea being that what was important were abstract mechanisms – structures that organize collective life – rather than the subjectivity of the people. But in the 1980s and 1990s new ideas – and these are very important for violence – appeared explaining that we have to deal with subjectivity and not only with abstract mechanisms, structures and all this vocabulary. I will quote two world famous authors, both French: historian and philosopher Michel Foucault

and sociologist Alain Touraine. Both, starting from very different perspectives, said that we have to take into serious account the notion of subject.

What does this mean? Its meaning is a little bit different for both of these two intellectuals – but they share the belief that the subject more or less has the capacity to act. Being a subject is being able to transform oneself into an actor. A subject is the opposite of an abstract mechanism. These great intellectuals and many others after them introduced the notion of subjectivity to social science, including when dealing with violence. Maybe Foucault's or Touraine's subjects are romantic people, wonderful people, who transform themselves into actors. They build their own life, a very wonderful life. But subjectivity does not mean only a wonderful life, subjectivity may lead also to the polar opposite, to the dark side of an individual or collective life. If we introduce the notion of subjectivity in order to analyse violence, we must admit that subjectivity can lead to dark and eventually cruel behaviours and not only to positive romantic forms of action.

The second point is that we must avoid what social scientists called naturalization or essentialization of social behaviours. Subjectivity is not nature, it is not an essence that is better than using the notion of subject. We should be interested in processes of subjectivation – the fact that people are increasingly able to build their own lives – and processes of desubjectivation – the fact that often people who are less and less able to build their own lives are going to be increasingly destructive.

And here begins a fourth approach in the analysis of violence, taking into account the processes through which individuals and groups learn more to be subjects or on the contrary to be anti-subjects, to destroy, to kill and to stand on the dark side of collective life. In some cases there is not such a big gap between subjectivity and action and violence, for instance when people live in neighbourhoods where they become violent because they are not master of their own lives and cannot become actors. But there are other cases where subjectivity is absolutely different. Some people, who I call anti-subjects, use violence for pleasure; violence here is connected with nothing more than the pleasure sadistic cruelty can give them.

If we want to analyse violence today we must seriously take into account the idea that in some cases it is caused by the process in which people lose contact with what I call positive subjectivity and increasingly find themselves

on the other side to the point where they kill, destroying other people or/and themselves.

This kind of approach was not so prevalent during the 20th century; it begins to be more influential in social sciences during the later years of the 20th century. The new interest in the notion of subjectivity, for the processes of subjectivity and the appearance of deradicalization, for instance, appeared when it became obvious that in order to fight against radicalization, it was necessary to introduce policies of 'deradicalization' that seriously took into account the subjectivity of the individuals. This kind of vocabulary is close to the notion of subject. Radicalization means a new form of subjectivity, and deradicalization is supposed to introduce new elements, new dimensions in the subjectivity of these individuals, in their way of thinking and in their consciousness.

This is possible since during the last thirty or forty years of the 20th century there was an important development: the idea that violence was not only the problem of the state of order, it was not only a problem of a system, it was also the problem of the victims and of those people who suffer from violence. If we want to understand why there is such an emphasis on violence connected with the idea of subjectivity, it is because we are entering an era where victims are recognized, which was not so much the case before.

Victims have recently said, 'I've been destroyed' or 'my group has been destroyed', 'my culture has been destroyed', 'my family has been destroyed'. When this is a discourse that people can hear, that politicians listen to, that the media echoes, then this changes the way people think. During the past forty years, we have come to recognize that victims exist. And as victims exist, we must take into account their subjectivity. And if we consider the subjectivity of the victims, we must also take into account the subjectivity of those people that perpetrate violence. I do not say that they are not responsible, my aim is to understand how people become violent.

This leads me to my conclusion. Entering an era with victims also means a period of 'memory and remembrance'. Because the family, friends and neighbours of victims want justice and recognition, they want the violence suffered to be recognized. Victims have memories. Memory is not history, as we all know. Memory is what one remembers and what the family remembers,

it is not necessarily what one finds in history books. And a problem has appeared: is it possible to pass from memory to history?

It is not so obvious, and in some cases it takes time but is possible. In my country, for instance, there was no room for Jews in the general memory and in school history books for twenty or twenty-five years after the Second World War. But some Jews, some intellectuals, some great historians, Michael R. Marrus and Robert O. Paxton for instance, authors of the famous book *Vichy France and the Jews* (1981), decided to mobilize themselves in order to make memory participate in the public debate and after some years, memory became history. Today you can open any kind of school book on the history of France and it will dwell on the French state during the Second World War, the story of Jews in France and so on, which was not the case before.

In some cases it is more difficult. It may be because different memories conflict with one another. Let me take a French example, the memory in France of the Algerian War. Some people are the sons of members of the National Liberation Front (FLN), while others are sons of *Harkis*, native Algerian Muslims who either decided to fight with the French army or were obliged to fight with the French army. Some people were white French, the so-called *Pieds-Noirs*, who were obliged to return to France. Others were Jews from Algeria. All these people have different memories that conflict and sometimes they hate each other. So how can you come to a common understanding of the past when so many memories conflict? It is not so easy.

Sometimes the conflict is not within nation-state but at the international level. It is very interesting, for instance, to know that some committees have been proposed during recent years in order to work on a common history for children living in Germany and France, with the aim of publishing a book that would be accepted in both countries, which meant being able to deal with points on which the national narrative in both countries could disagree. It is not always so easy and sometimes memory can be an obstacle to history.

As you can see, I passed from time to time from analysing violence to the idea that we must put an end to violence. For instance, passing from memory to history helps to end violence. I think that the 20th century obliges us – speaking as a social scientist – to analyse violence. Maybe the 21st century will be the century where we build a new field – the end of violence. Let us study how people move from violence and how European Remembrance

works. You could be a wonderful actor but you could also be a wonderful object of analysis! Why do you exist now? You did not exist fifty years ago. What does this mean? What does this bring? I think that there will be more and more work in the future with the aim of understanding violence and offer more analysis of how to eliminate it.

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VIOLENCE IN WESTERN EUROPE IN THE 20TH CENTURY

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This is a lightly edited transcript of a lecture given at the symposium 'Violence in 20th-century Europe: Commemorating, Documenting, Educating' in Brussels, Belgium on 6 June 2017.

Europe is still suffering from consequences of the First and Second World Wars, which almost resulted in Europe destroying itself. Both wars, the 'Thirty Years' War' of the 20th century, resulted in many millions of killed or heavily wounded soldiers and many millions of widows and orphans. There were almost sixteen million deaths during the First World War and at least sixty million deaths during the Second World War. This included genocides against the Jews, Armenians, Poles, Roma and Sinti as well as Chechens-Ingush and Crimean Tatars. There were more than thirty-five million expelled and refugees (Germans, Jews, Poles, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Lithuanians, Latvians, Estonians, Finns, Slovaks, Magyars, Romanians, Bulgarians, Greeks, Serbs, Croats, Slovenes and Italians). Economies and societies were destroyed and we still feel the consequences of this destruction up until the present day. On the one hand, after both wars the 'victors' made mistaken and ill-judged political, economic and social decisions that undermined peaceful developments, particularly in Eastern Europe. On the other, both wars created remembrances that still strongly divide many European nations.¹

In the First World War Germany lost 4 per cent of its inhabitants; Russia (without the civil war) 3 per cent; France 5 per cent; Britain 3 per cent; and Italy 4 per cent; but Serbia suffered the death of almost 15 per cent; Romania 5 per cent; and the new Republic of Austria 4 per cent. The war left three million widows, as many as ten million orphans and millions of grieving parents, brothers, sisters, lovers and friends. The names of the dead were listed on tens of thousands of monuments built throughout Europe after the war. In the 1920s and 1930s, Europeans remembered the war in ceremonies that emphasized sacrifice, grief and mourning. A number of

remarkable novels and memoirs began to appear about ten years after the armistice (Sheehan 2008, 100–104).

The demographic disaster of the Second World War was even worse, literally the most disastrous in modern history. Rough estimates of military losses and civilian deaths arising from wartime policies, including the Nazi extermination of the Jews and other war-related causes, particularly aerial warfare, expulsions and forced resettlements, gave a different picture. Germany (of 1937) lost more than 10 per cent of its inhabitants, the Soviet Union 15 per cent, Poland even 20 per cent, Yugoslavia 7 per cent, Austria (of 1937) 5.5 per cent. In comparison, Italy suffered ‘only’ 2 per cent, France 1 per cent, Britain even less. In the Nazi ‘Final Solution’ almost six million Jews were murdered, half of them in the Nazi extermination camps in occupied Poland, with more than a million by SS-Einsatzgruppen in the western parts of the Soviet Union (Winter 1995, 289–92; Tomasevich 2001; Gilbert 1995, 364–71).

In comparison, Western Europe suffered more in the First World War than in the Second World War, Eastern Europe far more in the Second World War. No doubt, the Germans fought differently in the East and in the West, and Germany’s enemies did so too. From 1939, Eastern and Southeastern Europe were involved in a total war, and in 1944–45 Central Europe was too. In the First World War all the complex military machines had transformed civilians into soldiers. Citizen soldiers had to fight not through fear but through devotion to their country and commitment to their comrades. For many soldiers the battlefields in Western, Eastern and Southeastern Europe provided the first glimpses of a world beyond their village. Winston Churchill realized very early that ‘this is no ordinary war, but a struggle between nations for life and death’ (Sheehan 2008, 12–20, 55, 60, 73).

