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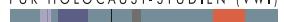


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Elisabeth Gallas

„Facing a crisis unparalleled in history“

Jüdische Reaktionen auf den Holocaust aus New York, 1940 bis 1945

Abstract

This contribution describes and analyses the activities of two expert committees on Jewish politics and analysis of the present age, which were established in New York in 1940 and 1941. The Research Institute on Peace and Post-War Problems and the Institute of Jewish Affairs were meeting places for Jewish people who worked on political strategy papers on how to address the apocalyptic presence of the extermination of the European Jews, based on their range of experiences during the interwar period. They were modelled on the tradition of East European minority protection policies and the Jewish defence against antisemitism in the Weimar Republic; it was their aim to debate the possibilities for saving the Jews as well as the future of Jewish existence. Their activities resulted in the collection of wide-ranging documentation and many reports on the reality of Nazism. These documents are significant sources of information on the immediate effect of the events on contemporaries and bear witness to the attempts to act, understand, report, remember the victims and at the same time design a new Jewish life after the catastrophe in America while war and extermination were still going on.

Lag New York während des Zweiten Weltkrieges geographisch gesehen weit entfernt vom europäischen Kriegsschauplatz, schien es in anderer Hinsicht wiederum sehr nah am Geschehen. Nicht nur der japanische Angriff auf Pearl Harbour und der darauf folgende Kriegseintritt der amerikanischen Truppen im Dezember 1941 hatten die von Europa ausgehenden Ereignisse ins Zentrum der amerikanischen Öffentlichkeit katapultiert. Auch die zahlreichen jüdischen Flüchtlinge aus Europa, die sich an erster Stelle in New York niederließen, erhöhten die amerikanische Aufmerksamkeit für die katastrophischen Vorgänge unter der sich ausbreitenden nationalsozialistischen Herrschaft. Mit seiner stetig anwachsenden jüdischen Bevölkerung und der bereits hohen Dichte jüdischer politischer, wissenschaftlicher und sozialer Organisationen war im New York der 1930er- und 1940er-Jahre die historisch größte urbane Ansiedlung von Jüdinnen und Juden weltweit entstanden.¹ Deshalb bietet sich die Stadt auf einzigartige Weise an für eine Betrachtung der Bedingungen und Formen jüdischer Reaktionen außerhalb Europas auf den ultimativen Genozid, der sich im deutschen Machtbereich vollzog. Hier lässt sich ein Raum rekonstruieren, der wie unter einem Brennglas das Blick- und Handlungsfeld der Zeitzeugen zeigt. Das jüdische New York der Kriegszeit war geprägt von fieberhafter Aktivität in den unter-

1 Zur Geschichte des jüdischen New Yorks dieser Zeit vgl. Deborah Dash Moore (ed.), *City of Promises. A History of the Jews from New York*, New York 2012, hier Bd. 3: Jeffrey S. Gurock, *Jews in Gotham. New York Jews in a Changing City, 1920–2010*.

schiedlichsten Feldern jüdischer Politik, Wohlfahrt und Recherche. Es entstanden in dieser Zeit abertausende Dokumentationen und Strategiepapiere, Aufrufe und Interpretationen jüdischer Provenienz unterschiedlichster Prägung. Anhand ausgesuchter Fallbeispiele lassen sich auf der Mikroebene Untersuchungen anstellen, die unterhalb der breit und kontrovers geführten Diskussion um die Wirksamkeit und Reichweite der von Juden in Amerika angestoßenen Auseinandersetzungen bzw. deren Verhalten während des Holocaust im Allgemeinen angesiedelt sind und neue Erkenntnisse hervorbringen. Diese helfen dabei, ein differenzierteres Bild davon zu erhalten, auf welcher Ebene und mit welchen Mitteln reagiert wurde und damit die polemisch diskutierte Frage der möglicherweise unzureichenden Reaktionen durch eine detaillierte Analyse der rekonstruierbaren Verhaltensformen in ihren sozialen, politischen, ökonomischen und historischen Rahmenbedingungen zu ersetzen.² Denn schon der kurSORische Blick auf einzelne Akteure zeugt erstens von dem breiten Spektrum von Einflussversuchen und verdeutlicht zweitens die Motive, Bedingungen und Chancen jüdischer Politik der Zeit. Es lässt sich ein in der Forschung bisher weitgehend unbeachtet gebliebenes Feld jüdischer Auseinandersetzung mit dem Holocaust herausarbeiten, dessen Darstellung nicht nur den weitreichenden Bemühungen jüdischer Akteurinnen und Akteure Rechnung trägt, die zu frühester Zeit mit Akribie und großem Verständnis die Aufarbeitung des Geschehens anstießen und jedem Eindruck von der Passivität oder Abkehr der amerikanischen Juden gegenüber den Geschehnissen in Europa zuwiderlaufen.³ Es können gleichermaßen Möglichkeiten und Grenzen der politischen wie erkenntnistheoretischen Auseinandersetzung mit der Vernichtung der europäischen Juden auf Grundlage der Zeugnisse unmittelbar Betroffener, Beteiligter und Beobachter noch einmal neu diskutiert und für die gegenwärtige Holocaustforschung furchtbar gemacht werden.

Exemplarisch und in aller Kürze soll anhand der Aktivitäten zweier jüdischer Organisationen, die 1940 und 1941 als Expertenkommissionen für jüdische Politik und Gegenwartsanalyse entstanden, gezeigt werden, aus welchen Beweggründen heraus sich jüdische Akteure in New York mit der Realität von Verfolgung und Vernichtung in Europa konfrontierten und wie sie mit ihr umzugehen sowie sie zu beschreiben versuchten. Dabei handelt es sich zum einen um das im November 1940 unter dem Dach des American Jewish Committee entstehende Research Institute on Peace and Post War Problems und zum anderen um das im Februar 1941 begründete Institute of Jewish Affairs, das als eine Art Think Tank des World Jewish Congress agierte.⁴

Beide Einrichtungen verstanden sich explizit als Forschungsinstitutionen, die sich zur Aufgabe machten, auf Grundlage umfassender Analysen der historischen und gegenwärtigen politischen Entwicklung in Europa, Pläne zur Sicherung der Lage der Jüdinnen und Juden zu erstellen und den Alliierten zu Gehör zu bringen. Im Kontext beider Institute und des gesamten Umfelds jüdischer Organisationen, in dem sie sich

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- 2 Die Auseinandersetzung um die Haltung der in Amerika ansässigen Juden während des Holocaust schwelt seit den 1960er-Jahren bis heute. Einen einführenden Überblick über die entsprechende Forschungsentwicklung bietet Raphael Medoff, *The Holocaust, America, and American Jewry Revisited*, in: *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* VI (2012), 2, 127–135.
- 3 Die passive Haltung der in Amerika ansässigen Juden betonen z. B.: Julie Neeman Arad, *America, its Jews, and the Rise of Nazism*, Bloomington 2000; Henry Feingold, *Bearing Witness. How America and the Jews responded to the Holocaust*, Syracuse 1995; David Wyman, *Das unerwünschte Volk. Amerika und die Vernichtung der europäischen Juden*, Ismaning bei München 1989; Arthur Morse, *While Six Million Died. A Chronicle of American Apathy*, New York 1968.
- 4 Zur Geschichte des Research Institute on Peace and Post-War Problems gibt es bisher keine historische Darstellung; zur Geschichte des Institute of Jewish Affairs vgl. Omry Feuereisen Kaplan, *Institute of Jewish Affairs*, in: *Enzyklopädie jüdischer Geschichte und Kultur*. Im Auftrag der Sächsischen Akademie der Wissenschaften zu Leipzig, Dan Diner (Hg.), Bd. 3, Stuttgart 2012, 130–136.

befanden, wurden unzählbare Versuche der politischen Einflussnahme auf die Alliierten, auf die traditionelle Kriegs- und Völkerrechtsprechung, den Völkerbund und die spätere UNO unternommen – und für diese Aufgabe wurden Informationen gesammelt und zugänglich gemacht. Allgemein standen diese Initiativen von oft grundverschiedene Positionen vertretenden Organisationen häufig in Konkurrenz zueinander und blieben ob der meist ausgebliebenen Resonanz von Seiten der politischen Machthaber vielfach wirkungslos.⁵ In der Forschung wird die Dissonanz innerhalb der amerikanisch-politischen Organisationen als ein wesentlicher Grund dafür genannt, warum eine wirkungsmächtigere Politik zur Unterstützung der Juden Europas ausblieb.⁶ Auch die genannten Institute stehen im Kontext dieser innerjüdischen Oppositionen, doch zeigt ihre jeweilige Arbeit jenseits aller politisch-ideologischen Orientierung vor allem, dass alle jüdische Politik dieser Zeit einer Aporie ausgesetzt war, die am relevantesten zur Bewertung ihrer Handlungsmöglichkeiten ist. Einer Aporie, die die politische Theoretikerin Hannah Arendt, selbst Teil dieses Netzwerkes in New York, schon Ende 1943 in aller Deutlichkeit formulierte:

„Der systematische Massenmord [...] sprengt nicht nur die Vorstellungskapazität des Menschen, sondern auch den Rahmen und die Kategorien, in welchen politisches Denken und politisches Handeln sich vollziehen. [...] Eine politische Antwort auf diese Verbrechen gibt es in keinem Fall.“⁷

Der Erkenntnis- und Bedeutungsgehalt dieser frühzeitigen Einsicht Arendts sollte sich erst nach und nach offenbaren. Über einen bis zur Kapitulation Deutschlands reichenden Zeitraum hinweg, waren es nämlich genau solche politischen Antworten, die von Beteiligten gesucht wurden. Auf der Basis zurückliegender Erfahrungen von Verfolgung, Gewalt und Pogromen gegenüber Juden in Europa in den ersten Jahrzehnten des 20. Jahrhunderts wurden in den jeweiligen Forschungskreisen New Yorks politische Pläne formuliert, die als adäquate Antwort auf die Verbrechen scheinen mussten. Man meinte die Situation zu kennen und darauf mit den an Nationalitätenkonflikten und Minderheitenpolitik geschulten Perspektiven jüdischer Politik der Zwischenkriegszeit reagieren zu können. Indem man das Geschehen in diese Kategorien transformierte, ihm damit rational handhabbare Dimensionen zurückgab, wurde es auf rechtlicher Ebene verhandelbar. Diese Versuche einer Rationalisierung mussten angesichts der Monstrosität des Verbrechens zwar ins Leere laufen, trugen aber gleichzeitig dazu bei, den Charakter und die Dimensionen des Geschehens, an dem sie scheiterten, sichtbarer zu machen.

Aus diesem Grund lassen sich an der Arbeit beider Institute wesentliche Elemente amerikanisch-jüdische Wahrnehmungsentwicklung zeigen, die viel über die Zeitumstände sagen, in denen das Nachdenken und Handeln geschah und durch ihre Unmittelbarkeit dem historischen Geschehen gegenüber dessen tatsächliche Realität – die heute hinter den zahlreichen Deutungs- und Erinnerungsfiguren, die mit dem Thema des Holocaust in Verbindung stehen, häufig zu verschwinden droht – deutlicher konturieren.

5 Zu den Verhandlungen zwischen jüdischen Akteuren und den alliierten Regierungen während des Zweiten Weltkriegs sind zahlreiche Monographien entstanden, vgl. zur Forschungsentwicklung: Monty Noam Penkower, *The Jews were Expendable. Free World Diplomacy and the Holocaust*, Champaign 1983; Shlomo Shafir, *Ambiguous Relations. The American Jewish Community and Germany Since 1945*, Detroit 1999; Ariel Hurwitz, *Jews without Power. American Jewry during the Holocaust*, New Rochelle 2011; Richard Breitman/Allan J. Lichtman, *FDR and the Jews*, Cambridge 2013.

6 Vgl. dazu z. B. Monty Noam Penkower, *American Jewry and the Holocaust. From Biltmore to the American Jewish Conference*, in: *Jewish Social Studies* 47 (1985), 2, 95–114.

7 Hannah Arendt, *Organisierte Schuld* (1944), in: dies., *Die verborgene Tradition. Essays*, Frankfurt a. M. 2000, 35–49, hier 41.

Wer waren also die Akteure des Institute of Jewish Affairs und des Research Institute? Was waren ihre Vorstellungen und Vorgehensweisen in Reaktion auf Krieg und Vernichtung und wie suchten sie diese umzusetzen?

Das Institute of Jewish Affairs wurde von dem 1940 aus Litauen geflüchteten jüdischen Juristen Jacob Robinson geleitet und beschäftigte zahlreiche Politiker, Juristen und Forscher osteuropäisch-jüdischer Herkunft. In dem ersten Programmplan, der vom Institut 1941 vorgelegt wurde, heißt es zur Zielstellung des Unternehmens:

„Das jüdische Volk ist mit einer historisch präzedenzlosen Krisensituation konfrontiert. [...] Die Aufgabe des Instituts ist die umfassende Erforschung der letzten 25 Jahre jüdischen Lebens, um daraus die indirekten und direkten kausalen Bezüge zur Situation der Gegenwart herzustellen und einen Plan für die Durchsetzung jüdischer Rechte in den Nachkriegsabkommen vorzubereiten. [...] Es besteht aus einer Gruppe von Gelehrten und repräsentiert den Versuch der Mobilisierung jüdischer geistiger Ressourcen um das gigantische Problem zu bekämpfen, das dem jüdischen Volk gegenüber steht.“⁸

Zur Umsetzung dieses Programms wurden vier Abteilungen eingerichtet, in denen man sich mit Politik und Recht, Statistik und Wirtschaft, Migration und Kolonisation und dem Wiederaufbau nach Kriegsende (Post-War Reconstruction) beschäftigten wollte. Es gab detailliert formulierte Forschungs- und Publikationsvorhaben in den jeweiligen Bereichen, doch wie der Historiker Omry Kaplan Feuereisen unterstreicht, entstanden durch das spezielle Vorgehen Robinsons, der großen Wert auf gemeinsames Diskutieren und Arbeiten an Texten im Team legte, „ungeachtet der auf dem Buchdeckel oder dem Papier deklarierten Autorschaft lauter kollektive Werke“.⁹ Die Mitarbeiter, die sich mit Robinson ans Werk machten, waren unter anderen Arieh Tartakower, Nehemia Robinson (der Bruder von Jacob), Max Laerson und Jakob Lestschinsky. Ihre Herkunft und damit verbundene Erfahrungswelt bestimmte in nicht unwesentlichem Maße das Forschungsprogramm des Instituts. Rechtssicherung stand hier im Mittelpunkt und deutlicher die Frage: wie konnten die Juden Europas geschützt und wie Rechtssysteme etabliert werden, die stabiler und wehrhafter waren als der vom Völkerbund etablierte Minderheitenschutz, der sich zunehmend als kraftlos gegenüber den Interessen souveräner Nationalstaaten erwiesen hatte? Robinson und seine Mitstreiter waren in unterschiedlichem Maße in die europäische Minderheitenpolitik der Zwischenkriegszeit involviert gewesen und versuchten ihre auf diese Erfahrungen gründenden Vorstellungen auf die Gegenwart zu übertragen.¹⁰ Zum Zeitpunkt der Gründung des Instituts hatte sich die Situation der europäischen Juden dramatisch zugespielt und war der deutsche Angriff auf die Beneluxländer und Frankreich bereits erfolgt. Zunehmend erreichten das Institut Nachrichten von systematischer Verfolgung der Juden und spätestens mit Hitlers Offensive gegen die Sowjetunion im Juni 1941 wurde den Akteuren in New York bewusst, dass ihre politische Agenda dem Geschehen neu angepasst werden musste. Deshalb begannen sie mit einer kleinteiligen und detaillierten Recherche zur Zwangslage der Juden im stetig wachsenden deutschen Herrschaftsbereich. Sie profitierten hierbei von den engen Verbindungen, die der World Jewish Congress nach Europa unterhielt.¹¹ Dessen Mitarbeiter in den vier Posten in Genf, Lissabon, Lon-

8 Institute of Jewish Affairs, Program, New York 1941, 9 [Übersetzung: E.G.]

9 Feuereisen Kaplan, Institute of Jewish Affairs, 132.

10 Zur Einführung vgl. Philipp Graf, Die Bernheim Petition 1933. Jüdische Politik in der Zwischenkriegszeit, Göttingen 2008.

11 Zur Geschichte des WJC während des Zweiten Weltkrieges vgl. Leon Arie Kubowitzki, Unity in Dispersion. A History of World Jewish Congress, New York 1948.

don und Stockholm berichteten alarmierende Details über die Lage der Juden vor allem in Osteuropa, zahlreiche Hinweise kamen auch von Exilregierungen der okkupierten Länder und aus Verbindungen des Kongresses zu verschiedenen Widerstandsgruppen. Zusätzlich werteten die Institutsmitarbeiter europäische Zeitungen und Zeitschriften aus, befragten Diplomaten und holten Augenzeugenberichte von Flüchtlingen ein. Dabei entstand eine von einem Autorenteam mit über zwölf Beiträgern, durch den Publizisten Boris Shub betreute und 1943 vom Institute publizierte, monographische Studie unter dem Titel *Hitler's Ten-Year War on the Jews*.¹² Sie stellt einen der ersten umfassenden Dokumentationsversuche der deutschen Vernichtungspolitik dar und besticht durch ihre informierte Einschätzung der Lage. Ihre Form sagt außerdem vieles über die Möglichkeiten und Ziele dieser frühen Berichterstattung aus. Der Text hat einen eindeutigen Gegenwartsbezug, stark dokumentarischen Charakter und bietet zwar keine rein deskriptive Darstellung der Situation, zeugt aber von einer Zurückhaltung in Deutung und Kommentar. Es wird kein umfassender Erklärungsanspruch geltend gemacht, sondern eher auf Intuition und vorsichtige Positionsbestimmungen gesetzt. Die Studie liefert Situationsbeschreibungen zu 24 Ländern und Regionen unter Herrschaft der Achsenmächte mit jeweils einführenden Hinweisen zu Geschichte und Status der jüdischen Gemeinden vor Ort, gefolgt von einer Darstellung der nationalsozialistischen Maßnahmenpolitik und Verfolgung sowie ihren Auswirkungen auf die Gemeinden. Ziel war, wie Robinson erklärte, eine Zwischenbilanz der Folgen von Hitlers Krieg gegen die Juden zu ziehen.¹³ Diese fiel eindeutig aus: ca. 180.000 Jüdinnen und Juden konnten bis 1943 aus Europa emigrieren, 1,8 Millionen wurden in die Sowjetunion evakuiert und über drei Millionen Juden waren zum Zeitpunkt bereits umgebracht worden. Sie wurden, so heißt es im Schlusswort des Textes, „vorsätzlich vernichtet: durch geplantes Aushungern, Zwangsarbeit, Deportation, Pogrome und systematisches Töten in den deutsch geführten Vernichtungszentren Osteuropas. [...] Nur acht Prozent der Juden starben durch Kriegshandlungen, die Anderen starben, weil sie Juden waren.“

Und als allgemeines Fazit dieser statistisch gefütterten Bestandsaufnahme der apokalyptischen Gegenwart: „Und mit jedem weiteren Tag des Krieges kommt die Bedrohung totaler Vernichtung, wie sie so oft von Hitler und seinen Gefolgsleuten geäußert wurde, ihrer Verwirklichung näher.“¹⁴ Die Realität wird im Text unmissverständlich beschrieben, allerdings nicht weiter kommentiert oder kontextualisiert. Nach dem Krieg wurde die Studie unter anderem für die dokumentarische Beweisführung des World Jewish Congress in der Zusammenarbeit mit den amerikanischen Behörden bei der Vorbereitung der Nürnberger Prozesse gegen die Hauptkriegsverbrecher 1946 genutzt.¹⁵ Doch die hier erfassten Ergebnisse lösten auch eine unmittelbare Neuorientierung des Instituts vor Kriegsende aus. Knapp zusammengefasst fokussierten sich die Überlegungen der Mitarbeiter im Laufe des Jahres 1943 auf zwei Kernfragen: den Umgang mit dem was sie das *Ende der Minderheitenpolitik* nannten und entsprechende politische Lösungsstrategien sowie die Vorbereitung von Restitu-

12 Boris Shub/Institute of Jewish Affairs, *Hitler's Ten-Year War on the Jews*, New York 1943.

13 Jacob Robinson, Preface, in: ebda., o.S.

14 Ebda., 300 und 302.

15 Zur Rolle des Institute of Jewish Affairs und des WJC in Nürnberg vgl. Laura Jockusch, *Justice at Nuremberg? Jewish Responses to Nazi War-Crime Trials in Allied-Occupied Germany*, in: *Jewish Social Studies* 19 (2012), H. 1, 107–147; Marc A. Lewis, *The World Jewish Congress and the Institute of Jewish Affairs at Nuremberg: Ideas, Strategies, and Political Goals, 1942–1946*, in: *Yad Vashem Studies* 36 (2008), 1, 181–210; Boaz Cohen, Dr. Jacob Robinson, the Institute of Jewish Affairs, and the Elusive Jewish Voice in Nuremberg, in: David Bankier/Dan Michman (ed.), *Holocaust and Justice. Representation and Historiography of the Holocaust in Post-War Trials*, Jerusalem 2010, 81–100.

tions- und Strafrechtstatbeständen für die Zeit nach dem erhofften Ende des Krieges. Man suchte also verstärkt nach Lösungen zur Sicherung jüdischer Existenz und wollte die Anerkennung jüdischer Mitspracherechte in den Friedensverhandlungen und bei der Täterverfolgung erstreiten.¹⁶

Die längerfristige Lösungsstrategie der ‚Judenfrage‘, wie sie in den zeitgenössischen Texten bezeichnet wurde, die man in wachsendem Maße diskutierte, klingt drastisch, ist aber vor allem Spiegel der drastischen Situation, mit der sich die Menschen konfrontiert sahen: Auf Grundlage ihrer Forschungen zur Lage der Juden im nationalsozialistischen Machtbereich kamen die Strategen des Instituts zu der Auffassung, dass die gewaltsame und totalitäre Ausformung des Nationalstaats, wie sie in Europa Gestalt angenommen hatte, keinen Raum mehr für Minderheiten ließ und man sich deshalb für vollständige, geleitete und gewaltfreie Bevölkerungsverschiebungen, also ethnische Homogenisierung, aussprechen müsse. In finaler Konsequenz bedeutete dieses Fazit das Ende der Jahrhunderte währenden europäisch-jüdischen Diaspora. Und diese Einschätzung kam nicht von überzeugten Zionisten, sondern denjenigen, die Zeit ihres Lebens für jüdische Autonomie und nationale Minderheitenrechte im östlichen Europa gekämpft hatten. Sie mussten sich ob der Realität, der sie gegenüberstanden, völlig neu orientieren und sprachen sich entgegen ihrer früheren Perspektiven für das zionistische Projekt in Palästina und die Überführung aller Jüdinnen und Juden Europas dorthin aus.¹⁷ Dass ein Moment der Rationalisierung der Realität, ein Festhalten an Möglichkeiten diplomatischen Aushandelns, auch in diesem Plan lag, wird schnell offenbar. Die Idee einer Bevölkerungsverschiebung konnte weder in einer Form vorgebracht werden, die die Vernichtungsmaschinerie hätte aufhalten können, noch rechnete sie mit deren tatsächlichen Konsequenzen. Sie liest sich eher wie ein letzter verzweifelter Versuch, mit Mitteln internationaler Politik, Einfluss auf die Vorgänge zu nehmen. Die während des Krieges angeschobenen Überlegungen mündeten in zweierlei Perspektiven für die Nachkriegsplanung. Das Institute of Jewish Affairs wurde zum einen ein deutlicher Verfechter des zionistischen Aufbauwerkes in Israel und widmete sich zum anderen mit zunehmender Kraft den Fragen der Gestaltung und Sicherung universal gültiger Menschenrechte.¹⁸

Die Vorbereitung der erwarteten Nachkriegsverhandlungen stand schnell im Zentrum des Wirkens der Akteure rund um Robinson, da unmittelbare Einflussnahme sich als weitgehend aussichtslos erwiesen hatte. Der Kampf um rechtliche Anerkennung des jüdischen Kollektivs und die erst dadurch garantierte Wahrnehmung der Juden als Subjekte des Völkerrechtes wurde zum zentralen Anliegen. Dies war zum Zeitpunkt die einzige Form mit den Verbrechen umzugehen und handlungsfähig zu bleiben. Zahlreiche amerikanisch-jüdische Interessenvertretungen stürzten sich auf Restitutions- und Rückerstattungsfragen sowie die Vorbereitung der Strafverfolgung; die Rechtsdiskussion ermöglichte auf praktischer Ebene eine erste Annä-

16 Gil Rubin, The End of Minority Rights: Jacob Robinson and the ‚Jewish question‘ in World War II, in: Jahrbuch des Simon-Dubnow-Instituts 11 (2012), 55–71; Mark Mazower, No Enchanted Palace. The End of Empire and the Ideological Origins of the United Nations, Princeton 2008, hier Kap. 3: Nations, Refugees, and Territory. The Jews and the Lessons of the Nazi New Order. Zur Restitutions- und Entschädigungsfrage vgl. Constantin Goschler, Wiedergutmachung. Westdeutschland und die Verfolgten des Nationalsozialismus, München 1992, hier Kap. 2: Pläne von jüdischer Seite, 38–47; Ronald Zweig, German Reparations and the Jewish World. A History of the Claims Conference, London/Portland 2001, hier Kap. 2: Origins of the Claims Conference.

17 Beispiele für diese neue Lesart bieten verschiedene Aufsätze von Jacob Robinson: Jacob Robinson, Minorities in a Free World, in: Free World (May 1943), 450–454; ders., Uprooted Jews in the Immediate Postwar World, in: International Conciliation 389 (April 1943), 291–310; ders., From Protection of Minorities to Promotion of Human Rights, in: The Jewish Yearbook of International Law (1948), 116–151.

18 Vgl. Mark Mazower, The Strange Triumph of Human Rights, in: Historical Journal 47 (2004) 2, 379–398.

herung an die Verbrechen, suchte den durch die Nationalsozialisten zerstörten jüdischen Rechtsraum zu rekonstruieren und verschob, wie Charles Maier pointiert resümierte, Elemente des „Niemals zu Vergebenden in den Bereich des politisch Aushandelbaren“.¹⁹

Das Institute of Jewish Affairs sollte auch nach 1945 noch mit verschiedenen Publikationsformaten auftreten, in denen die Dokumentation und Darstellung des Massenmords an den europäischen Jüdinnen und Juden im Zentrum standen. Am deutlichsten mit seiner Serie *Lest We Forget*, in der vor allem Anatole Goldstein, freier Mitarbeiter des Instituts russisch-jüdischer Herkunft, mit den Titeln *Operation Murder, From Discrimination to Annihilation und The Jewish Catastrophe. Ten Years After* detaillierte Bestandsaufnahmen der nationalsozialistischen Vernichtungspolitik sowie ihrer ideologischen Prämissen lieferte, die heute weitgehend vergessen sind.²⁰ Es waren aber vor allem die politische und rechtliche Lobbyarbeit des Instituts, die es zu einem der wichtigsten und wirkungsvollsten jüdischen Akteure der Nachkriegszeit im Umgang mit der durch den Nationalsozialismus erschütterten Weltordnung werden ließen.²¹

Anders das Research Institute on Peace and Postwar Studies. Diese im November 1940 begonnene Forschungsinitiative des American Jewish Committee hatte weder die Reichweite und Ausstrahlung des Institute of Jewish Affairs, noch wählte man hier den gleichen Zugang im Umgang mit den Verbrechen. Die grundsätzliche Idee und Zielsetzung, nämlich die Gegenwart zu dokumentieren und analysieren, um auf die nahe Zukunft und die mit ihr verbundenen Fragen jüdischer Existenzsicherung vorbereitet zu sein, waren aber in beiden, mitunter in Konkurrenz auftretenden, Instituten ähnlich. Doch wo Robinson und seine Mitarbeiter versuchten, diese Fragen auf der Ebene des Völkerrechts neu zu beantworten und die Erfahrungsbestände aus der jüdischen Politik des östlichen Europas zu reaktivieren, konzentrierten sich die Mitarbeiter des Research Institute unter der Leitung des belgisch-jüdischen Sozialwissenschaftlers Max Gottschalk auf Aufklärungs- und Bildungsarbeit.²² Auch hier liegt deshalb nahe, einen Blick auf die Sozialisation und das Selbstverständnis der Beteiligten zu werfen. Sie, und damit waren sie repräsentativ für ihre Dachorganisation, das American Jewish Committee, waren meist schon lange in Amerika oder hatten eher westeuropäisch-jüdische Prägung. Das wirkte sich insofern auf ihr Forschungsprogramm aus, als sie mit Strategien, die an den deutsch-jüdischen Abwehrkampf der Jahrhundertwende und Zwischenkriegszeit erinnern, den Antisemitismus durch Aufklärung und Gegendarstellung bekämpfen wollten und sich einem liberalen Bildungsideal verpflichtet fühlten.²³ Erstes Ziel des Unternehmens war die Erhö-

19 Charles Maier, Overcoming the Past? Narrative and Negotiation, Remembering and Reparation. Issues at the Interface of History and the Law, in: John Torpey (ed.), Politics and the Past, On Repairing Historical Injustices, Oxford/Lanham 2003, 295–304, hier 297.

20 Anatole Goldstein, Operation Murder, hg. v. Institute of Jewish Affairs, New York 1949; ders., From Discrimination to Annihilation, hg. v. Institute of Jewish Affairs, New York 1952; ders., The Jewish Catastrophe. The Years After, hg. v. Institute of Jewish Affairs, New York 1955.

21 Vgl. z. B. Michael Marrus, A Jewish Lobby at Nuremberg. Jacob Robinson and the Institute of Jewish Affairs, 1945–1946, in: Cardozo Law Review 27 (2006) 4, 1651–1665.

22 Zu Aufbau und Idee des Instituts vgl. ein entsprechendes Dokument einer seiner Gründerväter: Morris R. Cohen, Jewish Studies on Peace and Post-War Problems, in: Contemporary Jewish Record 4 (April 1941), 2, 110–126.

23 Einführend zum deutsch-jüdischen Abwehrkampf der Jahrhundertwende und Zwischenkriegszeit: Arnold Paucker, Zur Problematik einer jüdischen Abwehrstrategie in der deutschen Gesellschaft, in: ders. (Hg.), Juden im Wilhelminischen Deutschland 1890–1914, London/Tübingen²1998, 480–548; Avraham Barkai/Paul Mendes-Flohr/Steven M. Lowenstein, Deutsch-Jüdische Geschichte der Neuzeit, Bd. 4: 1918–1945, München 2000, Bd. 4, Teil 1.V4: Initiativen aktiver Abwehr. Zur Gegenüberstellung westlicher und östlicher jüdischer Erfahrungsbestände in Europa vgl. Dan Diner, Zweierlei Emanzipation. Westliche Juden und Ostjuden gegenübergestellt, in: ders., Gedächtniszonen. Über jüdische und andere Geschichten, München 2003, 125–134.

hung der gesellschaftlichen Aufmerksamkeit in den Vereinigten Staaten für die Vorgänge in Europa, und hierbei waren gleichermaßen jüdische wie nicht-jüdische Kreise adressiert. Zweitens kümmerte man sich, wie im Namen des Instituts festgelegt, ebenfalls um die Vorbereitung einer langfristigen Perspektive für die europäischen Juden und wollte auch Recherche zur besseren Vorbereitung auf Nachkriegsprobleme wie Versorgung, Wiederaufbau und Emigration anbieten. Morris Raphael Cohen, Professor für Philosophie an der Columbia University und Gründungsmitglied des Instituts, formulierte die Programmatik und dessen Anliegen eindeutig: man müsse die „Waffen wissenschaftlichen Denkens“ einsetzen, um „den Charakter und die Dimensionen des deutschen Angriffs auf jüdische, im weiteren Sinne Menschenrechte, vor das Weltgewissen zu bringen“.²⁴ Er war wie seine Mitarbeiter davon überzeugt, dass durch Verbreitung von Wissen und ein damit verbundenes Wachsen von Urteilskraft, Zukunft humaner und toleranter gestaltbar werde.

Deshalb widmeten sich die Mitarbeiter des Research Institute ab 1941 vorrangig der Erstellung von so genannten Lehrplänen, Studienkursen und Programmen zur Weiterbildung, um das öffentliche Bewusstsein für die Lage in Europa und die zu erwartende offene Existenzfrage der Juden nach Kriegsende zu sensibilisieren. Auch hier wurden verschiedene Abteilungen gegründet, die Forschung zur Situation und Zukunft der europäischen Jüdinnen und Juden betreiben sollten. Eine zu politischen, legalen und sozialen Fragen; eine zu Fragen der Migration und Kolonialisierung und eine dritte zu Fragen des Wiederaufbaus in Europa. Die Studienkurse, die von verschiedenen Mitarbeitern als Vorlesungen angeboten und später zu einer Monographie zusammengeführt wurden, umfassten folgende Themen: Vergleich der zwei Weltkriege, Strategien der jüdischen Welt zur Friedensvorbereitung während des ersten Weltkrieges; Juden in der Nachkriegswelt; Palästina und die neue Welt, Jüdisches Überleben, Wohlfahrt, Wiederaufbau und Migration und allgemeine Perspektiven auf die Möglichkeiten zur Stärkung der Demokratie in Europa.²⁵ Genauso wie im Institute of Jewish Affairs entstand während der Vorbereitung dieser auf die Zukunft gerichteten Überlegungen ein detailliertes Dossier zur gegenwärtigen Lage der jüdischen Gemeinden in Europa. Es wurde zwar nicht in Buchform veröffentlicht, aber als Manuskriptfassung vervielfältigt und an alle großen jüdischen Organisationen sowie die amerikanische Behörden verteilt. Auch dieses Dossier, im Juli 1944 unter dem Titel *The Jewish Communities of Nazi Occupied Europe* fertig gestellt, liefert eine nach Ländern geordnete Bestandsaufnahme der Entwicklung und sozialdemografischen Fakten der Gemeinden und der Folgen nationalsozialistischer Maßnahmen in den jeweiligen Ländern.²⁶ Es hat viel weniger Textcharakter als die vorher vorgestellte Studie und diente vorrangig als Dokumentationsgrundlage für die politische Lobbyarbeit, die vom American Jewish Committee zum Beispiel gegenüber der amerikanischen Regierung geführt wurde.²⁷ Aber auch dieses fast 1.000 Seiten starke Konvolut zeugt von Kenntnisreichtum und Einschätzungsvermögen der Situation in

24 Morris Raphael Cohen, *A Dreamer's Journey*, New York 1975, 242f.

25 Research Institute of Peace and Post-War Problems, *Jewish Post-War Problems. A Study Course in Eight Units*, hrsg. v. Institute of Peace and Post-War Problems, New York 1942, alle Dokumente einsehbar in: www.ajcarchive.org/ajcarchive. Die Ergebnisse wurden zusammengefasst publiziert in: Abraham G. Duker/Max Gottschalk, *Jews in the Post-War World*, New York 1945.

26 American Jewish Committee, *The Jewish Communities of Nazi-Occupied Europe*, prepared by the Research Institute on Peace and Post-War Problems, July 1944.

27 Zur Geschichte des AJC während des Krieges vgl. Naomi Cohen, *Not free to desist. The American Jewish Committee, 1906–1966*, Philadelphia 1972. Die hier angebotene Interpretation der Tätigkeiten des AJC wird heute z. T. in Frage gestellt, vgl. Steven Bayme, *American Jewish Leadership confronts the Holocaust: Revisiting Naomi Cohen's thesis and the American Jewish Committee*, in: *American Jewish Archives Journal* 61 (2009) 2, 163–186.

Europa. Deutlich wird von den Vernichtungsabsichten und -vorgängen gegenüber der gesamten jüdischen Bevölkerung gesprochen und zum Beispiel Taktiken und Vorgehensweisen der Gestapo und der SS beschrieben. Die aus der Ferne Amerikas fast unglaublich scheinende Realität, die sich für die Jüdinnen und Juden Europas unter nationalsozialistischer Herrschaft herausgebildet hatte, sollte durch eine detaillierte und möglichst faktenreiche Darstellung der Öffentlichkeit zugänglich gemacht werden. Gleichzeitig aber waren eben auch diese Dokumente wesentlicher Bestandteil der politischen Arbeit, die wiederum das American Jewish Committee in Bezug auf Rechte, Emigrationsmöglichkeiten und Rehabilitation für die Jüdinnen und Juden nach dem Krieg anstieß.

Manche Beteiligten des Research Institute blieben auch in der Nachkriegszeit bei der Auseinandersetzung mit den nationalsozialistischen Verbrechen und ihren Folgen mit Mitteln des Dokumentierens, Berichterstattens, Deutens – also eher wissenschaftlichen Formen. Das Institut löste sich nach 1946 langsam auf, viele seiner Mitarbeiter blieben aber im American Jewish Committee oder in anderen Interessenvertretungen tätig. Eine Reihe von ihnen publizierte erste aus heutiger Sicht außerordentlich weitreichende Ergebnisse der Forschung zum Nationalsozialismus in den meinungsbildenden jüdischen Presseorganen der Zeit *Jewish Social Studies and Commentary*. Der Historiker und Redakteur Abraham G. Duker, der leitendes Mitglied des Research Institutes gewesen war, spielte darüber hinaus eine wichtige Rolle bei der Organisation und Durchführung der ersten akademischen Konferenz, die 1949 an der New School for Social Research in New York zu Prämissen der wissenschaftlichen Auseinandersetzung mit dem Holocaust abgehalten wurde. Unter dem Titel *Problems of Research in the Study of the Jewish Catastrophe, 1939–1945* diskutierten hier prominente jüdische Wissenschaftler und Wissenschaftlerinnen wie der Historiker Salo W. Baron oder auch Hannah Arendt über Grenzen und Möglichkeiten der historischen Betrachtung des Holocaust und legten eindrucksvolle Analysen der methodologischen Hürden seiner Erforschung und des Verstehens vor und besprachen einzelne thematische Aspekte nationalsozialistischer Politik und Kriegsführung.²⁸ Mit diesem Initialschritt zur Institutionalisierung von Holocaustforschung wurden Grundlagen zu seiner Erforschung gelegt, die erst zwei Jahrzehnte später umfassend wieder aufgegriffen wurden.

Was die nur skizzenhaft vorgestellten Tätigkeiten der beiden New Yorker Forschungsinstitute zeigen, ist, dass ungeheuer viele und vielfältige Aktivitäten unter jüdischen Intellektuellen und Politikern angestoßen wurden, um auf den Nationalsozialismus zu reagieren und seine Verbrechen öffentlich zu machen. Diese Aktivitäten waren geprägt von den Erfahrungshorizonten der Akteurinnen und Akteure und spiegelten verschiedene historisch gewachsene Perspektiven auf Prämissen jüdischer Politik. Sie zeigen vor allem, wie zeitgleich zu den europäischen Ereignissen in Amerika versucht wurde, zu handeln, zu verstehen, aufzuzeichnen und die Erinnerung an die Opfer und ihre Geschichte für die Nachwelt ebenso zu bewahren, wie neues jüdisches Leben zu gestalten. Es ist eine spezifische Verknüpfung von politischer Aktivität und Strategiebildung mit Impulsen der Aufklärung und Berichterstattung, die die Initiativen bis in die Gegenwart noch spannend macht. Das, was mit dem heutigen Reflexionsbegriff Holocaust bezeichnet wird, steht von diesen ersten Annäherungen recht entfernt. Denn diese Begriffsbildung als Resultat jahrzehntelanger erkenntnis-theoretischer und historiographischer Deutungsarbeit meint auch eine Distanzierung von den eigentlichen historischen Ereignissen, die der Holocaust bezeichnet.

28 Die Beiträge der Konferenz finden sich gesammelt in *Jewish Social Studies* 12 (1950) 1 veröffentlicht.

Der Blick auf die frühen Schriften, Dokumentationen und Reaktionen vermag die unmittelbare Wirkung, die der ultimative Genozid entfaltete und die existentiellen Fragen, die er aufwarf, wieder schärfer sichtbar werden zu lassen. Vor dem Hintergrund heutiger Auseinandersetzung mit der universellen Bedeutung der Gewaltgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts scheint eine Neulektüre dieser Auseinandersetzungen äußerst fruchtbar, da sie das Spannungsverhältnis zwischen einer spezifisch jüdischen Erfahrung und ihrer universellen Geltung in der Zivilisationsgeschichte deutlich hervortreten lassen.

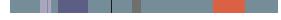
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Reaktionen auf den Holocaust aus New York, 1940 bis 1945,
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http://simon.vwi.ac.at/images/Documents/Articles/2014-2/2014-2_ART_Gallas/ART_Gallas.pdf

Article

Lektorat: Jana Starek



Robby Van Eetvelde

Judging the Past

The Use of the Trials against the Members of the Gestapo in Belgium as a Source for Historical Research

Abstract

Academic historians have an ambiguous relationship with the use of documents produced in the context of criminal investigations. On the one hand, these documents provide an avalanche of information, often giving a voice to historical actors that would otherwise stay hidden in classical top-down history. On the other hand, academics denounce such documents as inherently biased and thus unfit for use in an “objective” reconstruction of the past. This problem’s urgency increases in the context of a politically tense period such as the immediate aftermath of the Second World War. In post-war Belgium, military courts were responsible for bringing to justice both German officials and Belgian collaborators. This paper identifies the methodological possibilities and problems associated with the use of the documents these courts amassed to this end with regard to research on the Holocaust and the German occupation of Belgium and to history-writing in general. Among others, elements such as the influence of the internal workings of the military court and the legal framework in which it had to operate, the similarities and differences in how historians and prosecutors go about their research, and how defence strategies employed by suspects/perpetrators as well as witnesses/victims twisted their hearings and testimonies, are addressed. The paper concludes that although judicial sources come with inherent limitations, they can be employed in academic history as long as attention is paid to the specific context in which they were produced and they are subjected to proper critical reading.

Historical research and criminal investigations have often benefited from each other. From *Montaillou*, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie’s famous reconstruction of everyday life in a French medieval village, to *Ordinary Men*, Christopher Browning’s assessment of the motivation of a grassroots German execution squad during the Holocaust, historians have used the documents produced during criminal investigations to study the past in the context of a range of time periods and methodologies.¹ Reversely, historians have often been asked to serve as experts in legal proceedings, for example in the trial between David Irving and Deborah Lipstadt. Irving’s claim for libel against Lipstadt for calling him a Holocaust denier was refuted using testimonies by a wide range of academic specialists of the field, an effort that was coordinated by Cambridge historian Richard J. Evans.² More rarely, there are prosecutors who have the intention to shape historical narrative. This was the case, for example, at the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg. The proceedings there not only produced a substantial amount of documentation on the internal workings of the Third Reich but also influenced historiography for several decades with its interpretation of Nazi Germany as a plutocratic, organised chaos. The prosecution, especially Telford Taylor, wanted to openly confront the German public and force them to accept the necessary

1 Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou. The World-Famous Portrait of Life in a Medieval Village*, Middlesex 1980; Christopher R. Browning, *Ordinary Men. Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, London 2001.

2 David Irving v. Penguin Books and Lipstat (High Court of Justice Queen’s Bench Division 2000).

historical and moral lessons.³ In this paper, I will look at the methodological pitfalls when using documents formed in criminal investigations and court proceedings for carrying out historical research. I will use as an example my own research into the activities of the Gestapo in Belgium during the Second World War.⁴ This research is mostly based on the post-war trials that were brought against Belgian collaborators and German war criminals between 1944 and 1949. The problems I address stem from four elements: the similarities and dissimilarities between historians and judicial magistrates, the influence of the workings of the post-war military court system on the interpretation of the documents, the influence of the legal logic of the court, and finally the inherent value of the amassed documentation.

Criminal law and history

Several historians have already discussed the intricate interplay between criminal law investigations and academic history, and the methodological repercussions of the use of the documents produced by the former for scientific research.⁵ These authors all agree to a large extent that the work of a historian and that of a prosecutor are similar. Both start from a hypothesis about a past event. Both set out to find evidence and arguments to prove or disprove this theory. In both cases some sort of judgement concludes the research: a verdict in the case of court proceedings, an answer to the hypothesis in the case of historical research. This abstract level is where similarities end. In practice a historian has more liberty to define the boundaries of these three elements. A prosecutor is restricted by the limits posed by the law: he can only investigate whether an action in the past is punishable under the criminal law effective at the time (*nullum crimen, nulla poena sine lege*), in his research he is limited by the restrictions posed by criminal procedure, and the judgement is restricted to formulating an answer to the question of guilt.⁶ These two elements, the legal restrictions and the necessity of formulating a verdict of guilt, predetermine the research and its outcome from an early stage of the investigation. A historian can work more freely in all three elements. With an event or person situated in the past, the subject matter remains the same. In posing questions to the subject, finding information, and formulating conclusions, a historian is only limited by his or her own

3 Donald Bloxham, *Genocide on Trial. War Crimes Trials and the Formation of Holocaust History and Memory*, Oxford 2001, 222.

4 For preliminary findings dealing with the Gestapo in Antwerp, see: Robby Van Eetvelde, De Sicherheitspolizei und Sicherheitsdienst (Sipo-SD) Aussendienststelle Antwerpen. Het politieke repertoire van een lokale Duitse politiedienst in bezet België, in: *Bijdragen tot de Eigentijdse Geschiedenis* 15 (2008) 19, 135-179; Robby Van Eetvelde, De weg van Vlaamse 'daders' naar de Gestapo: de tolken van de Antwerpse Sipo-SD, in: *Bijdragen en Mededelingen betreffende de Geschiedenis der Nederlanden* 124 (2009) 3, 349-367; Robby Van Eetvelde, La police allemande dans la ville de l'Escaut. L'activité de la Gestapo à Anvers, in: Daniel Weyssow (ed.), *Les caves de la Gestapo. Reconnaissance et conservation*, trans. Marie Mariani, Entre histoire et mémoire 6, Paris: Kimé/Fondation Auschwitz, 2013, 36-53.

5 Michael Wildt, Differierende Wahrheiten. Historiker und Staatsanwälte als Ermittler von NS-Verbrechen, in: Norbert Frei/Dirk Van Laak/Michael Stolleis, *Geschichte vor Gericht. Historiker, Richter und die Suche nach Gerechtigkeit*, München 2000, 46-59; Michael Stolleis, Der Historiker als Richter – der Richter als Historiker, in: Wolfgang Benz/Bernhard Diestelkamp/Michael Stolleis (Hg.), *Justizalltag im Dritten Reich*, Frankfurt a. M. 1988, 173-182; Henry Rousso, Justiz, Geschichte und Erinnerung in Frankreich. Überlegungen zum Papon-Prozeß, in: Norbert Frei/Dirk Van Laak/Michael Stolleis (Hg.), *Geschichte vor Gericht: Historiker, Richter und die Suche nach Gerechtigkeit*, München 2000, 141-163; Johannes C. Blom, Historische en strafrechtelijke 'ordening van de chaos', in: Mark Spiering et al. (ed.), *De weerspannigheid van de feiten. Opstellen over geschiedenis, politiek, recht en literatuur. Aangeboden aan W.H. Roobol*, Hilversum 2000, 23-32.

6 The use of male pronouns and possessive forms to denote individuals in their function was chosen to improve the readability of the text, they do not constitute a value judgement and are used in a gender-neutral manner.

imagination, by whatever taboo society imposes on research topics, and by the limitations posed by the requirements of the academic historical profession. The latter includes a proper critical treatment of the source material and the possibility of verification by peers, for example by using footnotes.

As a general rule, historians prefer to work with documentation formed as close as possible to the historical event they are investigating. These documents are given the merit of more credibility and objectivity, since they are not yet distorted by the bias of fading memory, by *Hineininterpretierung*, or by defence strategies. But what should a historian do if such sources are not, or not widely enough, available? This is the case for my own research, dealing with the activity of the infamous German secret police, the Gestapo, in Belgium during the Second World War. The German occupiers could anticipate the advance of the allied armies. The SS police destroyed most of its institutional documentation in the bonfires accompanying the German retreat.⁷ As a result, historians looking at the activity of the German police need to find alternative sources.

Post-war Belgian “repression”

This alternative can be found in the post-war trials, which were brought against collaborators and German war criminals. The Belgian government in exile prepared its comeback in a timely fashion. A swift punishment of collaborators was part of a deliberate policy of quickly re-establishing state authority. The government in London had initially intended this process to be largely symbolic, focusing on the most prominent collaborators. The mounting German repression at the end of the occupation and the subsequent resentment and popular fury among the population made this option an impossibility. The purpose of this operation went further than the desire to avoid the mob’s revenge against collaborators and to keep the monopoly on violence in the hands of the legitimate government. The resistance’s claim to power and the pre-war challenges brought against the political state of affairs by the collaborating parties VNV and Rex also had to be eliminated.⁸ As such, as Martin Conway has argued, the post-war repression became more a tool of political and economical reconstruction than a means of challenging the status quo.⁹

The uncertainty of how easily the Belgian territory would be liberated inspired the decision to give responsibility for the post-war “repression” not to civilian criminal courts, but to military courts. These would be able to operate in wartime conditions, their civilian counterparts would not. This decision had an important procedural consequence. In a civil court, a researching magistrate, a *juge d’instruction*, would carry out an investigation *à charge* and *à décharge*, meaning finding all elements which incriminate and exonerate a suspect, before passing on the collected material to the prosecution and defence. Obviously, such a researching magistrate should be completely objective and impartial. In a military court, a military magistrate combined the function of researching magistrate and prosecutor. This carried the risk of affecting impartiality. Would the military magistrate already think as a prosecutor

7 PV relatif à l’action 118, April 11, 1947, Gestapo Liège, Documentation Générale 4, 192, 4, Archives Military Court (AMC).

8 Kris Hoflack/Luc Huyse, De afrekening met de vrienden van de vijand, in: Luc Huyse and Kris Hoflack (ed.), *De democratie heruitgevonden. Oud en nieuw in politiek België, 1944–1950*, Leuven 1995, 27–30.

9 Martin Conway, Justice in Post-War Belgium. Popular Passions and Political Realities, in: *Bijdragen tot de Eigentijdse Geschiedenis* 4 (1997) 2, 24.

during his supposed impartial research, steering it in a certain direction.¹⁰ Combined with the suggestion that the military court recruited young, inexperienced, and politically motivated men as magistrates, this led to the conviction among certain circles that the post-war “repression” had a political aim, namely to once and for all silence political Flemish nationalism. This was consequently debunked by historical research.¹¹ Under the authority of *Auditeur Général* Walter Ganshof van der Meersch, 405,067 files were built against suspected collaborators between 1944 and 1949. In 57,000 cases this led to court proceedings. 53,000 individuals were actually convicted.¹² In other words, the potential material for historians to work with is enormous.

For a long time the policy of access to the case files for researchers was quite liberal. This changed in the late 1980's: from then on, only the files of actually convicted collaborators could be looked into. This meant that investigations which did not produce enough material to warrant court proceedings, so-called *non-lieux*, as well as the files against individuals who at a later stage had been pardoned for their offences, could no longer be investigated. The Belgian archival law was not of much help, since this restricted access to files from less than one hundred years ago.¹³ The logic of the legal system limited academic research. Legally, guilt is not or no longer an uncontested, objective fact in the aforementioned restricted cases. This, however, does not mean that the documentation these files contain no longer has any relevance from an academic point of view. In some instances the logic of the law lead to absurd restrictions. For example, information on the activity of the German leaders of the anti-Jewish sections of the Gestapo offices is in my opinion rather indispensable when researching the persecution of the local Jewish population. Yet, the German *Judenberater* were not brought to trial either in Antwerp or in Liège, the two instances of my own research. They had either escaped arrest or were assumed to be deceased. In both cases, the judicial research ended and was classified as a *non-lieu*. This classification barred the files from further research, even though the men would almost certainly have been convicted if only they had been arrested, especially given their perpetrated crimes.

The fact that the local *Judenberater* was not brought to trial is especially striking in the case of Antwerp, which housed forty-five percent of Belgium's Jewish population and is the only case where the city police provided extensive assistance in round-ups. Erich Holm, head of the anti-Jewish section in Antwerp during the entire course of the occupation, managed to escape arrest. He was first taken prisoner by the Canadian army in 1945, but managed to escape to South-Africa, where he was not further disturbed.¹⁴ The case file against his counterpart in Liège, Wilhelm Stade, known for his brutality and corruption, was wafer-thin.¹⁵ After the retreat from Belgian soil he was supposedly transferred for military duty to the Eastern front as a disciplinary

¹⁰ Stanislas Horvat, Het verloop van de incivismeprocessen voor de militaire rechtsbanken in 1944–1949, Dirk Luyten/ Chantal Kesteloot (ed.), Repressie en gerechtelijke archieven: problemen en perspectieven. Dossier bij het SOMA Berichtenblad no. 38 (2003), 3-23.

¹¹ Dirk Luyten and Michel Magits, Aspecten van de werking van de krijgsauditoraten en de rekrutering van militaire parketmagistraten na de Tweede Wereldoorlog, in: Belgische Tijdschrift voor Nieuwste Geschiedenis 28 (1998) 1-2, 203-226; Koen Aerts, De bestrafing van de collaboratie in België na de Tweede Wereldoorlog. Beeldvorming en onderzoek, in: Bijdragen tot de Eigentijdse Geschiedenis 16 (2009) 21, 55-92.

¹² Hoflack and Huyse, De afrekening met de vrienden van de vijand, 30.

¹³ Bruno De Wever, Laat nu ook de geschiedenis oordelen, Dirk Luyten/Chantal Kesteloot (ed.), Repressie en gerechtelijke archieven: problemen en perspectieven, in: Dossier bij het SOMA Berichtenblad no. 38 (2003), 28-33.

¹⁴ Nico Wouters, De Jodenvervolging voor de Belgische rechters, 1944–1951, in Rudi Van Doorslaer (ed.), Gewillig België. Overheid en Jodenvervolging tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog, Antwerpen/Amsterdam/Brussel: Meulenhoff/Manteau, 2007, 932-933.

¹⁵ Ibid., 931.

measure, where he was rumoured to have fallen in battle.¹⁶ As a result, the military court considered it futile to build a case file against them. Both in Antwerp and Liège, the local implementation of the Final Solution was reconstructed in the case files against the collaborators with the anti-Jewish section of the German police. In contrast to their immediate superiors, they did stand trial for their wartime actions. Bringing the immediate collaborators to justice instead of their German superiors bore an additional advantage. During the interwar period the Belgian legislator had neglected to modernise its penal code to include war crimes. And although according to article 46 of the Hague Convention religious persecution was forbidden, it was much easier to use the traditional criminal laws which punished collaboration with the enemy (articles 115, 118bis, and 121bis) to bring suspects to trial.¹⁷ These laws could not be used for the persecution of German perpetrators of the Holocaust in Belgium. The German perpetrators were difficult to identify, locate, and extradite. A law that allowed Belgian courts to bring war crimes committed by non-nationals to trial was only passed in June 1947.¹⁸ By then, the nascent Cold War climate, in which rapprochement with West-Germany had a foremost role, further complicated matters. In March 1948, the US and UK decided to no longer extradite German suspects. Within three years, the window of opportunity to bring suspected German war criminals into Belgian jails had shut.¹⁹

At the beginning of the new millennium, restrictions for accessing the files for academic research were lifted to a large extent. The logic of the legal system was exchanged for one which took into consideration the logic of historical research and the expectations of the public at large. Almost seventy years after the fact, this public is still exceedingly concerned with the history of National Socialism and the legacy of the Second World War, no doubt largely due to the influence this legacy had on political divisions in present-day Belgium.²⁰ However, in the current age of austerity the previous legal restrictions were traded for practical ones. In June 2013, four Belgian scholars criticise the long waiting periods for gaining access to files, which made it difficult for history students and academic historians alike to carry out research in a realistic amount of time.²¹

The search for an ideal and unbiased source

In Antwerp, the suspects brought to trial for their contribution to the Holocaust were Felix Lauterboren and his gang of so-called Jew-hunters, infamous for hunting down Jews who had gone into hiding after the summer of 1942.²² In Liège, judgment was passed against Auguste Voss, Oscar Evrard, and Pierre Telgmann, who had not only assisted Stade in implementing the Final Solution in Liège, but also in the surveillance of other religions, among others the Catholic Church. Evrard had been

16 Extrait du PV 835, November 8, 1945, Gestapo Liège, Documentation Générale 4, AMC; PV 5487, July 28, 1945, Nossent-Gruslin (NG), I, IV, 5, AMC.

17 Wouters, De Jodenvervolging, 822-823.

18 Lieven Saerens, Van vergeten naar gegeerd. Dossin en de Joodse herinnering, in: Journal of Belgian History 42 (2012) 2, 140.

19 Wouters, De Jodenvervolging, 925.

20 Rudi Van Doorslaer, Gebruikt verleden. De politieke nalatenschap van de Tweede Wereldoorlog in België, 1945-2000, in: Bruno De Wever/ Gita Deneckere (ed.), Geschiedenis maken. Liber amicorum Herman Baltazar, Gent: Tijdsbeeld/Vakgroep Nieuwste Geschiedenis Universiteit Gent/Amsab, 2003, 227-266.

21 Bruno De Wever et al., Oorlogstrauma's Achter Slot En Grendel, in: De Standaard, 26.6.2013.

22 Lieven Saerens, De Jodenjagers van de Vlaamse SS, Tielt, Lannoo, 2007.

particularly useful for the latter purpose, having previously been a seminarian.²³ The amassment of documentation was in other words also influenced by the court's decision which suspects to try together. Research into the activity of the anti-Jewish section of the Gestapo in Antwerp and Liège was disjointed from research of the sections fighting the resistance. Individuals who had carried out crimes together were also tried together. For the Gestapo in Antwerp, this logic was also followed in other cases. The activities of German officers active in fighting the communist or right-wing resistance were investigated together with those of their Belgian collaborators. This fragmentation meant that the research could go into great detail, but it also led to the loss of an overview of the Gestapo activities. For example, it is difficult to establish whether there was a correlation between a rise in the activities of the resistance with subsequent mounting German repression and a rise in anti-Semitic actions, or the extent to which collaborators with other sections were involved in large-scale round-ups of Jews. On the other hand, the activities of the Sipo-SD in Liège were investigated in four separate cases: against the German officers, against their Belgian collaborators, against the Belgian collaborators with the anti-Jewish section, and against the Belgian collaborators working for the institutional *Sicherheitsdienst*, the actual SS intelligence service. The case file against the Belgian collaborators was not only the most extensive, but also went into most detail regarding day-to-day activities and tactics of repression. The trial against the suspected German officers was special. It did not limit itself to the German officers active with the Sipo-SD in Liège, but extended its reach to members of the outpost in the nearby city of Arlon, as well as Germans active with the occupation administration in that city. This heterogeneous cohort meant this research was more focused on political issues, the responsibility for ordering decrees, and shifting blame, among others for the execution of hostages and prisoners. In historical "reality", however, policing and political matters were intertwined and hard to separate. Separating them not only led to substantial lacunas in interrogations and reconstructions, but also often entailed twice the work for the investigating magistrate. In some cases the extensive work put into amassing the material proved to be superfluous. In the case brought against the Gestapo in Liège, the court decided to base its case for a large part on the interrogations of one man only, the Belgian collaborator Maurice Krier, although a huge array of material had been built up. While Krier appears to have been gifted with an amazing memory and an eye for detail, relying so heavily on his point of view obviously biased the judicial research, a circumstance that was challenged by other Belgian collaborators on the stand.²⁴ Krier's statements were bound into a two-hundred page booklet and were used at length by other historians who dealt with the Gestapo in Belgium. To my surprise, I also came across a copy in the Antwerp city archive.²⁵ Does this mean that the testimony of one man not only directed the interpretation of the courts in Liège, but also in Antwerp, and perhaps in other parts of Belgium as well?

For historians, however, the extensive preliminary work makes the case files themselves a true treasure trove. The nature of the collected material is very diverse. It consists of interrogations of suspects, statements by witnesses, surviving original

23 PV relatant à l'action 14bis, May 10, 1947, Gestapo Liège, Documentation Générale 1, 32, 1, AMC.

24 Déposition de témoin, June 28, 1947, Gestapo Liège, 4A, 7, AMC.

25 Eddy De Bruyne, La Sipo-SD à Liège, 1940–1944. Composantes et lignes de force, Housse, Eddy De Bruyne, 1998; Eddy De Bruyne, La Sipo-SD à Liège, 1940–1944, in: Bulletin d'Information du Centre Liégeois d'Histoire et d'Archéologie Militaires 9, no. 1 (2004), 27–48; Eric Paquet, Sicherheitspolizei – Sicherheitsdienst Lüttich et organisation policière allemande à Liège (1940–1944), MA, Université de Liège, 1985; SA (City archive Antwerp), MA 34183, 11.

documentation, pictures, and so forth. The personal nature of most of the documents almost bring the historical actors to life. How did these documents come about? The researching magistrate gave the orders to collect the documentation, to question the suspects and witnesses, confronted them with each other, weeded out inconsistencies in their argumentation, and the like. This task description closely resembles that of a positivist, Rankean historian. Both try to reconstruct history “as it actually happened”, as “objectively” as possible. In the case of the military magistrate, reconstructing events truthfully is not a philosophical choice but a necessary requirement. The quality of the reconstruction was decisive for a potential conviction and punishment of a suspect. Although the researching magistrate’s complete formal objectivity can never be guaranteed, it is my opinion that the historian using the material collected in the course of the investigation should acknowledge and profit from the zeal that went into the research, instead of dismissing its value *a priori*.

