Dialogues for the Future:
Countering the Genealogy of Amnesia

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Dialogues for the Future:

Countering the Genealogy of Amnesia

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Marina Gržinić

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INTRODUCTION

The book *Dialogues for the Future: Countering the Genealogy of Amnesia* arose from the research carried out by the PEEK Project No. AR 439-G24/IBK, whose full title is "Genealogy of Amnesia: Rethinking the Past for a New Future of Conviviality."[1] This is an interdisciplinary arts-and-theory-based research project funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) and developed at the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, from 2018 to 2020. During this time, we created an online video archive entitled "Countering the Genealogy of Amnesia." It consists of seventy hours comprising eighty-two interviews/positions[2] as well as the recordings of the symposium "GENEALOGY OF AMNESIA: Crushing Silences, Constructing Histories" held at the mumok in 2018, thus tying together the three sites that constitute the "Genealogy of Amnesia": Belgium, Austria, and Bosnia and Herzegovina/Croatia/Serbia and "Republika Srpska."

This book comprises sixty-six interviews in the form of deep reflections concerning territories and histories.

1 See Genealogy of Amnesia: Rethinking the Past for a New Future of Conviviality (website), Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, accessed 8 June 2019, https://archiveofamnesia.akbild.ac.at.

2 See "Archive," Genealogy of Amnesia: Rethinking the Past for a New Future of Conviviality, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, accessed 11 June 2020, https://archiveofamnesia.akbild.ac.at/?page_id=17.

The book consists of three parts.

The first part presents four sites of genocide. First we take a look at present-day Brussels, the capital city of Belgium, still heavily adorned with reminders of its colonial past. The rule of King Leopold II of Belgium, who acquired his own private Congo region in Africa and perpetrated one of the bloodiest colonial genocidal extractions of wealth in the last few centuries, seems to have been erased both from the "city's memory" and its monuments. King's monuments are still present all over the city.

In Austria, we examine the Mauthausen Memorial,[3] a Nazi concentration camp from World War II period, whose sub-camps were spread throughout the country. It was a place of forced labour, extermination and horror. We also researched the Jasenovac Memorial Site. Jasenovac was a camp run by the Ustasha, the Croat collaborators of the Nazis in World War II, and it was the largest concentration and extermination camp complex in Independent State of Croatia (Nezavisna Država Hrvatska, NDH). At least 83,145 people were killed there.[4] Former Yugoslavia during the 1990s is defined by the Srebrenica genocide of 1995. Additionally, there are hundreds of other genocidal sites in the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, locations where the systematic killing of Muslims (men, women, and children), rapes and other atrocities occurred. We visited Prijedor in "Republika Srpska," where the genocide of Muslim children was committed by the Serbian paramilitary forces of "Republika Srpska."

The second part presents a series of workshops that we organized and conducted in all three territories.

Finally, **the third part** consists of interviews. The interviews are divided into four sections: the majority are those covering the territories of Belgium, Austria, and the former Yugoslavia, as well in relation to Spain.

3 "About Us," Mauthausen Memorial, accessed 1 April 2020, https://www.mauthausen-memorial.org/en/About-us/Organisation.

4 "List of Individual Victims of Jasenovac Concentration Camp," Jasenovac Memorial Site, accessed 11 July 2020, http://www.jusp-jasenovac.hr/Default.aspx?sid=6711.

These interviews were carried out in the form of collaborative dialogues; forty-five were conducted by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić, twenty by Marina Gržinić alone, three by Tjaša Kancler and one by Šefik Tatlić.

Knowing their activist, decolonial, and trans* position, we asked Tjaša Kancler to conduct three interviews in Spain. Francoist Spain, or the Francoist dictatorship, named after Francisco Franco (1892–1975), a general who ruled Spain from 1939 to 1975 (the period from the Nationalist victory in the Spanish Civil War until his death), was also one of the leading anti-Communist figures in the world during the Cold War. His regime was supported by the West, especially by the United States. After World War II, several Nazi collaborators, including Ante Pavelić, the fascist leader of the NDH and Jasenovac concentration camp, found asylum in Francoist Spain.[5] After Franco's death, a cultural movement called La Movida Madrileña, along with the growth of the gay rights movement in the rest of Europe and the Western world, played a significant role in creating the Spain of today.[6]

Muzaffer Hasaltay made the recordings in Belgrade, Serbia and Brussels, Belgium in 2018, Zlatan Filipović, Adnan Peco, Haris Sahačić made the recordings of the interviews in Sarajevo, the interviews in Kosovo were recorded by Matko Bulent, Ivana Jandrić recorded the workshop in Zagreb at the Center for Women's Studies, and then Valerija Zabret took over the recordings. The three interviews in Spain were recorded and edited by Tjaša Kancler.

The editing of seventy-nine digital units was managed by Marina Gržinić and Valerija Zabret. Each dialogue-interview is edited as a text, with sub-chapters and notes.

The digital archive enables cross-referencing and offers links to the related materials, allowing access from different perspectives and points of departure: territorial, personal, and topical. After in-depth research,

5 Raanan Rein, *Argentine Jews Or Jewish Argentines? Essays on Ethnicity, Identity, and Diaspora* (Leiden and Boston: Brill), 87n56.

6 "LGBT rights in Spain," Wikipedia, updated 4 June 2020, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGBT_rights_in_Spain.

we asked people to talk with us (of course, dozens refused); the orientation questions were submitted.

We humbly recognize their ideas and essential commitment. As well we decided that NO perpetrator would be given a voice within our project: no turbo-nationalists, fascists, sexists, racists, or antisemite villains will ever be given a space within our project.

This was also an approach consistent with the new ways of establishing the form of these archives that no longer just involves "talking heads."

This book will be presented at the exhibition *Stories of Traumatic Pasts – Counter-Archives for Future Memories* at the Weltmuseum Wien (7 October 2020 – 03 April 2021), which is also part of this PEEK project. Via mobile phone, the viewer will be able to access to forty-two dialogues in English, so that they can listen to them without watching, as something alive and accessible, as well as spoken word, sound, a stream of thoughts. The accessibility of this material within the exhibition is threefold: the visitor can scan the QR code with their mobile phone and listen to forty-two interviews in English as a radio programme; they can sit in the exhibition "study room" and read the sixty-four excerpts from the interviews published in the exhibition catalogue; or they can access all eighty-two digital units in the exhibition's study room. This book, the exhibition, and the catalogue will be an essential source of visibility for the project and for the Academy, and thus develop the potential for critical discourse and contemporary art through the mechanisms of oral history, documentation, and display. It is important to mention that some of these interviews have already appeared in the book *Opposing Colonialism, Antisemitism, and Turbo-Nationalism: Rethinking the Past for New Conviviality*,[7] which was the result of the second year of our PEEK research.

The archive is a collection of digital and digitized materials that address the subjects and objects, territories, and the events of oblivion and amnesia. As a result, the book *Dialogues for the Future: Countering the*

7 See Marina Gržinić, Jovita Pristovšek and Sophie Uitz, eds., *Opposing Colonialism, Antisemitism, and Turbo-Nationalism: Rethinking the Past for New Conviviality* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2020).

Genealogy of Amnesia takes further different narrative methodologies, creating a very intense dialogue with the future to come. It is intended to be an essential methodological tool, as well as a site of dialogues for the future. The Academy of Fine Arts Vienna served as the research location and was involved in the publication of the book. Our work with the Centre for Cultural Decontamination (CZKD), Belgrade in 2018 while conducting interviews in Belgrade and now as co-publisher has created an extremely strong collaborative relationship; CZKD is an organization of the utmost integrity and emancipatory political commitment. We would like to thank all those running the CZKD (Aleksandra Sekulić in particular) for endorsing the project proposal of co-publishing and handling the postproduction of the book. Our sincere thanks also go to the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna and the Rectorate for their support and, of course, to the PEEK programme and the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) for awarding a grant to this research project as a whole. Last but not least, we wish to thank all those who so generously offered us their knowledge, their views, their histories, their time, and thoughts. Their colossal engagement and strength is both inspiring and liberating. In the post-COVID-19, neoliberal, necrocapitalist world, where structural racism reigns, where people and spaces are exploited, and bodies are being disposed, we instead turn toward tracing paths for the future, its contingency, and its possibilities.

Marina Gržinić

CONTEXTUALISATION

In the period from 2018 to 2020, we focused on exploring the genealogies and histories of currently dominant memory discourses, commemoration culture(s), and historical revisionism(s) in three European territories: Austria, Belgium, and the former Yugoslavia. Our main focus was on how to cope with the histories of the Nazi past, colonial history, and the history of the establishment of nation-states in the former Yugoslavia in the so-called post-socialist period of the 1990s. In these terms, "amnesia" does not imply that the bloody parts of these histories are "forgotten," but rather that the project sought to uncover what kinds of ideological and epistemic forms of logic appear behind various relativizations, erasures, or morbid glorification of the periods

in the histories tackled. What is immensely important is that the project "Countering the Genealogy of Amnesia" sought to explore structural connections between those ideologies, practices, and epistemologies of (imperial and racial) oppression and persecution that are – whether in mainstream historiography, critical theory or generally in the field of mainstream social and historical research – often regarded as unconnected or structurally unconnected. Hence the purpose of this book is to offer extensive insight into otherwise publicly (online) accessible sixty-six interviews, workshops, and workshop presentations, as well as memorial site tours, and to serve as a "hard-copy" iteration of its web-based archive. Concerning Belgium, the project hosted several interviewees who talked about Belgium's colonial past and genocide committed in Congo during the rule of King Leopold II of Belgium; about the connections between the Crusades and the rationalization of colonial history; about the perseverance of racism and the glorification of colonial reminders present in the Belgian public space in the form of various monuments, as well as about contemporary decolonial movements seeking both to expose the colonial history and to end its glorification. Also, as has been noted with a critical undertone, a critique of one particular European colonial legacy is not enough in the perspective of the continued lack of a critique of European colonialism as a systemic whole. In Austria, the project hosted several interviewees that spoke about the Austrian history of (not) coming to terms with the Nazi past and active participation in the Third Reich's structures and the Holocaust (Shoah). Interviewees from Austria spoke about the impact of the now seemingly discredited first victim (of Nazi Germany) myth on this history and about well known, but also not so well known, political scandals or affairs that were hallmarks of this long and arduous process of confrontation with the Nazi past. The interviewees also tackled questions concerning the origins of both antisemite and other racisms, which were seen as pre-dating World War II and the Nazi era. We talked about Austrian colonial endeavours, tackled the correlations between various forms of antisemite, anti-Muslim and generally xenophobic racism, as well as structural connections between far-right ideologies and neoliberalism.

Regarding the former Yugoslavia, the project "Countering the Genealogy of Amnesia" hosted several interviewees who articulated the

mainstream memory discourses and politics of historical revisionism as being closely structurally related to the patterns of reproduction of capitalism and corresponding ideological narratives in the region. As was observed by the many interviewed, amnesia (in terms of an intentional "forgetting" of the past) does not play any role in the processes of coping with the past, giving way instead to the often blatant glorification of the reactionary regimes and the war crimes. This is most noticeably observable in the case of the glorification of genocides committed during the 1990s in the name of the turbo-fascist project of the Greater Serbia and the rehabilitation of the fascist Chetnik movement from World War II in the case of Serbia (and the "Serb Republic"), and in relation to the ongoing process of rehabilitation of the fascist, genocidal Ustasha regime of the World War II era and the normalization of racism and fascist ideology in the case of Croatia. Slovenia is not an exception in this respect. The reinvigorated nationalist tendencies to rehabilitate the collaborators of the Nazis in WWII, the so called Slovene Home Guard (»Domobranci«), are manifestly present in 2020 even by the Slovene government (especially the Prime Minister Janez Janša).

As explained by many interviewees, historical revisionism, mostly about the (defamation of) socialist past (and flirting with the fascist movements from the past), is present in the entire space of former Yugoslavia and based on almost identical forms of ideological logic and political practices. These were seen as supported or encouraged by the "twin totalitarianisms" paradigm that equals fascism and communism and that, since it "comes" from the First World of capital, presents an excuse for a plethora of revisionist transgressions.

Šefik Tatlić

CODA

We hope this book will contribute to establishing links between the antagonization of racism/fascism and the critique of (neoliberal) global necrocapitalism as a colonial, racial system of dominance. It means that we are calling for the severing of ties between Eurocentric episte-

mology and its monopoly on the definition of class-sensitive, as well as feminist and LGBT*QI discourses.

An option for the future lies in connections between anti-colonial discourses in the Third World and the anti-capitalist discourses from the First World that oppose universalized narratives of modernity, progress, and reason and hence oppose the colonial division of the world and extremely disparate distribution of rights, resources and wealth.

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PART I

GENOCIDES

Collectif Mémoire Coloniale et Lutte contre les Discriminations
4 May 2018, Brussels, Belgium

Jasenovac Memorial Site
29 May 2019, Jasenovac, Croatia

Prijedor: White Armband Day
31 May 2019, Prijedor, Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mauthausen Memorial
11 October 2019, Mauthausen, Austria

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COLLECTIF MÉMOIRE COLONIALE ET LUTTE CONTRE LES DISCRIMINATIONS

4 May 2018, Brussels, Belgium
Interview by Marina Gržinić

The Collectif Mémoire Coloniale et Lutte contre les Discriminations (the Collective Colonial Memory and Fight against Discrimination) is a decolonial movement, formed by several African associations in Flanders, Brussels and Wallonia.

EXCERPT FROM THE GUIDED TOUR

Kalvin Soiresse Njall: In the public space there are many tributes to the people who conducted colonization, who killed many people, but we do not have tributes to people who fought against colonization, black people, and white people. This is so because they used to tell us, you know, that all people were in favour of colonization in those years and we used to tell them that is not true.

[TRIBUTES]

We do not have tributes like this for people who fought against colonization, like communists who were anti-colonialists, like some liberals,

like Paul Otlet,[1] and the government was against them. For example, Paul Otlet lost his job because he was an anti-colonialist. So, we want to see some tributes given to Patrice Lumumba, for example, to Simon Kimbangu,[2] for example, to Queen Nzinga[3] who fought against the Portuguese, in the public space. It is very, very important for us, and for all the Belgian society because now we are in big denial of this history. In the schools, in public spaces, in the museums, in the institutions, even in politics, there are people who are very ignorant of this history or are very cynical about it. That is why [and what] we are fighting for and that's why we begin here. So, here you have this building, which was the headquarters of the colonial administration. People who wanted to go to the Congo used to come here to get the papers, like, if they wanted to work in the Congo. Because in those times the propaganda said that going to Congo was a "civilizing mission," to civilize the black people who are savages. It was propagated that the service to the colonial system would make people rich. The propaganda told the poor people here that they would be the masters there and that they will have a lot of money. It is very true because after the independence, I used to say that after the independence, it was a big trauma and, psychologically, many Belgians had psychological problems because they were there, they were masters served by black people and, one day, it was all gone. They had to go back to Belgium. Some white people did not even know Belgium because they were born there, served by black people and it was a big trauma for them. So, here [next to the previous building] we can see the Constitutional court. There is not a single marking there saying it was a colonial building, and it is what we are fighting for too. Because, in the public space, they want to erase many, many marks of colonialism because of the shame they feel now and because of our struggle now. They do not want to have visible marks in the public space. And, it is very, very important. In 1955, a university professor whose name was Jef van Bilsen,[4] made a statement telling the political and economic establishment that all the colonies around us are moving away, the Congo Braz-

1 Paul Marie Ghislain Otlet (1868–1944) was a Belgian author, entrepreneur, lawyer, peace activist and author of the Universal Decimal Classification; he is considered the father of information science (Wikipedia).

2 Simon Kimbangu (1887–1951) was a Congolese religious leader, a founder of a separatist Kimbanguist Church (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

3 Nzinga Mbande or Queen Nzinga (1583–1663) was a 17th-century queen of the Ndongo and Matamba Kingdoms of the Mbundu people in what is known as Angola today (Wikipedia).

4 In December 1955, a Belgian professor Anton Arnold Jozef "Jef" Van Bilsen (1913–1996) proposed a 30-year plan (called "Van Bilsen Plan") to prepare the Congo for autonomy in the context of its transition from the Belgian Congo (Wikipedia).

zaville, the French colonies, and we are managing things like nothing is happening in Africa. We have to prepare the independence of Congo, we have to prepare cultural, political and the economic emancipation of the Congolese.

[TRAITORS]

In the parliament and in the political establishment they regarded him as a traitor to his country because he dared to imagine that one day the Congolese will be free. It was inconceivable for the Belgian political establishment. It is why, after the independence, there was a big denial and it was because of the mythical speech of Patrice Lumumba.[5] So, we will not go to the statue of Godfrey of Bouillon[6] because Godfrey of Bouillon was the inspiration for Leopold II. Here is the Place Royale [Royal Square] and this whole area is a triangle. It was an area where the colonials who came back from the Congo and they were spending their holidays here in those years. Now it is very ironic that Matongé,[7] for example, is a cultural centre for the descendants of people who were colonized. So, here we are in front of [the statue of] Godfrey of Bouillon, he was the chief of the First Crusade against the Muslims and Jews in Jerusalem. And he was a big inspiration to Leopold II, because Leopold II said that Godfrey of Bouillon was the first who gave Belgium its first colony. For him, Jerusalem was a Belgium's colony.

[THE COLONIAL SPIRIT]

I want to show you how the colonial spirit was already present, but now it is too. In 2005 the minister of foreign affairs, Karel de Gucht,[8] went to Jerusalem to bring back the sword of Godfrey of Bouillon because...

5 Patrice Lumumba delivered his speech on 30 June 1960; it marked the independence of Congo-Léopoldville (today's DR Congo) from Belgium. See Patrice Lumumba, "Speech at the Ceremony of the Proclamation of the Congo's Independence: June 30, 1960," Marxist Internet Archive, accessed 5 June 2019, https://www.marxists.org/subject/africa/lumumba/1960/06/independence.htm.

6 Matongé is a part of the municipality of Ixelles in Brussels, Belgium, formed in the late 50s and known for its Congolese community. It is named after the marketplace and the commercial district in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of the Congo (Wikipedia).

7 Karel Lodewijk Georgette Emmerence De Gucht (1954) is a Belgian politician who served as European Commissioner for Trade from February 2010 until October 2014. Prior to that, he served as Belgian Foreign Minister from 2004 to 2009 (Wikipedia).

Marina Gržinić: So, it is the continuity of this colonial mind...

Soiresse Njall: Colonial spirit, yes, the colonial mind is very, very, very present...

Gržinić: Because the crusaders also committed genocide...

Soiresse Njall: Yes, yes, they killed thousands and thousands of people, yes. After the independence of Belgium in 1830, against the Netherlands, they wanted some symbols to unite the people and one of the symbols... Because, in the 12th, 13th and 14th century, Godfrey of Bouillon was considered a murderer, as a genocide perpetrator, but they changed his image, making him one of the symbols of the unity of Belgium, you know. They used him as one of the symbols justifying the colonial project. And it is why he is considered as the inspiration of Leopold II. This statue was made by an architect called Eugène Simonis [Louis-Eugène Simonis (1810–1893)] after whom the metro station here was named and he was inaugurated by a noble called Félix de Merode and you can find a metro station in the east of Brussels named after him, called Merode station.

Gržinić: So, all the names and monuments of these people are in a public place?

Soiresse Njall: Yes, streets, squares, place, names of metro and bus stations are named after these people, and all it is like that all around Brussels, all around Belgium, in all the cities, even in the institutions, the buildings in which the institutions are placed, there are many marks of colonialism.

Kalvin Soiresse Njall (1982) is a member of the Brussels French-speaking Parliament. He is a co-founder of the Collectif Mémoire Coloniale et Lutte contre les Discriminations, and was its coordinator from 2012 to 2017.

JASENOVAC MEMORIAL SITE

29 May 2019, Jasenovac, Croatia
Reasearch by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

The Jasenovac Memorial Site compiles and researches as well as preserves the museum buildings and exhibits documents of the Jasenovac camp history. It is located near the former Jasenovac concentration camp, Camp III (Brickworks), in Jasenovac, Croatia. The Jasenovac Memorial Site is also responsible for the originally preserved camp building named "The Tower," the Stara Gradiška Camp cemetery, the Roma cemetery in Uštica, and the mass graves in Krapje, Mlaka and Jablanac.[1]

THE JASENOVAC CAMP COMPLEX

On 10 April 1941, after the collapse of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia, the so-called Independent State of Croatia (Nezavisna Država Hrvatska, NDH) was established, under the leadership of the Poglavnik, Ante Pavelić, and with the full support of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy. In its first four years, the NDH was ruled by the Ustasha that came into being in the 1930s in the Croatian émigré circles in Italy, Austria and Hungary. The majority of the organisation's members were supporting

1 "Jasenovac Memorial Site," Jasenovac Memorial Site, accessed 2 April 2020, http://www.jusp-jasenovac.hr/Default.aspx?sid=6468.

the Croatian Rights Party's policies, whose leader Ante Pavelić was an immigrant in Italy from 1929 until 1941. Gradually strengthening their power, Ustasha carried out a number of terrorist operations, including the organisation of the 1932 Velebit Uprising, and the assassination of King Alexander Karađorđević in 1934 in Marseilles.[2]

Within the NDH, Ustasha established an efficient administrative, military and police apparatus in order to achieve the planned nationalist, fascist, terrorist and genocidal policies.[3] On the territory of the NDH, all in all, about 30 concentration camps were established. These camps were used to exterminate Jews, Serbs, Roma, and other non-Catholic minorities (excluding Muslims who were regarded as Croats of Islamic faith), as well as Croatian political and religious opponents of the regime.

The Jasenovac camp complex was established in late August 1941 as a string of five camps on the banks of the Sava River, approximately 60 miles south of Zagreb. It became known as the "Auschwitz of Balkans," and it was run solely by the Ustasha regime. It was the largest NDH's concentration (*sabirni logor*) and extermination camp complex. [4]

In late August 1941, the first two camps of the Jasenovac complex, Krapje and Bročica, were built, and both were closed down four months later. In November 1941, Ciglana camp was established and dismantled in April 1945. The Kozara camp was established in February 1942 and dismantled in April 1945. The last of the five camps of the complex is Stara Gradiška, which was an independent holding centre for political prisoners since the summer of 1941. In the winter of 1942, Stara Gradiška was converted into a concentration camp for women,[5] and children.

"Between 1941 and 1943, Croatian authorities deported Jews from throughout the so-called Independent State to Jasenovac and shot many of them at the nearby killing sites of Granik and Gradina. The camp complex management spared those Jews who possessed special

2 "The Ustashas," Jasenovac Memorial Site, accessed 2 April 2020, http://www.jusp-jasenovac.hr/Default.aspx?sid=6802.
3 Ibid.
4 "Jasenovac," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, accessed 2 April 2020, https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/jasenovac.
5 Ibid.

skills or training, such as physicians, electricians, carpenters, and tailors. In two deportation operations, in August 1942 and in May 1943, Croat authorities permitted the Germans to transfer most of Croatia's surviving Jews (about 7,000 in total), including most of those still alive in Jasenovac, to Auschwitz-Birkenau in German-occupied Poland."[6] It is estimated that the Ustasha regime killed 77,000–99,000 people in the Jasenovac camp alone between 1941 and 1945.[7] Many important documents have been destroyed and lost, a number of those preserved, remain inaccessible for the most of the independent scholars, due to "the ideological agendas of postwar partisan scholarship and journalism, which has been and remains influenced by ethnic tensions, religious prejudices, and ideological conflicts."[8]

At the end of April 1945, the Partisan Resistance Movement commanded by Josip Broz Tito approached Jasenovac. Several hundred prisoners rose up. Many have been killed during the uprising, and a few managed to escape. Most of the prisoners that managed to survive were executed by the guards before the last three camps were dismantled at the end of the April. In early May 1945, Jasenovac was overrun by the Partisans. [9]

Following the collapse of the NDH in May 1945, some Ustasha members fled to exile, some were arrested and convicted for war crimes, while others died during Ustasha, Chetnik and civilian retreats towards the Austrian border.[10]

6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
8 Ibid.
9 Ibid.
10 "The Ustashas," Jasenovac Memorial Site, accessed 2 April 2020, http://www.jusp-jasenovac.hr/Default.aspx?sid=6802.

PRIJEDOR: WHITE ARMBAND DAY

31 May 2019, Prijedor, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Research by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Prijedor, a town located in north-west of Bosnia and Herzegovina, is the site of the second largest genocide committed during the Balkan Wars, while the largest one is the Srebrenica genocide (11–22 July 1995; Bosniak men and boys; 8,372 deaths).

Shortly before the takeover of Prijedor, Serb forces relieved the non-Serbs, Muslims and Bosnian Croats of all their official positions, many were fired and the children prevented from going to school. Radios broadcasted anti-Muslim and anti-Croat propaganda.[1]

Following the takeover of Prijedor municipality on 30 April 1992, Serb forces confined thousands of non-Serb civilians in the Omarska, Keraterm and Trnopolje camps.[2]

The war crimes in Prijedor were subjected to 13 trials before the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY).

1 Kvočka et al. (IT-98-30/1), "Omarska, Keraterm & Trnopolje Camps," 7, http://www.icty.org/x/cases/kvocka/cis/en/cis_kvocka_al_en.pdf.
2 "Bridging the Gap in Prijedor, Bosnia and Herzegovina," International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, accessed 2 April 2020, https://www.icty.org/en/outreach/bridging-the-gap-with-local-communities/prijedor.

EXCERPT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL TRIBUNAL FOR THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA CASE INFORMATION SHEET

"On 23 May 1992, Serb forces attacked and gained control of the largely Muslim village of Hambarine, eventually resulting in the displacement of approximately 20,000 non-Serbs. The following day, a successful attack was launched on the town of Kozarac, which was again situated in a predominantly Muslim area (approximately 27,000 non-Serbs lived in the wider Kozarac area and of the 4,000 inhabitants of the town itself, 90% were Muslim). A large number of Muslim citizens of these areas who did not succeed in fleeing in the face of the assaults were rounded up, taken into custody and detained in one of the three camps which were the subject of this case. To avert any desire for resistance by the Croats, and especially the Muslims, the Serbs interrogated any non-Serb who might present a threat, and arrested in particular any persons exerting authority, moral or otherwise, or representing some kind of power, in particular economic. At the same time, the men were separated from the women, children and elderly. Men in particular were interrogated. The Serbs assembled the non-Serbs who had not left the region in detention centres. This is how the camps of Omarska, Keraterm and Trnopolje were established.

The three camps were officially established on 30 May 1992 by Simo Drljača. Omarska was located in a former mining complex in a village of the same name, approximately 25 kilometres from the town of Prijedor. Planned initially to function for a fortnight, it in fact remained in operation until about 20 August 1992. During this period, more than 3,334 detainees passed through the camp, including approximately thirty-six women, many of whom were prominent in local affairs. All those detained were interrogated. Almost all were beaten. Many did not leave the camp alive. The mistreatment in Omarska was constant and widespread and began with the arrival of the detainees. As soon as they arrived, the prisoners were usually beaten, or in any case mistreated, as if to demonstrate to them straight away that they were not to be considered human beings. They were beaten as they were led out of the bus

which brought them to the camp; they were lined up against the wall and often had identity documents or money stolen from them; they were made to sing Serb songs; they were made to sit on the ground or even lie face down on the burning asphalt for hours without being allowed to move or find something to drink.

They were interrogated. They were punched, kicked with boots, beaten with rifle butts and other objects. [...] There were no real toilets and they had to use buckets or the corner of a room to relieve themselves, or else soil themselves. The sick or wounded detainees received little or no treatment. In general the men were wasted, weakened, and exhausted from living in a climate of violence and fear. Some women were molested and/or raped. There was no area of the camp where a detainee could feel safe or, quite simply, hope to avoid beatings or subjection to some form of violence. Detainees taken to the 'White House' were almost always beaten, usually ferociously. The men were tortured in front of each other. Sometimes they were made to beat one another. A father was beaten to death in front of his son. The men shrieked with pain. There was blood on the walls and on the ground. The men who came out of there alive had open wounds, could not stand or were unconscious. The corpses removed from there had open wounds to the skull, severed joints, slit throats. Some of the victims were ultimately executed with a bullet. [...]

The evidence demonstrated that Omarska, Keraterm and Trnopolje camps were not an accident; that they were not set up by chance but that they were a result of an intentional policy to impose a system of discrimination against the non-Serb population of Prijedor."[3]

WHITE ARMBAND DAY

The White Armband day commemorates the events that took place on 31 May 1992 in the Prijedor municipality. On that day the Serb authorities imposed a forceful directive, instructing the non-Serb population, mainly Bosniaks and Croats, to display white sheets on their homes and

3 The paragraphs are an excerpt quoted from ICTY's case information sheet. Kvočka et al. (IT-98-30/1), 7–8, "Omarska, Keraterm & Trnopolje Camps," http://www.icty.org/x/cases/kvocka/cis/en/cis_kvocka_al_en.pdf.

to carry white armbands in all public spaces. This fascist campaign, in a way equal in brutality to the campaign against the Jews during World War II, was an introduction into the ethnic cleansing of the non-Serb population and the genocide against Bosniaks in Prijedor area. White Armband Day is being commemorated in numerous cities in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as in numerous cities worldwide.[4]

EXCERPT FROM VISIT ON WHITE ARMBAND DAY

A woman attending the commemorative event: Everything that was happening in the Second World War, what Hitler had been doing against the non-German populations, was the same as everything Serbs have done during the last war in Prijedor – the Jews were forced to wear yellow armbands, and we were forced to were these white armbands during the last war. Not only those children were murdered, but around 4,000 citizens were murdered in Prijedor and not only that, we suffered the same destiny as Srebrenica. They should be afraid and ashamed of everything they did in Prijedor. The whole world should hear about everything that took place here. The world was then turning deaf to everything that happened in Prijedor, but at least now everything that took place here should become known in the name of all victims from Hambarine, Čarakovo, Kozarac, all the other places. We did not come here to seek justice, but the time has come for the media to get unblocked, to disseminate the truth about what happened in Prijedor.

Goran Zorić: Today's gathering, same as six previous ones, was organized by the "Because I Care" initiative [...] Today's event, same as previous years, is dedicated to the support of the initiative of the parents of murdered children that demands a monument in remembrance of 102 killed children to be constructed in the centre of Prijedor. [...] In 2012, Emir Hodžić, who is a performer, stood alone at the square wearing a white armband. Since then this massive commemorative event started to take shape. This event refers to 31st May 1992, when Serb authorities ordered all non-Serb citizens to display white bed-sheets on their

4 "Dan bijelih traka," Wikipedia, updated 31 May 2020, https://bs.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dan_bijelih_traka.

homes and wear white armbands when leaving their homes. This gathering clearly outlines the brutality of what happened in Prijedor. This brutality involved systemic crime, which consisted of not only propaganda but also concentration camps, ethnic cleansing etc. Around 3,176 civilians were murdered in Prijedor during the last war, out of which 102 were children.

Goran Zorić is a co-founder of "Because I care initiative." He works with issues concerning confrontation with the past and human rights.

MAUTHAUSEN MEMORIAL

11 October 2019, Mauthausen, Austria
Interview by Marina Gržinić

The Mauthausen Memorial is a site of remembrance and education, preserving the memory of the victims and examining, documenting and exhibiting the history of the Mauthausen Concentration Camp. The concentration camp was a central component of the system of more than 40 sub-camps, and the central site of political, social and racial persecution by the National Socialist regime in Austria from 1938 to 1945. Of a total of 190,000 people imprisoned here, at least 90,000 were killed.[1]

EXCERPT FROM THE GUIDED TOUR

Christian Dürr: We are now in the basement of the former infirmary building. Infirmary building means that it was a place for certain groups of prisoners who had special functions, important functions who the SS wanted to recover, so to say, it was not for everybody, obviously. This infirmary was also a huge hospital, very well equipped as we know, very modern for its time and we could ask ourselves why to have a modern

1 "About Us," Mauthausen Memorial, accessed 16 June 2020, https://www.mauthausen-memorial.org/en/About-us/Organisation.

equipped hospital in a concentration camp? The answer is not so clear but one part of the answer, an important part of the answer certainly is that it was also a place for the formation of SS physicians, of SS doctors. So, they were educated and formed here as SS doctors and this is why this place was so very well equipped as a hospital. It was also a place for medical experiments on prisoners, with different means, vaccination experiments, nutrition experiments, for example, took place here. Nowadays, it is an exhibition place, so, this exhibit was installed here in 2013 and its purpose is to prepare visitors who visit the following rooms what expects them there. Because the rooms that follow this exhibition are the crematoriums, to prepare the spectators cognitively, so to say, and to give them information about what is to be expected there, how to understand it, contextualize it and also to prepare them emotionally for what is going to come.

[Points at the sign "Former Killing Area and Memorial Rooms 'Room of Names.'"]

So, we are now in the crematorium area. This crematorium oven was installed very lately in the camp's history, in 1945, so very close to the liberation, so it did not function for a long time. But, symbolically nowadays it is a very important place in which you can see all the plaques that have been installed here.

[Points at numerous plaques that commemorate victims from Israel, Yugoslavia, etc., as well as those that contain photographs and the names of victims.]

I think this place also refers to something, which I tried to point out in our interview before, that the oven as such speaks of the traumatic quality of this place, I think, and the plaques for me speak of the obvious necessity of filling this traumatic void with some symbolic interventions. These are mostly visual, showing faces of people; showing dates, personal dates; showing, so to say, what has been lost, what is not here anymore.

This is a special commemoration place, which was installed here also in 2013 at the same time when the permanent exhibition was installed.

Originally this room was used for depositing dead bodies before they have been brought to the crematorium. This idea was picked up by the concept of the architects and nowadays, instead of dead bodies we have the individual names [shows plaques consisting of tens of thousands of names] of all those prisoners who perished here or at least of those we were able to identify. We are talking about some 82,000 names, you can see here on these glass plaques. Also, here are the books in which the names are ordered alphabetically and people are here able to search for individual names. And, the idea was also to set the counterpart, somehow, to this nationally dominated remembrance and commemoration in the monument park. For example, the basic idea is to have some equality, to have a democratic commemoration, so that every individual is worth the same as any other in this room.

[Showing a plaque at the entrance to the gas chamber saying that "Between March 1942 and the end of April 1945, at least 3,455 people were murdered in the gas chamber using poisonous gas. "]

So, we are now in the gas chamber area and through this door you can get into the former gas chamber. The gas chamber in Mauthausen was installed in early 1942 and we know that the first gassing took place here in March of the same year. The first persons who were gassed here were Soviet prisoners of war and many things indicate that the original purpose for installing this gas chamber was also the arrival of Soviet prisoners of war who were exterminated to the huge extent here in Mauthausen. But, throughout the years, different kinds of persecuted were being exterminated in the gas chamber.

For example, a group of civilians, just as one example, a group of Czech civilians was deported here, after the Heydrich assassination.[2] They were civilians who had nothing to do with the assassination itself, they were also gassed here in the gas chamber. Altogether, we know that at least around 3,500 or 4,000 people were in this gas chamber, which

2 Reinhard Tristan Eugen Heydrich (1904–1942), named also "Heydrich the Hangman," was one of the highest-ranking German SS and police officers in the Nazi era, and the main planner of the "final solution." He was fatally wounded in Prague on 27 May 1942 as a result of Operation Anthropoid in which he was ambushed by a team of Czech and Slovak soldiers, trained by the British Special Operations Executive and sent by the Czechoslovak government-in-exile to kill the governor of Bohemia and Moravia (todays Czech Republic); he died of his injuries a week later, and his death led to Gestapo-led reprisals, resulting in the destruction of Lidice village and the mass killing of civilians (Wikipedia).

means that when we are talking about around 90,000 or 95,000 who perished in Mauthausen. The role of the gas chamber in this mass assassination, in this mass extermination was actually a smaller one. So, there were other places where people were being killed at a huge extent, but at the same, it was not so much in the gas chamber. Nowadays, after many decades the gas chamber was always in the centre of a visit to the Memorial site. With the new concept of the exhibition and the new conceptualization of the site as such, we have to take away a little bit this focus on the gas chamber, put it more on all the other sites, which have been neglected for many years, such as, for example, the infirmary camp. What we also did within this concept, which was realized in 2013, we blocked the entrance to this gas chamber so you cannot enter it anymore. Before it was possible to go through from both sides and we thought that for ethical reasons, but also for conservation reasons, that it should not happen anymore. So, you cannot enter anymore. We did not block it completely, so anyone could still step over, but this [block at the bottom of the door] works as some kind of a mental barrier, so to say.

The last gassing here took place on the 28th of April 1945. One day later the SS sent the prisoner commando to dismantle all the installations of the gas chamber. So, for example, they dismantled the part with which the gas was introduced from this smaller room to the gas chamber. The ventilation system, which ventilated the gas into the chamber, all this was dismantled, so much evidence of the gas chamber was disappeared, so to say. The chamber itself was still there when the Americans arrived but it was not immediately clear that it was a gas chamber. But, prisoners knew about it, obviously, and prisoners also preserved some of those installations which they had dismantled. For example, the photographs of this apparatus with which the gas was introduced still exist, and they were found after the liberation, so we know about it.

Christian Durr, PhD studied philosophy, history and communication theory at the University of Vienna. From 2001 he has been working as archivist and historian for the Mauthausen Memorial Archives, currently in the role of head curator.

PART II

WORKSHOPS

Memory/History: The Power of Decolonialization, Art and Interventions
3 May 2018, leSpace, Brussels, Belgium

Post-War Nationalism, Memory and History
18 May 2018, Centre for Cultural Decontamination (CZKD), Belgrade, Serbia

Feminism between Nation-States and Capitalism
27 May 2019, Centre for Women's Studies, Zagreb, Croatia

Fighting Racism, Deconstructing White Privilege and Cultural Interventions, Artistic Projects, Political Strategies
On the occasion of 25 years of maiz
12 October 2019, Altes Rathaus, Linz, Austria

MEMORY/HISTORY: THE POWER OF DECOLONIALIZATION, ART AND INTERVENTIONS

3 May 2018, leSpace, Brussels, Belgium
Research by Marina Gržinić; initial support by Nicole Grégoire

Workshop with Monique Mbeka Phoba, Laura Nsengiyumva and Pitcho Womba Konga, with an introduction by Matthias De Groof and Marina Gržinić

Matthias De Groof: This is a workshop which is a part of the project entitled "Genealogy of Amnesia," which explores the politics of oblivion in three contexts, which are: Belgium – colonialism, Austria – antisemitism and Nazism, and ex-Yugoslavia – its pro-turbo-nationalist strategy and the negation of the war crimes in the context of the Balkans and especially Srebrenica.

Marina Gržinić: The idea behind this workshop today, as well as the others that are to come in the next three years, is to actually build an archive that involves three territories, Belgium, Austria and ex-Yugoslavia. This workshop today is a part of that archive, as others will be, and, it consists of the presentation of positions coming from new generations and new patterns of empowerment of subjectivities in all three places; positions that are thinking about traumatic genocides. So we'll talk about three genocides that were perpetrated in the span of a cou-

ple hundred years and it is these genocides that constitute traumatic events of contemporary Europe.

MONIQUE MBEKA PHOBA PRESENTATION AT THE WORKSHOP

Monique Mbeka Phoba: Since I am the one starting this evening, I am going to try to present to you something that is, after all, rather strongly linked to my life and my experience, without going too much into numbers, dates, etc., I have to say that I find rather relevant that this whole activity has been entitled "Genealogy of Amnesia." Why? Because I find that this place where we live, Brussels, or this country, Belgium, is extremely "Leopoldized." Actually, we are still living under the shadow of Leopold II, like in the time when Leopold II launched all his enterprises of colonization of Congo and wanted to convince Belgians and Belgium that it was a good course of action for the economy and the wealth of the country. Well, this is a guy who was nearly thrown out of almost everywhere. He was rejected by the government, which refused to endorse his colonization project; he had to find means to make it a private one. He was absolutely hated, loathed by the Belgian population. They even published a book, unfortunately I couldn't buy it, although I buy as many books as I can, sometimes I lack the means, but, ok, I am trying to get a book which is really about all those caricatures of that king made for the newspapers here in Belgium, in which we see him, but really, with blood dripping from his teeth. So, I want to say that he was really a hated guy, and it needs to be acknowledged that over time he gained such respectability that the moment one dares to touch his statue or his memory or to oppose one of his tributes gets criticized. Still there are, in papers and in the, how should I put it, in the media consequences, there are media repercussions that follow, there is still, in spite of everything, a defense of the king, despite the fact that when he launched all his enterprises there were, without a doubt, three quarters of the population which thought that he was a truly bad king and they didn't want him. It is because of that that I am saying that this guy secured a rather surprising posthumous victory because now we almost feel that we should apologize when we say that this guy was genocidal.

So, I undertook a project about which I am now going to speak in more detail, which is entitled "The Colonization of the Belgian Cinema in the Last Forty Years." Because, actually, when I was making my film, from which we will see a short clip, thanks to this lady here... when I was making that film, I thought that I was making a film about my mother. And since my mother is 73, evidently, she was young during the Colonial Era. Well, for me, it is completely logical that a writer, or a filmmaker, should revisit hers/his childhood years, the years of initiation, the years of intellectual development. We always go back to the beginning of our lives, that is to say, to our childhood and to our parents, so, I stopped myself there.

But this film, once I'd made it, I realized, we could say, that people's perception of this film was a perception that I hadn't at all anticipated, and it went beyond that which I imagined to be a story about a family like all the other families in the world. Only it was a story about a Congolese family, set in the Colonial Era, and I showed the film – where? In Belgium. And because of all those things together I am not saying that it is a film on the right side, but that it is a film which provokes fear, in any case, a film which provokes strong reactions. And, so, I think that I finally decided to make a film about that taboo, since it seemed so extraordinary that it had an effect on the perception of the colonial era, because I received two reactions on the topic. The first one happened when I returned to school at the age of 47 in order to do a Master in Scriptwriting, and my fellow students were in their twenties or thirties, and after lectures we asked each other, "How are you managing, what are your projects, have you managed to make a film," etc. So, I come across one of them and I tell him that I have made a film and I say, "There is the video, watch it and then tell me what you think." I encountered this young man again a few days later, like I've said, he is a thirty-something-year-old, and I asked him, "What did you think about my film? Have you watched it, what do you think about it?" And this gentleman answers me, this young man answers me, "In your film, I didn't see that we whipped the Congolese, so we weren't so bad in Congo." I was taken aback, and I told myself, "I am speaking to a twenty-year-old, thirty-year-old guy and he gives me such an answer?" So, after that remark, I truly perceived the weight, the mental, psychological weight which I thought was only on the shoulders of people in their fifties or sixties, people who are familiar with this history, but I saw

that this history is, actually, on the shoulders of all generations. From the moment when one starts to perceive him/herself as Belgian, one feels like someone who did something not so good in Congo. And at that moment, at some point, the whole relationship that one could have with Congo and the Congolese is phagocytized [engulfed] by that. So, in the case of that young man, actually, I expected him to tell me if the actors have done their job well, if the camera was good, things that we usually discuss with each other. Normally, we talk about that. What I want to say is that when two students get together that is what they talk about, but he didn't talk to me about those things at all. So, it means that my relationship with him was completely swallowed, gobbled up, phagocytized, and there were no means – it was like a sort of a trap – no means for coming out of it because that history wasn't, let's say, wasn't decoded, it wasn't untangled. And so, we are in a sort of a mist, fog, in something that is in my opinion very complex, and very hard. I am soon going to be fifty-five and I have 30 years of history and friendship and love and everything thus I see to which extent it weighs on us, and how hard it is to make it an abstraction. So, indeed, a Belgian who is Belgian is also a Belgian linked to Congo – no matter who they are, how old they are, what their origin is, what their convictions are, what are their relationships, what is their story, a Belgian is defined in relation to Congo.

And when you have understood that, you have understood that this is indeed a very, very interesting title, because despite the fact that it exists, we never talk about it. We never talk about it. So, I told you that I had gotten two reactions; the first one that I have told you about was from that fellow student at the Institute of... Broadcast Arts, where I did my master in script writing [dramaturgy], and the second reaction was from a man who invited my film to Cinémathèque, whose name is Julien Trudeau, and who works at NGO CEC [Cooperation through Education and Culture]. He met with me and told me, "Why did you make a film about the Colonial Era?" I tell him, "But, why are you asking me that, I clearly made a film about my family." He says, "No, no, you made a film about the Colonial Era! Nobody does that!" I said, "Ah!" And then a bulb lit above my head and I thought to myself, "No, I am not the only one; there must be other films of this kind."

LAURA NSENGIYUMVA PRESENTATION AT THE WORKSHOP

Laura Nsengiyumva: So, I wanted to share the figures of the last, very recent study conducted by the Foundation Roi Badouin, which explains that, actually, the communities of people who originally come from the ex-colonies, namely Belgian Congolese, Belgian Rwandan and Belgian Burundi communities, represent the most educated population in Belgium, but with a four times higher unemployment rate than the rest of Belgium, so, those are some tangible proofs that the discrimination exists. And, like Monique [Mbeka Phoba] was saying, we can have these impressions and feelings, but at a certain point, we have to be able to make real political declarations.

This is another project ["Helen"], which also strongly speaks about Brussels. It is a monologue that I had dubbed, dubbed like in TV series and on TV, by all the African women that I could find in Brussels – not all, there are more, we had to limit ourselves. And these voices are dispersed throughout the piece, and, really, the idea was to make a resounding cartography of Brussels... Because it should also be known that Brussels is the second most diverse city in the world, after Dubai; New York comes only in the sixth place on that list. We often talk about that diversity, but we talk, well, about the fact that it is a European capital, but the Africanness of Brussels is rarely highlighted, and its cultural richness is either parodied or a little bit caricaturized. I really wanted to show that cultural richness. Here you see all the names, my friends and my mother did the dubbing; it was really a kind of journey and a kind of encounter; it is really my physical experience in Brussels to hear these languages, to be able to finally tell the difference between them... Lingala, Swahili, Kinyarwanda, Kirundi... All that cultural richness that we can have here in Brussels. Here, we see an installation with people... Here, well, Queen Nikkolah is known here at leSpace, because this, this is at leSpace.

So, Queen Nikkolah, well, it is an alternative to Saint Nicholas, and it is me [laughter]... It was my idea, well... We always talk about the blackness of Black Peter, "Zwarte Piet," but we never talk about the whiteness of Saint Nicholas and the fact that he is male. And, so, I did some re-

search and it turns out that at the root... the real origin of that tradition is a woman who had two faces, who was angelic and demonic at the same time, because she either gave presents to children or punished them; and little by little, over time, that became... well, the character of Black Peter is less than one century old, actually. So, I really wanted to mention these hybridizations of tradition, traditions in general, because we often cling to it by saying, "But it is history," and since Belgium is a young country we have to invent that identity a little bit. And I imagine a future – I live that reality, but it is apparently a future – a world without discrimination could have, where roles would be interchangeable, Black Peter could also be the one who gives presents, and a woman could also do that job, because deep down, I only wanted to do Saint Nicholas' job...

And what brings me here – and I am very happy to share it with you – is a project which still hasn't been realized. It is not my custom to talk about projects which haven't been realized, but I have to do it in order to protect myself from censorship, because I have been fighting for this project since 2016 and I have noticed that collective mobilizations is what will protect me from censorship. I am also showing it to you today in order to invite you to see it and to mobilize you, because we never know where the key to the problem might be, maybe it is here among you, you never know. What is it about?

The context is Leopold II. Here, among us here, we are preaching to the choir, we can all, more or less, say that we know what our reality is. Nevertheless, we live in a society which doesn't always notices where the problem lies. And still there are publications, articles which are pretty pro-Leopold II, we don't realize it, but, really, there are municipalities etc., which still do homages to Leopold II, and his statues are still adorned with flowers. And I talked to a friend about it – we don't know *who* adorns these statues. There is also the fact that we find ourselves in an urban fabric where he really left his mark, and all this architectural heritage that surrounds us, which we enjoy... and it is also a bit like this: their silence is bought, there is this myth of "the Builder King," and the people of Brussels simply don't allow themselves to be critical since they love these buildings, they are attached to them.

So, here we see: Parc du Cinquantenaire, the Africa Museum, the Venetian Galleries in Ostend, and there are many more. Personally, I am not really the advocate of starting again from the scratch; as an architect, I also understand the architectural quality of these buildings, because it is not typical Belgian architecture, and it should be known that the architecture from that period is a pretty generic architecture, because it was built in the spirit of competition with other cities like Paris etc. So, Le Parc du Cinquantenaire is not a park made in a typical Belgian style, it is a park made in a universal style. It is necessary to know all these issues connected to heritage in order to relativize them. And it is not the reason why we should not love them. Personally, I decided to feel even more at home there, when I am there.

And there is also this... which, I think, doesn't buy the silence, but it contributes to perpetuating, generation after generation, the idea that this man is important. This is just a part, and there are many more, and it would really be an enormous task to make a cartography of the profusion of these statues. I call them "propaganda selfies," because that is what they are; they were made at his request, for him, so that they could support the colonial myth. And, well, there is always the argument, "But, it is history, it is history"; who here knows the face of Leopold III or the First? We don't know them, because they are not at every corner of the city, so, it is not history, it is just him.

Here, the project starts here. When I was passing by this statue, I got a desire to knock him off his pedestal and – well, it was a metaphoric gesture in my head – to really turn the base of the statue upside down... And, so, a bit later, the idea became more precise and so I imagined the statue, a replica of that statue in ice, with a base on top which would emit light in order to melt it until it became a puddle of water. I am saying all this because it is a temporary piece which should live before, during and after its realization, it is a gesture really, and, well, now there are no surprises.

What do I want to express by this piece? What does this light that melts the statue represent? For me, it is an homage to the partisans of the decolonial thought. Partisans of the past, because, as Monique explained very well, critics also existed in the past. We are made to believe that those ideas are new or particular to the African community, but it isn't

true. I found two examples of the caricatures that Monique spoke of, here they are, and it should be known that they already existed in those times and they didn't conform to the propaganda of Leopold II, and in order to do all these enormous works he also had to destroy a lot of the heritage, and we will never see those things again.