Between 1914 and 1918, neither side respected the Fourth Hague International Convention of 1907. However, as the Allied armies hardly ever succeeded in penetrating German, Austro-Hungarian, Bulgarian or Ottoman territory (not before late 1917), foreign occupation, collaboration, resistance, repression and retribution mainly occurred in territories that the Central Powers occupied in Belgium, northeastern France, Serbia, Montenegro, Romania, Italy and Russia. German troops started executing alleged *francs-tireurs* (snipers) in Belgium and France; Austro-Hungarians hanged thousands of Serbians and Ukrainian civilians, among them Orthodox priests, suspected of spying for the enemy. Politically, the shootings and lootings benefited

mainly the Allies, whose media spread the news of atrocities committed by the 'Huns' (Germans) and their allies. The issue of collaboration with the enemy was less of a public concern during the First World War, at least in Western Europe, than it would become during the Second World War. In the Ottoman Empire, the Young Turk government and the army high command suspected the Armenians of siding with the invading Russian enemy and organized the expulsion and massacre of perhaps a million Armenian fellow citizens, including women and children. This was the first true genocide in the 20th century (Naimark 2001, 17–42).

Europe in the 1920s and 1930s was divided along many fault lines – between victors and losers, liberalism and radical nationalism, militarism and pacifism, democracy and dictatorship, capitalism and communism, right and left, 'but the most important was between those who rejected and those who embraced political violence at home and abroad'. Major components of the comprehensive crisis continued: (1) an explosion of ethnic-racist nationalism; (2) bitter and irreconcilable demands for territorial revisionism; (3) acute class conflict – now provoked by the Bolshevik Revolution; and (4) a protracted crisis of capitalism that culminated in the Great Depression. No doubt, nationalist conflicts and ethnic-racial tensions, greatly intensified by the Paris peace treaties played a much greater role in Eastern than in Western Europe. The alternative model of a 'dictatorship of the proletariat' with the elimination of the capitalist class and a redistribution of land provoked elements of the right to combine extreme nationalism with virulent anti-Bolshevism and to establish authoritarian governments. Often nationalist hatred singled out Jews as special scapegoats for resentment and social misery. At the beginning of the 1930s, in many European countries the men who became presidents or prime ministers had fought in the trenches in the First World War and were more familiar with everyday violence than their predecessors. Violence was central particularly for fascism, National Socialism and communism (Steiner 2011, 167–80; Baberowski and Doering-Manteuffel 2006, 59–79).

Between 1939 and 1945, Europe under Nazi leadership experienced armed conflict, foreign occupation, aerial bombardments, persecution, shooting of hostages, concentration and death camps, as well as ferocious civil and ethnic wars. In many places from the North Cape of Norway to the Island of Crete and from the French port of Brest to the highest peaks of the Caucasus, German soldiers, SS and policemen were numerous enough to rule the land but not plentiful enough to control every town, village and forest.

As a consequence, national governments, local authorities, native populations and diverse interest groups, as well as many individuals, were eager, for a myriad of reasons, to accommodate or collaborate with the ruling Germans or to resist them. Only one major group was not able to choose between collaboration or resistance: that is, the Jews. Genocide and 'ethnic cleansing' on a gigantic scale were an intrinsic part of the meaning of the war to the German leadership and to its subordinates in the military, police and bureaucracy who sought to implement racial policy (Mazower 2008, 259–93; Deák 2015, 1–13).

Although France, Belgium and the Netherlands had enough manpower and possessed immense colonial empires and could have created well-trained and well-equipped armies, they broke down within weeks of the German onslaught from May to June 1940. They had drawn the wrong lessons from the First World War ignoring changes brought about by tanks and aeroplanes, and were caught in a defeatist attitude against Nazi Germany. The leaders of the French army were, in the historian Marc Bloch's words, 'incapable of thinking in terms of a new war'. However, the occupying German troops treated Dutchmen, Belgians, Frenchmen, as well as the Danes and the Norwegians, more gently than they did the Poles, the Yugoslavs, the Greeks, the Belarusians, the Ukrainians and the Russians. There existed some clear reasons: Hitler had no interest in colonizing the West and the North of Europe; the German war industry needed – and generally received – the willing cooperation of the western and northern Europeans; last but not least, the willingness of the local population and its leaders to cooperate corresponded with the German occupation policy of accepting the race of the inhabitants. The German Nazis were especially keen on seeing the Norwegians as 'Nordic Aryans', and therefore admirably suited for interbreeding as well as for participation in the Great Germanic Empire (Deák 2015, 41–47; Sheehan 2008, 122).

After the capitulation of France, the northern and western parts of France and Belgium were ruled as occupied zones by the German military administration. The new French government, settling in the resort town of Vichy in the unoccupied zone, declared that moral decline spread by godless Marxists, liberals, Freemasons and especially the Jews had undermined France. Marshal Philippe Pétain proclaimed after his handshake with Hitler in October 1940: 'I enter, today, into the way of collaboration.' Aside from everyday business transactions with the German occupier, such as selling food or transporting them, contacts between the French and the Germans were mostly on the

level of a relationship between a man and a woman. With more than two million French soldiers in captivity, German soldiers sometimes took their places in women's lives; however, similar relationships occurred between German women and French prisoners of war (POWs) in Germany. The Vichy regime also took anti-Jewish measures in advance of German requests. Thousands of Jewish refugees from Germany, Austria and the East were pushed back across the German border. Then, in 1941 and 1942, the French police arrested and deported many thousands of Jews, many of whom were born in France, to the death camps of Germany (Deák 2015, 50–58).

While in Norway the local authorities and the population were in general uninterested in saving the lives of most of the country's 1,700 Jewish citizens, in collaborationist Denmark the government and the population – as well as the local German occupation forces – succeeded in protecting the lives of nearly all of their 8,000 Jewish inhabitants. As Queen Wilhelmina and her government fled from the Netherlands to England, the Austrian lawyer Arthur Seyss-Inquart ran the country as Reichskommissar from his seat at Clingendael near The Hague. Among other things, the Germans found in the governmental offices accurate statistics on the country's Jews, and Dutch exactness and reliability also infected the Jewish Council. Therefore, the Nazis deported 106,000 Dutch Jews, with only 20,000 remaining. The total value of Dutch goods exported to Germany amounted to about 8.5 billion guilders, at the time US \$3 billion, of which almost two-thirds was for military goods (Deák 2015, 48–50; Mazower 2008, 271, 397).

Resistance involved illegal activity, illegal not only in the eyes of the German or other occupation forces but also according to international conventions and the laws of one's country. To fight the occupier, the resisters needed to seize arms from military garrisons. In western and northern European countries – unlike Poland, the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Greece – only a small segment of the population participated in the resistance; armed clashes were infrequent and people generally obeyed the rules set up by the country's German-controlled national government. Nonetheless, resistance groups set up underground newspapers, as in the case of perhaps the most famous resistance group in France, Combat. The group published a sophisticated yet popular clandestine newspaper of the same name, edited by Albert Camus. Although the Combat group never numbered more than a few hundred activists, their newspaper's print run increased from 10,000 in late 1941 to 250,000 in 1944. Listening to BBC broadcasts was considered

a grave crime; but millions of Europeans – even Germans and Austrians – were able to hear its programmes (Dear and Foot 1995, 115–16).

Among the most controversial yet most effective resistance weapons of the Second World War was the legendary Special Operations Executive (SOE), called into being in 1940 by Prime Minister Churchill and his Minister of Economics, whose goal was ‘to set Europe ablaze’. The SOE trained and sent agents to practically every European country with the aim of gathering intelligence, engaging in sabotage and setting up secret radio stations for transmitting information to Britain. Over the course of the war, the SOE employed or directly controlled some 13,000 people and supplied another one million with money, food and weapons. Interestingly, there was no equivalent organization on the German side. However, thousands of Europeans were executed for having helped the SOE men and women, and, in turn, hundreds of SOE agents died because of their own or their superiors’ negligence. Famously, the SOE employed many younger women, who could circulate more easily than men of military age. But when the secret radio operators in the Netherlands were caught by the German intelligence service, and then ‘turned around’ to work for the Germans; flight after flight of SOE agents, who were parachuted into the Netherlands, would first be followed and then arrested, tortured and either killed or also ‘turned around’ to work for the Germans (Dear and Foot 1995, 115–16).

SS-Hauptsturmführer Klaus Barbie was the head of the Gestapo in Lyon from November 1942 to August 1944. In this period he tortured and murdered members of the French Resistance, such as Jean Moulin, the secret delegate of General Charles de Gaulle in France. The circumstances of Moulin’s arrest and death have remained controversial and have typically led to endless speculations, especially with regard to the name of the traitor. Though wanted as a war criminal, Barbie was employed by the US Counter Intelligence Corps in February 1947, which protected him from the French and then helped him reach Bolivia. He was extradited to France in 1983, found guilty of war crimes and sentenced to life imprisonment in 1987. In 1990, the aged Barbie pointed a finger at Raymond Aubrac, another famous resister, and his wife Lucie, the no-less-famous resistance heroine (Dear and Foot 1995, 113; Deák 2015, 121–23).

