ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE
STUDIA TERRITORIALIA
XVIII
2018
2

ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE

STUDIA TERRITORIALIA

XVIII
2018
2

CHARLES UNIVERSITY
KAROLINUM PRESS
2018

Website: http://stuter.fsv.cuni.cz

ISSN 1213-4449 (Print)
ISSN 2336-3231 (Online)

CONTENTS

EDITORIAL

Dear readers,

We are happy to bring you a second volume of the *AUC Studia Territorialia* journal in 2018. This issue includes four original articles. The bulk consists of three contributions received in response to our call for papers entitled "Memory of Genocide in Interdisciplinary Perspectives," which we issued in summer 2018. The fourth contribution was in response to one of our earlier calls for papers. All four texts, their varying methodology and perspective notwithstanding, have one thing in common: they all deal with the issues of memory, working through the traumatizing past and construction of collective identities in divided and post-conflict societies. These questions are at the heart of some of the most pressing contemporary political and social problems in Central and Southeastern Europe.

The volume opens with the paper by Karolina Ćwiek-Rogalska which portrays the fate of German war memorials built in the aftermath of the First World War in the Czech borderlands. In effect, it is an anthropological survey of the Cheb and Mariánské Lázně regions. Having been inhabited predominantly by German speakers prior to 1945, this area lost its specific character due to the forced removal of the original German population, which was a part of the wider population transfers occurring in the aftermath of the Second World War. This, understandably, left its mark on the region's cultural landscape. Drawing on a long-term field research in the area, Ćwiek-Rogalska characterizes three main types of German war memorials: heroes' groves, stained glass windows, and weeping and sleeping soldiers figures. She interprets the re-use of and lack of care for these monuments in post-WWII communist Czechoslovakia as a way of managing a "dissonant heritage."

The second paper brings us to the other side of the Czech-German border. In her text, Maria Palme illuminates the modalities of working through the

troublesome past in eastern Germany. Her work is an original contribution to the debate on the applicability of public apologies as vehicles of reconciliation in divided societies. She analyzes three cases of public apologies by the former representatives of the oppressive communist regime and investigates the impact these speeches have had on reconciliation between former oppressor groups and their victims. She argues that while often of limited success, apology speeches have brought about a discursive shift resulting in the pursuit of a unifying narrative about the conflicted past through inclusion and dialogue between hitherto antagonistic groups.

For her part, Jasmina Gavrankapetanović-Redžić revisits the traumatic experience of the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the first half of the 1990s. She focuses on the use of gender-directed violence as an instrument of war by the Serbian armed forces and their proxy paramilitaries. Relying on the theoretical assumptions in the works of Yugoslav feminist Žarana Papić and employing the examples of visuals from the films by filmmaker Jasmila Žbanić, she illustrates the workings of gender-directed violence and traces the consequences of this genocidal practice for the formation of the collective national memory among the affected community members. She finds that the memory of this traumatic experience has become an integral part of contemporary Bosnian Muslim female identity.

Last but not least, Giustina Selvelli presents the results of her anthropological research conducted among the Armenian Diaspora in the Bulgarian city of Plovdiv. She demonstrates and synthesizes different patterns of commemorative practices of remembering the Armenian Genocide on the occasion of its centennial in 2015.

With regard to the overall length of the individual papers in this volume, we have opted to omit the regular review and information sections. This will be more than compensated for in the upcoming volumes, which are already in preparation.

We hope you have a stimulating read.

On behalf of the editorial board,

Lucie Filipová, Jan Šír

doi: 10.14712/23363231.2019.9

ARTICLES

2018 ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE PAG. 11–30
STUDIA TERRITORIALIA 2

THE GLORY OF DEATH? GERMAN MEMORIALS OF THE GREAT WAR IN THE NORTH-WESTERN CZECH BORDERLANDS AFTER 1945

KAROLINA ĆWIEK-ROGALSKA
INSTITUTE OF SLAVIC STUDIES, POLISH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

Abstract
War memorials (in German, *Kriegerdenkmäler*) were built after World War I in almost every village and town in Czechoslovakia that had a German population, to commemorate those who had been killed in the war. After 1945, these memorials were either destroyed or recycled. The author shows how the new Czech inhabitants who replaced the traditional population of the borderlands coped with these memorials. Focusing her research on the Cheb and Mariánské Lázně regions, she considers the destruction of the monuments to be an example of managing a "dissonant heritage." Some of the monuments were demolished altogether; others were re-used for new purposes as parts of new objects. Applying Reinhart Koselleck's theory that war memorials serve the living more than they do the dead, by creating communal attitudes toward common social issues, the author analyzes patterns in the erection of German memorials of the Great War in the Czech lands. She also refers to Bernhard Böttcher's analysis of German war memorials in Czechoslovakia, which regards them as monuments commemorating a country which had ceased to exist. Her main thesis is that the "new life" given to war memorials after 1945 is connected to a new and different perspective among Czechs on World War I, to their hostile attitude towards the German heritage of Czechoslovakia, and to a different perception of memorials inherited from the past.
Keywords: World War I; war memorials; dissonant heritage; Czechoslovakia; German minority
DOI: 10.14712/23363231.2019.10

The article is an extended version of a presentation given at the workshop "Grenze/n, Gedächtnis, Friedhöfe" held in Prague on September 26 and 27, 2018 and organized by the research consortium Grenzen in Erinnerungskulturen.

Karolina Ćwiek-Rogalska, PhD, is an assistant professor at the Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw. Address correspondence to Instytut Slawistyki PAN, ul. Bartoszewicza 1b/17, 00-337 Warszawa, Poland. E-mail: karolina.rogalska@ispan.waw.pl.

Introduction

Great War memorials are common features of the cultural landscape of all countries that took part in World War I. Starting with the countries that were among the main participants of that war, we note the British *war memorials*[1] and French *monuments aux morts*[2] on the side of the Entente, and from the other side of the conflict, the German *Kriegerdenkmäler.*[3] The "orgy of monumentalization," as the postwar wave of erecting Great War memorials has been called by memory studies scholar Paul Connerton,[4] was a large-scale phenomenon not only in Europe, but also in the United States, which had in 1917 declared war on Germany and become an active participant in the conflict.[5] The situation of the Central European states that emerged from the war as independent countries was slightly different, as was their remembrance of that conflict. The collective memory,[6] as well as the common perception of the outcome of the war was not the same as in Western Europe and America. The way the societies of the newly founded states, including Czechoslovakia and Poland, perceived the Great War was atypical in comparison with the Western perspective.[7]

That does not mean there were no war memorials in those countries, but the communities that erected them, their reasons for building them, and the

---

1 Jonathan A. Black, "Ordeal and Reaffirmation: Masculinity and the Construction of Scottish and English National Identity in Great War Memorial Sculpture 1919–30," in *Memory and Memorials: The Commemorative Century*, ed. William Kidd and Brian Murdoch (London: Routledge, 2017), 75–91; Stefan Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory: War, Remembrance and Medievalism in Britain and Germany, 1914–1940* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991).

2 Annette Becker, *La guerre et la foi. De la mort à la mémoire: 1914-années 1930* (Paris: Armand Colin, 2015).

3 Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*; Reinhart Koselleck, "War Memorials: Identity Formations of the Survivors," in *The Practice of Conceptual History: Timing History, Spacing Concepts*, ed. Reinhart Koselleck and Todd Samuel Presner (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), 285–326; Reinhart Koselleck and Michael Jeismann, eds., *Der Politische Totenkult: Kriegerdenkmäler in der Moderne* (Paderborn: Wilhelm Fink, 1994); Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*.

4 Paul Connerton, "Seven Types of Forgetting," *Memory Studies* 1, No. 1 (January 2008): 69, doi: 10.1177/1750698007083889.

5 Steven Trout, *On the Battlefield of Memory: The First World War and American Remembrance, 1919–1941* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2010); Jennifer Wingate, *Sculpting Doughboys: Memory, Gender, and Taste in America's World War I Memorials* (London: Routledge, 2017).

6 Jeffrey K. Olick, "Collective Memory: The Two Cultures," *Sociological Theory* 17, No. 3 (November 1999): 333–348, doi: 10.1111/0735-2751.00083.

7 Maciej Maria Górny, "All Quiet? The Memory and Historiography of the First World War in Poland," *Rúbrica Contemporánea* 3, No. 6 (2014): 37–46.

states' official strategies for coping with their erection and their results differed from the West. In Czechoslovakia, we can distinguish war memorials built by the Czech majority[8] from memorials erected by the German minority.[9] The latter memorials are especially interesting from the point of view of the anthropological inquiry that I undertake in this paper. The aim of my article is to analyze the war memorials built by the German-speaking communities in Czechoslovakia in the inter-war period, which were subjected to cultural recycling after 1945 after those communities had been expelled from the country. I will address such research questions as: what kind of heritage are we dealing with when we discuss the memorials erected by the German-speaking population of Czechoslovakia between 1918 and 1938? Is the common belief true, that after 1945 all that was perceived as "German" was destroyed or left to be devoured by time? If so, did the region's new inhabitants differentiate between the different war memorials that they came across in their new homeland? What types of German Great War memorials can be seen in the Czech borderlands? Were there any reasons why some of them were re-used or preserved and others were destroyed?

After 1945, the so-called Czech borderlands (in Czech, *pohraničí*),[10] as well as other parts of the Czech lands, such as isolated language islands, ethnic neighborhoods of larger cities, and other areas that were inhabited mostly by German-speaking inhabitants, were subjected to forced migration of German- and Czech-speakers and speakers of other languages.[11] So-called "wild expulsions" of German-speaking inhabitants took place before the Allies' Potsdam conference in July 1945, while other, organized expulsions occurred later on. The forced migration of Czech-speakers and speakers of some other non-German

[8] See Zdeněk Hojda and Jiří Pokorný, *Pomníky a zapomníky* (Praha: Paseka, 1997), 164–174; Martin Zückert, *Zwischen Nationsidee und staatlicher Realität. Die tschechoslowakische Armee und ihre Nationalitätenpolitik 1918–1938* (München: Oldenbourg, 2006), 217–221; Marcin Jarząbek, *Legioniści i inni: Pamięć zbiorowa weteranów I wojny światowej w Polsce i Czechosłowacji okresu międzywojennego* (Kraków: Towarzystwo Autorów i Wydawców Prac Naukowych 'Universitas', 2017), 181–184; Jan Galandauer, "Hrob neznámého vojína v proměnách času," *Historie a vojenství* 48, No. 2 (1999): 251–273.

[9] See Bernhard Böttcher, *Gefallen für Volk und Heimat: Kriegerdenkmäler deutscher Minderheiten in Ostmitteleuropa während der Zwischenkriegszeit* (Köln: Böhlau, 2009).

[10] Matěj Spurný, *Nejsou jako my: česká společnost a menšiny v pohraničí (1945–1960)* (Praha: Antikomplex, 2011), 25–26; Andreas Wiedemann, *"Pojď s námi budovat pohraničí!" Osídlování a proměna obyvatelstva bývalých Sudet 1945–1952* (Praha: Prostor, 2016), 27; Jan Jeništa, "Pogranicze w Czeskiej Perspektywie Oglądu," in *Pograniczność i pogranicza w perspektywie nauk społecznych i humanistycznych*, ed. Wojciech Chlebda and Ivana Dobrotová (Opole: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 2015), 19–28.

[11] Adrian von Arburg, Tomáš Dvořák, and David Kovařík, *Německy mluvící obyvatelstvo v Československu po roce 1945* (Brno: Matice moravská, 2010).

languages took place after the "Victorious February" of 1948 and the communist takeover of power in Czechoslovakia. These radical demographic changes had an immense influence on the culture of the border regions. The war memorials built by the German-speaking minority were destroyed, neglected or re-used for new purposes after these communities were expelled and the regions were resettled. Following the demographic changes, the regions adopted a cultural landscape belonging to a different, homogeneously "Czech and Slovak" society with a different historical memory than that shared by the German-speaking communities that had built the memorials years earlier.

I propose to analyze a particular region of the borderlands: the commune of Dolní Žandov and its neighborhood. For the purposes of this paper, I will refer to them as the regions of Chebsko (Egerland) and Mariánskolázeňsko (Marienbad Region). The regions are interesting for purposes of this paper for several reasons, but among other things, they showcase the processes that took place more generally in the borderlands. However, one should bear in mind that it is not all that simple to draw conclusions about the borderlands as a whole because of the diversity of its regions. Similar processes took place everywhere (demographical changes, the establishment of forbidden zones, demolitions), but they could look different when it came to details. I chose Dolní Žandov because no anthropological research had as yet been done there.[12] The region is a kind of historical "blank space" on the map of the Czech borderlands. Moreover, typical kinds of German war memorials can be found there, and it is possible to analyze them with reference to local conditions. Although there is a published catalog of German war memorials in the two regions,[13] it focuses mostly on documenting the memorials without analyzing them. I will use visual and oral material gathered during my fieldwork for deeper analysis.

Methodological Remarks

This paper is interdisciplinary in character. It depends on anthropological fieldwork, combining methods from such disciplines as history, memory, culture

[12] There have been two minor ethnographic research projects conducted by the Cheb Museum. In 1983, one documented the condition of the villages in photography, and in 2001, the museum conducted a pilot study in the region, during which some older inhabitants were asked for their recollections of the past, which were recorded. No analysis of the materials gathered was published, however.

[13] Zbyněk Černý and Tomáš Dostál, *Bolest v kameni. Pomníky vojákům z chebských jednotek padlým v první světové válce* (Cheb: Krajské muzeum Karlovarského kraje, 2007).

and landscape studies. The basic material to be analyzed was gathered during extensive fieldwork in the commune of Dolní Žandov, starting in 2012 and ending in 2014.[14] My fieldwork was aimed mainly at the inhabitants' perception of their cultural landscape and its elements, one of which is the German monuments in the region.[15]

According to the founding father of the school of the interpretative anthropology, Clifford Geertz, ethnography should not make general assumptions based on fieldwork done in one village, although it is possible to derive great ideas based on the analysis of one minor phenomenon.[16] Sharing that Geertzian belief, I base my analysis of the German war memorials in the Czech borderlands on fieldwork I have done in one small village community in the north-western part of the contemporary Czech Republic. As an anthropologist, I use fieldwork as my main tool for gathering materials, consisting of participant observation as well as interviews.

During my fieldwork I conducted 35 interviews with the inhabitants of the Dolní Žandov area. I interviewed Czechs and Slovaks who were among the new settlers who moved there after 1945, a Czech-German family that was expelled in the so-called "internal expulsion" (in Czech, *vnitřní odsun*) in the late 1940s, and one German family that emigrated later, in the 1950s, to West Germany. I also transcribed and used four interviews that were gathered during pilot research done by the Cheb Museum in 2001. Those interviews were taped and are stored in the sound recordings library in the Cheb Museum but they have never been transcribed or analyzed before.[17] My typical interviewee was more than 80 years old and moved to Žandov in the second half of the 1940s, so s/he briefly experienced the presence of German-speaking inhabitants of the village until they were displaced.

War Memorials and Their Meaning

To start my examination, I should first address the question, what exactly can be defined as a war memorial? The "orgy of monumentalization" that swept through Europe after 1918, as it is referred to by Connerton, reflected

[14] Detailed information about the fieldwork can be found in Karolina Ćwiek-Rogalska, *Zapamiętane w krajobrazie. Krajobraz czesko-niemieckiego pogranicza w czasach przemian* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2017), 19–28.

[15] See Ćwiek-Rogalska, *Zapamiętane w krajobrazie*.

[16] "Thick Description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture," in Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures. Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), 3–30.

[17] "Dolní Žandov – pamětníci," file 53, sound recordings library, Cheb Museum.

the massive number of the war's victims, soldiers as well as civilians, who were killed between 1914 and 1918. In some regions they died even later, especially where the local wars that established the frontiers of the newly founded states were fought. The victims of these later conflicts are often included in the list of deceased and fallen in the Great War.[18] In this paper, I understand "Great War memorials" as memorials of different kinds that commemorate soldiers who fell between 1914 and 1918, which were erected in the places from which the fallen came. They do not commemorate a particular event of the war, but rather particular groups of soldiers: those who served in the same regiment, came from the same place, or belonged to the same parish. They commemorate one event (the Great War), but are divided into local parts, so that they can be referred to as a kind of "scattered monument" (in Czech, *rozptýlený pomník*).[19] In this paper I do not analyze any one "central" memorial devoted to all Czech or German soldiers or one that commemorates a particular battle.

At least three reasons for erecting Great War memorials can be distinguished: (1) the desire to make some sense of an unbelievably savage war, the likes of which had never been experienced before,[20] (2) the wish to mourn the victims, who had been deprived of their individuality by the massive death toll of the war,[21] in a more individual way than did the tomb of an unknown soldier that was erected in the capital of almost every state after 1918,[22] and (3) the need to redefine the notion of the "nation," which changed in the course of postwar events such as the break-up of prewar multinational states like Austria-Hungary.[23]

Several approaches to dealing with war memorials can be identified. For a long time, they were seen as objects that propagated the ideas that triggered the

---

[18] In the case of the Czech borderlands, the cult of those German citizens who were killed on March 4, 1919 in the bloody repression of demonstrations demanding the inclusion of the Sudetenland in Austria is especially interesting. See Böttcher, *Gefallen für Volk und Heimat*, 174–176.

[19] This term was proposed by Vojtěch Kessler in his work on Czech war memorials. See Vojtěch Kessler, *Paměť v kameni. Druhý život válečných pomníků* (Praha: Historický ústav AV ČR, 2017), 12.

[20] Laurence van Ypersèle, "Making the Great War Great: 1914–18 War Memorials in Wallonia," in *Memory and Memorials. The Commemorative Century*, ed. William Kidd and Brian Murdoch (London: Routledge, 2017), 26; Zückert, *Zwischen Nationsidee und staatlicher Realität*, 212.

[21] Jay Winter, *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

[22] Vojtěch Kessler, *Paměť v kameni*, 35; Galandauer, "Hrob neznámého vojína," 251–273; Laura Wittman, *The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Modern Mourning, and the Reinvention of the Mystical Body* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011).

[23] Böttcher, *Gefallen für Volk und Heimat*, 1.

next "great war," especially in the German case. Because they were used by Nazi propaganda as political tools, academics analyzed them mainly in terms of politics, overlooking other possible perspectives on war memorials. Commenting on classic works on war memorials by George L. Mosse,[24] Reinhart Koselleck, and Michael Jeismann,[25] as well as newer works by Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan,[26] Stefan Goebel argues that war memorials have more than one side that should be taken into consideration. They not only reflected the deep trauma that the war was for Europeans, a trauma "understood as a sustained mass experience leaving particularly dense memory traces,"[27] but they could also be considered as compensation for the lack of any graves for the dead bodies of soldiers who were not brought home, especially in the case of Great Britain and Germany.[28] Moreover, analysis of war memorials links the private (families' bereavement) with the public (monumentalized manifestations). Mourning was personal, but its manifestation in form of commemorative monuments was a social practice that involved social networks and a new language of commemoration that was created on the public level.[29] As work by Goebel proves, it is not the difference between victory and defeat that is crucial when analyzing war memorials, but the balance between the individual and group practices that were created around the monuments. This is further borne out by Goebel's comparative analysis of British and German Great War memorials. In my research and analysis, I find it inspiring to use his observations to analyze the (victorious) Czech memorials and the (defeated) German war memorials. I will also call upon his observations about the medieval motifs of Great War commemorative monuments, which can also be found in Czech and German monuments to the fallen.

Similar observations have been made by a German art and culture historian, Michaela Stoffels. Stoffels argues that it is impossible to separate all the meanings carried by the Great War memorials.[30] We should remember that in addition to the top-down meanings, later re-used by Nazi propaganda, there were also bottom-up meanings that were important to local inhabitants. The monuments commemorated the local dead and served to channel their families'

---

[24] Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*.
[25] Koselleck and Jeismann, eds., *Der Politische Totenkult*.
[26] Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan, eds., *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), doi: 10.1017/CBO9780511599644.
[27] Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 2–3.
[28] Ibid., 3.
[29] Ibid., 5.
[30] Michaela Stoffels, *Kriegerdenkmale als Kulturobjekte: Trauer- und Nationskonzepte in Monumenten der Weimarer Republik* (Wien: Böhlau, 2011).

bereavement. They were not usually administered by central, state-controlled entities, but were designed, erected and maintained by local communities. They included nationally oriented expressions of meaning. The repertoire of visual and symbolic means was, as Koselleck notes, not very wide.[31] They included local expressions of meaning, most prominently the list of names of the fallen from the local community. The memorials can and should be analyzed as *Kulturobjekte*[32] and not only as political statements or tools.

In analyzing the Czech and Czech-German memorials, as distinct from the British and German memorials compared by Goebel, it is important to remember that we are dealing with memorials erected in one country by members of the national majority and a national minority. The term "minority" in the case of Czech Germans can be misleading.[33] I use it not to describe the absolute number of Czechoslovak citizens of German nationality, but their social status in the First Czechoslovak Republic.[34] War memorials were erected not only by Germans in Germany and Austria. They were also erected by groups that identified with those nations or – generally speaking – with their culture, but who after the War lived in another state, one that was on the side of the victors. The fact that some Czech war memorials were dedicated to Czech soldiers who fought with the defeated armies constitutes another phenomenon worthy of further study.

Bernhard Böttcher, in his work devoted to Baltic, Czechoslovak and Romanian German minorities' memorials erected in the inter-war period, proposes yet another analytical perspective for dealing with the German minority's memorials in Czechoslovakia. He argues that it is possible to look at them not only as commemorations of particular fallen soldiers, but of the bigger entity that succumbed to the effects of the Great War: the state that ceased to exist.[35] In this way the meaning behind the mourning that is inscribed on the German war memorials in the Czech lands is broader; it is a wake for the late Austro-Hungarian

---

[31] Koselleck, "War Memorials," 301.

[32] Stoffels, *Kriegerdenkmale als Kulturobjekte*.

[33] There were more Czech Germans in the First Czechoslovak Republic than there were Slovaks, and they were a majority in many of the regions where they lived, but Germans were a minority in the sense that the Czechs and Slovaks were the nations that shaped the new state and were represented by the name Czechoslovak Republic. See Adrian von Arburg and Tomáš Staněk, eds., *Vysídlení Němců a proměny českého pohraničí 1945–1951: Dokumenty z českých archivů*, Part I (Středokluky: Zdeněk Susa, 2010), 80.

[34] Eagle Glassheim, "National Mythologies and Ethnic Cleansing: The Expulsion of Czechoslovak Germans in 1945," *Central European History* 33, No. 4 (December 2000): 467–468, doi: 10.1163/156916100746428.

[35] Böttcher, *Gefallen für Volk und Heimat*, 1.

Empire. Symbolically, the celebrations connected to these German memorials were conducted at the beginning of November, during the Roman Catholic feast days devoted to All Saints and, moreover, to all dead Catholics. There were no signs of "competitiveness" between the former Austrian citizens, Czech and German, in their commemorations.[36] Böttcher stresses that there was no one community of "Czech Germans" because their culture was different depending on the region of Czechoslovakia in which they lived.[37]

The function of the German Great War memorials in the Czech lands changed after 1945. They were no longer objects that consoled local communities, because the German-speaking communities ceased to exist with the forced migrations that started in 1945. New inhabitants, coming from all over the Republic, as well as from abroad,[38] did not have any specific emotional attachment to the memorials in their locality. They knew only that they were connected with the former German presence in Czechoslovakia as such. The war memorials became part of a "dissonant heritage" as two British scholars, Gregory J. Ashworth and John E. Tunbridge, call the sum of the cultural artifacts in postconflict sites.[39] What is dissonant heritage? In music, when some chords are not played in a proper way, it creates a dissonant sound. When a heritage is not perceived as the things produced by "our" ancestors, but as the product of a different culture, which may in addition be hostile to "our own," it makes that heritage "dissonant." It does not harmonize with the dominant cultural landscape but creates dissonance as it is perceived by the new group that "inherits" the artifacts. It also recognizes that an inherited object can have different meanings while still having the same form. New groups can inscribe their own meanings onto the inherited form. This can be observed in the case of the Czech German war memorials. They are a "dissonant heritage" in two ways: they testify to "the dark side of the humanity" (war)[40] but also to what happens as a result of radical socio-political change (in this case, the expulsion of almost entire minority population). The question of whether they are as well a destination for "dark tourism" merits further discussion.

---

[36] Ibid., 176–178.
[37] Ibid., 159, 164–165.
[38] Spurný, *Nejsou jako my*, 115–133.
[39] John E. Tunbridge and Gregory John Ashworth, *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1996).
[40] The author gives an overview of the theories concerning such heritage. See Joy Sather-Wagstaff, "Heritage and Memory," in *The Palgrave Handbook of Contemporary Heritage Research*, ed. Emma Waterton and Steve Watson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 195.

Czech and German War Memorials

War memorials in the Czech lands are not only found in the borderlands. They were erected in almost all towns and villages to commemorate their citizens who fell in the Great War. They served not only as war memorials, but some also commemorated the establishment of an independent Czechoslovakia in that they were built to commemorate not only Czechs who served in the Austro-Hungarian army, but also the Czech and Slovak Legionnaires, whose story is intimately connected to the founding of the Republic.[41] The war memorials are the litmus paper of an emerging national consciousness because their observers' reactions reflected their connection to the newly founded state.[42] They can also be seen as a unifying force on the local level. As Koselleck argues,

> memorials which commemorate violent death provide a means of identification. First, the deceased ... are identified in a particular respect: as heroes, victims, martyrs, victors, kin, possibly also as the defeated; in addition, as custodians or possessors of honor, faith, glory, loyalty, duty; and finally, as guardians and protectors of the fatherland, of humanity, of justice, of freedom.... Secondly, the surviving observers are themselves put in a position where they are offered an identity.... Their [fallen] cause is also ours. The war memorial does not only commemorate the dead; it also compensates for lost lives so as to render survival meaningful. Finally, there is the case contained in all the ones mentioned but which, taken in and of itself, means both more and less: that the dead are remembered – as dead.[43]

It should be repeated that the war memorials had meaning not only as commemorations of the Great War, but also as commemorations of the local dead. Of all the characteristics noted by Koselleck, "guardians and protectors" of the local community is most important in regard to the fallen soldiers who came from a particular town or village.

Both the Czech and the German war memorials demonstrate this meaning. However, we have to bear in mind that two separate canons were created in the historiography of the fallen. Although all the soldiers were fighting in the same war, and in most cases, in the same army, two different canons of

[41] Martin Zückert distinguishes between war memorials to fallen soldiers (*Gefallenendenkmäler*) and memorials devoted solely to fallen legionnaires (*Legionärdenkmäler*). See Zückert, *Zwischen Nationsidee und staatlicher Realität*, 220.
[42] Kessler, *Paměť v kameni*, 35.
[43] Koselleck, "War Memorials," 287.

commemoration arose, separating those who were commemorated. This happened in three different ways. Firstly, World War I could be perceived as a war that resulted in the creation of independent, more or less nationality-based states or it could be seen as a catastrophe that ended the old world where social and political rules were clear and "timeless." Secondly, the new state of Czechoslovakia had its own war heroes who were officially commemorated: the members of the Czechoslovak Legions.[44] The legionnaires stood in opposition to the German dead. In some cases – a matter that needs further study – their status also differed from that of Czechs who fell in the service of other armies. Thirdly, the way memorials were "used" and the dates on which commemorations were organized around them were different. The main Czechoslovak commemorations took place on October 28, while Germans commemorated their losses a few days later, in early November. The former celebrations took on patriotic forms and meaning, while the latter were more connected to local sorrow and with religious forms and meaning.[45]

Heroes' Groves

I want to distinguish three different types of war memorials that are found in the regions under discussion. That does not mean that there are no other types of memorial there, but I find these three kinds to be the most interesting, especially when it comes to what happened to them after 1945. The first type is the so-called "heroes' grove" (in German, *Heldenhain*). The concept was first implemented by a German architect, Willy Lange, during the war. Lange proposed commemorating the dead symbolically: a tree was planted for each soldier individually, typically an oak, with its rich symbolic meaning in Teutonic folklore. With the addition of a memorial plaque for each fallen soldier, the grove took on the air of a cemetery.[46] It is a particularly German way of honoring the dead that connects

---

[44] See Jarząbek, *Legioniści i inni*, 176–184; Zückert, *Zwischen Nationsidee und staatlicher Realität*, 214–216.

[45] Böttcher, *Gefallen für Volk und Heimat*, 173–176.

[46] Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn, "Gärten, Natur und völkische Ideologie," in *Die Ordnung der Natur: Vorträge zu historischen Gärten und Parks in Schleswig-Holstein*, ed. Reiner Hering (Hamburg: Hamburg University Press, Verlag der Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Hamburg, 2009), 143–187; Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn and Gert Groening, "The Ideology of the Nature Garden. Nationalistic Trends in Garden Design in Germany during the Early Twentieth Century," *The Journal of Garden History* 12, No. 1 (1992): 73–80, doi: 10.1080/01445170.1992.10410571.

nature and terrain with iconography.[47] The oak was a metaphor that symbolized the traits of a good soldier in its solitary yet powerful nature. The stones used for memorial plaques were not without meaning either. Boulders, usually of granite, were considered to be truly "Germanic" in that they symbolized "primeval power" and "national" values deeply rooted in the past.[48] In other cases, orphan-like, stand-alone memorial stones containing a plaque with the names of fallen soldiers were a popular way of commemorating the fallen. They fulfilled a desire that the local dead should be commemorated using local materials.

The *Heldenhaine* were modified after the war. For example, the linden that stood at the center of each heroes' grove, intended by Lange as a symbol of the emperor, was removed as the Republic replaced the monarchy.[49] In the regions of Chebsko and Mariánskolázeňsko there are two heroes' groves. The larger one is in Mariánské Lázně (see Image 1). There is a smaller one in the village of Horní Žandov (see Image 2). The new inhabitants who replaced the German speaking community of the region treated the groves as they did cemeteries, and frequently did not realize that they were only symbolic. As one of my interviewees stated,

> And in fact, we're doing a cemetery now ... Or the cemetery, it's actually ... Everybody thought it was a cemetery, but it's actually a sacred place from the First World War. It's in Horní Žandov, and it's a commemoration of the victims of the First World War, right? Of those fallen in former Yugoslavia or so, and so they were doing memorials devoted to them like the one in Horní Žandov. It has appeared now, we are renovating it, so it will be theoretically done this year.[50]

Although this interviewee started talking about a "cemetery," he quickly switched to describing it as a "sacred place," with the emphasis on its connection to World War I. Furthermore, it is worth noting that he not only identifies

---

[47] Sarah Elaine Lavallee, "Monumental Shifts in Memory: The Evolution of German War Memorials from the Great War to the End of the Cold War" (Doctoral Dissertation, Wichita State University, 2014), 14.

[48] Lavallee, "Monumental Shifts in Memory," 14; Karen E. Till, "Staging the Past: Landscape Designs, Cultural Identity and Erinnerungspolitik at Berlin's Neue Wache," *Ecumene. A Journal of Cultural Geographies* 6, No. 3 (July 1999): 257–258; Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 88–89.

[49] Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 88.