PITCHO WOMBA KONGA PRESENTATION AT THE WORKSHOP

Pitcho Womba Konga: Because I grew up here, there are others who were born here, other Congolese, people of Congolese origin who were born here, who have their history here, I grew up here, I have my history here, and at a certain moment I thought to myself, "If I need to document myself, to know who my parents are, what my origins are, and I don't have the money for a ticket to Congo, I have this museum. And I can either get frightened by it and it will become a place where I will never set my foot in again and I will leave it to others or I will re-appropriate it at a certain moment." That is to say, even though I know what is going on there... there is material, it is necessary to work on it, it is necessary to change; either I leave it or I re-appropriate it, I take it back. And what I wanted to do with the project "Héritage"... I said to myself, "I am going to put 25 people there, we are going inside, we are going to visit this museum, and then we are going to spit out everything we have to spit out, we are going to say what we have to say. And it is a way for me, for us, to re-appropriate this museum. Because things don't change overnight, they change little by little, and it is interesting that not all at this museum is fit for the bin: there are really very cool people there, like Isabelle Van Loo, like Bambi Ceuppens etc.

But there is something interesting, something that is problematic, and it is the fact that Isabelle Van Loo, who enabled us to realize the project "Héritage," who let a number of artists from our urban milieu to get inside the museum, is the same person who was in charge of the Youth Section. And for me, now, there is a true resonance... that is... I see it also in the connection with urban milieu: every time when we are dealing with these things which are, in a way, connected to immigrants or refugees, to foreigners, there is something like, "Ah, in fact, those are children, so, we are going to give them a place in the Youth Section,

because it is cool, it is great, it is colorful." And, in fact, yes, it is just a stage in the process, I think, and I am not critiquing Isabelle Van Loo, I think she had a tool which enabled us to get inside, but I see it now, with hindsight, and I tell myself, "In fact, it does mean something, it really is something very strong and very powerful."

And these thoughts were also connected with the Congolese diaspora, with all these people who didn't have their own space. It should be known that today, here, in the music domain, there is an organization called Africalia, which has been here for a long time, and that every time when an African person wants to talk about their life experience, they always send them to Africalia. But I wanted to talk about stories that didn't necessarily have a direct connection to Congo. I wanted to talk about stories which were connected to me, here, today, now, in Brussels. About how I could write myself into this place, now, in Belgium. And, in fact, there is no space for that. I became aware of that fact, the fact that there is no space for that, very early on. And after that – and I am really grateful for having been introduced to the European culture and that my European culture says, "Don't wait for others to do things instead of you, do them yourself" – and after that I thought about the idea of organizing the festival "Congolisation." The idea was to open this space for artists, for people who are even slightly interested in African culture or Congolese culture. And I find that there is something about the diaspora or even about the African question that we don't feel like addressing because we don't want to create a provocation every time we are there – like Monique was saying, and I really liked the story when people said, "Oh, you're not angry" – and, in fact, there is something that has become smooth, we sometimes say, "What happened in Congo is heavy, but we are not going to talk about it too directly, we are not going to go straight to the point, because it is a little..." And I don't agree with that, I think that we can go straight to the point, we can create a shock. But I am not talking about a gratuitous shock, I am talking about something that raises questions, and, so, using a word like "congolisation" in connection to colonization and Congo, for me, that is saying something, that says, "Ah, now, it is you."

And I had this feeling, because the first time we presented the project "Congolisation" it was at the Centre for Fine Arts (BOZAR) in Brussels, I went there because I had contacted the people who had told me, "Yes, it

is great, you should come into contact with the association; there were many organizations, people from the diaspora who were joining the BOZAR, and *BOZAR Expo*, the exhibition department of BOZAR, etc., in short, there were a lot of people sitting at the table. And so, I present them my project "Congolisation." And then I hear, "Yeah, but the name, it is too strong, are you sure it will pass? No, it cannot pass, it is heavy, change the name, because your project is good, and you need to change the name." And I say, "But, no, I don't want to change the name."

And I find that, sometimes, there is something very malicious underneath it: they make you believe that, in fact, you need them more than they need you. And it was the game that the BOZAR was playing with me a little – in any case, that is what I felt – when they said, "But, you see, if you change the name of your project, we have already reserved halls, space, and why not, you just change the name and it is going to be good." And I said, "I don't want to change the name, if you want, you can do your event and I am going to do mine. I haven't come here to beg for a space, I have come here to share something, I haven't come here saying that this project must be done at the BOZAR."

And what happened was that I did organize the "Congolisation" Festival at a venue called Pianofabriek, and what's more, the first edition of the festival [from 17 January to 17 February 2015] was done in partnership with the BOZAR. But, what is interesting – and here we are arriving at all these issues of amnesia and all that – what is interesting is that I wanted to do "Congolisation" also in order to do homage to Patrice Lumumba, in order to talk about this colonial history that belongs to us, that belongs not only to the Congolese but also to the Belgians. And it was important for me to do this event on 17th January, the day of the anniversary of his death [17 January 1961]. The BOZAR was more or less for organizing the event, until the moment when they came to tell me, "Well, we really want to do this event, but Lumumba shouldn't be mentioned at the event, nothing should be said in connection to Lumumba." I said, "You are crazy, you are doing an event on 17th January, the date of the anniversary of Lumumba's death and you want Lumumba not to be there, I don't understand the principle." And suddenly there was movement, people wanted to leave, people didn't want to do the event, there were many people who came to tell me, "Pitcho, we are going to boycott," etc. "No, no," I said, "we are going to use this to make Lumumba's voice heard even louder."

EXCERPT FROM Q&A

Woman from the audience: Since you started doing your master classes, have there been changes in the mind of the professors and the students? Have you seen some people who have been inspired or have gotten the impulse to discover or explore things?

Mbeka Phoba: Listen, we find ourselves in extremely activist times, all the time, people of various ages, young people, are searching. Be it Belgians or Congolese from Belgium, or even Europeans, I think there is an enormous amount of curiosity. Now, is it something that is in fashion, or are we going to push further the repercussions in the form of, well, in the form of what I would call a true awareness of historical composition that exists. In my opinion, it is extremely important, because if we don't do that, we will be faced with the crushing of the Afro-Congolese community. Why? Because, when there is some discontent, this discontent must be expressed, and it is expressed in a very perverse way. Because when someone doesn't have a job or doesn't have lodging, or doesn't have their degree because of these things, these underlying problems, but we don't talk about them, but they feel it, actually, everybody feels it, we are talking about something knowing that there is an entire hidden current which makes us have an invisible dialogue. So, it is extremely heavy and extremely oppressive and it won't be solved on its own; because there are plenty of people who tell me, "It's fine, there are no problems, and there are plenty of mulattos today." Well, when I hear that, I want to slap them. It is really... uh, we put two people in a bed and the problem is solved; pay attention to what is going on in the bed and outside the bed, before you say that everything is solved, there is a child. It is ridiculous and, so, it is clear that we continue to carry all that and it weighs on us and I – I have almost reached the retirement age – I would not like my daughter to experience what I have experienced: depression, absolutely terrible psychiatric problems; no one takes interest in that, because no one takes interest in us, but if we took... hmm... a closer look, we would see that it is rather disastrous.

[...]

Woman from the audience: I would like to know if they gave you a reason why you couldn't talk about Lumumba[1] at that moment, and if not, if you have your own idea concerning that?

Womba Konga: Yes, they explained to us that, in fact, the funds that they were receiving were connected to a person who was directly connected to Lumumba's death. But, of course, they didn't tell us that like this, we discovered it while we were trying to discover more about that question, and it dawned on us and we said, "Ah, ok, ok." That is why I am saying that sometimes people aren't aware of the thing, but also because, in a way, there is a will... it isn't a will, but there is something underneath the pretext that we are a bit kind, we are a bit... like she was saying, festivals about Africa are always a bit like parodies, a bit too "cute," and when you assert your rights... because my vindication of "Congolisation" was telling them, "Talking about Africa is good, but Africa is not a country." And often, at many events – in any case, at events where I have been – it is Africa in general; the best example could be Black Panthers, who you love or you don't. In my opinion, that is what it says, it is that fantasy that people have about Africa, "Yes, we are going to make a film about Africa, so you speak African, you eat African food..."

[...]

Woman from the audience: What is your attitude towards this entire architectural heritage connected to Leopold II?[2]

Nsengiyumva: It is true that we have other, more important things to do than to destroy. But, for me, this puddle... all the institutions like the Royal Museum for Central Africa or the Cinquantenaire Museum should turn this colonial myth into a big puddle of water so that they can do other things. And when I say that I feel even more at home there, that is the attitude I decided to have with it...

1 Patrice Lumumba (1925-1961) was an African nationalist leader and the Democratic Republic of the Congo' first prime minister (June–September 1960). Removed from the power during a political crisis, he was assassinated on 17 January 1961 (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

2 King Leopold II of Belgium (1835–1909) ruled Belgium from 1865 to 1909. Though he played a major role in the development of the modern Belgian state, he was also responsible for the widespread atrocities committed in his private colony Congo Free State (1885–1908) in Central Africa (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

Woman from the audience: I am trying to understand... because when I am thinking about architecture, there are so many... I am trying to find links, because when I am thinking about architecture I go in all directions... What I am trying to understand is what link...

Nsengiyumva: I don't understand the question... Personally, what I want to say is that on the one hand, this taboo is reinforced by that architectural heritage, by the fact that we are surrounded with all these "gifts" that didn't come from his pocket, but Congo's pocket, and that is what buys the silence of our governments. Let me explain, during my talks with the Royal Museum for Central Africa, they told me that it was the museum of Leopold II etc., "And you, Laura, would you be willing to have your father melted..." [laughter] and so on and so forth... So, yes, this is why I am saying that this myth should be melted.

Woman from the audience: Having in mind what you have just said, how do you feel about doing an installation, a sculpture for the Royal Museum for Central Africa when this museum, ok, now it is being renovated, but, obviously, we already know that they haven't done their work in terms of the decolonization of the museum, so, how do you feel about doing something that is almost like an inauguration at a museum which is not decolonized?

Nsengiyumva: Thank you for your question... For me, it was a way of provoking them, of taking possession of places, because deep, deep down, I think that sooner or later a restitution of art works will happen and all these statues of Leopold II will have to be returned to their home, to the Royal Museum for Central Africa, and that is why I think that these statues should be there.

Matthias De Groof PhD is a fellow of the Bayreuth Academy of Advanced African Studies, "Africa Multiple" Cluster of Excellence, Bayreuth University, Germany, and a postdoctoral researcher at the Antwerp University, Belgium. He has a strong interest in film theory and film making, Congo and (post) colonialism.

Monique Mbeka Phoba is a Belgian filmmaker, screenwriter and producer of Congolese origin who has been making documentaries for over twenty years. She obtained MA in commercial and consular

sciences at HEC Saint-Louis, Brussels, and MA in dramaturgy at the Institute of Media Arts (IAD) in Louvain-La-Neuve, Belgium. Mbeka Phoba is a founder and creator of LAGUNIMAGES festival in Benin, West Africa, and runs the production company RUMBACOM in Brussels.

Laura Nsengiyumva is a Belgian-Rwandan artist who lives in Brussels. She won the first prize at the Kunstsalon Ghent in 2011, and the second prize at the Dakar Biennale in 2012. Nsengiyumva explores themes such as diasporic experience, multiple identity, North-South relations and empathy.

Pitcho Womba Konga is a Belgian-Congolese artist, prolific writer, videographer and filmmaker, rap-musician and actor, active in Belgium and elsewhere. He initiated the multimedia festival "Congolisation" in 2015. At the centre of many of his works stays the Congolese diaspora who, according to him, is one of the most tangible symbols of the relationship between the history of the Congo and Belgium.

POST-WAR NATIONALISM, MEMORY AND HISTORY

18 May 2018, Belgrade, Serbia,
Centre for Cultural Decontamination (CZKD)

Ana Isaković, Nebojša Milikić and Aleksandra Sekulić in conversation with Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Šefik Tatlić: Could you tell us what is the role of historical revisionism in regards to the 1990s in the context of the reproduction of capitalism in Serbia?

Aleksandra Sekulić: The 1990s are also payed-off and hidden. There is one, for me very important, part of historical revisionism and that is the over-signification of Yugoslavia through fragmentation of that memory into certain commodities that we all remember and shared. This whole sphere of Yugonostalgia is normalized; you cannot erase 50 years of experience. But, then you fragment it and launch it. It is a very nice opportunity for regional marketing to launch certain products, bring back the design, and through this Yugonostalgia the "fog" you also make to hide Yugoslavia, more precisely, to fragment it. There are many symptoms in culture, cultural production, for example, my favorite is *Cinema Communisto*. So, this whole exoticization of Yugoslavia is part of this revisionism. It seems positive, but it is fragmentation nostalgia

actually. That participates in this much better than the defamation of Yugoslavia as a "dungeon of peoples." That really did not hold much water here. I see that, ok, there is a process of rehabilitation of Chetniks,[1] but as if they were antifascists. So, I think that this overall process is leading towards annihilation of any difference there. [As if] it is all good. During the process of national unification that was invoked in the 1990s, citizens were, sort of, represented as particular, fragmented elements within that process and I can see how young people, high-school kids, really have problems now, after 15 years, to understand that there are nuances in terms of how they could connect the 1990s and World War II.

For us, it is very much connected. WWII was dug up and deployed as a fuel for fear that was constantly served by the media. Jasenovac[2] was the immediate reality of the 1990s. I see also the difference, when you asked today, those comprador elites are trying somehow to use the resources of that fear from the 1990s and WWII, but their "game" with Jasenovac today has much less resounding, I think, then it was in the 1990s when that fear was very visible. Regarding Republika Srpska ["Serb Republic"][3] I think that they are the true hostages of this politics because they very closely related to and, mostly, threatened by this. It's a very complex issue, the way how Jasenovac memorial is treated and there will probably be many books about how it was misused and deployed as a weapon. In parallel to the Jasenovac memorial, what is also at work is the misrepresentation of Jasenovac as a communist camp for "poor" Ustasha after the war. It is a model that I saw in Buchenwald also where a nearby forest where German troops and the SS murdered by Soviets is becoming a memorial.

Marina Gržinić: It's very important what all of you are bringing up in this talk and for the workshop because it is actually showing how much we are part of this neoliberal, capitalist ideological washing of history and actually one of the important elements here is the Nazi past.

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1 Chetniks was Serbian royalist, ultra-nationalist, fascist and genocidal movement active in World War II and in the 1990s (Wikipedia).

2 During World War II, the authorities of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) established the Jasenovac concentration and extermination camp in Slavonia. The majority of victims in Jasenovac were ethnic Serbs, Jews, Roma, and some political dissidents (Wikipedia).

3 "Serb Republic" was a quasi-state formed within the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which existed (as unrecognized by the Bosnian government) from 1992 to 1995; since 1995, it has been recognized as one of the two entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Wikipedia).

Ana Isaković: From 2006 till 2010, I would say, there were a lot of plays in theatres that were talking about the history of Yugoslavia, about facing the war, the crimes and everything, but at one moment there was so much of that production with postmodern rules of the theatre that everything seemed the same and if you were going to the theatre you would have already known what will happen next. I forgot to say before that, here, while the student protests were going on in 1996 and 1997, they were discussing whether theater should work or not; act or not. In the centre of this there was a discussion, which was called "Instead of a Play" and there were a lot of directors and a lot of actors, everything, and one famous director Gorčin Stojanović, now an artistic director of Yugoslav Drama Theatre, said one important thing, which was for me in terms of how an actor could impact a revolution, that an actor is a person who decides if he would act or not, would he read a text or not.

20 years later, in the context of one great play, reading of the play *Serbian Faust*, according to *Croatian Faust* by [Slobodan] Šnajder, but this was written by dramaturge Tanja Simić, and in this play, she was talking about the whole production and giving all of these examples of the plays that predicted, in some way, what [the war] will happen. And that discussion started with *Bacači Sjenki* [Shadow Throwers], the independent theatre group from Croatia, who started this discussion after the reading of the play and Katarina Pejović asked Gorčin Stojanović, the same man who said the previous sentence in 1996, you were saying that an actor has a very important role in the revolution, and suddenly the same man was, like, he was running from that fact. Like, I do not want to talk about this now, it is not important. That is one example of the change in transition, of the roles, and it is obvious that the political stage reflects on a theatre stage.

In 2010, the director of a famous theatre here, Atelje 212, became Kokan Mladenović who announced a big season in theatre, in terms of revolution and everything, and he started one politically engaged repertoire, but in fact it wasn't according to what he previously said, but the most important event, for me, during the time he was a director, was the following. Milan Marković, the dramatist who wrote a play called *Da nam živi, živi rad* [Long Live People's Labour], which was about the transition in this country, but the whole iconography was socialist, the costumes,

etc. They had rehearsals when Kokan Mladenović appeared and when a girl who did scenography placed a big portrait of Boris Tadić, who was then the president of Serbia and also of Mišković, the main tycoon, Kokan said: "No, just put them down." She said, ok, you can propose something, but you cannot forbid me, and he said "I am not forbidding you, I am censoring it."

Gržinić: What this means, if somebody asks you when you talk about revisionism, in the context of ex-Yugoslavia, specifically Serbia, what are we talking about?

Nebojša Milikić: It is a tool of ideological and political hegemony of peripheral capitalist society, which is deprived of any realistic, even critical memory of socialist Yugoslavia's endeavor or project and it is there to demonize historical communist ideologies and socialist systems. To remove all its achievements and tendencies from the political horizon and to discipline masses, people, working-class to accept this system as inevitable, as the only normal system.

Gržinić: Could you give us some examples of how this revisionism functions now, in the last decades?

Milikić: For example, in all textbooks, history textbooks from socialism, whether from Bosnia, Kosovo, Slovenia, Serbia, the explanation of fascism, historical fascism, from the eighth grade elementary to the fourth-grade secondary school, in the first sentence, or at least in the first paragraph, there was an explanation that fascism is the result of the crisis of capitalist society, or contradictions of the world capitalist system, or problems related to imperialistic ambitions of the capitalist economy; this was always there. Then in transition, when revisionism became the tool, it all disappeared.

Ana Isaković has been the archive editor, project coordinator and theatre production organizer at the Centre for Cultural Decontamination (CZKD) since April 2011.

Nebojša Milikić (1964) is a cultural worker and producer, researcher, and activist. He lives and works in Belgrade.

Aleksandra Sekulić is the programme director at the Centre for Cultural Decontamination (CZKD), and a PhD candidate at the Faculty of Media and Communication at the Department of Theory of Art and Media in Belgrade.

FEMINISM BETWEEN NATION-STATES AND CAPITALISM

27 May 2019, Zagreb, Croatia,
Centre for Women's Studies

Workshop by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić with the participants of the module "Feminism between Nation-States and Capitalism" at the Centre for Women's Studies

After the initial presentations by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić that dealt with the issues of the nation-state, feminisms, colonialism and turbo-fascism, the discussion that followed tackled these issues by further reflecting on biopolitics, necropolitics, turbo-fascism, occidental and other feminisms, as well as the reproduction of neoliberal global capitalism.

EXCERPT FROM Q&A

Marina Gržinić: [...] feminism was seen as emancipation within the system of whiteness; as historically connected with the European tradition and historically connected with the First capitalist world as if there were no signs of feminism in Africa, not even in Latin America. In Latin America they say that this is due to the colonial past that it was never

a part of feminist discourses and for them to talk feminism in these terms and embrace occidental feminism is absolutely not enough, not even necessary, because it cannot critically address the colonial/racial divide. The quotation Šefik mentioned, historically speaking, many books, not only those by Angela Davis, but many other theoreticians, artists, activists emphasise that in our fight, our struggles, we/they first fight through posing a question of the meaning of being black within the wider register of thinking about civil society and civil organizations. And only then is coming to the fight about being a woman. First Black then woman. In this way, all these questions cannot be put aside or apart because they are now, within the dominance of colonialism, nation-state, war-state, and so on, still present. Being straightforward in our political analysis requires these issues to be embraced and talked about. As we see all these differences, we also see that plurality of feminism; feminism in the plural is a political stance; the whole idea of this biological, sexual difference is not enough. It is so because we also have to think about other implications. For example, if you are not white, how your position in labour/capital relations looks like? The subjugation, in this case, is three times more intensive and that is not related only to gender and sex.

Karolina Hrga: So, we have some class interests, which are the same everywhere in the world?

Gržinić: No, they are not necessarily the same. The differentiation exists everywhere because capitalism is the system that can never, ever function on the basis of equilibrium. It functions on the basis of differential exploitation. The exploitation and expropriation are the key and central for capitalism as the system. So, historically there are differences in struggles, but also there are differences in the process of formation of histories that are behind [these struggles]. And, this is why it is not possible to say that it is the same everywhere. This is so because the exploitation in the Third World, as it is obvious today, is very different than the exploitation in the First World where intensive precarization is more and more present, while in the Third World some people are so superfluous, so, in a certain way, obsolete that they will never, ever work. This is actually the possibility of capitalism to make a profit from just not having or giving millions of people the possibility to work. This changes, for example, the whole perception of work as such and the

perception of a certain idea that you actually work and through work you get a frame that gives you the possibility to exercise certain politics or to essentially sustain yourself with which you can have a certain dignity. This process is already, now, going on and it is being applied to the millions of people for whom it is not an option to think about working as an option in the future. This is very interesting and changes the whole categories of these basic relations because these people are non-working. It is actually the ultimate way of pure exploitation in a certain way because these people were made obsolete, superfluous from the moment they were born, and in such a way they were put in a position to produce for the interests of capitalist reproduction.

Hrga: But, I was talking about human needs, not the way how exploitation or expropriation works; differently or in shapes of work here and there, in relation to outsourcing etc., I was just talking about the needs, human needs. And, we can agree that some certain needs are the same?

Gržinić: Good life? It is part of this decolonial moment and I like this term "good life" but still and also in this case, in those terms absolutely, everybody likes to live. Nobody wants to die, it is clear. But it is not the same as surviving. Good living and the category of "good life," its meaning, is something that still has to be elaborated.

Šefik Tatlić: To say that a class-prefixed struggle is always the same can carry an implication that says that the exploitation matrix is universal. There is a bunch of layers entailed in the said matrix and whether are we talking about the profile of these layers or not, they are in majority of cases racist and/or racial layers that are involved in the exploitation. Not everybody is exploited in the same measure by global capitalism, which is, more or less, consistent in relation to the imperative of exploitation. So, these sorts of approaches always carry a need for additional elaboration, which is always complex.

Woman from the audience: I have a remark. It is an interesting topic, but I did not get a very clear sense of direction from the way you were talking about these things and it is something I would like to comment on. It is, like you said, a very complex topic, we touched upon a lot of things but I also get a feeling that if we were taking into consideration a historical perspective, I am just trying to understand what we were

talking about. Because, if we were taking history into consideration, I think maybe the approach could have been a little bit more linear because we jumped a lot. And there was this thing you could maybe elaborate a bit further on, and that is the regional subtext actually in terms of how these things that are happening in capitalism, within the framework of the neoliberal shift, are reflected in the Balkans. We mentioned them, but maybe it would be good to summarize? What would be several important points that refer to the Balkans today? I am a little bit acquainted with the work of Žarana Papić and there is one concept we did not mention, and I think it was implied, and that is the concept of "re-patriarchalization" of the society as the part of the war. I think we could talk about it a little more?

Gržinić: Regarding this locality, from my point of view we cannot talk about the Balkans as something super specific and this comes out precisely from Žarana Papić. Because at the moment when she mentioned "turbo-fascism," it was 2002 and sometime after, not in relation to this, but in the Spanish context, Santiago López Petit produced the term "postmodern fascism." So, why it is important to have these constant inside/outside situations? Because we could think that, the perception could be, that in the Balkans just by sheer coincidence live "uncivilized" people, because this is the idea that some kind of barbarian, post-socialist societies or communities dwell in the Balkans and that fascism could have arisen from this space. There has been a lot of talk about this at the time of the Balkan wars in the 1990s, that it was a civil war in which brotherly communities clashed with each other to such an extent that even the Western media could not report about this. There was an idea that this was so uncivilized that it was disturbing to the occidental public. My point of departure is not to make this space-specific, because it is not – it is part of these processes taking place within the global capitalism.

Centre for Women's Studies, Zagreb, is the first non-institutional educational centre in Croatia. It was founded by a group of feminists, theorists, and scholars, peace activists, and artists in 1995.

FIGHTING RACISM, DECONSTRUCTING WHITE PRIVILEGE AND CULTURAL INTERVENTIONS, ARTISTIC PROJECTS, POLITICAL STRATEGIES

12 October 2019, Altes Rathaus, Linz, Austria
On the occasion of 25 years of maiz

Workshop with Marina Gržinić and the participants. Taking part in O&A: Rodrigo Cesar Benedetti, Chiara Benedetti, Michaela Lehofer, Ursula M. Lücke, Nadja Meisterhans and Rubia Salgado

This workshop dealt with the topics in relation to the work of maiz during the last 25 years, as well as addressing the questions of history, memory, and activism. After Marina Gržinić's presentation of number of video works and explanation of the conditions and social-political contexts in which they were made and the topics that they tackled, the issues of genocide in relation to Srebrenica as well as to the Holocaust were addressed. Also, the workshop tackled and reflected on the issues of necropolitics, the perseverance of racism and racial-state, colonialism, memory, remembrance, collective amnesia and/or historical revisionism, as well as activism, and feminism(s).

INTRODUCTION

Marina Gržinić: I think maiz, from my estimation of Austrian society, is the best thing that ever happened to Austria. It is so because it questions

the whole construction of the nation-state in Austria. It was capable to make a lot of points of antagonism visible, as well as to say that those who have citizenship are not the only ones who constitute this space, those who are "entitled" to this space, but also those who work here and are engaged in many processes of reflection, work and building this country. The second point is that I work with a group of colleagues, there is my colleague Valerija [Zabret], but also there are many others and we work together on the project called "Genealogy of Amnesia." This project is online; everybody can access it as it is hosted by the Academy of Fine Arts Vienna. This "Genealogy of Amnesia" is actually a kind of a historical view, i.e. genealogy, that is going into the history of the meaning and the function of amnesia, which is in individual terms forgetting, but the project aims at uncovering remembrance. Amnesia can also be a social process and within this research we have connected three different territories. One is Austria, the other is Belgium, and the third is the ex-Yugoslavia, which now consists of many states, but we focus primarily on the wars of the 1990s and their legacy.

EXCERPT FROM Q&A

Nadja Meisterhans: First of all I want to thank you for this impressive introduction and I want to make two comments, which are also connected to questions. Looking from a psychoanalytical perspective and in regards to Mauthausen [Memorial], is it not also a kind of strange strategy of disassociating memory? I mean, of course, it is very, very important to reflect on Auschwitz, Mauthausen and so on, but, of course, it can also be or become fetishized in the sense that all the focus on that can be seen as a strategy that makes other things invisible? And, my second question and/or a comment, what I really liked about these performative actions [referring to a set of video works that Gržinić presented before Q&A that depicted a number of anti-racial and anti-colonial activist interventions in the media and public space] is that it shows how we can use aesthetics in order to disturb our stereotypical thinking. What I mean to say is how the phallus, for example, was used to resignify the master's language; to work with a symbol of oppression and transform it into a symbol of disturbance and resistance, subversion. Therefore, my question is, do you think that this kind of symbolic scandalization can also be understood as a point of action that already

articulates some kind of concrete utopia? [I am asking] in the sense that scandalizing is already a kind of latent utopia and after the scandalization is done and we were provoked to think and be aware of our privileged position, is not that already part of concrete utopia expressed in manifold ways?

Gržinić: You now actually gave me the material to think. This is very important for me. I did not think in this way, but, yes from now on I will surely start to think about it. Still, I think it is interesting that you brought up utopia as a possibility because we talk so much about dystopia. I actually find this return to utopia as very productive.

Meisterhans: If I may add, I would say that in every dystopian storytelling there is already some kind of latent utopia, hope, which of course then has to be transformed and developed by a political fantasy. But in the end, I think that disturbing is something that is a precondition for political imagination and it forces us to re-image [reimagine] and at the same time go through this process by doing art is also part of developing new ideas of how things could be different.

Gržinić: You are touching the core, from my point of view, because I also thought where is utopia in dystopia? It is very strange to think about dystopia in this way, and now this thinking actually came to me and I did not have an answer. Regarding the first part of your questions, I must say that I think it is not about fetishization. How do I see it? I see that going back to Shoah, the Holocaust in this concrete space of Austria, that has now become very racist in Islamophobic terms, can offer a lot to us in terms of learning. This space was always very antisemitic. Antisemitism and the way how the industry of death was established in Europe during World War II, attacking and targeting the Jewish community, not only in Austria but specifically in Germany, where the Jews were denied German citizenship even though they really believed in that state. I think it is super important to see this analysis as a political demand. So, the question of how do we connect different, so to say, historical moments also depends on the place from where we talk. What I learned first in Austria is that this is hyper antisemitic society, but that it is now refraining itself from it and hiding it through different manipulations and that actually the biggest problem here, as I see it, is that younger generations are not reflecting on the Nazi past of

their parents and/or grandparents. In these terms, it seems that the said generation, is in a hostage situation from time to time, and specifically regarding these topics because there is a lot of micropolitical searching for enemies. I think we should still think that those – who are in power and in the political parties, like right-wing parties here – actually use this and manipulate with it in terms of not reflecting historically what this past really was. So, in this way I am starting from the conviction that I can illustrate with another example. I learned a lot from Marika Schmiedt. She is an artist from Vienna, with a Roma background. In her case and in regard to her work, which is really substantial, she taught me, when I was doing a research of her work, that every time I was researching anti-Romaism I actually stumbled on antisemitism. Every time I opened one place in regard to the perpetuation of anti-Romaism, I found a Nazi monster falling out of this chalice. And I said to myself, what is this, what is this territory, this symbolic space, dramatic space? Hence, this space is full of this brutal, racist antisemitic politics.

maiz – Autonomous Centre of and for Migrant Women in Linz is an independent association with the aim to improve the living and working situation of migrants in Austria and to promote their political and cultural participation as well as to change the existing, unjust social conditions (maiz.at).

PART III

INTERVIEWS

ANNE REIJNIERS AND ROB JACOBS

2 May 2018, private home, Brussels, Belgium
Interview by Marina Gržinić

Rob Jacobs: [...] the question, abstract question, was how can we decolonize public space and, more concretely, how can we interpret the Troonplein, which is the square in Brussels where the statute of Leopold II is located. So, for a year, we and the people from this activist group would get together with the students and they would work on these questions and think of different proposals; we would get feedback from them. Then, after a year we organized two exhibitions, one in Antwerp and other in Brussels, and around that we organized lectures and screenings. For me, the invitation came through artistic world, like, are you guys willing to be involved in this, very much hands-on, practical rethinking; rethinking of how our city should look like. So, I feel the film is just, like, one evidently... There are so many different ways of fighting this fight and I think film reaches a certain group of people, an activist group, an exhibition reaches a certain group of people, people go into political issues and keep asking for a Lumumba square[1] and reach other groups of people and so on. I think this is a collective effort

1 Fifty-eight years after the declaration of independence of the Democratic Republic of Congo, a Lumumba square was inaugurated on 30 June 2018 in Brussels, Belgium, in honour of one of the former Congolese leaders for independence and DRC's first Prime Minister Patrice Lumumba. The square is situated at the entrance of the Matonge neighbourhood (Wikipedia).

that takes different forms so that different audiences get informed and activated and involved in this struggle.

Anne Reijniers: And also, what we did, what came directly out of this film is that in the film we see the empty pedestal and actually when the film had its premiere in Antwerp and Brussels, we collaborated with another artist who made the pedestal, like the one on which the statue of Leopold II is on, in wood, so that you can see how it is constructed, but it looks exactly the same, only without the statue of Leopold, just the pedestal. The inspiration came directly out of this empty pedestal in Kinshasa, which we put in the centre, next to the *bourse* (Stock Exchange) in Brussels. In Antwerp, it was not in the centre, but it was in a kind of, good place, where it looked like all the monuments that are...

Jacobs: Super visible.

Reijniers: Yes, super visible, but also as if they grow out of the square, and it looked as if it was installed without thinking as if it was a part of the city. But, then, it was wooden and it was without a monument, so when people came out of the cinema they saw the pedestal and then it came to them that we connected the story of the film and artists in Kinshasa to the public space in Belgium. I think it, kind of, worked because it was so concrete.

Marina Gržinić: How much the whole process in general, regarding the process of removal of these monuments, is connected with what was going on around, in other places, not only in Belgium, specifically what happened in Africa in relation to what happened to Cecil Rhodes statue in Cape Town,[2] but also in connection to what happened in Charlottesville,[3] what kind of question can we see being posted here?

Jacobs: It is interesting when the statue of Rhodes fell, there was very little attention for it in the Belgian mainstream media, which it was

2 British born Cecil John Rhodes (1853–1902) was a businessman, founder of the De Beers diamond mining monopoly, believer in imperialism and white supremacy, who also served as Cape Colony' prime minister (1890–1896). In 2015 the "Rhodes Must Fall" movement began with student campaign at the University of Cape Town, South Africa, which succeeded in removing the statue commemorating Rhodes that stood in the campus. The campaign has led to a larger movement to decolonize education in South Africa (Wikipedia).

3 The white supremacist and neo-Nazi rally, known as the Unite the Right rally, was held from 11 to 12 August 2017 in Charlottesville, Virginia, by far-right extremists. The rally and resulting death and injuries led to a backlash against white supremacist groups in the United States (Wikipedia).

treated as something that just happened in a very faraway place and is not connected with our lives in Belgium, while when Charlottesville happened, incidents the protests and the killing, it was really all over the Belgian news and direct reflection was made as to what we are going to do with our own colonial legacy, with the presence of colonial monuments in our cities. It is an interesting observation but, of course, it is hard to pinpoint the reason why there was no reaction then and there is a reaction now. Maybe it is because it is easier to identify with the social circles in the US than with those in South Africa, or it was a "change in climate" but these events were not so far apart.

Gržinić: Or it is another imperial discourse that is actually there and so persistent in terms of one imperial system reading other imperial forces?

Jacobs: Yes, I could say that. Such a connection is made easier in terms that there are no same connections with formerly colonized countries and former colonizing power maybe. I think there are many reasons that create the social climate, but that could also be one of the reasons. And is it changing? I think the events in Charlottesville definitely brought a lot of attention for it and it is a discussion that entered the mainstream, it is really something more people have opinions about and it is more widely discussed. Has it really changed the views? Maybe up to a certain degree, but what I think is really important, this of course is only a symbolic discussion, which is really useful and important, but it is also important to see it as a point of entry into a discussion that goes deeper than images and representations on the surface.

Gržinić: Are there demands that brought along the issues of reparations, giving back a part of the wealth of Belgian society?

Jacobs: There is some kind of influence of it, but that has not to lead to any concrete changes.

Reijniers: No.

Jacobs: What is a very concrete change in public space is that we can see very recently that is the official Patrice Lumumba square, but the statues are still there and the claims for objects in museums in terms of

repatriations, there has not been concrete around this, maybe only in the domain of discussion.

Anne Reijniers and **Rob Jacobs** are filmmakers and researchers affiliated with the audio-visual collective De Imagerie in Belgium and performance festival Kinact in the Democratic Republic of Congo. In 2015 they initiated *Échangeur*, collaboration between Belgian and Congolese artists who deal with questions about the colonial past and the continuation of colonial structures in the present. Together with Congolese directors Paul Shemisi and Nizar Saleh, they are currently working on a film about politically engaged performance artists in Kinshasa.

GERT HUSKENS

4 May 2018, ARGOS, Brussels, Belgium
Interview by Marina Gržinić

[ANTI-COLONIAL MONUMENTS]

Gert Huskens: Sometimes I think it may be better to make a general anti-colonial monument because in the shadow of the Museum of the Tropics[1] in Amsterdam, in the park, you have the anti-colonial, anti-slavery monument and it is more general. So, in that way you come loose from Lumumba. I recognize his importance for the Congolese history, but by constructing maybe a more general anti-colonial monument, you can also give attention to other projects of the king [Leopold II] and other involvements because sometimes, I think, people also get lost in Leopold II and the Congo, but the imperialist map of Leopold II was a global map. He also had investments in China; he wanted to colonize the Philippines; he was interested in Ceylon/Sri Lanka. So, maybe we can make a bigger monument because there are also names, street names in Antwerp that refer to the Belgian imperialism in China for example. So, if you only tell the Lumumba story and the Congo story, you also neglect these kinds of topics.

1 The Tropenmuseum (Museum of the Tropics) is an ethnographic museum founded as a colonial museum in Amsterdam, Netherlands, in 1864 (Wikipedia).

Marina Gržinić: But, the Congo Free State[2] was something so specific in this whole colonial history that practically constitutes a place of such violence and such privatization of the whole nation there; all the ways of this unbelievable dispossession make me think of the comparison to other "adventures" of Leopold II that were as brutal in other parts of the world if not so persistent. What can be the next step in questioning and reflecting on this history by those who are now second or third generations from Congo, living in Belgium, and how are they treated in Belgium?

[POSTCOLONIAL SUBJECTIVITIES IN BELGIUM]

Huskens: First, you have to be aware that after the independence not a lot of Congolese migrated to Belgium. There was only a small post-independence migration and most migrants came during, what we call, the African War during the 1990s, the era of both Kabila's[3] and the Rwandan genocide, so most of the people from Africa, the Congolese of Burundian background, came in the 1990s. So, most of the time, they are first-generation or maybe second-generation immigrants. A recent study by the King Baudouin Foundation showed that despite their high intellectual profiles because they have good degrees, they have the know-how, most of the time they have above-average education, they are still not able to get good jobs, good professions, which match their education profile. So, I think that these dynamics still exist. Also, if you look at the university, you do not see a lot of people of colour at the universities in Belgium. To some extent, some universities are better at this, especially in Brussels, those are more diverse, but at other universities you still see a lack of people of colour at all layers of universities, as well as PhD's, professors, assistants, but also students. So, we have to include them and we have to help them and empower them, not in an opportunistic way, but really empower them in a constructive way in which they can also enter a dialogue with us... We do not have to

2 The Congo Free State, also referred to as the Independent State of the Congo, was a large state, a private colony in Central Africa, ruled privately by King Leopold of Belgium from 1885 to 1908. In 1908 the Congo Free State was annexed to Belgium, and renamed Belgian Congo (Wikipedia).

3 A Congolese politician Joseph Kabila Kabange, son of a Congolese rebel leader and President Laurent-Désiré Kabila (1971), served as president of the Democratic Republic of the Congo between January 2001 and January 2019 (Wikipedia).

give them a voice, they have a voice, but it should be heard, that is the problem. For example, I spoke to some students and they said, yes, we are interested in, for example, political sciences, humanities, art history and stuff like that, but for us, sometimes we have the implicit feeling that we have to prove our value to the society; we have to prove that we are worth something and that we contribute to our society in an economic way, so they go study economics or law, stuff like that, and they do not go toward the more philosophical courses. So, there is, like, an implicit pressure, maybe, from the society that they have to prove themselves and show that they are capable of contributing in an economic way and also in an intellectual way.

Gržinić: How the system of whiteness, that we are part of, in different contexts, is actually pushing and contributing to these questions of inclusion of those who have the knowledge about and within the university system, and that is producing knowledge?

Huskens: About the regime of whiteness in Belgium; in politics I think people are increasingly getting included in parties and on the lists and stuff like that. You have the upcoming local elections and people of colour are on the lists. But, a lot of the time there is a lot of polarization in political discussions.

[POLITICAL POLARIZATION]

Gržinić: How much is all this attached to European consciousness that we are all part of?

Huskens: I think colonialism is still a lot of times investigated and also coped within a national space. So, Belgium has to cope with its colonialism; Holland has to cope with their legacy; the UK with its legacy, France, Germany, stuff like that, but the system as a European colonialism...

Gržinić: Occidental?

Huskens: Yes, occidental, or the Western, however you call it, as a whole is not investigated. I think there is a lot of focus on the national responsibilities of the countries and it is interesting because during the

Belgian rule of the Congo, a lot of American missionaries, Protestants, or Swedish missionaries were there too. And there were international companies. You also had the Abir Company,[4] a rubber company; it was in cooperation with firms of English people, Belgian people. So, in reality, it was an interaction between all the players, all the occidental players. I have done a lot of research on Belgian imperialism in China and there were all the powers from the coalition, the Eight-Nation Alliance,[5] and they all fought against the Chinese Boxer insurgence,[6] but there is no European collective coping with how they acted in China.

Gert Huskens is currently enrolled as a PhD candidate on the project "Pyramids and Progress: Belgian Expansionism and the Making of Egyptology, 1830–1952." His PhD focuses on "Belgian diplomatic representatives in Egypt before WW1 and the making of Egyptology" from a Science & Empire perspective.

4 The Abir Congo Company (previously the Anglo-Belgian India Rubber Company) was the largest company that exploited natural rubber in the Congo Free State (Wikipedia).

5 The Eight-Nation Alliance was an international military coalition formed in 1900 in response to the Boxer Rebellion. Its forces consisted of approx. 45,000 troops from eight countries, including Germany, Japan, Russia, Britain, France, the United States, Italy and Austria-Hungary (Wikipedia).

6 The Boxer Rebellion, also called Boxer Uprising (or Yihetuan Movement), was officially supported peasant uprising in Beijing (then Peking), China, between 1899 and 1901, toward the end of the Qing dynasty. It was aimed against foreigners, Western powers and Japan, and Chinese Christians and missionaries (Wikipedia).

LAURENT LICATA

5 May 2018, Free University of Brussels (ULB), Brussels, Belgium
Interview by Marina Gržinić

Laurent Licata: [...] would people feel guilty for the misdeeds their ancestors did more than 150 years ago or something like that? That was the question. And, it was, in this literature it is shown that when people accept collective guilt or experience of collective guilt, it favours positive attitudes towards symbolic, but also material reparations. That is something that we also applied to this colonial memories and it was that way that when people experience collective guilt, or at least report experiencing collective guilt, when you remind them of Belgian colonialism [they] are more ready to accept that our government should pay a little bit for reparations, should help the Congo or Congolese immigrants here and also apologize symbolically.

Marina Gržinić: The question that I want to pose is that we are now talking about the situation in Congo, but the question that is very relevant is how this social and political space here affects Belgium and Belgian nationals? I am talking in terms of the presence of amnesia regarding these issues, as you also pointed out, you have passed through the Belgian education system and you knew absolutely nothing about the crimes committed by Belgians in Congo?

[COLONIAL AMNESIA]

Licata: I am not sure that our research can really help answering that question because that is the context in which our research emerged and, which made it, in my view, quite interesting. I would not say that our research can really explain why that happened or to what extent it was amnesia or forgetting or whatever. What some other authors, historians describe is that representations of colonialism in Belgium were extremely benevolent. We find that in one of our papers too. Up to the independence people thought that it was such a nice colony, the best colony in the world, Belgian people are so benevolent and so nice and so on, with the Congolese. Then you had independence and then, I would not say suddenly, but they nearly stopped talking about colonialism. It was very apparent, especially when you did not talk much about the first part of the colonial history of Belgium, which was quite specific, which was the Leopoldian times when it was not the Belgian colony, but private Leopold's...

Gržinić: A private property?

Licata: Not really private property, but something like that. It was not directed by the state, but by the king, which was the part in which the worst atrocities took place. They stopped talking about that, which is not totally true, because [this period] did not totally disappear, but [the reflection of it] became very, very, very silent, very quiet. And then it suddenly emerged at the end of the 1990s with Adam Hochschild's book,[1] and he was an American journalist who was delegitimizing [this silence] in America, Anglo-Saxon world...

Gržinić: And then Ludo de Witte[2] came?

Licata: Yes. And then some other things came into focus; the assassination of Patrice Lumumba and then the postcolonial literature was

1 See Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa* (Boston: Mariner Books, 1998).

2 A Belgian sociologist and writer Ludo De Witte (born 1956) is known internationally for his book unravelling the circumstances of the murder of African nationalist leader and the first prime minister of the DRC Patrice Lumumba. See Ludo De Witte, *De Moord op Lumumba* (Leuven: Uitgeverij Van Halewyck, 1999). Translated as *The Assassination of Lumumba*, trans. Ann Wright and Renee Fenby (London: Verso, 2001).

discovered in Belgium, which existed, Jules Marchal[3] is an example of it. There were books that kept being published, but the white public did not know. And we, as social psychologists, did not know that either. And then it came back and at that time there were some reactions from associations of former colonialists.

[INTERVIEW WITH FORMER BELGIAN COLONIALISTS]

The first thing we published was a chapter about interviews made with former Belgian colonialists and Congolese people living in Belgium, i.e. who lived through the colony.

Gržinić: How the academia in Belgium, that is mostly white – generally speaking, it is a white system, we all are part of this regime of whiteness – reacted to this and what is the discourse actually about the genocide committed against the black people that was done in Congo, here in Belgium?

Licata: Some say you have to differentiate between genocide and mass massacres, the consequence is exactly the same, but the genocide is an intention to eliminate people defined in a racial or ethnic way. If you take this definition, it is a little bit difficult to say that Belgian colonialism was genocidal or that it included, it perhaps included some instances of genocide, but was it massive genocide is difficult to say because... We have evidence that there was cruelty and there was total disrespect for people's lives; that there was will to make profits at the expense of other people, that other people's interests were not considered, but a will to eliminate the whole people is probably not what drove these actions. But, I repeat, *comme ci comme ça,* it is not different when you have a massacre on the basis of genocidal intentions or being massacred for another reason, you are being massacred.

Gržinić: You brought up a question of race, about which we can talk about, especially considering your next research that is dealing with these new positions, postcolonial subjectivities, migrants and so on.

3 Jules Marchal (1924–2003) was a Belgian diplomat in the Belgian Congo and historian, who researched extensively on the history of forced labour in a context of colonial exploitation in the Belgian Congo. See Jules Marchal, *Lord Leverhulme's Ghosts: Colonial Exploitation in the Congo*, trans. Martin Thom (New York and London: Verso, 2008).

But, it would be interesting for me to know how do we approach the question of racism, race, differentiation, the formation of the other, and is your research connected with this? I am asking because I want to connect these issues. Adam Hochschild is saying in the book that the possibility of thinking the genocide was possible because this element of the race came out as very clearly present and the exploitation was possible on the basis of this denied humanity.

Licata: Yes. I have some idea that came from the research, but firstly, I believe in the idea that race was created by slavery and colonialism, rather than in reverse. The necessity to exploit people raised the need to have a legitimation myth about it, and the legitimation myth is race. It gives you permission when you have denied part or all the humanity of some people by defining them as racially different, which gives you permission to treat them differently than you treat the people of your own group. So, it is one strategy of distancing yourself from another person; from other. What have we found and what was reflected also in our studies, coming back to the position of former colonials, for example, is that here and now, which allowed us not to prove, but to think about it, to raise the possibility that race is still useful. Because, and when you think about colonialism, and you are accused by the people around you, by the younger generation, by Adam Hochschild and so on, you have to, you want to keep a positive sense of your social identity and that social identity is based on your experience as a colonial, then you still need race to make sense of it.

Laurent Licata PhD is a vice-rector for academic policy and career management, in charge of diversity and gender policies at the Free University of Brussels (ULB).

ANTON PELINKA

24 June 2019, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Austria
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Šefik Tatlić: What is the dominant memorialization discourse in Austria today with regards to its role in World War II?

Anton Pelinka: It changed over the generation. Today, you have in Vienna and other cities a lot of memorials remembering the Holocaust for instance, which did not exist 50 years ago. New synagogues were built but not immediately after 1945. It happened during the 1970s, 1980s and 1990s and a new generation started to become aware of what has happened between 1938 and 1945. Today we have much more sensitivity concerning the crimes of the Nazi past, concerning Austrian collaboration in these crimes, concerning co-responsibility until one, two generations ago. Immediately after 1945 the situation was very different. In that respect we have much more sensitivity, but it is also clear that we do not have one dominant narrative, we have different narratives. Of course, an important role is played by the official redefining of Austria by chancellor Vranitzky[1] in the late 1980s, I think 1987, when he declared that Austria accepts its co-responsibility for the Nazi crimes.

1 Franz Vranitzky (born 1937) is an Austrian politician who served as chancellor of Austria (1986–97) and was a chairman of the Socialist Party of Austria (from 1991 on Social Democratic Party of Austria, SPÖ) (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

Austria was not only a victim, which is exactly how it was declared in the Moscow Declarations,[2] but it was, more or less, overloaded and overshadowed by the practice of day to day politics.

Marina Gržinić: What would in this respect be these two most known events or links? Were the Waldheim Affair[3] and the other, recent one, involving Strache[4] these two important moments in relation to these narratives?

Pelinka: Yes. We do not have to forget that Waldheim was already a candidate for the president in 1971. Nobody at that time criticized him for being a Nazi, including the Socialist Party, who did 15 years later. What has happened in between? The candidate called Waldheim in 1971, who lost by the way, was not criticized for his role in World War II and the Nazi years. So, 15 years later he was decisively criticized. In 1971 he lost, in 1985 he won [the elections]. So, one explanation is, I think, generation break and education. Generation break means that those who started to be socialized politically in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s had no personal memory with respect to World War II. They did not see a need to define their own [guilt] in the 1970s, for the Nazi regime, they were free. And, certainly, education [in terms that] the percentage of the Austrians who got high education in the 1980s was at least twice as much as one generation ago. Younger, better educated generation ended the taboos the older generation had for different reasons. Regarding the question about Strache, he could not be called a Nazi. He was born after 1945 and he even started to integrate pro-Zionist, pro-Israeli narrative into his party. He was proud of that [he] recruited a Jewish member of the Austrian parliament from the Freedom Party![5] So, Strache is not Waldheim. Was Waldheim a Nazi, this can be debated. He was probably never a formal member of the Nazi party, he was a junior officer in the German Army like most of the non-Jewish Austrians participating out of the feeling that "It is my duty," "I have no way out" so

2 Following the *Anschluss*, Austria had generally been regarded as a constituent part of Nazi Germany. In 1943 however, the Allies concluded in the Moscow Declaration that Austria should now instead be considered the first victim of Nazi aggression, and treated as a liberated and independent country after the war (Wikipedia).

3 Waldheim affair refers to controversy over former Austrian diplomat and statesman Kurt Waldheim's military record, and his knowledge of war crimes committed by Austria during World War II. Waldheim (1918–2007) was a member of the Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) and served as foreign minister. He was United Nations secretary-general (1972–81) and later on the Austrian president (1986–92) (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

4 Heinz-Christian Strache (born 1969), leader of the Austrian far-right Freedom Party (FPÖ), served as Vice-Chancellor of Austria (2017–2019) before resigning due to corruption (video) scandal (Wikipedia).