In Rome there was considerable anti-German resistance activity by three groups: the conservative monarchists (Badoglio), the moderates (Christian

Democrats, Social Democrats), and the communists and allied socialists. The first major partisan attack was planned and executed by the communists who had noticed that a German military police company marched through central Rome, specifically down the narrow via Rasella, every day and always at the same time. The military policemen were draftees from the South Tyrol, which was Austrian until 1919 and then Italian between 1919 and 1939, and then forced to be German from 1939. The German military police consisted of two companies, totalling 400 men. On 23 March 1944, the partisans, disguised as sanitation workers, hid a bomb in a rubbish cart that killed thirty-three German military policemen and wounded hundreds when it exploded. All sixteen partisans escaped unharmed, and none were ever caught. Field-Marshal Albert Kesselring, commander-in-chief in Italy, recommended that ten Italians be executed for every German soldier who had died. SS-Obersturmbannführer Herbert Kappler, the SS head of security in Rome, got the order to organize the execution. Kappler took prisoners who were under a death sentence, other political prisoners, common criminals, bystanders from the via Rasella, Italian POWs and seventy-eight Jews. The Pope tried to help some individuals selected by the SS for execution, but for every one released another innocent person was arrested. In the end 335 Italians were killed in the Ardeatine Caves outside Rome by untrained, unprepared and drunken SS men. The question was raised whether the German action was legal. Hostage taking and hostage shooting as well as reprisals had been recognized as perfectly legal by The Hague Conventions and also, somewhat surprisingly, by one of the US-led Nuremberg Tribunals in 1948. Kappler was sentenced to life in prison by an Italian court in 1948, but in 1977 his wife smuggled the then-terminally ill and very thin Kappler out of jail in a large suitcase. She took him to Germany, where he soon died (Deák 2015, 166–71).

On 10 June 1944, four days after the beginning of Operation Overlord, the Allied landing in Normandy, a company (120 men) of the SS Panzer Division Das Reich passed through the historic province of Limousin, in west-central France, on the way to the front. By then, the division had been subjected to guerilla attacks, including the torture and killing of some forty captured German soldiers in the village of Tulle, not far from Oradour-sur-Glane. For that outrage, the division had already taken revenge by torturing and killing ninety-seven Frenchmen in Tulle. Acting on the rumour that a Waffen-SS officer was being held captive by the French Resistance guerilla fighters, the SS company under Sturmbannführer Adolf Diekmann entered Oradour and within a few hours killed all 642 inhabitants, including even the youngest

of children, mostly by burning them alive. It is still unclear from whom the order to kill originated. The majority of the SS killers at Oradour, including their commander, fell in battle a few weeks later. However, at the Bordeaux Trial in 1953 against some survivors of the SS company, it turned out that fourteen of the twenty-one defendants had once been French citizens; they all claimed in court to have been forcibly drafted into the Waffen-SS. Almost as a whole, people in Alsace-Lorraine bemoaned the tragic fate of the poor boys who had to kill so as not to be killed by their own superiors. Therefore, at the Bordeaux Trial the Alsatians were treated mildly (Deák 2015, 171–73; Dear and Foot 1995, 113).

During the Ardennes Campaign, which involved the 6th Panzer Army commanded by Colonel-General of the Waffen-SS, Sepp Dietrich, the founder of the Leibstandarte SS Adolf Hitler, SS-Standartenführer Joachim Peiper carried out, on 17 December 1944, a mass execution of US POWs and local civilians at Baugez near Malmédy in the east of Belgium. A number of similar incidents followed. There were forty-three American survivors, but eighty-six were killed. After the war, Dietrich and Peiper were incarcerated at Dachau. At the trial the prosecution admitted that confessions had been extracted by threatening execution, false witnesses and mock trials. Peiper and forty-two others were condemned to death; Dietrich was sentenced to life imprisonment. However, both were released after ten years of imprisonment (Dear and Foot 1995, 713).

In 1946 Karl Jaspers discussed the problem in his book of lectures called *The Question of German Guilt*: ‘What wrongs did the German people commit?’ He established four categories of responsibility: criminal guilt, followed by political, moral and metaphysical guilt. He found the seeds of collective responsibility in the metaphysical category. But Jaspers was willing to talk only about individual culpability. Hannah Arendt’s series of lectures entitled *Some Questions of Moral Philosophy*, presented at the New School of Social Research in New York three years after Adolf Eichmann’s execution in 1962, raised questions as to the origins of ‘evil’ and formulated the theory of ‘the banality of harm’. But the deputy prosecuting attorney at the Eichmann Trial in Jerusalem, Gabriel Bach, corrected Arendt: Eichmann had the ‘dreadful inclination’ to destroy the Jews (Humler 2011; Bach 2011, 38–39; Deák 2015, 220). Meanwhile, judicial retribution and political purges were held elsewhere in Europe. The heads of state or prime ministers who were executed after the war included those of Italy, France, Norway, Slovakia,

Hungary, Romania, Serbia, Croatia and Bulgaria. The list of non-German Europeans executed for treason, collaboration and war crimes included thousands of generals, police chiefs, city mayors, politicians and journalists. In France intellectuals had played a major role in both resistance and collaboration. Therefore, the debate over French wartime behaviour and the post-war purges has become a veritable national pastime. However, the number of real or alleged collaborators shot, beaten to death or summarily executed reached almost 10,000. In the courts, the prosecutors tended to single out actors, actresses, cabaret singers, writers, poets and philosophers (Deák 2015, 200).

Amazingly, the harshest sentences were pronounced in Norway, Denmark and the Netherlands. In Norway more than 90,000 people were tried, nearly 4 per cent of the population; thirty were executed. Similar proportions existed in Denmark, while in the Netherlands 150,000 people were detained under the suspicion of collaboration and treason. About 60,000 of them were subsequently convicted, 152 condemned to death, and 40 were actually executed. Norwegian courts dealt harshly with women who had had sexual relations with German soldiers; worse even, the new laws denied citizenship to their children, which amounted to some thousands. In Belgium 53,000 men and women were convicted of collaboration; officials used the phrase '*la politique du moindre mal*' (the policy of doing the least harm) to cover the ways in which they tried to accommodate German demands: giving way only when they had to. Although in Italy during the last months of the war, or at the moment of liberation, almost the same number as in France were lynched or shot; the courts were relatively mild (Deák 2015, 204–5).

Europe survived the second Thirty Years' War between 1914 and 1948. Not since the Thirty Years' War of the 17th century had such a large proportion of the European population suffered so much from the pains of war. Many Europeans had acted badly – not only as politicians, officers and policemen, but also as economists, technicians, doctors, intellectuals, journalists and even priests. Under the conditions of two world wars and their consequences, as well as the strong influence of several ideologies, there was almost no barrier to violence against 'the other'. Populist nationalism, nationalist and religious hatred and fighting against the imagined class enemy as well as inter-racial fighting led to a European-wide crisis in compassion and humanity. Not only were most Europeans indifferent to the fate of their Jewish, Roma and other sectarian neighbours, but millions actually participated in manhunts or

at least profited from the disappearances and deaths of the victims. There were many who risked their lives for the persecuted, especially priests, nuns, doctors and individuals who did not like to fit into 'normal' society. But too many accepted the witch hunts in many cities and towns as well as the deportation of Jews, Roma and political opponents to concentration camps by cattle wagons.

In an address to the United Nations on 7 December 1988, Mikhail Gorbachev declared that 'force and the threat of force [...] should not be instruments of foreign policy'. Although the German 'Re-Unification' and the dissolution of the Soviet Union occurred peacefully, violence diminished but did not disappear from European public life, as experienced in Northern Ireland, the Basque Province, in Cyprus, in Kosovo, in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and in Ukraine. So, the main challenge is continuing: how to run Europe without violence? (Cf. Mueller, Gehler and Suppan 2015).

ARNOLD SUPPAN

Arnold Suppan, professor emeritus, was born in 1945 in Carinthia, Austria. He received his PhD from the University of Vienna in 1970 and progressed from assistant to associate and full professor of East European History at the University of Vienna between 1971 and 2011. He has been a visiting professor at Leiden, Fribourg, Stanford and Budapest; head of the Austrian Institute of East and South-East European Studies (1988–2002); head of the Department for East European History at the University of Vienna (2002–8); corresponding (1998) and full member (2003) of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (AAS), chairman of the Historical Commission of the AAS (2003–11), secretary general (2009–2011) and vice president of the AAS (2011–13); and an honorary member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Suppan has written and edited many books, articles and conference papers. He received the Scientific Award of the University Ljubljana in 1999, the Silver Medal of the Faculty of Philosophy of the Charles University, Prague in 2001, the Austrian Honorary Cross for Science and Art First Class in 2001, Waclaw Felczak and Henryk Wereszycki Prize, Kraków in 2014 and the Cardinal Innitzer Honour Prize, Vienna in 2015.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Cf. Dear and Foot 1995; Flacke 2005; Sheehan 2008; Wehler 2008; Kershaw 2016; Suppan 2017; Naimark 2017.

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IS THERE A SPECIFIC EASTERN EUROPEAN PERSPECTIVE ON VIOLENCE IN THE 20TH CENTURY?

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This is a lightly edited transcript of a lecture given at the symposium 'Violence in 20th-century Europe: Commemorating, Documenting, Educating' in Brussels, Belgium on 6 June 2017.

I am truly honoured to be invited for a presentation of an 'Eastern European' perspective on violence in the 20th century. Nevertheless, I would like to begin with a caveat. It concerns the very concept of juxtaposing 'Eastern European' and 'Western European' perspectives. I think that it is worth remembering that most Eastern Europeans did not know that they were 'Eastern Europeans' until about the 19th century because this was the time the very name 'Eastern Europe' was invented – as presented by Larry Wolff in his wonderful monograph – by French philosophers at the end of the 18th century (Wolff 1994). One can ask, for example, whether there are Eastern Belgians and Western Belgians? I know that there are Flemings and Walloons but what about Eastern Belgians and Western Belgians? This could be just an intellectual creation. It could be treated, however, as an element of symbolic or civilizational violence that imposes names or categories and with them specific intellectual constructs onto given regions (peoples) from centres of a self-given authority.

