

ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE  
STUDIA TERRITORIALIA

XVII

2017

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**STUDIA**  

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**TERRITORIALIA**

**XVII**  
**2017**  
**2**

CHARLES UNIVERSITY  
KAROLINUM PRESS  
2018

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

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## EDITORIAL

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Dear readers,

welcome to the 2/2017 issue of our *Acta Universitatis Carolinae – Studia Territorialia* journal.

This volume stems from the late 2017 call for papers titled “Coming to Terms with the Past: The Politics of Reconciliation and Beyond.” The call invited contributions that would provide diverse disciplinary perspectives on various reconciliation strategies that have been taking place across North America, Europe and Eurasia.

We have chosen three original articles for this special issue. It opens with a study by Andrea Carlà and Johanna Mitterhofer on the role cultural heritage plays in multiethnic societies. Using the example of the Fascist Victory Monument in Bolzano/Bozen, South Tyrol, their contribution shows how monuments can be engaged for a pluralist reconstruction of contested memory. The second contribution is an archival study of the restitution claims made by German social-democratic and communist parties for the printing companies confiscated from them by the pre-war Nazi regime in Hannover, Lower Saxony. In this study, Jana Stoklasa unveils to what extent the righting of the past wrongs in post-WWII West Germany was hampered by the East-West tensions of the Cold War era. Finally, Alena Heinritz offers a critique of works by two contemporary Russian novelists, Olga Slavnikova and Sergei Lebedev, to reflect on the possibilities and limits of coping with the legacy of communist totalitarianism in today’s Russia.

We have striven for complementarity and compactness when selecting papers for this special issue. The included contributions are therefore geographically limited to Europe and post-Soviet Eurasia. The American perspective will be covered in one of the following issues that we are currently preparing.

On behalf of the editors,

Lucie Filipová and Jan Šír  
doi: 10.14712/23363231.2018.2





## ARTICLES

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## TRANSFORMING A CONTROVERSIAL HERITAGE: THE CASE OF THE FASCIST VICTORY MONUMENT IN SOUTH TYROL

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### Abstract

Using a Fascist monument in South Tyrol, Northern Italy as a case study, this paper investigates the role of monuments in managing and negotiating interpretations of the past in culturally heterogeneous societies. It explores approaches to overcoming the exclusionary potential of cultural heritage, reframing it in more inclusive, pluralist terms. It provides an in-depth analysis of a dialogical, pluralistic approach to heritage, which allows divergent, even contrary, interpretations of the past to coexist. Thus, the paper sheds light on how monuments (re)construct and contest memory and history. It provides insights into constructive ways of engaging with a controversial heritage in multiethnic societies.

**Keywords:** cultural heritage; fascism; memory; monuments; reconciliation; South Tyrol; multi-ethnic societies

**DOI:** 10.14712/23363231.2018.1

### Introduction

The Victory Monument in Bolzano/Bozen, a town in the province of South Tyrol in northern Italy, immediately reminds the visitor of the fascist period in which it was erected. Its columns resemble the lictoral fasces, which later became a model for a key element of fascist architecture. An inscription in Latin reads,

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“Here at the border of the Fatherland, plant the insignia/From here we educated the others with language, law and the arts.”<sup>1</sup> The monument is an embodiment of fascist ideology (see Fig. 1).



**Figure 1:** The Victory Monument in Bolzano/Bozen, Italy.  
Source: Photo © Gruppe Gut.

Commissioned by Benito Mussolini, the monument was built in the 1920s to celebrate Italy’s victory over Austria-Hungary in World War I. For the German-speaking population of South Tyrol, which had been a territory of the Habsburg Empire until the end of the War when it became part of Italy, it was a concrete reminder of the Fascists’ domination and oppression of the region. Almost a century later, the Victory Monument still stands in its original location

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<sup>1</sup> HIC PATRIAE FINES SISTE SIGNA / HINC CETEROS EXCOLUIMUS LINGVA LEGIBUS ARTIBUS.

and continues to spark regular debates about the place of a fascist monument in today's world. Most recently, a major intervention has attempted to transform the divisive nature of the monument; since 2014, a permanent exhibition inside the monument challenges its negative symbolic power by historicizing and (re)contextualizing it. Thus, the once-divisive monument is set to become an instrument for bridging South Tyrol's divergent memory cultures, improving relations between South Tyrol's different language communities, and fostering a peaceful future.

This article explores how the Victory Monument and its symbolic power has been reshaped by this new permanent exhibition. After providing a brief theoretical overview of the role of cultural heritage, and monuments in particular, in divided societies, we introduce our case study with an overview of the history of South Tyrol and the Victory Monument. We then analyze the multitude of discourses and ceremonies related to the monument over the years, from its erection in 1928 to the opening of the permanent exhibition inside it in 2014.

Drawing on interviews with the exhibition curators, texts from the exhibition catalogue, statements by politicians and public intellectuals, and media discourses, as well as the body of scholarship on Fascist monuments in South Tyrol and beyond, we explore to what extent the original monument preserved the experiences and memories of the traumatic events of the past that have affected group relations in South Tyrol over the years. This paper also seeks to explain how well the permanent exhibition has succeeded in reframing the symbolic and political discourse surrounding the Victory Monument. Finally, we briefly consider whether the multiple narratives promoted by the museum sufficiently include alternative memory cultures, such as those of the increasing number of migrants settling in the region.

The controversies surrounding the Victory Monument are far from unique. From debates about the contemporary meaning of the heritage of national socialism, fascism, socialism and colonial rule<sup>2</sup> to violent ethno-religious conflict

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<sup>2</sup> Henrika Kuklick, "Contested Monuments: The Politics of Archaeology in Southern Africa," in *Colonial Situations: Essays on the Contextualization of Ethnographic Knowledge*, ed. George W. Stocking, Jr. (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1991); Sharon Macdonald, "Undesirable Heritage: Fascist Material Culture and Historical Consciousness in Nuremberg," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 12, No. 1 (2006): 9–28, doi: 10.1080/13527250500384464; Sharon Macdonald, "Reassembling Nuremberg, Reassembling Heritage," *Journal of Cultural Economy* 2, No. 1–2 (2009): 117–134, doi: 10.1080/17530350903064121; Klaus Neumann, *Shifting Memories: The Nazi Past in the New Germany* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2000); D. J. Smith, "Woe from Stones: Commemoration, Identity Politics and Estonia's 'War of Monuments,'"

in the Balkans, Afghanistan, Israel and Palestine, and Africa,<sup>3</sup> heritage is contested worldwide. Scholarship in the field of ethnic politics and the literature on historical legacies within it tend to focus on tensions and conflicts and thus overrepresent the negative face of ethnic diversity.<sup>4</sup> However, peaceful and cooperative ethnic relations are actually more common than violent ones.<sup>5</sup> Thus, this paper departs from a negative presentation of ethnic diversity; rather than highlighting conflict, we focus on the most recent developments concerning the Victory Monument and explore approaches which seek to make heritage, and by extension society as a whole, more inclusive and pluralistic.

Using the monument as a case study, this paper investigates the role of monuments in managing and negotiating interpretations of the past in culturally heterogeneous societies. It explores approaches that seek to overcome the exclusionary potential of heritage, reframing it in more inclusive and pluralistic terms. It provides an in-depth analysis of a dialogical, pluralistic approach to heritage that allows divergent, even contrary, interpretations of the past to coexist. In that way, this paper sheds light on how monuments (re)construct and contest memory and history and provides insight into constructive ways of engaging with controversial heritages in multiethnic societies.

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*Journal of Baltic Studies* 39, No. 4 (2008): 419–430, doi: 10.1080/01629770802461191; Blair Ruble, John Czaplicka and Nida Gelazis, *Cities after the Fall of Communism: Reshaping Cultural Landscapes and European Identity* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009); Dacia Viejo-Rose, *Reconstructing Spain: Cultural Heritage and Memory after Civil War* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2011); Paolo Pantaleo, “Lettonia: chi vuole rimuovere il monumento alla vittoria?” *East Journal*, October 30, 2013, <http://www.eastjournal.net/archives/35845>.

<sup>3</sup> Robert Bevan, *The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 2006); John Chapman, “Destruction of a Common Heritage: The Archaeology of War in Croatia, Bosnia and Hercegovina,” *Antiquity* 68 (1994):120–126, doi: 10.1017/S0003598X00046251; Gregory Ashworth and Bart J. M. van der Aa, “Bamyan: Whose Heritage Was It and What Should We Do About It?” *Current Issues in Tourism* 5, No. 5 (2002): 447–457, doi: 10.1080/13683500208667934; Nadia Abu El-Haj, “Translating Truths: Nationalism, Archaeological Practice and the Remaking of Past and Present in Contemporary Jerusalem,” *American Ethnologist* 25, No. 2 (1998): 166–188, doi: 10.1525/ae.1998.25.2.166; Paul Basu, “Confronting the Past? Negotiating a Heritage of Conflict in Sierra Leone,” *Journal of Material Culture* 13, No. 2 (2008): 233–247; Martin Hall, *Archaeology and the Modern World: Colonial Transcripts in South Africa and the Chesapeake* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2000).

<sup>4</sup> Smith, “Woe from Stones”; Marko Lehti, Matti Jutila and Markku Jokisipilä, “Never Ending Second World War: Public Performances of National Dignity and Drama of the Bronze Soldier,” *Journal of Baltic Studies* 39, No. 4 (2008): 393–418, doi: 10.1080/01629770802461175.

<sup>5</sup> James Fearon and David Laitin, “Explaining Interethnic Cooperation,” *American Political Science Review* 90, No. 4 (1996): 715–735, doi: 10.2307/2945838.

## Understanding Cultural Artifacts: Identities, Memories and Conflicts

Heritage is not simply “what is left from the past.” It is a powerful instrument employed to construct and strengthen a nation’s common (hi)story, identity and continuity. As “imagined communities,”<sup>6</sup> nations are made tangible by embedding them in a physical, lived-in landscape – “a special place of belonging,”<sup>7</sup> which establishes the boundaries necessary for people to orient themselves, to develop their self-understanding as a nation, and to identify with heritage. Heritage artifacts “act as cues for expressing identity,”<sup>8</sup> legitimize national ideology, and cement the hegemony of elites.<sup>9</sup> Monuments are “flashpoint[s] of struggles over history, politics and identity”<sup>10</sup> and “vessels of [collective] memory.”<sup>11</sup> In monuments, “time collapses into space” and assumes material form.<sup>12</sup> As expressions of collective memories, monuments are not simply historical artifacts that represent the past; rather they are *lieux de mémoire* and as such, phenomena that project themselves into the present and future.<sup>13</sup> This process is dialogical; monuments and their representations of the past affect our understanding of the present. At the same time, the forms in which monuments crystallize the past are not immutable. Their meaning is interpreted in the present, influenced by ever-changing conditions.

Monuments’ intimate relationships with collective identities and memories turn them into potential sources of division and conflict. Indeed, the process by which monuments are selected and turned into part of the national fabric is neither cohesive nor unproblematic. While a monument can provide a shared narrative and a sense of belonging to those who see themselves represented in it, “those who cannot see themselves reflected in its mirror cannot properly

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<sup>6</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London and New York: Verso, 1991).

<sup>7</sup> Ross Poole, *Nation and Identity* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), 127.

<sup>8</sup> Sarah Jane Meharg, “Identicide and Terrains of Opportunity: The Problem with Post-Conflict Reconstruction” (Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Regional Peace Studies Consortium, Syracuse, 13 November 2004), 7.

<sup>9</sup> Abu El-Haj, “Translating Truths.”

<sup>10</sup> Bill Niven, “War Memorials at the Intersection of Politics, Culture and Memory,” *Journal of War and Culture Studies* 1, No. 1 (2008): 45, doi: 10.1386/jwcs.1.1.39\_0.

<sup>11</sup> Meharg, “Identicide and Terrains of Opportunity,” 6.

<sup>12</sup> James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 15.

<sup>13</sup> Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire,” *Representations* 26 (1989): 8–9, doi: 10.2307/2928520.

‘belong.’”<sup>14</sup> In the words of Tunbridge and Ashworth, “all heritage is someone’s heritage and therefore logically not someone else’s: the original meaning of an inheritance implies the existence of disinheritance and by extension any creation of heritage from the past disinherits someone completely or partially, actively or potentially.”<sup>15</sup> As those who are excluded, disinherited and marginalized begin to challenge, contest and rewrite the dominant narrative, monuments become sites of contestation between divergent collective identities and memories.

How to deal with sites of “dissonant heritage” is not a straightforward question.<sup>16</sup> Their removal is often proposed as a solution. However, the destruction of places and landmarks may destabilize identities and provoke social disorder, and it might be considered a form of “identicide.”<sup>17</sup> Another option is the modification of the meaning of a monument by erasure of its most problematic and controversial aspects. However, the result of both these options is a “community of forgetting” that is, as Booth argues, a world without a common life or shared identity, and a place without morality.<sup>18</sup> Such revisionism is based, says Habermas, “on the assumption that one can turn the spotlights of arbitrarily reconstructed past histories on the present and from the options illuminated select a particularly appropriate picture of history.”<sup>19</sup> Instead, Habermas suggests retaining reminders of the negative elements of the past in order to bind society together more tightly.

Rather than simply removing contested interpretations or memories of the past, it is necessary to recognize the memories of different groups “so that each may know and respect the other’s version of the past, thereby understanding better what divides and unites” them.<sup>20</sup> Such a multi-voice approach to heritage encourages reflection on the past as process,<sup>21</sup> and creates “a state of ‘negotiated

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<sup>14</sup> Stuart Hall, “Whose Heritage? Un-settling ‘The Heritage,’ Re-imagining the Post-Nation,” in *The Politics of Heritage: The Legacies of ‘Race,’* ed. Jo Littler and Roshi Naidoo (London: Routledge, 2005), 24.

<sup>15</sup> John E. Tunbridge and Gregory Ashworth, *Dissonant Heritage: The Management of the Past as a Resource in Conflict* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1996), 21.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Meharg, “Identicide and Terrains of Opportunity.”

<sup>18</sup> James W. Booth, “Communities of Memory,” in *Canadian Political Philosophy*, ed. Ronald Beiner and Wayne Norman (Ontario: Oxford University Press, 2001), 277.

<sup>19</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *The New Conservatism: Cultural Criticism and the Historian’s Debate* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989), 214.

<sup>20</sup> Gillis, quoted in Aletta J. Norval, “Memory, Identity and the (Im)possibility of Reconciliation: The Work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa,” *Constellations* 5, No. 2 (1998): 260, doi: 10.1111/1467-8675.00091.

<sup>21</sup> Macdonald, “Reassembling Nuremberg.”



memory' based on mutual critical engagement with the past and greater tolerance of different viewpoints."<sup>22</sup>

Heritage sites thus carry within them the dual potential to bring communities together or pull them apart. They embody memories that can unite as well as divide. They shape interpretations and imaginations of the past, present and future that can be either inclusive or exclusive, and they act as cues for articulating multiple national identities. The recent interventions and reinterpretations of the Victory Monument in South Tyrol presented below are an example of attempts to reframe Italy's cultural heritage by approaching the divisive legacies of the past critically and reflexively, in order to make the heritage accessible to everyone regardless of ethnic and linguistic community boundaries.

## The Historical Context of South Tyrol

The Autonomous Province of Bolzano/Bozen, also known as South Tyrol, is located in northern Italy, on the Austrian and Swiss borders. Its population of approximately 516,000 is composed of 70% German-speakers, 26% Italian-speakers and 4.5% Ladin-speakers. The large percentage of German-speakers living in South Tyrol is the result of a shift in the borders after the First World War, when South Tyrol, until then part of the Habsburg Empire, became part of Italy. When Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini came to power some years later in 1923, he started a program for the Italianization of South Tyrol. This included, for instance, a prohibition on the use of the German language, the closure of German-language schools and newspapers, the Italianization of names, and the replacement of local administrators with personnel from other parts of Italy. Newly built industry attracted Italian migrant workers and led to an increase of the Italian population from 7,000 people in 1910 to more than 100,000 in 1943. In 1939, Hitler and Mussolini signed the South Tyrol Option Agreement under which South Tyroleans had to decide whether to retain their right to speak German but emigrate to the Third Reich, or to stay and accept the Fascists'

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<sup>22</sup> Müller, quoted in Smith, "Woe from Stones"; see also Basu, "Confronting the Past"; Keld Buciek and Kristine Juul, "'We Are Here, Yet We Are Not Here': The Heritage of Excluded Groups," in *Ashgate Research Companion to Heritage and Identity*, ed. Graham Brian and Peter Howard (Abingdon: Ashgate Publishing Group, 2008); Gabi Dolff-Bonekämper, "Cultural Heritage and Conflict: The View from Europe," *Museum International* 62, No. 1–2 (2010): 14–19, doi: 10.1111/j.1468-0033.2010.01713.x; Lynn Meskell, "Negative Heritage and Past Mastering in Archaeology," *Anthropological Quarterly* 75, No. 3 (2011): 557–574; Brian S. Osborne, *Landscapes, Memory, Monuments, and Commemoration: Putting Identity in Its Place* (2001), <http://canada.metropolis.net/events/ethnocultural/publications/putinden.pdf>; Tunbridge and Ashworth, *Dissonant Heritage*.

Italianization program. Eighty-six percent of South Tyroleans officially opted for leaving, although only about thirty-seven percent actually did so.<sup>23</sup>

After World War II, the foreign ministers of Italy and Austria, Alcide De Gasperi and Karl Gruber, signed an agreement that assured South Tyrol's German-speaking inhabitants they would not face discrimination and provided for their political autonomy. However, the Italian state implemented the agreement poorly and ethnic tensions simmered from the late 1950s to the 1970s. Separatist activists targeted symbols of the Italian state, such as Fascist monuments, police stations, state-funded housing projects, and power plants. The tense situation improved in 1972 when the Italian government enacted the Second Statute of Autonomy, which introduced additional measures to protect the German and Ladin minority populations in South Tyrol and led to a settlement of the conflict and the reduction of separatist tendencies.

Through the Second Statute of Autonomy, the German-speaking population in South Tyrol enjoys one of the world's most advanced systems of minority protection. It is often described as a model for resolving ethnic tensions and protecting national minorities in various contexts from Bosnia-Herzegovina to Tibet and more recently in Ukraine.<sup>24</sup> It is a "complex power sharing system,"<sup>25</sup> which combines extensive territorial autonomy with various consociational elements. These include proportional representation of the linguistic groups in the provincial legislature and executive governmental bodies, the distribution of public employment and public resources among the linguistic groups in proportion to their numerical strength, mandatory bilingualism on public signage and for public officials, and mother-tongue education, implemented in three separate school systems.

Critics of the autonomy system point out, however, that because of rigid separation between the linguistic groups, it has crystallized divisions between

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<sup>23</sup> Georg Grote, *Ich bin a Südtiroler: Kollektive Identität zwischen Nation und Region im 20. Jahrhundert* (Bozen: Athesia, 2009), 138. For further historical accounts of South Tyrol see also: Rolf Steininger, *South Tyrol. A Minority Conflict of the Twentieth Century* (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2003); Leopold Steurer, *Südtirol zwischen Rom und Berlin. 1919–1939* (Wien: Europa Verlag, 1980); Michael Gehler, ed., *Akten zur Südtirol – Politik 1945–1958. 1945–1947 Gescheiterte Selbstbestimmung* (Wien: Studienverlag, 2011).

<sup>24</sup> Roland Benedikter, "Overcoming Ethnic Division in Iraq: A Practical Model from Europe," *The National Interest*, February 11, 2004; Roland Benedikter, "East Ukraine's Four Perspectives: A Solution According to the South Tyrol Model," *Ethnopolitics Papers* 37 (2015): 1.

<sup>25</sup> Stefan Wolff, "Complex Power Sharing as Conflict Resolution: South Tyrol in Comparative Perspective," in *Tolerance through Law. Self-Governance and Group Rights in South Tyrol*, eds. Jens Woelk, Francesco Palermo and Joseph Marko (Leiden and Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2008).

institutions in many aspects of social and political life.<sup>26</sup> Each language group has created its own separate structures, such as trade unions, political parties, associations and mass media, thereby limiting social contact between the groups.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, some scholars highlight that the groups enjoying autonomy in South Tyrol no longer match the changing demography of the territory. The Statute of Autonomy does not take into account the increasing number of bi- or multi-lingually-raised people (an estimated 25,000 to 35,000 people);<sup>28</sup> nor the growing number of migrants, who in 2016 constituted 8.9% of the province's population.<sup>29</sup> Over the past decade, however, there have been improvements in terms of increased trust, interaction and cooperation among South Tyrol's elites and development of interethnic civil society initiatives.<sup>30</sup>

## The Victory Monument

Designed by architect Marcello Piacentini and inaugurated by King Vittorio Emanuele III in 1928, the Victory Monument was erected as symbol of the victory of Italian troops over Austria-Hungary in World War I. It was an "architectural symbol of the fascist spirit," as Piacentini himself stated.<sup>31</sup> By its location at the site of an earlier Austrian war memorial and the inscriptions on both its interior and exterior, "the entire symbolism of the monument expressed the conquest of South Tyrol and its economic, infrastructural and cultural penetration" by Italy.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Joseph Marko, "Is There a South Tyrolean 'Model' of Conflict Resolution to be Exported?" in *Tolerance through Law. Self-Governance and Group Rights in South Tyrol*, eds. Jens Woelk, Francesco Palermo and Joseph Marko (Leiden and Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2008), 386; Andrea Carlà, "Living Apart in the Same Room: Analysis of the Management of Linguistic Diversity in Bolzano," *Ethnopolitics* 6, No. 2 (2007): 285–313, doi: 10.1080/17449050701345041.

<sup>27</sup> Günther Pallaver, "South Tyrol's Consociational Democracy: Between Political Claim and Social Reality," in *Tolerance through Law. Self-Governance and Group Rights in South Tyrol*, eds. Jens Woelk, Francesco Palermo and Joseph Marko (Leiden and Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2008), 311–312.

<sup>28</sup> Alessandro Pallaoro and Micaela Colletti, "'Nuove' minoranze in Alto Adige/Südtirol: impatto sugli strumenti a tutela delle 'vecchie' minoranze," in *Politiche Migratorie e Autonomie Territoriali. Nuove Minoranze, Identità e Cittadinanza*, eds. Roberta Medda-Windischer and Andrea Carlà (Bolzano: Eurac Research, 2013), 119.

<sup>29</sup> Centro Studi e Ricerche IDOS, *Dossier Statistico Immigrazione 2017* (Roma: IDOS Edizioni, 2017), 440.

<sup>30</sup> Günther Pallaver, "South Tyrol's Changing Political System: From Dissociative on the Road to Associative Conflict Resolution," *Nationalities Papers* 42, No. 3 (2014): 376–398, doi: 10.1080/00905992.2013.856393.

<sup>31</sup> Stadt Bozen, *BZ '18-'45: One Monument. One City. Two Dictatorships* (Vienna–Bolzano: Folio, 2016), 125.

<sup>32</sup> Soragni quoted *Ibid.*, 25.

As explained by historian Hannes Obermair, the construction of the Monument was part of a movement initiated by the Fascist regime that was aimed at destroying Austro-Tyrolean memories and Italianizing South Tyrol and its urban landscape.<sup>33</sup> The monument employed a multilayered symbolism, expressed through its architecture, its Latin inscriptions, its sculptures by the Italian patriot Cesare Battisti, and its statue of *Victory Sagittarius*, a female archer shooting northward toward Austria. It was “the bearer of various messages: the commemoration of the Italian martyrs in the First World War; the exaltation of Italian victory and the conquest of the ‘natural borders’; the supposed superiority of the Latin civilization; the triumph of Fascism.”<sup>34</sup> To the German-speaking population of South Tyrol, however, the monument soon became a symbol of oppression and discrimination under Fascism and, after the fall of Mussolini, under the Italian state more generally.<sup>35</sup> It thus embodied two highly dissonant interpretations of the past, representing for the German-speaking population “the Fascist conquest through architecture” and the “symbolic colonization” of South Tyrol by Italy on the one hand, and, on the other hand, for the Italian-speaking population, a symbol of Italian history and identity.<sup>36</sup>

Considering this historical and socio-political background, it is not surprising that the Victory Monument has been contentious from the beginning and has been used to assert group identities and stake out political claims.<sup>37</sup> As the “tip of a larger cleavage,”<sup>38</sup> the monument became “the focal point of battles over politics, culture, and regional identity.”<sup>39</sup> For instance, in 1943, soon after the fall of Mussolini, a group of Nazi sympathizers damaged the monument. During the political tensions of the 1960s and 1970s, the monument became a key site for protest and displays of power. An explosion in 1978 nearly caused the monument to collapse; a year later, a political activist carried out a hunger strike in front of the monument. As a result of these actions, the monument was closed off

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<sup>33</sup> Hannes Obermair, “Monument and City – A Tormented Relationship,” in *Ibid.*, 123.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 135.