[50] Field interview, Dolní Žandov, taken on July 12, 2014. In the original Czech: „A vlastně teďka dodělováme hřbitov... Nebo hřbitov, ono to je vlastně... Všichni mysleli, že je to hřbitov, ale nakonec to je pietní místo z první světový války. To je v Horním Žandově, a to je na památku obětem 1. světové války, jo? Co padli třeba v bejvalé Jugoslávii nebo takhle, a tak se jim dělaly pomníčky jako třeba v Horním Žandově. Ten se teďka objevil, dává se dohromady postupně, takže ten bude teoreticky letos hotovej, zpřístupněnej."

Image 1: Heroes' grove, Mariánské Lázně
Author: Karolina Ćwiek-Rogalska, 2013

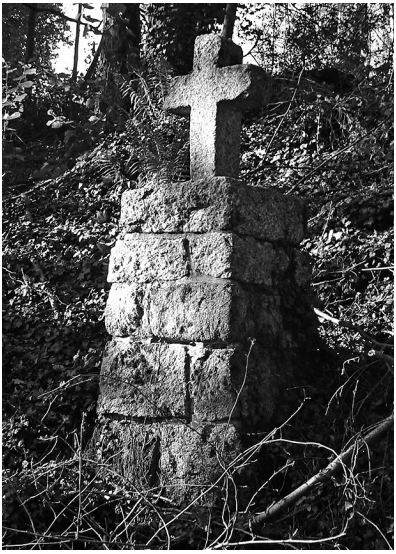

Image 2: A center piece in heroes' grove, Horní Žandov
Author: Karolina Ćwiek-Rogalska, 2013

it as a memorial erected to fallen soldiers, but also stresses that they fell in some distant place. In his mind, the local *Heldenhain* is not truly "local," but is oriented on something general, far away, and not really connected to Žandov. By the time my fieldwork ended, the Horní Žandov heroes' grove was not yet renovated.

Stained Glass Windows

As early as 1919, in the Weimar Republic, the German Ministry of Science, Art and National Education (*Ministerium für Wissenschaft, Kunst und Volksbildung*) issued a letter advising municipalities not to erect new monuments but to use existing objects to commemorate fallen soldiers. One way to do that was to hang a plaque with a list of names in the local church.[51] Commemorative church windows were a more elaborate way of commemorating the dead. They added the aura of medieval cathedrals to the memory of fallen soldiers and granted them a kind of apotheosis, linking contemporary fallen with medieval religion, as Stefan Goebel has observed.[52] Such windows served to incorporate the memory of the recent and not very "heroic" war into the canon of earlier, more heroic wars. The medievalization of the memory of those who fell in the Great War was a common phenomenon in all German-speaking regions.[53]

An example of this can be seen in the Saint Michael Roman Catholic Church in Dolní Žandov (see Image 3). The biblical scene in one window of the church is dedicated to one particular fallen soldier by two families. The title of the stained-glass window is "Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe" [Glory to God in the Highest] which captions the depicted scene of an angel appearing to the shepherds on the night of Jesus' birth. The inscription below the scene is, however, not written in the classic German Fraktur font. It reads as follows: "Dem Andenken des Gefallenen Helden Josef Röll gewidm. v. Johann u. Margareta Röll und von Josef und Marie Krüss" [Dedicated to the Memory of the Fallen Hero Josef Röll from Johann and Margareta Röll and from Josef and Marie Krüss]. The scene is rendered in a medieval-ish, Gothic revival style. My hypothesis for the reason the particular scene was chosen is that the name of the soldier, Josef, recalls the nativity scene, where Saint Joseph was the father figure.

---

[51] Document issued by the Ministry of Science, Art and National Education, August 20, 1919, 1, signature 161, collection Landratsamt Schievelbein, State Archive in Szczecin.
[52] Goebel, *The Great War and Medieval Memory*, 57–58.
[53] Ibid., 57–58.

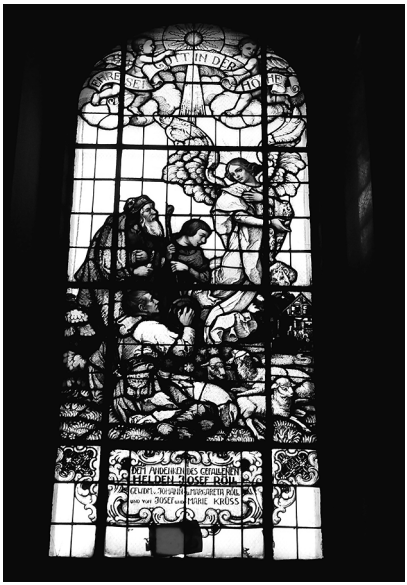

Image 3: Stained glass window in Saint Michael Roman Catholic Church, Dolní Žandov
Author: Karolina Ćwiek-Rogalska, 2013

However, the scene has another meaning that employs religion in an attempt to give meaning to the experience of the recent war: the shepherds are not as they traditionally appear. Instead of three young men we see an old man, a boy and a man in the middle of his life. Together they represent the three stages of human life. The shepherds, as well as the architecture of the shed where the nativity takes place, remind the viewer of the local milieu. Žandov was a town where many inhabitants were farmers. The shed looks like the traditional half-timbered buildings that are still found in the neighborhood to this day. The angel appearing before the shepherds symbolizes a sudden call to do something unexpected, like the sudden mobilization for war. The life of a common citizen of Žandov who went to war, i.e., whose fate was influenced by something greater than himself, is thus ennobled. Even more: the fight for *Heimat* is here equated to the fight for heaven, or *Himmelreich*, to which the viewer's attention is drawn. God is present in the scene only as a beam of light in the sky. It is worth noting that the remainder of the Bible verse the window quotes is absent. The whole quotation is "Ehre sei Gott in der Höhe und

Frieden auf Erden und den Menschen ein Wohlgefallen" [Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men] (Luke 2:14).[54] Perhaps the window's donors decided to leave the rest of the quotation out because of its performative character. The phrase is well known and is recited during the Roman Catholic mass. When visitors to the church read the quotation, they are expected to add the rest themselves. Or maybe there is another interpretation: the direct invocation to peace was not highly regarded by the donors and they were trying to avoid mentioning it.

All the stained-glass windows in the Žandov church have been preserved to this day. This happened even though they all have German language inscriptions, like as the one described above, as an example of a local *Kriegerdenkmal*. Why were they not destroyed? I would argue that they do not have an overtly warlike or even specifically "German" character. By being placed in the sacred space of a church they became more universal. The stained-glass window described here is not only a memorial to the fallen Josef Röll, it is also a biblical scene and can be seen and interpreted on that level alone.

Weeping and Sleeping Soldier Figures

I would like to highlight one particular motif of Czechoslovak war memorials that is similar to one that can also be seen among the German *Kriegerdenkmäler* and the French *monuments aux morts*. This is the figure of a sleeping or weeping soldier. Examples of such figures from my fieldwork are found in the villages of Palič (see Image 4), Vysoká (see Image 5) and Milíkov (see Image 6). The soldier-figures are all contemporary to the World War I period in style, but they also show some links to medieval times that are different in each village. The soldier depicted in Palič is wearing the German *Stahlhelm* helmet and a uniform. He stands, holding a wreath. The wreath is most likely composed of oak leaves, because "the oak wreath...was clearly a symbol of nationalist ideals," as Karen E. Till states.[55] Till draws upon George L. Mosse's observation that using the oak as a motif implied that "nature herself was to serve as a living memorial.... The oak, whose symbolic strength had been invoked during the Wars of Liberation, was considered the 'German tree.'"[56]

[54] The English quotation is from the King James version of the Bible.
[55] Till, "Staging the Past," 257.
[56] Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers*, 87.

Image 4: War memorial, Palič
Author: Karolina Ćwiek-Rogalska, 2013

Image 5: War memorial, Vysoká
Author: Karolina Ćwiek-Rogalska, 2014

Image 6: War memorial, Milíkov
Author: Karolina Ćwiek-Rogalska, 2013

The soldier depicted in the memorial in Vysoká requires close inspection to be recognized as a contemporary World War I soldier. Having been damaged in 1945, he is missing his head. He is in uniform, kneeling, and holding an oak wreath, as does the soldier in Palič. The third memorial, in Milíkov, can easily be mistaken for a kneeling medieval knight instead of a World War I soldier. His face is unrecognizable and the viewer is unsure whether he is wearing a helmet or a medieval kind of haircut. His uniform coat is rather long and takes the form of a robe. The only visible hints that this is a soldier from the World War I era are a cartridge belt and the puttees he is wearing.

The defacement of the statues also adds an interesting sort of medieval quality to the memorials. Especially in the two latter cases, where the head or face is missing, the figures of the soldiers are even more knight-like than not. The stories that interviewees told me about them support this interpretation. As one of them said:

> There was a soldier in Milíkov, he laid in front of the cemetery.... But there was no head. The head was destroyed.... Well, the soldier's been without a head for a long

time. And there are some gardens in front of the cemetery. And some women were digging there and they found this head. ... It's a little bit damaged however.[57]

The defacement of the monuments made the soldiers more anonymous, more universal, and in a way, more open to different interpretations of what they were meant to symbolize.

Plaques with the names of fallen soldiers were originally added to all of these monuments. As the photographs reveal, not all the plaques survived. In Palič, which is a remote village, almost without permanent inhabitants who might have had reason to deface its memorial, the plaque is still there, although the names are barely readable. In Vysoká, it has been renovated, but in Milíkov there is no sign of it. Removing the plaque, which was the most meaningful part of the war memorial[58] to the local German population, was a way to obliterate the memory of the dead of Milíkov.

Conclusions

As in the cases above, the fate of the German Great War memorials in the Czech borderlands after the expulsion of the German-speaking inhabitants and resettlement of the region by new settlers varied a lot. Some memorials were preserved; others were intentionally destroyed or simply left to be destroyed by time. Was there anything that had a decisive impact on which memorials were preserved and which were destroyed? It is tempting to suggest that there were some definite reasons behind the behavior of the new settlers, but that would be false. As can be seen in the cases from two small regions of the borderlands, the reaction to war memorials differed from village to village, which were separated by distances of only a few kilometers.

I can say, however, that the monuments with figures of soldiers were more endangered than the others. They shared a similar fate because they were recognizable signs of "German-ness." They were targeted because the figures were meant to embody the "German spirit" or because they personified the "enemy." Their destruction was a tool of revenge, and indeed, most of them were beheaded or lost limbs or other parts of their bodies. Most of the monuments

[57] Field interview, Podlesí, taken on July 18, 2013. In the original Czech: "Tam byl voják v Milíkově, ležel před hřbitovem shozenej. ... Jenže tam nebyla hlava. Ta hlava byla uražená. ... No tak voják tam dlouho byl bez hlavy. No a tam jsou pod hřbitovem nějaké zahrady. A ženský ryly a našly tu hlavu. ... Je poškozená jako trochu."

[58] Kessler, *Paměť v kameni*, 39.

were also deprived of their plaques, the things that were most meaningful about them. Things that were more abstract and symbolic, like oak wreaths, were left in place, since they did not have an explicit meaning for the new inhabitants. Nevertheless, the fact that they were defaced or destroyed shows that they were seen as a part of a "dissonant" heritage, as I argued above.

Some monuments were recycled and parts of them were used in new commercial buildings, fences and houses. Some parts of them, considered neutral in their meaning, were re-used for decorative purposes. One example is the Dolní Žandov war memorial, which was completely dismantled. Nonetheless, the figure of a lion from the memorial was preserved and nowadays is a decoration in the yard of a summer house in Pístov, a village near Tachov. The places where the monuments stood were sometimes re-purposed, keeping their character as places that "meant something," even though the "something" was changed.

The aesthetic value of the memorials did not have a decisive impact on their preservation. As Zdeněk Hojda and Jiří Pokorný argue, people venerate a monument not because of its aesthetic value, but very often in spite of its lack of such value.[59] We can, however, risk the hypothesis that some of the memorials were actually preserved because of their multiple meanings. Other connotations than that of the cult of the fallen soldier were coded into them. These meanings were decoded by new settlers as culturally and politically neutral, or as being close enough to the meanings of their own culture that a decision was made to save the monuments that conveyed them.

Memorials that bear some religious meaning, or that were recognized as referring to something more than just the memory of fallen German soldiers, have been preserved for the most part. It is interesting that the monuments that were erected near a church or in the vicinity of one were not destroyed. The dead soldiers that were commemorated on them were still known more as "local dead" than "fallen enemy soldiers" – even if they were relegated to some distant "memoryland"[60] – as were those mentioned by the interviewee from Horní Žandov, above.

[59] Hojda and Pokorný, *Pomníky a zapomníky*, 15.
[60] Sharon Macdonald, *Memorylands: Heritage and Identity in Europe Today* (London: Routledge, 2013).

2018 ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE PAG. 31–62
STUDIA TERRITORIALIA 2

ON THE NECESSITY FOR AND THE LIMITS OF POLITICAL APOLOGIES IN POST-1989 EASTERN GERMANY

MARIA PALME
EUROPA-UNIVERSITY FLENSBURG

Abstract
Since the 1990s, the making of an apology has become an instrument for promoting international and national reconciliation, replacing the exaction of vengeance upon the officials of former non-democratic regimes. This article explains when and under what circumstances an explicit apology for political wrongs has contributed to overcoming divisions in post-socialist German society. It specifically focuses on politicians and political parties that have direct links and continuity with the former oppressive regime in East Germany. What role and what impact have political apologies had on the victims to whom they are addressed and on public discourse generally? Are they part of a broader acknowledgment of past injustices under the German Democratic Republic (GDR) dictatorship? Adopting a discourse analysis approach, this paper outlines the historical and political conditions, the intentions and the outcomes of speeches of political apology in eastern Germany. It focuses on the narratives of GDR officials, Stasi informants, and members of *Die Linke* (The Left), a successor party to the GDR's ruling communist Socialist Unity Party (SED), and on the responses to those narratives from the new elites, former dissidents in the GDR, and groups representing the victims of communism. The article concludes that political apologies expressed by state officials who were formerly linked with the oppressor state stimulate a dialectical process with regard to past injustices, even if they fail to achieve the desired reconciliation.
Keywords: political apology; reconciliation; collective memory; Germany; communism
DOI: 10.14712/23363231.2019.11

Maria Palme is a PhD student at Europa-University Flensburg. Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Ralf Wüstenberg. Address correspondence to Institute of Social Sciences and Theology, Auf dem Campus 1, D-24943 Flensburg. E-mail: Maria.Palme85@gmail.com.

I. Introduction

In the final, closed door hearing of the German parliamentary History Commission, held on June 17, 1994 and titled "Working through the History and Consequences of the Dictatorship of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschlands*, SED)," Dietmar Keller (born 1942) apologized before the Bundestag in Bonn:

> These hearings were the most bitter hours of my life, primarily, because not only did I know not all, but also because I understood what happened in the name of Socialism with my ideals and beliefs, my hopes and my wishes, and how they were abused. As a member of the German Enquête Commission for the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) it is my moral duty and responsibility to apologize to all victims of the one-party dictatorship of the SED.[1]

Keller was the GDR's Minister of Cultural Affairs under the communist dictatorship. He became a member of the German Bundestag after reunification in 1990 as a representative of the leftist Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), the successor party to the communist SED, which ruled East Germany from 1949 to 1989. Keller was one of the few participants in the history commission who was a former GDR official. He showed deep remorse over past communist crimes. All the factions of the German Bundestag accepted his symbolic apology and greeted it with applause.

***

After the Cold War ended, political apologies[2] became an accepted tool for international and intra-national political reconciliation. They were promoted by United Nations organizations with that aim in mind. The International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ) defines a public apology as a "symbolic gesture of reparation" and an "acknowledgment of past crimes." A public, political apology

[1] Deutscher Bundestag, ed., *Enquete-Kommission "Aufarbeitung von Geschichte und Folgen der SED--Diktatur in Deutschland" (12. Wahlperiode des Deutschen Bundestages)*, Vol. 1: *Enquete-Kommission: Anträge, Debatten, Bericht* (Baden-Baden: Suhrkamp, Nomos, 1994), 813.

[2] "Political apology" refers to an apology offered to the public domain. It is consequently widely publicized. See Sandra Harris, Karen Grainger, and Louise Mullany, "The Pragmatics of Political Apologies," *Discourse & Society* 17, No. 6 (2006): 715–757, here 720, doi: 10.1177/0957926506068429. Consequently, this article uses the terms "political apology" and "public apology" synonymously.

is one more tool for achieving societal reconciliation, along with rehabilitation, restitution, medical and psychological care, and institutions like "history" or "truth and reconciliation" commissions.[3] Some scholars even argue that we have entered a "new age of apology."[4]

These efforts at reconciliation emerged in the wake of the collapse of communist and other non-democratic regimes at the end of the Cold War. Optimists see in reconciliation a chance for an end to an unforgiving bipolar world and the beginning of a new world order where individuals and collectives accept their moral and political responsibility for past injustices.[5] According to Christopher Daase, an apology can "restore the self-respect and human dignity of the victims by acknowledging their suffering, and it can relieve the perpetrator from feelings of guilt and self-contempt by paying respect to the victim and acknowledging the perpetrator's own wrongdoing."[6] Additionally, political apologies set the stage for a new national master-narrative or a dialogue that emphasizes reconciliation instead of vengeance between former antagonists. Detractors see such apologies as a cynical ploy by former oppressor groups to extort "forgiveness" and to "forget the past." They view apologies as an "empty ritual" with a destructive effect on the process of national reconciliation.[7]

Indeed, a number of negative examples substantiate the latter opinion, such as the Spanish transition from 1975 to 1982 and the Argentinean amnesties at the beginning of the 1990s. Other examples are self-serving speeches made by Eastern European leaders such as the one given in 2006 by Romania's President Basescu, a former member of the Romanian Communist Party, where he urged national reconciliation prior to Romania joining the European Union.[8] On the

---

[3] "Reconciliation," International Center for Transitional Justice, https://www.ictj.org/gallery-items/reconciliation.

[4] Robert R. Weyeneth, "The Power of Apology and the Process of Historical Reconciliation," *The Public Historian* 23, No. 3 (Summer 2001): 9–38, doi: 10.1525/tph.2001.23.3.9.

[5] Christopher Daase, "Entschuldigung und Versöhnung in der Internationalen Politik,"*Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, No. 23–24 (2013): 43–49, http://www.bpb.de/apuz/162893/entschuldigung-und-versoehnung-in-der-internationalen-politik?p=all; Joseph V. Montville, "The Healing Function in Political Conflict Resolution," in *Conflict Resolution Theory and Practice*, ed. Dennis J. D. Sandole and Hugo van der Merwe (New York: Manchester University Press, 1993), 112–127.

[6] Christopher Daase, Stefan Engert, and Judith Renner, "Introduction," in *Apology and Reconciliation in International Relations*, ed. Christopher Daase et al. (London: Routledge, 2016), 1–29, here 12.

[7] Judith Renner, "A Discourse Theoretic Approach to Transitional Justice Ideals: Conceptualizing 'Reconciliation' as an Empty Universal in Times of Political Transition," *Critical Perspectives in Transitional Justice* 8 (2012): 51–73, here 52–54.

[8] "Speech by the President of Romania, Traian Basescu, to the Parliament of Romania on 18 December 2006, given on the Occasion of the Presentation of the Report by the Presidential Commission

other hand, some current experience proves the potential of political apologies to foster national reconciliation. Such apologies can serve not only as tools for social transformation and defusing of antagonistic relations between former enemies,[9] but also as a stimulant for a dialectical process that reveals and reinterprets the deeds of past dictatorships in the hope of influencing collective memory.[10] According to Judith Renner, reconciliation "creates a space for collective action and political and social mobilization."[11] This paper argues the reconciliation process in the post-communist societies has brought about a paradigm shift after which the narrative of the past injustices is created through a dialogue between the antagonistic groups.

In 1995, French President Jacques Chirac (born 1932), who is a member of the generation that was alive when the Holocaust took place, expressed his regret – fifty years after the fact – for the deportation by the collaborationist Vichy regime of more than 75,000 Jews to German death camps during World War II.[12] His remarkable speech marked the end of a one-sided, victim-centered interpretation of the past in France. It was followed by a vibrant public discourse between the generations about French citizens' collective responsibility for the crimes of the Holocaust era.

Decades later, a few speeches of apology were made by Eastern European former Communists, in which they regretted the crimes committed under socialist regimes. However, those speeches had less impact in Eastern Europe and Germany than in France, with only some exceptions. One example of such an apology was a speech by Aleksander Kwaśniewski, the leader of the Polish Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) and later President of Poland, on November 11, 1993. His speech was exceptional and heralded a new, consensual approach

---

for the Analysis of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania," Honorary Consulate of Romania (Boston, Massachusetts), http://www.roconsulboston.com/Pages/InfoPages/Commentary/Communism/BasescuSpeech.html.

[9] Lily Gardner-Feldman, *Germany's Foreign Policy of Reconciliation* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2012), 10.

[10] Dialectic refers to the Hegelian theory that describes a certain method based on a contradiction of ideas and arguments followed by a synthesis, see Georg W. F. Hegel, *Encyclopedia Logic. Part I: Encyclopedia of Philosophical Science*, transl. by T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting, and H. S. Harris (Indianapolis and Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company Inc., 1991), 124. See also Renner, "A Discourse Theoretic Approach," 54.

[11] Renner, "A Discourse Theoretic Approach," 70.

[12] Marlise Simons, "Chirac Affirms France's Guilt in Fate of Jews," *The New York Times*, July 17, 1995, https://www.nytimes.com/1995/07/17/world/chirac-affirms-france-s-guilt-in-fate-of-jews.html.

in Poland to the transition from old to new political elites.[13] He expressed deep remorse and his emotional appeal was met with wide acceptance by leaders of the former opposition to the communist regime, by Christian Democrats and by the victims of oppression.[14]

This paper will focus on the effect of political apologies, such as their potential to either reveal or conceal past injustices. It will make use of the experience of eastern Germany after reunification. It will seek an answer to the question, how do political apologies contribute to reconciliation?

Eastern Germany[15] is a promising example for analyzing the effectiveness of political apologies in terms of reconciliation and accountability for the acts of former communist dictatorships. Firstly, East Germany's short, peaceful democratic transformation after 1989[16] and its integration into West Germany's legal framework created an ideal basis for an effective accounting for the deeds of the communist state.[17] Germany is a role model, a "world champion in working through the past"[18] compared to its formerly socialist neighbors, which faced more fragile power relationships and difficulty in finding political compromises in their post-communist existences. Most of the former elite in public service

---

[13] Carlos Closa Montero, "Study on How the Memory of Crimes Committed by Totalitarian Regimes in Europe is Dealt with in the Member States" (Study commissioned by the European Commission and completed in January 2010), fol. 140, http://digital.csic.es/bitstream/10261/34366/1/Closa_Memory_of_crimes.pdf.

[14] Linnet Myers, "Polish Leftist Sorry for Old Party's Abuses," *Chicago Tribune*, November 10, 1993, http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1993-11-10/news/9311100158_1_parliamentary-election-solidarity-apology.

[15] The term "eastern Germany" is used to describe the eastern parts of unified Germany as opposed to the term "East Germany," a colloquial name for the German Democratic Republic (GDR), which existed between 1949 and 1989.

[16] The historical break of 1989 reflects the internal German perspective. It stands symbolically for the end of the Cold War that began with the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989. According to studies by Huntington, this historical event needs to be interpreted in the context of the "third wave of democratization." This series of political transitions away from autocratic states started in Europe with the "Carnation Revolution" in 1974, which deposed the fascist regime in Portugal. It influenced events in Latin America, East Asia and Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Soviet Union. See Samuel Huntington, *The Third Wave: Democratization in the Late Twentieth Century* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991).

[17] A. James McAdams, *Judging the Past in Unified Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 4.

[18] This reference to Germany as the *Weltmeister der Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (world champion in working through the past) is found in a speech given by German Book Trade Peace Prize Winner Péter Esterházy. See Katrin Hammerstein and Julie Trappe, "Aufarbeitung der Diktatur – Diktat der Aufarbeitung. Einleitung," in *Aufarbeitung der Diktatur – Diktat der Aufarbeitung. Normierungsprozesse beim Umgang mit diktatorischer Vergangenheit*, ed. Katrin Hammerstein et al. (Göttingen: Wallenstein, 2009), 9–21, here 9.

was replaced in post-socialist eastern Germany following passage of the lustration law of 1991. Consequently, the old political and official elites were all disempowered within a short span of time. Multiple acts of transitional justice, such as the Border Guard Trials (1991–2004) and the Politburo Trials (1995–2000) took place, but they had little success in healing the old wounds of communism's victims. Many of the prosecutions were only symbolic; most of the individuals who were directly responsible for past injustices could not be punished and those who were received only a few years in prison. For instance, there were a total of 280,000 known collaborators with the Stasi, the central executive organ of state repression, which was responsible for building more than 40 years of distrust within East German society. The SED, the leading Marxist-Leninist political party, had more than 2.3 million members. Yet only 224 persons were ever convicted in German courts on account of political crimes and human rights violations.[19]

After 1990, the criminal law and the political process did not meet the high expectations for justice of the communist regime's victims. Nevertheless, multiple rehabilitation and restitution laws have been passed since 1995 to compensate the victims of the state's violations of human rights. Of an estimated 200,000 persons arrested by the communist regime for political crimes,[20] about 80,000 have been officially rehabilitated.[21] Another 100,000 who were not arrested but experienced other forms of oppression (e.g., by being banned from employment) have been compensated.[22] The legal responsibility for righting the injustices committed by the GDR communist regime has been transferred to today's Federal Republic of Germany; as a result, a one-sided dissidents' perspective has become the national master-narrative in reunified Germany. As Andrew Beattie aptly put it, "a focus on questions of integrity, morality, and truth relating to individual or group behavior *within* (or toward) the GDR does not engage with

---

[19] Constantin Goschler, "German Reunification and the Challenge of Transitional Justice," in *Transitional Justice in Unified Korea*, ed. Baek Buhm-Suk and Ruti G. Teitel (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015), 123–137, here 127; see also Ruth Gleinig and Anna Kaminski, eds., *Übersicht über Beratungsangebote für Opferpolitischer Verfolgung in der SBZ/DDR*, 5th edition (Berlin: Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur, 2010), 7.

[20] According to Fricke, this includes victims of state oppression who were arrested because of "their political attitude, their belonging to a certain social class, or their political or religiously motivated opposition towards the Communists." See Karl Wilhelm Fricke, *Politik und Justiz in der DDR: Zur Geschichte der politischen Verfolgung 1945–1968. Bericht und Dokumentation* (Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1990), 8; for the number of victims see Ansgar Borbe, *Die Zahl der Opfer des SED-Regimes* (Erfurt: LZT, 2010), 18.

[21] Gleinig and Kaminski, *Übersicht über Beratungsangebote*, 7–8.

[22] Ibid.

the...question of the legitimacy *of* the GDR (or the FRG or unification)."[23] The communist oppressors' narratives have mostly been excluded from the public sphere. This raises a question as to whether, 30 years after reunification, the state can find a balanced approach to confronting the communist past in Germany.

This paper introduces an original approach to political apologies. It regards them as a stimulus for the kind of public discourse that promotes revelations and reinterpretations of past injustices. Adopting a discourse analysis approach, it considers politicians' apologies to be systems of social relations and practices that are intrinsically political.[24] The paper will investigate the narratives of different entities, such as former GDR officials, informants, members of the successor parties to the communists, the media and press agencies, asking how, after German reunification, contemporary political elites have dealt with former GDR officials and the perpetrators of crimes. How do the victim groups and the public react to public apologies?

This paper will proceed as follows: After this introduction of the context (Section I), Section II will introduce the theoretical concept of the political apology. Section III will explain the choice between strategies of retribution and reconciliation in confronting past communist injustices. Finally, Section IV will highlight three case studies of political apologies in Germany after 1989. The concluding Section V will then discuss the paper's main findings.

II. The Concept of the Political Apology

According to the Oxford Dictionary, the word apology originates in the Greek word *apologia*, meaning "a speech in one's own defense." Apologies are characterized by three crucial elements: an acknowledgment of an offense or failure; a formal expression of regret; and a plea for forgiveness.[25] Scholars distinguish between *individual* and *political apologies*. While individual apologies focus on the private relationships, political apologies transmit a "reconciliatory

[23] Andrew H. Beattie, *Playing Politics with History, The Bundestag Inquiries into East Germany* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2008), 7. Italics in original.

[24] David Howard and Yannis Stavrakakis, "Introducing Discourse Theory and Political Analysis," in *Discourse Theory and Political Analysis*, ed. David R. Howarth et al. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000), 1–39.

[25] "Apology," in *Oxford Dictionary of English*, 3rd edition, ed. Angus Stevenson and Judy Pearsall (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 73. See also Carl D. Schneider, "What it Means to be Sorry: The Power of Apology in Mediation," *Mediation Quarterly* 17, No. 3 (Spring 2000): 265–280; see also Nicholas Tavuchis, *Mea Culpa: A Sociology of Apology and Reconciliation* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991).

message" from the private sphere into the public national level or vice versa.[26] A political apology can be expressed on behalf of a collective or an identity group and can address either an individual or a group. The ICTJ argues that apologies are a communicative act with greater normative moral impact than an ordinary act of speech because "apologies have value in themselves and can address both moral and physical harm." They "reflect a communal reckoning with crimes of the past" and they can help to prevent such events from ever happening again.[27]

Since the 1990s, against the backdrop of the third wave of democratization, we have observed a politicization of apology speeches across Europe. Scholars characterize public apologies as a speech act (hence the term "apology speech") and a symbolic political gesture of reconciliation that represents a logical stage in the advancement of a society.[28] National apology speech has a special social and political import due to its official character and the claim that it represents the official state interpretation of past history.

The dialogue begins with a symbolic request by the perpetrators, collaborators or successors for forgiveness from an injured party. Perpetrators and victims are entangled in a shared difficult past, joining them in a "destiny community" for life.[29] A public apology is a precarious request by the perpetrator to be forgiven and accepted into the currently dominant social order. It empowers the victim to decide if the perpetrator will in fact be forgiven and reintegrated into society. It requires a certain space or environment and a certain audience to transmit the moral message out into society. According to Daase, the following criteria determine the outcome of the reconciliation process (whether on the interpersonal or the national level): the credibility of the performer of the apology and their performance, and the intensity of remorse and the acknowledgment of victimhood that they show.[30] The act of an apology is a reciprocal, dialogical process that requires a communicative encounter between the parties themselves or their representative identity groups. Consequently, this paper's position is that the engagement of perpetrators and victims in a broad public discourse raises

---

[26] Karina Strübbe, *Politische Entschuldigungen: Theorie und Empirie des sprachlichen Handelns* (Wiesbaden: Springer Fachmedien, 2017), 63–82.

[27] Ruben Carranza, Cristián Correa, and Elena Naughton, *More Than Words: Apologies as a Form of Reparation* (New York: International Center for Transitional Justice, 2015), 1, https://www.ictj.org/sites/default/files/ICTJ-Report-Apologies-2015.pdf.

[28] Daase, "Entschuldigung und Versöhnung," 43–49.