In order to interpret the material correctly, the first important element that has to be taken into account is the specific context in which the documents were compiled. This context is different for the suspect, the victim, and the interrogator. Suspects, living in the shadow of the death penalty or of an extensive imprisonment, wanted to minimise their individual responsibility. Informal contacts between collaborators under arrest meant that false stories could be harmonised.²⁶ Deceased former colleagues or suspects still on the run were easy scapegoats. Eduard Strauch, as *Kommandeur der Sicherheitspolizei* (KdS) in Wallonia partly responsible for the radicalisation of the German repression during the last months of the occupation, complained in an interrogation that he was being used as a scapegoat due to his illness (an advanced form of epilepsy) and his extensive absence from the proceedings.²⁷ As a former member of *Einsatzgruppe A*, the mobile killing unit active in the Baltic countries, and as KdS of the Sipo-SD in Minsk responsible for the brutal death of thousands of Jews, he stood trial in the so-called Einsatzgruppen-trial, one of the subsidiary trials held in the context of the *International Military Tribunal* in Nuremberg.²⁸ He was extradited to stand trial for his crimes committed in Belgium only after he had received his death penalty there.²⁹ This had provided his colleagues and subordinates with ample time to shift as much responsibility for excessive crimes as possible onto his shoulders; they expected him to accept this responsibility because of his confused mental state. Strauch threatened to expose the crimes of these men as a form of retaliation, but did not “want to take upon himself the responsibility of talking”.³⁰ This statement probably indicates his frustration with the defence strategy chosen by his former subordinates and a vain attempt to implicate them in a similar fashion. Other suspects were unashamed in letting their wartime convictions bias their post-war statements. Was the aforementioned Felix Lauterboren affirming a personal anti-Semitic stereotype or telling the truth when implicating a young girl of having denounced her parents of hiding two Jews because she was forced to “share a bed” with one of them? Were the vigorous denials of this accusation by the girl in question perhaps an attempt to protect her post-war reputation?³¹ This example shows how testimonies by victims can also not be taken at face value. Some had un-

²⁶ Déposition de témoin, August 9, 1946, Evrard –Telgmann–Voss (ETV), Auguste Voss (AV), 2, AMC; Déposition de témoin, February 4, 1947, Gestapo Liège, 7, 1, 3, AMC.

²⁷ PV d’interrogatoire, June 20, 1950, Strauch et autres (STRAU), 3, 31, AMC.

²⁸ Durchschlag für SS-Personalhauptamt, March 22, 1944, SS-Führer Personalakten (SSO), 066, Bundesarchiv Berlin (BArchB); Hilary Earl, *The Nuremberg SS-Einsatzgruppen Trial. 1945–1958*, New York 2009, 240.

²⁹ Earl, *Nuremberg SS-Einsatzgruppen Trial*, 239.

³⁰ PV d’interrogatoire, June 20, 1950, STRAU, 3, 31, AMC.

³¹ PV 11194, October 16, 1945, Case against Felix Lauterboren et. al. (LAU), LA, XIII, B10, AMC.

dergone gruesome torture and probably wanted to reverse the balance of power and exercise some kind of revenge, if only by making sure their former torturers got the sentence they undoubtedly felt they deserved. Several had succumbed under torture and wanted to conceal the fact that they had given up brothers in arms to the German police. The post-war statements of German Gestapo officer in Antwerp Herman Veit and an arrested leading resistance member, who would become the post-war symbol of resistance in Flanders, could not be more different from each other: While the former claimed to have received names and documentation without submitting the arrestee to a form of “sharp interrogation”, i.e., torture, the latter declared that he had been brutalised so extensively he “could no longer remember what had happened”.³² Still other witnesses came forward in an effort to turn the dire circumstances of the post-war period into a personal profit, claiming for example to have helped Jews in hiding.³³ Finally, the interrogators themselves steered the testimonies into a certain direction. This was partly due to their legal logic. Even though witnesses and suspects often gave elaborate descriptions, the interrogators remained primarily interested in identifying acts punishable under the legal framework at their disposal. These acts were often highlighted in the individual affidavit, which meant that other elements, which may often have been interesting for social historians, were largely overlooked. A second aspect influencing the interrogations were the intellectual capacities and education of some of the German defendants. The aforementioned Strauch held a PhD in law from the university of Königsberg, present-day Kaliningrad.³⁴ Constantin Canaris, nephew of *Abwehr* chief Wilhelm Canaris, and head of the Sipo-SD in Belgium and northern France between 13th of September 1940 and 26th of November 1941 and again between 1st of February 1944 and 1st of August 1944, also held a doctoral title in law. Doubtlessly, these men knew international law regarding armed conflict better than their interrogators did. These were men who could pull the wool over their interrogator’s eyes, knew what facts to emphasise and when to keep silent. The execution of a high-ranking member of the Belgian communist party, who had been arrested in May 1944 for his involvement with the armed resistance, serves as an example: Strauch first denied any knowledge of personal involvement, subsequently tried to shift the blame to the German military administration in Liège and Brussels, and finally admitted having given the authorisation for the execution, “not realising what he had signed, his mind being clouded by personal problems”.³⁵ The employment of such intricate and evolving defence strategies by the suspects further complicated the courts’ efforts to achieve an objective reconstruction. The same problems of course challenge historians using this material.

Documents were also drafted in a very specific language. One element is the use of legal terms which require a certain amount of background knowledge by the researcher to correctly assess the information, e.g., the linguistic difference between the “hearing” of a witness and the “interrogation” of a suspect.³⁶ Another element to

32 PV 9813, August 2, 1948, Case against Herman Veit (HV), 10, AMC; PV Verhoor, June 30, 1949, HV, 10, AMC.

33 Robby Van Eetvelde, The Motivation and Fate of Arrested Shelterers of Jews in German Occupied Antwerp during World War II (presented at the International Conference on Hiding, Sheltering and Borrowing Identities, Yad Vashem, Jerusalem, December 19, 2010); Lieven Saerens, *Vreemdelingen in een wereldstad. Een geschiedenis van Antwerpen en zijn Joodse bevolking (1880–1944)*, Tielt, Lannoo, 2000, 728–732.

34 Lebenslauf, November 25, 1934, SSO, 075B, BArchB.

35 PV 9, January 4, 1947, STRAU, 1, STRA, 2, AMC; Déposition de témoin, January 6, 1947, STRAU, 1, STRA, 3, AMC; Rapport de Strauch, January 26, 1947, STRAU, 1, LUC, 3, AMC; Déposition de témoin, April 28, 1947, Gestapo Liège, 9, 37, AMC.

36 The specific terms used are Déposition de témoin and PV d’interrogatoire.

consider is the fact that individual affidavits are almost recorded as a monologue, as if the private stream of consciousness of the witness or the suspect was transcribed onto a piece of paper. In reality, questions asked by the inquiring magistrate or policeman steer the interview in a certain direction, but are rarely mentioned in the document.³⁷

The aforementioned problems should always be considered when using these sources to construct a historical narrative. However, I don't consider them fundamental enough to completely disregard these sources for historical research. As Christopher Browning has correctly pointed out:

“If historians cannot find ‘smoking pistol’ documents, they must look for pattern and fit among the evidence that is available [...] a historian must make critical judgments about the use of sources depending upon the questions that are being asked and the varying capacity of the available source [...] to provide reliable information relevant to those questions.”³⁸

Judging the Holocaust

It is often asserted that too little attention was paid to the persecution of the Jewish population in Belgium in the post-war trials. In the post-war phase of reconstruction, an emphasis on the suffering of the country's own population was considered more important than the suffering of a religious minority ninety percent of whom had been foreigners. Recent research has both affirmed and negated this point of view. The German repression of the resistance and the deportation of political prisoners undoubtedly received more attention. This was partly due to the larger survival rate among this group than among the group of deported Jews. Moreover, a legal structure was available which could be used to bring the responsible figures to justice. This is not to say that the court deliberately neglected the persecution of the Jews. The inherent lower survival rate of the extermination camps meant fewer witnesses could identify their hangmen. It was difficult for the court to identify and arrest the guilty men. The legal framework was moreover unprepared to properly judge the perpetrated crimes. By the time preparations had been completed, in the late 1940's, too much time had passed to have a realistic expectation of both witnesses and perpetrators to give reliable testimonies. In the emerging Cold War climate, the punishment of German war criminals had become a less urgent matter.³⁹ Despite this, judging by my own research into the activity of the Gestapo in Liège, it is quite obvious that the persecution of the Jews received less attention than the fight against the resistance. The German leader in charge of the anti-Jewish section was not brought to trial. The trial against his collaborators was carried out with less rigour and depth than the trial against Belgian collaborators with other sections. An example of neglect is Eduard Strauch, in whom the court had on the stand one of the main perpetrators of the Holocaust in all of Europe. Not only was he not questioned about his involvement with the Final Solution, he was even allowed to euphemistically call his genocidal activity in eastern Europe “fighting the partisans” without being corrected.⁴⁰ It would have been easy to reprimand him since the statement in question

³⁷ Marijn Van Nooten, Proces-verbaal tot bewijs van het tegendeel, in: *Jura Falconis* 39, 3 (2002–2003), 337–377.

³⁸ Christopher R. Browning, *Collected Memories. Holocaust History and Postwar Testimony*, George L. Mosse Series in Modern European Cultural and Intellectual History, Madison 2003, 36, 42.

³⁹ Wouters, *De Jodenvervolging*.

⁴⁰ Déposition de témoin, January 6, 1947.

was given when the truth of his gruesome activity was widely known. In Antwerp, the military court research into the activities of wartime mayor Leon Delwaide did not go into the involvement of the city police in assisting their German counterparts in three round-ups in the city's Jewish quarters: The research was considered to be too sensitive.⁴¹ Only in 2000 would the contribution of the Antwerp city police to the implementation of the Final Solution be brought to the attention of both the academic establishment and the public at large with the publication of Lieven Saerens' doctoral dissertation. Delwaide's son, who was also politically active as alderman for the harbour of Antwerp, threatened to press charges against the historian, aiming to clear his father's good name and reputation.⁴² The controversy eventually led to a government-funded research project to assess the full involvement of the Belgian state with the persecution of its Jewish community. The study, published in 2007 as a monograph, aptly titled *Gewillig België – Willing Belgium*, and counting over a thousand pages, relied heavily on the archives of the military court. The investigation not only confirmed Saerens' findings, but also pointed out in great detail other areas in which the Belgian state was implicated in the Final Solution. This participation was inspired by a wide ranging "policy of lesser evil", which can be summed up as a maximal accommodation to German wishes in order to avoid the destructions suffered during the previous World War, which was still fresh in everyone's memory.⁴³

Conclusion

Despite the above-mentioned limitations, I still consider the documentation collected for the post-war trials against collaborators and German war criminals a viable and even crucial source for studying the Gestapo and the Holocaust in Belgium. The described limitations are due to the post-war political climate, the difficulty of correctly interpreting post-factum statements, and the methodological difference between a prosecutor and a historian. I described the public prosecutor as the "perfect Rankean historian": this is undoubtedly a caricature, but one with a kernel of truth. A conviction beyond reasonable doubt requires an objective reconstruction of the past "as it actually happened". Shades of grey do not exist. What does exist in legal matters is black or white, punishable by law or not, guilty or not guilty. The historian, looking at the same documentation with more sensitivity for both social realities and narratives, can only profit from the work done by the court to weed out inconsistencies in statements, to confront conflicting witnesses with each other, and so forth. These preparatory efforts and reconstructions by the court can be critically reinterpreted by historians. The most important pitfall lies in the adaptation of the sources' inherent legal logic. The former lies in the pre-defined outcome of the proceedings, i.e., a verdict of guilt or innocence. When writing my narrative, I had to remind myself not to put too much emphasis on questions of culpability and responsibility. Instead, the defined research hypothesis should remain the main focus.

To conclude, historians should always remain critical of their source material. But this criticism should not mean the automatic discarding as biased of the extensive preparatory work done by the researching magistrate. Every source has inherent problems, including even any sources originating as closely as possible to the studied

41 Saerens, Vreemdelingen in een wereldstad, 752; Wouters, De Jodenvervolging, 924.

42 Frank van Vree, Joden Hadden Weinig Vrienden in Antwerpen, in: Volkskrant, 18.5.2001.

43 Rudi Van Doorslaer (ed.), *Gewillig België. Overheid en Jodenvervolging tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, Antwerpen/Amsterdam/Brussel, Meulenhoff/Manteau, 2007.

events. This should not, however, lead to self-censorship by historians in the questions they ask of the past. Just like critical historians can use the work carried out by their (neo)positivist peers to build their own narrative, historians, however epistemologically inclined, should use every opportunity, including the work of the post-war courts, to recreate historical “reality”. The alternative to this stance would mean no history-writing at all, something everyone should consider a sad prospect.

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Article

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Anna Lujza Szász

Visualising the Holocaust

Abstract

In this text, I wish to explore the relationship between trauma and representation, which would serve as a theoretical framework for my research on the Roma Holocaust and its visual representation. First, I attempt to understand the concept of trauma starting from a rather psychoanalytic perspective and then shifting towards historiography. Then, I aim to conceptualise the Holocaust as a traumatic event within the context of representation and think about the ways in which the experience of the Holocaust was understood, thought, reflected or visualised in art. I argue that art, or representation in general, is an ‚outer dimension of memory‘; a tool for the working-through of a trauma; a possibility for a new rhetoric that provides a better understanding of our past, present and our future.

“They also killed the Jews everywhere” says Rudolf Krasznai of Roma origin, born in Pécs, Hungary in 1927.¹ Krasznai, together with the other Roma in the area, were collected in the beginning of the 1940s by the gendarmerie and transported by train to a ghetto at Pélportpuszta. Following a few month of forced labour, they were taken on freight trains to a lager close to Linz. “They had taken fifteen or twenty people to dig the pit, the others encircled them”, Krasznai continues.

“And then they were shot in the head with machine-guns, they fell in the pit. I only saw dead bodies, they poured lime on them, the cart went, they put soil on it, and good-bye! I saw it in Dachau in forty-five. By then the camp was closed down, we were taken there to work. We buried people. Shovel and spade in our hands and we buried them. We were there for three or four days, we covered the body, that’s it. With shovel and spade. We pushed soil on them. That was it. Hey, my God, it is no use speaking about it. It was miserable. Miserable.”

“I [only] saw [...]” and in Krasznai’s testimony ‘seeing’ seems to be a self-evident and banal act of communication in the silence that was imposed by isolation. Also, in order to remember he has to ‘animate’ the past and compress it into images such as the “dead bodies”, the “lime”, the “cart” or the “entombment”. The art of seeing, argue Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub in their book *Testimony*², is strongly related to the experience of witnessing in the Western world. In order to gain an objective knowledge in historiography on a certain event one shall occupy the cognitive position of seeing which then becomes the source of historical realism. Seeing since the Enlightenment, as a precondition of knowledge evokes truth and authenticity³ on the one hand, on the other implies the agency of the T. It suggests the possibility and necessity of seeing and the framing and transmission of the visual elements into under-

1 Gábor Bernáth (ed.), *Porrajmos. Roma holokauszt túlélők emlékeznek* [Roma Holocaust Survivors Remember], Budapest 2000, 99.

2 Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, *Testimony. Crisis of Witnessing. Literature, Psychoanalysis, Witnessing*, New York 1992.

3 Ernst van Alphen, *Art in Mind. How Contemporary Images Shape Thought*, Chicago 2005, 164.

standing. However in the case of the Holocaust, as Felman and Laub write, the tension lies between witnessing that is “central to the Holocaust experience” and that the Holocaust is “an event without a witness” since there was “historically no witness to the Holocaust, either from outside or from inside the event”.⁴ They argue that the Holocaust was a historical assault of seeing:⁵ the main actors of the events – the victims, the bystanders and the perpetrators – either did not see or failed to witness, understand.⁶ The Jews saw but did not understand what they saw, the bystanders saw but did not look directly, while the perpetrators saw everything and made everything essentially invisible in order not to be seen.

As Laub and Felman explain:

“To make the Jews invisible not merely by killing them, not merely by confining them to ‘camouflaged’, invisible death camps, but by reducing even the materiality of the dead bodies to smoke and ashes, and by reducing, furthermore, the radical opacity of the *sight* of the dead bodies, as well as the linguistic referentiality and literality of the *word* ‘corpse’ to the transparency of a pure form and to the pure rhetorical metaphoricity of a mere figure: a disembodied verbal substitute which signifies abstractly the linguistic law of infinite exchangeability and substitutability. The dead bodies are thus verbally rendered invisible, and voided both of substance and specificity, by being treated, in the Nazi jargon, as *Figuren*: that which, all at once, *cannot be seen* and can be *seen through*.⁷

Without the possibility of seeing, or as a result of that ‘seeing’ and ‘understanding’ were drifted apart, Laub claims the impossibility of bearing witness ‘from inside’ due to the absolute dehumanising and destructive power of the Nazi regime which did not offer any frame of reference to step outside and understand what is happening on the “planet of Auschwitz”.⁸ Thus, for the dehumanised creature the result of both the impossibility of escaping from the “inside” and the lack of attention, recognition on behalf of the outside (bystanders or the outside world who overlooked or failed to see) “extinguished [philosophically] the very possibility of address, the possibility of appealing, or of turning to, another”,⁹ hence to bear witness. This creates for the Holocaust a paradoxical situation in history claiming that it is an absolute historical event “whose literally overwhelming evidence makes it into an utterly proofless event”.¹⁰

In his book, *Remnants of Auschwitz*¹¹ Giorgio Agamben develops a very similar argument on the ‘authentic’ or ‘real’ witness. He points out the paradox in witnessing emphasising that those who saw the ‘fatal secret’,¹² in other words, witnessed the crematorium ‘from inside’ are dead, however they are the real witnesses of Auschwitz.¹³ The survivor’s testimony is neither authentic, nor complete but only mediated since

4 Ibid., 80-81.

5 Felman and Laub, Testimony, 209.

6 Ibid., 208.

7 Ibid., 201.

8 Dinoor/K-Zetnik’s term see in Shoshana Felman, *The Juridical Unconscious. Trials and Traumas in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge 2002, 125.

9 Felman and Laub, Testimony, 82.

10 Ibid., 211.

11 Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and the Archive*, New York 2002.

12 Felman and Laub, Testimony, 228.

13 Similarly: Agnes Heller, Hungarian philosopher, says the same in a video used for the RESCAPE project (2010–2011, initiated by Voices of the 20th Century Archive at the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, Institute of Sociology; financed by EACEA ‘Europe for Citizens Program’). The project focuses on the period 1938–1956 and has two equally important parts: *Return* project is about homecoming whereas *Escape* documents the stories of survivors who escaped from regimes of oppression in Hungary. Agnes Heller’s testimony belongs to the second project. http://www.20szazadhangja.hu/heller_agnes (00:01 - 01:14).

"testimony contains a lacuna [...] and the value of testimony lies essentially in what it lacks; at its centre it contains something that cannot be borne witness to and that discharges the survivors with authority".¹⁴ Agamben then however claims that on the basis of the "impossibility of speaking" there is a possibility of testimony to bear witness. In the case of the Muselmann, the figure on the threshold between life and dead, "there can be testimony because there is an inseparable division and non-coincidence between inhuman and human, the living being and the speaking being, the Muselmann and the survivor".¹⁵ The Muselmann, according to Agamben's interpretation, which is primarily based on Primo Levi's understanding, are the remnants of Auschwitz, hence the true witnesses of the camp which cannot speak and whose testimonies are mediated by the 'incomplete' survivors.

In Agamben's work there is not much about seeing but instead, he shifts the emphasis from the art of seeing to the act of speaking that appears as a 'test' of being or remaining human. Speaking is a triumph in a sense that the human overcomes the inhuman by appropriating language with the usage of linguistic signs, such as 'I' and 'you'. Laub introduces the very same idea by filling the gap of 'you' with the role of the "responsive", "attentive" and "unobtrusively present"¹⁶ of the listener that is the psychoanalyst. The necessity of a 'you' to enable the victim to overcome the traumatic muteness, to speak as well as to restore the victim's humanity is, as Laub argues, "another mode of struggle against the victim's entrapment in trauma repetition, against their enslavement to the fate of their victimization".¹⁷ Since victims of traumatic events fail to integrate past experiences into their memories, which, consequently, continue to haunt them in the present, the present becomes for the victims nothing else but the persistent re-living of the past. Laub claims that the therapeutic conditions – identifying the analyst as a listener who carefully, and with empathy, follows the victim's narration and might as well become a partner in this 'journey' – have a healing effect and might bring about the possibility of rescuing traumatic past experiences being entrapped in the present. The act of speaking in therapy, hence the narration of one's life history under 'sterile' circumstances, whose life bore witness to a trauma, might help reconstruct history and re-externalise the event, in other words, emplot one's own narrative into a coherent story in which traumatic disruptions become integral, nonetheless formative experiences of the past.¹⁸

Regarding the historical validity of the testimony Laub confronts with the historians and suggests that despite historical inaccuracies one's personal account on the past provides a more nuanced, additional knowledge. To support his argument, his well-known example is taken from the *Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies* which he launched in 1979 at Yale University's Department of Manuscripts and Archives, and which has now over 4,400 videotaped interviews with witnesses and survivors of the Holocaust. Laub cites a woman's testimony in which she talks about being witnessed to a failed attempt to resists the Nazis in Auschwitz in October, 1944: "All of a sudden, we saw four chimneys going up in flames, exploding. The flames shot into the sky, people were running. It was unbelievable."¹⁹ While historians discredited her testimony due to her limited knowledge on the fact that only one

14 Agamben, Remnants of Auschwitz, 33-34.

15 Ibid., 33.

16 Felman and Laub, Testimony, 71.

17 Ibid., 70.

18 Tihamér Bakó, Sorstörés. A trauma lélektana egy pszichoterapeuta szemszögeből [Breaking Fate. The Psychotherapy of Trauma Seen by a Psychotherapist], Budapest 2009.

19 Felman and Laub, Testimony, 59.

chimney blew up in Auschwitz during the uprising of the Canada Commando in the end of 1944, Laub unfolded a different kind of truth²⁰ in her narration saying that “[T]he woman was testifying, not to the umber of the chimney blown up, but to something else, more radical, more crucial: the reality of an unimaginable occurrence. One chimney blown up in Auschwitz was as incredible as four. The number mattered less than the fact of the occurrence. The event itself was almost inconceivable. The woman testified to an event that broke the all compelling frame of Auschwitz, where Jewish armed revolts just did not happen, and had no place. She testified to the breakage of a framework. That was historical truth.”²¹

Laub’s approach to survivor testimonies was not paradigmatic but instead was a representative example of “the era of the witness”²², as Wieviorka names the time period from the end of the 1970s. Then a ‘frenzy’ started for life stories which on the one hand were standardised along the line of moral and political responsibility, on the other, rendered exclusive significance to the victims and their testimonies. Hence the legitimate speaker of a true and authentic account on the past, which was once the eyewitness, now became the traumatised victim.²³ By the same token the status of witnessing was delegated to the listener, let it be the psychoanalyst, the interviewer or the historian who from outside interpreted what was told and testified for the past.²⁴

Without diminishing the benefits of psychoanalytic reconstruction of traumatic past experiences I would argue that the shifting emphasis from the role of the eyewitness to the position of the victim has an effect not only on the witness but also on the ‘eye’, more precisely and literally, it takes the credit from it. And here I do not mean to play an arbitrary game with the words. The Holocaust, as Laub argues was an “unimaginable occurrence”, that is to say that it was a set of events which cannot be framed in images, which cannot be visualised in a true and authentic way, and hence it cannot be known and remembered properly. Thus positioning the victim’s, instead of the eyewitness’, testimony, as a privileged form of memory, denotes a shift from imagination, or imaginative representation to the historical. It deprives ‘seeing’ from ‘truth’, ‘authenticity’ or ‘agency’ and considers ‘the eye’ only as a vehicle of language and gestures to formulate historical knowledge.

What is happening is that the eye is distinguished from vision, since under the pressure of traumatic experiences, as we have seen the case of the woman and the

20 Laub’s approach is similar to what the psychoanalyst Donald Spencer calls narrative truth as opposed to historical truth. Discusses for example in Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, *The Witness in the Archive: Holocaust Studies/Memory Studies* 2 (2009), 151-170.

21 Felman and Laub, *Testimony*, 60.

22 Annette Wieviorka, *The Era of the Witness*, Ithaca and London 2006.

23 Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder, *Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age*, Philadelphia 2010; see an astute summary on present day memory politics in Hungarian: Máté Zombory, *Határtalan emlékezés* [Borderless Memory], in: *Café Babel* 66 (2012), in English: Máté Zombory, *Memory as spatial localization*, (paper presented at the Genealogies of Memory conference, Warsaw, Poland, 23-25 November, 2011).

24 In an essay by Didier Fassin he aims to provide a typology, based on etymology, of the witness. His case study focuses on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The word ‘witness’ evolved from the words *testis* (‘third party’); *superstes* (‘lives on beyond’); *arbiter* (who sees without been seen); *martyr* (‘the sacrifice of his life bears witness’). This semantic richness of the word ‘witness’ allows instances of power to either produce the ‘sufferer’ or the ‘victim’. In the case of the sufferer the only possibility to get recognition of past experiences works through the testimony of trauma, in other words through giving voice to his/her sufferings. In the case of the victim, power produces subjectivities which lack autonomy, which are exposed to the judgement of power (and then, for example, humanitarian organizations speak testify in the name of the so-called victims). As a matter of fact the witness is not only a rhetorical figure but a political subject whose subjectivity shows that testimony is defined by structural ambiguities stemming from the variety of its meanings. We are living in a regime of witnessing and in order to become a witness one shall prescribe herself/himself in a codified tradition that lays down the rules of what and how to say as well as the aftermath of the testimony, such as the ways in it becomes archived, interpreted, published. (Didier Fassin, *The Humanitarian Politics of Testimony: Subjectification through Trauma in the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, in: *Cultural Anthropology* 23 (2008), 531-558.)

four chimneys; it often leads to ‘false’, ‘inauthentic’ witnessing.²⁵ Thus testimony becomes the representation of the traumas of the Holocaust, the nonfictional genre, which is considered as historical truth, and furthermore, as Dominick LaCapra argues, in cases it is equated with history. LaCapra does not diminish the importance of testimony which is “crucial as a way in which an intimidated or otherwise withdrawn victim of trauma may overcome being overwhelmed by numbness and passivity, reengage in social practice, and acquire a voice”²⁶ but warns us not to equate testimony with history, neither agency with witnessing.

In this chapter I follow LaCapra’s admonition and explore the relationship between trauma and representation in order to provide a theoretical framework for my further analysis. First, I attempt to understand the concept of trauma starting from a rather psychoanalytic perspective and then shifting towards historiography. Then, I aim to conceptualise the Holocaust as a traumatic event within the context of representation and think about the ways in which the experience of the Holocaust was understood, thought, reflected or visualised in art. I argue that art, or representation in general, is an ‘outer dimension of memory’; a tool for the working-through of a trauma; a possibility for a new rhetoric that provides a better understanding of our past, present and our future.

Trauma and representation

Cathy Caruth begins with the story of Clorinda and Tancred in her book on trauma theory.²⁷ The Italian romantic poet, Torquato Tasso published in 1581 his epic titled *Jerusalem Delivered*, which is a story about the First Crusade and how the Christian knights battle against the Muslims and try to win back Jerusalem from them. Tancred, a Christian knight falls in love with Clorinda a warrior-maiden who is on the side of the Muslims. After Clorinda set the Christian siege tower into fire they come across each other behind the veil of night. Since both of them are in armour they fail to recognise (do not see) each other and start a fight in which Tancred kills Clorinda by mistake. In her last will the dying woman asks the knight to baptise her. Tancred removes the helmet and identifies under it his love. Following the burial Tancred rushes into a forest, grabs his sword and slashes it at a tree; “but blood streams from the cut and the voice of Clorinda, whose soul is imprisoned in the tree, is heard complaining that he has wounded his beloved once again”²⁸ – writes Tasso, quoted by Cathy Caruth, literary theorist, in her book *Unclaimed Experience*. Caruth opens her book and begins to think about trauma with Tancred’s story and follows Freud’s interpretation, which places repetition – that is the repeated infliction of pain on Clorinda – in the heart of trauma. However Caruth’s analysis draws attention not only to the traumatic experience and its unwished-for repetition but also to the phenomenon of the voice. Caruth argues that the traumatic event, when he killed his love by chance, happened too unexpectedly and too painfully for him that he could not integrate it into his past, hence Tancred becomes aware of his deed only the second wounding, in the forest.

25 Ernst van Alphen discusses this separation. Contemporary visual artists, let them be second or third generation survivors or of no background like this do come up with alternative ways of representation however ‘authenticity’ does not apply to them at all. Still in order not to surrender the visual domain van Alphen suggests to distinguish vision from its vehicle, the eye in other words, to privilege the visual medium and analyse what vision does, achieves in the context of the Holocaust. See: van Alphen, Art in Mind.

26 Dominick LaCapra, History and Memory After Auschwitz, New York 1998, 12.

27 Cathy Caruth, Unclaimed Experience. Trauma, Narrative and History, Baltimore 1996.

28 Caruth, Unclaimed Experience, 2.

As a matter of the delayed understanding of what happened, Caruth's key concepts are 'belatedness' and 'inaccessibility' suggesting that traumatic events resist immediate comprehension²⁹, are always followed by *latency* and then the 'voice cried out of the wound'. The latter means that the victim of trauma cannot process and represent the event but performs, re-experiences it in the flashback that repeats the trauma in its literalness and immediacy. She supports her argument on unrepresentability with ideas taken from neuroscience, drawing on the American physician Bessel van der Kolk's³⁰ theory. Van der Kolk argues that the traumatic event is registered in the brain at its occurrence and then it later becomes an image on the right side of the brain, which resists to symbolization, representation. It cannot be read only belatedly not because of repression but because it is dissociated from the language centres on the left. Hence due to the temporary malfunctioning of consciousness and memory, instead of representation, the literal coding of the event takes place – the image gets imprinted into one's mind literally, which is by neuroscientific definition, unrepresentable but which comes back and haunts the victim via flashbacks. Flashbacks "suggest that [trauma] cannot be thought simply as a representation", it is perceived by Caruth as "a 'walking' rather than a 'seeing'"³¹. Traumatic experience stands outside of representation and since its transmission happens mimetically to the next generation the best it can be approached as a performative act of language, of voice.

Historian and trauma theorist Dominick LaCapra however discounts the deconstructive reading of Caruth's trauma theory, which says that trauma, as LaCapra argues "can only be represented or addressed indirectly in figurative or allegorical terms that necessarily distort or betray it".³² In the meanwhile LaCapra works on a set of criteria in order to conceptualise and evaluate the relationship between history and psychoanalysis avoiding the concepts such as deconstruction, pathologisation or redemption but linking the inquiry to ethical-political concerns. He makes a distinction between historical and structural trauma – which is considered by both Laub and Caruth as reciprocal – and means by structural general anxiety-producing conditions of humanity like mortality, while historical trauma is a historically and morally specific punctual event, such as the Holocaust. Historical trauma causes a rupture in memory, LaCapra calls it primary memory, thus the traumatic experience fails to integrate into the past and be directly remembered. Due to the lack of understanding on what happened, the only tool the victim has is to relive, re-experience the event, and later as a result of a critical work on primary memory, with the help of secondary memory, the event can be worked-through and inserted into one's life story.

As a matter of fact there could be three possible reactions given to trauma. There is the strategy of denial, mostly applied in the case of redemptive narrative, in which the victim excludes trauma and aims to avoid an "explicit encounter with normative problems and to restrict historical discourse to seemingly empirical and analytical uses of language".³³ The other two strategies focus on understanding the ways in which one *remembers* the traumatic event: LaCapra borrows the concepts of 'work-

29 Since full assimilation and comprehension is impossible trauma reveals not so much an empirical but an ethical relation to the real. Trauma, in Caruth's understanding, is non-referential, as a matter of fact, non-historical. Ethical relation imply the way to listen to the other, however she does not dwell into this argument.

30 Bessel A. van der Kolk and Alexander C. McFarlane and Lars Weisaeth, *Traumatic Stress: The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Mind, Body, and Society*, New York 1996.

31 Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience*, 115.

32 Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma*, Baltimore 2001, 107.

33 Ibid., 193.

ing-through' and 'acting-out' from psychoanalysis and makes them readable for historical studies. In the aftermath of the traumatic event, there is melancholia that is an isolating experience in which the traumatised self is locked in and remains narcissistically identified with the lost object.

More precisely, LaCapra differentiates between loss and absence and relates absence – a mimetic relation to the past, which is relived as if it was fully present which means to consider the past as if it was fully present – to the state of acting-out. Acting-out is a necessary precondition of processing and dealing with the past for those who underwent trauma. It is related to repetition or to repetitive-compulsion, which means the repetitive reliving or re-experiencing past occurrences, which might appear in 'flashbacks', as Caruth discussed it earlier. Acting-out might be countervailed by the force of working-through, however, as all binary oppositions are discouraged so is the relation between the two defined as in close proximity with each other. Melancholia can be followed by mourning, "where grief is repeated in reduced, normatively controlled and socially supported form".³⁴ Working through conveys the possibility to engage in trauma, hence the victim aims to take a critically distance on the problems; to recognise the difference between past and present and to deprive past experiences from the dominating the present. Achieving a distance and setting oneself free from the tendency to be fixated on the past as well as to be drawn back by flashbacks and nightmares implies the process of renewing one's life in the present and find harmony, hence the ability to reconstitute agency.

However, as historian Gábor Gyáni notes, LaCapra does not imply that working-through can be fully accomplished and it might not be a desired achievement for neither the survivors, nor their descendants. Otherwise such a detachment from a past experience would distort the meaning of the past, regard it as complete, total, banal or harmonic.³⁵ Additionally, not only the individual but also the community has responsibility and work to do via social practices an rituals which generate normative limits in order to, as Eric Santner writes not to "expunge the traces of trauma"³⁶, but to integrate into one's life story. Following Gyáni's line of thinking what is interesting here is that it seems like even though LaCapra and the others are engaged in challenging the concept of trauma, memory-compulsion still celebrates its victory over working-through. Hence trauma is inflicted upon the concept of working-through as if it was worth preserving at all costs. What strikes me in this is the question whether there is any kind of meaning of trauma, which could be distorted in the process of working through? What happens with the trauma when it enters the sphere of memory-work? How can this transformation be grasped? What is gained and what is lost in this translation? I argue that one among the dynamic social spaces in which grief- and memory-work can be effectively practiced is: art. Further, the history of the Holocaust representations provides a perspective, which might tell us more about the trauma, about its changing significance and its traces in memory, if at all.

In order to understand the role of art in relation to trauma I would suggest to go back to LaCapra. He argues back in 1994 that the Holocaust itself is an already canonised historical event that is to say that there exists an already established know-

34 LaCapra, *Representing the Holocaust*, 199.

35 Gábor Gyáni, Trauma, emlékezet, kultusz [Trauma, Memory, Cult], in: Élet és Irodalom [Life and Literature], 13.11.2006.

36 Eric Santner, History beyond the Pleasure Principle. Some Thoughts on the Representation of Trauma, in: Saul Friedlander (ed.), *Probing the Limits of Representation. Nazism and the 'Final Solution'*, Cambridge 1992, 143-155.

ledge which fuels as well as creates a frame of reference for historical and imaginative discourses. Canonisation, in this respect especially, covers all the wounds and pains the event might have been caused and creates an impression that nothing subversive or disturbing happened. However LaCapra proposes to the historians to re-think some of the texts that are chosen to be canonised as well as those which were marginalised in order to challenge the well-established knowledge on the past as well as engage in a critical dialogue with the present. A text is only considered as historical if it has a “never-to-be-fixed limit of contextualisation”.³⁷ Re-contextualization shall not be considered as the production of simple replicas or derivative items but as the creation of necessary, valuable reflections. Reflections fuel a critical work on the past in order to re-enact and not to repeat it as well as to open towards the future and engage in new imaginative and historical possibilities. Amy Hungerford in her book entitled the *The Holocaust of Texts* however vehemently opposes the possibility to rethink texts and channel or transmission their ‘new’ understandings into imaginative and historical representations. She is especially against the personification of the Holocaust and regards it as an arbitrary game of the “fantasy that we can really have another’s experience that we can become someone else”.³⁸ Similarly, Gary Weissman identifies the institutionalisation of the Holocaust in the “fantasy of witnessing”.³⁹ Both of them claim that one shall establish an objective and non-sentimental relationship towards the Holocaust, which sets aside transfiguration or any kind of artistic and literary representation. Gabriele Schwab on the other hand dwells into linguistics and argues that symbolism or anthropomorphism is a basic operation of language, all the more transfiguration – personalisation or anthropomorphic representation – is necessary in order to empathise as well as emotionally relate to the other person, hence to get engaged in the working-through process. As a matter of fact, art, as LaCapra argues, is considered – similarly to the historians’ work of re-thinking canons – as a possible tool to establish a stimulating relation to the past.

Similar consequence is drawn by the historian Saul Friedlander. His starting point is a differentiation between deep memory and common memory, two terms taken from Charlette Delbo.⁴⁰ Deep memory is meant to be an event, which remains an unsettled trauma and can hardly be integrated into one’s past, while common memory takes its place in the chronology of events. Friedlander’s challenge is to establish a historiography, which permits the integration of both types of memories in the historical narrative. He requires the self-awareness of the historian, in the form of the commentary, which “should disrupt the facile linear progression of the narration, introduce alternative interpretations, question any partial conclusion, withstand the need for closure”.⁴¹ He calls it as the working-through process of the historians who deal with the traumatic past. The process is primarily an imperative to work not only with documents, facts and figures but also with testimonies and personal accounts and secondarily working-through means an awareness to find a fragile balance between silence and disruptive emotions, that is to say to avoid on the one hand full objectivity and neutrality and on the other hand a full identification with the victims which might transform the researcher into a “surrogate victim”.⁴²

³⁷ Ibid., 35.

³⁸ Quoted by Gabriele Schwab, *Haunting Legacies. Violent Histories and Transgenerational Trauma*, New York 2010, 16.

³⁹ Ibid., 19.

⁴⁰ The term appears in Charlotte Delbo’s *Auschwitz and After*, quoted by Saul Friedlander, *Memory, History and the Extermination of the Jews of Europe*, Bloomington and Indianapolis 1993.

⁴¹ Friedlander, *Memory, History and the Extermination of the Jews of Europe*, 132.

⁴² Ibid., 130-133.

This problematic balance brings up the question of transference that is in the psychoanalytic sense repetition, however when it comes to the role of the listener, researcher or of the historian it refers to a respectful and emphatic subject-position in relation to the victim. Hence the challenge for the historian is not to avoid engaging in a (possibly emotional) dialogue with the victims nonetheless – this would deny the possibility of positivism – and to articulate or reconstruct, without the hint of closure, a valid understanding of the past.

I would argue that the integration of deep memory into historiography invokes in Friedlander's work the need to think about the relation between memory, history and representation in the context of the Holocaust. He questions the literary representation which was born following the World War I, lived on after the World War II – this also suggests that there was no adequate artistic or literary response to the World War II – and has an ironic aesthetics, since the emerging literature (for example Aharon Appelfeld, Primo Levi, Tadeusz Borowski) could not speak with the same voice but aspired to tell their experiences in a profoundly didactic way. He believes that the ironic mode undermines all the meanings and "creates a major obstacle to the representation of the Shoah" as well as "accentuate the dilemmas". Friedlander cries for a new aesthetics, which respects remembering-compulsion and avoids the transgression of meanings. He might also suggest that the representation of the Holocaust on the basis of "the new aesthetics" would powerfully and effectively contribute to collectively deal with the trauma. Hence it would provide a solid frame of reference for the "collective self-perception of the groups directly involved" as well as play a primary role in the elaboration of historical consciousness.⁴³

Friedlander's argumentation brings up the question of how it is possible to experience an event collectively, or create a sense of collectivity? How can a traumatic event experienced if it was never experienced directly? As it was discussed above, from the 1970s the personal trauma went into public *en masse* and testimonies, more precisely the voice of the traumatised victim started dominating the discourse on the Holocaust contributing to the creation of a globalised space of Holocaust memory. That is to say that the Holocaust becomes a definitive catastrophe which bridges over national or ethnic lines and represents the universal Evil, a reference point to all other traumatic historical occurrences.

Jeffrey C. Alexander argues likewise and explores those socio-historical processes through which the Holocaust became detached from a particular historical event and became a central and universal tragedy of humanity in modern times.⁴⁴ However Alexander explains the shift from regarding the Holocaust as one of the atrocities of World War II to a full identification with the traumatic event by introducing two forms of thinking. The first is, as he calls it, the Lay Trauma Theory which claims that trauma is naturally part of humans' lives and traumatisation is an automatic reaction to it. In the second theory, called Cultural Trauma, trauma is conceived as a socially constructed phenomenon that is epistemological, hence is not an ontologically given but something that has to *become* traumatic. It becomes traumatic when there is a gap between the events and its representation, but it only gains social significance and becomes a collective state of affairs belatedly and requires agents, mediations and a community of carriers and caretakers. The gap is not always open to interpretation and agency, sometimes it demands decades to achieve appropriation,

⁴³ Ibid., 47-55.

⁴⁴ Jeffrey C. Alexander, Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma, in: Ron Eyerman (ed.), *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, Berkeley 2004, 1-30.

and furthermore, as Ferenc Erős, psychologist, notes, it might trigger a great outburst of hostility from the outside and puts a burden not only on the relatives and on those who are directly affected but also on the following generations.⁴⁵ As it was in the case of the Holocaust which was in the beginning a war drama, then already at the Nuremberg trial its generalisation started, followed by the establishment of a legal framework as to never let it happen again, then came the 1960s and the Eichmann trial when victims came into the limelight and later from the 1980s it established the basis for metonymic guilt, became an analogy for discrimination and provided a vocabulary for the framework of universal human rights. In sum, Alexander argues that the collective and universal trauma of the Holocaust is a result of two parallel procedures: one the one hand of the construction of the community of victims as well as by the emotional identification of either with them or with the perpetrators, on the other hand of the symbolic extension of the event which stimulated an unprecedented universalisation of moral and political responsibility (as the ‘never again’ moral imperative suggests).

Alexander argues that trauma is mediated through representation, which generates some kind of knowledge as well as identification towards the event. The mediated power of representation does not only function in the first stages of cultural trauma but also when the trauma-situation stands still and when the meanings get materialised in museums, monuments. In this part of the chapter, I attempted to explore trauma as an object of memory studies as well as to understand the ways in which trauma theories approach the question of representation.

Considering the previous theories on trauma, through the lens of Alexander they all belong to the so-called Lay Trauma Theory. Indeed, both by Caruth and LaCapra trauma, as the mental consequence of an act of violence, was theorised as a self-evident and automatic reaction of a human being. Alexander argues on the other hand that it cannot be read as a fixed and positivist affirmation of a violent situation but it is produced, belatedly through the course of time. Trauma can be understood as a “moral problematisation”, which “propose new frameworks to interpret [...] conflicts [...] [and] is not only a clinical description of a psychological status but also a political expression of a state of the world”.⁴⁶ Trauma is political because it has both individual and collective importance in positioning ourselves and let ourselves be positioned in the narrative of the past. However I find important LaCapra’s concept of working-through since it offers a practical approach to come to term with the past as well as suggests closing the gap, which, in Alexander’s interpretation, is between the event and its immediate representation. In the following, I will introduce the dilemma of representation in the context of the Holocaust.

Representation and the experience of the Holocaust

Literature dealing with the problematic relation between the Holocaust and its representation tend to start with the (in)famous statement of Theodor Adorno saying that “after Auschwitz it is barbaric to continue writing poetry”.⁴⁷ Questions regarding

⁴⁵ Ferenc Erős, *Trauma és történelem* [Trauma and History], in: *Trauma és történelem. Szociálpszichológiai és pszichoanalitikus tanulmányok* [Trauma and History. Studies in Social Psychology and Psychoanalysis], Budapest 2007, 13–26.

⁴⁶ Michel Foucault quoted by Fassin, *The Humanitarian Politics of Testimony*, 532.

⁴⁷ Ernst van Alphen, *Caught by History. Holocaust Effects in Contemporary Art, Literature and Theory*, Stanford 1997, 17.

aesthetics or ethics have been raised and up until recently we could witness one of the biggest polemical debate of our times. His antipathy towards art provided the dominant theoretical framework to understand the aesthetic regime in the post-holocaust era. As Dora Apel explained, art existed after 1945 indeed however it was dark that is realistic without the sense for redemption imagination.⁴⁸ There is the Stojka family, with a special emphasis on Karl Stojka who throughout his life, starting immediately after his liberation in Dachau, attempted to depict the fate of Roma reflecting on, remembering, re-enacting his experiences under the Holocaust.⁴⁹ Zoran Music, a Slovenian Jewish survivor of Dachau, returned home to Gorizia and carried with himself a package of drawings on corpses. He refined and clarified the pictures, then took them away and only in 1970 returned to the subject under the title *We are not last*. Osias Hofstatter's work resembles the chaos and voidness after Auschwitz while Yehuda Bacon, who was thirteen at the time he was interned to Theresienstadt, then was deported to Auschwitz, Mauthausen and finally to Gunskirchen and gave his testimony in the Eichmann trial, started his workbook series in 1973 – at the time he returned from a sabbatical year in the United States to Jerusalem. These workbooks contain his memories about the Holocaust.⁵⁰ However, the art of the non-survivors let them be of Jewish or non-Jewish origin was also based upon the refusal of aesthetics: Pablo Picasso or Leonard Baskin regarded the Holocaust as a universal tragedy and avoided any Jewish reference,⁵¹ while Chagall applied Christian symbols.

As a matter of fact, as Lawrence Langer⁵² or Ernst van Alphen⁵³ argues, "Adorno never intended his statement to be taken literally, as his own elaborations of the principle demonstrate",⁵⁴ hence instead of closing down the discussions on artistic representation we shall deprive this statement from its assumed authority and reflect upon the issue critically. Indeed, Adorno repeated his statement in 1962 saying: "I do not want to soften my statement that it is barbaric to continue to write poetry after Auschwitz [...] It is the situation of literature itself and not simply one's relation to it that is paradoxical. The abundance of real suffering permits no forgetting ... But that suffering [...] also demands the continued existence of the very art it forbids."⁵⁵ He refused those kinds of works of art, which aimed at the forgetting of the Holocaust and redeeming the 'audience' from the pain, trauma or victimhood. Adorno was hostile towards transfiguration, especially towards what Langer calls "literature of atrocity" which is about "the suffering of the victims into works of art, tossed out to be gobbled up by the world that did them in".⁵⁶ Langer continues with Adorno's words, that "[t]he so-called artistic representation of naked physical pain of victims felled by rifle butts, contains, however remote, the potentiality of wringing pleasure from it".⁵⁷ The moral consideration behind Adorno's hostility was the impropriety of

48 See Dora Apel, *Memory Effects. The Holocaust and the Art of Secondary Witnessing*. New Brunswick, 2002; Matthew Baigell, *Jewish-American Artists and the Holocaust*. New Brunswick 1997.

49 Lorely French, *An Austrian Roma Family Remembers. Trauma and Gender in Autobiographies of Ceija, Karl and Mongo Stojka*, in: *German Studies Review* 1 (February, 2008), 64-86.

50 Glenn Sujo, *Legacies of Silence*, London 2001, 92-101.

51 Ágnes Heller discusses the same phenomenon in the field of Hungarian literature: http://boldogsag.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=12763:zsidotlanitas-a-magyar-zsido-irodalomban-&catid=650:zsidokerdesek-magyarszag&Itemid=493

52 Lawrence Langer, *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination*, New Haven 1975.

53 Van Alphen, *Caught by History*.

54 Langer, *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination*. 1.

55 Theodor Adorno, *Engagement*, in: Rolf Tiedeman (ed.), *Notes to Literature*, New York 1992, 87-88; quoted by van Alphen, *Caught by History*, 18.

56 Theodor Adorno, quoted by van Alphen, *Caught by History*, 18.

57 Langer, *The Holocaust and the Literary Imagination*, 1.

aesthetic pleasure in the sense of amusement and banality as well as the promise of relief, or redemption. Instead, he suggests making art which remembers the Holocaust and which works not toward repression or denial but which engages with the past and is willing to deal with it.

Ernst van Alphen argues in *Caught by History* that it is primarily due to Adorno's dictum that Holocaust representation is morally inadmissible, because it is assumed to cause aesthetic pleasure. The statement evokes a complex range of discourses around the Holocaust such as its taboo-status – considering it as sacred which would be ethically unacceptable to represent. Jean-François Lyotard philosopher proclaims, on the basis of the uniqueness and unrepresentability of Auschwitz, the end of the era of the meta-narratives. He compares Auschwitz to an earthquake which destroys everything including the very reference points by which one is able to formulate judgements: "Suppose that an earthquake destroys not only lives, buildings, and objects but also the instruments used to measure earthquakes directly and indirectly. The impossibility of quantitatively measuring it does not prohibit, but rather inspires in the minds of the survivors the idea of a very great seismic force."⁵⁸ Lyotard, similarly to Adorno, considers Auschwitz as an event, which cannot be fully known, however, unlike Adorno, he destroys all kinds of possibility and knowledge, as the total destruction of the measuring devices by the earthquake suggests. Although scholars would claim that nothing is knowable to them about the event, the average people would rather have the feeling of indeterminacy and insecurity and they would remain in silence. With this metaphor Lyotard suggests that due to the extremity of the event our traditional categories of representation and explanation are questioned and language itself becomes insufficient. However, as average men in the aftermath of the earthquake are waiting for the historians and scholars to define and explain what happened so also do we need a solid narration about Auschwitz. Terrence Des Pres is also guided by Adorno's dictum and suggests that experiences shall automatically be channelled into language without the need to mediate them through imagination or culture. And, unavoidably, when it comes to representation, then Des Pres sets out the principles for an ethically acceptable form, that is to say that the Holocaust shall be represented as a unique event; representation shall be faithful, accurate; and the Holocaust shall always be preserved as sacred.⁵⁹

Van Alphen however claims that the reason why the historical representation of the Holocaust, that is modelled on documentary realist genres such as the testimony or the eye-witness account, is regarded as the 'proper' mode of representation because it is mimetic (as opposed to the imaginative representation's interpretive approach), true and not trapped in vision's mirage as well as re-creating the past as its mirrored image, hence is untouched, unrepresented. As a matter of fact, Erős explains that is morally impossible to represent the Holocaust, only its re-presentation, its reassertion into the present is allowed.⁶⁰ Hence one could re-live the past by "the mystery play of reenactment", that is by retelling the past from the position of the victim. On the other hand, he continues, there is the imaginative representation of the event, which is, as they are binary oppositions with the historical, also less valuable. It is considered as morally intolerable, inauthentic and subjective. Van Alphen suggests replacing the historical and imaginative oppositions into literal and figurative. The latter means that the imaginative discourse is personalised, hence "only

58 Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, Minneapolis 1988, 55-56.

59 Terrence Des Pres, *Holocaust Laughter*, in: Berel Lang (ed.), *Writing and the Holocaust*, New York, 1988, 217.

60 Erős, *Trauma és történelem*, 25.

figurative discourse allows expression of that which is unrepresentable in so-called literal, factual, historical language".⁶¹ Not only believes van Alphen that the figurative/imaginative discourse has an added value to our knowledge about the Holocaust as well as it completes what cannot be expressed otherwise, but also he argues from a moral point of view saying that the Nazi regime aimed at the total destruction of the individual and one's personality thus art shall recreate subjectivity's well-deserved place in history. Later in his book he – instead of imaginative representation – introduces the term 'Holocaust effect' as a matter of reenactment (direct experience via artistic works) and not representation.

The other problem of Holocaust representation, which van Alphen mentions, is semiotic: the Holocaust is unsayable and – in case of its articulation – has to face the limits of representation. Éva Kovács, sociologist, and Júlia Vajda, psychologist, for instance discussed in their book titled *Appearance. Jewish Identity Stories*⁶² the case when a disruption of continuity in one's life story, hence the experience of a traumatic event, challenges one's identity as well as deprives from both the ability to share it with the others and the possibility of healing. However, van Alphen changes the discourse on 'unsayability' with an argument, in which he claims that the problem is rather with the available frames of representation or following Alexander's argument, there is a gap between the event and its existing representations. We first have to experience the event in order to formulate, shape our experience through representation however experience is already a representation, it is already the transformation of the pure 'naked' event into knowledge.

As the true witness of the Holocaust is the Muselmann who cannot speak, according to Agamben, it also suggests that there was no form of representation available for the prisoner, such as language, in order to help them articulate into experience what they went through:

"(T)his unrepresentability defines those events as traumatic. The Holocaust has had a traumatic impact for many because it could not be experienced, because a distance from it in language or representation was not possible. [...] I would argue, in fact, that the problems of the unrepresentability of the Holocaust arose during the Holocaust itself and not afterward when survivors tried to provide testimonies of it, whether literary/artistic or otherwise. To put it differently, the later representational problems are a continuation of the impossibility during the event itself to experience the Holocaust in the terms of the symbolic order then available."⁶³

Similarly to Hannah Arendt who said that if Auschwitz is unthinkable in juridical or political terms then we must rethink and redefine our concept of law and politics.⁶⁴ Hence the historians "must not accept that the problem posed by the genocide of the Jews be neglected by relegating it to the unthinkable. The genocide was thought, it was therefore thinkable."⁶⁵ The genocide was presented, it is therefore representable. Only the forms of representation shall be *figured* out.

"The representation of the Holocaust is conditioned by the historical moment in which it is produced."⁶⁶ That is to say that there is no strict, solid and ever existing

61 Van Alphen, Caught by History, 29.

62 The book contains eleven interviews, in narrative life history style, conducted with families who send their children to Jewish schools. Éva Kovács/Vajda Júlia, Mutatkozás. Zsidó Identitás Történetek [Appearance. Jewish Identity Stories], Budapest 2002.

63 Van Alphen, Caught by History, 45.

64 Georges Didi-Huberman, Images in spite of All. Four Photographs from Auschwitz, Chicago 2008, 25.

65 Pierre Vidal-Naquet, quoted by Didi-Huberman, Images in spite of All, 25.

66 The Holocaust Effect in Contemporary Art, CCA Visual and Critical Studies Lecture Series, 25 January 2009; see: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oSEwi9CoZ2E> (28.2.2014).

mode of representation in relation to the Holocaust but the ways in which the Holocaust appears in the historical or imaginative discourse is the matter of the ideological, political and cultural circumstances under which representation appears. That repetition in this subject matter offers paths to deal with the past experience and does not necessarily maintains the very same discourse but challenges the individual and collective narrations of the traumatic event. Apel claims that from the mid-1970s a new generation of artists appeared on stage to change the agenda.

The first representatives were Anselm Kiefer or Christian Boltanski. The former was born in Germany a few months before the war ended, on 8 March 1945. At first, he studied languages then he turned to art, to photography. His first exhibition, for his diploma in 1969, called *Occupations (Besetzung)* was a collection of photographs taken in Switzerland, France and Italy, and on each of those Kiefer was standing in front of a famous building and saluting to Hitler. As opposed to the American and German critics, which idealise Kiefer's work and praise its 'Germanness', Andreas Huyssen⁶⁷ claims that his work is not about forgetting the German past but rather bringing it into the fore and criticise it. He refuses to hide behind ideas such as 'transcendental art' and 'universal humanness', neither does he consider his mythical motifs exclusively as a pathway to resurrect the German nation, but rather regards myth and history, or as van Alphen puts it, 'the imaginative' and 'the historical', as equally important and mutually explanatory in the context of the past. He evokes the crimes the Germans committed in World War II but also creates spaces for renewal, rebirth. Christian Boltanski was born a year earlier than Kiefer, in Paris, France with a mixed Jewish and Catholic background. As an autodidact, he began his career in 1958 and became famous by the end of the 1960s. One of his first work, which focuses on ideas such as life and death, mourning our memory was the *Attempt at Reconstitution of Objects that Belonged to Christian Boltanski between 1948 and 1954* (1970–1971). As van Alphen notes in his analysis on Boltanski, "his consistent use of historical resources such as the archive reveals the Janus face of the historical approach to the Holocaust. The strategy of mimicking archival research is confusing because it does not provide objective information about the Holocaust. Instead we are lured into the event itself, experiencing directly a certain aspect of Nazism or of the Holocaust as we view an image. We are no longer listening to the factual account of the witness, to the story of an objectified past. Rather we are placed in the position of being the subject of that history. We are subjectively living it."⁶⁸

The historical moment which rendered representation possible was largely shaped by the German *Historikerstreit* and the approach to 'seeing' of those historians, who dominated and controlled knowledge on the Holocaust. The *Historikerstreit* was a debate about Germany's responsibility in World War II and in the Holocaust as well as about the necessity to historicise the Nazi past. The debate was formative in forming a new German national identity and initiated in 1986 by Ernst Nolte who had published an article on 6 June, 1986 in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* with the title *Vergangenheit, die nicht vergehen will (The past won't go away)*.

A few years later, in 1989, the debate *History, Event and Discourse* on the nature of historical truth between Hayden White and Carlo Ginzburg followed. White, with extreme relativism, aimed to lay a new foundation to historical understanding by analysing the relation between historical storytelling and historical reality. In this

⁶⁷ Andreas Huyssen, Anselm Kiefer. The Terror of History, the Temptation of Myth, October 48 (Spring 1989), 25–45.

⁶⁸ Van Alphen, Caught by History, 10.

debate, he argued that the choices we make to understand history – i.e. the choice of the mode of emplotment or the choice of language – are already interpretations. In that sense, White denies the possibility of any kind of ‘truth’ or ‘real’ or ‘meta-narrative’ in the context of the Holocaust:

“This is not to suggest that we will give up the effort to represent the Holocaust realistically, but rather that our notion of what constitutes realistic representation must be revised to take account of the experience that are unique to our history and for which older modes of representation have proven inadequate.”⁶⁹

Hence, he favours the ‘modernist approach’ and names Primo Levi as one of its representatives. As opposed to White, Ginzburg underlines the importance of microhistory. He tells the story about a Jewish community in La Baume which was exterminated in the mid-1340s with only two survivors left. On the basis of the story he claims that “just one witness” is enough to get an insight in historical reality, hence to get the hint of historical truth.⁷⁰ His insistence on objectivity and historical truth, as Friedlander explains in the Introduction, is very much informed by ethical and analytical categories. That is to say that if we deny the voice of the survivor as well as consider the Final Solution in White’s relativism than we provide the opportunity to the counter-history to rise, which might lead to the justification of the Nazi regime. Friedlander formulates the need for a “new rhetorical” mode which on the one hand respects the radicalism and uniqueness of the event and on the other hand offers the possibility for a hypersensitive transgression of the limits of representation.⁷¹

In this historical situation I would identify three main “shifts” which changed the discourse on Holocaust representation, which overwrote the demonization of aesthetics and legitimized the role of artistic genres.⁷² The first one is what James E. Young calls mediation that is a shift from representation to the portrayal of the artist’s hypermediated experiences. The second one, very close in meaning to the first one, introduces the Holocaust as not a singular event but as an event which is already filtered through various channels of representation such as media, hence can be endowed with a variety of cultural, historical and political meanings. The third one is the shift from the need of documentation to the need of identification, which visibly manifests itself in the field of education as Shoshana Felman discusses it.

To the dilemma of how it is possible to remember an event which one never experienced directly, James E. Young provides the answer with the term ‘vicarious memory’. One shall witness the emergence of a new post-war generation, which has not directly experienced the events under World War II but only know them from hearsay, listening to the older generation’s stories as well as shaped by them. This generation of artist, as Young argues, does not depict or represent the event as it was passed on them but portray the Holocaust from a “vicarious past”⁷³, that is a distance taken from the first generation’s experience, furthermore, Young claims that their work is a valuable contribution to the understanding of what happened in the past. The common denominator of the secondary witnesses is that they deal with and reflect upon the memory that was transmitted to them however they also add to it their own re-

69 Hayden White, Historical Emplotment and the Problem of Truth, in: Saul Friedlander (ed.), *Probing the Limits of Representation. Nazism and the ‘Final Solution’*, Cambridge 1992, 52.

70 Carlo Ginzburg, Just One Witness, in: Saul Friedlander (ed.), *Probing the Limits of Representation. Nazism and the ‘Final Solution’*, 82-97.

71 In: Saul Friedlander (ed.), *Probing the Limits of Representation. Nazism and the ‘Final Solution’*, 2-4.

72 Hereby I have to note that Claude Lanzmann’s *Shoah* shall be regarded as the fourth factor which triggered the shifting of the discourse however I will discuss it in another chapter devoted exclusively to films.

73 James E. Young, *At Memory’s Edge. After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture*, New Haven and London 2000, 1.

searches. In Young's words, this generation "rarely presumes to represent events outside of the ways they have vicariously known and experienced them. Instead of attempting to portray the events of the Holocaust, they write and draw and talk about the event of its transmission to them – in books, films, photographs and parents' stories. Instead of trying to remember events, they recall their relationship to the memory of events."⁷⁴

Such as Art Spiegelman, David Levinthal, Tibor Balogh, Zsolt Vári or Teréz Orsós, these artists childhood is overloaded with stories of the Holocaust and they seek to find these memories a proper form of representation which does not fall into the trap of melancholy neither repeats the traumas of the proceeding generation nor cause disintegration in their life stories. Following the same line of thinking Dora Apel highlights that these artists instead of rendering the memory of the Holocaust exclusively to the survivors and ascribing one meaning to it, they question conventional aesthetics and aim to look at the event as a culturally, socially and politically significant occurrence in the past and then attempt to reformulate the meanings attached to it. The question is not whether these representations are violations of a single fixed meaning – they are since all representations, as Apel argues, are partial, and Auschwitz can never be fully represented – but how they engage in new effect of the Holocaust.

Indeed, they introduce a new ethic in representation that is their explicit aim to replace sacralised pedagogy of the Holocaust with the interplay of various meanings which makes visible as well as raise attention to for instance the relationship between race and nation, the presence of everyday racism, the underlying mechanisms of capitalism which intensify discrimination. Sacralised pedagogy is meant to transmit a "complete and totally appropriated knowledge", which "will become in all sense of the word, a mastery"⁷⁵. In this sense of the world pedagogy is and "academic discourse"⁷⁶, as Lacan names it, is linear, frontal, hierarchical and all the more tends to control, forbid and suppress. On the basis of Adorno's dictum and Terrence Des Pres' premises, the Holocaust is meant to be taught, learned and memorialised in a disciplined manner and was believed that it can be mastered and never forgotten. However – and this is the third point –, as Shoshana Felman argues, from the 1980s psychoanalysis opened up new teaching possibilities, renewing both its core questions and practices and suggests that pedagogy, similarly to psychoanalysis, shall proceed through "break-throughs, leaps, discontinuities, regressions and deferred action". As it follows, instead of considering teaching as a hierarchical setup between students and teachers we shall take knowledge as essentially dialogic, as an exchange of thoughts.⁷⁷ "Dialogue," writes Felman, "is thus the radical condition of learning and knowledge, the analytically constitutive condition".⁷⁸ By the same token the new generation of artists challenges the traditional pedagogical approach to the Holocaust. Their artworks shift the discourse from the historical that is from documentation, from the desire for mastery and from testimony, to the imaginative.