<sup>35</sup> Johanna Mitterhofer, “Competing Narratives on the Future of Contested Heritage: A Case Study of Fascist Monuments in Contemporary South Tyrol, Italy,” *Heritage & Society* 6, No. 1 (2013): 46–61, doi: 10.1179/2159032X13Z.0000000006.

<sup>36</sup> Georg Mair, “Monumente, die uns prägen,” *ff06* (2011).

<sup>37</sup> Hannes Obermair and Sabrina Michielli, “Erinnerungskulturen des 20. Jahrhunderts im Vergleich / Culture della memoria del Novecento a confronto,” *Quaderni di storia cittadina / Hefte zur Bozner Stadtgeschichte* 7 (2014).

<sup>38</sup> Alessandro Leogrande, “La redenzione elettronica di un relitto fascista,” *pagina99* (December 6, 2014), 29.

<sup>39</sup> Jeffrey Schnapp, “About a Monument and a Ring,” July 23, 2014, <http://jeffreyschnapp.com/tag/monuments/>.

with a fence for security reasons. Meanwhile, it became a place for commemorative ceremonies by Italian-speaking nationalists (and celebrations of the victories of the Italian national football team by sports fans). Until 1997 it was the locus of military ceremonies.

## What Next for the Monument?

“Monuments don’t hurt,” Giorgio Holzmann, a South Tyrolean right-wing politician, once stated.<sup>40</sup> In contrast, historian John Foot writes that the monument was created “to sow discord” and, as historian Hannes Obermair states, “it managed to do so perfectly.”<sup>41</sup> As highlighted above, the victory monument “hurt” when it was built, and it continued to hurt long after: “Some monuments slip into oblivion. Others, however, remain at the center of disputes: they become the focal point of issues related to the political present and future, to the identity and culture of a society.”<sup>42</sup> The Victory Monument was one such focal point. For Bolzano/Bozen and South Tyrol it is a “boulder that history has forgotten to remove.”<sup>43</sup>

Discussions about the monument’s future have thus been intense and highly politicized.<sup>44</sup> While Italian right-wing parties called for the preservation of the monument, which they considered part of the Italian cultural heritage, right-wing parties representing German-speaking South Tyrol called for its demolition. More moderate proposals included the removal of fascist symbols to weaken the divisive force of the monument,<sup>45</sup> a name change from Victory Monument to Peace Monument in order to transform it into a symbol of peace between the Italian and German communities,<sup>46</sup> and the addition of information panels to contextualize the monument historically.

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<sup>40</sup> Quoted in Marco Angelucci, “Sfiducia a Bondi, si tratta L’SVP: spostare anche l’Alpino,” *Corriere dell’Alto Adige*, January 26, 2011, <https://www.pressreader.com/italy/corriere-dellalto-adige/20110126/281483567842299>.

<sup>41</sup> Interview with Hannes Obermair, March 16, 2017.

<sup>42</sup> Stadt Bozen, *BZ ’18-’45*, 138.

<sup>43</sup> Obermair, “Monument and City,” 122.

<sup>44</sup> For an in-depth discussion on the divergent public discourses about the Victory Monument, see Mitterhofer, “Competing Narratives.”

<sup>45</sup> Along those lines, as early as 1979 the left-wing politician and activist Alexander Langer proposed in the Provincial Parliament – in vain – an intervention in order to transform the monument’s meaning and improve interethnic relations, which at the time were very tense.

<sup>46</sup> In 2002 the City Council of Bolzano decided to change the name of the homonymous square adjacent to the monument from Piazza della Vittoria (Victory Square) to Piazza della Pace (Peace

In 2011, after years of debate, and following an agreement between three key actors (the Italian state, the South Tyrolean provincial government and the municipality of Bolzano/Bozen), a commission of historians and art historians was tasked to elaborate a concept for the historical contextualization of the Victory Monument.<sup>47</sup> A year later, the three governments agreed to implement the concept elaborated by the Commission – a permanent exhibition about the Victory Monument and South Tyrol’s more recent history. They jointly funded the project.

According to Hannes Obermair, a historian and one of the members of the Commission, a conjunction of various political circumstances opened a window of opportunity that led to this decision. Italy’s then-Minister of Culture, Sandro Bondi, delegated making the decision about the future of the Fascist monument from the Italian state to the province of Bolzano. A new president of the province was elected after 25 years of government by Luis Durnwalder (1989–2014). The government of Silvio Berlusconi ended. Furthermore, a new generation of South Tyrolean Italian-speaking and German-speaking historians, who were working on the histories and memories of all South Tyrolean language communities, provided a body of scholarship necessary for the proper historicization of the monument.<sup>48</sup>

The permanent exhibition inside the monument was meant to open up a public dialogue about the differing interpretations of the monument’s role in South Tyrol’s heritage by critically reflecting the political-social context in which it was created and the role it has played in South Tyrol since its conception.<sup>49</sup> Composed of members from the two main language groups, as well as representatives from municipalities, the province, and the state,<sup>50</sup> the Historical

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Square). This decision was overturned by a referendum in which 62% of the inhabitants of Bolzano/Bozen (who are prevalently Italian speakers) voted for maintaining the old name.

<sup>47</sup> In connection with restoration works on the monument in 1973, a historical commission was given the task of finding solutions for the proper contextualization of the Victory Monument. Due to the political climate of the time, this first attempt was not successful. See Stadt Bozen, *BZ ’18–’45*, 25.

<sup>48</sup> Leogrande, “La redenzione elettronica,” 29. These historians also launched a petition to preserve and yet also historicize the Fascist monuments in South Tyrol. See Davide Pasquali, “L’appello degli storici italiani e tedeschi ‘Il passato va spiegato senza rimosizioni,’” *Alto Adige*, February 5, 2011.

<sup>49</sup> Johanna Mitterhofer, “Beyond the Nation: Making Heritage Inclusive,” in *Heritage at the Interface: Interpretation and Identity*, eds. G. Hooper and P. A. Shackel (Gainesville, FL: University Press of Florida, 2017), 136–147.

<sup>50</sup> The Historical Commission’s members were Ugo Soragni (representing the Italian state), Christine Roilo and Andrea di Michele (representing the Province of South Tyrol), Hannes Obermair, and Silvia Spada (representing the municipality of Bozen/Bolzano).

Commission underscored right from the beginning the dialogical nature of the new approach to South Tyrol's heritage.<sup>51</sup>

## **BZ '18–'45: One Monument. One Town. Two Dictatorships**

Nevertheless, it should come as no surprise that the decision to open an exhibition in the Victory Monument caused a new wave of public debate. While some left-wing parties celebrated the exhibition as a breakthrough, adherents of German-speaking right-wing parties considered it a concession made to fascism. The Italian right considered it an illegitimate attempt to modify a historical monument.<sup>52</sup>

Given expectations of the politicization of the project, a non-interference clause in its statute shielded the work of the Historical Commission from political influence. As explained by the president of the Commission, Ugo Soragni, "we needed to work without direct political interference."<sup>53</sup> According to two members of the Commission, Hannes Obermair and Silvia Spada, politicians respected this clause:

We were only given the instruction to put together an exhibition in the spaces below the monument that would tell its history and contextualize it. We knew that if politics had entered our discussions, or if all our plans and texts for the exhibition would have needed to be approved by the Provincial Government, nothing would ever have come out of it. Our work would have been impossible.<sup>54</sup>

According to Spada, the primary task of the Commission was to open up the monument – until then closed to the public – and tell its history and that of the region with dates and facts. The hope was to rid it of its "mysterious aura" and the many half-truths and misinterpretations associated with it. "You may like or dislike the monument, but now you can at least enter and judge for yourself! We wanted to make it possible for people to form their own judgment about the past, without being influenced ideologically."<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>51</sup> Obermair and Michielli, "Erinnerungskulturen."

<sup>52</sup> See the collection of related articles in Stadt Bozen, *Pressespiegel Siegesdenkmal* (2012), [http://www.gemeinde.bozen.it/cultura\\_context.jsp?ID\\_LINK=3921&page=3&area=48&id\\_context=19564](http://www.gemeinde.bozen.it/cultura_context.jsp?ID_LINK=3921&page=3&area=48&id_context=19564).

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in Francesca Gonzato, "Nuovo Monumento Processione senza fine," *Alto Adige*, July 23, 2014.

<sup>54</sup> Interview with Silvia Spada, March 14, 2017.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*

By being opened to the public, explored, and studied, the monument has lost its intangible, mythic nature. Providing information about its history weakens its divisive potential. The Commission was aware that no date or fact is ever completely objective and that conflicting historical narratives were unavoidable. Therefore, rather than seeking to please everyone by selecting only uncontroversial, consensual aspects of the monument's and the region's history or by harmonizing two contrasting sets of memories, the Commission took a different approach. "It would have been impossible to please everyone. Instead, we realized that we had to displease everyone."<sup>56</sup> Only by portraying history "as grey, rather than black or white,"<sup>57</sup> could they avoid their work causing further divisions amongst the population, which, according to Spada, was the biggest challenge of the project. One principle guiding the work of the commission was not to "censor anything." Thus, the exhibition highlights not only the process of Italianization in South Tyrol, but also the benefits of the public infrastructure constructed during the Fascist regime.<sup>58</sup> The commission embraced awareness of the multifaceted aspects of history in order to transform the monument into a place for critical reflection.

The new, permanent exhibition in the subterranean spaces of the Victory Monument opened in 2014. Entitled *BZ '18-'45: One Monument. One Town. Two Dictatorships*, it explores the monument's history against the backdrop of the events of 1918–1945, focusing on the period of fascism and national socialism in South Tyrol.<sup>59</sup> Visitors can explore the role and meaning of monuments in general and reflect critically on the past and future of the monument. In the entrance room, audiovisual installation projects overlap Fascist and Nazi slogans and anthems, rendering them indistinguishable, yet evanescent.<sup>60</sup> In the monument's crypt, quotations from Hannah Arendt, Bertolt Brecht and Thomas Paine are projected on the walls, warning of the dangers of dictatorships and the importance of democracy. They "neutralize" the original frescoes by painter Guido Cadorin and the inscriptions from classical Roman texts praising fame, virtue,

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<sup>56</sup> Interview with Silvia Spada, March 14, 2017.

<sup>57</sup> Interview with Hannes Obermair, March 16, 2017.

<sup>58</sup> Ugo Soragni, quoted in Gonzato, "Nuovo Monumento."

<sup>59</sup> Konzept zur Gestaltung der Dokumentations-Ausstellung im Siegesdenkmal Bozen (2014), [www.siegesdenkmal.com/fileadmin/user\\_upload/pdfs/GGG\\_MaV\\_Konzept-DE.pdf](http://www.siegesdenkmal.com/fileadmin/user_upload/pdfs/GGG_MaV_Konzept-DE.pdf).

<sup>60</sup> Stadt Bozen, *BZ '18-'45*, 16; See also Gruppe Gut, "Progetto di allestimento per un percorso espositivo nel monumento alla vittoria di Bolzano," July 21, 2014, [http://www.monumentoallavittoria.com/fileadmin/user\\_upload/pdfs/GGG\\_MaV\\_Concetto\\_ITA.2.pdf](http://www.monumentoallavittoria.com/fileadmin/user_upload/pdfs/GGG_MaV_Concetto_ITA.2.pdf).



and the honor of sacrifice for one's country.<sup>61</sup> The main exhibition is organized into three "paths." The first path focuses on the region's macro-history from 1918 to 1945, while the second presents the micro-history of the monument. The third path addresses four different, yet interrelated questions: What is a monument? What elements compose the Victory Monument? Who was Marcello Piacentini? What do citizens demand of monuments today?<sup>62</sup>

In a context where language remains a contested issue despite decades of peaceful cohabitation between different communities and official bilingualism, the use of language in the exhibition texts is significant. On signs, English appears first, followed by Italian and German. The Commission chose to use English as the first language of the exhibition to avoid the primacy of one local language over the other.<sup>63</sup> This peculiar decision was an attempt to keep the historical contextualization and explanation of the monument as neutral as possible, and to protect it from possible controversy. It should be noted that the Commission did not include Ladin, the third official language of South Tyrol, on the signs in the exhibition.<sup>64</sup>

The exterior of the monument was left untouched, apart from the addition of a LED ring on one of the columns. This subtle, yet highly visible intervention, which breaks the monumental nature of the façade, is described as "neutralizing" and "contradicting" the ideology of the monument without damaging or erasing it. The ring is "highlighting the critical engagement with Fascist ideology,"<sup>65</sup> as a "symbol of discontinuity and disruption"<sup>66</sup> and a "nose ring for Fascist rhetoric."<sup>67</sup> As explained by Jeffrey Schnapp, scientific advisor to the Commission, the ring aims "to unbalance the façade with its neoclassical symmetries – not to mention, the ideology embedded within those neoclassical symmetries – in the name of post-fascist-era balance." It "marks the difference between the totalitarian *then* [...]" and "a *now* characterized by cultural pluralism and tolerance." Thus, "by unbalancing, the ring rebalances; by defamiliarizing, it refamiliarizes."<sup>68</sup> As the only visible external element that locates the monument squarely in the pres-

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<sup>61</sup> The quotations from Hannah Arendt, Bertolt Brecht and Thomas Paine are, respectively, "Nobody has the right to obey," "Unhappy the land that is in need of heroes," and "The duty of a patriot is to protect his country from its government." Stadt Bozen, *BZ '18-'45*, 14.

<sup>62</sup> Gruppe Gut, "Progetto di allestimento," 10.

<sup>63</sup> Interview with Hannes Obermair, March 16, 2017.

<sup>64</sup> Information material about the exhibition was later translated into Ladin.

<sup>65</sup> Stadt Bozen, *BZ '18-'45*, 16, 29.

<sup>66</sup> Interview with Silvia Spada, March 14, 2017.

<sup>67</sup> Stadt Bozen, *BZ '18-'45*, 29.

<sup>68</sup> Schnapp, "About a Monument."

ent, the ring distances the monument from the past without erasing its history. According to Andrea di Michele, one of the members of the Commission, the idea of the ring was to signal, even to those who do not enter the exhibition, “that something has happened” with the monument and that South Tyrolean society and institutions have launched a process of reflection about it.<sup>69</sup> As explained by Demetz and Prugger of Gruppe Gut, the design firm that oversaw preparation of the exhibition, the “irony and lightness” of the LED ring were more appropriate and “less traumatic” than adding new, heavy architectural elements to represent the breach with the past.<sup>70</sup>

The opening of the permanent exhibition and the addition of the LED ring have transformed the Victory Monument into a “counter monument” in order to “register protest or disagreement with an untenable prime object and to set a process of reflection in motion.”<sup>71</sup> *BZ '18-'45: One Monument. One Town. Two Dictatorships* is “an exemplary effort to reintegrate a controversial monument,” says Jeffrey Schnapp.<sup>72</sup> It has become “a radically different monument, a monument 2.0.”<sup>73</sup> If previously the monument had been used (and abused) primarily by right-wing extremists who used its symbolic power to divide and sow discontent, the controversies surrounding the monument have largely disappeared since the changes were made.<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless, the monument continues to be a disruptive element within the city and the larger region – “an open wound”<sup>75</sup> – and as such, it still commands attention. In contrast to the past, when the visitor’s attention was unable to pass through the stones of the façade and citizens were unable to interact with the “intimidating” monument, visitors can now enter and explore it from both outside and inside. “It is now possible to reclaim the space, interact with it and use it.”<sup>76</sup> Soragni, the president of the Commission, points out that the monument remains an object with several meanings, but that the various meanings are now explained.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Quoted in Gabriele Di Luca, “Il timbro di Sgarbi,” *Salto.bz*, July 23, 2014.

<sup>70</sup> Quoted in Paolo Campostrini, “Gli inventori dell’anello «Serviva un po’ di ironia»,” *Alto Adige*, July 31, 2014. Besides philosophical considerations, economic factors also played a role; the ring was significantly cheaper than other proposals. See Gruppe Gut, “Progetto di allestimento,” 11.

<sup>71</sup> Sergiusz Michalski quoted in Michael Landzelius, “Commemorative Dis(re)membering: Erasing Heritage, Spatializing Disinheritance?” *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 21, No. 2 (2003), 212.

<sup>72</sup> Schnapp, “About a Monument.”

<sup>73</sup> Interview with Hannes Obermair, March 16, 2017.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*; Interview with Silvia Spada, March 14, 2017.

<sup>75</sup> Interview with Hannes Obermair, March 16, 2017.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>77</sup> Quoted in Gonzato, “Nuovo Monumento.”

The exhibition has transformed the monument from an artifact of a violent history into an open space for critical reflection that belongs to everyone and where anyone can “discuss, ask questions and look for possible answers.”<sup>78</sup> Through the democratization of its space, the monument has become a place where knowledge is presented, but also contested and remade. Instead of negating or obliterating the fascist nature of the monument, the monument’s troubled past is used as a resource<sup>79</sup> to explain the ideologies of dictatorships and the divisive power of monuments. As explained by Obermair, “from a monument conceived in the twentieth century by and for fascism, it is now a monument for the new millennium; reinterpreted by a democratic society that believes in the values of participation, tolerance and respect for humanity.”<sup>80</sup> By remaking this element of the cityscape into a site of knowledge production, it has become a site of resistance to social and ethnic categorization that would have been lost had the monument simply been taken down.

Political statements as well as media discourses, the opinions of public intellectuals, and the general reactions of the South Tyrolean population confirm that the process of historicization of the Victory Monument has been successful in reframing its earlier, controversial commemoration of violence. Most politicians have praised the “new” monument and the exhibition. For instance, Arno Kompatscher, the provincial president, spoke of a historical outcome that has managed to respect different sensibilities and free the monument from its ideological weight. According to Kompatscher, the exhibition gives people a space where they can “learn the historical bases of cohabitation and to build a future of peace.”<sup>81</sup> The Italian-speaking vice-president of the province, Christian Tommasini, stressed how “a monument that has in the past divided” the population became “a place that can unite,” and described the exhibition as “a step toward cultural pluralism, plurilingualism and [...] European citizenship.”<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, Dario Franceschini, a former Italian Minister of Cultural Heritage, referred to the monument as a symbol of re-pacification and refusal of totalitarian regimes, pointing out that controversial memories are now used to highlight

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<sup>78</sup> Obermair, “Monument and City,” 139.

<sup>79</sup> Interview with Hannes Obermair, March 16, 2017.

<sup>80</sup> Obermair, “Monument and City,” 135.

<sup>81</sup> Quoted in Redazione ANSA, “Kompatscher, da storicizzazione a normalizzazione,” *ANSA.it*, July 21, 2014, [http://www.ansamed.info/trentino/notizie/qualitaalloadige/2014/07/21/kompatscher-da-storicizzazione-a-normalizzazione\\_7d0939ba-bd5c-4a44-bee1-b331479a4652.html](http://www.ansamed.info/trentino/notizie/qualitaalloadige/2014/07/21/kompatscher-da-storicizzazione-a-normalizzazione_7d0939ba-bd5c-4a44-bee1-b331479a4652.html).

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

the progress of peaceful cohabitation in South Tyrol.<sup>83</sup> Hans Heiss, from the South Tyrolean Green Party, added that the exhibition “makes the Victory Monument less poisonous.”<sup>84</sup>

Negative criticism – though focused on different issues – came predominantly from South Tyrolean German and Italian nationalist parties. Eva Klotz, a leader of the *Süd-Tiroler Freiheit*, a separatist, national-conservative political party, defined the monument as “an affront to all true anti-fascists and democrats” in that it “celebrates the symbolism of Fascism, renovated with an enormous sum of money.”<sup>85</sup> The Victory Monument remains “*the* Fascist monument,” “protected by high fences and CCTV; millions are spent for its upkeep.”<sup>86</sup> Along the same lines, Roland Lang, head of the *Heimatbund*, a patriotic separatist organization, stated that “a hidden museum in a cellar does not change the fact that day after day the inhabitants of Bozen have to live with a roman goddess of victory, who points an arrow toward Austria.”<sup>87</sup> According to Sven Knoll, a representative of the *Süd-Tiroler Freiheit*, without more radical intervention (i.e. its removal), the monument will always be a bulwark of nationalism and the exhibition hypostasizes that role.<sup>88</sup> Therefore, Knoll says: “I will not visit this museum, I won’t put foot into it. It doesn’t interest me at all.”<sup>89</sup>

The criticisms of Italian nationalist right-wing parties focused on the LED ring, seen as an “indecent thing,” an “eyesore” that should be removed, and a disfigurement of the monument. There were even threats of legal action against the “alteration of the material and historical characteristics” of the monument.<sup>90</sup> However, the process of historicization, including the exhibition itself, was largely met with approval, even by one representative of *Casa Pound*, a neo-fascist party.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid.; Francesca Gonzato, “Il Monumento liberato dice addio all’ideologia,” *Alto Adige*, July 22, 2014.

<sup>84</sup> Quoted in Ursula Lüfter, “Hans Heiss: Das ist kein Keller,” *Salto.bz*, July 21, 2014, <https://www.salto.bz/de/article/21072014/hans-heiss-das-ist-kein-keller>.

<sup>85</sup> Quoted in Susanne Pitro, “Die wahre Herausforderung steht noch bevor,” *Salto.bz*, July 20, 2014, <https://www.salto.bz/de/article/20072014/die-wahre-herausforderung-steht-noch-bevor>.

<sup>86</sup> From the website of the *Südtiroler Schützenbund*, a folklorical patriotic association, <https://schuetzen.com/2016/05/01/das-siegesdenkmal-in-bozen/>.

<sup>87</sup> Quoted in Pitro, “Die wahre Herausforderung.”

<sup>88</sup> See Gabriele Di Luca, “Il Monumento, lo storico e il patriota,” *Salto.bz*, July 27, 2014.

<sup>89</sup> Quoted in Lüfter, “Hans Heiss.”

<sup>90</sup> Quoted in “L’anello sulla colonna. Ed è subito polemica,” *Alto Adige*, July 22, 2014; Sarah Franzosini, “Südtiroler History X,” *Salto.bz*, February 11, 2018, <https://www.salto.bz/de/article/10022018/suedtiroler-history-x>; see also *Alto Adige*, Monumento, esposto di Urzi: “Alterate le caratteristiche storiche,” *Alto Adige*, July 22, 2014.

<sup>91</sup> Franzosini, “Südtiroler History X.”

The historicization of the monument was also positively received by many public intellectuals, the media and the general public. Historians and art experts commented approvingly on the exhibition. For example, according to South Tyrolean historian Carlo Romeo, the “light setting” of the exhibition succeeded in avoiding rhetorical banalization, in which the desire to symbolically weaken the monument would have come at the expense of proper, factual historicization. On the other hand, he observed, it also avoided a purely academic approach that ignored the political developments that led up to the installation of the permanent exhibition. It managed to communicate “the relationship between past and present,” lifting the monument out of its isolation and making it part of the history and memory of Bolzano/Bozen and South Tyrol.<sup>92</sup>

Particularly significant in this context is the opinion of Vittorio Sgarbi, a prominent Italian art critic close to center-right parties. When a local right-wing politician called upon him to criticize the LED ring, the art critic instead approved of it, describing it as a “pop solution.”<sup>93</sup> Furthermore, various media accounts of the exhibition described it as a “high quality museum” that “marks a turning point and witnesses the change in relations between the South Tyrolean language groups,”<sup>94</sup> that is “good for history and cohabitation,”<sup>95</sup> is the “only way to deal with controversial past experiences”<sup>96</sup> and is a “re-aestheticization” that allows people to “distance themselves from a heritage that stings.”<sup>97</sup> The addition of the LED ring was described as an “auto-critical historicization,”<sup>98</sup> while the setting of the exhibition was considered the result of “a stroke of genius,” because it allows citizens to question the monument, disempower it, and reflect on the future of such type of monuments.<sup>99</sup> The 39th European Museum of the Year Award gave a “special commendation” to the exhibition and praised it for reintegrating a controversial monument and being a “highly

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<sup>92</sup> Carlo Romeo, “Il monumento svelato,” August 14, 2014, [http://www.carloromeo.it/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=180:il-monumento-svelato&catid=8&Itemid=106](http://www.carloromeo.it/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=180:il-monumento-svelato&catid=8&Itemid=106). See also interview with an expert on the art of the 1920s, Nicoloso: “Ben fatto, così fa meno paura,” *Alto Adige*, July 23, 2014.

<sup>93</sup> Paolo Campostrini, “Sgarbi: mi piace quell’anello. Operazione pop,” *Alto Adige*, July 23, 2014.

<sup>94</sup> Gerhard Mumelter, “Metamorfosi di un monumento,” *Internazionale*, April 23, 2014, [www.internazionale.it/opinione/gerhard-mumelter/2014/07/23/metamorfosi-di-un-monumento](http://www.internazionale.it/opinione/gerhard-mumelter/2014/07/23/metamorfosi-di-un-monumento).

<sup>95</sup> Marco Del Corona, “L’anello al naso che fa bene a Bolzano (e alla storia),” *Corriere della sera*, August 15, 2014.