[29] Katharina Gajdukowa, "Opfer-Täter-Gesprächskreise nach dem Ende der DDR," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, No. 41–42 (October 4, 2004): 23–28, here 24.

[30] Daase, Engert, and Renner, "Introduction," 1–29.

the probability that an apology will be accepted. This highlights the special role of the media as the transmitter of the "reconciliatory" message.

The ideal apology requires a confession of guilt from the wrongdoer, who is powerless in the situation and who must run the risk of not being forgiven by the victim and the public audience. The higher the public awareness of the acceptance by the victims to forgive or not to forgive, the higher is the impact of the apology speech on the broader society. Furthermore, the more there are of victims who express support for the repentant individual or group, the more likely and complete the perpetrator's reintegration into society will be.[31]

If reconciliation is to be more than a theoretical construct, it needs to have practical implications. Scholars consider reconciliation to be the ultimate normative purpose of *Vergangenheitspolitik* and transitional justice.[32] They see it as a counterbalance to human rights abuses, which seeks to end long-term conflicts and overcome international or domestic divisions between perpetrators and victims in the wake of war or the collapse of a non-democratic regime. Lily Gardner-Feldman defines reconciliation as a process through which opponents of formerly ruling non-democratic regimes steer their relationship away from vengeance and "[from] bilateral enmity towards harmony and ideally, friendship."[33] Especially in cases where nations are divided, such as Germany, Korea, Cyprus and Israel-Palestine, conflict and peace researchers observe a strong interdependency between the domestic and international politics of reconciliation.[34]

The vigor of the public discourse resulting from a political apology determines the quality and the effectiveness of the reconciliation process at the international and national level. In general, political speeches of apology are an instrument of reconciliation and are a precondition for its success. Apology speech is most often used on the international level, but it can appear on the national or sub-national level as well. Its impact on the process of reconciliation

---

[31] Ibid.

[32] The German term *Vergangenheitspolitik* jumped from the national to the international sphere in the comparative research of dictatorships after 1990. It is used as a synonym for "working through a troubled past," mostly by historians and political scientists. Meanwhile, the term *transitional justice* has arisen to describe the practices of war crimes tribunals, truth commissions, and restitution and rehabilitation processes. See Veit Straßner, "Vergangenheitspolitik, Transitional Justice und Versöhnung," in *Handbuch Transitional Justice*, ed. Anja Mihr, Gert Pickel, and Susanne Pickel (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2018), 201–233.

[33] Gardner-Feldman, *Germany's Foreign Policy*, 2.

[34] Goschler, "German Reunification," 133–134; see also Catherine Lu, *Justice and Reconciliation in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 38, doi: 10.1017/CBO9781108329491.

between perpetrator and victim groups and within a society as a whole can be measured.

Efforts at reconciliation and political apologies are complementary, in that they both imply moral agency and impact collective memory and identity in divided societies. Currently governing officials represent their identity groups, as do former government officials, leaders of victim and human rights organizations, and other collective actors. Their individual acts of contrition or forgiveness can have a multiplier effect on reconciliation in their societies. Their symbolic gestures provide insight into new moral standards among the elites as they face up to past crimes and their repercussions. Additionally, their gestures inform us about the perceptions of victims, perpetrators and collaborators about progress toward reconciliation. The discourse involves competing, contested historical narratives about past injustices and crimes and reflects the feedback the participants in the dialogue are receiving from the local level.

In the context of *historical justice*, reconciliation means the end of one dominant, unilateral narrative about the past. Moreover, reconciliation is a recognition "that there are (at least) two narratives" about the problematic past.[35] In eastern Germany's particular post-communist politics of the past,[36] i.e., in dealing with the legacy of the GDR communist dictatorship, "reconciliation" means finding a balance between the contested narratives of the old communist elites, collaborators, and representatives of the Communists' successor party on the one hand and former dissidents and victim and civil rights groups on the other. A few publications on reconciliation policy in eastern Germany focus on the "perpetrator-victim mediation" process that took place in small groups, mostly in the framework of church initiatives at the beginning of the 1990s.[37]

In the aftermath of dictatorship, open wounds often remain between perpetrators and collaborators with the former state on the one hand and victims and their relatives who suffered from their injustices on the other. In the so-called "asymmetric relationships" that follow dictatorships, members of marginalized minority groups that were the most frequent victims of political harassment, persecution, imprisonment and re-education transfer their antagonisms to the

[35] Daase, Enger and Renner, "Introduction," 1–29.

[36] The Anglo-Saxon term "politics of the past" describes the function of history research in reconstructing perceptions of the past and drawing lessons from it in order to mobilize intellectual discourse and social movements. See John Torpey, *Politics and the Past: On Repairing Historical Injustices* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003); and Nikolay E. Koposov, *Memory Laws, Memory Wars: The Politics of the Past in Europe and Russia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018). doi: 10.1017/9781108304047.

[37] Gajdukowa, "Opfer-Täter-Gesprächskreise," 23–28.

next generation. This leads to a vicious circle of revenge and mistrust, which ideally should be prevented and transformed into a more positive relationship.

Research on political apology speech as an instrument for political reconciliation is quite a new field that is still being defined. Furthermore, the tools for producing comparative case studies are lacking. The literature that emerged after 1990 coincided with an increase in the number of societies that were undergoing transition. Because of the very short time span in which the studies were performed, assessments of the efficacy of political apologies in promoting social reconciliation are conflicting. Obstacles to the sharing of knowledge and theoretical concepts among international and domestic researchers resulted from the heterogeneous cultural and linguistic landscape of Eastern Europe.

German historians and political scientists in particular have reservations about applying highly moralized discourse to political reconciliation. This attitude reflects the different etymological and cultural origins of the word "reconciliation." The term originates in the Latin word *reconciliare*, which means either "to restore friendly relations" (in German, *wiederherstellen*) or "bring together again" (*wieder zusammenbringen*),[38] both of which have rather positive connotations. On the other hand, the German word *Versöhnung* has the somewhat negative connotation of seeking retributive justice "to atone for" or "to expiate" (*sühnen*) past sins.[39] The German term *Aussöhnung* refers to one-sided compensation for guilty acts. It contrasts with *Versöhnung*, which implies a shift in power from perpetrators to victims. Some experts criticize reconciliation as too "soft" an approach and as an attempt by former functionaries to draw a line with the past (*Schlussstrichmentalität*),[40] or as an "empty compensation ritual" which recalls the very common German phrase "to forgive and forget" (*Vergeben und Vergessen*). An academic debate about "reconciliation kitsch" (*Versöhnungskitsch*), ongoing since 1994, is an example of the negative aspects of the term reconciliation as it has been used to avoid the normative dictate "to work through the past" in the reunified Germany.[41]

The discussion above illustrates the strong doubts that exist in Germany about the value of a political apology speech. It helps to explain the general lack

[38] "Reconcile," in *Oxford Dictionary of English*, https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/reconcile.

[39] "Versöhnung," in *Ethymologisches Wörterbuch des Deutschen*, ed. Wolfgang Pfeifer, https://www.dwds.de/wb/Vers%c3%b6hnung. See also Michael O. Hardimon, *Hegel's Social Philosophy: The Project of Reconciliation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 85.

[40] See Hans Henning Hahn, Heidi Hein-Kircher, and Anna Kochanowska-Nieborak, eds., *Erinnerungskultur und Versöhnungskitsch* (Marburg: Herder-Institut Verlag, 2008).

[41] Hammerstein and Trappe, "Aufarbeitung der Diktatur," 17.

of initiatives on the national and grassroots levels for reconciliation after the crimes of communism. This lack indicates the continued distancing of the communist heritage from present-day politics, combined with a culture of silence among former GDR officials and their exclusion from the public discourse. It demonstrates a persisting failure of the German government to take responsibility for the divided narratives of the shared communist past and to include the divided social identity groups and their antagonistic historical narratives into a shared public discourse as an unavoidable and important part of Germany's national heritage. This one-sided memory building process has produced a sentiment of heteronomy and further deepened existing social division in eastern German society.

The manner in which the East German state was subsumed into Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and its norms after 1989, and the manner in which the old eastern elites were replaced, determined the opportunity for coming to terms with the past in the post-transitional period. Most initiatives for measures of transitional justice originated in the West and were based on decades of experience in dealing with human rights crimes under the Nazi regime.[42] The double weight of fascist and communist dictatorship, and the "accession" of the GDR to the FRG, allowed eastern German society to avoid self-critical discourse about its past. Public discourse since 1989 has predominantly focused on the victims, instead of on the former GDR elites who were quickly and effectively delegitimized and disempowered.[43] That the elite was stripped of its power does not mean that the human beings they ruled, who include more than 200,000 political victims as well as more than 2.3 million members of the Communist Party as political collaborators of the oppressing regime, disappeared. Their memories of the time before 1989 were banished from public into the communicative sphere of family talk. New studies demonstrate the negative impact the persisting inter-generational transmission of old antagonistic stereotypes still has on eastern German society.[44]

Additionally, there was and still is no independent media in eastern Germany that is interested in promoting a discourse of public reconciliation after 1990.

---

42 Goschler, "German Reunification," 125.

43 The victim-centered discourse in Europe is discussed in Jürgen Gerhards, Lars Breuer, and Anna Delius, *Kollektive Erinnerungen der europäischen Bürger im Kontext von Transnationalisierungsprozessen. Deutschland, Großbritannien, Polen und Spanien im Vergleich* (Wiesbaden: Springer VS, 2017), 205.

44 See Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela, ed., *Breaking Intergenerational Cycles of Repetition: A Global Dialogue on Historical Trauma and Memory* (Opladen: Barbara Budrich Publishers, 2016).

In the middle of the 1990s, the vivid desire to confront past communist crimes and the opportunity to increase social cohesion between former political opponents changed into an atmosphere of disillusionment and distrust toward the new authorities. For instance, the anti-communist, conservative-led "red socks" campaign of 1994 attempted to exploit the social and political internal divisions in eastern Germany, which still exist under the surface. It symbolized the interference of western politicians and elites into eastern German local politics and the continuation of former Cold War enemy stereotypes after reunification. In that campaign, Christian Democrats condemned the minority government of the Green Party and the Social Democrats (1994–1998) in Saxony-Anhalt, which enjoyed the backing of the PDS. The campaign instrumentalized political symbols of the communist era, such as the "red handshake" that merged the Social Democrats into the communist SED in 1946. It was intended to frighten the German population with the specter of a resurrection of the Communists and deepened antagonistic stereotypes from the Cold War.[45]

Taking an innovative research approach, this paper will explore whether political apology speech has led (ideally) to interpersonal and national reconciliation and if it did (at least) actually stimulate public discourse about past communist injustices in post-1989 eastern Germany. The selected case studies give insight into the views of left-wing politicians having a certain ideological or personal continuity with the former GDR regime and the three different types of political apologies they have expressed. The cases differ in their temporal situation and the personal closeness of the politicians to the injustices committed under the East German communist regime. They give information about the effects of apologies on advancing social reconciliation and mobilizing discursive strategies.

The first speech was given in 1994 by Dietmar Keller, a former GDR official who epitomizes the old *nomenklatura* of the GDR. Applying Karl Jaspers' categories of German guilt,[46] Keller is morally responsible for past GDR injustices as a member of the leading political monopoly SED and as the minister in charge

---

45 Juliet Roper, Christina Holtz-Bacha, and Gianpietro Mazzoleni, *The Politics of Representation. Election Campaigning and Proportional Representation* (New York: Peter Lang, 2004), 77–99, here 93.

46 Jaspers differentiates four dimensions of guilt: (1) criminal guilt based on an objective, individual violation of existing law, (2) political guilt of public entities that have responsibility for state crimes, (3) moral guilt borne by an individual as part of an identity group of a nation, culture, religion or ethnicity, (4) metaphysical guilt that includes everyone who does not resist at the moment an injustice is done. See Karl Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt*, transl. by E. B. Ashton (New York: Dial Press, 1947).

of cultural affairs. I argue that perpetrators, causal agents and representatives of culpable identity groups need to address all the various categories of guilt during a national apology speech in order to increase its impact on the response level. To be an effective instrument for reconciliation, an apology speech should recognize the different levels and nature of guilt. Hence, the more precisely and immediately a confession of guilt or remorse is directed toward the victims or the group representing the victims, the higher is the probability the apology will be accepted.

The second apology speech, given in 2014, was made by a representative of *Die Linke*, a successor party of the communist SED and the PDS: Bodo Ramelow, the Minister President of the federal state of Thuringia in eastern Germany. His speech admits to his party's ideological continuity with the GDR regime, but it also represents the views of a person who was not affected by communist crimes and who was educated under democratic norms and the rule of law in the former West Germany.

The third case is that of a former unofficial Stasi informant, Frank Kuschel. His speeches were given in 2006 and in 2012 before the Thuringian Parliament. Kuschel is one of more than 189,000 unofficial collaborators like him.[47]

III. Strategies for Confronting the East German Past after 1989

> *An apology, particularly a public one, is a necessary if not a sufficient condition for reconciliation.*[48]

East Germany was ruled by the one-party communist dictatorship of the SED between 1948 and 1989. Beginning in the spring of 1989, a lively citizen and opposition movement called for a change of government and the peaceful transition of the GDR to democracy. This transition was realized in the short historical time frame of one and a half years, between spring 1989 and the end of 1990, by which time all aspects of the political transition of eastern Germany were complete. Normative legal, judicial, and democratic standards and values were transferred from the former West Germany to a reunified state that included all of the former East Germany.

---

47 Helmut Müller-Enbergs, ed., *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter des Ministeriums für Staatssicherheit,* Vol. 1: *Richtlinien und Durchführungsbestimmungen* (Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2001), 4.

48 Juan Espindola, *Transitional Justice after German Reunification* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 217, doi: 10.1017/CBO9781316014851.

Political scientist Juan Espindola described the immediate post-transition period of reunified Germany as follows: "Post-unification confrontation of the East German communist past...was not only about justice, truth, reconciliation... but also about power and ideology."[49] Jennifer Yoder has argued that Germany put in place a well-defined truth-seeking and memory-building process with regard to its contested past, but failed to continue its politics of reconciliation after the first years of the 1990s.[50] New right-wing movements emerged after German reunification that were fostered by an ongoing division of German identity based on unresolved issues in the communist past and narratives that have been passed on unopposed to the next generation.[51] The Alternative for Germany, a right-wing party with a neo-fascist ideology, received the most votes in the German federal parliamentary elections of 2017 in the eastern German state of Saxony, as well as receiving high percentages in all other eastern German states. Its electoral success raises questions about the fading of the "reconciliatory environment" and the continued existence of divisions within eastern German society. Observing political reconciliation in post-communist Germany almost than 30 years after reunification, Henning Pietzsch (born 1962 in Zeitz, Halle, East Germany, and a historian and civil rights activist of a church group opposed to the Communists) states that there is hardly any willingness for collective national reconciliation in eastern Germany, whether on side of the perpetrators or the victims. Instead, one finds "mutual refusal, resentment and bitterness within their identity roles," which "continues as in the time of the Cold War."[52]

A government poll conducted in 2015 on the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of German reunification gave more detailed insight into the reconciliatory environment and the (un)willingness of the local eastern German population to seek and offer forgiveness. Approximately 40 percent of those questioned who were over 45 years of age mentioned "dialogue and reconciliation" as their most-desired aim of government policy with regard to the memory

---

49 Ibid., 68.

50 Jennifer A. Yoder, "Truth without Reconciliation: An Appraisal of the Enquete Commission on the SED Dictatorship in Germany," *German Politics* 8, No. 3 (2007): 59–80, doi: 10.1080/09644009908404568.

51 Jürgen Danyel, "Spätfolgen? Der ostdeutsche Rechtsextremismus als Hypothek der DDR-Vergangenheitspolitik und Erinnerungskultur," in *Fremde und Fremd-Sein in der DDR. Zu historischen Ursachen der Fremdenfeindlichkeit in Ostdeutschland,* ed. Jan C. Behrends, Thomas Lindenberger, and Patrice G. Poutrus (Berlin: Metropol, 2003), 23–101, here 23–24.

52 Henning Pietzsch, "Versöhnung – Politischer Auftrag oder Private Angelegenheit," in *Thüringen: Braucht das Land Versöhnung? Kritisches Jahrbuch der Philosophie 17*, ed. Martin O'Malley et al. (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2017), 87–102.

of the East German regime, followed by rehabilitation (29%) and education in democratic values (29%). At least one third of people over 45, most of whom were educated under communism, and a third of the transitional generation of 25- to 34-year-olds, welcomed a balanced historical approach instead of a one-sided, victim-oriented way of dealing with past communist crimes.[53] In contrast, 18- to 24-year-olds, the first generation born after reunification, showed less interest in a balanced, "moderate" approach to the communist past. These statistics confirm international observations that reconciliation policies and practices are mainly of interest to the generations that experienced trauma and that the willingness to reconcile decreases as people's temporal distance from past injustice increases.[54] Some scholars criticize the calls for a balanced approach as a revisionist movement, intent on closing the books on past communist crimes (*Schlussstrichmentalität*).[55] More optimistic scholars interpret them as opening a historical window, an opportunity to appreciate others' perspectives, and a chance to stimulate a new public discourse. This new discourse would include the perspective of both young scholars and non-affected generations raised under the new democracy as well as the "internal" perspective of the generation that lived under the GDR dictatorship.

The rapid dissolution of the East German state and its submission to West German legal norms and standards won out over the desires of some civil rights activists and reform-oriented elites who advocated a "soft" transformation with a consensual approach. The prerogative of interpreting the communist and fascist past was arrogated to an anti-totalitarian consensus and was the ideological starting point for the unified democratic nation.[56] With some justification, Germany became a role model for Eastern Europe due to its multiplicity of legal, moral and historical achievements in working through the past.[57] Indeed, the broad range of retributive and non-retributive measures of transitional justice, which included trials, purges, history commissions, and the creation in 1998 of

---

53 Heinrich Best et al., *Politische Kultur im Freistaat Thüringen. Thüringen im 25. Jahr der deutschen Einheit* (Jena: Institut für Soziologie, Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, 2015), 56–57 and Figure A79, https://www.thueringen.de/mam/th1/tsk/thueringen-monitor_2015/thuringen-monitor_2015.pdf.

54 The Asan Institute for Policy Studies, "Asan Poll: Survey on South Korean Perceptions of Transitional Justice in Post-Unified Korea," in *Transitional Justice in Unified Korea*, ed. Baek Buhm-Suk and Ruti G. Teitel (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 247–252, here 249.

55 Ibid., 56.

56 Eckard Jesse, ed., *Totalitarismus im 20. Jahrhundert: eine Bilanz der internationalen Forschung* (Baden-Baden: Nomos Verlag-Gesellschaft, 1999).

57 Lavinia Stan and Nadya Nedelsky, eds., *Post-Communist Transitional Justice: Lessons from Twenty-Five Years of Experience* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

an entire governmental agency dedicated to working through the legacy of the SED dictatorship, was an outstanding example to follow.

But who were the victims, who were the perpetrators and how can we categorize the crimes?

Based on the human rights norms of the United Nations, International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which the German Democratic Republic signed and ratified in 1973, most of the GDR's violations of human rights can be classified as crimes against life, health, individual liberty, and property, and political persecution of opponents.[58] In the years from 1948 to 1989, between 180,000 and 250,000 people were arrested on political grounds in the GDR.[59] According to Ansgar Borbe, about one million people were directly or indirectly affected by state violations and abuses of human rights during the 40 years of communist rule in East Germany.[60] Approximately 42,000 politically motivated violations of the human rights of GDR citizens have been documented by the Federal Documentation Center in Salzgitter since 1961.[61] The historian Klaus Schröder claims that the dimensions and intensity of the crimes committed by communist regimes are different from those committed by the Nazi dictatorship, but in general, the infiltration of society and the psychological indoctrination in daily life under the repressive communist system of state security, along with state control over the media, economy, education and the mobilization of population by mass organizations, is in fact comparable.[62]

Retributive Justice

According to Constantin Goschler, a preliminary investigation following German reunification identified 100,000 suspects involved in killings at the East German border, voter fraud, perversion of justice, denunciations, atrocities by the secret police, mistreatment of captives, doping of athletes, abuse of authority, corruption and other economic offenses, and espionage.[63] Eventually only

---

58 Ansgar Borbe, *Die Zahl der Opfer des SED-Regimes* (Erfurt: Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Thüringen, 2010), 10.

59 Ibid., 17.

60 Ibid., 15.

61 Hubertus Knabe, *Die Täter sind unter uns. Über das Schönreden der SED-Diktatur* (Berlin: Propyläen-Verlag, 2007), 90.

62 Klaus Schroeder, *Der SED-Staat. Geschichte und Strukturen der DDR* (München: Hanser Verlag, 1998).

63 Goschler, "German Reunification," 126.

40 defendants received a prison sentence (0.04 percent of those suspected). Only a few high-ranking party officers of the SED and of the Ministry for State Security (Stasi) were sentenced to prison for the destruction of dissidents' lives by denunciation, political imprisonment, persecution and psychological repression in re-education camps.[64] Of course, many suspects were not punished at all because their individual wrongdoing could not be proven. This was obviously disappointing for victims and former dissidents.

One striking example of the inability to punish a political culprit is the case of the SED General Secretary Erich Honecker, who escaped sentencing thanks to his ill health. Honecker certainly never apologized to his victims. During the Politburo Trials, held between 1995 and 2000,[65] main regime collaborators such as Egon Krenz and Günter Schabowski were sentenced to no more than four years in prison. The biggest obstacle to obtaining a conviction was the principle *nulla poena sine lege* (no punishment without law). As most of the accused's acts did not contravene either GDR or FRG law, obtaining a conviction was difficult. The prosecutions for human rights abuses evoked long-running trials.[66]

Apart from the GDR political authorities and party members, the officers of the Stasi were the main perpetrators of state repression in the GDR. They were most responsible according to categories of political guilt identified by Jaspers, with their denunciations and spying on any hint of political opposition. According to statistics published by the Federal Commission for Stasi Records (BStU), the State Security counted 189,000 unofficial collaborators in 1989.[67] In 1989, about 17 million people were living in the GDR,[68] yielding a ratio of one informer for every 89 GDR citizens.[69] After reunification, about 1,500 former Stasi officials were absorbed into the public service in Germany. This not only caused mistrust of the new authorities but also gave an impression of selective prosecution of collaborators that deepened the internal divisions in German society. The BStU admits that retributive justice in reunified Germany was "unsuccessful,"

---

64 Ibid., 123.

65 The Politburo was the highest central organ of the SED Party. Through it, the GDR elite influenced all the main political, economic and social sectors. It consisted of 21 senior members.

66 Neil J. Kritz, ed., *Transitional Justice. How Emerging Democracies Reckon with Former Regimes,* Vol. 2: *Country Studies* (Washington: USIP Press, 1995), 642.

67 Müller-Enbergs, *Inoffizielle Mitarbeiter*, 4.

68 Ansgar Borbe, *Die Zahl der Opfer des SED-Regimes* (Erfurt: Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Thüringen, 2010), 8.

69 "Inoffizieller Mitarbeiter (IM)," Der Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik, https://www.bstu.bund.de/SharedDocs/Glossareintraege/DE/I/ inoffizieller-mitarbeiter.html?nn=5976488.

in that "through the year 2000, only 87 Stasi collaborators could be punished."[70] In 1991, a lustration law paved the way to removing former communist government officials from the public sector in the former East Germany. Consequently, civil servants in key educational institutions, public offices, and courts were identified as collaborators and replaced. For example, in Saxony alone nearly 13.400 teachers were suspended from their posts for collaboration with the former communist regime.[71]

In summary, there were a variety of tools of transitional justice, most of which failed to satisfy the victims' need for restoration of their dignity.

The Politics of Reconciliation

Due to the limited capability of the justice system to prosecute those responsible for communist crimes, other non-retributive measures such as the work of the parliamentary history commissions between 1992 and 1998 and laws on the restitution of property rights and rehabilitation of victims became important. By 1992, some 1.1 million restitution claims had been filed involving over half the land area of the former GDR.[72] A remarkable practice was the possibility for individuals to view the information gathered on them by the GDR state security. The objective was to allow personal encounters with past suffering. Since 1989, the Stasi files have been archived in response to continuing protests and the demands of opposition groups and civil rights activists. The BStU was founded in 1991 and since then has collected more than 69 million individual security files, which have been transferred to the national archives and made accessible to their subjects, to the public at large, and to scholars.[73] From a historical point of view, the accessible research material will help future generations to reconstruct past crimes based on first-hand sources and to work through a complex history.

Due to shifting power relationships and the exclusion of former elites from the public sphere, a truly cathartic encounter between victims and perpetrators was impossible in eastern Germany. Shortly after the transition in the 1990s, mediated encounters between victims and perpetrators did take place in few

---

70 Ibid.

71 Mary Albon, "Report to Democracy and Decommunization: Disqualification Measures in Eastern and Central Europe and the former Soviet Union" (Conference Paper by the Project on Justice in Times of Transition, New York, November 14–15, 1993).

72 Kritz, *Transitional Justice*, 644.

73 Ralf Wüstenberg, *Die politische Dimension der Versöhnung. Eine theologische Studie zum Umgang mit Schuld nach den Systemumbrüchen in Südafrika und Deutschland* (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2014), 309.

cases, but only on the local level, between individuals or in small-group settings like the House at Check Point Charlie in Berlin.[74] Contemporary media like *Der Spiegel* labeled the post-1989 environment as a "witch-hunt" between perpetrator and victim groups. Former Stasi officers and their collaborators fled to obscurity in West Germany or abroad.[75] In some cases, harassment of identifiable perpetrators resulted in their early death or suicide.[76] According to Jan Behrends, feelings of a loss of "self-determination" and of "foreign" domination were strong in the collective perception and inter-generational memory of the East German population. This created a fertile basis on which radical neo-fascist groups could increase after 1990.[77]

IV. Political Apology Speeches in post-1989 Germany

Dietmar Keller: "No Reconciliation without Truth – No Truth without Reconciliation"

Returning to Dietmar Keller's speech of political apology, I argue that his 1994 statement was a rare, outstanding example of a gesture of reconciliation at the early stage of transition. Keller fulfilled Daase's main criteria for a fruitful apology. He confronted past communist crimes critically, he acknowledged the repressive structure of the GDR dictatorship, and he took personal responsibility for his collaboration with the repressive regime. Keller showed deep remorse towards his victims and confessed his guilt. His apology gave him back his dignity and created the preconditions for his acceptance by former victims and opposition groups, as well as by the political elites in the then newly-elected Bundestag and the new, democratic society of the unified Germany.

The parliamentary Enquête Commission (1991–1994), formed to work through the troubled communist past, provided a historic impetus and constituted a unique time and space for encounters between former GDR officials like Keller and their opponents, and for reconciliation.[78] The protected environment of the Commission's hearings and its historic truth-seeking processes exposed

74 Gajdukowa, "Opfer-Täter-Gesprächskreise," 23–28.
75 "Neugier Aneinander," *Der Spiegel*, March 9, 1992, http://www.spiegel.de/spiegel/print/d-13687423.html.
76 Pietzsch, "Versöhnung – Politischer Auftrag oder Private Angelegenheit," 90.
77 Jürgen Danyel, *Spätfolgen*? (Berlin: Metropol, 2003), 24.
78 See Ralf K. Wüstenberg, *The Political Dimension of Reconciliation: A Theological Analysis of Ways of Dealing with Guilt during the Transition to Democracy in South Africa and (East) Germany* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009).

the repressive structure of the GDR system and acknowledged the pain of its victims. The Commission created conditions for symbolic steps toward reconciliation. The conciliatory moment and the dialogical encounters of perpetrators and victims took place in (semi)public hearings.

Keller's speech was met with approbation from all factions of the Bundestag, including former civil rights activists and clergy like Rainer Eppelmann and Gerd Poppe, and was regarded as an inclusive appeal for forgiveness. The price for acceptance of his apology was his acknowledgment of the new democratic norms and his admission of former injustices. He had to distance himself from the crimes committed by the regime he had served. At the same time he risked being excluded from his own identity group of former party members and regime collaborators.

Keller's speech of apology lacked any support from his PDS party colleagues and contradicted the consensus of the former elites. Fellow members of the post-communist PDS party criticized his speech harshly, but nevertheless it did provoke an internal dispute within the PDS over the proper interpretation of the communist past. Keller distanced himself from the PDS and resigned from it in 2002.[79] His resignation substantiates the argument that his apology was an individual decision to heal himself of his guilt feelings, rather than a sentiment that was widely accepted and shared by left-wing politicians. At the same time, his speech demonstrated the limits of such political apologies. The positive response toward him from the former opposition did not mean they collectively forgave and accepted his fellow former communists, nor that they absolved them of their individual responsibility for the communist past. If a political apology is to have a multiplier effect on the identity group of the one who offers it, there must be a common sense of the identity group's mission that person is transmitting into the public sphere. That was the case with Minister President Ramelow, below, which proves the hypothesis.

Keller's symbolic gesture did not fulfill the necessary temporal and spatial relationship to the injustices and to the political transition from the GDR to the unified Germany. As the documentary film *What Became of the SED?*, broadcast in 2016 by ARD/MDR, stated, "for some of the party of the left, this apology came too early, for most of the victims it came too late."[80] The closed-door forum

---

79 Dietmar Keller, *Zwischen den Stühlen* (Berlin: Dietz, 1993); see also Ralf K. Wüstenberg, *Aufarbeitung oder Versöhnung? Ein Vergleich der Vergangenheitspolitik in Deutschland und Südafrika* (Potsdam: Brandenburgische Landeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2008), 169.

80 Jan Lorenzen, "Was wurde aus der SED?" in Filmreihe 'Geschichte im Ersten' (ARD/ MDR), November 21, 2016, https://www.mdr.de/tv/programm/sendung716404.html.

of the apology prevented a broad public response from victim and opposition groups and the broader population of eastern Germany. Some former dissidents had become members of the Christian Democrats and the newly-formed Green Party, such as Gerd Poppe (Green Party) and Rainer Eppelmann (CDU). Their positive reception of Keller's apology in the Bundestag in Bonn produced some effects on the inter-personal level between members of those parties and the PDS. Nevertheless, the final demand of Keller's speech, that there would be "no truth without reconciliation,"[81] failed to win wide public acceptance due to the political realities and the existing power relations of the time. This result reflected the dilemma posed by the struggle for control of the master narrative in Germany after 1989. While the new elites demanded complete authority over the interpretation of the past as a precondition for reconciliation, the perpetrators and collaborators sought a balanced approach that included their perspective. The latter position stood in opposition to the priorities of the victims who were newly empowered in post-1989 Germany.

In conclusion, Keller's speech can be categorized as an individual's speech of political apology. The lack of a public audience, the absence of media coverage, and especially Keller's lack of authority to speak on behalf of his party colleagues and perpetrator groups all decreased the multiplier effect of his apology. That he sought forgiveness for his past crimes gave him credibility within the Bundestag and allowed him individually to be accepted by opposition and victim groups. However, it excluded him from his former colleagues who suffered from their criminal entanglements. We have to state that Keller's speech of apology did not resonate much in eastern German society. But his speech did have some positive effect on semi-public and internal discourse within the political left and among former GDR officials,[82] by encouraging the opening of debate about their own individual relationships with their communist past and the legacy of the GDR dictatorship.