⁷⁴ James E. Young, The Holocaust as Vicarious Past: Art Spiegelman's *Maus* and the Afterimages of History, in: *Critical Inquiry* 3 (Spring 1998), 670.

⁷⁵ Shoshana Felman, Psychoanalysis and Education: Teaching Terminable and Interminable, in: *Yale French Studies* 63 (1982), 28.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 22.

⁷⁷ Ibid., 33.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

Generations of post-Holocaust

From the beginning of the 1980s, as the survivor's generation is passing away, there is more and more focus on secondary witnesses, hence on the second or third generations and on the ways in which they attempt to approach the Holocaust. On the basis of the above I argue that in the beginning of the 1980s one could have witnessed a paradigmatic change in the field of the representation of the Holocaust. Hence, the core questions of representation before the 1980s were how to transmit the knowledge of the traumatic experience in a way that preserves its historical truth and authenticity? Also, what kind of form of representation would represent the trauma of the others in an ethically and aesthetically adequate way? Following the 1980s in the heart of the debate there was the question of how to use trauma of the survivors and of the later generation as a means to communicate or mediate the memory of the Holocaust to the later or secondary generations. New concepts came to the fore in order to deal with the traumatic experience as well as to keep the memory of the Holocaust alive.

One of the most well-known concepts is 'postmemory' introduced by Marianne Hirsch.⁷⁹ Initially the concept was understood as a response of the second generation to the trauma of the first, hence as the second generation channels their parents' memories into art. Memory is considered dynamic which is affected by and effects the present and the future. Later, the term has shifted focus from family structures but then broadens it up to the affiliative structures:

"(N)o more than an extension of the loosened familial structured occasioned by war and persecution. It is the result of the contemporaneity and generational connection with the literal second generation, combined with a set of structures of mediation that would be broadly available, appropriable, and indeed, compelling enough to encompass a larger collective in an organic web of transmission."⁸⁰

According to the additional understanding of postmemory, the concept is broadened and becomes the reservoir of secondary witnessing. Postmemory denotes the identification with the traumatised victim as well as a latency, a belated and not first-hand experience of the traumatic event. Hirsch is concerned about the better understanding of the past, thus 'postmemory' – 'retrospective witnessing' – is explored by photography: encounter with the photography and re-living the traumatic event in the visual domain has a traumatic effect⁸¹, however it is different from the survivor's since instead of re-experiencing it the secondary witness repeats the event. Repetition is in the center of Hirsch's arguments, since she claims that it transforms aesthetics into ethics. As opposed to Andrea Liss, who claims that the creative use of photography by artist cause "pitfalls that trespass too heavily through postmemories"⁸², or Barbie Zelizer⁸³ and Geoffrey Hartman⁸⁴, who discuss the desensitising effect of the repetition of images, Hirsch argues that "repetition connects the second generation to the first, in its capacity to produce rather than screen the effect of trauma that was lived so much more directly as compulsive repetition by survivors and contemporary witnesses."⁸⁵

In the case of secondary witnesses repetition is not the means of retraumatization but a helpful vehicle of "transmitting an inherited traumatic past in such a way that

⁷⁹ Marianne Hirsch, *The Generations of Postmemory. Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust*, New York 2012; Hirsch, *Family Frames*, Cambridge 1997.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 36.

⁸¹ Susan Sontag, *On Photography*, New York 1989, 19-20.

⁸² Andrea Liss, *Trespassing Through Shadows. Memory, Photography and the Holocaust*, Minneapolis 1998.

⁸³ Barbie Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory Through the Camera's Eye*, Chicago 1998.

⁸⁴ Geoffrey Hartman, *The Longest Shadow. In the Aftermath of the Holocaust*, Bloomington 1996.

⁸⁵ Hirsch, *The Generations of Postmemory*, 108.

it can be worked through".⁸⁶ Also it raises the question how these images avoid retraumatization and translate the "shock of seeing" into working through. The repetition of images has no restorative attempts, "it is only when they are deployed, in new texts and new contexts, that they regain a capacity to enable a postmemorial working through".⁸⁷ Hence, postmemory is not an identificatory model, "it is 'post'" but at the same time "it approximates memory in its affective and psychic effects".⁸⁸

In Hirsch's understanding postmemory is a personalised conception of trauma, which evokes empathy in the secondary witnesses towards the victims without the appropriation of their identity. Architect Daniel Libeskind however considers trauma abstract, which is linked to concepts such as exile or annihilation.⁸⁹ His concept 'spaces of memory' reflects upon the experience of the material dimension of trauma. Trauma is an architectural challenge that is built into architecture in the forms of void or cuts or sharp lines, while the secondary witnesses become subjected to the materiality of the trauma, to its physical, bodily and spatial sensation, by visiting the site and being exposed to it. The void, as Libeskind explains, suggests the very limit of representation: "The need in architecture to respond to the questions of culture, of public space, of the void is very palpable, since in architecture the void is a space. It is a place of being and non-being. It is a place where one can hardly find traces of a relationship. And yet, it is something, which has been recorded and presented in light, matter, and documents. One can attempt to have access to it through names, addresses, through a kind of haunting quality of spaces which the passage of absence took place."⁹⁰ Libeskind establishes site-specific buildings – let us think about the Garden of Exile in Berlin at the Jewish Museum – whose authenticity might be questioned by the survivors, although, as Libeskind suggests forgetting authenticity and instead practicing the creative reimagination of the authentic spaces.

Besides Adorno's dictum the fact that certain kind of aesthetics was exploited by the Nazis, hence aesthetics was an inherent component of the Fascist regime, and that the Holocaust was supposed to be unique, hence needed an equally unique aesthetic regime led to the demonisation of aesthetics and beauty in the context of the Holocaust.⁹¹ Artists during the Holocaust produced works of art as an affirmation of life, as an act of witnessing, as a spiritual resistance through the assertion of individuality or just to meet the client's needs that is to paint to the order of the commanders.⁹² In the aftermath of the events they felt the innermost urgency to reflect upon what happened and deployed a "dark style" that was anti-realist (i.e. the Holocaust is not knowable and not representable), iconic and figurative based on the concepts of heroism (i.e. anti-fascism) and redemption. However from the 1970s the face of Nazism begun to change in the West and despite their varying tone, register and genre those artworks aimed to introduce a more authentic perception of the past that was also a critique to previous representations.⁹³

86 Ibid.

87 Ibid., 122.

88 Ibid., 36.

89 Comparison of the two is done by Elke Heckner, *Whose Trauma Is It? Identification and Secondary Witnessing in the Age of Postmemory*, in: David Bathrick/Brad Prager-Michael D. Richardson (ed.), *Visualizing the Holocaust. Documents, Aesthetics, Memory*, New York 2008, 62-86.

90 Quoted by Heckner, *Whose Trauma Is It?*, 75.

91 Brett Kaplan, *Unwanted Beauty. Aesthetic Pleasure in Holocaust Representation*, Urbana 2007.

92 Ziva Amishai-Maisels, *The Complexities of Witnessing*, in: Monica Bohm-Duchen (ed.), *After Auschwitz. Responses to the Holocaust in Contemporary Art*, Sunderland 1995, 25.

93 Saul Friedlander, *Reflections of Nazism: an Essay on Kitsch and Death*, New York 1984.

It became clear that the operation of Nazism could not have been analysed only from political, social or economic point of view but there was a need for a synthesis of divert interpretations as well as for the inclusion of images and emotions. Aesthetics presents and interprets the past as well as helps to better understand the present.⁹⁴

By the 1980s a new generation of artists came to the limelight “those who confront the horror of the Nazi genocide and the suffering of its victims, and who continues to bear witness through reconfigured forms of contemporary testimony to events they have never experienced”.⁹⁵ They rejected previous modes of representation and aimed to combine their relation to the past to its memory and in the meanwhile integrate the event in their life narrative. It is not about mourning or talking from the position of the traumatised victim but instead it is a political act, an identity struggle and an attempt to overcome the non-autonomous subjectivity of the victim and to gain control over the future.

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Dora Appel, Memory Effects, 21.

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in: S.I.M.O.N. – Shoah: Intervention. Methods. Documentation. 1 (2014) 2, 28-47.

http://simon.vwi.ac.at/images/Documents/Articles/2014-2/2014-2_ART_Szasz/ART_Szasz.pdf

Article

Copy Editor: Nadezda Kinsky-Mügersdorff

Éva Kovács/András Lénárt/Anna Lujza Szász

Oral History Collections on the Holocaust in Hungary¹

*"It is time to step back and take an accounting.
Where does all this history and its telling lead,
to what kinds of knowledge, to what ends?
For this is, I believe the primary challenge to Holocaust art
and historiography in an anti-redemptory age: it is history-telling
and memory that not only mark their own coming into being
but also point to the places – both real and imagined –
they inevitable take us."*

James Young²

Abstract

This paper focuses on Hungary, where the most unmerciful and the fastest destruction took place in the course of the European Holocaust. Even though it was indeed ‘the most unmerciful’ and ‘the fastest’, Holocaust research still fails to take a prominent role in Hungarian historiography. The archival collections do not constitute an inherent part of the Hungarian national historical heritage. That is to say that the experiences of both the Holocaust and the Roma Genocide³ have not yet become part of collective knowledge; nor have they been able to shape collective identities.

This paper seeks to explore this ignorance through an analysis of existing digital oral history collections on the Holocaust in Hungary. The collections will appear in the order of their creation and will be discussed on the basis of questions such as who supported the collection and for what reason, how much research was done or what results they produced; we will also address whether the collections were established for museological, educational, scientific or tourism-stimulating purposes. The paper identifies three main reasons for the ignorance: First, it argues that – after the regime changes 1989/90 – while coming to terms with the memory of Nazism and autochthonous authoritarian regimes was one of the challenges of Eastern European societies, this process was competing with and retarded by the other challenge, namely the coming to terms with the communist system. Second, it states that the status of the research on the Holocaust and on the Roma Genocide is highly influenced by the actual social, cultural and political environment, while, third, we argue that one reason for that is the conservative attitude of European historiography.

1 This is a revised version of an article originally published in Hungarian: Kovács Éva, Lénárt András and Szász Anna Lujza, A Magyar Holokauszt személyes történetének digitális gyűjteményeiről [About the Digital Collections of the Hungarian Holocaust], in: BUKSZ – Budapesti Könyvszemle [Budapest Review of Books] 23 (2011).

2 James E. Young, *At Memory's Edge. After-Images of the Holocaust in Contemporary Art and Architecture*, New Haven/London 2000, 11.

3 The archives under discussion tie our hands in how to name the historical period. If we were exclusively dealing with the persecution of the Jews then we would have to choose between the words Shoah or Holocaust, while a sole focus on Roma introduce even more phrases that are in use (Porrajmos, Pharrajimos, Kali Traš, Samudaripen). Since we are addressing the memories of the persecution of both groups, we decided to use the word Holocaust with reference to the Jewish persecutions and the word Genocide with reference to the Roma.

Although the experience of the Holocaust is paradigmatic for the history of events and ideas of the 20th century, its research in Hungary not only started late (namely in the beginning of the 1980s), but also was barely institutionalised. Thus, on the one hand, institutional identities and interests failed to offer structures and ways to promote collective memories and on the other, memory was hardly able to play a role in the process of the construction of collective identities. As far as universities are concerned, there has yet to be a department or program established that explores the Holocaust from a historical, sociological, anthropological or psychological perspective. Departments of Hebrew and Jewish Studies focus on the history of the Jews before the 20th century. For example, the program on the Holocaust run by the *Department of Assyriology and Hebrew* at the *Eötvös Lóránd University* in Budapest under the leadership of Géza Komoróczy in cooperation with his colleagues lasted only a few semesters.

Researchers in higher education approached the Holocaust and its consequences not only from a historical perspective but also by analysing the empirical data gained through psychological and psychiatric treatments. There are also a number of publishing houses, journals, websites and clubs with a special focus on Jewish studies. Furthermore, an official Memorial Day (April 16) was established for schools in 2000 and the *Holocaust Memorial Centre* was opened in 2005.⁴

This latter institution deserves more attention. At the end of the 1990s, the Hungarian political elite took the decision to establish two historical museums. This decision, which was deeply criticised by the media, was to set the tone for the public discourse on both the history of Hungary in the 20th century and its memory for a long time. The *Memorial Centre* does not 'exist' on its own; it is a *counterpart* to the House of Terror, which opened its doors in 2002 and was widely criticised for its factual mistakes, simplifying contents, its the black-and-white perception of history, disproportionate emphases, the influence of politics, and for the provocative choice of the site and the construction of the blade-wall. Furthermore, the Memorial Centre for the Holocaust, was situated on the outskirts of the city at a considerable distance from the location of the former Jewish ghetto; this essential lack of a geographical contextualisation for the building revealed the ways in which the Holocaust is approached by social and political powers in Hungary.

Yet, from a present-day perspective, it was an irrevocable mistake on the part of the dominant cultural policy of the time to separate the ongoing discussions of the two consecutive stormy epochs not only in the urban but also in the mental space: into a 'cold', i.e., inactive memory of Nazism and a 'hot', i.e., still mobilising memory of Communism.⁵ Hence, the ordinary visitor to any one of these museums can decide whether a 'Jewish' or a 'Hungarian' narrative of suffering is of more interest to him or her. But while – following recent research results – the Memorial Centre aims to convey the message that the persecution of Jews was an inherent part and result of Hungarian history, the House of Terror attempts to fade out this history. With regard to technology and spectacle, these two museums are the most advanced of all Hungarian memorial institutions. In their state of separation, however, they establish an out-dated concept by creating two central but competing national sites of memory, i.e., national narratives.

4 We have already discussed the establishment of the museum in a wider context: Gerhard Seewann and Éva Kovács, *Juden und Holocaust in der ungarischen Erinnerungskultur*, in: *Südosteuropa* 54 (2006), 24–59.

5 Charles S. Maier, *Heißes und kaltes Gedächtnis. Über die politische Halbwertszeit von Nazismus und Kommunismus*, in: *Transit* 22 (2001/2002), 153–165.

Although personal recollections and family stories constitute a significant part of each exhibition, they invoke a sense of incompleteness since they are not aptly inserted into the narrative frame. As a result of the fact that these lives were reconstructed on the basis of archival sources, the survivors were not able to personally contribute their image and voice. Thus they become mere illustrations of a general narrative of political history. We therefore conclude that the marginalisation of the Holocaust as a research topic together with a essentially conservative historiographical approach that is based exclusively on archival sources are responsible for the fact that the voices of the eyewitnesses and survivors remain too quiet in the public history of the Holocaust in Hungary.⁶

That these two peculiar attitudes have gradually removed Hungary from participation in international research as well as the wider international public discourse is best indicated by the fact that the Holocaust in Hungary rarely features in international academic discussions (especially when compared to its significance). Historian Gábor Gyáni, who was commissioned to critically evaluate the Hungarian historiography of the Holocaust in 2008, argues that where there ought to be a river there is but a small stream of research conducted in Hungary. This research primarily focuses on the analysis of archival sources (mainly the existing archival documents of organisations and of governmental departments) and aims to reconstruct the history of events outside of any theoretical framework.⁷ However, as Gyáni adds, the broader international academic discourse nevertheless continues to follow schools of theory, arguing accordingly when it comes to the interpretation of universal and local phenomena of the Holocaust.

One among the many responses to the critical observations of Gyáni was László Karsai, Professor of History at the University of Szeged and the Head of the Yad Vashem Research Group⁸ in Hungary. In his extensive response, Karsai refined some issues of uncertainty, while at the same he did not clarify reassuringly why “the competent historian contributors of a representative companion to the historiography of the Holocaust”⁹ fail to refer to works of Hungarian authors, not even to those who publish in English.

The debate has closed and the situation has remained the same. Yet a minor change can be perceived: As Gyáni acknowledges in his permissive moments, we are seeing the emergence of a new generation of researchers, who are already familiar with contemporary theories.

6 Generally speaking, the oral history collections were only belatedly incorporated into Hungarian mainstream social history, see: András Lénárt, ‘Történetgyűjtés’ – Oral history archívumok Magyarországon [Story Collecting – Oral History Archives in Hungary], in: Aetas 22 (2007), 5-30.

7 Balázs Ablonczy/Novák Attila, Tizenkét állítás a soáról [Twelve Statements about the Shoah], in: Kommentár 3 (2008), 9; Gábor Gyáni, Helyünk a holokauszt történetírásában [Our Place in Holocaust Historiography], in: Kommentár 3 (2008), 13-23; László Karsai, A magyar holokauszt-történetírásról [About the Hungarian Holocaust-historiography], in: Kommentár 6 (2008): 91-104; Attila Pók, Krisztián Ungváry, Tamás Csiki and Kinga Frojimovics were also involved in the debate.

8 Unfortunately, the collection cannot be searched in Hungary, neither does Yad Vashem provide a database for further research. Researchers have to personally approach László Karsai and ask for access to the data.

9 Dan Stone (ed.), *The Historiography of the Holocaust*, London 2004.

I. “Collecting oneself” – Interview Projects on the Holocaust and on Jewish Identity

Consequently, the collection of testimonies and interviews is not rooted in the mainstream of international Holocaust research in Hungary. A lack of historical projects focussing on testimonies has meant that the trauma of the past has remained with survivors and the descendants of victims. Hence, it is not by accident that it was psychologists who first were faced with the haunting heritage of the Holocaust, only later to inform the public about their findings (apart from a moderate amount of published autobiographical reflections and of their depictions in national and international fiction). According to Ferenc Erős, “[T]he scientific, visual and textual conceptualizations in some sense have become self-referent models. The cultural patterns were not sufficient to unfold individual life stories or autobiographical narratives. In fact, internal barriers and repressions had to be overcome to be able to communicate the experiences related to Jewishness. The situation was as followed: although there were many things available for the cultural memory, the communicative memory was suffering from deficits and shortages.”¹⁰

A pioneer project on challenging forgetting and silence was conducted by Teréz Virág. She delivered a lecture on her therapeutic work with Holocaust survivors in front of a small audience (others claim there was a wider professional audience) on November 9, 1982. In the last remaining two decades of her life, she concentrated on understanding and analysing the trauma of the Holocaust. She published a call in one of the Hungarian Jewish Cultural Association’s newsletters that invited interested readers to talk about the (Jewish) past and to learn the history of others’ descents. That is to say that Virág initiated the first ‘Holocaust discussion group’, called KÚT, which was then a unique initiative in the Eastern bloc. It was turned into a psychotherapeutic consulting room in 1992 and later into a foundation.¹¹ Every year hundreds, by 1996 more than a thousand, socially traumatised persons approached the staff of the foundation. The primary focus was to heal the wounds of Holocaust survivors and their descendants, but the organisation also aimed to help victims of social persecution and of any other type of discrimination, organised conferences and summarised therapeutic observations in edited volumes.

Another psychotherapy project was initiated almost at the same time as Virág’s undertaking: Ferenc Erős and András Stark were interested in how the first-generation descendants of Holocaust survivors coped with the anxiety stemming from their Jewishness or from its concealment. With the help of András Kovács and Katalin Lévai they started conducting interviews. The first essay, following the launch of the project for a professional audience, was published in the journal Medvetánc [Bear Dance] in 1985.¹² Further ambitious research projects were started and articles based on the approximately 150 in-depth interviews conducted a decade earlier by interviewers with various social backgrounds were published in

10 Ferenc Erős, A zsidó identitás ‘felfedezése’ Magyarországon a nyolcvanas években [The ‘Discovery’ of the Jewish Identity in Hungary in the Eighties], in: Katalin Bárdos/Erős Ferenc/Kardos Péter (eds.), “... aki nyomot hagyott”. In memoriam Virág Teréz [“... who left a trace”. In Memoriam Teréz Virág], Budapest 2003, 55.

11 Needless to say, the Foundation was financially supported by foreign organisations: the Representation of Hungary to the European Union, Soros Foundation, Cooperating Netherlands Foundations for Central and Eastern Europe, the Hungarian office of JOINT. Teréz Virág (ed.), Elhúzódó társadalmi trauma hatásának felismerése és gyógyítása [The Recognition and Healing of the Effects of Chronic Social Traumas] Budapest 1997.

12 Ferenc Erős/Kovács András/Lévai Katalin, Hogyan jöttem rá, hogy zsidó vagyok? [How Did I realise that I am a Jew?], in: Medvetánc [Bear’s Dance] 2-3 (1985), 129-145.

the 1990s.¹³ The transcriptions are currently the property of Ferenc Erős and András Kovács. Negotiations on archiving and digitisation the material have started only recently with the Voices of the 20th Century Research Archive (Voices) as well as with the Open Society Archive (OSA).

Another interview project, this one related to psychoanalysis, was started even earlier: in 1986–87, and with the help of scholarships, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the Social Scientific Board of the Soros Foundation supported a research project entitled “The effect of prolonged and vitally dangerous social discrimination on the psychic life of survivors’ children”. The head of the research team was Júlia Szilágyi, its members were the psychiatrists István Cserne and Katalin Pető, as well as psychoanalyst and writer György Szőke. According to the existing research reports, they managed to conduct forty interviews with first- and second-generation representatives of Holocaust survivors. The interviewees were approached by applying the method of snowball sampling. The participants were assured that they would stay anonymous and the transcripts of their interviews would be used for a few presentations and publications in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The interviews focussed on life stories and were further concerned with the interviewees’ relationship to their Jewishness, with their families and with illnesses in the family as well as with syndromes considered to be pathological. This collection of interviews is also expected to be adopted by the Voices and the OSA.

Soon after the Jewish foundation schools were established in 1991, Éva Kovács and Júlia Vajda embarked on exploring the Jewish identity among second and third generation Holocaust survivors by applying the technique of narrative life history interviews, which they conducted with two dozen families. In each case, they spoke with both the parents and the children. However, it took another decade, until 2002, for the book that sums up the main lines of research to be published.¹⁴ Social psychologists and sociologists welcomed not only the new method but also the innovative approach to the personal memories of the Holocaust; social historians acknowledged it only several years later. As the above examples show, these interviews were conducted for the purpose of researching and not for archiving. There were no plans to store and provide public access to the collections.

The opposite can be said about the very large-scale video-interview project launched by the Shoah Foundation in the 1990s. The collection has finally been made accessible and searchable in Hungary. It is notable that instead of being canonised as a source in historical research, and as a result of the devoted work of one of its host-institutions, the Zachor Foundation, its testimonies have been used as an important educational resource.

On the basis of the above, we can conclude that the use of interviews as sources for scientific research was insufficient in the last thirty years. This is partly due to the fact that they are unknown and difficult to access as well as still barely analysed. In a wider sense, the negligence of qualitative sources is an unfortunate outcome of the efforts to come to terms with the past (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*). Thus, the search for identity and a self-definition in the 1980s and 1990s was followed by confrontations not only with the society’s disinterest and antipathy but also with relativisation and a conservative historiography. However, it has to be added that the interview

13 The research projects were funded as a result of the lobbying activity of professor György Csepeli, by the Faculty of Sociology at ELTE, then the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund and the Randolph Braham Foundation.

14 Éva Kovács/Vajda Júlia, Mutatkozás. Zsidó Identitás Történetek [Appearance. Jewish Identity Stories], Budapest 2002.

situation was considered to be therapeutic, since it held in itself the possibility to re-experience past events and at the same time express and invoke one's Jewishness in the present through the act of speech; in other words, through the narration of the self. Narration construed permanence in time and organised the past of the person who through the capacity of speech and gestures performed his/her Jewishness. Additionally, these interviews had a social function among second-generation Jews by contributing to the Jewish revival. Hence, becoming visible and providing autobiographical accounts of the past encouraged the younger generation of Jews to reconstruct their identity from the perspective of being a Jew.

II. Counter-memories – the Lonely Governmental Initiative for Documenting Nazism and Communism

Soon after the regime change, victims of all kinds of former totalitarian and authoritarian Hungarian regimes went public with their stories in order to reclaim their lives and identities as well as to establish their truth about past events. However, this boom of remembering calmed down after a few years and took a more or less political turn. There occurred a politicisation of memories, that is to say, a fierce struggle over language and visibility in which memory was able to legitimise present political aims and at the same time could preserve itself for future remembering.

One of the most apparent manifestations of political influence in shaping memories is the Hungarian government's wish to assign all tasks for producing, collecting and recording personal memories of the post-1945 period to The Public Foundation for the Research of Central and East European History and Society, which operates the House of Terror, in order to develop inter-generational knowledge-sharing and to channel the material into education. Evidently, the Hungarian scientific communities have grown accustomed to the fact that politics is only moderately sensitive to professional argumentation. When questions of expenses in the cultural and scientific sphere are decided on the grounds of prestige rather than professional considerations, this is usually followed by an outcry from the given field's (intellectual) professionals. Such an outcry did occur in this case as well, but remained in vain.

The Public Foundation, under the auspices of Mária Schmidt, was commissioned and took up operations in 2009. It is a large-scale research project with absolute priority for the government, mainly supported by the European Union. Although the budget of the Public Foundation would have sufficed in order to preserve and improve the conditions in many of the already existing audio/visual interview archives as well as to make them accessible and channel them into education, the foundation established a new visual archive titled *Emlékpontok* [Memory-spots]. We can assume that the decision-makers were not aware of the interview collections owned by civil organizations or individuals. If they did, however, know of their existence, they obviously saw less political profit to be gained in these than in a grand 'national' plan. Evidently, such an allocation of EU-funds as well as the juxtaposition of the memory of Communism with the experience of Hungarian Jews raised thought-provoking questions. After all, it was a decision not only of the distribution of funds but also of the politics of history.

A memory, hand in hand with the socially constructed 'spirit' of the archive, that is 'invented' and worth preserving is able to trigger an avalanche of endless power manipulations. This is the true implication of the gigantic scale of the *Emlékpontok* collection ('only' 3,200 out of the planned tens of thousands of interviews were actually

conducted and only 1658 are available on the website. The amount is remarkable *per se*, as will be demonstrated later on in the discussion on the existing archives.). Generally speaking, the institution of an archive, which represents and provides access to a collection, is necessarily involved in the process of canonisation: it influences the discursive formation and maintenance of identity, in this case national identity.¹⁵ Thus, the institutionalization of the past which is organised around questions such as ‘What to collect?; ‘How to collect?; ‘What to do with the collection?; or ‘What to remember and what to forget?’ is one of the many techniques which construct a community in the social space that is managed by politics. In this sense, the archive is a ‘saturated space’, which uses the past in order to shape collective identifications. However, another reading of the archive as an institution suggests that the preservation of memories is merely a compulsive habit. It is understood as a contemporary phenomenon which aims to disguise the instability of the ‘self’ as a result of the technological development and of the late modern age as well as to provide a shelter from social changes; it re-evokes the past in the present but fails to relate it to future expectations.¹⁶

III. Private obsessions – Interview Collections on the Roma Genocide

The majority of primary source materials related to the Roma Genocide are in private hands. Both their status of obscurity and their rather bad quality (a consequence of how they have been stored) preclude direct access, knowledge production and knowledge sharing as well as the publication of results. As if the Roma Genocide itself was Pandora’s box, as if the narrators of past events were the carriers of secrets which would better be forgotten: “[a]t one and the same time the Gypsies conspire to forget the trauma of their persecution and to hold on – though in silence – to a hidden, collective memory of it”. However, in this case, the root of the problem is not the forgetting, as remembering and forgetting are not mutually exclusive practices. “The opposing concepts are preservation and erasure.”¹⁷ In a slight exaggeration, this paper argues that both terms proved to be harmful to the research on the Roma Genocide: with regard to preservation, there are ‘private obsessions’ and with regard to erasure, there is a real or simulated lack of concern evolving in the prevailing political field of power. Hence, the real tragedy of the Roma Genocide is that it is still considered alien within the corpus of Holocaust historiography and of national history. Furthermore, it is neither incorporated in the collective memory of Roma nor does it play any significant role in the process of identification at individual, group and community levels.

There are gaps in our knowledge of the Roma Genocide. The question of ‘*What happened?*’ remains unanswered – partly due to the lack of documents, partly because there was no central order issued for the persecution of Roma by the authorities in 1944. As a result, some researchers argue that the Roma Genocide cannot be qualified as part of the Holocaust since, unlike in the case of the *Endlösung* there was no deliberate intention to annihilate.¹⁸ Each district or county were autonomous in

15 György Péter/Kiss Barbara/Monok István (eds.), Kulturális örökség – társadalmi képzelet [Cultural Heritage – Social Imagination], Budapest 2005, 7-8.

16 Andreas Huyssen, Present Past. Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory, Stanford 2003.

17 Tzvetan Todorov, Az emlékezet hasznáról és káráról [On the Use and Abuse of Memory]. Budapest 1998, 13 [The original version of this text is titled ‘Les abus de la mémoire’ and presented at a conference organised by the Auschwitz Foundation in Brussels in 1992].

18 E.g.: Guenter Lewy, The Nazi Persecution of the Gypsies, Oxford 2001.

treating their Roma population; the documents are scattered in local archives. Finding them, organising them on the basis of various themes and analysing them would require determination, cooperation, and an enormous amount of financial and human capital. Moreover, the recorded testimonies – although they were not destined for filling the gaps in the documentation of the past – failed to become part of a collective knowledge.

Zsuzsanna Vidra wrote an essay in which she summarises those political and historiographical discourses that play a significant role in shaping the narrative of the persecution.¹⁹ She discusses international developments such as that the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum was founded exclusively upon Jewish experiences or that the representation of Roma was gaining gradually more space as a result of the work of Ian Hancock and Sir Angus Fraser. Vidra also explores the international debate between the Roma Genocide researchers at the British Hertfordshire University and the Gypsy Lore Society, which deeply influenced the Hungarian historiographical approaches.²⁰ While the former claim that Roma were persecuted on racial grounds and that the repercussions of this genocide still structure the underlying distributive and redistributive mechanisms of the society, the latter organisation considers the Holocaust as a defining “Jewish event”. None of the parties is able to free itself from that political and moral framework.²¹

IV. Personal Narratives of the Holocaust

IV. 1. Collections of the Holocaust Memorial Centre

A collection of memoires, articles and objects came into being through the dedicated work of both the Hungarian Resistance Fighters’ and Antifascists’ Alliance (*Magyar Ellenállók és Antifasiszták Szövetsége, MEASZ*, established in 1945) and the Committee for the Victims of Nazi Persecution (*Nácizmus Üldözötteinek Országos Egyesülete, NÜB*, established in 1971), and was completed by the compilation of the Auschwitz Foundation. This collection was then merged with the Holocaust Memorial Centre, established in 2004, but in separated form. In the last decade, the activities of the Centre have been overshadowed by professional and political debates and scandals covered by the media. The archiving of documents was considered less important than other priorities set in the fields of education, research and exhibition, hence professional preservation did not begin before the summer of 2010.

The Centre’s holdings are divided into five main sub-collections: documents, testimonies, photographs, audio-visuals and objects. In the autumn of 2011, 9,000 items were registered in the inventory, 673 of which were testimonies. A scan of the registry files reveals that the testimonies and diaries arrived in two waves in the 1960s and 1980s when the survivors handed them over to the MEASZ (in the course of compensation proceedings). Until today, the Centre is continuing to receive these kinds of sources. In most cases, the texts are short and factual, in accordance with the written requests for compensation. They focus on the experiences of forced labour and of the concentration camps, providing summaries of the individuals’ sufferings on a few pages each. Strangely, the archive of the Centre lacks collections of interviews

19 Zsuzsanna Vidra, A roma holokauszt narratívái. Történetírás, megemlékezés, politikai diskurzusok [Narratives of the Roma Holocaust. Historiography, Commemoration, Political Discourses], in: Regio 15 (2005) 2, 111-129.

20 Donald Kenrick and Grattan Puxon, The Destiny of Europe’s Gypsies, New York 1972.

21 Daniel Lévy/Natan Sznaider, The Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age, Philadelphia 2006.

conducted for the purpose of research. This is particularly interesting in light of the Centre's mission statement, wherein the institution considers itself the only establishment with the aim of exclusively collecting the sources, the memories of the persecutions. The lack of qualitative sources stems primarily from the fact that the Centre does not regard it as its duty to interview survivors and eye-witnesses. In other words, a greater emphasis was placed on the exploration of written and material sources than on the audio-visual recording of personal memories.

In 2001, Miklós Bauer, a former high-ranking officer at the communist State Protection Authority ÁVH, wrote his wartime memories at the age of 80 and donated one copy to the Memorial Centre. In his text entitled *De arte Vivendi*, he recalls his underground communist activity, which focused mainly on his involvement in falsifying documents. But apart from the above, the majority of the autobiographical accounts are produced by unknown or forgotten people. The audio-visual collection comprises various recordings stored on different, occasionally unplayable, types of data storage devices. There are films or recordings of public commemorations or audio interviews as well as interviews conducted by the Shoah Foundation in Hungary, which were handed over to the Centre personally by survivors. Furthermore, there are approximately thirty testimonies of particular relevance to Hungary, which were donated by the Shoah Foundation itself. Since 2005, donations can be accepted in a legally safe way: the agreement ensures that the donor fully or partially cedes his/her right over the donation.

Regrettably, the main shortcoming of the collection is its lack of public visibility and its unmanaged state, despite the fact that it is located in a prestigious, state-funded institution with an extensive network of international partners. However, archival processing is making headway; it is only a question of time that the inventory will become an online, open-access research database.

The material on the Roma Holocaust ought also to be stored by the Memorial Centre. By this, we mean on the one hand the research conducted for the temporary Holocaust exhibition at the inaugural of the Holocaust Memorial Centre in 2004, and on the other hand the research that has been done for the permanent exhibition. The Bársony-Daróczis and the staff at the Roma Press Centre have lobbied assiduously in order to achieve the inclusion of the memory of the Roma Genocide. *Memory of the Pharrajimos* was arranged on the balcony of the synagogue and curated by Gábor Székely and Éva Orsós from the Museum of Ethnography. The institute appointed Péter Szuhay as curator who was in charge of the exhibition in close cooperation with Gábor Bernáth (then director of the Roma Press Centre) and together with his colleagues Andrea Tóth and János Bársony and the stage designer Márton Szuhay. Until November 2005, the display introduced a dozen testimonies recorded by János Bársony, Ágnes Daróczki, József Lojkó Lakatos, Ágota Varga as well as related photos. A book edited by János Bársony and Ágnes Daróczki (*Pharrajimos, The Fate of Roma during the Holocaust*²²) accompanied the exhibition. It was compiled with the help of even more interviews, studies and other notes than the collection actually presented: The archiving of the interviews has not yet begun.

Following the temporary exhibition, preparations were made to set up a permanent exhibit under the direction of head curator Judit Molnár. Judit Molnár and László Karsai took the decision to include the story of a Roma family next to the four stories of Jewish families from different social strata. In the autumn of 2004, a small re-

²² János Bársony/Ágnes Daróczki (eds.), *Pharrajimos The Fate of Roma During the Holocaust*, New York, Budapest 2008.

search team was formed under the leadership of Péter Szuhay in order to find a Roma family who could be documented and visually presented. Based on their previously obtained knowledge, each researcher picked at least two communities and conducted around three unstructured interviews in each settlement in order to unfold the history of the family. The interviewers explored not only the experience of the Roma Genocide but also the history of the family and of the wider community. They also made findings on the relationship between the majority and the minority or the status of Roma on the labour market. The researchers also gave a voice to local historians and teachers by using their texts. The collection comprised photographs, birth certificates, identification cards, official documents, correspondence as well as in-depth interviews conducted on the settlement as part of the representative Roma survey in 1971.²³

Finally, written personal reports examined and summarised the findings and the experiences gained during each field investigation. Unfortunately, we have not succeeded in detecting this historical collection. According to the former head of research, the documents were handed over to the Hungarian National Museum, which was involved in setting up the exhibition. However, the museum's archives only hold the documentation of the collection, not the collection itself. The digital copies, however, have been preserved by Péter Szuhay in Budapest's Museum of Ethnography and are accessible following a prior agreement – yet there is justified concern regarding the proper preservation and management of the documents.

IV. 2. Esther's Bag Collection

The Esther's Bag Workshop is related to the special women's issue of the Jewish political and cultural magazine *Szombat* (*Shabbat*). The special issue and the questions and topics it raised resonated on a collective level. This led to further discussions and finally Esther's Bag came into existence in 2002. Its founders are Borbála Juhász (historian), Andrea Kuti (then English language teacher, now rabbi), Katalin Pécsi (literary historian), Andrea Pető (historian), Mónika Sándor (psychologist), Zsuzsanna Toronyi (museologist, now the Head of the Hungarian Jewish Archives) and Judit Wirth (women and children's advocate). The mission of the workshop was to "spread Jewish and female values" to a wider public and professional circles, reinterpreting traditional Jewish values from the perspectives of social justice, solidarity, and equal opportunities.

The most important pillar of its scope of activities – next to publications and the organisation of film clubs and conferences – is to collect personal testimonies of women on subjects that have been silenced and tabooed. Events like *Untold Stories by Jewish Women* were transmitted by word-of-mouth and set a stage where fear dissolved and even those who had not been able to speak before were able to gain a voice. The stories could be heard at readers' nights, and were eventually edited and published by Katalin Pécsi. The workshop continued to take place under the auspices of the Esther's House Association, which Pécsi established in 2007 with a focus on researching and photo-documenting the homes and material culture of Jewish women. In the meantime, Esther's Bag has joined the *Madok* programme of the Museum of Ethnography, which aims to establish a virtual museum for objects, which were made, used and cared for by women.

²³ István Kemény/Kálmán Rupp/Zsolt Csalog/Gábor Havas, Beszámoló a magyarországi cigányok helyzetével foglalkozó 1971-ben végzett kutatásról [Report on Research Carried Out in 1971 On the situation of Gypsies in Hungary], Budapest (Sociological Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences [HAS]) 1976.

Most of the texts can be found on the archive pages of the *Szombat* website. It is unclear what is going to happen to the collection or who is going to take care of it if the workshops stop or the website goes offline.

IV. 3. *Centropa Collection*

The *Centropa Hungary Jewish Family History Non-profit Ltd. (Centropa)* officially launched its operations in Budapest in 2003. However, it had already started collecting materials (life stories, photographs, artefacts or their copies) three years earlier. Its international umbrella organisation (*Centropa – Central Europe Center for Research and Documentation*) had recorded life history interviews and collected photographs in fifteen countries within the framework of a project entitled *Stories from a Family Album – Memories of Hungarian Jews from the 20th Century*. The interviewers approached a precisely defined group of individuals, namely the generation born between 1910 and 1935, and asked them to describe the world they grew up in in the first half of the 20th century, then their life under the Holocaust and subsequently experiences after the war to the present. The primary goal was to document the every-day life of Jewish families with a special focus on photographs. The project regarded the photographs not only as documents of historical value but also as tools to recall the past. The explanations attached to the photographs and the stories unfolding from them complete visual memories well, yet they are significant enough in themselves to be recorded.

The founder of *Centropa* is the Austrian-American photographer, documentary film-maker and journalist Edward Serotta. By the end of the 1980s, he had managed to build his personal archive of photographs collected from Jews of Eastern European origin. He was also devoted to taking photographs and recording interviews. After a long preparation period, the *Central Europe Center for Research and Documentation* was registered as a non-profit NGO in the USA in the mid-1990s, with its headquarters located in Vienna, Austria and an additional office in Budapest, Hungary.

Both the interview format and the methodological guidelines were prepared by the sociologists Eszter Andor and Dóra Sárdi, who were also responsible for the coordination of interviewers, editors, historians etc., working for the project in other countries.²⁴ Initially, the organisation received a substantial amount of financial support from the Austrian federal government and from American Jewish foundations. As the funds were cut over time, *Centropa* stopped conducting interviews and shifted towards the preparation of educational materials. The commissioned interviewer had to make the appointment, fill out the (long enough) questionnaire, draw up the family tree, collect photographs and record the interview as well as adopt some small changes and produce a 20 or 30-page ‘reader-friendly’ edition of the transcript.

An earlier version of the website showed additional explanations to concepts and words; the current version makes neither these nor the methodological guidelines available. One of the biggest advantages of the present surface is that one can search in the database and explore the texts and images by categories such as state, individual, occupation, place, activity, document, Holocaust or military rank. It aims to reach a wider public. Hence the online platform is not concerned with the ‘raw’ texts and sounds. These are, however, available to researchers upon request. Images ap-

²⁴ Besides Austria and Hungary, the interviews were conducted in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Israel, Poland, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Turkey.

pear to be preferred to texts on the platform; no decision has yet been made regarding the preservation of audio-materials. However, the Hungarian regional coordinators claim that the digitisation of the recordings is on the agenda. The digitised images in lesser quality may only be used with the permission of the archive.

The website provides access not only to photographs, but also to eleven short films. The films focus on a single part of the life story, with the aid of moving and mounting the interviews, the photo database and other photos as well as inserting some sections of video recordings. Certain effects are increased by acting out interview texts, providing background music and audio description. It is up to the viewer to decide whether this increased aestheticisation of the Holocaust (the mass production of schematic short films) is appropriate to transmitting past experiences and will make future generations sensitive towards history or family stories.

On the Hungarian website, one can browse among 220 edited interviews and approx. 5,000 digitised photographs.²⁵ The structure elaborated by the founder and his advisors intends to achieve the highest grade of documentation and presentation of a group's past and present. Strikingly enough, there are only two contact people listed on the website and not much information provided on the activities of the foundation, particularly recent ones.²⁶ Students have the opportunity to upload photographs and videos, but only a small number of children and adolescents have taken the opportunity to do so. Those few photos illustrate everyday life at Jewish schools, occasionally including festivities. It seems that *Centropa* is no longer a favoured or financially supported Holocaust archive. The only ongoing programme is the *Café Centropa*, which is formed by former interviewees who meet every six weeks at the Bálint House, a Jewish community centre in Budapest.

IV. 4. The Mauthausen Survivors Documentation Project (MSDP) and the Forced Labour 1939–1945 Collection

In 2002, the Austrian Federal Ministry of the Interior initiated an international project for the worldwide recording of testimonies given by survivors of the Mauthausen concentration camp and its satellite camps. The Hungarian team recorded 52 audio and five video interviews in Hungarian, using the narrative technique.²⁷ One copy of each interview, of the collected artefacts as well as of their additional documentation came to Hungary in the autumn of 2011. Since 2012, the material has been accessible through an online platform jointly maintained by the Voices of the 20th Century Archive and Research Group. One third of the interviews have already been transcribed.

The German Foundation Remembrance, Responsibility and Future (EVZ – Stiftung Erinnerung, Verantwortung und Zukunft) was established in 2000. As the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II was approaching, the EVZ intended to give voice to those individuals who were deployed as forced labourers or slave workers in the Third Reich between 1939 and 1945.²⁸ The Hungarian team, led by Éva Kovács, conducted fifteen interviews in Hungary and four interviews in Slovakia, all of them in Hungarian. Voices of the 20th Century Archive and Research Group finally got the

25 Photographs and interviews were collected between 2000 and 2008.

26 There is no information available on the exhibition, which introduced the oeuvre of photographer Imre Kinszki, in cooperation with the Jewish Museum.

27 <http://www.mauthausen-memorial.at/>, (12.7.2013).

28 "EVZ Stiftung", <http://www.stiftung-evz.de/eng/the-foundation/history.html>, <http://www.zwangarbeit-archiv.de/en/index.html>, (12.7.2013).

copyright for these interviews in order to promote further research on the material in Hungary. In 2010/11, the Hungarian sub-collection was prepared for high school and university education with funding by the Active Remembrance' Programme of the European Commission's Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA). The material focuses on the aspects of liberation and homecoming.²⁹

IV. 5. The "Totalitarianism and Holocaust" Collection

This archive was state funded with a smaller investment than the above-mentioned *Emlékpontok* Visual Archive. It was run as a sub-project in the framework of the Spirit of Europe and the Totalitarianism projects, directed by Júlia Vajda. The project was set up in order to explore the memory of the Holocaust by analysing testimonies given by survivors and eyewitnesses of the first half of the 20th century. It aimed to understand the history of a mentality and the historical context that led to the mass destruction of life. In the course of the project, which started in 2004, the team recorded 334 narrative life history interviews. The research director stated that they encountered particular difficulties in approaching eyewitnesses. In contrast to the experience of freedom in survivor testimonies, eyewitness accounts are overshadowed by a sense of shame stemming from the narrators' past failure to act.

Each interview is accompanied by a questionnaire that sums up the most important data on the interviewees' experiences of persecution and war. The interviewers also took every opportunity to collect artefacts, photographs or other documents. The collection is stored at the University of Debrecen and at the OSA. Interviews kept at the latter are only accessible with permission from the interviewees. A copy of the collection was delivered to the *Yad Vashem Museum* in the spring of 2010.

It is uncertain whether there will be sufficient funds available in the future in order to preserve the interviews and make them openly accessible (only twenty out of 334 have so far been transcribed). Other issues concern target groups and future potential researchers. If OSA begins to archive these documents, it will aspire to ensure open access as well as improved search and user functionality in accordance with its mission statement: „to broaden access to primary sources by overcoming technical, legal, geographic, and socio-cultural barriers”. Until then, it may be useful to create a database enabling interested persons to gain information about the project, the interviewees as well as the place and time of the interviews. Next to raising curiosity and awareness, such a database would also acquaint potential future users with the basic features of the interviews, the semantic particularities of the collection and the suggested categories of archiving. Furthermore, it is unclear if the interviewees are aware of where their stories are stored and what will happen with the collection in Yad Vashem beyond being conserved. We wonder if these materials will be or indeed should be managed by the museum at all.

29 For more, see: <http://www.20szazadhangja.hu/rescape>, (12.7.2013).

IV. 6. Collection 'Inside the Glass House and Beyond'

As the title suggests, this collection is interested in the activities of the Zionist Youth Movement operated in the Glass House in Budapest's Vadász Street³⁰ as well as in the life stories of young women participating in the movement. It was the project's primary goal to locate women who have rescued others or have been rescued themselves and collect their stories, their involvement and role in the resistance and rescue movements in Hungary.

By focussing on women, the collection provides new and legitimate interpretations of what it means to be 'oppressed', to 'resist' or to be a 'hero'. With this gesture, head of research Katalin Pécsi-Pollner suggests a different view of the memory of the Holocaust. She aims to explore the dialectics of remembering and forgetting from the perspective of the invisible or under-represented Woman. Pécsi-Pollner reminds us that it is a question of power who remembers and what is being remembered. She raises questions in line with the fundamental questions of women's historiography: 'Why are women missing from history?' 'What circumstances did women live in in the past?' 'How did different gender roles shape their lives?' 'How can the masculine cultural understanding inherent in scientific work and thinking be modified, transformed or completed?'

Pécsi-Pollner's research is the first to give a voice to Hungarian Zionist women: it reveals new historical facts and aspects. The collection became the archive of Untold Stories of Women, recounting memories filled with little details, emotions and with a sense of humour. The collection was borne out of an international cooperation between the Holocaust Memorial Centre in Budapest and two partner-institutions in Berlin: The German Resistance Memorial Centre (*Gedenkstätte Deutscher Widerstand*) and the International Auschwitz Committee. In August and September 2010, Pécsi-Pollner and her team (one cameraman and two volunteer assistants) recorded 53 video-interviews throughout Israel, from the Lebanese border to the Gaza strip. The copyrights are held by the Memorial Centre, where the collection can be researched upon submission of a researcher's statement. Eighteen out of the 53 interviews have so far been transcribed. The website provides access to the entire list of interviewees with an indicator next to each name if the document can be accessed in the institution.³¹ Due to financial issues, only eight interviewee profiles (photograph, short biography, date and place of the interview) have been completed until now.

In each interview, the first questions focus on family background, childhood experiences and education, then the interviewee explains how she got involved in the Zionist Movement, followed by information on the German occupation and the times after the liberation, including Aliyah. The final question of each interview asks: 'What would you do differently in your life if you had the chance to begin again?' These portraits – condensed into less than an hour – preserve the voice of the woman, her personality, feelings, emotions and her environment. However, the conspicuous presence of the interviewer in the films means that they may be more appropriately considered double portraits.

³⁰ The Glass House on Vadász Street 29 was the property of the Weiss family and had been the building of the family's glass factory until the anti-Jewish decree banned the family from exercising its profession. Carl Lutz, the Swiss vice-Consul in Budapest and Emigration Department for Representing Foreign Interest of the Swiss Embassy moved into the empty building in July 24, 1944. The house became a shelter as well as the center for issuing *Schutzzpasses* and distributing other documents.

³¹ Holocaust Documentation Center, www.hdke.hu/emlekezes/eletinterjuk, (12.7.2013).

IV. 7. Visual History Archive in Hungary and the Collection of the Zachor Foundation

The Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive in Hungary can be accessed at the library of the Central European University, and since November 2013 also at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest.³² There are 3,600 interviews that were conducted with individuals born in Hungary, 1,336 which were held in Hungarian. The majority of the interviews in Hungarian were conducted with Jewish survivors, but also include some with political prisoners, Jehovah's Witnesses and rescuers/aid providers. Unfortunately, only two Roma people from Hungary were included in the interview project.

It is our impression that both the database and its operation are full of contradictions. Although it is the world's largest collection of Holocaust testimonies, only a few people in Hungary have heard of it and even fewer actually use it. It is available to the public and free of charge, but the Hungarian institutions struggle to come up for the operational and license fees they are obliged to cover.

The Zachor Foundation for Social Remembrance developed out of the Visual History Archive. It is a non-profit educational organisation whose mission it is to raise awareness against racism, antisemitism and prejudice. The organisation develops educational programmes and approaches schools with those materials in order to demonstrate the decay of morality in the Hungarian society as well as the ways in which every-day humiliations led to genocide at hand of these interviews. To put it differently, the foundation regards the Holocaust as a 'showroom of history' where the students can cultivate human rights or tolerance towards each other. The staff is mainly high school teachers of history and foreign languages teachers, their director is Andrea Szőnyi, the head of the Hungarian Office of the *Shoah Foundation*. They believe in the power of personal memories and consider the use of testimonies more effective than that of 'alienating databases'. They also consider remembering and storytelling inherent aspects of working through of a trauma on a collective level. Interviews, recollections, memoires, photographs and other private documents are archived and made accessible on this website.³³ The materials can be used in both formal and informal curricula. The website contains various support materials for teachers that in some cases can be used as is.

According to the staff, the collection is fully accessible online. Upon browsing through the impressive arrangement, it becomes obvious that the interview collection comprises only eleven interviews and a study on Czechoslovak repatriations as well as a few related, short autobiographical accounts. This number of interview proves to suffice in order to meet the goals of the organisation: the materials are well managed, there are photographs attached, questions are formulated so as to support a better understanding of the text, which is put into its historical and socio-psychological context.

However, it is obvious that some parts of the website are carefully and professionally edited. This hampers smooth orientation on the site, although the mistakes are irrelevant and can easily be fixed. More attention needs to be paid to the 'accessories', especially to the animations, which are either not accessible or hardly enjoyable, depriving younger generations from the visual experience. Next to some inconsist-

³² USC Shoah Foundation Institute's Visual History Archive, Central European University Library, <http://www.library.ceu.hu/vha.html>, (12.7.2013).

³³ www.emlekezem.hu/iremember.hu, (12.7.2013).

encies in content, little information is provided about the circumstances of the interviews, which take the form of edited monologues of varying length. Five of the eleven testimonies have already been published in a book, while one has been moved to a different website by its author, Imre Rábai. A six-chapter ‘encyclopaedia’ and a glossary are provided on the political history of the 20th century. Disregarding the editing issues, the site fulfils its mission and provides essential and useful materials for teachers and students.

IV. 8. Collection of the Roma Press Centre

The Roma Press Centre is a non-profit news agency that shared and delivered news stories related to Roma communities in Hungary and in the Central-Eastern European region between 1995 and 2012. This section also covers two collections managed by the centre.

The centre’s most important treasure is the collection of interviews conducted in 1971 under the supervision of István Kemény. This collection covers (or scratches the surface of) the memory of the persecutions that took place during the first half of the 20th century. It was donated by Gábor Havas³⁴. The material is indexed by keywords. Visits to the archive are possible after prior consultation. Unfortunately, this incomparable gem has remained hidden from the public eye since it has not been managed properly, or indeed digitised, professionally archived or made widely accessible.

The second aspect worth mentioning in relation to the centre is that it published the first books that gave a voice to Roma survivors. The series (four editions were published in total) was titled *Porrajmos*³⁵ and published in English, Hungarian and Lovari. The majority of the approximately thirty interviews that were recorded with survivors (the Voice of the Survivors collection) are published in the book and their transcriptions as well as the audio material are stored on the organization’s internal server. On the centre’s website exploring the Roma Genocide, the visitor can listen to eight of the interviews and look at a map that constitutes the most complete topographical depiction of the event, representing all the 600 sites of deportation.

IV. 9. Collection of Katalin Katz

Katalin Katz’s work *Restrained Memory* also aspires to fill a knowledge gap. As she argues, “the story of the Porrajmos of Roma in Hungary has not been told yet” and “the story demands to be noted by history [...], this is the last opportunity [...] to find survivors who can recount their experiences”.³⁶ Katz considered it a personal responsibility to conduct a comprehensive research on the Roma Genocide. She immigrat-

³⁴ Sociologist, retired researcher at the Institute for Sociology of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. Participated in the Roma surveys led by István Kemény.

³⁵ Gábor Bernáth (ed.), *Porrajmos: e Roma seron, kon perdal zhuvinde/ Roma Holocaust túlélők emlékeznek/ Recollections of Roma Holocaust survivors* Budapest 2000: When the book was published, it triggered a debate on the meaning of the term *Porrajmos*. According to the National Roma Information and Cultural Centre (NRICC), the words means ‘open up’ in a sexual manner and they demonstrated against its official use, while the Roma Press Center understood *Porrajmos* as ‘devouring’ and questioned the belated response of the NRICC as well as its role as a self-appointed ‘proofreader’. The staff of the Roma Press Centre eventually decided not to use the term until the debate was concluded. Later editions were published under the title *Roma Holocaust*. The debate is not over. Ágnes Daróczai and János Bársónyi enriched the possibilities with another word, when they claimed that the Roma Genocide in Romani is *Pharrajimos*, meaning ‘fragmentation’, ‘destruction’.

³⁶ Katz Katalin, *Visszafojtott emlékezet. A magyarországi romák holokauszt történetéhez [Restrained Memory. Addenda to the Holocaust History of Roma in Hungary]*, Budapest 2005, 8-13.

ed to Israel in 1975 and began her research at The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She visited Hungary in order to meet Roma survivors on nine occasions between 1996 and 2001.

It is unclear with whom and where she started the fieldwork, which would take between two and six weeks. However, the introductory chapter notes that the body of the book consists of 57 interviews, 40 of which were conducted with the narrative life history method (34 survivors, six from the second generation), while the rest (thirteen survivors, four from the second generation) were oral history interviews recorded by Danica Vincze and Ágnes Daróczi. Another 25 interviews were collected from articles, reports and from the news. The interview data (interviewee name, interview location and date, occasionally bibliographical information) is compiled into a list at the end of the book. The collection further includes a manuscript that explores the life of one Hungarian-Roma family from the 1950s to the present. Unfortunately, the storage of the interviews is not solved uniformly. This puts them at risk, not due to the heterogeneity of the storage itself, but due to the fact that the various data carriers have different life periods and some of the data might already be lost. As Katz explains, she has doubts whether the interviews that were recorded on magnetic tape still exist and if so, can be used at all. Although the majority of the interviews were transcribed, only 21 of them have been digitised, including their manuscripts. The collection is Katz's property. She informed us that she only provides access to those of whom she is convinced that they will „use the materials in serious and ethically unquestionable research that represents the interests of Roma”.

We wonder how many of the documents have already been lost and how many have been available for research. We are interested in the rationale for the researcher's choices to sacrifice years in order to establish a collection but then not assure its appropriate storage or accessibility.

IV. 10. Collection of Ágota Varga

Ágota Varga, director of the award winning films *Porrajmos – Gypsy Holocaust* (2000) and *Black List – Gypsy Forced Labourers in 1944* (2002), preserved over seventy hours of video and close to fifty hours of audio interviews with Roma victims of the Holocaust.

The production of the documentary film *Porrajmos* was sponsored by a programme of the Swiss government in 1998, which was initiated in order to search for and provide financial relief to Roma Holocaust survivors. The local Red Cross organisations helped to identify survivors of the Roma Holocaust. They were joined by Ágota Varga, who collected interviews with survivors throughout Hungary between 1999 and 2002. She used the interviews in both of her above-mentioned films. A copy of her interview collection was donated to the European Roma Cultural Foundation in 2013 and it is yet to be archived.

V. Closing Remarks

It must be acknowledged that the existing collections do not constitute an inherent part of the Hungarian national historical heritage and have not been incorporated into the canon of the history of the 20th century.³⁷ A number of opportunities

³⁷ Eleonore Lappin-Eppel, Ungarisch-Jüdische Zwangsarbeiter und Zwangsarbeiterinnen in Österreich 1944/45. Arbeitseinsatz – Todesmärsche – Folgen, Berlin 2010.

for interested and/or personally involved intellectuals to explore past experiences and present the results to the public have gone unheeded during the past two decades (most of which admittedly were based on foreign financial and institutional support). The Hungarian materials as well as other sub-collections of international researches can either not be accessed or have failed to receive enough attention as a result of their ambiguous or restricted copyright status. In some cases, the research director appropriated the documents or initiated their preservation and storage belatedly. If more time and spirit had been invested and advantage taken of the impetus and enthusiasm during the regime change period, different results could have been yielded. However, not everything has been lost: after all, documents have been produced, even if they are separate and fail to reflect upon each other.

In the beginning of our text, we addressed the question why this level of 'ignorance' on the Holocaust has been maintained even after the transition in Hungary, in contrast to the practice in other (not only Western) European countries. One possible answer to this question is the status of Holocaust research in Hungary, which is driven and torn by the needs, constraints and regulations of everyday politics as well as being deeply influenced by the overriding current relevance of the communist experience in the Eastern parts of Europe on various cultural, social and political levels. However, interviews have been conducted with survivors, having been effected and recorded for research purposes; unfortunately, once the research had been completed, there was neither a commitment nor a stable institutional setting to collect and preserve these sources. Several, retrospectively systematic coincidences have resulted in the potential loss of interviews conducted.

One important lesson that we have learned from our exploratory research is that the collections, albeit scattered and momentarily hardly researchable, still comprise a very wide-ranging testimonial heritage of the Holocaust in Hungary. Not least for that very reason, this heritage is irreplaceable. Thus, researchers exploring the oral history sources of the Holocaust as well as its collective memory face a challenging task: to make this heterogeneous material generally accessible and introduce it not only into the historiography but, in a wider sense, into everyday social practice: Even though belatedly, the voice of the survivors shall finally be heard in Hungarian history writing.

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http://simon.vwi.ac.at/images/Documents/Articles/2014-2/2014-2_ART_Kovacs-Lenart-Szasz/ART_Kovacs-Lenart-Sasz.pdf

Article

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Randolph L. Braham

Ungarn

Das umstrittene Kapitel des Holocaust

Abstract

The circumstances of the extermination of the Hungarian Jews on the eve of the Allied victory – at a time when the secrets of Auschwitz were already known to the political elites (even in Hungary) – remain a mystery within the history of the Holocaust. In his lecture, Randolph Braham established the central elements of the questions that remain and offered an analysis. It is necessary to consider the wider context in order to see how it was possible for this unthinkable and unforeseeable catastrophe for the Jewish Hungarians to take place.

The lecture focused amongst other issues on the historical roots of the different considerations and miscalculations (even illusions) by the elites in Germany and Hungary in their desire to achieve particular political and military goals as well as on the various strategies employed by the Jewish political elites in Hungary and Slovakia (both traditional and Zionist) in their attempts to rescue their communities.

Einführung

Die Vernichtung des ungarischen Judentums im Jahre 1944 stellt eines der widersprüchlichsten Kapitel in der Geschichte des Holocausts dar, ein Kapitel, das niemals hätte geschrieben werden dürfen. Als die ungarischen Juden der „Endlösung“ zugeführt wurden, war die Weltelite – auch das politische und jüdische Establishment in Ungarn – über die wahren Zustände in Auschwitz voll im Bilde. Fast niemand glaubte mehr an einen Sieg des Dritten Reichs: Italien war im Sommer 1943 aus dem Bündnis der Achsenmächte ausgestiegen, die Rote Armee hatte fast das gesamte Gebiet der Sowjetunion befreit und bewegte sich rasch auf die rumänische Grenze zu, und die Westalliierten steckten nach erfolgreichen militärischen Operationen in Nordafrika, im Pazifikraum und in Italien mitten in den Vorbereitungen für den D-Day. Selbst viele Nationalsozialisten gaben sich keinen Illusionen über die militärische Lage hin – und waren gerade deshalb entschlossener denn je, zumindest den Parallelkrieg gegen das Judentum für sich zu entscheiden.

Die ungarischen Juden blieben in den ersten viereinhalb Jahren des Zweiten Weltkriegs vom Schicksal, das den anderen jüdischen Gemeinden im nationalsozialistischen Europa widerfuhr, nahezu verschont. Als patriotische Bürger, die stets die Interessen der Magyaren mitgetragen hatten, waren sie Anfang 1944 überzeugt, den Krieg unter der konservativ-aristokratischen Führung Ungarns relativ unbeschadet zu überstehen.