5 The Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) is a far-right political party in Austria.

they participated in World War II. There has been, exactly one decade before the Waldheim case of 1986, the Wiesenthal case.[6] And this is important to compare. Wiesenthal and Peter[7] with Waldheim. Peter was a leader of the Freedom Party. The second chairman of the Freedom Party in its history was a Nazi. Voluntary member of the SS and his SS unit participated in the Holocaust behind the so-called Eastern Front. This is quite clear from the documents we have. Wiesenthal, who made it public, was isolated by whom? By the Social-democratic party, because the Social-democratic party in 1975 had already made a deal with Peter. Peter has helped Kreisky to form a minority cabinet in 1970 and the prize was, indirectly, never outspoken, never written down, let us forget about the Nazi years. The problem was that Wiesenthal had to pay a price for criticizing a real Nazi. Whatever Waldheim was, he was at least much less a real Nazi than Peter was. And, do not forget also that this is in a certain way a tragedy of Waldheim. He did not really understand the situation. He was a second lieutenant, meaning a junior officer of the German Wehrmacht, but he had to do with intelligence in the Balkans. And, it was one of the biggest mistakes he made, he declared that he cannot remember what has happened to the Jewish community in Thessaloniki, which was of course, outrageous. Either he was so traumatized by this – nobody claimed that he was responsible for the Holocaust in southern Thessaloniki but he must have known about it. An intelligence officer sitting in Thessaloniki not realizing what is happening is, of course, nonsense or pure drama. Secondly, in 1945, there was one brief moment in Waldheim's official history, which is not yet clearly explained. He was debriefed by US intelligence. And it is from this cleat that Waldheim became, not an agent for the Americans, but he was in a certain way seen by the Americans as a guy that they can rely upon. And, he became an Austrian diplomat, he became a minister of foreign affairs, he became an ambassador to the United Nations, then he became a candidate for the president in 1971 and then he became secretary-general of the United Nations.

6 The Kreisky–Peter–Wiesenthal affair was public dispute in the 1970s between the then Austrian chancellor Bruno Kreisky, Simon Wiesenthal known as the "Nazi hunter," and Friedrich Peter, the leader of the Freedom Party of Austria who was reported by Wiesenthal of being *Obersturmbannführer* in an SS unit that was involved in systematic mass murder of Jews in the Soviet Union (Wikipedia).

7 From 1958 to 1978, Friedrich Peter (1921–2005) served as chairman of the Freedom Party of Austria. In 1938, at the age of 17, Peter joined the National Socialist German Workers Party (NSDAP) and volunteered for the Waffen-SS. During World War II, he served on the eastern and western fronts, and became *Obersturmführer* in the 10th regiment of the First SS Infantry Brigade (the unit being part of *Einsatzgruppen*). In 1941, the *Einsatzgruppen* systematically killed hundreds of thousands of Jews behind the front (Wikipedia).

Prof. Anton Pelinka PhD is a professor of political science and nationalism studies at the English-speaking Central European University (CEU), Budapest. Before this appointment, Pelinka was a professor of political science at the University of Innsbruck, one of Austria's largest universities.

ÉVA KOVÁCS

26 June 2019, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Austria
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Šefik Tatlić: What would you say what are the major differences between paradigmatic memorialization discourses in Western Europe and in the East, especially in terms of the rise of extreme right-wing in Eastern Europe?

Éva Kovács: I do not see such a huge difference between the two parts of Europe, but the crucial difference is that Germany established a language, a kind of political agenda, how to deal with this past. Unfortunately, this "can" is not "edible" in many other countries and slowly you can conclude Germany remains alone with this concept and political agenda. It is so because in other countries right-wing activism is not [considered as] extreme political attitude. So, right-wing goals go hand in hand with nationalism, patriotism and [so defined] vision of the future, so you cannot really differentiate between right-wing, radical right-wing, and mainstream populism. In Hungary, for example, mainstream populism has the same political agenda regarding the so-called Jewish question, regarding antisemitism, and Islamophobia, xenophobia and so on. So, Islamophobia and xenophobia in Germany are still on the margin, and at the same time these feelings, for example, here in Austria are at the heart of everyday politics, as well as in Hungary, are

at the core of [the narrative of being] "real" Hungarian. So, if you want to be a "real" Hungarian, you should hate the refugees. They were transformed into migrants, it was the first step, because toward the refugees you feel some solidarity, but if you change the language then you can change the attitude as well. So, this is a real difference. And, in that way, I also think that Austria is rather moving toward the East. But, if you take into consideration the Czech Republic, the Czech Republic is generally a democratic state, but it is against the refugees or the migrants or the non-Christian world, and thus the same, closed society. So, I cannot make this type of regional cut between Eastern and Western Europe, it is a global issue, I think.

[ANTISEMITISM, ISLAMOPHOBIA, HOLOCAUST]

Marina Gržinić: You actually now connect antisemitism, Islamophobia, and the Holocaust, which is absolutely central for our research, and I want to ask how can we detect changes within or among these relations?

Kovács: Almost all of the big surveys show that antisemitism is rising in the whole world. My opinion is that they [i.e. the above-mentioned concepts] run together because they cannot live alone. It is so because they symbolize a kind of "re-ethnicization" of the world. So, after hundred years of building a kind of nation-states with citizenships and democratic political structures, which impacted after World War II in a really big scope the consensus in Western Europe, after 1989 everybody in Eastern Europe also wanted to have a democratic regime and democratic society in which ethnicity cannot play a fundamental role. Citizenship is important, political activities are important, civil courage can be important, and so on. And after 30 years we found ourselves in the same framework within which ethnic origin is important, ethnicity is important and societies reproduce themselves [on the basis of this reduction] onto a lower and lower, and smaller form. In Hungary, this is really shocking. So, first they cut the Roma population [out of society], which was also a regional cut that meant that eastern Hungary does not play an important role in the Hungarian government development. Then they cut the Jews, which was a problematic issue because in Hungary we have a real Jewish community, but then the Orbán gov-

ernment[1] could have cut [divide] this community within itself. Now we have two different directions within the Jewish community. And then, in addition, they used the "refugee crisis" and finalized this ethnicized view, no matter that 4 million Hungarians out of 10 could not take part in this society. So, this was the idea [that lead the society to become] even smaller and smaller, as well as it shows that the government is really weak, not just the Hungarian, in terms that it can forget half of the society. But, I do not think that you can take one of these stereotypes and understand the procedure because the story always was open to integrating others [into its narrative as] enemies. Gender, for example. So, in Hungary, this type of xenophobic, authoritarian society really shows [itself]. Gender issues, Roma, Jews, and migrants, so-called migrants, refugees. All of these groups have a kind of insecure position in society. They can still be Hungarian, but "I" [the ones in power] will declare who is Hungarian and who is not. So, I do not think that in Hungary Islamophobia has a long history or that it has a very fundamental tradition. No. In parallel with Islamophobia, we support Turkey, the Turkish government and we rebuild these Ottoman-Hungarian political connections. So, you could not declare that Hungarian society hates Turks. No, we do not have Turks in Hungary. We have a very small Muslim society, invisible, almost invisible. Jewish society is also invisible. The refugees were partly visible because they were on the move and the Roma community is partly visible, but not all of them. And, it also means that the position, the social position of the Roma, and the social position of [various] groups can be mixed. You can get this "stamp" of [being] Roma if you are poor. It can happen that you are not a Roma, but you find yourself in a Roma position. The police and your neighbours will recognize you as a Roma. You are white; you are "Hungarian" and not Roma, but suddenly you find yourself in this social position because you are poor. If you are poor, you are Roma.

Gržinić: How would you analyse the change of the stances of right-wing in Austria towards the Holocaust?

Kovács: What is happening now in Austria, or what happened in the past 20 years – antisemitic declarations from the right-wing, FPÖ, or

1 Viktor Orbán (born 1963) is a Hungarian politician who served as prime minister of Hungary (1998–2002; 2010–) (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

these *Burschenschaft*[2] stories [surfacing] every year – show that there is a double speech at work. On the public level, the right-wing politicians are trying to be more PC [politically correct] and *salonfähig* [acceptable for polite society], but on the other hand their everyday life goes on in the same way. As I mentioned in the first part of our conversation, Austria is really tricky because it has an institution, it has a language, which is PC, which is supportive toward refugees, which is integrative in terms of cultural differences, but on the other hand, the everyday habits can... remain the same. You can find the same language in a village, still in Austria, like in 1944 or 1943, which means that fundamental, subversive confrontation with the past never happened. If you can use this language it means that you have never thought whether I can use it or not. If you declare yourself, I conducted an interview in eastern Austria ten years ago, and my old interviewees declared themselves as Germans, not because of the language, but because of the identity.

Prof. Éva Kovács PhD has been a research programme director at the Vienna Wiesenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies (VWI) since October 2012. Her research fields are the history of the Holocaust in Eastern Europe, research on memory and remembrance, and Jewish identity in Hungary and Slovakia.

2 *Burschenschaften* were student fraternities at German universities that began as an expression of the new nationalism (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

GERHARD BAUMGARTNER

27 June 2019, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Austria
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Gerhard Baumgartner: What is strange today and here, I think that FPÖ has learned quite clearly that with clearly antisemitic positions you cannot win elections because, internationally, you get into a very impossible position. What has happened, and also what makes it easier, is that in Israel the political spectrum has shifted and now you have Netanyahu[1] and his political party,[2] and all of a sudden there is a political partner for the European right in Israel. And this is "super" because the argument of antisemitism was an argument that the left or the centre-left could always use against the centre-right and the right-wing parties. And now they "team-up" with the Israeli right and all of a sudden this does not work anymore. Now everybody can say, no, no, we have nothing against the Jews, we love the Jews, we support Israel, etc. and it works, and it worked quite well, and it is being used actually as a tool, as a hammer, to hit the Muslims at the moment. And we have this whole discourse about old and new antisemitism, meaning old is the fascist past, but we have overcome that. Apparently or so, we are made to believe that this does not happen anymore and there is the new [dis-

1 Benjamin Netanyahu (born 1949) has been a prime minister of Israel since 2009 (Wikipedia).
2 Likud (in English the Unity-National Liberals) is a right-wing Israeli political party (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

course]. And the new [antisemitism], and the new one is being brought in by the Muslims. And I think that is just a covered way of pushing racist politics. It clearly is racist. So, there is a very strong bias against the people from the Middle East and Muslims in general. It has nothing to do with their real, sort of, religious affiliation into any of the branches of Islam, but it is... Before that, there was very strong, and for a very long time, [bias against] the guest workers, *Gastarbeiters*, yes? And, we did not even make a differentiation, and nobody cared if they were Turks or if they were ex-Yugoslavs, *Yugos*, and Turks, as we used to call them and especially nobody made a distinction between Bosnians and Serbs and Croats, it was all just one thing. This has all changed. Now, there is a very strong emphasis on anti-Muslim sentiment and this is being used; you have it in the discussion, as we have it nowadays if Muslim family wants to buy a piece of land in one of the communities, this [stirs] quite shocking [reactions].

Šefik Tatlić: So, you would say that Islamophobic racism is an iteration of old racisms out of which antisemitism as well came?

Baumgartner: I would have called it like that. I think that it has metamorphosed into anti... It is xenophobia and as xenophobia it just had a different face, so to speak. From this old xenophobia, which did not prove so very successful in political life, now we have a new one. And now the face is Islam, basically. And, the refugee crisis etc., but it is very strong. Not only in Austria, of course, but this is also all over Europe, yes? I think it gets very, very dangerous when the then still vice-chancellor Strache[3] takes over concepts like the "exchange of populations" from the really hard-core right-wing like Mr. Sellner[4] and the Identitarian Movement.[5]

Marina Gržinić: Is it also possible to think about the colonial, racial division in these terms? It seems that Islamophobia, this way how the European Union practically removed the refugees, expelled them or stopped them in Africa, in Turkey, as well as it is observable that these issues are,

3 Heinz-Christian Strache (born 1969) is an Austrian politician, the former leader of FPÖ, who served as vice-chancellor of Austria from 2017 to 2019 (Wikipedia).

4 Martin Sellner (born 1989) is an Austrian New Right (Neue Rechte), Identitarian (extreme right-wing) activist, and a leader of the Identitarian Movement Austria (IBÖ) (Wikipedia).

5 The Identitarian movement or Identitarianism is a European far-right post-World War II political ideology claiming the right of peoples of European descent to culture and territory as exclusively belonging to people defined as European (Wikipedia).

in this sense, being treated as if they are not a problem anymore. Is it connected with racialization in connection with the colonial past?

[RACIALIZATION AND THE COLONIAL DIVIDE]

Baumgartner: I think that basically, in the political debate, the knowledge that we had in the 1970s that the First World is related to the Third World, as it was called in the 1970s and the 1980s, has completely disappeared. In the 1970s and 1980s, we had, through different kinds of players, not so much party politics. [There was] some party politics, but basically no, it was mainly church and civil society organizations. But, we all grew up with this understanding that the poverty there has to do something with us. And, this knowledge has completely disappeared. This has been completely cut away. This has been pushed under the table. That is why I think it does not figure anymore.

[COLONIAL GENOCIDES, ANTISEMITISM, TURBO-FASCISM]

Gržinić: Our research is focused on rethinking genocidal politics of Belgium in relation to its colonial past in the Congo, which was very specific as a model; antisemitism in Austria and the Second World War, the Holocaust, what happened in Europe; and also this turbo-fascism – this specific, very invigorated nationalism in ex-Yugoslavia – as three territories and the related phenomena. This is why I am asking does all this, including the rethinking the status of Europe today, in terms of what is going on with the refugees, have a relation to the colonial past?

Baumgartner: It does. To my mind it does. I am just not so sure that it really figures in the political discourse. To my mind, I think if we take this longer perspective if you look at the history of camps, it is a colonial practice. So, before the 1880s, you had no camps in Europe, not what so ever. I am not talking about prisoner camps or this idea that you go on holiday, you send your children to a camp on holiday – all this does not exist. Prisoners of war camps, or refugee camps, or whatever, it is

just not there. This is a colonial practice that was very quickly, around the turn of the centuries, before World War I, imported into European life. And, all of a sudden you have a phenomenon, which two French historians have then called "the century of camps." And then camps are everywhere because you have so many relocations of people. During World War I, it was not only about the prisoners of war, when the front moves lots of populations are being taken from one region, because you don't really trust them, you do not know, the same language is spoken across the border, so you take them and relocate them and it was very, very ugly how the army and the political representatives treat the local population in the non-German speaking areas of the Habsburg Monarchy. So, if you read the book of Rauchensteiner,[6] who was a conservative historian, but a very good historian and he wrote fantastic documentation about Austria in World War I, about debates that were going on and political leadership was already in discussion with the military leadership, how will we ever re-establish something like a normal country if you treat the local populations like this.

Gerhard Baumgartner PhD has been head of research at the Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance (DÖW) since May 2014. His research focuses on the resistance and persecution 1938–1945, history of the persecution of Roma and Sinti, Austria's handling of its Nazi past, and history of national minorities in Burgenland.

6 See Manfried Hermann Rauchensteiner, *The First World War and the End of the Habsburg Monarchy, 1914–1918* (Vienna, Cologne and Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2014).

GEORG HOFFMANN

27 June 2019, House of Austrian History, Vienna, Austria
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

House of Austrian History (Haus der Geschichte Österreich) is the republic's first museum of contemporary history. Located in the Hofburg Palace, it opened in 2018 on the centenary of the establishment of the First Austrian Republic.

EXCERPT FROM THE GUIDED TOUR

Georg Hoffmann: One of the biggest, key questions is *Anschluss* in 1938[1] because for quite a long time that was the core of Austria's feeling that it was the first victim[2] of National Socialism, which means, as you can see on these pictures [showing exhibited photographic material] is that the German army marched into Austria. The first point of view [as regards the previously mentioned debate] was that it was a violent annexation. The other point, as you can see here especially [showing the pictures of

1 The *Anschluss* (joining), also the *Anschluss Österreichs* (Annexation of Austria) refers to the annexation of Austria into Nazi Germany on 12 March 1938 (Wikipedia).

2 The Victim Theory (*Opferthese*) embodied in the slogan "Austria – the Nazis' first victim," was the ideological basis for Austria under occupation of the Allies (1945–1955) and in the Second Austrian Republic until the 1980s. This "victim theory" has become a fundamental myth in Austrian society (Wikipedia).

Hitler's speech at Heldenplatz, Vienna][3] is that 200,000 thousand are cheering Adolf Hitler announcing the annexation of Austria. So, what do you have in a scientific discussion is that we have different points of view. That the annexation of Austria came from the outside, that it came from the inside, that it came from above and also from below, so from different levels. The question we tackle here at the museum, within the [permanent] exhibition is how Austrians praised National Socialism; in which way, how and why. What you can see here is [points at various depictions of the Nazi swastika in newspapers, the design of household artefacts etc.], and this is really a point of discussion, is that swastikas that were almost everywhere in Austria, even before the Nazis were here. But, the main point [that is being depicted here] is the violence against Jews, [which started] immediately, also even before the Nazis were here. So, the Austrians reacted to the new situation and antisemitic violence broke out soon.

Šefik Tatlić: How the proponents of the "first victim narrative" explain the enthusiasm by which Hitler was met in Austria?

Hoffmann: That has something to do with the "first victim myth" going back to 1918 telling about – and it is a very nationalistic point of view in Austria, of course – about the feeling of being German and that all the nations in Europe were trying to destroy this large German nation. So, the Austrian reading of the power of Germany and Adolf Hitler's coming was framed by this strong feeling of having their own nation, their own German nation and that was...

Tatlić: Also amplified by the process of Pan-German unification?

Hoffmann: Yes, that is right. That is something that was part of the victim myth for quite a long time. The big narration was that they were cheering for National-socialism but that they were cheering for Germany. That was the narration for a really quite long time, which was also the explanation for antisemitic violence, of course. Then, you have the key point of the Austrian victim myth, [which says] don't discuss this kind of violence, because it is really National Socialism [at work]. So,

3 Hitler's triumphant tour through Austria culminated in Vienna on 15 March 1938, when about 200,000 German Austrians gathered on the Heldenplatz (Square of Heroes) to cheer and hear Hitler announce: "The oldest eastern province of the German people shall be, from this point on, the newest bastion of the German Reich" followed by the completion of the annexation of Austria into the Greater German Reich (Wikipedia).

if you see a board game called *Jews Out* [points at the displayed board game], one million of these board games were sold in 1938 in Austria.

[NAZI TERROR AND ANTISEMITIC VIOLENCE]

Tatlić: So, you are saying that currently antisemitic violence is not so often discussed in public space?

Hoffmann: It was not. There is a large shift [that began] in 1986, but before it really was not much discussed because it was against the official picture of Austria being a victim. What we can see here [points at various displayed newspapers] is a discussion about National Socialist terror, which was part of a museological discussion on how to deal with it, to show violence, extreme violence, and Nazi terror and we decided not to show human bodies, which was usual for quite a long time. In these terms we wanted to give the visitors an insight into the destinies of specific persons. And [these exhibits] are telling this story of specific places. We have chosen six places in the whole German Reich that have connections to Austria on several levels.

Marina Gržinić: So, what do you do with the display of concentration camps because Mauthausen consisted of many sites all over Austria?

Hoffmann: Yes, that is why the Mauthausen is one of the places we have shown here. That is the part of... that is Mauthausen [points at several written and physical artefacts in relation to the working of Mauthausen concentration camp].

Gržinić: Why are all these artefacts so miniature? Is it because the whole exhibition is so huge and covering one hundred years' period?

Hoffmann: Yes, that is right. That is regarding the exhibition, which also consists of another space we have upstairs where a large discussion about the Holocaust and concentration camps is hosted. So, what we are trying to do is to talk about the victims, the perpetrators and so on and specific places regarding concentration camps are upstairs in connection with the balcony [on which Hitler was standing when he announced the annexation of Austria]. That is the main focus we

have. What we are doing here is really shedding light on the fates of several people in different places, which means that the only people we are showing here are victims. We have [a display] of the discussion also about perpetrators. For example, as you can see, here is Auschwitz [showing the blueprint of the Auschwitz concentration camp]. The architects of the gas chambers and the crematorium in Auschwitz are Austrians. We are not showing them, in this discussion the victims are at the centre, of course, not perpetrators. But, we wanted to show, when we are talking about the extermination of Jews, that the Austrians were part of the system. And, also, there is a discussion about the law afterwards because these architects were not sentenced after the end of the war because they were saying that they had no idea what the gas chamber was used for.

Tatlić: They actually said that?

Hoffmann: Yes, yes. They were not punished because of that explanation.

Gržinić: They returned to Austria?

Hoffmann: Yes. The "first victim myth" of Austria as being the first victim of National Socialism was the first myth. The second one had another function. It told the story that the Austrians were the victims of liberation and war. That is something that worked quite well for prisoners of war; for the people returning from war; former soldiers and for former National Socialists. The main point of that myth is aerial war [Allies' bombardments] – still, until today, even in Germany and also in Austria. Because, there is a big narration and you have it in places of remembrance, even in Vienna, in Germany it would be Dresden, where people can talk about war and feel strongly only as victims, not as perpetrators. It has no connection to the Holocaust, that is interesting, within the discussion of remembrance.

Georg Hoffmann PhD is a curator at the House of Austrian History, Vienna.

HEIDEMARIE UHL

28 June 2019, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Austria
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Šefik Tatlić: Is the memory of the Holocaust somehow separated from the mainstream discourse of interpreting the Nazi past, in terms of the Austrian context, as well as in the context of Eastern Europe?

Heidemarie Uhl: In the context of Austria, and in general, I would say that the Holocaust commemorations became, so to say, the point of reference. You cannot talk, so to say, about the fallen soldiers, Austrians, which became part of the German Wehrmacht as it was the case in post-war decades. You cannot talk about this without talking about the Holocaust.

[THE IMPORTANCE OF THE HOLOCAUST]

Of course, you can say that there are also absurdities that are trying to counter this overarching commemoration point. And that is, of course, the identitarian movement [discourse]. They are trying to re-invoke this, so to say, very strong but not nearly as important position in the Austrian memory by looking at the wars against the Ottomans, the

Turks and so on; you know, 1683 and the Kahlenberg.[1] I think that only since a few years ago a march to the Kahlenberg started to happen in September to honour, so to say, the fight of Christianity against the Ottoman Empire.

Marina Gržinić: How much have these discourses of memorialization changed in accordance with the changes in capitalism, let say from liberalism and further? I am asking because you have talked about the 1980s and many emphasize the 1980s as a decade when these changes happened. From a historical point of view, what were the conditions, what were those other processes that led to the 1980s being the period when one format of the organization of memory discourses changed into something else?

Uhl: I am glad you asked, and if we take a look at which changes and transformations occurred in society in this period of the 1980s, 1990s we can observe the following. Of course, you have liberalism, neoliberalism, so to say, "wild capitalism," which was not only the case in "the East" but also shaped "the West," at least. And, of course, one of the main transformations is, so to say, the crumbling of big political camps and, also, of the narratives. The narratives concerning the past of these political camps, conservatives, social-democrats. They just lost importance.

[THE CHANGES OF THE MEDIA SPACE]

And if you would, for example, look at the 1980s, you have, not only on the national level but also on the level of provinces; you had party publications, newspapers of social-democrats, the conservatives, even the communist party. All these kinds of media have vanished, very quickly in the 1990s. If you, for example, think about social-democratic *Arbeiter Zeitung*,[2] which was their traditional newspaper, it just... all these kinds of voices vanished. That means, all these kinds of belonging to the social, cultural, political, so to say, strata in society, they have just lost importance. And, you have now a very individualized [approach], and not, so to say, "politicized" in terms of thinking about party politics. This was

1 The Battle of Vienna took place on 12 September 1683 at Kahlenberg Mountain near Vienna, after the Ottoman Empire besieged the imperial city for two months (Wikipedia).

2 *Arbeiter Zeitung* (in translation: workers' newspaper) was a daily published by the Austrian Social Democrat Party between 1889 and 1991 (Wikipedia).

before. You can also see that some talk about... My question would be, if we would say that the Holocaust is now the main point of reference for looking at the past of the 20th century, what kinds of points of historical reference have lost importance, have lost social energy, have lost, so to say, the place in cultural imagination? And, there are clear losers. One of the most important transformations is the decline of the memory of resistance. And that was, of course, at the forefront in the post-war decades, though only for the small part of the Austrian society. But, if you would talk about what is antagonism in post-war Austria, it is, on the one hand, a commemoration of the fallen soldiers, which was dominant in the provinces, in each village, in each small town you have this kind of monument.

And, on the other hand, the commemoration for the resistance against the Nazi regime. This was predominant, so to say, in the culture of social-democrats, and of course, the communists, but not so much or not even nearly existing in the conservative milieu because there the commemoration for the fallen soldiers was in the forefront. And now these this kind of antagonism has also vanished. And, you have the second part why the history of the resistance just lost influence and lost its former place in cultural memory, which is due to this general transformation from a heroic to the victim-oriented memory. And, of course, the heroic memory of resistance was coined by this kind of partial [components] of post-war decades; it had, so to say, a history. Holocaust memory had no history and could have now acted in a new way of discourse and so on. If I want to think about, or if I just try to get the idea, what would historians in 50 or 100 years critically ask when they look at our culture of commemoration, or which questions they would raise, I think that one question could be why did it become so important to identify the completely innocent victim? Is it, so to say, kind of symbolic identification with a kind of group, which did not do anything because they could not do anything, or mostly did not do anything; they were not persecuted because of what they did but because of what they were and if I identify with the completely innocent, but also a victim of the agency, so to say, and every agency was under the umbrella, under the framework of Nazi persecution, it gives me, so to say, the freedom that I also do not have to act. So, what is the message? It is, of course, fighting against antisemitism; fighting against racism, but there is no [implication suggesting] the fight against the authoritar-

ian state or fighting against all these kinds... or doing something, yes? In the sense of identifying with somebody who really acted as a partisan for example. So, I think that there is ambivalence... The question is not what is the outcome, so to say, what does it mean, but the question is why did become so attractive and important?

Gržinić: We are also interested in a question [if] it is possible to see a difference between memory and history in terms of change in memory being directed from the state and becoming part of the civil society, of individual memory, of groups and then history, on the other hand, is now delegated back to the state or institutional framework. Is it possible to think about this difference or what is this difference?

Uhl: I will come back to the question of what is the framework for these kinds of changes we are just talking about. Of course, one of the main aspects is that the concept of the future vanished. Pierre Nora,[3] he speaks about an obsession of society for memory. But, what we can see if we look for example at the 1970s, the historiography of the 1986 generation – you have a clear idea of a better future. More democratic, more equal, more social security for more people and so on; more participation, these kinds of light motives of democratization of society. The idea of a better future has vanished and we can, really if we want to think about, [ask] what is this kind of connected development at the end of the 20th century?

Prof. Heidemarie Uhl PhD is a senior researcher at the Austrian Academy of Sciences (OeAW) in Vienna and lecturer at the University of Vienna and the University of Graz, Austria.

3 A French historian Pierre Nora (born 1931) is known for his work on French identity and memory, as well as for his editorship of Parisian multivolume *Les lieux de memoire* and magazine *Le débat*. On 7 June 2001, he was elected to the Académie française (Wikipedia).

RUDOLF "RUDI" VOUK

27 September 2019, Ljubljana, Slovenia
Interview by Marina Gržinić

Marina Gržinić: Can you tell us more about the history of the Slovenes in Austria, especially with regard to World War II? How did, for example, Nazi authorities deal with Slovenes?

Rudolf "Rudi" Vouk: Before the plebiscite,[1] the Carinthian Slovenes were promised that they would be equal citizens, that they would be given the same care as the majority of the nation, and this undoubtedly also affected the outcome of the plebiscite for Austria. Because in the area where the plebiscite took place, at that time, the absolute majority of the Slovene population was around 80% or more, in some places. But these Slovenes decided that they wanted to stay in Austria for economic or other reasons. As soon as the result was out, however, everything changed. Immediately after the plebiscite, the then governor of Carinthia stated that there was only one generation of time to bring Carinthia back to German, that is, in one generation, a complete Germanization of the Slovenian minority should be achieved. The policy also corresponded to this in the period between the wars. And

1 The Carinthian plebiscite (*Kärntner Volksabstimmung*) was held on 10 October 1920 in the area predominantly settled by Carinthian Slovenes. It determined the final southern border between the Republic of Austria and the newly formed Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Yugoslavia) after World War I. 59.04% of Carinthian Slovenes voted for Austria (Wikipedia).

when Nazi Germany occupied Austria, this policy turned into an attempt to actually also physically destroy the Slovenian minority. There were plans to evict the entire Slovene population, probably to Ukraine, that is, where the Slovenes, as a Slavic sub-nation, as inferior, would play a certain role.

[EVICTION OF THE SLOVENIAN MINORITY]

The eviction had already begun. The first 1000 people were evicted in 1942 and, in fact, the only reason they were not able to complete this project was the course of the war. Many Slovenes were put in concentration camps, and there were a considerable number of victims. And... on the other hand, Slovenian boys were conscripted into the German army. And it happened that when they got home on vacation they saw that their families were gone because the Nazis had evicted them at the same time. These developments led to the emergence of a resistance movement in Carinthia, the Partisans. This was the sole organized military revolt against Nazism in the Republic of Austria, and after the liberation, when the question arose as to whether Austria alone also contributed to the liberation, this partisan revolt was actually the only thing Austria could refer to, and did so at that time.

Gržinić: I am interested to know, from today's point of view, if there is any talk about this? Is this commemorated? Because this was, as a matter of fact, really the only resistance against the Nazis?

Vouk: This has been slightly more commemorated than it was before. In the early post-war years, not only years but also decades, there was actually a widespread belief like "Yes, what do you want, since you came back anyway?" There were even vicious allegations that these Slovenes had come back in far greater numbers than had been evicted, and so on. And many never wanted to speak about these experiences. It was not until 2000 that Austria introduced a sort of fund to compensate those affected. Many then, for the first time, more than half a century later, reported to tell their story and then received some relatively low compensation, but well, it was something. It is also partly a phenomenon that only the next generation is beginning to become more aware of what happened to their parents and trying to bring it to the

public attention. But the matter is more or less confined to the internal Slovenian public and to certain cultural, scientific circles. In terms of the wider population, there is, quite simply, no awareness of what happened here. It even goes so far that Carinthians, that is to say, Austrian Carinthians living next to us, sometimes seriously ask us, when did you actually move here, as if we were some *gastarbeiters*, who happened to arrive in around the 1960s or something like that. That is to say, there is practically no historical awareness amongst the public around this issue, and the country does not take care of it either. Here, the official memory often begins with the plebiscite and also ends with it.

Gržinić: I am now interested in what you have just described and the place of that within the Austrian State Treaty. These formulations of the Austrian State Treaty, how they manipulate or relate to this resistance – because this point was inside the treaty, then there were different machinations. I am interested in your view. The importance of this and, in general, the importance of the Austrian State Treaty.[2] What happens after World War II?

Vouk: The State Treaty, or the mention of the Slovene minority in the State Treaty, is, indeed, the result of the resistance in the Nazi era. Of course, there was also a matter of politics, the systemic difference between Yugoslavia, communist Yugoslavia, and western Austria. But after 1945, Yugoslavia, of course, renewed its territorial demands to annex the southern part of Carinthia, with the argument that those promises from 1920, before the plebiscite, were not fulfilled, that an attempt was made to actually destroy the Slovenian minority and that the Slovenian minority in Austria was, quite simply, not safe. And because of this, in the early post-war years, Austria put a lot of effort into removing this impression. At that time, bilingual education for all in southern Carinthia was introduced. They called one representative of the Carinthian Slovenes to the provisional Carinthian Provincial Government, and there were promises that everything would be in ship shape, and that Austria, the new Austria, was no longer the same as before. And... When, after the conflict, when [Josip Broz] Tito had a quarrel with [Josip] Sta-

2 Following eight years of negotiations, the Austrian State Treaty (State Treaty for the Re-establishment of an Independent and Democratic Austria) was signed by the occupying Allied powers (France, the then Soviet Union, Great Britain and the United States of America) and Austria on 15 May 1955 at the Austrian Schloss Belvedere. The Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia acceded to the treaty subsequently. The treaty officially came into force on 27 July 1955 (Wikipedia).

lin, Yugoslavia was no longer able to fulfil its territorial claims, and the Article 7 was virtually the price for Yugoslavia to give up those claims.

In a special resolution on 28 June 1948, Stalin accused the Communist Party of Yugoslavia [KPJ] of moving away from Marxist and Leninist ideology, and of a hostile attitude toward the Soviet Union [USSR], and expelled it from that organization. The real reason for the confrontation was the conflict between Stalin and Tito, since the latter, after World War II, wanted a greater degree of autonomy in Yugoslav politics. That is to say, this is, sooner or later, directly related, and I also think that we are still largely unaware of ... the [process of] articulating... this still public provision of minority protection in Austria. There is, however, one more interesting fact, that to this very day, Austria has not yet, by itself, adopted any minority legislation.

Rudolf "Rudi" Vouk MA is an Austrian lawyer, politician and human rights activist of Slovene ethnic background, known for his legal and political fight for the minority rights of Carinthian Slovenes.

LJILJANA RADONIĆ

8 October 2019, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Austria
Interview by Šefik Tatlić

Šefik Tatlić: Given your focus on the memory politics in central and south-eastern Europe how would you compare these politics with those in Austria? What are the similarities and differences?

[THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WORLD WAR II AND THE POST-SOCIALIST CONTEXTS]

Ljiljana Radonić: Important difference is, of course, the time frame when did someone start to confront the past. Like, in the Austrian context, we deal with World War II, whereas in the post-communist, post-socialist countries it is merged, the confrontation with the World War II and the confrontation with the communist crimes is merged together into one hot issue somehow. So, in Austria, it took very long to confront the past, but it has happened in several segments of society. In the post-communist societies it is still very conflicting and "hot memory," but I would not go there to say that is why they need time to confront their past more critically and [that they should be] given more time, which is a kind of arrogant position.

[CONFRONTING THE PAST IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE]

It is so because the people who fight for confronting the past and for fighting against historical revisionism in eastern and central European countries have no time to say, "Ok, we Austrians took so long, so let us give them time as well," that does not work for those people who want to fight historical revisionism there, on the ground, now. They need support as much as they can get, so this is a difference. But, still it means it is good if they can confront their past earlier on. In the former Yugoslav context there is this very specific phenomenon of war on memories. So, somehow the Yugoslav succession wars were also wars about memory.

Tatlić: Would you say that this war is a war against a specific memory, against the memory of socialism?

Radonić: Wars of the 1990s [that] were basically annexed to all the economic reasons and political reasons, were also wars of unconfronted past during the Tito era, of this myth of "Brotherhood and Unity,"[1] which succeeded in calming down all the nationalisms for some decades but then exploded because of the unconfronted past during the Tito era. So, all these ideas of not speaking about who precisely the perpetrators were in which context and who precisely the victims were, but always giving all the names of all Yugoslav nations both as perpetrators and as victims, pretending that there were no differences, like between the Ustasha[2] who ran a state regime and the Chetniks[3] who did not run a state regime, both committed crimes, but different kinds of crimes. So, this was all silenced [in terms of] speaking about this precisely and that is exactly what blew up at the end of the 1980s when Jasenovac,[4] for example, became the hot issue. I would argue that, somehow, the war of

1 Coined during the Yugoslav People's Liberation War (1941–45) the "Brotherhood and Unity" slogan of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia transformed into a guiding principle of Yugoslavia's post-war inter-ethnic policy (Wikipedia).

2 The Ustasha – Croatian Revolutionary Movement, was a Croatian separatist, ultranationalist, fascist and terrorist organization that was active in Yugoslavia between 1929 and 1945. Its members brutally murdered hundreds of thousands of Serbs, Jews, Roma and political dissidents during World War II (Wikipedia).

3 Chetniks were Serbian royalist, ultra-nationalist, fascist and genocidal guerilla force active in World War II and in the 1990s (Wikipedia).

4 The Jasenovac extermination and concentration camp was set up by the Croatian Ustasha authorities of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) in Slavonia in August 1941. The camp was run solely by the Ustasha and dismantled in April 1945 (Wikipedia).

the 1990s had, to a big degree, to do something with the unconfronted past of World War II.

[THE NARRATIVES OF THE "TOTALITARIAN REGIMES" AS AN OBSTACLE FOR CONFRONTING THE PAST]

Tatlić: There is a lot of revisionist narratives which take place exactly under the umbrella of the narrative of the condemnation of the so-called "all totalitarian regimes," so how do you interpret that situation?

Radonić: This idea of totalitarianism is very practical for not confronting the past critically. Because, of course, you can blur everything into that and then it does not make a difference if we are talking about, not even Stalin or Tito, then if it makes no difference because if it is all totalitarianism, who cares. And, also, it is very practical for not seeing the differences between National Socialist and, if we stay in the Yugoslav context, Ustasha past and communist crimes or socialist crimes. These are then blurred into this one term totalitarianism, which then does not force us to deal with the specificities, like that the Ustasha were, next to the Romanians, the only ones who were running death camps on their own; who did not deport their Jews to the Nazis, but who ran their camps. This is a specificity that should, must be talked about way more, it has to be explained. But, everything like that is blurred when we speak about totalitarianism.

[THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW VOCABULARY]

And, in the Yugoslav context, due to the war there is also the figure of the "New Jews of today," and depicting the perpetrators of the Yugoslav wars of the 1990s as the new Nazis or the new fascists. And, this can be found, interestingly enough, all around the conflicts; not only with Bosniaks but also Croatian prime minister, Ivo Sanader,[5] before he went to prison, went to Yad Vashem, into the Israeli Holocaust Memorial Museum and said that no one knows better than the Croats what it

5 Ivo Sanader (born 1953) was a prime minister of Croatia from 2003 to 2009 (Wikipedia).

means to become the victim of Nazism and fascism. Claiming that the Croats were the new Jews of the wars of the 1990s and the Serbs were the new Nazis and fascists. And so, the past is then recharged with a new meaning in this war on memory and the idea of the new Jews is very dangerous, I would say because you cannot live together if you depict your neighbour as a new Nazi or a new fascist.

[THE UNIVERSALISATION OF THE HOLOCAUST]

There is this trend of the so-called Europeanization of the Holocaust and universalization of the Holocaust that is somehow also helpful for not confronting critically one's own past because if the Holocaust is something whole Europe has to deal with, because we all somehow collaborated, then there is no need to talk about the specifics – like the Ustasha who were running the death camps on their own. So, this also works in the Austrian context. Like, if you take the 27th of January, the day Auschwitz was liberated, as a Holocaust memorial day then it is about Jews, but if you focus on the day when Mauthausen was liberated, this is the day that is commemorated in Austria, then it is about all the victim groups. So, here, this Europeanization somehow allows us not to be very precise about what happened in our own country; not to talk about the specifics of "our" perpetrators and in Austria [about] the higher degree of involvement in extermination camps, in Croatia about the running of the death camps in their own and so on.

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LUKAS EGGER

9 October 2019, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Austria
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Šefik Tatlić: How do you interpret the ideological origins of racist narratives in Austria and Germany and their correlations with similar discourses in Western Europe?

Lukas Egger: The main thing that differentiates Austria and Germany from other parts of Europe is this very folkish kind of nationalism, very blood and soil kind of thinking, which always had with it very vial antisemitism and also, especially in Austria, a kind of anti-Slavic racism that was really foundational. You can really see this trajectory until today when you look at the whole debate about the guest workers and stuff like that. I think anti-Slavic motives were way more important then anti-Islamic motives, which are now becoming more and more the main target. But, still, I would not say that these kinds of antisemitism and anti-Slavic racism really differentiate Austria and Germany by a lot from the rest of Europe. Antisemitism can be found pretty much everywhere, all across Western Europe, also across Eastern Europe, of course. The difference, especially for Austria, is that there was no real... Of course, Austria has some kind of colonial history. There was recently a good book published by an Austrian historian called Simon

Loidl[1] who did some research on colonial adventures of Austria and he basically said that, of course, there were always orientations in that direction, there were always political groups that wanted Austria to have a full-on colonial project but it never really worked out; there were only minor adventures and minor settlements also. I think that this actually had an impact on how racism developed here because Austria never had this ideological pressure to legitimize and rationalize colonial adventures overseas. That means that this whole idea of the "noble savage" in the new Americas or anti-African racism, stuff like that, is not really so much present. Of course, there are these images, of course, there are these symbols and, of course, there is a lot of colonial knowledge circulating in Austria, but it was not at the foundation of public and state racism.

[ANTI-MUSLIM RACISM]

Marina Gržinić: How are the refugees today treated within these discourses you have presented to us? Also, how are some other minorities and ethnic groups – those that are not really seen as a minority, like Turkish minority or ex-Yugoslav minorities, maybe the black community, which is quite big or Latin American community – being seen? And these groups talk about overt racism and try to change and ask for certain different positions.

Egger: I think you can see a lot of the motives from hundreds of years ago now popping up again, especially when it comes to Turkish migrants, you have this old idea of Austria defending itself against the invading Turks, this is a motive you can find everywhere, especially in the discourse of the FPÖ and you can also see some articles of this anti-Slavic racism, but this was pretty much superseded by the incoming of anti-Muslim motives, pretty much. I do not think you can actually say that anti-Muslim racism, that became the main racist outlook during the last, I would say, a decade, became, like, a reinstatement of older racist ideas. I think this is actually a new phenomenon, especially for Austria. I think it more like reacted to the whole war on terror; to

1 Simon Loidl, *"Europa ist zu eng geworden": Kolonialpropaganda in Österreich-Ungarn 1885 bis 1918* ["Europe has become too narrow": Colonial propaganda in Austria-Hungary 1885–1918] (Vienna: Promedia Verlag, 2017).

this whole idea about "the clash of civilizations." This was pretty much non-existent in the 1990s in Austria or only in very small circles and it really became a huge, huge centre of the debate in the 2000s.

[THE EXTERNALIZATION OF ANTISEMITISM ONTO MUSLIMS]

And, I think it was taken up so easily because it kind of matched with the whole refugee situation that became more and more prominent and it also has to do with antisemitism, as well. Especially and also with the narrative of the Austrian society as a whole that for the first time, it was possible for the right, not just to deny that they are antisemites, they actually could talk about antisemitism but by externalizing it onto Muslims. So, for the first time, the right could say it wanted to talk about antisemitism, but in the sense that they positioned themselves as critics of antisemitism, because are the only ones who are actually criticizing the "Islamic masses who are invading Europe" and bringing back this antisemitism that, in their eyes, long ago vanished from Austria.

Gržinić: You are a specialist in the theories of state and it is a certain paradox, or maybe not, that we have this big concentration of nation-states in the space of Europe. This closure of borders, also in the European context, while we are living in global neoliberal capitalism. So, how do you see this turn, connected with the building of Fortress Europe, this process of marginalization and pushing out all the others?

Tatlić: Actually, how do you interpret the renewed emphasis on the concept of the nation-state in Europe?

[THE NATION STATE AS A BASE OF GLOBALIZATION]

Egger: First of all, I do not think that we could say that globalization was something that actually makes the nation-state vanish. This was an idea that was discussed a lot in the 1990s and also at the beginning of the 2000s, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri wrote their famous book

about Empire.[2] And, at that point, it kind of made sense, you had a lot of development which lead in the direction of more supra-nationalism, more internationalism, and stuff like that, but now we see that globalization always needed the nation-state as a base.

[THE VANISHING OF POSITIVE VIEWS ON GLOBALIZATION AFTER 2008]

Every capitalist firm needs a state that actually sets the terms for economic development. And the backlash we are seeing right now is that the nation-state is more and more present, also in the debates then it was before. You can see that his kind of very optimistic view of the globalization that was there for 15 or 20 years ago pretty much vanished. After the 2008 and after the whole financial crisis what we saw is that the people became more and more critical of neoliberal globalization actually, bringing them something they can benefit from, like this idea that one day it is all going to trickle down. Right now we can see that this never happened and I think that, yes, that led to these discourses of the nation-state because the nation-state certainly looks like a warm, cosy shelter from [as opposed to] this big and bad globalization. This also leads to these kinds of romantic notions of the Fordist state after the end of World War II; this, like, huge network of social welfare and, like, this more autonomous mode of making politics, like, politics still had to say something, while now it is more that politics is technocratic, just following technocratic imperatives. [...] But, I think that this whole idea and populism that actually likes to state that we have just to come back to the nation-state and nation-state is just going to solve all crisis for us is, of course, an illusion, because you cannot just roll back globalization. But, it is still an illusion that really reverberates with people because everybody still has these memories, even though it is just about some ideological constructs they never actually experienced, but still these are only memories of good, old social welfare state of the 1950s and 1960s.

2 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

Lukas Egger graduated in political science in Vienna. Currently, he is working on a PhD thesis on racism from a state-theoretical perspective. His research focuses on the history and theories of racism, the state, Marxism, and neo-Marxism.

ASSIMINA GOUMA

9 October 2019, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Austria
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Assimina Gouma: At this time I am very interested in school segregation, segregation in schools and about gentrification where, let us say, new groups, new social groups enter migrant neighbourhoods and what kind of conflicts take place, as well as how solutions look like. So, in schools you can see a lot of in-school segregation, so these are migrant schools and these migrant schools are kind of "bad schools."

["BELONGING" TO SCHOOLS]

What people think of them is that their children do not belong to these schools. There are also schools that are trying to have a lot of, let us say, people with good education and then, in order to get these people into the schools, some schools make a proposal saying "In our schools, there are a lot of migrant children, but we are not going to mix classes."

[THE SEPARATION OF CLASSES IN SCHOOLS]

So, the classes are separated. You have classes for Austrian or, let us say, children with the "right" background. It is not only about Austrian children, it is about children that have parents who can care about their education; parents who speak German very well and all the other children, also Austrian children, with problems in the family, coming from poor families or families without higher educational background are strongly present in other classes. I am interested in what is happening there and also as an educated migrant, I make [bring] my experiences into this setting and solutions. It is very hard to see that a new, privileged generation, privileged regarding some things – most of the people who are architects for example and many highly educated people in general – are not as privileged as they expected while they were studying. Because education is not anymore a key, a certainty, or a solution for getting privileges.

[A MATTER OF PRECARITY]

You get some, but you are not sure whether you will get a job. So, precarity is also a matter for highly educated people. And these people are trying to keep their privileges, not by solidarity and fighting the system that produces differences, but they say "No, no, my child should get a good education" and a good education means an education without migrant children or with very few, you know, like "But, we have a child from Egypt!" in our class. All other children are not, they are Austrian children that speak German very well and then they get just one migrant child and say "We are not racists," you know, it is a kind of presentation thing.

[PRIVILEGES BY EXCLUSION]

So, in my research I see a lot of people who are trying to keep their privileges by exclusion of social groups. In migrant neighbourhoods they are making their own clusters, you know, they still live just by themselves. They do not mix. They do not have any experience with other people. By

looking at the agenda and violence they, of course, think that the place of violence, the place of racism is where uneducated people are. The idea is that this is a problem of uneducated, poor people, it is not a matter of the elites. They define themselves as elite. The classes are elite classes. There is no reason to think about it that way, but they construct their life projects as elite projects, although many of them are not financial elites. They do not have a "regular" biography, you know, working biography. So, when a school finds out that some children experience violence at home then they react very strongly and very fast when it is about migrant parents. But, if violence happens in "good families" then they talk with parents; they also use it as a motor of silencing them if they are critical about a school. They say "Do not criticize us, your child told us he experienced violence at home, why did you do this?"

[STEREOTYPES]

So, they think that the violence was a mistake, but if migrants do this then it is their culture. They react in a very different way and you get a feeling, especially, you know, when it concerns Roma people, the stereotypes surrounding these people are so strong and institutions like schools react on the basis of these stereotypes. So, they have different strategies according to their stereotypes and their fantasies about what is happening in different families. There is a point when you get a feeling that every poor migrant family, and there are a lot of them, always has to fight with these stereotypes of being, you know, violent towards women, violent towards children, which is, of course, reality but it is not cultural reality.

[THE REALITIES OF EASTERN AND WESTERN PATRIARCHAL SOCIETIES]

It is a reality of a patriarchal society. So, Austrian men are not better than Greek men, or Turkish men, they also use their privileges given to them by society, but women in Austria, of course, have stronger representation. Feminists are strongly involved in politics. Their self-organization is much more powerful, so this is a historical continuity we can see here. They can address their political concerns in public more

strongly than maybe in other countries. So, it is not a matter of biology or culture, it is a matter of self-organization and to what extent feminism is present in political situations.

[CLASS RACIALIZATION]

Marina Gržinić: What you described can be called class racialization, especially in regard to what is going on in schools. How is all of this working in the context of the presence of these big slogans of integration, because it is obvious that what is taking place is a process of ghettoization?

Gouma: There is a communique from the FPÖ party[1] asking for ghettoization, asking for Austrian classes in schools so the children do not get "disturbed" by migrant children. If you look now in Vienna there are a lot of schools that have implemented this solution although the FPÖ was not [in power]. They were [in power] only for a few years in the government. So, there is a thing happening now regarding ghettoization in classes, parents are asking classes to be cleansed of prolets[2] and it concerns people not coming from Austria. This is a very strong word because somebody [is regarded as less worthy] in the society if he is a prolet. So, this term is in Austria used for people [who are regarded as] less worthy in society. You can see that the elites are trying to say, we are not racists and at the same time, they are fighting for their privileges, also in places like schools, which should be places of social justice and a place of utopias, you know, if children are going to change the world.

[VALORIZATION, RACIALIZATION, EVERYDAY LIFE]

What happens to people who are poor or uneducated is that they [are regarded as] less worthy. I find this very important. There was a teacher who said to my husband – who is a white man, well educated, you can look at him and get these fantasies about what he is – and one teacher said to him, "Why do you come so late," he was late with our child to the school, and she said to him, "Why are you coming so late, are you an

1 The Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) is a far-right political party in Austria.
2 Prolet is a colloquial shortening of the term proletarian.

auslander [foreigner]?" And, he was astonished to get such an question or that somebody addresses him with so open racism in the school.