Bodo Ramelow: "Reconciling Instead of Dividing Societies"

In autumn 2014, twenty-five years after German reunification, *Die Linke* (the Left Party) gained power in the eastern German state of Thuringia for the first time. Bodo Ramelow became the state's Minister President, and introduced

[81] Deutscher Bundestag, ed., *Enquete-Kommission*, 815.

[82] I categorize the debate sparked by Keller's speech as semi-public because the internal dispute was documented in Keller's book, *Zwischen den Stühlen* (Berlin: Dietz 1993).

a moral paradigm shift in the official treatment of past communist crimes. His speech of apology was an outstanding moment in post-1989 German history, and was a symbolic political acknowledgment of moral agency that enhanced reconciliation between former oppressors and dissidents.

A short explanation of the historical background will clarify the discursive paradigm shift with regard to the communist past. *Die Linke* was founded in 2007 as a merger of the Electoral Alternative for Labor and Social Justice (WASG) and the PDS. During the 1990s, the PDS was allowed to campaign and operate in all of the former East German states. However, it was constantly under suspicion of harboring former Stasi officials and GDR collaborators.[83] Following state parliamentary elections in October 2014, *Die Linke* formed a coalition with the Green Party and the Social Democrats. Their coalition had 86 representatives, 28 of whom belonged to *Die Linke*. In November of the same year, the daily *Handelsblatt* announced that seven delegates from *Die Linke* in the Thuringian Parliament had been Stasi officers, members of the former East German National People's Army (*Nationale Volksarmee*, NVA), or border troops.[84] The population of eastern Germany, especially victim groups, erupted in protest. Nevertheless, only one month later, for the first time in regional history, *Die Linke* took charge of the state government. The day before Ramelow's inauguration as Minister President, 1,500 citizens, some of whom had belonged to former opposition and victim groups and had participated in the civil rights movement during the upheaval of 1989, protested in the streets, shouting *Stasi raus!* (Stasi get out!).[85] Against this historical background, Ramelow's inaugural speech drew special attention.

In his speech, Ramelow apologized to the victims of communism before the state parliament in Erfurt. He singled out his friend Andreas Möller, a victim and political prisoner under the communist dictatorship, and asked Möller to grant him forgiveness for the injustices committed by the GDR in the name of all his fellow victims. Quoting Federal President Johannes Rau of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) (in office 1994–2004), Ramelow pleaded for "reconciling instead of dividing society." He called for a process of mutual dialogue, respect and trust-building, to include both perpetrators and victim groups. His speech

---

83 Dan Hough, *The Fall and Rise of the PDS in Eastern Germany* (Birmingham: The University of Birmingham Press, 2001).

84 Laura Waßermann, "Wieviel DDR steckt in den Thüringer Linken?" *Handelsblatt*, November 3, 2014.

85 Merle Schmalenbach, "Bodo Ramelow. Der Versöhner," *Cicero*, December 5, 2014, https://www.cicero.de/innenpolitik/bodo-ramelow-der-wogenglaetter/58591.

symbolized a break with the prior official, one-sided, victim-centered approach to the past crimes of the GDR's communist regime. Instead, Ramelow urged the former GDR elites to enter into a dialogue. "We need to go down this path together when working through the past!" he said.[86]

Ramelow then turned his attention completely towards the victims and acknowledged their protests in 1989 to be a historic moment for Germany. The immediate target of his apology, Andreas Möller, was seated in the Landtag before him. From the age of 19, Möller was a political prisoner between 1963 and 1965 in Waldheim (Gera, East Germany) because he had tried to help the pregnant fiancée of a friend to flee the East. In 1965 he was ransomed by the West German government and emigrated to the West. After reunification, he returned home to eastern Germany. He was a cofounder of the conservative magazine *Bild in Thüringen*. Working as a journalist, Möller has been friend with Ramelow for more than ten years. Möller is just one of tens of thousands of victims of communist state injustice. In his speech, Ramelow, who grew up in West Germany and moved to Thuringia after 1990, distanced himself personally from communist crimes but still showed deep remorse for them. His biographical distance from the crimes increased his credibility in the eyes of the victims. In an interview with the German Press Agency following Ramelow's speech, Möller stressed that the apology had a healing effect ("a catharsis") on him and was gratifying to him even half a century after the injustices inflicted upon him.[87] He pointed out the symbolism of Ramelow's plea for forgiveness, which he felt addressed all his "friends" who "did not receive an apology from anyone."[88]

In contrast to Dietmar Keller in the previous case, Ramelow enjoyed the support of the leading members of *Die Linke*. This gave him the authority to speak not only as an individual but also as a representative of his party colleagues and former GDR elites with close ideological links to the Left Party. Only a few weeks before the 2014 election the board of *Die Linke* made a statement in which they denounced the GDR state as a "political despotism," which "could replace

[86] Bodo Ramelow, "Die Rede des Ministerpräsidenten von Thüringen im Wortlaut," *Der Tagesspiegel*, December 5, 2014, http://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/bodo-ramelow-die-rede-des-ministerpraesidenten-von-thueringen-im-wortlaut/11082066.html.

[87] Florian Kain, "Nach Entschuldigung im Landtag. DAS denkt das Stasi-Opfer über Ramelows Auftritt. Ministerpräsident sprach Ex-Bild-Reporter Andreas Möller auf DDR-Verbrechen an," *Bild*, December 5, 2014.

[88] German Press Agency, "Ramelow entschuldigt sich bei SED-Opfern," *Thüringische Landeszeitung*, December 5, 2014.

law and justice any time, and in which tens of thousands of biographies were refracted through state injustice and destroyed."[89]

The public response from victim and opposition groups, and also from both conservative and left-wing media, appeared on the local and the international level. It had a great impact on the interpretation of the communist past in Germany.[90] The response revealed the open wounds of the former GDR opposition, which were still painful almost 30 years after reunification. The leading German newspapers and magazines ran highly emotional articles about the new moral stance of the political leadership in Thuringia.[91] For instance, the right-wing magazine *Cicero* dubbed Ramelow the "Reconciliator" (*Der Versöhner*).[92] Ramelow's apology met all the criteria of Daase's categorization of reconciliation, and his inter-personal gesture of reconciliation toward Möller had a stimulating effect on public discourse. However, his speech did not result in a multiplier effect of stimulating forgiveness among the victim groups in eastern German society towards their former oppressors.

On the contrary, victim organizations and civil rights activists from the former GDR opposition movement reacted with great mistrust. Joachim Gauck, Germany's Federal President from 2012 to 2017, broke a promise he had made to remain neutral. He harshly criticized the entangled power relations between former GDR elites and new democratic parties. The chairman of one anti-communist victim group, Rainer Wagner, rejected Ramelow's rehabilitation gesture as a "defeat of the 1990's democratization movements and an insult to the victims."[93] The cofounder of the Social Democrats in the GDR, Stephan Hilsberg, even considered Ramelow's new morality as a contribution to the division of society, instead of its reconciliation.[94] The director of the memorial to political prisoners in Berlin-Hohenschönhausen voiced the widespread concern of victim

---

89 German Press Agency, "Linke bekräftigt Entschuldigung für DDR-Unrecht," November 11, 2014, http://www.t-online.de/nachrichten/deutschland/parteien/id_71717130/linke-bekraeftigt-entschuldigung-fuer-ddr-unrecht.html.

90 Justin Huggler, "German Far-Left Party takes State Parliament," *The Telegraph*, December 5, 2014, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/germany/11276037/German-far-Left-party-takes-state-parliament.html.

91 "Ramelow bittet SED-Opfer um Entschuldigung," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, December 5, 2014, http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/ministerpraesident-bodo-ramelow-entschuldigt-sich-bei-sed-opfer-13304142.html.

92 Schmalenbach, "Bodo Ramelow. Der Versöhner."

93 "Ramelow bittet SED-Opfer um Entschuldigung."

94 See interview at Deutschlandfunk "Reaktionen auf Ramelow-Wahl: Skepsis, Abneigung und große Freude," December 5, 2014, https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/reaktionen-auf-ramelow-wahl-skepsis-abneigung-und-grosse.2852.de.html?dram:article_id=305335.

groups that "old elites were getting back into office and that the lessons of history might be banished and forgotten."[95] He claimed that two thirds of the Left Party members in Thuringia were former GDR officials and that previous staff of the state security service were among them.[96]

These harsh accusations were only partly justified. Two independent parliamentary Thuringian investigations in 2006 and 2012 showed that only seven of the 28 Left Party delegates had been politically active in the GDR. Only two were former Stasi officers, both of whom had been absolved by the lustration law. One of them, Frank Kuschel, is the subject of the case study below. The concern expressed by victim groups demonstrated that the wounds caused by their suffering in the traumatic past were still open, but also that they were unable to forgive their oppressors for their deeds. Their negative reaction to Ramelow's apology was a plea for a sensitive approach by the new authorities to the granting of power to members of the former GDR elite after reunification.

The members of *Die Linke* have a moral responsibility for the communist past because they have a certain ideological continuity with the former dictatorship, even if they were not themselves collaborators or perpetrators of the crimes of the regime. Ramelow, who is a leftist political leader without direct connections, fulfills a double function. He is a spokesman for the official state narrative and he has an obligation to respond to so far unfulfilled needs of the Thuringian population. That old elites are able to continue their careers in the new government poses a problem that needs to be solved and that is an obstacle to a new beginning.

Summarizing, the Ramelow case demonstrates a completely new approach to the burden of the past. He invites all citizens to participate in an inclusive reconciliation process. Ramelow's speech produced a number of side-effects based on its position in space and time, its historical momentum, and the internal support he received from his party. Even if the symbolic gesture of inter-personal reconciliation he offered to his friend and GDR victim, Andreas Möller, was not replicated in society or fully satisfied the representatives of victim groups, it did have a positive public effect of stimulating dialectical discourse among the population of eastern Germany.

The growing distance from injustice resulting from the rise of a new generation may help to establish an environment conducive to reconciliation and heal the still open wounds within eastern German society. The reopening of public

95 "Ramelow bittet SED-Opfer um Entschuldigung."
96 Ibid.

discourse about the burden of the communist past in consequence of Ramelow's speech had a positive effect in that it overcame the mentality of silence, especially among perpetrators and collaborators. A lively public debate still needs to be conducted, with further dialogue on the intra- and inter-group levels, between former officials and victims, in order to break down the stereotypes held on both sides. Ramelow's speech injected a powerful moral counter-narrative into society that opposes the current trend toward radicalization on both the left and the right in eastern Germany. The growing distance in time from the historical period of communism is allowing greater objectivity with regard to the past. Apology speeches must be measured by their pragmatic impact. Purposeful programs in a German collective "memory-building industry," aimed at softening the perspectives of both victims and offenders, are needed if time alone cannot heal all wounds.

Frank Kuschel: "Once a Thief, Always a Thief"

Frank Kuschel joined the SED in 1983. He was recruited as an informant under the cover name "Fritz Kaiser" and was Deputy Mayor of Ilmenau, Thuringia with responsibility for "Interior Affairs" from 1987 to 1989. He informed against East Germans contemplating emigration, the so called *Republikflüchtlinge*, and disrupted the plans of families wanting to leave the country by denouncing them to the authorities. In 1990, he lost his job with the City due to the lustration policy of the post-communist government, but he soon returned to local government service. In October 1989, just one month before the Berlin wall fell, when a strong civil movement was resisting the communist authorities in the streets, he betrayed some members of the GDR opposition group Neues Forum.[97] In speeches before the Thuringian Parliament in June 2006 and again in 2012, he apologized for his wrong-doing and asked his victims for forgiveness: "I made political mistakes. ... I am sorry to all those whom I have injured and I wish to apologize to third persons who were affected due to my collaboration with the Ministry of State Security." He continued, "I am open to confrontation and dialogue with victims" and pledged "to draw a line under the past."[98]

Kuschel was born in 1961 in a small town close to Ilmenau, Thuringia in East Germany. He was one of five children. His father was an alcoholic and his mother

[97] Hubertus Knabe, *Honeckers Erben – Die Wahrheit über DIE LINKE* (Berlin: Propyläen, 2009), 319.

[98] Die Akte Kuschel, Thüringer Landtag, 4. Wahlperiode, 43. Sitzung, 13.07.2006; see Kuschel's official website with texts, http://www.frankkuschel.de/ueber_mich/die_akte_kuschel/.

was an invalid. His family situation prevented him from pursuing a high-level career, even in the socialist system. The communist government did, however, approve Kuschel for higher education and he became a military officer in spite of his lower-class origins.[99] In 1980 he joined the GDR's National People's Army and attended the military academy (*Offizierhochschule*) in Zittau, Sachsen. Kuschel characterizes himself as one of the "convinced" Stasi officers, who did his job "effectively." He recalled his enthusiasm to "defend the state from the capitalist enemy" in an interview with the daily paper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* in 2014.[100] He never publicly confessed involvement in or moral guilt for any criminal acts with regard to his victims.

In 2006 and 2012, two independent parliamentary commissions of the federal state of Thuringia reviewed his biography and proved his collaboration with the former Security Ministry. The commissions came to the conclusion that he was not suitable for public service or for a career in the politics under the new democratic system of the reunified Germany.[101] Nevertheless, he was allowed to keep his mandate as a duly elected delegate in the Thuringian parliament because of a court decision in 2000 that prohibited the dismissal of former collaborators from political mandates to which they had been freely elected.

The various victim groups rejected his apology and request for forgiveness because he failed to show real repentance for his deep involvement in communist crimes. The non-governmental organization for victims, Vereinigung 17. Juni 1953, criticized his apparent lack of remorse, his refusal to renounce the unjust former regime, and his misguided betrayal of his fellow GDR citizens.[102] Kuschel defended his history as the result of his being a "convinced political socialist" and asserted his "political re-orientation after 1989/90." The latter claim was dismissed by the victim groups because it completely ignored the suffering of his victims. The majority of the public doubted the truth of his claimed rejection of the old ideology.[103]

The chief of Kuschel's new party, Bodo Ramelow, maintained a close personal relationship with the former Stasi officer and did not disavow him before

---

[99] Lydia Rosenfelder, "Sein Deckname war Fritz Kaiser," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, November 26, 2014, http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/inland/ex-stasi-im-fuer-die-linke-im-thueringer-landtag-13280463.html.

[100] Ibid.

[101] "Flugblatt: Ich will keine Rache. Aber Einsicht, Reue, Schamgefühl sind Kuschel fremd," Official homepage of the victim's organization Vereinigung 17. Juni 1953 e.V., May 24, 2014, https://17juni1953.wordpress.com/tag/frank-kuschel/.

[102] Ibid.

[103] Rosenfelder, "Sein Deckname," 3.

being elected the federal state's minister president, as the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* pointed out. Instead of showing remorse, Kuschel evidenced a lack of understanding for the public reaction to his apology. According to the motto "once a thief, always a thief," most of his fellow citizens simply did not believe in his change of political attitude and behavior.[104] In spring 2017, Kuschel spoke to a tenth-grade history class, where he was peppered with critical questions about his past. He gave the class a first-hand account of the life of a Stasi operative.[105] Kuschel's insider perspective as a collaborator of state's repression gave first hand insights into the mechanisms of communist dictatorship. At the same time, his witness' perspective became critically embedded into an anti-totalitarian interpretation of the communist crimes. This approach was one of only a few attempts at an inter-generational and inter-group reconciliation process between former perpetrators and later born, non-affected generations.

Recalling Jaspers's four dimensions of guilt, Kuschel's failure to admit his guilt limited his chances of being forgiven. If former GDR collaborators like Kuschel are unwilling or unable to accept personal responsibility for their personal crimes and refuse to apologize and adopt the victims' perspective as the predominant narrative over the past, political apology speeches lose their positive effect on society.

V. Conclusion

This paper has investigated the role and the impact of political apology speech in post-1989 eastern Germany, with special focus on its after-effects, such as mobilizing social and discursive processes to reveal and reinterpret past injustices under the GDR communist regime. The empirical case studies feature officials who have certain continuity with the former GDR regime – either as members of the former political elite or as a high official of the SED's successor party, *Die Linke*. The German case studies confirm the conclusion reached in the international research literature that speeches of political apology provoke public discourse and assist in the collective memory-building process. These effects are illustrated by the vibrant debates that followed the three speeches about the proper interpretation of the injustices of the former GDR dictatorship.

---

[104] Ibid.

[105] Hanno Müller, "Ich war Stasi-IM aus Überzeugung: Frank Kuschel stellt sich Fragen von Schülern," *Thüringer Allgemeine Zeitung*, April 04, 2017, http://www.thueringer-allgemeine.de/web/zgt/politik/detail/-/specific/Ich-war-Stasi-IM-aus-Ueberzeugung-Frank-Kuschel-stellt-sich-Fragen-von-Schueler-378518893.

All three cases of apology speech had a positive effect in terms of reopening public discourse about the communist past. Even if former GDR officials failed in some cases to achieve their intended goal of being forgiven and were unable to reconcile with former dissidents, public awareness of the GDR regime's injustices increased as a result of their symbolic political gestures. The cases presented here were individual choices to apologize and to acknowledge past injustice. They were featured in press reporting numerous times. Moreover, they illustrate the important role of moral agency to the promotion of a reconciliatory message, as well as the importance of the historical time frame, which created an environment conducive to the opening of a discussion about the past. Finally, all three cases demonstrate progress in East German society toward reopening of a critical debate about the country's communist past.

Each of the three cases we examine here exemplifies a different relationship with time and space and a particular relationship of the individual with the past injustice that was addressed in their speech of apology. As the case of Bodo Ramelow, the West German-born Minister President of Thuringia, demonstrates, the more time that passes from the communist injustices, the lesser the chances that an apology will be accepted. All three cases of political apology speech involve different levels of individual and official responsibility on the part of the person who delivered it, in the sense of the categories of political and moral guilt set forth by Jaspers. Apologies delivered by persons who are directly or indirectly responsible for the injustices differ with regard to what their author believes needs to be reconciled. The results of a political apology, such as its impact on interpersonal and intra-national reconciliation between perpetrators and victims, depends first and foremost on the victims' willingness to accept the apology. If the offender shows real remorse and acknowledges the suffering of the victims under a dictatorship, he or she gains credibility, which increases the willingness of the victims to accept the apology.

The case of Frank Kuschel shows the moral and practical limits of reconciliation. His inability to demonstrate true, deep remorse, to confess his individual crimes and moral guilt, and his refusal to distance himself from the GDR's crimes were met with a negative public response. As a result, his plea for integration into the new democratic society was turned down. This case confirms that the personal dimension of an apology defines the extent to which a perpetrator can be forgiven by victim groups.

Rebuilding or transforming personal relationships between former opponents depend primarily on the decision of the individual. The self-interest of a political entity often differs from that of the individuals it represents, i.e., there

is often a difference between the official state narrative and individual private opinion. Sometimes personal narratives and public narratives about a troubled past remain irreconcilable and open wounds are unable to heal. The degree of public acceptance of a speech of apology gives insight into how strongly different narratives about the past continue to conflict with each other.

Each of the three cases cited here confirms the multiplier effect of a speech of political apology in that it raised public awareness about past communist injustices, independently of their success in promoting reconciliation on the inter-personal or inter-group level. A direct correlation between a speech of apology and progress toward reconciliation can mostly be seen on the level of the individual, and not so much on the national level. Progress in reconciliation between groups can be increased if a public forum, such as the public hearings held in the German Federal Parliament, allows a direct encounter between perpetrators and their victims.

The case of Bodo Ramelow shows that attempting to reform the overall culture of memory increases the credibility and acceptance of a speech of political apology, along with public trust in political authority. The grant of an ideological pardon to a fallen totalitarian regime and its elites must be approached critically and with respect for the perspectives of its victims. General forgiveness for communist injustices can only be achieved if there is a public political consensus that acknowledges the suffering of the victims and respects democratic norms and values. Two of the three case studies above (Keller and Ramelow) showed positive impact on the inter-personal and intra-group levels, as well as between groups of victims, civil rights activists and offenders. That finding suggests that if Dasse's criteria for a successful apology are fulfilled, a more positive response from victim groups can be achieved and the probability that a political apology will be accepted by society increases.

The hypothesis that the earlier an apology is made, the better it will support a reconciliation process is not confirmed by the above findings. Nevertheless, the examples of Ramelow and Kuschel seem to confirm the international observations that a shift in perspective a generation after the democratic transition allows for a more pluralistic discourse on the past and increases the chances for a successful reconciliation between the antagonist groups. Furthermore, a public apology needs the support of verified historical facts about past crimes, which politicians can address in order to redefine the collective national awareness and memory. The Ramelow case study shows that internal acceptance of guilt by the collaborator group raises the chances for the acceptance of an apology on the public national level. Even though the German victim and civil activist

groups still harbored doubts about Ramelow's and his party's sincerity and were less than willing to reconcile, his rehabilitation gesture raised the moral credibility of the new government with eastern German society. Ramelow's speech established a counter-narrative in the local and national arenas that allowed consideration of new paths toward reconciliation. While Ramelow and Keller were able to put distance between themselves and the injury done by the former GDR regime, Kuschel's case is different. Because of his personal involvement as an informant for the agencies of state repression, he faced greater skepticism from victim groups. His failure to show remorse or even to admit that the state committed any crimes, and his failure to address his individual victims directly, did not inspire his victims. His example can therefore be interpreted as a failed speech of political apology.

With the growing distance in time from past injustices of the GDR, the perspective of *Die Linke* on the overall anti-totalitarian consensus in Germany has changed. This is evidenced by the party's full-scale acceptance of responsibility for crimes committed under the communist regime and its acknowledgment of the suffering of the regime's victims. Apology speeches have brought about progress in the internal reconciliation of the old GDR political elite with its past crimes. In some cases, symbolic gestures of apology created an opportunity to open up the public landscape to reconciliation. Keller's case demonstrates how institutions like parliamentary commissions can create an atmosphere of reconciliation between oppressor groups and dissidents and promote empathy for different perspectives through dialogue.

Speeches of political apology are transmitters of a message of reconciliation that bridges the public and private spheres, and also the past and present. They can stimulate public discourse about a troubled past and create awareness of past injustices within the collective memory of a nation. A reconciliatory environment initiated by society's moral leadership opens a window of opportunity to learn from others, to reinterpret the past, and to build up a shared narrative about a contested past.

2018 ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE PAG. 63–88
STUDIA TERRITORIALIA 2

POST-GENOCIDE BOSNIAN MUSLIM FEMALE IDENTITY: VISUALIZING MOTHERHOOD, VIOLENCE AND VICTIMHOOD

JASMINA GAVRANKAPETANOVIĆ-REDŽIĆ
DOSHISHA UNIVERSITY, KYOTO; UNIVERSITY OF SARAJEVO

Abstract
As Yugoslavia fell apart in the 1990s, the Serbs used violence strategically, to achieve permanent divisions between ethnic categories and to thwart future attempts to rebuild trust and normalize interethnic relations. The goal of the violence was to intensify national and religious differences within socialist Yugoslavia's highly multicultural society. The violence of the war, and the sexual violence in particular, influenced the identity of Bosnian Muslims. It heightened their sense of endangerment and consequently, their feeling of belonging to a persecuted group. This paper analyzes the visual representations of motherhood, violence and victimhood in four films directed by Jasmila Žbanić. It finds inspiration in Žarana Papić's critical approach to patriarchy and nationalism and Inger Skjelsbæk's field work among the survivors of sexual violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The paper's main goals are to trace the link between patriarchy, nationalism and the memory of gender-directed violence, and to highlight the transformation of Bosnian Muslim identity within the context of history.
Keywords: Bosnia and Herzegovina; genocide; war crimes; sexual violence; patriarchy; victimhood; motherhood
DOI: 10.14712/23363231.2019.12

This article is based on research supported by the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science.
Doc. Dr. Jasmina Gavrankapetanović-Redžić teaches at the University of Sarajevo. She is a JSPS international research fellow at the Faculty of Policy Studies, Doshisha University, Kyoto. Address correspondence to Academy of Fine Arts Sarajevo, Obala Maka Dizdara 3, 71000 Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina. E-mail: gavrankapetan@gmail.com.
I extend my gratitude to two anonymous reviewers as well as to the journal editors for their insightful comments and suggestions on earlier drafts of this paper.

Introduction

The wars that accompanied the fracturing of the former Yugoslavia were the crystallization of years of propaganda. That propaganda promoted only one possible way for the ethnic groups that until 1991 formed the south Slav nation to survive: the creation, through violence, of ethnically homogeneous territories.

In order to intensify the national and religious differences within socialist Yugoslavia's highly multicultural society, the Serbs used violence strategically, to achieve permanent divisions between ethnic categories and thwart attempts to rebuild trust and normalize interethnic relations. The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina was one of a series of wars that started in 1991 (in Slovenia) and ended in 1999 (in Kosovo) – although it has sometimes been argued that socialist Yugoslavia's dissolution was not complete until Kosovo's proclamation of independence in 2008. It is important to keep in mind that Bosnian ethnic identities must be considered in all their plurality and diversity, because Bosnia and Herzegovina's ethnic and national heterogeneity is the determinant of its past and present. Indeed, Bosnia and Herzegovina is sometimes referred to as a Yugoslavia in miniature. There are in fact numerous ways Bosnia can be compared to the former Yugoslavia. However, by itself, that approach may serve more to obscure than to explain Bosnia's complexity.

Rape has been used as a weapon of war for centuries. Nevertheless, the war in Bosnia produced a particularly systemic pattern of sexualized violence. Bosnian Muslim women were targeted with rape-induced, forced pregnancies because of their ethnicity and because of their gender.[1]

However, labeling this violence as targeted solely at female victims would be a dangerous oversimplification. When discussing sexual violence in the context of the Bosnian war (1992–1995), it should be recognized that both men and women were targeted, but in different ways. Similar to the psychological effect of sexual violence against women, the effect of sexual rape and mutilation on men was equally devastating. Moreover, it was systematic. The first case in the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) in The Hague, in which sexual violence was recognized as part of a wider pattern of severe human rights violations, concerned, among others, a male victim who did not survive his ordeal in the Omarska Camp in Prijedor.[2] Of course, men were usually tar-

[1] Inger Skjelsbæk, *The Political Psychology of War Rape: Studies from Bosnia and Herzegovina* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 25.

[2] Case No. IT-94-1-T Indictment and Judgment Decision – Duško Tadić a/k/a/ "Dule," May 7, 1997, http://www.icty.org/x/cases/tadic/tjug/en/tad-tsj70507JT2-e.pdf.

geted for immediate execution by the Army of the Republika Srpska (*Vojska Republike Srpske*), most strikingly in Srebrenica in July 1995, where men were the majority of those killed. The prosecutors in The Hague charged the Serbian perpetrators of this crime with genocide, conspiracy to commit genocide, extermination, murder, persecution, and inhumane acts of forcible transfer.[3]

For this analysis, I rely on the work of the late Yugoslav feminist and sociologist Žarana Papić (1949–2002) who, thanks to her engagement as a young feminist researcher and academic before and during the dismemberment of Yugoslavia, was a valuable first-hand observer of the entanglement of nationalism and patriarchy with late-stage Yugoslav socialism. This entanglement facilitated the proliferation of violence across the country. As she writes, "the socialist regime was a conglomerate of communism, male domination, patriarchy and authoritarianism that was, paradoxically, reinforced with a mixture of progressive women's rights and a continuing patriarchy that governed women's true lives."[4]

Using four films by Bosnian contemporary film director Jasmila Žbanić, this paper analyzes the memory of genocide, nationalism and gender-based violence in the Bosnian war. My intention is to examine how the violence against Bosnian Muslim women played a part in the post-socialist construction of a Bosnian Muslim/Bosniak identity, by casting the Muslims as victims. In addition, I will try to shed light on the effect that the concepts of motherhood, victimhood and violence had on an increasingly unequal post-conflict, post-socialist Bosnian society. As noted by Inger Skjelsbæk:

> The female body constitutes yet another field where ethnic conflict can be fought, where a woman's sexual identity – in conjunction with her political and religious national identity – is the main target for the actions being carried out. Consequently, the way in which women's victimization takes form is crucial in order to understand the way in which sexual violence has political impact during and after a conflict.[5]

A haunting question for anyone living in the wider post-Yugoslavian space and present day Bosnia and Herzegovina in particular is how the relatively open, multi-ethnic, welfare-oriented Yugoslav state apparatus produced rape and other

---

[3] Case No. IT-05-88/2-T Judgment – Zdravko Tolimir, December 12, 2012, http://www.icty.org/x/cases/tolimir/tjug/en/121212.pdf.

[4] "Od državnog socijalizma do državnog nacionalizma: slučaj Srbije iz rodne perspective," in Žarana Papić, *Tekstovi 1977–2002* (Beograd: Centar za studije roda i politike, Rekonstrukcija Ženski fond, Žene u crnom, 2012), 297.

[5] Skjelsbæk, *The Political Psychology of War Rape,* 25.

extremely violent criminal behavior – which in peacetime would be severely sanctioned – to be encouraged and heroicized. Answering this question is not an easy task. I believe that it is important to look at the origins and consequences of the violent acts, since we are living with their memory every day. Today's memory of the trauma is something that must be taken into account in any attempt at an explanation for the degeneration of the Yugoslav ideals.[6]

In the first part of my paper I map out some of the main historical influences on Yugoslav, and consequently Bosnian women's identities, starting with their participation in World War II as doctors and nurses, and later, as partisan fighters. I will feature the Women's Anti-fascist Front (*Antifašistički front žena*, AFŽ), which was an arm of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia (*Komunističke partije Jugoslavije*, KPJ) and therefore was also a part of the National Liberation Struggle (*Narodnooslobodilačka borba*, NOB). Then, I will highlight issues that were downplayed under state socialism (nationalism and the persistence of patriarchy), but which have more recently been identified and criticized by feminists, including Žarana Papić.

In the second part of this paper, I will sketch out the historical background of the often-confusing amalgam of class, ethnicity and religious identity that is characteristic of Bosnian Muslims' self-image. In order to establish a link between pre-socialist, socialist and post-socialist interpretations of Bosnian Muslim identity, I refer to the different self-understandings held by the Muslims of Bosnia and Herzegovina over time, both as an ethnic group and as a religious group. I will argue that today's construction of the Bosnian Muslim/Bosniak identity is to a large extent based on the memory of the violence experienced during the 1990s. This understandably traumatic memory has several implications for female and individual identities, which I will examine.

---

[6] In "What are Memories for? Functions of Recall in Cognition and Culture," Pascal Boyer explains that from an evolutionary point of view, memories of the past are tools that organize our present and future behavior. Boyer highlights the fact that although memories can be shared by social groups their incorporation into a group's identity is more complicated than the way in which they sustain an individual's identity. Although Boyer does not refer specifically to traumatic memories, it can be deduced from his explanation that the incorporation of individual memories into a larger social group's identity provides a means for collaboration and coordination within the group, and, I would add, for group cohesion. Boyer's concept helps us to explain how traumatic memories are shared among group members who have not lived through an experience themselves and how its members are capable of relating to those memories, even if it is to a certain degree on a fictional or imaginary level. See Pascal Boyer, "What are Memories for? Functions of Recall in Cognition and Culture," in *Memory in Mind and Culture*, ed. Pascal Boyer and James V. Wertsch (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 3–28, doi: 10.1017/CBO9780511626999.002.

