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**Contested Memories of the Difficult Past
Eastern Europe and Its History of the 20th Century**

ABSTRACTS

Bekus, Nelly

Multiple Cartographies of Negative Remembrance and Limitations of Anti-communist Discourse in Belarus

The presentation will discuss how agencies and actors of various types - regional and local activists, religious organisations, international foundations and foreign states, interact and compete in fostering anti-communist agenda in Belarusian society and what are the effects of this complex interplay. Using the case of the memorial site of Kurapaty, which is the site of mass executions and a mass grave (1937-1939) located on the outskirts of Minsk, the paper will demonstrate how different agencies and actors develop various projects of truth-telling and memorialization programmes that aim at criminalisation of the Soviet past based on the specific cartographies of negative remembrance (European, Eastern European, post-Soviet, national). These multiple cartographies transform the memorial site into a space of contestation that ultimately hampers its ability to counteract the official Belarusian policy of non-remembrance of the Stalinist repressions in Belarus.

The paper will address the symbolic role played by the memorial site in the debates on criminalisation of the Soviet past as well as the spatial and material aspects of the site, i.e. its controversial role in Minsk's development.

Blacker, Uilleam

Writers and texts as actors in mnemonic space: the case of Anatoly Kuznetsov.

Public monuments and literature are both well-established carriers of cultural memory. The relationship between these two media is rarely considered, however. This paper will investigate the ways in which literary texts about past events can directly influence the shape of public commemorative projects, and will also consider the role of the writer as a mnemonic actor in this context. As a case study, the paper will consider Anatoly Kuznetsov's famous 'documentary novel' *Babi Yar*, looking at how the text has recently been used in the creation of a memorial project in Kyiv, but also at other ways in which the use of this literary text in particular can help approach new, more nuanced paradigms of public commemoration. The

paper will suggest that public memory projects in general can benefit greatly from harnessing the complexity and nuance that is often provided by literary treatments of urban memory.

Colin-Lebedev, Anna

Veterans' Memories in the Context of Changing Ukrainian National Narratives

Contemporary Ukrainian society comprises different groups and generations of veterans of armed conflicts: WWII Soviet veterans, OUN/UPA fighters, veterans of the Soviet war in Afghanistan and, these last years, combatants of the armed conflict in Donbas.

The shaping of individual and collective memories of the participants in these armed conflicts is extremely dependent on the political context and on the dominant national narrative. The social attitude towards different groups of veterans has been very diverse and dynamic in contemporary Ukraine, varying from delegitimation to heroisation. Heroisation as well as stigma hamper the formulation of a more complex and nuanced narrative of the violent experience they have been through. Paradoxically, the social recognition of veterans does not necessarily contribute to a better understanding of war experience.

The presentation will partly rely on two of my research projects. The first one, conducted between 2010 and 2015, is dedicated to Ukrainian Afghanistan war veterans. The second one is an ongoing research on combatants and veterans of the armed conflict in Donbas.

Grimm, Jürgen

Media-Based Holocaust and Holodomor Reception in the Ukraine. Perspectives for a humanity-oriented impartment of history.

In the digital age, the monopoly of remembrance of the national elites is broken by a mediation of the memory-related material on the one hand and by transnational media communications on the other hand. In an international comparison of media receptions of critical historical events, specific national characteristics as well as trans-national trends regarding the appropriation of historical conflictual issues can be found. This offers the chance for overcoming narrow-minded views that carry the seed for new conflict and for strengthening the self-reflection of national memory cultures. On the basis of several media effect studies on the topics *Holocaust* and *Holodomor* in the Ukraine and in Austria, possibilities for a humanity-oriented impartment of history by trans-national *perspective sharing* are tested and evaluated against the background of the MIH model (Multidimensional Imparting of History). The study is part of an international research project „Communicating History in the Transnational Space“ in which so far empirical research in eight countries (Austria, Germany, Hungary, Russia, Ukraine, Turkey and Vietnam) has taken place. The aim of the project is the generation of knowledge about the quality of history impartment by varying the design of individual media communications and by comparing the effect output. This insight into design and effect shall serve as the basis for strategies of optimization.