But let us try to do this: to presume and to discuss certain interesting elements that enable us to speak meaningfully about the differences in experiences of violence throughout the 20th century and, more generally, about the differences between Eastern and Western Europe.

In order to introduce these differences, I would like to use two very powerful names: Marx and Lenin. First I would like to introduce not Groucho Marx, nor Karl Marx, but Anthony Marx, a political scientist from Columbia University who published a very interesting book, *Faith in Nation*, some years ago. In that book he presented early modern processes of nation building in Spain, France and England. All these early modern practices were extremely exclusionary and violent, organized around the exclusion of particular religions, for example, Catholics in England, Protestants in France or the exclusion of specific groups of people, such as the Jews, evicted from so-called Western Europe, who were forced to migrate to so-called Eastern Europe. These exclusionary practices, says Anthony Marx, formed an important and steep step on the road to nation statehood, and with that an advance in democracy and liberalism.

In Eastern Europe most societies did not make that step in the early modern period. So we may take into consideration that the nation-making and modern democracy-making (and with them the conflicts and violence connected to these exclusionary practices), which had been already passed in some western parts of Europe in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, would become part of Eastern European experiences in the 19th and 20th centuries. And many times, observed from a Western perspective in the 20th century, they were just perceived as not only 'barbarous', but also somehow typically Eastern European. I would like to quote a summary of Anthony Marx's argument:

The cohering effect of exclusion and intolerance is still reflected in the West's views of the rest of the world, denigrating others as the basis of cohering us was not only central to the origins of Western nationalism and then justifications of colonialism, it is also recapitulated in our current denigration of latecomers to nationalism. Ironically as Western Europe now begins to move beyond national solidarities, its own coherence as a developed bloc is again solidified by distinguishing itself as more consistently civic than those others still faithfully forging national unity. Thus the West is itself distinguished and thereby given coherence by denigrating the rest – or Eastern Europe – and by pretending that our own past was somehow different, mimicking the pattern by which our own earlier national level solidarities were forged and then forgotten. The

West's idealization of its past has indeed gone hand-in-hand with denigration of those who were encouraged, attempted and failed to live up to that noble standard. Western civic nationalism has been contrasted with the ethnic or exclusionary forms later adapted by the East or the South (Marx 2003, 199).

So here you have a perception of the West on the problems with nationalism in Eastern Europe in the 20th century; nationalism is seen as the core, as the essence and as the source of violence.

Now to Vladimir Ilyich Lenin. Exactly a hundred years ago, he published probably one of his most incisive books: his analysis of 'Imperialism as the highest stage of capitalism'. In that study he presented a concept according to which most Western European countries existing at that time were able to diminish social and economic conflicts in their metropolises, due to the fact that they had and exploited, more or less brutally, huge colonial overseas possessions (Bocharov 2001, 497–532). One can add that there were Western European countries, nine countries within the contemporary European Union (Britain, France, Spain, Portugal, Italy, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Denmark), that had overseas colonies. And there were no countries of Eastern Europe with such possessions (save Russia, which deserves a separate mention). Let us now do an intellectual experiment: we know that during the last decade of the 19th century in a Central Africa colony ruled by the Belgian king five to ten million native dwellers perished in one of the worst examples of brutal colonialism. But how many people in the world connect Belgium with such a practice that could be compared to the most horrible crimes of the 20th century? I dare suggest that very, very few. Let us imagine that such a colonial crime had been committed by one of the countries of Eastern Europe, Poland or Hungary, for example. I think that it would have been treated as an example of a typical Eastern European act of violence, as opposed to Western European civility. And it would have been known the world over, as well as an obligatory element of an all-European memory in the making. But it is not. And why is this? It is because the source of the colonial crime was 'here' rather than 'there'? Here in Belgium we can see public monuments to the real organizer of the death of these five to ten million Africans in the Congo. Could you imagine the pressure stemming from Brussels if there had been monuments to perpetrators of such gigantic colonial crimes in, shall we say, Warsaw, Budapest, Vilnius or Riga?

I want to stress that most of Western Europe exported much of its violence (violent exploitation and conflicts) outside Europe, while most of Eastern Europe was dominated throughout ‘the long 19th century’ (to use Eric Hobsbawm’s title) by three empires. I put certain stress on this word: these were empires, not national states. I mean here: the German Empire (the Second Reich), the Romanov/Russian Empire and the Habsburg Empire (with its imperial centre in Austria, and – after 1867 – another one, in Hungary). These empires clashed finally in 1914.

This was the beginning of a real experience of differences in violence between Eastern and Western Europe. Why was this? To put it simply: because there was the Eastern Front and the Western Front. They provided, so to speak, slightly different experiences. There were devastating military campaigns and occupation regimes on both fronts of the Great War. The occupation regimes existed, however, for a longer time and covered a much larger space in Eastern Europe, encompassing contemporary Poland, Ukraine, Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania and Serbia. What also made an important difference was the fact that Eastern Europe experienced mass migrations (usually forced and frequently violent) of several millions of people. These people were forced to leave their original dwellings and evacuated, as it was called, with ‘their’ imperial armies. Imperial Germany was usually successful here, so forced mass migration was predominantly the experience of Austro-Hungarian, Russian and later also Romanian subjects.

Probably the most important difference connected to the violence at that point in European history stemmed from the fact that the war meant uprooting millions of peasant soldiers. As regards peasant soldiers fighting also on the Western Front, most of them had already identified themselves, even in the pre-war period, as Frenchmen, Germans or Englishmen, while on the Eastern Front most of these millions of peasants, many of them illiterate, were objects of nation-formation processes, of imperial and anti-imperial political agendas, as well as specific social goals that turned the war on that front into a war for their identities. And that made changes connected with the First World War probably even more disruptive. While in societies engaged on the Western Front, the results of the war were relatively quickly seen as a mass suicide in the trenches, a completely absurd final conflict that brought nothing good, causing only tragedy. This experience marks the beginning of an evolution in Western memories of war that would concentrate its attention on the victims rather than on the heroes and would lead

towards pacifism. All of this would finally come to fruition in the 1960s and 1970s.

The curve of memorial changes stemming from the war was (or at least seems to be) different in Eastern Europe. Almost as many people were killed on the Eastern Front as on the Western one. However, there were numerous Poles, Latvians, Lithuanians, Estonians, Finns, Czechs, Slovaks and ‘Yugoslavs’ – I have purposely grouped them together – that believed that the war would lead towards something good, that it opened the possibility of forming or recreating their nation state, to reaffirm their cultural and political identities of which they had been previously deprived. Many hoped that they would be able to build their own (to use the words of Balfour’s memorandum on Jewish settlement in Palestine from 1917) ‘national home’ on the ruins of the former empires: the Second Reich, Habsburg, Ottoman and Romanov. But there were also other experiences in Eastern Europe that influenced further developments in the problem of mass violence in the 20th century in Eastern Europe. There were people who perceived themselves as nations who were on the losing side in the First World War, among them Hungarians, Bulgarians, Russians and Germans. With that new situation, there loomed dreams of retaliation on the political horizon; the dream to avenge the losses, lost territories, lost greatness and to regain imperial domination over these ‘peripheries’, which now formed separate statehoods. There were also peoples that did not realize their national elites’ dreams of independence (for example, Ukrainians or Belarusians), and there was a huge Jewish population which was – generally speaking – rather unsettled within the new boundaries, in which new statehoods, new legal systems and cultural-political frames of existence created after 1918 replaced old empires. These politically very different, extremely divergent perceptions of the results of the First World War formed, dare I say, a very important factor in the development of future mass violence in the region.

It also seems important to note the fact, or rather the interpretation, that within Eastern Europe there were many different cultures. They had been different in terms of violence creation and violence reception, too. Vladimir Bocharov, an eminent Russian sociologist-anthropologist, wrote a fascinating book on a specific culture of violence that developed throughout history in Russia. According to him, violence has been treated in that particular Russian political culture as an inherent attribute of power. The authorities not only may but also must refer by tradition to violence if they are to hold power

and this is violence against their subjects. For Bocharov such a phenomenon is quite typical of non-Western societies in general. This internal violence is presented to the subject as a model of parental authority; its task is to separate society from dark forces and ‘destabilizing agents’, of course, by using violence. In such a case sacrifice was natural and socially acceptable. Bocharov analyses elements of the said phenomenon in the history of relations between Russian society and its authorities throughout the centuries until the horrors of Stalin, after which period, he remarks, many victims were willing to excuse state violence *post facto*, saying: ‘such were the times’ (Bocharov 2001, 497–532).

Such broad generalizations made by this Russian anthropologist with regard to violence are obviously quite risky. If, however, one were to reject the general term ‘non-Western societies’ and limit oneself to an analysis of trends dominant in the Russian political tradition, then Bocharov’s observation concerning some acceptance of state violence in that particular tradition might be worth considering as a working hypothesis.