Finally, in order to gain more insight into how motherhood, violence, and victimhood are perceived in post-genocide Bosnia and Herzegovina, I will turn to four films produced and directed by the Sarajevo-born film director, Jasmila Žbanić (born 1974). I will analyze her films in the light of the ideas found in Inger Skejlsbæk's book, *The Political Psychology of War Rape* (2013) and Žarana Papić's collection of essays, *Tekstovi 1977–2002*, published in 2012.

War-related violence in general, and sexual violence in particular, influenced the construction of Bosnian Muslim identity to a large degree, reinforcing a sense of endangerment and consequently, a sense of membership in a discrete but persecuted group. However, the full extent of the gender-based violence directed at Bosnian Muslims is hardly recognized in Bosnian society, unless it is discussed as a subset of group victimhood. Moreover, Bosnia and Herzegovina's peripheral position in relation to the international capitalist system exacerbates existing social inequalities that have also helped to shape Bosnian identity.

Yugoslav Feminism: Žarana Papić and the Critique of Patriarchy

Exploring the issue of wartime rape in the context of Bosnia and Herzegovinia, and its relation to the broader issue of nationalism(s) and the memory of such gender-based violence in post-Yugoslavia, risks creating an impression that the use of rape as a weapon emerged suddenly in the Bosnian war and was somehow peculiar to the "wild and violent" Balkans. This impression discounts warnings and sustained criticism of nascent nationalism that were voiced by some feminist groups such as the Women in Black (*Žene u crnom*) in Belgrade, and by individual activists and researchers in socialist Yugoslavia who were aware of the signs of imminent disaster.[7]

In the former Yugoslavia, we are today experiencing a clash between various understandings of national belonging, emancipation, immigration, welfare policies and access to diminishing resources. Rights that women gained in the past are today being taken away, and things that earlier were considered normal have become artifacts of a "decadent" past. The post-Yugoslav space has gone through violent changes since the 1990s. Unfortunately, we can see those changes as one example among many of the dangers that arise when aggressive nationalism meets gender-based military violence. This does not mean that gender-based

[7] For more on the Women in Black's anti-war feminist activism see Orli Fridman, "Alternative Voices in Public Urban Spaces: Serbia's Women in Black," *Ethnologia Balkanica* 10 (2006): 291–303; Orli Fridman, "It Was Like Fighting a War with Our Own People: Anti-War Activism in Serbia during the 1990s," *Nationalities Papers* 39, No. 4 (2011): 507–522, doi: 10.1080/00905992.2011.579953.

violence did not occur during World War I or World War II in Yugoslavia or that it did not occur in the 1990s in other regions of the former Yugoslavia (e.g. Kosovo, Croatia, among others). However, since those places and times are beyond the scope of this paper, they will be left for future examination.

Women's organizations existed since the second half of the nineteenth century in Serbia and the South Slav provinces of the Habsburg Empire,[8] but feminism strengthened in socialist Yugoslavia thanks to women's participation in the communists' struggle in World War II. Women participated at first as doctors and nurses, and then in larger numbers as resistance fighters.[9] Jelena Batinić attributes the gradual involvement of women in the struggle to the absence of men, which made the inclusion of women unavoidable. She writes:

> An unprecedented number of women, an estimated 100,000, participated in the Partisan struggle against the Nazis during the Second World War. The Communist Partisan movement during the war promised equal rights for women, seeing gender equality as an inevitable by-product of the unfolding communist revolution. Numerous women were active in the AFŽ (*Women's Antifascist Front*) during and after the war. They worked to mobilize women for the war effort, and were later engaged in the rehabilitation of the country ruined by the war, in educational activities, and in the propagation of socialist ideology.[10]

According to Ivana Pantelić, "during the war, the idea of equality between men and women was fully accepted among the Partisans."[11] Similarly, Drago Borovčanin documents that women contributed to the anti-fascist struggle on an equal basis with men, producing and disseminating political propaganda, hiding members of the Partisan resistance, and helping the families of those arrested: "Starting immediately in 1941, when large numbers of men left for the cities in order to contribute to the uprising, women took over their duties within party

---

8 See Zlatiborka Popov-Momčinović, *Ženski pokret u Bosni i Hercegovini: artikulacija jedne kontrakulture* (Sarajevo: Sarajevski otvoreni centar, Centar za empirijska istraživanja religije u Bosni i Hercegovini, Fondacija CURE, 2013), 57–66.

9 Jelena Batinić, "Feminism, Nationalism, and War: The 'Yugoslav Case' in Feminist Texts," *Journal of International Women's Studies* 3, No. 1 (2001): 4.

10 Ibid., 4.

11 Ivana Pantelić, *Partizanke kao građanke. Društvena emancipacija partizanki u Srbiji 1945–1953* (Beograd: ISI i Evoluta, 2011), 37.

committees and the SKOJ [League of Communist Youth of Yugoslavia, *Savez komunista omladine Jugoslavije*] leadership."[12]

Borovčanin states that this was when the focus shifted from the struggle for women's rights to the struggle for national liberation under the authority of the KPJ.[13] He writes that women fully participated in the network of organizations and structures that conducted the partisan struggle.

As a consequence of their participation in the war, women achieved a significant degree of emancipation in socialist Yugoslavia. However, persisting remnants of the patriarchy required that they adapt to the particularities of the Yugoslavia of the time. In Yugoslav society, women had acquired rights to abortion, the vote, contraception, free medical care, paid maternity leave and free education. Despite having gained such significant rights, full equity with men was not achieved and women's demands evolved.[14] The power of the patriarchy and the "natural" reproductive role of women as wives and mothers trapped women between the contradictory realities of their private and public lives. This was a problem that was never sufficiently addressed or officially acknowledged.[15]

After her early pioneering work in the 1970s among Yugoslav feminists, Žarana Papić focused her attention on feminist issues specific to Yugoslav society that are particularly relevant to the topics mentioned here. In her 1981 paper "Socialism and the Traditional Stance on the Relationship Between the Sexes," Žarana Papić writes:

> The system of patriarchal values is still vigorously rooted in our land despite social efforts towards the creation of equal opportunities for both sexes. Patriarchal patterns of behavior and thought have, of course, experienced tangible erosion, and they are no longer the rule governing individual and social behavior. This, however, does not mean that they have disappeared or that they have been overcome by a new dominant pattern of behavior and relationship between the sexes. The patriarchal system of values – in which the essence of a woman's nature (unlike the nature of a man) is reduced to her sexual and reproductive role, so that at every moment the perpetuation of this "natural" distinction supports and constitutes this distinction as

---

12 Drago Borovčanin, *Izgradnja bosansko-hercegovačke državnosti u uslovima NOR-a* (Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, 1979), 141.

13 Ibid., 142.

14 See Chiara Bonfiglioli, "Feminist Translations in a Socialist Context: The Case of Yugoslavia," *Gender & History* 30, No. 1 (March 2018): 240–254, doi: 10.1111/1468-0424.12343.

15 It needs to be emphasized that this was also the case with the issue of social class, because it was never truly resolved in Yugoslavia, even though it was commonly assumed to have been.

the cultural and social criteria for the possibilities and role of the sexes – is still both privately (and publicly) a powerful regulator of our social and individual behaviors.[16]

Adrijana Zaharijević indicates that since the AFŽ, which was established in 1942 as part of the Unitary National Liberation Front (*Jedinstveni narodnooslobodilački front*, JNOF), was dissolved in 1953 and the Union of Women's Associations (which remained in existence until 1990) was created to replace it, the state *per se* was not the main addressee of feminist demands.[17] Zaharijević traces this misdirection of effort to the subversive and ambivalent nature of the relationship of feminist groups with the Yugoslav state structures.[18]

In spite of the legacy of significant success left behind by the AFŽ in the eleven years of its existence, a shift happened in the 1950s, and again in the 1970s, when a new Constitution anointed the working class as the sole bearer of political power in Yugoslavia.[19] For women, this shift marked a transition from the status of fighters that they had gained in World War II to one of workers and mothers.[20] For Zaharijević, this reframing of the female role did not imply that Yugoslav socialism was inevitably patriarchal, because she believed that socialism was advancing toward equality and emancipation for women. According to Zaharijević, the moment when the symbiosis between patriarchy and state reached its peak was also the beginning of the end of the socialist regime in the 1990s.[21] On the other hand, Žarana Papić took a more critical stance towards Yugoslav socialism, particularly in its later stage at the end of the 1980s, when Slobodan Milošević began to gradually purge the Communist Party of Serbia of its non-nationalistic and liberal element.[22] Papić wrote in *From State Socialism to State Nationalism* that:

---

16 "Socijalizam i tradicionalno stanovište o odnosu polova," in Papić, *Tekstovi 1977–2002*, 103.

17 Jelena Batinić writes that the AFŽ was dissolved by the Communist Party because it believed that the AFŽ leadership was manifesting bourgeois "feminism" and departing from the party's policies. See Jelena Batinić, *Women and Yugoslav Partisans: A History of World War II Resistance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 15, doi: 10.1017/CBO9781316118627. For AFŽ's organizational structure, see Lydia Sklevcky, *Konji, žene, ratovi* (Zagreb: Ženska infoteka, 1996).

18 Adrijana Zaharijević, "Fusnota u globalnoj istoriji: Kako se može čitati istorija jugoslovenskog feminizma?" *Sociologija* 57, No. 1 (2014): 72–89.

19 Constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia adopted in 1974, article 88, as quoted in Zaharijević, "Fusnota u globalnoj istoriji," 75.

20 Ibid., 75.

21 Zaharijević, "Fusnota u globalnoj istoriji," 79.

22 Papić's criticism was especially focused on the state of affairs in Serbia. She contended that it is each individual's first duty to criticize his or her own group's nationalism. She also traced a link between resurgent traditionalism and patriarchy in Serbia (e.g. the shrinking of women's rights

> Socialism did not encourage the construction of a complex social fabric that could have been the basis for democratic alternatives. With such totalitarian praxes [the suffocating of "anti-socialist" bourgeois, religious, national, ethnic, cultural and historical tendencies] socialism has actually prevented the creation and expansion of the fundamental conditions necessary for the development of a nation's democratic character.[23]

Papić believed that the fall of communism left behind a vacuum that turned out to be fertile ground for chauvinism and nationalism. Referring to Serb nationalism, Papić contended that in its initial phase, nationalism developed in opposition to communism, but that it was then adopted by the Communist Party structure, fully appropriating and instrumentalizing the existing state structure.[24] The simultaneous patriarchization of the state apparatus through a discourse of masculine nationalism, combined with the feminization of citizens' bodies and Serbia's perceived enemies, has had numerous significant impacts, some of which are still very tangible today in both Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Islamizirani Slaveni: Slav Muslims and a Historical Perspective on the Issue of the Naming and Recognition of the Muslim Nation in Yugoslavia

The Balkans are often regarded negatively as the "other" Europe,[25] although in a different sense than Edward Said's notion of the "Orient."[26] The ethnic heterogeneity of socialist Yugoslavia (1945–1991) still persists in post-Yugoslav space despite the violence of the 1990s.[27] Problems in naming the various groups

---

when the right to abortion was rescinded) and the violence against the ethnic "other" outside of Serbia.

23 "Od državnog socijalizma do državnog nacionalizma," in Papić, *Tekstovi 1977–2002*, 293.

24 Ibid.

25 Maria Todorova, *Imagining the Balkans* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997).

26 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978).

27 The post-Yugoslav wars separated Yugoslavia's heterogeneous population and through violence produced autonomous nation-states. Significant demographic changes have occurred as certain groups' presence has been drastically reduced in their former homelands (e.g., Croats and Bosniaks in the Republika Srpska entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina). A right to return to one's place of origin even if it was located in a nearly totally ethnically cleansed territory was guaranteed by the 1995 General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, also known as the Dayton Peace Agreement. The complicated administrative and political organization of the Bosnian state that was established by the Agreement makes it difficult for any one group to maintain control of all political levels (cantons, municipalities, entities, districts, and the national government). Consensus is therefore required to ensure that whole apparatus functions.

living in Bosnia and Herzegovina emerged early on in Yugoslav history, and still are encountered today.[28] For example, the name "Bosniak" as a reference to the Bosnian population was applied without regard to any particular religious affiliation in certain documents from 1860 and 1867.[29] In other documents, Muslims are referred to as Bosniak Muslims. The epithets "Serb" and "Croat" were not used in connection with the Bosnian population. Non-Muslim Bosniaks were usually referred to as Christians, either Greek-Orthodox or Roman Catholic.[30] "Serb" was reserved for references to Serbia's population.[31]

According to Nira Yuval-Davis, "the specificity of a nationalist discourse and project lies in the claim for separate political representation of its collectivity."[32] That was not the case in the 1960s with regard to Bosnian Muslims in socialist Yugoslavia, even though they were progressively being recognized as a nationality by the KPJ.[33] Although the birth of Bosnian Muslims' self-perception as a nation can be traced back to that period, since the 1990s their self-image has

---

28 The variety of names applied to national groups used in, for example, British consular correspondence regarding Bosnia and Herzegovina reflects the difficulties of any attempt to make semantic distinctions among them. For more on this particular topic see Edin Radušić, "Ko su Bošnjaci 19. stoljeća? Bosna, Hercegovina i Bošnjaci u britanskoj konzularno-diplomatskoj korespondenciji od 1857. do 1878. godine," in *Identitet Bosne i Hercegovine kroz historiju*, ed. Husnija Kamberović (Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, 2011), 131–156.

29 Ibid., 143.

30 Ibid., 150.

31 These nuances in nomenclature are even more interesting in light of eighteenth and nineteenth century discourses on the Balkans, as Marina Matešić and Svetlana Slapšak showed in *Gender and the Balkans*. According to the authors, the aspects of gender associated with the uncivilized and racially differentiated Balkans created an image in which this undefined zone of fluid borders (and ethnic categories), suspended between the Orient and the Occident, was a wild and retrograde "heart of darkness," especially when viewed through the prism of writings by foreign female travelers. See Marina Matešić and Svetlana Slapšak, *Rod i Balkan* (Zagreb: Durieux, 2017), 179.

32 Nira Yuval-Davis, "Les femmes et le nationalisme," *Les cahiers du GRIF*, No. 48 (1994): 89–96.

33 See Enver Redžić, *Prilozi o nacionalnom pitanju* (Sarajevo: Svjetlost, 1963); "Društveno-istorijski aspekt nacionalnog opredjeljenja Muslimana Bosne i Hercegovine," *Socijalizam* 4, No. 3 (1961): 31–89; Atif Purivatra, "Prilog proučavanju koncepcije o nacionalnom opredjeljivanju muslimana," *Pregled* 16, No. 10 (1964): 323–332; Atif Purivatra, "Nacionalnost Muslimana i Peta konferencija KPJ," in *Peta zemaljska konferencija Komunističke Partije Jugoslavije – Zbornik radova*, ed. Zlatko Čepo and Ivan Jelić (Zagreb: Institut za istoriju radničkog pokreta Hrvatske, 1972), 98–106; Vlado Jokanović, "Elementi koji su kroz istoriju djelovali pozitivno i negativno na stvaranje bošnjaštva kao nacionalnog pokreta," *Pregled* 58, No. 9 (1968): 241–263; Enver Redžić, "Istoriografija o 'muslimanskoj' naciji," *Prilozi* 29 (2000): 233–244; Mustafa Imamović, *Nacionalni fenomen Muslimana – Razvitak građanskih pokreta i ideogije kod Muslimana 1878–1914* (Sarajevo: Fakultet političkih nauka, 1972); Husnija Kamberović, ed., *Rasprave o nacionalnom identitetu Bošnjaka – Zbornik radova* (Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, 2009); Husnija Kamberović, ed., *Identitet Bosne i Hercegovine kroz vrijeme – Zbornik radova* (Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, 2011).

undergone "tectonic" changes, in which the memory of war and genocide have played a crucial role.

To unpack those changes, it is necessary to take a look at the overlap of ethnic, national and class identities in Bosnia. In order to better understand this entanglement, we must take into account that the transition from religious group to nationality under socialism was particular to Bosnian Muslims.[34] To paraphrase historian Avdo Sućeska, Bosnian Muslim society was built culturally and politically upon its close relationship with the Ottoman state, a relationship that had over time resulted in the conversion of a significant part of the population to Islam.[35]

In *The Building of Bosnian and Herzegovinian Statehood During the National Liberation War*, Drago Borovčanin writes:

> The Slav population of Islamic faith, and Bosnia as their homeland, influenced the construction of a specific ethnic or national group, which we saw develop in the twentieth century. But apart from their faith, Bosnian Muslims did not identify with the Turks, and always emphasized the difference in their origin as well as the importance of their role, despite many things that linked Bosnia to the Ottoman Empire.[36]

It is difficult to explain in a short essay the full history of the expansion of Islam among the Bosnian medieval population and the (re)definition of Muslims as a distinct nationality within secular Yugoslavia. However, it must be stressed that when the Ottoman Empire disintegrated, the feudal society in which Bosnian Muslims lived came to an abrupt end. The advent of "modernity," beginning with the Austro-Hungarian Empire's occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (1878) and later its formal annexation (1908) meant that Bosnia and Herzegovina continued to exist as a colony. The advent of Austro-Hungarian rule represented a rather traumatic transition from Muslim to Catholic governance. One example of the changes it provoked was the formation of the Islamic Community of Bosnia and Herzegovina (*Islamska zajednica Bosne i Hercegovine*, IZBiH). The IZBiH was established in 1882, shortly after the beginning of the

---

[34] See Xavier Bougarel, "Od 'Muslimana' do 'Bošnjaka': Pitanje nacionalnog imena bosanskih muslimana," in *Rasprave o nacionalnom identitetu Bošnjaka – Zbornik radova*, ed. Husnija Kamberović (Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, 2009), 117–136.

[35] Avdo Sućeska, "Neke specifičnosti istorije Bosne pod Turcima," quoted in *Rasprave o nacionalnom identitetu Bošnjaka – Zbornik radova*, ed. Husnija Kamberović (Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, 2009), 72.

[36] Borovčanin, *Izgradnja bosansko-hercegovačke državnosti*, 24.

Austro-Hungarian rule. It was created in an attempt to enhance communication between the Austrians and the Bosnian Muslims, who made up the largest part of the territory's middle and upper classes.

As they are portrayed by Xavier Bougarel, some of the issues that arose in the twentieth century related to Muslims' self-understanding of their shared identity, particularly in relation to other ethnicities living in Bosnia. That identity was founded on the intersection of various currents of thought, among which historic changes in class and religion played an important role, especially in the period between 1918 and 1941.[37]

Historian Drago Borovčanin has noted that earlier attempts by the Ottoman state administration to forge a distinct Bosnian ethnic identity, mainly among Muslims in the governing local elite, failed. The reasons why a unique Bosnian nation did not emerge at that time were manifold, but Borovčanin believes the reason for the failure of this "nation building process from above" was its exclusion of the poorer Christian classes.[38] Later on, ethno-national divisions were a useful tool of Austro-Hungarian policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina because they diffused potential threats to Austro-Hungarian interests and helped to maintain the status quo. Nevertheless, the Austrians made some attempts to foster a specific Bosnian identity through the establishment of institutions like the *Landesmuseum*, the National Theater, etc.

The idea of unification of the different Yugoslav nationalities gained strength in the early 1900s. It was based on a shared language and on the struggle against what was perceived as foreign occupation by Austria-Hungary. It aimed to overcome the disparity of the ethnic groups that lived in what became Yugoslavia. The idea of Yugoslav nationalism was expressed most vehemently, so to speak, in the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife, Arch-Duchess Sophia, in Sarajevo by the nationalist group *Mlada Bosna* in 1914. Early support for nation-building emerged first among Serbia's bourgeoisie, and then spread to their Croatian counterparts. The Bosnian Muslim elite, whose main concern was the conservation of their social and economic position, came to the idea relatively late. Serbia's political leadership, and its dominance in relation to other Yugoslav nations, was established early on in the provisional State of Slovenes, Croats, and Serbs, which united with the Kingdom of Serbia and Montenegro (*Kraljevina Srbija i Crna Gora*) in 1918 to become the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (*Kraljevina Srba, Hrvata i Slovenaca*). The new kingdom was not

[37] Bougarel, "Od 'Muslimana' do 'Bošnjaka,'" 118–120.
[38] Borovčanin, *Izgradnja bosansko-hercegovačke državnosti*, 26–27.

immune to pre-existing inter-ethnic tensions, most particularly between the two dominant elites, Serb and Croat. From the proclamation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in 1929, until 1939 when Croats were recognized as a discrete nationality within Yugoslavia in the Cvetković-Maček agreement, Bosnia and Herzegovina went through several administrative reorganizations. The last one, just before World War II, established provinces (*banovine*) within Bosnia. These Bosnian *banovine*, with one exception, were located on Bosnia's riverine bordersand were heavily influenced by their neighbors in Croatia and Serbia.[39]

World War II in Yugoslavia was a combination of social revolution, resistance to foreign occupation (by Nazi Germany, Fascist Italy, Bulgaria and Hungary), and civil war. It took a heavy toll on all of Yugoslavia's nations. The legacy of World War II was particularly significant for Bosnian Muslims, because they participated in the creation of the Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*) and collaborated with the Axis powers. Neither Croatians nor Bosnian Muslims bear sole responsibility for collaboration during World War II. For example, officers of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia's army were convicted by the post-war communist regime and executed for collaboration. Many were rehabilitated in the 2000s in Serbia.

With this historical background in mind, let us now turn to the recognition of Muslims as a constituent national group of Yugoslavia in their own right. The process was heavily burdened by the above-mentioned legacy of World War II and did not proceed without a heated debate within the KPJ, which lasted for more than two decades. Historian Husnija Kamberović considers the decision of the KPJ in 1968 to recognize Bosnian Muslims as a nation to be an attempt to gradually marginalize the IZBiH.[40] After the end of World War II, the KPJ subjected the religious communities in socialist Yugoslavia to its control, most notably the Catholic Church, the Islamic Community and the Serbian Orthodox Church. The religious communities faced severe difficulties, especially as regards the management of their property, which was nationalized, and their finances. However, freedom to practice religion was never abolished altogether. Religious institutions continued to operate under socialism, but with significantly less agency than before.[41]

---

39 Ibid., 51.

40 Husnija Kamberović, "Bošnjaci 1968: Politički kontekst priznanja nacionalnog identiteta," in *Rasprave o nacionalnom identitetu Bošnjaka – Zbornik radova*, ed. Husnija Kamberović (Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, 2009), 79.

41 See Denis Bećirović, "Normativni i stvarni položaj islamske zajednice u BiH tokom prve decenije nakon završetka II svjetskog rata," in *Identitet Bosne i Hercegovine kroz historiju*, ed. Husnija Kam-

In the socio-political setting of socialist Yugoslavia, the primary concern of the communists was the "national" question rather than the "class" question, as might have been expected.[42] Muslim identity was enmeshed in Yugoslav society along with many other national, religious, and cultural categories.

In his book *Nations and Nationalism*, Ernest Gellner mentions the case of Yugoslavia's Bosnian Muslims as an example of a transition from an identity as a religious group to a nationality with a particular claim to the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This differentiated them from other Muslim communities of Yugoslavia, notably the Albanians in Kosovo.[43]

For instance, Gellner writes that Bosnian Muslims considered themselves to be "Serbo-Croat speakers of Slav ancestry and Muslim cultural background":

> What they meant was that they could not describe themselves as Serb or as Croat (despite sharing a language with Serbs and Croats), because these identifications carried the implications of having been Orthodox or Catholic; and to describe oneself as "Yugoslav" was too abstract, generic and bloodless. They preferred to describe themselves as "Muslim" (and were now at last officially allowed to do so), meaning thereby Bosnian, Slav ex-Muslims who feel as one ethnic group, though not differentiable linguistically from Serbs and Croats, and though the faith which distinguishes them is now a lapsed faith.[44]

The consequences for Gellner's ex-Muslim Muslims of the entanglement between their former identity (based on class and religion) and their new identity (based on ethnicity) would become prominent during the bloody disintegration of socialist Yugoslavia.

Gellner's view of Muslim identity aligns with the Yugoslav historical and political context of the 1980s. In addition, Gellner understood the Islamic faith of Bosnian Muslims as a lapsed faith.[45] Since the 1990s however, religions have regained an important place in post-Yugoslav societies, principally as badges of ethnic difference. According to Žarana Papić, the creation of new but still patriarchal nation-states meant "the disappearance of a communist 'equality

berović (Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, 2011), 239–256.

42 Hannes Grandits, "Ambivalentnosti u socijalističkoj nacionalnoj politici Bosne i Hercegovine u kasnim 1960-im i u 1970-im: Perspektive odozdo i odozgo," in *Rasprave o nacionalnom identitetu Bošnjaka – Zbornik radova*, ed. Husnija Kamberović (Sarajevo: Institut za istoriju, 2009), 15–38.

43 Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1983), 71–72.

44 Ibid., 71–72.

45 Ibid.

paradigm' and the rise of an old-new conservative ideology of state, nation or religion" in post-Yugoslavia.[46]

Post-socialist, Post-genocide Bosnian Muslim Female Identity

Gender-based violence is often wrongly described as the result of centuries-old Balkan hatreds. To unlock a gendered perspective on post-Yugoslav violence and war, the following statement by Žarana Papić is helpful. It debunks some of the stereotypes that persistently haunt post-Yugoslav space:

> The genocidal brutality of the ethnic wars shows how ethnic hatreds have been provoked/produced in order to construct new frontiers of enemy-otherness.... This means that the wars in the former Yugoslavia cannot be interpreted as a reflection of the tribal and "eternal" barbarian mentality of its peoples, but must be seen as a contemporary phenomenon of violent, post-communist strategies of redistribution of ethnic/gender power by defining new ethnic and sub-ethnic borders *between men*, and their respective (often militarized) elite structures.[47]

The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina was a continuation and escalation of the violence that began first in Slovenia and then spread to Croatia in 1991. In Bosnia, it started after the referendum on independence that was held in March 1992, which was followed by a proclamation of independence. Shortly after the proclamation, the first civilian victims were killed during peaceful demonstrations in the capital, Sarajevo. Outside Sarajevo, the heavily armed, well-prepared Bosnian Serb forces, backed by the Yugoslav National Army (*Jugoslavenska narodna armija*, JNA) started to implement "ethnic cleansing" in those territories they deemed to be Serb, or which they wanted to make Serb. Their tactics combined military maneuvers with terrorizing of the Bosnian Muslim population. The Serbs used violence against non-Serb civilians systematically.[48]

---

[46] Žarana Papić, "Europe after 1989: Ethnic Wars, the Fascistization of Civil Society and Body Politics in Serbia," in *Thinking Differently: A Reader in European Women's Studies*, ed. Gabriele Griffin and Rosi Braidotti (London: Zed Books, 2002), 128.

[47] Ibid., 128.

[48] According to Human Rights Watch, "the aim of their [Serbian military and paramilitary forces] vicious policy of 'ethnic cleansing' has been to rid an area of an 'enemy ethnic group' through murder, forced displacement, deportation, detention or confinement to ghetto areas, destruction of villages and cultural and religious objects of the 'enemy' ethnic group. Mass rape of women has also been used as a tool of 'ethnic cleansing,' meant to terrorize, torture and demean women and their families and compel them to flee the area." See *The Human Rights Watch Global Report on*

In the early spring of 1992, Bosnian Serb forces started to use rape (among other forms of violence) as a weapon of war across Bosnia and Herzegovina. They targeted one group of Bosnian Muslims in particular – women.[49] Inger Skjelsbæk has summarized the five hallmarks of sexual violence in war identified by Ruth Seifert. It is: (1) an *integral part of warfare* (part of generalized warfare); (2) an *element of male communication* (symbolic humiliation of a male opponent); (3) a way of *reaffirming masculinity* (masculine solidarity and repression of "weaknesses" seen as feminine among the military); (4) a way of *destroying the culture of the opponent* (destruction of biological basis for future reproduction and interference in the pregnancy outcome); and (5) an outcome of *misogyny* (frustration taken out on the weak).[50]

The war in Bosnia and Herzegovina reached its nadir in Srebrenica in July 1995. The war combined the disintegration of state socialism and an outburst of violence with several other elements, including gender-based violence. It also witnessed the culmination of the historical transformation of Bosnian Muslims from a social group (mainly composed of upper-class land-owners in the Ottoman Empire) into a loose grouping characterized by its religion but divided between Croat and Serb nationalities, and finally into a recognized national group in itself (for which religion played a less important role than before). As the Yugoslav socialist state came to an end, Bosnian Muslims adopted the appellation "Bosniak." They did so in the context of ethnic cleansing and genocide. Moral superiority, a by-product of victimhood, was an aspect of Serb nationalism following the Serbs' travails during WWI and even more saliently during WWII. In turn, it became a building block of Bosniak nationalism in the 1990s.[51]

Women's Human Rights (New York: Human Rights Watch, 1995), 8, https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/general958.pdf.

49 Chronologically speaking, gender-based military violence against women in the Bosnian war was a continuation of policies targeting women that had been seen before in Croatia and that reappeared later in Kosovo.

50 Ruth Seifert, *War and Rape: A Preliminary Analysis*, as given in Skjelsbæk, *The Political Psychology of War Rape,* 62–63. Italics in original. All five characteristics fit the Bosnian scenario, while the last one applies as well to the gender-based violence of rape in times of "peace" or in a post-conflict period, especially in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, where women form the largest number of domestic violence victims. See Skjelsbæk, *The Political Psychology of War Rape*, 62–63.

51 For sacralization of Serbian victimhood in World War I, see Dubravka Stojanović, Teofil Pančić, and Todor Kuljić's review of Božidar Jezernik's book *Jugoslavija, zemlja snova* (Beograd: Biblioteka XX vek, 2018), in a December 3, 2018 radio broadcast and transcript, 33:55, Radio Peščanik, https://pescanik.net/jugoslavija-zemlja-snova-2/. Serb World War II trauma and its representation in the media under Milošević's regime is described by Žarana Papić as "a *re-invention of the*

In a situation in which a large part of Bosnian and Herzegovinian territory was swept by "ethnic cleansing," one event symbolized the rupture of relations between Bosnian Muslims and the other former Yugoslav nationalities. On September 27, 1993, the first Bosniak Council (*Prvi Bošnjački sabor*) was held, which brought together Muslim intellectuals and politicians in besieged Sarajevo. This gathering was the moment when the intellectual and political elites officially replaced the term Bosnian Muslim (which they probably judged too indeterminate of nationality due to its religious connotations), with the term Bosniak (*Bošnjak*), which was linked to the historical territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.[52] In his opening speech to this gathering, Alija Isaković, a key figure of the Bosnian Muslim intellectual elite, made reference to female rape victims:

> We are here now and there where we are not. With victims, with ruins, with devastated monuments, burned libraries, raped mothers and sisters, with pain. We will never forget this evil. The evil against our people and our land is shaped in such a manner and so expressively that this civilization will view it as a terrifying example which can be studied artistically and scientifically in order for humanity to learn and benefit from this experience, which has brought us so much harm.[53]

According to Philippe Poutignat and Jocelyne Streiff-Fenart, ethnicity can be regarded as a "sign of solidarity that appears as a response to discrimination and inequality, which in consequence reflects on the political consciousness of the group that aims to neutralize the logic of domination."[54] It follows that one of the building blocks of Bosnian Muslim/Bosniak national identity was victimhood. Of course, there are levels of victimhood, which are complicated by post-conflict economic and political tensions.