Doch diese Einschätzung erwies sich nach der Besetzung Ungarns durch deutsche Truppen am 19. März 1944 bald als Trugschluss. Dass die so große und ausgesprochen selbstbewusste jüdische Gemeinde Ungarns noch am Vorabend des Sieges der Alliierten einer an Grausamkeit kaum zu überbietenden, blitzschnell durchgeföhrten Vernichtungsaktion zum Opfer fiel, ist tragische Ironie der Geschichte. Hatten die Nationalsozialisten etwa in Polen fünf Jahre für die Umsetzung ihres zerstörerischen Plans gebraucht, so genügten ihnen und ihren Erfüllungsgehilfen in Ungarn weniger als vier Monate.

Wie konnte das geschehen? Um das zu beantworten, gilt es zunächst, die wichtigsten Seiten des ungarischen Kapitels des Holocausts aufzuschlagen und zu analysieren. Der vorliegende Aufsatz gibt eine Antwort auf diese und andere kontroverse Fragen und beleuchtet die vier Kernaspekte des historischen Rätsels: die Haltung und Strategie der jüdischen Führung; Ungarns Kalkül und seine Politik nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg; militärische und rassenpolitische Überlegungen der Deutschen; und die Beziehungen zwischen den slowakischen und den ungarischen jüdischen Vertretern vor und nach der Besetzung.

Haltung und Strategie der jüdischen Führung

Während des Zweiten Weltkriegs setzten die ungarischen Juden alle Überlebenshoffnungen auf die konservativ-aristokratische ungarische Führung. Das Vertrauen, das sie zu Kriegszeiten in die Ungarn hatten, beruhte auf ihren Erfahrungen und Wahrnehmungen im sogenannten goldenen Zeitalter – der Ära der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie (1867–1918). Damals hatten sich die ungarischen Juden zunehmend patriotisch gegeben und sich stolz mit den Belangen der Magyaren identifiziert – sehr zum Missfallen der anderen Volksgruppen im Königreich. Sie zählten zu den glühendsten Befürwortern der Ungarischen Revolution gegen die Habsburger in den Jahren 1848/49 und schulterten einen unverhältnismäßig großen Anteil der militärischen und wirtschaftlichen Last der Revolution, in der sie eine Chance zur Emanzipation sahen. Laut dem aufgeklärten Revolutionsführer Lajos Kossuth dienten in seiner 180.000 Mann starken Armee rund 20.000 Juden – und das zu einer Zeit, da die 340.000 ungarischen Juden nur 3,7 Prozent der 9,2 Millionen starken Gesamtbevölkerung ausmachten. Auch Mór Jókai, einer der berühmtesten ungarischen Schriftsteller des 19. Jahrhunderts, zollte den Juden für ihren Beitrag zur Revolution Respekt. Aus seiner Sicht „hat keine ethnische Volksgruppe im ungarischen Unabhängigkeitskampf so viele Leben und Mittel geopfert wie die Juden.“

Nach der Niederschlagung des Aufstands 1849 wurden sowohl die Ungarn als auch die Juden von den siegreichen Habsburgern streng bestraft. Mit dem Österreichisch-Ungarischen Ausgleich im Jahre 1867 wurde die Gleichstellung der Juden in Ungarn verankert – wohl auch, um ihre pro-magyarisiche Haltung zu würdigen. Entsprechend dem Wunsch der ungarischen Revolutionsführer assimilierten viele Juden und akkulturierten allmählich oder konvertierten überhaupt zum Christentum – vor allem jene, die in Budapest oder im Westen des Landes lebten. Nach und nach magyarierten sie ihre Namen und bezeichneten sich als „Ungarn israelitischen Glaubens“. Sie vermeinten eine echte Symbiose mit den Magyaren eingegangen zu sein.

Ungarns Juden waren nun an den Hochschulen zugelassen und hatten völlig neue wirtschaftliche und kulturelle Möglichkeiten, sodass sie schon bald eine zentrale Rolle bei der Modernisierung Ungarns spielten. Sie wussten die behördliche und legislative Unterstützung des aristokratisch-konservativen Establishments, das selbst vom Modernisierungsprozess profitierte, bestens zu nutzen. Binnen ein bis zwei Generationen nahmen sie eine führende oder gar beherrschende Stellung in der Wirtschaft und Industrie, im Bankwesen und in den akademischen Berufen ein. Sie profilierten sich auch in den Bereichen Kunst und Kultur und spielten eine zentrale politische Rolle, indem sie den Magyaren jene knappe Mehrheit verschafften, die diese benötigten, um über die anderen Volksgruppen im Land regieren zu können.

Aus Verbundenheit, aber letztlich auch aus Überzeugung, legten die Juden einen nachgerade chauvinistischen Patriotismus an den Tag. Laut dem vielbeachteten un-

garischen Schriftsteller Paul Ignotus wurden die Juden „glühendere Magyaren als die Magyaren selbst“. In der Euphorie jener Tage hatten die wenigsten ungarischen Juden eine Vorstellung vom Unheil, das die Zukunft für sie bereithielt. Eine prominente Ausnahme war der in Pest geborene Begründer des Zionismus, Theodor Herzl. 1903 schrieb dieser in einem Brief an den Freund und Parlamentarier Ernő Mezei, er sehe Schlimmes auf das ungarische Judentum zukommen: „Die Faust des Schicksals wird auch das ungarische Judentum treffen. Je später dies geschieht und je stärker die jüdische Gemeinde dann ist, desto härter und verheerender wird der Schlag sein, den man uns mit umso größerer Grausamkeit versetzt. Es gibt kein Entrinnen.“

Die glühenden Verfechter der Assimilierung und Magyarisierung waren freilich blind für die antijüdischen Vorboten, die Herzl Sorgen bereiteten, oder bagatellisierten sie. So fiel zum Beispiel die Affäre um den vermeintlichen Ritualmord von Tiszaeszlár (1882/83) just in dieses „goldene Zeitalter“, ebenso wie die antisemitische Agitation ideologisch motivierter Politiker und klerikaler Kräfte.¹

Allmählich bekam das ungarische Judentum die Schläge zu spüren, vor denen Herzl nach dem Ende des Ersten Weltkriegs und dem folgenden Zerfall der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie gewarnt hatte. Die Euphorie vieler – vorwiegend nicht assimilierter – Juden ging in den Revolutionen der Nachkriegszeit unter. Ungarn verabschiedete als erstes Land im Nachkriegseuropa ein antisemitisches Gesetz: Der *Numerus Clausus* 1920, das den Hochschulzugang für jüdische Studenten beschränkte, war nur die erste von zahlreichen zunehmend strengeren judenfeindlichen Maßnahmen der Zwischenkriegszeit, die im Holocaust münden sollten. Die vielen sozioökonomischen Probleme, die Ungarns Verluste aufgrund des Vertrags von Trianon (1920) mit sich brachten, und die Folgen der Weltwirtschaftskrise fachten den Antisemitismus der 1930er-Jahre weiter an. Und wie in Nazideutschland war auch in Ungarn schnell ein Sündenbock gefunden – der Jude.

Allen antisemitischen Maßnahmen der ungarischen Regierungen der 1930er-Jahre zum Trotz blieb die Loyalität der Juden gegenüber dem ungarischen Staat im Wesentlichen aufrecht. Wie die Magyaren beklagten auch sie die Verluste, die das Land aufgrund der Friedensbedingungen des Vertrags von Trianon hinnehmen musste. In Gebieten, die an die Nachfolgestaaten – Rumänien, Jugoslawien und die Tschechoslowakei – gefallen waren, hielten die Juden zum Missfallen der jeweiligen Regierung hartnäckig an der ungarischen Sprache und Kultur fest. Ungeachtet der unzähligen antisemitischen Vorfälle in den frühen 1920er-Jahren und der reichsfreundlichen Politik der ungarischen Regierungen nach 1935 klammerten sie sich an das Ungarnbild, das sie aus dem „goldenem Zeitalter“ kannten. Sie glaubten weiterhin fest daran, dass die ungarische Führung trotz ihrer deutschlandfreundlichen Außen- und Innenpolitik die zentralen Interessen der „Ungarn jüdischen Glaubens“ auch in Zukunft wahren würde. Diese Einschätzung änderte sich auch nicht, als im Mai 1938 erste weitreichende antisemitische Gesetze verabschiedet wurden. Viele jüdische Repräsentanten rechtfertigten sogar die „Notwendigkeit“ gewisser antijüdischer Maßnahmen als Tribut an den „Zeitgeist“, als wohlüberlegten Schachzug, um die Rechtsextremen im Inland und die Nazis im Ausland zu beruhigen. Kurz: Die ungarischen Juden wähnten sich nach wie vor von den aufeinander folgenden konservativ-aristokratischen Regierungen beschützt, deren Mitglieder die Nationalsozialisten schließlich fast so sehr hassten und die einheimischen Extremisten fast so sehr fürchteten wie die Juden selbst. Und pflegten nicht viele dieser Regierungsmitglieder enge und

1 Näheres zum „goldenen Zeitalter“ des ungarischen Judentums in: Randolph L. Braham, The Politics of Genocide: The Holocaust in Hungary, New York 1994, 2-12.

lukrative Kontakte zu jüdischen Bankiers, Wirtschaftsmagnaten und Industriellen? Während die meisten Juden unter den Auswirkungen der antisemitischen Gesetze litten, waren etliche Wirtschaftsmogule – vor allem konvertierte Christen mit besten gesellschaftlichen und persönlichen Verbindungen zum konservativ-aristokratischen Establishment – auch im Krieg außerordentlich erfolgreich.

Trotz der zahlreichen drakonischen antijüdischen Bestimmungen – darunter der Arbeitsdienst in der ungarischen Armee und Rassengesetze nach Nürnberger Vorbild – fühlten sich Ungarns Juden während der ersten viereinhalb Jahre des Zweiten Weltkriegs relativ sicher. Obwohl sie in diesem Zeitraum an die 60.000 Opfer zu beklagen hatten – rund 42.000 starben im Arbeitsdienst, an die 18.000 wurden (gemeinsam mit 5.500 ukrainischen Juden) bei Kamenez-Podolsk (Sommer 1941) und fast 1.000 in Novi Sad (Januar–Februar 1942) ermordet² –, glaubten sie fest daran, den Krieg zu überleben, wenn auch wirtschaftlich stark geschwächt. Schließlich, so meinten sie zuversichtlich, sei Ungarn eine Achsenmacht. Was sich im antisemitischen Polen und in anderen europäischen Ländern unter dem Nationalsozialismus zutrug, konnte sich unmöglich im zivilisierten, ritterlichen Ungarn wiederholen! Die Ungarn würden den jüdischen Mitbürgern niemals ihren großartigen Einsatz für die politischen Interessen der Magyaren und die Modernisierung des Landes vergessen! Und überhaupt werde der Krieg bald vorbei sein, mit den „Großen Drei“ als Sieger.

Als die „Endlösung“ im nationalsozialistischen Europa bereits in vollem Gange war, übten sich die jüdischen Repräsentanten weiterhin in Zweckoptimismus und hielten daran fest, dass das ungarische Judentum „mit der ungarischen Nation, Sprache und Kultur, ihrem Geist und ihrer Seele“ eins sei. „Die ungarischen Juden“, betonten sie, „sind Ungarn und als solche im Herzen wie im Geiste fester Bestandteil der ungarischen Nation.“³

Freilich entbehrt die Argumentation der jüdischen Vertreter nicht jeglicher Grundlage – zumindest nicht bis zum Einmarsch der deutschen Truppen am 19. März 1944. Ungarn verfügte zu diesem Zeitpunkt als einziges europäisches Land in nationalsozialistischer Hand noch über eine große, halbwegs intakte jüdische Gemeinde. In Ungarn lebten fast 800.000 Juden, darunter an die 100.000 Konvertiten und Christen, die nach den herrschenden Rassengesetzen als Juden galten. Ungeachtet der vielen antijüdischen Gesetze und Dekrete wähnten sich die Juden unter der konservativ-aristokratischen Regierung in physischer Sicherheit. „Zivilisierte“ Antisemiten, die die Mitglieder dieser Regierung waren, fassten sie zwar eine Reihe von Beschlüssen, die darauf abzielten, den jüdischen Einfluss im ungarischen Wirtschafts- und Kulturleben zu beschneiden, aber sie weigerten sich beharrlich, Juden, wie von den Nazis und ihren ungarischen Erfüllungsgehilfen gefordert, einer „Endlösung“ zuzuführen.

Im Gegensatz zur politischen und jüdischen Elite des Landes hatte die breite Masse – Christen wie Juden – keine Ahnung vom wahren Wesen der „Endlösung“, wie sie andere europäische Länder in nationalsozialistischer Hand erlebten. Natürlich wussten die ungarischen Juden vom Leid der in der Ukraine und in Serbien eingesetzten Arbeitssoldaten und vom Elend tausender „ausländischer“ Juden, die im Sommer 1941 zusammengefasst und deportiert worden waren. Von polnischen, slowakischen und anderen Flüchtlingen, die in Ungarn Zuflucht gefunden hatten, lagen erschreckende Berichte über Judenverfolgungen und entsetzliche Zustände in Ghettos vor, doch wusste kaum jemand Genaues über die „Endlösung“. Und von Auschwitz

2 Näheres zu diesen Massakern und zum ungarischen Arbeitsdienst in Braham, Politics, 205–222 und 294–380.

3 Ebda., 101.

oder den anderen nationalsozialistischen Vernichtungs- und Konzentrationslagern in Polen hatte kaum ein Jude je etwas gehört.⁴

Die Zuversicht der Juden wurde in den sieben Monaten vor der deutschen Besetzung noch größer, als Ungarn hinter den Kulissen nach einem „ehrenhaften“ Ausstieg aus dem Achsenbündnis suchte. Da die antisemitischen Gesetze zwar immer noch in Kraft waren, in der Praxis aber nicht mehr so rigoros angewandt wurden, verbesserte sich die Lage der Juden erheblich. Zum Entsetzen der Nationalsozialisten und der ungarischen Extremisten stellte die ungarische Regierung Mitte Dezember 1943 auch noch 15 hochrangige Offiziere der Armee und Gendarmerie vor Gericht, die Anfang 1942 bei Novi Sad Kriegsverbrechen an Serben und Juden begangen hatten. Die Juden nahmen diese Entwicklung positiv auf, und ihre orthodoxen, neologischen und zionistischen Vertreter sahen sich in der Überzeugung bestärkt, dass ihre Gemeinden unter dem Schutzhelm der ungarischen Regierung den Krieg überstehen würden. Die politischen und militärischen Vorgänge jener Tage ließen bei der jüdischen Führung auch das Selbstbewusstsein wieder erstarken, das sie im „goldenen Zeitalter“ gefunden hatte.

Ungarns Kalkül und seine Politik nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg

Doch der Schutzhelm, unter den die jüdische Führung ihre Überlebenshoffnungen gestellt hatte, war mit einem Schlag weggeweht, als am 19. März 1944 völlig unerwartet deutsche Truppen einmarschierten. Die Besetzung Ungarns zerstörte aber nicht nur die Hoffnung der Juden – im Nachhinein wird man sagen müssen: ihre Illusion oder ihr Wunschdenken –, sondern durchkreuzte auch das politische und militärische Kalkül der konservativ-aristokratischen Regierung, von dem alles Überleben abhing.

Den Einmarsch der Deutschen hatte die konservativ-aristokratische Regierung ihrem realitätsfremden Gebaren in der zweiten Hälfte des Jahres 1943 zu verdanken, als sie begriff, dass die Achsenmächte den Krieg verlieren würden. Ungarn war seit Mitte der 1930er-Jahre eng an das „Dritte Reich“ gebunden und hatte sich ihm im Juni 1941, da die Achsenmächte unbesiegbar schienen, im Krieg gegen die Alliierten angeschlossen. Ziel dieses Unterfangens war die Revision der harten Vertragsbedingungen von Trianon, durch die Ungarn zwei Drittel seines historischen Gebietes, ein Drittel der magyarischen Bevölkerung und drei Fünftel seiner Gesamtbevölkerung verloren hatte.

Ungarns Kriegseintritt war die letzte Konsequenz der revisionistischen Bestrebungen des von Miklós Horthy angeführten konterrevolutionären Regimes an der Seite des „Dritten Reichs“, das entschlossen war, die auf dem Versailler Vertrag beruhende Weltordnung umzustürzen. Ungarns Außenpolitik wurde 1935 – unter der Ministerpräsidentenschaft des glühenden Germanophilen Gyula Gömbös – noch enger an jene des „Dritten Reichs“ gekoppelt. Mit zunehmender Durchdringung der ungarischen Wirtschaft und Politik durch das Reich wurden auch die Rechtsextremisten immer mächtiger. Der dezidiert antisemitische Feldzug der zahlreichen, durch Nazi-Gelder finanzierten, radikalen politischen Parteien und Bewegungen bereitete den Boden für immer schärfere judenfeindliche Maßnahmen. Der öffentliche Diskurs über die „Endlösung der Judenfrage“ wurde bald ebenso leidenschaftlich geführt wie jener über die Revision der auferlegten Friedensbedingungen. Binnen

⁴ Ebda., 806–849.

Kurzem waren die zwei Themen derart miteinander verflochten, dass die politische Elite und die breite Masse zu der Überzeugung gelangten, der Erfolg aller revisionistischen Bestrebungen hänge von einer raschen Lösung der „Judenfrage“ ab.

Der erste Erfolg der revisionistischen ungarischen Außenpolitik stellte sich schon bald nach der Unterzeichnung des Münchener Abkommens im September 1938 ein, das die Aufspaltung der Tschechoslowakei zur Folge hatte. Mithilfe des „Dritten Reichs“ holte sich Ungarn Anfang November „Oberungarn“ (*Felvidék*) und im März 1939 die Karpatenukraine (*Kárpátalja*) von der Tschechoslowakei zurück. Im August und September 1940 bekam es das nördliche Siebenbürgen (*Erdély*) von Rumänien abgetreten, im April 1941 schließlich ein Teil der Batschka (*Bácska*) von Jugoslawien. Dass Ungarn sich dem verhängnisvollen Krieg Nazideutschlands anschloss – zunächst Ende Juni 1941 gegen die Sowjetunion und im weiteren Jahresverlauf gegen die Westalliierten –, hatte vor allem den Zweck, die neu gewonnenen Gebiete zu halten. Man war sich sicher, dass die Achsenmächte am Ende siegen würden, und hoffte so auch die anderen Gebiete zurückzugewinnen, die Ungarn durch den Vertrag von Trianon verloren hatte.

Doch Ungarns Hoffnungen wurden bald jäh zerschlagen: Im Verlauf des Jahres 1943 zeichnete sich immer klarer ab, dass die Achsenmächte im Krieg unterliegen würden. Ungarns 2. Armee erlitt bei Woronesch in Russland eine verheerende Niederlage; kurz darauf wurde die deutsche 6. Armee Anfang 1943 in der Schlacht von Stalingrad vernichtet; und im Sommer stieg Italien – jener faschistische Verbündete, dem die ungarische Führung politisch wie ideologisch näher stand als NS-Deutschland – aus dem Achsenbündnis aus.

In der zweiten Hälfte des Jahres 1943 war Ungarn nun selbst bemüht, dem italienischen Beispiel zu folgen und „ehrenhaft“ aus dem Bündnis zu scheiden, ohne jedoch seine Grundinteressen aufzugeben. In völliger Verkennung der geografischen Lage des Landes und dessen strategischer Bedeutung für die Deutschen entwarf die konservativ-aristokratische Führung einen „Geheimplan“, der sich als geradezu grotesk erweisen sollte: nämlich jenen, nur vor den Westalliierten zu kapitulieren. Man fürchtete die Sowjets, gegen die Ungarn einen Angriffskrieg begonnen hatte, und verabscheute den Bolschewismus noch mehr als den Nationalsozialismus. Ungeachtet der militärischen Gegebenheiten, die das Bündnis der „Großen Drei“ zusammenhielten, spekulierten die Ungarn darauf, dass die Westalliierten, die ebenso anti-bolschewistisch waren, über den Balkan ins nationalsozialistische Europa eindringen und damit die langersehnte zweite Front eröffnen würden. Beim Vormarsch gegen Norden, Richtung Baltikum, würden sie – so die Hoffnung – die Nationalsozialisten niederschlagen und gleichzeitig verhindern, dass der Bolschewismus in den Westen eindringt. In Anbetracht dieser – zu Unrecht erwarteten – Entwicklung sollte es möglich sein, ausschließlich vor den Westalliierten zu kapitulieren. Insgeheim hofften die Ungarn sogar, die westlichen Demokratien würden ihnen als Zeichen des Dankes für die Kapitulation die mithilfe der Nationalsozialisten eingenommenen Gebiete belassen – oder gar Ungarns zwar überholtes, aber zutiefst antikommunistisches Regime fortbestehen lassen. Mit diesem Ziel vor Augen nahmen ungarische Gesandte Kontakt mit Vertretern der westlichen Alliierten in der Türkei und in Italien auf.

Dank seiner zahllosen Spione war Deutschland jedoch bald über die Pläne der Ungarn im Bilde. Noch während dieser „geheimen“ Verhandlungen Ende 1943 und Anfang 1944 lockerte die ungarische Regierung unter Miklós Kállay ihren antisemitischen Kurs und ergriff eine Reihe politischer und militärischer Maßnahmen, die bei den Deutschen für Verwunderung sorgten. So wurde nicht nur führenden deutschlandfreundlichen Militär- und Gendarmerieoffizieren der Prozess gemacht,

sondern auch der Rückzug der restlichen ungarischen 2. Armee zum Zwecke der Verteidigung Ungarns an den Karpaten gefordert.

Zum Schutz ihrer nationalen Interessen beschlossen die Deutschen, Ungarn davon abzuhalten, dem Beispiel Italiens zu folgen: Dieser Schritt hätte das Reich nicht nur der wirtschaftlichen und militärischen Ressourcen Ungarns beraubt, sondern womöglich auch die Ölversorgung aus Rumänien, auf die die deutsche Kriegsmaschinerie angewiesen war, zum Versiegen gebracht; außerdem wäre damit eine für den etwaigen Rückzug der in Osteuropa und am Balkan stationierten deutschen Truppen unverzichtbare Route abgeschnitten worden. Der Entscheidung, Ungarn zu besetzen, mochten vorwiegend militärisch-strategische Überlegungen zugrunde liegen; für die Nationalsozialisten hatte Ungarn aber auch die „Judenfrage“ noch immer nicht beantwortet.

Hitler hatte im Februar 1944 die Pläne für die Besetzung Ungarns fertig und stellte die ungarische Delegation bei einem Treffen auf Schloss Kleßheim am 17. und 18. März vor vollendete Tatsachen. Er drohte Miklós Horthy für den Fall der Abtrünnigkeit mit der Besetzung Ungarns unter Beteiligung rumänischer, serbischer und slowakischer Truppen – und damit mit dem Verlust aller zwischen 1938 und 1941 erlangten Gebiete. Horthy und seine Begleiter akzeptierten die Bedingungen der Deutschen, darunter die Lieferung von 300.000 jüdischen „Arbeitern“ in das Reich. Der Einmarsch deutscher Truppen in Ungarn am 19. März war für den Großteil der anti-nationalistischen, konservativ-aristokratischen Führung folgenschwer, für die Juden aber war er vernichtend. Oder wie ich an anderer Stelle geschrieben habe: „Im Nachhinein hätten die ungarischen Juden den Krieg vielleicht sogar relativ unbeschadet überlebt, wenn Ungarn ein zwar militärisch passiver, aber politisch mündiger Verbündeter des ‚Dritten Reichs‘ geblieben wäre, anstatt sich in Verlegenheitsaktionen und provokantem, aber letztlich aussichtslosem diplomatischen Geplänkel zu üben.“⁵

Militärische und rassenpolitische Überlegungen der Deutschen

Anders als die Ungarn zögerten die nüchtern kalkulierenden und übermächtigen Deutschen nicht, ihre politischen und militärischen Interessen zu wahren. Der Hauptgrund für die Besetzung Ungarns war zwar ein militärischer, aber die angestrebte „Lösung der Judenfrage“ spielte ebenfalls eine entscheidende Rolle. Zunächst hatten die Deutschen ihre Zweifel, ob das neue Kabinett, die sie anstelle der „judenfreundlichen“ Kállay-Regierung einzusetzen gedachten, die „Endlösung“ auch tatsächlich vollziehen würde. Manche Nationalsozialisten befürchteten, dass Miklós Horthy und seine neue, deutschlandfreundliche Regierung in Anbetracht der heiklen militärischen und internationalen Lage beschließen könnten, es dem rumänischen Diktator Marschall Ion Antonescu gleichzutun und die „Judenfrage“ zur Staatsangelegenheit zu erklären. Denn obwohl Antonescu für den Tod von geschätzten 300.000 rumänischen und ukrainischen Juden in den Jahren 1940 bis 1943 verantwortlich zeichnete, hatte er der geplanten „Endlösung“ eine Absage erteilt und den Großteil der Juden aus Alt-Rumänien und dem südlichen Siebenbürgen „gerettet“.

Eichmanns 100-150köpfiges SS-Sondereinsatzkommando (die genaue Zahl ist unbekannt) kam mit Planvorgaben im Gepäck nach Ungarn. Zur positiven Überraschung des Sonderkommandos übertrafen manche Mitglieder der neuen Regierung Döme Sztójay – sie waren alle von Horthy auf die Verfassung angelobt worden – die

⁵ Ebda., 230-262.

SS in der „Judenfrage“ sogar noch an Eifer. Im Wissen um die rasch heranrückenden sowjetischen Truppen stellte die neue Regierung die Organe der Staatsgewalt – Polizei, Gendarmerie und Verwaltung – in den Dienst der Deutschen beziehungsweise der mit der „Endlösung“ betrauten Ungarn. Da die Zeit drängte, handelten die Nationalsozialisten und ihre ungarischen Erfüllungsgehilfen schnell und unerbittlich. Fest entschlossen, die „Endlösung“ noch vor dem Einmarsch der Roten Armee umzusetzen, führten sie die Juden dem schnellsten und bei Weitem abscheulichsten Vernichtungsprozess in der Geschichte des Holocausts zu.

Ungarns Besetzung durch die Deutschen kam für die Juden wie für die meisten Ungarn überraschend. Die Juden waren fassungslos und geradezu paralysiert, begriffen sie doch plötzlich, dass sie mit all ihrem Vertrauen und Optimismus falsch gelegen waren. Zunächst klammerten sie sich noch an die Hoffnung, dass die neue ungarische Regierung, der schließlich zahlreiche Mitglieder früherer konservativer Kabinette angehörten, die „Judenfrage“ zur Staatsangelegenheit erklären und die Nationalsozialisten an der Umsetzung ihres perfiden Plans hindern würde. Sie fanden auch Trost in Horthys Entscheidung, Staatsoberhaupt zu bleiben. Was sie freilich nicht wussten: Der Reichsverweser hatte zugestimmt, 300.000 jüdische „Arbeiter“ an Deutschland auszuliefern und sich nicht mehr in die „Judenfrage“ einzumischen. Bei aller Unerbittlichkeit der Deutschen, so meinten sie, würden sich die Ungarn letzten Endes doch weigern zu kooperieren, und sei es nur wegen der Bedeutung der Juden für die Wirtschaft, die wiederum die deutsche und ungarische Kriegsmaschinerie am Laufen hielt. Und schließlich glaubten die Juden auch, dass sich die neue ungarische Führung in Anbetracht des „unmittelbar bevorstehenden und nicht mehr zu verhindern“ Sieges der Alliierten wohl vor drastischen Schritten hüten werde, um nach dem Krieg nicht für Kriegsverbrechen vor Gericht gestellt zu werden.

All diese Vermutungen und Hoffnungen verpufften augenblicklich, als jüdische Vertreter an diverse Regierungsstellen herantraten – und dort unmissverständlich zu hören bekamen, dass die „Judenfrage“ nunmehr im alleinigen Verantwortungsbereich der Deutschen liege. Aber trotz der bedrohlichen Lage wurden führende jüdische Vertreter nicht müde, an das patriotische Gewissen der Gemeinde zu appellieren. Im April 1944, da die ungarischen Juden längst unter zahlreichen drakonischen jüdenfeindlichen Maßnahmen litten, etwa dem Tragen des „Judensterns“, ermahnte Dr. Ferenc Hevesi, Oberrabbiner der Neologen, die Juden: „Betet zu Gott, für euch selbst, für eure Familie, eure Kinder, aber vor allem für euer ungarisches Vaterland! Mögen Heimatliebe, Pflichterfüllung und Gebete euch den rechten Weg weisen.“⁶ Dieser kniefällige Appell an den Patriotismus war noch zu vernehmen, als Juden bereits in Ghettos zusammengepfercht wurden. Im Ghetto von Szeged etwa erklärte der Rabbiner von Mohács noch kurz, bevor die Deportationen einsetzten, in seiner Predigt: „Ungeachtet der Verfolgungen müssen wir unsere Heimat lieben, denn es ist nicht das Land, das uns verstößt, sondern es sind böse Männer.“⁷ Bei den Ungarn stießen solche Botschaften von Rabbinern freilich auf taube Ohren, und auch viele Laienvertreter des ungarischen Judentums, insbesondere die Zionisten, blieben davon unbeeindruckt. In ihrem verzweifelten Kampf um die Rettung der Gemeinde von den Ungarn im Stich gelassen, hatten sie keine andere Wahl als mit der SS zu verhandeln.

⁶ Ebda., 101.

⁷ Ebda.

Der Einfluss der slowakischen jüdischen Vertreter

Die ungarischen Judenvertreter hatten seit Langem enge Verbindungen zu den slowakischen Judenvertretern, von denen viele ungarischsprachig waren, so wie zahllose Juden in der Slowakei. Besonders gute Beziehungen unterhielten das zionistische Budapester Hilfs- und Rettungskomitee (*Waada Ezra we Hazalah*)⁸ und die sogenannte *Arbeitsgruppe* (*Pracovná skupina*) des Judenrates in Bratislava.⁹ Die Kooperation der beiden Gruppen war ab Anfang 1943 besonders intensiv, da die *Waada* als eine der wichtigsten Hilfs- und Rettungsorganisationen für Flüchtlinge vor Verfolgung im nationalsozialistischen Europa in Erscheinung trat. Die meisten Flüchtlinge, die in Ungarn Zuflucht fanden, kamen aus Polen oder der Slowakei. Bis zur Gründung der *Waada* hatte die slowakische Schattenregierung in enger Zusammenarbeit mit Dieter Wisliceny, einem von den Nationalsozialisten eingesetzten „Berater für Judenfragen“, an die 60.000 – und damit rund zwei Drittel – der ursprünglich 88.000 slowakischen Juden deportiert.

Die slowakischen Juden waren die Ersten, die nach Auschwitz deportiert wurden, nachdem das dortige Vernichtungslager im März 1942 seinen Betrieb aufgenommen hatte. Im Juni 1942 kam es aus verschiedenen Gründen zu einem Deportationsstopp: So hatten slowakische Regierungsvertreter um Besichtigung der neuen jüdischen Siedlungen im Osten ersucht, deren Genehmigung die Wahrheit hinter der „Endlösung“ ans Licht gebracht hätte; weiters war es gelungen, die regionalen Anführer der slowakischen paramilitärischen und faschistischen Hlinka-Garde, die mit den Deportationen in das KZ betraut war, zu bestechen; außerdem erhielten viele verbleibende Juden „Schutzbriefe“, die ihre Unentbehrlichkeit für die nationale Wirtschaft bescheinigten; und schließlich hatten Vatikan und katholische Kirche Druck ausgeübt.

Die Führung der slowakischen Juden glaubte – fälschlicherweise, wie sich zeigen sollte –, dass der Deportationsstopp 1942 ihrer Schmiergeldzahlung an Dieter Wisliceny zu verdanken sei. Besonders der Rabbiner Michael Dov Weissmandl, einer der Köpfe der Arbeitsgruppe, vermeinte durch Bestechung der SS das Leben von Juden retten könnten.¹⁰

Ermutigt durch ihre vermeintlich erfolgreichen Bemühungen um einen Deportationsstopp wandten sich die slowakischen Judenvertreter im Oktober 1942 erneut an Dieter Wisliceny; als Informant und Vermittler fungierte Karel Hochberg. Sie unterbreiteten ihm einen umfassenden Europa-Plan, dem zufolge die SS für eine Summe von zwei Millionen US-Dollar die Deportationen von Juden aus ganz Europa einstellen sollte.¹¹ Dabei gingen sie von der falschen Annahme aus, durch Bestechung hochrangiger Offiziere des Sonderkommandos die antijüdische Maschinerie der Nationalsozialisten anhalten oder zumindest bremsen zu können. Sie konnten – oder

8 Das Budapester Hilfs- und Rettungskomitee wurde Anfang 1943 unter der – nominellen – Leitung Ottó Komolys gegründet; sein tatsächlicher Leiter war Rezső (Rudolf) Kasztner. Näheres zur Tätigkeit des Komitees: ebda., 1069-1073.

9 Zum tragischen Schicksal der slowakischen Juden und zur Tätigkeit der Arbeitsgruppe, siehe ebda., 1048-1053, 1073-1075.

10 Nach neuestem Erkenntnisstand trat Rabbiner Michael Dov Weissmandl nicht vor Anfang Sommer 1942, also erst nach der ersten Deportationsphase, an Wisliceny heran, und auch da nicht persönlich: Als Kontaktperson fungierte Karel Hochberg, ein jüdischer Verräter, der für die SS arbeitete. Wisliceny spielte mit und erhielt für seine „Dienste“ zwei Zahlungen über 25.000 US-Dollar. Näheres dazu und zum tragischen Schicksal der slowakischen Juden in Yehuda Bauer, Freikauf von Juden? Verhandlungen zwischen dem nationalsozialistischen Deutschland und jüdischen Repräsentanten von 1933 bis 1945, Frankfurt a. M. 1996, Kapitel 5 und 6; sowie Braham, Politics, 1048-1053.

11 Näheres zum Europa-Plan, in: Braham, Politics, 1074-1076.

wollten – nicht wahrhaben, dass diese SS-Offiziere dem Kommando des Reichssicherheitshauptamtes (RSHA) in Berlin und damit Heinrich Himmler unterstanden. Was die Bewahrung der Juden vor der „Endlösung“ betraf, war ihre Entscheidungsgewalt sehr eingeschränkt.¹² Raffiniert griff Wisliceny, den Vorgaben des RSHA folgend, den Vorschlag der jüdischen Vertreter auf und bediente sich des Vermögens der Juden. Er ermutigte sie in ihren falschen Hoffnungen, wog sie in Sicherheit – und trieb indes mit seinen Gesinnungsgenossen die „Endlösung“ im nationalsozialistischen Europa voran.

Die Vertreter der ungarischen Juden wurden über die „erfolgreichen“ Verhandlungen ihrer slowakischen Kollegen mit der SS auf dem Laufenden gehalten.¹³ Sie bekamen auch regelmäßig Berichte über die nationalsozialistische Vernichtungsmaschinerie in Europa, insbesondere in Polen und der Slowakei. Diese Berichte bestätigten Meldungen anderer Quellen – unter anderem solche der zahlreichen nationalen und internationalen jüdischen Organisationen in Palästina, der Schweiz und der Türkei –, die am wahren Wesen der „Endlösung“ allesamt keinen Zweifel ließen.¹⁴ Als sie Ende April beziehungsweise im Mai oder Juni 1944 Durchschriften der *Auschwitz-Protokolle* erhielten, waren sie über den Vernichtungskrieg der Nationalsozialisten gegen die Juden bereits im Bilde, wiewohl die Protokolle neue Details zu den Abläufen im Todeslager enthielten.¹⁵ Zu diesem Zeitpunkt aber befanden sich die meisten ungarischen Juden bereits in Ghettos oder waren nach Auschwitz deportiert worden.

Wie in anderen europäischen Ländern, die sich in nationalsozialistischer Hand befanden, waren auch die ungarischen Juden den deutschen Besatzern hilf- und schutzlos ausgeliefert. Von den Ungarn, mit deren Unterstützung sie gerechnet hatten, vor den Kopf gestoßen, sah sich ihre Führung gezwungen, mit der SS zu verhandeln. Neuerlich spielte Wisliceny, wie zuvor schon in der Slowakei, auch bei diesen Verhandlungen zunächst die Hauptrolle. Wenige Tage nach dem Einmarsch der deutschen Truppen übergab er Fülöp Freudiger, dem Leiter der orthodoxen jüdischen Gemeinde, ein Empfehlungsschreiben des Rabbiners Michael Dov Weissmandl, eines Architekten des „Europa-Plans“. Darin wurde Wisliceny vom Rabbiner als „durchaus empfänglicher“ SS-Offizier und „verlässlicher“ Verhandlungspartner beschrieben, mit dem man getrost Abkommen treffen könne.¹⁶ Freudiger blieb bis zu seiner eigenen Flucht nach Rumänien im August 1944 in Kontakt mit Wisliceny, während die Verhandlungen mit der SS alsbald von Rezső (Rudolf) Kasztner und anderen Akteuren der zion-

12 Die SS, darunter Mitglieder des Eichmann-Sonderkommandos, war gemäß einer Weisung Hitlers an Himmler ermächtigt, vereinzelt kleinere Gruppen von Juden gegen entsprechende Summen ziehen zu lassen. Am 10. Dezember 1942 notierte Himmler: „Ich habe den Führer wegen der Loslösung von Juden gegen Devisen gefragt. Er hat mir Vollmacht gegeben, derartige Fälle zu genehmigen, wenn sie wirklich in namhaften [sic] Umfang Devisen von auswärts hereinbringen.“ Bauer, Freikauf von Juden?, 103. Himmlers eigene Anweisung lautete: „Holen Sie von den Juden heraus, was herauszuholen ist. Versprechen Sie Ihnen, was sie fordern. Was davon eingehalten wird, das werden wir sehen!“ Ebda.

13 Gisi Fleischmann war einer der Köpfe der Arbeitsgruppe. Sie zählte zu jenen, die sich bitter darüber beschwerten, dass sich die Führung der ungarischen Juden beharrlich weigerte, der Bitte um finanzielle Unterstützung für den ihrer Meinung nach vielversprechenden Rettungsplan nachzukommen. Braham, Politics, 816.

14 Näheres ebda., 806-849.

15 Die Protokolle basierten auf Berichten der slowakischen Juden Rudolf Vrba und Alfréd Wetzler, denen am 7. April 1944 wie durch ein Wunder die Flucht aus Auschwitz gelang. Der Wortlaut der Protokolle findet sich in Rudolf Vrba, I Escaped from Auschwitz, Fort Lee, 2002, 327-363. Näheres in Braham, Politics, 824-832.

16 Manchen Quellen zufolge soll Wisliceny dem Rabbiner Weissmandl das „Empfehlungsschreiben“ abgepresst haben. Wisliceny demonstrierte gegenüber Freudiger seine Verfügungsgewalt, indem er dessen Bruder auf freien Fuß setzen ließ. Dieser war einer der ersten prominenten Juden gewesen, die unmittelbar nach dem Einmarsch von der Gestapo verhaftet worden waren.

nistischen *Waada* weitergeführt wurden.¹⁷ Dank seiner Position bei der *Waada*, deren Leiter er de facto war, hatte Kasztner womöglich die beste Kenntnis vom Vernichtungsfeldzug der Nationalsozialisten gegen die Juden. Am 19. März 1948 gab er als Belastungszeuge im Veesenmayer-Prozess zu Protokoll: „Ich denke, nur wenige wussten in Ungarn so gut über die Lage der Juden Bescheid wie ich [...] Wir waren bereits 1942 im Bilde darüber, was im Osten mit den nach Auschwitz und in die anderen Konzentrationslager deportierten Juden geschehen war.“¹⁸

Auch Samu Stern, Präsident der neologischen jüdischen Gemeinde von Pest und später Vorsitzender des Zentralrats der Juden, räumte ein, vom Vernichtungsfeldzug der Nationalsozialisten gegen die Juden gewusst zu haben. In seinen Memoiren schrieb er unter anderem: „Ich wusste, was sie in allen von Deutschland besetzten europäischen Ländern getan hatten [...] Und das wussten auch die anderen, als sie Ratsmitglieder wurden.“¹⁹

Die SS verhandelte lieber mit den Zionisten als mit den Vertretern der Neologen und Orthodoxen, von denen viele nach wie vor auf die Unterstützung der Ungarn hofften. Die Nationalsozialisten bauten darauf, über die guten internationalen Verbindungen der zionistischen Führung an Devisen und Kriegsmaterial zu gelangen und die politischen Interessen des Reichs im Ausland zu wahren, vielleicht sogar den Bruch der „Großen Drei“ herbeizuführen.

Das erste Treffen zwischen den Zionisten und der SS fand am 5. April 1944 statt, an dem die Juden erstmals gezwungen waren, den Gelben Stern zu tragen. Die zionistischen Vertreter Ungarns folgten dem wohlmeinenden, aus heutiger Sicht aber verhängnisvollen Rat ihrer slowakischen Kollegen und loteten gleich zu Beginn der Verhandlungen die Möglichkeit einer Rettung der ungarischen Juden auf Basis des *Eropa-Plans* aus. Die SS zeigte sich sogleich gesprächsbereit – und rang den Zionisten auch prompt die Zusage für große Mengen an Bargeld und Wertsachen als Gegenleistung für eine Hilfszusage ab, die sie freilich nicht einzuhalten gedachte.²⁰

Die jüdischen Verhandler kannten zwar die Strategie und die taktischen Kniffe der SS bei der Umsetzung der „Endlösung“ in anderen Ländern, hatten sich aber einen eigenen Plan zurechtgelegt: Sie suchten die Rettung der jüdischen Gemeinde in einem Wettlauf gegen die Zeit zu erreichen, den sie mit Blick auf die militärischen Erfolge der Alliierten (insbesondere auf den raschen Vormarsch der Roten Armee) sowie durch Bestechung und Verschleppung der Verhandlungen mit der SS zu gewinnen hofften. Jeder weitere Tag, den die Juden in ihren Heimen erlebten, wenn auch gebrandmarkt, isoliert und verarmt, war in diesem Wettlauf ein Etappensieg.

Die Verhandler der SS durchschauten diese Taktik natürlich – und spielten mit. Ihre Verhandlungsziele waren ebenso klar wie skrupellos: Sie würden mit den Vertretern der ungarischen Juden weiterverhandeln, eine geringe Zahl von Juden freilassen, Bargeld und Wertsachen erbeuten, die jüdische Masse in Sicherheit wiegen und gar

17 Bei seiner Befragung am 17. Mai 1945 durch das FBI schilderte Kasztner in knappen Worten die „Organisation der in Ungarn mit der Judenverfolgung betrauten SS“. Er gab an, dass „mit Ausnahme von Wisliceny, der Besteckungsgelder annahm, [...] alle SS-Leute absolut unbestechlich waren“, vgl. FBI Intelligence Report.

18 Braham, Politics, 822; nach der Besetzung war Edmund Veesenmayer des Führers Reichsbevollmächtigter für Ungarn.

19 Ebda., 820.

20 In Anlehnung an das Angebot der slowakischen jüdischen Vertreter auf Basis des Europa-Plans verlangte Wisliceny insgesamt zwei Millionen US-Dollar; 200.000 ungarische Pengő mussten als „Zeichen der Gefälligkeit und Zahlungsfähigkeit der Zionisten“ sofort bezahlt werden. Die erste Zahlung von drei Millionen Pengő wurde unmittelbar danach an Hermann Krumey und Otto Hunsche, zwei Hauptakteure des Eichmann-Sonderkommandos, geleistet. Die zweite Rate von 2,5 Millionen Pengő ging am 21. April an dieselben Empfänger. Zu diesem Zeitpunkt war die Ghettosierung in der Karpatenukraine und in Nordost-Ungarn bereits in vollem Gange, Braham, Politics, 1076-1077.

nicht erst den Gedanken an Widerstand aufkommen lassen. Die SS hatte alle Trümpfe in der Hand und „verhandelte“ weiter, trieb aber gleichzeitig die „Endlösung“ nach ihrem eigenen, ausgeklügelten Zeitplan voran – als Teil eines mit den ungarischen Komplizen entworfenen Generalplans.

Dieser sah für die Umsetzung der „Endlösung“ in Ungarn zwei Schritte vor, die sich über jeweils 54 Tage erstreckten: In der ersten Phase – diese dauerte von der Ernennung der Sztójay-Regierung am 22. März bis zum 15. Mai – wurden die Juden mit antisemitischen Gesetzen und Dekreten zugeschüttet. Sie waren nun völlig isoliert, ihres Rechts auf Reisefreiheit beraubt, durften keinerlei Transport- oder Kommunikationsmittel wie Fahrräder, Kraftfahrzeuge, Radios etc. besitzen oder verwenden, wurden enteignet und mussten fortan den „Judenstern“ tragen. Dann trieb man sie zusammen, verbrachte sie in Ghettos und pferchte sie in Verladezentren ein, von wo Deportationszüge fuhren. Kaum einer von ihnen hatte den leisen Schimmer, welches Schicksal auf sie wartete.

In der zweiten Phase vom 15. Mai bis zum 9. Juli wurden rund 440.000 ungarische Juden nach Auschwitz-Birkenau deportiert und großteils gleich nach der Ankunft ermordet. Bis 9. Juli, als der von Horthy beschlossene Deportationsstopp zum Tragen kam und Raoul Wallenberg seine Rettungsaktion startete, war ganz Ungarn (mit Ausnahme Budapests!) „judenfrei“.

Ende April oder Anfang Mai 1944 begriffen die zionistischen Vertreter, dass ihre Verhandlungstaktik nicht aufging. Der Vormarsch der Roten Armee war ins Stocken geraten und die SS kam ihren Versprechen nicht nach. In ihrer verzweifelten Lage verkannten die jüdischen Verhandler, dass die SS weder imstande noch gewillt war, ihre Zugeständnisse einzuhalten. Sie beschwerten sich bei den Verhandlern der SS, die wiederum erpicht waren, die „guten Beziehungen“ zu den jüdischen Vertretern nicht zu gefährden. Schließlich wollten sie ihrerseits sicherstellen, dass die eigenen Ziele erreicht werden, die da lauteten: noch mehr jüdisches Vermögen zu erbeuten und die Lage ruhig zu halten, um jegliches Aufbegehren zu unterbinden und die Deportationen reibungslos abzuwickeln. Um sie bei Laune zu halten, unterbreitete die SS den enttäuschten Zionisten zwei unterschiedliche, aber zusammenhängende Angebote: ein an bestimmte Voraussetzungen geknüpftes Konzept zur Rettung von mehr als einer Million europäischer Juden; und ein konkreteres Konzept zur Rettung einer begrenzten Zahl ungarischer Juden. Ersteres ist uns als „Blut-für-Waren-Abkommen“ bekannt,²¹ zweiteres als „Kasztner-Eichmann-Abkommen“.²² Während die jüdischen Vertreter um eine Entscheidung rangen, deportierten die Nationalsozialisten und ihre ungarischen Erfüllungsgehilfen rund 12.000 Juden täglich. Das erste Angebot entpuppte sich im Wesentlichen als nationalsozialistischer Plan zur Spaltung der „Großen Drei“; das zweite Konzept führte schließlich zur Rettung von 1.684 Juden. Die Verhandlungen, die zur Rettung dieser verhältnismäßig wenigen Juden führten, stellen eines der umstrittensten Kapitel in der Geschichte des Holocausts dar.²³

Als der Zweite Weltkrieg auf europäischem Boden am 8. Mai 1945 endete, waren die vier historischen Protagonisten dieses Aufsatzes – das „Dritte Reich“, Ungarn, die ungarischen und die slowakischen Juden – allesamt Verlierer. Das „Dritte Reich“, das „tausend Jahre“ hätte überdauern sollen, war vernichtet; Ungarn musste die Gebiete, die es mithilfe der Nationalsozialisten geholt hatte, aufgeben und wurde wieder auf die im Vertrag von Trianon definierten Grenzen zurechtgestutzt.

21 Siehe ebda., 1078-1088.

22 Siehe ebda., 1088-1104.

23 Siehe ebda., 1104-1112.

Die Geschichte Deutschlands und Ungarns ist dauerhaft mit dem unauslöschlichen, schändlichen Kapitel des Holocausts behaftet. Die ungarischen Juden hatten an die 560.000 (70 Prozent) Tote zu beklagen, die slowakischen rund 70.000 (87 Prozent). Viele überlebende Juden dieser beiden Länder emigrierten später in den neu gegründeten Staat Israel, das einzige positive Produkt der sonst so tragischen Geschichte des europäischen Judentums in der NS-Zeit.

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SWL-Reader-Braham.pdf](http://simon.vwi.ac.at/images/Documents/SWL_Reader/2014-2/2014-2_SWL_Braham/SWL-Reader-Braham.pdf)

SWL-Reader – Reader der Simon Wiesenthal Lectures

Lektorat: Jana Starek



Ulrike Jureit

Gefühlte Opfer

Illusionen der Vergangenheitsbewältigung

Abstract

In Germany, the Holocaust is one of the central historical events of reference for collective self-description. No other country has so intensely addressed its own criminal history. The decided effort to award the national socialist mass crimes an appropriate place in the collective memory is particularly supported by the memory figure of the „perceived victim“. Victim-identified remembrance has become a norm of a kind and it contains a promise of redemption which offers reconciliation in return for honest remembrance. However, even after decades of remorse, a state of moral release has still not set in and the apparent competition on display in matters of remembrance policy creates an increasing unease.

What are the consequences for collective memory when Germany identifies primarily with the victims and their stories of persecution? What are the challenges to historical remembrance more than sixty years after the end of the war?

In einem Brief an Walter Benjamin vom 29. Februar 1940 verwies Theodor W. Adorno darauf, dass eine dialektische Theorie des Vergessens von einem Konzept ausgehen müsse, das Vergessen nicht als Negation begreift. Nur ein solches Verständnis entspreche den Bedingungen der Möglichkeit von Erfahrungsgewinn in der Moderne. Das Vergessen, so schrieb Adorno nach Paris, sei sowohl Grundlage für die Sphäre der Erfahrung als auch für den reflektorischen Charakter, dessen Erinnerung selber das Vergessen voraussetzt. Oder mit den Worten Adornos: „Ob ein Mensch Erfahrungen machen kann oder nicht, ist in letzter Instanz davon abhängig, wie er vergißt.“¹ Entscheidend für das hier zu diskutierende Thema wäre somit nicht das Ob, sondern das Wie des Vergessens angesichts einer Erinnerungskultur, die sich wie keine andere der Vergegenwärtigung des Holocaust und anderer Massenverbrechen während des Nationalsozialismus verpflichtet sieht und nicht müde wird, dem drohenden Vergessen entgegen zu wirken.² Wenn man davon ausgeht, dass „Vergessen“ im gedächtnistheoretischen Horizont, nicht in der Bedeutung aufgeht, die man verkürzt als Löschtaste bezeichnen könnte, soll es im Folgenden darum gehen, eine Grundfigur des kollektiven Erinnerns in den Blick zu nehmen, die sich mit der Formel Gefühlte Opfer schlagwortartig charakterisieren lässt, und an der zu zeigen sein wird, wie eine Gesellschaft trotz – man möchte fast sagen – obsessiven Erinnerns sowohl einen Verlust von Geschichte erlebt wie auch von einer Latenz unerwünschter, widersprechender und irritierender Erinnerungen geprägt ist.³ Oder pointierter gefragt: Vergessen wir möglicherweise auf eine eklatante Weise gerade dadurch, dass

1 Theodor W. Adorno – Walter Benjamin, Briefwechsel 1928-1940, hg. v. Henri Lonitz, Frankfurt a. M. 1994, 415-421, 417.

2 Vgl. Johann Kreuzer, Über das Vergessen und Erinnern, in: Margrit Frölich/Ulrike Jureit/Christian Schneider (Hg.), *Das Unbehagen an der Erinnerung – Wandlungsprozesse im Gedenken an den Holocaust*, Frankfurt a. M. 2012, 67-82.

3 Ausführlicher hierzu: Ulrike Jureit/Christian Schneider, *Gefühlte Opfer. Illusionen der Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. Stuttgart 2010.

wir erinnern oder sogar gerade weil wir meinen, uns ohne Unterlass erinnern zu müssen?

Ein Blick zurück: Norbert Elias beschrieb 1977 die damalige politische Situation in West-Deutschland als eine Spirale der Selbstzerstörung. Die bundesdeutsche Gesellschaft laufe angesichts terroristischer Anschläge und staatlicher Gewalt zunehmend Gefahr, „in eine Eskalation der Furcht verwickelt zu werden, in eine polarisierende Eskalation der Konflikte zwischen denen, die die Errichtung einer kommunistischen Diktatur, und denen, die das Wiederkommen einer faschistischen Diktatur in Westdeutschland befürchten“.⁴ Diese gesellschaftliche Spaltung führte Elias auf eine ausgebliebene Aufarbeitung der nationalsozialistischen Vergangenheit zurück, durch die die Bundesrepublik in eine tiefe und zudem generationell strukturierte Identitätskrise geraten sei. Während ein erheblicher Teil derjenigen, die den Nationalsozialismus noch selbst erlebt hatten, so tätte, als wenn nichts geschehen sei, hätten sich vor allem nachwachsende Jahrgänge vom politischen System der Bundesrepublik abgewandt und im Marxismus das Gegenmodell zum autoritären Staat gesucht. Elias markierte damit den gesellschaftlichen Wandel in den 1960er- und 1970er-Jahren als einen Umbruchs- und Transformationsprozess, den er eng an die generationale Auseinandersetzung und Weitergabe der nationalsozialistischen Vergangenheit gebunden sah. Dieser gesellschaftliche Konflikt mündete zwei Jahrzehnte nach der Staatsgründung nicht nur in eine soziale, ökonomische und politische Neuorientierung der Bundesrepublik, er brachte auch nachhaltige und für die damalige generationale Konfliktlage signifikante Muster der Vergangenheitsdeutung und Aufarbeitung hervor. Hierbei sei entscheidend, so Elias, dass jüngere Jahrgänge aufgrund der unverstandenen Vergangenheit dem eigenen politischen System entfremdet blieben und damit die Hoffnung verbanden, dem Gefühl des Makels und der Schuldgefühle entkommen zu können. Im Ergebnis weist Elias daher darauf hin, „dass das nationalsozialistische Problem nicht ein Problem der Vergangenheit ist; es hat nie aufgehört, ein aktuelles Problem zu sein“.⁵

Als Bundespräsident Richard von Weizsäcker 1985 aus Anlass des 40. Jahrestages des Kriegsendes in Europa eine in seiner Wirkung wohl kaum zu überschätzende Rede hielt, schien die einige Jahre zuvor von Elias hervorgehobene Aktualität des Nationalsozialismus eher noch zugenommen zu haben und zeitgenössisch war zudem bereits absehbar, dass diese Ansprache eine Zäsur in der bundesdeutschen Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung darstellen würde. Denn von Weizsäcker formulierte damals im Deutschen Bundestag eine Grundfigur des historischen Erinnerns, die bis heute nachwirkt: „Es geht nicht darum, Vergangenheit zu bewältigen. Das kann man gar nicht. Sie lässt sich ja nicht nachträglich ändern oder ungeschehen machen. Wer aber vor der Vergangenheit die Augen verschließt, wird blind für die Gegenwart. Wer sich der Unmenschlichkeit nicht erinnert will, der wird wieder anfällig für neue Ansteckungsgefahren. Das jüdische Volk erinnert sich und wird sich immer erinnern. Wir suchen als Menschen Versöhnung. Gerade deswegen müssen wir verstehen, dass es Versöhnung ohne Erinnerung gar nicht geben kann. Die Erfahrung millionenfachen Todes ist ein Teil des Innern jedes Juden in der Welt, nicht nur deshalb, weil Menschen ein solches Grauen nicht vergessen können. Sondern die Erinnerung gehört zum jüdischen Glauben. Das Vergessen verlängert das Exil, und das Geheimnis der

⁴ Norbert Elias, Gedanken über die Bundesrepublik, in: ders., Studien über die Deutschen. Machtkämpfe und Habitusentwicklung im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert, hg.v. Michael Schröter, 3. Auflage, Frankfurt a. M. 1990, 517-552, 550.

⁵ Ebda., 549; ähnlich auch ders., *Humana conditio. Beobachtungen zur Entwicklung der Menschheit am 40. Jahrestag eines Kriegsendes* (8. Mai 1985), Frankfurt a. M. 1985.

Erlösung heißt Erinnerung.⁶ Mit dieser Passage lüftete Weizsäcker nicht nur das Geheimnis der Erlösung, sondern er stellte für aufrichtiges Erinnern auch noch Versöhnung in Aussicht – ein verlockendes Angebot für eine Nachkriegsgesellschaft, die sich in der zweiten Generation ohnehin schon intensiv um die Aufarbeitung der überlieferten Schuld bemühte. Das staatspolitisch bekämpfte Erlösungsversprechen bestärkte eine erinnerungspolitische Selbstermächtigung, die seither für die deutsche Erinnerungskultur, wie sie sich seit den 1960er-Jahren entwickelt hat, prägend wurde. Dabei handelt es sich um eine Konfiguration, die sich begrifflich als opferidentifizierte Erinnerungskultur fassen lässt und für die die Figur des gefühlten Opfers strukturbildend wurde, denn der Identifizierungswunsch mit den Opfern stellte bis in die 1990er-Jahre und teilweise darüber hinaus eine erinnerungspolitische Norm dar, wenn es darum ging, den Holocaust als negatives Bezugseignis unserer kollektiven Selbstthematisierung aufzurufen.

Ein zweites Grundmuster gegenwärtiger Erinnerungspraktiken ist das bereits erwähnte Erlösungsversprechen. Dass historisches Erinnern und Gedenken religiöse Wurzeln hat, ist unbestritten. Die gesamte Theorie des politischen Totenkults beispielweise verdeutlicht, wie sehr unsere modernen Erinnerungskulturen durch die unterschiedlichen Formen des religiösen Totengedenkens und insgesamt durch einen engen Bezug zu Ritual und Liturgie geprägt sind. Dabei beziehen sich unsere gängigen Erinnerungshandlungen in der Regel auf christliche und jüdische Gedenkformen, und genau durch deren Inanspruchnahme entstehen in den gegenwärtigen Erinnerungskulturen offenbar Missverständnisse. Der Glaubenssatz, dass das Geheimnis der Erlösung Erinnerung heiße, steht im Kontext eines speziellen Verständnisses von Geschichte und Heilserwartung. Die Inanspruchnahme einer solchen Erlösungshoffnung hat für die Erinnerung an den Holocaust verhängnisvolle Folgen: Das jüdische Erinnerungsgebot wird nicht nur als Aufforderung zur gemeinschaftlichen Vergegenwärtigung der verbrecherischen Vergangenheit aufgefasst, es wird als Vorschrift missverstanden und zudem auch noch mit dem christlichen Erlösungsversprechen verbunden. Wer nur aufrichtig und intensiv genug an die deutschen Massenverbrechen erinnert, der darf auf Versöhnung, ja auf Erlösung von der überlieferten Schuld hoffen. Angesichts der Schwere des begangenen Unrechts ist eine solche Naherwartung durchaus nachvollziehbar, wenn auch abwegig. Es gehört zu den zentralen Missverständnissen unseres opferidentifizierten Gedenkens, dass ein religiöses Heilsversprechen in ein säkulares System der Vergangenheitsbearbeitung transformiert wird, ohne über die damit verbundenen Verheißungen Rechenschaft abzulegen. Das Unbehagen, das dieses opferidentifizierte Erinnern zunehmend erzeugt, hängt auch mit diesem nicht einzulösenden Versprechen zusammen. Denn der in Aussicht gestellte Zustand moralischer Entlastung will sich auch nach Jahrzehnten intensiven Bemühens, Bereuens und Gedenkens partout nicht einstellen.

Opferidentifikation und Erlösungshoffnung beziehen ihre Wirkungskraft aus verschiedenen Theoriekonzepten. Neben der von Alexander und Margarete Mitscherlich vertretenen These einer kollektiven Unfähigkeit zu trauern, auf die hier nicht eingegangen werden kann, gehören insbesondere die von Jan und Aleida Assmann vorgelegten Studien zum kulturellen Gedächtnis zu den einschlägigen Forschungs-

⁶ Rede des Bundespräsidenten Richard von Weizsäcker bei der Gedenkveranstaltung im Plenarsaal des Deutschen Bundestages zum 40. Jahrestag des Endes des Zweiten Weltkrieges in Europa am 8. Mai 1985; online: [http://www.bundespraesident.de/Reden-und-Interviews/RedenRichard-von-Weizsaecker-,12166.629421/Rede-von-BundespraesidentRich.htm\[...\]/global.back=/Reden-und-Interviews/-%2c12166%2c0/RedenRichard-von-Weizsaecker.htm%3flink%3dbpr_liste,\(27.2.2009\).](http://www.bundespraesident.de/Reden-und-Interviews/RedenRichard-von-Weizsaecker-,12166.629421/Rede-von-BundespraesidentRich.htm[...]/global.back=/Reden-und-Interviews/-%2c12166%2c0/RedenRichard-von-Weizsaecker.htm%3flink%3dbpr_liste,(27.2.2009).)

ansätzen.⁷ Ihre Theorie des kulturellen Gedächtnisses ist für das gegenwärtige Verständnis gemeinschaftlicher Erinnerungspraktiken von zentraler Bedeutung. Die Unterscheidung zwischen kommunikativem, kulturellem und sozialem Gedächtnis, das Wissen um seine medialen Repräsentanzen sowie die immer wieder beschworene identitätsstiftende Wirkung öffentlicher Erinnerungspraktiken, all dies gehört zur Grundausstattung unserer politischen Kultur. Die Assmanns vertreten eine Gedächtnistheorie, die in ihrer Grundstruktur auf die Arbeiten von Maurice Halbwachs zurückgreift, und für die der Begriff „kulturelle Arterhaltung“ von zentraler Bedeutung ist. Mit ihm wird eine Forschungsperspektive markiert, die nicht nur auf die Konstituierung und vor allem Sicherung von Gesellschaften und Kulturen verengt ist, sondern die zudem das kollektive Gedächtnis als einen identitätsstiftenden Mechanismus ethnogenetischer Prozesse konzipiert. Das kollektive Gedächtnis wird als Selbstbild-bezogenes Wissensreservoir einer Gruppe verstanden, „durch dessen Pflege und Weitergabe sie sich im Sinne kultureller Arterhaltung reproduziert“.⁸ Für das Konzept des kollektiven Gedächtnisses und seine Übertragung auf gegenwärtige Erinnerungsvorgänge bleibt diese Nuancierung nicht folgenlos. Schließlich basieren ethnogenetische Konzepte auf der Vorstellung homogener Gemeinschaften, unabhängig davon, wie man sie nennt. Ob Homogenität als gesellschaftliches Strukturprinzip für die antiken Hochkulturen unterstellt werden kann, muss hier nicht weiter interessieren, entscheidend ist vielmehr, was aus dieser Grundannahme für die Theorie des kulturellen Gedächtnisses folgt. Bei Assmann geht es nicht mehr – wie noch bei Halbwachs um ein gefühltes Gruppenbewusstsein und Kontinuitätsempfinden, sondern – wie er formuliert – um die unauflösliche Verbindung von Erinnerung und Identität.