<sup>96</sup> Giovanni Belardelli, “Ribattezzare Ronchi dei Legionari?,” *Corriere della sera*, August 8, 2014.

<sup>97</sup> Gabriele Di Luca, “Il Monumento (ri)estetizzato,” *Salto.bz*, March 22, 2015.

<sup>98</sup> Leogrande, “La redenzione elettronica,” 29.

<sup>99</sup> Elfi Reiter, “Un abbecedario in marmo del fascismo,” *il manifesto*, August 9, 2014, <https://ilmanifesto.it/un-abbecedario-in-marmo-del-fascismo>.

courageous and professional initiative aimed to promote humanism, tolerance and democracy.”<sup>100</sup>

Finally, most of the South Tyrolean general public has responded positively as well. The day of the exhibition’s inauguration more than 3,500 people visited the monument and exhibition.<sup>101</sup> By 2015, the number of visitors had amounted to more than 55,000, and it increased to more than 85,000 by July 2016 (an average of 1,500 visitors per month). In two years, 177 school classes (4,000 pupils) visited the monument.<sup>102</sup> According to a survey conducted in December 2015, South Tyrolean residents and tourists positively welcomed the monument and the exhibition. Eighty-three percent of the respondents considered it a successful project and considered it to be something between a memorial and a historical monument.<sup>103</sup>

This view is well represented by the following remarks by an Italian-speaking woman during a public discussion of the exhibition a few days after its inauguration: “I never liked the monument and I never considered it an expression of my Italian-ness. The implemented project is the only way to stop persons who have until now identified with it from doing so.”<sup>104</sup> In her analysis of the exhibition guest book, Adina Guarnieri points out that most visitors rate the exhibition positively because it neutralizes the monument. In contrast to the political level, where German-speaking politicians especially raised criticisms, Italian-speaking visitors make the most negative remarks. They complain, for example, about the LED ring and allege that the exhibition presents a false picture of history.<sup>105</sup> It should be noted that members of Italian-speaking groups have been reluctant to fully abandon the original meaning of the monument. Indeed, when in 2016 the mayor of Bolzano/Bozen mentioned the idea of changing the name of the monument (and the adjacent square) to Peace Monument and Peace Square, various representatives of the Italian-speakers opposed the idea. In a survey sponsored

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<sup>100</sup> EMYA, Press Release, April 9, 2016, accessed February 20, 2018, [http://www.monumenttovictory.com/fileadmin/user\\_upload/presse/\\_EMYA\\_2016\\_press\\_release\\_9\\_April\\_2016.pdf](http://www.monumenttovictory.com/fileadmin/user_upload/presse/_EMYA_2016_press_release_9_April_2016.pdf).

<sup>101</sup> Gonzato, “Il Monumento liberato.”

<sup>102</sup> Data from Comune di Bolzano, “Premio Museo Europeo 2016,” April 12, 2016, [http://www.comune.bolzano.it/stampa\\_context.jsp?ID\\_LINK=426&area=295&id\\_context=28885&COL0008=36](http://www.comune.bolzano.it/stampa_context.jsp?ID_LINK=426&area=295&id_context=28885&COL0008=36); and Alto Adige Innovazione, “Monumento alla Vittoria, un volume racconta la mostra,” July 27, 2016, <http://www.altoadigeinnovazione.it/monumento-alla-vittoria-presentato-il-volume-che-accompagna-la-mostra>.

<sup>103</sup> Alto Adige Innovazione, “Monumento alla Vittoria.”

<sup>104</sup> Quoted in Di Luca, “Il Monumento.”

<sup>105</sup> Quoted in Mara Mantinger, “Sieg und Frieden,” *barfuss*, February 27, 2018, <https://www.barfuss.it/leute/sieg-und-frieden>.

by the Italian newspaper *Alto Adige*, 78% of respondents rejected changing the name.<sup>106</sup>

In any event, the meaning of the monument has already been transformed. As pointed out by Obermair and Liliana Di Fede, the former secretary of the Partito Democratico, a name change is no longer needed because the monument “now belongs to everybody” and does not represent “that victory” but the victory of “the new South Tyrolean.”<sup>107</sup> In other words, it “is already in substance a monument of peace.”<sup>108</sup>

## Going Forward: Difficult Pasts and New Citizens

Traditionally, cultural heritage has been closely linked to the conservation and preservation of historical artifacts and monuments that are deemed to be of significance to a particular nation’s history. The Council of Europe’s 2005 Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (the Faro Convention) moves away from the previous place-centered understanding of heritage toward a people-centered perspective. The Convention emphasizes the idea of “heritage communities,” understood as groups “which may not be linked by language, an ethnic tie or even a shared past, but are linked by a purposive commitment to specific heritages.” It promotes the preservation of heritage as an inclusive, creative and transformative process. Focusing on the creation of a “common heritage of Europe,” the Faro Convention also challenges the exclusionary nature of cultural heritage. At both the supra-national and the infra-national level, heritage can exist within, beyond and across nations.<sup>109</sup>

As explained above, the origins of the Victory Monument were anything but inclusive. Built to celebrate Italian rule, it was a physical manifestation of Fascist Italy’s claims over the local population of South Tyrol and embodied the regime’s aim to eradicate any language and culture other than the Italian one. In direct contrast to this homogenizing aim, the *BZ* ’18–’45 exhibition embodies the spirit of the Faro Convention and emphasizes South Tyrol’s heterogeneity by embracing and openly exploring pluralistic, often divergent interpretations of

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<sup>106</sup> “Monumento alla Pace il 78% dei lettori dice «no»,” *Alto Adige*, July 30, 2016.

<sup>107</sup> Obermair, quoted in Paolo Campostrini, “Finalmente è caduto anche il nostro muro,” *Alto Adige*, July 25, 2014.

<sup>108</sup> Di Fede, quoted in Paolo Campostrini, “Sgarbi: «Pace sì, ma non al Monumento»,” *Alto Adige*, July 29, 2016.

<sup>109</sup> Fairclough, “New Heritage Frontiers,” in *Heritage and Beyond*, ed. Council of Europe (Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, 2009); see also Mitterhofer, “Beyond the Nation.”

South Tyrol's past and heritage.<sup>110</sup> Members of both the Italian and the German political right have criticized the exhibition, which is testimony to its success, according to one of the historians in the Commission.<sup>111</sup>

The debates surrounding the Victory Monument have concerned primarily the feelings of the German and the Italian communities. However, as the percentage of people with completely foreign backgrounds is increasing in South Tyrol, the meaning and role of heritage may need to be re-defined. This applies particularly to sites like the Victory Monument, which play a key role – whether positive or negative – in the common heritage and collective identity of a community. The intimate relationship of these heritage sites to a circumscribed, territorially rooted past tends to exclude recent immigrants, whose pasts are rooted elsewhere and for whom a monument may carry little, if any, significance.<sup>112</sup>

To what extent have considerations about the inclusion of “new” South Tyroleans played a role in the making of the Victory Monument exhibition? According to Silvia Spada and Hannes Obermair, the exhibition's creators did not consider people with migrant backgrounds to be a target group. On the other hand, Spada says that there were no target groups categorized by language or ethnicity: “We didn't think about particular audiences when we were putting together the exhibition. The audience we had in mind was an abstract one. This helped us select themes and interpretations independently of ethno-linguistic categories.”<sup>113</sup> According to the curators, the aim was to plan an exhibition that would speak to visitors independently of their origin and that would be accessible to anyone from a longtime resident to a casual German tourist, or from a local elementary school student to a newly arrived migrant.

With this “non-discriminating” approach, the exhibition applied the credo that heritage is not always inherited but can also be adopted<sup>114</sup> – an important insight gained from the conceptual shift away from the idea of a single, cultural heritage. The curators' approach opens up the possibility for people to engage with heritage in fluid, ever-changing ways, without the need to belong to a community with an age-old connection to a particular heritage.<sup>115</sup> Interpretations and approaches to the past do not necessarily need to be shared. They may be

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<sup>110</sup> Mitterhofer, “Beyond the Nation.”

<sup>111</sup> Interview with Hannes Obermair, March 16, 2017.

<sup>112</sup> Mitterhofer, “Beyond the Nation.”

<sup>113</sup> Interview with Silvia Spada, March 14, 2017.

<sup>114</sup> Fairclough, “New Heritage Frontiers,” 35.

<sup>115</sup> Mitterhofer, “Beyond the Nation.”



conflictual or dissonant, as this paper has shown, and they may be of varying (ir)relevance. What is important is that heritage is openly accessible to whoever may want to engage with it.

The transformation of the Victory Monument from a fenced-in monument, with which passers-by could only engage passively from the outside, to a monument-and-exhibition, which people could enter and actively reclaim the space, is a step toward democratization of what originally was a non-democratic heritage. The monument now invites people with or without shared roots to debate, disagree and creatively re-think the role of the past in the present.

## Conclusions

Dealing with divided societies and ethnic tensions remains an enduring test for democracies. The task is not limited to designing institutions which organize government or share power among different ethnic segments of the population, or to recognizing minority rights and implementing policies to protect diversity.<sup>116</sup> It also requires dealing with the cultural heritage of the region and the presence of symbols and cultural artifacts that may carry highly controversial meanings.

This article investigated the role of heritage in managing and negotiating interethnic relations and controversial memories. Focusing on the case of the Victory Monument in Bolzano/Bozen, the article sheds new light on the construction, contestation and reconstruction of controversial memories by physical landmarks. Heritage objects like the Victory Monument embody memories, provide cues for articulating identities and, in multiethnic societies, play a key role in shaping relationships between ethnicities and ethnic politics. Their management mirrors society's understanding of what it means to respect diversity. As shown in this article, the Victory Monument represented controversial meanings for decades and was at the center of tensions between the South Tyrolean linguistic communities. However, as has happened with the *BZ '18-'45* exhibition, it is at least possible to reframe such monuments as sites of reflection and mutual understanding, if not reconciliation. The permanent exhibition has transformed the Victory Monument from a symbol of division to a symbol of

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<sup>116</sup> For a review of this scholarship, see for example: Arend Lijphart, *Democracy in Plural Societies: A Comparative Exploration* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1977); Allison McCulloch and John McGarry, eds., *Power-Sharing Empirical and Normative Challenges* (London and New York: Routledge, 2017); Tove H. Malloy, ed., *Minority Issues in Europe: Rights, Concepts, Policy* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2013).

peace. Today, the monument no longer sparks tensions and discussions among the South Tyrolean linguistic communities. Furthermore, although not intentionally or directly, the exhibition has made the monument and its heritage accessible to the increasing number of people with migrant backgrounds who live in South Tyrol today.

This article does not intend to present the South Tyrolean experience as a model that can be copy-pasted in order to deal with contested cultural artifacts in other divided societies. The entire process of historicizing the Victory Monument, as well as the outcome of that process, is deeply embedded in the specific socio-political context of South Tyrolean society, in particular the relatively peaceful relations between the linguistic communities of the last few decades. Moreover, while the Victory Monument has been substantially transformed by the LED ring and the permanent exhibition, historicization of the many other Fascist relics in the region, and elsewhere in Italy, has only just begun. Most recently, for instance, a monumental bas-relief on an official building in Bolzano/Bozen, which depicts Mussolini on horseback with the Fascist credo “believe, obey, fight,” has been overlaid with a quotation from Hannah Arendt, “nobody has the right to obey.”<sup>117</sup> Further research is necessary to analyze the mid- to long-term socio-political and cultural effects of the transformation of the controversial heritage of South Tyrol and to examine the South Tyrolean experience from a comparative perspective.

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<sup>117</sup> See The Bas-Relief: The History of Fascism in Images, <http://www.basrelief-bolzano.com/en/content/the-bas-relief.html>.

## RETHINKING RECONCILIATION AND THE WEST GERMAN LEFT WING

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### Abstract

Discussion about reconciliation in post-World War II Germany usually centers on Hitler's Jewish victims or recently enacted programs of restitution for so-called marginalized victim groups. In this paper, I explore the largely neglected domestic reconciliation policy affecting the West German left wing in the postwar period. Initially, on a genealogical, micro-historical basis, I investigate the restitution claim files of former communist and social-democratic printing companies located in Hannover, Lower Saxony. In the light of recent nationwide discourse in Germany about anti-communist measures of the pre-unification Federal Republic of Germany, such as the so-called *Berufsverbote* (bans on employment of leftists), these sources document negotiations to right past wrongs and shed light on reconciliation policy during the German-German "cold civil war" that followed World War II.

**Keywords:** Germany; reconciliation; restitution; KPD; SPD; *Berufsverbote*

**DOI:** 10.14712/23363231.2018.3

### I. Introduction

*The past, as we know it from history, is depicted as the only possible past because this serves to justify the present order, but this arrangement is never entirely stable.*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Berthold Molden, "Resistant Pasts Versus Mnemonic Hegemony: On the Power Relations of Collective Memory," *Memory Studies* 9, No. 2 (2016): 125–142. Molden refers to the seminal work of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe on post-Marxist hegemony theory. See Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (New York: Verso, 2001).

The Cold War did not just fade away, it was won – and lost. In Germany, both sides in the conflict were represented by geographic and political units for 45 years. In discussions about overcoming the legacy of the German-German “cold civil war” today,<sup>2</sup> massive and incontrovertible violations of human rights during the post-World War II period are being reinterpreted by organizations like the Federal Foundation for the Study of Communist Dictatorship in East Germany (*Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur*).<sup>3</sup> As a constituent part of German post-1989 reconciliation politics,<sup>4</sup> present-day discourse views communism as a perverted utopia and decries the evils of the totalitarian system. Consequently, victims of persecution in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) can claim rehabilitation by law, while rehabilitation is still being sought by former West German communists.

During the post-World War II period, in reaction to the despotic policies of the GDR towards its citizens, the formation of a West German identity was stamped with a political culture of anti-communism. The German-German political system resulted in concrete persecution of the left in West Germany by measures such as the *Berufsverbote*. In 1950, the first West German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, announced the so-called *Adenauererlass*, which mandated the dismissal of officials, employees and workers who were accused of promoting

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<sup>2</sup> Unlike the Cold War, the German-German “cold civil war” is not a historical artifact. In recent works, the term rather serves as a metaphor expressing the interaction between the international and the national conflict in Germany. It is helpful to describe the social dimension of the political framework of the Cold War, in which Germans were pitted against Germans. See Josef Foscchepoth, *Verfassungswidrig! Das KPD-Verbot im Kalten Bürgerkrieg* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2017), 18; Bernd Stöver, *Der Kalte Krieg 1947–1991. Geschichte eines radikalen Zeitalters* (München: C. H. Beck, 2007), 227–236. The analytical potential of the term was well stated by Major: “It was, after all, here, on the home fronts of both East and West Germany that one will find the casualties of the cold civil war. This is not an excuse for a victim-based history, but a plea for a broader socio-cultural sweep to what must, at heart, remain a political phenomenon. The interaction of politics, society, and culture only enrich the history of the Cold War.” See Patrick Major, *The Death of the KPD: Communism and Anti-Communism in West Germany, 1945–1956* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), 303.

<sup>3</sup> Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur, <https://www.bundesstiftung-aufarbeitung.de/>.

<sup>4</sup> The German terms *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* and *Aufarbeitung* relate to the whole range of reconciliation politics that serves to overcome the past and re-evaluate past wrongs. See Wulf Kansteiner, “Losing the War, Winning the Memory Battle. The Legacy of Nazism, World War II, and the Holocaust in the Federal Republic of Germany,” in *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*, ed. Richard Ned Lebow, Wulf Kansteiner and Claudio Fogu (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006), 162. Since World War II, the first step in reconciliation has consisted of making material reparations or compensation and is necessary in order to acknowledge past wrongs and allow further dialogue about negotiating a societal reconciliation. In this contribution, I use the term “restitution” to describe the material dimension of *Wiedergutmachung*. The term reconciliation refers to a conciliatory approach to the past (*Versöhnung*).

national resistance from their posts in the public service. Adenauer's Decree on the Political Activity of Members of the Civil Service against the Democratic Order<sup>5</sup> mostly targeted communists and served as the precursor for the professional bans of the 1970s and 1980s. The measure also affected former members of the resistance to Nazi rule.<sup>6</sup>

In 1972, as a protective measure against the propaganda activities of East Germany and the related fear of overthrow by the protest movement of the 1960s, German Chancellor Willy Brandt issued the Radicals Decree (*Radikalenerlass*).<sup>7</sup> On the basis of that resolution, 3.5 million people were screened for their political orientation. Approximately 10,000 mostly leftist employees and candidates for office were removed or ruled out from holding public service positions.<sup>8</sup> This left deep marks in German society that have only recently received any attention at all directed at reconciliation. Until now, the work of a representative for the rehabilitation of victims of the so-called Radicals Decree (*Landesbeauftragte für die Aufarbeitung der Schicksale im Zusammenhang mit dem sog. Radikalenerlass*) in Lower Saxony remains unique among the states of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> The *Adenauererlass* decreed a duty of loyalty to the German Constitution (*Verfassungstreue*) on part of public officials. In consequence, the *Berufsverbote* affected approximately 11,000 KPD members and their sympathizers.

<sup>6</sup> The consequences of the double victimization of the KPD victims of Nazism remain unelaborated. Their descendants have mentioned neuroses, severe depressions, alcoholism and suicides. The "thinkable" is here indeed unsayable and requires first and foremost explicit legal responsiveness toward its victims.

<sup>7</sup> The official title of the so-called Radicals Decree was Principles of the Issue of Anti-constitutional Forces in Public Service, German History in Documents and Images, [http://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub\\_document.cfm?document\\_id=898](http://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=898).

<sup>8</sup> "The systematical screening of all applicants for public service positions reveals a fundamental distrust of the West German citizen's democratic reliability [...]." See Jutta Rübke, ed., *Berufsverbote in Niedersachsen 1972–1990. Eine Dokumentation* (Hannover, Niedersächsische Landesbeauftragte für die Aufarbeitung der Schicksale im Zusammenhang mit dem sogenannten Radikalenerlass, 2018), 12. It was not the risk of a Communist overthrow that was the foundation for those political measures, but rather the demands for domestic reform by the protest movements of the 1960s. Not personally involved in Nazi crimes, the post-World War II generation provided a societal platform for questioning how the Nazi past was being handled. On the other hand, the fear of a Soviet invasion should not be underestimated, since Germans were separated into two ideologically opposed states. However, already in 1976, Brandt expressed regret for the issuance of the *Radikalenerlass*, which had led to a climate of anxiety caused by loss of social standing and inhibition of societal criticism.

<sup>9</sup> In recent research on the *Berufsverbote* in Lower Saxony, the suffering of the persons affected by the professional bans and court proceedings is given voice and is linked to the social stigmatization of Communists within West Germany. Based on evaluation of critical sources, a hypothesis has been advanced that in Lower Saxony, the *Berufsverbote* were part of a broader counter-reform

The banning of the Communist Party of Germany (*Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands*, KPD) made the impact of these measures tangible. In 1951, the West German government began to seek a ban on the KPD, which was finally realized in 1956. Recourse to history was made in order to denounce political enemies and critical voices and to satisfy hegemonic interests. Overturning of the KPD ban, which was unique in Western Europe, only began in 1968 with the emergence of the German Communist Party (*Deutsche Kommunistische Partei*, DKP). A generational break took place in the early 1970s, when the West German government's New Eastern Policy (*Neue Ostpolitik*) was adopted, and the restitution proceedings analyzed here were closed down.

In this paper, I examine the restitution claims resulting from Nazi suppression of the printing companies run by the former KPD and the Social-Democratic Party of Germany (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*, SPD). Those printing companies were the main assets of the KPD and SPD before the rise of national socialism in Germany, and the treatment of claims for their restitution provides evidence of the efforts at internal post-World War II reconciliation in West Germany. This paper aims to demonstrate that the restitution claims of the West German left wing and its former labor organizations were a discursive platform in the German-German cold civil war that preceded the *Berufsverbote* of the 1970s and 1980s.

Mainly due to the politics of remembrance, the process of internal restitution for the KPD and SPD in recompense for their persecution by the Nazis remains *terra incognita*.<sup>10</sup> Nevertheless, two different perspectives dominate the research that has been done on the SPD and KPD printing companies. In the case of the SPD, the research was commissioned mainly by the party itself. Although the SPD's studies reconstruct the history of the party's assets, they also reflect a *post hoc* canon of glorification of the party.<sup>11</sup> In opposite fashion, and due to the complexity of defensive property transactions, the history of the

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movement. Willy Brandt sought to discredit supporters of reform by "attesting their proximity to terrorist sympathizers and enemies of the constitution." See Rübke, *Berufsverbote in Niedersachsen*, 10 and 15.

<sup>10</sup> Hans Günter Hockerts, "Wiedergutmachung in Deutschland. Eine historische Bilanz 1945–2000," *Vierteljahreshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 49 (2001): 171.

<sup>11</sup> Detlev Brunner, *50 Jahre Konzentration GmbH. Die Geschichte eines sozialdemokratischen Unternehmens 1946–1996* (Berlin: Metropolis, 1996); Andreas Feser, *Der Genossen-Konzern. Parteivermögen und Pressebeteiligungen der SPD* (München: Olzog, 2002); Uwe Danker, Markus Oddey, Daniel Roth and Astrid Schwabe, eds., *Am Anfang standen Arbeitergroschen. 140 Jahre Medienunternehmen der SPD* (Bonn: Dietz, 2003); and Friedhelm Boll, *Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie und ihre Medien. Wirtschaftliche Dynamik und rechtliche Formen* (Bonn: Dietz, 2002).

KPD printing companies resists all attempts at its reconstruction. Its property transfers can be seen as precursors of the party's time in illegality under the Nazi regime and after the KPD ban.<sup>12</sup>

In recent years, based on newly available sources, critical research on the SPD and the KPD restitution policies has slightly opened up the discourse about the links between national restitution and the politics of memory, which had been frozen during the German-German cold civil war.<sup>13</sup> Rigoll reveals that the motives for denying the parallels between the persecutions of the two parties that took place following the *Adenauererlass* in the 1950s and those that followed the *Radikalenerlass* in the 1970s cannot be blamed exclusively on the international conflicts of the time. Rigoll argues that they lie also in the personal interests of reintegrated Nazis who wished to purge the public service to prevent witnesses and victims from raising their voices against the reintegration of their former oppressors.<sup>14</sup>

In the following part of this paper, the restitution proceedings of the KPD and the SPD are contrasted, so as to demonstrate how relations between the parties shaped the restitution process. I evaluate the course of the restitution process with the help of Elazar Barkan's *theory of restitution*.<sup>15</sup> I argue that the knowledge uncovered in the archival sources is helpful in order to pull together two opposing historical perspectives of communism – as a perverted utopia and as a shared ideology.

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<sup>12</sup> Herbert Girardet, *Der wirtschaftliche Aufbau der kommunistischen Tagespresse in Deutschland von 1918 bis 1933, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Verhältnisse im Regierungsbezirk Düsseldorf* (Doctoral Dissertation: University Essen, 1938); Johann Wachter, *Zwischen Revolutionserwartung und Untergang. Die Vorbereitung der KPD auf die Illegalität in den Jahren 1929–1933* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1983); and Christa Hempel-Küter, *Die KPD-Presse in den Westzonen von 1945 bis 1956. Historische Einführung, Bibliographie und Standortverzeichnis* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1993).

<sup>13</sup> Meyer has shown how for the SPD the national handling of the Nazi past depended on the realignment of the political constellations of the Cold War in the 1970s and the marginalization of the anti-Nazi resistance and domestic restitution by the leadership of the SPD. See Kristina Meyer, *Die SPD und die NS-Vergangenheit 1945–1990* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2015). Foschepoth's publication analyzed recently opened sources on court proceedings that resulted in the KPD ban. Foschepoth dismantled the dominant contemporary historical research on the Federal Constitutional Court. In view of the pressure exerted on the Court by the German federal government, the contention that the Court's practice during the 1950s and 1960s was liberal and democratic is no longer sustainable. See Josef Foschepoth, "Verfassungswidrig!"

<sup>14</sup> Dominik Rigoll, *Staatsschutz in Westdeutschland* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2013).

<sup>15</sup> Elazar Barkan, *The Guilt of Nations: Restitution and Negotiating Historical Injustices* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2000).

## II. On the Restitution Experience of the West German Left Wing

### Supporting Anti-Communism with Reparations for Nazi Persecution?

The elimination of the German labor movement, which was quite strong until the advent of the Nazi regime, was a key goal of Nazi ideology in the early years of that regime. Both the KPD and SPD were declared hostile to the Reich and outlawed in 1933. The funds of the SPD and KPD invested in their printing companies had up to then supported the propagation of a free press. A Nazi publishing monopoly was built up throughout Germany with the confiscated property of the printing companies that had belonged to the SPD and KPD. Ironically, the Nazis called this process “uniformization” of the press. It started in 1931–32, when pressure on communist and social-democratic newspapers increased, but before the KPD and SPD printing companies were ultimately liquidated.<sup>16</sup> It was precisely in this period of semi-legality that the companies’ resilience had a transformative impact on society.