Assimina Gouma PhD is a communication scientist writing her dissertation at the University of Vienna. She is a member of the research group "Critical Migration Research" [KriMi]. In addition to migration and media, her research focuses on transnationalism, critical journalism and the empirical methods of social science. Fields of her expertise include migration and antiracism research, media sociology, gender research, empirical methods, and action research. She works as an external lecturer at the Institute for German Studies at the University of Vienna.

BENJAMIN GRILJ

9 October 2019, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Austria
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Marina Gržinić: If we take a look back at the previous decades, what has remained unexplored in terms of the mapping of history; what was left out and remained unresearched and what is left to be done? What do you find really important [and] that remained unresearched?

Benjamin Grilj: This is a personal question and I can just answer it as a person because other historians have different views and have other really important issues and really important things that they are looking at. From my point of view, at the moment – this is my historic research at the moment – is the question of citizenship in the interwar period because this was mainly bound up with the Jewish community. All other parts, like German-speaking Bukovinians[1] [...], it was clear, they all became citizens, the Jews did not. And, this arises a lot of other

1 Bukovina is a historical region, divided between Romania and Ukraine, located on the northern slopes of the central Eastern Carpathians and the neighbouring plains. During 1774 and 1918, Bukovina was an administrative division of Habsburg Monarchy, the Austrian Empire and Austria-Hungary (Wikipedia).

questions. You have to redesign the question of Eastern Jewry[2] and antisemitism against Eastern Jewry because we are talking about a way bigger group than we talked before. Before we thought there were several thousand, and as far as I see it at the moment, we have pretty much forty thousand Eastern Jews in Vienna in the interwar period.

[UNNUMBERED VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST]

So, we have to think, to rethink this theme. We have to think about the amounts. We are always talking about 65,000 or the last number was 67,412, but first of all, numbers do not count, they are people, and second, this number does not fit. New researches say that we have at least, minimum we have 5 to 10% more Holocaust victims than it is stated now. Then I think we have to, not just look at the Jewish victims, we have to look at all other victim groups as well, which is not really done in Austria.

[HOMOSEXUAL AND ROMA-SINTI VICTIMS OF THE HOLOCAUST]

If you look at the discussion [in many] dissertations, if you look at the homosexuals; if you look at the Roma-Sinti. There was something done with regards to Roma-Sinti [victim research], but I think there is a lot more to be done. I think we also should not stop in 1938 with the research, I think we have to go further. Antisemitism did not fall off the trees in 1938, it was already there, it was deeply bounded with Austrian identity and this is not something you can just answer on the national level, you have to ask it, you have to look into the local communities because there is a huge difference between Styria[3] and Vienna, or

2 There are two meanings of the term "Eastern European Jewry." The first refers to the present-day Eastern European countries' political spheres, and the second to the Jewish kibbutzim in Russia and Poland. The term "Eastern European Jews" or "Jews of the East" was constructed during the 19th century in the German Empire and in the western provinces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, with the aim of distinguishing the integrating Jews in Central Europe from those in the East (Wikipedia). The concept of "Eastern European Jewry" thus describes the Jewish communities who lived in collective settlement in Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Russia, Romania, Hungary and modern Moldova. It may also refer to: the "True" Jews in the eyes of many Zionists, like Nathan Birnbaum; Poor "Russian" Jewry; Chassidim (Hasidic Judaism, a religious Jewish community in Western Ukraine during the 18th century) (Wikipedia).

3 Styria is a federal state (or Bundesland) in south-eastern Austria (Wikipedia).

Burgenland[4] or Tyrol.[5] So, I think that regional studies have to become much more intense.

[THE HISTORY OF ANTISEMITISM]

Gržinić: What do you think about the history or genealogy of antisemitism? There is a lot of talk about the new antisemitism. During our interviews with specialists, academics, political scientists and so on, we always ask about what could be the definition of new antisemitism. Is this really new or is it antisemitism that we know historically, which has gone through certain "cosmetic" changes? What do you think about these new formats of antisemitism?

Grilj: As far as I get, the discussion about new antisemitism entails just the questions of how Muslim immigrants are antisemitic. This is, for me, this is the reason or the word that defines new antisemitism. When I look at the history of antisemitism in Austria, we do not have a constant version, we don't have a constant version in time and constant version in place. We have classical, religious antisemitism, which was founded on anti-Judaism; we have the antisemitism against Eastern Jewry; we have anti-communist antisemitism; we have anti-capitalist antisemitism, we have so many different types of antisemitism, which are combined in different ways and different measures like it was useful at a specific moment. Talking now about new antisemitism, I am sorry but I do not see it in that way. If you are talking about the antisemitism of Muslim migrants, I would not see it as a new one or a specific one. When I look at Eastern Europe, when I look at the theories of Dugin [Aleksandr][6] or when I look at the quite ordinary antisemitism in Ukraine, on the streets, I see pretty much the same.

[VARIANTS OF ANTISEMITISM]

Gržinić: What about, for example, Germany? Now, in the last years, there were really antisemitic violent acts committed in the public space

4 Burgenland is Austria's easternmost and least populous federal state (Wikipedia).
5 Tyrol is a historic region in the Alps, in northern Italy and western Austria (Wikipedia).
6 Aleksandr Gelyevich Dugin (born 1962) is a Russian political analyst and strategist, traditionalist, known for his proximity with fascism (Wikipedia).

that even politicians in power had to react to and say that this is not what we did in all these decades during the process of denazification and so on. This is also something, which in the German case, seemed as if it is a concluded chapter, but actually it is not?

Grilj: It was never a concluded story in Germany and, it is not comparable, but it was also not concluded in Austria. We have in Germany 5 to 7% of people who would declare themselves as national-socialists and in Austria 3 to 5%, and in Germany, when you just look at the synagogues in Germany, they were always guarded by the police. In Austria, we have a synagogue in Seitenstettengasse, which is guarded, all the others are pretty unguarded. In Graz, they were at the beginning, but at the moment, as far as I know, they are not guarded anymore.

[THE SITUATION IN GERMANY]

Regarding the situation in Germany, you have, when you think of Munich, in summer when a Rabi and his son were attacked, it was a German woman who did it and afterward there was the attack in Karlsruhe done by two Muslim migrants, and it was all seen together and the German lady disappeared. Everything was just sown to Muslim antisemitism, which is changing political coins.

Šefik Tatlić: Are there antisemitic discourses at work in contemporary Austria?

Grilj: Antisemitic discourses? Of course not. Is there antisemitism in Austria, yes, I truly believe so, but this is hidden because we all know that it is not invoked.

Benjamin Grilj PhD is a historian and philosopher. He works at the Institute for Jewish History in Austria. His research focus includes local and regional history, and research on antisemitism and the Holocaust.

BERNHARD WEIDINGER

9 October 2019, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Austria
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Bernhard Weidinger: This anti-Muslim racism has proved to be very effective because it resonates very well with the masses, and it is different from antisemitism. You cannot attract mass support in Austria today running on an explicitly antisemitic platform. You can attract mass support running on an explicitly anti-Muslim platform. And, I think there are many reasons for that. One would be, of course, the threat of Islamic terrorism, but there are also factors that date back much further, ranging into colonial times. On the one hand, [this relates] to the collective memory in regard to some conflicts, like the siege of Vienna, but also the tradition of anti-Orientalism.The stereotypes of Muslim men and Muslim women that were coned in colonial times are now revitalized, if you look, for example, at the stereotypes of Muslim man as an oversexualized figure. [There is also] the ethnicization of sexual violence, for example, where the far-right nowadays is supposedly tackling this problem by ethnicizing it, by presenting it as if sexual violence, just like antisemitism, nowadays in Austria only exists among migrant populations and particularly Muslim migrant communities. And this, of course, serves another purpose. On the one hand, it perpetuates a narrative of exclusion of Muslims and, on the other hand, it serves to basically absolve the local population of patriarchal heritage.

[THE IDEA OF GREATER GERMANY]

Marina Gržinić: On which elements is this idea of Greater Germany actually based?

Weidinger: In Austria, historically, the notion that Austria is part of Germany, that Austrian people are part of German people was shared by all political camps until at least 1918. The first political camp to do away with that were communists and after 1945 the social-democrats and the conservatives followed this too. Only the so-called third camp of Austrian politics, the national liberals, they held on to German nationalism beyond 1945 and actually hold on to it until the present day. So, if you look at the platform, the party manifesto of the Austrian Freedom Party, it still includes a sentence that embraces the idea Austria or the Austria people is a part of, and the exact quote goes, "Deutschen Volks-, Sprach- und Kulturgemeinschaft" [German people's ethnic, linguistic and cultural community]. And that is interesting because the inclusion of the term *Volk* [People] here emphasizes that it is not really about a cultural bond, not really about shared language and shared culture, but also about biology. It is about this community of common descent.

[BIOLOGICAL COMMUNITY]

Gržinić: So, it is almost this biological racism in a certain way? Because it refers to biology and it is not only, as you used, a cultural factor?

Weidinger: Yes. If it was not about biology, then would be no need to include *Volk* in this sentence. So, you could put it like "Deutsche Sprache und Kultur Gemeinschaft" (German language and culture community). But, they don't. They include the *Volk,* because the common descent is important to them.

Gržinić: So, in a certain way, this is actually why this idea is so persistent, violent and aggressive in the present time in the public space? Is this one of the reasons?

Weidinger: I would say that what is interesting is that this idea of Austria being a part of the German nation is really of very low to none importance to the actual voters of the Freedom Party. So, if you were to conduct a poll asking people, "In your opinion, are you German or are you Austrian? Are you culturally German or Austrian?" I think maybe 5% or even less would respond German, and many Austrians actually would consider it as an insult to be called German today, even the voters of the Freedom Party. The inclusion of this, of the German *Volksgemeinschaft*[1] in the party platform is really something that caters to the core, to the party elites, many of which were politically socialized in German nationalist student fraternities.[2] So, we see, I would say, a cleavage here between the party elites on one hand and the voters of the party on the other.

[THE ISSUE OF FRATERNITIES]

Gržinić: You are a specialist also in this analysis of academic fraternities after 1945 and could you give us your view on what are actually the changes in these fraternities and how they transformed, if they transformed, through these decades until today?

Weidinger: I would say that one of the most striking features about these fraternities is that they actually did not transform at all over the last decades. In my perception, after 1945, they basically picked up where they left off in 1938. So, ideologically this is still very much the same and actually they have after 1945 integrated this resistance to change in their own self-representation. So, they are proud of not having transformed, of not having succumbed to the *Zeitgeist* of political correctness and so on. So, on an ideological level, and also structurally, I see very little change there.

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1 *Volksgemeinschaft* is a German term meaning "people's community," that first became popular during World War I when Germans rallied in support of the war, and it implied the idea of achieving national purpose through anti-elitism and of class unity. The term was heavily utilized by the Nazis in 1933 to describe all Germans, including those living outside Germany, as a racially unified and hierarchically organized body sharing a common, racial soul, and serving the interests of nation (Wikipedia).

2 *Burschenschaften* (youth associations) were student organizations at German universities that began as an expression of the new nationalism that was prevalent in post-Napoleonic Europe. The first such youth association was established at the University of Jena in 1815, and the movement has spread throughout Germany. The early groups were egalitarian and liberal and supported the political unification of Germany (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

[THE ORGANIZATION OF LOYALTY TO THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS QUO]

Gržinić: What is depicted through your answers is this unbelievable persistence of a certain element of the racial, right-wing position, of something that goes on for generations and generations. My question is what is actually the fundament of this?

Weidinger: I do think that what we could call the revitalization of nationalism certainly has to do a lot with capitalism and how it functions. I mean, the growth model that propelled the reconstruction period went into crisis mode in the 1970s, not only in Austria but in all of Europe. And, so, the problem capitalism has been facing since then was, if this growth model is now in crisis mode, and with it the welfare state, how do we organize mass support to, how do we organize loyalty to the socio-economic status quo? In times of increased uncertainty, increase aggravated distribution by this, and the answer is nationalism. And the offer that capitalism, more precisely, the far-right makes is the promise of preserving and renewing privileges. So, people who are in fear of sliding down the social ladder are being promised that their social and economic privileges will be preserved and, of course, in the times of decline of the welfare state, these can only be preserved at the expense of others, at the expense of those who are portrayed as outsiders, as not belonging to the national collective.

Bernhard Weidinger PhD is a researcher on far-right issues at the Documentation Centre of Austrian Resistance (DÖW) in Vienna and affiliated with the Research Group on Ideologies and Politics of Inequality (FIPU). His dissertation on pan-German student fraternities and politics in Austria after 1945 was published at Böhlau in 2015. His research interests include far-right parties and movements in Europe and the US, nationalism, and masculinities.

FAIKA EL-NAGASHI

10 October 2019, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Austria
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Šefik Tatlić: How do you see the main problems Austria has with regard to the possibilities of equality and recognition of various minority groups?

Faika El-Nagashi: The question of equality is... whether it is equality on the level of legal frame and legal possibilities and equality to what extent and for whom. So, does it include equality for refugees and in what sense? What we have for the past two years is a politics that divides very, very, very strongly.

[SEGREGATION PRACTICES]

So, from children in primary schools that are divided into separate classes to learn German, to recognized asylum seekers that do not have the same access to social benefits. So, this was a politics characterized by division and by normalizing inequality.

[NORMALIZATION AND JUSTIFICATION OF INEQUALITY]

And, not only by normalizing it, but by justifying it with elements of difference by origin, by religion, by gender and by trying really to mainstream this normalization of what is a racist division of people and to systematically cement it into legislation, for example, but also other policy measures, into our life realities. Realizing this, the relief is so enormous, that this has been cut after two years because I think that we all felt that this [is a] relief, really also physically. I know I did and I talked to so many who after Ibiza,[1] which on 18 May, the day when the new elections were announced, were physically, you know, relieved because they understood first about their bodily reaction, what they have been carrying, consciously or subconsciously. And, these are changes that manifest in the system and then also manifest in how we relate to each other.

[CONTAMINATION OF NEW GENERATIONS]

Because [when] you continue with politics like this, I mean, for two, three, four, five, six years, there is not only a new generation that wakes up to this reality as normal, but also others who have excepted it and incorporated it into how they relate to each other on a day to day basis. I don't think it is justified and justifiable to have these differences, which are basically, completely cutting people off equal chances, participation, and even on the level of worth.

[UNEQUAL DISTRIBUTION OF WORTH]

[In relation to the question of] what is the worth of humans towards [each] other or citizens towards another, the hierarchies were implemented. So, this is what has happened in the past two years, but I think it

1 The Ibiza affair (also Ibiza-gate) was a political scandal in Austria that arose from the release of a secretly recorded video showing dubious deals and illegal party donations. It involved the former vice chancellor of Austria and the FPÖ leader Heinz-Christian Strache, and a deputy leader of the FPÖ Johann Gudenus. The scandal caused the dramatic end of the Austrian governing coalition (consisting of FPÖ and Austrian People's Party, ÖVP) on 18 May 2019 and the announcement of an early election (Wikipedia).

is also quite important to see that the last two years did not just appear, come out of nowhere and that everything before was a perfect paradise.

[THE CONTINUATION OF INEQUALITY POLITICS]

Very much so, and especially in the beginning, the last two years were building on the politics that happened before when it was much more difficult to realize that those were not equality politics either. A number of these discourses have existed before as well. So, it is a continuation. I find it quite difficult to imagine a system, a political system in Austria that would be really, you said equality and the other one was? Was that inclusion or?

Tatlić: Recognition.

El-Nagashi: Recognition. That is even worse. That is even more difficult to achieve, recognition of minorities. So, we talk about climate change, what we would profoundly need for this would be political climate change. And, how do you achieve that?

[THE FIRST VICTIM MYTH AND THE NAZI PAST]

Marina Gržinić: Is this myth of the first victim with which Austria tried to present itself [as the first victim of Nazism] still valid and how much this relates to the far-right movement in Austria and also in other countries? How do you see this continuity in relation to the Nazi past?

El-Nagashi: You see it in the history of the far-right party, of the FPÖ [The Freedom Party of Austria]. So, maybe two or three things about that. It is researched, it is established, it is very well known, that this continuity is performed almost every day in the political practice of this party. And, there is no intervention and there is no condemnation by their partners. So, if their partner is the Christian conservative party,[2]

2 The Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) is a conservative and Christian-democratic political party in Austria (Wikipedia).

as it has been for the past two years, but also others, in some provinces they are in partnership, in coalition with others, with Social-Democratic Party,[3] for example. So, there is no intervention, no condemnation and also no consequences, no sanctions in a way.

[THE NORMALIZATION OF TRANSGRESSION]

So, by this almost daily performance and re-enactment of transgressions that are clearly connected to this connection of ideas and this political thought, the subtext that is communicated with this, through the media reporting for example, is that it loses seriousness and it is something that becomes normality to an extent that it is not understood as a transgression. It is understood as part of political practice. It is understood as part of the spectrum of politics. It is understood as what they always want to portray as singularities, not as a systemic character of their political party or also very conscious communications with different groups that are part of their electorate. And, this is constantly apologized and legitimized and so, there is complicitness on that level from all of these actors that participate in this game. And this is a game to not be confronted also with a clear drawing of borders around this topic or this behaviour. So, apparently there is a lack of consensus on how to analyse and understand this and how to then, also, truly, really have consequences. If you do not do that you are not credible.

[ANTISEMITISM AND ANTI-MUSLIM RACISM]

Tatlić: Do you see a correlation between antisemitic racism and anti-Muslim racism?

El-Nagashi: Maybe I could point out because yesterday was the attack on a synagogue in Germany,[4] and if you look into what these terror attacks build on as they like to publish their manifestos and relate to each other, and they are part of a network, which is a global network, they build off

3 The Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ) is a social-democratic and pro-European political party in Austria and the oldest extant Austrian political party (Wikipedia).

4 The Halle synagogue attack occurred on 9 October 2019, during the Jewish holiday of Yom Kippur, in eastern German city of Halle, and continued in nearby Landsberg (Wikipedia).

each other's ideology. And they build on antisemitic ideology and on racist ideology and, I would add also, on sexist ideology very strongly.

[THE MODERNIZATION OF ANTISEMITIC TROPES]

They have a world view that brings old antisemitic tropes into new, anti-immigration and anti-Muslim attitudes and politics and merges both of them together. So, this is, I think, the general foundation. And then from this you have moments when one or the other approach is emphasized in a stronger manner, also [working] as a tactic to divide any solidarity [that] would organize towards [against] this ideology. And, I think this would be very dangerous to follow [persist] in this division because this is clearly very strongly connected with each other.

Faika El-Nagashi MA is a politician, a political activist and a political scientist (University of Vienna). She is a member of the Austrian Parliament for the Green Party and spokesperson for integration and diversity politics for the Austrian Greens.

MARIA POHN-LAUGGAS

10 October 2019, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Austria
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Marina Gržinić: What are the main differences in the ways how older and younger generations interpret the Nazi era in Austria?

Maria Pohn-Lauggas: I am very careful with the term generation because we use it in daily life, of course, but in using this term we create a very homogeneous group of people. And, so this notion it is not a helpful term, I do not use it in this way in sociology. For the social science, the term generation becomes relevant if persons were born in the same historical, social period and if they developed the same, in my case, same memory structures or same layers of experiences. So, if we have this term of generation then it is possible that in "one youth," if we can call it like that, we can find different generation units. We need more comparative research if we want to talk about generational phenomena. There is generational research on descendants of Nazi families in Germany. There are some studies, and I think they found structures, which are very similar to Austria, I would say. Even though in Austria the discourse in a little bit more different, especially with this national victim discourse. But, the structures of how the descendants of a Nazi family interpret the past, these structures are very similar. But, they

really depend on what happened in the family; they depend on what these descendants experienced in their youth, in school, etc.

[BIOGRAPHIES OF RESISTANCE FIGHTERS AND FAMILY MEMORIES]

As a sociologist, I am interested within my research in biographies of descendants of former resistance fighters, against the Nazi regime. I am interested in the family memory, how it developed over the time and how the past, especially the past of resistance is transmitted between the generations and within the generations. So, what are the topics of the family dialogue; which topics can be talked about and which not, etc. so these are basically my questions. And, I talked even to grandchildren of former resistance fighters and one of my first results is that they are independent from their concrete background; independent from the form of resistance. If we talk about organizations of resistance, like communist resistance, but also of deserters, etc. in relation to this past, concrete past, they experience their lives, their life stories, their lives in the shadow of the family past.

[THE FAMILY PAST]

So, they always have in their stories, if they tell their life stories, they always have to deal with the family past. They always ask themselves what, how was my life influenced by this past. So, this is a very crucial aspect of their life stories. And, this shadow is also a result of or is based on the constitution of the Austrian society because the resistance is not part of the collective memory. Now it starts to become a discourse, in the last decade, I would say, when the resistance became more visible, but until then it was not part of the collective memory.

[REMEMBERING RESISTANCE AND REMEMBERING PERPETRATORS]

There was a really simple reason for that, if you talk about resistance, you also have to talk about perpetrators. But, the national victim dis-

course often tried to hide these stories. So, the resistance was very much marginalized, especially communist resistance, so this shadow is based on this silence. The relationship between generations is very much structured by what do we know about the past; what do my parents or grandparents tell me; what I am allowed to ask, etc. So, they deal all the time in really daily interactions with this issue.

[DIFFERENCES IN THE INTERPRETATIONS OF THE PAST]

The ways how descendants interpret the past, this differs a lot from the concrete history of the family. For example, I talked to a grandchild of former communist resistance fighters and his experience of his father and mother is a history of victims. And, the reason for that is that they were [part of] the communist resistance, it was a "we-group," so we can talk about a group that developed a counter-collective memory, as a group.

[COUNTER-COLLECTIVE MEMORY]

And, "we were not the victims, we were the winners of the war." It is a counter-memory within this national collective memory. And this "we-group" as connected with this collective memory is the basis for the interpretation of the past as the history of victory. On the contrary, totally contrary, I talked to descendants of deserters. They really struggle with the past of their parents or grandparents because there is no speech on desertion in Austria. Until 2005, deserters were not [regarded as] official victims of the Nazi regime. Until then, their stories were hidden, also in the family dialogue.

[NON-VERBAL FORMS OF MEMORY]

Šefik Tatlić: In your research, you seem to focus a lot on non-verbal forms of memory. What is the role of diary and photography in the sociological research about memory?

Pohn-Lauggas: In my research, I do biographical research, which aims to analyse structures of action and, in my case also, structures of memory. And the main data for this research is the biographical narrative, interviews. The interviewees are asked about their families and their life story, and, yeah, so that is the interview situation. And, during the interview it very often happens that the interviewees show photographs, show diaries, but also other forms of written documents, newspapers from the past, etc. So, there is lots of biographical material coming [up] in this situation. So, if you do biographical research, you are quite used to handle all this and this material becomes our empirical data. My starting point was because one of the *trümmerfrau*[1] showed me her diary – I started to conduct [collect] this data more systematically. That is why in my present research on resistance fighters, I ask the descendants for family photos. And, I also do this by referring to the concept of "postmemory"[2] of Marianne Hirsch[3] and the role of photos in "postmemory." She defines "postmemory" as an intergenerational transmission structure, which is based, not only on her own experience but which is based on transmitted traumatic experiences of the survivors of the Shoah. Her research really is about the survivors of the Shoah. And, it is a memory, which refers to the past of the parents and this past is characterized by death, loss, and trauma.

["THE UNBELIEVABLE OF THE PAST"]

In the "postmemory" itself, it tries to understand this, we call it very often "unbelievable of the past" of the parents and in this sense "postmemory" is always fragmented and it operates with lots of imaginations. At this point, the photos get a very special function; they connect the present with the past; the memory, which is situated in the past, and the "postmemory" in the present, and they show the way it has been.

1 *Trümmerfrauen* (ruins women or rubble women) is the German term for women who helped to clear and restore Germany and Austria' destroyed cities in the aftermath of World War II (Wikipedia).

2 "'Postmemory' describes the relationship that the 'generation after' bears to the personal, collective, and cultural trauma of those who came before – to experiences they 'remember' only by means of the stories, images, and behaviors among which they grew up." Marianne Hirsch, "An Interview with Marianne Hirsch," Columbia University Press, accessed 18 June 2020, https://cup.columbia.edu/author-interviews/hirsch-generation-postmemory.

3 Marianne Hirsch is William Peterfield Trent Professor of English and Comparative Literature at Columbia University and director of and professor at the Institute for Research on Women, Gender, and Sexuality. Her work combines feminist theory with memory studies, particularly the transmission of memories of violence across generations. "Marianne Hirsch: Curriculum Vitae," *Columbia blogs*, accessed 18 June 2020, http://blogs.cuit.columbia.edu/mh2349/.

Maria Pohn-Lauggas PhD is a sociologist and professor of multi-method social research at the Centre of Methods in Social Sciences at the University of Göttingen, Germany. Her research fields are in the area of the after-effects of National Socialism in Germany and Austria, in particular the biographies of descendants of resistance fighters and other stigmatized groupings of victims and survivors of the Nazi regime, intergenerational and collective memory, and memory practices. She was a Hertha-Firnberg Fellow of the Austrian Science Fund at the University of Vienna (2013–2016).

TANJA PRUŠNIK

10 October 2019, Academy of Fine Arts Vienna, Austria
Interview by Marina Gržinić

Marina Gržinić: What does it mean to connect Slovenian and Austrian culture while referring to the political-historical context?

Tanja Prušnik: In my work, this is one and the same thing. For me, this is one and the same and I would not separate it. Of course, Carinthian Slovenes, or Austrian Slovenes, since they are not only Carinthian, have their own activities very different from Austrian activities, but on the other hand, it is very similar.

[AUSTRIAN SLOVENES]

Gržinić: The history of the Slovenian minority is a history of resistance, but also of oppression. In today's Austria, there are a lot of other, not minorities, but, for example, ethnic groups, who are also much oppressed. How do you look at these relationships?

Prušnik: These minorities, or rather large minorities, have a strong presence in Vienna. The Turkish minority and all of the other ethnic groups that are [here]. And of course, here the Slovenian minority is

even smaller and maybe a little more distanced. But I see that here – I can only say this from the Viennese point of view because I have lived here for a long time – [minorities] have started to connect interculturally. This means that everything in the cultural field is already strongly... I can see these aspects of connecting when it comes to theatre performances, to joint activities, to spaces that are then used together.

[INTERNATIONAL NETWORKING]

Gržinić: How does your art relate to these topics?

Prušnik: I am one [of those people] who almost always have bilingual communication for an exhibition. On the other hand, the work itself is, of course, also very thematically oriented. For the regional exhibition *CARINTHIja 2020*, exploring the theme of the plebiscite,[1] 100 years of a plebiscite, [I am preparing] a project that will be [presented as] a seven-kilometre long installation. It is a long foil, which I take from one place to another, right from the space of the resistance struggle, from my grandfather's homestead, from that homestead to the homestead of other people, to the resistance, to the Peršman Museum. And of course, it will be obvious here as well, since I am going to transfer the book onto this foil, and of course also my artistic expression will be shown. The Carinthian Slovenian area is always quite present in my works.

[THE PERŠMAN MUSEUM]

Gržinić: What is the status of the Peršman Museum?[2] What position does the Peršman Museum hold generally, in Austria?

1 After World War I, the Carinthian plebiscite (*Kärntner Volksabstimmung*) was held on 10 October 1920 in southern Carinthia, to define the state border between the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (later known as Yugoslavia) and Austria. 59.04% of Carinthian Slovenes voted for Austria (Wikipedia).

2 The mountain farm "at Peršman," where the Sadovnik family lived, was an important base of the resistance movement in southern Carinthia after 1942. Just before the end of World War II, on 25 April 1945, members of the SS and the 13th Police Regiment murdered all members of the Sadovnik and Kogoj families on the farmstead. The Peršman farm, proclaimed as a cultural monument, has been a contemporary museum of semi-past history since 2012, displaying themes around the persecution and resistance of Carinthian Slovenes, with a focus on crimes against the Peršman family, on more than 100 m2 exhibition area. "Kdo smo" [About us], Društvo/Verein Peršman, accessed 19 June 2020, http://www.persman.at/index.php/kdo-smo.

Prušnik: People are aware of it, but it is interesting that there is always someone who can't even imagine what it is about. We hear it over and over whenever someone comes to visit. Of course, those who prepare themselves a little know where they are going and what kind of site it is, what a powerful site it is, and what it means for the Carinthian Slovenian population. To me, this place, this site, this museum is rather shocking. I have had several exhibitions at the museum itself.

[HISTORY OF OPPRESSION, PERSECUTION, DEPORTATION, EXPROPRIATION]

Gržinić: I am interested not only in the project you described, but also how you perceive, from this cultural point of view, all that is going to take place on the centenary of the plebiscite?

Prušnik: I think it's an important project. It was well chosen, and I also think that it is well prepared. Maybe it needs to tighten up a little bit here or there. However, a lot of Slovenian projects were submitted, which were then also selected.

[CENTENARY OF THE PLEBISCITE]

Gržinić: What this anniversary aims at, let's say, from an official point of view?

Prušnik: Yes, the current situation is such that it is very open and that... of course some people are critical of the fact that there are so many Slovenian projects. I noticed that they are a little, let's say... careful, because there are so many Slovenian projects. If we are talking, for example, about the fact that the presentation logo is not in Slovenian, and only in German, then this criticism would prompt us to say "Well, now we have to be careful because others are here, so that they would not be offended." Because, unfortunately, this common history is painful. But we need to get over it somehow, and I think it's important particularly for us to show how things can open up now and that these procedures were correct.

Gržinić: You are president of the Künstlerhaus[3] in Vienna. What is your role as president? And [considering] that you come from Carinthia, and that you have spoken, basically, with reference to the Slovenian minority, will they somehow be included, as you said, not only Carinthian Slovenes but also Austrian Slovenes, within the program of this institution?

Prušnik: The institution is 158 years old and has now indeed elected a woman to this position for the first time. It should be nothing unusual. But it seems that, even among artists, things that should have become quite usual long ago still aren't. I am very pleased that they have elected me to the position and a function for which I applied.

We have a two-year program prepared by the artistic director. And we also have a brand new experimental option, a platform, known as the "Factory" platform, which, of course, we will be able to activate very quickly and easily in social, cultural and political terms, also [in terms of] what is happening right now.

[THE FUTURE]

We are already preparing an international exhibition, which is in dialogue with Slovenia. And it basically shows a view of and research into women's artistic activity in Austria and Slovenia.

Tanja Prušnik, Carinthian Slovenian, has worked as a freelance architect and artist. As an engaged architect and painter, she became known through her social project "den blick öffnen." In 2019 she was elected the first female president of the Vienna Künstlerhaus, the Association of Austrian Artists, founded in 1861.

3 Built in 1868, the Vienna Künstlerhaus is an event and exhibition space located in the historic Ringstraße building. The exhibition house has been owned by "The Association of Austrian Artists Künstlerhaus" since its founding in 1861. "Künstlerhaus," Künstlerhaus, accessed 19 June 2020, https://www.k-haus.at/de/kuenstlerhaus/english_information/.

OLIVER RATHKOLB: PART 1

10 October 2019, University of Vienna, Austria
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Oliver Rathkolb: When Kurz,[1] the young chancellor, formed the new government we have a comparable situation like in the 2000s.[2] The main difference is that the EU top did not care anymore, they have accepted Orbán,[3] they have accepted Kaczyński,[4] the authoritarian trends in the EU are obviously part of an on-going political process, but on the other hand, Kurz wanted to show that this was not the right-wing government. It was an extreme right-wing government with regard to migration, refugees and so on, that is clear, but in the issue of coming to terms with the Nazi past, Kurz decided to form the alliance against antisemitism. He organized large conferences, invited people and so on. And, at the same time the Freedom Party [FPÖ] always tried to find a way to come to terms with the past, which is very difficult for them because of the roots, which I have explained in the late 1940s and 1950s. But, at some point, [Heinz-Christian] Strache was forced to show lead-

1 Sebastian Kurz (born 1986) has been a chancellor of Austria since January 2020. Previously he held this position from December 2017 to May 2019 (Wikipedia).
2 The Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) agreed in February 2000 to form a coalition government with the Freedom Party of Austria (FPÖ) (Wikipedia).
3 Viktor Orbán (born 1963) has been a prime minister of Hungary since 2010. Previously he held this position from 1998 to 2002 (Encyclopaedia Britannica).
4 Jarosław Kaczyński (born 1949) served as prime minister of Poland from 2006 to 2007 (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

ership on this. That means that we have a strange issue that a former neo-Nazi, under political pressure had to stand up and during a ball here in the Hofburg[5] declared that if one fighting fraternities, which constitute the majority of Freedom Party representatives in the last parliament, show antisemitic signs, they are not part of his political movement anymore. I must say, in retrospect, this was quite a courageous move. I heard from journalists that it was an unbelievable silence in the ballroom when he really indirectly attacked antisemitism in pan-German fraternities and the reason was that, a few months earlier, there was a songbook discovered and sent to a paper, which was full of antisemitic, racist texts, also making fun of the Shoah and other issues[6] meaning that the party was under pressure because the songbook belonged to a school fraternity, which means this is for school kids under 18 years old. And, one of the key party functionaries of the lower Austrian Freedom Party was a member of this fraternity and, therefore, there was the debate and pressure and everything.

[HEINZ-CHRISTIAN STRACHE: UNDER PRESSURE]

The second issue was that Strache said, ok, we will establish a historian's commission, which will deal with how the Freedom Party dealt with the Nazi past. That is also a ridiculous issue because first, he said, ok it will take a year or less, and then it took two years and then, a few months ago they just presented a twelve-page summary full of mistakes and really absurd summaries of articles of a mixed group of people and [they] said, no, we cannot give you the 1000 pages of our report because first, we have to send it to Israel, that it will be, more or less, authorized by someone, no one knows who it is and it is really... It is such an absurd incident, which also shows that even within 1000 pages, they are so under stress that something comes out, which they do not like.

5 The Hofburg was the main imperial residence of the Habsburg dynasty rulers. Nowadays it houses the office of the Austrian President (Wikipedia).

6 In 2018, a Viennese weekly newspaper *Falter* published lyrics from a songbook used by a fraternity with links to the far-right Freedom Party that glorified the Holocaust and murder of Jews by the Nazi regime. See Nina Horaczek, "'Wir schaffen die siebte Million': Die Burschenschaft des FPÖ-Spitzenkandidaten Udo Landbauer treibt ihre 'Späße' über die Schoah ["We can do the seventh million": The fraternity of FPÖ's top candidate Udo Landbauer is making fun of the Shoah], *Falter*, 24 January 2018, https://www.falter.at/archiv/wp/wir-schaffen-die-siebte-million.

[FACING THE CO-RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SHOAH]

But, you know, it is a different generation, no one of them served in World War II or so, but still, obviously, in the party tradition they are not able to follow the mainstream in Austria, that means to sum up this long, complex, paradoxical story of Austrian society finding a way to try to face the Nazi past and face the co-responsibility in World War II and the Shoah, is that I would say quite a large percentage of society are on this track, but still it can be very difficult. When you go, for example, into family histories, then the story turns into another direction, yes?

[NARROW VIEWS AND THE LACK OF CONFRONTATION WITH RACISM AND ANTISEMITISM]

In general, you can talk about the Nazi past of Austrians and so on, but still, it is sometimes tricky when it gets on a personal level. Sometimes, it is very open, you find quite a number of authors like Michael Pollak and others who deal with family histories in a critical way, but others really refuse it and you can see in posts on the internet. This is still, sometimes a hot debate, but with regards to the school system, I think it is really accepted by the society. The key problem, which I see is that, especially in the school system, but also in the public debate, it is a very narrow view. People do not really deal with the origins of racism and antisemitism. I remember well the heated debate about Karl Lueger[7] and the usage of his name for the street in the front of my university, and Eric Kandel,[8] he was an Austrian born Nobel Prize winner who was forced out of Austria with his family in 1939, and he is the origin of the change of the name of our university. Neither the university, which started an effort in 2000, but failed, nor the city government did it themselves. It was Eric Kandel who approached the Austrian chan-

7 Karl Lueger (1844–1910) was an Austrian layer and politician, cofounder and leader of the Austrian Christian Social Party, and Vienna's mayor between 1897 and 1910. Lueger was known for his antisemitic and nationalistic views and rhetoric (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

8 Eric Kandel (born 1929) was an Austrian-born American neurobiologist who was awarded the Nobel Prize for Physiology or Medicine in 2000 together with Arvid Carlsson and Paul Greengard for discovering the central role synapses play in memory and learning (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

cellor Faymann[9] during the state visit in the US and really gave him a hard time by saying, your main university has a street named after an important politician, but at the same time of convinced and very aggressive antisemite, you have to do something about this. And then Faymann began to move, but still politics as you know is very careful because they fear that debate, even in these days, a few years ago, I think this was quite a symbolic change that the most important university was able to get rid of the name of Karl Lueger.

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9 Werner Faymann (born 1960) is a former Austrian politician. He served as Austrian chancellor and chairman of the Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ) from 2008 to 2016 (Wikipedia).

OLIVER RATHKOLB: PART 2

10 October 2019, University of Vienna, Austria
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Oliver Rathkolb: I think one of the key problems is that the European Union does not understand the importance of symbolic policy of also trying to communicate democracy in a different way. They are much formalized and this is, I think, also a reason why it is so difficult to find a way of cooperation, because of Cold War, but also because older perceptions are still so strong.

[WHAT DOES LIBERAL DEMOCRACY MEAN?]

There never was a program, more or less, to say, ok, what does liberal democracy, which should involve people, really mean? I will give you a short example because it is very typical. As you know, in the period after 1991 and [later] when the wars in former Yugoslavia ended, a large number of German publishing houses bought papers all over the states like Croatia, Slovenia, Serbia, and so on. And, the important one was the Waz group.[1] A good friend of mine, historian Lutz Niethammer had

1 Funke Mediengruppe, previously named WAZ-Mediengruppe, is one of the largest German media house based in Essen. It is present in eight countries with a total of over 500 newspaper and magazine publications (Wikipedia).

an idea, which also was pushed in the beginning by the Waz group, let us have a strong educational academy for young journalists from these countries, really have them [educated] how they can also push democracy, fight corruption, a system and so on, because many of these papers were completely owned by the Waz. He did a survey, a lot of interviews suggested something, and [he] put up a nice plan, even thought about having an academy here in Vienna, and nothing happened. Now, most of the papers are sold again. It is a tiny little example. You had the means, you had at the beginning political thinking, but nothing happened because the main reason was just to make money. They did not care. It is also due to the largest Austrian publishing house Styria, which is still owned by the Roman Catholic Church, but some of the papers which they owned really were yellow press, sex and crime and nothing else. I think that is a small example. When you compare it with the period of late 1940s and 1950s, the Americans tried to have educational programs, bring young journalists from Germany, Austria to the US and train them also to, at least try to fight the authoritarian styles and governments, to push democracy, and it really did work.

[THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRATIZATION]

I will bring you a concrete example. One of these young journalists was Hugo Portisch, he came to the US, I think, in 1949 or 1950 and then, later on, became editor-in-chief of one of the largest papers in those days, *Wiener Kurier,* and he was the one in 1964 who for the first time organized a strong referendum against the will of the great coalition,[2] against the will of all political parties, to get the party influence out of the Austrian TV. It was an unbelievable story because the political parties and the government even tried to intervene in the referendum; not to accept signatures and so on. It was a very dirty chapter of our history. But, it has something to do [with] when he was a young journalist; he had at least an impression that there can be another form of strong, independent journalism trying to push democracy.

2 Since the end of World War II, the prevailing form of governance has been the so-called grand coalition between Austrian People's Party (ÖVP) and the Social Democratic Party of Austria (SPÖ) (Wikipedia).

[EXTENDING HISTORICAL ANALYSIS BEFORE WORLD WAR II]

Šefik Tatlić: In what kind of discourses do you see a possibility for proper historicization of World War II period and what kind of impact such a historicization could have on the possibilities of producing the future of equality and conviviality?

Rathkolb: I think that the first important issue is that we should not limit our historical analysis of World War II. We should go back to the origins of the war. This can lead us far back in history, but I think it is important, for example, German-French relationship; the German-Austrian and Russian relationship; Soviet relationship. I think it is important to get people to understand that negative stereotypes, xenophobic hatred are long-range processes in society and it takes very long to contain them. This, I think, is a precondition for the historicization of World War II. Right now, I think that we have a strong tendency to see it started in Poland in 1939 and ended in 1945. It did not end in 1945. Not only the fighting, but the effects of unbelievable war crimes on society, and you know it very well from the debates in Croatia, Slovenia, the role of the resistance and the Germans etc. Still, for example, we have only vague historical analysis of the roles of Austrians in the German Wehrmacht in Yugoslavia. It is not only the army. For example, Austrians were also part of occupation machinery, for example in Poland, in Krakow.

[THE ORIGINS OF STEREOTYPES]

I think this is an important issue to focus also on the origins of stereotypes. Why people are able to commit these unbelievable war crimes all over Europe and what, how these stereotypes developed over the history? Certainly, World War I is an important issue and not finding a way in the interwar period to come to terms with the war. Certainly, you had a peace movement, you had the League [of Nations], humanitarian law, but it was very elitist. When you read school books, the stereotypes of Germans vis-à-vis French people, the stereotypes of Germans vis-à-vis Russians and later on Soviets, this is continuity, which is very difficult to overcome.

[COLONIALISM]

Tatlić: Which also goes back to the era of European colonialism?

Rathkolb: Absolutely right. I think that you can clearly see how helpless Europe is when it comes to refugees and migration from Africa. Because, and that is always strange to me, the Europeans still see even the Northern African and Middle Eastern part of Europe, not as part of Europe, as a narrow element. It is different with Israel because of historical reasons, but the rest is far away and you see it in political decision making; in economic decision making and here also, I think, the perception of Europe is still...

[THE CONTINENTAL VIEW OF EUROPE]

That is maybe the problem of Cold War and this continental view of Europe. And, here we have, by the way, a very strange continuity because especially Hitler, but also the Nazi functionaries, and the German army, from the strategic point of view, they were only interested in controlling continental Europe – having the Slavs, more or less, as slaves or servants, but it is always this continental European line and also, the invasion of Yugoslavia somehow happened because of Italy, it was not really the primary target. And, also Northern Africa, this is not, from their point of view, Europe. And here we have a strange continuity that Europe is always seen in this east-west line, neither north nor and certainly not south, including Africa. That is also, I think, from the strategic point of view one of the key problems of European decision-makers. And, then, we always have these very special relationships when it comes to France. France still has a quite strong network of relations with certain African countries, partly this is even true to Great Britain, but, you know, that is a continuation of colonial ties, in a way. You also see it when you analyse special programs of the EU, they are partly phrased within these networks, excluding the rest of the continent.

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the chairman of the advisory board of the House of European History (European Parliament, Brussels) and an elected member of the Senate of the University of Vienna.

LUZENIR CAIXETA

11 October 2019, das kollektiv, Linz, Austria
Interview by Marina Gržinić

Marina Gržinić: Regarding the racist processes at work and the new type of education, can you explain how the social struggle confronts racism and what kind of racisms are we dealing with?

Luzenir Caixeta: There are so many layers. While we were talking about the course participants, I was thinking about the qualifications of migrant women in the medical area. When we started 15 years ago with these measures, it was a pilot project on which we worked for 15 years, and there are now other organizations doing the same thing. We have two problems as a consequence of this. The first is that we are facing the threat that our courses will no longer be financed, because there are bigger organizations that have them now. On the other hand, they involve the women, also migrant women, but they include the women who speak the best German, who have the best chances of achieving the [desired] qualifications, of passing the entrance exams and potentially succeeding. We work with the "last ones," those who remain and who do not have a place in bigger programs. So, there are so many different layers, because alongside the institutional act[s] of racism, these institutions do offer something to migrants and refugees, but they only take the best. This is the

new neoliberal logic, to be effective and successful and receive the next funding, but the rest are left over.

Gržinić: Is this racial profiling?

Caixeta: I think this institutional layer of racism, which is also present within the organizations and authorities that do something for migrants, is horrible and probably the biggest threat to our existence as maiz.

[...]

Gržinić: How is this coming together, cooperation among different struggles, among LGBT, feminism? Also, if you talk about feminism in the plural – is this visible, and has there been a big change in historical terms? 25 years ago there was nothing and then you started, so what is happening today?

Caixeta: I do see that it is different now – there are feminists who are interested in getting in contact with us, engaged in a certain dialogue, but it is very difficult. If it is about structural means and existence, it is very difficult to really feel it. We do have solidarity in activities concerning critical situations, but I see it with a certain amount of scepticism. What do we have in common? The situation is so different in the sense that the basic concerns are at the very bottom. Women from here, who have different approaches, have difficulty understanding the situation of migrants – and I think that this level is quite an obstacle to further alliances, to increasing their effectiveness... but maybe I have become a bit disillusioned.

[...]

Gržinić: Did the situation change with the coming of refugees? Have there been changes in priorities, in terms of education and empowering?

Caixeta: There are big changes, because before 2015 we were told that we would get the money for working as a consultancy only with migrants. This was because it was said that refugees are to be handled only by authorized organizations, and again and again we had a course

for participants who were refugees, but after 2015 this rule ceased to exist. The same migration department that was before reluctant to work with refugees now said no, you should do it, you should work with refugees. Today we have a lot more arrivals than earlier, even though there are a lot of legal questions about the right to asylum, we do not have a service for that, we do not consult on this particular question. But we do have a range of activities in this respect, group activities, as well as a lot of those who join these group activities. There are a lot of refugee women. On the 8th of March 2019 we had a lot of refugee women present, so there is an interest, I would say. They are looking for spaces where they are accepted, where they are welcome, and they are very grateful for these spaces, it is incredible because they have so little. All this has challenged us because there are different situations, different problems, and it is all a bit more complicated than it was before.

[...]

Gržinić: If we go back to the issue of racism, there is a lot of talk about post-Nazi Austria, the question is how much, especially when we are talking in the vicinity of the concentration camp Mauthausen [Linz], do we understand antisemitism, the Nazi past, how much does all of this influence Austrian society in producing discrimination, racism, very strict racial profiling, management of diversity and so on?

Caixeta: Yes, it all has a strong influence. The way of thinking which enables the classification of humans, who has the right to live and who does not, who is more human than others – this logic is still very strong amongst the population, and I see the link between this logic and colonial logic, I totally see it.

[THE HUMAN RIGHTS DISCOURSE]

And now, in this last year, because until 2014 or 2015, there was a discourse of human rights and at least it was a discourse that was established, and that was the limit. But since 2015 there has no longer been any space for the human rights discourse. Many people ask, what is that? Security has become the most important thing. Security for those

few who have the rights for themselves and who define the world as if they are allowed to do anything, while others have no meaning.

[...]

Gržinić: As already mentioned, this line of racism is connected with colonialism. Is this colonialism, which is very important for us to think about, present within these discourses, for example in terms of understanding the past?

Caixeta: I can make a comparison. In 2012 we ran a course and back then the students were, like "What? Post-colonial critique, what is that?" They had no idea about it. But seven years later it is different. In the discursive field, yes – but in practice, it still has not arrived. Maybe some people are more critically sensitive, but a lot of people still tend to think that it is something we have already learned and in actual discussions, they just repeat the slogans of how it was before. It is just a theory. But in practice, there are no major changes.

[...]

[NEW FORMATS, NEW METHODOLOGIES]

Gržinić: If we go back to the importance of knowledge and education, what are the new or different formats?

Caixeta: It is not only pedagogical work that is based on courses and/or reduced to the course measures that we work with, but there are also other areas where we are engaged, like consultancy work, but also with the same approach. We want to receive and perceive the knowledge of those people who come to the consultancy and together with them look at the processes in order to discern which aspects of structural nature are important. It is not one's individual destiny if one does not get an apartment; it is due to a racist structure. Such an approach is very freeing, as well as painful. It is not because I have had some bad luck, but because of structural issues. It is freeing in the sense that there are many people in a similar situation, and we can work together to change these structures. This is our aim, to motivate them in terms of acknowl-

edging this logic and doing something against it, to fight together. This is also a kind of knowledge that is generated, which is very important. I think that the articulation of knowledge and the dissemination of this knowledge is something through which we really contribute a lot.

Luzenir Caixeta PhD is one of the founding members of maiz – The Automous Centre of and for Migrant Women, Linz, and the coordinator of maiz research and advice centre. She is a philosopher and feminist theologian.

CHRISTIAN DÜRR

11 October 2019, Mauthausen Memorial, Austria
Interview by Marina Gržinić

Christian Dürr: Groups of people who have been deported to Belzec, Sobibor, Treblinka got killed there instantly. They were brought there for the only reason to be exterminated there. It was different here in Mauthausen. Although there were groups of prisoners who have been brought here for direct extermination, the major part of the prisoner population came here for isolation; to be isolated from society and to be put to work. And, within this process, many of them got killed and it was also purposeful that they should be killed here. But, it was a different process than in the extermination camps.

Marina Gržinić: What does this Grade III [or] Stufe III mean? I am asking because this designation marked the toughest camps for political prisoners of the Reich and I wonder what this means specifically for Mauthausen, this designation?

Dürr: Well, at some time in 1940 I think for the first time the IKL, the Inspectorate of the Concentration Camps,[1] made this scale of three grades, three levels of concentration camps. Mauthausen and Gusen,

1 The Concentration Camps Inspectorate or Inspektion der Konzentrationslager (IKL) was the central agency of the SS, responsible for centralized administration of the Third Reich's concentration camp system (Wikipedia).

both of them figured as the only camps as Stufe III. In fact, we suppose or, what we think is that this scale basically reflects something, which had already been installed before. So, Mauthausen at that time, together and especially with its twin camp Gusen, which was more a kind of an extermination place at that time, even more than Mauthausen was, was already the toughest place to be in terms of mortality rate etc. So, I think that this scale, which was then put on paper and made official, so to say, reflected something that already had a history before, so to say. In the end, as it says more or less, not literally but documents say that, more or less, the prisoners who were to be sent to a camp designated Stufe III should have the harshest living conditions and the harshest working conditions. And, I think, in reality, that it meant, in many cases, that the possibility of them not getting back [getting out] and that should die there, should be taken into account. It was part of the idea that the prisoners of Stufe III camps were not supposed to get back [out] anymore.

[THE CONCENTRATION CAMP BUILT BY PRISONERS]

Gržinić: Can you give us more insight into this forced labour that took place here?