Die Symbiose zwischen der kulturellen Gedächtnistheorie und der opferidentifizierten Grundstruktur bundesdeutscher Erinnerungskulturen beruht dabei unter anderem auf dem impliziten Gegensatz von Erinnern und Vergessen. Zweifellos ist der Auffassung, dass es sich beim Erinnern um einen zwar nicht unbedingt zielgerichteten, aber hochgradig selektiven Auswahlvorgang handelt, uneingeschränkt zuzustimmen. Gleichwohl bleibt einzuwenden, dass im Umkehrschluss das Nicht-Erinnern keineswegs zwangsläufig mit der Betätigung einer Löschtaste gleichzusetzen ist. Wenn Vergessen nur als Gegensatz oder als komplementärer Vorgang zum Erinnern gewichtet wird, bleibt der Begriff theoretisch unterbestimmt. Die Herabstufung des Vergessens zum bloßen Ausfall setzt das Vergessen mit dem Vergessenen gleich. Schließlich ist mit Vergessen zunächst einmal nur die Abwesenheit von Vergangenem gemeint, ohne dass damit gleichzeitig eine Aussage darüber getroffen worden wäre, ob und wie das Vergangene noch zugänglich ist. Vergessen ist zudem

7 Hier nur einige Verweise auf die zahlreichen Publikationen: Jan Assmann, Das kulturelle Gedächtnis. Schrift, Erinnerung und politische Identität in frühen Hochkulturen, München 1997²; Ders., Kollektives Gedächtnis und kulturelle Identität, in: Ders./Tonio Hölscher (Hg.), Kultur und Gedächtnis, Frankfurt a. M. 1988, 9–19; Jan und Aleida Assmann, Schrift, Tradition, Kultur, in: Wolfgang Raible (Hg.), Zwischen Festtag und Alltag: Zehn Beiträge zum Thema Mündlichkeit und Schriftlichkeit, Tübingen 1988, 25–49; Dies., Das Gestern im Heute. Medien und soziales Gedächtnis, in: Klaus Merten/Siegfried J. Schmidt/Siegfried Weischenberg (Hg.), Die Wirklichkeit der Medien. Eine Einführung in die Kommunikationswissenschaft, Opladen 1994, 114–140; Aleida Assmann, Erinnerungsräume. Formen und Wandlungen des kulturellen Gedächtnisses, München 1999; Dies., Soziales und kollektives Gedächtnis, online: www.bpb.de/files/0FW1JZ.pdf, (20.5.2009); Dies., Der lange Schatten der Vergangenheit. Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik, München 2006; Dies., Geschichte im Gedächtnis. Von der individuellen Erfahrung zur öffentlichen Inszenierung, München 2007; Dies., Die Last der Vergangenheit, online: www.zeithistorische-forschungen.de/16126041Assmann-3-2007, (20.5.2009). Die lesenswerte Kritik dazu von Martin Sabrow, Die Lust an der Vergangenheit, online: www.zeithistorische-forschungen.de/16126041-Sabrow-3-2007, (20.5.2009); darüber hinaus lesenswert der Sammelband von Oliver Dimbath/Peter Wehling (Hg.), Soziologie des Vergessens. Theoretische Zugänge und empirische Forschungsfelder, Konstanz 2011.

8 Assmann, Schrift, Tradition, Kultur, 28.

als Vorgang weiterhin konstitutiv dafür, dass etwas überhaupt wieder-erinnert werden kann.⁹

In der Theorie des kulturellen Gedächtnisses erhält das Vergessen eine negative und defizitäre Konnotation, wenn Erinnern als gemeinschaftliche Identitätsarbeit verstanden wird. Wer den Zusammenhang von Gruppendynamik und Erinnerungspraktiken derart an die Konstituierung und vor allem an die Fortexistenz von Gemeinschaften bindet, der schreibt Erinnerungsvorgängen *per se* eine existentielle Bedeutung zu. Dass ein solches Konzept kulturellen Erinnerns spätestens dann unter Druck gerät, wenn es um die gemeinschaftliche Vergegenwärtigung von Massenverbrechen geht, liegt auf der Hand, denn die Referenz auf eine solche destruktive Kollektiverfahrung gilt in der Logik der kulturellen Gedächtnistheorie als nicht „arterhaltend“ und kann daher in ihrer Ambivalenz gar nicht erinnert werden. Wenn ich kollektives Erinnern als „arterhaltenden“ Mechanismus definiere, dann ist eine Erinnerung an den Holocaust gar nicht oder nur durch Identifizierung mit den Opfern möglich. Und genau in dieser Opferidentifizierung liegt der moralische Link zwischen der Theorie des kulturellen Gedächtnisses und den in Deutschland eingeübten Erinnerungspraktiken. Wir beobachten eine generationell aufgeladene Erinnerungsgemeinschaft, die auf das geliehene Selbstbild des gefühlten Opfers rekurriert. Das Reden als Generation erweist sich dabei als überaus starke Differenzkategorie, weil dadurch nicht nur der moralische Bruch zur Elterngeneration als quasi evolutionärer Quantensprung ausgewiesen werden kann, sondern damit auch die Hoffnung verbunden wird, diese generationenspezifische Deutung des Holocaust an die eigenen Nachkommen tradieren zu können.¹⁰

Dahinter lässt sich die Annahme erkennen, dass die dritte Generation, durch ihre generationelle Lagerung über keine vergleichbare (Opfer-)Identifizierung verfügt und daher gegenüber der deutschen Vergangenheit womöglich nicht das gleiche (Nach-)Empfinden aufzubringen vermag – eine Unterstellung, die vermutlich sogar zutrifft. Diese Differenz allerdings als Makel abzuwerten, kennzeichnet eine Erinnerungskonstellation, in der opferidentifiziertes Erinnern zu einer Art Gesellschaftszustand geworden ist und die sich mit ihrem Selbstverständnis stets auf der moralisch richtigen Seite weiß.

Aber wen oder was vergessen wir, wenn wir an die Opfer erinnern? Tendiert die deutsche Erinnerungskultur dazu, eine Vergessenskultur zu werden, die sich paradoxerweise gerade dadurch auszeichnet, dass sie zwanghaft erinnert? Geht das eigentlich: Vergessen durch Erinnern? Natürlich liegt es nahe, bei solchen Überlegungen zum *Nutzen und Nachtheil* des Erinnerns auf Friedrich Nietzsche zu verweisen.¹¹ In seiner 1873/74 verfassten Schrift qualifiziert er das Erinnern als eine Last des Menschen, der nicht „am Pflock des Augenblicks“ angebunden sei, sondern an der langen Kette der Erinnerung laufe. Ein Mensch, der nicht vergessen könne, sei wie jemand, dem der Schlaf entzogen würde: „Es gibt einen Grad von Schlaflosigkeit, von Wie-

9 Vgl. hierzu ausführlicher: Kreuzer, Über das Erinnern und Vergessen, 78.

10 Zum Generationenbegriff hier nur der Verweis auf: Manfred Riedel, Generation, in: Joachim Ritter (Hg.), Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie, Bd. 3, Basel 1974, Spalte 274-277; Sigrid Weigel, Generation, Genealogie, Geschlecht. Zur Geschichte des Generationskonzepts und seiner wissenschaftlichen Konzeptionalisierung seit Ende des 18. Jahrhunderts, in: Lutz Musner/Gothart Winberg (Hg.), Kulturwissenschaften. Forschung – Praxis – Positionen, Wien 2002, 161-190; Bernd Weisbrod, Generation und Generationalität in der neueren Geschichte, in: Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte, B 8/2005, 3-9; Ohad Parnes/Ulrike Vedder/Sigrid Weigel (Hg.), Generation. Zur Genealogie des Konzepts – Konzepte von Genealogie, Paderborn 2005; Ulrike Jureit/Michael Wildt (Hg.), Generationen. Zur Relevanz eines wissenschaftlichen Grundbegriffs, Hamburg 2005; Ulrike Jureit, Generationenforschung, Göttingen 2006.

11 Diese Formulierung in Anlehnung an Nietzsche: Vom Nutzen und Nachtheil der Historie für das Leben, Kritische Studienausgabe, Bd. 1, München 1988, 209-287.

derkäuen, von historischem Sinne, bei dem das Lebendige zu Schaden kommt, und zuletzt zu Grunde geht, sei es nun ein Mensch oder ein Volk oder eine Cultur.“ Zweifellos hat der Historiker Heinz D. Kittsteiner recht, wenn er betont, dass Nietzsche hier gegen eine bestimmte Art der Geschichtserfahrung des 19. Jahrhunderts wettert, allerdings steht Kittsteiners Nachdenken über das Erinnern wiederum unter dem Eindruck einer Schlussstrich-Debatte, die sich ihrerseits auf Nietzsche bezieht.¹² Somit fällt seine Verwerfung möglicherweise etwas zu umfassend aus, denn man muss Nietzsche in seinem Loblied des Vergessens nicht unbedingt folgen, um aus seinen Überlegungen über den Nachteil des Erinnerns Gewinn zu ziehen. Hier geht es um eine bestimmte Gewichtung, um eine Quantität des Erinnerns, die Nietzsche für schädlich hält. Es geht um das verflachte, das stereotype Erinnern, um das permanente Wiederkäuen, um die Verkleisterung der Geschichte durch Pathos und Sentimentalität, um ein Übermaß an Sinn und Moral.

Jürgen Habermas hat die Funktion von Erinnerung einmal als Widerlegung einer „fugendichten Normalität dessen, was sich nun mal durchgesetzt hat“ bezeichnet.¹³ Ihr käme demnach im Historisierungsprozess eine eher widerspenstige Rolle zu. Sie stellt die rationalisierende Einebnung geschichtlicher Brüche und Widersprüche in Frage und verweist darauf, dass jede gelungene Historisierung bestimmte Aspekte von Geschichte aus den Augen verliert, weil sie verallgemeinern und rationalisieren muss. Sie fragt nach dem emotionalen Überschuss, nach dem, was sich nicht ordnen, nicht objektivieren, nicht klassifizieren lässt. Erinnerung im Sinne einer solchen „gefährlichen Überlieferung“ (Johann Baptist Metz), weil unsere mühsam gewonnenen Selbstverständlichkeiten und Zugehörigkeitskonstrukte wieder in Frage stellend – von solch einer weniger moralisierenden, denn irritierenden Erinnerung nach vorn ist die gegenwärtige Gedenkkultur weit entfernt. Während die Mahnungen an ein drohendes Vergessen des Holocaust, an die Gefahr des kollektiven Verdrängens und Verschweigens in der deutschen Nachkriegsgeschichte ja zweifellos ihre Berechtigung hatten, besteht die Problematik mittlerweile ja nicht mehr in einer für die fünfziger und sechziger Jahre noch charakteristischen Kollektivamnesie. Seit mehr als zwanzig Jahren gehören der Nationalsozialismus und insbesondere der Holocaust zu den zentralen historischen Bezugseignissen, auf die sich eine kollektive Selbstthematisierung bezieht, wenn es gilt, sich selbst zu beschreiben. Die nachholende Hinwendung zu den Opfern, die Anerkennung und das Nachempfinden ihrer Leiden waren ein unabdingbarer Schritt in der viel zitierten Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung. Eine solche Emotionalisierung war und ist notwendig, um überhaupt das Geschehene als Verbrechen, um die Beteiligten als für diese Taten verantwortlich auszumachen. Allerdings hat sich dieses Mitfühlen und Mitleiden zu einem Identifizierungswunsch mit den Opfern entwickelt, und nicht nur individuell, auch gesellschaftlich ist daraus eine Art geliehene Identität erwachsen – ein Identitätswunsch, der die Opfer zwar umarmt, während die Täter und ihre Taten anonymisiert oder pauschal dämonisiert werden. Eine solche Erinnerungskultur hat ihr beunruhigendes, ihr subversives Potenzial verloren. Sie ist eben ein „Ort, an den man gerne geht“, wie Altbundeskanzler Gerhard Schröder mit Blick auf das Holocaust-Mahnmal in Berlin treffend formulierte.

12 Vgl. Heinz D. Kittsteiner, *Vom Nutzen und Nachteil des Vergessens für die Geschichte*, in: ders., *Out of control. Über die Unverfügbarkeit des historischen Prozesses*, Berlin 2004, 217–251.

13 Jürgen Habermas, *Symbolischer Ausdruck und rituelles Verhalten. Ein Rückblick auf Ernst Cassirer und Arnold Gehlen*, in: ders., *Zeit der Übergänge*, Frankfurt a. M. 2001, 63–82, hier 82; hierzu auch: ders., *Können komplexe Gesellschaften eine vernünftige Identität ausbilden?*, in: ders., *Zur Rekonstruktion des Historischen Materialismus*, 3. Auflage, Frankfurt a. M. 1972, 92–126; ebenso ders., *Eine Art Schadensabwicklung*, Frankfurt a. M. 1987, 115–179 und ders., *Die Normalität einer Berliner Republik*, Frankfurt a. M. 1995.

Auf die Frage, ob der Mensch eigentlich wirklich etwas vergessen kann oder aber nur von Vergessen zu sprechen ist, wenn etwas gar nicht wahrgenommen wurde, und wir es ansonsten mit Formen des Verdrängens, Überschreibens und Umarbeitens zu tun haben, über diese Frage ließe sich durchaus streiten. Gleichwohl müssen wir davon ausgehen, dass es sich beim Erinnern und Vergessen um ein und denselben Vorgang handelt. Indem wir uns an etwas erinnern, wählen wir aus der unendlichen Vielfalt des Wahrgenommenen etwas aus, was zugleich bedeutet, dass unsere Aufmerksamkeit von dem, was nicht aktualisiert wird, abgezogen wird. Vergessen als Unvermögen oder als Scheitern von Erinnerung zu beschreiben reproduziert schon die gegenwärtig dominierende Vorstellung, Erinnerung sei in jedem Fall förderlich und notwendig. Auch hier stellt sich die Frage der Balance: Wie viel Vergessen ist unverzichtbar, um nicht verrückt zu werden, und wann dient es der Entlastung?

Geht es um die gesellschaftliche Verarbeitung nach Kriegen, Revolutionen und Massenmord, ist das moralische Erinnerungsgebot eine ausgesprochen moderne Vorstellung. Bis in die Neuzeit hinein herrschte vielmehr die Auffassung vor, ein wirksamer Friedensvertrag funktioniere nicht ohne Amnestie und Amnesie. Ein solches Vergeben und Vergessen als Form der Vergangenheitsbearbeitung ist spätestens seit Auschwitz unvorstellbar geworden.¹⁴ Das Vergessen hat seine Unschuld verloren, aber ein verordnetes Erinnern von Verbrechen kann sich ebenso als subtile Entlastungsstrategie erweisen. Die Ermordung der europäischen Juden nicht durch Identifizierung mit den Opfern zu beruhigen, sondern als negativen Referenzpunkt in ein kollektives Gesamtbild zu integrieren, setzt voraus, den obsessiven Hang zur Naherinnerung zu überwinden und die Geschichte, auch die deutsche Geschichte, als einen historischen Prozess zu begreifen, der durchaus auch hätte anders verlaufen können. Durch solche Horizonterweiterungen ließen sich nicht nur die Reichweiten des Erinnerns anders vermessen, es wäre auch möglich, sich den gegenwärtigen Aufgaben historischen Erinnerns ernsthafter zu stellen. Denn während es noch vor vierzig Jahren darum ging, eine deutsche Mehrheitsgesellschaft davon zu überzeugen, dass der Holocaust kein bedauerlicher Betriebsunfall der Geschichte war, stehen wir heute vor ganz anderen Herausforderungen. Hier sind vor allem zwei Aspekte zu nennen: Zum einen die zu beobachtende Universalisierung des Holocaust und zum anderen die Frage, wie in einer Einwanderungsgesellschaft an den Holocaust gedacht werden kann.

Noch bis in die 1980er-Jahre hinein wurde vor dem Hintergrund von Arbeitsmigration, Flüchtlingsbewegungen und Asylgesetzgebung darüber debattiert, wie sich Geschichtskonstruktionen eingewandrerter nationaler Minderheiten zu denjenigen der jeweiligen Mehrheitsgesellschaften verhalten; inzwischen ist unverkennbar, dass solche Referenzrahmungen an der Realität vorbeiziehen. Auch erinnerungspolitisch gilt es, nicht nur Deutschland als Einwanderungsland, sondern auch die EU als ein politisches System zu begreifen, das eine nicht mehr nach Nationen und Ethnien zu differenzierende Bevölkerung umfasst. Dementsprechend vollzieht sich historisches Erinnern immer weniger im Rekurs auf national oder ethnisch verfasste Geschichtsentwürfe, da ein stetig wachsender Teil der Bevölkerungen über andere familiäre Hintergründe verfügt und somit mit Vergangenheiten konfrontiert wird, „die außerhalb ihres ethnischen Herkunftsglaubens liegen“.¹⁵ Daraus entstehen Dynamiken unterschiedlichster Prägungen, denn es geht bei weitem nicht mehr nur darum, dass

14 Vgl. Christian Meier, *Das Gebot zu vergessen und die Unabweisbarkeit des Erinnerns: vom öffentlichen Umgang mit schlimmer Vergangenheit*, München 2010.

15 Claus Leggewie, *Ein Schlachtfeld wird besichtigt. Sieben Kreise transnationaler Erinnerung Europas*, in: Manfred Grieger u. a. (Hg.), *Die Zukunft der Erinnerung. Eine Wolfsburger Tagung*, Wolfsburg 2008, 21–34, 33.

sich das Spektrum von Geschichtsbildern immer stärker differenziert und nationale Meisterzählungen ihren gesellschaftlichen Resonanzboden einbüßen. Hier geht es auch um das zukünftig wohl kaum zu überschätzende Problem, wie Vergangenheiten, die sich aufgrund ihres Gewalt- und Destruktionspotenzials ja ohnehin einer harmonischen Gemeinschaftsstiftung verweigern, jenseits tradierter Zugehörigkeitskonstruktionen überhaupt noch kollektiv erinnert und angeeignet werden.

Angesichts der gegenwärtigen Erschöpfung unserer Gedenkkultur ließen sich solche Umbrüche ja durchaus auch als Chancen begreifen. Davon kann derzeit allerdings noch keine Rede sein, denn was sich zurzeit beobachten lässt, ist eine massive Konkurrenz um die Anerkennung von Opferschaften. Insbesondere seit 1989 – und verstärkt durch den EU-Beitritt osteuropäischer Staaten 2004 – steht beispielsweise der Konflikt um das Verhältnis zwischen Holocaust-Gedenken und der Anerkennung stalinistischer Massenverbrechen im Zentrum europäischer Geschichtsdebatten. Wie beispielsweise soll in der KZ-Gedenkstätte Buchenwald an das dortige, von 1945 bis 1950 existierende, sowjetische Speziallager Nr. 2 und an dessen Opfer erinnert werden? Wie gewichtet die Europäische Union das gemeinsame Gedenken an den Holocaust im Verhältnis zum stalinistischen Terror, vor allem in Hinblick auf die europäische Integrations- und Erweiterungspolitik?

Der erinnerungspolitische Ost-West-Konflikt dominiert die europäischen Auseinandersetzungen mit dem „historischen Erbe“. Vor diesem Hintergrund verwundern auch die heftigen Reaktionen nicht, wenn die lettische Politikerin und EU-Kommissarin Sandra Kalniete während eines Besuches der Leipziger Buchmesse 2004 von den gleichermaßen verbrecherischen Regimen des Nationalsozialismus und des Kommunismus spricht. Eine solche Gleichsetzung beider Systeme stößt im Westen auf massiven Widerspruch, während im Osten das Dominieren der Erinnerung an den Holocaust als Missachtung der stalinistischen Verfolgungserfahrungen gewertet wird. Das Europäische Parlament sieht sich mit entsprechenden Forderungen konfrontiert, so zum Beispiel mit jener, nicht nur das Hakenkreuz, sondern auch kommunistische Symbole wie Hammer und Sichel europaweit zu verbieten. Und in Anlehnung an die Einführung des Holocaust-Gedenktages am 27. Januar soll nun auch der 23. August als Jahrestag des Hitler-Stalin-Pakts dazu dienen, „das Gedenken an die Opfer von Massendeportation und -vernichtung aufrecht zu erhalten und somit Demokratie zu stärken sowie Frieden und Stabilität auf unserem Kontinent zu fördern.“¹⁶ Dass dabei der Eindruck entstand, dass die EU stalinistische und faschistische Massenverbrechen gemeinsam unter „Kriegsverbrechen und Verbrechen gegen die Menschlichkeit“ subsumiere und dadurch gleichsetze, blieb bekanntlich nicht unwidersprochen.

Während also die konkrete Gewichtung der partikularen Vergangenheitsdeutungen umstritten bleibt, umfasst das europäische Gemeinschaftsversprechen zunehmend einen unspezifischen Opferbezug sowie ein Erinnerungsangebot, das auf Versöhnung und Friedensbewahrung abzielt. Die kollektive Identifikation mit den Opfern der unterschiedlichen politischen Systeme dient als gemeinschaftsstiftender Bezugsrahmen, dem zugesprochen wird, politische Spaltungen zu überwinden sowie Frieden und Aussöhnung zu ermöglichen. Der Preis, der für ein solches Selbstverständnis zu zahlen bleibt, ist hoch. Nicht nur die gegenseitige Aufrechnung und Relativierung der verübten Verbrechen ist die Folge (einschließlich der Opferkonkur-

¹⁶ EU-Entschließung 809/08 zur Erklärung des 23. August zum Europäischen Gedenktag an die Opfer von Stalinismus und Nazismus vom 28. September 2008, online: http://www.umweltonline.de/PDFBR/2008/0809_2D08.pdf, (15.6.2009).

renzen), auch manifestiert sich diese Perspektive in der dezidierten Ausblendung der für die Massenverbrechen verantwortlichen Täter, die zum Beispiel in den Entschlüsse der EU nur noch – wenn überhaupt – als anonyme Größen Erwähnung finden. Der Massenmord an den europäischen Juden gilt in dieser Wahrnehmung als ein extremes Beispiel von Menschenrechtsverletzungen, die in ihren gegenwärtigen Ausprägungen zu den zentralen politischen Herausforderungen weltgesellschaftlicher Systeme zählen. Während für manche eine universale Menschenrechtspolitik – mit oder ohne Interventionsbereitschaft – die einzige legitime und moralisch notwendige Konsequenz aus der Geschichte des Holocaust darstellt, sehen andere darin eine ausgesprochen gefährliche Entwicklung; diese werde letztlich dazu führen, dass die nationalsozialistischen Massenverbrechen instrumentalisiert und banalisiert werden. An die Stelle des verlorengegangenen historischen Urteilsvermögens – so formuliert es Dan Diner – trete ein universell drapiert moralisierender Diskurs über unterschiedslose Opferschaften.¹⁷

Solche Einwände laufen zwar oft Gefahr, die einzige wahre Deutung des Holocaust nur sich selbst zuzugestehen, gleichzeitig ist jedoch unverkennbar, dass eine Universalisierung des Holocaust erhebliche politische Konsequenzen mit sich bringt. Denn mit dem Etikett *Holocaust* werden spezifische historische Konstellationen auf aktuelle politische Konflikte übertragen, deren Analogie ja durchaus fraglich ist, und zwar weniger aus moralischen denn aus analytischen Gründen. Die Konfliktlinien verlaufen zum einen in ost-westlicher Richtung, nämlich dort, wo es – häufig in Bezug auf oder in Konkurrenz zum Holocaust-Gedenken – um die kollektive Erinnerung an den stalinistischen Terror geht, zum anderen sind in den letzten Jahren aber auch Massenverbrechen der europäischen Kolonialmächte in den globalen Blick genommen worden. Das Massaker im nordalgerischen Sétif am 8. Mai 1945 ist hier ebenso als Beispiel zu nennen wie der deutsche Kolonialkrieg gegen die Herero 1904 bis 1908. Dass sich in Ländern wie Algerien, Indien oder Namibia aufgrund der kolonialen Erfahrungen andere Perspektiven und Erinnerungsmuster auf die Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts entwickelt haben als in (West-)Europa und in den USA, überrascht wenig. Gleichzeitig wird es zukünftig von entscheidender Bedeutung sein, wie sich kolonial strukturierte Geschichtsentwürfe zu denen in Beziehung setzen, die den Holocaust zum negativen Bezugseignis ihrer Selbstbeschreibung erklären.

Historisches Erinnern in Einwanderungsgesellschaften und transnationale Erinnerungsprozesse angesichts einer sich globalisierenden Welt – das sind zwei der fundamentalen Herausforderungen, um die es in den nächsten Jahren wird gehen müssen, wenn wir uns mit Mustern, Strukturen und Deutungshorizonten kollektiven Erinnerns beschäftigen. Dass sich dabei Formen eines opferidentifizierten Erinnerns weiter, auch transnational durchsetzen werden, ist nicht auszuschließen, ja sogar wahrscheinlich. Mittlerweile steht nicht mehr der Held als globale Grundfigur des historischen Erinnerns im Mittelpunkt, sondern das Opfer.¹⁸ Diese Umcodierung bedeutet jedoch keineswegs, sich generell nicht mit den Tätern zu beschäftigen, ganz im Gegenteil: Opferidentifiziertes Erinnern produziert eine spezifische Sicht auf Täter und auf ihre Taten – eine Sicht, die zur Generalisierung tendiert, die dazu neigt, mentale Täterkollektive zu konstruieren und die NS-Täter häufig als sadistische, triebgesteuerte oder sonst wie pathologisch auffällige Überzeugungstäter dämonisiert. Diese Exklusion der NS-Täter zementiert das eigene Selbstverständnis als nach-

17 Vgl. Dan Diner, Gegenläufige Gedächtnisse. Über Geltung und Wirkung des Holocaust, Göttingen 2007, 9.

18 Vgl. Martin Sabrow, Vom Held zum Opfer. Zum Subjektwandel deutscher Vergangenheitsverständigung im 20. Jahrhundert, in: Fröhlich, Margret et al. (Hg.), Unbehagen an der Erinnerung. Wandlungsprozesse im Gedenken an den Holocaust, Frankfurt a. M. 2012, 37-54.

geborene Deutsche, die sich durch die Identifikation mit den Opfern der Vernichtung radikal von der ererbten Geschichte lossagen – und dadurch einen wesentlichen Kern ihres Vergangenheitsbezuges ausblenden. Martin Walser hat in einem immer noch lesenswerten Text von 1965 mit Blick auf den Auschwitz-Prozess geschrieben: „Natürlich verabscheuen wir die Täter. Das gehört ja mit zu unserer intimen Auseinandersetzung. Wir empfinden dadurch den Unterschied. Und wir nehmen Anteil am Opfer. [...] Erst durch den hilflosen Versuch, uns auf die Seite des Opfers zu stellen oder uns, so gut es gehen will, wenigstens vorzustellen, wie schrecklich da gelitten wurde, erst durch diese Anteilnahme wird uns der Täter so verabscheungswürdig und brutal, wie wir ihn für unsere realitätsarme, aber momentan heftige Empfindung brauchen.“¹⁹

An der Heftigkeit der Empfindungen hat sich seither offenbar wenig geändert, an den hilflosen Versuchen der Anteilnahme – so ließe sich zynisch kommentieren – wurde indes massiv gearbeitet. Mehr als vierzig Jahre später hat sich daraus ein gesellschaftlich dominantes Muster der Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung professionalisiert, doch statt diesen Mechanismus als „Dauerrepräsentanz unserer Schande“²⁰ nach außen zu projizieren, wie Walser es dann 1998 getan hat, zielt die Erinnerungsfigur des „Gefühlten Opfers“ darauf, die vermutlich notwendige, aber letztlich entlastende Funktion des opferidentifizierten Erinnerns zu historisieren und ihre Verleugnungsanteile sichtbar zu machen.

19 Martin Walser, Unser Auschwitz (1965), online: <http://www.workpage.de/mwa1.php> 18.

20 Dankesrede von Martin Walser zur Verleihung des Friedenspreises des Deutschen Buchhandels in der Frankfurter Paulskirche am 11. Oktober 1998, online: http://www.hdg.de/lemo/html/dokumente/WegelnDieGegenwart_redeWalserZumFriedenspreis/.

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SWL-Reader – Reader der Simon Wiesenthal Lectures

Lektorat: Barbara Grzelakova



Tim Cole

Holocaust Landscapes

Mapping Ghettoization in Hungary

Abstract

The lecture sought to examine both the wartime mapping out of ghettos by local officials, and the contemporary mapping of ghettoization by the academic researcher as a way to uncover the shifting motivations and experiences of both Jews and non-Jews during the Holocaust in Hungary. In part, the lecture sought to contribute to recent scholarship on the Hungarian Holocaust by examining the complex involvement of local officials in implementing crucial elements such as the concentration of Jews. But the lecture also sought to ask broader methodological questions by considering the potential of the so-called 'spatial turn' in the 'digital humanities' to ask – and answer – new questions. In short, the lecture sought to explore whether geographical approaches have the potential to contribute to the interdisciplinary field of Holocaust Studies in general and study of the ghettoization in particular.

I have always been struck by something that one of the pioneering post-war historians of the Holocaust, Philip Friedman, wrote in a co-authored *Guide to Jewish History* jointly published by Yad Vashem and YIVO back in 1960. Setting out what they saw as the basis for future historical study of the Holocaust, Friedman and Jacob Robinson advised scholars "that a careful examination of the ghetto maps is [...] of utmost importance in the study of the trends and objectives of Nazi ghetto planning", and made a series of suggestions for historians making use of these cartographic sources:

"[...] a comparison of the ghetto maps with the city maps can help the student to decide whether there was a Nazi master-plan to locate the ghettos in the periphery of a town, in its dilapidated and overpopulated suburbs, or in those sections which were destroyed by military operations. A comparison of the ghetto area with the 'Aryan' section of a town will show the relationship between density of population and available living space for Jews and non-Jews, and thus reveal a pattern of overcrowding the Jewish ghettos. A study of the ghetto and city maps will indicate whether gardens, squares and other recreation areas were permitted in the ghetto area. The ghetto maps themselves will show the non-Jewish enclaves (e.g. the Gypsy ghetto in Łódź) and intimate why they were placed there by the Nazis. On September 21, 1939, Reinhard Heydrich recommended that the ghettos be placed near railroads in order to facilitate the deportations of the Jews. The ghetto maps may indicate whether this recommendation was accepted by local authorities. This does not exhaust their usefulness. They also reveal a peculiar feature of Nazi ghetto planning: the simultaneous creation in several towns of two or even three ghettos, with either no communication between them, or with very little. [...] The maps also show the frequent changes the Nazis made in the ghetto areas, almost all of which were meant to worsen the existing facilities, narrow the available space, or move the inmates to new sites."¹

¹ Jacob Robinson/Philip Friedman (ed.), *Guide to Jewish History Under Nazi Impact*, Jerusalem/New York 1960, 74.

Their words informed an earlier study of mine – *Holocaust City* (2003) – that examined the motivations of ghetto planners in Budapest by exploring the changing shape of the ghetto there.² But they are also words that I have had echoing in my ears for the last decade or more looking at – and more recently, making and analysing – maps of Hungarian Jewish ghettos.³

Some maps from 1944 survive – drawn up by local officials charged with identifying where to place the ghetto in their town or city. One map survives from Budapest of the closed Pest ghetto created in the winter of 1944. More maps survive from Tolna county, where a complete set of maps were drawn up in May 1944 showing the location of the ghettos in the eight towns in the county which had been chosen as places of Jewish concentration. I start off this evening looking at two of those maps drawn up in May 1944 in order to explore broader issues of importance in understanding the rapid implementation of the concentration and deportation of Hungarian Jews so late on in the war in the spring of 1944, following the German occupation of its wartime ally.⁴

However, most of the 150 or so ghettos in Hungary appear not to have been mapped out cartographically at the time, or at least if they were, those maps have not survived. Most were delineated textually, in ghetto orders which listed where in the town or city Jews were to live. In the second half of the lecture I want to think about why we might want to map out these sites – or, to put it another way, visualise largely textual records – and reflect on the potential of applying geographical methodologies to Holocaust studies. Here, I draw on collaborative work recently undertaken with a Geographic Information Scientist based in Texas, Alberto Giordano, as part of a broader interdisciplinary research team exploring Holocaust Geographies. But before I talk through some of the mapping that Alberto and I have done over the last couple of years, let me start with two maps drawn up by local officials involved in implementing Holocaust ghettos.

Map 1 – Hőgyész

In May 1944, a clerk sketched out a map of the two broad ghetto areas in Hőgyész. Like seven other clerks across Tolna county,⁵ this clerk drew a map because of a request from the deputy prefect of the county. On 11 May 1944, he issued two orders implementing the national ghettoization decree within his county.⁶ The first, as was the practice elsewhere, outlined which towns and cities were to have ghettos. Local officials in these eight places were given some of the practical regulations relating to ghettoization in this order, with further details following in a supplementary order published on the same day that outlined the nitty-gritty of the construction and day-to-day running of county's ghettos. Point number 28 in a long list of detailed instructions ordered local authorities to provide four copies of a name list of the Jews living in each building in the ghetto along with two copies of a ghetto map.⁷

2 Tim Cole, *Holocaust City. The Making of a Jewish Ghetto*, New York 2003.

3 Tim Cole, *Traces of the Holocaust. Journeying in and out of the Ghettos*, London 2011; see also Anne Kelly Knowles/Tim Cole/Alberto Giordano (ed.), *Geographies of the Holocaust*, Bloomington 2014.

4 On this, see Cole, *Traces of the Holocaust*, Chapter Four.

5 For copies of all eight, see Hungarian National Archives (MOL), I 133. These are reproduced in János Balog (ed.), *Évszázadokon át. Tolna Megye Történetének Olvasókönyve III* [Across Centuries. Reader to the History of Tolna County], Tolna 1990; Braham, *Politics of Genocide*, 796 refers to these maps in a footnote.

6 MOL, I 133, 8.100/1944, Tolna county deputy prefect (11 May 1944); 8.101/1944, Tolna county deputy prefect (11 May 1944).

7 MOL, I 133, 8.101/1944 Tolna county deputy prefect (11 May 1944).

This call for multiple copies of lists and maps reflects the breadth of distribution of this paperwork to interested parties. The local town council and chief constable of the district were to receive copies of both the map and the name lists. Jewish house commanders – responsible for ensuring order and cleanliness within the ghetto – and the *gendarmerie*, or in the case of cities the police district station, were to get only the name lists.⁸ Armed with both the map and housing list, local officials were able to pinpoint the precise whereabouts of Jews. As Patrick Joyce notes of a different time and place, “the modern map is essential to power and to the practices of rule”⁹ Ghetto maps and their accompanying lists were instruments of territoriality – the exercise of “power with the help of maps” through spatial control.¹⁰ The local authorities knew where any one of over five thousand individuals were at any one time, which was particularly important in this county where there were rather too many ghettos.

But this map from Hőgyész was unusual. It was the only one of the eight maps from Tolna where in a sense the different data provided on the name list and map overlapped, or at least they did in the case of one individual. Drawing up the ghetto map here, the clerk carefully marked out the ‘temporary residence’ of Dr Lajos K. on the map and its accompanying key.¹¹ He is the only individual named on any of the Tolna county maps. Everyone else was named simply in the lists that accompanied these ghetto maps – and were designed to be read alongside them. Dr. Lajos K. was exceptional in living – temporarily – outside the ghetto rather than being housed in the ghetto areas delineated on the map. He was a Jew living outside – rather than inside – the ghetto, although his whereabouts was still under the control asserted through mapping.

His place on the map was a result of his profession. He was a medic.¹² It is not surprising to find a Jewish doctor in a town like Hőgyész in 1944. In the 1930s, over half of all doctors in Hungary were Jews, with the proportion even higher in towns and cities outside the capital.¹³ The perceived over-representation of Jews in the medical profession drew the ire of radicals who pressed for limits on the numbers of Jewish doctors in inter-war Hungary.¹⁴ However, once ghettoization got under way the large number of Hungarian communities reliant on Jewish doctors faced a dilemma. In the city of Nagyvárad in the region called *Partium*, on today’s Hungarian-Romanian border. Local officials reported that placing Jewish doctors into the ghetto there “had temporarily aggravated the healthcare situation in the city”, which was a complaint echoed elsewhere.¹⁵ In Hőgyész – and it seems that this was not the only such place – a temporary local solution was adopted in May 1944 that allowed Dr Lajos K. to

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Patrick Joyce, Maps, Blood and the City. The Governance of the Social in Nineteenth Century Britain, in: Patrick Joyce, (ed.), *The Social in Question. New Bearings in History and the Social Sciences*, London 2002, 99.

¹⁰ J.B. Harley, Deconstructing the Map, in: *Cartographica* 26 (1989) 2, 12.

¹¹ MOL, I 133, Map of central Hőgyész.

¹² Cf. I 199, 2502/1944, pass 1 (23 May 1944). On this see Cole, Traces of the Holocaust, Chapter Five.

¹³ Braham, Politics of Genocide, 76, estimates that 55.2 per cent of doctors were Jews; Krisztián Ungváry, Robbing the Dead. The Hungarian Contribution to the Holocaust, in: Beate Kosmala/Feliks Tych (ed.), *Facing the Nazi Genocide: Non-Jews and Jews in Europe*, Berlin 2004, 239, notes that the proportion of Jewish doctors in Budapest was 38 per cent compared to the national average of 55.2 per cent; Tamás Stark, Hungary’s Human Losses in World War II, Uppsala 1995, 9, estimates that 60 per cent of doctors were Jewish in 1920.

¹⁴ Gábor Kádár/Zoltán Vágó, Rationality or Irrationality? The Annihilation of Hungarian Jews, in: *The Hungarian Quarterly* 174 (2004), 35, 45. See also: Kovács Mária, Liberalizmus, Radikalizmus, Antiszemitizmus. A Magyar Orvosi, Ügyvédi és Mérnöki Kar Politikája 1867 és 1945 között [Liberalism, Radicalism, Anti-semitism. The Commercial Chambers of Doctors, Lawyers and Engineers between 1867 and 1945], Budapest 2001.

¹⁵ Kádár/Vágó, Rationality or Irrationality?, 47f.

live and work outside the ghetto.¹⁶ He may well have been the only doctor in this town by the early summer of 1944 and so the segregatory logic of ghettoization was pragmatically done away with to ensure that the sick in the town could continue to see a doctor. But despite local murmurings, national officials took a hard line. On 23 June, when Jews across the country were housed in ghettos or had already been deported, national legislation was introduced forbidding Jewish doctors from treating non-Jewish patients and secretary of state in the Interior Ministry László Endre rejected calls that Jewish doctors be spared from deportations.¹⁷ On the map, Dr Lajos K.'s place outside the ghetto was clearly marked as 'temporary'.

However, other Jews were more permanently removed from ghettos. What the map does not show, but what does emerge clearly from looking at the accompanying name lists that survived from some places, is that these ghettos were markedly gendered spaces. Ghettos across Europe tended to have majority female populations. But this is particularly striking in Hungary given a history that pre-dates the German occupation in 1944 of calling up Jewish men to labour service in the Hungarian Army. When Hungary entered the war on the side of the Axis powers on 27 June 1941, plans for separate Jewish labour battalions were implemented and Jewish men aged 20-42 years were called up to serve in auxiliary labour service units for a period of two years. In what can be seen as a compromise solution of sorts, Jewish men were to serve in the military like non-Jewish men, but – critically – they were to be unarmed. Hungarian Jewish men were sent to the Eastern Front, where they suffered especially harsh conditions and high casualty rates.¹⁸

However, this story of labour battalion service as gendered threat changed dramatically during the early summer of 1944. Not only did the ghettoization decree issued at the end of April 1944 explicitly exempt Jewish men already serving in labour battalions from being placed into ghettos,¹⁹ but as ghettoization was implemented, new waves of conscriptions took place. This was a cause of concern to *Gendarmerie Lieutenant Colonel László Ferenczy* who oversaw the concentration and deportation process. He wrote to his superiors in the Interior Ministry in Budapest in May and June complaining about Jewish men being removed from ghettos and transit camps by the Hungarian military.²⁰ As a result of these call-ups, hundreds and hundreds of Jewish men were removed from those ghettos that had not yet been liquidated. Instead of being deported, Jewish men in their late teens, twenties, thirties and forties served out the war in labour battalions.

Prior to the arrival of Hungarian Jews at the ramp at Auschwitz-Birkenau then, a pre-selection of sorts had been taking place within Hungary. The Hungarian state had already selected those Jews – young adult men – that it deemed fit for labour. The result was that the Jews arriving at Auschwitz-Birkenau were primarily children, women and the elderly, as can be seen from looking at the gender and age profile of the Jews deported from two ghettos in western Hungary – Veszprém and Körmend.²¹ The death rates of Hungarian Jews at Auschwitz were so high in large part because

¹⁶ Tim Cole, Building and Breaching the Ghetto Boundary: A Brief History of the Ghetto Fence in Körmend, Hungary, 1944, in: *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 23 (2009) 1, 54-75.

¹⁷ Kádár/Vági, Rationality or Irrationality?, 46-48, who see this as evidence of 'those in power' giving preference to 'the solution of the Jewish question' over the 'interests of production'.

¹⁸ On the labour service system, see Braham, R., *The Hungarian Labor Service System, 1939-1945*, New York 1977; and Braham, Politics of Genocide, 294-380.

¹⁹ 1.610/1944. M.E. (28 April 1944), paragraph 8, no. 4.

²⁰ USHMM, RG-52.009.04/2, Ferenczy report to Interior Ministry (29 May 1944), para. 7, para. 12; USHMM, RG-52.009.04/1, Ferenczy report to Interior Ministry (12 June 1944), para. 5.

²¹ On this, see Cole, *Traces of the Holocaust*, Chapter One.

adult males were not on the deportation trains. The Hungarian state saw Jewish men as too valuable to offer to the German state. Jewish women were another matter entirely.

As Randolph Braham has reflected, “it is one of the ironies of history that the Ministry of Defense, which had been viewed as one of the chief causes of suffering among [male] Jews during the previous four to five years, suddenly emerged as the major governmental institution actively involved in the saving of Jewish lives.”²²

However his claim that, “it is safe to assume that many local commanders, aware of the realities of the ghettoization and deportation program and motivated by humanitarian instincts, did everything in their power to rescue as many Jews as possible”, remains relatively unsubstantiated across the country as a whole.²³ I remain more convinced by his signalling of more pragmatic motivations resulting from “the manpower shortage from which the country was suffering at the time”.²⁴ This, for Krisztián Ungváry, was more critical, arguing that, “sparing the Jews certainly was not the intention of those Hungarians responsible, but rather exploiting Jewish work power and expertise (physicians, pharmacists, etc.) ‘for free’ and for as long as possible.”²⁵ Here is the link, I think, between the two ghetto areas on the Hógyész map being gendered spaces and the marking on the map of the ‘temporary residence’ of Dr Lajos K. Both medics and Jewish men from their teens through late forties were seen to be too valuable to place behind ghetto walls. Here is evidence of the opportunism and economic pragmatism that others – in particular Gábor Kádar and Zoltán Vági – have seen as characterising the implementation of the Holocaust in Hungary, and I have pointed to in my own work, which leads me on to my second map from Tolna county.²⁶

Map 2 – Tolna

This time it is the town of Tolna, and a map that is perhaps particularly striking given the patchwork shape of the ghetto here which was made up of a series of separate houses on Árpád utca and a single outlying house on Szedresi utca. That ghettoization was dispersed both here, and to a lesser extent in Hógyész, is not that surprising. The national legislation ordering ghettoization in Hungary left the practical details of where ghettos were to be placed up to local officials, and explicitly gave them the freedom to use individual houses, specific streets, or entire sections of the town or city.²⁷ The core principles of ghettoization were clear: Jews were to be concentrated and segregated, but the precise shape of ghetto was left to local officials (albeit under central supervision) to determine.

22 Braham, Politics of Genocide, 352 and 1122, where Braham notes that, “the institutional approach [...] was more effective in saving Jewish lives. Among the agencies of the government that contributed toward this end were the Ministry of Defence, which recruited able-bodied Jewish males into the labour service system.”; see also Braham, The Wartime System of Labour Service, vii-viii, where Braham notes the irony that, “when the Final Solution program was launched [...] the labour service system became refuge for many thousands of Jewish men. While the newly established quisling government of Dóme Sztojáy virtually surrendered control over the Jews to the SS, the labor service system continued to remain under the jurisdiction of the Hungarian Ministry of Defence. As a result the labor servicemen were not subjected to the ghettoization and deportation that took place during April-July 1944.”

23 See on this point more broadly, Braham, Politics of Genocide, 349-65, 969-71, 1368-1370.

24 Braham, Politics of Genocide, 352-353.

25 Ungváry, Robbing the Dead, 254-255.

26 See especially Gábor Kádar/Zoltán Vági, Self-financing Genocide. The Gold Train, the Becher Case and the Wealth of Jews, Hungary, Budapest 2004; Cole, Holocaust City; Cole, Traces of the Holocaust.

27 MOL, 1.610/1944. M.E., (28 April 1944).

What is clear in Tolna is that a patchwork ghetto was created in order to minimise the impact of segregation on the non-Jewish population. Ghettoization – especially at the scale of an entire section of the city – was something that not only meant that Jews had to move into the ghetto area, but non-Jews had to move out. In Tolna, local officials sought to minimise the need for non-Jews to relocate by neatly sidestepping non-Jewish owned houses along Árpád utca.²⁸ Here, and it is true elsewhere as I want to talk more about in a moment, private property rights shaped ghettoization, rather than being reshaped by it. One way to achieve this was to make use of Jewish owned property. In Tolna, eight of the nine ghetto houses were Jewish owned.²⁹ But another way was to eschew residential property entirely – something you also see being done elsewhere. In Tolna, alongside making use of eight Jewish owned houses, the local authorities also utilised the former gendarme barracks at Árpád utca 7. This building formed the heart of the ghetto. It explains why it was this street rather than others in the town that was chosen as the main spine of the ghetto. The attraction of Árpád utca appears to have been the former barracks building that was so physically large in this town made up of small family homes rather than large apartment buildings. According to the name lists drawn up once the ghetto in Tolna was established, this one building housed 128 Jews, or just over one third of the total ghetto population. In short, it kept the number of Jewish houses to a minimum, which fitted with the concerns expressed by the deputy prefect when offering clusters of houses or free-standing buildings as an option when ‘local conditions’ made this necessary. Size mattered. Ghettoization was seen as spatial concentration as well as spatial segregation.

But, and this is something that I want to return to again when I look at Budapest, segregation in dispersed ghettos like Tolna worked in multiple ways. Not only did it separate Jews from non-Jews, but also Jews from other Jews. In Tolna, each of these individual ghetto houses were, in effect, ‘micro ghettos’, separated out from nearby or even neighbouring ghetto houses. The house at Árpád utca 12 housed four extended families along with one extra person to make up the numbers, who lived one family to a room, with a shared kitchen and bathroom. Although the neighbouring house was also part of the dispersed ghetto in Tolna, these were entirely separate places. The 18 Jews living at Árpád utca 12 were in reality cut off not only from the non-Jews living in the house to one side of them, but also from the Jews living in the house to the other side.

There were limited opportunities for exchange with other Jews and non-Jews. One woman, Mrs. Izidor K., regularly left the house to shop along with seventeen other Jews who left their ghetto houses across the town between ten and twelve on market days and three and five on other days.³⁰ Other women left the house more sporadically, as was the case elsewhere in labour gangs doing agricultural work.³¹ It was at moments like these that there was the possibility for some contact between Jews separated out into self-contained micro ghettos. But multiple and dispersed ghettos that were adopted in a number of places in Hungary (out of concerns to limit the impact of ghettoization on the non-Jewish population) separated Jews from other Jews. This was most marked in the Hungarian capital Budapest where a highly dispersed form of ghetto was created in the summer of 1944.

28 MOL, I 147, 2.368/1944, Tolna chief constable (30 May, 1944).

29 MOL, I 147, 2.368/1944, Tolna chief constable (30 May, 1944); I 149, 9060/1944, undated handwritten name lists.

30 MOL, I 149, undated handwritten list.

31 MOL, I 149, 9060/1944 (30 May 1944). See also Cole, Buildings and Breaching the Ghetto Boundary.

Map 3 – Budapest

Pre-dating this highly dispersed form of ghettoization, earlier plans had suggested multiple ghetto areas. In early May 1944, city officials had aimed to clear Jews from major streets and squares in Buda (13 streets and 5 squares) and Pest (19 streets and 8 squares) and relocate them into seven ghetto areas – three in Buda and four in Pest.³² In these demarcated areas, Jews were to be assigned to poor quality, high rent apartment buildings. However, just over a month later – in mid June – a far more dispersed form of ghettoization was ultimately adopted.³³ Jews were to live throughout all districts of the city but were to be restricted to 2,639 specified apartment buildings – largely those already owned by, and lived in, by Jews. In its emphasis on concentrating Jews in buildings where they already lived, the June 16 plan was shaped by the pragmatic concern of limiting the number of relocations, particularly for non-Jews. Despite this, the plan met with immediate, widespread resistance. The mayor of Budapest was overwhelmed with petitions from individuals protesting the specifics of the ghetto plan. The majority of these petitions came from non-Jews requesting the removal of their property from the ghetto list, and from Jews requesting the addition of their property to the list. In both cases, petitioners hoped not to be dislocated from their homes. A small number of non-Jews requested the inclusion of their property on the ghetto list in hopes of being able to exchange a poor quality apartment for a vacated Jewish apartment in a better building. Another set of petitions came from coalitions of Jewish and non-Jewish residents who called for a new ‘mixed status’ to be applied to their apartment building so that all of them could stay put.³⁴ The furor prompted a week of door-to-door surveys to clarify proportions of Jewish and non-Jewish residents. On June 22, a new list of 1,948 ghetto houses was issued, which included both cancellations and new designations.³⁵ At the end of November 1944, two much more concentrated ghettos were established in place of the dispersed ghetto of the summer and fall. The fenced ghetto on the Pest side of the Danube River was centred on the main synagogue in the city’s traditional Jewish area. The so-called ‘International ghetto’ was a collection of individual apartment buildings spread over a number of streets in the *Újlipótváros* district close to the Danube, which came under the protection of a number of neutral powers, most significantly the Swedish and Swiss. Here, Jews with paperwork granted by the neutral legations were housed separately from so-called ‘unprotected Jews’. Ultimately both ghettos were liberated in mid-January 1945 by Soviet troops.³⁶ In earlier work on Budapest, I examined the shifting shape of the ghetto across 1944 as a way to understand the changing motivation of the city’s *doctors of space* – borrowing a term from the work of Henri Lefebvre – who restructured residential and public space along racialised lines.³⁷ I was interested in highlighting the ways in which ghettoization

32 MOL, K 148, 3410 cs. (May 9, 1944).

33 Budapest Székesfőváros Polgármestere [Mayor of the Capital Budapest] 147 501-514/1944 IX published, in: Budapesti Közlöny [Budapest Bulletin] 95 (April 28, 1944), the local press and on wallposters. See also: Benoschovsky/Karsai (eds.), Vádirat a Náczizmus Ellen. Dokumentumok a Magyarországi Zsidóúldozés Történetéhez. 2. [Charges against Nazism. Documents on the Persecution of Jews in Hungary] 1944 Május 15-1944 Június 30: A Budapesti Zsidóság Össze-költözöttetése [Relocating Budapest's Jews], Budapest 1960, 203-222.

34 Cole, Holocaust City, Chapter Six.

35 Budapest Székesfőváros Polgármestere [Mayor of the Capital Budapest] 148 451-452/1944 IX published in: Budapesti Közlöny [Budapest Bulletin], the local press and on wall posters. See also Benoschovsky/Karsai (eds.), Vádirat a Náczizmus Ellen 2, 293-298.

36 Cole, Holocaust City, Chapter Eight.

37 Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith, Oxford 1991.

was variously seen as a policy of creating sites of Jewish absence, achieved by ‘cleansing’ parts of the city by removing Jews to ghettos, and of creating sites of Jewish presence, by concentrating Jews in particular places in the city. Shifts between the two reflected the move from utopian planning and concern about the socio-economics of ghettoization to policies of pragmatism.³⁸ In this work, I emphasised the very different shapes of ghettoization as it was planned and then implemented across the summer, fall and winter of 1944. However while my earlier work did contain maps, these only marked Jewish-designated buildings as points on a map, without taking into account the variations in population density in a city whose residential architecture ranged from large apartment buildings to single family homes.³⁹ One way to try to represent this is to ‘weight’ buildings by the number of residents to capture the diversity of residential properties and population density. This is not an easy task to undertake without the immensely time consuming job of extracting building-level data from the hard copy of individual census returns. To overcome this problem, Alberto and I used published data from the 1941 Hungarian population census that summarised population density by districts,⁴⁰ to project values of residential density to Jewish-designated residences within each district. Integrating some sense of the different nature of building stock across districts into mapping suggests that the visible changes to the shape of the ghetto across 1944 were not as marked as unweighted visualisations show. To give just one example, using a variety of tools of spatial analysis (mean centre analysis, directional distribution, standard distance)⁴¹ points to remarkable continuities across the turbulent week in June 1944. It is striking that the mean centre of ghettoization for June 16 and June 22 hardly shifted at all.⁴² Another way to visualise this is to use kernel density analysis.⁴³ While it is clear that Jewish-designated residences were becoming increasingly concentrated – with the disappearance of the local high in District XIV and the general shrinkage of the high density area in Districts V, VI, VII, and VIII – kernel analysis validates the results of the mean centre, directional distribution, and standard distance analysis, suggesting that there were marked continuities across this turbulent week in mid June. Indeed, this story of continuities can be seen to extend across 1944 as a whole. Not only does kernel density analysis at the city scale closely align with two of the largest of the planned ghetto areas from May 9, but also with the location of the two ghetto areas established in Pest at the end of November and beginning of December 1944.

Utilising a variety of spatial analytical techniques suggests that there were greater continuities in ghettoization in Budapest than might be imagined when considering simply the seemingly radically different spatial strategies adopted (seven ghetto areas in May, 2,639 ghetto houses on June 16, 1,948 ghetto houses on June 22 and two ghetto areas in November/December) in both plans and policy during 1944. Rather than emphasising changes in ghettoization in terms of shifting concerns with ab-

38 Cole, *Holocaust City*, esp. Chapters Four to Six, as well as Chapter Eight.

39 See Cole, *Holocaust City*, 106, 160.

40 Lajos Illyesfalvy (ed.), *Budapest Székesföváros Statisztikai Évkönyve* [Statistical Yearbook of the Capital Budapest] XXX, Budapest 1942.

41 Mean centre analysis identifies the geographic centre of a distribution, shown as a solid circle on the map. Directional distribution finds the overall directional pattern of the data. Standard distance measures the degree of concentration; the larger the circle, the more dispersed the locational pattern.

42 Likewise, the orientation stayed the same, with a prevailing east-west trend that mirrored the overall residential patterns of the city. The only measure that changed was a slight shift toward increased concentration in the June 22 list, as indicated by the smaller circle marking standard distance for that date.

43 Unlike the mean centre, standard distance, and deviational ellipse, which return a single value, kernel analysis calculates a density surface around points or areas, returning a set of continuous values. The result is a more detailed representation of the phenomenon under study.

sence and presence, as I did in previous work, weighted mapping and making use of a variety of tools of spatial analysis points to a dominant story of continuities in ghettoization throughout 1944 that drew upon (and hardened) a longer history of Jewish demographic patterns in Budapest. Jews had historically resided in much greater numbers, and higher proportions, in districts V, VI, VII and VIII than in the rest of the city. The increased concentration of Jewish residences in central Pest was a change in the degree but not in the kind of residential patterns that had prevailed for many years. The dominant idea that remained constant throughout the process of ghettoization in Budapest was taking the ghetto to the Jew, rather than taking the Jew to the ghetto.⁴⁴ While ideology is a part of this story – a notion of the Jew's place in the city – bringing the ghetto to the Jew signalled the persuasiveness of pragmatic concerns that ghettoization avoid displacing non-Jews.⁴⁵

Ultimately in Budapest, the desire to avoid displacing non-Jews led to a major concession being granted, which allowed non-Jews to remain living in their apartments within ghetto buildings. Three days after the definitive list of ghetto properties was issued on 22 June, regulations were published stipulating, among other things, when Jews could leave these ghetto properties. The eighth point in along list of regulations forbade non-Jews from allowing Jews to enter “for no matter how brief a period into either Christian houses or the Christian-tenanted portions of Jewish houses”.⁴⁶ It would seem that relatively large numbers of non-Jews chose to stay in their apartments in ghetto houses. The journalists Jenő Lévai’s post-war claim that 12,000 non-Jews lived in ghetto houses is impossible to substantiate, but it may well not be far off the mark.⁴⁷ In the area of the city which later became the site of the closed Pest ghetto in the winter of 1944, 144 of the 162 ghetto houses there were lived in by non-Jews as well as Jews.⁴⁸ It would seem that the 1,948 ghetto houses that made up the shape of Jewish residence in Budapest throughout the summer and into the fall of 1944 were in reality ‘mixed houses’. The scale at which the ghetto was implemented was, in practice, the scale of the individual apartment – a scale where segregation was very difficult to police.

In this context, I have come to rethink my sense of what ghettoization in Budapest meant on a day-by-day basis. Ghettoization during the Holocaust is generally imagined as a simultaneous process of both concentration and segregation. Jews were placed in increasingly physically concentrated living quarters and were separated from the non-Jewish population through the creation of closed and guarded boundaries.⁴⁹ However, while concentration appears to be the norm where ghettos were set up, the extent and nature of segregation varied from place to place. As I have already suggested in the case of Tolna, dispersed forms of ghettoization meant that Jews were not only segregated from non-Jews but also from other Jews. In Budapest GIS allows us to map out ‘invisible walls’ within this dispersed ghetto that limited Jewish access to both people and places in the city. In this context, there appears to be evidence of the increased importance of Jewish and non-Jewish social networks within apartment buildings.

44 Tim Cole, Contesting and Compromising Ghettoization: Hungary, 1944, in: Jonathan Petropoulos/Lynn Rapaport/John Roth (eds.), *Lessons and Legacies VIII*, Evanston 2010, 152–66; Cole, *Traces of the Holocaust*, Chapters Three and Four.

45 Here our work confirms the thrust of Cole’s earlier emphasis in *Holocaust City*, esp. Chapter Five.

46 Randolph L. Braham, *The Politics of Genocide. The Holocaust in Hungary*, New York 1994, 737–738.

47 Jenő Lévai, *Fekete Könyv a Magyar Zsidóság Szenvedéseiről* [Black Book on the Suffering of the Hungarian Jewry], Budapest 1946, 156; Braham, *Politics of Genocide*, 735.

48 New Hungarian Central Archives [ÚMKI] XXXIII-5-c-1, XI. 23.

49 Raul Hilberg, *The Destruction of the European Jews*, New Haven 2003, 237.

Each of the just under two thousand individual ghetto house in Budapest in the summer and early fall of 1944 (dubbed yellow star houses because they – like Jewish bodies – were marked with a large yellow star) was a discrete bounded ‘ghetto’. However this boundary was permeable, initially for three hours each day when Jews were permitted to leave their homes between the hours of 2-5 pm.⁵⁰ Later on this three hour window was extended.⁵¹ There were legislative limits to where Jews could go: they could leave their apartment buildings only to go shopping, receive medical attention or bathe, and were forbidden from entering into non-designated apartment buildings.⁵² But there were also (shifting) practical limits to where Jews could physically go in the city, given the temporal limits when they could leave their apartments.⁵³ The importance of physical distance emerges from mapping out walking distances within the dispersed ghetto in Budapest.⁵⁴ Alberto and I used network analysis to calculate the shortest distance (the ‘least-cost’ route) between each Jewish residence and critical places to access: other Jewish residences, the nearest market hall, the nearest hospital, and the Swedish legation. Here we worked with the assumption that Jews used the most direct routes to get to their destinations in order to arrive as quickly as possible and avoid the queues that survivors recall,⁵⁵ but it may be that they chose instead to use side streets to avoid non-Jews and officials. Given this caveat, the maps produced from the GIS showing travel time between key destinations need to be read as suggestive models rather than representing reality.

Mapping walking times from destinations suggest that a series of ‘invisible walls’ existed within this dispersed ghetto, limiting where Jews could get to. This can be seen in the mapping of 30-minute and 60-minute walking distances to the main market halls, the offices of the Swedish legation, and the hospitals permitted for Jewish use. Taken together, these maps convey the extent and implications of dispersion within this ghetto that stretched across the city with houses designated in all fourteen of the city’s war time districts. Visualising Budapest in terms of the time it would take to walk to and from a range of key points, reveals how this ghetto that stretched from the outskirts of Buda to the outskirts of Pest can be conceptualised as a divided space. It was physically impossible to walk across the entire ghetto area within the three-hour window initially permitted to make that journey and return again. Naomi Gur, who was 14 in 1944 remembered running on her way back from the hospital in Buda where she’d been taking kosher food to her mother in order to get

⁵⁰ M. kir. Rendőrség budapesti főkapitánya [Budapest Commander of the Hungarian Royal Police] 7200/fk.eln. 1944 sz.: reproduced in: Benoschofsky/Karsai (eds.), Vádirat a Nácizmus Ellen, b304-305; for a translation see Braham, Politics of Genocide, 855-856.