I would say that even if this analysis is not totally accurate, it is important to note that there are different cultures of violence and some of them were or are exported to other countries by means of imperial power. This was exactly the experience of many societies that were subjugated to the Russian Empire throughout the 18th or 19th centuries and they either accepted some elements of that particular state violence culture or fought against it. Through that fight, some of them joined or formed a specific anti-state, anti-Tsarist (or anti-imperial) violence culture within Russia itself (Nowak 2009, 59–82). Through this fight there developed exactly the phenomenon that we are so passionately discussing today, namely that of terrorism. Of course, the phenomenon was also developing in Southern and Western Europe, but it was especially well embedded in the Russian imperial state structure of violence and rebellions against that state’s structure of violence. One should recollect not only the names of the anarchists Mikhail Bakunin or Peter Kropotkin but one should also recollect the names of Józef Piłsudski, as well as the second and the third President of the Second Republic of Poland, Stanisław Wojciechowski and Ignacy Mościcki, respectively. They were all terrorists (or at least were helping them with their knowledge) at the beginning of their careers; they used to prepare bombs and some of them made attempts against the imperial powers of Russia. And this is not only the Polish case, by any means. This was just one example of the imperial

culture of state violence transferred and transported to its peripheries, and its backlash on the imperial centres.

With that we can come back to Lenin and to his particular case that unites many levels of analysing the problem of mass violence in the 20th century, especially in Eastern Europe. One is at a personal level: it combines the experience of state violence with a particular response by Lenin. His older brother was hanged for participating in an attempted coup against Tsar Alexander III. This example of state terrorism (or counter-terrorism), or state violence, influenced Lenin personally. One can add the level of specific traditions of state violence to it, as suggested by Bocharov in the Russian case. That specific tradition engaged and influenced, as we have mentioned, different societies overtaken by the Russian Empire even before the 20th century, but it expanded further and much more brutally to other countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which had never 'belonged' before to the Romanov Empire's domain but would be attacked and attached to the Soviet bloc throughout the last century. But the mass violence there was not just connected to the new version of traditional Russian imperialism. There was a third level formed by a specific ideology. Communism was obviously developing within Western Europe, but Lenin and Stalin developed it in a special way. In order to illustrate this I would like to use a quote from the first day Lenin came to power in November 1917. It was the moment when the Congress of Soviets decided to abolish the death penalty for frontline deserters, which Kerensky had reintroduced in mid-1917. Lenin, busy elsewhere, missed that event and when he learned of it he became utterly indignant, 'Nonsense,' he said, 'how can you make a revolution without executions? Do you expect to dispose of your enemies by disarming yourself? What other means of repression are there, prisons? Who attaches significance to that during a civil war, when each side hopes to win? It is a mistake, impermissible weakness, pacifist illusion' (Pipes 1990, 791).

We should mention not just individual quotes, but also the countless victims of the new state mass violence and the physical consequences of this kind of ideology. Building on the experience of Western European colonial empires and their methods, one such development was the creation of concentration camps. They had been introduced as a new means of mass violence by the Bolshevik regime in 1918, but they were based on two previous examples, one American – in Cuba 1898 – and another one English – in South Africa in 1900–1901. The Marxist revolutionary, Leon Trotsky, who reinvented the

concept of concentration camp for the sake of Bolshevik power in 1918, was well aware that the concept had been tested elsewhere. He introduced it on the geographical fringes of Europe – on the Volga River near Kazan. From those relatively modest beginnings, it later developed into the whole Gulag system, with tens of millions of inmates (in reality slaves) and millions of deaths. Nazi Germany would go a step further, by organizing death camps during the Second World War.

So we can observe many different, as I called them, levels of factors that made violence in Eastern Europe a specific phenomenon in the 20th century. But this experience of mass violence was not connected solely with the Russian version of communism or with that combination of the First World War experience of mass killings and mass deportations that helped create a Bolshevik ‘synthesis’ of violence. We also have to mention elements connected to nation building, and fighting for the foundation of new nations that created unstable and unclear boundaries and issues with ‘alien’ minorities (causing fights or persecution). This was the experience of many Eastern Europe countries that found their way onto the political map after the First World War.

I would like to take three examples: Poland, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. In all these countries we not only have a nation-state project, but there were imperial-like structures, sometimes with elements of a federative idea, but at the same time it connected with efforts aimed at dominating minorities by the ‘core’ nation and turning from an imperial-like structure or federative structure to a nation-state structure. Were experiences in Poland, in Yugoslavia or in Czechoslovakia different? One is tempted to suggest at least part of the answer by linking Poland to Russia’s political (violent) culture experienced in the previous century. Most of Poland created after the First World War was founded on the territories that experienced more than a hundred years of Russian imperial influences, control and administrative practices. Rebellions against this culture somehow imitated some violent elements of that culture. Yugoslavia bore the influences of Turkish, Islamic imperial domination over large part of its territories. Czechoslovakia was based on territories exclusively belonging to the Austro-Hungarian Habsburg Empire. It does not mean that the Habsburg Empire was ideal with no conflicts, nevertheless the political culture of the Habsburg Empire in the late 19th century was evidently slightly different to the one developing in the Russian or Ottoman Empires. I am aware that it could be only partial and a very

provocative suggestion of an answer for the development of violent clashes between different national projects in these particular countries. There were other, probably more pressing, sources of differences in ‘eruptions’ of violence, too. For example, the fact that Ukrainian nationalization was not fully realized during or after the First World War somehow postponed the final clash of that project (along with a specific culture of violence that was involved there too) until the Second World War.

Other factors could be connected to the uneasy geopolitical, economic context (notably the Great Crisis of the early 1930s) and the ideological attempts to peacefully solve the tensions that we have just mentioned: that is, the tensions between fulfilled and unfulfilled national aspirations, as well as different social projects during the interwar period in so-called ‘East-Central Europe’, a term coined by Oskar Halecki (Halecki 1950; Arnason and Doyle 2010; Troebst 2003, 293–321). These difficult conditions were created on the western side by acts of German imperial revenge that soon loomed large after 1918. On the eastern side communist ideology became more widespread – it had already tried to take over all East-Central Europe in 1920, but was stopped at the gates of Warsaw and was forced to recede for the next twenty years. Throughout the 1930s Stalin turned that ideology to a large degree into another instrument of Russian imperial revenge. There was an evident change when compared with the times of Lenin, though not in terms of the mass killings (because those also took place under Lenin’s regime), but in the ‘rationalization’ – if one can use that word – for these mass killings. Stalin was reorganizing the Soviet state around the Russian imperial core in order to prepare it for the ‘new Great War’. That is, for example, the reason for one of the least known, the least remembered experiences of mass violence in the 20th century. I mean here so-called national operations led by the NKVD security service in 1937–38.

Most people asked what the Great Terror means, would answer: yes, of course – old Communist guards were executed, Lenin’s comrades were victims; others would probably answer that the Great Terror was one more tragic experience of the Russian elites – seeing this tragedy through the prism of artistic expressions such as Anna Akhmatova’s *Requiem* poem (depicting the fate of Russian mothers asking for the release of their sons imprisoned in the NKVD jails) or other literary testimonies. However, numerically speaking – and by numbers we should always mean individual people – the most numerous of the Great Terror victims were those shot in so-called

national operations of the NKVD. In 1937–38 there were almost 260,000 such victims. By far the most targeted were the Poles: in a single ‘Polish’ operation, initiated in August 1937, 111,097 people were shot. Germans were the second; Finns, Koreans and other nations that Stalin’s imperial perspective perceived as a ‘potential danger’ followed the pattern. Norman Naimark (a professor at Stanford University) called the NKVD operation against the Poles ‘one of the most unambiguous cases of genocide in the history of the twentieth century’ (Naimark 2010, 92: see also Snyder 2010; Kuomiya 2007; Martin 2001).

What came afterwards? The Second World War, of course, instigated by the Hitler–Stalin agreement of 23 August 1939 to divide ‘Eastern Europe’ with a single act, signed in Moscow. Nazi Germany’s ideology that joined the imperial revenge of the *Deutsches Reich* (this was the official and appropriate name for Hitler’s state) over especially Slavic neighbours with the anti-Semitic core of Hitler and his comrade’s worldview (*Weltanschauung*) led to the physical elimination of almost all Jewry from East-Central Europe. It is necessary to stress that the particularly tragic experience of the Second World War in that region stems from first the collaboration and then the clash of two imperial projects – Russian/Soviet and German/Nazi. This was the essence of the Molotov–Ribbentrop handshake: the totalitarian empires will to eliminate what was between these two empires in East-Central Europe: to eliminate Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Finland, Moldova, to completely subjugate Belarus, Ukraine, and so on and so forth (Czechoslovakia had been already erased from the map, though, fortunately, with much less violence).

Most of the above-mentioned countries and peoples inhabiting them (after the Holocaust eliminated the Jewish population from the region) were overtaken by the communist imperial expansion of Stalin’s ‘Russified’ Soviet Union. This expansion reframed older imperial patterns of domination and infused them with more mass violence than in the 19th century. The rest of the ‘shorter 20th century’ was perceived by many from that perspective as a fight or an experience of waging more or less violently suppressed rebellion against this foreign occupation, against this imperial domination. From that very perspective *annus mirabilis* – that of 1989 – was seen by many (not by all, of course) as liberation. The experience of violence obtained a meaningful narrative of a struggle for independence, a struggle for freedom, against ‘the evil empire’ (a reminder of Ronald Reagan’s catchy metaphor from 1983). It

became similar to the narrative that followed the First World War in these Eastern European (or East-Central European) countries that gained or regained their independence after 1918. For most people in Western European countries, the experience of violence in the 20th century, beginning with the First World War, was not remembered as one of heroic struggle, but rather, increasingly towards the end of the century, it was remembered as one where innocent civilian victims were at the centre of these horrors. Some (in fact, millions) of the specific victims of the horrors that happened in Eastern Europe during the same century, but stemmed from such an exotic (that is, not experienced by Western European societies) source of violence as totalitarian Soviet/Russian imperialism, looked for the recognition of which they had obviously been deprived before 1989.