Khromeychuk, Olesya

Glory to the Heroes? Gender, Nationalism and Memory

The paper will examine the role of gender in remembering the nationalist movement of the 1930s-50s in contemporary Ukraine. It will discuss how Ukrainian nationalist women are represented, remembered or forgotten. Analysing gender dynamics in the nationalist underground, and how it is reflected in later representations, tells us much about the ideology of nationalism, the discrepancy between theoretical ideals and the practical involvement of women and men in the movement, and the impact political conflicts have on the way gender is perceived by society. The paper will argue that, on the one hand, war itself allows negotiations of gender distinctions, and yet, on the other, the process of remembering and com-

memorating war produces the type of cultural encoding of experience that reinforces traditional gender roles. The paper will trace the developments in memory politics in post-Maidan Ukraine, paying particular attention to the work of the Ukrainian Institute of National Memory. The paper will also examine representations of nationalist women in historiography, and briefly look at their cinematic and literary portrayals. It will argue that the question of representation of nationalist women has a direct relevance to the shaping of contemporary Ukrainian society.

Kończal, Kornelia

The notion of *lieu de mémoire* is one of the major concepts in interdisciplinary memory studies. Created in France in the late 1970s, it has gained currency on a global scale since the 1990s. While nation-centered approaches still dominate historical memory studies, first attempts have already been made to combine the history of memory with regional, comparative and transnational perspectives. How did the concept of *lieu de mémoire* change over time and space? How to explain its belated reception in Eastern Europe? And how could the focus on Eastern European *lieux de mémoire* help us to rethink the complex history of this particular region? The French-German and Polish-German experiences provide not only answers to these questions. They also allow us to establish a catalogue of best (and less good) practices for memory studies in general.

Mälksoo, Maria

Self-reflexivity or Security: Strategies of Remembrance in 'Transition Countries'

I outline two basic models of pursuing the politics of truth and justice-seeking in 'transition states': (i) a reflexive and (ii) a mnemonic security-oriented approach. The former tends to contribute towards a more systematic and comprehensive adoption of a range of transitional justice measures, which, in turn, generally lays the basis for a more cooperative stance in the foreign policy outlook of states. Meanwhile, if the state's dealing with its repressive legacies is geared towards the safeguarding and securitisation of its glorious memories and 'useful past' at the expense of engaging with the more problematic chapters in its history, self-interrogation and self-reflexivity tend to be actively discouraged and the adoption of transitional justice measures remains limited or highly selective. Calls to revisit the state's past 'self' are thus resisted, the alternative approaches depicted as dangerous and undermining for the state's sense of ontological continuity, leading eventually to a more confrontational stance vis-à-vis the perceived challengers of the state's mainstream self-narrative in international society.

Schwartz, Michael

Ethnic "cleansing" is the dark, flip side of our modern democratisation and nation-building period. As early as the 19th century, the Balkans and colonies outside of Europe were becoming training grounds for this kind of rational solution: From massacres and wartime displacement, the instrument of mass deportations became a peacetime solution, and state-sponsored genocide occurred alongside this policy of forced migration. From 1914 onwards, these governance techniques, developed both globally and at the peripheries of Europe, returned in force across Europe. In both world wars, but particularly in the Second World War, their destructive potential surpassed anything that could have been imagined. Since then, they have continued to influence global development.

Serotta, Edward

When you digitize memory...

...you can do just about anything.

Centropa was formed in 2000 with the goal of interviewing a thousand elderly Jews still living in Central and Eastern Europe. We did not use video; we did not focus primarily on the Holocaust. Instead, we digitized more than 22,000 of their old photographs and asked them to tell us stories about their lives—through their pictures: from grandparents to grandchildren. We now turn their stories, and pictures, into walking tour apps, interactive books, illustrated books, traveling exhibitions and multimedia films.

Shcherbakova, Irina

Both in Russia and Europe, we are witnessing an abrupt rise in nationalistic sentiments, hatred of liberalism, the West, and democracy. The search for a “guilty other” often entails anti-semitism. European values have been rebuffed aggressively in Russian mass media since 2014: The events on Maidan were presented as a “fascist coup in Ukraine”. Furthermore, a shared culture of remembrance and Russia’s participation in European organizations are called into question. Namely the history of World War II is mythologized and abused as an ideology. It goes without saying that the Hitler-Stalin Pact’s consequences for the Baltic countries, Poland and Western Ukraine are excluded from Russia’s ideological memory. The Holocaust is also incompatible with the myth of the “Great Victory” and hence was ousted from the collective memory. Its disappearance over the years – up until the Perestroika – developed into yet another trauma. Furthermore, the Soviet Union’s defensive war is decontextualized from World War II as a whole, and the Western Allies’ role is belittled. The antagonism of the Cold War enjoys a renaissance, centering on the glorification of Stalin. Hence, wartime memory is stripped of what does not fit into the myth: the Great Purge of 1937/38; Stalin’s fatal decisions as a military commander and brutal conduct of war, resulting in millions of dead soldiers; the deportation of entire peoples suspected of collaborating with the German occupying forces; the cruel treatment of returnees from German war captivity and compulsory labor; the bloody abatement of liberation movements in post-war Eastern Europe, to name but a few. All of this can on no account be the basis of a shared culture of remembrance. The question remains: What can be done today, what scope is there for dialogue, for a future hopefully different from today?

