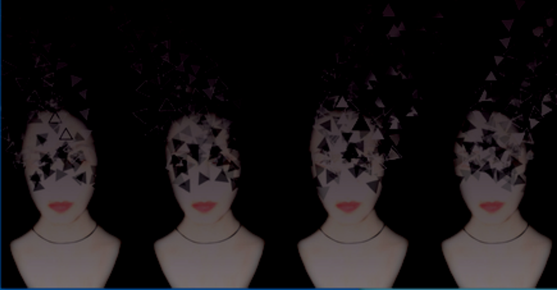
YOUTH AND MEMORY IN EUROPE

DEFINING THE PAST, SHAPING THE FUTURE

Edited by Félix Krawatzek and Nina Friess



MEDIA AND CULTURAL MEMORY

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Youth and Memory in Europe

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Volume 34

Youth and Memory in Europe

Defining the Past, Shaping the Future

Edited by
Félix Krawatzek and Nina Friess

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For all those travelling on the overgrown path of raising future citizens

Acknowledgements

The ideas for this volume took shape just before all our lives were derailed by the pandemic that befell us in early 2020. In the loss of normality and the rollercoaster of living through a pandemic, the research for this volume gave some sense of continuity between the previous and the new normal. The fascination for this research topic emerged over several pre-Covid-19 lunchtime discussions as a result of which we wrote a study on how young people engaged with the Russian celebrations of Victory Day in 2020. But Victory Day 2020 was not the only major event that needed to be postponed, cancelled or reduced in scale since early 2020.

The conference that was to provide the groundwork for this volume was originally supposed to take place in person in Berlin. Instead, it ended up inaugurating the now conventional online and hybrid events at our institute. A format that was to become a modus vivendi for us all. In September 2020, this was still somewhat of a terra incognita for us at the Centre for East European and International Studies (ZOiS). As we write these lines in January 2022, the excitement about the novelty of an online conference has become a very distant memory. We are now all masters of different video conferencing platforms, travel between time zones during one working day, and regularly experience a clash of cultures without even leaving our own bedroom.

This volume is the result of the conference “Memory as a Dialogue? History for Young People” and we wanted to express our gratitude to all the participants in that event. Despite the distance created by the screen, the commitment and enthusiasm of all the participants made it as far as to the two of us in Berlin, and the discussions of our shared research interests during the panels and virtual coffee breaks – which seemed very innovative at the time – helped to clarify the ideas that readers can encounter on the pages of this book.

The work behind this volume would not have been possible without the freedom that we enjoy at ZOiS and which our academic director, Professor Gwendolyn Sasse, has generated for us. The working environment at ZOiS allowed us to embark on this truly interdisciplinary adventure and it is with great pleasure that we acknowledge Gwendolyn’s important role in facilitating the natural encounter that takes place between a scholar of Slavic literature and a political scientist at the institute. Through our discussions at ZOiS, we were able to define an object of interest that transcends the borders of our respective disciplines. Beyond the possibility for interdisciplinary dialogue, ZOiS also uniquely creates room for comparative analyses. As a quick glance at the table of contents shows, the geographical focus of the present volume is Eastern Europe, but for an understanding of Eastern Europe a comparative perspective with other parts of Europe is helpful.

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We also want to thank the entire communications department at ZOiS, and in particular Anja Krüger, for their help in running the online workshop and promoting our research findings via social media and other means. Dr Christian Schaich and Thomas Berthold also deserve a special mention for remaining cool-headed when it came to the financial and legal questions that arise in the course of such a project. We are also very grateful to ZOiS for mobilising the funds necessary to make this book available to everyone through open access and to Katrin Hoffmann for steering us through that process.

The book got a very warm reception by the editors of Media and Cultural Memory, Professor Astrid Erll and Professor Ansgar Nünning. We are very thankful for the place our book found in this distinguished series, now standing next to some of the most important contributions to memory studies over the last years. To our great pleasure, the anonymous reviewer endorsed the project and the positive reception we received gave the project its final boost.