⁵¹ In early July, Jews were permitted to leave their homes for six hours each day – from 11 am on weekdays and from 9 am on Sundays. In early September, while Jews could still leave their homes from 9 am to 3 pm on Sundays, the hours when they could leave their homes on other days was restricted from 12 to 5 pm, before returning to the hours of 11 am to 5 pm later on in the month. See Braham, Politics of Genocide, 855-856; Ernő Munkácsi, Hogy történt? XXXI. A Budapesti Zsidóság Összekötözése [How Did it Happen? The Residential Concentration of Budapest’s Jews], in: Új Élet [New Life] II/32 (8 August 1946); cited in: Benoschofsky/Karsai, Vádirat a Nácizmus Ellen. Volume 2, 348; Esti Ujság [Evening News] (8 July 1944); Függetlenség [Independence] (9 July 1944), Összetartás [Union] (3 August 1944); Raoul Wallenberg Project Archive, University Library Uppsala (RWPA) F2C 21/535, Alfred Schomberger; Esti Ujság [Evening News] (22 September 1944).

⁵² Braham, Politics of Genocide, 855-856.

⁵³ Our focus here is on the initial period when Jews could leave their homes for three hours, given both that this was the earliest plan and also that during the later period when Jews could leave their homes for longer stretches it appears from survivor testimony that in practice Jews sought to leave and return within as short a period of time as possible.

⁵⁴ University of California, Riverside, Department of Physics and Astronomy website: <http://www.physics.ucr.edu/>, (15.10.2015).

⁵⁵ Ernő Szép, The Smell of Humans, Budapest 1994, 40; Correspondence with Judit Brody (11 June 2010).

back home to her yellow-star house in central Pest before 5 pm.⁵⁶ Given the degree of dispersion and the temporal limits placed on Jewish access to the public space of the city, Jews were limited in how far they could go, and therefore where they could go. However, as the maps suggest, the nature and extent of inaccessibility was not uniform but varied according to where in the city Jews lived.

Confined to apartment buildings, initially for twenty one hours a day, fearful of being exposed to abuse on the streets,⁵⁷ and – as the mapping suggests – spatio-temporally limited in where they could go when they were permitted to leave the building, there was a turn inwards and a shrinking of lived space.⁵⁸ This inward turn took place in the broader context of a city at war that experienced frequent aerial bombardment from the spring of 1944 onwards. The individual apartment building – itself in effect a ‘micro ghetto’ – increasingly became the operational scale at which day-to-day life was lived. Outside of their apartments, survivors recall the courtyards, stairways, internal balconies and even the rooftop as crucial sites of exchange within these ghetto houses.⁵⁹ TK told me of days spent playing bridge with other teenagers sitting on the internal balcony overlooking the internal courtyard.⁶⁰ Judit Brody remembered that, “after dark we dragged chairs out onto the corridor that ran the length of the building. Parents sat on the third floor discussing the day’s events, the state of the war and other important issues, children sat on the second floor.”⁶¹ Péter Tarján, who was an eight-year-old boy at the time, recalled replacing his usual play-space of the street with the stairways and internal balconies of their seven storey apartment building which became the setting for games of cowboys and Indians.⁶²

But, within individual apartment buildings scattered across Budapest, there were not only intense interactions between Jews in the summer and early fall of 1944, but also between Jews and non-Jews given the last minute concession on the part of the authorities that allowed non-Jewish tenants to continue living in ghetto buildings. The continuing presence of non-Jews in ghetto houses radically reframes our understanding of ghettoization as segregation. Here is a critical difference between ghettoization in Budapest, and for example, in the city of Warsaw. It was not only that ghettoization in Budapest was dispersed rather than taking the form of a single closed ghetto – at least until the creation of the Pest ghetto in the winter of 1944 – meaning that Jews were effectively separated from other Jews, as well as non-Jews. It was also that the enacting of ghettoization in Budapest at the scale of the individual apartment, meant that the so-called ‘Aryan side’ in Budapest was within many ghetto buildings, being found just along the corridor or up the stairs. On paper, non-Jewish apartments within what were in practice mixed houses were out of bounds to Jews.⁶³ However, the policing of this was effectively an internal matter, depending in large part on the role played by the building’s caretaker (*házmester*) and those non-Jewish neighbours who had decided to remain in their apartments. Even if on paper and no doubt in at least some apartment buildings in practice non-Jewish apart-

56 RWPA F2C 3/118, Naomi Gur.

57 Gottlieb, *Becoming my Mother’s Daughter*, 62; Laura Palosuo, *Yellow Stars and Trouser Inspections. Jewish Testimonies from Hungary, 1920–1945* (Uppsala 2008) 151–3; RWPA F2C 7/307; Miklósné Kellner; RWPA F2C 18/349, Erwin Forester; RWPA F2C19/503 Péter Tarján; Szép, *The Smell of Humans* 19–20.

58 Szép, *The Smell of Humans*, 10–32.

59 Interview with Judit Brody (26 November 2009); RWPA F2C 16/339, Zsuzsa Gordon; RWPA F2C 11/340 Erzsébet Rosenberg; RWPA F2C17/343, István Bélai; Szép, *The Smell of Humans*, 28.

60 Interview with TK & JK (London, 19 November 2010).

61 Judit Bródy, Unpublished Memoir, Correspondence with Judit Bródy (11 June 2010).

62 RWPA F2C 17/343, István Bélai; RWPA F2C 19/503 Péter Tarján.

63 Braham, *Politics of Genocide*, 737–738.

ments were not places that Jews could access, the shared public spaces of the staircase, internal balcony, courtyard and corridor were – potentially – sites of opportunity for exchange between Jews and non-Jews.

Indeed, it would seem from survivor testimony that social networks between Jews and non-Jews within these mixed houses were vitally important during the summer and fall of 1944. This was hinted at by Randolph Braham, who noted that, “while some [non-Jews] took advantage of their privileged position, many were of great assistance to the persecuted Jews. They were especially helpful during the curfew by shopping or doing errands for the Jews, and by hiding or safekeeping their valuables.”⁶⁴

Given the late onset, swift time scale and surprising nature of ghettoization in Budapest, pre-existing social networks of Jews and non-Jews were of particular importance in the Hungarian capital. The result was that whether Jews were able to stay put because their apartment building was included in the list of ghetto buildings, or were forced to relocate was of crucial importance. Whether ghettoization meant dislocation or staying put mattered in all sorts of ways. Not only did staying put mean being able to hang on to your furniture, and avoid the trauma of forced relocations (although it is clear that both mattered).⁶⁵ Staying put also meant being able to maintain a local network of contacts both within and in the close vicinity of the apartment building.

Interviewing a survivor from Budapest, Judit Brody, I was struck by her response to what she saw as a rather naïve question about whether it mattered that the family was able to stay within their own apartment that was in a yellow star building.⁶⁶ In her words, staying put meant ‘everything’. It was not so much the importance of remaining in a physical and material place (your own apartment with its furnishings and stored foodstuffs) but the significance of remaining in a social place. Staying put meant that pre-existing social networks were more easily maintained, and in 1944 contacts were, in a sense, everything. For Brody, of particular importance were continuities of contact between her mother and market stall owners that had been built up over a number of years.⁶⁷ Those personal connections made shopping during the curfew for non-rationed goods far easier. But as her story showed, it was not just social networks in the immediate neighbourhood outside the apartment building that were crucial, but also social networks within the apartment building. In Brody’s case, particularly important was a non-Jewish neighbour who remained living in his apartment next door. He was a man the family had history with, who “helped find someone who was willing, for payment of course”, to take Judit to hide in the countryside.⁶⁸ Also important was the longstanding caretaker of their apartment building. In the summer of 1944 Judit adopted a new persona as Edit, the daughter of their non-Jewish caretaker. Reflecting on why it was her, rather than her sister three years older than herself, who was sent into hiding, Judit recalled that it may well have been because their caretaker’s daughter was “just a few months younger than me” suggesting that he played a crucial role in Judit’s escape from the city.⁶⁹

As Judit’s story suggests, pre-existing non-Jewish contacts within the apartment building were of crucial importance during the summer and fall of 1944. In Judit’s

⁶⁴ Braham, Politics of Genocide, 853.

⁶⁵ Tim Cole, Multiple and Changing Experiences of Ghettoization: Budapest, 1944, in Eric Sterling (ed.), *Life in the Ghettos during the Holocaust*, Syracuse 2005, 150-1; RWPA F2C8/309 Dénésné Simor; RWPA FC2 22/560, Anonymous 4 (JK).

⁶⁶ Interview with Judit Bródy (26 November 2009).

⁶⁷ See also RWPA F2C 11/319, Jánosné Solmosi.

⁶⁸ Judit Bródy, Unpublished Memoir.

⁶⁹ Correspondence with Judit Brody (28 November 2009).

case, it was non-Jewish contacts who meant that she travelled away from Budapest and spent the summer in the countryside outside of Debrecen. But non-Jewish contacts both inside and outside ghetto buildings could – and did – help Jewish families in other ways. Magda Kálmán recalled that she “was the first who got these Swedish papers from Wallenberg in my building. And after the other people find it out, and everybody rush to Mr Barát [a non-Jew living in the building who had freedom of movement in the city] and asked him to get it, and they got.”⁷⁰

Judit’s family also got hold of papers Swedish papers in 1944, although in their case, it was not a non-Jewish neighbour who went to collect these but rather Judit’s father who left the apartment building without his yellow star.

As these examples make clear, the invisible walls that Alberto and I map out in the dispersed ghetto could be, and were, breached by Jews and non-Jews. These individual’s stories point to the limits of GIS analysis. While the model generated from the GIS – like any model – works in the general, it does not work in a particular: a particular that included Jews not only drawing upon social networks of non-Jews, but also risking it by heading out to the city out-side of the curfew hours without wearing the yellow star.⁷¹ While mapping can show where Jews could physically walk to within the confines of the initial curfew, it cannot show us where Jews did go in the city. Moreover, our mapping tends to treat Jews as a homogeneous group, rather than acknowledging the significance of differences such as gender and class in determining access to places and people in the city in 1944. To give just one example, the importance of gender was signalled by survivors who tended to assume that it was easier for women to leave their Jewish houses without the yellow star for more than the three hour window, given that men were marked out by circumcision, and feared the so-called ‘trouser test’ if caught on the streets outside of the curfew hours.⁷² Models are generalisations. They describe a potential reality rather than an actual reality. However my sense is that taken together, models and other sources complement each other in promising ways. Qualitative and quantitative approaches and kinds of evidence have the potential to enrich each other and generate new research questions. Uncovering the extent of the invisible walls within this dispersed ghetto through spatial analysis has forced me to re-read survivor’s testimony in the context of the spatial patterns suggested by the model. It has triggered an attentiveness to the ways in which dispersed ghettoization in Budapest separated out Jews from other Jews, and increased the importance of Jewish-non-Jewish relations within the social space of ghetto apartment buildings. Moreover the context provided by mapping, helps to better understand the significance and importance of Jewish and non-Jewish attempts to breach the limitations of physical distance from resources in a divided city. Rather than quantitative and qualitative methodologies being opposed, they have the potential for meaningful exchange, with historical GIS a potential central element of the research process post the so-called ‘spatial turn in the digital humanities’. There may be value, not only as Friedman and Robinson argued to reading ghetto maps as texts, but also to mapping out ghettoization in Hungary to better understand both the motivations of Hungarian policy makers and the experiences of ordinary Jewish and non-Jewish Hungarians during 1944.

70 RWPA F2C 22/542, Magda Kálmán.

71 Brody, Unpublished Memoir; Palosuo, Yellow Stars and Trouser In-spections,151-3.

72 Palosuo, Yellow Stars and Trouser Inspections, 151-3; RWPA F2C20/508, Ivan E. Becker; RWPA F2C 22/555, Andrew Stevens.

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Zygmunt Bauman

A Natural History of Evil

Abstract

In the 36,525 days of the twentieth century, between 100 and 160 million civilians lost their lives at hand of mass-murder, slaughter and massacres – that is an average of more than 3.000 innocent deaths per day. The pace has not slackened in the new millennium: statistically speaking, September 11 was an ordinary day.

In his lecture, Zygmunt Bauman outlines and analyses the efforts made to solve the mystery that more perhaps than any other keeps ethical philosophers awake at night: the mystery of *unde malum* (Whence the Evil?) and, more specifically and yet more urgently, of "How do good people turn evil?" The latter is, succinctly put, the secret of the mysterious transmogrification of caring family people and friendly and benevolent neighbours into monsters.

It is highly unlikely that 21st Century readers of Anatole France's novel *Les Dieux ont soif* originally published in 1912¹ won't be, simultaneously, bewildered and enraptured. In all likelihood, they will be overwhelmed, as I have been, with admiration for an author who not only, as Milan Kundera would say, managed to "tear through the curtain of preinterpretations", the "curtain hanging in front of the world", in order to free "the great human conflicts from naïve interpretation as a struggle between good and evil, understanding them in the light of tragedy",² which in Kundera's opinion is the calling of the novelists and the vocation of all novel-writing – but in addition to design and test, for the benefit of his yet unborn readers, the tools with which to cut and tear the curtains not yet woven, but certain to start being eagerly woven and hanged "in front of the world" well after his novel was finished, and particularly eagerly well after his death ...

At the moment Anatole France put aside his pen and took one last look of the finished novel, no words like 'bolshevism', 'fascism', or indeed 'totalitarianism' were listed in dictionaries, French or any other; and no names like Stalin or Hitler appeared in any of the history books. Anatole France's sight focused on Evarist Gamelin, a juvenile beginner in the world of fine arts, a youngster of great talent and promise, but yet greater disgust of Watteau, Boucher, Fragonard and other dictators of popular taste – whose "bad taste, bad drawings, bad designs", "complete absence of clear style and clear line", "a complete unawareness of nature and truth", fondness of "masks, dolls, fripperies, childish nonsense" he explained by their readiness to "work for tyrants and slaves". Gamelin was sure that "a hundred years hence all Watteau's paintings will have rotted away in attics", and predicted that "by 1893 art students will be covering the canvases of Boucher with their own rough sketches". The French Republic, still a tender, unsound and frail child of the Revolution, will grow to cut off,

1 Here quoted after Frederick Davies's English translation, published under the title *The Gods will have blood*, London 1979.

2 See: Milan Kundera, *The Curtain. An Essay in Seven Parts*, trans. by Linda Asher, London 2007, pp. 92, 123, 110.

one after another, the many heads of the hydra of tyranny and slavery, including this one. There is no mercy for the conspirators against the Republic, as there is no liberty for the enemies of liberty, nor tolerance for the enemies of tolerance. To the doubts voiced by his incredulous mother, Gamelin would respond without hesitation: "We must put our trust in Robespierre; he is incorruptible. Above all, we must trust in Marat. He is the one who really loves the people, who realises their true interests and serves them. He was always the first to unmask the traitors and frustrate plots." In one of his few and far between authorial interventions, France explains the thoughts and deeds of his hero and his hero's likes as "serene fanaticism" of "little men, who had demolished the throne itself and turned upside down the old order of things". On his own way from the youth of a Romanian fascist to the adulthood of French philosopher, Emile Cioran³ summed up the lot of youngsters of the era of Robespierre and Marat, and Stalin and Hitler alike: "Bad luck is their lot. It is they who voice the doctrine of intolerance and it is they who put that doctrine into practice. It is they who are thirsty – for blood, tumult, barbarity." Well, all the youngsters? And only the youngsters? And in eras of Robespierre or Stalin only?

For Kant, respect and goodwill for others is an imperative of reason; which means that if a human being, a creature endowed by God or Nature with reason, ponders on Kant's reasoning, she or he will surely recognise and accept the categorical character of that imperative and will adopt it as a precept of her or his conduct. In its essence, the categorical imperative in question boils down to the commandment of treating others as you would wish to be treated by them; in other words, to another version of the biblical injunction to love your neighbour as yourself – only in the Kantian case grounded on an elaborate and refined series of logical arguments, and thus invoking the authority of human reason able to judge what needs and cannot but be, instead to the will of God deciding what be ought.

In such a translation from the sacred to secular language something of the commandment's persuasive powers has been however lost. The will of God, that unashamed 'decisionist', can bestow apodictic, unquestionable power on the presumption of the essential, preordained and inescapable symmetry of inter-human relations, a presumption indispensable for both the sacred and the secular version; whereas reason would have a lot of trouble with demonstrating that presumption's veracity. The assertion of the symmetry of inter-human relations belongs, after all, in the universe of beliefs, taken-for-granteds and stipulations (and may be therefore accepted on the ground of 'if would be better, if ...', or of 'we owe obedience to God's will'); but it has no room in the universe of empirically testable knowledge – that domain, or rather the natural habitat, of reason. Whether the advocates of the legislative powers of reason refer to the reason's infallibility in its search for truth (for 'how things indeed are and cannot but be'), or to the reason's utilitarian merits (that is, its ability to separate realistic, feasible and plausible intentions from mere daydreaming), they will find it difficult to argue convincingly the reality of symmetry, and yet more difficult to prove the usefulness of practising it.

The problem is the paucity, to say the least, of experiential evidence supporting the debated presumption, whereas reason rests its claim to the last word in contention on its resolution to ground its judgements precisely in that kind of evidence, while dismissing validity of all other grounds. Another, yet closely related problem, is the profusion of contrary evidence: namely, that when promoting the effectiveness of human undertakings and humans' dexterity in reaching their objectives, reason

³ See: Emile Cioran, *Précis de décomposition*, Gallimard 1949, 3.

focuses on liberating its carriers from constraints imposed on their choices by symmetry, mutuality, reversibility of actions and obligations; in other words, on creating situations in which the carriers of reason may quietly strike off the list of factors relevant to their choices the apprehension that the course of action they take may rebound on them – or, to put it brutally yet more to the point, that evil may boomerang on the evildoers. Contrary to Kant's hope, common reason seems to be deploying most of its time and energy in the service of disarming and incapacitating the demands and pressures of the allegedly categorical imperative. According to the precepts of reason, the most reasonable, worthy of attention and commendable principles of action are those of pre-empting or abolishing the symmetry between the actors and the objects of their actions; or at least such stratagems that once deployed reduce to minimum the chances of reciprocation. Whatever 'stands to reason', all too often flatly refuses to 'stand to demands of morality'. At any rate, it loses none of its reasonability when failing a moral test.

Reason is a service station of power. It is, first and foremost, a factory of might (*Macht, pouvoir*), defined as the subject's capacity of reaching objectives despite the resistance – whether of the inert matter or of the subjects pursuing different aims. 'To be mighty' means, in other words, the ability to overcome the inertia of recalcitrant object of action or to ignore the ambitions of other *dramatis personae* (to wit, to enjoy the sole subjectivity and the sole effective intentionality in the multi-actor drama, and so to reduce the other subjects to the status of the objects of action or its neutral backdrop). By its very nature, might and power are a-symmetrical (one is tempted to say: in the same way in which nature stands no void, power stands no symmetry). Power does not unify and does not level up (or down) the differences; power divides and opposes. Power is sworn enemy and suppressor of symmetry, reciprocity and mutuality. Power's might consists in its potency to manipulate probabilities, differentiate possibilities as well as potentialities and chances: all that through sealing-up the resulting divisions and immunising inequalities of distribution against dissent and appellations of those at the receiving end of the operation.

In the nutshell: power and the might to act, the production and the servicing of which are calling of reason, equals an explicit rejection or ignoring in practice of the presumption which renders Kant's imperative categorical. As vividly and poignantly expressed by Friedrich Nietzsche: *What is good?* All that enhances the feeling of power ... *What is bad?* All that proceeds from weakness ... The weak and the botched shall perish: first principle of our humanity. And they ought even be helped to perish. *What is more harmful than any vice?* – Practical sympathy with all the botched and weak ...⁴

"I know joy in destruction" – Nietzsche admitted – proudly. "I am therewith destroyer par excellence."⁵ Several generations of other 'destroyers par excellence', armed with the weapons adequate to making the words flesh (and more to the point, to make the words kill the flesh), who worked hard to make Nietzsche's vision reality, could draw inspiration – and many among them did. They would find the absolution for their intention in Nietzsche's exhortation to help the weak and the botched to perish. As Zarathustra, Nietzsche's authorised spokesman and plenipotentiary, puts it: "My greatest danger always lay in indulgence and sufferance; and all humankind wants to be indulged and suffered."⁶ Verdicts of Nature can be tinkered with only at

⁴ The Antichrist, trans. by Anthony M. Ludovici, London 2000, 4.

⁵ Ecce Homo, trans. by R. J. Hollingdale, London 1979, 97.

⁶ Friedrich Nietzsche, Thus spoke Zarathustra, trans. by R. J. Hollingdale, London 2003, 204.

the tinkerers' peril and ruin. To avoid ruin, humans must be freed: the high and mighty from pity, compassion, (unjustly) guilty conscience and (uncalled for) scruples – and the vulgar and lowly from hope.

The efforts to crack one mystery that more perhaps than any other keeps ethical philosophers awake at night, namely the mystery of *unde malum* (whence the evil?), and more specifically and yet more urgently of “how good people turn evil”⁷ (or, more to the point, the secret of the mysterious transmogrification of caring family people, and friendly and benevolent neighbours, into monsters) – were triggered and given the first powerful push by the rising tide of the 20th century totalitarianism, set in feverish motion by the Holocaust revelations, and accelerated yet further by the growing evidence of the ever more evident likeness between the post-Holocaust world's and a mine-field, of which one knows that an explosion must sooner or later occur, yet no one knows when and where. Just how shocking that evidence is and how urgent are measures needed do be undertaken in response, show for instance the calculations made by the psychologist Robert J. Sternberg: in the 36,525 days of the twentieth century, 100 million to 160 millions civilians lost their lives in massacres – that is an average of more than 3,000 innocent deaths per day, and the pace has not slackened in the new millennium. “Statistically speaking”, Sternberg concludes, “September 11 was an ordinary day” ... It takes a lot of evildoers to murder 3,000 civilians in a day. How much it takes to murder 100–160 millions?

From their start, the efforts to crack the aforementioned mystery followed three different tracks; in all probability, they will continue to follow all three of them for a long time to come, as none of the three trajectories seem to possess a final station at which the explorers could rest satisfied that the intended destination of their journey has been reached. The purpose of their exploration is after all the catching in the net of reason the kind of phenomena which Günther Anders described as ‘over-liminal’ (*überschwellige*): phenomena that cannot be grasped and intellectually assimilated because they outgrow the size of any of the sensual/conceptual nets, sharing thereby the fate of their apparent opposite, ‘subliminal’ (*unterschwellige*) phenomena – tiny enough and fast moving enough to escape even the most dense of nets, and to vanish before they could be caught and sent over to reason for intelligent recycling.

The first track (through which Jonathan Littell⁸ seemed most recently to proceed, with but few, and less than principal, qualifications) leads to the sounding and fathoming of psychical peculiarities (or psychical sediments of biographical peculiarities), discovered or hypothesised among the individuals known to have committed cruel acts or caught in the act red-handed, and assumed therefore to surpass the average individuals in their inclination and eagerness to commit atrocities when tempted or commanded. That track was laid yet before the monstrous human deeds of the post-Holocaust era revealed the full awesomeness of the problem's potential scale. It was started by Theodore Adorno's highly influential and memorable *Authoritarian Personality* study, promoting the idea of, so to speak, the self-selection of the

⁷ The subtitle of Philip Zimbardo's *The Lucifer Effect*, London 2009.

⁸ Jonathan Littell, *Les Bienveillantes*, Paris 2006; the edition referred to here now and thereafter is Charlotte Mandel's English translation *The Kindly Ones*, London 2009. The original French title, similarly to the title given to the German translation (*Die Wohlgesinnten*), seems to convey the intended interpretation better than its English translation. A title like *The Well-wishers*, or better still *The Benevolent*, would be much more faithful to the original intention.

evildoers – and suggesting that the self-selection in question was determined by natural rather than nurtured predispositions of individual character.

Another, perhaps the widest and most massively trodden track was laid along the line of behavioural conditioning: it led to the investigation of the types of social placement, or the situations, that prompted individuals – ‘normal’ under ‘ordinary’ or most common circumstances – to join in the perpetration of evil deeds; or, to express the same in another fashion, conditions that awoke evil predispositions which under different conditions would remain fast asleep. For scholars who followed this track, it was the society of a certain type, not the certain types of individual features, that ought to be put on the defendant bench. For instance, Siegfried Kracauer or Hans Speier sought in the unstoppably multiplying ranks of the *Angestellte* the source of the foul moral atmosphere favouring recruitment to the army of evil. That malodorous, indeed morally poisonous atmosphere was to be shortly afterwards ascribed by Hannah Arendt to the ‘proto-totalitarian’ predispositions of the bourgeois, or to philistinism and vulgarity of classes forcibly re-forged into masses (and following the principle of *Erst kommt das Fressen, dann kommt die Moral*, as Bertolt Brecht succinctly put it).

Hannah Arendt, arguably the most prominent spokesperson for this way of thinking sharply and uncompromisingly opposing the reduction of social phenomena to individual psyche, observed that the true genius among the Nazi seducers was Himmler, who – neither descending from the *bohème* as Goebbels did, nor being a sexual pervert as Streicher, adventurer as Goering, fanatic as Hitler or madman as Rosenberg – “organized the masses into a system of total domination” – thanks to his (correct!) assumption that in their decisive majority men are not vampires or sadists, but job holders and family providers.⁹ Where to that observation ultimately led her, we could learn from the *Eichmann in Jerusalem* book. The most widely quoted among Arendt’s conclusions was the succinct verdict of the banality of evil. What Arendt meant when pronouncing that verdict, was that monstrosities do not need monsters, outrages do not need outrageous characters, and that the trouble with Eichmann lied precisely in the fact that according to the assessments of supreme luminaries of psychology and psychiatry he (alongside so many of his companions in crime) was not a monster nor a sadist, but outrageously, terribly, frighteningly ‘normal’. Littel would at least partly follow that Arendt’s conclusion in his insistence that Eichmann was anything but a “faceless, soulless robot”. Among the most recent studies following that line, *The Lucifer Effect* of Philip Zimbardo, published in 2007, is a blood-curdling and nerve-racking study of a bunch of good, ordinary, likeable and popular American lads and lasses who turned into monsters once they had been transported to a sort of a ‘nowhere place’, to the faraway country of Iraq, and put in charge of prisoners charged with ill intentions and suspected to belong to an inferior brand of humans, or being possibly somewhat less than human.

How safe and comfortable, cosy and friendly the world would feel if it were monsters and monsters alone who perpetrated monstrous deeds. Against monsters we are fairly well protected, and so we may rest assured that we are insured against the evil deeds that monsters are capable of and threaten to perpetrate. We have psychologists to spot psychopaths and sociopaths, we have sociologists to tell us where they are likely to propagate and congregate, we have judges to condemn them to confinement and isolation, and police or psychiatrists to make sure they stay there. Alas, the good, ordinary, likeable American lads and lasses were neither monsters nor per-

⁹ See Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, London 1986, 338.

verts. Were they not assigned to lord over the inmates of *Abu Ghraib*, we would never know (surmise, guess, imagine, fantasise) the horrifying things they were capable of contriving. It wouldn't occur to any of us that the smiling girl at the counter might, once on overseas assignment, excel at devising ever more clever and fanciful, as well as wicked and perverse tricks – to harass, molest, torture and humiliate her wards. In her and her companions' hometowns, their neighbours refuse to believe to this very day that those charming lads and lasses they have known since their childhood are the same folks as the monsters in the snapshots of the *Abu Ghraib* torture chambers. But they are.

In the conclusion of his psychological study of Chip Frederick, the suspected leader and guide of the torturers' pack, Philip Zimbardo had to say that there is absolutely nothing in his record that I was able to uncover that would predict that Chip Frederick would engage in any form of abusive, sadistic behaviour. On the contrary, there is much in his record to suggest that had he not been forced to work and live in such an abnormal situation, he might have been the military's All-American poster soldier on its recruitment ads.

Indeed, Chip Frederick would have passed with flying colours any imaginable psychological test, as well as the most thorough scrutiny of behavioural record routinely applied in selecting candidates for the most responsible and morally sensitive services, like those of the official, uniformed guardians of law and order. In the case of Chip Frederick and his closest and most notorious companion, Lyndie England, you might still insist (even if counterfactually) that they had acted on command and had been forced to engage in atrocities they detested and abhorred – meek sheep rather than predatory wolves. The sole charge against them you might then approve would be that of cowardice or exaggerated respect for their superiors; at the utmost, the charge of having too easily, without as much as a murmur of protest, abandoned the moral principles which guided them in their 'ordinary' life at home. But what about those at the top of bureaucratic ladder? Those who gave commands, forced obedience and punished the disobedient? Those people, surely, must have been monsters?

The inquiry into the *Abu Ghraib* outrage never reached the top echelons of the American military command; for the top, command-issuing people to be brought to trial and tried for war crimes, they would first need to find themselves on the defeated side in the war they waged – which they did not ... But Adolf Eichmann, presiding over the tools and procedures of the 'final solution' of the 'Jewish problem' and giving orders to their operators, was on the side of the defeated, had been captured by victors and brought to their courts. There was an occasion, therefore, to submit the 'monster hypothesis' to a most careful, indeed meticulous scrutiny – and by the most distinguished members of the psychological and psychiatric professions. The final conclusion drawn from that most thorough and reliable research was anything but ambiguous. Here it is, as conveyed by Hannah Arendt: Half a dozen psychiatrists had certified him as 'normal' – "More normal, at any rate, than I am after examining him", one of them was said to have exclaimed, while another had found that his whole psychological outlook, his attitude towards wife and children, mother and father, brothers, sisters and friends was 'not only normal but most desirable'. The trouble with Eichmann was precisely that so many were like him, and that the many were neither perverted nor sadistic, that they were, and still are, terribly and terrifyingly normal. From the viewpoint of our legal institutions and our moral standards of judgement, this normality was much more terrifying than all the atrocities put together.

It must indeed have been most terrifying of findings: if not ogres, but normal people (I am tempted to add: ‘guys like you and me’), commit atrocities and are capable of acting in a perverted and sadistic way, then all the sieves we have invented and put in place to strain out the carriers of inhumanity from the rest of human species are either botched in execution or misconceived from the start – and most certainly ineffective. And so we are, to cut a long story short, un-protected (one is tempted to add: ‘defenceless against our shared morbid capacity’). Employing their ingenuity to the utmost and trying as hard as they could to ‘civilise’ human manners and the patterns of human togetherness, our ancestors, and also those of us who’ve followed their line of thought and action, are so to speak barking up a wrong tree ...

Reading *The Kindly Ones* attentively, one can unpack a covert critique of the common, and endorsed by Arendt’s herself, interpretation of *The Banality of Evil* thesis: namely, that supposition that the evildoer Eichmann was an “un-thinking man”. From Littel’s portraiture, Eichmann emerges as anything but an un-thinking follower of orders or a slave to his own base passions. “He was certainly not an enemy of mankind described in Nuremberg”, “nor was he an incarnation of banal evil”, he was on the contrary “a very talented bureaucrat, extremely competent at his functions, with a certain stature and a considerable sense of personal initiative”¹⁰. As a manager, Eichmann would be most certainly a pride of any reputable European firm (one could add: including the companies with Jewish owners or top executives). Littel’s narrator, Dr. Aue, insists that in many personal encounters he had with Eichmann he never noticed any trace of a personal prejudice, let alone a passionate hatred of the Jews whom he saw as no more though not less either than the objects which his office demanded to be duly processed. Whether at home or in his job, Eichmann was consistently the same person. The kind of person he was, for instance, when together with his SS mates he performed two of Brahms’ quartets: “Eichmann played calmly, methodically, his eyes riveted to the score; he didn’t make any mistakes.”¹¹

If Eichmann was ‘normal’, then no one is a priori exempt from suspicion. None of our dazzlingly normal friends and acquaintances; and neither are we. Chip Fredericks and Adolf Eichmanns walk in our streets in full view, queue like us at the same shops’ checkouts, fill cinemas and football grandstands, travel on trains and city buses or stick next to us in the traffic jams. They might live next door, or even sit at our dining table. All of them, given propitious circumstances, might do what Chip Frederick or Adolf Eichmann did. And what about me?! Since so many people can potentially commit acts of humanity, I might easily by chance, by a mere caprice of fate, become one of their victims. They can do it – this is what I already know. But is not it so that equally easily it may be I myself who become one of them: just another ‘ordinary human’ who can do to other humans what they have done ...

John M. Steiner¹² used metaphorically the notion of a ‘sleeper’, drawn from the terminology of spy networks, to denote as yet undisclosed personal inclination to commit acts of violence, or person’s vulnerability to a temptation to join in such acts – some odious potential that may be hypothetically present in particular individuals while remaining for a long time invisible; an inclination that can (is bound to?) surface, or vulnerability that may be revealed, only under some particularly propitious conditions: presumably once the forces that hitherto repressed it and kept under cover are abruptly weakened or removed. Ervin Staub moved one (gigantic) step fur-

10 *The Kindly Ones*, 569-70.

11 *The Kindly Ones*, 565.

12 John Steiner, *The SS Yesterday and Today: A Sociopsychological View*, in: Joel E. Dinsdale (ed.), *Survivors, Victims and Perpetrators*, Washington 1980, 431.

ther, deleting both references to ‘particularity’ in Steiner’s proposition and hypothesising the presence of malevolent ‘sleepers’ in most, perhaps all humans: “Evil ... committed by ordinary people is the norm, not an exception.” Is he right? We don’t know and will never know, at least never know for sure, as there is no way to prove or disprove that guess empirically. Possibilities are not unlike chicken: they can be reliably, definitely counted only after they have been hatched.

What do we know for sure? The ease (as Zimbardo himself found in his earlier experiments conducted at Stanford University with students randomly selected to play the role of ‘prison guards’ towards fellow students, also randomly cast in the role of prisoners) “with which sadistic behaviour could be elicited in individuals who were not ,sadistic types“.¹³ Or, as Stanley Milgram found in his Yale experiments with again randomly chosen people who were asked to inflict on other humans a series of what they were made to believe were painful electrical shocks of escalating magnitude: that ‘obedience to authority’, any authority, regardless of the nature of the commands that authority may give, is a “deeply ingrained behaviour tendency” even if the subjects find the actions they are told to perform repugnant and revolting.¹⁴ If you add to that factor such well-nigh universal sediments of socialization as the attributes of loyalty, sense of duty and discipline, “men are led to kill with little difficulty”. It is easy, in other words, to prod/push/seduce/entice non-evil people to commit evil things.

Christopher R. Browning investigated the twisted yet invariably gory itinerary of men belonging to the German Reserve Police Battalion 101, assigned to the police from among conscripts unfit for front-line duty, and eventually delegated to participate in the mass murder of Jews in Poland.¹⁵ Those people, who had never been known to commit violent, let alone murderous acts before, and gave no ground to suspicion of being capable of committing them, were ready (not a hundred per cent of them, but a considerable majority) to comply with the command to murder: to shoot point blank men and women, old people and children unarmed and obviously innocent since not charged with any crime, and none of whom nestling the slightest intention to harm them or their comrades-in-arms. What Browning found, however (and published under the telling-it-all title of *Ordinary Men*), was that just about ten to twenty per cent of the conscripted policemen proved to be ‘refusers and evaders’, who asked to be excused from carrying out the orders, that there was also a ‘nucleus of increasingly enthusiastic killers who volunteered for the firing squads and ‘Jew hunts”, but that a by far the largest group of conscript policemen performed placidly the role of murderers and ghetto clearers when assigned to it, though not seeking opportunities to kill on their own initiative. The most striking aspect of that finding was in my view the amazing similarity of Browning’s statistical distribution of zealots, abstainers and impassioned ‘neither-nors’, to that of the reactions to the authoritatively endorsed commands by the subjects of Zimbardo’s and Milgram’s experiments. In all three cases, some people ordered to commit cruelty were only too eager to jump to the occasion and give vent to their evil drives; some – roughly of the same number – refused to do evil whatever the circumstances and whatever the consequences of their abstention; whereas an extensive ‘middle ground’ was filled by people who were indifferent, lukewarm and not particularly engaged or strongly com-

13 See Craig Haney/Curtis Banks/Philip Zimbardo, Interpersonal Dynamics in a Simulated Prison, in: International Journal of Criminology and Penology 1973, 69-97.

14 For full discussion, see Zygmunt Bauman, Modernity and the Holocaust, London 1989, chap. 6.

15 See Christopher R. Browning, Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland, London 2001.

mitted to one or another side of the attitudinal spectrum, avoiding taking any stand, whether for morality or against it – and preferring instead to follow the line of least resistance and do whatever prudence dictated them, whereas unconcern allowed, to do.

In other words, in all three cases (as well as in innumerable other specimens of the extensive set of studies of which these three investigations have been acclaimed as the most spectacular and illuminating examples), the distribution of the probabilities that the command to do evil will be obeyed or resisted has followed the standard known in statistics as the Gaussian curve (sometimes called the Gaussian bell, Gaussian distribution, or Gaussian function) – believed to be the graph of the most common and prototypical, to wit ‘normal’, distribution of probabilities. We read in Wikipedia that what the notion of the Gaussian curve refers to is the tendency of results to ‘cluster around a mean or average’. ‘The graph of the associated probability density function is bell-shaped, with a peak at the mean.’ We also read that ‘by the central limit theorem, any variable that is the sum of a large number of independent factors is likely to be normally distributed.’

As the probabilities of various behavioural responses by people exposed to the pressure to do evil show a clear tendency to take the form of a Gaussian curve, we can risk the supposition that, in their case as well, the results were compounded by the mutual interference of a large number of independent factors: commands descending from on high, instinctual or deeply entrenched respect for or fear of authority, loyalty reinforced by the consideration of duty and by drilled discipline were some of them – but not necessarily the only ones.

The possible silver lining under this uniformly dark cloud is that it seems plausible (just plausible ...) that under conditions of liquid modernity, marked by the loosening or dissipation of bureaucratic hierarchies of authority as well as by the multiplication of sites from which competitive recommendations are voiced (the two factors responsible for rising illegibility and diminishing audibility of those voices), other – more individual, idiosyncratic and personal factors, for instance personal characters, may play an increasingly important role on the choice of responses. Humanity of humans may gain if they did.

And yet, our shared experience thus far offers few if any reasons to be optimistic. As Winfried George Sebald (in his 1999 *Luftkrieg und Literatur*, published in the English translation by Anthea Bell under the title *On the Natural History of Destruction*) suggests, “we are unable to learn from the misfortunes we bring on ourselves” and “we are incorrigible and will continue along the beaten tracks that bear some slight relation to the old road network”. Bent as we all are, by nature or training, on seeking and finding the shortest way to the aims we pursue and believe to be worth pursuing, ‘misfortunes’ (and particularly misfortunes suffered by others) do not seem an excessively high price to pay for shortening the way, cutting the costs and magnifying the effects.

Sebald quotes, after Alexander Kluge’s *Unheimlichkeit der Zeit*, an interview conducted by a German journalist Kunzert with the U.S. Eight Army Air Force Brigadier Frederick L. Anderson. Pressed by Kunzert to explain whether there was a way to prevent/avoid the destruction of Halberstadt, his home town, by American carpet bombing, Anderson responded that the bomb were, after all, “expensive items”. “In practice, they couldn’t have been dropped over mountains or open country after so much labour had gone into making them at home” (Sebald, p. 65). Anderson, uncommonly frank, hit the nail on its head; it was not the need to do something about Halberstadt that decided the use of the bombs, but the need to do something with

the bombs that decided the fate of Halberstadt. Halberstadt was but a “collateral casualty” (to update the language of the military) of the bomb factories’ success. As Sebald explains, “once the *materiel* was manufactured, simply letting the aircraft and their valuable freight stand idle on the airfields of eastern England ran counter to any healthy economic instinct” (p. 18). That “economic instinct” could perhaps have had the first, but most certainly had the last word in the debate about the propriety and usefulness of Sir Arthur ‘Bomber’ Harris strategy; the destruction of German cities went into its full and unstoppable swing well after the spring of 1944, when it had already dawned on the policy makers and the military order-givers that contrary to the officially proclaimed objective of the air campaign and its protracted, determined, lavish, zealous, pull-no-punches execution, “the morale of the German population was obviously unbroken, while industrial production was impaired only marginally at best, and the end of the war had not come a day closer”. By the time that discovery and disclosure was made, the *materiel* in question had been already manufactured and filled the warehouses to capacity; letting it lie idle would indeed “counter any healthy economic instinct”, or, to put it simply, would make no “economic sense” (by A.J.P. Taylor’s estimate, as quoted by Max Hastings in his 1979 study Bomber Command, 349, the servicing of the bombing campaign engaged and “swallowed up” after all one-third of the total British war-servicing production).

We have sketched so far and compared two tracks along which the search for an answer to the *unde malum* has in recent times proceeded. There is, however, a third track as well, which due to the universality and extemporality of the factors it invokes and deploys in the pursuit of understanding deserves to be called anthropological; a factor that with the passage of time seems to rise in stature and promise, just as the other two sketched above near the exhaustion of their cognitive potential. We could intuit the direction of that third track in Sebald’s study; it has been however laid out already before, in Günther Anders’ seminal yet for a few decades overlooked or neglected study of the *Nagasaki Syndrome* phenomenon,¹⁶ charged by Anders with a fully and truly apocalyptic potential of ‘globocide’. *Nagasaki Syndrome*, as Anders suggested, means that “what has been done once, can be repeated over again, with ever weaker reservations”; with each successive case, more and more “matter-offactly, casually, with little deliberation or motive”. “Repetition of outrage is not just possible, but probable – as the chance to win the battle for its prevention gets smaller, while that of losing it rises.”

The decision to despatch atomic bombs on Hiroshima on 6 August 1945 and three days later on Nagasaki was officially explained, *ex post facto*, by the need to bring forward the capitulation of Japan in order to save uncounted numbers of American lives which most certainly would be lost were the American army to invade the Japanese archipelago. The jury of history is still in sitting, but the official version of the motive, justifying the meanness and villainy of the means by reference to the grandiosity and nobility of the goals, has been recently cast in doubt by American historians examining the newly de-classified information about the circumstances in which the decision was considered, taken and implemented, which allows to question the official version also on factual, and not only moral grounds. As the

¹⁶ See Günther Anders, *Wir Eichmannsöhne* (1964, 1988), here quoted after French translation *Nous, fils d’Eichmann*, Paris 2003, 47.

critics of the official version aver, rulers of Japan were ready to capitulate a month or so before the first atom bomb was dropped – and just two steps would cause them to lay down arms: Truman's consent to the Soviet Army joining the war with Japan, and the commitments of the allies to keep Mikado on his throne after Japan's surrender. Truman, however, procrastinated. He waited for the results of the test set to be conducted in Alamogordo in New Mexico, where final touches were about to be put on the performance of first atomic bombs. The news of the results did arrive, to Potsdam, on 17 July: the test was not just successful: the impact of explosion eclipsed the boldest of expectations ... Resenting the idea of consigning an exorbitantly expensive technology to waste, Truman started playing for time. The genuine stake of his procrastination could be easily deduced from the triumphant presidential address published in the New York Times on the day following the destruction of a hundred thousand lives in Hiroshima: "We made the most audacious scientific bet in history, a bet of two billion dollars – and won." One just couldn't waste two billion dollars, could one? If the original objective has been reached before the product had a chance of being used, one had to promptly find another aim that would preserve or restore to the expenditure its "economic sense" ...

On 16 March 1945, when Nazi Germany was already on its knees and the speedy end of war was no longer in doubt, Arthur 'Bomber' Harris sent 225 Lancaster bombers and eleven Mosquito fighter planes ordered to discharge 289 ton of explosives and 573 ton of incendiary substances on Würzburg, a middle-size town of 107 thousands residents, rich in history and art treasures while poor in industry. Between 9:20 and 9:37 p.m. about five thousand inhabitants (of whom 66 per cent were women and 14 per cent children) were killed, whereas 21 thousand living houses were set on fire: only six thousand residents found roof over their heads once the planes left. Hermann Knell,¹⁷ who calculated above figures following a scrupulous scrutiny of archives, asks why a town devoid of all and any strategic significance (that opinion being confirmed, even if in a round-about way, by omitting all and any mention of that town's name in the official History of RAF, meticulously listing all, even the most minute, strategic accomplishments of air forces) had been selected for destruction. Having examined and disqualified one by one all conceivable alternative causes, Knell was left with the sole sensible answer to his question: that Arthur Harris and Carl Spaatz (the commander of the US Air Force in Great Britain and Italy) found themselves at the beginning of 1945 short of targets.

The bombing progressed as planned without consideration of the changed military situation. The destruction of German cities continued until the end of April. Seemingly once the military machine was moving it could not be stopped. It had a life of its own. There was now all the equipment and soldiers on hand. It must have been that aspect that made Harris decide to have Würzburg attacked ...

But why Würzburg of all places? Purely for reasons of convenience. As previous reconnaissance sorties have shown, "the city could be easily located with the electronic aids available at the time". And the city was sufficiently distanced from the advancing allied troops to reduce the threat of another case of 'friendly fire' (i.e., dropping the bombs on own troops). In other words, the town was "an easy and riskless target". This was Würzburg's inadvertent and unwitting fault, a kind of fault for which no 'target' would ever be pardoned once "the military machine was moving" ...

¹⁷ See Hermann Knell, *To Destroy a City: Strategic Bombing and Its Human Consequences in World War II*, London 2003 – particularly pp. 25 and 330-331.

In *La violence nazie: une généalogie européenne*¹⁸ Enzo Traverso puts forward a concept of the “barbaric potential” of modern civilization. In that study dedicated to Nazi violence he comes to the conclusion that the atrocities Nazi-style were unique solely in the sense of synthesising large number of the means of enslavement and annihilation already tested, though separately, in the history of the Western civilization. The bombs thrown on Hiroshima and Nagasaki prove, that the anti-Enlightenment sentiments are not the necessary conditions of technological massacre. The two atomic bombs as much as the Nazi camps were elements of the “civilising process”, manifestations of one of its potentials, one of its faces and one of its possible ramifications. Traverso finishes his exploration with a warning: there are no grounds whatsoever for excluding the possibility of other syntheses in the future – no less murderous than the Nazi. The liberal, civilised Europe of the 20th century proved to be, after all, a laboratory of violence. Myself, I would add that there are no signs of that laboratory having been shut and ceased operation with the dawn of the 21st century.

Günther Anders¹⁹ asks: are we, in this age of machines, the last relics of the past, who did not manage as yet to clean off the toxic sediments of past atrocities? And he answers: the outrages under discussion were committed *then* not because they were still feasible (or failed yet to be eradicated), but on the contrary – they were perpetrated *already* then, because *already* then they became feasible and plausible ...

Let me sum up: there must have been the ‘first moment’ in which the technologically assisted atrocities, until then inconceivable, had become feasible; those atrocities must have had their moment of beginning, their starting point – but it does not follow, that they must have an end as well. It does not follow, that they entered human cohabitation on a brief visit only, and even less that they brought or set in motion some mechanisms bound to cause sooner or later their departure. It is rather the other way round: once the contraption allowing to separate technological capacity from moral imagination is put in place, it becomes self-propelling, self-reinforcing and self-reinvigorating. Human capacity of adjustment, habituation, becoming accustomed, starting today from the point to which one has been brought the evening before, and all in all recycling the inconceivability of yesterday into today’s fact-of-the-matter will see to that.

Atrocities, in other words, do not self-condemn and self-destruct. They, on the contrary, self-reproduce: what was once an unexpectedly horrifying turn of fate and a shock (an awesome discovery, gruesome revelation), degenerates into a routine conditioned reflex. Hiroshima was a shock with deafeningly loud and seemingly non-extinguishable echoes. Three days later, Nagasaki was hardly a shock, evoking few if any echoes. Joseph Roth²⁰ pointed to one of the mechanisms of that de-sensitising habituation:

When a catastrophe occurs, people at hand are shocked into helpfulness. Certainly, acute catastrophes have that effect. It seems that people expect catastrophes to be brief. But chronic catastrophes are so unpalatable to neighbours that they gradually become indifferent to them and their victims, if not downright impatient ... Once the emergency becomes protracted, helping hands return to pockets, the fires of compassion cool down.

In other words: a protracted catastrophe blazes the trail of its own continuation by consigning the initial shock and outrage to oblivion and thus emaciating and enfeeble-

18 Enzo Traverso, *La violence nazie: une généalogie européenne*, Paris 2003.

19 Nous, fils d’Eichmann, 108.

20 See *Juden auf Wanderschaft*, here quoted from Michael Hoffmann English translation *The Wandering Jews*, London 2001, 125.

ling human solidarity with its victims – and so sapping the possibility of joining forces for the sake of staving off future victimage ...

But how and why the said atrocities came to be in the first place? For the explorers of the sources of evil, it is Anders, it seems, who sketches a yet another, best called metaphysical, approach. One could spy out its antecedents in Heidegger's concept of *technē* (*Tέχνη*), though curiously that acclaimed metaphysician of being-in-time set the *technē* beyond historical time, in the metaphysics of Sein – being – as such, presenting thereby *technē* as a history-immune, intractable and unchangeable attribute of all and any being. Anders, on the other hand, is intensely aware of the intimate interdependence of *technē* and history and the sensitivity of *technē* to the historical transmutations of forms of life. Anders, as it can be seen, focused on metaphysics of evil made to the measure of our times, a specific evil, endemic uniquely to our own, present and still continuing, form of human cohabitation: form defined and set apart from other forms by the *technē* (a product, in the last account, of human power of imagination) dashing far beyond human imagining powers and in its turn over powering, enslaving and disabling that human capacity which brought it to be. A prototype of such convoluted, meandering story of Andersian *technē* needs to be sought perhaps in the ancient saga of sorcerer's wayward apprentice, Hegel's and Marx's physiology of alienation, and closer to our times in Georg Simmel's idea of the *Tragödie der Kultur* – of the products of human spirit rising to a volume transcending and leaving far behind human power of absorption, comprehension, assimilation and mastery.

According to Anders, human power to produce (*herstellen*: having things done, plans implemented), has been in recent decades emancipated from the constraints imposed by the much less expandable power of humans to imagine, re-present and render intelligible (*vorstellen*). It is in that relatively new phenomenon, the hiatus (*Diskrepanz*) separating human creative and imagining powers, that contemporary variety of evil set its roots. The moral calamity of our time “does not grow from our sensuality or perfidy, dishonesty or licentiousness, not even from exploitation – but from the deficit of imagination”; whereas imagination, as Anders untiringly insists, grasps more of the “truth” (*nimmt mehr ‘wahr’*), then our machine-driven empirical perception (*Wahrnehmung*) is capable of.²¹ I would add: imagination grasps also infinitely more of the moral truth, in encounter with which our empirical perception is especially blindfolded.

The reality which the perception orphaned by imagination grasps, and beyond which it is unable to reach, is always-already-made, technologically prefabricated and operated; in it, there is no room for those thousands or millions cast at its receiving end and sentenced to atomic, napalm, or poisonous-gas destruction. That reality consists of keyboards and pushbuttons. And as Anders points out, “one wouldn't gnash teeth when pressing a button ... A key is a key.”²² Whether the pressing of the key starts a kitchen ice-cream-making contraption, feeds current into an electricity network, or lets loose the Horsemen of Apocalypse, makes no difference. “The gesture that will initiate the Apocalypse would not differ from any of the other gestures – and it will be performed, as all other identical gestures, by a similarly routine guided and routine-bored operator.” “If something symbolises the satanic nature of our situation, it is precisely that innocence of the gesture”;²³ the negligibility of the effort

21 See Wenn ich verzweifelt bin, was geht's mich an? (1977), here quoted after French translation *Et si je suis désespéré, que voulez-vous que j'y fasse?*, Paris 2007, 65–66.

22 See Günther Anders, *Der Mann auf der Brücke*, München 1959, 144.

23 See Günther Anders, *Le temps de la fin*, Paris 2007 (originally 1960), 52–53.

and thought needed to set off a cataclysm – any cataclysm, including the globocide. We are technologically all-powerful because of, and thanks to, powerlessness of our imagination.

Powerless as we are, we are omnipotent, since capable of bringing into being the forces able in their turn to cause effects which we will not be able to produce with our ‘natural equipment’ – our own hands and muscles. But having become all-powerful in that way, watching and admiring the might and the efficiency and the shattering effects of entities we have ourselves designed and conjured-up, we discover our own powerlessness ... That discovery comes together with another: that of the pride of inventing and setting in motion magnificent machines able to perform Herculean deeds of which we would be incapable otherwise of performing. By the same token, we feel however *challenged* by the standards of perfection we have set for the machines brought by us into being, but which we ourselves can’t match. And so, finally, we discover shame: the ignominy of our own inferiority, and thus the humiliation which overwhelms us when facing up to our own impotence.

Those three discoveries combine, as Anders suggests, into the *Promethean Complex*. Anders has names for the objects of each discovery: Promethean pride, Promethean challenge, and Promethean shame.²⁴ The latter is the sense of one’s own inborn inferiority and imperfection – both blatant if juxtaposed with the perfection, nay omnipotence, of made-up things; the outcome of indignity brought upon us in the last account by our failure to self-reify – to become like the machines: indomitable, irresistible, unstoppable, un-submissive, and indeed ungovernable as are the machines ‘at their best’. To mitigate that infamy, we need to demonstrate our own ability to accomplish, by our own natural means and bodily effort and without help of machines, things which the machines so easily, matter-of-factly perform: by turning themselves, in other words, into means for the means, tools for the tools ... Having watched from their low-flying war machines, avidly and at close quarters, the ravages perpetrated by the tools of murder and devastation sprinkled over the village of My Lai, lieutenant Calley’s soldiers could not resist the challenge/temptation to perform personally, with their bare hands, what their weapons achieved mechanically: the temptation to catch up with the tools of destruction and to overtake them in the chase after perfection – if only for a moment and only here and now, in this village.²⁵ The sight of inanimate objects harnessed to the gory job widened the soldiers’ horizons, uncovered un-thought-of possibilities, stimulated imagination – but these were already horizons drawn by machines, possibilities opened up by mechanical conduct, and imagination industrially prefabricated.

In his second open letter to Klaus Eichmann²⁶ Anders writes of the relation between criminal Nazi state and the post-Nazi, our contemporary, world regime: “The affinity between the technical-totalitarian empire which threatens us and the monstrous Nazi empire is evident.” But he hastens to explain right away that he intended the above statement as a provocation, aimed against the widespread (because comforting) opinion that the Third Reich was a unique phenomenon, an aberration untypical of our times and particularly in our Western world; an opinion which owes its popularity to its treacherous potency of exonerating and legitimising turning one’s eyes away from one’s own gruesome, terrifying potential. Personally, I deeply

24 See: Günther Anders, *Die Antiquiertheit des Menschen: Über die Seele im Zeitalter der zweiten industriellen Revolution*, München 1956. Here quoted after the French translation, *L’Obsolescence de l’Homme: Sur l’âme à l’époque de la deuxième révolution industrielle*, Paris 2002, 37-40.

25 See: *Et si je suis désespéré*, 67-68.

26 See: *Et si je suis désespéré*, 100.

regret that I was not aware of these Anders' conclusions, when working on my *Modernity and the Holocaust*. In response to a journalist's suggestion, that he belongs in the ranks of "panic mongers", Anders replied, that he considers the "panic monger" title to be a distinction and wears it with pride – adding that "in our days, the most important moral task is to make people aware that they need to be alarmed – and that the fears that haunt them have valid reasons."²⁷

²⁷ Ibid., 92

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Susanne Heim

Zuflucht und Utopie

Österreichisch-jüdische Emigration in die Dominikanische Republik

Abstract

The Dominican Republic is nowadays considered an ultimate holiday paradise by most Europeans. It is less known that this small state in the Antilles served as a place of refuge from Nazism for Austrian, German and Czech Jews during the Second World War. While most countries closed their borders to the flood of refugees after the ‚annexation‘ of Austria, it was - of all places - this dictatorial Caribbean island state that offered refuge to the persecuted. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee built an agricultural model project in Sosúa on the country's northern coast, which was modelled on Kibuzzim and was laid out for tens of thousands of refugees. However, only a few hundred reached the island; they included many Viennese.

The history of this settlement project reveals the developmental lines of the twentieth century: the democratic states' capitulation in the face of the German anti-Jewish policies, the concept of an agricultural project based on socialist ideas and its failure and, finally, migration as a modernising catalyst.

Der Historiker Emanuel Ringelblum, Begründer des Untergrundarchivs im Warschauer Ghetto, hat die dort lebenden Juden aufgefordert, ihre alltägliche Geschichte aufzuschreiben, auch angesichts der sich abzeichnenden Katastrophe. Je mehr sich die Lage der Juden verschlimmere, so Ringelblums Credo, desto mehr drohe die Vergangenheit, betrachtet durch das Prisma immer größerer Leiden, zu verschwinden, die Erinnerung an sie zu verblassen.

Das Beispiel der jüdischen Siedlung im dominikanischen Städtchen Sosúa scheint Ringelblum recht zu geben. Vor dem Hintergrund der Shoah ist die jüdische Flüchtlingsiedlung in der Dominikanischen Republik nahezu in Vergessenheit geraten – auch und ausgerechnet in Österreich. Und dies, obwohl das Projekt Sosúa seine Wurzeln eigentlich in Österreich hat und obwohl die größte Gruppe der Siedler dort die österreichischen Juden waren. Selbst noch die Bilddokumente, die heute die Erinnerung an das verheißungsvolle Projekt wach halten könnten, stammen von einem Österreicher, Kurt Schnitzer, der sich in der Dominikanischen Republik Conrado Schnitzer nannte. In Wien war er Arzt gewesen und nach dem ‚Anschluß‘ über die Schweiz, Frankreich und Belgien in die Dominikanische Republik geflohen, wo er im Oktober 1938 ankam, als die Siedlung in Sosúa nur erst als Idee existierte. Da er als in der Dominikanischen Republik nicht in seinem alten Beruf tätig sein konnte, machte er sein Hobby zum Broterwerb und wurde Fotograf. Er arbeitete für verschiedene Zeitungen und seine Bildreportagen machten ihn zum Avantgardisten der Fotografie im Land. Warum er 1944 überstürzt das Land verließ, ist nicht bekannt. Offenbar war er, der lang Hoffotograph des Diktators gewesen war, politisch in Ungnade gefallen. Er hinterließ mehrere Tausend Fotos. 7.000 sind heute im Nationalarchiv der Republik in Santo Domingo erhalten, darunter eine Sammlung von Glasnegativen und eine

von Fotos über die jüdische Migration, von denen bislang nur sehr wenige in einem der Bücher über Sosúa veröffentlicht wurden. Einige davon werde ich in meinem Vortrag zeigen, um die Geschichte dieses nicht nur alltagsgeschichtlich interessanten Projekts auch bildlich vorstellbar zu machen.

Bei der Beschäftigung mit Sosúa stellen sich schon auf den ersten Blick eine Reihe von Fragen: Wie kam es dazu, dass ausgerechnet ein Diktator, der noch dazu erklärter Rassist war, den Juden, die aus dem nationalsozialistischen Deutschland flohen, Asyl bot? Warum kamen letztlich nur wenige Hundert Flüchtlinge dorthin, obwohl Millionen in ganz Europa von der Judenverfolgung bedroht waren und nichts sehnlicher wünschten, als den Kontinent zu verlassen? Welche Hindernisse standen der Aufnahme der Flüchtlinge entgegen? Welche Schwierigkeiten hatten sie zu überwinden beim Aufbau der Siedlung? Und warum haben sich die meisten darum bemüht, sobald wie möglich den friedlichen Karibikort wieder zu verlassen?

Projektiert war viel mehr als eine Zuflucht. Sosúa sollte nicht einfach nur ein Aufanglager für Flüchtlinge aus Europa sein. Die Gründer des Projekts sahen darin die Chance, eine Utopie zu verwirklichen: ein landwirtschaftliches Siedlungsprojekt mit demokratisch-sozialistischem Anspruch, das sowohl die eigenen Mitglieder ernähren als auch zur wirtschaftlichen Entwicklung des armen und als rückständig geltenen Karibikstaats beitragen würde. Und sie waren nicht die einzigen, die in Sosúa ihr Zukunftideal realisiert sehen wollten. US-amerikanischen Migrationsexperten und nicht zuletzt auch Präsident Roosevelt galt die kleine Flüchtlingskolonie als Experimentierfeld für eine Gruppenansiedlung in unerschlossenen Regionen und letztlich für eine gezielte Bevölkerungsregulierung auf wissenschaftlicher Grundlage.

Doch der Reihe nach: Die Vorgeschichte Sosúas beginnt in Österreich. Der ‚Anschluß‘ des Landes an NS-Deutschland ließ die Zahl der Jüdinnen und Juden, die vor Verfolgung und im März 1938 erstmals auch vor explodierender Pogromgewalt flohen, binnen Tagen in die Höhe schnellen. Nachdem die Nachrichten über die Pogrome in Wien durch die Weltpresse gegangen waren, wuchs der öffentliche Druck auf die US-Regierung, ihre restriktive Einwanderungspolitik zugunsten der Juden zu lockern, enorm. Doch das Thema war heikel und der Gegendruck kaum minder stark. Die Mehrheit des US-Kongresses war entschieden gegen eine Liberalisierung der Flüchtlingspolitik, und der Antisemitismus durchaus auch in den USA virulent. Roosevelt fürchtete um seine Wiederwahl.