Shchupak, Igor

The Holocaust in Ukrainian Historical Memory

During the first years and even decades of Ukraine’s existence as independent state, for many Ukrainian historians, as well as for Ukrainian society, the Holocaust remained “the Jewish tragedy” which was not incorporated into the national history of Ukraine.

Political elite and historical memory of the Holocaust:

- L. Kravchuk on the ceremony at Babyn Yar on 1991, October;
- V. Yushchenko on the International Forum on the Holocaust in Stockholm, 2000;
- P. Poroshenko on 2015, December in the Knesset of Israel.

Education: Ukraine has become the first country in the former Soviet Union that included the topic of “Holocaust” as mandatory for studying at schools. Ukrainian state and public organisations have created quite an advanced system of training school teachers on teaching the Holocaust history.

Scholarly historical researches: the Holocaust in Ukraine has not yet become the subject of a comprehensive study within doctoral theses.

Separately it is necessary to consider memorialisation of the Holocaust at museums.

The large-scale events in Ukraine dedicated to the 75th anniversary of the Babyn Yar demonstrate a new level of public memory of the Holocaust.

Stola, Dariusz

The Polin Way of Presenting Difficult Pasts

The experience of the POLIN Museum of the History of the Polish Jews offers interesting insights into the possible ways of presenting divisive topics of history. The museum tells the 1000-year history of Polish Jews, but it pays special attention to the Holocaust chapter of this history and is located in a memorial complex in front of the Monument to the Warsaw Ghetto. It also deals with antisemitism, including the pogroms of the 1930s and 1941. While these topics have been at the center of major public controversies, the museum has so far earned very limited criticism and widespread praise. Virtually all Polish media as well major newspapers in Israel, Western Europe and America welcomed its opening and published positive, often enthusiastic reviews. The opinions of its diverse audience of 700,000 visitors are similar so far, as confirmed by exit polls and thousands of posts. The presentation will point at some features of the exhibition that contributed to such positive responses, and ask about their possible application elsewhere.

Sznaider, Natan

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, Europe is searching for some shared cultural imagery to provide a cultural backbone to the crisis-ridden European unification. What shape could that cultural imagery take? The Western European presumption that narratives of the Holocaust can provide the foundation for a shared European identity has clashed with the memory politics of post-Stalinism as well as post-Francoism. My argument in a nutshell is that the study of memory is too often pervaded by a territorial conception of culture, society, and memory that leads to an idea of culture that is rooted and spatially fixed. On the one hand, what we will see is that the Holocaust is not a shared memory, while on the other hand genocide memorialisation has become a key component in nationalist politics in some of the Eastern European nation states. This lecture will try to give an account of the distinctions between Holocaust memorialisation and the comings of terms with genocide in a European comparative perspective.

Templin, Wolfgang

Conflicts of Remembrance in Independent Post-Soviet Ukraine

After gaining its independence in 1991, an official brand of eclectic state patriotism developed within Ukraine, which was fixated on hero worship and Ukraine's status as a nation of victims. In everyday life, strong elements of nostalgia for Soviet Ukraine lingered. On the other side stood, and indeed still stands, militant Ukrainian nationalism, which made a hero of even right-wing terrorist Ukrainian resistance, and disowned the dark side of Ukrainian collaboration and the anti-Semitism frequently associated with it. Young historians and representatives of historical civil initiatives strive to establish differentiation in the way the various aspects of Ukrainian history are handled, however they remain in the minority. International cooperation and close collaboration with critical historians and history initiatives in neighbouring countries such as Poland, Russia and Belarus, could bring vital progress. German experience with the Stasi Records Agency and successful rehabilitation initiatives could also be valuable.

