

# A b s t r a c t s

## The Politics of History and Counter-Memory War, Violence, and Trauma in Europe's East

György Konrád

Tumult

Does the future need memory? What are all these sordid stories good for? Why should I fill my backpack with stones? Does the future need memory? It is as necessary as walking is for feet. Otherwise, they atrophy. Those who do not remember will suffer a loss of consciousness. Gradually, whether they want to or not, Europeans are sharing their memories with one another. In retrospect, they are recognising that delusions and artificially exaggerated affairs have led to the deaths of millions. Errors in reasoning, unreal fantasies, a lack of self-awareness can unleash hell.

Helmut König

Remembering and Forgetting

On Their Use and Abuse in Politics

The concept of memory has become a key category of politics and social science theory. Remembering is not a natural process, but depends on social conditions. Political figures deliberately use remembering and forgetting as coequal acts and capacities of memory. Since antiquity, reference to the past has served to stabilise and legitimise political order, to form collective identities, and to secure political loyalty. The politics of memory are of particular importance after political upheavals. According to period and context, remembering and punishing or forgetting and forgiving have proven useful in escaping the power of the past.

Karl Schlögel

Places and Layers of Memory

Reflections on the Eastern Part of Europe

East-Central and Eastern Europe was the core zone in the epoch of world wars and revolution. Violence raged in unprecedented form here. The region was caught between the fronts of National Socialism and Soviet Communism; it was the main theatre of wars, policies of social and ethnic cleansing, the genocide against the Jews, a scorched earth policy, and enormous forced population and refugee movements. There is no language capable of finding a single denominator. Only when all the nameless millions of victims of this violence have been named can there be any serious talk of a European memory.

Harald Welzer, Claudia Lenz

### Grandpa in Europe

Findings from Comparative Transgenerational Transmission Research

Reassessments of the Second World War, the Holocaust, occupation, collaboration, and resistance are central themes of public debates throughout Europe. The trans-generational transmission of history and the construction of views of the past play an important role in the self-assurance of individuals, groups, and nations. The official memory and commemorative cultures that are established can deviate considerably from private memories. This is the case in Germany, where grandchildren invent good grandmas and grandpas in order to resist the imposition of a negative identity. In Serbia and Croatia as well, young people have difficulty using the past as a source of identity. By contrast, the young generation of many West European countries can accept problematic aspects of their national history, because national identity is not in question there.

Boris Dubin

### Remembrance as a State Event

History and Power in Russia

In Russia, the state claims a monopoly on the creation of history and passing on of memory. Every assessment of past and contemporary events that deviates from the official line is perceived as hostile. The memorialisation of the Great Patriotic War is a perfect example. The symbol of remembrance “victory in the war” was created in the Brezhnev era with all the power of the Soviet state. In the Putin era, it was reactivated. It serves the creation of a collective, the definition of an enemy, and the legitimization of rule. Consensus on the victory’s importance for Russia is so widespread that even scepticism is appropriate as to whether family memory is the place for the counter-memory of the Gulag.

Stefan Troebst

### 1945

A(n) (All-)European Place of Memory?

Again and again, there is talk of a European memory culture – sometimes as a product of an identity management guided by a European Union history policy, sometimes as the convergence of national memories. But is a unified memory culture possible? The central place of memory, the year 1945, represents a test. Europe’s national societies remember this date very differently, even contradictorily. But memory cultures are so fluid that a paradigm change is to be reckoned with at any moment.

National Views of History

### The 20th Century and the “War of Memories”

An Appeal from MEMORIAL

The 20th century left deep wounds in the memory of the peoples in East and East-Central Europe: The revolutions, dictatorships, world wars, National Socialist subjugation

tion, and the Holocaust are unforgotten. Every society remembers and processes its own experiences in its own way. Frequently, the memory of one people contradicts that of another. If one encounters these contradictions with understanding and responsibility, they can enrich the historical consciousness of every society. But a platform is needed to conduct a dialogue on such conflict-laden issues. MEMORIAL is calling for the formation of an International History Forum.

## Countries

Peter Oliver Loew

Heroes or Victims?

Memory Cultures in Poland Since 1989

The totalitarianisms of the 20th century dominate Poland's memory cultures to this day. Since 1989, the state's sovereignty of interpretation has decreased. Efforts by the national-conservative governments under Prime Minister Jarosław Kaczyński to win back this sovereignty within the framework of history policy have failed for the time being, not least because of an increasingly pluralised and regionalised historical memory.