And yet they were deprived of that recognition, at least on an official 'all-European' level again after 1989. Their desire for recognition clashed with the new culture of memory that had already matured in Western Europe based on the model developed in the Federal Republic of Germany over the last five decades. There was no time for the many dramatic (different and conflicting) memories of the inhabitants of Eastern Europe, suppressed or marginalized before 1989, to find a place in the public space – unlike in Western Europe, where the Nazi-occupation horrors, collaboration and Holocaust supplanted previous more 'heroic' or individual national memorial narratives within only three to five decades. There was no time for many of the hundreds of thousands of victims (and living mourning communities of these victims) to find recognition – and then graduate to the 'healing' stage. They were to be 'healed' without recognition. They faced the demands of a new centralizing memory politics, one which had come – once again – from 'outside', from Western Europe, whose memorial elites used their own model of commemorating past violence.

I have discussed that model elsewhere, perfectly summed up by a German culturologist, Claus Leggewie, in his formula of the 'Seven Circles of European Memory'. He composed his model after the EU memorial elites decided also to include, symbolically, the Gulag experience, in about 2004. So, after the 'Holocaust' and the 'Gulag', there are five more circles, three of them dealing with the traumatic experiences of violence: 'Expulsion as a Pan-European Trauma', 'War and Wartime Memory', 'Black Book of Colonialism', 'Europe as a Continent of Immigration' and 'Europe's Success Story after 1945' (Leggewie 2011, 123–24; Nowak 2015, 38–56). The

outstanding question in that list is connected with experiences of colonialism and its violence. Are they the same in Belgium and in other Western European former colonial metropolises – and in, let's say, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Lithuania, Ukraine, or even Hungary and Poland (which have their own specific imperial histories)? Were these Eastern European societies perpetrators of colonial crimes committed outside Europe (predominantly in Africa and Asia) or rather victims of imperial (according to some concepts – just colonial) violence exerted by such imperial centres as Germany, or Russia, or even a non-European, Islamic Empire (the Ottoman Empire that for centuries subjugated the populations of Bulgaria, Romania and Hungary – to mention just contemporary members of the EU)?

Now we can return to the beginning of our commentaries. That violence that was 'exported' overseas throughout the 19th century by Western Europe to their colonies is coming back here. From an Eastern European perspective of unrecognized, regional memories, there seems to arise an unfortunate temptation to look at this situation with some *Schadenfreude*: you Western Europeans looked at our problems with nation-making, with our Eastern European tragic experiences of mass violence from the high point of the acclaimed 'Europe's Success Story after 1945'. Most Eastern Europeans had to wait for the beginning of their success, for their chance – only after 1989. When will we be ready to achieve success together? Probably only after we talk and listen attentively to each other, to all 'sides' of European experiences and memories of violence (and I believe there are many more of these 'sides' than just 'Western' and 'Eastern'). Just as we do here, at this conference.

I would like to end with a short quotation from Joseph Brodsky, an American poet of Russian-Jewish origin, and recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1987. I want to present his poem that is entitled 'Bosnia Tune'. It describes Eastern European anger with Western Europe's lack of real compassion, lack of understanding of the violence that is still happening in the East. I would now propose to reverse this meaning for a moment and read this poem as 'London Tune', 'Brussels Tune' or 'Paris Tune' and to address its moral pathos: Eastern Europeans now watch violence happening in the West. So let us listen, together:

As you pour yourself a scotch,
crush a roach, or check your watch,

as your hand adjusts your tie,
people die.

In the towns with funny names,
hit by bullets, caught in flames,
by and large not knowing why,
people die.

In small places you don't know
of, yet big for having no
chance to scream or say good-bye,
people die ...

We would never eliminate violence with simplistic formulas that stem only from our particular experiences. The experience of a clash or rather of differences of memories of mass violence, of different reasons for that mass violence in Western and in Eastern Europe should not lead to a lack of solidarity. Only, just as Professor Wiewiorka said, when we begin to address our different experiences, can we find solidarity versus violence – our common enemy. Thank you.

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FROM THE MEMORY OF VIOLENCE TO THE VIOLENCE OF MEMORY

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This is a lightly edited transcript of a lecture given at the symposium 'Violence in 20th-century Europe: Commemorating, Documenting, Educating' in Brussels, Belgium on 6 June 2017.

While the topic of memory is multifarious, covering many issues of identity, belonging, pride and sorrow, the relationship between memory and violence clearly has a special significance. As a scholar of memory, of course, I am fascinated with the complexities of memory in its many forms and many referents. This is thus a welcome opportunity to think more, and perhaps more directly, about the other side of the equation. This invitation, then, has led me to think about the phenomenon – or more accurately phenomena – of violence in a more systematic and general fashion than memory scholars are sometimes inclined to do, just as it has perhaps led specialists on violence to think more about the complexities of memory than they might otherwise do.

If we are going to talk about a particular kind of remembrance – namely the remembrance of violence – we need to be clear exactly what it is we are talking about when we identify such an objective as a special one for remembrance. Like memory, however, violence is an exceptionally difficult concept to define in a robust way (so too is memory, which I will come back to later). Violence has at least two generic senses: the first refers to the very act, which is an exertion of power of force directed at an object. To be sure, we can exert violence over nature: we can blast through rock to build a tunnel, we can knock down a tree to clear a path (in the process destroying life, which gives a hint of what is essential), and it is not inappropriate to talk about the violence of nature or of our violence towards nature. But what we are primarily talking about in the context of the memory-violence nexus is the exertion of force – coercive, damaging, destructive – by one person

or group of people over another person or group. We should note that violence in the human realm – in contrast to the natural – only sometimes involves a physical dimension, such as bodily injury, brutality or even death. Violence can also be a single act, a repeated act, a condition or a pervasive order in a society.

We must remember at the beginning, moreover, that not every act of violence is illegitimate. No one would dispute, for instance, that some violence is sometimes necessary: if you want to build a house, you have to clear a place, sometimes with explosive force. Even more, reasonable people would not dispute, though they might be frightened by the fact, that we need some form of policing to secure our social and physical security. Or the fact that when a terrorist attacks, the police come running and take him or her down by any means necessary. One may have concerns about the political context, but in the moment when one person or group is committing violence against another, we legitimately look to others to protect us from that violence, which they do with further – this time hopefully justified – violence. So not all violence is illegitimate or unjustified (all scepticism about ‘just war’ notwithstanding). A world without violence is not, in the words of the philosopher Gottfried Leibniz, the best of all possible worlds. In reference to Sigmund Freud’s ‘Beyond the Pleasure Principle’ – an enduringly relevant text for an understanding of violence, of memory and of the relations between them – to wish for a world free of violence is to wish for a world that is bland, inhuman, narcotized, an existence of what would in fact be an order without meaning. We recall as well – as Professor Wieviorka already mentioned in his lecture on the first day of this symposium – the sociologist Max Weber’s famous definition of states as those agencies that have a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence. So, again, not all violence is illegitimate. What qualities then, other than just the act, are we referring to when we are discussing violence?

The second sense of violence is not just the generic sense of violence as force – legitimate or illegitimate. Rather, the specific meaning that I think is at issue when we talk about violence in relation to memory – as I have been charged to do here – is violence that is the expression of an etymologically related term, namely violation. Not all violence involves violation. When you go to the doctor and have to have surgery, there is clearly violence involved – the cutting into flesh – but because its goal is to help you and presumably you consent to it, such an act is not a violation, though you may

in fact feel it that way. In contrast, it seems to me, the violence that is at issue in our contemporary moral and political – and indeed memory – culture is that of power that violates or transgresses norms, particularly norms of human inviolability, our sense of order, of appropriateness and of integrity, physical and moral. Here it is important to note that while Weber may have pointed out that states may have a monopoly on the legitimate use of violence, that is not exactly the same thing as a monopoly on the *use of legitimate violence*. We know that much of what states have done to each other and to their peoples and to other peoples was not legitimate violence, even if, with the power of their armies and their control of the streets they had a monopoly on its use. This is because their violence has violated rules and norms, integrity bodily and moral. And these kinds of violence/violation create particular problems for memory.

Yet another issue to raise about violence in framing the question of the relationship between violence and memory is that, like everything else, violence has a historical development. Recently, for instance, the cognitive psychologist Steven Pinker, based to some extent on the ideas of the sociologist Norbert Elias, has argued that despite the horrors of illegitimate violence in the 20th century – effected particularly through our extraordinary means of inflicting it on mass scale – the absolute amount of violence in the world today has in fact been in steady decline. Whether or not one believes Pinker's data or Elias's argument about the so-called 'civilizing process', one thing is clear: our expectation of violence and our tolerance for it, at least in public discourse, has indeed decreased (though of course this decrease is not universal or evenly distributed). This too – the unexpectedness of violence/violation – contributes to its mnemonic challenges.