The SPD printing companies belonged to one SPD-controlled holding company, Konzentration AG. Since 1925, it had coordinated more than 100 printing companies with an estimated value of 90–100 million Reichsmark (RM).<sup>17</sup> The KPD controlled three holding companies in 1924, which coordinated the assets of approximately 34 printing companies with an estimated value of 34 million RM.<sup>18</sup>

After the war, the confiscated printing equipment of both the KPD and SPD was supposed to be restituted to the parties by the post-World War II German state in a measure of reconciliation.<sup>19</sup> In their restitution claims, representatives

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<sup>16</sup> Heinz-Dietrich Fischer, *Parteien und Presse in Deutschland seit 1945* (München: Schuenemann, 1981), 30. For the Nazi press monopoly, see Oron J. Hale, *Presse in der Zwangsjacke 1933–45* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1965), 25–46.

<sup>17</sup> Detlev Brunner, *50 Jahre Konzentration GmbH. Die Geschichte eines sozialdemokratischen Unternehmens 1946–1996* (Berlin: Metropol, 1996); Andreas Feser, *Der Genossen-Konzern. Parteivermögen und Pressebeteiligungen der SPD* (München: Olzog, 2002); Danker et al., *Am Anfang standen Arbeitergroschen*; and Beate Häupel, “Das Vermögen der sozialdemokratischen Bewegung. Aufbau, Enteignung und Wiedergutmachung,” in *Frau. Macht. Zukunft*, ed. Helga Grebing et al. (Marburg: Schüren, 2001), 359–374.

<sup>18</sup> Hempel-Küter, *Die KPD-Presse in den Westzonen*, 21.

<sup>19</sup> After the unconditional surrender of Germany, the territory of Germany was divided into four occupation zones. In each zone, the reconstruction of the press was subordinated to the authority of the occupying power. Military Law No. 191 of May 1945 dictated who would control the press in the three western zones. For the politics of the allied occupation powers with regard to the press in early post-World War II Germany, see Harry Pross, *Deutsche Presse seit 1945* (Bern: Scherz, 1965).



of the KPD and SPD had to describe to the allied occupiers' as well as to the local German restitution authorities how their property was confiscated, in order to prove the extent of their damages and that they were due to Nazi persecution. However, a relatively sudden break in the discourse of the time occurred at the end of the 1940s and beginning of the 1950s. The ensuing narrative about the German past was then reflected in West German domestic restitution policy.

According to Barkan, homeostasis is unlikely to serve as a guiding principle for resolving conflicts.<sup>20</sup> For the restitution claiming party, the mental image of *status quo ante* guides morally the negotiations. For this same moral reason, in October 1945, the central Nazi publishing company Eher Verlag was liquidated along with 61 other Nazi organizations by order of the Allied Control Council's Law No. 2.<sup>21</sup> The publishing house had functioned as the holding company for the Nazi press (*Gaupresse*) since 1934.<sup>22</sup> The seizure and sequestration of property the Nazis had earlier confiscated was mandated by the American occupation authorities' Military Law No. 52. These assets were an important macroeconomic factor because of their large extent. Discriminatory Nazi laws were abrogated in order to restore human rights and preserve the interests of the victims of persecution.<sup>23</sup> Military Law No. 52 was the precursor of later restitution laws, which were applied differently in the three western zones.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, as evidenced by the events in Hannover, the legal framework was ignored in the processing of claims for restitution of the formerly communist printing companies in West Germany.

Following the example of American occupation authorities, in May 1949 the British administration enacted Restitution Law No. 59 for Lower Saxony,<sup>25</sup> where the city of Hannover is located. The purpose of this law, which concerned the restitution of property identifiable to victims of Nazi oppression, was to effect the speedy restitution of property (tangible and intangible) to the widest

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<sup>20</sup> Barkan, *The Guilt of Nations*, 327.

<sup>21</sup> The law was based on the declaration of the victorious nations. In order to define the control of public and private property that had been illegitimately confiscated by the Nazis, the Allied Control Commission in Berlin issued Proclamation No. 2 on September 20, 1945.

<sup>22</sup> The NSDAP controlled the world's largest press corporation, which had an 82.5 % share of the national market. See Norbert Frei and Johannes Schmitz, *Journalismus im Dritten Reich* (München: C. H. Beck, 1989), 38.

<sup>23</sup> Hans Dölle and Konrad Zweigert, *Gesetz Nr. 52 über Sperre und Beaufsichtigung von Vermögen. Kommentar* (Stuttgart: C. E. Pöschle, 1947), 1–2.

<sup>24</sup> Walter Schwarz, *Rückerstattung und Entschädigung. Eine Abgrenzung der Wiedergutmachungsformen* (München: C. H. Beck, 1952), 25–28.

<sup>25</sup> Walter Schwarz, *Die Wiedergutmachung nationalsozialistischen Unrechts durch die Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Rückerstattung nach den Gesetzen der alliierten Mächte* (München: C. H. Beck, 1974).

extent possible. It benefited individuals and legal entities who had been unjustly deprived of their property between January, 30 1933 and May 8, 1945 for reasons of their race, religion, nationality, political views, or their opposition to national socialism.

Even before the KPD was banned and Restitution Law No. 59 was issued, in practice in the British zone no communist organization was recognized as eligible to claim restitution rights on behalf of the KPD. Because of so-called “uncontestable acts of state” of the British authorities, the KPD continued to lack legitimacy. This allowed the Hannover reparation authorities to ignore the KPD’s status as a victim organization of the Nazis.<sup>26</sup> Somehow, the strategic interests involved in East-versus-West politics were put above righting of past wrongs. The representatives of the communist printing company protested against being excluded from restitution: “This would mean that exactly those who experienced in the Nazi state the biggest injustice would have the lowest protection, because the Nazi state triggered not only the sale of property to another party, but even misappropriated this property for itself.”<sup>27</sup>

In 1957, based on the banning of the KPD by the Federal Constitutional Court (*Bundesverfassungsgericht*), the West German state confiscated the property of all communist printing companies that had been built up on West German territory after 1945, using materiel brought in from the GDR.<sup>28</sup> This confiscation included the restitution rights of the West German communist printing companies that had claimed damage by Nazi persecution. In that way, the property of the former communist printing companies was confiscated a second time and placed under the control of the Federal Minister of the Interior. The Federal Constitutional Court’s ban on the KPD was overturned in 1963, when the Federal Ministry of the Interior verbally retracted its decree of seizure. However, this retraction did not put any property back into the hands of the Communists.

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<sup>26</sup> Before the issuance of British Restitution Law No. 59, restitution of the property of formerly suppressed labor movement organizations was regulated by Decree No. 159 of the British Military Government. In 1948, in order to implement the speedy restitution of the confiscated property of the organizations, the occupation authorities established the General Organizations Committee in Celle (Allgemeiner Organisationsausschuss Celle). The AOA Celle took no responsibility for resolving the restitution claims of KPD organizations, while an entire section of the AOA Celle was responsible for restitution of SPD organizations’ property in Lower Saxony.

<sup>27</sup> Reparation file, Collection Nds 720 Hann Acc 2009/126 No. 1520/1–3, 66–69, Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv, Hannover.

<sup>28</sup> After the German federal government requested the German Federal Court to ban the KPD in November 1951, the KPD began another campaign to conceal its property. This time it did so in such a way that there was practically nothing left to confiscate. See Hempel-Küter, *Die KPD-Presse in den Westzonen*, 70.

In the KPD restitution case in Hannover, the Supreme Court of Restitution annulled all prior decisions of the Regional Courts that viewed the restitution claims by KPD as unsubstantiated. Its justification read: “The contested decision is based on an error of law.”<sup>29</sup>

Behind the façade of the legal disputes over the publishing houses lay fundamentally divergent worldviews. Despite the recommendations of the Supreme Court of Restitution, nothing in fact changed regarding the KPD’s restitution claims in Hannover. The situation was one of a *probatio diabolica*, where the local restitution authorities demanded production of evidence forty years after the KPD property was confiscated by the Nazis.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, the Interior Ministry’s verbal retraction of the KPD seizure notification allowed the KPD’s representatives to push the limits of what was sayable:

Reading words like concealment of Communist property, property displacement and transfer, one feels as if going back in time, when combatants against the Nazi state were attacked in this way. If the claim defendant [SPD] presumes that the claimant’s transfer happened only in order to protect Communist property, then the question must be asked, what can be actually objected to this?<sup>31</sup>

In the relations between social-democrats and communists in West Germany, Jens Schultz has observed an irrational component of anti-communism on the part of the SPD. This anti-communism was a reaction to repression that ex-communists who had turned their back on communism experienced in the Soviet zone. To legitimize the need for protection against communists, the social democrats pointed to the cases of emigration, banishment, persecution and detention going on behind the iron curtain.<sup>32</sup> The disrepute of the GDR, combined with restrictive acts by the West German state, resulted in communism being personified as evil itself. In pursuit of their interest in restitution,

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<sup>29</sup> Reparation file, Collection Nds. 720 Hannover Acc. 2009/126 No. 1520/1 to 3, 301–306, Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv, Hannover.

<sup>30</sup> Reparation file, Collection Nds. 720 Hannover Acc. 2009/126 No. 1520/1 to 3, 394–398, Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv, Hannover.

<sup>31</sup> Reparation file, Collection Nds. 720 Hannover Acc. 2009/126 No. 1520/1 to 3, 397, Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv Hannover. In this restitution claim, the SPD was defending against the KPD, who claimed restitution of a former KPD printing press that the British authorities assigned to a post-WWII SPD printing company in Hannover.

<sup>32</sup> Jens Schultz, *Sozialdemokratie und Kommunismus. Die Auseinandersetzung der SPD mit dem Kommunismus im Zeichen der Neuen Ostpolitik 1969–1974* (Doctoral Dissertation, University Mannheim, 2009), 20 and 43.

the representatives of the then-banned communist organizations had somehow to deal with this “red paranoia.” In 1989, the German historian Gotthard Jasper condemned the denial of reparations to the Communists, aptly describing them as the “disqualified victims” of the Cold War.<sup>33</sup>

### **Property Transactions, Concealment and Coping Strategies: Righting Past Wrongs**

In order to understand the transfers of communist property before the rise of national socialism, we must retrace the history of the communist printing companies.<sup>34</sup> The German Communists’ real estate was owned by the company Bürohaus Vulkan. By 1932, this corporation had no funds left to pay its creditors, which resulted in decrees of foreclosure against its assets. However, its assets were transferred abroad just in time and served to finance the Nazi resistance from exile. The shares of the printing companies themselves were the property of the holding company Papiererzeugungs- und -verwertungs-AG (PEUVAG), which owned the KPD-affiliated printing company in Hannover. The entire property of PEUVAG was gradually transferred to different companies. PEUVAG, along with Bürohaus Vulkan, was liquidated just before the seizure of its assets took place in 1933. By early 1931, some funds had already been transferred to Switzerland, including the equipment of the German communist printing companies. The printing companies became the property of a Swiss company, Diligentia AG.<sup>35</sup> As such, they were assumed to be safe from seizure by the Nazis. In postwar restitution claim litigation, the restitution authorities interpreted this transfer of the KPD’s property to its disadvantage, undermining its argument for reparation for Nazi persecution.

The KPD printing company in Hannover, Fortschritt AG Hannover, became part of Diligentia and reflected the pattern of concealment before the Nazi

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<sup>33</sup> Gotthard Jasper, “Die disqualifizierten Opfer. Der kalte Krieg und die Entschädigung für Kommunisten,” in *Wiedergutmachung in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, ed. Constantin Goschler et al. (München: Oldenbourg, 1989), 361–384.

<sup>34</sup> In 1938, a doctoral dissertation was written as part of a Nazi governmental investigation to clarify the property movements of the KPD. See Herbert Girardet, *Der wirtschaftliche Aufbau der kommunistischen Tagespresse in Deutschland von 1918 bis 1933, unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Verhältnisse im Regierungsbezirk Düsseldorf* (Doctoral Dissertation: University Leipzig, 1938). The dissertation’s archival research is based on confiscated documents and protocols of interrogations of KPD members. Today, these documents have been lost. See Hale, *Presse in der Zwangsjacke*, 73.

<sup>35</sup> Direct contacts between Diligentia and PEUVAG were always denied. See Reparation files, Collection RY 60/25, Bundesarchiv Berlin.



**Figure 1:** The building am Klagesmarkt 21, Hannover, 1926 or 1927.

Source: Courtesy of VVN-BdA Niedersachsen e.V.

Note: KPD Hannover resided in this building since 1922. The printing company of the communist newspaper of Hannover *Niedersächsische Arbeiterzeitung*, later *Die Neue Arbeiterzeitung* (NAZ), was located there along with the publishing company Niedersächsischer Zeitungsverlag AG.

seizure in 1933. In 1932, the printing presses of Fortschritt AG Hannover were relocated to two different sites. Fortschritt A.G. was moved to a new location in Hannover, Andertensche Wiese 6, in May 1932. Another printing company, Staberow & Co., remained at the old location, Am Klagesmarkt 21.<sup>36</sup> The communist newspaper was no longer printed there, but at the new location. When the companies separated, a number of the printing presses and much of the companies' other equipment were moved to secret locations in order to save them from Nazi confiscation and allow them to print illegal leaflets. Between March and November 1933, the central press organ of the KPD, *Die Rote Fahne*, was printed in at least six different places.<sup>37</sup>

According to details provided by Diligentia representatives to the Restitution Office of Hannover (*Wiedergutmachungsamt beim Landgericht Hannover*) after the war, printing presses and other equipment with an estimated value of 140,000 RM were saved from confiscation, out of a total estimated value of 190,000 RM.<sup>38</sup> Activities at both the old location on Am Klagesmarkt and the new one on Andertensche Wiese ended in May 1933, when the Nazis seized the property there.<sup>39</sup> In 1951, in view of the Federal Government's claim for a KPD ban in West Germany, it became obvious that no organization would be able to claim restitution for Nazi persecution damages for the KPD. As a reaction to the restrictive practices by the restitution authorities in Hannover, Diligentia combined the restitution claims for the two printing companies into one.<sup>40</sup> The resilient tactic of separating the KPD printing company into two locations prior to May 1933 went unremarked in the restitution process.

Limits on publishing were tightened after 1931 and the printing houses were in a critical economic situation. The communist printing company in Hannover was divided up as part of a larger effort in 1932 to conceal the full extent of the Communists' assets. In Hannover, according to information in the restitution files, the move to two separate locations allowed printing to continue until the

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<sup>36</sup> It is unknown if the company Staberow & Co. existed before the move. See Reparation file, Letters from September 28, 1964, November 20, 1964, and January 12, 1965, Collection RY 60/44, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>37</sup> Hermann Weber, *Kommunistischer Widerstand gegen die Hitler-Diktatur 1933–39* (Berlin: Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand, 1990), 9.

<sup>38</sup> Reparation file, attachment to letters from May 12, 1955 and June 21, 1954, and attachment C to reparation claim from June 1954, Collection RY 60/44, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>39</sup> Reparation file, Letter from the company Diligentia to the Police Department of Hannover of May 8, 1933, Collection RY 60/44, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

<sup>40</sup> Reparation file, Collection Nds 720 Hann Acc 2009/126 No. 5896/1 and 2, Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv Hannover.

last legal Communist printing press was sealed up on May 12, 1933.<sup>41</sup> Hannover still commemorates February 28 as the anniversary of 1933's oppressive measures, the *Gleichschaltung* of the Communists, because on that day the KPD's party office was occupied and the first of several hundred communists were arrested.<sup>42</sup>

The conspiracy to conceal their assets allowed the Communists to maintain secret printing places for use in the resistance to Nazism that followed.<sup>43</sup> Based on research into the KPD's restitution claims in Hannover and Diligentia's restitution claims on a federal base, it is estimated that up to three-quarters of the communist printing company's equipment was saved.

In 1933, an unknown percentage of Diligentia's property was confiscated, in total amounting to an estimated value of 6 million RM. This property was effectively confiscated a second time when the FRG rejected Diligentia's claims for reparations. All claims for restitution by the Swiss corporation Diligentia AG were declined for various reasons, most of which were related to the KPD's lack of legal standing in the FRG to claim any compensation for Nazi persecution damages. The arguments of the restitution authorities completely avoided any discussion of the need to right a historic injustice. Restitution policy was influenced more by the political culture of anti-communism than by a desire to rehabilitate victims damaged by Nazi persecution.

In 1933–1938, the German secret police were speculating that the three founders of Diligentia were Swiss communist agents collaborating with the Soviets. Based on the paper record of the Nazi seizure of Diligentia's assets in Germany, the restitution authorities found that the contracts between Diligentia and PEUVAG were shams, entered into in order to conceal the Communists' assets. The founders and shareholders of Diligentia had French and Swiss nationality, and insisted on several occasions that they were not communists. Their names were never made public in spite of the pressure from the Nazis and later from the West German restitution authorities.<sup>44</sup>

After twenty years of legal proceedings, Diligentia was finally liquidated in 1968. It waived all its rights to restitution of property with an estimated value of

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<sup>41</sup> Reparation file, Collection RY 60/ 44, Letter of the company Diligentia to the Police Department of Hannover, May 8, 1933, Bundesarchiv Berlin; Observation reports, Collection Hann. 180, MF 751 MF, fol. 1368, Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv Hannover.

<sup>42</sup> Herbert Obenaus et al., eds., *Widerstand im Abseits Hannover 1933–1945. Beiträge zur Ausstellung* (Hannover: Historisches Museum Hannover, 1992), 15.

<sup>43</sup> Until 1935, the Communists distributed an estimated one million leaflets per year. See Weber, *Kommunistischer Widerstand*, 9.

<sup>44</sup> Reparation files, Collection RY 60/25, Bundesarchiv Berlin.

60 million German marks (Deutsche Mark, DM).<sup>45</sup> The same year that Diligentia lost all its rights to restitution in the course of its liquidation, the West German government allowed the German Communist Party to be reconstituted (intentionally under a different name: *Deutsche Kommunistische Partei*, and not the *Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands*).<sup>46</sup> How much property the Communists had managed to conceal before the KPD was banned in 1956 and was able to save in the course of the liquidation of Diligentia AG remains unknown.

The fate of the SPD printing company, EAH Meister & Co., which was located in Hannover's trade union house,<sup>47</sup> can give us an idea of the interplay between political constellations in the politics of reconciliation after the war. Before the relaxation of Cold War tensions in the 1970s, in light of the historical-political collision between reconciliations on the international and national stages, how flexible were domestic restitution politics?

In April 1933, the Nazis confiscated Meister's building. Thereafter, Meister's printing equipment was used to print Hannover's Nazi newspaper, *Niedersächsischer Beobachter*. In July 1934, the Nazi publishing company NS-Gauverlag Südhannover-Braunschweig GmbH moved out of the trade union house, taking some of the former SPD printing company's equipment to a bigger location at Georgstrasse 30–33. The biggest Nazi newspaper in northern Germany began publishing there. Part of the SPD-owned equipment confiscated from Meister was sold to Nazi publishing companies in other cities or to private printing companies, and printing presses from other German cities were received in exchange at the new location on Georgstrasse in Hannover. In contrast, none of the confiscated communist printing presses remained in Hannover.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Reparation files, Collection RY 60/44, Bundesarchiv Berlin; Reparation files, Collection Nds 720 Hann Acc 2009/126 No. 1659, No. 5896/1 and 2, No. 1520/1–3, No. 549, No. 1330, Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv Hannover. Hempel mentions that some of the compensation demanded was granted to the Drupa company in Stuttgart after long negotiations, but gives no archival source. See Hempel-Küter, *Die KPD-Presse in den Westzonen*, 72.

<sup>46</sup> Georg Füllberth, *KPD und DKP 1945–1990. Zwei kommunistische Parteien in der vierten Periode kapitalistischer Entwicklung* (Heilbronn: Distel, 1990).

<sup>47</sup> A picture of the trade union house appears on several web pages. In 1983, several newspapers published a report on the placement of a memorial plaque with an inscription commemorating the Nazi suppression of the labor movement in Hannover on the building of the former trade unions (*Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung*, March 31, 1983, and April 5, 1983). See Klaus Mertsching, *Die Besetzung des Gewerkschaftshauses in Hannover, 1. April 1933* (Hannover: Offizin, 1983; reissue 2008). Mertsching dates the Nazi occupation of the official printing place of the KPD newspaper to the same day as the occupation of the trade union house, i.e. April 1, 1933.

<sup>48</sup> Reparation files, Collection Nds. 720 Hann. Acc. 2009/126 No. 1520/1, 235–236; and Collection Nds. 720 Hann. Acc. 2009/126 No. 1520/1, 237, Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv Hannover.



In July 1946, the British Military Government in Hannover began the process of making reparations to the printing companies by officially transferring the premises of the former Nazi newspaper in Georgstrasse to the social-democratic newspaper *Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung* (HAZ).<sup>49</sup> In 1952–53, without questioning the origin of the property, the reparation authority Allgemeiner Organisationsausschuss Celle (AOA Celle) decreed that the moveable property that remained in the Georgstrasse location would also be transferred to HAZ, which had been legally recognized as the successor of the suppressed printing company Meister & Co.<sup>50</sup>

Among the printing equipment of the former Nazi newspaper that was transferred to HAZ was one printing press formerly belonging to the communist newspaper *Rote Fahne*. By agreement with the British military government, the trustee holding the property confiscated from the Nazi publishing company NS-Gauverlag Südhannover-Braunschweig GmbH was authorized to turn the Communists' former property over to HAZ, without regard to Military Law No. 52. The local reparation authorities in Hannover considered this transfer to be required by the mandatory regulatory act of the British military government, precluding the Communists' right to restitution.<sup>51</sup> A bitter twenty-year fight between the SPD and KPD printing companies over what was in fact an old, useless printing press was ended by the forgery of a serial number on the press. It remained SPD property.<sup>52</sup>

Besides the restitution of its so-called identifiable property, the SPD in Hannover was granted compensation of 1.125 million DM in 1968 for the deprivation of its right to publish its newspaper.<sup>53</sup> In 1968–69, the SPD was granted

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<sup>49</sup> Production of the British newspaper *Neuer Hannoverscher Kurier* was stopped at the same time. This British newspaper was published after May 1945 under the supervision of the social-democratic journalist Walter Spengemann. The history of the location under the Nazis was neglected. See Elke Schröder, *Parteipresse im Wandel. Die Hannoversche Presse von 1946 bis 1958* (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 1996), 36.

<sup>50</sup> The decree by AOA Celle was a formality, when all the printing equipment was already being used by the precursor of HAZ. In contrast to Diligentia, private companies received compensation for returning the printing equipment to HAZ as decreed by the local reparation authorities. See Reparation files, Collection Nds. 720 Hann Acc. 2009/126 No. 1618, No. 1897 and No. 1898, Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv Hannover.

<sup>51</sup> Reparation files, Collection Nds. 720 Hann Acc 2009/126 No. 1520/1–3, Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv Hannover.

<sup>52</sup> Reparation files, Collection Nds. 720 Hann Acc 2009/126 No. 549, Niedersächsisches Landesarchiv Hannover.

<sup>53</sup> The authorities who negotiated this compensation were the German Federal Minister of Finance and the board of the SDP of Germany. Reparation files, Collection B126-68611, Bundesarchiv Koblenz.

compensation in the amount of 20 million DM. In all, reparations of approximately 40 million DM were paid to the SPD.<sup>54</sup> Pursuant to Article 1 of Restitution Law No. 59, title in the tangible property was legally restored to the SPD. The restitution authority's files on the SPD are not referred to in SPD publications and are inaccessible for further historical research.<sup>55</sup> Might this material shed light on conditions imposed on the SPD in connection with restitution?<sup>56</sup>

The transfer of the shares of the SPD-linked Konzentration AG to the Swiss company Züricher AG für Zeitungsunternehmungen, shortly before the Nazi confiscation, was described in postwar official discourse as a failed attempt at resistance to the Nazis. The transfer of the SPD's financial reserves, estimated at 1–2 million RM, allowed the exiled SPD board of directors, SOPADE, to pursue political opposition to the Nazis.<sup>57</sup> In contrast to the restitution claims of Diligentia, the SPD's concealing of assets is not discussed in the post-World War II restitution proceedings. Its transfers of funds and their exact amounts remain secret.<sup>58</sup>

Behind the scenes of the restitution proceedings involving the political parties that are analyzed in this paper stand negotiations to restore the destroyed relationships between the SPD and KPD, which were so-called collective actors in West German post-World War II society. The controversies in these negotiations are symbolic of the escalation of post-World War II Cold War conflicts. They reveal how historical guilt and dissenting opinions of the former labor movement organizations were suppressed in West Germany.

Based on evaluation of critical sources, I have found evidence supporting the assumption that during the post-World War II rehabilitation of the pre-war German labor movement organizations in West Germany, restitution was used to promote one particular discourse above all others.

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<sup>54</sup> The total compensation included nearly 1 million DM in interest. See Reparation files, Collection B126-68611, Bundesarchiv Koblenz.