At De Gruyter, Dr Myrto Aspioti expressed her commitment to the project right from its inception and her dedication has helped us bring this text to its conclusion. We would also like to thank Stella Diedrich for her management of the production process and her eye for detail at the very final stages.

Turning a collection of articles by authors from different disciplines and academic cultures into one coherent book requires a very firm editorial hand. And whilst we certainly tested our contributors' nerves on numerous occasions, this project could not have succeeded without the unforgiving editorial work undertaken by Dr Ian Garner. Ian went far beyond the usual copy editing one can expect and thereby spurred all of us to further clarify our lines of thought and tighten up our arguments. The last stages in the production of such a large volume always require great attention to detail and our student assistant Martha Jurowski was invaluable when it came to checking the layout, the consistency of bibliographies and footnotes, as well as the punctuation. Obviously, all remaining errors remain solely the joint responsibility of the editors.

Last but not least, thanks go to our families. We have all been living through the pandemic reality since 2020 and an end is not yet in sight. It gave us immense pleasure to work on this book, but it also made significant demands on our time and freedom. Naturally, time needed to be made for this project at the very moment when children did not want to sleep, schools were closed due to Covid-19, or when our partners also needed to do their own work. It is thanks to the love and freedom we received from our families that we could find the space to work on this project and bring it to its conclusion.

Félix Krawatzek & Nina Friess
Berlin, January 2022

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Félix Krawatzek & Nina Friess

Transmitting the Past to Young Minds

When the two of us talked about the representations of history that had accompanied our own transition from childhood to adolescence and adulthood, the significance of our different socialisation, in spite of our shared German nationality, stood out. While we had a shared childhood memory of the fall of the Berlin Wall, one of us had experienced this moment in East Berlin, while the other was near Frankfurt/Main in the West. In spite of the many political, social and economic changes that occurred after 1991, the cultural environments of our childhood remained relatively stable. The historical narratives that we were exposed to remained unchanged during our transformative years and left their echo as we gradually encountered the complex historical underpinnings of the societies that we integrated in the wake of the Cold War.

Growing up in a family from East Germany, one of us read Arkady Gaidar's Soviet classic *Timur and his Gang* (*Timur und sein Trupp*/*Timur i ego komanda*), which was part of the GDR's school curriculum but unknown in West Germany. Written in 1940, and first published in its German translation in 1947, the story is situated in a pastoral idyll of Moscow countryside in the summer of 1939. *Timur* revolves around the 14-year-old eponymous hero, who leads his "gang" of friends as if they were partisans. The book highlights the values of neighbourhood solidarity and the pacifist nature of Soviet society, but also draws attention to children's military upbringing and potential even before the Great Patriotic War – the Soviet and Russian name for World War II – would begin on 22 June 1941.

In the West, meanwhile, the other one of us read Hans Peter Richter's novel *Friedrich* (*Damals war es Friedrich*, 1961), a tale of friendship between a German and a Jewish boy in Nazi Germany that deals with the persecution of Jews in the Third Reich. Generations of pupils in middle school read this young adult novel. Today, both *Timur* and *Friedrich* are generally considered outdated. The Soviet outlook of *Timur* does not conform to the historical understanding that prevails in unified Germany (Dolle-Weinkauff and Peitsch 2008) and *Friedrich* is criticised for its stereotypes and simplified history (Moffit 2000).

However, despite sweeping institutional changes, the ideas behind these works did not cease to be influential. One of us maintains a romanticised memory of – and an almost naïve fondness for – Soviet solidarity and the Russian countryside; the other one preserves a deeply embodied sense of guilt for the crimes committed by the grandparents of today's generations. Our own exposure to *Timur* and *Friedrich* and their historical ideas illustrates the intersection which this volume explores. By looking at a shared topic of concern – a region or a

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theme – the authors writing on issues spanning the European continent develop interdisciplinary encounters between cultural manifestations of history aimed at young people and the historical memories young people express. The emerging dialogues illuminate the fictional groundings of collective identities (Truglio 2017, 19), shedding light on how young people contest and adopt such identities.