Dürr: In the beginning, which is also the main reason why the Mauthausen and Gusen camps were installed here in this place in because for a long time, over a century, there was an important stone industry. So, the first work, forced labour the prisoners had to do here was production for the stone industry. The SS bought, or also loaned, quarries that had already existed here and were property of or belonging to different owners, and started to exploit them again with the force or prisoner labourers. The prisoners had to work in the quarry; cut out the stones; work on the stones, carry them to the camp and, basically that was also the part of the first work, build their own camp. So, every stone that we see here in the camp was actually cut out from the quarry by prisoners; brought up here by prisoners and put together also by prisoners. So, prisoners had to build their own camp. This stone industry; forced labour continued being important until around 1942 here in Gusen and in Mauthausen. In 1942, with the changes in the development of the war, with the fact that Wehrmacht

switched to defence more and more, armament production became more and more important. Also, [it has to do] with the fact that the major part of the male population was on the front. So, there was a lack of labour force for armament production and at the same time the armament production became more and more important. The idea was that the only lasting reservoir of the workforce was the concentration camp prisoners. [The idea was] to put them to work for armament production.

[THE INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX]

This, in Mauthausen-Gusen complex, starts mostly in 1943, from the early 1943 onwards. In this period, subcamp or the twin camp Gusen was converted or developed to a real industrial complex for the armament production industry. There were Messerschmitt aircraft factory; Steyr-Daimler-Puch gun factory, they installed parts of their production at Gusen and most of the prisoners had to work there. That was on the one hand. On the other hand, from 1943 onwards, this whole network of subcamps arose or were being installed and the idea was to bring the labour force of concentration camp prisoners to the places where there was already production. There were several camps and subcamps of Mauthausen, [some] being founded in the area of Vienna, for example, which was rather huge industrial complex; in the area of Linz; in the area of Graz etc.

[UNDERESTIMATION OF THE IMPACT OF MAUTHAUSEN-GUSEN]

Gržinić: You said before that Mauthausen concentration camp was very visible, unlike [many other] extermination camps, specifically extermination camps in other parts of Europe, and I wonder how much the local population, the civilians around [Mauthausen-Gusen] were involved in crimes that were committed here? I am asking this [since] there is a known event, known as the "Rabbit Hunt," were Soviet prisoners in 1945, who tried to escape, were hunted down and killed, not only by the SS but also by the local civilians. So, what was the impact of Mauthausen on the social body of, not only these regions but also Austria?

Dürr: This is a topic that has been underestimated for a long time and for a long time there was not a lot of research about it and still there is not a lot of research on that. There was one book by Gordon Horwitz,[2] [which contains] interviews with people from the surrounding population and, for the first time, this question was stated how actually did this population react [to the camp]. But, as I said before, there was not a lot of attention put to this question for a long time. I think that this also has a little bit to do with the fact that, as we said before, that Mauthausen was not one single place, it was a whole network, which extended throughout the whole Austrian territory. But, by the end of the war and after 1945, the whole culture of commemoration, the whole remembrance, was centralized very much here at this place, here at Mauthausen. And, the stronger this place grew as a site of commemoration, the more all the other places were forgotten. On the other hand, the stronger this place grew, the more this crime was seen like a monstrous crime, which was represented by the gas chamber here in Mauthausen; crematoriums in the Mauthausen, a really monstrous crime, but what was not in the focus anymore was also these everyday aspects of these crimes. As you said before, there were people from the surrounding population who were working together with the concentration camp. So, there was not just this monstrous fact of mass extermination, but there was a whole involvement of the population of the whole region on an everyday basis with these crimes. So, by installing this central commemoration site, the focus was put on the monstrous side of the crime and not so much on the everyday side of the crime.

Christian Dürr PhD studied philosophy, history and communication theory at the University of Vienna. From 2001 he has been working as an archivist and historian for the Mauthausen Memorial Archives, currently in the role of head curator.

2 See Gordon J. Horwitz, *In the Shadow of Death: Living Outside the Gates of Mauthausen* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris and Co Ltd., 1991).

RUBIA SALGADO

11 October 2019, das kollektiv, Linz, Austria
Interview by Marina Gržinić

Marina Gržinić: Tell us about the maiz centre, what were the reasons for establishing the centre, when it started and what is the focus of the work at the centre?

Rubia Salgado: There are different stories, different versions of stories and memories of how maiz was established, and I like to play with the different narratives about the various interpretations of the centre's history. One particular narrative I like to pass on is how we started by having meetings with different women once a week, every other week, as I remember, and there were different activities – we talked, we watched videos, and one day we came up with an idea having seen Black, Caribbean women with whom we had no contact, on the streets and in trams. We heard them talking Spanish and one day we decided, as a group, to invite these women along. These women were from the Dominican Republic and now they are here. All the other women, Latin American women who were part [of our group], responded by saying or explaining that they did not want to have anything to do with the prostitutes. Back then, Luzenir [Caixeta, a co-founder of maiz] was still in Brazil [and our answer to this was] that they did not have to come and join us. The women from the Dominican Republic kept coming

and this is one of the narratives; this is how maiz started. This was the moment when maiz positioned itself.

Also, the question of how we position ourselves includes a question about how we wanted to articulate ourselves. This was a very important moment for me: the women who had said they did not want anything to do with prostitutes did come around in the end. Most of these women actually came to Austria through sex tourism, but married Austrian men, middle-class men and, therefore, a middle-class existence was imagined, constructed and so actually they [now] have a car, a kitchen, they have a garage, a TV, and this segregation, this split caused by a refusal to "mix," this is what I find a beautiful narrative. So, we said, OK, what are the options, on which side do we put ourselves as maiz? But, ok, this is one story.

[...]

Gržinić: How is this coming together, cooperation among different struggles, among LGBT, feminism? Also, if you talk about feminism in the plural – is this visible, and has there been a big change in historical terms? Twenty-five years ago there was nothing and then you started, so what is happening today?

Salgado: I am an optimist. I do not know where this comes from, but I always draw strength from the places and contexts in which we participate, which are then strengthened by you and me. I think that this is what maiz always did and will continue to do. One of the attributes of maiz is to always be in dialogue. We are always working outwards, looking for dialogue and conflict, we are never closed. maiz has always directed itself towards the outside world. Without these cooperations and alliances we would not exist, maiz would not exist. Of course, we have managed a lot alone, and we do, but because we have alliances, we have networks. But the situation in Austria – even though I am optimist – the situation is difficult, because Austria is very small and conservative, as is the majority of the population here – we can all see the election results. Austria is a very conservative country. There are minorities, small groups, most of which are not very well organized. There are also many groups that form temporarily and who fight for just one aspect, for one demand, for one concern, and who comprise, so to speak,

the mobilization force. I have a few examples in mind. There is a Queer Base in Vienna; they are allies, our very important allies. There is also a movement known as the Donnerstag team.[1] So when something like that is generated, we try to be supportive. We are famous, so we can use our name as a form of support and we are in the dialogue. But, these are small, very small groups who work too much in isolation. I think the practice of conviviality is a very difficult practice because [...] different institutions are fighting for the same funds – there is racism, there are different forms of hierarchies, which are all very difficult, and there are other groups that once in a while stand up and who carry out continuous radical work. Very often, and unfortunately not only in Austria, they limit themselves, they usually have just one concern or one demand, so they bind themselves exclusively to this one concern or one demand, be it skin colour, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, so these are islands, fragments – this is not a phenomenon that applies only to Austria...

[...]

Gržinić: If we go back to the issue of racism, there is a lot of talk about post-Nazi Austria, the question is how much, especially when we are talking in the vicinity of the concentration camp Mauthausen [Linz], do we understand antisemitism, the Nazi past, how much does all of this influence Austrian society in producing discrimination, racism, very strict racial profiling, management of diversity and so on?

Salgado: As you said, it has to do with the value of life. Since I started living here, I have seen the continuities previously mentioned, and now there is a combination of neoliberalism and neoconservativism – they have come together. And this line of continuity goes on and gets clearer, and this is what I see and what we see. It seems that Austria never had consequences in terms of complete denazification, and the state failed in this. There is a lot of dramatic entrenching. In comparison to earlier times, in Germany it is different: they had a serious attempt at denazification, but we see a distance now. There are a lot of murders in relation to the refugees and the right-wing, the refugee labour, and so on. And this has to do with the past and the combination of neoliberal-

1 Vienna's anti-government protests "Es ist wieder Donnerstag," or Thursday movement.

ism and neoconservativism, which enables all of that – be it in Brazil, Eastern Europe, or Turkey, and so on.

[...]

Gržinić: I want to think now about the similarities or divergences between Islamophobic racism and antisemitic racism? How is this, because of the question of refugees and what we talked about the post-Nazi situation, present? Do you have this discussion inside maiz, in your groups, about the presence of Islamophobic racism, is there an impact on the processes of teaching and education?

Salgado: It happens every day here, it is an everyday topic. Most of the women with whom we work are Muslim women. There is barely a week when I am teaching that women do not come and tell us that they were spat on; that their headbands were taken off; that their kids were beaten; that they were beaten on the street, and so on. There are also very perverse structural forms that perpetuate this. But antisemitism is also a theme here for us, and we try to initiate the discussion. With all of the participants we visit Mauthausen, which is very near here, also an extermination camp, and we try to make it a topic for discussion here. This is also a part of the education process. We, as an organization, have little to do with the education on antisemitism and we have to deal a lot with Islamophobia, which keeps us very busy and is on our minds.

[...]

Gržinić: If we go back to the importance of knowledge and education, what are the new or different formats?

Salgado: We were the first ones in the German-speaking arena, in language education and within the hegemony of language education of migration, who defined these processes as dealing with knowledge production. I do not know that it takes place anywhere else, in any other context. We see our pedagogical and educational work as processes of the appropriation of knowledge and language from the hegemony of knowledge and language.

Rubia Salgado is one of the co-founders of maiz – Autonomous Centre of and for Migrants, Linz. Salgado has a teaching degree (Portuguese and Literary Studies) that she obtained in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil.

LUANA HANSEN

12 October 2019, Altes Rathaus, Linz, Austria
Interview by Marina Gržinić

Marina Gržinić: What is the relationship between Black feminisms, rap and Blackness?

Luana Hansen: I think the feminist rap movement, Black feminist rap combines all of what Black empowerment is fighting for – for example, power for black people, the inclusion of black people, and the fight against racism. I think the black feminist movement is also made of sections because in Brazil, feminism wasn't capable of reaching the peripheries. Feminism was very white, for example something like Simone de Beauvoir, something that didn't represent the reality of peripheral Brazilian women. Feminism called for women to work, but Brazilian women work from their childhood. Therefore this was not our reality. I created a feminism that conjoined with black empowerment, inside a country that has a black majority but is completely racist.

We created this movement to allow us to talk, so that other people would listen, for them to be proud of their Blackness, to be proud of their race, not to be ashamed of who they are. I think when I brought feminism to this side I reached the people that feminism couldn't convince. There were a lot of Black women who didn't identify with feminism, who said

things like "I am not a feminist," although they were super feminist – but they kept saying, I am not a feminist, because this feminism doesn't convince me. And now with Black feminism, now they can say they are integrated. I think representation is what matters most: when we see someone like us, it's much easier for our message to reach them. So I think that's what music does.

Gržinić: Do you position yourself as a lesbian coming from a peripheral context? What kind of a political impact do you have with such a position?

Hansen: I believe that, even inside the LGBT community, there exists an invisibility of lesbian women, because it is a patriarchal world, a capitalist world.

There the patriarchy, the man, the white man, is most important. Thus when we identify as a lesbian woman, it's our existence. As it feels like we don't exist in society; there exist the bisexual, Trans women, while the lesbian, it seems, gets thrown underneath all of that. I understand it's a political act; it's an act that implies that you don't need patriarchy. It's like saying we are two women living together without any penis nearby, it's like showing we are two women who can create a family, we have kids – so I think even our existence is already uncomfortable. But our country wants to take away our right to marry; they want to take away that little of the law we fought for. They want us to be invisible. So when you identify as a lesbian, like I am a Black lesbian woman, this is pure visibility – this is for that small number of people to realize: Oh, there is a lesbian, lesbians do exist. Because we feel like we are invisible in the LGBT movement, the lesbian woman is always swept under the carpet, and sometimes when you come out and say I am lesbian, it really is a political act. It's our own thing, it's like saying they exist.

Gržinić: What are the groups with whom you think is important to make alliances in Brazil?

Hansen: In Brazil, it's very funny because I am not part of just one group; I am one of the few artists who migrate between groups that don't talk with each other. So our music can penetrate opposite groups really. I truly believe that our society will indeed change, around the world, to have an opportunity for everybody to unite. We all have dif-

ferent fights: my fight with a Trans woman is different, my fight with a straight woman is different – but at the end of the day we are women, we suffer sexism, we suffer patriarchy. I think unity is fundamental if we are to destroy fascism. Because the extreme right, the fascists, are united, while we, sometimes, painfully, with our scars and sadness, cannot be united, and sometimes you are always in the position to defend yourself. We left-wing people, we are always defending ourselves. You see this cup is half empty and not full, so we spend our time finding excuses to defend ourselves. I believe, with all of these groups, even with different ideas, they can unite against the greater evil that is patriarchy, sexism, racism, fascism, all the phobias... this is the right path for the [r]evolution, indeed.

Gržinić: You are a prominent activist for human rights, how much the discourse of feminism forms the basis for this political activism?

Hansen: It's very difficult, because, for example, a lot of the time you feel abandoned by feminism. We have to be very careful about our mental health, because it's a daily fight, to construct, to find ourselves, to try to find a focus. Even when I'm in the front row of the march, raising my hand high, a lot of the time I feel alone. With my spouse, when we come home with our kids, late at night, without any kind of safety, without any kind of protection, I as a person who has music on the internet, we are really on the front line. We lose a lot of space for work, a lot of things to do. And if we don't support each other, we are alone a lot of the time, we are surrounded by a multitude of people but in the time of action, we are always the ones that appear in the front. It's always our two faces that appear, to fight, so it's very difficult. Today I feel like I am an activist because I really love to fight for the rights of everyone. I am a person who does not tolerate injustice. I can't just observe any unjust situation, so I fight because I believe that I am fighting for a better world, and because I have kids I believe that I want to leave a better world for them, and I can't just stand there with my arms crossed while the world crumbles and pretend that I am not bothered, so I think that's why I am an activist. I do not expect support from many people, but I do believe that our fight has some support because it is genuine – it's a true fight, an existential fight, so we create true alliances in life. The people who come to me are people who then stay near me for the rest of my life. We have friends that start the march with us, resist all the day and then end

up at our place for dinner. So we really create true alliances in life, and activism does that to me: I find people who are very similar to me. But I also find myself alone in this fight, fighting alone, because we realized when we don't have water, we don't have money, we don't have anything at home, what does activism do to solve that? In Brazil, it is very difficult to make a living from activism with the present government.

Gržinić: To what extent are the discourses of decolonization connected with your struggles?

Hansen: When I came here for the first time, I had never heard the term "decolonization" before. I first heard it here in Europe. When I came here for the first time, last year in Vienna, and I heard that term, I was delighted – because Brazil is still a colonial country, a country that accepted European colonization. Until now the Brazilians have glorified everything that comes from the outside, anything that comes from abroad really. Our work even develops if we go abroad, whereas if we stay in Brazil nobody values us the same way as when we go abroad. So, first of all, Brazil needs to learn the meaning behind that word. We don't really work with that word in our country. We have talked at conferences about colonization, decolonization, while talking about intersexuality. You know, in Brazil these words still need to take baby steps and they would still need to recognize that they were a colony in the first place, before they can decolonialize. I believe that because more of us are coming to Europe we are starting to come across a variety of versions of colonization.

Luana Hansen is a black feminist rapper, DJ and producer, musician and human rights activist from Brazil. As a human rights activist, she addresses themes of black feminism, oppression against black peripheral women and the legalization of abortion in Brazil also in her rap music.

TANJA MARKOVIĆ

18 May 2018,
Centre for Cultural Decontamination (CZKD), Belgrade, Serbia
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Šefik Tatlić: Regarding the question of amnesia: Is collective amnesia within the context of Serbia and the "Serb Republic" exclusively linked to the 1990s, or is it selective in terms that you can talk about World War II, but not about atrocities committed during the 1990s?

Tanja Marković: I think that amnesia is still a better term for what is happening, let's say, Austria, because I think that these, so-called, civilised nations, do not want to remember that they were fascists. Here, people are proud that they were fascists. They do not call it fascism, but they see it as Serbian heroism. They are proud of it. These civilised nations at least somewhere retain a consciousness that what they did was not OK, and so they try to sweep it under the rug. That was not us, those were the Germans, the Austrians; it is considered a German issue, which has nothing to do with the sentiment here. Here, people are proud of it.

Marina Gržinić: How is it possible that this area functions so perversely in relation to its wider context? Is there some historical connection with the way in which socialism worked? Is it connected to a process of

emptying public space that is so extreme, so pressured, so drained that it disables any kind of critical discourse?

Marković: When you ask me does it have anything to do with socialism, the only thing that comes to mind is that the Serbian people were the most numerous, which ascribed them the position of oppressor, which is related to the project of First Yugoslavia,[1] when many of the nations involved felt that they were occupied by the Serbs. I mean, no one asked those nations whether they wanted to live in Austria-Hungary as well. One part wanted to live with the Serbs, the others not. When Serbia came out of World War I as a victor, this probably influenced a number of nationalist intellectuals, historians, writers and politicians, giving them the idea that they could do whatever they wanted. But, I think, the more perfidious idea was an emotional one, an idea that the Serbs are victims, which is an idea that permeates the Memorandum[2] as an idea that justifies their behaviour. I am thinking now about the Serb Republic, Jasenovac is near... Instead of emotional calming that memory and extracting a message, what happened in the next historical moment was that the generations whose ancestors were killed in Jasenovac became mass murderers, and that they sought revenge against a nation that had nothing to do with the crimes committed in Jasenovac. So, it is the traumatisation of this space that is at work, which persists over the centuries, and you simply cannot process it entirely. What is especially dangerous in that regard, as I have already mentioned, is this temporal tunnel where all the centuries are merged, which makes the past seem as if it were yesterday. As if your neighbour, who has nothing to do with what happened before, killed you yesterday. In the Balkans, nationalists perceive history, things that happened 500 years ago, as if it was yesterday.

Gržinić: What is the reaction to the genocide? How that word is generally perceived in the public discourse in Serbia? I am asking because genocide is a key to understanding the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

1 The Kingdom of Yugoslavia was a state that existed during the interwar period and beginning of World War II, from 1918 until 1941. It was officially called the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes until 1929 (Wikipedia).

2 The Memorandum of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU Memorandum), was a document written in 1985/1986 by a committee of sixteen members of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts that came into public in *Večenje novosti* journal in 1986. SANU Memorandum outlined the tensions of the time and proposed a (controversial, nationalistic) direction of solving Serbian question within SFRJ's economic and political fragmentation and decentralization in the mid-1980s (Wikipedia).

Marković: Only in the NGO sector. The Women in Black still insist that the monument to the victims of Srebrenica[3] must be constructed and we often, Sunday after Sunday, stand in the Square [The Square of the Republic in Belgrade] in silence, wearing black. I like to say that we ourselves are the monument – because the authorities in Serbia, it seems, will never build it, will not acknowledge that it was a genocide. They will maybe acknowledge it if the need arises, within the context of trade, if the EU demands it, but intimately, they will not... How can I put it: even if they acknowledge it, they still say it was great that they killed those people. Concerning the acknowledgment of the genocide, it is all on the table, a negotiating chip. A term itself could be acknowledged, but not in a context in which a war reparation would be requested. That moment of avoiding the possibility of paying war reparations is also the moment when many intellectuals who had treated the atrocities fairly, and spoken about them, faltered when it came down to it. The intellectuals in Serbia have also, at least for me, encouraged an incorrect interpretation. They have spoken about the killing of the town, but it was not just that, it was not just a town. They were killing a man from a village, a working man, which was an act of destruction of Bosnia as the centre of Yugoslavia.

Tatlić: Of course, when we talk about racism, we think not only of skin colour, but also of discrimination, segregation, chauvinism. What do you think is the origin of the chauvinism within this context? Do you think there is a correlation with the legacy of Yugoslavia, which is incorporated within the bodies of the populations associated with such a context?

Marković: Yes. It has to do with the problematic fascist interpretation, with revenge on the Turks, what Mladić said when he entered Srebrenica. When the multi-party system was established, it established nationalist divisions, and everybody went their separate directions, but what was terrifying was that the Serb ruling class gained control of the JNA [The Yugoslav People's Army] and directed it against those civilians.

3 The Srebrenica genocide occurred during the Balkan Wars in July 1995. The units of the Bosnian Serb Army of Republika Srpska massacred more than 8,000 Bosniaks, mostly men and boys, in and around the Srebrenica town, Bosnia and Herzegovina (Wikipedia).

Gržinić: What is the relation between the political elite, not only the elite, but also the army, and those that were in power, and international flows in terms of capital, geopolitical interests? Are there some analyses that deal with these relations? Is this part of a discourse here in Serbia?

Marković: Recently, especially among younger researchers, you could hear a lot of leftist interpretations, but they are also problematic, if you ask me, because they avoid addressing the 1990s and the issue of collective responsibility. They just skim over it and say that it all served to establish capitalism. As if everything was the same everywhere, in Bosnia, in... Nothing is said about the war in the 1990s, nothing is said about the fact that this society did not approach these issues fully. I support the interpretations coming from the left, but that same left has not learnt anything from the German left. The first question for them was, "What did you do in the war, daddy?" Here, nobody asks that.

Tanja Marković is a psychologist by education, and feminist and anti-war activist by vocation. She co-founded the Centre for Queer Studies, Belgrade, and was a vice-president of the Alliance of Anti-Fascists of Serbia. She works with the association Women in Black in Belgrade.

SRĐAN HERCIGONJA

19 May 2018,
Centre for Cultural Decontamination (CZKD), Belgrade, Serbia
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Srđan Hercigonja: The result is that we have ethnically cleaned states and ethnically cleansed territories, for example in Bosnia and Herzegovina or in Kosovo. Those were the consequences of war crimes. When we speak about the war crimes that were committed during the 1990s, of course, we can discuss it on different levels. If we speak from legal perspective, for example, those war crimes that were committed violated the Geneva Conventions and so on, or Convention on Genocide when it comes to Srebrenica or Bosnia and so on. But, in my opinion there is a direct link between the war crimes committed during the 1990s and the present political, economic, cultural situation in every single former Yugoslav republic. Because, understanding what is behind these war crimes is the way, in my opinion of understanding what we are living through at the moment.

[WAR CRIMES]

That is why I am personally interested in war crimes because it is not simply something that can be examined through the lenses of legal system or something like that, it is something that should be examined

more deeply; what is the social, what was the economic purpose of these war crimes that were committed.

Šefik Tatlić: If we speak specifically about Serbia and the "Serb Republic"[1] what is your opinion on the question of construction of national identity in the context of the negation of war crimes and the genocide committed in the 1990s?

Hercigonja: The denial of the war crimes is actually, and I would pose a question mark, is there actually a denial? I would give an example, one example, which is a paradigmatic case in my opinion. In the suburban area of Belgrade, the capital of Serbia, there was a mass grave with 750 civilians, Kosovo Albanians, and that mass grave was found in 2001. It is only 12 kilometres from the very centre of Belgrade. It was in 2001; and legally, everything was ok; the bodies were exhumed and brought back to their families and so on. But, what is happening now on that site where the said mass grave was discovered is that a Serbian Orthodox Church is being built. So, in a way, for me, it is also – is it a denial? Yes, it is a denial. But, for me, the very act of constructing and erecting Serbian Orthodox Church on that very site is that we are saying...

Marina Gržnić: Erasure?

Hercigonja: Exactly. It is like they are saying we know what happened here and we acknowledge it, but still we are doing that. That is in my opinion. And, of course the construction of the Serbian Orthodox Church is part of constructing the Serbian national identity because the religious element plays a significant role in the constructions of national identity. This is only one example, but for me it is very paradigmatic when we speak about the denial of war crimes and the construction of national identity in the case of Serbia. For example, in the case of Republika Srpska ["Serb Republic"] there is also one specific site, concentration camp Trnopolje near Prijedor where 24,000 civilians were held for three months in terrible conditions. And, on that site, which is the backyard of a school, there is a monument dedicated to the military of the Republika Srpska. So, it is also, for me, in a way [a sign of saying], we

1 One of the two entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina (Wikipedia).

are not denying it, we know it, and we are actually acknowledging it. This is actually what is a consequence of that war crime.

Gržinić: So, in your opinion, as well as it is coming from other opinions, I think, there actually exists a genealogy of the process of forgetting?

Hercigonja: Yes.

Gržinić: So, amnesia is actually historical, some part of the modernist time, after World War II, but also in relation to what you are talking about, it is actually a conscious process of erasure, that is, a kind of a process that is very visibly exercised, accepted and acknowledged by the masses, let us say, the public and the institutional and political framework?

Hercigonja: Yes, yes. Of course, many would say now, ok, but nobody in Belgrade knows about the mass grave that I mentioned, near Belgrade. But, still the silence about it is actually the acceptance of what happened there, because there is plenty of means to know what happened there. Even if people would know what has happened there, they would not object the construction of the Serbian Orthodox Church instead of a memorial site for the victims that were buried there.

Gržinić: You are working for this international agency that has an important role in many cities in ex-Yugoslavia and my question will be how this awareness is actually seen in the international context? Because those who are also working on the same topic of the past, questions of memory, construction of Europe, questions of genocide that was also in World War II and in the time of colonialism, how are they, in the international arena, seeing what is going on today in the whole territory?

Hercigonja: They see it as, how to put it, some kind of derailment.

[EUROPE]

It is completely "anti-European" what happened here. It is like some kind of imaginary land where these massacres took place. Like it has

nothing to do with Europe, let us say. So, it is very difficult to explain, actually, to my colleagues, not only in Europe but on the international level, in the US, etc., right, what actually happened in connection with Europe and the role of Europe during the wars [of the 1990s].

Tatlić: In that context, could you elaborate on what is your view on the nature of the conflict in the region within the process of the post-socialist reconfiguration?

Hercigonja: In my opinion, there are two levels to it, of course. The nature of the conflict, from a superficial point of view, in my opinion, is that it was an ethnic conflict. That we had different nations, ethnicities fighting with each other – Serbs against Croats, Serbs against Bosniaks, Bosniaks against Croats, Serbs against Albanians and so on. But, in my opinion, there is a need for more comprehensive understanding of the nature of these "ethnic" conflicts. What is behind that? In a way, while speaking about that, we have to think what was the broader context in which the Yugoslavian conflict took place, which happened only two or three years after the collapse of socialism in Europe, right? Also, [the conflict] took place after the collapse of socialism in what is now former Yugoslavia, which means that [it corresponded to] transition from socialism to capitalism in all former Yugoslav countries. So, the war corresponded also with this economic transition from socialism to capitalism. Sometimes I wonder whether the only purpose of the war was actually the privatization of social goods, social property that we had in former Yugoslavia. [This is so] because after the end of the war, almost every single factory, every single social property was privatized through the war. And, there is a direct link between, also, the war crimes or war criminals or organized criminals who were collaborating with war criminals or with armies, and their position after the war [which] is that they are usually millionaires now, right? But, there is a direct link. So, there is, in my opinion, a deeper economic aspect of these ethnic conflicts.

[TURBO-NATIONALISM]

Gržinić: Turbo-nationalism that we see is, from what you are saying, connected very much with the political economy in terms that the pri-

vatization, restructuring of every level of the society, is connected actually with turbo-nationalism as the main ideology of this whole process?

Hercigonja: Yes, exactly. For me, turbo-nationalism includes also the privatization and what happened with the social, with common goods, with social property, yes.

Srđan Hercigonja currently works as a project manager at the Serbian office of the German organization forum Ziviler Friedensdienst (Civil Peace Service). Prior to this position, he was a junior researcher at the Belgrade-based Centre for Comparative Conflict Studies.

ALEKSANDAR KRAUS

19 May 2018,
Centre for Cultural Decontamination (CZKD), Belgrade, Serbia
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Aleksandar Kraus: When "Brotherhood and Unity"[1] is brought up within the context of critiques of Tito, it is usually said that it was an empty phrase, yet we are forgetting that this slogan originated in the French Revolution slogan *Liberté, égalité, fraternité* and that it did not fall from Mars. This was one progressive idea that served in the capacity of overcoming everything World War II produced, and in that sense I often say, which is perceivable from Bosnia and Herzegovina, that we had all these big companies, Unis, Energoinvest, etc., we had Zenica; there were Yugoslavian companies that had their headquarters in republic centres where the CK [Central Committee of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia] determined who led those companies, not the workers' committees, whose role was to affirm those decisions formally. If those companies were allowed to become real multinational companies, to operate across Yugoslav borders – because at that time multinational companies were emerging, and we could not export self-management, only goods and commodities, as well as left agenda. Then Eurocommunism was strong, Italy had a strong party, France and Spain also had strong communist parties. So, there was no chance that Yugoslavia

1 The slogan of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia was coined during the Yugoslav People's Liberation War (1941–45) and transformed into a guiding principle of Yugoslavia's post-war inter-ethnic policy (Wikipedia).

could have had democratic socialism within its borders. When I spoke about democracy, I forgot to mention socialist direct democracy, which is something we, in the absence of a multi-party system, had here – or more precisely, the workers had it. So, it was a democracy connected to the work process, where you had a chance to discuss within the companies, within the workers' councils, and to reflect on how you practice self-management, how you practice democracy. Today you only have the chance to vote in the elections, and that's all the democracy that you can have.

There are alternatives that present themselves and which can be fought for. With regard to World War II, the Ustasha[2] and Chetniks,[3] there were a lot of mixed marriages after the war, yet later we arrived at a situation where members of workers' councils were looking at each other behind the barrel of a gun. There were workers' sport games, various social gatherings were organised, like in Gorenje, since they were all Yugoslavian companies. People were socialising, travelling, so that the problem from World War II was over 40-year period, in Yugoslavia, pushed to the background. The same problem was intentionally drawn out. Vuk Drašković[4] intentionally started to write about it, mass graves were being excavated; a specific vocabulary was imposed because these people needed it. There is an example of Šešelj,[5] who gained his PhD on the topic of People's defence, he was a member of [the communist] party, both Šešelj and Drašković, who was not. These people would not have any significance today if they had not dug up all these topics and they were right, from their perspective, because they got rich, because they had good lives; Drašković was even a minister of foreign affairs... To them, digging up war axes, everything that happened during World War II, where there were some mistakes made by communists, was the main topic. It was not ideal, but everything that was not ideal is now dramatised. There is a whole discourse that constantly dramatises

2 The Ustasha – Croatian Revolutionary Movement, was a separatist, ultranationalist, fascist and terrorist organization, active in Yugoslavia between 1929 and 1945 (Wikipedia).

3 Serbian royalist, ultra-nationalist, fascist and genocidal guerilla force active in World War II and in the 1990s (Wikipedia).

4 Vuk Drašković (born 1946) is a Serbian writer and politician, the leader of the conservative Serbian Renewal Movement (SPO) (Wikipedia).

5 Vojislav Šešelj (born 1954) is the founder and president of the nationalist Serbian Radical Party (SRS) who was a deputy prime minister of Serbia (1998–2000). The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) convicted him of crimes against the humanity (Wikipedia).

whatever was not ideal, Bleiburg...[6] We have one [partisan] veteran who was there, who says that it was not as it is now represented, he says that they were in combat much longer [after the war officially ended] because fascists did not want to disarm... So, things are pretty clear in that sense, there were gangs that did want to disarm, and there were a huge number of them.

Marina Gržinić: How was it possible then for Milošević[7] to mobilise such a huge mass of people into going to war?

Kraus: Latinka Perović[8] is partly right in that respect. Of course, the discourse of "Greater Serbia" existed and was supported by many intellectuals, but the background to this discourse is much older. Bora Jović, who was a big communist, spoke of "the last century." There is a history of Yugoslavia that was not created by communists. A First Yugoslavia existed, Ljudevit Gaj,[9] the Yugoslavian Ilirian movement, etc. If you go to Mirogoj [the central cemetery in Zagreb] you will see a number of people who were involved in this. So, this First Yugoslavia was a progressive project, a project that resembles what the EU would want today, to reconcile the developed and the underdeveloped, to reconcile a number of different religions, etc. An incredibly difficult project, but still, it functioned for seventy years. Today, a lot of people underestimate these achievements; they underestimate the fact that conviviality existed. I still think that the socialist Yugoslavian experience is something that can be built upon. However, passions have to be calmed; a range of criminal activities has to be tackled. There was a situation in which a crowd of workers came to protest in front of the National Assembly in Belgrade. Milošević spoke to them, and they returned home as Serbs.

6 The Bleiburg repatriations (named after the Carinthian town bordering Slovenia and Austria) refer to events in May 1945, at the end of World War II in Europe, when German and Croatian forces together with several civilians fled through Yugoslavia toward Austria as the Soviet Union (Red Army) and Yugoslav Partisans took control. Soldiers and civilian refugees were turned back and forced by the British Army to surrender to Partisan forces. Some of them were further subjected to "death marches," together with groups captured by the Partisans in Yugoslavia (Wikipedia).

7 Slobodan Milošević (1941–2006) was a Yugoslav and Serbian politician. As a leader of Socialist Party of Serbia and Serbian president he pursued Serbian nationalist agenda and policies that contributed to the breakup of the socialist Yugoslav federation. He was in trial for charges of war crimes before the ICTY that ended without the verdict as he died of a heart attack (Wikipedia).

8 Latinka Perović (born 1933) is a Serbian historian and former politician (Wikipedia).

9 Ljudevit Gaj (1809–1872) was a Croatian linguist, poet, journalist, writer, politician, and one of the main figures of the pan-Slavist Illyrian Movement. He is known for Gaj's Latin Alphabeth (Wikipedia).

Aleksandar Kraus was born in Belgrade in 1940. He was educated in Belgrade, where he graduated at the Faculty of Technology and Metallurgy, University of Belgrade. During his professional career, he worked in the industry, where, for a long time, he was a general manager of a large company in Belgrade. This was in an important period of the self-management socialism in Yugoslavia.

DUŠAN MALJKOVIĆ

19 May 2018,
Centre for Cultural Decontamination (CZKD), Belgrade, Serbia
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Marina Gržinić: Is it possible to think about the political history of LGBT movement in ex-Yugoslavia, generally, and is it, through this kind of politicization, of looking at and constructing history, possible to look at the history, or the parallel history, of genocides and the war crimes in ex-Yugoslavia?

Dušan Maljković: My answer is a clear no. What is happening, for example, at the moment in Belgrade is the fact that there was this celebration of IDAHO Day,[1] the day when World Health Organization officially removed homosexuality from the list of mental disorders and within the frame of this celebration a first movie festival of Israeli LGBT films was organized at the very moment at which the Palestinians are being killed. So, if there was ever a more – how should I put it – a more direct

1 The 17th May was chosen as an International Day Against Homophobia, Transphobia and Biphobia to commemorate the decision made in 1990 by World Health Organization to declassify homosexuality as a mental disorder. The Day' campaign aims to coordinate international events and organizations and initiatives at global, regional, national and local levels that draw attention to LGBT*QI+ rights violations and discrimination. It aims at stimulating interest in LGBT rights work globally (may17.org).

embodiment of what Sarah Schulman named "pinkwashing,"[2] there we have it at this very moment. I tried to sparkle up on Facebook a little debate about that and it was like what are you talking about, it is nonsense, you cannot really think about that in such terms etc. etc. So, there was no concrete opposition to what I was writing or even this idea that we should do something about that, you know, like to perhaps cancel the festival, perhaps make some kind of talk about what was going on. So, I do not think that there is any kind of wider political approach of the LGBT at the moment because what happened is the so-called *NGO-ization* of the LGBT movement.

We have a lot of NGOs at the moment that are really being subsidized by liberal foundations that do not really want to question the economic basis of our society. You cannot even find some kind of critique of capitalism. That did happen on the Pride two years ago when Marija Perković, an activist from the Women in Black,[3] quoted Rosa Luxemburg at the Pride. But, you could then read articles in the newspapers about how the guests from the Western embassies were very mad at her because she mentioned some kind of socialist agenda. So, even though we here all know very well what is "pinkwashing" and it is often quoted and it is often projected towards what Ana Brnabić[4] is doing at the moment. We have the same very thing in our community and there is no really radical critique of it. On the other hand, it seems that the new idea of capitalist society, of multiculturalism, of EU etc., has been widely accepted as the basis for doing any kind of politics here, so, I am afraid there is not any kind of [critique]... Of course, there are a few individuals or very few organizations, like Women in Black, who are still protesting against what is going on in Palestine at the moment, but I think it is not mainstream of NGOs. It is like a little side faction of a few individuals who still dare to be critical.

2 "The growing global gay movement against the Israeli occupation has named these tactics 'pinkwashing': a deliberate strategy to conceal the continuing violations of Palestinians' human rights behind an image of modernity signified by Israeli gay life." Sarah Schulman, "Israel and 'Pinkwashing,'" *New York Times*, 22 November 2011, https://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/23/opinion/pinkwashing-and-israels-use-of-gays-as-a-messaging-tool.html. The term "pinkwashing" is a compound word modelled on term whitewash. Used in the context of LGBT*QI rights, it refers to a variety of marketing and political strategies promoting products, countries, people or entities through an appeal to gay-friendliness (Wikipedia).

3 Women in Black is a women's feminist and antimilitarist peace organization. Founded in Belgrade in October 1991, it has made visible the nonviolent resistance to sexism, nationalism, militarism and war (zeneucrnom.org).

4 Ana Brnabić (born 1975) is the first woman and the first openly gay person who has been appointed Serbian Prime Minister (Wikipedia). She holds the position since 2017.

Gržinić: In the 1990s, when the war was going on, and this is one of our primary interests in order to understand what we have today, what was actually the situation in terms of opposing the war, what was going in the public sphere in Serbia in connection with other groups, maybe in Bosnia and Herzegovina, in Croatia, and what is the difference today? How do you see this passage during the last 20 years?

[YUGOSLAVIA]

Maljković: I should explain that there was this internal debate on how do we accept people who wanted to join the Arcadia and there was this anti-war idea of us not to accept anyone who had any kind of nationalistic attitudes or who were supporting [Slobodan] Milošević at the time of war expansion of Serbia. But, some of the activists participated in Women in Black's protests and a lot of other different anti-war activities. So, that was the connection. But, then the war ended and the agenda moved onto something else.

I was very young at that time, you know, so I did not really participate in the march and from my personal experience it was a very traumatic thing since I still feel that my country is Yugoslavia, that I felt really strong about, politically and identically wise, has fallen apart. And I am still thinking about myself as somebody who does not have any kind of state. I have a Serbian passport, but I do not think of myself as a Serbian citizen, although formally I am. I still feel – I still declare myself as Yugoslavian. So, in this sense, that was the loss of a state for me that I still feel has never returned and I do not think that the European Union is any kind of alternative, at least for me. It is so because it is not a socialist state at all. And, looking from that perspective, Yugoslavia was a socialist state and the EU simply is not that. But, there were some groups, like the Labris, a lesbian group, that was also formed at the beginning of the 1990s and they were also against the war. The whole alternative context in which the LGBT movement appeared was that women activism, anti-war activism, we all came from that because it was the only open space at that moment for LGBT activists, and it was a huge alternative, even avant-garde at the time.

But, now, it completely switched to the mainstream. So, that is the major change. There is this, almost globally accepted, LGBT agenda and it is called mainstreaming LGBT, so that is exactly what happened here. When Ana Brnabić was elected as our prime minister I remember actually that a lot of lifestyle magazines took over this whole media fuss, so they were asking her "What was her favourite kind of jazz, what kind women do you like, etc." So, it was instantly depoliticized. She never said for herself that she is a lesbian. Of course, I accept it, but she says "I am gay," you know, but she never used the term lesbian, which to me seems, well, that it offers an insight into how lesbophobia is still very strong in Serbia, you know. Gay is something like, she is not male, and then she can be gay because it is not openly connected with male homosexuality. There is still a great taboo and they do not believe that if she were a male she could have been elected prime minister, at least not yet. So, she is lesbian and we do not mention this word that still has a very bad context, but she is gay, she has a girlfriend, she is appearing at a lot of theatre performances, she loves theatre, she loves to dress like this or that etc., etc. So, it was impossible in the 1990s for lesbian identity to be constructed in such a mainstream lifestyle, when it was more political, at that time. So, yes, we are on the path of less politics and more of some easy chit-chat, you know.

Dušan Maljković PhD is a Belgrade-based journalist, publicist, translator and a long-term LGBT activist. He studied philosophy at the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade. He is a co-founder of Centre for Queer Studies, Belgrade, with Tanja Marković, and the editor of homoerotic edition *Kontrabunt* (Rende), the suthor international award-winning broadcast *Gayming* on Radio Belgrade, and website gay-serbia.com.

DRAGOMIR OLUJIĆ OLUJA

19 May 2018,
Centre for Cultural Decontamination (CZKD), Belgrade, Serbia
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Dragomir Olujić Oluja: I think that the roots of everything going on today lie exactly in those years, in the 1960s. Why? Those were the years when capitalism, the capitalist bloc, was going through its first crisis, while the socialist bloc, including Yugoslavia, was going through its second crisis. It was the period when anti-colonial revolutions ended, and when the first post-war, the so-called baby boom, generation entered the public scene on the basis of dissatisfaction with the system, with the life they lived within such systems. It was a period when the middle class abandoned its status of mediators or moderators between the two big classes, and acquired the status of a political and social subject beginning to represent its own interests as general interests. Both the capitalist and the socialist worlds found themselves in a crisis, where they, along with the new states created after the anti-colonial revolutions, started to seek an exit from that crisis, within which and as an answer to which, the capitalist world started to rely upon socialist, above all, state interventions or measures. The socialist world, within which Yugoslavia went farthest, followed by Czechoslovakia, on the other hand introduced a number of measures of a capitalist nature – meaning the introduction of private property, unemployment, drastic social segregation, the introduction of bankruptcy, etc. – a number

of measures that were dictated from the centres of capital. Of course, these new states started to combine both these kinds of measures. The student and youth rebellion was, so to speak, the expression or reflection of a deep conflict. What was clear to us as students in the rebellion from the very outset – which can also be seen in our activities – was that the fundamental problem was the so-called worker problem. In that regard, there was a close link between the workers and students in France, Italy and Germany, and that same link was present in Yugoslavia. The Yugoslavian reaction testifies to this. When we declared the occupation of the university and the seven-day strike on 3rd June [1968], the Federal Assembly imposed two laws – the law on the minimum wage, which was increased by 100%, from 15,000 to 30,000 [dinars], and the law on obligatory employment of interns at 10% in all companies. So, it is clear what the problem was.

The second political measure deployed by the Yugoslavian authorities was that the workers' watches was introduced to all companies, whose task was to prevent us students from coming into contact with the workers. Our group, that precisely had such a mission and led by Milan Nikolić, was physically prevented from entering, even though we had invitations extended to us by either youth or union organisations. However, the workers – either on an individual basis or through their own unions or youth organisations – expressed an interest in working, cooperating and communicating with us. For instance, Teleoptik, which was then one of the most important industries in Zemun,[1] gave us, from day one and through its own unions, 500,000 dinars, which was then the equivalent of 50 times my monthly mortgage rates. After that they gave us, on a daily basis, 5,000 dinars for food and the materials we needed at the time, paper, paint, etc. Of course, in the end we were defeated, but the problem remained.

After all that, and I am now focusing on Yugoslavia, we arrived at a process in which many coalitions were formed, and various middle class factions organised themselves in order to ideologise and rationalise this important conflict, as well as to try to present it in a specific way... The answer of the workers to this new politics based on the economic reform and connected with other political and social events in the

1 A suburb of Belgrade.

country, was, so to speak, radical. There were strikes on a daily basis in that period until the1980s, during which the workers did not manage to constitute themselves as a unified movement, as a unified class, because every time they initiated a strike, their demands were met, which happened in combination with repressive measures, such as the arrests of leaders, etc. But the problem was dealt with instantly, which in fact demotivated the workers to persevere, because they would simply get what they asked for. In the 1980s, when the other break happened, a connection between the workers appeared, not only in the form of moral support, but in the form of active politics, the politics of action. During the 1980s, Yugoslavia was the country with the most strikes in the world. Yugoslavia saw more strikes than the whole of Europe put together. Of course, the authorities' response, applied the same strategies from 1968 on, focused on an attempt at reformulating the working class, at ideologising it, at translating it into something other than it was. The economic reforms that began in the mid-1960s entailed an attempt at presenting the nation as if it was more important than labour. This brand of politics was becoming more and more blatant. At that time, various texts, articles, essays that explained the priority of nation, and which were written by university professors, began to appear in party newspapers and journals.

In a systemic sense, both the constitution and the Law on Associated Labour as well as the Associated Labour Courts systematically began to create a situation in which workers were marginalised, removed, with no regard for the meaning of the term associated labour, the [Basic] Organisation of Associated Labour [BOAL], etc., which looked as if it were a continuation of the self-management system (*samoupravljanje*), but when you take a look at what was really happening, the workers were being downplayed. Until then, the Party had 33% of members who were workers [representatives of workers], while 22–25% of workers were in the executive institutions; the Federal Assembly had 25% workers. However, by 1989 there were only four workers in the national assembly. As another example, I was sacked twice from the firm in Belgrade where I worked because I was found to be morally and politically unsuitable. Of course, I sued them at the Associated Labour Court, but I never won the case. I even joked then that the Associated Labour Courts were famous for the fact that no worker had ever won a case there. There was an example, now legendary, that the court in

Vranje[2] regularly ruled in favour of workers, but in the rest of Yugoslavia the practice was as I have just described it.

Here, we can also detect another systemic problem, so to speak. The difference between Yugoslavia and other socialist countries, and not only socialist countries, was the workers' self-management system. Without explaining it in detail, the system was at the lowest level based on fundamental direct democracy. At the next level, a representative democracy was dominant, although between the two of them no natural connections existed; they were simply, through various law directives, held together within the same system. There was also a third level, a control level that oversaw and ruled upon other levels. This was the rule of the Party and the state, which were formally separated but, in essential and practical terms, conjoined. This level held the entirety of the hybrid system – comprised of basic, representative and repressive, so to speak, "democracy" together, and that was doomed to fail. You could see exactly, after looking at what coalition was in power, what faction was in power, you could see what a real problem was. So, there was an ideological narrative at work, the workers were confined to the national sheepfolds.

Dragomir Olujić Oluja was born in 1948 in Croatia, in a partisan family. His nationality is "Jewish, bike rider, rock and roller." He was an active participant in the students' demonstrations of 1968 and an activist in the students' movement in Yugoslavia (1966–1974) as a supporter of the "workers line."

2 A town in south-eastern Serbia.

MARIJA PERKOVIĆ

19 May 2018,
Centre for Cultural Decontamination (CZKD), Belgrade, Serbia
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Marina Gržinić: Can we, at this moment, talk about the fascisation of the social body in Serbia and the "Serb Republic" and as well as in Croatia and the rest of the territories that were involved in the wars in the 1990s? Is this a proper term?

Marija Perković: Of course it is. This is an every-day used term that describes what is at work, without venturing into the academic differences between fascism, Francoism, Nazism, which are completely unimportant for our reality. So, we are talking about one, let's say, generic term that depicts what is going on, and not only in the space of former Yugoslavia. As a little reminder, which is for me actually a big reminder, there is a recording from the "Drug-ca" conference that took place in 1978, when comradesses from Europe already spoke of fascisation. Actually, very quickly after World War II and after the enthusiasm and belief that something epic would happen, at least on European soil, there came the fascisation of Europe followed by counterrevolution in socialist Yugoslavia, along with the slew of economic reforms in the 1960s, maybe even 1950s, which Oskar Davičo[1] vigorously warned

1 Oskar Davičo (1909–1989) was a revolutionary socialist activist and politician, and one of the most acclaimed Serbian surrealist writers in Yugoslav literature, publishing over 50 books (Wikipedia).

against. As we have learned, he was angry because a petty-bourgeois ideology of national identification was introduced perfidiously and that process, seen here as a break that led to the wars, which were actually the culmination of a course of events that had started long before that in Yugoslavia. This process entailed the imposition of market reforms, hence the establishment of capitalism and, alongside that, fascism, because they are never separate. It all happened after a global development or a preconception that assumed that after victory over fascism a better, more beautiful and just society was possible – a hope that failed even in the socialist states.

Šefik Tatlić: In what kind of relations do you see between the process of fascisation, including historical revisionism, that took place in Milošević's era and the process of neoliberalisation?

Perković: Milošević is, so to speak, a founder. There is no relation, but one line of logical development, within which Milošević, for the sake of his own political survival, kept some parts of the socialist idea alive. We could even say that a number of governments before Milošević, such as Milka Planinc's[2] administration, then Ante Marković's[3] administration, all perpetuated a process of market reforms that led us to capitalism. Capitalism did not come after Milošević, but parallel to him, even before him, the process had gradually been accelerated through a series of intensive reforms symbolised by Ante Marković – more than Milka Planinc – but still, it was the same economic programme, if I remember correctly. Nationalism appeared here as the logical superstructure of a capitalist economy, and that national discourse appeared before the wars. It was one line of development that was continued by Milošević's opposition, or even finalised by it. The majority of this task was accomplished by Milošević. He simultaneously abolished social property, or more precisely left it as equal with state property, which was accompanied by changes to the constitution, the introduction of private property, which all comprised one line of development that was not severed. It could have been severed, because in history everything can be done differently, but this line has not changed since the 1960s through to the

2 Milka Planinć (1924–2010) served as Yugoslavian prime minister from 1982 to 1986. She was the first and only woman to hold this office (Wikipedia).

3 Ante Marković (1924–2011) was the last prime minister of Yugoslavia (Wikipedia).

current day. It has, unfortunately, intensified, and finally became the victorious one.

Gržinić: How did you experience the 1990s and how can that era be understood today, speaking from your position? How did it come to war in the Balkans? Were you and the groups you have worked with were able to anticipate the war, and what kind of social tissue were these groups made up of? What kind of processes were at work? What could have been done then and what was then given as something you could not react against because the war happened, which was also influenced by some wrong predictions?