<sup>55</sup> A recent request by the author to view the so-called reparation files of Konzentration AG revealed that those archival sources have been moved to the Willy Brandt Center in Berlin and remain closed to further research.

<sup>56</sup> Restitution allowed the SPD a great head start. In 1973, the SPD had approximately 500 million DM at its disposal. See Karl-Heinz Seifert, *Die politischen Parteien im Recht der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Berlin: Heymanns, 1975), 31; and Miroslav Angelov, *Vermögensbildung und unternehmerische Tätigkeit politischer Parteien* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2006), 62.

<sup>57</sup> Marlies Buchholz and Bernd Rother et al., eds., *Der Parteivorstand der SPD im Exil. Protokolle der SOPADE 1933–1940* (Bonn: J. H. W. Dietz, 1995), XXVII.

<sup>58</sup> Kurt Lichtenstein, *In Sachen Kriedemann* (n.p.: Bösmann, 1949).

### III. Memory Politics: Post-History vs. Restitution

In the second part of this paper, contextualization of restitution policy is required in order to illustrate the wider societal conditions in which West Germany's proceedings to correct past wrongs took place. Elazar Barkan states that the modern concept of restitution was born from the unique need in West Germany to reestablish the country's political and moral legitimacy after World War II.<sup>59</sup> Consequently, in West Germany, the legal process of restitution for the crimes committed under Nazism led to new possibilities for international relationships. Under U.S. influence, Germany's efforts to reconcile German-Israeli relations included the payment of reparations and are considered today by many to be exemplary.<sup>60</sup> In contrast, restitution for the domestic political resistance to the Nazis was neglected in West Germany. Its rehabilitation on the international scene had priority. A strategic realignment of the young FRG's rehabilitation policies was required.<sup>61</sup>

The year 1948 marked a break in the solidarity between the two formerly politically persecuted victims of national socialism, the SPD and KPD. The SPD's rejection of any prospect of an alliance with the KPD meant that members of the SPD could not join the Organization of Persecuted Victims of the Nazi Regime (*Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Nazi Regimes*, VVN).<sup>62</sup> Partly influenced by the rising tide of anti-communism in America and partly by internal conflicts in West German society, the VVN was accused of being a communist

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<sup>59</sup> In hindsight, the forced admission of war guilt at Versailles undermined the chances for reconciliation. Therefore, after World War II, the innovative phenomenon was that there was no longer a demand for reparations against Germany as the perpetrator of war and war crimes, which facilitated its self-rehabilitation through compensating its victims of its own volition. See Barkan, *The Guilt of Nations*, 308–314 and XXIII.

<sup>60</sup> Lily Gardner Feldman, *Germany's Foreign Policy of Reconciliation: From Enmity to Amity* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2012); Ronald W. Zweig, *German Reparations and the Jewish World: A History of the Claims Conference* (London and New York: Routledge, 2013); and Jan Surmann, *Shoah-Erinnerung und Restitution. Die US-Geschichtspolitik am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Washington, DC: Franz Steiner, 2012).

<sup>61</sup> In the immediate aftermath of World War II, the defeated German enemy had to be won over as an ally when the United States reoriented itself and declared that the Soviet Union was its principal adversary. See Surmann, *Shoah-Erinnerung und Restitution*, 262–264.

<sup>62</sup> The VVN was founded in the first place to represent the interests of former concentration camp prisoners regardless of their political orientation. See Regina Hennig, *Entschädigung und Interessenvertretung der NS-Verfolgten in Niedersachsen 1945–49* (Bielefeld: Verlag für Regionalgeschichte, 1991), 52.

organization infiltrating Soviet influence into West Germany.<sup>63</sup> The two victims of political persecution by the Nazis were separated by the reality of politics. In fact, there was little respect for the multi-vocality of the German victims of Nazi persecution and their experiences of resistance in the West German Society. By distancing itself from the KPD, the SPD imported the border between East and West Germany into West German restitution policy.

In the early 1950s, German Minister of Justice Thomas Dehler asserted: “We must sacrifice one freedom in order to guarantee liberty.”<sup>64</sup> This idea led to a national policy called “amnesty and amnesia.”<sup>65</sup> This policy was introduced by the first post-World War II West German Chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, and effectively supported reintegration of the former Nazi elite.<sup>66</sup> In 1954, an amnesty law known as the *Straffreiheitsgesetz* marked the end of the denazification carried out under the allied occupation forces. The law permitted the rehabilitation of roughly 400,000 persons.<sup>67</sup> In practice, their rehabilitation devalued the acts of resistance of the Nazis’ German victims. Former NSDAP members were allowed back into public office and various positions in the public service, while KPD members and their so-called sympathizers were removed from those positions. Paradoxically, in the propagandistic fight for Germans’ allegiance, West German reconciliation policies served the GDR as another instrument of propaganda and indoctrination.

The denazification process pushed its boundaries when it became obvious that nearly all German citizens were somehow tainted by Nazism. The political scientist Eugen Kogon described the problem, stating: “You can only kill them or win them.” In the young FRG, this meant that former members of the Nazi elite and their collaborators were amnestied and successfully reintegrated into

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<sup>63</sup> Michael J. Heale, *McCarthy’s Americans: Red Scare Politics in State and Nation, 1935–1965* (Basingstoke: MacMillan, 1998); and David Oshinsky, *A Conspiracy So Immense: The World of Joe McCarthy* (Oxford: Oxford Press, 2005).

<sup>64</sup> Major, *The Death of the KPD*, 279.

<sup>65</sup> A prime example of the continuity of personnel between the Nazi era and the FRG is the figure of Hans Globke. Globke was an administrative lawyer in the Reich Interior Ministry and co-author of and commentator on the Nuremberg Racial Laws. In 1953 he became secretary to Chancellor Adenauer. See Jürgen Bevers, *Der Mann hinter Adenauer. Hans Globkes Aufstieg vom NS-Juristen zur Grauen Eminenz der Bonner Republik* (Berlin: Ch. Links, 2009).

<sup>66</sup> Between 1949 and 1951, some 800,000 West Germans were granted amnesty in this program. It still remains unknown today how many of them were former Nazi party members responsible for various crimes. Also unknown is how many of the 100,000 persons who began living under another identity were granted exemption from punishment after they voluntarily revealed their true identities to the police, before the deadline for doing so in March 1950.

<sup>67</sup> Norbert Frei, *Vergangenheitspolitik. Die Anfänge der Bundesrepublik und die NS-Vergangenheit* (München: dtv, 1996), 101.

society. According to the historian Norbert Frei, the politics of post-history were a form of resocialization that created a secure inner distance that West Germans enjoyed with regard to the ideology of national socialism.<sup>68</sup> Furthermore, for many Germans, the silence of large parts of the population that had suffered under Nazism facilitated forgetting and the displacement of memory.

In this atmosphere of denial and inability to mourn,<sup>69</sup> the emphasis shifted from the real need for denazification to anti-communism. Politically active communists were disqualified from holding public service positions, from the institutions administering reparations and from making restitution policy. This was supported by the construction of anti-communism internationally. Even before the German Federal Government demanded a ban on the KPD in the Federal Constitutional Court in November 1951, the first political measures leading up to the ban, such as the *Adenauererlass*, were introduced.<sup>70</sup> Later, in 1956, the Federal Constitutional Court declared that the KPD was an organization fighting against German democracy.<sup>71</sup>

That declaration still forms the legal basis for the post-World War II confiscation of an unknown amount of the property of West German communist organizations.<sup>72</sup> The restitution claims that were retracted in the aftermath of the KPD ban cannot be raised again. Even in 2014, referring to the principle of separation of powers and the independence of the judiciary, the German

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<sup>68</sup> Norbert Frei, *Adenauer's Germany and the Nazi Past: The Politics of Amnesty and Integration* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2002).

<sup>69</sup> Alexander Mitscherlich and Margarete Mitscherlich, *The Inability to Mourn: Principles of Collective Behavior* (New York, NY: Grove Press, 1975); and Major, *The Death of the KPD*, 282.

<sup>70</sup> Re-integrated ex-Communists like Herbert Wehner somehow served to demonstrate that anti-communism was an ideology purely rooted in the intent to protect national security. In April 1957, the magazine *Die Zeit* proclaimed Wehner's experience as a communist to be of the kind now amenable to German democracy. At the same time, Wehner was supporting an amnesty bill for communists in the German parliament, speaking before an audience that included former Nazi party members and collaborators who were also deputies or even ministers.

<sup>71</sup> Angelika Lehndorff-Felsko and Fritz Rische, *KPD-Verbotsprozess, 1954/56* (Frankfurt: Marxistische Blätter, 1981).

<sup>72</sup> In 2006, the deputies of the left-wing party Die Linke directed a so-called "small request" (*Kleine Anfrage*) to the German parliament concerning the amount and the nature of KPD assets confiscated in connection with the KPD ban. Based on its correspondence from 1960, the German Federal Government estimated an amount of 4.5 million DM. The printing companies constituted the biggest part of the confiscated assets. The exact nature and use of these assets was not specified. See Dokumentations- und Informationssystem für parlamentarische Vorgänge, <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/extrakt/ba/WP16/27/2791.html>.

Federal Government still felt no reason to question the ban on the KPD or support the political, social and legal rehabilitation of persons affected by the *Radikalenerlass*.<sup>73</sup>

After the KPD was officially banned in 1956, between 125,000 and 200,000 preliminary investigations of its members were opened and 7,000 to 10,000 convictions handed down. Furthermore, an unknown number of communists who continued their political activity were obliged to return money they had received as compensation for damages caused to them by Nazi persecution. This result can be traced back to a court decision codified in Article 6 of the Federal Reparation Law (*Bundesentschädigungsgesetz*, BEG). This law, which is still in force today, denied restitution not only to former members of the NSDAP but also to anyone in the FRG who was accused of having fought against the re-establishment of the liberal democratic order. National socialism and communism were both considered totalitarian ideologies that were consubstantial for purposes of the statute.<sup>74</sup>

After the issuance of the *Radikalenerlass* in West Germany in February 1972, Article 3 of the German Basic Law, mandating equal treatment of all persons regardless of religion, national origin or political orientation, had no application in practice any more.<sup>75</sup> In West Germany, this fundamental principle of human rights was abrogated in view of the danger of dictatorship. Many, including European human rights organizations, identified its disregard as a human rights violation.<sup>76</sup> The *Radikalenerlass* now represents the most widely known symbol of the oppression of voices critical of the system in West Germany.

Twenty-two years after the closure of restitution proceedings concerning the KPD and SPD organizations, in 1990, the Prime Minister of Lower Saxony, Gerhard Schröder, nullified the *Radikalenerlass* in his state. In 1995, when the parliament of Lower Saxony belatedly decreed payment of a compensatory pension to victims of Nazi persecution, recompense to the communists, as the

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<sup>73</sup> In 2014, the Die Linke deputies directed another request to the German Parliament concerning rehabilitation after the *Berufsverbote* and the rescission of the KPD ban. See Dokumentations- und Informationssystem für parlamentarische Vorgänge, <http://dipbt.bundestag.de/extrakt/ba/WP18/611/61118.html>.

<sup>74</sup> In the discourse of German historians, comparing national socialism to communism is presumed to be inappropriate. On this controversial presumption, see Detlef Schmiechen-Ackermann, *Diktaturen im Vergleich* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2002).

<sup>75</sup> "Die Grundrechte," Deutscher Bundestag, [https://www.bundestag.de/parlament/aufgaben/rechtsgrundlagen/grundgesetz/gg\\_01/245122](https://www.bundestag.de/parlament/aufgaben/rechtsgrundlagen/grundgesetz/gg_01/245122).

<sup>76</sup> Gerard Braunthal, *Politische Loyalität und Öffentlicher Dienst: der Radikalenerlass von 1972 und die Folgen* (Marburg: Schüren, 1992), 9.

double victims of Nazi and postwar oppression, seemed possible. However, the state government of Lower Saxony rejected this idea.<sup>77</sup> Another 22 years later, in February 2017, the state government of Lower Saxony offered an apology to persons affected by the *Berufsverbote* that were issued in pursuance of the *Radikalenerlass*. In so acknowledging its error, the state government honored the suffering of the persons concerned. However, it still remains to establish a legal basis for compensating them.

At the time the *Radikalenerlass* was decreed, Willi Brandt, in 1970, performed his kneeling down in front of the monument to the victims of the Warsaw Uprising. Today, Brandt's gesture is considered a symbol of *Ostpolitik*. Dogmatic policies were relaxed. Rapprochement with the GDR and other East European countries led to the turmoil of 1989. The moral import of Brandt's gesture, which marked the first thawing of the Cold War, was at the time an exceptional signal that Germans recognized their own crimes. Brandt's act of apology received more attention internationally than domestically.<sup>78</sup> When Brandt, who paradoxically was a former member of the anti-Nazi resistance, fell on his knees in Warsaw, a descendant of German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck, the progenitor of the Anti-Socialist Laws of the nineteenth century, stood in the first row behind him. In view of German crimes against humanity and the desire to expiate them, did this constellation of personages indicate a normative transition by the West German left wing toward conservatism?

Brandt's act of reconciliation was in fact a denial of the anti-Nazi resistance experience. The marginality of the domestic West German Nazi resistance members and their descendants is reflected in the KPD vs. SPD restitution case study analyzed here. After Brandt's *Kniefall*, those who demanded acknowledgment of their Nazi resistance experiences gave up the battle.<sup>79</sup> Paradoxically, by devaluing the domestic resistance experience, righting past wrongs became feasible in West Germany. Somehow, the gap between the former Nazi resistance members and the followers of the NSDAP had to be closed. The interests of the social-democratic resistance members were subordinated to the interests of the SPD leadership.<sup>80</sup> As indicated by the results of the restitution proceedings,

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<sup>77</sup> Rolf Gössner, *Die vergessenen Justizopfer des kalten Krieges. Verdrängung im Westen – Abrechnung mit dem Osten?* (Hamburg: Aufbau T., 1998), 12.

<sup>78</sup> Barkan, *The Guilt of Nations*, 11.

<sup>79</sup> Kristina Meyer, "Verfolgung, Verdrängung, Vermittlung. Die SPD und ihre Verfolgten," in *Die Praxis der Wiedergutmachung. Geschichte, Erfahrung und Wirkung in Deutschland und Israel*, ed. Norbert Frei et al. (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2009), 185–186.

<sup>80</sup> Meyer, "Verfolgung, Verdrängung, Vermittlung."

the pursuit of these interests influenced the reconciliation policies of the West German left.

Those policies first began to change at the end of the 1970s, after the importance of the social-democratic resistance was pointed out by numerous research projects.<sup>81</sup> The transition from repairing international relations through reparations to silencing the voices of the domestic resistance is evidence of the clash between the international and the domestic politics of reconciliation. Rigoll underlines that in collective therapy for Nazi regime sympathizers, stories of collaborators, perpetrators and victims were regularly constrained by the limits of the “sayable.”<sup>82</sup> The historical limits of the thinkable and “sayable” seem quite analogous to the limits of what can be remembered by society in the form of the politics of reconciliation.

#### IV. Concluding Remarks

In the late 1960s, the pre-World War II German labor movement’s claims to restitution tested West Germany’s politics of reconciliation. German restitution law did not apply to the formerly suppressed KPD printing companies in West Germany, whereas damage from Nazi persecution to similar SPD organizations was largely acknowledged, as investigation of the restitution claims in Hannover has shown. As part of the postwar devaluing of the domestic Nazi resistance, the resilience experiences of the left wing were effectively left out of the hegemonic political canon.

Barkan underlines that the precondition for restitution arrangements is reciprocity.<sup>83</sup> In this specific case, the left’s self-denial enabled the political conflicts of the German-German cold civil war to influence the disposition and redistribution of resources originally seized by the Nazis. The strategic alignment of West Germany with anti-communist forces in the political constellation during the East-West conflict guided internal reconciliation policy. That policy was further aided and abetted by silence about the history of the domestic resistance. Ambivalent relations with the past required successive revisions and the development of new perspectives that were supported by the gradual suppression of history.

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<sup>81</sup> Meyer, *Die SPD und die NS-Vergangenheit*.

<sup>82</sup> Dominik Rigoll, “Grenzen des Sagbaren, NS-Belastung, und NS-Verfolgungserfahrung bei Bundstagsabgeordneten,” *Parlamentsfragen* 45 (2014): 128.

<sup>83</sup> Barkan, *The Guilt of Nations*, 86–87.



The intergenerational dialogue was warped by miscommunication. This was perceived as an opportunity by the anti-communists, who took advantage of it to impose socially stigmatizing measures like the *Berufsverbote*. The limits on what was “sayable” in the context of the historic burden of German-German miscommunication about the past, and the subjugation of discourse to the dominant view, have been made obvious in recent efforts to redress the effects of the *Radikalenerlass*. The opposing memories of the persons harmed by the *Berufsverbote* are tools for resisting former totalizing perspectives.

As Jacques Derrida stated, the task of the so-called “new International”<sup>84</sup> is to produce specific critiques of the nation, the state, international law<sup>85</sup> and as needed, reconciliation politics. However, in searching for a different historical understanding of Marxism, Derrida seeks to be “anti-political” – a stance that Czech President Václav Havel also sought to read into history.<sup>86</sup> The specter of life in a shared utopia and all its elements that might serve to emancipate the people is set up in opposition to the documented repressions of communism. In that sense, recent nationwide discourse in Germany about the *Berufsverbote* indicates the existence of conscious, unfinished business, which is being re-evaluated. Does this controversial attempt at reconciliation reveal a counter-voluntary desire to come to terms with left wing trauma arising from the German-German past?

Further historical research on specific regional restitution cases and the history of anti-Nazi resistance and subversion would help to explain the impulse for conciliatory engagement within the contemporary German left wing, i.e. those most affected by the *Berufsverbote*, and would help to support the premise of this paper.

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<sup>84</sup> “It is on the ground of renunciation of social class, of ideology and its representations, of the idea of a superstructure, that the coming of a new International is announced. It [the new International] is an untimely link, without status, without title, and without name, barely public even if it is not clandestine, without contract, ‘out of joint’, without coordination, without party, without country, without national community, without co-citizenship, without common belonging to a class. The name of new International is given here to what calls to the friendship of an alliance without institution among those who, even if they no longer believe or never believed in the socialist-Marxist International [...], continue to be inspired by at least one of the spirits of Marx or of Marxism [...]. Barely deserving the name of community, the new International belongs only to anonymity.” See Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx* (New York: Routledge, 1994), 53 and 55.

<sup>85</sup> Aijaz Ahmad, “Reconciling Derrida: ‘Specters of Marx’ and Deconstructive Politics,” in *Ghostly Demarcations: A Symposium on Jacques Derrida’s Specters of Marx*, ed. Michael Sprinker (London and New York: Verso, 2008), 104.

<sup>86</sup> Jan Vladislav, ed., *Václav Havel or Living in the Truth* (London: Faber, 1986).



## **BURYING THE UNDEAD: COMING TO TERMS WITH THE SOVIET PAST IN NOVELS BY OL’GA SLAVNIKOVA AND SERGEI LEBEDEV**

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### **Abstract**

I ask how novels by Ol’ga Slavnikova and Sergei Lebedev reflect the possibility of reconciliation between the post-Soviet present and the Soviet past in Russia and the contemporary politics of history. Both novels will be read in the context of “magical historicism” (Etkind), a genre that uncovers the legacy of traumatic past events in the present time using elements of the grotesque. After discussing the concepts of spectrality (Marx, Derrida) and hauntings by the “unburied” (Etkind), I argue that specters and other similar figures reflect mediality. In the two case studies, I present haunting as a reflection of the problems that arise in the attempt to delineate communism and the Soviet past in discourse. Discursive delineation, I argue, is a precondition for coming to terms with the Soviet past.

**Keywords:** Lebedev; Slavnikova; Russian literature; communism; reconciliation; spectrality; trauma

**DOI:** 10.14712/23363231.2018.4

### **1. The Specter of Communism**

The spectral, the gloomy, the grotesque, and the undead often appear – for different reasons – as figurations within the discourse of communism. The

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“Manifesto of the Communist Party” (1848) comes immediately to mind. At the beginning of the “Manifesto,” Marx and Engels write:

A spectre stalks the land of Europe – the spectre of communism [...]. It is high time for communists to lay before the world their perspectives, their goals, their principles, and to counterpose to the horror stories of communism a manifesto of the party itself.<sup>1</sup>

The authors use the “specter of communism” as a metaphor for the yet to be defined or declared aims of communism. The manifesto is meant to make the vague become manifest. Derrida, however, describes the “Manifesto” as a

presentation of the living reality: we must see to it that in the future this specter [...] becomes a *reality*, and a *living* reality. [...] The universal Communist Party, the Communist International will be, said the *Manifesto* in 1848, the final incarnation, the real presence of the specter, thus the end of the spectral.<sup>2</sup>

Derrida therefore understands Marx and Engels’s “specter of communism” as a utopia awaiting its realization.

From a critical perspective, people living in such a yet-to-be-incarnated utopian version of society are described as spectral figures. Boris Groys claims that the figuration of the specter originated with the outside enemies of communism who stated that “[t]he reality of communism has no depths; it is a case of a merely mediating surface.” The people living in societies on their way to communism are seen by their opponents as “empty shell[s]: the interior, the human flesh as such, is absent.”<sup>3</sup> Viktor Pelevin, in his essay “Zombifikatsiia” (1990, “Zombification”), compares the Soviet man with a Haitian zombie that has been forced into unconditional servitude by his master with the help of magical rituals, leaving him no will of his own. According to Pelevin, one need only think of the inhuman Soviet discourse, with all its contradictions and acronyms, to see the extent to which its users are “zombified.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “Manifesto of the Communist Party,” in *Later Political Writings*, by Karl Marx, ed. and trans. Terrell Carver (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx. The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York, London: Routledge, 1994), 101–103; see also: “time rejoins and adjoins itself here, now, a now that happens to itself in the act and the body of this manifestation.” *Ibid.*, 103.

<sup>3</sup> Boris Groys, *The Communist Postscript*, trans. Thomas H. Ford (London, New York: Verso, 2009), 81–82.

<sup>4</sup> Viktor Pelevin, “Zombifikatsiia. Opyt sravnitel’noi antropologii,” in *Vse povesti i esse*, by Viktor Pelevin (Moskva: Eksmo, 2005), 380.

Derrida conceptualizes spectrality from a wider perspective. In his essay “Spectres de Marx” (1993) he describes spectrality as a consequence of the lack of justice in contemporary society and writes about the principle of responsibility “beyond all living present”:

It is necessary to speak *of the* ghost, indeed *to the* ghost and *with* it, from the moment that no ethics, no politics, whether revolutionary or not, seems possible and thinkable and *just* that does not recognize in this principle the respect for those others who are no longer or for those others who are not yet *there*, presently living, whether they are already dead or not yet born. No justice [...] seems possible or thinkable without the principle of some responsibility, beyond all living present, within that which disjoins the living present, before the ghosts of those who are not yet born or who are already dead, be they victims of wars, political or other kinds of violence.<sup>5</sup>

Justice, says Derrida, can be maintained only with regard to the living. Therefore the living have to reckon with the presence of the ghosts that are “*living-on* [sur-vie],”<sup>6</sup> for the sake of justice.

Derrida expects from the state of “being-with specters” a more just life, with a “*politics* of memory, of inheritance, and of generations.”<sup>7</sup> Here he takes up Walter Benjamin’s concept of a “*weak* messianic power” that, according to Benjamin, has been given to every man and that holds human beings responsible not only for the present and future, but also for the past, in a “secret agreement between past generations and the present one.”<sup>8</sup> It is now quite obvious that the concept of time underlying Derrida’s “hauntology”<sup>9</sup> cannot be linear. Derrida assumes that it is the “time out of joint” that gives rise to the spectral moment.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, xix. The idea of solidarity between the living, the dead, and those living in the future can be traced back to Edmund Burke, who considered society to be a contract among people in the past, present, and future. See Edmund Burke, *Revolutionary Writings. Reflections on the Revolution in France and the First Letter on a Regicide Peace*, ed. Iain Hampsher-Monk (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 101; see Alexander Etkind, *Warped Mourning. Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2013), 206–207.

<sup>6</sup> Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, xx.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, xix.

<sup>8</sup> Walter Benjamin, “On the Concept of History,” in *Selected Writings. Vol. 4: 1938–1940*, by Walter Benjamin, trans. Edmund Jephcott et al., ed. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings (Cambridge, London: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003), 390; Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 55; see Derrida’s location of the “memory of the hope” at the heart of the “place of spectrality” (*ibid.*, 65).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, 10.

<sup>10</sup> See Derrida’s discussion of Shakespeare’s protagonist Hamlet and his declaration that “[t]he time is out of joint” (*ibid.*, e.g., 17).