Just as an illustration – not in a manner that is going to prove anything to a rigorous social scientist – we might consider some 'data' from Google Ngram. If one is to search the frequency of the term 'violence' in the titles of English language books from 1800 to the present, precisely at the time when there was the most shocking violence being perpetrated on a mass scale, we find that there was a substantial dip in the number of mentions of violence, bottoming out in about 1917. The frequency then remains relatively steady up until about 1950, when uses of and references to the concept of violence only then return to the level of mentions in the early 1800s. Of course, one of the things that has changed in this time is what exactly we meant by violence at the beginning of the 1800s and what we mean by it in

the second half of the 20th century. In some ways, this is an indication of the changing presence of a discourse about violence, though of course we must recall that the term and its meanings do not strictly coincide and thus that frequency is a limited indicator. Whether or not this index of uses of the term violence indicates a change in the amount of violence, then, it at very least indicates something about the change in the way we think about (and remember) it.

Indeed, it is not the absolute amount of violence in the 20th century that has caused the move from what has been called a culture of monuments to a culture of memorials, from one of heroes to one of victims, to one of national identity to one of human rights. Rather, it is our moral universe that has changed, and it is this change that is indicated in the changing frequency – and indeed nature – of references to violence. This is not, however, to discount the very real changes that have taken place in the forms and contents of the violent practices that have taken place in the contemporary world, for indeed there are new kinds of violence and new conditions for knowing about them. So, for instance, the new violence of the 20th century is not the violence of nature or even the violence of God against man – an earthquake, a catastrophe, a fire – but that of man against man. But it is a different kind of violence of man against man. It is not a raiding tribe, an act of vengeance or personal expiation, nor violence toward some end or for some purpose. Rather, it is mass violence, though it is important to remember that even mass violence – which depends on mass society – is itself a diverse and multifaceted phenomenon.

One of the most interesting features of contemporary violence is not merely its mass nature, however, nor is it merely our preoccupation with it in our changed (by violence) moral culture. What we have seen in the late 19th and early 20th century, rather, is the emergence of new forms of violence that are only enabled by changed conditions, namely the rise of mass society, but also of industrialization. We use today quite glibly the term trauma in many contexts. And if you were to ask many history students or ordinary people – not that history students are not ordinary people – what trauma means and where did it come from, they might make reference to the concept of post-traumatic stress disorder that arose in the context of the Vietnam War. And if one were to ask historians, they would likely make reference to an earlier period, namely the First World War and the concept of shell shock or war neurosis. But in fact the historiography of

trauma shows clearly that the concept emerged in an earlier period, namely the 1860s to the 1880s. What was happening in those years that gave rise to our contemporary concept of trauma? One of the things that happened was a great epidemiological expansion in the experience of trauma. I do not mean that modern people suffer more or are more miserable than people before the modern industrial era. What I mean is that the ways in which we suffer have changed with mechanization.

In a marvellous book on the railway journey, the cultural historian Wolfgang Schivelbusch describes the radical novelty of the experience of riding in a railway car. If you ride a horse or even a stagecoach, you are still in a direct connection to biological power – the power of the horse. You experience the passage through space, the bumps of the road, the curves, in a humanly comprehensible fashion. Once you experience the speed of the railway journey, you are taken into a radically new realm. One of the things that happened with the advent of railway journeys – although with railway journeys being only one example of industrial experience – is the rise and spread of accidents. To be sure, one could always fall off a horse or have a stagecoach crash. But there was a categorical difference between the experience of being injured through bio-power and being injured through an industrial mechanism, one that created existential ruptures. This is to some extent what the philosopher Martin Heidegger was addressing in his distinction between the windmill and the power plant: the former is still comprehensible to ordinary people, while the latter is beyond the comprehension of most of us. And these new experiences required new concepts for understanding. This is the birthplace of the modern sense of trauma.

While war neurosis was not new in the 19th century, its scale and severity were. And this is why the philosopher Walter Benjamin, for instance, diagnosed the experience of the First World War as a civilizational rupture. In his famous essay on the ‘Storyteller’, Benjamin wrote, ‘Never has experience been contradicted more thoroughly than strategic experience by tactical warfare, economic experience by inflation, bodily experience by mechanical warfare, moral experience by those in power.’ So what has happened with the advent of industrial warfare, marked most clearly by the First World War, although it has been tied up with industrialization more broadly, is the loss of a direct human experience, a sense of measure, a sense of control. If you recall your US Civil War movies, you will remember the plan of battle, in which two armies stand in lines facing each other, affix bayonets and

then walk towards each other until they meet. In US Westerns, the cliché is ‘don’t shoot until you see the whites of their eyes’. The First World War was categorically different. There the average soldier grovelled in trenches, and the biggest threat was insidious: a gas one could not see and whose effects one could not fathom. In order to protect himself, the soldier donned a mask that turned him into an extra-terrestrial monster, the likes of which medieval theology could not begin to understand.

Despite the importance of the First World War – and industrialization more broadly – in our experience of violence and in our ability to understand it, the Shoah was the second blow in the death on a human scale. The Shoah introduced us to what philosopher and survivor Emanuel Levinas so poignantly described in his work as ‘useless suffering’. What is Levinas getting at with this concept as an interpretive frame for the Holocaust? He is saying that the ‘events’ are in fact not ultimately interpretable or comprehensible. The framework in which Levinas addresses this is in fact a much older one – tracing back all the way to Leibniz, who I have already mentioned: namely that of theodicy. Theodicy is the explanation of evil and suffering. What meaning can we give to our miseries? In the period after Leibniz published his treatise on theodicy in 1710, Europe experienced a major crisis in the earthquake that hit Lisbon in the middle of the 18th century. How could you explain, how could you defend God, or any notion of his benevolence, when fires consumed children, innocents, civilians? This was not a phenomenon of war, but a ‘natural’ event that seemed to have no purpose. This moral crisis begun in the middle of the 18th century received exceptional clarity by the middle of the 20th century, when Levinas posed it again, but in contrast to Leibniz, saw no possible answer to it. This is because the conditions for making meaning had changed along with the new forms of suffering that demanded such meaning.

The question of theodicy, of course, is one that underwrites the entire history of Western moral thinking, from the Book of Job onwards. Job, who was made to suffer for no good reason, never lost his faith. When he demanded an answer, it was one that has resonated throughout the ages: Job was not entitled to, or capable of understanding, an explanation. And so Job’s only recourse was to live in resignation. But Job’s suffering was an individual, personal suffering (or at least was portrayed this way, despite the destruction of his family that caused him to suffer), while the suffering of the 20th century was a categorical suffering on a mass scale, and thus not one to which

resignation is a judicious approach. One cannot simply say human beings are mortal, we experience illness and pain, and this is a part of life. There is no existential scale that can contain the knowledge of what happened in Auschwitz.

Here too it is important always to historicize. The question of theodicy, our ability to come up with explanations that make sense of the suffering we have experienced or witnessed, has itself changed dramatically over time. This goes back, again, to Max Weber, in whose work we also see a discussion of theodicy. For Weber, it was a matter of how poor people might 'come to terms' with their misery. Weber's answer was that they create salvationist religions; they believe that their suffering in this world will be redeemed in the next, the Christian idea that the meek shall inherit the earth. What Weber points out in his discussion of theodicy, however, is that the ability, the conditions for us, to come up with a satisfactory explanation, have in fact diminished in modernity. If your house fell down and your family was killed by an earthquake in the middle ages, we would have said, like Job, that we must have done something wrong – not prayed hard enough, etc. God must be angry with me. But with the rise of science, we understand how plate tectonics work and we theorize stochastic processes, statistical randomness, etc. We understand that there may not be any true meaning, which is to say purpose, that can be ascribed to something like an earthquake. It hits where it hits, when it hits.

One of the things we try to do, and we have seen this in the late 20th century, is that we try to hold each other accountable, even for natural disasters. So when an earthquake hit Aquila, Italy in 2009, the Italian government put the seismologists on trial, and indeed convicted them for not providing adequate warning to the population. Following the Southeast Asian tsunami of 2005, we blamed overdevelopment, incompetent governance and failure to respond adequately to climate change. While it is also true that Jean-Jacques Rousseau disputed the naturalness of the destruction in Lisbon in 1755 – pointing out that it was not nature that dictated building flimsy dwellings on hillsides or dense clusters of wooden structures that would burn so quickly – the general trend has been towards the increasing difficulty of coming up with satisfactory explanations of how our suffering is meaningful.

So what does this have to do with the topic in hand? It seems to me that the link connecting violence to memory is to recognize that memory is a form of theodicy. That is, memory, particularly the act of commemoration, is a way

of ascribing meaning to what has happened in history, to suffering, a way to redeem suffering in some fashion or other. Here I am moved, however, by the philosopher Paul Ricoeur who, in his discussion of Levinas and of the problem of theodicy, argues that every theodicy is an exercise in bad faith. That is, every time we offer an explanation for suffering that enables us to see how it happened and fix the problems in the name of 'never again', we are retrospectively assigning meaning. (This can include a scientific explanation about the facts that led to an atrocious outcome, for instance, an explanation that might refer to human psychology or bureaucratic organization or administrative complexity and the perfect storm of conditions and events that led to Auschwitz.) But not everything, or not everything completely, can be explained in this manner. To try to do so is to risk 'bad faith', move from explaining something to explaining away, or making it seem necessary in the service of some larger or longer end.

In the lecture we heard a few days ago by Professor Wieviorka, we learned that violence has a complex social geometry to it. So too does memory. When we analyse violence, we need to be careful that we specify the geometry of perpetration and victimhood. Are the perpetrators acting as individuals or as members of groups? Who are the victims? What is the power relationship between the perpetrators and victims? Are they symmetrical or asymmetrical? Do they remain in contention or does one side triumph over the other? To what extent? One of the conditions of post-war Germany, for instance, was that the Holocaust was in fact largely successful – not merely in eliminating the lives of six million people, but in removing Jewish life from German culture and society. When we use the term violence, moreover, we need to be careful not to overgeneralize a variety of different phenomena into one category. Violence can be once, it can be a condition, it can be enduring, repeated or none of these. It can be reciprocal, can have meaning or can be devoid of meaning.