Perković: I, as an indoctrinated child of socialism, remember that time as crazy. I remember, in my personal memory, that my father told me that the war was going to happen, and I did not believe him back then in 1989, when I was nineteen. When the war started, I did not believe that it was starting and that the siege of Vukovar was possible and that it is really happening. When they took away my boyfriend on my birthday, I believed that it was simply an excess. The appearance of Milošević at that time was the complete opposite of everything we had learned at school back then. However, when the siege of Vukovar started I was twenty-one and in my social circles it caused extreme divisions, we started to have divisions among ourselves, for me it was unbelievable that a number of people did not see Milošević as a nationalist, that they did not understand that it was unacceptable to shoot at the comrades in Vukovar, it was one crazy situation. I still do not think that my personal memory qualifies enough to convey the memory of that time, because I was an indoctrinated child of socialism who grew up without a TV set, since my mother said in 1984 that it makes people stupid. This is why I don't have any memory of the mass culture of that time; I was kind of separated from it. So, I guess that my personal memory cannot be seen as relevant, for the same reason that many personal memories do not really qualify in that regard.

[WOMEN IN BLACK]

The scope for action was extremely restricted. When the multi-party system was established, the political positions that the establishment

made dominant were maddening to everyone because, I suppose, many of the positions presented as different were actually the same, including the Socialist Party of Serbia. The only party that was really different, and that does not exist anymore, was the Labour Party [Partija rada]. They were the only ones who kept a truly critical distance from the situation, and the party was based on historical insights into what is reality. The Labour Party was the only party that had a clear political position, a very clear critical consciousness and that maintained a very clear practice. Nothing could be said against them. The others were Women in Black, whose political platform was far wider, precisely because of the possibilities to mobilise wider layers of the population who were already indoctrinated in another way, and I am speaking in the context of Serbia and the "shortened" versions of Yugoslavia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.[4] What Staša Zajović,[5] Lepa Mlađenović[6] and [Dragomir Olujić] Oluja wanted was to make a broader platform that would be acceptable to the people who had already adopted an anti-communist hysteria and that is why they sought to utilise one specific language in order to use it towards the outside, while they stayed true to their cause and all that presented one unique practice of usage of body presence against the war and against fascisation.

Marija Perković is a Marxist, feminist and activist of the Žene u crnom (Women in Black) from Belgrade, Serbia. The Women in Black is a women's feminist – antimilitarist peace organization founded in Belgrade in October 1991. It was active in nonviolent resistance to militarism, war, sexism, and nationalism visible (zeneucrnom.org).

4 Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY) had existed between 1992 and 2003 and consisted of Serbia and Montenegro.
5 Staša Zajović (born 1953) is one of the co-founders and coordinator of Women in Black (Wikipedia).
6 Lepa Mlađenović (born 1954) is a pioneer of second-wave feminism in Serbia. She is a lesbian and anti-war activist (Wikipedia).

SELMA HADŽIHALILOVIĆ

26 June 2018,
Association for Culture and Art – Crvena,
Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Selma Hadžihalilović: For the others to understand the concept in which we are living, you have to understand the perspective and said concept in really the simplest words one can use. If you do not define yourself as a member of one of the constitutional nations in Bosnia and Herzegovina, you will not get a job. And, no job means any food on the table. It is fun to be anarchist when you are young when you don't have responsibilities toward your parents, toward your siblings, toward your children, but when you get to the moment when you have to be responsible; you are forced to choose to be one of those three [nationalities] in order to provide food. When I hear stories about how much a position of a sous chef at the state institutions costs, how much people were ready to pay to get such a position in order to work at a position that is funded by the state, it breaks my heart. It is a not a question whether are you capable or are you the best choice for that position, because you will advance, maybe bring some fresh ideas, new ideas, maybe you will open a new world of opportunities. No, you have to define yourself as [one of the above] mentioned so that heads of nations can blame the others that they are being discriminated and/or that their national rights were infringed. Wherever you go, you will hear stories of people saying "I have to, unfortunately..." – always adding this "unfortunately"

– identify myself as this or that, join a certain political party in order to get a job. The second solution is to leave the country. So, what will be your choice?

[HOW DARE YOU QUESTION MY IDENTITIES?]

I am asking people, how you dare question my identities because I have the right to be, to choose, whatever identity I want. And then they would be giving me explanations: the Quran says this; Muslim community says that, and so on and so on. Literally, their responses forced me to apply for a program at Islamic Studies in order to learn more about the reality of the rule and laws within Islamic communities. I can only say that I had a fantastic experience with my professors at the Faculty of Islamic Sciences in Sarajevo. They were so open and willing to explain to a feminist that what she is doing is nothing wrong, it is right. And that it is absolutely OK that I can embrace my Muslim identity and be as feminist as I want. I have to tell you I had some friends who are practicing Muslims, who are even more feminist than I am and more radical in certain issues, in issues of inheritance, in issues of social rights. Basically, questions full of prejudices only expanded my field of work or my outreach and the social network of friends that I gained. When [a question of] political feminism is raised in this context, it is also very much related to a lot of prejudices and stereotypes toward Muslim women.

Also, feminists from the West very often question "How can you be a Muslim and declare yourself as a feminist, when as a Muslim woman you have to be this and that?" And then we ask did you, or do you give yourself a right to choose what is best for me? And then they are no, no. But, this is exactly what you are saying, what you are trying to do. You have to discover, together with me, my different identities and learn through that process together with me. This is because if there is one truth about all that I have said, it is that both of us, both the side that was posing a question and me, as a side that was providing responses, have been brought up in the world where stereotypes and prejudices have been imposed as social norms, without opportunities to explore others and different identities. I think that this lack of opportunity to talk with others that are different brought us actually to a position where we are now.

Šefik Tatlić: Is there a feminist movement in Bosnia and Herzegovina?

Hadžihalilović: I do not think so. But, I think that there are several feminist women, very strong, socially and politically active who are as strong as a group that would be called a movement.

Marina Gržinić: What is a relation of these groups with, for example, LGBT communities, or what is called queer communities? Are there any relations between them, are they working together?

Hadžihalilović: I think that the feminist movement, feminist groups, feminist individuals actually provided a safe space for the LGBT community to gather and work on their own identities.

[THE LGBT COMMUNITY]

But, not only for the LGBT community. I would say we leap toward any socially marginalized community. Because, identifying yourself as a feminist, you do not do things, let's say, on the street saying I am a feminist and now all the problems are solved. No. Your power comes from the results that you have been achieving by devoting your life to a certain social cause and people respect you. People know that when you say I am providing a safe space, I am providing you an opportunity to speak up and I will be behind you, it really means what it states, they know that they will always have us behind them and provide support. So, feminist individuals and groups have been providing safe space for LGBT community, for trans* community, for Roma community, for people with disabilities, for survivors of sexual violence, so, yes, we have dedicated our lives to social justice and as such, we are providing safe spaces for all those small, marginalized social communities.

Gržinić: How to look in a feminist way, or by looking "feministically," on history and the contemporary moment in Bosnia? I am asking this because you talked about rape, rape that was used as a vicious mechanism for the purpose of war? So, how we could rethink this now?

Hadžihalilović: Definitely. It is very hard, very, very hard. This January [2018] I had an opportunity to work, speak, and spend some quality

time with one woman who was raped. She was held for three years in a concentration camp. She gave birth to a child as a consequence of rape and she was of my age.

[GENOCIDAL RAPE DURING THE BOSNIAN WAR]

She was young. We were young when the war started, we are peers, and we talked. It broke my heart, she is now happily married and has a beautiful family, but we spent half an hour in a car sitting and she just burst into, not tears, but into a waterfall of words. It was Christmas and she was returning home and the electricity was cut off because they did not manage to pay the bills and she has a son of the same age as my daughter – I am going to start crying now out of revolt, so I really apologize – and her son asked her, "Mom, why you never buy me oranges?" They have apples because they grow them and they manage to keep some apples for the winter, but they do not have enough money to buy those damn oranges that this eight-year-old child wanted to have. It hurt me so much. The fact, to know that someone who has been in a concentration camp, who went through such a terror, cannot afford today, in 2018, damn oranges for her child. So, it does put you in a perspective to ask, what is your responsibility? It is my responsibility that she does not have money to pay for the oranges. Why was I not above the others, thinking in different terms? Why did we not make sure that women survivors have jobs? Because that is also what she told me. Selma, I do not want any more workshops for women survivors, I want to live. And I have to respect that. And I have to find ways how to ensure that she lives, together with her family. I, who have access to others, have gotten to know this kind of very shocking perspective. What about the others who neglect the mere existence of this category? They do not give a damn.

Selma Hadžihalilović is a feminist activist with over 20 years of experience working on improving the quality of life of women and girls in BiH. She co-founded a large number of women's organizations in BiH as well as Women's Network BiH, and various international networks such as Women Waging Peace.

MARIO HIBERT

26 June 2018,
Association for Culture and Art – Crvena, Sarajevo,
Bosnia and Herzegovina
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Marina Gržinić: I would like us to explore the direction of the digital, this redefinition of the digital, in relation to the reality of social and political theory in Bosnia and Herzegovina. So, my question would be, how do you see these relations, technology, formalism, open access and so on, and then the horrible reality of misery and the impossible situation of the communities that are stuck here?

Šefik Tatlić: Ethnic divisions...

Mario Hibert: I believe that technology is the substitute for what is missing. I would like to mention what McKenzie Wark[1] says about our reality, that we actually have passed the three stages – from concentrated spectacle to distributed spectacle and now we are in living in the disintegrated spectacle. I believe that people are quite accepting of that disintegration and the reason why I think this is the following. I had a chance last year to speak to high school students, and I warned the organizers that I was going to talk about the internet from a dystopian perspective. What I felt after twenty minutes was that, of course, in the

1 McKenzie Wark is an Australian-born writer and scholar, known for their writings on media theory, critical theory, new media, and the Situationist International (Wikipedia).

first few minutes nobody was listening, they were using their phones, but when they heard somehow that I was speaking about the internet, their attention was suddenly there. But, as I was really persistent in trying to de-mask, let us say, what is actually going on, that is, what I believe is going on, they somehow [became hostile], I felt their hostility. Somehow I was criticizing something "precious" to them and that was a really an interesting moment to me – I saw that they were not ready to hear what I had to say about the internet. When you speak about the past, about history, about ethnic nationalism, I feel, even with my students, that new generations are quite indifferent to these topics. But, when you speak about new media, about their realities, their attention is there and if you want to re-politicize the discourse I think we should start with digital [condition].

Tatlić: What do you think how the concept of the commons, as an organizational and theoretical practice, can be used to tackle these national, ethnic divisions in Bosnian context?

Hibert: It would be nice to use public institutions as institutions of not just common knowledge, but in terms of the concept of commons through which we could really re-actualize the position of users as members. Not just users, but members of institutions because I believe that those should be the main beneficiaries of those institutions. They have to feel not just engaged, but as a part of the process, part of the management, part of those who are deciding on budgeting and programs... It is all about the openness and participation, how to reopen the institutions to become places and/or become perceived as the commons. The commons is not just about people, it is also a tool of building communities. So, what I think is the most problematic and the hardest task is [the creation of] the community. If we are ready to have this kind of an experiment, then we should be ready to hear what kind of communities we would end up if we let people down.

Tatlić: What is the connection between the non-existence of community and the a-historicism or de-historicization?

Hibert: I could be wrong, but I see it as a problem of education. When I had to teach library science I realized we were taught to think what and how, but never why. I said to myself that now I am going to use

this opportunity as an authority in the classroom to bring the *why* as the main focus of my philosophy teaching. That is how you realize that a-historicism about anything in present. Then I got even more interested in a-historicism in professional fields, in the institutional sector, in general perception of technology and machines. That is why I think that the problem is how you contextualize and correlate the history with the present situation and I found it really crucial. I am thankful now for the opportunity to speak about data, information and metadata, because it gives me an opportunity to practice academic responsibility at my work. I believe it is extremely unknown how librarianship classes could be politically engaging in terms of information ethics, information politics, and knowledge society. For example, when you speak about copyright, no one mentions copyleft. In order to teach students about the copyleft, you have to teach them about the copyright, so you got to cover both sides, which is fair enough, which is professor's role, to bring both perspectives to the class, without preferring or favouring your subjective stances, but to broaden the research topic and the floor with the narratives, which are not usually present in the curriculum.

Gržinić: There is this moment between the technology and the digitalization because talking with scholars from Sarajevo, they told me that there is a paradox, it is a kind of a clash between a certain perception and a certain reality, certain impossibility of the community, the disintegration of the whole space and on the other hand, the sites of technology, the digitalization as a means of control. How do you see this relation? Is this something we should think about in a futuristic way, about technology, about digitalization, about the possibilities [conveyed through such a paradigm]?

Hibert: I think that digitalization projects most of the time are a trendy way of practicing humanities. I do not see how you reconnect digitalization projects with the community if you are not working with the community and those who are going to use that data for research. I see digitalization as something that aims to function for itself and we do not usually ask who is going to run and own databases. Would repositories be open to society as a whole? Would it be part of some public institution or would it be protected as a top-secret content? With whose money such a project would be funded and organized? I am not familiar with those processes, but I think that public institutions like museums,

archives, and libraries should be perceived as still relevant formations which are serving public needs.

Tatlić: So, you are basically saying that the process or the processes of digitalization in the context you mentioned are completely separate from the needs of the community?

Hibert: I am not sure who is deciding what is going to be, what the subject of a particular project is, but if I heard correctly, even The Hague Tribunal archive is closed and is not actually possible to get access to any recordings... It seems that it is about the authorities and the decisions, which were not made for the democratic, public sphere.

Tatlić: You mean in terms of access?

Hibert: That is what I mentioned. We somehow substituted the internet for the library and if we are not ready to cherish or recognize the value of the heritage institutions, then somebody else is going to write our history and we will learn our history from the databases that would be owned by corporations and we will not be able to ask some important questions about ourselves.

Gržinić: I asked Serge Brammertz, who served as the chief prosecutor for the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia, from 2008 until its closure in 2017, for an interview, as he is a public persona, but he did not agree to give me an interview. Afterwards, I wrote to him and argued how it is possible that he, occupying such position, who is getting the money from the EU, does not consider himself as someone who could be willing to say anything about what was done? Therefore Mario you are right, not only that many of these issues are more and more in private hands, even those that hold important legal and institutional positions are not ready to answer the questions of public concern, although being public servants. So, in this way, your answers are important as you emphasize the problems of public institutions, control, the public sphere with which the issues of commons and the future are connected in terms of openness and possibilities.

Hibert: It is also the question of existing or non-existing state because, in order to have public institutions or at least heritage institutions in

Bosnia and Herzegovina it is almost impossible because the national library is actually disappearing, the same happens with the museums, it is obvious that there is no consensus whose institutions are these... We do not have and we will actually never be able to reach the end of the war, which actually never stopped. I heard a story from my close friend, former Bosnian diplomat and ambassador, who said that, when Dayton Peace Agreement was signed, not even Richard Holbrook[2] and the American authorities believed that Dayton was going to be successful and when they realized that we started to organize our post-war reality under that concept, it told me that it was actually a perfect example of neoliberalism – maximum of the market and the minimum of the state. Of course, we do not even have a proper market, but we also have a minimum of the state, which is actually Bosnia and Herzegovina in which you can see all discontents of neoliberalism that are not fostering creation or recreation of any [kind of] society.

Dr. Mario Hibert is an associate professor at the Department of Comparative Literature and Library Sciences, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Sarajevo. He has written numerous articles in Bosnian and English on different aspects of the information society, digital culture, media literacy, library and information ethics.

2 Richard Charles Albert Holbrooke (1941–2010) was an American diplomat, magazine editor, author, professor, Peace Corps official, and investment banker (Wikipedia).

ADELA JUŠIĆ

26 June 2018,
Association for Culture and Art – Crvena,
Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Adela Jušić: When I was growing up, I used to go to certain parts of Republika Srpska ["Serb Republic"] to understand that on this level, in smaller villages, smaller towns there was basically no option but to go to your own tribe, let us say. So, the situation is much more complicated, and neither I am religious, nor do I think of myself as a part of a certain ethnicity, but it is much more complicated to talk about this from this position of a Sarajevo war child, you know. To understand also that there were similar positions on all levels and divisions. Of course, the quantity of all crimes and genocide done by the Serbs against the Bosniaks is clear, obviously clear. We have the numbers and we understand this, but to accept this, on the ethnical level on all sides is, of course, a problematic part because the acceptance of this fact that there were those who were aggressors on the one side and that there were more victims on one side than on the other is actually being abused the whole time by those still in power as an argument to destroy the leftovers of the economy after the war. So, even their agenda is not reconciliation and it is not recognition of crimes for the purposes of reconciliation, but their agenda is just to divide further and stay in power. And, therefore, it is a very touchy subject, as well as it is very hard to find good ways to speak about the war and reconciliation but at the same time

not to demonize the others or not to victimize more than we have to in order to admit or in order to make some type of consensus on what actually happened here. And, then attempt explaining everything what has happened on economic level. These actually entail several parallel processes, and the problematic thing is that nobody cares enough and there is not much sensitivity in this regard. I am not talking only about politicians, but also theoreticians, you know, whoever, people in the education system. It is still and simply just a struggle to keep sides for wrong purposes and wrong reasons.

Marina Gržinić: So, which elements you think are necessary to change? What is it necessary to change now from your point of view, looking at it historically?

Jušić: There was a great example recently when the war veterans from Bosnia were protesting, I do not remember quite clearly what about so I'll maybe make some mistake, but the war veterans from the Federation[1] were protesting here in Sarajevo and the war veterans from the Serb Republic sent a letter of support these said veterans. So, we had come to a situation that those who used to kill themselves are actually now less divided than they used to be because they all are poor. And there was this great slogan at the protests in Sarajevo when they were burning, when we were burning buildings and everything, which said "We are hungry in three languages." The people are, as you can see on the streets, more and more unhappy and there are also PTSD [posttraumatic stress disorder] issues. There was some study about this 25 years after the war, i.e. now, and we [could say] that we are all crazy and we are all poorer, as well as we are all less happy; we all see less perspective in the near future; that anything will become better soon. The best option for the reconciliation of all people is actually to understand that they are all in the same economic position, that they are all miserable the same and that this misery can only end if we fight again, not against each other, but against higher evil.

1 The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is an entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a state.

[PERSPECTIVES]

I do not really think that people have any ideas on how to fight against what is coming and what has been coming since the 1990s. Of course that after the system we have been living in, they have no ideas on how to fight this system that is represented as our only political destiny. This is really problematic because every time we think about Bosnia, the arrival of the European Union [is usually seen] as the option, is basically not an option for us because what is the other option? Why do they call it an option? This is the only political destiny that is imposed on us as our goal and as something we have to fight for. But, basically, there are no other options at the moment and there is no vision, of course, among the people – who are, again, lacking the education in finding alternatives or awareness as to what is the global politics today. We have been just taught to see our past as something completely wrong; to see the system we have been living in as a total failure. At the same time, nobody teaches us to understand what is the system that has been promised to us. Why does it fail and what are its bad sides? [We only hear] about what are its good and great sides. People do not even think. They do not even think that there is an option. I am not even sure that there is a real political option and we will ever be able to create some kind of idea of how to really react to what is going on to the people in the region.

[THE POSSIBILITIES OF ART]

Every part of my work at every exhibition gets a different colour, you know. With every different text, with every curator it can; it is, as soon as you give it away and if you put it next to another work, not some specific work, you just put one work next to another then it can produce meaning, which you do not want to produce. So, it is also very tricky to deal with such subjects like war or collective memory, victims or anything like that, or recent happenings in history. This is so because it can be abused again as all personal experiences of memory of people are being abused on an everyday basis from the politicians and the curators or theoreticians of art or historians, they all can [abuse it]; they also have

and do the same sometimes. They can contextualize things whether it is my friend's childhood story from the basement [in besieged Sarajevo], whether it is represented or written about in a different way; it can become something completely else. So, this is where artists have a responsibility to really and every time rethink with whom they are going to cooperate with, who are the curators, what is the institution you are working for, who is financing an exhibition because you do not want your work to further serve nationalist or fascist interests.

[IDEOLOGY AND ART]

When we were in Srebrenica, in the power generator [accumulator] factory, there has been some press conference or something, which lasted for seven days for PhD students from all around Europe and there was a German girl jogging every morning at the place of genocide, so it became also normal to them to be there and accept the space. It was the first time I went to Srebrenica and saw the place of genocide and the concentration camp and there has been one building where the Dutch soldiers were doing graffiti inside. There have been graffiti of tanks with penises instead of the barrels and the countdown of days before [they were supposed to go] home, and pornographic drawings on walls and stuff like that, or motorbikes.

Adela Jušić is a Bosnian contemporary visual artist exhibiting worldwide. She is a co-founder and works on cultural projects at Crvena. She is a co-creator of the online Archive of Antifascist Struggle of Women of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Yugoslavia (afzarhiv.org).

ELMA HODŽIĆ

28 June 2018,
Association for Culture and Art – Crvena,
Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Marina Gržinić: Recently the Museum of Contemporary Art was built in Banja Luka and that is quite surprising because of, on the other hand, a big lack of money, conditions, and possibilities is observable in regards to the relation towards some other museums. So, how to think about these two phenomena? The Museum of Contemporary Art in Banja Luka and a museum [History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Sarajevo] that has such a history, which is barely functioning?

Elma Hodžić: I actually do not mind that we build museums and that we invest money in cultural life. I think that we just have to be careful. I think that the institutions that were established, that are already established, have to live first and then we can think about opening and investing in new things. Personally, I find it – there has been a huge mess, I would say, about the Venice Biennale regarding the national gallery of art and the Museum of Contemporary Art of Republika Srpska ["Serb Republic"] – and I think that we are struggling with our own challenges in a way, but I find that phenomenon very interesting that in one part of Bosnia and Herzegovina you can see that there is a huge will to be present in the cultural landscape of, not only Bosnia and Herzegovina, but the region and in the international context as well. But, on the other

side, when you do not have a budget provided to operate in general, there are so many difficulties in being visible on an international level. Although, I really feel empathy with my colleagues in Sarajevo, and I really find that phenomenon of these borderlines and cultural life that is totally different in two very close parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Šefik Tatlić: It also seems that the level of visibility depends on the level of the commodification of recent memories in that regard, in Bosnia Herzegovina and in the region?

Hodžić: I would like my museum to become visible on an international level as a place of dialogue, a place of communication, a place that is helping our society to heal in a way, as a place of constantly rethinking history, but not in a negative way where we might use history to manipulate and say, for example, that socialism was not good because of these and these or that Ottomans were not good because of these and these reasons. I think that all these boxes have to be open in a way, and I think that this is the thing that we are doing with the socialist heritage at the moment. There is one very specific exhibition called *Open Depot* and it is the story about the following: During the siege [of Sarajevo] all the objects from the permanent exhibition were presented in the major gallery in the History Museum, then the Museum of the Revolution were put in the basements of the museum. When the permanent exhibition about the siege was established, it was placed upstairs. It is very interesting to observe, in an architectural sense, how one exhibition or one war was actually transferred and how another war [became primary]. It is constantly like that. So, we actually decided... Each year the Museum is trying, in a way, to promote one of the collections and we have to revise everything, we have to see what is in the basements, of course, and we were actually very challenged when we examined the collection of objects [found there]. There were many batons of youth,[1] objects that belonged to national heroes, like, very small, very personal objects that were delivered to the museum and that became parts of this process of building collective identity, portraits of national heroes, and we had to ask ourselves what to do with these stories. And, all those stories were in the basement. So, we decided to – ok we could have left them

1 The Relay of Youth (Štafeta mladosti) was a symbolic relay race held every year in Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The young people of Yugoslavia carried a baton throughout the country to be handed over to Josip Broz Tito on his birthday, the 25th of May (Wikipedia).

there, but – we wanted to, it had to become visible. We decided that this museum environment, the depot, something that is hidden, could also be very interesting for visitors because people like to go somewhere they usually don't have a chance to go, so the idea was to bring them to the underworld of the museum and to show them the objects that were, in a way, hidden there.

[COLLECTIVE IDENTITY]

For instance, I belong to this war generation. I was a child when the siege started and I do not have any memories from Yugoslavia. My brother was born during the last war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and he does not have any memory, so he is just a post-war child that has a totally different system of values, of interpreting things, but I am still, in a way, connected, personally connected, with the story about the war. And it is very interesting to see our interests, and I am constantly using the two of us as an example of my curatorial practice because I am comparing what is interesting to the new generation that was born, that belongs to this new era, in a way. I am trying to find some connections for my brother and his generation in history within the history of socialism, for instance, which is totally, in a way, neglected or abandoned.

[THE NEW HEROES]

The most important question that I usually ask my brother and his generation is who are the new heroes? So, 15 years from this moment, who are going to be the heroes we are going to celebrate or research? At the moment, I do not see them, yet, like, I am not working on these kinds of stories. I do not collect stories of politicians that are alive now, or of someone that we think could be kept or preserved for the future. I think citizens are actually heroes and we are working with them.

Gržinić: If we look and make a parallel with contemporary museums that are also working with history in the Occident or in other parts of Western Europe and so on, the topics they tackle are usually about identity and sexuality and if this were the case, what would be those specific topics important for pushing this visibility you spoke about for the museums in Bosnia?

Hodžić: I work in a museum that has to deal with history and the past. Since it is very difficult for us to work in these terms, I have to be very honest, we are using a lot the language of arts and common elements, I would say, common values and common problems that we have. We are trying to exhibit all these questions, not answers, but rather questions relevant for our society today. We have recently opened an exhibition about migrations and refugees and I think that is something that is very connected with and familiar to all the Bosnians, but it is also a strong topic in the international context. I think that these kind of things are telling that we are not so much focused on the war right now, we have, in a way, "chewed" the story about the war in the last 20 years.

Gržinić: But also the questions of refugees are, as we could have learned from other interviews we have conducted, something very internal to the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina because many displaced persons are still, in a sense, refugees, so these topics tackle this issue?

[HISTORY TEACHING]

Hodžić: Yes, we always have to... It is also very interesting, I think, how we have to work with locals, with local art, with history teachers from Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is always easier for us to to organize a seminar in France, so we can learn in France together if we are working with professors from the Serb Republic and the Federation [of Bosnia and Herzegovina[2]]. So, let us move. If we are planning to work with students and high school pupils, let us move, let us go to Germany when we can first learn stories from World War II in Germany, and when we come home we can focus on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Elma Hodžić is an art historian from Sarajevo and works as a curator at the History Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Hodžić researches the connections between museums and collective identity. She is active in the field of museum pedagogy and education, but also in projects connected with heritage and activism.

2 The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is an entity in Bosnia and Herzegovina as a state.

HIKMET KARČIĆ

28 June 2018,
Association for Culture and Art – Crvena,
Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Hikmet Karčić: Again, I think the core lies in the Islamophobic racism that is part of Serbian nationalism. I believe this is the main reason. Recently we had a migrant crisis in the Balkans, there were many lovely stories about Syrian immigrants having Ramadan in Belgrade, being offered food by local Serbs and so on, and this is a very positive story. But the first thing that came to mind was, what happened to Bosnian refugees in Belgrade? There were deported right back to Bosnia. I mean, there was not one case. We have dozens of cases of ordinary people in Belgrade and Novi Sad calling, saying there are Bosnian refugees living right next door, these people would be arrested... Just like what happened in Montenegro, the famous case of the execution of 100 deported Bosniaks. How is this possible? How is it possible that you treat one refugee in one way, and another refugee in another way? I think that the Slavic moment there is very important. I think that not all people, but a majority of people – it's not hard to find people who think this way – they honestly, still, deep down believe that we Bosniak Muslims are traitors of some kind, and that we are this or that, and for this reason we need to be punished on this earth... I mean, it's really hard to find the meaning of this, but I think this would be one... Because there's no way to explain how you treat Syrian refugees in one way and deport

Bosnian Muslim refugees in another. I mean, why didn't this happen in Croatia? Why were Bosniak refugees made so welcome in Rijeka and Split? By Croats, Catholics... The only Bosnian refugees in Serbia were in the Sandžak area.[1] And even they had to run very quickly to Macedonia or somewhere else. Even as a refugee in Macedonia, you were not treated very well. At one point, the Macedonian government actually shut down the entire border and didn't allow Muslim refugees from Višegrad to be deported to Macedonia. How can you explain this other than as racism? Because these are people who six months earlier were living in the same country, Bosnia was part of Yugoslavia and now, after six months, Muslim refugees are deported from Višegrad to Serbia to Macedonia and the Macedonian government shuts down the border – doesn't allow Muslim refugees in.

Marina Gržinić: One of the focuses of your research is history and memory... What is the outcome of your research in terms of thinking about memory and history today?

Karčić: Firstly, memory is not encouraged. The first thing that the OSCE[2] did in 1997, 1998 was to erase any mention of genocide in the textbooks. They basically took big, black markers and erased text wherever genocide was mentioned, Srebrenica, šehids, wherever it related to war, because the idea of the OSCE at the time was that it's better not to learn history at all than to learn the "wrong" history. What was the result? We got children who learned history from their parents and the internet, which makes matters worse. Because we didn't have an official story. When I went to high school, my history textbook ended in 1991. The last topic there was that the first democratic elections were conducted in 1990 and in 1991 Yugoslavia fell apart, and that was it. And they didn't learn anything, officially, in high school.

Secondly, when we talk about Eastern Bosnia, the only place where we can have memory is Srebrenica and the small part of the Potočari[3] state lines. If you go elsewhere, memory is erased. Remember the memorial erected in Višegrad in 2012, where the word *genocide* was erased. I

1 Sandžak in Serbia and Montenegro is the unofficial geo-political region named after the former Ottoman Sanjak of Novi Pazar (Wikipedia).
2 Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe.
3 The Srebrenica-Potočari Genocide Memorial Center is located in Potočari, a small settlement near Srebrenica, BiH (srebrenicamemorial.org).

think this was the first case in the world where local authorities sent in 100 fully armed members of the special unit to erase the word *genocide* from the memorial. They basically came with a grinder and erased the word *genocide*. How is it possible that the G-word can evoke such emotions in perpetrators? They were not offended by anything else; they were offended by this one word. Basically, later on, the municipal authorities told the people [to] put whatever they wanted, just not the word *genocide*, because, you know, we won't allow that. So, that's one thing.

If we go back to the camps, the camps were, as I said, mostly in schools used as camps. The first thing I thought about was how long this lasted. They usually told me around August, July or August, and I asked, for example, where did the kids go to school in September, school started again in September? They said, well, they went to the same place. Imagine this, school ends in May, on the 15th of May, and they finished earlier in 1992, everywhere, from Prijedor to Višegrad – this is what I am saying, there was a pattern. They stopped school earlier than usual, gave schoolbooks to everybody, they set up a camp, executed people, raped people, tortured people, humiliated people. Then in August they cleaned up the place and reopened it. Imagine your kid going to school tomorrow when you know that people... How else would you justify this in your mind? We are talking about small communities, this is not New York, these are communities of 10,000 people. If you want to find out what your neighbour had for breakfast, you can. These are small, condensed communities. How is it possible [to have] such a case where you would allow your children to go to school? Nobody normal would do this. How would you allow your children to go to school in a place where you know something bad happened? That's why I go back to triumphalism. This is not a denial; this is triumphalism. You are celebrating it. You are not only denying, you are [also] celebrating and you are blaming the victim later by saying, "If we hadn't killed them, they would have killed us," the preventive genocide story, blah-blah. But, when it comes to memory today, the only memory, I think, left in the country is the social media memory, Sarajevo, this part of the Federation [The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, an entity within BiH as a state] and Srebrenica. Prijedor is also trying a bit to do something about it, but you can see the effects of elitocide in Prijedor, mostly. Because in Prijedor you had 3500 people killed, but they killed the most educated, the *crème de la crème*, the best people, let's say – not the best, the most

educated people in Prijedor. And you can see that all the things that are happening up there, the failures of social activities and everything else, are the direct result of this elitocide. Memory to this day is, how do I explain this to you, people, victims are under pressure from society, from the media, from foreign organizations, and so on, from non-governmental societies to come and say, we forgive them. Because if you say, if anybody comes up and say: "I don't forgive," it's somebody's right to say I don't forgive, not everybody is the same – they consider him a radical. I mean, something completely normal, human behaviour... Why would you need to forgive somebody who raped you? Why would you? If he didn't say he is sorry and if he didn't apologize, if he's not telling you where the mass graves are... Why the hell would you? I mean, but why, these victims are traumatized, people who survived mass traumatization, who still today are under pressure to say publicly: "Yes I forgive them, I am ready to forgive," and so on. But, if you talk to them privately, they say: "No way, I would never forgive them."

Hikmet Karčić PhD is a researcher at the Institute for Islamic Tradition of Bosniaks, Sarajevo. In the past, he worked at the Missing Persons Institute of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Centre for Advanced Studies, and was the project coordinator for "Mapping of detention camps in Bosnia and Herzegovina 1992–1995" at Association TPOS, BiH.

NEVENKA TROMP

28 June 2018,
Association for Culture and Art – Crvena,
Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Nevenka Tromp: A perpetrator is at the centre of international criminal justice and one of the resentments people have towards these tribunals, very often subconsciously, is that [they] highlight, put them in such a central position that all other actors, especially victims, are completely undermined and forgotten. What is for me interesting is that in this material, from indictment to judgment, there is so much for everything and everyone and all the researchers now interested in related subjects have found fascinating primary sources there.

[PERPETRATORS]

Marina Gržinić: We focus on the questions of perpetrators, so this line Milošević, Karadžić, Mladić,[1] how do you see this line and the work that The Hague Tribunal[2] did in this regard? What is your evaluation? What

1 Ratko Mladić (born 1942) is a Bosnian Serb former military commander who led the Army of Republika Srpska (VRS) during the Balkan Wars. In 2017 the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia found him guilty of war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide (Wikipedia)

2 The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) was a United Nations court of law, located in The Hague, the Netherlands. It dealt with war crimes committed during Balkan Wars in the 1990s. Its mandate lasted from 1993–2017 (icty.org).

do we get in the end in regard to these processes, the way they finished and what they left for us here in ex-Yugoslavia?

Tromp: Slobodan Milošević as president of Serbia, later the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia,[3] was the highest level politician ever to be indicted by the Tribunal, but his powers as indictee could not be pinned just because of his *de jure* position. For Milošević's leadership, it was immensely important to see what is the dynamics and combination between his *de jure* power, meaning the first as president of the Republic of Serbia and then as president of Yugoslavia, and how they are combined with his *de facto* powers. And his *de facto* powers were enormous. So, he is unique in his category. And Karadžić's *de jure* powers [were due to] him being president of a quasi-state. So, basically, his powers as president are also, in a way, just *de facto* power; assumed power to which people reacted because the state has military as well. And then Mladić comes. Ratko Mladić is a general, he does not make any decisions on his own. A general is a civil servant. It is not an elected position, these [previous] two are elected positions. So, he does what every general in every army should do when given orders by political commanders. So, in a way, the law would evaluate the difference [among] those positions. Not just the law, but the electorate as well.

The interesting part of being a politician in such a trial of times is that, ok, you have democracy in this country so we can now dispute what sort of democracy it was and how [it functioned], but he had a mandate by people and only people could take away his mandate. So, in a way, Karadžić and Milošević were the same category, and Mladić was a different category. In a court of law, it was much more difficult to deal with the evidence to prove the combination of *de facto* and *de jure* responsibilities of Milošević and Karadžić, than of Mladić. Because in Mladić's case you could just simply follow their *de jure* positions. You go to constitutions, the law on defence, and you go to the relationship between the military and civilian commander. So, that was interesting in terms of positions. The third thing, apart from their *de facto* and *de jure* positions that were of interest for the law, is their personalities [which are] as different from each other as you can think of. If you deal with

3 Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1992–2003) was a country in Southeast Europe, created from the two remaining republics (Serbia and Montenegro) of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia after its breakup in 1992 (Wikipedia).

mass atrocities in a court of law, one of the essential aspects in proving the guilt or responsibility is criminal intent or *mens rea*. In Milošević's case, *mens rea* was complicated to prove because he did not like public speaking so much. He had states of depressions while which he would disappear from public life. It was very difficult to identify the crime scene for *actus reus*,[4] for actual crimes that happened and actually connect them *to him,* to his words, his deeds. He was to a great extent introvert human being who depended on very close, almost private circle of people whom he would let in and then if they hurt him he would completely cut them off. And then you have someone like Karadžić. He loved himself, he was so extrovert, he actually talked more than he did. His *mens rea* is immense, so we had to find a connection with *actus reus*, with crimes, how much he talked and used anti-Muslim rhetoric and so forth. So, he is a completely different personality. And then Mladić, who is a category for himself, being a professional soldier, having some personal histories that determined him.

And yet, there are so many red threads, similarities, or complementarity between their actions. One is, for example, genocide. We started this discussion with genocide and if you look into indictments for genocide, all three were there. And all three were individuals, but they all bring connection together with collective, state responsibility and international responsibility. If you very carefully read the indictments, only three of them, just three of them, would give a wonderful legal case for genocide that would go beyond their personal involvement. Why? Milošević immediately brings in the responsibility of Serbia for genocide in Bosnia from 1992 to 1995 at the position where he *de facto* commanded the armed forces, not *de jure.* Difficult for prosecution, but immensely fascinating and interesting. That was the best part of my work when we had to figure out how, what were the ways outside the constitution and laws that allowed him to use complete Serbian state institutions to execute genocide. And one central institution for that was Serbian Ministry of Internal Affairs, so-called MUP, and its both departments, public security and state security. So, he by himself is actually opening doors to the complexity of genocide. And then, his relationship to Karadžić. So, who is Karadžić? How could Karadžić be president of the state called Republika Srpska ["Serb Republic"], having

4 The essential ingredients of any crime are two: a voluntary act or omission (*actus reus*), accompanied by a certain state of mind (*mens rea*) (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

an immensely powerful army; who was paying taxes here? Where does the budget come from in a war-ridden country? Did they have industry? Did they produce milk or vegetables and sell them to the international market? No. So, where does this money come from? Completely, absolutely from Serbia.

Nevenka Tromp PhD has been a lecturer in East European Studies at the University of Amsterdam (UvA) since 1992. Between 2000 and 2012 she was a member of the Leadership Research Team (LRT) at the ICTY, and from 2000 to 2006 the principle researcher in the team prosecuting Slobodan Milošević.

DRAŽEN CRNOMAT

30 May 2019,
Banja Luka Social Centre (BASOC),
Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Dražen Crnomat: The officials connect it in the following way: if we acknowledge the genocide in Srebrenica, and Dodik[1] acknowledged it ten years ago, it will ruin Republika Srpska ["Serb Republic"]. Republika Srpska is not just genocide in Srebrenica, there was ethnic cleansing in Banja Luka, atrocities in Prijedor and elsewhere, you know. So many people died in this. I do not know really, I think that if Republika Srpska wants to survive, they have to acknowledge the Srebrenica genocide, but everything is upside down. So, if Dodik, who is now president of Bosnia and Herzegovina, now saying that there was no genocide in Srebrenica, but that it was a huge massacre and then he opens a student dormitory in Eastern Sarajevo[2] naming it after Radovan Karadžić,[3] what are we then saying? What are we saying if we find graffiti in Banja Luka, which are celebrating 8000+ killed people in Srebrenica and around Srebrenica, which is something very perverted, you know? It is general politics to eradicate [erase] massacres. So, that is Republika Srpska.

1 Milorad Dodik (born 1959) currently serves as the Serb member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the collective federal head of state. Previously he has occupied several political positions in Republika Srpska (Wikipedia).
2 Eastern Sarajevo is a suburb of Sarajevo that politically belongs to Republika Srpska entity.
3 Radovan Karadžić (born 1945) was leader of the Serb Democratic Party in Bosnia (1990–1996) and a president (1992–1995) of the autonomous Republika Srpska, a self-proclaimed Serb republic within Bosnia. He was found guilty of war crimes, including genocide, by ICTY in 2016 (Wikipedia).

In these terms. They are also now bourgeois compradors, serving the Brussels or Moscow of whatever. So, [there is] no genuine politics, we cannot even address our own interests, people here, it is a periphery, of course, European periphery or even Russian Federation periphery.

Marina Gržinić: You said that Dodik is negating Srebrenica genocide, but the present prime minister in Serbia [Ana Brnabić] also denied the genocide, which was paradoxical because, she is a lesbian [and] one would think that she has a certain political agenda, but actually she proved very clearly that these are two completely different positions?

Crnomat: There is a lack of our own judiciary system, people's judiciary system that would deal with these atrocities. So, wars in Bosnia and Herzegovina are very well documented, but we need catharsis, the people's cause should be a catharsis, like, to impose capital punishment to those who committed atrocities. To give [a sign] that they were not supposed to do such things, especially if we consider ourselves brothers and sisters. And that would be full, or better way, of dealing with the past. Just to put them to court and impose a capital punishment against those people who were charged in The Hague and local courts as well. And that would be something like, you know... If a court cannot punish – it is not only about the punishment of course – if it cannot openly punish, taking [instead] an apologetic stance towards the war, prosecuting only some people, a lot of the legacy of the war stays kept [intact] in the field, which means that local people, ordinary people who do not have the means and who lack the knowledge have to deal with these things – in the factories, on the street, in families.

Šefik Tatlić: What is the correlation between the perpetuation of these nationalist-chauvinist narratives and the reproduction of neoliberalism, neoliberal politics?

Crnomat: It is connected to the privatization and, as a general place, what war did not finish, capitalism finished. In these terms, our government will just sell everything, they will just impose austerity measures, whatever, change the social structure. They will sell all the public goods and, as it is common in the working of the institutions, they will privatize everything. So, profit is the only goal and the [dominant] maxim is everyone for himself. So, if everyone is for himself, you can just

do whatever you want with the past. There is no collective resistance, collective answers to this.

Gržinić: How could you survive and what were the processes in these decades that made you come to such a way of thinking, also if we take into consideration that you are part of a larger group of people?

Crnomat: After the war I think that organizations from the international community brought a lot of youth together, immediately after the war, and there was a cloud of new NGOs established and they collaborated beyond these ethnical or entity divisions or whatever. It was very nice, because after the war, you know, you were really happy, even exalted about peace and whatever. You do not know what peace is, but it is something better that is going to happen. And then you lived your imagination about the West, about these things, which was happening around the 2000s. But, those NGOs promoted mainly the principle of the *citoyen* [citizen], and how to build a state of law, blah, blah, blah, which was all based on the notion of *citoyen*, which lasted until 2014. Then it became obvious that this *citoyen* principle does not play a role in our societies, because it is shallow and because you cannot gain any rights, even if you are citizen, but then let us talk about the minorities and other people who are not citizens. And then, the uprising in 2014[4] showed the link between neoliberal agencies and our organizations of civil society. The organizations of civil society did not want to support the uprising, they did not even want to print various documents or manifests or whatever. And then there was a shift towards leftist politics and I think that from 2014, Bosnia and Herzegovina witnessed this. Everyone was upset about leftist politics and the uprising, some organizations even called it as such, maybe, in those terms or whatever, in their agendas. But, we have to be strict. For me, when we established this centre, besides the streets, we said that we wanted to stay loyal to the uprising in 2014, and we started to, because you cannot isolate yourself, you have to walk with the organizations of civil society; you have to walk with everyone, of course. Not everyone, but you have to... What you want to do and how you want to do it, we started pushing our surroundings, NGOs that were in our vicinity to be more concrete and

4 On 4 February 2014, a series of demonstrations and riots began in the northern town of Tuzla, Bosnia and Herzegovina. The demonstrations quickly spread to several other cities and towns expressing the dissatisfaction with the system and lack of jobs (Wikipedia).

to try to think about their interests and also the interests of the people living here. I think what is happening is that you have a fully filled [in terms of synchronized] identity between the organizations from the international community and the organizations of civil society here in Banja Luka. There is a lack of subjectivity in our organizations here. If there is not any kind of clash between your interests and the interests of your funders, I don't know how you can be political. Whatever is coming from the West, we are just adopting, as if it reflects our interests, but it is not.

Dražen Crnomat is a political worker from Bosnia and Herzegovina. His presence in public life is based on the occasional dissemination of the positions and activities at Banja Luka Social Centre (BASOC) to the media and wider audiences, as well as participating in these activities.

LEILA ŠEPER

30 May 2019,
Banja Luka Social Centre (BASOC),
Banja Luka, Bosnia and Herzegovina
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Leila Šeper: I think that without feminism, the situation even today would be totally different and much harder. So, I think that feminists play a big role, but for men, more time is needed to start a dialogue, no matter how successful or unsuccessful that might be. I also find some differences in our communication with Croatian feminists and somehow it is harder, you know. There are some really nice women that I really respect and like. I do not know, we are friends on Facebook, when I am in Croatia we see each other, same when they come here. But, somehow there is no, they are totally not open to talk about some things that happened during the 1990s, as for instance, some women from Serbia are.

Šefik Tatlić: What kind of things?

Šeper: Kind of war things. I am not sure, maybe I did not meet the right women, but most of them are pretty reserved when they talk about that. It is more like a position that Croatia was not involved in the war here. In Serbia, at least feminists are pretty aware of that.

Marina Gržinić: Yes, we had quite a lot of talks, we conducted [them] in Belgrade and it was a big, emphasized point. What do you think, what is the reason in Croatia for withdrawing or putting aside such a discussion?

Šeper: I am not really sure, but they maybe think that some other things are more important and they, kind of, have the position of victims that they want to keep. Vukovar[1] is important, Srebrenica is important, but some other areas where Croatians did crimes are, well, you know... So, I am not sure.

Gržinić: How do you think about the relation between the genocide and the point from which you speak and the implications this has on depoliticization?

Šeper: For me, it is very hard to look at those extreme points. During the war I lived partly in Ilidža,[2] which was on the front line, and from direct experience I know how it was, what it was. Somehow I am connected mostly with my experiences. So, I am not really, I do not know how to answer it. I think it is very important but I have connected dots [laughs] inside of my head differently. I think it is important and, as you said, that is where we can see what happened and how big that was. That is also proof of how vulnerable we are, but I cannot really just relate to that.

[THE FEMINIST STRUGGLE, THE LEFT STRUGGLE]

Tatlić: What do you think about the correlation between feminist struggles and leftist struggles?

Šeper: That is a good question. Actually, I thought that we are natural partners but the more I work, the more I can see that is not really the truth. I am not sure how the situation is where you live and what you are doing, but here, in most leftist organizations are only men. [Laughs.]

1 Between August and November 1991, Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) with the support of various paramilitary forces from Serbia besieged the bordering Croatian city of Vukovar. The siege, which lasted 87 days, is known as the Battle of Vukovar. Most of the city was ethnically cleansed of non-Serbs and entirely destroyed (Wikipedia).

2 A suburb of Sarajevo.

For me, it is a sign that something is really wrong. Whenever I tried to start a discussion with whomever, they said, "Oh, we hate identity politics, blah, blah." So, I am not bothered with that, I think that leftists' ideas are the right ones, but I have a problem with that operative level where you do not see that it is a problem that there are no women inside of your groups. And you don't even wonder why is that.

Gržinić: What would then be the relation between feminism and anti-capitalism? So, the relation of feminism in the analysis of labour and capital and the gender question?

Šeper: Well, first of all, I would say that we can connect the war with capitalism and the new system of values, let us call it that way.

[THE WAR, CAPITALISM, VALUES]

We must have a critique of that. So, that is the obligation of feminism and it is because we always have to look for a better society, for social justice. Unfortunately for the poor countries that are stuck in capitalism, social justice is something that does not exist. We must always, at least, ask questions and be loud about that. You know, usually, the problem is that we are closed in the groups and we must find ways to spread our voices outside. It is not that we are closed because we want to, sometimes we just don't have a space to spread our messages. But, it is also part of our agenda to go...

Gržinić: What would be the main points or forms of discrimination against those who are declared as feminists or those who actually talk about social justice in this space? How is the "civil society" or the other parts in the concrete setting of the cities actually acting?

Šeper: That is a very hard question. [Laughs.]

Gržinić: How do they dismiss you?

[ACTIVISM, PRIVILEGES, POSITION]

Šeper: I would not say they dismiss me because I am very picky. I do not want to spend time with someone I do not think is a "healthy person," let us put it that way. Sometimes I will go, I will join a discussion and try to tell something, and to listen to you, but I am not always able to do that. I am not sure what are the ways. This is so because, you know, to be in the position of someone who is criticizing society, your position is already privileged. It depends on with whom you are comparing yourself. If I as an activist, as someone who lives here, who can say "I do not believe in god" publicly or whatever, I cannot really compare my position with someone who does not have such a luxury, let us say. Or with Roma people or someone who is really, really, at a disadvantage here in this society. So, I do not know how to answer that. This is my answer.

[IMPOSSIBILITIES TO WORK, TO SURVIVE]

Gržinić: There was a lot of thinking we could hear these days and a lot of it was actually about impossibility.

Šeper: I want to say that I am a little bit pissed off even with the activists who think they deserve something that is not really part of the average package [laughs] and I do not know. I always question my privileges – although I am not privileged in terms of surviving – I still think I am really, really privileged, and I always question that. I do not have a job, OK, I do not have a job.

Tatlić: Speaking of influences and historical experiences, would you say that feminist discourses in Bosnia and Herzegovina are influenced by similar discourses from the First World, or are there any similar influences that are coming from the Third World?

Šeper: Well, I would not say that we are First World feminists, and I do not actually see... I see some attempts, especially in this political sphere of high politics, political parties, some women who probably studied abroad and now they came back with the ideas, but I would not say that the natural habitat of their ideas is in this area. I would say that "natural"

feminism from here is feminism that is talking about social justice that is talking about privileges, that is talking about everyone who does not have an equal position [in society]. So, I would say those are the differences and in relation to connections with the Third World, I would say yes. We do not really understand the problems of the Third World either because we are in a much better position, because at least, or most of us, are surviving somehow, you know.

Gržinić: So, Marxist feminism, it is present?

Šeper: I would not say that it is present, but I think that is, for our region, a good way of thinking, you know.

Leila Šeper, Banja Luka, BiH, was born in 1982 and is an economist by profession. She likes to say that she is a feminist and an activist.