Knapp zwei Wochen nach dem ‚Anschluß‘ trat er die Flucht nach vorn an. Auf Anraten des State Departments lud er zu einer internationalen Konferenz ein, auf der über das Problem der rasch wachsenden Flüchtlingsbewegung in und aus Europa beraten werden sollte. Damit war denjenigen, die die US-Regierung zum Handeln drängten, erst einmal der Wind aus den Segeln genommen, ohne dass Roosevelt eine Öffnung der Grenzen versprochen hätte. Und schon in der Einladung zur Konferenz sicherte er auch den Teilnehmerstaaten zu, dass von ihnen keine Änderung ihrer Einwanderungsgesetze erwartet werde. Dahinter stand die unausgesprochene Erwartung, dass sich die dünn besiedelten und wirtschaftlich wenig entwickelten Staaten Lateinamerikas oder auch Australien bereit finden würden, die Flüchtlinge ins Land zu lassen, um die vermeintlich ‚leeren Räume‘ zu besiedeln bzw. überhaupt erst einmal urbar zu machen.

Die Erwartung erfüllte sich nicht. Die Konferenz, die Anfang Juli 1938 in Évian am Genfer See zusammenrat wurde ein Flopp. Die Repräsentanten der 32 Teilnehmerstaaten bekundeten zwar einer nach dem anderen ihr Mitgefühl mit den Flüchtlingen, erklärten jedoch alle, ihr Land sei leider nicht in der Lage, weitere Menschen aufzunehmen.

Eine Ausnahme bildete allein der Vertreter der Dominikanischen Republik, Virgilio Trujillo Molina, ein Bruder des dominikanischen Diktators Rafael Trujillo, der den Inselstaat seit 1930 regierte. Bei internen Verhandlungen machte Trujillo Molina in Évian zunächst das Angebot, 10.000 Flüchtlinge in der Dominikanischen Republik anzusiedeln; später wurde die Zahl auf 100.000 erhöht. Das Angebot war zwar einerseits hoch willkommen, wurde aber gleichwohl von Eingeweihten mit Skepsis aufgenommen. Zum einen gab es Zweifel, ob die Dominikanische Republik wirklich so viele Einwanderer aufnehmen könne und wolle. Dagegen sprach die im Allgemeinen eher restriktive Einwanderungspolitik des Inselstaats. Von den 2.000 Visaanträgen, die Flüchtlinge aus Europa in den ersten vier Monaten nach der Évian-Konferenz gestellt hatten, waren lediglich zwanzig positiv entschieden worden.



Familie Trujillo

Von Dezember 1938 an wurde eine Einwanderungssteuer von 500 US-Dollar pro Kopf für Afrikaner und Juden erhoben, von März 1939 an explizit für ‚Angehörige der semitischen Rasse‘ (St. Louis). Hingegen war Personen mit ansteckenden Krankheiten, Epileptikern, psychisch Kranken und „Idioten“ sowie allein reisenden Frauen, die nicht in der Lage seien, „die zuständigen Einwanderungsbeamten von ihrem ehrenwerten Ruf zu überzeugen“, die Einreise verboten. Vor allem aber lag die Skepsis in der Person des Despoten Trujillo begründet, der die Opposition im eigenen Land mit brutalen Methoden verfolgte und sich selbst in einem geradezu bizarren Personenkult als ‚Wohltäter des Vaterlands‘ feiern ließ. Trujillo hatte aus seiner Bewunderung für Hitler und Mussolini in den vorangegangenen Jahren kein Hehl gemacht. Dennoch waren ihm die jüdischen Flüchtlinge, die vor Hitler flohen, gerade recht – weil sie weiß waren. Denn nach Ansicht des dominikanischen Despoten war auch die Bevölkerung seines Landes eigentlich europäischen Ursprungs im Gegensatz zu den Bewohnern des Nachbarlands Haiti.



Trujillo hatte bereits mehrere Versuche unternommen, Europäer anzusiedeln (darunter Deutsche und Finnen) in der Hoffnung, sie würden Einheimische heiraten und dadurch die Hautfarbe seiner Landsleute ‚aufhellen‘. Und auch er persönlich pflegte seinen Teint mit Aufhellungscreme. Gegenüber den Haitianern herrschte und herrscht zum Teil bis heute eine rassistisch konnotierte Geringschätzung, die sich u. a. an der Hautfarbe festmachte. Daneben hatte Trujillo noch ein aktuelles Motiv für sein Angebot: Im Oktober 1937, also ein Dreivierteljahr vor der Évian-Konferenz, hatte es im Grenzgebiet zwischen der Dominikanischen Republik und Haiti ein Massaker gegeben, zu dem der Diktator seine Landsleute persönlich angestiftet hatte und dem 15.000 bis 20.000 Haitianer zum Opfer gefallen waren.

Die US-Regierung, die ihn lange protegiert hatte, war nach dem Massaker von ihm abgerückt. Einen Bruch mit den USA jedoch konnte er sich schlicht nicht leisten. Die Dominikanische Republik war stark verschuldet und wirtschaftlich von den Vereinigten Staaten extrem abhängig. Indem Trujillo nun ein Angebot unterbreitete, das Roosevelts diplomatischem Vorstoß in Évian doch noch einen Erfolg zu bescheren versprach, bot sich die Chance, die verspielten Sympathien zurückzugewinnen.

Zudem hielten dominikanische Fachleute die Ansiedlung von Flüchtlingen für ökonomisch wünschenswert – vorausgesetzt, diese brachten auch Geld ins Land. Der Honorarkonsul der Dominikanischen Republik in Wien schlug bereits im Juni 1938 vor, von den jüdischen Hilfsorganisationen zu verlangen, dass sie eine hinreichend große Summe Geldes an dominikanische Banken überwiesen. Das Geld sollte der Kontrolle der dortigen Regierung unterliegen, so dass diese die Gewissheit habe, dass die Einwanderer dem Land nicht zur Last fielen, sondern das Kapital im Gegenteil der einheimischen Wirtschaft zum Vorteil gereiche. Wenn das Siedlungsprojekt in Sosúa trotz der Zweifel an der Seriosität von Trujillos Angebot zustande kam, so lag dies in erster Linie am Joint. Die amerikanisch-jüdische Hilfsorganisation stellte nicht nur das Geld für den Ankauf von Land, die Anreise der Siedler aus Europa in die Karibik und die Ausrüstung des Landwirtschaftsbetriebs zur Verfügung, sondern auch das Personal.

Die vom Joint gegründete Siedlungsgesellschaft DORSA kam für die Überfahrt von Europa – 200 US-Dollar pro Person – sowie für die Grundausstattung, in Höhe von 1.000 bis 1.200 US-Dollar pro Kopf auf. Den entsprechenden Kredit sollten die Siedler binnen zehn bis fünfzehn Jahren zurückzahlen. Zudem veranschlagte die DORSA 500 Dollar pro Siedler und Jahr an laufenden Kosten.

Vorgesehen war eine Mischung aus Individual- und Kollektivwirtschaft, d. h. die Siedler bekamen zum einen etwas Privatland und einen kleinen Grundstock an Vieh zugeteilt, um für den Eigenbedarf zu wirtschaften. Falls Überschüsse erwirtschaftet wurden, so verpflichtete sich die Siedlungsgesellschaft, diese aufzukaufen, um einen Anreiz zur Mehrproduktion zu schaffen. Zum anderen gab es Gemeinschaftsbetriebe (u. a. zur Verarbeitung der Agrarprodukte etwa eine Meiereigenossenschaft, aber auch im Dienstleistungssektor), die kollektiv betrieben wurden und in denen die Siedler gegen Lohn arbeiteten.

Bei den Zielvorstellungen des Joint von dem Siedlungsprojekt dürfte auch die Idee vom ‚neuen Menschen‘ Pate gestanden haben. Die Sozialstruktur des Judentums galt gemeinhin – und auch jüdischen Soziologen – als ‚ungesund‘. Juden gehörten in den meisten europäischen Staaten überwiegend städtischen Berufsgruppen an. Sie waren in erster Linie in Handel, Handwerk und freien Berufen tätig – und damit anfällig für die notorischen Boykottversuche der Antisemiten. Juden jedoch, die sich von ihrer Hände Arbeit und auf eigener Scholle selbst ernähren konnten, waren gegen derartige Boykotte weitgehend gefeit. Entsprechend wurden als Siedler vornehmlich junge gesunde Männer angeworben, möglichst ohne familiären Anhang. Dies kam auch den Vorstellungen Trujillos entgegen, der ja gerade wollte, dass die weißen Einwanderer sich mit der einheimischen Bevölkerung vermischten und nicht unter sich blieben.

Als die beiden Gründerväter des Projekts sind Joseph Rosen und James Rosenberg zu nennen.



Rosenberg – hier bei der Unterzeichnung des Vertrags zwischen der vom Joint gegründeten Siedlungsgesellschaft DORSA und der dominikanischen Regierung im Januar 1940 – war Rechtsanwalt in New York und einer der Vorsitzenden des Joint. Schon bei der ersten Sondierungsreise in die Dominikanische Republik freundete er

sich mit Trujillo an und ließ sich wohl auch von den pompösen Empfängen beeindrucken, die der Diktator für seine amerikanischen Gäste ausrichtete. Rosenbergs Verdienste um Sosúa lagen vorrangig auf diplomatischem Gebiet: Er war einer der wichtigsten Verbindungsmänner des Joint zum State Department, ohne dessen Unterstützung die Hilfsorganisation glaubte, das Projekt überhaupt nicht in Angriff nehmen zu können. Rosenberg gab die Devise aus: „Unsere Regel muss sein: Im Zweifel fragen wir das State Department!“ Dies bedeutete aber auch, dass im Konfliktfall die außenpolitischen Belange der USA vor den Interessen der Flüchtlinge bzw. den humanitären Zielen des Joint rangierten. Dazu später mehr. Für die Siedler wichtiger war hingegen Joseph Rosen.

Er hatte in den frühen 1920er-Jahren den Agrojoint aufgebaut, eine Organisation zur Ansiedlung von Juden in landwirtschaftlichen Kolonien auf der Krim und in der Ukraine. Nachdem er zunehmend Probleme mit den Behörden in der stalinistischen Sowjetunion bekommen hatte, war er in die USA zurückgekehrt und sah in Sosúa nun eine Möglichkeit, sein landwirtschaftliches Fachwissen, sein Charisma und seinen Aufbauelan in ein neues Siedlungsprojekt zu stecken. Die jüdischen Siedlungen in der Sowjetunion blieben für ihn auch weiterhin Vorbild. Allerdings lehnte er Zwangsmethoden, wie sie im Rahmen der stalinistischen Kollektivierung angewandt wurden, ab und vertrat das Ideal eines demokratischen Führungsstils. Zu seinen Grundüberzeugungen gehörte es, dass sie Siedler nicht nur für den eigenen Lebensunterhalt wirtschaften, sondern auch zur ökonomischen Entwicklung des Landes beitragen sollten. Außerdem legte er Wert darauf, dass sie nicht zu bloßen Grundbesitzern würden, die nur noch die einheimischen Dominikaner für sich arbeiten lassen.

Rosen war unter den Sosúa-Siedlern äußerst beliebt. Doch diese Sympathie beruhte nur bedingt auf Gegenseitigkeit, und Rosen blieb dem Projekt in Sosúa auch nicht lange erhalten. Schon nach einigen Monaten musste er die Insel aus gesund-



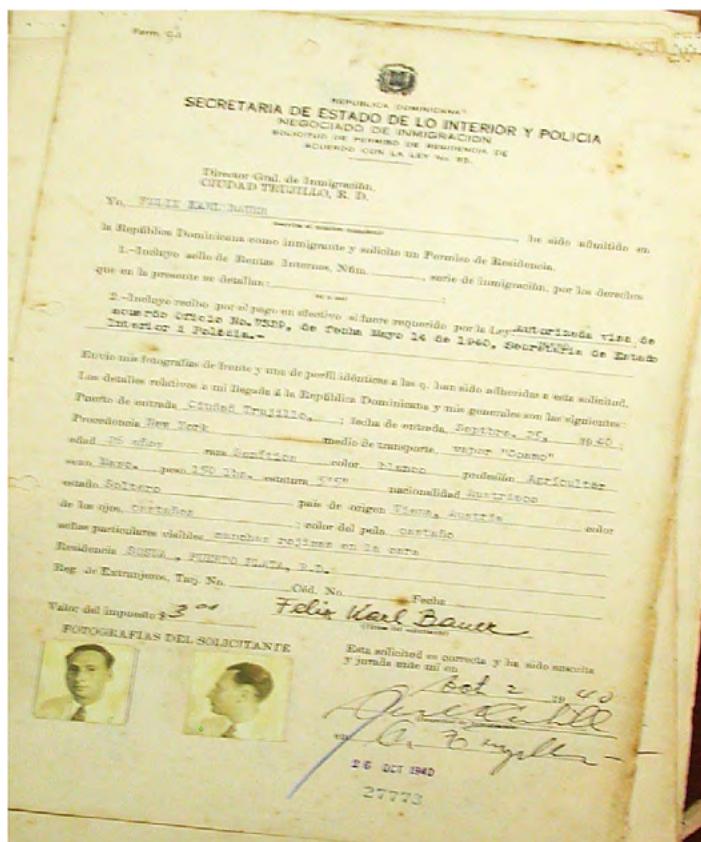
heitlichen Gründen für längere Zeit verlassen. Hinzu kam seine Enttäuschung über das „schlechte Siedlermaterial“ wie er sich ausdrückte. Rosen verlangte von den Siedlern vollen Einsatz wie er ihn von den Juden gewohnt war, die er in der Sowjetunion betreut hatte. Den Flüchtlingen aus Deutschland und Österreich hingegen schienen die richtige Siedlermentalität und der nötige Enthusiasmus zu fehlen. Viele von ihnen verfolgten nach Ansicht Rosens viel zu sehr ihre Eigeninteressen, waren zu sehr großstädtisch-europäisch sozialisiert, um die Entbehrungen eines Siedlerlebens klaglos in Kauf zu nehmen:

„Die größeren Jungen hatten schon zu viele Erfahrungen mit Mädchen. Sie sind alle mehr oder weniger verdorben durch das gute Leben, das sie in England hatten. Einige haben bei reichen Leuten gelebt, andere haben schon ein paar Pfund pro Woche in einer Munitionsfabrik verdient. Und selbst die, die in den verschiedenen Lagern gelebt haben, bilden sich ein, über kurz oder lang zu verhungern, wenn sie nicht allmorgendlich Eier und Speck und zum Mittag- oder Abendessen ein Stück Fleisch serviert bekommen.“

Vonseiten der Siedler sah dies natürlich anders aus.

Die ersten von ihnen landeten im Mai 1940 in Santo Domingo. Von dort fuhren sie in Bussen an die Nordküste der Insel, wo in den Gebäuden einer ehemaligen Plantage der United Fruit Company die ersten notdürftigen Unterkünfte eingerichtet worden waren.

Zu einer der ersten Gruppen, die in Sosúa ankamen, gehörte auch Felix Bauer, ein Musiker und Künstler aus Wien. Von ihm sind nicht nur die Lebenserinnerungen im Leo-Baeck-Institut erhalten, die er viele Jahre später verfasst hat, sondern auch einige Zeitungsartikel. Er schrieb über das Projekt in Sosúa für das in Wien erscheinende Jüdische Nachrichtenblatt.



Einwanderungsformular Fritz Bauer

Während Rosen das Hauptproblem in den charakterlichen Mängeln der Neuan-kommlinge und ihrer Herkunft aus dem bürgerlichen Milieu Wiens oder Berlins ge-sehen hatte, so eröffnet Bauer einen Blick auf das Siedlungsprojekt aus der Perspek-tive der Flüchtlinge, die in Sosúa zu Siedlern gemacht werden sollten.

Bauer war nach dem ‚Anschluss‘ Österreichs in die Schweiz geflohen und hatte über ein Jahr lang im Flüchtlingslager Diepoldsau in Graubünden gelebt. Ähnliches traf auch auf etliche seiner Landsleute zu, mit denen er später gemeinsam die Sied-lung in Sosúa aufbaute. Die Dominanz der Österreicher in dem Projekt hängt wahr-scheinlich auch damit zusammen, dass die Siedler vor allem in Flüchtlingslagern in der Schweiz und in Frankreich rekrutiert wurden. Dort hatten nach dem ‚Anschluss‘ viele österreichische Juden Aufnahme gefunden, während die deutschen meist weni-ger plötzlich ihr Land verlassen und daher anderweitig Unterkunft gefunden hatten.

Damals galt für die Flüchtlinge in den Lagern der Schweiz Arbeitsverbot. Der ein-geschränkte Bewegungsradius und die Geldknappheit wirkten sich auf die Dauer deprimierend auf die Flüchtlinge aus, so dass sie in der Regel froh waren über jede Möglichkeit, das Lager verlassen zu können.

Die DORSA verlangte von den künftigen Siedlern, die sie in den Lagern rekrutier-te, dass sie jung und gesund waren, möglichst ohne familiären Anhang und mit land-wirtschaftlicher Ausbildung und dass sie sich verpflichteten, auf Dauer in Sosúa zu bleiben.

Bauer berichtete, dass er bei seiner Anwerbung für Sosúa zunächst von einem Arzt auf seinen Gesundheitszustand hin untersucht wurde und dass er eine Ver-pflichtungserklärung zur dauerhaften Übersiedlung in die Dominikanische Repub-lik unterschrieb, ohne überhaupt zu wissen, wo das Land lag. Wie aus seinem Einrei-seformular ersichtlich, hatte er sich – wie viele andere auch als Landwirt eintragen lassen, um seine Chancen auf Aufnahme in das Siedlungsprojekt zu erhöhen.

Die Gruppe, zu der Bauer gehörte, kam am 25. September 1940 in Santo Domingo an. Seinen ersten Eindruck vom eigentlich Reiseziel fasst er folgendermaßen:



„Sosúa war ein blühender Ort, als die United Fruit Company dort residierte, doch inzwischen war er auf einige erbärmlich aussehende Steinhäuser heruntergekommen. Die Hauptattraktion war die wunderschöne Bucht und die Tatsache, dass rundherum etliche Meilen Land der Siedlungsgesellschaft DORSA überlassen worden waren.“

Etwa fünfzig Siedler seien bereits dort gewesen, als er in Sosúa eintraf, berichtete Bauer. Es gab ein paar Häuser und eine Baracke, die als Schlafsaal diente, einen gemeinschaftlichen Speisesaal sowie eine kleine Gesundheitsstation.



Dieses Foto der Gesundheitsstation ist mit Sicherheit später entstanden, nicht schon im September 1940 bei der Ankunft Bauers. Es zeigt aber seine spätere Frau Magda Mondschein (2. Von links), die als Krankenschwester in Sosúa arbeitete.

Nur wenige aus seiner Gruppe hätten irgendeine Verbindung zur Landwirtschaft gehabt, so Bauer weiter, obwohl die Projektidee vorsah, dass sie ausgebildete Landwirte sein sollten. Diese Idee hätten sich jedoch Stadtmenschen aus New York ausgedacht, und die Experten, die der Joint nach Sosúa geschickt habe, hätten nie in den Tropen gearbeitet. Anfangs musste Bauer alle möglichen Aufgaben übernehmen: Löcher für die Bananenpflanzen graben, Frühstück servieren, Zement für die Häuserfundamente gießen, Häuser bauen, Stroh färben etc. Schließlich fand er eine Möglichkeit, seine künstlerische Begabung nutzbringend einzusetzen. Er zeichnete Landkarten, die es bis dahin nicht gab, und entwarf Baupläne für Häuser und Möbel. Außerdem gründete er eine Gymnastikgruppe, in der die Siedler abends sportlichen Ausgleich von der Landarbeit fanden, sowie einen Chor, und er unterrichtete Musik an der Schule der Siedlung.

Die Siedlung wuchs allmählich und gab auch positive Impulse für die Entwicklung der dominikanischen Wirtschaft: Als wichtigstes ist die Einführung von Milchprodukten zu nennen, die bis dahin völlig unbekannt waren und über die siedlungseigene Gesellschaft Productos Sosúa im ganzen Land vermarktet wurden. Außerdem wurden verschiedene Handwerksbetriebe und Dienstleistungseinrichtungen geschaffen – eine Bäckerei, Auto- und Tischlerwerkstatt, eine Schmiede, ein Frisiersalon, ein Café.



Milchverteilung in der Genossenschaft



RESTAURANT • CAFE • OASIS

Inneneinrichtung des Café Oasis

Im Café Oasis wurde österreichische Küche mit Wiener Schnitzel und Sachertorte angeboten. Es existierte im übrigen auch noch, als der Massentourismus in Sosúa Einzug hielt. Das waren immerhin beachtliche Anfangserfolge. Doch verglichen mit dem, was die Siedler aus ihrer Heimat gewohnt waren, war die Fallhöhe noch immer groß. Hinzu kam eine Reihe interner Konflikte. Im Januar 1941 schrieb Bauer noch halbwegs optimistisch nach Wien:

„Selbstverständlich gibt es auch Misserfolge, aus denen man aber erst recht lernt. So pflanzten wir am Anfang unseres Aufenthalts 8.000 Bananenstauden, mehrere hundert Platanos, die bananenähnliche Früchte tragen, und 2.000 Kokospalmen, alles mit einem gewaltigen Aufwand an Arbeit und Material. Dann kamen die ersten Tage der Regenzeit und setzten die Felder unter Wasser, und alles ging verloren. Es zeigte sich, dass große Drainagen notwendig sind, die jedoch erst im Sommer durchgeführt werden können. Das Ende harter, monatelanger Arbeit ist nun ein schier unübersehbarer Pflanzenfriedhof.“

Allmählich aber häuften sich die Misserfolge. Die fehlende Erfahrung mit der tropischen Landwirtschaft führte zu allerhand Fehlentscheidungen. Statt Yucca und Kochbananen, von denen sich die Einheimischen ernährten, wurden Tomaten, Paprika, Auberginen angebaut, die nicht gediehen oder für die es keinen Absatzmarkt gab. Einige der Siedler führten dies auch auf Ignoranz und Hochmut den Einheimischen gegenüber zurück.

Diese Haltung mag mit dazu beigetragen haben, dass zunehmend gegen eine der Grundüberzeugungen verstößen wurde, die Joseph Rosen dem Siedlungsprojekt ins Stammbuch geschrieben hatte: Die Tatsache, dass die einheimische Arbeitskraft relativ billig war und die Siedler das tropische Klima nicht gewohnt waren, hatte zur Folge, dass viele von ihnen harte Arbeit zu meiden versuchten und für anstrengende landwirtschaftliche oder Bauarbeiten lieber dominikanische Arbeitskräfte anheuerten.

Das Klima war bei weitem nicht die einzige Eingewöhnungshürde. Viele Siedler vermissten ihre vertraute Umgebung, den Komfort, das Kulturangebot und andere Dinge, die sie in Wien lieben gelernt hatten. Zwar gab es auch kleine Theateraufführungen und gelegentlich ein Konzert. Dafür sorgte u. a. Judith Kibel. Sie lud selbst alle drei Monate zum Klavierkonzert ein und erwartete, dass sich ihre Gäste auch entsprechend anzogen: „Frau Kibel legte Wert auf Etikette. Trotz der Hitze waren Sakko, Schlips und Kragen vorgeschrrieben“, erzählte ein anderer Siedler über diese Konzerte.

Die in Ungarn gebürtige Pianistin war als Kind mit ihren Eltern nach Wien gekommen und hatte am dortigen Musikkonservatorium studiert. Nach dem ‚Anschluß‘ war auch sie gemeinsam mit ihrem Mann in die Schweiz geflohen und hatte dort zweieinhalb Jahre verbracht, bevor sie im Dezember 1940 nach Sosúa kam. Doch war sie der Ansicht, dass Künstler in Sosúa nicht angemessen behandelt wurden. Die Administration habe kein Verständnis für Talente wie Felix Bauer gehabt, der wundervoll gezeichnet und Klavier spielen konnte. Man habe ihn „zum Bau dieser Häuser benutzt“, und damit seine Hände ruiniert. Deswegen habe er Sosúa verlassen, obwohl es ihm dort eigentlich gut gefallen habe. Er wurde schließlich Professor für Kunstgeschichte in South Carolina.

Judith Kibel fehlte es in Sosúa an kulturellen Anregungen. Das Leben in einem Karibikort war ihr und vielen anderen zu primitiv und wohl auch langweilig. In einem Interview Ende der 1960er-Jahre gab sie an, „sehr, sehr, sehr“ zu bereuen, dass sie die Schweiz verlassen hatte, dieses „wunderbare und kultivierte Land“, denn in

Sosúa könne man „wirklich gar nichts machen“. 27 Jahre lang sei sie nicht mit Kultur in Berührung gekommen.

Hinzu kam ein anderes Problem, das das Experiment Sosúa überschattete: Das zahlenmäßige Ungleichgewicht zwischen den Geschlechtern. Unter den Siedlern gab es etwa zehnmal so viele Männer wie Frauen. Das führte auch zu Reibereien untereinander, Rivalitäten, heimlichen Liebschaften und Eifersuchtsdramen. Die Tatsache, dass die Männer aus der Flüchtlingskolonie Liebesverhältnisse mit Dominikanerinnen eingingen, verbesserte die Situation nicht unbedingt. Die europästammigen Siedler zeigten wenig Neigung, Einheimische zu heiraten anders als von Trujillo erhofft. Sie wollten jüdische Familien gründen, und das ging nach den religiösen Grundsätzen nur mit einer jüdischen Frau. Und schließlich hatte ihnen der Joint zugesagt, ihre Angehörigen aus Europa nach zu holen, konnte dieses Versprechen jedoch schon bald nicht mehr einlösen. Als schließlich die ersten Ehen zwischen Siedlern und Dominikanerinnen zustande kamen, wurden sie zum Teil auch innerhalb des Projekts sehr kritisch gesehen. Luis Hess, der als erster eine Dominikanerin heiratete und bis vor kurzem noch in Sosúa lebte, berichtete, dass ihn der damalige Leiter des Siedlungsprojekts gefragt habe, ob er sich denn vorstellen könne, dass seine Kinder krause schwarze Haare hätten.

Soviel zu den internen Schwierigkeiten des Projekts. Sie erklären, warum so viele der Siedler Sosúa, sobald es ging, wieder verlassen haben. Die meisten sind nach Kriegsende in die USA weitergewandert, nur wenige nach Europa zurückgekehrt.

Die Frage aber, warum überhaupt nicht mehr als ein paar Hundert jüdische Flüchtlinge nach Sosúa kamen, erklärt sich eher aus den äußeren Schwierigkeiten: In der Gründungsphase wurde das Projekt politisch sowohl von der dominikanischen als auch von der US-amerikanischen Regierung unterstützt. Wie erwähnt knüpfte Roosevelt große Erwartungen daran, nicht nur im Zusammenhang mit der Évian-Konferenz. Vielmehr war er Verfechter der Idee, dass sich langfristig Frieden und Wohlstand am besten durch eine globale Migrationsregulierung gewährleisten lassen. Menschen, die in einer Region der Erde überflüssig oder unerwünscht seien (wie etwa Flüchtlinge), müsse man in einer anderen ansiedeln, wo die nötigen Ressourcen vorhanden seien, um sie produktiv einzusetzen. Im Rahmen des Geheim-Projekts ‚M‘ ließ Roosevelt Anfang der 1940er-Jahre Hunderte von Studien anfertigen, um derartige Vorstellungen nach Kriegsende umzusetzen. Sosúa galt für diese Art der Siedlungssteuerung als Experimentierfeld.

Doch vor dem Kriegsende lag erst einmal der Kriegseintritt der USA. Und der hatte zur Folge, dass sich im State Department diejenigen durchsetzten, die gerade in der Einwanderung von Flüchtlingen aus NS-Deutschland und Österreich ein Sicherheitsproblem sahen: Juden, deren Familien noch im deutschen Herrschaftsbereich lebten, könnten zu Spionagediensten erpresst werden. Dies führte dazu, dass nur die erste Gruppe der Siedler in Sosúa direkt aus Deutschland kam, alle anderen jedoch aus den umliegenden Ländern, in denen Juden Zuflucht gefunden hatten.

Schon im Sommer 1940 wurden die US-Botschaften und -Konsulate in Europa vom State Department dazu angehalten, generell alle Visaanträge hinhaltend zu behandeln. Hinzu kam, dass die Überfahrt immer gefährlicher und Schiffskapazitäten im Verlauf des Kriegs ohnehin knapp wurden. Die DORSA bzw. der Joint, die das Verbot des State Departments akzeptiert hatten, Flüchtlinge aus Deutschland anzuwerben, verloren zudem ihren wichtigsten Ansprechpartner im US-Außenministerium, Robert Pell, der dem Projekt in Sosúa auch persönlich verbunden war. Ihm wurde die Zuständigkeit für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten entzogen und stattdessen einem Diplomaten übertragen, der ein Verfechter einer restriktiven Einwanderungspolitik war.

Last but not least ist auch zu erwähnen, dass der Joint zunehmend in Finanzschwierigkeiten und in Legitimationsprobleme geriet, die sein Engagement in der Dominikanischen Republik behinderten. Die Rettung der Flüchtlinge in Europa, wo Millionen Juden ermordet wurden, hatte Vorrang vor dem Aufbau eines Zukunftsmodells, das Sosúa hätte sein sollen. Das mag in der akuten Situation durchaus verständlich und naheliegend gewesen sein – ist aber kein Grund, das Projekt dem Vergessen anheimzustellen. Denn gerade im Angesicht der existenziellen Gefahr kommt auch nach Ringelblums Verständnis, der sich ja im Zentrum dieser Gefahr befand, der Rekonstruktion der Vergangenheit eine wichtige Funktion für die jüdische Selbstvergewisserung zu. Geschichtskenntnis und Geschichtsbewusstsein waren für ihn ein kulturelles Bollwerk, und für viele säkulare Juden, die sich nicht über die Religion definierten, das Fundament jüdischer Identität. Darüber hinaus ist die Auseinandersetzung mit Sosúa auch für Nichtjuden von Interesse, nicht zuletzt, weil sich in dem Projekt auf kleinstem Raum die zentralen Entwicklungslinien des 20. Jahrhunderts widerspiegeln – seine destruktiven und konstruktiven Dynamiken: die Kapitulation vor dem Faschismus, Migration als Motor der Modernisierung, Sozialismus als Versprechen von Gleichheit und Solidarität.

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SWL-Reader – Reader der Simon Wiesenthal Lectures

Lektorat: Barbara Grzelakova



Mária M. Kovács

Disenfranchised by Law

The 'Numerus Clausus' in Hungary 1920–1945

Abstract

Adopted in 1920, the Hungarian *Numerus Clausus* law introduced a mechanism to keep Jews out of universities by screening all applicants as to whether or not they were Jewish, either by religion or by birth. Jewish applicants were listed separately and their admission was only possible up to six per cent of all students.

In her lecture Mária Kovács challenged a number of false historical legends that underestimate the significance of the *Numerus Clausus* law and, more generally, of state-sanctioned antisemitism in the Horthy regime. It provided strong evidence to dispel the convenient legend that Hungarian antisemitism was a policy externally imposed by Nazi Germany. It demonstrated that government-sanctioned antisemitism in Hungary was a story in and of itself, a story whose beginnings had predated the rise of Nazism in Germany by over a decade. It showed how the *Numerus Clausus* law not only legitimised antisemitism as state-policy, but also served as an inspiration all throughout the inter-war years for racist movements to demand further anti-Jewish quotas and legislation.

Finally, the paper addressed current implications of debates over the law in Hungary's memory war and demonstrated how apologetic accounts of the *Numerus Clausus* still serve to whitewash the Horthy regime from charges of state-sanctioned antisemitism.

I am honoured to have been invited to deliver a Simon Wiesenthal Lecture. Let me begin by saying that I received your invitation shortly after the launch of my new book on the history of the Hungarian *Numerus Clausus* law.¹ Starting in 1920, this law introduced a mechanism to keep Jews out of universities. All applicants were screened as to whether or not they were Jewish, either by religion or by birth. Jewish applicants were listed separately from all others, and their admission was only possible up to six per cent of all students, corresponding to the six per cent share of Jews in the overall population. After a minor modification in 1928, the law remained in force until the spring of 1945, thus spanning a history of 25 years.

But despite its long history, few topics in Hungary's interwar history remain so insufficiently understood by Hungarian historians and the public, as the story of the *Numerus Clausus*. Which is why, in my book, I present a detailed account of those mitigating legends that, still in our days, serve to underestimate the significance of the law. I argue that government-level antisemitism in Hungary was a story in and of itself, a story whose beginnings had predated the rise of Nazism in Germany by over a decade. The evidence in my book call into question the legend that antisemitism in Hungary would have been a policy only externally imposed by Nazi Germany and only from the 1930s.

On the contrary, I am suggesting that the significance of the *Numerus Clausus* law can hardly be overstated. This law elevated to the plane of government policy the idea that the so-called 'Jewish Question' could, and should be resolved by extraordinary legislation that apply to Jews and only to the Jews. Despite the fact that – before 1920

¹ Törvénytől sújtva. A Numerus Clausus Magyarországon, 1919–1945 [Disenfranchised by Law. The History of the Hungarian Numerus Clausus, 1919–1945], Budapest 2012.

– no such thing as a ‘Jewish nationality’ or ‘race’ existed in Hungarian law, the *Numerus Clausus* considered Jews as a so-called ‘non-Hungarian nationality’, even though most Jews in Hungary spoke Hungarian.

Figure 1. Implementation decree of the Numerus Clausus law

The image shows a historical document titled 'A néppesség megoszlása anyanyelv szerint' (The distribution of the population by mother tongue) from 'Csonka Magyarországon (Nyugat Magyarországgal együtt)' (Western Hungary). A red arrow points to the heading 'Taking Israelites for a separate nationality'. The table below lists the population of Western Hungary by language group, including Hungarians, Germans, Slovaks, Romanians, Ruthenians, Croatians, Serbs, and others. The total population is 7,874,385.

Összes népesség	Magyar	Német	Tót	Berán	Ruthén	Horvát	Szék	Egyéb	Zöldi
7,874,385	6,253,860	738,330	165,956	48,810	1,203	38,594	22,100	81,330	474,303
%	79.4	9.4	2.1	0.6	0.0	1.1	0.3	1.1	6.0

A hivatalos másolat hiteleül:
Trifán Miklós s. k.
s. hiv. igazgató
az elnöki irodához

The distribution of the population according to mother tongue				
In rump Hungary (together with Western Hungary)				
Taking Israelites for a separate nationality				
Population	Hungarian	German	Slovaks	Romanian
7.874.385	6.253.860	738.330	165.956	48.810
	79.4%	9.4%	2.1%	0.6%
Ruth	Croatian	Serbian	Other	Jewish
1.203	88.304	22.199	81.330	474.303
0.0%	1.1%	0.3%	1.1%	6.0%

The implementation decree of the *Numerus Clausus* law listed the proportion of all linguistic nationalities, which was then used to determine the ceiling for admission of students belonging to those nationalities.

But the decree created a new, special category for the Jews even though Jews were Hungarian speakers. To make sure that this more than dubious procedure is well understood by the university admission committees, the table contained a sub-heading which pointed out that “Jews are to be taken as a nationality”. So, for the purposes of university admissions, Jews were to be considered members of this newly constructed, so-called ‘nationality’, irrespective of the language they spoke. With this, the law created a unique rule for Jews, a rule that did not apply to any other Hungarian-speaking citizen of the country. In this way, at least as far as university admissions were concerned, the law effectively withdrew from the Jews their status as equal citizens.

This was the mechanism that made the *Numerus Clausus* law so important and valuable for antisemitic politicians, among them, Prime Ministers Pál Teleki and Gyula Gömbös. They regarded the adoption of the Jewish quota in 1920 as a decisive breakthrough that, in effect, opened up the political system for further anti-Jewish legislation in the future. They expected that the concept of *Numerus-Clausus*-proportionality was to be extended sooner or later beyond higher education to be applied in the business economy and other occupations.² In other words, the university Jewish quota was regarded by Hungarian antisemites as a first step in anticipation of further anti-Jewish legislation that would, in the long run, reduce the share of Jewish participation within the Hungarian economy.³

2 For Pál Teleki’s views, see fn. 6 of this paper.

3 For estimates on the Jewish share of property within Hungary see: Ungváry Krisztián, A Horthy rendszer mérlege [The balance of the Horthy-System], in: Jelenkor [Present Times] 2012, 57.

I would only mention two examples to illustrate the power with which this prototype legislation was imprinted in the minds of interwar politicians. My first example is that of Gyula Gömbös, Prime Minister from 1932, who – in 1920 – explicitly spoke of the need to introduce a five per cent *Numerus Clausus* in all fields of the economy, and repeated this plan several times before his nomination as Prime Minister. My second example is that of Miklós Horthy himself, who – writing his memoirs in exile in 1953 – still used the term *Numerus Clausus* not only to cover the 1920 law, but also to describe the anti-Jewish legislation of the late 1930s that restricted the rights of Jews in the economy and also deprived many Jews of their electoral rights.

Figure 2. Excerpt from Horthy's memoirs

This law, which was passed by Parliament in April, 1938, while the Darányi Government was still in power, differed fundamentally from the Nuremberg laws in that it was based on religion and not on racial origin. Jews who had been baptised before 1919 or who had fought in the First World War were not affected by the law. The law introduced a numerus clausus (quota) of twenty per cent for the employment of Jews in certain occupations. This was not to take immediate effect; the purpose of the law was that banks, limited companies, etc., should be given five years in which to comply with the terms of the law, the authors of which, with Darányi, the Prime Minister, reckoning that general conditions were likely to be radically altered before 1943. The numerus clausus put no restrictions on the independent activities of Jews in commercial life.

To my regret, premier Darányi, whose health was failing, had to ask to be relieved of his office. For reasons for which to this day I have no satisfactory explanation, after becoming Premier in 1938, his successor Imrédy, hitherto Anglophile and by no means anti-Semitic, changed into a rabid anti-Semite and became an advocate of the German political theories. [...] In reality, however, it was soon apparent that our views often differed. When, therefore, in December, without having previously consulted me, he introduced new legislation concerning the Jews, in which not only was the numerus clausus reduced from twenty per cent to six per cent but the race principle replaced the criterion of religion.

Admiral Nicholas Horthy, Memoirs (annotated by Andrew L. Simon), Safety Harbor 2009, 209/210

In my judgement, Horthy was perfectly correct to apply the term *Numerus Clausus* to the anti-Jewish legislation of the 1930s. Although these laws were of an incomparably larger scale than that of 1920, they were indeed based on the very same logic and on the very same procedure of extraordinary legislation as was the *Numerus Clausus* law of 1920.

But if all of this is true, then, we may ask, how is it possible that a number of our historians – among them even those who otherwise do a decent job of establishing the responsibility of the Horthy regime in the Hungarian Holocaust –, still portray the 1920 legislation as a relatively mild and benign story, a story that has analogies elsewhere in the western world, for instance, in the ‘Ivy League’ schools in the United States.

But why do they insist on comparing Hungary to the United States? Why is it that they use this comparison to point out that in the United States, university *Numerus Clausus* in itself did not trigger mass persecution, and therefore, by extension, this type of legislation cannot be regarded as a first step leading to a larger tragedy? In my

view, this is a transparently apologetic line of argument. Conditions in Hungary were very different from conditions in the United States.

First, in Hungary, the *Numerus Clausus* established a Jewish quota for all universities in the country, whereas in the United States those Jews who were excluded from ‘Ivy League’ schools could pursue their studies in hundreds of other universities.

Second, unlike in the United States, in Hungary the university *Numerus Clausus* was conceived as the first step in the effort to establish a comprehensive quota system in all fields of life. Let me refer to a speech by Pál Teleki, who was Prime Minister both in 1920, when the university *Numerus Clausus* was adopted, and in 1939, when the so-called ‘Second Jewish Law’ was passed. Speaking in the Upper House of the Hungarian Parliament in 1928, Teleki had this to say: “We must see sincerely and clearly [...] that [...] we are in the midst of a war of races.⁴ [...] Full equality [for the Jews; M.K.] would create an impossible situation.⁵ [...] To deny this is nothing, but a polite formula characterised by Max Nordau to be among the ‘Konventionelle Lügen der Kulturmenschheit’.”⁶ Teleki then went on to describe the Jewish quota as an indispensable instrument to help Hungarians to regain, as he said, their “power to life” by adopting the model of the *Numerus Clausus* to “all areas of life”.⁷

But if this was indeed what the *Numerus Clausus* was about in the eyes of our important politicians, such as Gömbös and Teleki, not to speak of even more radical antisemites, then, one may ask, why all the effort to downplay the importance of the law, instead of confronting its true significance?

I would like to suggest that the answer to these questions is to be found in the wider context of Hungary’s current memory wars. The stakes in this debate are high. They relate to how Hungarians today deal with their past.

On one side of the debate we find those who argue that state-sanctioned antisemitism related to the *Numerus Clausus* was a short episode that belonged to the crisis-torn years of the early 1920s. According to this view, antisemitism as state policy ceased after 1928, and was only revived in the mid-1930s as a direct consequence of German pressure. For the sake of this talk, I will name this view the ‘suspension’ thesis. Its proponents point out that, in 1928, the Hungarian government amended the legislation and eliminated the explicitly antisemitic formulations from the law on the request of the League of Nations. In this reading then, the formal amendment in the law in 1928 resulted in a genuine break with antisemitic policies, which then only reappeared in Hungary in the 1930s as an import from Germany, under overwhelming foreign pressure. All in all, proponents of the ‘suspension thesis’ maintain that by 1928 the consolidation of the Horthy regime produced a genuine and decisive turn away from the initial antisemitism of the regime.

On the other side of the debate we find a competing narrative that points to the effective continuity of antisemitism as state policy in the Horthy regime from 1920 all the way to 1944 – even if the intensity of antisemitism changed with the passing of years.

⁴ Balázs Ablonczy (ed.), Teleki Pál. Válogatott politikai beszédek és írások [Selected Political Speeches and Writings], Budapest, Osiris, 2000, 194 (Felsőházi beszéd, 1928, március 13.) [Speech in the Upper House of the Parliament, March 13, 1928].

⁵ Ibid., 196.

⁶ Ibid., 194.

⁷ Ibid., 189 and 201: A *Numerus Clausus* reformja – mondta Teleki – magát a törvény létfenyegeti, ami viszont „káros volna mindenkor, amíg csak ezen az egy téren mozgunk és amíg nem igyekszünk a kérdést az összes tereken nyíltan, világosan, őszintén és mind a két részről barátságosan megoldani.” [The reform of the *Numerus Clausus* – said Teleki – is threatening the very existence of the law itself, what “would be harmful until we only move in only this one field and until we do not aim to solve this problem in all fields in an open, clear and honest way – and cordially from both sides.”] (201).

This account does not consider the year 1928 to have been a decisive turning point. It maintains that antisemitism was continuously present all throughout all the 24 years of the regime. For the sake of this talk I will refer to this account as the ‘continuity’ thesis.

So what I would like to do in the rest of this talk is to concentrate on one aspect of the history of the Hungarian *Numerus Clausus*, namely the 1928 reform, which may help us to better understand the current debate and its implications.

I will proceed in three steps. First, I will briefly talk about the *Numerus Clausus* law of 1920. Second, I will describe the 1928 amendment. And third, I will give an account of the ways and means with which the Jewish quota was held up after 1928, despite the formal amendment of the law. Finally, I will end my talk with revisiting the two competitive accounts of the *Numerus Clausus*, namely the ‘suspension thesis’ as against the ‘continuity thesis’.

So first, a few words about the Jewish quota of 1920. It is important to remember that the university *Numerus Clausus* was not the only antisemitic policy introduced in the early 1920s. To name just a few fields: Jews were discriminated against in the revision of small trade licenses – that is, cinema, tobacco shops, alcohol shops⁸ –, in the selective designation of Jewish-owned land to be distributed in the land reform,⁹ in the dismissal of Jewish teachers from schools.¹⁰ Jews were not employed in public administration. Moreover, large numbers of long-time Jewish permanent residents were refused formal Hungarian citizenship.

But while these policies were tacit, and had no codified legal basis, the *Numerus Clausus* was an openly acknowledged policy that explicitly codified the discrimination of Jews at the universities. As a result of this legislation, thousands of Jewish applicants were refused admission to higher education. Overall, the proportion of Jews at Hungarian universities dropped from over 25 per cent in 1918 to 8.3 per cent by 1928.¹¹

The proportion of Jewish students in higher education
1910-1943

1910/1911	24.9%	1928/1929	8.8%
1911/1912	23.8%	1929/1930	9.5%
1912/1913	24.4%	1930/1931	10.5%
1913/1914	25.2%	1931/1932	12.3%
1914-1917	n.a.	1932/1933	12.5%
1918/1919	36.4%	1933/1934	11.6%
1919/1920	5.6%	1934/1935	9.7%
1920/1921	12.1%	1935/1936	8.3%
1921/1922	13.4%	1936/1937	7.4%
1922/1923	11.5%	1937/1938	6.2%
1923/1924	10.7%	1938/1939	3.9%
1924/1925	9.8%	1939/1940	3.2%
1925/1926	9.0%	1940/1941	3.1%
1926/1927	8.5%	1941/1942	2.9%
1927/1928	8.3%	1942/1943	2.7%

⁸ Ungváry, *ibid.*, 101.

⁹ Ungváry, *ibid.*, 103. By naming property that was acquired following 1864, the legislators targeted Jewish owners, as Jews could not acquire land before 1860.

¹⁰ Among the 1,090 teachers and inspectors of schools who were dismissed in 1924 under measures for the financial consolidation of the budget, the majority were Jews. more: <http://www.jta.org/1924/01/01/archive/hungarian-government-dismisses-officials-mostly-jews#ixzz2lwxrclFl>.

¹¹ In absolute terms the yearly number of students dropped from an average of 4-5,000 to around 1,500.

Let me then move on to my second item, namely the 1928 amendment. It is this amendment that advocates of ‘suspension thesis’ use to substantiate their argument according to which the 1928 reform constituted a decisive turn, by reversing earlier trends of discrimination. But in fact, this is no more than a legend. So what was this amendment, and why was a false legend built around it?

The pressure to amend the law came from the League of Nations from 1922 onwards. The League did not request Hungary to get rid of the entire *Numerus Clausus* legislation. The League had no problem with the system of closed numbers which authorised the government to limit the number of admitted students in any given year. What the League did request was that Hungary eliminates from the legislation all references relating to nationalities and races. In other words, they insisted that Hungary eliminates the Jewish quota from the law.

But for six years after 1922, the Bethlen government refused to modify the law. Prime Minister Bethlen himself considered the Jewish quota as a legitimate and useful instrument to restrict the role of Jews in Hungary. As he said in 1924, the *Numerus Clausus* was in the “interest of the Hungarian state”¹², and it was to be held up for as long as “the sons of the Christian middle classes [...] who represent a race that is adequate to the historical traditions of our country [...] will again become the leaders of the nation.”¹³

Bethlen was therefore steadfast in his opposition to any change in the law as demanded by the League of Nations and rejected five opposition motions to eliminate the Jewish quota. What finally changed his mind was strong pressure from the League of Nations. This happened in 1926 when the League warned Hungary that the Jewish quota may end up being examined by the Permanent Court of International Justice.

At this time discussions started between Bethlen and Kuno Klebelsberg, his Minister of Culture. In a letter, Klebelsberg advised Bethlen on how to avoid the court case: “As a lawyer, I can see quite clearly that the way our law is currently phrased, we can not confront the *Cour Permanent* in the Hague with any hope of success ... We will therefore have to revise the law, not in order to unleash thousands of Jewish university students on the nation once more, but rather in order to rescue the meaning of the entire enterprise by taking certain rational actions. [...] In this regard, I have my ideas ([such as] stressing, alongside intellectual ability, the ranking of good manners and physical education). I would consider the complete opening of the flood-gates a catastrophe, and therefore I think it is necessary to construct, with the co-operation of discreet Christian politicians, a text that will give no pretext for interference from Geneva or the Hague.”¹⁴

As we can see, all of Klebelsberg’s suggestions were meant to advise Bethlen on how to tacitly continue with the exclusion of Jews, while formally eliminating the Jewish quota. Klebelsberg’s advice was to pacify the League of Nations, but to do so in such a way that most Jewish students should still be kept out of the universities.

Which is exactly what happened in the 1928 amendment. This amendment was deceptive, it was a shame. Indeed, the original Jewish quota was eliminated from the

12 Lajos Szabolcsi, *Két emberöltő. Az Egyenlőség évtizedei (1881–1931)* [Two Generations. The Decades of Equality], Budapest, MTA Judaisztikai Központ [Centre for Jewish Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences], 1993, 353, The quote was made in 1924.

13 Bethlen quoted by Ignác Romsics, Bethlen István. *Politikai életrajz* [István Bethlen. A Political Biography], Osiris, Budapest, 1991, 201.

14 Miklós Szinai/László Szűcs (eds.), *Bethlen István titkos iratai* [The Confidential Papers of István Bethlen]. Budapest 1972, 256-7.

law. But it was replaced by a new quota, the so-called occupational quota. This restricted admissions on the basis of the occupation of the applicant's father. The internal proportions of the occupational quota were deliberately developed in such a way as to prevent any significant increase in the proportion of Jews within the new system. They imposed greater restrictions on those occupations in which Jews were found in larger numbers. This way, the new quota was simply a rephrased Jewish quota coded in new disguise. This did not escape the attention of the League of Nations, either. Lucien Wolf who evaluated the amended legislation for the League, wrote: "We cannot say that we are totally satisfied with this draft, but it does remove all reference to differentiation by nationality or religion from the law [...] and this is what we asked for. The new categories included in the law (namely the occupational quota) seem to be superfluous [...] and the possibility exists that they could be used for anti-Semitic purposes. At the moment, however, we are not trying to criticise this." The point of departure had to be that the Hungarian government had acted „in good faith.”¹⁵ Thus, the League took the issue off the agenda.

The results were as can be expected. In 1929, just as in previous years, over 75 to 80 per cent of all Jewish applicants were rejected, as opposed to the 15 per cent rate of rejection among non-Jewish applicants. There was, for three-four years, a slight – cosmetic – increase in the proportion of admitted Jews. In fact, had the restrictions been really removed, the proportion of Jews would have reached at least 20-25 per cent.

But even the slight, cosmetic improvement came to an end in 1932 with the coming to office of Gyula Gömbös. The proportion of Jews among first-year admissions soon dipped lower than had been their proportion in the 1920s. By 1935 admission numbers for Jews were lower than in the worst years of the 1920s, and by 1938 their proportion was as low as 3.9 per cent, lower than any numbers experienced in the 1920s.

To sum up: it should be sufficiently clear that the 1928 amendment did not bring any genuine turn. There was indeed a change, but this change was purely formal, and did not eliminate the Jewish quota from actual practice.

So, in conclusion, it is fair to say that the Jewish quota at the universities was in force throughout the entire span of the Horthy regime, despite the minor relaxation of its application for three years between 1928 and 1931. The legend that antisemitic discrimination at the universities would have been suspended following 1928, is no more than a legend. A legend that can only serve the purpose of turning interwar Hungarian history into a history that is – to quote Charles Maier's famous phrase – ‘a usable history’, a history we would wish had happened, instead of a history that had actually happened. A history that is based on false foundations and presents the Horthy regime better, more humane, than what it actually had been.

¹⁵ Andor Ladányi, A Numerus Clausus 1928. évi módosításáról [On the amendment of the Numerus Clausus in 1928], in: Századok, 1994, 1131.

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Yahya Elsaghe

Thomas Mann ohne Juden

Vergangenheitspolitik im westdeutschen Nachkriegskino

Abstract

Thomas Mann is the single best representative of German culture to authenticate the Federal Republic of Germany's foundation narrative. As an exile, he was beyond any suspicion that he might have in any way supported the Nazi regime. As an American residing in Switzerland, he was more easily included in the Western camp than, for example, his brother Heinrich. As a Nobel price winner and internationally respected author, he embodied the German cultural nation. As a member of the grandfathers' generation, he represented a better Germany with traditions that reached far beyond January 1933 – traditions which the Federal Republic wanted to latch onto. The desire to divorce this older tradition from the Nazi past via the person of Thomas Mann is demonstrated more than anything by the author's academic reception. His treatment in popular culture – the transposition of his works into the mass medium film – was obviously even more effective, however. This lecture addressed how the Jewish figures in his novels and novellas were successively made to disappear or vanished in the works' post-war film treatments.

Nie zuvor und auch nie wieder gelangten in der Bundesrepublik so viele Thomas Mann-Verfilmungen ins Kino wie während der Ära Adenauer. Allein in den Fünfzigerjahren waren es drei Romane: *Königliche Hoheit*, 1953; *Felix Krull*, 1957; *Buddenbrooks*, 1959. Im Jahr nach Adenauers Rücktritt kamen dann noch *Tonio Kröger* und *Wälzungenblut* hinzu, offenbar mit geringerem Erfolg. Danach verschwand Thomas Mann von der Leinwand, bis seine Verfilmungskarriere in den Siebzigerjahren vom Ausland beziehungsweise von der anderen Hälfte Deutschlands her wieder einsetzte, mit *Tod in Venedig* und *Lotte in Weimar*.

Aufschluss über die bundesrepublikanischen Anverwandlungen und über ihre mentalitätsgeschichtlichen Weiterungen gibt schon nur die Wahl der verfilmt Texte wie auch die Reihenfolge ihrer Verfilmungen. Abgesehen allenfalls von der etwas verwickelteren Genese des *Felix Krull*, gehörten sie alle ins Frühwerk. Die Handlung fiel deshalb jeweils notgedrungen in Zeiten, die so weit wie nur möglich von den nachkriegsdeutschen Verhältnissen entfernt waren; wobei die Entfernung von der Vorgeschichte der bald einmal so genannten ‚deutschen Katastrophe‘ bei den *Buddenbrooks* sogar noch gezielt vergrößert wurde. Denn die Geburt des letzten Buddenbrook wurde im Film um mehr als ein volles Jahrzehnt vorverlegt, vom 15. April 1861 auf den 18. September 1850. Und weil Hanno Buddenbrook auch hier früh sterben musste, ja gewissermaßen noch früher als im Roman – nach der Suggestion der mit einem noch kindlichen, gerade einmal zehnjährigen Jungen besetzten Rolle noch vor der Adoleszenz –, rückte die nicht oder nicht viel weiter laufende Handlung kaum an die Zeit des Deutschen oder selbst des Dänischen Kriegs heran; und schon gar nicht gelangte sie auch nur in die Nähe des Deutsch-Französischen Kriegs und der ihm folgenden Reichsgründung.

Wie kaum anders zu erwarten, betraf diese Flucht vor der Zeitgeschichte auch und vor allem anderen das finsterste Kapitel der deutschen Vergangenheit. Erinnerungen

an das Judentum, geschweige denn an den Antisemitismus blieben dem Kinopublikum konsequent erspart, so nahe solche Erinnerungen von den Texten her eigentlich gelegen hätten. In allen seinerzeit verfilmten Texten nämlich kommen jüdische Figuren vor: in *Königliche Hoheit*, abgesehen von einem flüchtig erwähnten Bankdirektor Wolfsmilch und der im Lauf der Konzeptionsgeschichte verunklarten Genealogie der weiblichen Hauptfigur, ein Doktor Sammet; in den *Bekenntnissen des Hochstaplers Felix Krull* zum Beispiel ein ‚Halsabschneider‘ von Bankier, der Krulls Deklassierung und halbe Verwaisung mit zu verantworten hat; in den *Buddenbrooks* unter anderen die Konkurrenten der titelgebenden Familie, die Hagenströms; in *Tonio Kröger* wiederum der Rivale des titelgebenden Protagonisten, Erwin Jimmerthal. Und in *Wälzungenblut*, was sich auch in der Forschungsliteratur nicht ebenso leicht übersehen oder unterschlagen ließ wie der ethnische Makel eines Jimmerthal oder Hagenström, ist das ganze Milieu jüdisch.

Aus den Verfilmungen waren alle diese Juden spurlos verschwunden. Oder vielmehr waren sie schrittweise zum Verschwinden gebracht worden. Denn an den erhaltenen Materialien lässt sich die Sukzessivität ihrer Beseitigung *in actu* beobachten.

Als Probe aufs Exempel hierfür kann bereits die allererste Verfilmung dienen: Für den Film *Königliche Hoheit* war die Figur eines Doktor Sammet zunächst unter diesem Namen noch verschiedentlich vorgesehen. So in einem ersten Treatment, obgleich auch dessen Verfasser sich vornahm, wie er an Thomas Mann schrieb: das „nationale Unterbewusstsein“ des Publikums zu schonen. Dennoch sah er etwa eigens vor, einen Dialog zu übernehmen, in dem Thomas Mann einen Großherzog erst nach Sammets beruflichen Plänen, dann aber auch nach seinem Judentum und nach den damit verbundenen Diskriminierungserfahrungen fragen und den Gefragten auf dieses Letzte wenig beschönigend antworten lässt. Die im Romandialog zweite Frage freilich, die dort als eine solche nur interpungiert ist und ansonsten die Form einer Aussage annimmt – „Sie sind Jude?“ –, diese Frage wurde nunmehr ganz naiv gestellt: „Sind Sie Jude?“; so als ob es die im Roman völlig selbstverständliche Option gar nie gegeben hätte, m sich quasi durch Blickdiagnose der ohnehin immer schon feststehenden Antwort auf solch eine Frage selber zu vergewissern: „Sie sind Jude?“ fragte der Großherzog, indem er den Kopf zurückwarf und die Augen zusammenkniff ...“

Vor allem aber wurde die Reihenfolge der drei großherzoglichen Fragen im Treatment umgestellt. Die Frage nach der beruflichen Zukunft Sammets trat zwischen die nach seinem Judentum und die nach der ‚Geltung des paritätischen Prinzips‘. Indem das Gespräch über Judentum und Diskriminierung damit durch ein vollkommen neues Thema unterbrochen wurde, war auch die Folgerichtigkeit verschleiert, mit der im Romandialog die eine, ernstgemeinte Frage nach Parität und Diskriminierung an die andere, rhetorische, nach Sammets jüdischer Identität anschließt. Auf solche Weise aus ihrem ursprünglichen Zusammenhang herausgelöst, wäre die Frage nach der Geltung des Toleranzprinzips samt der ‚offen[en]‘ Antwort, die der Großherzog darauf auch im Treatment noch erhalten sollte, nun nicht mehr ganz so zwingend und unmissverständlich auf spezifisch antisemitische Intoleranz zu beziehen gewesen wie im Romandialog.

Auch in solch geschönter Form und Sequenzierung aber scheint das im Treatment vorgesehene Gespräch des Großherzogs mit dem Juden Sammet noch immer zu wenig Rücksicht auf das ‚nationale Unterbewusstsein‘ genommen zu haben. Im Drehbuch jedenfalls, das und obwohl es diesem Treatment ansonsten weitgehend entlanggeschrieben wurde, sucht man nach so einem Gespräch ganz vergebens.

Mehr noch: Sammet kommt als solcher, das heißt unter seinem typisch jüdischen Textilnamen, gar nicht mehr vor. Er figuriert nur mehr als ‚Arzt‘ oder, in den Dialogen, als ‚Herr Doktor‘. Und während sich eine Besetzungsliste erhalten hat, in der einer jeden Rolle die Namen der Schauspieler zugeordnet sind – so auch ‚Dr. Sammet Oskar Dimroth‘ –, wurden in den *credits* des Films dann nur noch die bloßen Schauspielernamen aufgeführt, wie eben ‚Oskar Dimroth‘.

Dabei im Übrigen, sollte man vielleicht hinzufügen, dürfte Dimroth der älteren Hälfte des deutschen Publikums aus der nationalsozialistischen Unterhaltungsfilmindustrie der Kriegszeit vertraut gewesen sein. Die Besetzung führte folglich keinerlei jüdische Konnotationen mit sich. Entsprechend schlecht passte sie auf den Steckbrief der Romanfigur. Weder fiel Dimroths Nase auffallend „flach auf den Schnurrbart“ beziehungsweise Bart ab; noch trug oder spielte er sonst welche der Besonderheiten, die den jüdischen Mediziner im Roman kennzeichnen und leicht lächerlich erscheinen lassen.

Aus dem bedenklichen Schicksal, das der Figur Sammet bei ihrer kinematischen Verwertung widerfuhr, kann man jetzt die drei Operationen abstrahieren, mittels derer die Nachkriegsverfilmungen das Publikum mit unliebsamen Vergegenwärtigungen der jüdisch-deutschen Geschichte verschonten: durch Streichung oder Verwischung der betreffenden Rollen, gegebenenfalls durch deren jeweilige Besetzung und endlich durch ihre Umbenennungen.

Erstens also: Entweder, und besonders makaber, wurden jüdische Rollen kurzerhand getilgt; oder aber sie waren nicht mehr als solche identifizierbar. Ersatzlos gestrichen wurde zum Beispiel die Rolle des jüdischen Halsabschneiders im *Felix Krull* (die übrigens, wenn es nach Erika Mann gegangen wäre, schon in der Nachkriegsausgabe des Romanfragments gefehlt hätte). Ganz entfiel ebenso in den Buddenbrooks die Rolle der Laura Hagenström-Semlinger. Dem gemäß erhielt Tony Buddenbrook auf dem Weg von Lübeck nach Travemünde auch keine Gelegenheit mehr, gegen deren semitische Herkunft zu sticheln und sie auf ihren hierauf transparenten Mädchennamen festzulegen; noch auch brauchte Thomas Buddenbrook seine Schwester dafür zu tadeln, dass sie ihr bei der Gelegenheit einen vorsätzlich falschen Vornamen anhängt, denselben, der den deutschen Jüdinnen später einmal tatsächlich aufgezwungen werden sollte – unter maßgeblicher Mitwirkung von Adenauers nachmaligem Kanzleramtschef:

Tony: „Ha! – Natürlich! Wie wäre Sarah Semlinger wohl entbehrlich ...“

Thomas: „Sie heißt übrigens Laura, mein Kind, man muss gerecht sein.“

Wo die Rollen deutscher Juden doch beibehalten wurden, waren diese eben als solche, als Juden, nicht mehr kennlich. So ließ der Erzähler des *Tonio Kröger*-Films in seiner sonst extensiven *Voice-Over*-Narration ehedem entscheidende Informationen weg, etwa dass Erwin Jimmerthal Sohn eines Bankdirektors zu sein hat; ganz abgesehen davon, dass der kaum Halbwüchsige nun nicht mehr als Wichtiger aufzutreten hatte („Ich muss zur Stadt“, „Nun muss ich aber wirklich zur Stadt“) und auch nicht mehr als Schmarotzer. Denn aus freien Stücken wurden ihm die Süßigkeiten nunmehr angeboten, nach denen er in der Novelle so aufdringlich fragt. („Das sind wohl Fruchtbonbons, die ihr da habt?“)

Zur Aufnordung der früher eindeutig jüdischen Rollen diente zweitens, wie bei Dimroth ja schon einmal gesehen, der Cast. Frank Michael Pingel, mit dem der Part des Erwin Jimmerthal besetzt war, hatte weder „krumme Beine“ noch „Schlitzäugen“. Und Wolfgang Wahl, der den prominentesten Rivalen der Buddenbrooks spielte, Hermann Hagenström, hatte keine auch noch so „wenig platt auf der Oberlippe“ liegende Nase. Auch hieß seine Rolle nicht mehr wie im Roman. Denn drittens wie ge-

sagt wurden selbst noch die *Telling Names* der ehemaligen Juden zum Schweigen gebracht.