In the same way, we can analyse the complexities of memory. In the emerging field of memory studies, there is a great discussion about the relationship between individual memory and collective memory. Does collective memory exist, or is it merely a metaphor? Memory can be unitary – that is, there can be a single agreed set of memories in a group that one must share or at least know in order to be a member of the group. More often, however, memory is contested and fragmented; there may be hegemonic memory, official memory, top-down memory or bottom-up memory. Memory also

takes on different emotional and epistemological registers. Memory can be historical, documentarian, expressive, an effort to seek redemption, etc.

One of the features of memory that we do not see clearly enough when we are analysing violence is the profound temporality of memory, the fact that memory is not just an act in the present, nor a direct reference to the past, but a reference to the past in the present that is nonetheless conditioned by its place in the history of such commemoration. In other words, one cannot predict memory from the past or from the present. Memory is the result of an ongoing discourse of remembrance, where each version of the past follows, and in part responds to, those that preceded it; just as often, each subsequent version of the past is a commentary on, as well as departure from (and effort to transform), those earlier versions.

Since this is a conference on European remembrance, it is with great hesitation that I make reference to an American example to demonstrate this temporality of memory, though the United States has already been a significant part of the discussion at this meeting so far. In particular, there was reference to the origins of the idea of the concentration camp in Cuba (this statement itself being an effort to transform a version of the past – namely one in which the Nazis invented the concentration camp – just as the statement I am making now is an effort to transform this revised memory). In fact, concentration camps were not invented by the Spanish in Cuba; nor were they – as was a central claim by the right during the German historians’ dispute of the mid-1980s – an imitation of Stalin’s Gulags. No, the invention of the concentration camp lies squarely in the history of the United States. The first such installations in modern form were early ‘reservations’ for Native Americans. Another important reference in the history – though less so in the memory – of concentration camps was the prisoner of war camps maintained with particular brutality during the US Civil War. One of the most notorious such examples was Andersonville Prison, in which an estimated 15,000 Union soldiers died. Indeed, the prosecution of the camp’s commandant, Captain Henry Wirz, was one of the first modern examples of a war-crimes trial. Making things even more complex, however, subsequent revelations (after Wirz’s execution) revealed some merit to Wirz’s defense claims that he had tried to alleviate suffering. Wirz thus became something of a symbol for the legates of the Confederacy, who erected a memorial to him in 1909. Memory clearly has its ups and downs, its proponents, entrepreneurs, revisionists and rejectionists.

This story is particularly interesting to me here because it has long seemed to me that there has been a sort of American exceptionalism when it comes to the study of memory as well as to the power of memory politics. A good example of this is that conferences like the present one, sponsored by a prominent and successful NGO, does not really have – or has not really had – its equivalent in the United States. However, it does seem as if this American exceptionalism is coming to an end – and not least in part because of the influence of European memory politics as a model, and of the spread of the politics of regret as a principle of legitimation here in Europe. Indeed, this has been taking place in just the last year, when the United States has experienced a wave of commemorative debates and politics. While there have been numerous tributaries from every direction, these were brought together into a mighty river of discourse with the murderous attack of a white supremacist on an African-American church in South Carolina in June 2015. Only following this event – which took place after decades of criticism of officially sanctioned Confederate symbolism – did the governor of South Carolina unilaterally – though with substantial support from across the spectrum – act to stop flying the Confederate flag from the dome of the Statehouse.

Since then, there has been a great deal of new introspection – or at least more widespread introspection – about the shameful and problematic presence of the American past. To be sure, much of this introspection has taken place at the top of the intellectual food chain, and resistance to such thinking was not an insignificant part of the cultural background that has brought us a radical populist presidency (if that is indeed what it is). For instance, Georgetown University ‘discovered’ that its present financial security was built on the sale of more than one hundred slaves that the university – itself associated with the Catholic Church – owned. In the present context (begun before the South Carolina massacre), the university has undertaken – quite honorably, in my view – efforts to expiate this crime, including setting up a memory institute. A similar discussion took place recently at Yale University, where several buildings and institutions at the university made historical references in honour of individuals that many have come to understand – at least by contemporary standards – were perhaps not so honourable (in the literal sense) after all. For instance, one of the undergraduate colleges at Yale was named for John C. Calhoun, the seventh vice president of the United States who made his fortune in the slave trade. For decades, Calhoun Hall was the proud undergraduate residence and association for many of the

United States's present elite. The discussion began around the question of whether the title of the head of Calhoun College – and indeed of all of the undergraduate colleges at Yale – should continue to be 'Master', with its evocation of the era of slavery. It was fairly readily agreed that the 'Master' would henceforth be called 'Head'. Yet the question of the name of Calhoun College itself proved, at least at first, to be more difficult, with a presumption against 'changing the past'. It took a further year to overcome alumni resistance to changing the name itself.

In just the past several weeks [note, this lecture was delivered in June 2017, before the riots in Charlottesville, Virginia], indeed, we have seen a wave of municipal authorities around the Southern United States tearing down monuments to the Confederacy. What is fascinating about these moves, first of all, is that they are happening at all, but second of all who is agreeing and disagreeing with them, and with what arguments. Indeed, in many conversations I have had at my own and other universities, including with colleagues in history departments, a lot of people have asserted that tearing down such monuments and markers would be tantamount to changing history in the name of a sanitized, politically correct memory. Markers of the Confederacy, in such an argument, are tantamount to changing the history of the Confederacy itself. What they are missing (and, again, what has been highlighted since the Charlottesville riots) is, again, the complex temporality of such history and memory. What the defenders of 'not changing history' neglect to ask is who built these markers and for what reasons. The monument to Robert E. Lee, which was the occasion for the riots in Charlottesville [again, these events took place after this lecture was first delivered, though the debate was already underway in early summer], was not a remnant of the war itself but was a mnemonic act undertaken by particular people in a particular place at a particular time – and for a particular purpose. Monuments like the Charlottesville Lee statue were built decades after the end of the Civil War for the purpose of expressing a white supremacist ideology.

So even though the violence being commemorated happened in the past, before the monuments were built, that violence lives on in and through the monuments marking it, which were indeed intended to perpetuate the real violence of the war with the symbolic violence of memory. We need to recognize, in other words, that *memory itself can be a form of violence*. When you erect or maintain a statue in a city or town centre that symbolizes the historical oppression of a group of people, and the descendants of that

group of people have to walk by it every day and the dominant powers say they do not want to change the past, we are failing to recognize the ways in which versions of the past represented in monuments – versions of memory – give meaning to the original act of suffering and serve to perpetuate it. Ending the violence thus requires responding to these later acts of commemoration.

Where does this all leave us? As time is short, here, then, are some general prescriptions for the analysis of violence, memory and the relationships between them: we must take care, based on our analysis of the complexities of violence and memory, not to wash out the differences between different kinds of violence in one overarching culture of remembrance, one that often faces the choice between ‘never forget’ and its apparent opposite: ‘forgive and forget’. There are different kinds of violence, different kinds of remembrance for them and different conditions for reconciliation and meaning about different kinds of harms through a monolithic principle of remembrance. It matters whether the suffering was individual or collective, whether the perpetration was individual or collective, as well as whether the memory is individual or collective, and who is doing it for what purposes. As the discussion of theodicy showed, it matters whether the event being commemorated was a ‘natural’ event or man-made, the result of legitimate or illegitimate power, necessary and purposeful or ‘useless’. Each of these requires its own form of commemoration, and we must not overgeneralize the imperative to never forget all situations and all actors, regardless of their positions within these matrices of violence and memory and their relations to them.

The legitimacy of memory is to be found not by settling on any particular contents of memory, but on following a set of procedures, as well as resisting others, that require us to take into account the variety of different subjective and objective points of view. We must enter into constructive – and sometimes critical – dialogue with those perspectives, including those of both perpetrator and victim, as well as their descendants. In other words, we need to understand and differentiate the legitimate and illegitimate concerns of the defenders of the monuments as well as the legitimate and illegitimate concerns of those who feel oppressed by them. But understanding all points of view is not the same thing as accepting them. People’s views of the past may be authentic and even well motivated, though they may also be disingenuous and mean. But all of these possibilities are part of the analysis.

At the end of the day, however, the monuments of violence that deny or celebrate, rather than merely recall, its motivations must go. Remembrance, like any act, is subject to principles not merely of authenticity or desire, but of power and politics. The culture of remembrance does not mean accepting every authentic sentiment about the past.

A further corollary of these principles, however, is that we must avoid self-righteousness and to put our own victimhood and suffering in a wider perspective. While I am not a Christian, in this I am moved by the parable of the log and the speck from Matthew: ‘Why do you look at the speck of sand in your brother’s eye yet pay no attention to the log in your own eye?’ (Matthew 7:3). Perhaps we can adapt this even when we are the victims of tremendous suffering, not to retreat into a commemorative narcissism. Instead, our remembrance should be directed toward healing the wounds of our violent past: in the Jewish vocabulary ‘*tikkun olam*’, to heal the world. We do so by recognizing and recalling the pain of others, not merely of ourselves. We must give up, in other words, the strong prioritization of our own personal suffering and the suffering of our own people. This is how we prevent the flame of suffering from setting the world on fire yet again. The memory of violence must not be matched by the violence of memory.

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