Young children begin by reading the books that families deem appropriate for them. The household's historical and political vision dominates children in their earliest years. As time goes by, the influence of other socialising forces – school, friends, the media, the political environment – increases. As they experience this transition, which may continue into adulthood, young people form their historical understanding, an element of their positioning in relation to society, the family and other groups (Hurrelmann and Quenzel 2016). Identification with some historical narratives and the inevitable rejection of others accompanies this process of identity construction (Meeus 2011).

This volume contends that young individuals across Europe relate to their country's history in complex and often ambivalent ways. It pays attention to how both formal education and broader culture communicate ideas about the past, and how young people respond to these ideas. Exploring topics from across the whole of Europe, the book's chapters show what ideas about the past are central to the identities that young people develop and their belonging to groups such as nations, social movements or a religion. Young people express received historical narratives in new – and potentially subversive – ways. When young people develop their own sense of identity, they also come to interrogate their own roots and selectively privilege certain aspects in the history of their family or nation. This collection, therefore, also illuminates how constitutive historical narratives are to young individual's identities and to their sense of belonging to the different communities they are part of.

The transition from childhood to adulthood has across the globe become more multi-layered over the last three decades, because the role of conventional institutions of socialisation, such as the nation-state, the education system, media, political parties and the family, has evolved (Abendschön 2013; McDevitt and Chaffee 2002). To understand the range of historical perspectives expressed towards and by today's young people, we must therefore look beyond the traditional institutions of socialisation. This book puts the focus on one such realm, the broadly conceived cultural realm, comprising literature, cinema, and TV and its relationship to young people's historical memories.

While the cultural realm is not the only, and possibly not even the main, source of historical inspiration for young people, it offers unique insights into the competition between a range of historical visions. The authors in this volume do therefore not wish to make the causal claim that cultural representations of history are unambiguously imprinted on young minds. But we argue that in order to understand the circulation of historical and commemorative expectations and experiences it is important to look for discursive points of convergence and divergence.

The historical narratives young people express may influence what the broader population thinks about history. Mariana Achugar explains: “Youth can make a substantial contribution to social change and cultural reproduction through their participation in social practices where the past is (re)constructed.” (2016, 5) Across the globe, “youth” as a symbolic category is commonly associated with authenticity as is young people’s involvement in politics. Indeed, young people are a source of political and social change in any society, even if the direction of that change is by no means pre-determined and youth itself is defined by contradictory views. Young people have the potential to challenge historical interpretations in critical ways, yet they may seek to avert their eyes and avoid critical confrontation with the past or reinforce exclusionary visions on history. In Spain, for example, it is only the current generation of the “grandchildren” that has come to question the “pact of forgetting”, the basis for the country’s democratic transition after 1975 (Boyd 2008). Young Spaniards who are involved in local exhumation projects have been critical actors in challenging a mnemonic consensus (O’Donohoe, Regueiro Salgado and García Carcedo, this volume). Their activism has in turn triggered wider political and public debates on Francoism and how the regime’s crimes were silenced (Aguilar and Ramírez-Barat 2019). In post-1945 Austria, on the other hand, young people have not in greater numbers assumed this critical role, unlike their peers in West Germany from 1968 onwards (Welzer et al. 2014). Instead, the cross-generational post-war consensus on Austria having been the “first victim” of Nazi Germany continued to provide a societal basis for the consolidation of the Austrian post-war society until 1986, when a reinterpretation of the country’s past occurred in the context of the Waldheim affair (Hammerstein 2017, 57–67).

Nations, social movements and religious groups all rely on historical narratives to ground their group identity, focusing the dissemination of those narratives on the younger generations as a means to cement their future identity. Each successive generation emerges as a “mnemonic generation” (Wydra 2018), expressing new historical interpretations and expectations that potentially alter or solidify historical viewpoints (Palmberger 2016). Given society’s perpetual replenishment, young people are a crucial target of contested historical narratives to shape the future (Krawatzek 2018). These narratives can be encountered in different realms, including the cultural arena, the educational system or the media, which we will explore in the following section.