VJOLLCA KRASNIQI

19 July 2018, National Gallery of Kosovo, Prishtina, Kosovo
Interview by Marina Gržinić

Vjollca Krasniqi: The power of the international community, after Kosovo got independence, has changed, but also has remained in place. This makes me think of the famous line from the movie *The Leopard* [dir. by Luchino Visconti, 1963], "For things to remain the same, everything must change." I think this could also work if we look at what Kosovo became after 2008 when it got independence. Not that much really changed because real power resides somewhere else. For example, still, today if the Parliament of Kosovo is to vote on a law, the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank would have to give the green light whether the Parliament can vote on such a law. This is just one and a very illustrative example of how [and] where the real power resides. Democracy is there, but it looks more like a simulation of democracy, rather than democracy in earnest. When we look, for example, at other spheres of economic reconstruction, not very much has happened.

[SECURITIZATION]

In terms of the development of social agenda, you have this dominance of the security paradigm. The emphasis is on the securitization, which

also comes from the power of different international bodies, which look at these issues either from the perspective of the European Union or other international bodies who are regulators, like the Troika[1] or other global regulators in the fields of the economy but also mobility of people, ideas and goods. So, many democratic processes are also put under [the rug], are often challenged by the interference of the international community.

[THE POWER OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY]

And this has happened on many occasions; it is also going on. And this is the point of either critique, which is not that forceful critique, social critique of the role of the international community because, among the majority of Kosovars, the international community is perceived as the saviours. It is the international community that saved Kosovo from repression and from the aggression by Slobodan Milošević's regime. Very often, the role of the international community is valorised through the optics of NATO intervention and just basically through the lenses of saving lives of Kosovars from the military and paramilitary forces in 1998 and 1999. So, there is also a lot of ambivalence about the role and the presence of the international community. So, there is no strong critique, maybe in the name of democracy and support for institution-building, [since] that power [that is currently dominant] is not very democratic, but very much [reminds of] the neo-colonial way of institution building in a new setting.

[NEOCOLONIAL INSTITUTION BUILDING]

For example, in the 21st century everybody would be ashamed to speak of colonial practices but it seems that colonialism pervades in terms of ideas how different communities are advised or lead in and through these processes of political decision making. Yes, things on the outside may look like they have changed. Some kind of democratic processes have been in place but at the same time and still, the images and

1 The European troika (a notion often used in the media) refers to the decision group formed by the European Commission, the European Central Bank, and the International Monetary Fund (Wikipedia).

representations of Kosovo and Kosovars are not as positive – as if it is not skilful, as if there are not many educated people here, as poor, as if there is a lot of people who would like to leave Kosovo...

Marina Gržinić: There is also a whole story about organ trafficking...

Krasniqi: Yes. When I think about it, and by analysing these images, Kosovo is portrayed as a child. At that time it was a child, now it is ten years old. Being ten years old means that there are no capabilities for it to stand on its own. So, I think that there is a continuity, it is insidious, and not as easy to detect sometimes, but it is still very much present in the political discourse and within the symbolic systems, in the representation it is still very much alive. So, not that much has changed, unfortunately.

Gržinić: How much, i.e. to what extent is this revisionism present on the other side, in Serbia?

Krasniqi: In one of my recent research projects that will be published soon, which is part of the larger research project, we looked at the media frameworks and we looked particularly at the war as it is, as well as the war of representations. We looked through the media trying to see if the frameworks have shifted. No. Unfortunately. On both sides. There is always this victim and perpetrator [discourse present]. So, for Kosovo, Kosovars are victims and the Serbs are perpetrators, but also this feeling of victimhood is still very much alive and present in Serbia. Not only related to the NATO bombing but also victimhood in relation to Kosovo becoming an independent state. So, what I would say about Serbia is that, for example, there is this idea, this longing to search for positive examples.

[PERPETRATORS AND VICTIMHOOD]

Once I was in Belgrade and I saw a big billboard of Tito[2] and it came as a surprise because here in Kosovo you will not see Tito in any of the representations. I was, like, perhaps this is a way to look beyond, to rely

2 Josip Broz Tito (1892–1980) was a Partisan revolutionary and a president of Yugoslavia. He was the chief architect of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Wikipedia).

maybe on history, on something that was more positive that could be shared as a unifying symbol. Perhaps they could not find anyone else to put on a big screen in the centre of Belgrade – there was just Tito. Of course, it can be read in many different ways but it also tells about, you know, about the anxieties about the past and how the past haunts the collective and the collective psyche. Perhaps the tropes may be different to some extent, but I think that they go far back, which can be as similar [to other parts of ex-Yugoslavia].

[THE COLLECTIVE PSYCHE]

What is less optimistic is that the things remain pretty much the same. There are no movements forward. The past is, somehow, too strong in the present and that is always selective, arbitrary and that always connects to what is going on at the political level.

[FEMINISMS]

Gržinić: One of the very important moments in your very critical and precise analysis is feminism.

Krasniqi: Yes.

Gržinić: Feminism as a political, theoretical tool.

Krasniqi: Of course, feminism is plural, it is different. I look at feminism as a theoretical framework, but also as politics. So, what feminism brings into this analysis is, firstly, taking a critical stance on the nation and nationalism. This is so because feminism and nationalism, at least in the context of Kosovo, cannot be reconciled. There are many different theories and scholars who argue that nationalism is allowed in terms of anti-colonial struggles and I think that we have witnessed that in Kosovo in the 1990s when nationalism was allowed because it was part of a larger struggle against political violence, state instituted political violence.

[NATION STATE, NATIONALISM ≠ FEMINISMS]

But, to me, I think you start from the critique of the nation because the nation is never an inclusive construct. It is always based on the formula of who counts as a member of the nation and who is left out. And, also, there are many different types of nationalism as we know, but I think feminists are really very much right to question the nation, even to abandon the nation.

Prof. Vjollca Krasniqi PhD is a professor at the Department of Social Work, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Prishtina, Kosovo. She was one of the first women from Kosovo to be active in the women's movement in the Balkans.

BESA LUCI

19 July 2018, National Gallery of Kosovo, Prishtina, Kosovo
Interview by Marina Gržinić

Marina Gržinić: On the basis of stories you have told us and on the basis of the existing documentation, what is your point of view on the relation between Kosovo and Serbia, the positions of the victim, the resistance that was put up against Milošević's regime before Kosovo gained independence?

Besa Luci: Right now I think this relation is in very problematic place and everything about it, especially in the last year or two. I have a feeling that, if we could say that there was progress being made between the two societies, now I feel that we are going back in that regard. On the one hand, you have these institutional, political talks and dialogue happening on the governmental level, taking place in Brussels, agreements being signed and whatnot, but then, on the ground, I feel that there is more and more deepening of the division and the increase in alienation between these two societies. There is a cooperation between some organizations, different NGOs and whatnot, but I feel that between ordinary citizens there is no understanding among them, i.e. there is a misunderstanding, you know, in a lot of ways.

[MIS/UNDERSTANDING]

In the first ten years, OK, it was understandable that time was needed for understanding and for justice and all of that to happen. But, when 20 years passed and you see that not much has changed in that regard, then I feel that now we are in a place where it is a problem. I do not know, I just feel, lately, there has been a problem with people going there and everything is just... There is cooperation, but I feel what is lacking in Serbian society is a more critical voice. Because here we have to be critical of our own society, as well as we have to be critical, of course, of the policies of the Serbian government, but when you talk about the society I feel that there is a lack of more vocal, critical voices in Serbia.

Gržinić: How would you estimate the present reality of Kosovo in terms of social, political, economic, but also media possibilities or non-possibilities?

Luci: In general it is – especially in the past two years, we have really seen a kind of stagnation in society. We have had the same political class for the past 20 years, you are run by – it is an oligarchy, and it is the same as in all the countries in the region. When you have the government, when the people in the government are the wealthiest group in society, then it is automatically a sign that you are not functioning well. There is widespread corruption, nepotism, complete disregard of the rule of law, etc. And I think, especially in the past few years, there has been a debate that is finally shifting towards citizen-based issues and you can see that citizens want to talk about social welfare, about social policies, economic policies, about their wellbeing, but in general, the worst thing, as in the region as well, I think we are captives of political classes that benefit from [that]; that [they] are making sure that tensions exist between societies because they benefit from that and because it is the only way that they can stay in power. Once the tensions disappear, they would have to deliver on policies.

[CITIZENSHIP]

And, they do not want to deliver on policies because they see the positions that they have as positions that allow them to gain personal

wealth. So, the only way to stay in power is for them to make sure that there are still tensions between the societies.

[CLASS DIFFERENCES, POLITICS]

We are captives of current political classes in general in the region, and at the same time, you have an international community whose approach is... Especially in Kosovo, you can often hear the rhetoric, "You have your own state, now you are responsible for your own state," but the said community also has a very strong say in what is happening. It is a kind of choosing and selecting when to be interfering and when not to be interfering, and I think it leaves the citizens in a very confusing position because sometimes you do not know where to seek accountability. So, the political class and the establishment manage to use this for their benefit, to basically spin messages that come from the European Union or the West, which are very much important in Kosovo because there is still this quest for legitimacy and for being recognized, which I think is a problem. It is so because I think we should go over this point [or phase]. But, it is still very much there.

[ACCOUNTABILITY, LEGITIMACY]

Gržinić: By following your precise critical points, is there any pressure on your platform, *Kosovo 2.0*?

Luci: No.

Gržinić: It is a digital platform and it probably has an impact on social media.

Luci: Because of the type of journalism we do – we are not doing investigative reporting, we do not deal with corruption issues and we are not analysing the organized crime – if we were going more in that direction I think that the level of pressure or potential threats would probably be higher, and I say this in comparison to the experiences of other media. The pressure we feel comes more from society in a sense, because we are trying to challenge certain cultural expectations or practices. So, I feel that we had more struggles in that regard. We have not been

threatened by governmental structures. You feel sometimes a little bit of a pressure in terms of the particular point of view that you take on an issue or whatnot, but not like a direct threat in that regard. I do think that, in general, there is freedom in Kosovo to do good journalism and good work. The problem with the media is that the majority is just not independent. There are business, political ties or business or political groups whose interests are intertwined [with the media]. I think the problem is more that we do not have more independent media, rather than not being able to... There have been, I think, threats last year towards a journalist and I think it comes also as a result of the fact that we do not have a proper rule of law. I mean we do not have a functional rule of law and people start to think they can take the law into their own hands and implement it as they see fit. So, when the state, the system's structure does not function then people turn to other means to resolve things. If you cannot trust the court system then you are just going to go and say I am going to beat this journalist because he is hurting my business or whatnot. So, I think it is coming as a result of that.

[INTERSECTIONALITY]

Gržinić: You have exposed this moment of intersectionality, which is an important way or a tool for envisioning discrimination and tracing these different lines. So, how much such an approach actually brings to the surface real stories that speak about these discriminations? I am asking this because intersectionality tackles class, race, gender discriminations and the links among them.

Luci: In a lot of ways we are, I do not want to say first because there is this tendency here to talk about being first in doing this or that, which I also find very problematic because it is connected to this issue of legitimacy, but let's go back to the question. We have been, I think, one of the most vocal voices from the beginning whether are we talking about sexual orientation, gender identity, about different minority groups, especially in regard to the Roma minority groups, for example, and also worker's rights as well.

Besa Luci is the founder and chief editor of *Kosovo 2.0* (kosovotwopointzero.com), an online platform and biannual print magazine, which

combines traditional and new media to create a self-sustaining platform for Kosovo's youth to become informed and active participants of their communities and society. Luci has an MA in journalism/magazine writing from the Graduate School of Journalism, University of Missouri, Columbia, US.

SHKËLZEN MALIQI

19 July 2018, National Gallery of Kosovo, Prishtina, Kosovo
Interview by Marina Gržinić

Shkëlzen Maliqi: The problem for both Kosovo and the region is that we are undergoing a rough transition from one system to another, meaning that both these systems interlace with the whole process of the creation of new national states and the strengthening of nationalisms. In essence, everything that was happening in the 1990s in a less explicit way, and from 2000s onward in a more explicit way, is the establishment of a neoliberal model of the transformation of public property to private property. We used to be some kind of a social state. Yugoslavia, as it was, was a social state. We had free education, more or less...

Marina Gržinić: Health system?

Maliqi: Yes, the health system was also free. In factories, the self-management system [workers' control of the means of production and the work process] was in force. All of this fell apart the moment the state ceased to exist. Nowadays, since Kosovo's resources were destroyed in the 1990s, factories do not have anything to work with. When Milošević's regime took control of Kosovo, it nationalised everything. Everything Kosovo had was registered as Serbian property and then, when he [Milošević] realised that he could not keep Kosovo, he decided

to merge the large Kosovo companies with those in Serbia and Vojvodina. After that, their industrial machinery was transferred to Serbia as if it were theirs. Also, they picked out the most valuable exhibits from the Museum of Kosovo and took them to an exhibition in Belgrade and Novi Sad in 1997 because they knew they were preparing for war, and these artworks have still not been returned, although they belong here. Supposedly they just borrowed the art, but according to international rules, it belongs to the Museum of Kosovo. There is even proof that this art was borrowed and that they promised to return it, but it was not returned because it allegedly belongs to them. This is archaeological treasure, not the monasteries.

The monasteries are a completely different question because some of those monasteries were really built by Serb rulers in the 13th and 14th centuries, but they cannot be relocated. They now claim that these monasteries have some kind of extra-territoriality, as similar solutions are known to exist. There are monasteries in Atos, in Greece, that enjoy some sort of autonomy, but they are still under the jurisdiction of the Greek government, it is not Russian or Serbian territory. This is also one of those questions that are constantly repeated. Kosovo should defend these monasteries because Kosovo almost became an UNESCO member a couple of years ago, and the state that has such monasteries in its territory [has to have jurisdiction over them]. These have never been only Serbian. It is true that some of these monasteries were upgraded and decorated by Serb rulers, but they are also Christian monasteries. At that time, Albanians lived in this area too... In the modern sense of the nation, not even the Serbs existed then; it is just a projection from the 19th century backwards. But, obviously, these are Orthodox monasteries. There is the argument – when we talk about the monasteries – that during the Turkish period these were also defended by Albanian dukes, which was the case in Peć, Dečani, etc.

Gržinić: In the context of history and memory, genocide plays an important role. Genocide in the sense of the war that was in Kosovo, that was provoked and executed by Milošević's clique and everything that followed. A question that arises here is of the suffering during that period, and I am interested in the stories that survived and which I would like you to comment on. Secondly, it is noticeable that there is a story that connects Kosovo with the trade in human

organs, various mafia jobs, prostitution... So, I am interested in your view on those two instances?

Maliqi: This is something that can easily be proven and exposed as part of something which is an attempt by Serbia to neutralise, in the manner of propaganda, the drastic military measures and other measures it employed during the 1990s, and to connect and manufacture the organ-trading story – which might have happened, or might not, because neither the Hague Tribunal nor this new special court, formed in Kosovo in cooperation with the international community, could find any key evidence in this regard. Still, this is a powerful propaganda tool for Serbia with the aim of neutralising this other story. Regarding the narcotics, I think that some kind of narcotics trade happened. Nevertheless, these are two different stories. We have this national liberation movement that was made up of various leftist groups, Marxists-Leninists who were organising actions against the police, who could at times have even been seen as terrorist, but at the beginning these actions were localised, comprising small groups. At one point these groups decided to make an army. The army was actually put together by Milošević. They themselves claim that there were hundreds of them in the beginning, but when Milošević, i.e. the Serbian regime, started to massacre people in the villages, to burn villages, to kill 50 or 100 people in expeditions – mostly women and children – the guerrillas did not wait to get caught. These guerrillas were mobile, they were mostly doing ... That is what Stanišić – as the then chief of the Serb police, or whatever he was – said to Mahmut Bakalli[1] before the war, that if any actions were taken against Serbia, then a scorched earth policy would be applied.

That is what happened in 1998, when the Serb offensive began. On Kosovo's side, there were deviations, but there were not any structured... There was not a structural body that planned to commit genocide or a mass reprisal against the Serbs. In the 1990s there were no open ethnic conflicts. It was a conflict between the Serb state machinery and the population. The Serb police used to carry out home invasions at five o'clock in the morning in order to harass, kill, arrest and so on, they did whatever they wanted. When the reaction came, which came be-

1 Mahmut Bakalli (1936–2006) was a Kosovar Albanian politician (Wikipedia).

cause the people could not tolerate such humiliations, there was also a peace movement, a non-violent movement. Rugova[2] constantly appealed against open confrontation, but politically he still insisted that Kosovo had to become independent, and not be under Serb control. He had a formula that saw Kosovo as open to both Serbia and Albania and everyone else. It was not just a demagogy, but it was our real position. Anyone can enter Kosovo today, but few can easily leave.

Shkëlzen Maliqi is a Kosovo Albanian philosopher, art critic, political analyst and intellectual. He was one of the founders of the Social Democratic Party of Kosovo and served as its first president from 1991 to 1993. Maliqi heads the Centre for Humanistic Studies "Gani Bobi" in Prishtina.

2 Ibrahim Rugova (1944–2006) was a Kosovar nationalist writer and politician who devoted his public life to peaceful attempts to gain independence for ethnic Albanians in Kosovo (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

TVRTKO JAKOVINA

27 May 2019, Multimedia Institute/MaMa, Zagreb, Croatia
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Tvrtko Jakovina: The Ustasha movement was primarily anti-Serb, it was not [primarily] anti-Jewish. That is why, on the one hand, you can hear those advocating or trying to somehow make sense of the Ustasha regime telling that there were Jews in the Ustasha army or that some of the top leaders were married to some Jews. That is all true, but there are also examples of Jews being saved by the top Nazis, in Germany, so it is always the worst to go by those examples. We always have to look at the wider picture and the wider picture says that a small Jewish community in Croatia disappeared, 81% or 82% of them, meaning that the percentage is as high as in societies that were traditionally antisemitic or had a huge Jewish presence, like in Hungary and some other parts of Eastern Europe. And that is, of course, complicating things for those who want to make Jasenovac something else. Without Jews that would be much easier. That is why they try to say this in relation to the Jews, which is not because of Ustasha not being an antisemite, but because that "responsibility" is being [ascribed to] the Germans. [As if] it was because of the Germans or "Germans forced us." That is a lie because it all started before the Wannsee Conference.[1] Many

1 Wannsee Conference was a meeting of 15 Nazi elite bureaucrats held on 20 January 1942 in the Berlin suburb of Wannsee to prepare the plan for the "final solution" (*Endlösung*) to the "Jewish question" (*Judenfrage*) (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

of them lost everything and some of them lost their lives before the "Final Solution" was even thought of or before the plan was actually forged to the last. They [the Jews] were forced to leave their apartments, and we are not talking about the big cities, we are talking about small cities as well. So, you have a concentration camp.

The picture of Jasenovac was also complicated by the previous regime, in Tito's Yugoslavia, especially under the influence of Serbian historians or those who were writing about that because, without a clear number of those who were victims there, the numbers were pumped up. That also was not anything new, we had the same or similar with World War I. So, the number that was going as high as 700,000 or 1.100,000 people, that was, of course, ridiculous because we were very small and underpopulated part of Europe anyhow. But when you had that, it was a creation of a very dubious picture. Some say the reason Tito never went to Jasenovac was partially connected with the awareness that numbers were being doctored and manipulated with. After the end of the Croatian part of the wars of Yugoslav succession, or what some people here call the Homeland War, which was the name also given by Tuđman, which never really prompted a discussion whether do we really need to stick to that name and what does it mean, is it best to call the Croatian War of Independence the same way Stalin called World War II from the Soviet perspective. But, that is another story connected with Tuđman and what he was. You had, after the war, finally, a group of scholars that reached approximately the numbers we could maybe trust much more. From everything we know up to now, the number will probably stay around 100,000 people, now it is a little bit less...

Marina Gržinić: 87,000?

Jakovina: Now it is a little bit more than that, but it probably, from what they know and how they work, of course, with better funding, we would be much closer to the final number. But it is never going to [be final], it cannot be, because it is simply, technically, and because of different things, impossible to do that, [the numbers to reach] 700,000.

So, you had that. And then, for as long as the narrative [was in place], or simply, it was more, I would say, "normal and logical." First of all, because there were no new, or there were no brave intellectuals who

were searching for "proper Croatian truth." For as long as we were, for instance, then in 1999, Dinko Šakić, who was the last commander of Jasenovac concentration camp, was put on trial and he was found guilty in Tuđman's Croatia, if you wish, before we negotiated for the membership in the European Union. Then, with Račan[2] and Sanader,[3] the atmosphere became relatively normal, but that was due to, as I said, Croat unwillingness to be reprimanded from Europe, from the outside. So, for as long as we were negotiating and trying to present the European face, that was a bit easier, the things were more normal or stable, I would say. The problems erupted, and that coincided with the changes in Europe with the new – sometimes I am going to say illogical, but I could maybe use a stronger word – way how Poland is looking at the past, especially Hungary. That came to Croatia. That coincided with the economic crisis, Croatia joining the European Union, which meant that the outside authority observing the situation in Croatia was not there anymore, plus there was a new leader [Tomislav Karamarko][4] of the strongest conservative party, actually a movement, in Croatia, Croatian Democratic Union [HDZ] who also was changing his ideas, but eventually became extreme right-winger and he opened the door to Orban-like historical revisionism. So, all that came together, and then you got what we still have in 2019 in spite of Plenković[5] being the head of the government who was regarded as more moderate. You have societies that are being financed by the state and government or ministry of the war veterans, but that is the government, reformed HDZ government. A government that was not supposed to be as Orban-like government, which was brought down six months after the unsuccessful elections of 2016. So, you have Plenković in power but there are not too many changes that are visible. Meaning that you have societies that claim that Jasenovac was not actually even a concentration camp during World War II, but that it was used by the partisans after the war, although we have publications and never, ever, anyone from abroad or from Jasenovac, or from the region or anywhere, no one ever said anything about that. So, no testimonies, no people talking, no pictures, no books, nothing was ever...

2 Ivica Račan (1944 –2007) served as a prime minister of Croatia from 2000 to 2003, heading two centre-left coalition governments (Wikipedia).
3 Ivo Sanader (born 1953) was prime minister of Croatia from 2003 to 2009 (Wikipedia).
4 Tomislav Karamarko (born 1959) served as the first deputy prime minister of Croatia from January until June 2016 (Wikipedia).
5 Andrej Plenković (born 1970) is a prime minister of Croatia since October 2016 (Wikipedia).

On the contrary, we have books of the buildings destroyed before the Ustasha left the concentration camp Jasenovac and so on. So, the story goes that the Ustasha were hardly killing anyone. If they did that was those who rebelled and most of them died because of typhus and problems in Jasenovac in general, it was wartime, and then you had a massive murder after the war by the partisans. The attempt is to totally change the narrative or truth, if you wish, to tell that the Independent State of Croatia was actually just a normal state.

Prof. Tvrtko Jakovina PhD is a professor and former head of the Department of History, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb. His numerous works discuss 20th-century history, the Cold War, socialism, American history, the foreign policy of Tito's Yugoslavia, and Croatian history in the 20th century.

KATARINA PEOVIĆ

27 May 2019, Multimedia Institute/MaMa, Zagreb, Croatia
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Katarina Peović: It is interesting to see how this transition of classical orientalist, which is actually nationalism, transcended into more European nationalism in which the most important thing politically was to see how our nationalism tried to reproduce and tried to form symbolical other in this nationalist discourse in which we were trying, so pathetically I would say, to look like right-wingers in Germany for example, or in Austria.

Marina Gržinić: What is going on with Serbia within these discourses?

Peović: Our far-right is playing, so to say, with those minorities. They need those minorities in order to establish themselves as indigenous, authentic Croatian right-wingers.

[THE CROATIAN POLITICAL SCENE]

I would say that it is also interesting that the political centre is not any more interested in direct confrontation with these practices. I think this is really dangerous because at Bleiburg only Radnička Fronta [Worker's

Front][1] and Austrian and Slovenian radical left decided to come on the same day, at the same time, at the same place, when Croatian Ustasha gathering was happening at Bleiburg. That was the moment when we had to be there, not few days before, not few days afterwards, which happened with the Slovenian left that came two days before, as well as Croatian antifascists who came two days before. We had to be there on the same day, at the same place, and we have to confront this very dangerous right-wing Ustasha gathering. At the same time, those practices unfortunately, are in a way left and totally redirected towards the radical left as if [only] we are responsible to act against this fascism and these right-winger formats. And this social-democratic centre and the liberal left are "too good" to oppose and confront these practices in life.

Šefik Tatlić: In the same context, would you then say that anti-fascism was deprived of its connection with socialism and/or anti-capitalist struggles?

Peović: Definitely. That is the most dangerous form in which anti-fascism, this civil form of anti-fascism is separated from a communist perspective. We always say that anti-fascism was communist anti-fascism. And the communists were those guys who organized anti-fascist fights in Yugoslavia at that moment [in World War II] and we are often faced with this transgression of civil anti-fascism.

[ANTI-FASCISM, CIVIL SOCIETY, ANTI-COMMUNISM]

This goes in the same gesture, in the same political transgression of "two totalitarianisms," of this very dangerous political narrative that we had; this fascism on the one side, and that we had this communism on the other, and that communism was the same as fascism and neoliberals are promoting this narrative, not right-wingers in this traditional sense; right neoliberals are producing this narrative that we have those totalitarian practices and that we must learn from history, that never again we should go back to socialist and communist ideas of equal rights, social rights for all, better society and opportunity for everyone, every individual to develop for her or himself. This narrative is very

1 Workers' Front (RF) is a Croatian left-wing political party that started as a political initiative established in May 2014 by a group of trade unionists, workers, unemployed and students in Croatia (Wikipedia).

strong in Croatia and, again, we have this historical experience that we should look back and see how neoliberalism is complotting with right-wing politics and nationalist politics every time when capital is endangered. So, it is often promoted from our political centre that we should never go back. I would say that we should go back and learn from these historical practices and examples and see how neoliberalism and economic liberal politics will always complot with the right-wingers if they have some kind of interests in this.

[SOCIALISM]

So, even today we cannot only oppose this fascism as some kind of folklore, and also we cannot promote socialism as folklore or as a remembrance practices, a culture of remembering, historical "musealism," so to say. We must remember socialism at its core as a live and vivid political and historical possibility of better society, more equal society, and democratic society. Of course, we have to learn our lesson from real, existing socialisms and see how socialisms failed in many ways; that it was a social failure in many ways and many perspectives. But, we cannot certainly equate communist ideas with fascist ideas.

[THE CULTURE OF MEMORY, MUSEALIZATION OF MEMORY]

Gržinić: The memory of socialism is actually co-opted by institutions, so we have today also a big trend, for example, to "remember" the non-aligned movement as just something like a narrative or "cultural artefact," but not to think about these elements that can actually open really a vision for the future. So, my question is what is the role of institutions and also the systems of knowledge, the way how history is now retaken by the institutions of public importance in all these processes?

Peović: The best way to murder those ideas, to be sure that they will be murdered and killed is to "musealize" those ideas, to approach them in the form of "museal" performance in the form of culture of memory.

[CLASS ANTAGONISM, REACTUALISATION]

Tatlić: What would be the way or one of the ways how class-prefixed social conflict could be re-actualized in Croatia and in the space of former Yugoslavia?

Peović: Certainly, we have to be very specific on what is left in Croatia, what is left in the region. And we have to provide bridges between our left and the left in the region because we have to oppose the European Union. Not because the European Union is some kind of a bad institution or some kind of villain, but because capitalist elites are forming this European Union in this specific way that is bringing us and pushing us to the political and economic periphery – both Croatia that is in the EU, and Slovenia that is in the EU, and Serbia that is trying to enter this European community. We have to build those bridges because only in this regional form we can have the opportunity to oppose these neoliberal practices of the deregulation of everything, privatization of everything, flexibilization of every job. So, we have to – from my point of view, democratic socialism is a form of political actualization of socialism; it is a political term that is often disregarded as an oxymoron because what is the point in saying that socialism is democratic; because, if it is socialism it is democratic. But, nevertheless, we have to reflect on real, existing socialisms and reflect on the failures of real, existing socialism; reflect on those failures of the deficit of democracy in the first place and reaffirm socialism in a way that we stress the importance of democratic protagonism [inclusion] of every individual in the society that socialism cannot be a project of political elites.

Katarina Peović PhD is an associate professor at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Department of Cultural Studies, Rijeka, Croatia. She is a member of the Croatian leftist political party Worker's Front (Radnička fronta).

IVO GOLDSTEIN

28 May 2019, Multimedia Institute/MaMa, Zagreb, Croatia
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Ivo Goldstein: The basic question, when we speak about Croatian revisionism, is, to make a long story short, who was during World War II on the wrong and who was on the right side. Of course, from my antifascist, but liberal-democratic point of view, take it as you wish because it is more or less the same position, the partisans were on the right side. And all the others, the Ustasha, Chetniks, Domobrans[1] in Slovenia, were on the wrong side. There is not much space for debating that question, there is no space. For me, it is something, which is a pretext or what is an introduction to any serious conversation about World War II.

Nevertheless, there are revisionists in Croatia who deny that and with whom you practically cannot speak. The revisionism in Croatia has three roots. It stems from the first fact that it was something during the period of socialist Yugoslavia you could not discuss. It was a taboo theme, nobody was speaking about the victims at the end of the war, after the war, from the Ustasha side. In May 1945, when Ustasha army was retreating from Zagreb and central parts of Croatia towards Austria

1 The Slovene Home Guard, known as Domobranci, was a Slovene anti-Partisan paramilitary organization under the Nazi command. It was active during the 1943–1945, the time of German occupation of the formerly Italian-occupied Province of Ljubljana (Wikipedia).

to escape the partisans and the Soviet army, Red Army and enter British controlled territory in Austria [known as Bleiburg repatriations] – in order to... they thought that the British would not surrender them to the partisans, which is what happened. There were many war criminals among their ranks, about 100,000 Ustasha were retreating from Croatia, many of them were war criminals. It is hard to say how many, but 10,000 to 20,000 were the people who were killing, who were responsible for deportations, plundering during the war. So, many people, thousands of them committed war crimes, including the crime of genocide. And there were many people who were, I would say, at least innocent, if not innocent, then they maybe did something but definitely did not deserve to be killed.

Nevertheless, at the end of the war, it was a kind of revenge, it was also [a veritable] revenge, it was also squaring accounts with the class enemy. That was some kind of, there was an element of the socialist-communist revolution and at the end, many people who were killed, many of them were war criminals, but some of them did not deserve that, as some of them were, I would say, innocent. That was the core and for 45 years nobody could [speak about it], or at least we did not have the opportunity to get the full truth. I knew something about that, not because I was studying that at the university as a student of history, but because my father told me.[2] I read certain things so I knew there were some nasty things happening at the end of the war, that the new socialist authorities, the partisans did some things, which are not appropriate.

But, this is one thing. The other thing, the other element was that those who wanted to commemorate [Bleiburg repatriations] innocent victims after the war, did not, in fact, want to commemorate those people or at least it was not the only aim they had, the only goal. They were also trying to redesign history in order to neglect or completely annihilate the criminal character of the Independent State of Croatia,[3] which was criminal in its very character. So, there is no doubt that this so-

2 Slavko Goldstein (1928–2017) was a Croatian and Yugoslav publisher, historian, politician, and writer (Wikipedia). He is a co-author (with Ivo Goldstein) of *Jasenovac i Bleiburg nisu isto* [Jasenovac and Bleiburg are not the same] (Zagreb: Novi Liber, 2011).

3 The Independent State of Croatia (NDH) was established in parts of occupied Yugoslavia on 10 April 1941, following the invasion by the Axis powers. It was a "puppet state" of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, and lasted until 8 May 1945 when Nazi Germany surrendered. The NDH was ruled as a one-party state by the fascist Ustasha during its entire existence. The Ustasha was led by Ante Pavelić (the Poglavnik). The regime targeted Serbs, Jews and Roma as part of a large-scale genocidal campaign, as well as anti-fascist or dissident Croats and Bosnian Muslims (Wikipedia).

called Independent State of Croatia, Ustasha state committed genocide against the Serbs, Roma and the Jews and mass crimes against their own civilian population. When I say their own I think of Croats, not only Catholics but as Ustasha were saying, that the Muslims, Bosnian Muslims, today Bosniaks, are also Croats of the Islamic faith, they also, some of them, joined the Ustasha ranks during the war and were also the victims at the end of the war and some of them were, of course, also responsible for the war crimes during the war. So, they did not want to, let's say, they did not have any kind of empathy towards the victims of their own regime. They were trying to revive the sentiments towards the Ustasha state by saying that, "well, OK, somebody committed certain crimes, maybe those crimes were relatively big, nevertheless, the Chetniks and the Partisans did many more crimes, more numerous victims are on our side than on the other side." That was also some kind of an attempt to relativize the criminal character of the Ustasha regime and then what they are doing, or what they are attempting to do is to balance this criminal character of both regimes. So, in order to neglect or even annihilate that criminal character, they are trying, in the last couple of, especially in the last couple of years, to balance these two criminal characters of both regimes, communist on the one hand and vice versa, on the other hand, the Ustasha regime, which is completely unacceptable and there is no way to confront or to balance the atrocities made by both regimes. The third root why Croatian revisionism became stronger and stronger is that we had the same development in the late 1980s, which means 30 years ago, in Serbia, with the, first of all the Serbian national movement led by Slobodan Milošević.

Prof. Ivo Goldstein PhD is a Croatian historian, author and ambassador. Since 2001, he is a full professor at the Department of History, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Zagreb. His area of expertise is Byzantium and Croatian history in the Middle Ages, especially the early Middle Ages, as well as the history of the Jews in Croatia and the Croatian history of 20th century.

HRVOJE KLASIĆ

28 May 2019, Multimedia Institute/MaMa, Zagreb, Croatia
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Hrvoje Klasić: [...] when we talk about Germany, even maybe Austria, in comparison to these spaces [territories], I think that the situation is much better solved there in legal terms, although I am not entirely sure that it is so in terms of opinions and mentality. That is why I was genuinely surprised when I heard that this year's gathering at Bleiburg[1] was prohibited because, why now? So, a prohibition, which also came from the Austrian Church, i.e., church authorities in Carinthia, was imposed this year when the said memorial gathering became mildest as it could be. If you compare how it all looked like during the last 27 years, when the said gathering was an Ustasha party, a question is if you did not prohibit it then, what is being prohibited now?

Marina Gržinić: That is our question as well, why now?

1 The May 1945 Bleiburg repatriations (refering to tragic events that took place at the end of World War II when soldiers and civilians associated with the Axis powers fled Yugoslavia to Austria) are being annualy commemorated in Bleiburg, Austria. They are being organised by the Bleiburg Honorary Guard (an association founded by Croatian emigrants) (Wikipedia).

[BLEIBURG]

Klasić: I do not have an answer to that. I would say that, regarding the Catholic Church, maybe some winds, which are now seemingly different than those that blew during the reign of John Paul II or Benedict XVI, appeared, which is also corroborated by Pope Francis' decision about [the refusal of] the canonization of Stepinac.[2] When we are speaking of the state level regarding to this prohibition, maybe I am not right, but I would say that Austria is maybe washing its conscience in a situation in which [Sebastian] Kurz's [now former] coalition partner [Heinz-Christian Strache] is known to have had excursions into antisemitism and revisionism.

Maybe it was easier to tackle, to expose a relation towards the past by involving Croats, rather than Austrians. It was easier to prohibit something about the Croats and show teeth and muscles to Croats than to the party that was part of the coalition or to Austrian public opinion regarding its stances on what Austria was from *Anschluss* [the annexation of Austria by Nazi Germany in 1938] to 1945, what Austrians were in that period. Were they only victims? Were they observers or were they actively involved in committing crimes, and in what way? It seems that there is a lot of everything there... But, given the timing, the moment at which the prohibition came, when it all already became passé, and not at the moment when it all was most intensive, says something, it tells to me that the point is not to tackle the foundations of everything which is happening there.

[RIGHT-WING CONSERVATIVISM IN CROATIA]

Look, as everywhere, that is, in other parts of Europe, there are neoconservative, Christian, non-Church organizations. But I somehow think, as these elections have proven, that they are after all a minority. They are loud, aggressive; they can be heard, although it is noticeable that there were less of them than it was the case last year, much less. I

2 Aloysius Viktor Stepinac (1898–1960) was the Archbishop of Zagreb (from 1937 until his death) in a period that includes the existance of the Independent State of Croatia, the Axis puppet state led by the Ustasha regime (Wikipedia).

think that there is not a country, from Poland, Hungary, and Germany, in which there are no ultra-conservative groups that are against abortion. A country without such a group does not exist.

The question is what is happening in the mainstream. And the question is how long a mainstream is going to be like that. I think the mainstream in Croatia is still against such organizations and for women's rights to control their own body, as well as for abortion rights. Now, these organizations are extracting their agenda from religion, and that is interesting. They, at least in Croatia, are refusing to say openly that they are against abortion because they are, probably, under the influence of instructions that came from America – "never speak in negative terms." They are talking exclusively about right to live. When you insist on hearing openly whether are they against the abortion, no, they say they are for right to live. They extract it from religious, moral, whatever – whether a living being was conceived, whether an ultrasound scan shows a live human being, whether that then constitutes a killing, are you killing that being – and the whole story revolves around that. That is, if you ask me, very dangerous, especially if we take a look at how these neoconservative groups, or even elites, exercise influence also about Donald Trump who, at the beginning did not have anything with it. I think that it still did not get an impetus in Croatia as it did in Poland or somewhere else. But, the role of the Catholic Church has to be taken into consideration because the church was the leading carrier of national feelings during the high part of the 20th century. It was a protector of Croatianhood much more than it was a protector of Christianity. As much as Serbian Orthodox Church is much more Serb than orthodox, in the same way, the Catholic Church is much more Croatian than Catholic.

Gržinić: What is the importance of these specificities?

Klasić: It is so because the main difference between Croats and Serbs is faith. Croats and Serbs look the same, speak the same language, and understand each other – the only apparent difference is faith. The emphasis put on the religious element facilitates the possibilities of producing a difference, otherness. Serbs and we differentiate because they are Orthodox, and the Croats are Catholics. When you compare one Serb from Banija [a region in Croatia] with a Croat from the same re-

gion, they are much more similar than a Serb from Banija would be to a Serb from Šumadija [a region in Serbia]. The role of the church, especially after 1945, was that the church became the only institution that guarded Croatianhood because Croats, in principle, did not have real, political dissidents. We did not have Kundera,[3] Havel,[4] our "dissidents" worked here the whole time [during socialism]. At that time they were receiving awards, writing books, making movies, and in the 1990s they, of course, joined the HDZ[5] after which they represented themselves as if they were persecuted [by socialist authorities], but they have not gone abroad [during that time].

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3 Milan Kundera (born 1929) is a Czech writer. When his Czech citizenship was revoked in 1979 and his works banned, he went into exile in France in 1975 where became a naturalised French citizen in 1981 (Wikipedia).

4 Václav Havel (1936–2011) was a writer and former dissident. He was a Czech statesman who served as the last President of Czechoslovakia (1989–1992) and the first President of the Czech Republic (1993–2003) (Wikipedia).

5 Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica, or the Croatian Democratic Union, is a conservative political party and the main centre-right political party in Croatia (Wikipedia).

TOMISLAV MEDAK

28 May 2019, Multimedia Institute/MaMa, Zagreb, Croatia
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Tomislav Medak: We can see that the crisis of agency on the left, is being replicated across the world, particularly as the 2008 crisis unfolded did not give birth to anything new.

[THE FAR-RIGHT FORCES]

I think the fact that this was not overcome led to the fact that basically, the forces of the far-right are probably the true anti-globalist forces today and that they are, in the very specific key, discursive key of national sovereignism contesting economic globalization where the left has failed to consolidate a project upon which this could be staged. This is so due to various reasons, including the conflation of nationalism with globalism of the kind that the European Union, particularly Eurozone, was imposing in terms of pressure to keep intact a system, which is in a way helping this disembedding survive. So, this I think is the problem for the left in larger terms. Here, specifically the problem for the left is

also that the nation-state formation is wedded to Croatian Democratic Union [HDZ][1] and its various satellites further on the far-right.

[NATION-STATE FORMATION]

This is so because the legitimation narrative is that of Croatian independence, i.e. the legitimation narrative of the current social-economic crisis, and turmoil the society is going through is legitimated through the necessity of Croatian independence and the justification of the Homeland War.

[JUSTIFICATION OF HOMELAND WAR]

So, the triad of Croatian Democratic Union, war veterans, and the Catholic Church creates the three pillars upon which this specific social formation that we are in works and for as long as it works; for as long as it is there people [on the left] need to justify their existence to that. So, I think that is why the left has very limited capacity to do a lot in the Croatian political context.

Marina Gržinić: Does any vision exist for any change in the Croatian society, locally or in a much wider way in relation to the change of the state of the things we have now in neoliberal global capitalism?

Medak: Currently, I do not see that there is a consolidated project. I think that there are elements of socio-economic and environmental crises in the present that call for an overhaul of neoliberal capitalism, but the question is out of what would that grand scale transformation of the global system emerge. For the left, I think, it is fundamental to develop those ideational capacities of what is in the present considered utopian, but what might be a kernel of transformation.

[THE KERNEL OF TRANSFORMATION]

1 The Croatian Democratic Union is the main centre-right political party in Croatia (Wikipedia).

Because, if we think historically how capitalism emerged, it emerged out of very specific social property relations in Britain and it was something very much contingent and it consolidated something we today take for granted, the economy. The economic processes before were not understood in isolation and the economy was not really understood as a differentiated subsystem. This emerged with the capitalist mode of production and its expansion and development. So, I think that we can also think of the change in the present as emerging also out of very contingent relations. And I do not think that change will come simply in terms of the economy. Because the economy as the formation is the reality that we inhabit. We need to see that process of political transformation is happening differently and I think, we cannot see it in the crystal ball of the future, but obviously, because of the environmental crisis the world cannot go on like this.

[ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS]

There will be huge upheavals, population movements resulting from overstepping of planetary boundaries and non-linear changes in world systems, populations will move northwards; it will be harder to survive for many and out of this, in a couple of decades time – unless we act in a fashion that I cannot see happening at the moment – will be a reality. And that will be a process of historic transformation that is highly likely to happen from what we know from science. So, we need to find a way to try to live within planetary boundaries while sharing the abundance that societies can create, not focusing on the world of things, but on the world of relations.

[THE PRESENT]

Gržinić: By thinking about the ideas you are trying to conceptualize, we can actually think about your present work that you perform. What is the power; what is the place of this work?

Medak: Concretely with MAMA we are a space where people do their things: meet, organize, produce, present and they can do that for free and with no economic pressures. That is a value in itself, I think, and it

can be viewed through an analogy with open source as a form of commons that serve a certain community in building and expanding. We started in 2000 and that form of thinking has also been expanded into our work on digital commons. We have had free music label early in the 2000s, we were publishing music under General Public Licence [GPL][2] of the free software and we were thinking this is a way to go by which we can instil change by changing the legal regulation of how cultural works are produced, exchanged and how we can do way with authorship as a form of competition and a market place of ideas, as it is framed within the existing corporate system. We have done a lot of work around this, which was very successful but did not bring the transformation that we wanted to see.

[TRANSFORMATION, PIRACY]

So, at some point we came to understand that piracy was much more transformative in the sense that it created a condition where property relations do not pertain, where they are not fully operational and where the exclusions can be overcome by immediate action. So, a group of us, not the whole MAMA, started working on piracy, primarily book piracy with the idea that if anywhere in contemporary societies we could start contesting the idea of private property, it is in [the field of] this totally misleading metaphor that intellectuality and creativity can be treated as landed property. And, that we need to step in and contest property relations through upholding mass piracy that was happening around us. So, we have done a lot of work ourselves in creating infrastructures for that type of commoning, creating knowledge commons, one that is a great equalizer. We started working in a very specific moment on these activities in 2011 as an alliance of publishers have shut down Library.nu,[3] which was the largest pirate library at the time, digital library. And, people who have been juniors, who were studying at the time said that they were shocked; now, we have fundamental means of academic production, knowledge production, taken away from us because the library at the university of, or for instance at the School for Arts and

2 The GNU General Public License is broadly used free copyleft software license that provide end users with freedom to distribute and change free software or use pieces of it in new free programs (Wikipedia).

3 Library.nu (called ebooksclub.org from 2004 to 2007, and gigapedia.com until 2010), was a popular "shadow library" that hosted some 400,000 ebooks. It was accused of copyright infringement and shut down on 15 February 2012 (Wikipedia).

Humanities here in Zagreb, is very little, and it is piracy that has made books available that in the 1990s I could only crave for and [never] put my hands on or only through some weird networks, photocopying, friends abroad or someone buying a book and sending it over and get access to.

Tomislav Medak is a doctoral student at the Centre for Postdigital Cultures, Coventry University, UK. He is also a member of the theory and publishing team of the Multimedia Institute/MaMa in Zagreb, as well as an amateur librarian for the "Memory of the World/Public library" project, and an artist in the performing arts collective BADco.

IVO PEJAKOVIĆ

29 May 2019, Jasenovac Memorial Site, Jasenovac, Croatia
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Ivo Pejaković: When we come to this issue of the number of victims, which is something that is disputed and talked about since the time when camp still existed and after the liberation of the [Jasenovac] camp in 1945. In 1946 already first assessments were made. The first official assessment was made in 1946 by the commission established by the Yugoslav government that was dealing with war crimes committed in the territory of Yugoslavia, and in 1946 they published a small book and they mentioned that in Jasenovac camp somewhere between 500,000 and 600,000 thousand victims were killed. Immediately after that, Yugoslavia demanded reparations from Germany for the crimes committed in the territory of Yugoslavia and in those documents it was assessed that about 1.7 million people altogether in the territory of Yugoslavia were killed, regardless of the place and out of that number 700,000 were killed in Jasenovac camp. So, these numbers became official numbers in the period of Yugoslavia and if you look at the *Encyclopaedia of Yugoslavia* you can see these numbers mentioned under the title "Jasenovac." In the 1960s there was an attempt by the Federal Institute of Statistics to find exactly the names of the victims, the persons who were killed. And, they sent their researchers throughout the country and the goal was to establish those numbers and basically to confirm the num-

bers that were officially in the public, not only for Jasenovac camp but for all the victims all over Yugoslavia.

In 1964 this research was finished and, altogether, they found about 600,000 names of the victims, regardless of the place where they were killed, and out of that number 59,000 names of victims were those killed in Jasenovac camp. But, since this research did not really match these previous, official numbers, this research was actually never published. It was in the archives of this institution, the Federal Bureau of Statistics. Only some historians and politicians were aware of this research and its results. In the 1990s, these documents were somehow smuggled out of this institution, and in 1998 the Bosniak Institute [in Sarajevo] actually published the book with those 59,000 names killed in Jasenovac camp. So, we as an institution, Jasenovac Memorial Site, sometimes around 2005, started working on the list of victims and the goal of that research was to find as many names as possible of the people killed in Jasenovac camp. So, through work in archives, in different national or local archives, through the literature, or some local lists of victims that were published in particular counties or municipalities, through contacts with families of all the victims, we tried to make this list as correct as possible. At the moment, in our database we have about 83,000 records of the victims and we always try to emphasize that this is not the total number. It is impossible to find exactly, name by name, how many people were killed because, when you go through the archives, when you go through these different documents and the lists of victims sometimes under this section place of death stands unknown. This is so because somebody was arrested, deported somewhere, did not return, did not survive the war, but there is just not enough evidence to establish and claim that these persons were killed in some particular place or a camp. So, we are always clear in emphasizing that this is not the total number, the number is probably higher than that, but for us, it is also difficult to try to guess what that total number might be. We are careful not to go public with any specific numbers.

So, because of all these reasons that happened, even today there are certain disputes about the number of the victims, but as I already said, and I emphasize, we know for sure that, based on racial laws and on the ideology of the Ustasha movement, the whole families were deported to this camp and we talk about the Serbs, the Jews, the Roma,

and legally it is the definition of genocide what happened here. So, the intentions of the Ustasha movement and the results of those intentions are very clear. This is something that cannot be disputed. What I can also mention are the specific numbers related to the victim groups. The biggest number [of those] that were killed here were the Serbs. We have records that 47,000 Serbs were killed in the camp, which would make more than 50% of the victims. This is also different from the Nazi camps because in those camps the biggest numbers of the victims were Jews. The second biggest group would be Roma, about 16,000 according to our records. There were 13,000 Jewish victims and smaller numbers refer to other ethnic groups, about 4000 Croats, about 1000 Bosnian Muslims, about 250 Slovenians and in smaller numbers also other ethnic groups that were living in the territory of Croatia and Yugoslavia in World War II period.

Marina Gržinić: What you clarified about the numbers, Slavko Goldstein reported almost the same numbers and he, as well as others, said that [the numbers] were used for ideological manipulation and that it specifically had an impact when the war in Bosnia started, in regard to the demands for revenge by the Serbs, in this relation to Jasenovac when it was manipulated with the number of 700,000 victims. So, my question is, from your research and your way of dealing with this issue, how would you describe what was going on? Was it some specific way of how this manipulation with the numbers was used and did this change historically?

Pejaković: I guess that we'll have to go back a little, not to start with the war in the 1990s, we should start with the 1980s. Several years ago the Associated Press published their video archive online and, I think, in 1984 or 1985 they visited Jasenovac, Jasenovac Memorial Site, and they talked with the director at the time, she was called Ana Požar, and she responded to some questions about the camp and the history of the place and when she talked about the victims she said that Jasenovac is the place where 700,000 Yugoslavs were killed. So, that was basically a kind of the official narrative that existed in the 1980s. When they talked about the victims they did not really emphasize the ethnicity of any particular victims, so they were all considered as our victims, meaning Yugoslav victims. That was the official story. It kind of slowly started to change and shift in the mid-1980s or late 1980s with the rise of nation-

alism in Yugoslavia, and this history of Jasenovac camp proved to be something unresolved. People felt that the Yugoslav government did not deal with it appropriately. The official policies of "Brotherhood and Unity,"[1] it was kind of, I would say, challenging for the government how to approach this place because the crimes in this place did not come from outside of the borders of Yugoslavia. The people who committed the crimes here, the perpetrators, were Croats by ethnicity. So, how do you deal with that? I guess they tried to deal with it by looking into the future, not so much into the past.

Ivo Pejaković graduated from Zagreb University in 2006 with a degree in history. In 2019 he was appointed as the director of the Jasenovac Memorial Site, where he was employed as a curator of the Memorial Museum from 2009. Since 2018 he has represented Croatia in the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA), in the Museums and Memorials Working Group.