Christiane Brenner

The "Totalitarian Era"?

Democracy and Dictatorship in the Czech Republic's Politics of Memory

The politics of the past is the politics of the future. In the Czech Republic, as in other East-Central European countries, the sense of this connection is particularly pronounced. The events of 1989 therefore sparked a genuine boom in history. In the Czech Republic, for example, there was a struggle over the "rediscovery" of the First Republic's democratic tradition. Much more controversial than this search for positive landmarks in Czech history was the debate over reassessing the expulsion and resettlement of Czechoslovakia's Germans. For several years now, there has been a struggle over the creation of a view of history that brings together Czech society's dual experience with dictatorship since 1938.

Carmen Scheide

Gaps in Memory

Baltic Experiences and Europe's Memory

The upheaval of 1989–1991 led not only to a political reordering of Europe. "European memory" has been in motion since then as well. If Auschwitz as the "break with civilisation" was a point of reference for appraising the past in Western Europe, then the debate over Communist dictatorship stands at the centre of public discourse in East-Central Europe. This results in conflicts over the politics of memory, as is shown by the debate over the equating of National Socialism and Communism unleashed by Latvian politician Sandra Kalniete in 2004 and the dispute over the relocation of a Soviet war memorial in the Estonian capital Tallinn in 2007.

## Karsten Brüggemann

### Monuments of Resentment

#### Estonia and the Wars of the 20th Century

In April 2007, the relocation of the “bronze soldier” in Estonia’s capital Tallinn sparked street fighting and diplomatic conflicts with Russia. The dispute became a symbol for the contradictory views of the past in the East and West. In 2004, a memorial stone for Estonian soldiers who fought in German uniform during the Second World War drew international attention. Now, Estonia’s government is planning to build a monument to commemorate the country’s victory in its war of liberation in 1918-1920. With that, the dispute over monuments is heading into a third round.

## Katja Wezel

### Occupation or Liberation?

#### Latvian and Russian Views of History in Conflict

After Latvia regained independence in 1991, the Latvians struggled with the integration of the country’s Russians into state and society. Today, the conflicts over state citizenship have largely been resolved, but society remains divided. This is seen most clearly in interpretations of 20th century history. Every year, the Russians celebrate victory in the Great Patriotic War just as in the Soviet era. For Latvians, the end of the war marks the start of a violent occupation. Both sides honour their heroes and brand those of the other criminals.

## Alvydas Nikžentaitis

### The Epochs of Dictatorships

#### The Competition of Memories in Lithuania

Lithuania has a young culture of memory with a high potential for conflict. In particular, the memory of the Hitler-Stalin Pact and the Second World War – when Lithuania was caught between all fronts and Lithuanians fought on different sides – prompt disputes. Between Jews and Lithuanians as well as between Poles and Lithuanians, there also exist contradictory memories. But it is precisely present-day Lithuanian-Polish relations that show how a conflict-laden competition of memories can be mitigated.

## Wilfried Jilge

### “Nationalist-Ukrainian Struggle for Liberation”

#### The Re-evaluation of the Second World War in Ukraine

As long as Ukraine was a part of the Soviet Union, the symbols and rituals surrounding the myth of the Great Patriotic War determined commemoration of the war. Since independence, Ukrainian memory culture has changed. The Second World War may remain a central theme. But nationalist historians are reinterpreting it from a nationalist-Ukrainian point of view. The underground struggle of the Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) is moving towards the centre of state history policy and public memory culture. OUN and UPA collaboration with the German occupying authorities and their involvement in the murder of Ukraine’s Jews are largely taboo in public. The foundation of an identity and the con-

solidation of the nation will only succeed when these blank spots in the history of the nationalist movement have disappeared.

Imke Hansen

### The Political Planning of Memory

#### The Construction of History in Belarus between Conflict and Consensus

In Eastern Europe, the politics of history is a key field of political competition. This applies in particular to authoritarian ruled states, where there is no pluralistic competition of ideas; instead the regime and the repressed opposition struggle over the formation of collective memory. Belarus is a perfect example of this. In Soviet tradition, the Lukashenka regime's official politics of memory makes the victory over the German occupiers in the Great Patriotic War the founding myth of the present-day Belarusian state. By contrast, the opposition sees the roots of the Belarusian state in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. For several years, however, signs of convergence in the politics of memory have been observed.