After reviewing the initial historical background and the fluid naming conventions of the Bosnian Muslims/Bosniaks, and highlighting the patriarchal component of the "state nationalism" that contributed to gender-based violence against women "other" than the Serbs, I will now turn to the construction of

---

chosen trauma at the level of *the public* political phenomenon and through state media," see Papić, "Europe after 1989," 133. Italics in original.

52 A video recording of the Sabor is available as "Bošnjački Sabor 1993," YouTube video, 1:54:55, posted by 212 Brdska Brigada Srebrenik, May 8, 2012, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d5vxpm6jhGM.

53 Ibid., 0:40:13–0:40:59.

54 Philippe Poutignat and Jocelyne Streiff-Fenart, *Teorije o etnicitetu* (Beograd: Biblioteka XX. vek, 1997), 115–116 as quoted in Jovo Bakić, "Teorijsko-istraživački pristupi etničkoj vezanosti (ethnicity), nacionalizmu i naciji," *Sociologija* 48, No. 3 (2006): 239.

post-genocide Muslim identity, and in particular female Muslim identity, in the light of what Skjelsbæk calls "the dual identity construction of rape victims as both gendered and ethnic."[55]

In her book *The Political Psychology of War Rape*, Skjelsbæk maps out various dimensions of the wartime rapes that took place in the 1990s in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Her fieldwork, and more specifically, her interviews with survivors of wartime rape, highlight some of the issues that also surface in Žbanić's films. Among these issues, one of the most important is the intersection of the social positions of ethnicity and gender, that is, the distinction between "ethnic and survivor versus gendered and victimized"[56] in the narratives of Skjelsbæk's interviewees:

> At the valued endpoint in their narrative – that is, the turning point in their stories about who they have become – they position themselves as Muslim, that is, Bosniak, women. My interpretation, therefore, is that the ethnic identity of the women is not openly discussed in their stories because it serves as the basic premise for their entire narrative.[57]

Skjelsbæk's interpretation aligns with the fact that rape victims were targeted in the first place because of their ethnic and gender identity.[58] The political character of the wartime sexual violence is obvious.[59] Besides assisting in the Serbs' political aims of "ethnic cleansing," terrorizing the Muslim population, and attacking individual/group identity, wartime rapes also – albeit unintentionally – had the consequence of reinforcing sentiments of national belonging of victims and those affiliated with them. "Positioning oneself as an ethnic victim of war violence therefore makes possible the construction of a survivor identity in the post-conflict aftermath."[60]

Portraying Motherhood, Violence and Victimhood

How is the survivor identity, or narrative, constructed in Jasmila Žbanić's films, whose broad themes are motherhood, sexual violence and

[55] Skjelsbæk, *The Political Psychology of War Rape*, 44.
[56] Ibid., 46.
[57] Ibid., 31.
[58] Ibid., 36.
[59] Ibid., 28.
[60] Ibid., 35.

victimhood? One way to look at the question is through the narrative structures of her films, and in the way survivors narrate their experiences. Skjelsbæk argues that the women she interviewed have two basic approaches to their narratives: chronological and non-chronological, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive. The narratives are influenced by the social setting (i.e. to whom the story is narrated, what elements are emphasized over others, etc.).[61]

Motherhood is a theme of several of Žbanić's films, in several forms. In one of her early works, the 2000 documentary *Red Rubber Boots*,[62] Žbanić follows Amor Mašović, the head of a team from the International Commission for Missing Persons (ICMP) in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Jasna P., a Bosnian Muslim woman who is looking for the remains of her deceased husband and her two children, four-year old Amar and his 9-month old sister Ajla. The objects by which Jasna P. hopes to identify her children are the red rubber boots that Amar was wearing on the day the children, along with 150 other people from Nevesinje in eastern Herzegovina, disappeared. Jasna's husband and children were taken to a camp by Bosnian Serb forces and gone missing. The short film sketches out an intimate story, and is representative of the struggle experienced by many Bosnians who had to look for the remains of their missing loved ones. The film offers one of the first visual narratives of the experiences of a surviving parent, who in this case is a mother. Jasna's story echoes those of other mothers, particularly from Srebrenica and Žepa, who in the 2000s emerged as a highly visible, pro-active group on Bosnia's political scene.[63] The mothers were often the sole survivors of their families. They actively monitored the work of the ICMP, attending exhumations of mass graves, identifying body remains, undergoing DNA testing and sometimes paying for information themselves in the hope of finding the remains of their family members.

In *Grbavica* (2006),[64] Žbanić tackles a different aspect of gender-based violence, one which targeted the reproductive systems of its victims. The main character, Esma, was raped during the war by several Bosnian Serb soldiers. She gave birth to a baby girl. Today, Esma and her adolescent daughter, Sara, live in Sarajevo. Esma is struggling to make a living as a waitress in a turbo-folk nightclub owned by a war profiteer. Sara is obsessed by her absent father, and frequently asks her mother whether she resembles him. Sara tells other kids that

61 Ibid., 26–27.

62 *Crvene gumene čizme*, 2000, documentary, 0:18:00, https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1288396.

63 For more on the topic, see Elissa Helms, *Innocence and Victimhood: Gender, Nation, and Women's Activism in Postwar Bosnia-Herzegovina* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2013).

64 *Grbavica*, 2006, feature, 1:35:00, https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0464029.

her father is a *šehid* (or *shaheed*), that is, a Bosnian Army fighter who gave up his life to defend Bosnia.[65] Sara's questions about her father gradually raise tensions with her mother Esma, because Esma does not want to tell her daughter that she was impregnated during a gang rape and does not know the identity of any of her rapists. The film depicts the difficulties faced by rape victims in reintegrating into daily life. Their trauma is amplified by routine contact with their social environment. Esma attends group therapy organized by an NGO with other women who receive a small compensation for their participation. This therapy bears a resemblance to another gathering of women – the *tevhid* (or *tawheed*) – a funeral ritual in which the dead are mourned with the incantation of Quranic verses. The *tevhid* serves the purpose of calming the mourners down, providing them with peace, and liberating them from fear.[66] During the siege of Sarajevo, the city's Grbavica neighborhood was under the control of the Bosnian Serb Army. The fact that Esma continues to live there reminds us that victims often remain attached to the place where they were victimized despite their pain.

Both films deal with the physical remains of loved ones. Jasna is searching for her children and her husband; Esma finds her missing and murdered father in one of the many mass graves that surround Sarajevo. The survivors are mostly women, which introduces another aspect into the survivors' inter-generational relationships. The women conceal the fact that they were raped from their mothers, in an attempt to spare their mothers from a form of victimization. Preserving their mothers from the horror leads the women to act like mothers to their own mothers, infantilizing them and at the same time behaving as good children should.[67]

The "moral acceptability" of a woman is something that surfaces in the interviews Skjelsbæk conducted. That concept sheds light on rape victims' understanding of their bodies as something that to a certain extent belongs to someone else. One interviewee refers to herself as "damaged goods" and hides her

---

[65] In Islamic theology, Shaheeds are people who have lost their lives while "on Allah's path" and have therefore been granted entry to heaven in the after-life. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, however, the term has a broader meaning, in which (mostly) Bosnian Muslim/Bosniak men, who were either killed in battle during the war or murdered, as in the Srebrenica genocide or other mass crimes, are recognized as Shaheeds, or martyrs. According to an IZBiH decision of January 23, 1995, the second day of the Ramadan Eid is the day of the martyrs and it is observed by family members visiting the cemeteries.

[66] In Zilka Spahić-Šiljak, ed., *Contesting Female, Feminist and Muslim Identities: Post-Socialist Contexts of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Kosovo* (Sarajevo: Centre for Interdisciplinary Studies UNSA, 2012), 268.

[67] Skjelsbæk, *The Political Psychology of War Rape*, 43.

experience from her husband.[68] The implication is that she perceives her body to be her husband's property,[69] and that her post-war body is different from her pre-war one.

In one scene in *Grbavica*, a drunken uniformed soldier, a foreigner, spills beer on the breasts of a hostess who is dancing for him in the club where Esma works. The scene shows how difficult it is for Esma to readjust to normal life. It reflects the re-traumatization that she experiences on a daily basis as she struggles to make ends meet, as a single mother in a misogynistic, economically deprived environment. The film provides insight into Esma's daily difficulties, and shows that in most cases the war led to the downward social mobility of the survivors. For instance, Esma's character was a promising medical student when the war started, but after the war she works in a factory and in the club.

In *On the Path* (2010),[70] Žbanić explores the loving relationship between Luna and her male partner Amar. Luna is trying to conceive (unsuccessfully), while Amar wanders onto "the path" of extreme Islamic religious ideology, which gradually tears the two lovers apart. Amar, at first a rather unstable, unemployed character with alcoholic tendencies, transforms himself into a strictly religious person, in stark contrast to his earlier personality. Unlike Žbanić's other productions described above, in this film war and the memory of the war are relegated to the background. Nevertheless, Luna's Muslim identity and that of her family are revealed in a scene of Eid festivities that take place at her maternal grand-mother's house. Some of Luna's relatives drink alcohol at one point during the family reunion. Amar, who until recently used to drink heavily himself, openly disapproves. He insists that Islam is incompatible with alcohol and that communism is to blame for its use. However, he is shunned by Luna's grandmother. Amar thunders: "It is not a coincidence that genocide happened to us, we [Muslims] are non-believers [*nevjernici*]. You should be celebrating Eid at your home in Bijeljina, but you let them [the Serbs] drive you out of your homes and slaughter you." At that point, Luna's grand-mother steps in and throws him out of her house. She decides how Eid will be celebrated in her home; although the grandfather is present, the grandmother is the head of the family. Amar's outburst reflects his belief that the genocide that happened to Bosnian Muslims must be some sort of punishment for their not behaving "properly" in the past. It emphasizes the passive, even feminine identity of Luna's family group, who were

68 Ibid., 44.
69 Ibid., 44.
70 *Na putu*, 2010, feature, 1:40:00, https://www.imdb.com/title/tt1156531.

unable to defend themselves and therefore bear responsibility for the violence perpetrated against them.

Amar stands out as someone who has difficulty finding his place in post-conflict Bosnian society, and who suddenly realizes that religion and a return to an imaginary tradition offer him a chance to restore his self-esteem, manhood, and a sense of belonging. He is willing to let Luna leave him – she openly opposes him – and accepts that they will never have a child together. He considers that a sin anyway, because they are not married.

Later on, we see Luna's emotional visit to her childhood home along with a friend, which resurrects her painful history of leaving the house and the city behind. When she looks at the house, she starts to cry. A little girl, maybe the same age as Luna was when she was forced to flee, asks her why she is crying. When Luna's friend replies for her that the house was once hers, the little girl asks why she left. Luna just pats her gently on the head and leaves.

Luna longs for motherhood, but her chances of getting pregnant are slipping away as she grows apart from Amar. The film is inscribed within a generational setting. She bathes her grand-mother like a baby, and thinks of her own mother, who was killed in the war. During the bath, her grandmother laments: "Men stand by their wives because of children. I should have had more children, instead I only had your mother. May God give her peace, my dear child." Luna wants a child and is actively going for medical treatment in order to achieve a pregnancy. Her grandmother warns her that unless a woman "produces" children, it is socially understandable, if not acceptable, that her male partner should leave her.

The female characters in Žbanić's films are wounded, yet they endure their lives in as purposeful a way as possible. Esma, Luna, Luna's grandmother, and the real-life Jasna P. are all struggling with the aftermath of the war. There are no options available to them other than to find the remains of their children (Jasna), to live for the child they love but did not choose to bear (Esma), or to somehow recast their mother as their daughter even as they try to overcome their body's resistance to pregnancy (Luna).

The 2013 feature film *For Those Who Can Tell No Tales* recounts a true story from a different perspective, that of Kym Vercoe, an Australian actor who decides to spend a summer holiday discovering Bosnia.[71] Vercoe's visit starts brightly in Sarajevo. It is a typical discovery trip of the country and is presented as a visual diary of her time there. She is reading the Yugoslav novel by Nobel Prize-winning author Ivo Andrić, *The Bridge on the Drina* (1945), so she decides

[71] *For Those Who Can Tell No Tales*, 2013, drama, 1:22:00, https://www.imdb.com/title/tt3074796.

to stop in Višegrad to see the famous bridge (which was built in about 1577). She watches a competition of jumping from the bridge into the river and strolls around the city. She books a room in the Vilina Vlas, a spa hotel recommended in a tourist guide book. During her overnight stay in the hotel she has trouble sleeping. In the days after her return to Australia, she discovers that the Vilina Vlas was a rape camp where some 200 Bosnian Muslim women were abused and that people were killed on the bridge and thrown in the Drina River. Back home, Vercoe tells her friends that she was surprised there were no memorials and no sign of the crimes that happened there during the war. She says: "I could not believe you could just clean up a space and pretend nothing ever happened. But I guess this is not surprising. This silence is denial."

Vercoe's experience raises a key issue in post-conflict Bosnia: the memory of the war and the silencing or negation/suppression of its memory. Even though Vercoe is a foreigner, her individual female experience reflects the memory of the war, first through her physical proximity to and body contact with the place (the bridge, the bed, sheets, veranda, etc.) and later through her realization that any reminder of what happened there is absent. The film's plot begins and ends in winter, like a loop linking the end and beginning of the story, with low-key coloration. Vercoe is interrogated by police officers because they find her suspicious – a lone foreign woman asking too many questions about the war. Her Serb interrogators may even have taken part themselves in the "ethnic cleansing" and rape of Višegrad's Muslims. Their impunity and their heroic status among their fellow Serbs, even though they are possible war criminals, indicates how persistent militarized masculinity is and how violence is glorified and normalized. Their glory contrasts with their victims' invisibility and the denial that persists today in Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially in places like Višegrad, where Serbs are the majority. The necessity of denial stems from the need to maintain existing power structures, which have been described by Papić as resulting from "ethnic/gendered power redistribution and the redefining of new ethnic and sub-ethnic categories."[72]

Conclusion

Gender-based violence in the case of Bosnian Muslim women exhibits a double character in the context of post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina. First off, the group identity assigned to the victims was the motivation for their

[72] "Žene u Srbiji: postkomunizam, rat i nacionalističke mutacije," in Papić, *Tekstovi 1977–2002*, 306.

being targeted. Following the trauma of war and rape, that identity is an even more inseparable part of their lives. Second, because the violence was intended to harm Bosnian Muslims as a group, the memory of gender-based violence participates in the construction of the post-conflict Bosnian Muslim identity. Because the memory of violence is incorporated into their group identity, the line between the individual victim's trauma and the patriarchal character of the "new" Bosnian Muslim group identity is blurred. The "new" Bosnian Muslim/Bosniak identity is based on a conglomerate of victimhood and rediscovered traditions in which the religious identity component has a significant place. Yet, the patriarchal character of the nationalism that created such violence continues to be overlooked.

Despite the success of *Grbavica* at the Berlinale film festival in 2006, and Žbanić's position as one of the foremost film directors in Bosnia, wartime rape, motherhood, and female sexuality in general remain marginalized in the daily political discourse and agenda of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Although the scale of wartime rape has been acknowledged to the public through the medialization of war crimes trials in the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina,[73] we would be mistaken to assume that a significant degree of social justice has been achieved.[74] Most rape victims, male and female, have not been recognized and do not receive medical treatment or psychological support of any sort.[75] The feminization of the Bosnian Muslim/Bosniak "body" that resulted from systemic gender-based violence and the low visibility of the issue within Bosnian Muslim/Bosniak culture highlight the asymmetric power relationships inherent in the deeply traumatic events experienced relatively recently. They result in their current peripheral role in the culture.[76]

All this must be understood, as indicated earlier, within a post-colonial context. Bosnia and Herzegovina was for most of its history under occupation by

---

73 Skjelsbæk, *The Political Psychology of War Rape,* 35.

74 The Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina was established in 2002 "to ensure the exercise of jurisdiction of the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina, respect for human rights and the rule of law in its territory." See Istorijat Suda BiH, Sud Bosne i Hercegovine, http://www.sudbih.gov.ba/stranica/86/pregled.

75 "Bosnia and Herzegovina," in *Amnesty International Report 2017/2018: The State of the World's Human Rights*, 95–96, https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/POL1067002018ENGLISH.PDF.

76 This applies to all those who do not "properly" fit the masculine image. I include both male and female victims. Although the topic of victimhood appears in nationalist rhetoric, the Prijedor victims and events at the Omarska and Trnopolje camps do not seem to be of particular concern to the Bosniak political elite.

the Ottoman Empire and a colony of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Today, it still lies on the margins of Europe and the international capitalist system. Bosnia's post-genocide transition from socialism to neo-liberal capitalism bears all the hallmarks of what David Harvey labels "accumulation by dispossession."[77] A wrecked, post-industrial territory, Bosnia and Herzegovina has been subject to the International Monetary Fund's readjustments and austerity measures since 2015. In the context of rapid and intensified privatization of the commons, such as its water distribution and healthcare systems, social and economic development is a challenge that coexists with the memories of violence described earlier.

In Jasmila Žbanić's films, acts of violence are never shown. Rather, the memory of violence is communicated through incidents from the characters' present day lives – which is something the survivors interviewed by Skjelsbæk also describe. The present-day economic uncertainty and the overwhelming trauma of the war make it increasingly difficult for Bosnian Muslims to re-adjust to life in post-conflict Bosnia and Herzegovina. All the films analyzed above address issues directly related to Bosnia's post-socialist, post-conflict condition.

As described above, Yugoslav women's engagement as partisan fighters and members of the resistance during World War II laid the foundation for the development of women's rights in socialist Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, despite its emancipatory policies, the Yugoslav state failed to address problems that even then were identified by feminists. These issues were deemed to be dangerously bourgeois, which limited the positive impact of such policies in the years before the disintegration of the Yugoslav state. In her essay "Europe after 1989: Ethnic Wars, the Fascistization of Civil Society and Body Politics in Serbia,"[78] Žarana Papić addressed the Serbs' politics of representation and the image of reality created by Milošević's media. The main theme of that propaganda, she explains, was the trauma of World War II. She writes: "[the] continuous visual representation of World War II on TV – starting with the exhumation of mass graves in Herzegovina – prepared the terrain for new mass graves much earlier than 1991."[79]

---

77 David Harvey, "The 'New' Imperialism: Accumulation by Dispossession," in *Socialist Register: The New Imperial Challenge*, Vol. 40, ed. Leo Panitch and Colin Leys (London: The Merlin Press, 2003), 63–87. For more on the topic, see Srećko Horvat and Igor Štiks, eds., *Welcome to the Desert of Post-Socialism: Radical Politics After Yugoslavia* (London, New York: Verso, 2014).

78 "Europa nakon 1989: etnički ratovi, fašizacija društvenog života i politika tijela u Srbiji," in Papić, *Tekstovi 1977–2002*, 343–372. An English translation was published as Žarana Papić, "Europe after 1989: Ethnic Wars, the Fascistization of Civil Society and Body Politics in Serbia," in *Thinking Differently: A Reader in European Women's Studies*, ed. Gabriele Griffin and Rosi Braidotti (London: Zed Books, 2002), 127–144.

79 Papić, "Europa nakon 1989," 353.

It is therefore always necessary to be wary of the potential use or abuse of historical memories of the perpetration of atrocities like the wartime rapes in Bosnia. The same applies to the historical development of Bosniak nationhood. As I have mentioned, during the Ottoman era, Bosnian Muslim/Bosniak identity was primarily based on class and religion. Bosnia and Herzegovina's colonial status under Austria-Hungary delayed the development of a specifically Bosniak group identity. The process only began after World War II and was deeply influenced by the violence perpetrated against Bosniaks in the 1990s. The memory of World War II played an important role in mobilizing the masses in Milošević's Serbia, which raises the question of how the memory of the war and genocide in Bosnia and Herzegovina might be used in Bosnian society in the years to come. Furthermore, the question that must be asked is how the gender-based nature of the Bosnian war violence will affect the patriarchal character of Bosnian society as a whole, in light of the hardships faced by wartime rape survivors.

2018 ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE PAG. 89–116
STUDIA TERRITORIALIA 2

PRESERVING THE POSTMEMORY OF THE GENOCIDE: THE ARMENIAN DIASPORA'S INSTITUTIONS IN PLOVDIV

GIUSTINA SELVELLI
ALPEN-ADRIA-UNIVERSITÄT KLAGENFURT

Abstract
This paper intends to shed light on the memory of the Armenian Genocide among the Armenian diaspora in Plovdiv, Bulgaria. I will focus on the patterns of promoting remembrance found in the local Armenian press and literature, on initiatives of the Armenian General Benevolent Union/Parekordzagan (AGBU) to celebrate the ninetieth and hundredth anniversaries of the Genocide, and on analyzing the cityscape of Plovdiv in terms of the monuments, the museum, and the cemetery of its Armenian community. To that end, I will employ information collected during interviews, articles from Plovdiv's main Armenian newspaper, and data I gathered while visiting the community's public spaces. I will demonstrate the importance of collective memory and remembrance of the Genocide to the preservation of the internal cohesion of the Armenian community of Plovdiv and its ethnic identity. Taking a socio-anthropological approach, I will argue that the maintenance and promotion of a specific "postmemory" of the Genocide depends heavily on the activities and initiatives of the main diaspora organization, the AGBU, on its selection of specific symbols, and on the emotional content of its communications.
Keywords: Armenian Genocide; Bulgaria; collective memory; commemorative practices; diaspora
DOI: 10.14712/23363231.2019.13

Dr. Giustina Selvelli is a postdoctoral researcher at the Department of Cultural Analysis, University of Klagenfurt. Address correspondence to Universitätsstraße 65–67, 9020 Klagenfurt, Austria. E-mail: Giustina.Selvelli@aau.at.

Introduction

In this article, I discuss the importance of the memory of the Armenian Genocide for the members of the Armenian diaspora living in the Bulgarian city of Plovdiv. I focus on the existence of an intergenerational memory of the traumatic experiences of the ancestors of those Plovdiv residents. Taking a socio-anthropological and an ethnographic approach to memory practices, I will argue that the Genocide is still an essential theme in the social, emotional and cultural life of the community, which corresponds to what Marianne Hirsch has called a "postmemory."[1] In the context of the Armenian diaspora, the bond of individual and family memories becomes trans-generational at the moment the older generation's bond is transmitted to the next generation through collective commemoration of the cultural trauma of the Genocide. To illustrate, I will highlight the celebrations that took place at the time of the centenary of the Armenian Genocide in 2015. The celebrations were an especially symbolic event into which Armenians worldwide invested their energies and efforts.[2] We witnessed increased attention to the theme of the Genocide in the press, its appearance as a debate topic during several cultural and social activities, the appearance of commemorative publications by the local Plovdiv publishing house, and more. The occasion of the centenary strengthened both intra-diasporic contacts and the Armenian community's relationship with non-Armenian groups (including Bulgarians and Turks). Widespread collective participation in acts of remembrance of the genocide enhanced the emotional bonds of the diaspora members, both locally and internationally, and increased the visibility of commemorative events. In turn, this advanced the cause of recognizing the Genocide as such and applied pressure on the Turkish government to follow suit. Remembrance activities and the display of symbols of the Genocide were common throughout the Armenian diaspora worldwide, especially in major cities such as Los Angeles, Toronto, Montreal, and Istanbul, besides of course in Armenia's capital, Yerevan. In Yerevan, delegations from nearly 60 countries attended an official ceremony of remembrance.[3]

---

1 Marianne Hirsch, "Generation of Postmemory," *Poetics Today* 29, No. 1 (Spring 2008): 103–128, doi: 10.1215/03335372-2007-019.

2 Sossie Kasbarian, "The Politics of Memory and Commemoration: Armenian Diasporic Reflections on 2015," *Nationalities Papers* 46, No. 1 (2018): 123–143, doi: 10.1080/00905992.2017.1347917.

3 Many of the commemorative events and practices have been researched by scholars of memory and the diaspora. See Kasbarian, "The Politics of Memory and Commemoration"; Duygu Gül Kaya, "Memory and Citizenship in Diaspora: Remembering the Armenian Genocide in Canada," *Citizenship Studies* 22, No. 4 (2018): 401–418, doi: 10.1080/13621025.2018.1462503; Duygu Gül

In my analysis I will consider the different types of "memory sites," that is, the places where the tragedy of the past is remembered. It has been said that "in every society we can identify an array of memory sites or places of commemorative record and practice where remembrance anchors the past." These are categorized as "topographical places (archives, libraries, museums); monumental places (cemeteries, architectural edifices); symbolic places (commemorative rites, pilgrimages, emblems); functional places (manuals, autobiographies, associations); and places of power (states, elites, milieux)."[4]

In line with this classification, I will cite as an example of a topographical place the so-called "small museum" of the Genocide in the Plovdiv church crypt; as monumental places, the town's cemetery and its monuments recalling the genocide; as symbolic places, the residents' marches in commemoration of the Genocide; and as functional places, the activities and press releases of the Armenian General Benevolent Union (AGBU), the main diaspora organization worldwide, commemorating the hundredth anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. I will omit analysis of the places of power, limiting myself to highlighting the role of the AGBU as the main philanthropic, cultural and political organ of the Armenian diaspora in Bulgaria.[5]

In terms of organization, Section One describes the theoretical approaches that I employed in researching Hirsch's concept of "postmemory" in the context of the inter-generational transmission of a cultural memory of the Genocide and its correlation to Assmann's distinction between communicative and cultural memory.[6] Section Two outlines the history of the Armenian diaspora in Bulgaria and Plovdiv, highlighting the role of the city of Plovdiv in the peaceful

---

Kaya, "100 Voices after 100 years: Remembering the Armenian Genocide in Diaspora," *Popular Communication* 16, Vol. 2 (2018): 128–140; among others.

4 Uli Linke, "Collective Memory, Anthropology of," in the *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, Vol. 4, ed. James D. Wright, 2nd edition (Oxford: Elsevier, 2005), 181–187.

5 The Plovdiv Armenian community is the most important and organized Armenian community in Bulgaria, in particular because of the presence of an Armenian school and the long history of the Armenian community there, which dates back to the ninth century or earlier. The community is well integrated into the host society, and enjoys a high level of education. It contributes in quite a significant way to the socioeconomic and cultural life of the city of Plovdiv.

6 This concept has already been employed in many works dealing with the memory of the Armenian genocide. See, for example, Lisa Ann Gulesserian, "'Because If the Dead Cannot Live, Neither Do We': Postmemory And Passionate Remembering in Micheline Aharonian Marcom's Armenian Genocide Trilogy" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 2015); Derya Fırat et al., "Postmemory of the Armenian Genocide: A Comparative Study of the 4th Generation in Turkey and Armenia," *Oral History/Forum d'histoire orale* 37 (Special Issue on Generations and Memory: Continuity and Change) (2017), http://www.oralhistoryforum.ca/index.php/ohf/article/view/626/702.

development of Armenian culture and institutions. In Section Three, I analyze a number of "functional places," in the form of publications commemorating the centenary of the Armenian Genocide, produced by the Plovdiv branch of the AGBU and its newspaper *Parekordzagani Tzain*, which include personal stories and poems on the topic. In Section Four, I continue the analysis of functional places, examining some of the publications issued by the Armenian publishing house Armen Tur, which is closely linked to the AGBU. In particular, I focus attention on the novel *His Guiding Hand to Serve My People* by the Armenian-Bulgarian writer Suren Vetsigian. I emphasize that novel's value as a survivor's direct testimony. Section Five deals with "symbolic places," that is, social and cultural events involving collective participation by the diaspora, such as the march held at the time of the centenary, a theater performance about the Genocide, and a public reading of excerpts from novels by Armenian authors. In Section Six, I devote attention to the "Turkish factor," the question of recognition of the Armenian genocide by the Turkish government, and the legacy of Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrank Dink for Armenian and Bulgarian audiences. In Section Seven, I describe examples of "monumental" places of memory, such as Plovdiv's Armenian cemetery and its local monuments, including a *khachkar* (an Armenian cross-stone) dedicated to the Genocide. In Section Eight, I focus on a "topographical" place, the "small museum" of the Genocide, which is filled with objects carried by survivors as they escaped into Bulgaria from Ottoman territory. Finally, in the last section before the conclusion, Section Nine, I discuss the importance of the "imaginary" factor, the role of personal imaginations of the lost territory of the ancestral Armenian homeland as a specific factor that encourages a relationship between the Armenian community in Plovdiv and present-day Turkey and the independent Republic of Armenia.

1. The Postmemory of the Armenian Genocide

In considering the patterns that perpetuate the memory of the Genocide in Armenian communities around the world, it is important to remember that official commemorations of the Genocide have only taken place since the fiftieth anniversary of the event, that is, since 1965. Nevertheless, the memory of the Genocide affected the diaspora long before that date. The political context (including limitations on minorities' freedom of expression imposed by the Soviet Union) and practical and psychological factors (such as the concentration of the worldwide diaspora's energies and resources on their integration into their host countries) inhibited public discussion of the topic.

Since the fiftieth anniversary, the survivors of the Genocide, together with their children and grandchildren, have finally been able to break down the "wall of silence" that blocked the expression of their memories in the previous decades. That is why, after half a century, many young Armenians became more engaged in political activities and demonstrations, after being exposed in an "intergenerational way" to a cultural trauma that left "indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever, and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways."[7] Since 2015, the specific "pattern of functioning" of the Armenian diaspora has become rooted in its continuous engagement with the trauma of the 1915 Genocide. According to the famous Romanian-Armenian writer Varujan Vosganian, the author of the novel *The Book of Whispers,* memory has become for the Armenians "more important than both death and life."[8]

More than one hundred years after the tragic events of 1915, and after the 2015 centenary that was a symbolic moment of unity and of remembrance of the Genocide worldwide, it is appropriate to ask ourselves how the memory of the Genocide is being carried on by later generations, the children and grandchildren of the descendants of the survivors. In this respect, the concept of the "generation of postmemory," elaborated by Marianne Hirsch, is helpful. In her work, Hirsch used that term to refer to the generation that follows the one that experiences a trauma. She describes the second generation's relationship to the tragic events witnessed by their parents as a deep and emotional experience for them as well, which constitutes a memory in its own right.[9]

However, in the case of the Armenian Genocide, the memory extends far beyond the first generation of survivors' descendants, which proves that family memory can be reproduced and transmitted into the minds and hearts of much later generations. In my view, this is possible because of the persistence of individual stories, images, and narratives, not only within the family setting but also through "affiliative" forms of postmemory[10] and more "institutionalized," exteriorized examples of cultural memory.[11] The AGBU contributes in a major way

---

7 Richard G. Hovannisian, "The Armenian Genocide and Patterns of Denial," in The Armenian Genocide in *Perspective. Cultural and Ethical Legacies*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Books, 1986), 111–133, here 113.