Communism in this respect is spectral because of its focus on the future, and as a consequence it ceaselessly haunts the present: “a ghost never dies, it remains always to come and to come-back.”<sup>11</sup>

## 2. Hauntings by the Undead in Post-Soviet Culture

In his writings, Alexander Etkind has repeatedly pointed out how the “unburied, unwept Soviet experience”<sup>12</sup> haunts post-Soviet culture. Etkind criticizes Derrida because he assumes that the living cannot possibly give *justice* to the dead. The ghosts haunting post-Soviet society, he says, need nothing more than recognition, which is something the living can definitely give them.<sup>13</sup> Etkind refers in his discussion to Sigmund Freud’s essay “Mourning and Melancholia.”<sup>14</sup> Freud believed that “unsuccessful” mourning and repressed memories are expressed in melancholy. Melancholy, in turn, makes the past return cyclically to the present and leads to the subject’s total identification with the object.<sup>15</sup> It is on this theory that Etkind bases his hypothesis about the post-Soviet period:

The post-Soviet period is, undoubtedly, a time of melancholy. The work of mourning is incomplete and unsuccessful; the loss has been incorporated into the subject, who cannot (meaning that he does not want to) free himself from it [...]. But what is this loss? For some it is the unburied millions of Soviet victims; for others, by contrast, it is the grandeur of the Soviet empire.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 99.

<sup>12</sup> Mark Lipovetsky and Alexander Etkind, “The Salamander’s Return: The Soviet Catastrophe and the Post-Soviet Novel,” trans. Liv Bliss, *Russian Studies in Literature* 46, No. 4 (Fall 2010): 14, doi: 10.2753/RSL1061-1975460401; see also: “In a land where millions remain unburied, the dead return as the undead.” Alexander Etkind, “Magical Historicism,” in *Russian Literature Since 1991*, ed. Evgeny Dobrenko and Mark Lipovetsky (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 118. See Gudkov and Zorkaja about the reasons for the inability of present Russian society to come to terms with the Soviet past. Lev Gudkov and Natalija Zorkaja, “Instrumentalisieren, Klittern, Verdrängen. Russlands unerwünschtes Revolutionsjubiläum,” trans. Vera Ammer, *Osteuropa* 67, No. 6–8 (2017): 38.

<sup>13</sup> Etkind, *Warped Mourning*, 219.

<sup>14</sup> Sigmund Freud, “Mourning and Melancholia,” in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud, Vol. XIV: (1914–1916)*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1995), 243–258.

<sup>15</sup> Lipovetsky and Etkind, “The Salamander’s Return,” 8–9; see also Freud, “Mourning and Melancholia,” 249.

<sup>16</sup> Lipovetsky and Etkind, “The Salamander’s Return,” 9. See also: “In Eastern Europe, we discern neither reconciliation nor oblivion [...]. There are psychic and cultural processes in which an obsession with the past prevents the subject from discerning the present.” Alexander Etkind, Foreword to *War and Memory in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus*, ed. Julie Fedor et al. (Cham: Palgrave

Referring to Freud's essay "The Uncanny,"<sup>17</sup> Etkind writes that what is repressed returns in grotesque form in post-catastrophe memories.<sup>18</sup> According to Etkind, the work of mourning, which often remains incomplete, is in the first place done in literature.<sup>19</sup> In this context, it is important to keep in mind that the traumatic evades being framed by language.<sup>20</sup> The evasion of discursive fixation complicates dealing with trauma – both individual and collective – because the trauma cannot be adequately processed, thematized nor categorized.<sup>21</sup> The unarticulated moment, then, gives rise to spectrality and the repetition of history.<sup>22</sup> In this sense, Kathleen Brogan underlines the possibility of coming to terms with traumatic past by means of translation into language:

The saving movement from reenactment to enabling memory is, therefore, a movement into language. Through acts of narrative revision – which are very often presented as acts of translation, linguistic or cultural – the cycle of doom is broken and the past digested. Translation functions like an exorcism because it reframes cultural inheritance, rendering the past in the terms of the present [...]. The ghost that makes present the past while suggesting its indefiniteness (and thereby possible malleability), thus provides the vehicle for both a dangerous possession by and an imaginative liberation from the past.<sup>23</sup>

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Macmillan, 2017), ix; see also Mark Kramer, "Public Memory and the Difficulty of Overcoming the Communist Legacy: Poland and Russia in Comparative Perspective," in *Totalitarian Societies and Democratic Transition. Essays in Memory of Victor Zaslavsky*, ed. Tommaso Piffer and Vladislav Zubok (Budapest, New York: Central European University Press, 2017), 421.

<sup>17</sup> Sigmund Freud, "The Uncanny," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. Vol. XVII: (1917–1919)*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press and the Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1995), 219–252.

<sup>18</sup> Etkind, *Warped Mourning*, 220. See: "[...] for this uncanny is in reality nothing new or alien, but something which is familiar and old-established in the mind and which has become alienated from it only through the process of repression. This reference to the factor of repression enables us, furthermore, to understand Schelling's definition [...] of the uncanny as something which ought to have remained hidden but has come to light." (Freud, "The Uncanny," 241.)

<sup>19</sup> Lipovetsky and Etkind, "The Salamander's Return," 9.

<sup>20</sup> See, e.g., Jenny Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 38; Bessel van der Kolk, "Trauma and Memory," in *Psychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences* 52, No. 1 (1993): 52–64, doi: 10.1046/j.1440-1819.1998.0520s5S97.x.

<sup>21</sup> See Edkins, *Trauma and the Memory of Politics*, 39–40.

<sup>22</sup> See George Santayana's statement, which has become a common dictum when referring to the post-Soviet situation: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." George Santayana, *The Life of Reason or the Phases of Human Progress* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1954), 82; see also Anatoly Khazanov, "Whom to Mourn and Whom to Forget? (Re)constructing Collective Memory in Contemporary Russia," in *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions* 9, No. 2–3 (June–September 2008): 308, doi: 10.1080/14690760802094917.

<sup>23</sup> Kathleen Brogan, "American Stories of Cultural Haunting: Tales of Heirs and Ethnographers," *College English* 57, No. 2 (Feb. 1995): 156, doi: 10.2307/378807.

Following up and expanding Brogan's thought, I argue that discursive delimitation in literary narratives can be a step toward a dynamic mnemonic process and coming to terms with the Soviet past.

Of course, we must differentiate between the "specter of Communism" (Marx) and post-Soviet haunting by the past (Etkind). Nevertheless, both ideas are connected by a common basis in the "time out of joint." First of all, the post-Soviet present has to find a way from utopia (future) back to historical time. Groys, for example, describes post-communist life as going backwards, against the flow of time<sup>24</sup> and Iampolski attributes to it a melancholy of "the timeless time."<sup>25</sup> Furthermore, post-Soviet time is haunted by a vision of the future that is burdened by trauma. Layers of time are laid one on top of the other and the future collides with historical visions of the future. Literature, in particular, is able to create, bend, and semanticize temporal relationships,<sup>26</sup> and consequently depict time beyond linearity, giving form to the specters that arise out of complicated temporal situations like this.

Etkind proposes the term "magical historicism" to describe literary approaches that allow alternatives for a representation of the past that is considered as deficient:

When politics does not provide alternatives, historiography offers them in abundance. The hauntological idea of justice becomes relevant when the real courts deny hope; in a similar way, allegories bloom when other ways of constructing truth and memory betray the storyteller. Combining catastrophic past, pathetic present, and dangerous future, early twenty-first-century Russia is a greenhouse for ghosts, revenants, and other spectral bodies.<sup>27</sup>

The sociopolitical relevancy of the spectral in literature, of course, can easily be aligned with Brogan's "stories of cultural haunting" that explore "the hidden

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<sup>24</sup> Boris Groys, "Die postkommunistische Situation," in *Zurück aus der Zukunft. Osteuropäische Kulturen im Zeitalter des Postkommunismus*, ed. Boris Groys, Anne von der Heiden, and Peter Weibel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2005), 48.

<sup>25</sup> Michail Iampolski, "Die Gegenwart der Vergangenheit," in *Zurück aus der Zukunft. Osteuropäische Kulturen im Zeitalter des Postkommunismus*, ed. Boris Groys, Anne von der Heiden, and Peter Weibel (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2005), 165.

<sup>26</sup> See, e.g., Stephanie Wodianka, "Zeit – Literatur – Gedächtnis," in *Gedächtniskonzepte der Literaturwissenschaft. Theoretische Grundlegung und Anwendungsperspektiven*, ed. Astrid Erll, Ansgar Nünning (Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 2005), 184.

<sup>27</sup> Etkind, *Warped Mourning*, 235.



passageways not only of the individual psyche, but also of a people's historical consciousness."<sup>28</sup>

Drawing upon the following case studies, I claim that the retrospective literary representation of the Soviet past demonstrates different forms of magical historicism. The differences depend on the function of language and narrative used in representation. In the following sections, I present two different forms of magical historicism that I call "immediate" and "mediated magical historicism." I argue that in "immediate magical historicism" the magical and the grotesque operate *immediately* in the reality of the fictional world and permeate it to such an extent that the protagonists have no possibility of distancing themselves from it. Etkind refers to LaCapra's related concept of "acting out":

Acting out is related to repetition, and even repetition compulsion – the tendency to repeat something compulsively. This is very clear in the case of people who undergo a trauma. They have a tendency to relive the past, to be haunted by ghosts or even to exist in the present as if one were still fully in the past, with no distance from it.<sup>29</sup>

The concept of acting out goes back to Freud again: "He [i.e. the patient] reproduces it [i.e., the forgotten and repressed] not as a memory but as an action; he repeats it, without, of course, knowing that he is repeating it."<sup>30</sup> This repetition, according to Freud, "implies conjuring up a piece of real life"<sup>31</sup> which is of course something very like a haunting. I draw on Ol'ga Slavnikova's novel *2017* for an example of immediate magical historicism,<sup>32</sup> as in Slavnikova's novel, historical artifacts determine the dealings of people, and history takes possession of them like a virus.

The second form of magical historicism, "mediated magical historicism," will be represented here by Sergei Lebedev's novel *Predel zabveniiia*.<sup>33</sup> In Lebedev's

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<sup>28</sup> Brogan, "American Stories of Cultural Haunting," 152.

<sup>29</sup> Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore, London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 142–143; see also Lipovetsky and Etkind, "The Salamander's Return," 14–15.

<sup>30</sup> Sigmund Freud, "Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through (Further Recommendations on the Technique of Psycho-Analysis II)," in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud. Vol. XIII: (1911–1913)*, trans. and ed. James Strachey (London: Vintage, 2001), 150.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 152.

<sup>32</sup> According to Lipovetsky, Slavnikova's novel is one example of the magical historicism coined by Etkind. See Lipovetsky and Etkind, "The Salamander's Return," 13 and 21.

<sup>33</sup> The literal translation of the title would be "the border (or: limit) of oblivion," the English translation is titled "Oblivion."

novel, the magical takes place on an epistemic level, in the perception of the first-person narrator, in his dreams, imaginings, and his descriptions of them. In the beginning the narrator identifies strongly and corporeally with the haunting. By means of reflective narration, though, the narrator succeeds in putting critical distance between himself and the specters of the past. This can be compared to Freud's concept of "working through," which LaCapra conceptualizes as distancing in order to deal with a traumatic memory: working through does not mean avoidance, harmonization, simply forgetting the past, or submerging oneself in the present. It means coming to terms with the trauma."<sup>34</sup> Reflective narration and discursive delineation by the narrator in Lebedev's novel, I argue, finally enable him to bring the haunting to an end.

### **3. Russian Society Possessed by the Soviet Past: Ol'ga Slavnikova's Novel *2017***

Ol'ga Slavnikova's novel *2017* was first published in 2006. It is a vision of a future, with a more and more discernible dystopic nature. The plot focuses on its protagonist Krylov, who is working as a gem cutter. In the novel's dystopian prediction of the future, the year 2017 is of vital importance. Costumed parades are staged to celebrate the centenary of the October Revolution. The enactments turn deadly serious when masses of participants, costumed as White Guards and Red Army soldiers, start to attack and kill each other. Security forces are barely able to bring the situation under control.<sup>35</sup> Violent looting takes place in museums and theaters to seize historical costumes, weapons,<sup>36</sup> and their replicas for people are striving to take part in the battles – either

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<sup>34</sup> LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, 144. On "working through" see Freud, *Remembering, Repeating and Working-Through*, 155–156.

<sup>35</sup> See, e.g., Ol'ga Slavnikova, *2017. Roman* (Moskva: Vagrius, 2006), 374–376; Olga Slavnikova, *2017. A Novel*, trans. Marian Schwartz (New York, London: Overlook/Duckworth, 2010), 264–266.

<sup>36</sup> There are also attempts to mobilize other means of war: "В Питере революционные матросы захватили филиал военно-морского музея, а именно крейсер 'Аврора', и попытались жакнуть из бакового орудия по отсыревшему Зимнему, увенчанному зелеными, как лягушки, и такими же мокрыми статуями, – но все на крейсере было заварено и толсто покрашено, поэтому дело кончилось всего лишь большим железным грохотом и приводом хулиганов в ближайший участок." (Slavnikova, *2017. Roman*, 373–374.) // "In Petersburg, revolutionary sailors had seized a branch of the naval museum – the cruiser *Aurora* – and attempted to fire a tank gun at the damp Winter Palace; but everything on the cruiser had been welded shut and thickly painted, therefore the matter ended with just a large iron crash and the hooligans being brought in to the nearest police station." (Slavnikova, *2017. A Novel*, 264.)

on the White or the Red side. Battles are refought at their historical sites and White Guards try to win those battles that were won by the Red forces a century before. Criteria such as having a name identical to that of a historical military leader, or a physical appearance similar to one, determine the roles that people play in this new civil war.<sup>37</sup> Monuments are reconstructed and even the statue of the founder of the Cheka, Felix Dzerzhinsky, is re-erected after having been pulled down in 1991, an act that marked the end of the Soviet rule.<sup>38</sup>

In the novel, such excesses are explained by the characteristics of present-day Russian society in which “a culture of copies without originals,”<sup>39</sup> and a “secondary world”<sup>40</sup> rule, governed by “art projects”<sup>41</sup> and actors instead of politicians. No one lives an authentic life anymore, in which friendships, love, and solidarity matter.<sup>42</sup> Criminality, media, and propaganda rule a “theatricalized” life.<sup>43</sup> The protagonist Krylov compares the social gulf in twenty-first century Russia between the unbelievably rich and powerful and the disenfranchised to the social problems of one hundred years earlier. According to Krylov, the only difference is that there is no longer any organization that can lead the people to express the social tensions. Because of that, political contestation has to assume a form from the past – the October revolution:

<sup>37</sup> Slavnikova, 2017. *Roman*, 374 and 376; Slavnikova, 2017. *A Novel*, 264 and 266.

<sup>38</sup> Slavnikova, 2017. *Roman*, 149; Slavnikova, 2017. *A Novel*, 123.

<sup>39</sup> Slavnikova, 2017. *A Novel*, 187; “культура копии при отсутствии подлинника”. (Slavnikova, 2017. *Roman*, 239.)

<sup>40</sup> Slavnikova, 2017. *A Novel*, 233; “вторичный мир”. (Slavnikova, 2017. *Roman*, 335.)

<sup>41</sup> “Все политики представляли собой именно арт-проекты: Президент Российской Федерации походил, как никто другой, именно на Президента Российской Федерации, так что после стали выбирать таких же блондинистых силовиков.” (Slavnikova, 2017. *Roman*, 238.) // “All the politicians presented themselves as art projects: the president of the Russian Federation looked so much more like the president of the Russian Federation than anyone else that afterward people kept electing the same kind of blond security-agency types.” (Slavnikova, 2017. *A Novel*, 187.)

<sup>42</sup> E.g. Slavnikova, 2017. *Roman*, 239 (Slavnikova, 2017. *A Novel*, 187).

<sup>43</sup> “Что получилось в результате? Театрализация жизни, позиционирование всякого питейного заведения и всякой кофейни в качестве сценической площадки, актерство официанток, обилие блестящих телешоу при отсутствии толковых новостей, бесконечные конкурсы красоты без самой красоты. Мы есть то, на что мы похожи.” (Slavnikova, 2017. *Roman*, 240.) // “What was the result? The theatricalization of life, the positioning of any bar or coffeehouse as a stage, the waiters as actors, the abundance of grandiloquent TV shows in the absence of intelligible news and the endless beauty contests without any actual beauty. *We are what we resemble.*” (Slavnikova, 2017. *A Novel*, 188.) The term “theatricalization of life” was coined by Nikolai Evreinov whose mass re-enactments in the context of the third anniversary of the October Revolution in 1920 shaped the myth of the October Revolution. See, e.g., Igor’ Chubarov, “Teatralizatsiia zhizni’ kak strategiiia politizatsiia iskusstva. Povtornoie vziatie Zimnego dvortsa pod rukovodstvom N. N. Evreinova (1920 god),” in *Sovetskaia vlast’ i media*, ed. Khans Giunter, Sabina Khensgen (Sankt-Peterburg: Akademicheskii projekt, 2006), 281–295.

– Причина ровно та же, что у Великой Октябрьской социалистической революции, – проговорил Крылов [...]. – Верхи не могут, низы не хотят. Только у нас, в наше время, нет оформленных сил, которые могли бы выразить собой эту ситуацию. Поэтому будут использоваться формы столетней давности, как самые адекватные. Пусть они даже ненастоящие, фальшивые. Но у истории на них рефлекс. Конфликт сам опознает ряженых как участников конфликта. Конфликт все время существует, еще с девяностых. Но пока нет этих тряпок – революционных шинелей, галифе, кожанов, – конфликту не в чем выйти в люди. Он спит. А сейчас, в связи со столетним юбилеем, тряпок появится сколько угодно. Так что веселые нас ожидают праздники.<sup>44</sup>

‘The reason is the same as in the Great October Socialist Revolution,’ Krylov said [...]. ‘The rulers are unable and the ruled ones are unwilling. Only in our day and age we don’t have formal forces capable of expressing the situation. Therefore, they’re going to use hundred-year-old forms, because they’re the best we have. Even if they’re unreal, false. But history has a reflex to them. The conflict itself recognizes the maskers as the conflict’s participants. The conflict has always existed, since the 1990s. We just haven’t had these rags yet – the revolutionary greatcoats, riding breeches, and leather jackets. The conflict didn’t have anything to wear to go public. It’s been slipping. And now, in connection with the centenary, we’ve got all the rags you want. So we can look forward to some happy holidays.’<sup>45</sup>

The proposition that “[t]he rulers are unable and the ruled ones are unwilling” that Krylov quotes here was originally conceived by Lenin as one of the “symptoms” for the “revolutionary situation,” the situation with the potential to unleash a revolution.<sup>46</sup> But the scenes depicted in *2017* and Krylov’s explanation for them can be also read as an echo of Marx’s statements about historical repetition in “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte” (1852):

Hegel observes somewhere that all the great events and characters of world history occur twice, so to speak. He forgot to add: the first time as high tragedy, the second time as low farce [...]. Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please in circumstances they choose for themselves; rather they make it in present circumstances, given and inherited. Tradition from all the dead generations

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<sup>44</sup> Slavnikova, *2017. Roman*, 335.

<sup>45</sup> Slavnikova, *2017. A Novel*, 233.

<sup>46</sup> V. I. Lenin, “The Collapse of the Second International,” in *Collected Works. Vol. 21: August 1914 – December 1915*, trans. Julius Katzer (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1974), 213–214.

weighs like a nightmare on the brain of the living. And just when they appear to be revolutionising themselves and their circumstances, in creating something unprecedented, in just such epochs of revolutionary crisis, that is when they nervously summon up the spirits of the past, borrowing from them their names, marching orders, uniforms, in order to enact new scenes in world history, but in this time-honoured guise and with this borrowed language.<sup>47</sup>

According to Marx, the revolutions of the past found their “spirit” in “the resurrection of the dead” of former revolutions. The social revolution of the nineteenth century, in turn, had to “[strip] off all superstition from the past” and leave the dead behind, so that “content transcends phrase.”<sup>48</sup>

In Slavnikova’s novel, the contestations’ content is clearly confined to “phrase,” but is no less dangerous. The danger of a re-enacted revolution actually did become a central issue in relation to the 2017 centenary of the October revolution in Russia – a real situation that was anticipated in Slavnikova’s novel. Ilya Kalinin outlines the context of the Russian government’s hesitation when dealing with events related to the centenary.<sup>49</sup> In 1996 Boris Yeltsin changed the name of the national holiday commemorating the anniversary of the October revolution from “Anniversary of the Great Socialist October Revolution” (*Godovshchina Velikoi Oktiabr’skoi sotsialisticheskoi revoliutsii*) to “Day of Concord and Reconciliation” (*Den’ soglasiia i primireniia*). The reason for the change was the anxiety of the government that the memory of the revolution would mobilize people to rise up.<sup>50</sup> From 2005 onwards, November 7 was discontinued as a bank holiday; instead, November 4 was introduced as a holiday celebrating national unity and stability by commemorating the end of the Time of Troubles (*smuta*) in 1612

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<sup>47</sup> Karl Marx, “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,” in *Later Political Writings*, by Karl Marx, ed. and trans. Terrell Carver (Cambridge et al.: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 31–32; see also Iampolski’s prediction that the Russian society of the 2000s would be just such a repetition of history – in this case in the form of a parody – in Iampolski, “Die Gegenwart der Vergangenheit,” 159; see section 2 of this article.

<sup>48</sup> Marx, “The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte,” 31–32; see also Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 107–108.

<sup>49</sup> Il’ja Kalinin, “Antirevolutionäre Revolutionserinnerungspolitik. Russlands Regime und der Geist der Revolution,” trans. Volker Weichsel, *Osteuropa* 67, No. 6–8 (2017): 11. See also Jan Plamper, “2017. Erinnerung und Verdrängung der Revolution in Russland – zwischen Märtyrologie, Konspirologie und starkem Staat,” in *100 Jahre Roter Oktober. Zur Weltgeschichte der Russischen Revolution*, ed. Jan Claas Behrends, Nikolaus Katzer, Thomas Lindenberger (Berlin: Christoph Links, 2017), 279–294; and Gudkov and Zorkaja, “Instrumentalisieren, Klittern, Verdrängen,” 19–42.

<sup>50</sup> See “Ukaz Prezidenta Rossiiskoi Federatsii ot 7 noiabria 1996 goda No. 1537 ‘O dne soglasiia i primireniia’”, <http://www.kremlin.ru/acts/bank/10231>; Kalinin, “Antirevolutionäre Revolutionserinnerungspolitik,” 9–10.

and the founding of the Romanov Dynasty.<sup>51</sup> In December 2016, Putin emphasized that he wanted to prevent the anniversary of the revolution from triggering a split in Russian society.<sup>52</sup> Commemorating the October Revolution could have endangered stability and helped to unleash latent current conflicts.<sup>53</sup> That is why the centenary of the October Revolution ultimately passed hesitantly and almost unnoticed in Russia<sup>54</sup> – unlike in Slavnikova’s novel.

In the novel, the re-enacted revolution finally leads to civil war and to a collapse of infrastructure. Due to food shortages resulting from the turmoil in the country, old Soviet canned foods are sold that were kept in underground stocks. Among those provisions are huge amounts of reindeer meat that was tinned after a failed nuclear test in the 1950s, with the intention that it would be eaten after the radioactivity had decayed. Slavnikova’s narrator compares the tinned reindeer meat to mammoths frozen in the permafrost.<sup>55</sup> This passage recalls Solzhenitsyn’s discussion in the prologue of his *Gulag Archipelago* of an article that reports on camp prisoners who ate a prehistoric animal, a triton (a kind of a salamander).<sup>56</sup> According to Etkind, this scene is of central symbolical importance

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<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>52</sup> “Недопустимо тащить расколы, злобу, обиды и ожесточение прошлого в нашу сегодняшнюю жизнь, в собственных политических и других интересах спекулировать на трагедиях, которые коснулись практически каждой семьи в России, по какую бы сторону баррикад ни оказались тогда наши предки.” (Poslanie Prezidenta Federal’nomu Sobraniuu, 1.12.2016, <http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53379>.) // “It is unacceptable to drag the grudges, anger and bitterness of the past into our life today, and in pursuit of one’s own political and other interests to speculate on tragedies that concerned practically every family in Russia, no matter what side of the barricades our forebears were on.” (Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly, December 1, 2016, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53379>; see Kalinin, “Antirevolutionäre Revolutionserinnerungspolitik,” 13.)

<sup>53</sup> See *ibid.*, 14. Plamper believed that because of the popular notion of the cyclicity of history in Russia, the “magic” number of 100 years would encourage a revolutionary movement in Russia in 2017. (Plamper, “2017,” 290.) The dichotomy between stability and revolution can in this context be aligned with two prevailing political myths in Russia that are dialectically bound together: first, the myth of Russia as an eternal great power and second, the myth of cyclically recurring periods of unrest (Times of Troubles or *smuta*) “which are instigated from abroad, supported by defectors from within and finally overcome through the united efforts by the people and its resourceful leader(s).” Bo Petersson, “The Eternal Great Power Meets the Recurring Times of Troubles: Twin Political Myths in Contemporary Russian Politics,” in *European Cultural Memory Post-89*, ed. Conny Mithander, John Sundholm, and Adrian Velicu (Amsterdam, New York: Rodopi, 2013), 306.