Delphine Bechtel

### From Lemberg to L'viv

#### Conflict over Memory in a City on the Border

Throughout its history, L'viv has belonged to different empires. Its multi-ethnic population consisted primarily of Poles, Jews, and Ukrainians. Western historians and émigrés romanticise the city as a multi-cultural metropolis. In fact – whether under Polish rule, during Nazi occupation, or in the Soviet Union, or nowadays as the centre of western Ukraine – the city has always been the site of aggressive identity policies that excluded segments of the population. A differentiated appraisal of the past is not taking place. The local elites are engaged in a politics of memory in which dubious traditions of the Ukrainian nationalist movement are being exalted, and the Jews and the Poles are being eliminated for a second time.

## Memorials, Museums, Textbooks

Andrii Portnov

### Plurality of Memory

#### Monuments and the Politics of History in Ukraine

The talk of “two Ukraines,” a Ukrainian-speaking west and a Russian-speaking east, may apply in some fields. However, the politics of history and memory with regard to the Second World War do not allow themselves to be squeezed into this dichotomy. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, numerous new monuments were erected in Ukraine. Regional elites found in this a rewarding field of activity. Although almost every monument, and the view of history behind it, is in and of itself one-sided and authoritarian, a certain plurality emerges from the diversity in places of memory. This diverse memory culture provides social stability, for no population group is systematically excluded.

Astrid Sahn

### Under the Spell of War

#### Memorials and Memory Culture in Belarus

In Belarus, war memorials are omnipresent. They attest to the fact that under President Lukashenka the Soviet legacy continues to dominate the landscape of memory. As in the Soviet era, the exaltation of war heroes aims to create national figures of identification. However, depictions of the Belarusian people's experience with annihilation are also to be found, the most prominent one being the memorial site Khatyn'. Since 1992, public commemoration of individual victim groups has become possible in Belarus as well, in particular the victims of the Holocaust. By contrast, the memory of Stalinist repression continues to be suppressed. Nonetheless, a transformation of Belarusian memory culture is underway.

### "The Landscape is Co-Author of My Memorial Sites..."

#### A Conversation with Belarusian Architect Leanid Levin

For the Belarusian public, the name of architect Leanid Levin, born in 1936, is inseparably linked with the memorial site for the villages in Khatyn', which were destroyed by the German occupiers during the Second World War. In the period that followed, war memorials became a central theme in his life, although the broad spectrum of his creations includes residential areas, office and apartment buildings, convention centres, subway stations, and parks. Since 1992, Levin has also been the chairman of the Association of Jewish Communities in Belarus. In 2003, together with Dortmund's Association for International Education and Exchange, his organization opened on the former site of the Minsk ghetto the first history workshop to appraise the blank spots of the Second World War in Belarus. In 2008, Levin was awarded the Federal Cross of Merit for his work in reconciliation.

Elena Temper

### Conflicts over Kurapaty

#### Divided Memory in Post-Soviet Belarus

Belarus ranks among the few post-Communist states where the official interpretation of history is not conform with the national concept of history. The split of the Belarusian view of history in national and anti-national versions has led to a divided memory culture within society. This is seen in the conflict over Kurapaty, a site where Stalinist mass shootings took place.

Valters Nollendorfs

### 50 Years and Three Kilometres

#### Gaps in the Latvian Landscape of Memory

Only since independence have Latvians been able to articulate in public how they experienced the Second World War and the Nazi and Soviet occupations. Since then,

numerous monuments to the victims of Soviet terror have been erected. Latvian participation in the Holocaust and the Soviet regime has gone largely unmentioned. The public debate shows that a lot of time and a differentiated appraisal of history will be needed in order to overcome the prejudices and heal the wounds created by war and other forms of violence. This appraisal is a precondition for reconciliation between the Latvian and the Russian-speaking populations.

**Krzysztof Ruchniewicz**

### **A History Lesson**

The Second World War in Polish Textbooks

Textbooks convey historical knowledge and shape collective memory. They betray a great deal about prevailing views of history. In Poland, the memories of the Second World War and the totalitarian experience are of key importance. In light of the efforts of Jarosław Kaczyński's governments to use a particular history policy to fix Polish memory to one interpretation, the question is raised how disputed topics in the politics of memory such as the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact, Katyn, or the Holocaust are handled in Polish textbooks. The textbooks hold up to critical examination. Authors have not submitted to history policy. History books are laid out in a problem-oriented fashion and also treat painful issues, such as Jedwabne, in addition to the heroic sides of Polish history.