1 The slogan of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia was coined during the Yugoslav People's Liberation War (1941–45) and was publicized in the struggle against the fascist fragmentation of the social space. It later evolved into a guiding principle of post-war inter-ethnic policy of Yugoslavia to promote equality and peaceful coexistence of Yugoslav nations and its national minorities (Wikipedia).

LINA GONAN

14 October 2019, Centre for Women's Studies, Zagreb, Croatia
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Lina Gonan: [...] it is exactly through the prism of the state, the nation, demographics most of all, that we have these constant attacks on reproductive rights and also trans* peoples' rights. Of course, there are other reasons, for example, the fact that these nationalist discourses are so dominant in today's society that activists are just being afraid of criticizing them; not also for personal reasons but also because they do not want to endanger the existence of the NGOs where they work. It is so because it is a very well-known fact among the human-rights activist circles in Zagreb that older activists who were critical of Tuđman's[1] politics, both at that time and now, are being blackmailed, receiving life threats and so on.

[THE INFLUENCE OF NATIONALISM AND RELIGION ON FEMINIST STRUGGLES IN CROATIA]

Of course, it is very bad when, for example, feminist activists say on TV debates, things like that, that they are Catholics too or that some

1 Franjo Tuđman (1922–1999) was the first President of Croatia and served as president from 1990 until his death in 1999 (Wikipedia).

feminists are also Catholics. Or when queer LGBT activists invoke their national identity by saying things like, "I am a Croat, I am a taxpayer, I am a citizen" and stuff like that. So, yes, this is the situation with LGBT and feminist agendas towards nationalism, but I think it is also worth mentioning some other problems on the parliamentary left scene. One of the reasons for not addressing nationalism is also left-wing populism. Namely, recently we had this prominent municipal party leader and also some other left intellectuals who said, during the world football championship in Russia [2018] that we have to support our national team and things like that, whatever you do, because this is what makes people happy. I mean, this is something that, like, it is important to the working class. So, I think that this also actually affects the general position towards nationalism in civil society.

[HISTORICAL REVISIONISM AND THE RELATIVIZATION OF COMMUNISM AND FASCISM]

Šefik Tatlić: Are discourses that are erasing the difference between fascism and communism under the aureole [umbrella] of the condemnation of totalitarian regimes having an effect on feminist and queer struggles in Croatia and, if so, how?

Gonan: I would identify two different ways, but I should first explain the logic of these kinds of revisionism. So, the idea is that us, we the Croat people, were oppressed for so long under the communist regime and that we are now having a country of our own and what is then there to be criticized? And also, the assumption is that you can just have either Yugoslavia or Croatia, there is nothing else between this. Also, they are ignoring the fact that the civil society is a crucial democratic institution, so any kind of criticism coming from anybody, but of course, specifically from LGBT or feminist circles is suspicious, first of all, and it is often being denounced as communism, which is in this logic equated with fascism. So, the result of this is that feminist and LGBT activists sometimes try to – at all costs, let's say – ideologically neutralize their position in order to avoid this label of "Yugo-communists," which is Yugoslavian communist. I would still not say that this situation leads to "homonationalism," which is a tendency in certain Western coun-

tries where LGBT activists tried to somehow deny the radical roots of the movement in order to become "normalized" in the national state, which also lead them towards supporting some very problematic right-wing politicians. This is definitely still not the case here, but there are definitely some tendencies. For example, people carrying the national flag on the Pride march or wearing make-up or apparel with national symbols, or generally, how political demands are often being framed by activists in terms of, as I said before, things like [declaring] citizenship and as such citizens having the right to be this or that, forgetting the fact that many people who seek help from LGBT NGOs are immigrants and escaping their countries because of the threats of the death penalty for being queer. So, this position, this liberal position, is very problematic when it comes to race and immigration.

On the other hand, I think that this uncritical denigration of communism leads, of course not in all cases but some feminist circles, to the uncritical defence of Yugoslavia, Yugoslavian socialism, as a response, which in my opinion means giving up on something more radical, [on] more radical demands. In other words, historical revisionism [coming] from the right, with this logic "communism equals fascism, totalitarianism," drives the left into another sort of historical revisionism with the idea that everything leftist that the right attacks must necessarily be defended at all costs. I think that this makes it impossible to acknowledge, and I think this is important, to acknowledge the continuity of capitalist relations, the state, elites, racism and especially patriarchy, in this context from Yugoslavia to this day. Of course, right-wing revisionism is an extremely dangerous phenomenon and this is what is the problem in the first place. But, I just do not think that it can be confronted with another form of revisionism and without settling with the negative legacies of Yugoslavia. For me, this schizophrenic situation is best illustrated with the case of an old Croatian leftist intellectual who said, when the Marshal Tito square was renamed into the Square of the Republic of Croatia, she said that she politicized herself in her youth as anti-Titoist, but now has to defend him. So, I think that if we are going to move in circles like this, I do not think that we will ever get into the position to actually name the real problem.

Marina Gržinić: Is it possible to identify feminist, queer, and I will add also trans* discourses in Croatia, not only in Zagreb, that are actually connected with left-wing processes but also with class struggles?

Gonan: In the feminist movement, there is definitely some sensitivity toward economic, and let us say material questions. This is why, for example, the Platform for Reproductive Rights organized, a few years ago, a protest demanding that abortion be free of charge, regardless of the citizenship status and, of course, this was based on the assumption that abortion is, first of all, a matter of class, and not a matter of body autonomy, as it is usually being politically framed by liberal feminists. Of course, some middle-class women can speak of body autonomy, but some other women who are lower class and who are immigrants cannot speak of autonomy because they already do not have it. So, yes, the focus was on class and race, but the question for me is how do we conceptualize this class struggle or leftist struggle? I mean, there are definitely tendencies and groups that operate within traditional left-wing organizations such as parties, even trade unions, but I do not think this is a good thing and it shows that this is definitely something that does not lead anywhere for women, and certainly not leading beyond capitalism, which in my understanding of the problem is the main interest of women and queer people and the only thing that could lead to their liberation. And, I do not think, first of all, as I said, that class struggle means demanding something from the state because I think that class struggle is a struggle against the form of value or against capital and the kind of reproduction, which is organized by the state for capital, and we do not really have this kind of struggle.

Lina Gonan is a philosopher and art historian employed at the Multimedia Institute in Zagreb. She is an activist in the field of women and LGBT*QI+ rights. Her fields of interest are aesthetics, the philosophy of politics and gender theory.

SARA LALIĆ

14 October 2019, Centre for Women's Studies, Zagreb, Croatia
Interview by Marina Gržinić and Šefik Tatlić

Marina Gržinić: How do you see the position of the European Union [EU] institutions regarding all that you said? Are they looking the other way and supporting "pushbacks" of refugees/migrants that the Croatian authorities are practicing on the border between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina?

Sara Lalić: Unfortunately, these practices are, in a way, tolerated by the EU. These institutions and organizations that have been warning about these issues have also, on various occasions, been warning the EU institutions as well. Also, in April this year [2019], about 30 MPs asked the European Commission to act on this issue, but unfortunately, we still did not receive any information on [reacting to] some infringement procedures or any other similar actions by the EU. At the same time, the Croatian authorities are actually saying that the need to control the border is coming from the attempts of behalf of Croatia to join the Schengen Area[1] and now, the latest information says that Croatia will soon get a green light to enter Schengen. Although, the authorities are

1 The Schengen Area is currently a zone of 26 European states (22 EU states and 4 non-EU states), which have abolished internal border controls and laid down common rules for the control of the Schengen Area's external borders, including enhanced police and judicial cooperation between the member states. It is named after the Schengen Agreement of 14 June 1985 (Wikipedia).

constantly violating Schengen borders code. I think there are various reasons for this lack of proper reaction by the EU institutions, but the main one lies in the fact the EU now wants the borders to be closed and that what Croatia is actually doing is, in a way, part of or in line with at least informal policies of the EU [meaning] that Croatia is, in a way, a guardian of Fortress Europe. It is not a case only with Croatia. We have similar tendencies in other EU member states like Greece or Italy, but, yes, I think that these practices actually are in a great measure part of the EU policies.

Šefik Tatlić: How do you interpret the change of stance towards the refugees by Croatian authorities if we compare the situation in 2015 to the current situation?

Lalić: In 2015, as I already said, Croatian authorities facilitated the movement of refugees towards other countries. This was a political decision. At the same time, when we were in the refugee camps and the places were refugees were present, we could have seen that the policemen largely showed a lot of compassion and empathy towards the people that were there. As I partly said before, the main reason for the change of these policies is the fact that now the European Union, as well as some EU member countries do not have the policy of open borders anymore. And, the Croatian authorities are afraid that Croatia might become, as they call it, a "hot spot," a place where people on the move or migrants are, in a way, stuck because of the current Dublin Regulations,[2] which are still at least in force.

["MANAGING" THE BORDERS]

Also, another thing, as I already mentioned before, the Croatian authorities now have to prove that they can "manage" the borders, as they call it, in order to enter the Schengen area. So, I think that these European reasons are the most important ones. We can speculate about what would happen if the national government was different, if parties that are in the government were different, but I think it is very difficult to speculate on whether this potentially different national government

2 The Dublin Regulation is an EU law setting out the criteria and mechanisms for identifying which EU member state is responsible for processing an application for international protection within EU (Wikipedia).

would make any difference. [This is so] especially when we see that in some other European countries that are in a similar situation as Croatia, some left-wing governments that had this discourse that was open towards migration, also had similar practices as Croatia has today.

Tatlić: Since it seems that it has come to the radical rise of right-wing extremism and xenophobia in Croatia in the last couple of years, how would you describe these tendencies? Are they in connection with nationalist-chauvinist agendas from the Tuđman's[3] era and the lack of proper re-articulation and critique of Tuđman's legacy?

Lalić: I think that, of course, they are partly a result of Tuđman's legacy and the legacy of the war in the 1990s. Croatia and the whole region actually, never had a proper process of dealing with the past either in a legal way or in some social way. So, we did not, as a society, we have not really gone through a process that would make us critical towards what happened during that war and that would allow us to go further into a different direction.

[WAR IN CROATIA AND THE RAMIFICATIONS OF THE 1990S]

Some parties are still counting on raising this atmosphere of fear and hatred connected to the 1990s war [in order] to gain voters support, and when we see the recent developments I think that since 2016 we can see stronger affirmation of Tuđman's heritage and legacy in the discourse of homeland security, regarding the values of the Homeland War,[4] which are present in the media and especially on Croatian public television, even in the education system. So, I think that these right-wing populist tendencies are, in a way, coming from the fact that there is no real – i.e. there is a real critique of the Tuđman's era – but it is not official. But, at the same time, Croatia is not an island. We are part of what is happening at the European but also global level, and these tendencies are also affecting us. So, right-wing discourses are, in a way,

3 Franjo Tuđman (1922–1999) was the first President of Croatia from 1990 until his death in 1999 (Wikipedia).
4 The Croatian War of Independence, in Croatia primarily referred to as the "Homeland War" (Domovinski rat), also the "Greater-Serbian Aggression," was a war fought from 1991 to 1995 (Wikipedia).

also coming from these new sets of issues and from similar tendencies that are happening throughout Europe and outside Europe as well.

Gržinić: As you explained this relation between extreme right-wing and historical revisionism, in a certain way you have put these relations also in connection with Tuđman times, and the question is which are these other forces, democratic forces? Which are these forces of democracy, of change? Are these NGOs or are there other discourses and agencies in the space that bring or want to impose change?

[THE STATE OF THINGS – DEMOCRATIC FORCES, CIVIL SOCIETY, AND HUMAN RIGHTS]

Lalić: These democratic forces can be found in different sectors. I think that NGOs or at a least part of civil society – civil society is not all pro-human rights, of course – so, I think civil society is an important actor when it comes to different emancipatory policies. We also have independent media, independent culture, so people, organizations, initiatives in the field of both journalism and also culture. There are some progressive forces in the academia. For us, from the point of protection of human rights, I think that we can see those activists; we call them activists in the institutions, so people that maybe do not hold high positions but have some influence, as public officials, on what policies are being made. So, there are still people in institutions that are pushing for progressive changes. Lately, we have also witnessed something that is, in a way, a new tendency, which is forming or establishment of these new political actors, political parties at both local and national levels that are made of people coming from this activist scene who also now want to try out some institutional ways of fighting for a progressive change.

Sara Lalić is an activist and programme coordinator at the Centre for Peace Studies, a civil society organization based in Zagreb, Croatia. For the past ten years, she has been working as a researcher and policy analyst mainly in the fields of human rights and combating discrimination, racism, and xenophobia.

BORIS HAJDINJAK

26 August 2019, City of Women – Association for the Promotion of Women in Culture, Ljubljana, Slovenia
Interview by Marina Gržinić

Boris Hajdinjak: By comparing the number of the killed, it is usually said that the average ratio of the killed Jewish population in [former] Yugoslavia is 80%, maybe 75%, it depends. For example, in Serbia the ratio is very high, more than 90%. In what was NDH [Independent State of Croatia][1] there are some differences. For example, in what is today Croatia it is higher than in what is today Bosnia, and there is especially very low ratio in Dalmatia [southern part of Croatia], "just" 35%. In Slovenia, we know that in the Prekmurje region, which was part of Hungary during World War II, the number of killed was very high, 90%. Considering my research, I can say that in Maribor somewhere like 50% [were killed] and in Ljubljana it was, more or less, the same. What is usually very hard to explain to somebody who is not from Slovenia, including Yugoslavia, is that there is a lot of stories from World War II. Because, for example, just in Slovenia there were four occupation zones. Not just Hungarian, German and Italian, but also a very small part was under NDH. And, in each of those parts of Slovenia there was a different antisemitic, Holocaust policy [at work]. In [the rest] of Yugoslavia it was very different. For

1 Following the Germany's invasion of Yugoslavia in 1941, the leader of the Ustasha Ante Pavelić became head of the Axis puppet state NDH and put in place one-party regime. The NDH regime's goal was to create ethnically homogenous Greater Croatia by genocidal policies, systematic murders, expulsions and conversions of non-Croats (Wikipedia).

example, in Bačka, part of Vojvodina [a region in the north of Serbia] was the same as in Prekmurje, and Banat, which is also part of Vojvodina, [there was] a totally different story. So it is quite complicated to explain the Jewish destiny during World War II in Yugoslavia, but, as you know, everything in Yugoslavia is always very complicated.

[PROJECTS FOR AND OF MEMORY]

Marina Gržinić: So, the projects that were done, what is their importance? To which type of memory are they actually attached?

Hajdinjak: The very first thing is connected with all gratitude to the victims. For example, this is probably the most impressive monument to the victims of the Nazis, and it is not, as you can see [shows an image of a monument in Maribor, Slovenia, consisting of a plaque with 661 names], a very big monument, as well as there, are no Jewish names on it. This is in the centre of Maribor, called the Sodni Zapori [Judicial Prison], and from August of 1941 until March of 1943, so not during the whole duration of the war, here in the strict centre of Maribor, 661 persons were killed. The names are here; 10% of them were women and the reason why the Nazis decided to kill those people in the very centre of quite a big city like Maribor is, is of course very obvious. The most important monument, on the other hand, in Maribor is this. This monument [Maribor Liberation Monument to the fighters of People's Liberation Struggle, NOB] is popularly known as Kojak, after the star of one of the TV shows in the 1970s [Telly Savalas], but actually, if you look very carefully, you can see that artists [Slavko Tihec and Branko Kocmut] decided to put some faces like, as you can see Josip Broz, there is Slavko Šlander,[2] a national hero, or this is Jože Lacko,[3] Rado Iršič[4] [was also] killed; these are pictures, but, you must be very careful. So, that idea, even before *Stolpersteine*,[5] was to put [to show] a memory of the persons who are not just names. On the other hand, we have another monument with the names [shows an image of a plaque consisting

2 Slavko Šlander, nom de guerre Aleš (1909–1941), was a Slovene communist, partisan and national hero (Wikipedia).
3 Jože Lacko (1894–1942) was a Slovene partisan and national hero (Wikipedia).
4 Rado Iršič-Gregl (1910–1941) was a Slovene communist and national hero (Wikipedia).
5 A *Stolperstein* ("stumbling stone," metaphorically a "stumbling block") is a sett, a (10 cm) concrete cube with a brass plate engraved with the name and personal dates of the Nazi victims (Wikipedia).

of names] in what used to be Maribor's Realgymnasium [First Maribor Gymnasium] and that monument is in the very centre of the school. It stood there for years, where I pass by on a daily basis, but ten years ago when I decided to show what happened to the Jews during World War II, I found this name, Kohnstein Rudolf. Kohnstein is not, of course, Slovenian last name, who was him? And, so, the story began. It must be said that even though that family, Kohnstein was not erased from memory, but it was never said that they have been killed like victims in Auschwitz or somewhere else. They were just one of those who were killed. And, the idea of *Stolpersteine*, here you can also see the name Kohnstein, is much stronger. Here we do not have faces, we have names, but with some basic data. But, the position of the *Stolpersteine* is very important. *Stolpersteine* is the name in German, in English it would mean something like "obstacle stones," and it is the idea of German artist Gunter Demnig, who is not a historian but an artist. Twenty-five years ago he asked himself what we actually know about the victims of the Nazis, not just the Holocaust. And, because he lived in Cologne, quite a big city, he actually could not see anything. So, his idea was to put [to represent] a memory of the persons who were killed by the Nazis and who are actually the foundation of what we have in Europe. And, as you may know, a lot of victims of the Nazis, not all of them, but a lot of them, in Germany – because in Germany the Jews were the biggest group of the victims – were, of course, sent with "transports" to the East and they were killed there, sometimes immediately upon arrival, some later in places like Auschwitz and so on. And, you probably know, that in every concentration camp, not just in Auschwitz, there was a crematorium. You must have an idea of what does crematorium mean in the 1930s. For example, the very first concentration camp in Dachau was established; it was not very common to have a crematorium. And, usually there is a question why the Nazis, from the very first to the last needed to have the crematoriums? Ok, there was an answer in relation to a lot of people, diseases, hygiene and so on, but I think the answer was different. To cremate somebody at that time also meant to erase the memory of those cremated because the ashes were thrown away, there is no grave. And then, of course, technically, we do not have a place in the camps like Auschwitz where to put memory [plaques] for the persons [killed]. We know, ok, here approximately lie the ashes of millions of persons, but you cannot say that person and that person. And, again, his idea was also, why to remember people who suffered and were killed by the Na-

zis in the places in which they were killed. Let us remember them in the places in which they lived. They were not "at home" in Auschwitz, they were home in their home towns, in their houses. So, this is the idea. To commemorate the people in places to which they belonged. Of course they were killed in Auschwitz, but they belong to Maribor, to Cologne, to Berlin, where ever.

Boris Hajdinjak is a historian, geographer, and from 2017 a director of the Centre of Jewish Cultural Heritage Synagogue Maribor, Slovenia, where he has been a co-worker since 2003.

IRENA ŠUMI

26 August 2019, City of Women – Association for the Promotion of Women in Culture, Ljubljana, Slovenia
Interview by Marina Gržinić

Irena Šumi: If you were schooled in Yugoslavia you thought that, yeah, Holocaust has definitely happened, but it just did not happen here. It was somewhere else. Most people actually think that it was in Germany. Of course it was not in Germany, it was mostly in Eastern Europe because that it's where Jews were. Also, the numbers, Slovenian Jews perished in almost 90% whereas 55% of German Jews survived, actually. People have all sorts of wrong ideas about how this happened, but I think there is also a special mentality category that we call Central Europe. And, Austria, and Austrians should not be too secure in thinking that they are different. So, there is a specific type of blood nationalism that is the signature nationalism of Central Europe. It was cooked up in a thousand years of this horrible monarchy that basically exercised colonial policies within its territory because it just did not, or could not, actually expand into non-European spaces. And there was also the German problem of the time. So, I suggested to Dr. [Aleida] Assmann at that time that it has a lot more to do with class perceptions than ethnic perceptions. But, I did go into memory studies because of this kind of puzzles. I just recently managed to publish a little piece, because the way people individually remember is a very big theme in Holocaust studies, it is about that survivors never speak, never, ever speak up, and

especially not to their family. You know, we know that. And those few whoever spoke up told us stuff that we understand is also the result of heavy traumatization. For instance, you have a Slovenian survivor who is adamant, and she is not the only one, upon arrival in Auschwitz that she was met by doctor Mengele[1] personally, that he spoke to her and all that sort of thing. He may have, but on the other hand it is not terribly likely, right? Because being through this kind of ordeal means that you will get some kind of holistic perspective once you are out if you get out. And, of course, surviving that was the most improbable thing, statistically speaking.

So, many people got some kind of understanding, some kind of closure years or decades after the experience. And we understand that. We calculate this into methodology when we speak to survivors and make interviews and all that sort of thing. That is one part, the individual memory. And, Holocaust studies were relying almost exclusively on this kind of first-hand testimony, so there is big trouble coming up because in the shortest time there will be no witnesses or survivors anymore. So, that is a big question in Holocaust studies. What do we do now? What is our prime methodology from that point on? Ok, we will think that through, right? But, then you have also social memory, which is very different than individual memory and it is still very different from the national, accepted narrative. And, in Slovenia, because of the regime after the war, you have this wide gap between social memory and the official history. I came to Prekmurje[2] in the late 1990s to do with the first research and I spoke to people who were at that point thirty-ish or so, youngish people, and I asked them about the Jews, have they heard the stories and so on...

[THE RELEGATION INTO PAST AS A WAY OF DEALING WITH SOCIAL TRAUMA]

Most people never, ever heard anything about that. I asked how is that possible; you know about the cemetery, you know about the synagogue

1 Josef Mengele (1911–1979) was a Nazi doctor, known as the "Angel of Death," at the Auschwitz extermination camp (1943–45) who performed medical experiments on prisoners in pseudoscientific racial studies (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

2 A region in northeastern Slovenia.

in Lendava[3] and they said, "Oh, yeah, but that was way long ago." So, it is this relegation into the past that is one of the mechanisms to deal with this kind of social trauma. I believe, and it is my thesis, that we live with the consequences of this particular genocide and this particular horror of six years of war, planet-wide war and that there are consequences we do not recognize as such. We just do not recognize them, but they are still with us. Very much so, from epigenetic consequences to social, very much so, yes.

Marina Gržinić: If we think about racism in general terms and, of course, antisemitism, recently in Slovenia, like everywhere in Europe, but in Slovenia we really see that racism is a part of the vocabulary, but also very present in the public space and so on. Since you also do a lot of research on nation-state policies and nationalism, how do you see these connections in the present moment: Slovenia, nationalism, racism, antisemitism?

[NATIONALISM, ANTISEMITISM, RACISM]

Šumi: First of all, there is this question whether or not antisemitism is in fact a type of racism. Of course antisemitism has every structure of racism. There is more than that. Jews were not treated like white people; they were not considered white people. A Jew of the 19th century, throughout the West, especially in the United States there you still have racial delineations for administrative purposes. They only attained the status of white people during the early 20th century in the United States, but they were never quite considered, especially in Eastern Europe, they were never quite considered white. In central Europe, there was this historic sharing of the same economic niche, especially with Roma people. And, you have that especially in Moravia[4] and Bohemia[5] and all these parts of central Europe, where they were peddling, they were selling bread on the streets and they were mending umbrellas, stuff like that, and had circuses.

3 Lendava is a town in Slovenia in the Prekmurje region (Wikipedia).
4 With Bohemia and Czech Silesia, Moravia is one of three Czech Republic's historical region (Wikipedia).
5 Bohemia in today's Czech Republic is the westernmost and largest historical region of the country. Bohemia also often refers to the Czech territory as such, including Moravia and Czech Silesia, especially in a historical sense, such as the Lands of the Bohemian Crown that was ruled by Bohemian kings (Wikipedia).

[THE CLASSIFICATION OF WHITENESS AND OTHERNESS]

So, you still have people active that I met years ago, coming from the Czech Republic and they said "Well, we are both gypsies and Jews." So, you had this kind of different classifications of whiteness and alienness and all that sort of thing. But, with antisemitism, what is important to understand is that it becomes, starting from a racial prejudice, a political doctrine in the mid-19th century. It is weaponized, as we would say.

[THE CONNECTION BETWEEN COLONIALISM AND NAZISM]

Many things survived World War II, among them antisemitism, but there is one thing that did not and it is the colonial system. So, there is every reason to understand this process of decolonization that started well before World War II in certain places, but it became imperative after World War II because this type of racism that was deployed in Nazi Germany was in fact colonial. It was this ripe nineteenth-century doctrine intermixed with you believe "science" like eugenics and all that sort of thing and it was very deadly. The Holocaust proper, the murder of six million Jews in Europe, is in fact very special in the history of genocides because it was so industrialized. The fear is that, with all the history of genocides, we are probably now marching towards the genocide of such proportions that we cannot even think of, this time in terms of climate change consequences and all that sort of thing.

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MIHA MAREK

23 October 2019, City of Women – Association for the Promotion of Women in Culture, Ljubljana, Slovenia
Interview by Marina Gržinić

Miha Marek: Zionism can be defined as a modern national ideology of the Jews, modern national ideology conceived by the Jews. Zionism defines Jews as a nation alongside other nations and seeks to provide this nation with a national territory as its homeland. Now, this territory was not defined from the start but soon, very soon Zionist activities centred on one specific territory that is this part of traditional Jewish historical consciousness and that is Palestine or as it is known in traditional Jewish appellation, the land of Israel. So, this is a general definition of Zionism. The book, the anthology [*The Jewish State*][1] contains authors that belong to political Zionism and the specificity of this current is that political Zionism seeks this homeland for the Jews to be a political entity. So, more or less, an autonomous political entity, either an autonomous province within a larger empire, for example the Ottoman Empire, or as a commonwealth or an independent state, all of these options. So, the title of the book is the *Jewish State*, which brings out this idea. This is also the title of the famous book by the Austrian

1 See Miha Marek, ed., *Judovska država: Temeljni dokumenti političnega sionizma* [The Jewish State. Basic Documents of Political Zionism] (Ljubljana: Založba ZRC, 2019).

Theodor Herzl,[2] a pamphlet from 1897, which launched this brand of Jewish national activity. Another particularity of political Zionism is that it sees the method of securing this homeland in direct political action that is diplomacy, and a game on the big political stage with an appeal to the great powers of Europe, also colonial powers, to secure a kind of political guarantee or a charter, or a privilege for a piece of land and this, they claim, has to go before the settlement of the land itself.

[PRACTICAL ZIONISM]

This is different from other types of Zionism, some of which were parallel and some came later. For example, practical Zionism focused on settlement first and they started even before the end of the 19th century. So, practical Zionism focused on building an economic community, functioning Jewish economic community in a land before seeking any political goals.

[CULTURAL ZIONISM]

One other type is cultural Zionism, which was suspicious of both direct settlement and of building economic community, but also of big politics, and cultural Zionists such as the opponent of Herzl, Ahad Ha'am,[3] who was a Russian Jew, very cultured, very good writer, who was also very influential at that time, he thought that Jewish cultural and historic identity and national consciousness has to be consolidated first before anything else can happen. So, he was not against the settlement, but thought that this was secondary and had to come later.

[SOCIALIST ZIONISM]

Later in the 20th century there were also socialist and Marxist types of Zionism, which, kind of, hybridized the goals of socialism with nation-

2 Theodor Herzl (1860–1904) was an Austrian Zionist leader, founder of the political form of Zionism (movement to establish a Jewish homeland). He was an organizer of the First Zionist Congress in Basel, Switzerland (1897), and the first president of the Zionist Organization (Encyclopaedia Britannica).

3 Ahad Ha'am is a pen name of Asher Zvi Hirsch Ginsberg (1856–1927), a Hebrew essayist, one of the foremost pre-state Zionist thinkers, and the founder of cultural Zionism (Wikipedia).

alist goals and they were sometimes opposed to political Zionists who were, in large part, liberals in the political sense. For example, Herzl and Nordau,[4] and so on.

[IDEOLOGY]

Marina Gržinić: How did the situation in the 19th century make the terrain for the development and reinforcement of the idea of Zionism? You draw a line of six authors who were key in the appearance and strengthening of the idea of Zionism, and could you differentiate for us their main contributions?

Marek: As I said before, Zionism as an ideology is modern. It is a modern type of nationalism and it is the product of the 19th century that really got off the ground barely at the end of the century. It was quite late in terms of [other] nationalisms in Europe or globally. Although it is modern, it comes actually from older sources while it builds on Jewish tradition and Jewish religion because, traditionally, Jewish national identity and religious identity are intertwined. They form part of the same whole. So, this traditional Jewish religious attachment to the land of Israel, to the specific land where Jewish state or Jewish kingdom existed and where Judaism was born, and yearning to return to that land – which turned into messianic yearning – has been part of the Jewish religion for 2000 years. So, this forms part of the Zionist idea and also of the appeal of Zionism to large masses of Jews in, especially, Eastern Europe around the turn of the centuries, 19th to 20th and also later. On the other hand, modern Zionist nationalism is part of modern nationalism in the sense that Zionists looked at these new nations that were forming in the 19th century, for example, Greece and also Balkan states, as well as the unification of Italy.

[THE RISE OF ANTISEMITISM IN THE 19TH CENTURY EUROPE]

One other factor that contributed to Zionism, to its development, was that the anti-Jewish feeling in Europe increased dramatically during the

4 Max Simon Nordau (1849–1923) was one of the Zionist leaders, physician, author, social critic, and a co-founder (with Theodor Herzl) of the Zionist Organization (Wikipedia).

19th century and also changed its nature in terms that anti-Jewish feelings that were being religious and based on anti-Judaism, now started to change. So, with secularization during the 19th century this religious component fell away and you got a secular, ethnically and nationally based, as well as racially prejudiced [antisemitism]. So, the Jews were not [considered as] so much different in terms of religion, but were classified as different in terms of nationality, culture or race, even as something biologically foreign to the body of the nation, like a foreign body. Zionists to some extent accepted the situation as it was, but they interpreted it in a way that Jews were, in fact, suffering from all these prejudices, even violence, animosity, because they were, in fact, a nation fragmented and trapped in other nations and that this will always be so if they don't do anything about it, if they do not set themselves free. So, this freedom involved separation, separation from other nations.

[POLITICAL SEPARATION AS A DIMENSION OF ZIONISM]

So, Zionism is, in a sense, political separatism. And they were, of course, inspired by other nations that achieved this, such as the separation of Greece from the Ottoman state and so on. As far as the authors and the anthology are concerned there are some differences between them. For example, the first and earliest writer is Moses Hess,[5] who was an early socialist; he is regarded as the father of social-democracy. He collaborated with Marx and Engels and later with Lassalle.[6] He combined his socialist principles with Jewish nationalism because he thought that socialism itself cannot resolve some more essential conflicts, which he called racial, but he actually meant in terms of national, as well. He talks of racial in terms of national, so, he combines the two. Twenty years later, in 1882 there was a Russian doctor Leon Pinsker[7] who reacted to the pogroms in Russia in 1881, and he wrote a pamphlet where he was very pessimistic in thinking that the Jews, no matter how much they

5 Moses (Moshe) Hess (1812–1875) was a French-Jewish philosopher, socialist, and one of the founders of Labor Zionism (Wikipedia).

6 Ferdinand Lassalle (1825–1864) was a Prussian-German jurist, philosopher and a socialist political activist, regarded as one of the founders of the social democratic movement in Germany (Wikipedia).

7 Leon Pinsker (1821–1891) was a doctor, a Zionist pioneer, activist, as well as the founder and leader of the Hovevei Zion (also Hibbat Zion, Lovers of Zion) movement (Wikipedia).

secularize themselves, how much modern education they attain, will never really become an integral part of the nations they live in.

Miha Marek is an independent researcher, translator, and writer. He graduated in philosophy, French, and biology from the University of Ljubljana. His areas of interest include Enlightenment philosophy, the history and philosophy of science, Jewish history and religion, Hebrew studies, and literary criticism.

DIEGO FALCONÍ TRÁVEZ

5 April 2019, t.i.c.t.a.c. – Space for Transfeminist Antiracist Critical Interventions, Barcelona, Spain
Interview by Tjaša Kancler

Tjaša Kancler: What are historical and the present causes and effects of racism, islamophobia, antisemitism?

Diego Falconí Trávez: The European project was always a whitening and colouring project, and, in fact, Spain always had an ambiguous place in Europe for that reason. It was said, there was that phrase until not long ago that Europe ended at the Pyrenees, because there was precisely that fear of the non-civilized "other" which Spain and Portugal represented, [that Edward W.] Said has analysed so well in his book *Orientalism*[1]; that is the "other" that is not white, that is placed in this fiction of whiteness; and it seems to me that everything that we are living now is actually a recycling of previous discourses that have been previously implemented. That racially constituted Eurocentric discourse which created many "others," must also be contextualized in the rest of the world. The NATO is a whole articulation of that from the North, using its imperial logics, obliges, for example, to have global policies against terrorism, that serve to stigmatize, not only "terrorists," but whole populations, which serves precisely as an update of an idea that has been around

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

long time between Europe and the "Orientals." Islamophobia is a racist conception, as I mentioned before; [it] goes back to the idea of a Spain free of Moorish people. Also, the expulsion of the Sephardi Jews occurs in 1492, the year in which Columbus arrives to Abya Yala.[2]

This discrimination, this fear of the other, was also part of the Spanish Conquest. When the Spaniards arrived to the American Continent, for example, it was very perverse to understand how some of the *Chronicles of Indias*, the historic and literary texts written down by Spanish conquistadores, demonstrate the necessity to see in Indigenous populations that otherness of Moorish populations. According to these texts, there were mosques in Latin America, but these were actually indigenous temples. Also, figures who fought the Moorish, such as San Pelayo martyr, reappears in Abya Yala to burn sodomites. That "non-European other" that has been circulating for a long time in Europe reappeared in the Americas. Then it seems to me that what we are living now is merely a re-update of that deep racism and ethnocentrism, which are central issues that must be analysed with modernization: the process that begins with the arrival of Columbus with a Catholic, White, and Imperial project. It's been studied that in Abya Ayala racism became a global and unified discourse; better said, before Europeans had arrived to Abya Yala racism already existed, of course, but there was not a global, modern discourse. Precisely at the moment when that "new" other is "found," religious, scientific, legal discourses have articulated and instituted racism as universal. Therefore, I think any antiracist project should be anticolonial too.

All these processes disguised in multicultural projects, that apparently include "others" trying to erase their cultural otherness, are part of our geopolitical context nowadays. Those powers of the North continue rescuing Eurocentric, racist, and colonial imaginaries, which intend to "domesticate" those peoples of the South. It seems to me that in this time of Islamophobia, global anticolonialism is a key concept that has to unite us in the South and in the diasporas to find a common ground.

Kancler: Where do you see continuities and changes in dealing with history in Spain? Which social, ideological, and political relations determine the dealing with history?

2 Abya Yala is a name that refers to the Americas that originates from the Kuna people of Panama and Colombia to mean "land in its full maturity."

Falconí Trávez: I have to position myself as a racialized person who had to migrate here to Spain, to Catalonia, some years ago. I have to say that on each day of my stay here I have seen those continuities of trying to protect this European Hispanic space somehow. I have felt the desire of people and institutions to discipline my body from a racial and cultural perspective. And I have witnessed people with more intersections of race and class issues suffer that discipline in a rough and inhuman way. But I also have witnessed resistance and change, and it seems to me that it is vital to understand how in the case of Spain, that has traditionally been a country that has sent migrants to other nations, the migrations that have arrived have changed the landscape of the discussion. In fact, in the last five years, I would say, the anti-colonial discourse and the decolonial discourse have acquired an unprecedented strength here, which of course has to do with those bodies that have migrated here. I think that these debates, these reflections we are having today, and are allowing us to understand our privileges, differences and common struggle, would never have happened if we had not placed our bodies on the line, questioning the discourses through the immediacy of the corporal confrontation.

It occurs to me, thinking about coloniality in the Academia, there is this thinker who wrote an article that seems to be painful and very colonial. Her name is Carmen Romero Bachiller, and she tried to talk about coloniality and queer theories by analysing [what] was happening in India or the US, quoting authors like [Gayatri Chakravorty] Spivak, [Gloria E.] Anzaldúa, etc. She has never problematized the colonial relationship of Spain, with Latin America, or with the Philippines and did not consider us fags, dykes or *travesties* living here. I read these articles, which were published in the first decade of this century, and asked myself how this could be? How can it be that a person, who has gender sensitivity, does not have the slightest idea of reflecting on privileges that do not question the colonial that has to do with the Hispanic's triangulation that I spoke about? I have seen many of my colleagues think about intersectionality and run to texts from the United States to legitimize knowledge. They love speaking about and quoting the Chicano culture to think about coloniality in the US, but why not to talk about the coloniality of migrations here? Why are these analysis not even considered by most scholars?

Then if I have to think from a more optimistic perspective, I would say that the discontinuities within the Hispanic discourse came precisely from that corporeality, from those diasporas, which is a very critical way to start to question that discourse of the racial, that speech of coloniality that has remained untouchable. I know now Romero Bachiller has changed her perspective, which is good. Decolonial critical thinking would not have happened if a series of bodies had not questioned these texts, these practices and these people. It seems to me that this has been significant; I believe, however, that sometimes in our struggles we do not understand that the main enemy is Hispanism, that is the defence of Spain in a racist and colonial way which makes impossible to have an ethical dialogue. In Latin America many people defend that "being Latin American" is part of celebrating the link with Hispanism. I think that is problematic because it allows that colonial relationship to be continued, so I believe that attack on Hispanicism has to be the strategic move to short-circuit better this racist and colonial continuity that exists in the Kingdom of Spain.

Kancler: What aspects are crucial for envisioning the corresponding preconditions for emancipatory possibilities of remembrance?

Falconí Trávez: One of the crucial questions of thinking from the academic field is to understand how memory has worked in other places. Countries like Chile, Argentina, Colombia due to the grave and painful dictatorships or processes of violence that occurred in their history have taught us a lot about memory. There has been a gigantic reflection on memory, much deeper than those existing in Spain. In the case of Argentina and Colombia at least, it was not only a theoretical framework but also a practical display. The "Truth Commissions" tried both, to judge perpetrators of political violence and to rescue the memory of people who were erased from official history.

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MARÍA RUIDO

29 June 2019, Barcelona, Spain
Interview by Tjaša Kancler

Tjaša Kancler: How does the politics of memory, denial and erasure operate in Spain?

María Ruido: I think that there is an obvious politics that comes from Francoism, it's called a revision of the memory and it was also changing during different stages of Francoism; in the Francoist fascism it was a politics that had to deal with the *coup d'état*, obviously they did not call it a *coup d'état*, they call this reconquest of the country to save it from communism, the idea of "crusade," which is also very supported by the Church.

In a second moment, there was an idea that this process was necessary to build a state that conserved the Hispanic essences and especially a third stage from 1959, of the autarchy [autocracy] with Ricardo de la Cierva, one of the official historians of Francoism, and his "theory of two demons," as it was to be called in Latin America; because all dictatorships have quite different stages, and all transitions also, contextualizing them of course [is important], but they are quite similar. Then the "theory of equidistance," in a sense that, well we all did it wrong, in the war there was violence on both sides, the war was horrible, but of course the Republic was a terrible Republic, which exercised a lot

of violence; the assassination of [José] Calvo Sotelo. All this equidistance, which I also believe has a lot to do with what is happening right now. Certain people say: "Vox is maybe ultra-right but what can you tell me about Podemos, it's the ultra-left," this is really very worrisome. We are talking about a fascist party that intends to assimilate a party that is social democrat. We not only bleach fascism but anti-fascism is being criminalized, and we are turning claims [articulating demands that are] very basic, that in the 1930s would be... come on, they would not have been treated as anything radical, but now they seem incredibly [extremely] radical, or the mass media make them to be incredibly [extremely] radical.

So, I think there is a series of stages that have to do with this history of Francoism, which in the transition becomes a continuity of that equidistance. It is the idea "here we will forget and we will forgive" that works in the hands of the Socialist Party, in addition to the idea of consensus so that everything goes together, it fits in the same bag. For example, the acceptance of the monarchy, without asking anyone, and at the same time the implicit acceptance of the idea of equidistance, that everybody did it wrong, everyone is to blame and to be forgiven. I think it was voted, when we did *Rosebud* [a documentary film project], around 2005 or 2006 in the Parliament, to condemn the *coup d'état* of 1936 as a *coup d'état* with the opposition of the Popular Party. This means it has taken us a long time to call things by proper name, and I believe that this politics has continued, that Spanish "democracy" has a defect at its base, and that not only there is no principle of resolution but that we continue [persist] in avoiding it.

When Pedro Sánchez [Spanish Socialist Party] came to power, with his proposal to shift censorship saying we're going to get the dictator out of the Valley of the Fallen, the first thing you can think to ask is what the Socialist Party has been doing for the last 16 years when they had an absolute majority? Evidently they have been the architects of those policies, it is true that they passed the Historical Memory Law, but especially due to pressure from civil society, groups of Historical Memory, and revindication groups, not because it would come from them. Then there was a great retrogression during the almost eight years of the Popular Party on power, after Zapatero; as well with Zapatero there was also no substantial progress because the Historical Memory

Law has never been fully implemented. It is true that there have been changes in street names, very superficial, but things that should be inadmissible are still there; issues regarding Franco times are allowed to be taken individually to the Supreme Court, but it should be a matter of state politics.

There is no money to look for the DNA of the families of people who are in the graves, as Spain, after Cambodia, is the country with many people buried without being identified. This is a politics that has continued, which has not been reversed at any time, at least not in a clear way. I believe that the current Socialist Party is a bit like Zapaterismo but more deceitful, because Sánchez seems like a person with very unclear intentions, and then evidently he used that as a hook: Look, look what I'm going to do! In the meantime, he does not do anything about the labour reform. There is always a misuse by people who come to power of the Historical Memory Law as a kind of... well, it also happens with LGBTQI politics, for example, as a kind of spectacle politics, which really cover up other things of greater importance that they do not do. So, it seems to me a very dirty way of playing that hides that there is not any intention for a radical change of this substantial oblivion that is what underlies all Spanish democracy.

Kancler: How is this connected to colonial history and fascism here in relation to the current political situation? Which social, ideological and political relations determine this?

Ruido: It is even worse, in Spain, to talk about the colonial past and assuming responsibilities of that colonial past, is almost like make me laugh. We have mostly right and ultra-right media, despite what some say, I remember, for example, Federico Jiménez Los Santos [Spanish radio presenter] that when [Andrés Manuel] López Obrador, the current President of Mexico, asked for a kind of apology from the Spanish state and the King for the colonial past in what is now Mexico... there was a rage transmitted; well we need to remember some discourses from our "glorious" past that Vox puts on the table; it is very surreal, it seems absolutely surreal and has a lot to do with our unresolved fascist past, because fascism and colonialism are absolutely linked together and they are connected with that story of the "greatness of the homeland."

Not even in the academy there is no interest to think about the colonial past. Maybe there is an interest, but not a structure. To think about our colonial past, which we have and is very abundant, it is only necessary to look at how many countries that speak Spanish in the world, and then the recent colonial past, in the African case, which has a lot to do with the whole immigration issue at the moment, and has to do with the Melilla fence.[1] That is, with questions that right now have obvious political implications, that Ceuta and Melilla are Spanish places of sovereignty or that the Canary Islands that is practically on the line with Rabat, remains Spanish, while we are protesting loudly that Gibraltar is British, because it is on Spanish territory. This has some implications with an unresolved past and that I don't think is specific to the Spanish state, but in general the nation-states have complicated pasts that they tend to put under various carpets. In general, it seems that the integrity of that nation-state and its continuity depends largely on the fact that there is no talk about it, and that certain issues in the Strait [of Gibraltar] are not opened.

If we start here to talk about how fascism is related to colonialism, for example, we would have to talk about how the Civil War actually started in North Africa, what we have been doing in the wars of Morocco, what relation had the wars of Morocco with the politics of the First Republic, and even of the Second Republic, and of course, with the dictatorship in the middle. We would have to review our entire history, and then all these issues will come out as intertwined, they are related. Pulling one thread, it means pulling them all, and it means above all portraying ourselves in what we are, in something that I think we don't like to recognize ourselves.

María Ruido PhD is an interdisciplinary artist, filmmaker, researcher, and cultural producer. She lectures at the Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Barcelona.

1 Melilla is a Spanish exclave and a military base on the northern coast of Africa, bordering Morocco. It was a free port before Spain joined EU in 1986 (Wikipedia).

ESTHER (MAYOKO) ORTEGA

3 July 2019, t.i.c.t.a.c. – Space for Transfeminist Antiracist Critical Interventions, Barcelona, Spain
Interview by Tjaša Kancler

Tjaša Kancler: How does the politics of memory, denial and erasure operate in Spain?

Esther (Mayoko) Ortega: Well, it's complicated, because when there is a talk about memory, usually here in Spain, in the Spanish State, it's being discussed, but it is never referred to colonial memory, memory here has to do with something else. Again in public discourse, when there is a talk about memory it has to do with recent memory, with a memory of the Civil War related to fascism, obviously, but only from the period of the Civil War and the post-war period, etc. So, precisely, one of the issues we started to talk about not long ago, it has to do with all this. It has to do with how it is not talked about, while there is a systematic erasure of everything that has to do with colonial history, with colonial archives, mainly colonial archives of the recent colonies, the archives of the African colonies. Both Equatorial Guinea and Western Sahara are still a classified matter, and in the case of Guinea, they are secret archives which cannot be accessed, not for doing research or in any way. So, precisely the colonial archive, the colonial memory, is something about which there is no public discourse, there is no public debate in the State.

That has to do with the fact that the most recent history of colonization and decolonization of Guinea occurs precisely during Franco's stage, Franco's dictatorship. The effective decolonization of Guinea, the Independence, let's say, is declared in the year 1968. Last year it was 50 years ago, and it is also a symbolic date, 12th October, the day on which Equatorial Guinea declares Independence, so this year it will be 51 years ago. This happens practically during the last years of the Francoist dictatorship. But there is continuity, and it is an evident continuity, in addition, that clear continuity can also be seen in the fact that the archives are still inaccessible, inaccessible political archives, even for the researchers.

The point is that Independence, in this case, happens but the colonial relations, economic, cultural, etc., remain established. And they are still established today, it is known more in Guinea than here, that Spanish political leaders have significant economic interests today in the "ex-colony." I cannot speak about the Sahara because I do not know the situation so closely, but in the case of Guinea, it is so. And those continuities have to do also with the continuities that are produced by the non-rupture with the Francoist dictatorship here. I think that these non-ruptures that occur in Spain, the "famous" Spanish transition to democracy, are the same continuities that arise in what is now Equatorial Guinea, and the economic relations and the secrecy with which these relationships are managed.

Kancler: How is it dealt with colonial history and fascism here in relation to the current political situation? What can you comment upon collective imaginary being shaped by these processes?

Ortega: That is also interesting, because the relationship with this and with the archive, and the colonial memory here, the recent colonial memory, is the history of forgetfulness, precisely, it is something that is not talked about, it is unknown, it is something that is not studied. I think it has one line, or something like that, in the school curriculum, in this case about the relationship of Spain with Guinea, one line! Two hundred years of colonial relationship, settlement and a very recent decolonization are given one or two lines in the school curriculum. So this fundamentally also affects that erasure. I always talk about that erasure of Blackness in Spain, and this would be one part, an almost

final part of the erasure of Blackness in Spain, and the relationship with Blackness, with Africa, etc.

When it is said that in Spain there is no, or there were no Black people, it has to do with this. Today pupils in school do not study this, do not know that Spain, the Kingdom of Spain, had colonies in Africa until two days ago. Therefore, they do not know a crucial part of the history. They also do not know why, especially in times when the Spanish State, the Kingdom of Spain, was not a country receiving migrants, there were Black people, Afro, Afro-descents here. That has to do precisely with this relationship. But the ignorance is absolute, the phrase is "In Spain, there were no Blacks," or there were no Black people. That made us Afro-descents not being ever recognized; Afro-descent people from here, not being ever recognized with the possibility of belonging to the Spanish State – not legally but in everyday practice and in the collective imaginary – by denying the colonial relationship that was established and by which our parents came here, both before and after Independence. It is still like, why are they here?

It is not known; this does not exist; they are passing through. The lack of memory means that we cannot produce a more or less coherent account, about "other" corporalities, and how the Spanish State is thought about in that sense, meaning white. So, yes, for Afro, Afro-descent people who are in fact descendants of parents who have been Ecuatoguineans, the denomination is changing, it has always been one of the issues we have had to deal with, and with which we continue working in fact. Just these days that I was coming here to Barcelona, I met Remei Sipi, an Afro-Guinean woman, on the train Ave. She still calls herself Guinean, Bubi, and who speaks precisely or makes an effort to recover all this memory, which is important and also to recover the colonial memory there.

What was happening in Guinea while Franco's regime was in power, but also before, because the relationship, the relations concerning the colonies were not at all different, for example, in the time of the Spanish Republic or later in the Francoist period. These were still colonial territories, with a segregation regime, with plantation politics. The truth is a tremendous regime that in Spain, obviously, all this is erased and there is no talk about it. Another issue, racism towards Black people, the bad guys are always what we see in the movies, the plantation

regime, which only occurred, of course, in the 13 colonies or the United States, etc., but not something that was related to the Kingdom of Spain. I think it is severe, this politics, for me deliberate, of colonial amnesia, so much the past one; with the past I mean the colonies in America and Asia especially, which ended in the late nineteenth century, but also the most recent African ones.

Kancler: What are historically, and in the present, causes and effects of racism, islamophobia, antisemitism?

Ortega: In fact, when I speak I try to put all these historical facts in the context because, I think this is something that is not talked about, but I believe that the Kingdom of Spain, and I think you can talk about the Kingdom of Spain from 1492, that it is a very symbolic and very controversial date, but at the same time I think it is a point from where to start.

[1492]

Well, I was telling you, for me, there is a date that is a key, which is that of 12 October 1492. It has always been explained that it is a crucial date, with the beginning of colonization and conquest, conquest and colonization rather, of the American territories, which interests me, but I am very much focused on what are the processes that are happening inside the Kingdom of Spain at that time. I always talk that from those moments, and setting the date 1492 is important, because what is produced is a process of racial "hygiene" inside the peninsula.

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DIALOGUES FOR THE FUTURE: COUNTERING THE GENEALOGY OF AMNESIA

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