8 David Gaunt, "'Memory is More Important Than Death and Life': 100 Years After the Armenian Genocide", *Baltic Worlds* 7, No. 2–3 (September 2014): 9–11.

9 Hirsch, "Generation of Postmemory," 105–107.

10 Ibid., 115.

11 Jan Assmann, "Communicative and Cultural Memory," in *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, ed. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), 109–118.

to that process.[12] This transnational diasporic organization, founded in Cairo in 1906, and present on Bulgarian territory since 1910, operates in close cooperation with the Armenian Apostolic Church. Its Bulgarian branch holds an open dialogue and maintains strong ties with AGBU branches all over the world.[13] The AGBU's headquarters are in New York, and it is present in 23 countries of the diaspora. In promoting discourse and memory practices of the Genocide among the Armenian diaspora in Plovdiv, the AGBU has a dual role, one that is at once political (collective representation of the Armenian community) and spiritual (linked to the authority of the Armenian Apostolic Church).[14] The AGBU stands out as the main actor capable of channeling an intergenerational, collective trauma. It actively works to transform family experiences and traumas into a transgenerational form of memory, embedded in a shared symbolic system of signification and in a powerful "collective imaginary."

The work of the AGBU allows the later descendants of survivors to connect deeply to the injustices suffered by their ancestors, and to fully identify with their suffering. This connection is strengthened by the ongoing refusal of the Turkish authorities and the majority of Turkish public opinion to recognize the reality of the Genocide. The activity and the discourse supported by the AGBU and its representatives increase the internal cohesion of the Armenian community and promote the preservation of its memory of the Genocide. This implies the acceptance by the community of a symbolic frame,[15] a sort of national aware-

---

[12] The president of this non-profit organization in Plovdiv is Rupen Tchavushian. Its members (including the journalists of the AGBU bulletin, *Parekordzagani Tzain*) work on a voluntary basis. The AGBU is aligned politically with the Armenian political party Ramgavar (the Armenian Democratic Liberal Party), which holds liberal, free-market views, unlike the Dashnaktsutiun party (the Armenian Revolutionary Federation) whose leftist orientation is represented in Plovdiv by the "rival" Armenian newspaper *Vahan*. See Giustina Selvelli, "The Role of the Newspaper *Parekordzagani Tzain* and its Related Institutions in the Preservation of Language and Identity in the Armenian Community of Plovdiv," *Bulletin of Transylvania University of Braşov (Series IV – Philology and Cultural Studies)* Vol. 11 (60), No. 1 (2018): 199–222.

[13] The AGBU was abolished during the 45 years of communist rule in Bulgaria and was replaced by the Yerevan Association. It re-started its activities in 1991. Surprisingly, Bulgaria is now the country of the world with the second highest number of AGBU branch offices (after the United States), which are located in the cities of Burgas, Dobrich, Haskovo, Plovdiv, Ruse, Silistra, Sliven, Sofia, Varna, and Yambol.

[14] Another diaspora organization present in Plovdiv is the philanthropic and humanitarian Armenian Relief Society (H.O.M.), which nevertheless plays a marginal role compared to the powerful AGBU. For Armenian diaspora institutions worldwide, see Khachig Tölölyan, "Elites and Institutions in the Armenian Transnation," *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 9, No. 1 (Spring 2000), 107–136, doi: 10.1353/dsp.2000.0004.

[15] Anthony D. Smith, *Ethno-Symbolism and Nationalism: A Cultural Approach* (London: Routledge, 2009).

ness that is activated on specific occasions for interaction between the members of the community. Commemorations are a necessary component of Armenian life, in the absence of which the acts of the perpetrators of genocide would be legitimated. Armenians "who want to be ethical, are, so to say, doomed to commemorate," to such an extent that the survivors' descendants have a particular "post-genocide mode of being."[16]

To analyze the complex phenomenon of the remembrance of the Armenian Genocide, I will employ a combination of sociological, anthropological and ethnographic approaches. The first approach is derived from theories about the sociology of collective memory introduced by Pierre Nora,[17] and then elaborated by Marianne Hirsch,[18] and Eviatar Zerubavel.[19] These theories take into consideration the importance of the discourse, practices and sites around which and through which memory is affirmed and made present as a tool to strengthen the bonds of a social collectivity. The anthropological approach affirms the importance of symbols and rituals in the construction and maintenance of national and ethnic identities.[20] It underlines the role of emotions in the creation of cultures and memories.[21] The ethnographic approach makes use of observations of study participants and the space they inhabit, as well as a specific form of textual analysis, which I call the "ethnography of text." This third approach is drawn from "Writing Culture," as described by James Clifford and George E. Marcus.[22] It takes into consideration written sources produced by the community itself on a particular topic, with attention to the ways that discourse is produced by different actors and what the culture wants to say about itself. From this point of view, not only articles published by the AGBU's newspaper are useful, but so are the inscriptions on the monuments in the public space in Plovdiv. I have observed both for an extended, "iterative" period of time, spanning more than

---

16 Serafim Seppälä, "The 'Temple of Non-Being' at Tsitsernakaberd and Remembrance of the Armenian Genocide: An Interpretation," *Approaching Religion* 6, No. 2 (2016): 26–39, doi: 10.30664/ar.67589.

17 Pierre Nora, ed., *Les Lieux de mémoire*, Vol. I (Paris: Gallimard, 1997 [1984]).

18 Hirsch, "Generation of Postmemory."

19 Eviatar Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004).

20 See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso, 1983); Anthony P. Cohen, *Symbolic Construction of Community* (London: Tavistock, 1985).

21 Renato Rosaldo, *Culture & Truths: The Remaking of Social Analysis* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993).

22 James Clifford and George E. Marcus, eds., *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1986).

eight years.[23] My contribution to the remembrance of the Genocide relies on different sources and varying levels of analysis in order to document how the discourse of the Genocide is constructed.

2. The Armenian Genocide and the Diaspora in Bulgaria

For Armenian official historiography, based on collective as well as personal narratives, the watershed in recent Armenian history is the tragic persecution of the Armenians in the last years of the Ottoman Empire, which began with the so-called "Hamidian Massacres" in 1894–1896.[24] The 1915–1918 Genocide counted up to 1.5 million Armenian victims. In the years between 1922 and 1926, hundreds of thousands of Armenians left the Turkish territories and formed a worldwide diaspora. After Emperor Boris III of Bulgaria decided to open his country's borders to them, tens of thousands of Armenians arrived in neighboring Bulgaria. They settled especially in the city of Plovdiv.[25] While some of them continued on to destinations such as France, the United States, and Canada, others remained in Plovdiv to start a new life.

With the influx of new refugees, Plovdiv confirmed its multiethnic urban character.[26] The city was fertile ground for the development of important cultural institutions that preserve to this day the ethnolinguistic identity of Armenians, who have been present in Bulgaria since very early times.[27] Bulgaria achieved autonomy within the Ottoman Empire as early as 1876 and had offered shelter to its Armenian community since the time of the Hamidian persecutions. A rhetoric and discourse of interethnic solidarity emerged at that time,[28] fostered by

---

[23] My first contact with the Armenian diaspora of Plovdiv dates back to 2010, when I spent one year of fieldwork with the community as I prepared my Master's thesis. My work has been uninterrupted since then, thanks to my frequent stays in the city in the following years, my personal and professional relationships with various members of the community, and my reading of its publications, mainly the newspaper *Parekordzagani Tzain* and books issued by the local publishing house, Armen Tur.

[24] Boris Adjemian and Mikaël Nichanian, "Repenser les 'massacres hamidiens': la question du precedent," in *Études armeniennes contemporaines*, No. 10 (2018): 7–18, doi: 10.4000/eac.1385.

[25] Evgeniya Mitseva, *Armentsite v Bŭlgariia – Kultura i identičnost* (Sofia: IMIR, 2001), 18.

[26] Angel Wagenstein, *Dalech ot Toledo. Avram Kŭrkacha* (Sofia: Colibrì, 2002).

[27] See Dimitra Aslanian, *Storia della Bulgaria dall'antichità ai giorni nostri* (Milano: La Casa di Matriona, 2007); Janet Hamilton and Bernard Hamilton, *Christian Dualist Heresies in the Byzantine World, c.650–c.1450* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1998), 71–75. An Armenian school (Tiutiundjian) was founded in 1834, and several Armenian periodicals had seen the light of day as early as the second part of the nineteenth century.

[28] Stepan A. Agukian, *Otzvutsite na Armenskiia Genotsid v Bŭlgarskiia Pechat* (Sofia: Publication of the National Committee "80 Years from the Armenian Genocide," 1995).

the fact that the Bulgarians had themselves been victims of Ottoman violence (as in the case of the famous "Bulgarian horrors" committed by the Turks, which were reported to the Western world in the 1870s).[29] The difficult common situation of the Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire for more than 400 years contributed to the Bulgarians' solidarity and empathy towards the Armenian population, whom they perceived as innocent victims of an "Oriental" injustice that continues to this very day. In Bulgaria, Armenians always stood out as a particularly educated and skilled community, whose members were active as merchants, craftsmen, doctors, jewelers, etc. and occupied a prominent role in the host society. It is not surprising that the institutional discourse of the Armenian diaspora flourished in Plovdiv, given that Bulgaria's policies, practices and ideology were particularly sensitive to the welfare of this community.

Already by the 1890s, the Bulgarian press was publishing articles about the most important events in the country's Armenian colony, informing Bulgarians about the customs and traditions of the Armenian community, praising its refined, ancient culture and utilizing a discourse of solidarity. For example, in 1881 the local newspaper *Maritsa* wrote: "The Armenians have never been our opponents; on the contrary, we have continually received moral support from their press and their influential media." Similarly, Plovdiv's Bulgarian-language newspaper commented in 1890 that the Armenian nation, despite several attempts at its annihilation and assimilation, had managed to survive and keep its identity alive, "when instead many neighboring nations, incomparably stronger...have disappeared from the face of the earth." After the first massacres involving thousands of Armenians took place in the mid-1890s on Ottoman soil, the Bulgarian press wrote several articles about the crimes, affirming that "these new, horrendous crimes, worse than the previous ones, have come to show us what an Asian government is capable of, a savage sultan."[30]

Similar manifestations of solidarity emerged after the genocide.[31] Photos and articles mentioned in a brochure published by Stepan Agukian for the

---

[29] Marco Dogo, *Storie Balcaniche. Popoli e Stati nella transizione alla modernità* (Gorizia: Casa Editrice Goriziana, 1999), 50.

[30] All quotes are from Hripsime Erniasian, "90 godini ot armenskiia genotsid. Chronika na otzivite ot sŭbitieto," *Parekordzagani Tzain*, No. 65 (April 2005).

[31] When referring to the intercultural contacts between the two countries, we cannot forget the famous "Armentsi" poem written at the beginning of the twentieth century by Peyo Yavorov, one of the most famous Bulgarian poets, to honor the Armenian victims of the Hamidian persecutions of the late 1800s. The poem is a moving example of Armenian-Bulgarian brotherhood, which remains carved into the consciousness of both peoples. From their side, the Armenians have expressed their gratitude to their adoptive country in a variety of ways in the course of

eightieth anniversary of the Armenian genocide in 1995 testify to how Bulgarian newspapers helped to increase the awareness of the general public of the persecutions against Armenians in the collapsing Ottoman Empire.[32] More than a century after those tragic events, it is extremely important for Armenians to know that the fate of their ancestors has found sympathy and resonance in the newspapers of the country which has become their second homeland. Any word written on this topic is received as a sign of support for their community and recognition of the Genocide of which their people were victims. It is concrete proof of a historical truth that cannot be erased. It is no coincidence that Turkish authorities have tried to destroy the evidence of their crimes by eliminating any written testimony or archived text about the horrors that were committed, together with any trace of Armenian cultural heritage in the areas from which the Armenian population was cruelly and tragically expunged. The erasure of the thousand-year history and the cultural presence of the Armenian people in the former Ottoman territories, together with Turkey's official denial of the Genocide, is a source of deep feelings of injustice for Armenians, which still continue to be experienced with intense frustration.[33]

3. The Armenian Genocide in the Newspaper *Parekordzagani Tzain*

At the time of the Genocide, not only Bulgarian newspapers devoted attention to it. So did the Armenian press, which had been active in Bulgaria since the second half of the nineteenth century.[34] Nowadays, the affairs of the Armenian community in Plovdiv are covered by the biweekly *Parekordzagani Tzain*, published by the charitable association AGBU since 2004. The topic of the Genocide is a recurrent one in the pages of this newspaper. The reporting is especially transnational in scope because of the relationships among the diaspora communities in different countries (above all Romania, Turkey, the United States, and

---

the last century. One example is a short video released in 2018 in various media, in which the Bulgarian Armenians turned to their "adoptive" Balkan country, declaring profound gratitude for its hospitality and solidarity. See "Bŭlgarskite armentsi blagodarikha na rodinata si Bŭlgariia (video)," 0:01:12, April 24, 2018, https://www.blitz.bg/obshtestvo/blgarskite-armentsi-blagodarikha-na-rodinata-si-blgariya-video_news595707.html.

32 Agukian, *Otzvutsite na Armenskiia Genotsid*.

33 See Aldo Ferrari, "Viaggio nei luoghi della memoria armena in Turchia e Azerbaigian," *LEA – Lingue e letterature d'Oriente e d'Occidente* 5 (2016): 179–192, here 185, doi: 10.13128/LEA-1824-484x-20031.

34 Garo Hayrabedian, "Armenskiiat periodichen pechat v Bŭlgariia," *Bŭlgarska Etnografiia*, No. 3–4 (1994): 105.

Canada) and with the Republic of Armenia, which has established a government ministry for the diaspora.[35] In political terms, the difficult issue of the relationship with Turkey and its denial of the Genocide is very present in the discussions of Plovdiv's intellectuals and community representatives. It is particularly evident in the pages of the local press, although the tone of the reporting started to change after 2015.[36]

In comparison with the other local Armenian publication, *Vahan*,[37] *Parekordzagani Tzain* focuses less on contemporary political issues. Rather, it reports on events in the Armenian communities of Plovdiv and other Bulgarian cities, and on the many social and cultural activities of the AGBU around the world. Since its founding, *Parekordzagani Tzain* has been the main channel for promoting and sharing initiatives and commemorations of the Genocide with the Plovdiv community. It also contributes to organizing fundraising activities aimed at erecting monuments dedicated to Genocide victims and mobilizing resources for practical initiatives, as in the following announcement from 2015:

> On April 24th, we will mark 100 years since the Genocide against the Armenians! In connection with this, we are collecting the means to mark this tragic anniversary, which we will express through various informative tools – billboards, banners, posters and more. We encourage in the sincerest way anyone interested in supporting this noble initiative according to his or her possibilities.[38]

On this occasion, the AGBU branch in Plovdiv promoted display of the "forget-me-not" flower, a symbol that was chosen as a sign of remembrance of the Genocide by the diaspora worldwide. The following sentences appeared along with the flower: "I remember and condemn. I remember and I demand. I live and I remember. I live and I demand." The display of the forget-me-not confirms that the Armenian diaspora's existence is ontologically dependent on the

---

35 Khachig Tölölyan and Taline Papazian, "Armenian Diasporas and Armenia: Issues of Identity and Mobilization," *Études armeniennes contemporaines*, No. 3 (2014): 83–101.

36 Many Armenians now feel that there is a need to focus on topics other than the Genocide, in order not to be "stuck in the past," in a "victim mentality."

37 *Vahan* has been issued since 1991, on a weekly basis.

38 Original in Bulgarian: "Скъпи сънародници, На 24 април тази година, се навършват 100 години от Геноцида над арменците! Във връзка с това, набираме средства за отбелязване на тази трагична годишнина, която ще изразим чрез различни информационни средства – билбордове, транспаранти, плакати и други. Молим найучтиво, всички желаещи, според своите възможности, да подпомогнат това благородно начинание." The announcement appeared in *Parekordzagani Tzain*, No. 147 (January 2015).

memory of its past, that is, on remembrance of the sufferings and tragedy experienced by its ancestors.

Among the many initiatives to commemorate the events of 1915–1918, a competition was launched in the pages of *Parekordzagani Tzain* in early 2015. Its aim was to confer an award on a text (a piece of prose, an essay, a poem, or a dramaturgical work) written on the theme of the hundredth anniversary of the Genocide. As a result, several poems were published in issue 152 of the newspaper.[39] They are all in the Bulgarian language and were written by Plovdiv citizens (probably all of them of Armenian origin, although we cannot state that with certainty) as well as by authors from other Bulgarian cities. Among them, we find an extremely touching poem written by a 14-year-old girl of Armenian ancestry from Plovdiv, whose name is Vartuhi Erdeklian. The title of the composition is "Pomnia" ("I Remember"):

> And how many Armenians were not born?
> Wanderers tossed away in foreign worlds
> Starting over from scratch, on their way they marched
> creating our forefathers, up to what we are now
>
> Today – now we are here
> The resettlers from the genocide survivors
> One to the East, the other to the West
> The heirs of those who chose to live
>
> Nobody dies after his death
> As long as the memory remains with the living ones
> As long as somebody wakes up with his name
> And goes to sleep with a smile for his deeds
>
> From my eyes tears flow
> ... Tears of joy they are
> Because I know who were my ancestors
> And I remember ... And do you remember too?[40]

[39] *Parekordzagani Tzain*, No. 152 (May 2015).

[40] "А колко арменци се не родиха? / Скиталци захвърлени в чужди светове / Започвайки от нула по своя път пробиха / Предците ни до това което сме. // Днес – сега сме ние тук / На спасените от геноцида преселници / Един на изток, на запад – друг / Избрали живота наследници. // Никой след смъртта се не умира / Щом спомена със живите е / Щом някой

This poem manifests quite explicitly the intergenerational transmission of the trauma, the creative force of "postmemory" in later generations, and the relevance of "affiliative" acts carried out by institutions that are aimed at the "re-individualization" of cultural memory.[41] A 14-year old girl is likely to be no less than a great-grandchild of a Genocide survivor, but this does not imply that her experience of postmemory is less intense than that of the generations preceding her. Her composition is also evidence that, although Armenians around the world are divided in many ways, there is one thing that unites them: the goal of keeping alive the memory of the catastrophe that traumatized their families.[42]

The fact that this text was published along with many others in the pages of *Parekordzagani Tzain* also proves the extent to which a "communicative memory" handed down privately through the generations can be transformed into a "cultural memory."[43] Armenians take advantage of "institutional" channels to create images, monuments, and other forms of commemoration that express the communal, shared identity of the diaspora. I believe that with regard to the memory of the genocide in the Armenian community, the border between individual and collective suffering is quite blurred. In the year 2015, an increasing number of articles were published in *Parekordzagani Tzain* that were devoted to the memories and personal stories of the descendants of Genocide survivors.

An example of this is a text that appeared in issue 151 of the newspaper with the title "Memories of Haiganush: A Story of the Fate of My Parents During the Armenian Genocide (1915–1922)," written by Haiganush Dzhezarlian. In her article, the author recalls the life of her parents in the city of Van, their daily activities and their contacts with other communities such as Kurds and Turks before the genocide. She then recounts the terrible vicissitudes her mother and father experienced before they managed to settle and find refuge in the Bulgarian city of Varna. The story is written in a lucid and quite essentialist way, but nonetheless, as a personal narrative, it has the power to involve the reader in a touching, emotional family story. An important fact is that this private, individual story is connected to the general history and fate of the Armenian nation, which allows it to channel a flow of empathy, participation, and identification. All Armenians can identify themselves with such tragic narratives. When they

---

се буди със неговото име / И с усмиква за делата му заспива. // От очите ми бликват сълзи /...сълзи на щастие са те / Защото знам какви са моите предци / И помня... а помниш ли и ти?" Author's translation – G. S.

41 Hirsch, "Generation of Postmemory," 115.

42 See Gaunt, "'Memory is More Important than Death and Life,'" 10.

43 Assmann, "Communicative and Cultural Memory."

are published, the sense of community is affirmed and strengthened. That sense becomes a valuable tool for soothing the wounds and traumas of the inter-generational experience of the Genocide. At the same time, the memories recall vanished traces of a lost homeland: the territory and cultural coordinates of historical Armenia, or "Western Armenia," where the city of Van on the shores of Lake Van occupied a special place.

4. AGBU Publishing Activities

AGBU's publishing house, Armen Tur, is aimed at promoting the works of Armenian literature in Bulgaria. It plays a fundamental role in the commemoration of the Genocide and assists in creating a shared national and cultural memory. The publishing house and its promotion of Armenian literature predate the founding of the newspaper itself, having been established around the end of the 1990s. Among the books it has published are important literary works related to the Genocide, such as a novel by Soviet Armenian writer Khachik Dashtents (1910–1974), which appeared in Bulgarian in 2003 under the title *Zovŭt na orachite* (*Call of Plowmen*),[44] and one by Suren Vetsigian (1905–1961), *Voden ot Boga v sluzhba na naroda si* (*His Guiding Hand to Serve My People*), published in 2001.[45]

Both authors were born within the borders of the Ottoman Empire, in so-called Western Armenia (which corresponds geographically to the Eastern part of Turkey). In both novels, they share their personal experiences during the tragic years of the genocide. After escaping the massacres, Dashtents spent the rest of his life in Soviet Armenia. Vetsigian lived in Greece, Bulgaria and the United States, and eventually returned to settle in Plovdiv, in the country that had first granted him asylum. Vetsigian became a prominent member of the local Armenian community in Plovdiv. He was the director of the Armenian school, as well as a journalist and writer. Furthermore, he used his experience as a survivor of the Genocide to inspire his mission of nurturing and preserving a sense of "Armenianness" among members of the diaspora.

In the preface to his novel, Vetsigian says that he wrote it in the hope that it would contribute to shedding light on the story of a "near, unlucky nation." His motivation was to inform about the historical truth of what happened to the Armenian people during the last years of the Ottoman Empire and to give

[44] Khachik Dashtents, *Zovŭt na orachite* (Plovdiv: Armen Tur, 2003).
[45] Suren Vetsigian, *Voden ot Boga v sluzhba na naroda si* (Plovdiv: Armen Tur, 2001).

a response to books written by the Turks that provide a distorted view of historical events. Vetsigian was still a boy when the massacres occurred in his native town of Shabin Karahisar. He resisted his adverse circumstances with extraordinary strength. In his novel, the emotions of a teenager, who is catapulted from one place to another after surviving a genocide in which he lost everything and everyone, are portrayed sympathetically when he comes into contact with the symbolically strong elements of Armenian culture. For example, at a certain point he finds himself in an old Armenian monastery holding in his hands an ancient Armenian manuscript. Fourteen years after its first appearance, the Armen Tur publishing house issued an English translation of the book. In fact, the author had originally written the book in English, and the AGBU of Plovdiv decided to make it available for the first time in a digital format online.[46]

This publishing initiative was linked to the commemorations of the hundredth anniversary of the Armenian Genocide of 1915 and was aimed at reaching a wider audience and giving visibility to an important work that has not received the consideration it deserves. In the AGBU's vision, when one remembers the victims of the genocide one should not forget the memory of those who organized active resistance, as in the case of the town of Shabin Karahisar, as described in Vetsigian's novel.[47] Vetsigian enriches his narrative of the tragic events with historical facts that reveal Armenians to be not only victims, but also fighters.

In addition to the English translation of Vetsigian's novel, another book was published to coincide with the hundredth anniversary, a Bulgarian translation of the novel *Among the Ruins* (*Sred Razvalinite*) by Zabel Yesayan. This work deals with the massacres of Armenians in the Anatolian city of Adana in 1909, which the author herself witnessed. It documents the destructiveness of the pogroms waged against the defenseless Armenian population, in what was a prelude to the genocide carried out by the Young Turks. Yesayan herself was persecuted and was the only woman among the Armenian intellectuals who were deported from Istanbul to Anatolia on April 24, 1915 at the beginning of the Genocide. She was able to escape and fled first to Bulgaria and then to the Caucasus, where she worked with other refugees who had survived the massacres. She continued to document the consequences of the persecution of the Armenians.

---

[46] Souren M. Vetsigian, *Autobiography: His Guiding Hand to Serve My People* (Plovdiv: Armen Tur, 2014). The book is available to read at http://issuu.com/agbuplovdiv/docs/souren_vetsigian.

[47] See Donald Bloxham, "Determinants of the Armenian Genocide," in *Looking Backward, Moving Forward: Confronting the Armenian Genocide*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2003), 43.

While narrating the tragic events of the genocide, all these novels describe the Armenian component of the Ottoman cultural landscape, reconstructing the patterns of existence of a past world that has been totally wiped out in those territories. Similar to what has been said about Jewish narratives about their lost homelands in Europe, this literature not only preserves the image of past circumstances in a nostalgic way, it brings them into the present and "gives them cultural significance well beyond that of historically concrete sites."[48] As a consequence, we can see that "myths emerge almost naturally here, as the sense of loss acquires permanence."[49] Obviously, myths are not the same as "invented stories" but rather are images, words and narratives capable of evoking more than just bare facts. They have symbolic strength themselves and generate a potentiated imaginary of the past. The bitter history of the lost ancestral territories of the Armenians has turned into a myth for the Armenian people. It is "remembered, narrated, and used, that is, woven into the fabric of the present."[50] That is the reason why these narratives are a proper object of socio-anthropological investigation. In the collective memory of the Armenian people, they have acquired a value beyond mere historiography. The AGBU's publishing and promoting of these literary works is connected to a desire to transmit the cultural and identitarian memory of the Genocide in line with its mission of perpetuating "post-memory" among future generations of Armenians in the diaspora.

5. The Commemoration of the Armenian Genocide in Plovdiv

Commemorations of the Genocide take place on April 24, the day of the first organized deportation in 1915 of the Armenian intellectual class from what was then known as Constantinople to the city of Ankara. This deportation was the prelude to large-scale massacres of nearly the entire Armenian population.[51] The main strategist behind the persecution of the Armenians was the Ottoman Minister of the Interior, Talaat Pasha, who was a member of the movement of the Young Turks.[52] The Armenian massacres have been recognized as genocide by twenty-nine countries, as well as by various international organizations and

[48] Iwona Irwin Zarecka, *Frames of Remembrance: The Dynamics of Collective Memory* (New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 1994), 92.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Jan Assmann, *Moses the Egyptian: The Memory of Egypt in Western Monotheism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997), 9–10.
[51] Raymond Kévorkian, *The Armenian Genocide. A Complete History* (London: Tauris, 2006), 251.
[52] George Deukmejian, "Introduction," in *The Armenian Genocide: History, Politics, Ethics*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (Basinstoke: Macmillian, 1992), XII.

institutions including the United Nations (1985) and the Council of Europe (2001). In 2015, concurrently with the centenary of the beginning of the persecutions, the Bulgarian Parliament adopted a declaration recognizing the events, although it called them not genocide but the "mass extermination of the Armenian people in the Ottoman Empire."[53] However, for a number of years, the municipalities of Plovdiv, Burgas, Ruse, Stara Zagora and Pazardzhik have officially recognized the Armenian massacres as a "genocide," a fact that has led in some cases to tensions in Bulgaria's relations with Turkey.[54]

Plovdiv is a city that is particularly sensitive to Armenian history, since it is home to the largest Armenian community in Bulgaria, which numbers about 4000 people out of a total population of 12,000, as estimated in official figures. It is therefore not surprising that the celebrations on April 24 are always marked by wide participation and great emotion.[55] The day usually begins with a memorial mass in the Surp Kevork Apostolic Armenian Church, followed by a few minutes of silence in front of the large wooden cross (*khachkar*) located in the courtyard of the community complex, between the church and the Armenian school that bears the name of Viktoria and Krikor Tiutiundjian. Pupils usually recite poems dedicated to their ancestors who perished in the genocide and honor the victims by placing flowers around the monument. Then, in the afternoon, members of the Armenian community and representatives of local Armenian organizations march, together with Bulgarians, down the main street of the city waving the Armenian and Bulgarian flags. The march ends in Plovdiv's central square where a statement is read, in which Turkey is urged to acknowledge that the crimes perpetrated against Armenians during the First World War were a genocide.[56] As is well known, the essence of commemoration is participation, the coming

---

53 On this occasion, Prime Minister Boyko Borisov wanted to use the Bulgarian term for "genocide," but his ultimate declaration did not satisfy those who hoped for unequivocal recognition at the international level. An article, "Parliament Passes Resolution on Armenians' Mass Extermination in the Ottoman Empire in the 1915–1922 Period," appeared on the website of the Bulgarian News Agency, April 24, 2015, http://www.bta.bg/en/c/DF/id/1065011.

54 An example of this is the suspension of a project to establish a low-cost airline link between Plovdiv and the city of Bursa in Turkey following the recognition of the Armenian genocide by Plovdiv's municipal council. See Atanas Tsenov, "European Projects in Bulgaria Fail Because of a Dispute with Turkey About the Armenian Genocide," *Radio Bulgaria*, March 17, 2016, http://bnr.bg/en/post/100670478/european-projects-in-bulgaria-fail-because-of-a-dispute-with-turkey-about-the-armenian-genocide.

55 Commemorations also take place in some of the other major cities of the country including Sofia, Varna, Silistra, Ruse, and Pleven.

56 In 2018, the day ended with the screening of the recent documentary on the Armenian genocide, entitled "Izkoreniavane" ("Extirpation"). The film was made by a Bulgarian director, Kostadin Bonev, in 2017. It was screened simultaneously in Plovdiv and in several other Bulgarian cities. See

together of people to honor the subject of commemoration.[57] The annual march on April 24 supports a true *lieu de mémoire*, in that it is intended to affirm a specific memory,[58] and is a symbolic practice displaying the unity and continuity of the community. As previously mentioned, in 2015 the weeks leading up to April 24 were filled with news about initiatives linked to the commemoration of the genocide.

One such initiative was a theater piece directed by Evelina Nikolova and performed by the Armenian children's theater school of Plovdiv, which was based on Vosganian's *The Book of Whispers*. The stage for this cultural event was Plovdiv's well-known Kuklen Teatar. A very responsive and emotional audience filled the hall. The emotion was particularly evident when the orchestra played a famous song, "Dle Yaman," which was collected and arranged by the famous Armenian priest and musicologist, Komitas. Based on the folkloric tradition of ancient Armenia, this song has become a hymn and a symbol of the Genocide among the diaspora. Rubie Watson says that remembrance is constructed when the members of a community share "sets of images that have been passed down to them through the media of memory through paintings, architecture, monuments, ritual, storytelling, poetry, music, photos, and film."[59] "Dle Yaman" stands out as one of the most powerful tools of remembrance of the Armenians' tragic past. It is closely connected to the sad fate of Komitas (or Gomidas in the Western Armenian pronunciation), who fell victim to the Turkish persecutions. Although he survived physically, he suffered from severe psychiatric problems for the rest of his life.

The children of the Malvina Manukian theater school,[60] which is supported by the Plovdiv AGBU, rehearsed their roles in the theatrical version of *The Book of Whispers* for months. In so doing, the children became familiar with the horror of the Genocide. They internalized it to the extent that they gave an impeccable performance before their audience. The eager participation by young Armenians in this commemoration of the traumatic events of the past proves that the

---

YouTube video, 0:05:01, posted by Kostadin Bonev, September 16, 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dKqxpSAZJvM.