**Elfie Siegl**

### **Graveside Reconciliation**

The German War Graves Commission in Russia

Since the end of the First World War, the German War Graves Commission has looked after the graves of fallen German soldiers. In 1984, the commission was able to take up work in the Soviet Union, but only in 1992 did Germany and Russia sign a war graves agreement. Despite the gradual rapprochement, German military cemeteries remain an offence for older people in Russia, for others a political issue. However, this applied reconciliation work is showing first results.

**Xavier Galmiche**

### **Models and Modalities of Memory**

Toužim: The Duel History of a Town in Bohemia

Bohemia is one of the oldest German-Slavic contact zones. The competing German and Czech interpretations of city histories are therefore perfect examples of the differences in history policies. The Czech writing city histories engages in a hyper-historisation in order to place the past of this former German-settled locality in a national-Czech grand narrative. By contrast, Sudeten German histories show a de-contextualised view of a small, lost homeland.

## Places of Memory in Music and Literature

Dorota Szwarcman

“And God Hid His Face”

Polish Compositions about the War and Violence

Although Poland suffered from wars, genocide, and destruction in the 20th century like almost no other country, there were in the postwar era hardly any musical works in which the victims of totalitarian violence were remembered. The aesthetic dictates of Socialist Realism and ideological restrictions were responsible for this. Compositions by Witold Lutosławski and Andrzej Panufnik remain singular exceptions. After the thaw, the palate of musical forms of expression expanded. In the meantime, the memory of the Polish officers murdered in Katyn and the victims of the Holocaust have found compositional expression. After the shock of Jedwabne, Marta Ptasińska, Piotr Moss, and Krzysztof Knittel created remarkable works.

Natascha Drubek-Meyer

The Victim and the “Cremator”

The “Jewish Theme” in Czech Literature and Film

The fate of the Jews in the 20th century is a central theme in Czech literature and film. After the war, an ideological approach dominated at first. In the 1960s, attitudes involving psychological identification and self-criticism gained in importance. Books and films on the “Jewish theme” became a means of indirectly discussing the Communist regime. The dichotomous relationship of Czechs to their own people is reflected in the ambivalences of the fictional treatment of the “Jewish theme.”

Jūratė Landsbergytė

“Lord, Your Country is Burning!”

The Baltic: Resistance from the Spirit of Music

The influence of the Soviet dictatorship on the music of the Baltic is reflected in Baltic minimalism. The development of the intonational cell represents a milestone in which folkloric elements and intonations merge with modern techniques of composition. Baltic minimalism is a form of resistance. Compositions are dedicated to the philosophy of time, history, and memory as well as religious spheres. Its most important representatives are Arvo Pärt, Bronius Kutavičius, and Pēteris Vasks. Lithuania in particular has seen the development of a diverse musical culture, which is linked by an autonomous colour of tone.

## Claudia Sinnig

### Clio, the Muse of History

Lithuanian verse under the Soviet and German occupations, 1939–1942

The outbreak of the Second World War put an end to neo-romantic inwardness in Lithuanian literature. The war gave rise to a return to national romanticism and *Prolet-kult*, which writers used to celebrate the Soviet cession of Vilnius to Lithuania in October 1939 and even the invasion of the Red Army in June 1940, an event that was at first seen as liberation from the Smetona regime. In the autumn of 1940, when the violent Sovietisation of Lithuania set in, and in June 1941, when a Lithuanian uprising against the Soviet occupation broke out parallel to the German invasion of the Soviet Union, the lamentations, accusations, and appeals also fell back on rhetoric and stylistics that had been handed down. Only the repeated, deep disappointment, the excesses of violence, and the complete hopelessness under German occupation, in which a new Soviet occupation was heralded, brought Lithuanian verse a modern universality, new subjects and motifs. Lithuanian verse turned away from the national ideal towards a universal humanism. The poetological connections and transitions, in particular between Neo-romanticism and Socialist Realism, are fluid and have hardly been explored so far.

## Cornelius Hasselblatt

### Distance, Resentment, Grotesque

Memory Culture in Estonian Prose

Four Estonian authors from the postwar era have found their own styles to process the traumatic years from 1944 to 1953/1956 in literature. Jaan Kross approaches what was experienced from a considerable distance and with humour, whereas the cumbersome, inaccessible collages of text by Ene Mihkelson show resentment. In Viivi Luik's childlike-naïve report, the terror is revealed only indirectly. Andrus Kivirähk's approach to the past passes through satire.