<sup>54</sup> See Gudkov and Zorkaja, “Instrumentalisieren, Klittern, Verdrängen,” 19–20 and 22; see also Matthew Rendle, Aaron B. Retish, Introduction to *Silences and Noises: Commemorating 1917, Revolutionary Russia* 30, No. 2 (2017): 151.

<sup>55</sup> Slavnikova, *2017. Roman*, 379; Slavnikova, *2017. A Novel*, 268.

<sup>56</sup> Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *Archipelag Gulag 1918–1956* (Moskva: Sovetskii Pisatel’, Novyi Mir, 1989), 8.

to how trauma is dealt with in post-Soviet literature: “Solzhenitsyn’s salamander paves the way to the post-Soviet literary trauma.”<sup>57</sup> In Slavnikova’s novel the Soviet Union “suddenly emerged from underground storehouses to the light of day,” together with these cans.<sup>58</sup> The protagonist Krylov reacts to them with disgust:

Крылову казалось странным употреблять продукты, которым больше полувек: в этом было что-то биологически неправильное, нарушающее естественные циклы.<sup>59</sup>

Krylov thought it was odd to use food that was more than fifty years old. There was something biologically wrong about it, something that violated the natural cycles.<sup>60</sup>

This passage is a very informative example of the special way time is represented in the post-Soviet grotesque. The envisioned utopian future (in which reindeer meat could be eaten without danger of contamination) and the actual future (in which Krylov is living) collide. The tinned reindeer meat is a materialization of the “time out of joint” in the fictional reality of the novel.<sup>61</sup> Temporal disorder, in turn, leads to the resurrection of forms from the past.<sup>62</sup> Slavnikova’s novel plays with contradictory levels of temporality, satirically “acting out”<sup>63</sup> a scenario that reflects the possession of a collective by a spectrally present past.

#### 4. A Way of Coming to Terms with the Soviet Past: Sergei Lebedev’s Novel *Predel zabvenii*

The novel *Predel zabvenii* (2010) by Sergei Lebedev is about the first-person narrator’s research into the past of his so-called “Second Grandfather.”<sup>64</sup> This

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<sup>57</sup> Lipovetsky and Etkind, “The Salamander’s Return,” 8.

<sup>58</sup> Slavnikova, 2017. *A Novel*, 269–270; “вдруг вышедшего из подземных складов на житейскую поверхность”. (Slavnikova, 2017. *Roman*, 380.)

<sup>59</sup> Slavnikova, 2017. *Roman*, 380.

<sup>60</sup> Slavnikova, 2017. *A Novel*, 269.

<sup>61</sup> See Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 17–29; see also the narrator’s statement about stopping the course of history: “Вот войска, которым не суждено войти в историю, потому что история прекратилась.” (Slavnikova, 2017. *Roman*, 336.) // “Here were troops not fated to go down in history because history had stopped.” (Slavnikova, 2017. *A Novel*, 234.)

<sup>62</sup> See Derrida on Marx’s “The Eighteenth Brumaire”: “the more the period is in crisis, the more it is ‘out of joint,’ then the more one has to convoke the old, ‘borrow’ from it.” (Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 109.)

<sup>63</sup> See LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, 142–143; see also section 2 of this article.

<sup>64</sup> The English translator of the novel, Antonina W. Bouis, translated the Russian “Vtoroi ded” (“Second Grandfather”) as “Grandfather II.”

research leads him not only into the Siberian landscape but also into his own memory. To the narrator, his Second Grandfather is not only a close family acquaintance: when he was a child his Second Grandfather twice saved his life, in the end with a blood transfusion that caused the old man's death. This blood connects the narrator with the Second Grandfather even after his death, and takes possession of the boy in a most uncanny way.<sup>65</sup>

The narrator decides to investigate the past after a dream. In his dream, he sees the tracks of prisoners – the victims of state violence – in the snow, which are threatened with erasure by the flow of a river. The dream inspires the narrator's mission to follow the tracks as long as they are still visible. He becomes a “clairvoyant of memory,”<sup>66</sup> who alone can ensure that the victims of the past are being remembered. Thus the narrator's exceptional responsibility “for the specters” and for “living against oblivion”<sup>67</sup> is clearly outlined. Like Hamlet in Derrida's essay, he is committed to putting the “time out of joint” back into order.<sup>68</sup>

As a representative of the third generation, the narrator is only an observer in the constellation of victims and perpetrators. Nevertheless, he feels his involvement, because the past physically lives on in his own body. And only because he himself is a part of the past he investigates the narrator gains access to it. His very personal associations and memories allow him to find traces of the

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<sup>65</sup> “Я снова ощутил, как во мне обращается кровь Второго деда, как растет короткий звериный волос, растут слишком твердые ногти; мне хотелось соскоблить мясо с костей, вылить кровь, вычистить костный мозг.” Sergei Lebedev, *Predel zabveniiia*, 2nd ed. (Moskva: Èksmo, 2012), 163. // “Once again I sensed Grandfather II's blood circulating in me, I could feel the short animal hairs growing, the too-hard nails growing; I wanted to gnaw meat from bones, ooze blood, suck out the marrow.” Sergei Lebedev, *Oblivion*, trans. Antonina W. Bouis (New York: New Vessel Press, 2016), 122. In this context it is interesting to recall Freud's concept of melancholia arising from the inability of a subject to differentiate himself from the absent object. See Freud, “Mourning and Melancholia,” 249; see also section 2 of this article.

<sup>66</sup> Lebedev, *Oblivion*, 143; “Ясновидец памяти”. (Lebedev, *Predel zabveniiia*, 195.) See the Aristotelian relation between “seer” and “ghost-seer.” See Sladja Blažan, “Vernünftiges Geistersehen. Die Politik des Gespenstischen,” in *Lernen, mit den Gespenstern zu leben. Das Gespenstische als Figur, Metapher und Wahrnehmungsdispositiv in Theorie und Ästhetik*, ed. Lorenz Aggermann et al. (Berlin: Neofelis, 2015), 105–106.

<sup>67</sup> Christian Sternad, “Die Zeit ist aus den Fugen. Auf der Jagd nach sterblichen Gespenstern mit Emmanuel Lévinas und Jacques Derrida,” in *Lernen, mit den Gespenstern zu leben. Das Gespenstische als Figur, Metapher und Wahrnehmungsdispositiv in Theorie und Ästhetik*, ed. Lorenz Aggermann et al. (Berlin: Neofelis, 2015), 71.

<sup>68</sup> See “He [i.e., Hamlet] curses the destiny that would precisely have destined him, Hamlet, to do justice, to put things back in order, to put history, the world, the age, the time *upright*, on the right path [...]. He curses his mission: to do justice to a de-mission of time.” (Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 20.)



past and interpret them in the right way. Institutions such as archives and museums do not help him with his research, because they consistently suppress the problematic issues of the Soviet past.<sup>69</sup> People, too, refuse to be burdened with memory. Instead, objects, sites, and landscapes appear to him as signs that the narrator has to decode; in them he detects impressions of the past and witnesses to long-forgotten incidents:

Я увидел, что речь не о доказательствах, не о буквальном, музейном сохранении вещи – на те, кажущиеся нам неодушевленными, предметы, которые были орудием или просто свидетелями страданий, мук, ложится грозный отсвет; они получают как бы второе бытие, некое подобие голоса, прорываются сквозь собственное косноязычие – сама душа события, квинтэссенция его providенциального значения поселяется в вещи и говорит с нами.<sup>70</sup>

I saw that it was not about proof or literal, museum preservation of the object – the objects we consider inanimate that were the weapon or merely witnesses of suffering take on a threatening cast; they receive a second existence, a resemblance to a voice breaking through its own stammer – the soul of the event, the quintessence of its providential meaning settles into objects and speaks to us.<sup>71</sup>

In the course of his research, the narrator learns that his Second Grandfather was the commander in a Siberian forced labor camp and that he was responsible for the death of many people.

The peculiarity of the novel rests in the imbedding of the transcendent, spectral, and horrific in the everyday lifeworld of the narrator. It is the narrator's hypersensitive ability to experience that introduces the supernatural and the grotesque into a completely normal everyday reality. The narrator already had this special sensual receptivity as a child, and his retrospective depiction of his childhood is thus characterized by an atmosphere of intangible horror. The "uncanny" emanates from the figure of the Second Grandfather and contaminates landscapes and objects. Due to the Second Grandfather's presence, even the narrator's seemingly peaceful family life is steeped in a threatening light – all the more so because nobody is able to understand the narrator's visions and state of fear.

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<sup>69</sup> See, e.g., Lebedev, *Predel zabveniia*, 228; Lebedev, *Oblivion*, 165.

<sup>70</sup> Lebedev, *Predel zabveniia*, 131.

<sup>71</sup> Lebedev, *Oblivion*, 100.

During the Second Grandfather's lifetime, the narrator perceives the Second Grandfather as a "living dead,"<sup>72</sup> sensing the ominous presence of death that clings to him. It is unbearable to the narrator to let the Second Grandfather cut his hair,<sup>73</sup> and when he disregards the child's fear and forces him to drink cold water from a well. By doing so, in the narrator's perception the Second Grandfather turns the child into a naive, but nevertheless initiated, ally of his past in the Siberian forced labor camp.<sup>74</sup> After his death the Second Grandfather re-encounters the narrator as undead, not in his own corporeal shape but in the shape of objects.

There is an obvious link here between the haunting by the Second Grandfather and the haunting by communism, not only because the Second Grandfather's past was stamped by his service to the cause as commander of a forced labor camp. The death of the Second Grandfather coincides with the collapse of communism, and the narrator relates the formless time between the collapse of the old era and the ushering in of the new to the Second Grandfather's death.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>72</sup> "Я ощущал, что он внутренне мертв, рассоединен с миром живых; не призрак, не дух – обстоятельный, телесный, долго живущий [...] мертвец." (Lebedev, *Predel zabveniiia*, 66.) // "I sensed that he was dead inside, unconnected to the world of the living; not a ghost, not a specter – but a solid, physical, long-lived [...] corpse." (Lebedev, *Oblivion*, 53.)

<sup>73</sup> "[...] оно [i.e. бритье] было равнозначно и равносильно смерти. [...] а во мне росло ощущение, что дело не только в стрижке; что Второй дед решил – а никто этого не понимает! – взять меня в свою власть." (Lebedev, *Predel zabveniiia*, 53–54.) // "[...] a complete shave was equal and equivalent to death. [...] but I had the growing awareness that this wasn't just about the haircut; Grandfather II had decided – and no one understood! – to take me in his power." (Lebedev, *Oblivion*, 44–45.)

<sup>74</sup> "[...] ледяная вода обожгла губы, как металл зимой, а Второй дед стал рассказывать, что далеко на севере вода и летом бывает столь холодна, что у человека останавливается сердце; это не вода уже, а вещество холода. [...] Второй дед словно выбрал меня в младшие товарищи, в наперсники, заведомо зная, что я почти ничего не пойму в том, что скрытыми намеками, умолчаниями, загадками будет открыто мне [...]. Иногда он давал мне 'отпить из кружки' – будто бы причащал меня, позволяя глоток прошлого, которое я не мог ни достоверно представить, ни встроить в более объемную картину." (Lebedev, *Predel zabveniiia*, 72.) // "[...] the icy water burned my lips the way metal does in winter, and Grandfather II started telling me how in the North water can be so cold even in summer that it can stop a man's heart; it wasn't water anymore but the embodiment of cold. [...] Grandfather II had selected me to be a junior comrade, a confidant, knowing that I would understand very little of what would be revealed to me in hints, circumlocutions, and riddles; [...]. Sometimes he gave me 'a sip from the mug' – as if he was giving me communion, permitting me a sip of the past, which I could neither picture accurately nor fit into a bigger picture." (Lebedev, *Oblivion*, 57–58.)

<sup>75</sup> "Вот в эту паузу, во всеобщее оцепенение и пресеклась жизнь Второго деда; [...] новое время, может, и приняло бы его, гибельными оказались промежутки, рассоединенность." (Lebedev, *Predel zabveniiia*, 113.) // "In [sic] was during this pause, this general stupefaction that Grandfather II's life ended; [...] the new era might have accepted him, but it was the interval, the disconnect, that killed him." (Lebedev, *Oblivion*, 84.)

As Derrida says, the spectral particularly gains relevance in interjacent and indefinite time and space.<sup>76</sup> At first, the narrator feels relieved, expecting that the turn of the eras will release the close corporeal bond he has with the Second Grandfather.<sup>77</sup> Nevertheless, he is afraid to visit the Second Grandfather's gravesite, fearing the deceased might not be completely dead and may reunite himself with his other half, which is still living in the narrator's body after the blood transfusion.<sup>78</sup> Despite the narrator's worries, he finally visits the cemetery. There he experiences the haunting of the Second Grandfather for the first time. The narrator identifies a mushroom next to the gravesite as the Second Grandfather's ear:

Ухо – подземный мир слушал, он был здесь, я только не распознал его в сквозящих солнцем приметах дня. И все вернулось: страх, отвращение, озноб; гриб был похож на плоть трупа – и жив существованием растений; Второй дед не отпустил меня.<sup>79</sup>

An ear – the underground world was listening, it was here, I just hadn't noticed it in the sunny omens of the day. It all came back: fear, loathing, chills; the mushroom looked like the flesh of a corpse and it lived a vegetative existence; Grandfather II had not let go of me.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>76</sup> “What happens between two, and between all the ‘two’s’ one likes, such as between life and death, can only *maintain itself* with some ghost, can only *talk with or about* some ghost [s’entretenir de quelque fantôme].” Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, xviii; see also Lorenz Aggermann et al. “Enter ghost,” in *Lernen, mit den Gespenstern zu leben. Das Gespenstische als Figur, Metapher und Wahrnehmungsdispositiv in Theorie und Ästhetik*, ed. Lorenz Aggermann et al. (Berlin: Neofelis, 2015), 9.

<sup>77</sup> “[...] и я увидел, как вместе с временем ушло и то, что составляло – в посмертии – власть Второго деда надо мной; время, подумалось мне, разрешило эти узы.” (Lebedev, *Predel zabveniia*, 118.) // “[...] and I saw that along with time, the thing that comprised Grandfather II's posthumous power over me had also vanished; time, I realized, had loosened those bonds.” (Lebedev, *Oblivion*, 88.)

<sup>78</sup> “Во время его похорон я лежал в больнице, а потом с трудом мог приходить на кладбище: мне казалось, что Второй дед не умер до конца, что он поселился во мне, и когда я стою у могилы – это две разобщенные части души Второго деда встречаются друг с другом, одна – неупокоенная, вторая – та, которую я ношу под сердцем, как беременные плод; встречаются – и испытывают сладострастное удовольствие, потому что им удалось обмануть смерть, зацепиться за жизнь [...].” (Lebedev, *Predel zabveniia*, 113.) // “I was in the hospital during his funeral, and later it was an effort to go to the cemetery: I thought that Grandfather II had not died completely, that he had passed into me, and that when I stood by his grave that two separated parts of Grandfather II's soul encountered one another, one unsatisfied and the other I carried under my heart like a fetus; they met and experienced voluptuous pleasure because they had managed to deceive death, cling to life [...].” (Lebedev, *Oblivion*, 84.)

<sup>79</sup> Lebedev, *Predel zabveniia*, 120.

<sup>80</sup> Lebedev, *Oblivion*, 89.

With the transfusion of his blood, the Second Grandfather has entered the narrator and lives on inside him after his death. Blood is a common metaphor in national-patriotic expressions of pride and kinship for the continuity between the heroes of Soviet times and the Russian people today. For example, in the “Immortal Regiment” parade blood relationship plays a vital role for memory.<sup>81</sup> For his part, Lebedev’s narrator perceives the blood inside him as a horrible, grotesque blending that feels like a “graft on old wood.”<sup>82</sup> He himself has become a chimera that incorporates the old and the new eras, and both the guilt of the past and the innocence of the future. In that way, he symbolizes the transition between two social formations.<sup>83</sup>

Finally, the narrator encounters the materialized “unburied” past when he finds the corpses of people who have been deported from their homes.<sup>84</sup> He buries them and then realizes that he is starting to lose his mind. Only when he is able to clearly identify the specters that are causing him to go insane<sup>85</sup> does he succeed in ending the haunting of his present by the past. He overcomes the melancholic state that was caused by his blending with the absent object, which had kept the past alive in the present without allowing him to live his life himself.<sup>86</sup> The narrator then realizes that the blood of the Second Grandfather has definitively left his body<sup>87</sup> and the traumatic state of the “time out of joint” is thereby overcome, finally enabling him to remember. It is therefore no wonder that the novel ends by reference to its beginning.

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<sup>81</sup> See, e.g., Julie Fedor, “Memory, Kinship, and Mobilization of the Dead: the Russian State and the ‘Immortal Regiment’ Movement,” in *War and Memory in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus*, ed. Julie Fedor et al. (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), 310–312.

<sup>82</sup> Lebedev, *Oblivion*, 84; “как черенок, привитый на старое дерево”. (Lebedev, *Predel zabveniiia*, 113.)

<sup>83</sup> See Fuß, whose ideas about carnival as a medium of transition between two incompatible structural orders can partly be applied here. Peter Fuß, *Das Groteske. Ein Medium des kulturellen Wandels* (Köln, Weimar, Wien: Böhlau, 2001), 353.

<sup>84</sup> Lebedev, *Predel zabveniiia*, 393–394; Lebedev, *Oblivion*, 277–278.

<sup>85</sup> “[...] и теперь, лежа в шлюпке, плывущей к океану, чувствуя в себе безумие, я изнутри этого безумия увидел, как скитаются души, несущие и тяжесть грехов, и беспамятство рождения [...]” (Lebedev, *Predel zabveniiia*, 414.) // “[...] and now, lying in the dinghy sailing to the ocean, feeling my own madness, I could see through that madness the wandering souls bearing the weight of sins and the unconsciousness of birth [...]” (Lebedev, *Oblivion*, 290.)

<sup>86</sup> See Etkind, *Warped Mourning*, 235–236.

<sup>87</sup> Lebedev, *Predel zabveniiia*, 414; Lebedev, *Oblivion*, 290.

## 5. Conclusion

With reference to Derrida, it was stated that the spectral arises in the interjacent spaces, in the interstices between a subject and the external world, between subject and language,<sup>88</sup> and between reality and the ideal.<sup>89</sup> It thus functions as a reflection on mediality.<sup>90</sup> In the two cases I have discussed, the literary figuration of spectral haunting allows reflection on the problems arising from attempts in the post-Soviet period to delineate communism and the Soviet past by means of discourse. This discursive delineation, I argue, is in turn the precondition for the politics of reconciliation, for burying the “undead past,” and for memory. Based on Etkind’s concept of “magical historicism” I argue that there are two different literary approaches to the presence of traumatic past: by acting out the past, as is done in Slavnikova’s novel (“immediate magical historicism”), or by working through the past, as does the narrator in Lebedev’s novel (“mediated magical historicism”).

Slavnikova’s novel *2017* takes on a satirical perspective on current Russian society, depicting the haunting by the Soviet past in explicitly grotesque scenes. It is thus “acting out”<sup>91</sup> the common metaphor of the repetition of past events and structures in the present. In the Russian reality that the novel depicts, “natural cycles” are constantly being interrupted. This is where its grotesque dystopian<sup>92</sup> and spectral<sup>93</sup> characteristics can be found. The long-forgotten rises to the surface and people absorb it by grotesque processes of blending,<sup>94</sup> for example,

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<sup>88</sup> Gerald Siegmund, “‘Un-Fug’: Gespenster und das Wahrnehmungsdispositiv des Theaters,” in *Subjekt: Theater – Beiträge zur analytischen Theatralität*, ed. Gerald Siegmund and Petra Bolte-Picker (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2011), 40. See also Link, who situates the appearance of the spectral at the intersection of body and discourse. Jürgen Link, “Das Gespenst der Ideologie,” in *Gespenster. Erscheinungen – Medien – Theorien*, ed. Moritz Baßler, Bettina Gruber, and Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2005), 347.

<sup>89</sup> Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 63.

<sup>90</sup> See Moritz Baßler, Bettina Gruber, and Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf, Introduction to *Gespenster. Erscheinungen – Medien – Theorien*, ed. Moritz Baßler, Bettina Gruber, and Martina Wagner-Egelhaaf (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 2005), 11–12.

<sup>91</sup> See LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, 142–143; see also section 2 of this article.

<sup>92</sup> Fuß describes the grotesque with its “anamorphic mechanisms of liquidating structures: inversion, distortion and blending.” These mechanisms “mirror the morphotic mechanisms of structural stabilization: hierarchisation (linearisation), dichotomisation (polarisation) and categorisation (parcellation), that fix a structure by setting the relations between them in perpetuity.” (Fuß, *Das Groteske*, 235, trans. A. H.)

<sup>93</sup> “A spectral moment, a moment that no longer belongs to time, if one understands by this word the linking of modalized presents (past present, actual present: ‘now,’ future present).” (Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, xx.)

<sup>94</sup> For the grotesque blending, whose product is the chimera, see Fuß, *Das Groteske*, 349.

by ingesting food. This leads to a point where the layers of time can no longer be separated. The Soviet period lives on in post-Soviet society without the possibility of being separated from the new one and thus being rejected. Slavnikova's novel reflects this highly problematic temporal confusion. However, the narrated reflection within the frame of the fictional setting is not able to put the "time out of joint" back into order and thus overcome the haunting by the Soviet past.

In contrast to Slavnikova's explicitly grotesque scenes, the uncanny in Sergei Lebedev's novel *Predel zabveniia* is rooted in the sensitive mind of the narrator, resulting in horror becoming part of his everyday life. The paradox between normality and the concealment of the traumatic past is so glaringly perceived by the narrator that explicit, fantastic horror proves to be superfluous to its literary expression. The paradoxes – for example between the gravesite of the Second Grandfather and his life after death, between domestic intimacy and latent cruelty in the process of cutting hair, and between the beauty of nature and the horror of history at the site of a former forced labor camp<sup>95</sup> – render the everyday grotesque and most uncanny,<sup>96</sup> without being the least satirical. Lebedev's story succeeds in defining the specters of the Soviet past and trauma is transformed into memory by "working through"<sup>97</sup> – which is, at least, a first step toward coming to terms with the past.

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<sup>95</sup> "В отвалах штолен была порода, вобравшая в себя смертные усилия людей, удары киркой, кровь и тепло израненных камнем рук, – и теперь эта порода холодно искрилась под солнцем; красота ее не ослабла, не потускнела и потому казалась опасной, цепящейся, как свечение тонкого весеннего льда, под которым – мертвая, лишенная воздуха зимняя вода, полная тленом рыбьего мора. Чтобы перебить, сбросить впечатление, я обернулся. Солнце наполнило светом озеро у подножия хребта; выпуклый, будто капля на стекле, его абрис ударил в зрачки. Недобрая шутка природы – шутка, ждавшая своего часа несколько миллионов лет: у озера были очертания профиля Ленина, впечатанного в подкорку каждому из нас орденами, значками, марками, статуями, картинами, рисунками в книжках." (Lebedev, *Predel zabveniia*, 133–134.) // "The slag heap had rock that had absorbed the mortal efforts of men, the blows of picks, blood and warmth of hands wounded by the rock, and now that rock was coolly sparkling in the sun; its beauty did not weaken or dim and therefore seemed dangerous, freezing, like the glow of thin spring ice beneath which is the dead, airless winter water, filled with the decay of fish. To break away from this impression, I turned. The sun had filled the lake at the foot of the mountains with light; convex, like a drop on glass, its contour struck me in the eye. A mean trick of nature, a joke that had waited several million years: the lake looked like Lenin's profile, which was imprinted on us by medals, badges, stamps, statues, paintings, and drawings in books." (Lebedev, *Oblivion*, 102.)

<sup>96</sup> For the relationship between the paradoxical and the grotesque, see Fuß: "The grotesque is a paradoxical category and paradox is a grotesque phenomenon. The definition of the grotesque as decomposition of a symbolic cultural order explains this mutual affinity. [...] The impossibility of a clear attribution of a truth value characterises the paradox. [...] It marks the border of the logically resolvable by transgressing it." (Fuß, *Das Grotteske*, 113–114, trans. A. H.)

<sup>97</sup> See LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, 144.

## REVIEWS

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Elina Lange-Ionatamishvili et al.: **Redefining Euro-Atlantic Values: Russia's Manipulative Techniques**. Riga: NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence, 2017. NATO StratCom COE Online Library. 139 pages.

“This is a study about *us*, namely, the ‘transatlantic community’ – a community we consider to be based on democratic values,” proclaim the authors of *Redefining Euro-Atlantic Values: Russia's Manipulative Techniques* in the introduction to their publication (p. 5). Their goal is to identify various techniques and tools Russia has been using to redefine and remodel the core values of the Western, “Euro-Atlantic,” world. The publication focuses on several events that followed the uprising and outbreak of violence in the eastern parts of Ukraine. Its findings and conclusions, however, have the potential to be applied in other contexts.