57 Edward S. Casey, *Remembering: A Phenomenological Study* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987).

58 "Les lieux de mémoire naissent et vivent du sentiment qu'il n'y a pas de mémoire spontanée, qu'il faut créer des archives, qu'il faut maintenir des anniversaires, organiser des célébrations...parce que ces opérations ne sont pas naturelles," in Nora, ed., *Les Lieux de mémoire,* Vol. I., p. 29.

59 Rubie S. Watson, "Memory, History and Opposition: Under State Socialism. An Introduction," in *Memory, History and Opposition: Under State Socialism*, ed. Rubie S. Watson (Santa Fe: School of American Research Press, 1999), 1–20, here 8.

60 The theater school was founded by a former teacher of the Armenian School in Plovdiv, Malvina Manukian.

descendants of genocide survivors experience a form of "postmemory," linked to an "obligation that was placed upon them to be the bearers of hopes and aspirations of a whole people."[61] The narrative of the Genocide and the struggle for its recognition is being transmitted directly to a new generation, but also to an external audience, whose approbation is needed in order to legitimate the new generation's efforts to remember.

Another fact that can be gleaned from articles in *Parekordzagani Tzain* about the commemoration of the Genocide is the Plovdiv community's links with the initiatives of other diaspora communities. Those links are maintained and made visible through a dense network of cooperation. One significant initiative at the European level in 2015 was the so-called "Armenian Genocide Worldwide Reading" which took place in several cities on April 21. The Reading was organized by the International Literature Festival in Berlin in order to sensitize a European audience to a topic that is still alive and hotly debated. In Plovdiv, the Reading took place at the Ethnographic Museum. It included excerpts from the novels of Romanian-Armenian, Soviet Armenian and Bulgarian-Armenian authors, such as Vosganian's *The Book of Whispers* and works by Kachik Dashtents and Suren Vetsigian.

6. The Turkish Factor in the Armenian-Bulgarian Relationship

With its connections to the AGBU's worldwide structure and through its own publications, the AGBU branch of Plovdiv has always been a participant in the global diaspora's initiatives. It focuses on events and developments taking place in Turkey, and cooperates with groups such as the Hrant Dink Foundation and DurDe Platform. The Turkish element is a constant because Turkey is the ultimate destination for all messages related to the struggle for recognition of the Genocide. In issue 151 of *Parekordzagani Tzain*, published in April 2015, the front page of the newspaper has a black background with the words (interestingly, in English), "Recognize the Armenian Genocide. 24 April 2015." A Turkish flag appears inside the "o" of Recognize.

In the weeks before and after the hundredth anniversary, *Parekordzagani Tzain* devoted special attention to how the anniversary was being observed in Istanbul. Importantly, a delegation from AGBU Europe (which has its main seat

[61] Levon Boyajian and Haigaz Grigorian, "Psychosocial Sequelae of the Armenian Genocide," in *The Armenian Genocide in Perspective*, ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1986), 183.

in Brussels), together with the anti-racist movement EGAM and many other organizations, attended a commemoration in Istanbul. AGBU encouraged young Armenians from around the world to be present and join other members of the diaspora in that city, to share the important day of remembrance with its residents.[62] In Turkey's largest city, a huge march paraded from Istiklal Caddesi to Taksim Square. Early in the day, an event took place in front of the old Haydarpaşa Train Station, from which the first trains transporting the Armenian intellectuals left for Anatolia in 1915.

The fate of the Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink is a recurrent theme in the pages of *Parekordzagani Tzain*. Dink was a fundamental figure in the battle for recognition of the historical truth of the Genocide. He was assassinated in front of the building of the Armenian newspaper *Agos* in Istanbul in January 2007. The diaspora associates his memory with a "new Armenian martyrdom." AGBU Plovdiv has collected and published a Bulgarian translation of his writings, which has contributed to making Dink's work known to the wider Bulgarian population.[63]

In a certain sense, Armenians and Bulgarians are allies in terms of their confrontation with the Ottoman past, as well as in their relationship with present-day Turkey. The attitude of Bulgarian Armenians towards Turkey is complex and somewhat contradictory. For example, many Armenians in Plovdiv can still speak the Turkish language, which has been handed down to them by the generation that survived the genocide.[64] Very often, if we look beneath the surface of suffering and prejudice, we find a living heritage of elements of Turkish culture, which in some ways (in food, in music, etc.) are similar to those of the Armenian diaspora itself. However, Armenians are unwilling to admit too much (or too openly) to their relationship to the Turkish world and a common cultural past. There is still a sense of threat that dominates the psyche of the nation in the diaspora. Until the issue of recognition of the Genocide is solved, Armenian suspicions of the Turks will be passed on to future generations and affirmed in a variety of ways.

---

62 "1915–2015: Turks, Armenians, Europeans: Let's Commemorate the Armenian Genocide Together in Turkey," https://www.remember24april1915.eu/.

63 In 2011, AGBU's publishing house published the book *Two Close Peoples, Two Distant Neighbors* (in Bulgarian *Dva blizki naroda, dva dalechni sŭseda Armeniia – Turtsiia*). The book contains a selection of Hrant Dink's articles from the newspaper *Agos*. Hrant Dink, *Dva blizki naroda, dva dalechni sŭseda Armeniia – Turtsiia* (Plovdiv: Armen Tur, 2011). A second volume of Dink's writings will appear in the near future.

64 See Mitseva, *Armentsite v Bŭlgariia*, 153.

7. The Role of Monuments in the Construction of Memorial Spaces

Armenian cultural and social events, and the articles in the pages of books and newspapers, could not perpetuate the memory of the Genocide were they not supported by specific visual and physical features of the landscape. These "monumental sites" bring the Armenian Genocide and its victims directly to the observer's attention and are an important setting for the transmission of "post-memory." In 2005, coinciding with the ninetieth anniversary of the beginning of the Genocide, the AGBU branch in Plovdiv erected a monument to the victims of 1915. It also established a small museum dedicated to the Armenians and the Genocide in the crypt of the apostolic church. In the old Armenian tradition, the monument took the shape of a large wooden *khachkar*, inspired by a similar one in Paris. *Khachkar* in Armenian translates literally as "cross stone." The *khachkar* is one of the earliest manifestations of the Christian religiosity of the Armenian people.[65] Such monuments are particularly significant for Armenian culture, because they were erected throughout the historical Armenian territories. Unfortunately, in recent years serious damage has been done to the important historical monuments in the Caucasus. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, numerous old *khachkars* and tombstones were destroyed in the town of Julfa in Azerbaijan, symbolically removing the last trace of Armenian history from the Nakhichevan exclave.[66]

The declared purpose of erecting a *khachkar* in Plovdiv was to contribute to the struggle for recognition of the genocide of the Armenian people everywhere in the world.[67] The *khachkar* was produced in the Armenian city of Vagharshapat (Etchmiadzin), home to the Catholicos, the spiritual leader of the Armenian Church. It was then transported to Plovdiv. On April 24, 2005, the cross was inaugurated in the heart of Plovdiv's Armenian community, between the school and the church.

Plovdiv's *khachkar* is perhaps the most salient manifestation of the Armenian presence in the city. On its pedestal we can read, in both Bulgarian and Armenian: "In memory of the 1,500,000 Armenian victims of the first genocide of the twentieth century, organized and implemented by the leaders of the power of

---

65 Giulio Ieni, "Le arti figurative ed i khatchkar," in *Gli armeni*, Adriano Alpago Novello et al. (Milano: Jaca Book, 1985), 261.

66 Krikor Maksoudian, *History of the Armenian Alphabet and Literature* (New York: St. Vartan Press, 2006), 129.

67 "Izgrazhdane na memorialen kompleks v pamet na zhertvite ot genotsida," *Parekordzagani Tzain*, No. 4 (December 2004), 5.

young Turks in 1915." On the wall to the left of the monument, we find a marble slab engraved with the same sentence in English, and a second one in Bulgarian, which states that the *khachkar* was made possible thanks to gifts from members of the Armenian diaspora in Paris and New York, a major donor from Plovdiv, and the entire Armenian community of Plovdiv. The inscription confirms the cohesion of the local community as well as its cooperation with the diaspora abroad in initiatives to preserve the memory of the Genocide. Some Armenians, including a Plovdiv poet and writer, Hovannes Mikaelian, have expressed an intention to erect another important landmark in the city, also dedicated to the memory of the Armenian genocide and inscribed in both Armenian and Bulgarian.[68] In his book, *What I Want to Say*, Mikaelian writes:

> For a long time the idea of a monument to my predecessors, the victims of the genocide was growing inside of me.... The idea was to install a simple symbolic monument in an adequate place in the city, which would remind future generations of the worthy honor of the Armenian people.... Bulgaria was the most hospitable country for Armenian refugees at the time. That is why grateful Armenians want the erection of a symbolic monument....[69]

The presence of monuments in the public space is particularly important to a community that still lives very much in the past; such a nation needs symbols to pass on values and memories so that no one may forget. Above all, the monuments support the cause of gaining recognition of the Genocide by other nations. To inscribe a space, to mark it with powerful symbols, is an action that invests the space with a mnemonic function; the monumental space exists in order to affirm and remember who the Armenians are, what their past is, and what they suffered. In that way, postmemory is transmitted to future generations and is re-signified.[70]

Another monument to the memory of the genocide is located in the Armenian cemetery of the city, which forms part of the city's main graveyard. That monument has several plates on its base with inscriptions in the Armenian

---

68 Hovannes (Oncho) Mikaelian, interview with author, October 2010.

69 Hovannes Mikaelian, *Tova koeto iskam da kazha za...* (Plovdiv: Matador 74, 2010), 47–49. Author's translation – G. S.

70 Armenians are acutely aware of the importance that inscribing a space has for the perpetuation of collective memory. A significant example is the stele located in the Armenian capital Yerevan, on which the names of the victims of the massacres are carved, together with the names of world personalities who have recognized those crimes as genocide. See the article by Professor Agop Ormandjian that appeared in *Parekordzagani Tzain*, No. 17 (January 2006), 10.

language, one of which is a poem by Silva Kaputikian, a famous Armenian poet. Another plate bears the names of the Anatolian cities where thousands of Armenians were annihilated, such as Urfa and Muş. On the fourth side of the monument's base is a plate which states, in Bulgarian: "In memory of the one and a half million innocent Armenians from Western Armenia and Turkey who died on the path of forced exile because of the barbarous persecutions from 1915 to 1918."

In a certain sense, the monuments erected in the Armenian neighborhoods in the city of Plovdiv, and elsewhere in the world, are a necessary "counterweight" to the disappearance and abandonment of cultural monuments in the historical territory of Western Armenia. The lost monuments there embodied the "fragments of an ancient and abruptly interrupted history." A journey through the ancient Armenian lands in Turkey is unavoidably a "journey into the void, in a disputed and elusive memory, in the awareness of the tragedy."[71] In the absence of any possibility of going back to the old territories to reclaim their cultural history, Armenians have a need to mark the public spaces in their adoptive homelands around the world with monuments dedicated to their own past, as a symbolic way of affirming their presence to every observer. The Plovdiv cemetery is an appropriate place to reflect on the individual and collective memory of the genocide. The graves of the community's ancestors represent a history that cannot be forgotten, as most of the people buried there were genocide survivors or were descended from those who had to abandon their homeland forever. Their memories in fact consecrate the cemetery and each individual grave contributes to the holiness of the place. Individual grief for the loss of deceased loved ones combines with the collective suffering embodied in the monument of the Genocide, which every Armenian in Plovdiv recognizes is part of himself or herself.

8. The "Small Museum" of the Genocide in the Crypt of the Church

As previously mentioned, besides the *khachkar*, another important "mnemonic" installation was built in Plovdiv in 2005, on the occasion of the ninetieth anniversary of the Genocide. The community created the so-called "small museum" of the Genocide, dedicated to all victims of that tragedy. This museum is quite relevant to our discussion on the role of symbols and visible

[71] See Aldo Ferrari, "Van: il Paradiso Perduto degli Armeni," in *"A mari usque ad mare." Cultura visuale e materiale dall'Adriatico all'India. Scritti in memoria di Gianclaudio Macchiarella,* eds. Mattia Guidetti and Sara Mondini (Venezia: Edizioni Ca'Foscari, 2006), 332, doi: 10.14277/978-88-6969-085-3.

objects in creating spaces of memory. The museum is located in the crypt of Plovdiv's Armenian Church and displays numerous artifacts and relics from the old Armenian territories. These include personal items, books, photos, official documents that people fleeing the massacres managed to take away with them. Their descendants donated the objects to the museum to contribute to collective remembrance. The small museum is an important place where the interior and exterior spaces of memory fuse, and it is important as well to the self-image of the community. In order to speak to future generations, memories need specific, tangible anchor points.[72] These are chiefly places and objects in which, by virtue of their common symbolic frame, a group is able to root its existence.[73] The museum was established by the voluntary participation of the community's members, who donated their family heirlooms for the sake of collective memory. In a long message published in *Parekordzagani Tzain*, the council of the Armenian Church addressed all Armenian citizens who had preserved photos, objects or documents regarding the tragic events. It encouraged them to offer their material to the museum and thereby do their part to preserve the memory of the Genocide.[74] The museum was, similarly to the other cases here discussed, an initiative that allowed the emergence of new practices of postmemory, which were capable of reintegrating the dualism between the individual and the collective.

The museum is a place where Armenian identity stands out in relief against the background of an extremely tragic history. One cannot help noticing the strength of a cultural tradition that has been physically preserved by virtue of the survival of its strongest symbols: manuscripts, books, crosses, and religious paintings. Some of the museum's exhibits are church relics that were smuggled out of the Ottoman territories during the Genocide and brought to Plovdiv. These objects are tangible survivors of the genocide with which people can identify and empathize. The objects are not inanimate,[75] on the contrary, they are full of life and hope, and have become talismans and metaphors for the survival of the Armenian people.

The persistence of the memory of the Genocide among the diaspora community is strongly dependent on the use of objects that form part of a mythologized symbolic narrative. They transmit both personal and social values. They

---

72 Eviatar Zerubavel, *Time Maps: Collective Memory and the Social Shape of the Past* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 82.

73 Ugo Fabietti, *L'identità etnica. Storia di un concetto equivoco* (Roma: Carocci, 1995), 151.

74 Rupen Tchavushian (head of the AGBU Plovdiv), interview with author, autumn 2010.

75 Remo Badei, *La vita delle cose* (Roma: Laterza, 2009).

have absorbed the emotions, thoughts and sensations of their former owners. They seem to be waiting for someone to give them back their voice, especially the new "generations of postmemory."

9. The Relationship of the Post-Genocide Diaspora with the Lost Territories

The word diaspora (*spyurk* in Armenian) derives etymologically from the Greek word *diaspéiro*, "to disseminate." The term connotes the idea of an original place from which the dispersion took place and evokes images of travel and removal. Associated mainly with the destinies of Armenians and Jews, the word has also acquired a traumatic connotation when applied to people expelled from their original territory, especially where their numbers outside the borders of their motherland exceed those of its present-day inhabitants. There are now about seven million Armenians in the world (three million of whom live in today's Armenia). The dispersion of the Armenian people resulted from instability in the old Armenian motherland since ancient times, stemming from political strife, conquest, religious persecution, massacres and deportations.[76]

The discourse of the Armenian diaspora has focused for many years on "impermanence." From that perspective, life in a foreign country was a provisional phase before the longed-for return to the motherland. While they waited, Armenians commited themselves in various ways to supporting their community's identity and survival. This imperative emerged after the Genocide and has filtered into the discourses and ideologies of some political parties in the Armenians' new homelands.[77] To a certain extent, the myth of the return has provided a source of hope and a sense of destiny to the diaspora, as well as an ideological justification for its institutional structures. Despite the fall of the Soviet Union and the creation of an independent Armenia, however, Armenians did not come from around the world to settle in the new country. On the contrary, many people left the newly independent Armenia to live somewhere else. Some of them arrived in Bulgaria, in a process that has not yet stopped.

---

[76] See Boghos Levon Zekiyan: "In our opinion, we can only talk of a diaspora in the strict sense, that is, a state of 'dispersion,' starting with the aftermath of the 1915 massacre .... For the period prior to 1915 it would be more appropriate to talk about 'colonies' .... A large part of the Armenian people still lived on their territories." In Boghos Levon Zekiyan, *L'Armenia e gli armeni. Polis lacerata e patria spirituale: la sfida di una sopravvivenza* (Milano: Guerini e Associati, 2000), 143. Author's translation – G. S.

[77] Denise Aghanian, *The Armenian Diaspora: Cohesion and Fracture* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2007), 118.

When Diaspora Armenians speak about a return to their homeland, they are in fact engaged in a process of "double imagination."[78] The majority of Armenians have their genetic roots in the Western Armenia of the Ottoman Empire, where their ancestors were living until the Genocide. As a consequence, their "true homeland" is located in Anatolia,[79] to which it would be quite difficult to return. Instead, some Diaspora Armenians who are descendants of people who escaped the Genocide travel to the Republic of Armenia. They experience their journey as a kind of pilgrimage, a symbolic rapprochement with their "imaginary homeland."

The AGBU branch in Plovdiv often publishes articles about travel by Armenian journalists in the historical territories. For example, a column, "A Journey Through Our Ancient Lands," appeared in several issues of the AGBU newspaper in 2015. In this series of articles, the journalists describe the Armenian cultural heritage of cities such as Kars, Diyarbakir and Van. They also refer to the poverty of the region and the conversion of historic Armenian sites into Muslim places. Such is the case in the city of Ani and the Church of Surap Arakelot, which today functions as a mosque. Both are located in the Kars territory of northeastern Turkey. Although they belong to an imaginary geography and history in the minds of Diaspora Armenians, the Turkish territories they inhabited before the genocide have a tangible impact on members of the diaspora and produce real effects.[80]

An example of this in the context of the Armenian community of Plovdiv is the trips organized by associations linked to the Armenian Church to visit Edirne, the first Turkish city over the border with Bulgaria. Many Armenians lived in Edirne or its surroundings even before the time of the Genocide. All the survivors of the Genocide had to pass through the city to reach Bulgaria.[81] Edirne is a name that very often recurs in the narratives and personal stories of the survivors' descendants. An active group of pensioners shows particular enthusiasm for such trips and travels to Edirne quite often, in spite of the uncomfortable conditions of the journey (in particular, the strict and long

78 Ibid., 166.

79 Armenians often refer to the concept of "historical Armenia." The current territory of the Republic of Armenia corresponds to only a tenth of Armenia's original extent at the apex of its history.

80 On the practice of "diaspora tourism," see for example Zeynep Turan and Anny Bakalian, "Diaspora Tourism and Identity: Subversion and Consolation in Armenian Pilgrimages to Eastern Turkey," in *Diasporas of the Modern Middle East: Contextualising Community*, ed. Anthony Gorman and Sossie Kasbarian (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 173–211.

81 See the trilogy by the Bulgarian-Armenian writer Sevda Sevan: *Rodosto, Rodosto, Niakŭde na Balkanite, Der Zor: Roman-trilogiia* (Sofia: Hristo Botev, 1996).

customs controls at the border). An interesting fact is that some of the elderly descendants of genocide survivors who take part in the trip are trilingual; they are among the very few remaining Armenian people who still speak Turkish in addition to Armenian and Bulgarian, having heard the language spoken at home by their parents or grandparents. This facility is an important element in their practice of memory and "postmemory" and its transmission and elaboration. Their journeys can also be interpreted as a response not only to the history of physical annihilation and violent expulsion from the ancient territories, but also to Turkey's ongoing rejection of any right the survivors and their descendants have to return to their ancient homeland or reclaim confiscated property. The fact that they live so close to the Turkish border (less than two hours away) gives the Plovdiv diaspora a "privileged" position. They are near enough to the Ottoman Empire's successor state to visit, but at the same time they are more acutely exposed to a painful confrontation with the past and the unrelenting denial of the Genocide by many different Turkish actors.

It is a reality, though, that the community also feels a need to move forward. The publisher of the *Parekordzagani Tzain* newspaper, Hripsime Erniasian, has said in an interview that it is time for the AGBU to focus on new topics and foster a new sense of Armenian identity that is firmly positioned in contemporary times.[82]

Conclusions

In this paper, I have treated the topic of the commemoration of the Armenian Genocide among the diaspora living in the Bulgarian city of Plovdiv as a phenomenon that involves the very strong intergenerational transmission of a traumatic memory. I have demonstrated that the tragic events that took place in the Armenian territories under the last years of the Ottoman Empire still exert a great influence over the life of the Armenian community of Plovdiv and its relationship with Turkey. There is an undeniable "presence of the past," and the community's core values are based on the preservation of its ethnic memory and identity. This is particularly evident in social and cultural initiatives commemorating the Genocide that are organized and carried out by the main local actor of the diaspora, the AGBU. The AGBU and the Armenian community as a whole host a specific will to preserve the fundamental characteristics that are the substance of their "Armenianness" across various temporal and spatial dimensions.

[82] Hripsime Erniasian, interview with author at the *Parekordzagani Tzain* offices, May 2018.

Their identitarian commitments are closely connected with the memory of the Genocide, on which the Armenian diaspora is ontologically dependent.

Through my analysis of the public spaces and revered objects of the community, I have shown that, for the Armenian community of Plovdiv, its collective memory of the Genocide is constructed in relation to particular spaces – "places of memory" – as well as objects that inspire reflection on the past. These places and objects anchor the Armenian identity at a specific point in its past. The relevant spaces in Plovdiv are public, such as cemeteries, museums, and even the press (the *Parekordzagani Tzain* newspaper). The objects are of a most disparate nature, including monuments, graves, and pictures. Objects and monuments have an explicit symbolic function. They play an active role in the mnemonic process and relate to a memory of the Genocide that is experienced both privately (through individual and family forms of "postmemory") and collectively (in symbolic and institutional commemoration practices by the members of the community). In the discourse on the memory of the Genocide and in its commemoration, the individual and society are inextricably bound up and dependent on one another. The symbols of martyrdom and of the lost ancestral homeland are visible and are clear to everyone in their meaning, but they are also experienced subjectively by those who behold them. Consequently, the tragic story of the Armenian genocide is remembered and fosters the internal cohesion of the community's members. It encourages further manifestations of "postmemory."

Because most of the Armenian diaspora of Plovdiv is descended from genocide survivors, all members of the community are still personally touched by the massacres that took place in the Ottoman Empire early in the twentieth century. Almost everyone has a personal family story to tell related to the tragic events. The Genocide is the experience that unites all Armenians, and its commemoration is a way to manifest the miracle of the nation's survival notwithstanding its dispersion around the world and the definitive loss of its ancestral homeland. As it was written on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of the genocide: "by a continued denial by the Turks of the genocide and by the general lack of knowledge and acceptance of the truth...the psychological genocide continues. As a consequence, generations of Armenians are unwilling and unable to put aside the events of 1915 as past history."[83]

[83] Boyajian and Grigorian, "Psychosocial Sequelae of the Armenian Genocide," 183.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR AUTHORS

1. Manuscript Submission

The journal AUC Studia Territorialia publishes original scholarly manuscripts that have not been published anywhere else, are not currently awaiting publication in other journals, and are not being considered for publication by another journal. Manuscripts are accepted in English, Czech, and German. In the case of English-language manuscripts, American English is preferred, but British English is also acceptable so long as the quality of the writing meets the necessary standards and the spelling is consistent. Insofar as style is concerned, authors should consult either the Chicago Manual of Style or the Oxford Style Manual.

Manuscripts for consideration are to be uploaded online through the AUC Studia Territorialia journal management system, or sent to the editorial team via the e-mail address stuter@fsv.cuni.cz, in a standard document format (.doc, .docx or .rtf). All correspondence between the author and the editorial team will take place via e-mail.

Manuscripts considered for publication are subject to double-blind peer review. The period between the submission of manuscripts and their return to respective authors for authorization, resubmission of the revised manuscripts based on reviewers' comments, or with an outright rejection will not exceed four months. The editorial team reserves the right to edit the article in accordance with its own editorial standards or to reject the article with no further obligation to provide reasons.

Manuscripts requiring excessive editing due to the failure to respect the journal's editorial guidelines, poor quality of the text or not meeting the necessary language standards will be returned to the respective authors.

2. Author's License Agreement

By submitting their contributions, the authors authorize the editors to sign the publishing contract with the Charles University Karolinum Press. A license agreement with the publisher shall govern the use of the print version of the work. An electronic version will subsequently be published under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial--NoDerivatives license (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0 International).

3. Editorial Guidelines

The journal Acta Universitatis Carolinae Studia Territorialia publishes articles, book reviews, and reports.

An article should normally be between 7,000 and 10,000 words in length, whereas a book review would ideally be 1,500 to 2,500 words in length. Longer texts may also be considered if the subject matter warrants such treatment. All articles, regardless of language, must contain an English-language abstract between 100 and 150 words in length as well as four to six keywords.

A submitted manuscript must contain the following items: title page, abstract, keywords, main text, and annexes (if there are any). In a covering letter, the author must provide his or her full name, institutional affiliation, a brief biographical note in the language of the manuscript, an address to which author's copies are to be sent, and additional contact information. Articles by more than one author must have a single contact person designated for the purposes of correspondence.

Words from other alphabets must be provided in the Latin alphabet. A transliteration table valid for the given language must be consulted when transliterating bibliographical items in footnotes (Library of Congress, Oxford Dictionary, ČSN). Standard transcription should be used for foreign terms and names in the main text.

4. Reference Style

Authors should adhere to the classical reference style. References should be presented in the form of footnotes. Bibliographical information from consulted works should be included in the footnotes themselves, not in a separate bibliography. Journal articles should always include a DOI (Digital Object Identifier), if the journal has one. Electronic sources may be cited including the access date, if appropriate.

5. Reference Examples

Books

One Author or Editor

Richard Sakwa, *Postcommunism: Concepts in the Social Sciences* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 1999), 51–58.

Two Authors or Editors

Roy Allison and Christoph Bluth, eds., *Security Dilemmas in Russia and Eurasia* (London: The Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1998).

Three Authors or Editors

Martha Brill Olcott, Anders Åslund, and Sherman W. Garnett, *Getting it Wrong: Regional Cooperation and the Commonwealth of Independent States* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 1999), 105–8.

More than Three Authors or Editors

Viktor N. Rudenko et al., eds., *Politicheskaia nauka i gosudarstvennaia vlasť v Rossiiskoi Federatsii i Novykh Nezavisimykh Gosudarstvakh* (Ekaterinburg: Uralʹskoe otdelenie Rossiskoi Akademii Nauk, 2004).

Chapter or Other Part of a Book

Branislav Makyta, "Energetický dialóg EÚ a RF," in *Energie pro Evropu: energetická spolupráce Ruska a zemí postsovětského prostoru s Evropskou unií,* ed. Bohuslav Litera et al. (Praha: Eurolex Bohemia, 2006), 50–72.

Introduction, Foreword, or Similar Part of a Book

Anatol Lieven, Preface to *An Endless War: The Russian-Chechen Conflict in Perspective*, by Emil Souleimanov (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2007), 13–15.

Electronically-Published Books

Catherine Guicherd, *The Enlarged EU's Eastern Border: Integrating Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova in the European Project*, SWP-Studien 2000/S 20 (Berlin: Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, 2002), 31–32, http://swp-berlin.org/common/get_document.php?asset_id=319.

Repeated Citation

Makyta, "Energetický dialóg," 66.

Olcott, Åslund, and Garnett, *Getting It Wrong*, 80–84.

Consecutive Citation

Ibid., 66–69.

Journals

Article in a Print Journal

Zbigniew Brzezinski, "The Premature Partnership," *Foreign Affairs* 73, No. 2 (March/April 1994): 67–82, doi: 10.2307/20045920.

Article in an Online Journal

Farkhad Tolipov, "Uzbekistan and Russia: Alliance against a Mythic Threat?" *Central Asia-Caucasus Analyst* 7, No. 1 (January 11, 2006): 3–5, www.cacianalyst.org/files/20060111Analyst.pdf.

Item in an Online Database

Halford J. Mackinder, "Modern Geography, German and English," *The Geographical Journal* 6, No. 4 (1895): 367–79, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1773888.

Book Review

Cameron Ross, review of *Political Parties in the Regions of Russia: Democracy Unclaimed*, by Grigorii V. Golosov, *Slavic Review* 63, No. 4 (Winter 2004): 898–99.

Newspapers and Magazines

Svante Cornell, "The War That Russia Wants," *The Guardian*, August 8, 2008.

Markus Feldenkirchen and Horand Knaup, "Schulz Heads to Berlin. The Man Who Could Shake Up German Politics," *Spiegel Online*, November 25, 2016, http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/eu-parliament-president-schulz-could-shake-up-german-politics-a-1123130.html.

Theses and Doctoral Dissertations

Jeff Sahadeo, "Creating a Russian Colonial Community: City, Nation, Empire in Tashkent, 1865–1923" (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Illinois, 2000), 96–108, 116.

Presentations at Symposia, Meetings or Conferences

Jonathan Wheatley, "Democratization in Georgia since 2003: Revolution or Repackaging?" (Paper presented at the Third International Workshop for Young Scholars, Slavic Research Center, Hokkaido University, Sapporo, Japan, July 5, 2006).

Archives and Manuscript Collections

Sh. Z. Eliava and G. I. Broido to the People's Commissariat of Foreign Affairs, V. I. Lenin, L. D. Trotsky and L. B. Krasin, telegram, Tashkent, December 27, 1919, file 588, fol. 13, container 4-39-43, Chicherin Papers, Foreign Policy Archive of the Russian Federation, Moscow.

Interviews

Published and Broadcast Interviews

Paris Hilton, Interview with Larry King, *Larry King Live, CNN*, June 28, 2007.

Unpublished Interview

Petr Šochman (EC Directorate General for Competition), interview with author, September 24, 2008.

Unattributed Interview

Interview with a Border Guard officer, August 28, 1998.

Website

"Growth of Welfare of Kazakhstan's Citizens is the Primary Goal of State Policy. Address by the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan H. E. Mr. Nursultan Nazarbayev to the People of Kazakhstan," Official Site of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, accessed October 2, 2008, http://www.akorda.kz/www/www_akorda_kz.nsf/sections?OpenForm&id_doc=0793D9432423DDE5062573EC0048005B&lang=en&L1=L2&L2=L2-22.

Stephen Blank, „The Russian Balance Sheet at Hangzhou," *Atlantic Council* (blog), September 7, 2016, http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/the-russian-balance-sheet-at-hangzhou.

Personal Communication

Hans-Uwe Stahlmann, e-mail message to author, December 29, 2007.

Adapted from *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th ed. (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2010), 653–784.

ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE

STUDIA TERRITORIALIA

XVIII
2018
2

Published by Charles University
Karolinum Press, Ovocný trh 560/5, 116 36 Praha 1
Czech Republic
www.karolinum.cz
Typeset by Karolinum Press
Printed by Karolinum Press
MK ČR E 18588
ISSN 1213-4449 (Print)
ISSN 2336-3231 (Online)