Troebst, Stefan

The East-West divide of Europe is a product of World War II. “1989” confirmed the view of Polish historian-in-exile Oskar Halecki, put forward in 1950, that the continent’s eastern half consists of a Russian-dominated (post-)imperial Eastern Europe and an East-Central Europe of nation-states while in the western half a German-speaking West-Central Europe can be distinguished from a (post-)colonial Western Europe. Recently, the historical sociologist Gerard Delanty has further specified Halecki’s four-fold division into “a six-fold classification to capture the diversity of Europe’s historical regions”: North Western Europe, Mediterranean Europe, Central Europe, East Central Europe, South Eastern Europe, and North Eastern Europe. Not surprisingly, these divisions based on clusters of historical markers can also be identified—with some minor modifications—on the map of present-day European cultures of remembrance. Realms of memory like the Hitler-Stalin Pact, the Shoah, “1945” or “1968” prove this regional pattern.

Yekelchyk, Serhy

Contestation in the field of historical memory can take the form of a “war of monuments.” The Soviet authorities created in Kyiv a unified regime of memory about World War II that was organised around three main memorial sites: the Park of Eternal Glory, Babi Yar, and the Museum of the Great Patriotic War featuring a statue of the Motherland. The fall of communism opened all three to contestation, which took the form of rewriting the embedded narratives, adding competing monuments, and vandalism—the latter directed at both the new memorials and the old Soviet ones. Babi Yar stands out among the three memorial sites in the Ukrainian capital in that competing or additional narratives of martyrdom are grouped together around the main one, commemorating the Holocaust. Instead of a “war of monuments,” the diversity of the tragic experiences now commemorated at and near this site exists in a complex symbiosis with Babi Yar as a symbol of the Holocaust, which lends them legitimacy and a narrative framework.

Zhurzhenko, Tatiana

Memory in Transition(s)

The notion of “transitional societies” as applied to the countries of Eastern Europe assumes that they are supposed to leave behind the legacy of Communism and fully implement the Western model of democracy which is a prerequisite and an instrument for working through the painful memories of the past. In my presentation, I will argue that “democratic transition” in our societies has been complicated by some other transitions experienced simultaneously. The first one can be described as a “transition from triumph to trauma”, a formula coined by Bernhard Giesen, for whom this is one of the characteristics of European modernity in general. According to Giesen, “in modern Western nations the triumphalist founding myth is increasingly being replaced by reference to a traumatic past, to the collective memory of victims and perpetrators”. The Soviet triumphalist meta-narrative of the past is gone (although in Russia we can observe its surprising comeback at least since the annexation of Crimea) and the new nation states rather build their identities on the idea of collective suffering. But does this help to reconcile conflicting memories or does it lead to a new “competition of victims”? The transition from triumph to trauma coincides with another important transformation in the realm of collective memory. As the last witnesses of the World War II and Stalinism pass away, these historical events are shifting from communicative to cultural memory (a distinction introduced by Jan and Aleida Assmann). The social and political implications of this shift are many, from the re-codification and new mythologisation of the past, to the emergence of new “communities of memory”, commemorative entrepreneurs and public rituals.

Zvereva, Galina

New memory in new media

In the global networked world, the forms of social remembering and forgetting, as well as of social memory organisation, storage and transmission have experienced significant qualitative and technological transformations. These are interrelated with the change of people's cognitive and behavioural orientations in the face of a proliferating digital media environment. New media create a "new memory", the main features of which are globality, digitality, and mobility. The long established memory institutions (e.g., academies, libraries, museums, and archives) have to adapt to these conditions and change their work practices. In this environment, the new places of social memory organisation and production (e.g., web-archives, databases, digital encyclopaedias, etc.) have begun to grow intensively and live on their own. Thus, the monopoly of traditional institutions as agents of memory and places of its accumulation, regulation and storage has been contested by the new agents participating in memory production and broadcasting – by new media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Flickr, etc. At the same time, ordinary digital media users create their own "nests" of shareable individual and collective memory by means of their PCs and mobile devices.

This paper suggests a discussion on the following issues: Why are various social institutions and individuals able to act as equally authoritative agents of social memory? What are the characteristic features of production, promotion and consumption of multi-modal forms of media-memory in digital society? And, how do users of social media create competitive "memorable" digital stories (in forms of video, audio, and verbal texts)?

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