The Russian annexation of Crimea and its interventions in eastern Ukraine represent, as Roy Allison aptly put it, a “frontal challenge to the post-Cold War European regional order.”<sup>1</sup> This aggression triggered heated debate, both political and academic, about its causes and implications. Together with the EU, NATO is the most important Western institution embodying and defending Euro-Atlantic values. Both organizations took action in response to Russia's conduct consistent with their purposes and capabilities. The publication here reviewed was produced by NATO StratCom COE, one of the newest Centers of Excellence established under the Alliance in 2014, shortly after Russia's annexation of Crimea.

The publication focuses on the Russian media and how they have attempted to redefine Euro-Atlantic values. There is a substantial body of academic research confirming the crucial role the media plays in shaping people's views. The “media is the most comprehensive platform offering a wide spectrum of tools for influencing people's hearts and minds and redefining values,” claim the authors (p. 7). They describe several tools of media influence wielded by the Russians. Among them are framing, the “highlighting process of selection and ascribing saliency to certain aspects of reality at the expense of others,” as defined by Robert Entman.<sup>2</sup> Framing is inherent in the work of journalism because frames allow journalists to simplify complex topics and make them understandable to a wide audience. There is a difference, however, between the legitimate, inevitable journalistic practice of framing a story and the careful crafting of frames designed to support certain propaganda goals.

The publication applies critical discourse analysis to Russian propaganda, relying mostly on the concept of legitimation, understood as a “strateg[y] used to influence public opinion [...] to ‘win hearts and minds and change political attitudes’” (p. 16). The authors analyze Russian media coverage of four events: the downing of Malaysian Airlines flight

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<sup>1</sup> Roy Allison, “Russian ‘Deniable’ Intervention in Ukraine: How and Why Russia Broke the Rules,” *International Affairs* 90, No. 6 (2014): 1255.

<sup>2</sup> Robert M. Entman, “Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm,” *Journal of Communication* 43, No. 4 (September 1993): 52.

MH-17, the imposition of Russian countersanctions against the West, the first “humanitarian aid convoy” from Russia to eastern Ukraine, and the Minsk II agreement aimed at achieving a ceasefire. The authors selected two Russian television channels for analysis, Pervyi Kanal (PK) and RT (formerly Russia Today). Each of those channels targets a different audience: PK is the leading TV channel in Russia, while RT is an international TV network aimed at audiences outside the country. The difference in the two channels’ target audiences is crucial for understanding the difference in their coverage.

The authors focus on Euro-Atlantic values and seek to explain how Russia has been trying to redefine them through the reporting on the two media outlets. Values are the glue that holds every society or alliance together, and any external attempt to modify them “must be addressed with the highest attention, since this process may end with [...] a crisis in society” (p. 18). Values are vulnerable to becoming objects of strategic political communication and distortion by propaganda. The authors acknowledge the difficulty that Western countries have had in responding effectively to Russia’s communications and the techniques of manipulation used by its media outlets. In their opinion, the difficulty is due to several factors, among them the fact that Russia’s goal is not primarily gaining territory but rather increasing its influence in the West and sowing discord. The West is loath to fight propaganda with counter-propaganda, because that contradicts certain of its fundamental values (such as freedom of speech) and blurs the line between war and peace, leading to a chaos of information (p. 21).

The authors offer a broad catalogue of Euro-Atlantic values and sort them into four categories: political values, economic values, moral values, and international law. In each category they identify a Western and a Russian interpretation of the values. In the West, for example, democracy is an uncontested political value. The people support the liberal values of democracy: protection of minorities, trust in institutions, and unfettered participation in politics. On the other hand, the authors argue, a majority of people in Russia conceive of democracy mainly as a means of assuring social and economic benefits. Even so, only 38% of Russian respondents found European-style democracy desirable, according to polls taken by the Levada Center in 2013, while the remainder believed Russia “needs a strong ruler and power concentrated in one hand” (p. 33).

In general, say the authors, Russians express a very different understanding of the role of the state in society and expect more involvement by the state in more aspects of everyday life than Westerners. Compared to Western respondents, the Russians polled ascribed much less value to freedom of assembly, the right to be elected to public office, and civil values in general. Russia’s public political participation rate is much lower than in the West. According to one PEW Research Center poll from 2011, the Westerners surveyed “demanded good democracy more than good economic situation” while 78% of the Russians would chose a strong economy over democracy, which was preferred by only 14% (p. 27).

The Russians also put less importance on certain elements of the free market such as competition and private property. In the category of moral values, compared to Russian citizens, those in Western countries express greater tolerance for homosexuality, and

a preference for gender equality and multiculturalism. Russians also see a strong correlation between morality and the church, with which many of them more or less strongly identify. At the same time, materialistic views are very common in Russian society, according to the authors. On the international law dimension, Western countries tend to support use of force to maintain global order, but only when it is authorized by the United Nations (p. 29). That organization is understood in Western countries as a platform for maintaining global peace and is widely supported, while Russians' support for it is selective (p. 33). The Russian public is dismissive of the trustworthiness of international organizations and reflects the zero-sum game approach of Russia's foreign policy (p. 50).

The authors also develop a catalogue of the manipulative techniques used by Russia. My selection of the most important techniques they mention would be: authority, repetition, simplification, labeling, moral superiority, hypothetical future, victimization, statistics, pseudo plurality, and lesser evil.

The authors selected four events for which they analyzed Russian news coverage. Each chapter of the publication deals with one case study using an identical structure. It first describes the Russian agenda and the tools of communication used by the Russian media. It then proceeds to describe how Russia seeks to redefine Euro-Atlantic values, and finally it identifies the narratives it uses. The standard period of time over which media reporting was sampled was six days.

The first case study deals with the downing of Malaysian Airlines flight MH-17. While RT and PK used different approaches in their coverage of the event, the authors claim that they obviously shared the same end goal: to defend the innocence of Russia. PK raised a great number of issues related to the catastrophe, such as potential technical problems with the plane, the theory that Vladimir Putin himself was the real target of the attack, quotations from anonymous local sources, etc. The techniques PK used were "expertise," "statistics" and the "common man." On the other hand, with its international audience RT did not use any of the same issues raised by PK. The key issue for RT was the (lack of) credibility of the Western media. The political value on which both channels were most focused was the "presumption of innocence." Their anchoring messages were identical: "it is unprofessional to assign guilt [to Russia] before the investigation is over" (p. 64). They blamed the Western media for failing to uphold that political value.

PK focused more than RT on assigning blame to United States and Ukraine. The United States was presented as the main villain, who would profit economically from worsening EU-Russia relations, while Ukraine was portrayed as a "failed state," unable to maintain order inside its territory (disparaging references to "color revolutions" were made). Selected historical events were used to make the case that both countries were untrustworthy (e.g., Colin Powell's testimony at the UN prior to the Iraq War). A crucial role was assigned to Vladimir Putin. He was portrayed as a comforting international politician, calling for an independent investigation – and as a strong domestic leader, reassuring his citizens that Russia would never fall into chaos like Ukraine. The main legitimizing strategies used by the channels in defending the Russian government's position were "rationalization" of the events and "previous experience" with such disasters.

The second case study concerned the implementation of Russian countersanctions in response to Western sanctions on Russia in the wake of its deliberate destabilization of Ukraine. The crucial strategy both TV channels used was to downplay any Russian link to events in Ukraine and push for a geopolitical explanation of the situation in which Russia was portrayed as a victim of Western sanctions forced to take countermeasures. “Expertise” and “victimization” were the most often used techniques identified in this case study. Russian TV invited experts to highlight the negative consequences of the countersanctions on European farmers and the positive ones for Russian farmers. The central political value in this case centered on the role of the state, which was framed as the defender of the national interest, which all (patriotic) citizens were expected to support. In the economic dimension, the TV channels redefined the free market, describing countersanctions as a way of curbing “aggressive Western imports” which would have positive implications for domestic farmers (p. 87). In discourse, the Western world was divided between United States on the one side, which was framed as the main driver behind the sanctions on Russia, and the EU on the other side, which would have to bear the consequences in the form of Russian countersanctions. On the international law dimension, the Russian channels flatly stated that the countersanctions were in compliance with WTO rules.

The third case study dealt with the first “humanitarian aid convoy” that Russia sent to eastern Ukraine in August 2014. The authors argue that unlike the downing of MH-17, this event was pre-planned by the Russian authorities and supported by narratives they controlled (p. 93). This was underlined by the visual appearance of the convoy, as all trucks were painted a neutral white and carried orthodox religious icons, etc. The rhetoric of both Russian TV channels focused on the local population’s “need and danger,” the “growing humanitarian catastrophe,” and the “offensive actions of the Ukrainian military.” They held up the image of Ukraine as a “failed state,” reinforced by anti-Ukraine narratives such as “radical groups are out of control,” an alleged lack of trust by Ukrainian citizens in their officials, and the irresponsibility of the Ukraine government in waging war against civilians and its own citizens.

RT also decried “sins of the American military.” The key values being redefined in this case were moral and humanitarian. Kiev and Washington were framed as not caring about Ukrainian civilians, while Russia’s solidarity with them was praised. Accordingly, the verbal and visual technique used on both media platforms appealed to emotions such as feelings of solidarity, empathy with suffering civilians and fear stoked by warnings of a dystopian, hypothetical future.

The final case study analyzed coverage of the Minsk II agreement, which aimed at bringing about a ceasefire in Ukraine. PK and RT employed three main narratives: blaming Ukraine for the conflict, highlighting the success of Russian diplomacy, and condemning Ukraine for allegedly violating the agreement. Vladimir Putin was portrayed as the most important leader at the summit, in contrast to his Ukrainian counterpart Petro Poroshenko. For the first time, the technique of “infotainment” was used to present Poroshenko as a weak leader (by showing him yawning in meetings, etc.). The Ukrainian army and parliament were also discredited by the Russian news coverage, along with

the United States, whose foreign policy was alleged to be anti-democratic. The U.S. was depicted as the aggressor, while European countries were patronized as “less bad.” In general, the Russian channels portrayed Russia as the actor trying to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. A narrative of Russia’s moral superiority was employed, together with an appeal for solidarity under the banner of “one big happy family” with Russian compatriots living in Ukraine.

All in all, while the subject matter of the authors’ publication is highly relevant and current, there are several flaws in its presentation. The bulk of the publication is structured in a way that is inconvenient to the reader and that pays too much attention to small details at the expense of the larger picture. Its very detailed descriptions of media coverage make it hard to focus on its most important findings. Perhaps, given the authors’ affiliations with NATO, they felt a need to demonstrate absolute transparency in all their findings, yet the overtly detailed exposition may at times obscure the point. No attention is given to the question of what exactly Euro-Atlantic values are. The authors simply cite a catalogue of values, and then back their selection up with data provided by various surveys. How and why they selected the list of particular values is never explained. Furthermore, the surveys they use are sometimes as old as the year 2011. The publication was written in 2017. A lot happened in the six years in between that had the potential to change public opinion and shift its value orientation. Since the surveys are the only source on which the publication bases its selection of values, using such old data casts doubt on its relevance.

The publication’s concluding section is very short – only three pages out of 137 – which I find insufficient. It correctly focuses on the broader implications that Russia’s attempts to redefine Western values have for the Euro-Atlantic community. However, in such a small space it cannot go deep enough. The implications of these attempts are, in my opinion, much more important to any reader than a detailed description of the research’s findings – unless the reader is a media theoretician, which should not be the primary audience of a NATO publication. From my point of view, the unfortunate design of the publication effectively lowers its utility.

That being said, the authors do present findings that deserve closer attention and that will have value in countering Russia’s subversive activities in other situations. One of the principle objectives Russia has been pursuing, according to the study, is dividing the Euro-Atlantic community. Over the period of time tracked by the study, the authors found that this goal is being pursued on two separate tracks, with the aim first to divide the U.S. from the EU and second to divide the EU internally. Russia has been able to carefully craft narratives that aggravate long-time grievances among certain parts of Western society. One example of that is the anti-Americanism that is widespread among some segments of the European population.<sup>3</sup> The authors’ case studies show that the Russian media has raised doubts by referring to controversial episodes from American foreign

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<sup>3</sup> James Kirchick, “Russia’s Plot Against the West,” *Politico*, March 17, 2017, <https://www.politico.eu/article/russia-plot-against-the-west-vladimir-putin-donald-trump-europe/>.

policy history, such as Colin Powell's testimony to the UN Security Council prior to the invasion of Iraq, and the entire Iraq War itself, which created a major rift in the Euro-Atlantic community. In recalling these episodes, Russia deliberately targets those divisions, discredits Western policies, and presents itself as a champion of an alternative form of government. Russia's media messaging shows how long-term the consequences of those controversial foreign policy actions have been and how effectively they can be used to undermine the very same democracy in whose name they were said to be undertaken. As Michael J. Abramowitz, president of Freedom House, points out: "the hangover of that [the Iraq War] has made Americans and the rest of the world very hostile to the idea of democracy, and democracy promotion. It has handed a propaganda tool to people like Putin in particular."<sup>4</sup>

As has become clear from the events and developments of recent years in Russia, nowadays the country has little in common with liberal democracies of the Western type. However, carefully maintaining the illusion of democracy in its messaging allows Russia to manipulate Western values and float a narrative of Russia as a democratic alternative. According to annual Freedom House surveys, 2017 marked the twelfth consecutive year that democracy has declined worldwide. Democratic standards have even been eroding in the countries that have long been its principal defenders, including the United States.<sup>5</sup> The decline of liberal democracy within the Euro-Atlantic space goes hand in hand with a shift in values among its peoples. The role that Russia may have played in this value shift is a question of the utmost importance. It is highly relevant from NATO's point of view because it is adherence to commonly shared values that has ensured the Alliance's survival after the end of the Cold War and the disappearance of the Soviet Union as the common threat. At the end of the day, the weakening of the connecting "glue" caused by the erosion of liberal democratic values may prove to be the NATO's greatest problem. Seen from this perspective, the publication here reviewed is an important contribution, no matter its flaws. Other research should be conducted to deepen understanding of the Russian contribution to weakening the bonds of the Western alliance.

*Barbora Chaloupková*

doi: 10.14712/23363231.2018.5

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<sup>4</sup> Michael J. Abramowitz, "The Rise of Illiberal Democracies," Council on Foreign Relations, April 23, 2018, <https://www.cfr.org/event/rise-illiberal-democracies>.

<sup>5</sup> Michael J. Abramowitz and Wendell L. Wilkie II., "We looked at the state of democracy around the world, and the results are grim," Freedom House, January 18, 2018, <https://freedomhouse.org/blog/we-looked-state-democracy-around-world-and-results-are-grim>.

Filip Černocho, Jan Osička, Robert Ach-Hübner and Břetislav Dančák: **Energiewende: Current State, Future Development and the Consequences for the Czech Republic.** Brno: Masaryk University, 2015. 178 pages. ISBN 978-80-210-8279-3

*Energiewende* is a German term for the planned reorientation of the energy system in Germany. It is a remarkable long-term project consisting not only of a phase-out of nuclear power generation, or *Atomausstieg*, by the end of 2022, but also of a shift toward greater sustainability of energy production. There are ambitious environmental goals behind this transition, such as lowering greenhouse gas emissions, increasing the share of renewable sources of energy, and better energy conservation. The roots of *Energiewende* in Germany can be traced back to the 1970s when the world went through two major oil crises and the anti-nuclear movement in Germany was born. Crucial steps towards *Atomausstieg* and the development of renewable sources were taken by the red-green coalition government of Chancellor Gerhard Schröder (1998–2005). Angela Merkel's second government accelerated the project after the Fukushima nuclear disaster in 2011.

The book here reviewed deals with the topic of *Energiewende* in a relatively broad context. It examines not only the transition itself, but also its impact on the Czech Republic and more widely on Central Europe and the European Union. The book originated in the International Institute of Political Science of Masaryk University Brno and was first published in Czech.<sup>1</sup> The English edition that is the subject of this review is faithful to the Czech original, although some chapters have been reorganized and a few have been added. In addition, a new member, Robert Ach-Hübner, has joined the team of authors.

The authors met at the Faculty of Social Studies of Masaryk University in Brno, Czech Republic. All of them are specialists in the field of energy and energy security in the contexts of international relations, geopolitics and European and area studies. Two of the book's authors contributed to another publication on a similar topic in 2017, which dealt with *Energiewende* and its impact on the energy security of the Czech Republic and Poland.<sup>2</sup> Three of the authors (Černocho, Dančák, and Osička) were also part of a team working on an interdisciplinary research project investigating energy infrastructure across Europe and its influence on the EU energy security. They have produced several publications in the last four years.<sup>3</sup> The subject matter of the book here reviewed is therefore a well-established field of research at Masaryk University and among the book's team of authors.

The authors say in their introductory chapter that their book “follows the relation between the energy transition in Germany and the Czech sector in detail” (p. 14). They

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<sup>1</sup> See Filip Černocho, Břetislav Dančák and Jan Osička, *Energiewende: Současný stav, budoucí vývoj a důsledky pro ČR* (Brno: Masarykova univerzita, 2015).

<sup>2</sup> Filip Černocho, Robert Ach-Hübner, Veronika Jurčová and Yuliya Borshchevska, *Energiewende and the Energy Security of the Czech Republic and Poland* (Brno: Masaryk University, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> Project information: Energetická infrastruktura a její vliv na energetickou bezpečnost, Masaryk University, <https://www.muni.cz/en/research/projects/24323>.

do not really employ a specific research methodology. Rather, the goal is simply to explore the possible impact of *Energiewende* on Germany's neighbors.

The authors' research was based on both primary and secondary sources of information. The authors mostly used sources in English (most of which, however, are of German origin), some in Czech and Slovak, and only exceptionally a few written in German. Most of their sources were produced by state or supranational actors. Those include Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy, Federal Network Agency, Federal Statistical Office, and Federal Environment Office; the Czech Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Czech Energy Regulatory Office; and a few reports by European institutions, such as the European Commission, European Parliament and Eurostat. Those agencies were the main sources of the data used in the book's graphs and tables, along with a prominent Berlin think tank, Agora Energiewende, and the European Network of Transmission System Operators, ENTSO-E.

The first and longest chapter of the book introduces the reader to the issue of *Energiewende*. It sums up political developments in Germany in the field and explains the aims of the transition. This part of the book introduces the crucial actors involved, which include political parties, state institutions and private entities such as the owners of the means of energy production, the transmission network operators, and their opponents. It outlines their roles in the energy transition. It also presents technical and financial indicators, using a great deal of data and graphs on installed capacity and electricity production from the various energy sources, electricity import and export, balancing of loads for grid stability, electricity prices and subsidies for renewables.

The second chapter examines the turn to renewable sources and its impact on electricity production and trade. It explains how different factors influence the costs of energy production and how competition in the energy market works. It also shows how Germany deals with the problem of building flexibility into its energy production capacity, since production and consumption are not stable and balanced over the year or even over a day.

Next, the book focuses on the internal EU market for electricity. While in the past stability, predictability and security of supply were the most important targets of European energy policy, there is now a clear shift toward competition, which keeps prices low for consumers. However, the publication highlights some obstacles to the development of the EU internal market, such as the lack of convergence in the prices of electricity among the EU member states, deficiencies in interconnections across borders and the problem of so-called "wrong-way" energy flows.

The fourth chapter discusses the future of the Central European power sector. It analyzes the different energy sources that are available, their advantages and disadvantages, and how the energy mix should look if it is to both provide energy security and make economic sense. Some traditional energy sources will have to remain in operation in order to ensure the security of supply, even though they will no longer be very profitable.

The actual topic of the book – the impact of *Energiewende* on the Czech Republic – is the subject of its fifth chapter. It lays out the main problems Germany is dealing with in the course of its energy transition and how they affect the Czech energy sector. These



include unequal geographic distribution of energy production and consumption, an insufficient domestic network in Germany, growing export of electricity surpluses, and the continued utility of the German-Austrian bidding zone for pricing of energy. The way these issues are resolved can have negative financial and technical consequences for the Czech Republic.

Furthermore, the authors evaluate the Czech Republic's official State Energy Policy (issued in 2014), which they roundly criticize. In their opinion, the Czech Republic's energy policy runs counter to the reality of the market because it promotes the construction of new nuclear power plants and assumes that self-sufficiency in itself can ensure the country's energy security. According to the book, the Czech energy policy does not take into account important factors such as the unpredictability of electricity prices and of the European and German energy market, the very long time required to license and build a new nuclear power plant in the Czech Republic, and the difficulty of securing public funding for one.

The sixth chapter examines *Energiewende* in a broader context, analyzing its Europeanization. There are several issues that must be solved at the EU level, such as the permissibility of state interventions, the applicability of the new system of emissions trading (ETS), rules for cross-border trading in electricity, and increasing the capacity of cross-border networks. Other issues can only be solved at the member state level. In the authors' view, Germany is not pursuing a European nuclear power phase-out nor an EU-wide system to support use of renewable sources of energy. Germany is choosing to Europeanize only a select set of topics, like the common energy market, ETS, and climate objectives, because it recognizes the tensions between national energy sectors and member states' policies.

The authors conclude that "there is no reason to expect any significant change in course" in Germany (p. 161). There is a broad social consensus in Germany on energy policy. Renewable sources already cover a larger part of consumption than expected, and the planned nuclear phase-out and restrictions on the use of coal are to follow. However, as the authors point out, the future is not entirely easy to predict due to the changing environment of the energy sector. This poses a challenge for the Czech Republic. Its current main strategy paper, the State Energy Policy, and the priorities it sets for the Czech energy sector largely fail to reflect ongoing changes in the European energy market. Therefore, according to the authors, Czech politicians should create a new development strategy for the Czech energy sector.

The book contains a list of abbreviations, an introductory summary, a concluding summary of the authors' findings, an index and references. The chapters include several illustrations such as graphs and tables, which support the text and are a valuable source of data. Some of the chapters also have a brief summary of their content.

The subject matter of the book is very broad, and it opens up a number of topics for consideration. Not all of them have been elaborated as much as they deserve to be because of the book's limited length. In addition, some of the data in the tables is presented without interpretation in the text. Therefore, the book offers the reader only an

introduction to *Energiewende*, not a full picture of it. It is more an overview than a strictly academic text.

While its analysis of policy is perceptive, I would have expected to see more about politics in the book, especially how specific decisions were made and who pushed them through. It is notable that the book does not cover the influence of some actors on energy policy in depth. The attitudes of German political parties and their leaders to *Energiewende* are summed up very briefly. Some controversial political topics, such as subsidies for renewables and exemptions from paying EEG fees,<sup>4</sup> are only mentioned and not really analyzed.

Unfortunately, the book needs plenty of editorial revision, and the reader will note some shortcomings. To name a few, the summary at the beginning of the book, which contains its most important statements about the current state of *Energiewende*, its impact on the Czech Republic and the Czech Republic's future prospects, and which provides links directing the reader to the corresponding text in the following chapters, was simply translated from the original Czech version. For that reason, it fails to reflect important information found in some of the chapters of the English version. The links pointing to particular sections of the book where information is dealt with in detail do not match the chapters as they appear in the English edition. There is an index of names, but it lists only three persons, whereas many more people are mentioned in the text. Some graphs and pictures are almost unreadable due to low resolution printing (e.g. p. 61, 113). In one place, the text refers to a graph and uses colors to describe the individual lines when the entire publication is printed in black and white only (p. 52). The format used to write the names of German legislative acts varies as well. Moreover, there are occasional errors of fact; for example, the town where a nuclear power plant was planned is "Wyhl," not "Wahl" as it is written on p. 17. On the same page, the text states that the CDU/CSU, SPD and FDP were all opposed to nuclear power, while in fact they supported the technology.

To conclude, I would recommend this book to students and to the general public because it offers a good introduction to Germany's *Energiewende* and its European and regional contexts. For those who are already familiar with the field – practitioners, professionals, and the like – the book will seem very basic. Nevertheless, even they can glean some useful data from it.

Tereza Svobodová

doi: 10.14712/23363231.2018.6

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<sup>4</sup> The EEG fee is a part of the final price of electricity that is earmarked for development of renewable sources. It was introduced by the German Renewable Energy Sources Act (Erneuerbare-Energien-Gesetz).

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR AUTHORS

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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.

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#### **5. Reference Examples**

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ACTA UNIVERSITATIS CAROLINAE

# **STUDIA TERRITORIALIA**

**XVII**

**2017**

**2**

Cover by Kamila Schüllerová  
Published by Charles University  
Karolinum Press, Ovocný trh 560/5, 116 36 Praha 1  
Czech Republic

[www.karolinum.cz](http://www.karolinum.cz)

Prague 2018

Typeset by Karolinum Press

Printed by Karolinum Press

MK ČR E 18588

ISSN 1213-4449 (Print)

ISSN 2336-3231 (Online)