Die Feinde der Buddenbrooks trugen nicht mehr das Kakonym Hagenström, das ehedem auf den Schurken im Ring des Nibelungen verwiesen hatte. Sondern die Familie mit dem einst so raffiniert sprechenden Namen hieß nun nur noch Wagenström. Dabei war die Manipulation des vordem stigmatischen Namens ebenfalls das Resultat eines Prozesses, der sich an den Zeugnissen der Produktionsvorgänge ablesen lässt. Oder in gewissem Sinn lässt er sich ihnen gerade nicht mehr entnehmen. Denn in den hier ganz besonders zahlreichen Entstehungszeugen, Exposés, Korrespondenzen, Protokollen, Drehbüchern – auch in einer von Erika Mann auf deren Protest hin mit umgeschriebenen Drehbuchfassung –, lautet der Name partout noch Hagenström. Seine Abänderung erfolgte also in allerletzter Minute, möglicherweise auch aus Gründen des Persönlichkeitsschutzes und aus Rücksicht auf Nachfahren der Lübecker Familie, der Thomas Mann den Namen einst abgeschaut hatte.

Aber was auch immer es mit solcher Schonung – wohlgernekt nichtjüdischer – Zeitgenossen auf sich hatte: Ganz so noble Motive sind jedenfalls nicht allen Abänderungen zu supponieren, welche an den Namen jüdischer oder ehemals jüdischer Figuren fürs Kino vorgenommen wurden. Besonders drastische Beispiele dafür lieferte die Verfilmung von *Wälzungenblut*, erwartungs- und naturgemäß. Denn das Bedürfnis, alles Jüdische zu eskamotieren, musste sich natürlich nirgendwo so unverblümmt oder so unverschämt verraten wie bei dieser einen Novelle, da deutsche Juden darin ja, das konnte auch ihren treuherzigsten Lesern nicht entgehen, das Hauptpersonal stellen und weil sich Thomas Manns früher, wenn auch vergleichsweise moderater Antisemitismus hier nun einmal nicht weginterpretieren lässt.

Im Handlungszentrum stehen hier schwerreiche Juden mit dem gleich mehrfach signifikanten Namen ‚Aarenhold‘: signifikant nicht nur als Anspielung auf einen besonders erfolgreichen jüdischen Magnaten, Eduard Arnhold, sondern in eins damit auch als Andenken an eine alttestamentliche Urfigur, Aaron; als ein Versuch zugleich, dieses Andenken durch Abschwächung der Nebensilbe zu löschen, ‚Aaren‘; durch die Namenskomposition davon abzulenken, ‚Aarenhold‘; durch die Ironie dieses zweiten Kompositionsglieds, ‚hold‘, obendrein noch die Malice der Namensträger zu camouflieren. Denn hold sind diese Juden gerade nicht und niemandem. Am allerwenigsten sind sie es den Deutschen, wie sie in der Person eines gutmütigen Adligen namens ‚von Beckerath‘ ans *receiving end* ihrer Bösartigkeit geraten.

Dieses *Emplotment* erfuhr aufgrund eines von Erika Mann mitverfassten Drehbuchs eine nun wirklich bemerkenswerte Metamorphose. Für deren Gewagtheit mag vielleicht schon bezeichnend sein, dass die Autorschaft des Drehbuchs vertuscht werden sollte. Denn nicht nur dass Erika Manns Koautor dafür lediglich unter einem Pseudonym Verantwortung oder eben gerade keine Verantwortung mehr übernahm: Sie selber bestand telefonisch und schriftlich darauf, dass ihr Name hier in den Paratexten ganz verschwiegen blieb; im Unterschied notabene zu allen anderen Fällen, in denen der Vorspann ihre Mitarbeit jeweils eigens ausweisen musste, meistens sogar an erster Stelle. Die Hintergründe dieser Verschweigung, auch die nicht unbeträchtlichen Opfer, die sie dafür zu bringen bereit war, ließen sich aus den erhaltenen Korrespondenzen zwar zu einem guten Teil ermitteln. Doch wurde mir leider, leider keine Erlaubnis erteilt, sie Ihnen hier offenzulegen. Schade!

Nach dem also gewissermaßen autorlosen Drehbuch wurde Thomas Manns Beitrag zur seinerzeit bereits so genannten Judenfrage in einen ganz anders gearteten Antagonismus transformiert, ohne dass auch nur ein einziger Rezensent daran Anstoß genommen hätte, auch die allerneueste Monographie zum Thema nicht. Die

Attacke der Juden gegen den adligen Deutschen oder ‚Germanen‘ wie ihr spöttischer Titel in den Novellendialogen für ihn lautet, um so das ethnische Motiv ihrer Aggression desto stärker hervorzutreiben, auch ihre Verachtung für all die ‚blonden Bürger des Landes‘ – dieses Arrangement wurde in der Verfilmung zu einem Anschlag einer adligen Familie auf einen Besitzbürger, von dem denn in einem ansonsten wortwörtlich übernommenen Dialog nicht mehr als einem Germanen, sondern nur noch süffisant als einem ‚Herrn‘ die Rede war.

Der deutsche Adel wechselte somit auf die Täterposition. An die Stelle der Anmaßungen seitens der jüdischen *Nouveaux Riches* – noch Vater Aarenhold „war ein Wurm gewesen, eine Laus, jawohl“ – rückten Adelsdünkel und die Demütigung eines nun seinerseits Neureichen von allerdings nach wie vor untadelig deutscher Herkunft. Dessen Großvater, hatte er nun zu gestehen, sei eine Laus gewesen und ein Wurm. Sein Vater hatte nun einen immensen Reichtum genau so angehäuft wie in der Novelle Aarenhold senior.

Diese Umcodierung des rassistischen Schemas in einen Standeskonflikt, die Verbürgerlichung des Opfers wie die Nobilitierung der Täter, hatte zwangsläufig unmittelbare Auswirkungen auf die Namensgebung. Das Opfer hieß in Drehbuch und Film mit neuem und sprechendem Vornamen ‚Justus‘, mit Nachnamen aber ausdrücklich nicht mehr ‚von Beckerath‘ – es wurde eigens nach seinem Adelstitel gefragt und musste eigens verneinen, einen zu führen –; sondern sein Name schrieb sich nur noch schlicht und einfach ‚Beckerath‘. Die Täter dagegen hießen nun ‚Arnstatt‘ *anstatt* ‚Aarenhold‘, ihr Familienoberhaupt mit wiederum hinzuerfundenem und gänzlich unverdächtigem Vornamen „Eugen“, was die Abstammung des ‚Gutgeborenen‘ also schon *ex nomine* zu bereinigen geeignet war. Auch trugen ihre Bekannten, im Novellentext ehemals ‚Erlanger‘ genannt, keinen solchen typisch jüdischen Herkunftsnamen mehr. Sondern im Film hießen sie jetzt standesgemäß ‚Donnersmarck‘ (nachdem sie im Drehbuch auch schon gutdeutsch ‚Truchseß‘ geheißen hatten).

Dem Vorsatz, das Milieu von *Wälzungenblut* zu arisieren, gehorchte auch die Besetzung des nun judenfreien Personals. Sämtliche Rollen im Hause Arnstatt wurden mit Schauspielern und Schauspielerinnen besetzt, die weder physiognomisch noch von ihrer Geschichte her irgendwie jüdisch chargierbar waren. Darüber hinaus war das Casting der männlichen Hauptrolle nicht etwa an den Vorgaben des selten detaillierten Portraits orientiert, das der Novellentext für Siegmund Aarenhold liefert. Vielmehr scheint die Besetzung schon durch eine andere, etwas ältere, eine besonders erfolgreiche Thomas Mann-Verfilmung geleitet gewesen zu sein. Michael Maien in der Rolle des Siegmund Graf Arnstatt sollte offenbar, vermöge seiner in der Tat frappanten Ähnlichkeit mit diesem damals berühmten Schauspieler, an den Hauptdarsteller der *Felix Krull*-Verfilmung erinnern. Und nach Ausweis der Rezensionen erinnerte er das Publikum denn auch prompt an Horst Buchholz, der seinerseits keinerlei Berührungspunkte mit dem Judentum der Aarenholds hatte, weder vom Konnotat gleichsam seiner bisherigen Filmrollen her noch auch nur biographisch, ebensowenig wie Maien selber.

So gelang der Thomas Mann-Industrie mit *Wälzungenblut* eine Quadratur des Kreises, die die Thomas Mann-Forschung zu bewerkstelligen immer nur versuchte. Der Film *Wälzungenblut* schaffte es tatsächlich, die berüchtigte Novelle und ihren Autor von jedwedem Verdacht auf Antisemitismus zu entlasten. Und zwar muss eine solche Sanierung zu den vertraglichen Bedingungen gehört haben, unter denen die Verfilmungsrechte überhaupt erst abgetreten wurden. (Das musste ich notgedrungen aus zweiter Hand, aber aus zuverlässiger Quelle erschließen; weil mir nämlich, leider, eine Autopsie des Vertrags verwehrt wurde. Schade, schade!)

Dass Thomas Mann damit von der Vor- oder Vorvorgeschichte der deutschen und der jüdischen Katastrophe dissoziiert wurde, bediente selbstverständlich ein bestimmtes Narrativ der noch jungen Bundesrepublik oder ratifizierte, wenn man so will, eine Lebenslüge derselben. Es war der populärkulturelle Teil und Ausdruck einer ‚Vergangenheitspolitik‘, deren bürokratisch-institutionellen Aspekten Norbert Frei unter diesem Titel und Stichwort an den *Anfänge[n] der Bundesrepublik* nachgegangen ist. So gesehen war es durchaus kein Zufall, dass die ersten drei Romanverfilmungen unter der Direktion von Regisseuren entstanden, die ihre Spuren noch unter dem Nationalsozialismus verdient hatten.

Nur wäre es falsch, fahrlässig und auch selbstgerecht, in ihrem fragwürdigen Umgang mit den jüdischen Figuren und den antisemitischen Elementen der verfilmten Texte bloß ein historisches und als solches überwundenes Phänomen sehen zu wollen, das allein mit den Sachzwängen der Adenauer-Zeit zu tun gehabt hätte. Im Genteil. Die bundesdeutschen Thomas Mann-Verfilmungen der folgenden Jahrzehnte, und das müsste einem erst recht zu denken geben, liegen gerade in dieser einen Hinsicht allesamt wieder exakt auf der Trajektorie der ersten Nachkriegsadaptationen. Dafür nur ein Beispiel aus der allerjüngsten Verfilmung:

Heinrich Breloer, der nicht umsonst zu Protokoll gab, dass die Buddenbrooks der Fünfzigerjahre zu seinen formativen Kinoerlebnissen zählten, hat bei seiner eigenen Verfilmung des Romans im Merkmalssatz der Hagenströms jüdische Markierungen seinerseits so gut wie vollständig beseitigt. Symptomatisch dafür wäre zum Beispiel seine Abwandlung jenes Dialogs, in dem Tony Buddenbrook über Laura Hagenström-Semlinger herzog, um von ihrem Bruder wie ein unartiges Kind zurechtgewiesen zu werden. Von diesem Dialog bleibt in Breloers Verfilmung nur etwas von seiner zweiten Hälfte, also der Zurechtweisung stehen. So isoliert und verkürzt, ist die Zurechtweisung als solche nicht mehr erkennbar. Und noch dazu wird die beibehaltene Dialogzeile aus ihrem ursprünglichen Kontext herausgebrochen und in einen ganz anderen Interaktionszusammenhang gestellt. Das Gespräch, worin die zitierte Zeile jetzt auftaucht, ist aus der Intimität der Buddenbrookschen Kutsche in einen halböffentlichen Raum verlegt und um eine Generation hinaufverschoben. „Sie sind tüchtig, die Hagenströms“, anerkennt Bethsy Buddenbrook im Ballhaus ihrem Mann gegenüber – schon in der Eröffnungssequenz und übrigens unter etlichen Reminiszenzen an jene Nachkriegsverfilmung –, um dem hinzuzufügen: „Man muss gerecht bleiben.“

Das ungenaue Zitat des Verbs, ‚gerecht bleiben‘ statt ‚sein‘, kann einen dabei ziemlich zynisch anmuten, angesichts der hier vorgenommenen Ummodellung der angeblich mit schöner Konstanz geübten Gerechtigkeit. Gerechtigkeit nämlich lassen die Buddenbrooks Seniores den Hagenströms in einem Moment widerfahren, da eine Generation weiter unten sich zwischen den beiden verfeindeten Familien eine Beziehung anbahnt, für die man so im Roman keine, aber auch wirklich gar keine Anhaltpunkte fände. Die Worte: „Man muss gerecht bleiben“ werden am Rand einer Tanzfläche gesprochen, auf der Tony Buddenbrook und Hermann Hagenström, gutaussehend beide, miteinander zu schäkern beginnen.

Nicht dass im Roman den Begegnungen zwischen den beiden sexuelle Energien gänzlich abgegangen wären. Sie waren dort sehr wohl im Spiel. Nur gehorchte das Spiel dort anderen Regeln. Und diese sind aus dem Arsenal antisemitischer Zwangsvorstellungen nur zu bekannt. Die Rivalität zwischen den neu zugezogenen Bourgeois und den alteingesessenen Patriziern, die Aspiration der einen auf das soziale, ökonomische und symbolische Kapital der anderen fand im Roman ihre persönlich-libidinöse Fortsetzung in einem ganz und gar unerwiderten Interesse, das Hermann

Hagenström von Kindheit an auf oder vielmehr gegen Tony Buddenbrooks Körper richtete.

Von jung auf nahm seine Begehrlichkeit die Gestalt versuchter Prostitutionsgeschäfte an und virtueller Vergewaltigungen. Das alles rief er Tony, geschiedener Permaneder, geschiedener Grünlich, dann folgerichtig und sinnigerweise in Erinnerung, als er sich seinen Kauf- und Penetrationswunsch symbolisch doch noch erfüllte. Er erwarb den Stammsitz gleichsam ihrer Familie und kam ihr dabei mit seinem verhassten „Gänseleberpastetengesicht“ „unanständig und unerträglich nahe“, „sodaß nun das schwere Pusten seiner Nase dicht unter der ihren ertönte.“

Solche notorischen Übergriffigkeiten des begehrlichen Juden hat Breloer in ein ganz anderes Narrativ transkribiert. Hermann Hagenströms im Roman völlig einseitiges Begehren, man höre und staune, wird in der Verfilmung erwidert. Er und Tony Buddenbrook sind oder wären nun das Traumpaar schlechthin. Das zu suggerieren scheut der Film keinen Aufwand: von den Einstellungen bereits seiner pretitle sequence über die Ballhaussequenz bis zu seiner letzten Rückblende, in der die dafür einschlägigste Tanzszene aus dieser Eröffnungssequenz als nostalgisch-wehmütiges *Flashback* wiedereingespielt wird; und zwar aus Anlass just jenes finalen Immobilien Geschäfts, bei dem sich der Käufer jetzt jedoch durchaus respektvoll benimmt und Tony keineswegs mehr zu nahe tritt.

Als der passende, aber dennoch versagte Mann für die stattdessen in ihren zwei, drei Ehen unglücklich gewordene Tony verdoppelt Hermann Hagenström eine eigentlich schon einmal vergebene Funktion. Er rückt in eine Stelle auf, die vom Roman her immer schon ein Morten Schwarzkopf besetzt hält; nur dass das bei Schwarzkopf noch gegebene Problem einer Mesalliance sich jedenfalls in seiner ökonomischen Form bei ihm, Hagenström, nicht mehr stellte. Das entbehrt nicht einer sehr besonderen Pikanterie, um es vorsichtig zu sagen.

Denn Schwarzkopf, den ausgerechnet ein Hagenström so gewissermaßen übertrofft oder mit dem er nunmehr zumindest in eine paradigmatische Äquivalenzbeziehung zu stehen kommt, nahm unter dem Romanpersonal, wenn man es ethnisch auffächert, eine Extremposition ein. Seine im Roman definierten Personalien – norwegische Vorfahren, „außerordentlich heller Teint“, „so blond wie möglich“ – widerlegten die Bedeutung seines Geschlechtsnamens, „Schwarzkopf“. Sie wiesen den so Heißenden als Hypergermanen aus. Als solcher stand Schwarzkopf dort, im Roman, dem Semiten Hagenström diametral gegenüber.

Im Film aber wird aus dieser Opposition so etwas wie eine nordgermanische Ebenbürtigkeit. Der ominöse Name „Hagenström“, mit dessen erster, so ungut sprechender Hälfte die Erzfeinde der Buddenbrooks im Roman noch förmlich geschlagen waren, erhält dadurch sozusagen eine andere Betonung. Es kommt nun quasi der Nennwert seiner zweiten Komponente zum Zug, die vorher für ihr Teil nur ironisch oder dann assimilationstaktisch deutbar gewesen wäre: das nordschwedische und also seinerseits ultragermanische Namensuffix der Hagenströms.

Hiermit sind die antisemitischen Animositäten, die der Roman wie Thomas Manns Frühwerk überhaupt *suaviter in modo* zu schüren half, überschrieben durch die sentimentale Trauer um eine große Liebe, die nicht gelebt werden durfte. Einen gewissen Tiefsinn, zugegeben, kann man solch einer alternate history auch nicht ganz absprechen – wenn man sie etwa mit dem zusammenhält, was Goethe in Lotte in Weimar über „die allerwunderlichste Verwandtschaft“ von Juden und Deutschen zu sagen hat; eine in der DEFA-Verfilmung übrigens *tutta quanta* unterdrückte Stelle, wo auch das legendär gewordene Wort von dem „verzückten Schurken“ fehlt, dem die Deutschen „gläubig“ hinterherzulaufen sich bereit finden.

Unbeschadet solcher tieferen Sinndimensionen und ihrer Berührung mit dem Spätwerk des Autors ist die reale Vorgeschichte der jüdischen und der deutschen Katastrophe durch die verscherzte Liebe zwischen einer Buddenbrook und einem Hagenström wie in den Thomas Mann-Verfilmungen insgesamt bis auf die letzten Erinnerungsreste verleugnet oder verdrängt.

Verdrängungen jedoch, das braucht man am allerwenigsten hier vor Ort eigens zu betonen, kaum einen Büchsenschuss von der Berggasse 19 entfernt, – Verdrängungen haben den unerwünschten, aber erwartbaren Effekt, dass das Verdrängte wiederkehren muss, in mutierter Form und an versetzter Stelle. Zum Schluss ein, zwei Beispiele auch dafür noch; und zwar aus einer fünfteiligen Verfilmung der *Bekenntnisse des Hochstaplers Felix Krull*, die Bernhard Sinkel ins ZDF und den ORF brachte, als der wichtigste Erbe Adenauers eben an die Macht kam.

Bemerkenswert sind hier gewisse Verwandlungen, die ziemlich randständige Chargen erfahren haben. Sie betreffen die Portraits der beiden Figuren, über die Krull mit der Halb- und Unterwelt in Berührung kommt, indem er selber eindeutig straffällig wird beziehungsweise nachdem er es schon geworden ist: eine Prostituierte, deren Liebhaber, Liebesschüler und Zuhälter Krull in den Frankfurter Kapiteln wird; und einen Pariser Hehler, bei dem er seinen ersten größeren Diebstahl in das Startkapital seiner Hochstaplerkarriere ummünzt und dessen also handlungstragende Rolle, anders als die der Frankfurter Prostituierten, in einer filmischen Nacherzählung nicht ohne weiteres gestrichen werden kann.

Die Prostituierte, Rózsa, soll „aus Ungarn gebürtig“ sein, über Wien nach Frankfurt gelangt und ansonsten von „ungewisser Herkunft“. Mit solch einer ungewissen, aber jedenfalls nicht deutschen Herkunft hat es hier eine besondere Bewandtnis. Denn wie immer in Thomas Manns Erzählwerk, zum Beispiel im *Tod in Venedig*, in den Josephs-Romanen oder noch in seiner letzten Erzählung, *Die Betrogene*, entsteht die sexuelle Lust hier aus einem Kollaps der symbolischen Ordnung. Die erotische Ekstase geht auch hier mit einem Versagen der logisch fungiblen Rede einher und mit einem Versiegen insbesondere der deutschen Sprache. Es ließe sich hier sogar an den erhaltenen Romanmanuskripten im einzelnen und entstehungsgeschichtlich konkret nachweisen, dass und wie die sexuelle Begegnung gezielt auf das Moment des Sprachverlusts hin zugespielt wurde. Die Prostituierte war zuerst nur „wortkarg“. Sie sprach erst einfach „mit ausländischem Tonfall“, dann „gebrochenen Tonfallen“. Endlich aber kann sie „eigentlich überhaupt kein Deutsch“ mehr. „[I]hre Worte“ entgleiten nun „sonderbar ins Unsinnige“.

Von einem Entgleiten der Sprache „ins Unsinnige“ hat der Erzähler eines Romans natürlich leicht reden, solange er es und weil er es ja mit keinem Zitat in direkter Rede exemplifizieren muss. Für die Dialoge eines Drehbuchs aber kann oder könnte es zumindest eine besondere Herausforderung darstellen. Bei jener ersten Verfilmung des Romans brauchten Erika Mann *et alii* diese Herausforderung gar nicht erst anzunehmen. Denn hier, 1957, fiel die ganze Episode aus unschwer zu suppliernden Rücksichten auf die zeitgenössische Sexualmoral und Prüderie holus bolus weg.

In der *Felix Krull*-Verfilmung aber, die Sinkel für das Zweite Deutsche Fernsehen und den Österreichischen Rundfunk drehte und die erstmals wie gesagt 1982 ausgestrahlt und dann verschiedentlich wiederholt wurde, hat das Problem eine so abwegige wie andererseits auch wieder naheliegende und auf ihre Weise einleuchtende Lösung gefunden. Sinkel lässt die Prostituierte weder *Unsinn* noch auch nur mit ungarischem Akzent reden. Sondern er lässt sie schlechtweg Jiddisch sprechen. Abwegig ist diese Lösung natürlich insofern, als man vom Jiddischen, als einer großen Nebensprache des Deutschen, doch wohl kaum behaupten kann, dass es „überhaupt

kein Deutsch“ sei. Nahe liegt sie andererseits deshalb, weil das Jiddische für das deutsche und österreichische Fernsehpublikum der Achtzigerjahre offensichtlich nicht mehr anschließbar und wirklich vollkommen fremd geworden war. Es war in der Nachkriegszeit durchaus geeignet, das schlechthin Andere alles Deutschen zu repräsentieren.

Kommt vielleicht noch hinzu, dass eine jüdische Identität der Prostituierten gewissermaßen auf dem Vektor der wenigen topographischen Informationen liegt, die man über deren Lebenslauf erhält: ihre Herkunft aus dem europäischen Osten; ihre Assoziation mit Wien als einem Zielort der jüdischen Migration nach Westen; ihre Situierung in Frankfurt als derjenigen deutschen Stadt, die schon in den Buddenbrooks so „jüdisch“ konnotiert war wie keine andere, wenn etwa Laura Hagenström-Semlinger ausgerechnet von dort her einheiratete (wohingegen übrigens ihr historisches Modell eine gebürtige Hamburgerin war). Dabei scheint diese jüdische Konnotiertheit Frankfurts bis in die Ära Kohl gereicht zu haben, mit deren Anfang Sinkels Verfilmung ja nahezu zusammenfiel. So bemäntelte ein christlich-demokratischer Ex-Schatzmeister die Herkunft geheimer Spenden an die Partei des neuen Bundeskanzlers, indem er sie als „Vermächtnisse“ nicht irgendwelcher, sondern ausgerechnet von Frankfurter Juden auszugeben versuchte.

Die jüdische Konnotation der Stadt, in der die Prostituierte ihr Gewerbe betreibt, passt nun sehr genau zu diesem Gewerbe selbst. Denn Rózsa – ein unter Jüdinnen nicht seltener Frauenname – entspricht einer spezifischen Form, die das Stereotyp der schönen Jüdin Ende des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts annahm. Das Stereotyp der jüdischen Prostituierten, der Jüdin als gewissermaßen geborener Dirne, und die antisemitische Energie, aus der es sich speiste, lässt sich besonders gut gerade für die Zeit dokumentieren, in der sich Krull und Rózsa kennenlernen, und für das Land, aus dem es Rozsa unmittelbar ins Deutsche Reich verschlagen hat. 1892 wollte der niederösterreichische Abgeordnete Ernst Schneider etwa beobachtet haben, dass an den „letzten jüdischen Feiertagen [...] die Straßen leer waren“; und darin sah er den „Beweis“ dafür, „daß die Jüdinnen das größte Contingent zu den [sic] Prostituirten stellen“. Und 1897 heißt es in einer Denkschrift des Auswärtigen Amtes zuhanden des deutschen Reichskanzlers, dass jüdische Prostituierte „aus [...] Österreich“ oder auch aus „Ungarn“, woher Rózsa ja „gebürtig“ sein soll, „bereits von Jugend auf der Unzucht ergeben [...] und als Opfer nicht mehr zu bezeichnen“ seien.

Ähnlich lässt sich die Freiheit motivieren, die sich Sinkel bei der anderen hier einschlägigen Figur der zweiten Romanhälfte herausnahm, obwohl oder gerade weil Thomas Mann darin – wie in allen Texten nach 1945 – keine Juden mehr auftreten ließ (abgesehen nur von einem Hoteldirektor „Stürzli“, den er schon in der älteren Hälfte des Krull-Fragments eingeführt hatte und dem er in der zweiten wenigstens den stigmatischen Vornamen erließ, „Isaak“).

Im Romantext wie in der ersten Verfilmung verkauft Krull seine erste namhafte Diebesbeute einem Uhrmacher Pierre Jean-Pierre beziehungsweise, in der ersten Verfilmung, Jean Pierre, dessen Identität er hier wie dort „spaßeshalber“ annehmen wird. Denn nach getätigtem Geschäft neu eingekleidet, lässt er seine abgetragenen Sachen nicht an seine wahre Anschrift schicken, sondern an „Pierre Jean-Pierre, quatre-vingt-douze, Rue de l’Échelle au Ciel“.

Diese Selbstidentifikation, mag sie ansonsten auch noch so ironisch sein, wird wohl nicht zuletzt mit den guten Omina zu tun haben, die aus der Adresse sprechen und die nachweislich gesucht und gewollt sind; stand doch im Manuscript erst ein anderer, seinerseits vorteilhaft sprechender, das „zunehmende“ Glück anzeigennder Straßename, „Rue du Croissant“, und an Stelle der einen Glückszahl „Zwölf“ ein an-

derer *numerus perfectus*, „Quatre-vingt-dix“. Dazu kommt vermutlich die Gottgefälligkeit der biblischen Anspielungen, die hier, vor allem seit der Korrektur des Manuskripts, versammelt sind: einerseits der Personenname, „Pierre Jean-Pierre“, worin Christi Lieblings- mit dem kirchengeschichtlich wichtigsten Jünger zusammenfindet, der ja gleich doppelt auftaucht im Namen des offenbar katholischen Hehlers – während dieser im älteren Film wie gesagt immerhin noch „Jean Pierre“ hieß –; anderseits die Straße, die Himmelsleiter, deren Bedeutsamkeit im Roman wie in den Drehbüchern dieses älteren Films eigens expliziert wird und die auch noch von einer „Rue des Vierges prudentes“ abzweigt.

Außer seinem mutmaßlichen Katholizismus und seiner ominösen Adresse prädestiniert den Hehler aber herzlich wenig zu dem Spaß, den sich der seinerseits katholische Hochstapler mit ihm erlaubt, indem er postalisch seine Identität annähme. Denn seinem Namen und seiner Adresse zum Trotz ist Pierre Jean-Pierre eine widerwärtige Erscheinung und ein schlechter Charakter, habgierig, verschlagen und selbst in der Verliebtheit noch geizig. Die Uhrkette, die er Krull zu guter Letzt doch noch umsonst gibt, ist „rein gar nichts wert“ (während ihm „Jean Pierre“ in der älteren Verfilmung eine ganze Uhr schenkte. Und obendrein, so stand es im ältesten Drehbuch, „klebt[e]“ er ihm auch noch „einen schmatzenden Kuß auf jede Wange“.)

Ausgerechnet dieser „Halsabschneider“ nun, wie ihn Krull seinerseits einmal nennt, hat in der TV-Verfilmung eine sehr andere Identität erhalten, die es nun *a limite* zu verbieten scheint, dass Krull sie auch nur „spaßeshalber“ annimmt. Diese neue Identität, samt ihrer nunmehr säuberlichen Disjunktion von der Person des Hochstaplers, geht schon aus der Nennung der jetzt modifizierten Adresse hervor, wo im Übrigen selbst noch die Glückszahl, die der französischen Hausnummer ehedem einbeschrieben war, revoziert ist: „Schicken Sie bitte meine alten Kleider an einen gewissen Herrn Jean-Pierre Blumenberg [...], Dreiundneunzig, Rue de l’Échelle au Ciel“; wobei diese rue zu allem Überfluss auch nicht mehr von einer Straße der klugen Jungfrauen abgeht, wie sie in der antijudaistischen Allegorese des hiermit anzierten Matthäus-Gleichnisses den Gegensatz der Christenheit zum Judentum versinnbildlichen.

Dem nun also von den gutchristlichen „Vierges prudentes“ dissoziierten Hehler gab Sinkel einen Nachnamen, „Blumenberg“, der nicht von ungefähr auch schon im Frühwerk der Gebrüder Mann einmal figuriert, nämlich, versteht sich, als typisch jüdischer. Dieser Besetztheit des neuen Namens haben auch noch der Aufzug und der Habitus des jetzt so Heißenden zu entsprechen. Während seine Kleidung im Roman samt und sonders unter die Leerstellen fiel, lässt ihm Sinkel eine Kippah aufsetzen. Dazu vereindeutigt er die Habgier und den Geiz des Hehlers bis auf den allerletzten Rest einer menschlich-sympathischen oder auch nur homosexuell-verliebten Geste, wie sie im Film von 1957 ja noch verstärkt erschien, wo das im Roman vorgegebene Geschenk der Kette zu einer ganzen Uhr aufgewertet wurde. Denn der jetzt jüdische Geizhals, dem prominentesten unter den antisemitischen Charakterstereotypen entsprechend, schenkt Krull nun gar nichts mehr, nicht einmal eine Uhrkette, und sei sie noch so wertlos.

Die charakterologische Profilierung oder auch Verflachung der Hehler-Figur, ihre Umbenennung und die spezifische Füllung ihrer vestimentären Unbestimmtheit zeugen selbstverständlich vom Beharrungsvermögen einmal eingefleischter Antisemitismen oder eben von der zwanghaften Wiederkehr auch des kollektiv Verdrängten. In diesem einen Fall lässt sich die Kollektivität des Prozesses sogar sehr genau belegen, die Leichtigkeit auch, mit der solche stabilen Assoziationskonglomerate jederzeit wieder abrufbar sind. Denn dass Sinkel bloß kollektiven Phantasmen aufsaß,

als er dem Pariser Hehler gegen die Vorgaben des Romans eine ausgerechnet jüdische Identität verpasste, scheint selbst noch und leider auch die Forschungsgeschichte zu verraten. Der Lizenz nämlich, aus einem im Text als solcher unverdächtigen Katholiken einen Fernsehjuden zu machen, entspricht genau eine Fehlleistung und Fehllesung in der überhaupt jüngsten Monographie zum Thema *Thomas Mann [...] and the Jewish Question*. Auch ihrem Verfasser genügten die Merkmale der Habgier und der „dubiosen Moralität“, um den „clockmaker Jean-Pierre“ kurzerhand unter die „Jewish characters“ zu verbuchen.

Freilich steht die Aussagekraft dieser so oder so schlagenden Koinzidenz von produktiver und wissenschaftlicher Rezeption unter einem gewissen Vorbehalt. Ihr Evidenzwert sinkt natürlich in dem Maß, als man damit rechnen muss und jedenfalls nicht ausschließen kann, dass die produktive Rezeption hier den Erwartungshorizont der wissenschaftlichen Forschung immer schon mit festlegte; womit gegebenenfalls einmal mehr erwiesen wäre, dass die Verfilmungen der Texte mächtiger werden können als diese selbst und dass man also gut daran tut, sie ernster zu nehmen, als sie es an und für sich verdienten.

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Jeffrey C. Alexander

Culture, Trauma, Morality and Solidarity

The Social Construction of 'Holocaust' and Other Mass Murders

Abstract

Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways. While this new scientific concept clarifies causal relationships between previously unrelated events, structures, perceptions, and actions, it also illuminates a neglected domain of social responsibility and political action. By constructing cultural traumas, social groups, national societies, and sometimes even entire civilizations, not only cognitively identify the existence and source of human suffering, but may also take on board some significant moral responsibility for it. Insofar as they identify the cause of trauma in a manner that assumes such moral responsibility, members of collectivities define their solidary relationships that allow them to share the suffering of others. Is the suffering of others also our own? In thinking that it might in fact be, societies expand the circle of the 'we' and create the possibility for repairing societies to prevent the trauma from happening again. By the same token, social groups can, and often do, refuse to recognise the existence of others' suffering, or place the responsibility for it on people other than themselves.

Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their collective consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways.

As I have developed this new sociological approach with colleagues and students, cultural trauma is first of all a theoretical concept. It suggests empirical-causal relationships between previously unrelated events, structures, perceptions, and actions. But this scientific concept also newly illuminates a significant domain of moral responsibility and political action.

By constructing cultural traumas, social groups, national societies, and sometimes even entire civilizations, not only cognitively identify the existence and source of human suffering, but may also take on board moral responsibility for it. Insofar as groups identify the cause of trauma in a manner that implies their own moral responsibility, members of collectivities define their solidary relationships in ways that allow them, perhaps even compel them, to share the suffering of others. Is the suffering of others also our own? In thinking that it might be, societies expand the circle of the *we*. When the circle of the *we* expands, extraordinary repairs in the institutional and legal networks of society can be made.

Some of the most important social developments in the post-war world have been produced by such a trauma process. Because social actors have newly identified themselves as causal agents, social solidarity has expanded, moral universalism and

social criticism have broadened, and fundamental institutional and legal changes have been made.

Most extraordinary of all these developments has been the gradual, halting – still incomplete and contested – but eventually intensely powerful identification of Christian peoples in the West with the millions of Jewish persons murdered by the Nazis during the Second World War. For millennia, Christian civilization had polluted Jews as nefarious and subhuman, excluding them from civil society, punishing them economically, persecuting them culturally and politically, and sometimes doing far worse. When the Enlightenment unlocked the gates of European ghettos in the early 19th century, the oozing antisemitic wound that infected modernity seemed on the mend. But the backlash against Jewish incorporation was fierce: Pogroms in the East, the *Dreyfus Scandal* in Republican France, new quotas and old restrictions in the United States, rising anti-Jewish feelings and politics in central Europe. The Nazi monster arose out of this primordial slime. While the Nazis' antisemitic strategy was more ambitious and extreme than had ever before been contemplated, their antisemitic feeling was not. Its anti-democratic totalitarian state allowed Nazis to put into effect their 'final solution' to the Jewish Question, and it was the military defeat of that state that prevented ultimate success. Yet, while the Nazi state was demolished, broad antisemitic feelings remained, and not in post-war Germany alone.

In subsequent decades, however, the widespread Jewish hatred that had legitimated the Nazis' mass murder, allowing a blind eye to be turned to it, was sharply attenuated. The pervasive network of antisemitic legal and institutional restrictions that existed throughout the West was, as a result, eventually destroyed.

At the source of this reversal of *Weltgeschichte* was trauma work. Christian peoples who had nothing directly to do with the Holocaust – Americans, British, French, Scandinavians, and Austrians among them – came eventually to feel indirectly responsible for it. In doing so, they distanced themselves from antisemitic feelings and practices in which they had themselves been deeply implicated. Citizens of Christian nations had restricted and persecuted Jews in their own nations; they had stood by as Germany instituted the Nuremberg laws in 1933 and created *Kristallnacht* in 1938. After learning of the death camps in 1943, Allied war leaders had refused to divert the bombing campaign to stop the quickly gathering slaughter – for even a day. Certainly, it was fear of pervasive domestic antisemitism that motivated the leaders' decision.

Of course, in spring 1945, millions of Western citizens shrank in horror from the news photos from Buchenwald. But the American GI's who took over the camps often showed more sympathy for the German officials under their arrest than for the angry, emaciated, and foreign-seeming Jews whom they liberated. And in the years immediately after the war, it was Nazi barbarians – not the German people and least of all Western antisemitic civilization more broadly considered – who were held responsible for the Holocaust.

In the immediate wake of the trauma, the circle of the 'we' was drawn very narrowly indeed. As Bernhard Giesen has shown, it took three generations for the German people – and, even then, only those inside the democratically reconstructed Western nation – to take on board a broader sense of responsibility, to sharply separate themselves from the self-justifying exculpations of former participants and the hate-filled collective identity of earlier version of the German nation.

In one of the more radical cultural transformations of modern history, Germany eventually became a loyal friend of Israel, the land that Jewish Nazis victims had oc-

cupied to escape. The former Nazi nation now has the largest Jewish population in central Europe, German Jews continually reporting high levels of acceptance and safety. In post-Communist Poland, the longing for reconciliation is also palpable, at least in the cosmopolitan centres. Philosemitism is pronounced, Klezmer music revived, festivals celebrating lost memories of Jewish culture organised annually. In the U.S., Jewish writers, scientists, doctors and businessmen have become incorporated into the elite core groups that had rejected them for centuries before.

This transformation of the cultural identity and social status of one of the world's most fiercely denigrated groups was the result of a trauma process. The Holocaust came to occupy a central position in the collective identity of Western societies, and in the course of this deepening centrality the understanding of the Jewish mass murder subtly but decisively changed.

One vital thread of trauma process transformed the image of the victim. Rather than seeing the Nazi's Jewish victims as a depersonalised mass, and mess, popular culture began to personalise and differentiate them. Portraying Jews as recognizably human beings allowed non-Jews, for the first time, to experience deep emotional identification with the six million Jews who were Nazi victims.

A powerful channel for this new form of cultural expression was the memoir. In the 1950s, there unfolded a series of dramatizations of the suffering and courage of the Dutch 'everygirl' Anne Frank, whose *Diary* eventually became required reading in millions of American elementary schools. In the decade after, Eli Wiesel's *Night* also achieved massive popularity, deeply penetrating the consciousness and conscience of Christian and secular citizens in the West. Another popular culture genre driving this line of trauma work was televised melodramas. In 1978, one-hundred million Americans viewed the *Holocaust* miniseries, and so did record-breaking audiences in Germany. It was in the wake of this mini-series that the German *Reichstag* removed the statute of limitations on Nazi agents, whose actions were now described – note the generalization – as crimes against 'humanity'.

Such dramaturgical personalization of Jewish victims began transforming the Holocaust from a historical event into a deeply moving trauma-drama, one that increasingly engaged non-Jewish audiences in bathetic experiences of tragedy and catharsis. This cultural transformation was pushed further by a new understanding of Holocaust perpetrators. Personalization had so altered the identity of the trauma's victim as to allow them to become a dramatic protagonist. Now the other central figure in the Holocaust narrative – the Nazi antagonist – was also subtly changed. 'Perpetrator' was removed from its historically specific particularity, its status transformed into a more archetypically evil role that would become a stand-in for all humankind.

The critical event initiating this reconstruction of perpetrator was the 1961 trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem. As orchestrated by Israeli Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, Eichmann's capture and trial was intended to re-connect the new nation's citizens to the persons and places of the original crime, to Germany, the Nazis, and the victimised Jews – in Ben-Gurion's words, to „the dimensions of the tragedy which our people experienced.“ By its conclusion, however, the Eichmann trial had actually initiated something very different – a massive universalisation of Nazi evil. The removal of the Holocaust from particulars of time, place, and person was crystallised by Hannah Arendt's insistence on the *Banality of Evil*. This framing of Nazi guilt became highly influential, even as it was sharply and bitterly disputed. As a banally evil person, Eichmann could be 'everyman'. The antagonists in the Holocaust trauma-drama began to seem not so much larger than life monsters as normal

human beings who were not so different from anybody else. Perhaps they were simply, as Nietzsche put it, human, all too human.

This newly emerging mentality was eloquently expressed by the British-American poet W.H. Auden in his 1965 piece *The Cave of Making*:

*More than ever
Life-out-there is goodly, miraculous, loveable,
But we shan't, not since Stalin and Hitler,
Trust ourselves ever again: we
Know that, subjectively,
All is possible.*

Other cultural developments also widened the circle of perpetrators. Most spectacularly, there was Yale psychologist Stanley Milgram's experiment demonstrating that ordinary, well-educated adult men would 'just follow orders' from imperious authorities, even to the point of gravely endangering the lives of innocent people whose fates they imagined to be under their control. Raising profoundly troubling questions, Milgram's findings generalised the capacity for radical evil, moving it from Nazi deviance to everyday Americanism – and perhaps to humanity as such. Decades later, Christopher Browning provided historical documentation for this broadened understanding in his 1992 book *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101* and the *Final Solution in Poland*. When Daniel Goldhagen challenged Browning, in *Hitler's Willing Executioners: Ordinary Germans and the Holocaust* (1996), insisting on the uniqueness of German antisemitism, Browning revealingly responded by referencing Milgram, averring that the character of perpetrators should not be particularised but universal.

What allowed the Nazis to mobilise and harness the rest of society to the mass murder of European Jewry? Here I think we historians need to turn to the insights of social psychology. We must ask, what really is a human being? We must give up the comforting and distancing notions that the perpetrators of the Holocaust were fundamentally a different kind of people.

As the Holocaust trauma-drama broadened the cultural identification of and with perpetrator and victim, the US government began losing political control over the telling of the Holocaust story. When the Allied forces defeated Nazi Germany in 1945, they took over control of the representation process, assuring that the Jewish mass murder would now be presented in an anti-Nazi way. In their telling, the former Allies – American most powerfully but Britain and France as well – presented themselves as moral protagonists, pure-hearted, heroic carriers of the good. Two decades later, however, during the political wars of the 1960s, Western democracies were compelled to concede this dominant narrative position. This time around – as compared with 1945 – control over the means of symbolic production changed hands more for cultural reasons than by force of arms.

In the 'critical years' between the mid-1960s and the end of the 1970s, the US experienced a sharp decline in its political, military, and moral prestige. Domestic and international opposition to America's prosecution of the Vietnam War transformed the nation into a symbol, for many, not of salvationary good but apocalyptic, anti-democratic evil. This transvaluation was intensified by revolutionary student and black power movements inside the U.S. and anti-capitalist guerrilla movements outside it.

The U.S. now came to be identified, in some influential quarters, with terms that had been reserved exclusively for the Holocaust's Nazi perpetrators. According to

the post-war victor narrative, only the Allies' World War II enemies could be represented as evil. When America became *Amerika*, however, napalm bombs were analogised with gas pellets and flaming Vietnamese jungles with the killing chambers of Auschwitz. The American army had been hailed as the liberator of death camps, and, vowing not to repeat pre-War Nazi appeasement, claimed in the 1960s to be prosecuting a righteous war against communist Vietnamese. By many Western intellectuals and a wide swath of the educated Western public, however, the U.S. Army was now being framed as itself perpetrating genocide against helpless victims in Vietnam. Bertrand Russell and Jean-Paul Sartre established a War Crimes tribunal that applied the logic of Nuremberg to the United States. Incidents of civilian killings, like the *My Lai Massacre* of 1968, were represented, not as anomalous, but as an American policy of mass murder. The analogy between Nazi and American leaders was also made in more scholarly ways. Revisionist historians revealed that American and British leaders had known about the death camps by 1943, and had refused to bomb them, as I mentioned earlier. There also emerged new historical interest in the fire bombings of German and Japanese cities and in American's atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Eventually, this broadening of the figure of perpetrator expanded to include other Allied powers in the Second World War and those who had remained avowedly neutral as well. Charles de Gaulle had woven a narrative that purified the French nation as first the victim and later the courageous opponent of both Nazi domination and the 'foreign' collaborationists in Vichy. By the late 1970s and 1980s, young French historians were challenging this account. Seriously polluting the pre-War government of the Third Republic, and by implication its postwar successors, these revisionists documented a pattern of massive French collaboration with the Nazis' anti-Jewish activities.

As the symbolic power of the Holocaust trauma-drama intensified, it was only a matter of time until other nations who had been defeated and occupied, and even those that had remained neutral, were also forced to relinquish symbolic control over how their own stories were told. Austria, for example, had long depicted itself as the helpless first victim of Nazi aggression. When Kurt Waldheim ascended to the position of UN Secretary General, his hidden association with the Hitler regime was widely revealed, and the symbolic status of the Austria nation, which appeared to rally behind their former president, suffered moral pollution as a result. While Waldheim's political career survived in the short term – he was re-elected to the Austrian presidency – his moral reputation did not; and the national self-criticism triggered by the Waldheim Affair eventuated in Austria now accepting 'co-responsibility' for Holocaust and war. Switzerland also became subject to an inversion of symbolic fortune. The tiny republic had prided itself on its long history of canton democracy and the benevolent neutrality of its Red Cross. In the mid-nineties, however, journalists and historians documented that the wartime Swiss government had laundered Nazi gold. In return for the valuable minerals plundered from the bodies of condemned and murdered Jews, Swiss bankers gave Nazi authorities unmarked currency that could be used to finance Holocaust and war.

These processes of political deconstruction and symbolic inversion universalised the Holocaust. They allowed the so-called 'lessons of the Holocaust' – often referred to as 'post-Holocaust morality' – to be applied in less nationally specific, less particularistic ways. The Holocaust symbol came to stand for the systematic employment of mass violence against members of any stigmatised collectivity, whether defined in a primordial or ideological way – anywhere and any time.

As a symbol of radical evil, *Holocaust* became engorged, overflowing with badness. Now dramatised as the signal tragedy of modern times, this engorged evil became a drama that compelled eternal return, in Nietzsche's sense. As with the Greeks and their tragedies, the immersion of Western citizens in the Holocaust drama provided catharsis, moral clarification, and perhaps even grace. The Holocaust legend was told and retold, dramatised, filmed, novelised in hundreds and eventually thousands of aesthetically compelling ways, in response not only to emotional need but moral ambition. Its characters, its plot, and its pitiable denouement allowed a heightened sensitivity to modern social evil. The trauma-drama's message reflected a modernised, more reflexive version of Greek tragedy. Evil is inside all of us and in every society. If we ourselves have the capacity to be victims and also perpetrators, then none of us can legitimately distance ourselves from the suffering of victims or the responsibility of perpetrators. This cathartic experience and its moral lessons can allow us to change, however, so that we can prevent genocides from ever happening again.

The ability to script, cast, and produce a trauma-drama about mass murder spread to other nations, to other marginalised and oppressed groups, even to such contemporary enemies of the Jewish-Israeli people as the Palestinians. 'Holocaust' became a bridging metaphor deployed by the powerless, who cast themselves in the role of suffering victim and their opponents in the role of perpetrators.

The trauma-drama of the Holocaust – the aesthetic-cum moral resources it offered for denunciations of ethnic, racial and ideological suffering – powered a series of other world-historical transformations in the second half of the 20th century.

The struggle against Western imperialism came to be experienced through this prism. Imperialism had once been viewed as a civilising gift. In the shadow of the Holocaust and its corrosive critique of modernity's pretensions, Western imperialism became re-conceived as genocide – as objectification and othering, as the cultural and physical destruction of stigmatised civilizations and peoples that were non-White, non-Christian, non-Western. Africans, Algerians, Vietnamese, Indians, Chinese – these civilizations were constructed as helpless victims, French and British armies and administrators as heinous perpetrators. In the post-Holocaust era, influential Western audiences came to understand imperialism according to the logic of that overarching trauma-drama. Seeing colonial governments as perpetrators of genocide and those colonised as abject victims, citizens not only extended sympathy and material support to the anti-imperialist movements, whether violent or not, but struggled to purge their own governments of moral pollution and to stop colonial war.

This moral inversion and narrative revision helped liberate non-Western nations from the imperialist yoke, removing centuries of Western domination over Eastern and Southern regions of the globe. In doing so, the trauma process radically reshaped the post-war global landscape, creating new legalities and sovereignties, laying down infrastructural tracks for economic globalization. The post-Holocaust story of liberation also made it more difficult, paradoxically, to identify post-colonial domestic repression and new patterns of ethnic and regional war.

Other extraordinarily significant social transformations also unfolded inside the post-Holocaust frame. Consider, for example, the African-American civil rights movement. Black leaders saw how, in the wake of the Holocaust, attacks on antisemitic feelings and institutions were beginning to strike strong chords of sympathy and identification among America's white Christian core groups. African-Americans projected themselves into the generalised role of earlier Jewish victims. Engag-

ing in dramatic performances that generated traumatic violence against innocent and peaceful demonstrators, the civil rights movement depicted white Southern officials as Gestapo-like, out of control, made-in-America Nazis motivated by radical racial hatred. The contemporaneous recovery of slave narratives about the ‚middle passage‘ of captured victims from Africa to the New World functioned as analogy with the ‚cattle cars‘ that transported captured Jews to death camps, reinforcing the equation of America’s racial caste system with Nazi genocide. Northern white Americans increasingly identified with the black stigmatised victims of Jim Crow racism, withdrawing from the white Southern perpetrators a century of sentimental support. What flowed from this racial trauma drama were radical legal and institutional repairs in the social structure of the United States.

A similar story about analogical emplotment and institutional change can be told for the struggles of indigenous peoples in the Western hemisphere. From the 1960s onwards, there emerged a growing awareness that the first imperial exercises were not against developed civilizations but against peoples who were there before them. It was not, however, empirical evidence of an objective reality that put the decimation of the first occupants of the Americas on the map of the Western imagination. In 1962, in *The Savage Mind*, Claude Lévi-Strauss asserted that the most dramatic genocide of all, and the most complete, was the annihilation of earth’s first human residents. Spanish and Portuguese conquistadors destroyed native cultures and institutions throughout North and South America, unleashing processes of destruction that eventually resulted in the physical death of most of their peoples as well. Whether identified as Indians, Native Americans, aborigines, or first peoples, in the post-Holocaust world the populations who faced European and later American and Australian expansion have been categorised as victims, their opponents as perpetrators, and the crime as genocide. Only in the decades after World War II did the victims of this slow-moving mass destruction become humanised in a manner that could elicit cultural identification and empathy. Their styles of dress, their pierced and tattooed bodies, their painting, sculptures, music, and dance have recently entered into the core of the contemporary modern imagination. Their struggles for compensation have generated powerful political support, and significant institutional transformations have sometimes been made.

The qualifier *sometimes* provides a segue to the dark other side of cultural trauma, which I will elaborate in the concluding section of this lecture but will not have time fully to explore.

As we know all too well, social groups often refuse to recognise the suffering of others; and, even when they do, they frequently place the causal responsibility for inflicting that suffering on events and actors outside themselves. What follows from such refusals is a failure to identify and empathise. Opting out of the process of trauma creation prevents the possibility of achieving a moral stance. It restricts solidarity, leaving others to suffer alone. Laws are not changed and institutions are not repaired. Strains that triggered earlier traumas are left in place, a situation that may allow the original traumatic events to happen again.

Let us continue with the post-war trauma process that centres on first peoples. Frontier societies justified and often ennobled their dominating expansion, narrating it as evolutionary progress, evoking civilising stories about religious salvation and the secular cultivation of ‚virgin land‘. Four decades ago, chastened by the increasingly powerful legend of the Holocaust, Western core groups began to displace the more racialised strands of their founding narratives, weaving new origin myths – in film, television, songs, novels, and paintings – that acknowledged the suffering

of original peoples. Australian leaders apologised and offered reparations to radically marginalised Aborigines, and the nation's intellectuals and cultural entrepreneurs transfigured aboriginal totemic drawings once thought worthless into highly valuable art. American political and cultural leaders made similar gestures to decimated Native American remnants, and legal challenges produced restoration of stolen lands guaranteed by old treaties. In Canada, the Anglican church asked the country's first peoples to forgive them for having created boarding schools dedicated to religious conversion, ruthless discipline, and forced cultural assimilation.

In recent decades, however, these broad efforts at cultural revision have attenuated and institutional repairs slowed down. The Ottawa government has turned over to native tribes effective control over large swathes of the nation's land, but these are largely outside the great population centres and remain frozen tundra for much of the year. The American government has restored significant sovereignty to tribal reservations, but the new control, unevenly distributed, has been deployed to build gambling casinos for white Americans, allowing only a small minority of the continent's surviving original settlers to thrive. When Australia's Conservative John Howard came to power 18 years ago, he publicly retracted the Labour government's apology, advising Aborigines to assimilate and become rich. It is impossible to imagine the Christian peoples of the West displaying such ambivalence about the Holocaust, much less contemporary Germans. Indeed, denying the Holocaust is a crime in most European states.

The same ambivalence and polarization has marred Western efforts to deal with their imperial histories.

- Since Britain's Tories returned to power four years ago, they have ordered that textbooks be revised so that the civilising contributions of empire can be highlighted again. When Prime Minister David Cameron visited India last year, he spoke of the astonishing opportunities provided by its contemporary capitalist markets but said nothing about the British cotton industry bankrupting India's weaving enterprises two centuries before. The very suggestion that the Anglo-British should feel shame for their ferocious destruction of Irish social structure, four centuries ago, much less offer apology and reparation, would still be heatedly rejected in the United Kingdom of today.
- The French continue to offer the Baccalaureate to *les secondaires* in their former colonies, many of which provide romantic escapes from 'serious' civilization for its wealthy bourgeoisie. French school textbooks only timidly confront the bloody wars of terror their nation conducted against Algeria and Vietnam.
- The Soviet Union lost its empire barely a generation ago, but the leaders and masses of its Russian remnant mostly feel deprived, not guilty. Their sympathy and solidarity is reserved, not for the local cultures and people they dominated and sought to undermine, but for their ethnic Russian confrères left behind when the Soviet Union lost the Cold War. The effects of such restricted trauma processes are being played out before our very eyes, as Russia reoccupies Crimea and threatens Ukraine today.
- And what about Russia's victorious Cold War rival, the United States? While revisionist history continues to thrive and tragic narratives about Vietnam persist, neo-imperialist historians have become celebrities for urging Americans not to relinquish their neo-colonial yoke, and overreaching military efforts to make the world safe for democracy have almost bankrupted the nation. Meanwhile, most Americans, intellectuals and everyday Joes alike, seem genuinely unable to recognise that their nation does often behave in a bullying and hegemonic way.

Perhaps the most consequential short-circuiting of an imperial trauma process has unfolded on the other side of the world, in the Far East. Japanese officials have steadfastly refused to acknowledge the brutal decades-long occupation of China and Korea that preceded their nation's 1945 military defeat. If the very existence of traumatic occupation is denied, the suffering of its victims can hardly be contemplated, let alone become the object of empathy; the status of perpetrator is rejected; and solidarity remains restricted. While Japan's Socialist Party and its powerful teachers' union persistently challenged such chauvinistic denials, the deeply damaging fact of it has remained.

What about the tens of thousands – possibly as many as 200,000 – Korean 'comfort women', the young women enslaved as prostitutes by the imperial Japanese army? Last week, the chief cabinet secretary of Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's conservative government announced that Japan would re-examine the landmark apology it had offered 20 years ago to the Korean victims. This threat to rescind the apology, according to the *New York Times*, "would most likely draw an explosive reaction from South Korea, where the women are seen as an emotionally potent symbol of their nation's brutal early-20th-century colonization by Japan".

For many Koreans, the push by Japanese rightists is seen as proof a lack of remorse over treatment of the wartime brothel workers and other victims of Japan's colonization of the Korean Peninsula. South Korea's president, Park Geun-hye, has refused even to meet with Mr. Abe until Japan shows more contrition.¹

What about the *Nanjing Massacre*, where Japanese soldiers hacked and shot to death, over the course of just six weeks time, one to two hundred thousand Chinese beginning in December, 1938? The *Yasukuni Shrine* in Tokyo, which Prime Minister Abe recently resumed visiting, depicts the Chinese as aggressors in Nanjing and Japan as reluctantly responding on the grounds of self-defence. Suggesting a war between equal parties rather than a mass murder, the narrative display in Exhibition Hall 10 claims "the Chinese were soundly defeated" and that, "inside the city, the residents were once again able to live their lives in peace". This blocked trauma process allows Japan to refuse its earlier perpetrator role. Its East Asian Co-Prosperity Sphere is framed not as imperial expansion but as an effort to confront American hegemony; its war against America – like its military action in Nanjing – is framed as national self-defence. This restricted construction of trauma suggests that it is war-time Japan, not those it dominated and murdered, that deserves the victim role. After all, Japanese cities were fire bombed, and Hiroshima and Nagasaki experienced nuclear Holocaust.

Once again, how trauma work unfolds has institutional effects. With the cultural pathways for experiencing wider solidarity blocked, contemporary Japan cannot reach out to China or Korea. China's economic fortunes are intertwined with Japan's, but the Chinese are building up their naval forces against and declaring disputed islands their own. Prime Minister Abe recently compared Chinese military activity to the German naval build-up preceding the First World War, even as he works to reshape Japan's military profile and replace its Peace Constitution.

This model of abrogated trauma applies also to mass murders committed by totalitarian communist states. The Mao's PRC and Stalin's USSR instigated programs that directly and indirectly decimated tens of millions of their own citizens. During the Great Famine that followed Mao's *Great Leap Forward* in the late 1950s, millions perished in silence, with the government blocking efforts at providing relief. In the

1 Martin Fackler, Japan to Revisit Apology to Wartime Sex Slaves, in: *New York Times*, A5, 1.3.2014.

following decade, the Cultural Revolution created many millions more deaths. Decades have passed, and the revolutionary Maoist regime has disappeared, but in contemporary China it remains impossible publicly to discuss, let alone to mourn, these traumatic events. The political party that perpetrated the horrors will not dispense with its revolutionary narrative and continues to control the means of symbolic production. How can the rule of law, let alone democracy, be institutionalised in a society whose government refuses to accept moral responsibility in this way? The Russian case seems different on its face – there has been radical regime change – but the effect on trauma process has been less of kind than degree. The nationalist upsurge in post-Yeltsin Russia, Vladimir Putin's insistence that Russians take pride in their greatness again, makes it extraordinarily difficult to revisit the hundreds of thousands imprisoned and killed in the Gulag, the millions who starved during the Ukrainian famine, and the numberless victims of Stalin's other massive crimes. The war time leader continues to be configured as a leading protagonist in Russia's modernising narrative, and even the memory records of his millions of victims are hard to find. Memorial, the Moscow-based human rights organization dedicated to preserving artefacts and memories about the Gulag, is being hounded by the Putin government, along with other Russian NGO's.

Material forces are deeply implicated in social suffering, and the strategic calculations and practical considerations that trigger traumatic events require significant social organization. Organizational, material, and structural forces have often been front and centre of Holocaust studies, for example, in Zygmunt Bauman's *The Holocaust and Modernity*. I have been concerned here, however, to trace the manner in which such causes and effects are crucially mediated by symbolic representations of social suffering, with understanding how a socio-cultural process channels the emotional effects of suffering and to what effect. These discursive and emotional forces, I have shown, transform the worlds of morality, materiality, and organization.

Intellectuals, artists, politicians, and social movement leaders create narratives about social suffering, not only during but also after the fact. Creating new ideal interests, trauma narratives can trigger significant repairs in the civil fabric. They can also instigate new rounds of social suffering in turn.

The cultural construction of collective trauma is fuelled by individual experiences of pain and suffering, but it is the threat to collective rather than individual identity that defines the suffering at stake. Individual suffering is of extraordinary human, moral, and intellectual import; in itself, however, it is a matter for ethics and psychology. My concern is with traumas that become collective, with how they can be conceived as wounds to shared social identity.

This is a matter of intense cultural work. Suffering collectivities – whether dyads, groups, societies, or civilizations – do not exist only as material networks. They must be imagined into being. The pivotal question becomes, not who did this to me, but what group did this to us? Intellectuals, political leaders, and symbol creators of all kinds make competing claims. They identify protagonists and antagonists and weave them into narratives projected to audiences of third parties.

Individual victims react to traumatic injury with repression and denial, gaining relief when these psychological defences are overcome, bringing pain into consciousness so they are able to mourn. For collectivities, it is different. Rather than denial, repression, and working through, it is a matter of symbolic construction and fram-

ing, of creating stories and characters, and moving along from there. A *we* is constructed via narration and coding, and it is this collective identity that experiences and confronts the danger. Millions of individuals may have lost their lives, and many more might have experienced grievous pain. Even then, however, the construction of a shared cultural trauma is not automatically guaranteed. The lives lost and pains experienced are individual facts; shared trauma depends on collective processes of cultural interpretation.

Lost wars, economic depressions, and mass murders can be understood according to drastically varying accounts that imply sharply antithetical social prescriptions. If traumas can be re-imagined and re-presented, the collective identity will shift. There will be a searching re-remembering of the collective past, solidarity can be expanded, and much needed civil repairs can be made. Only such a full enunciated trauma process can prevent the same terrors from ever happening again.

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Quotation: Jeffery C. Alexander, Culture, Trauma, Morality and Solidarity.
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