1 The many voices speaking history to young people

The cultural realm is capable of expanding the limits of social and political thought and highlighting contradictions and tensions in society. Some cultural discourses challenge us to think about the origins of the apparently normal. Literature – but also film, theatre or graphic novels – makes such challenges, offering alternative narratives in the stead of the deconstructed (Erll and Nünning 2005). Cultural artefacts challenge norms of remembering when they expose, in a way that is less constrained than non-fiction, the multiple voices that exist below the everyday historical rhetoric.

Not every text performs this function, but two Cold War-era examples from East and West highlight its potential. Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn's novella *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (*Odin den Ivana Denisovicha*) was published in the Soviet literary journal *Novy Mir* in 1962. Solzhenitsyn describes a typical day in the life of a labour camp detainee, Ivan Denisovich Shukhov, who is serving a ten-year sentence for alleged treason. The publication caused a sensation and amounted to an official licence to report on the injustices that millions of Soviet citizens had experienced in the Soviet labour camps. For a short period, *One Day* was, in Kathleen Parthé's words, a "one-text phenomenon" (2004, 12): everyone was reading it and discussing it all at once. With the end of the political Thaw in the mid-1960s, the text vanished from Soviet libraries, to be reissued only during the 1980s period of *perestroika* (Frieß 2017). Although not intended for a young audience, *One Day* is now part of the Russian school curriculum, where it provides a rare critical perspective on Russian history.

The Franco-Belgian Didier Daeninckx's crime novel *Forgetting is Easy, Remembering is Murder* (*Meurtres pour mémoire*, 1983) is another striking illustration. The work engages with the massacre of 17 October 1961, when French police violently repressed a demonstration organised by the French branch of the Algerian independence movement, the *National Liberation Front* (*Front de libération nationale*). The massacre of 1961 had long remained a restricted memory which ended only in 1999, when the French Chamber of Deputies adopted a law recognising the reality of the war in Algeria and ending the euphemistic description of the massacre as a "public order operation" (Liauzu 2000). The law led to polemical debates that culminated in President François Hollande's acknowledgement of the 1961 massacre (Paissa 2016). Daeninckx's novel, published years before the 1997 trial of the civil servant Maurice Papon – who oversaw the extermination of French Jews and later the violence against Algerians – and in a context when society had not yet made any progress in its confrontation with its own guilt in past atrocities (Reynolds and Morin, this volume), had already caused a public outcry. Conservative voices dismissed the book as irrelevant, and Daeninckx could only appear in public to talk about the topic with difficulty. In due course, however, the text became very popular and was reprinted in numerous versions, in translation, and even as a graphic novel in 1991.[1]

Authors attempting to transmit historical narratives to young people often endeavour to generate a proximity between readers and the historical topics in question. Augustine Fouillée's nineteenth-century classic *The Tour of France by Two Children* (*Le Tour de la France par deux enfants*, 1877), for instance, depicts a pair of children – one aged fourteen, the other seven – from Lorraine. The duo tours France, conveying to their reading peers the geographical breadth and cultural richness of their homeland – a task of considerable importance following France's crushing defeat against Germany in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870–71. The book was intended to prepare young readers for an anticipated next war, when the "lost provinces" were to be reconquered (Audoin-Rouzeau 1993). Fouillée's approach allows young readers to emotionally identify with the protagonists of their age, with a series of historical events, and with the social group that they belong to. Its political ambitions notwithstanding, the book presents a childhood shorn of context as it seeks to appeal to *adult* readers nostalgic about their own happy childhood memories. Narrating history from a child's perspective permits the elision of ugly political struggles – at least for young readers focused on an adventurous plot and the depiction of characters – by removing an era from its socio-economic context.

Those who write for young people on World War II, the Holocaust and other crimes against humanity nevertheless often do seek to engage its historical context. Historical facts are integrated into widely discussed texts such as Judith Kerr's novel *When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit* (1971), which fictionalises the author's own flight from Nazi-era Berlin to London through Switzerland, or Jacek Dukaj's cross-over fantasy novel *Crowman* (*Wroniec*, 2009), which explores the early 1980s period of Polish martial law (Thaidigsmann 2022). Each work relates facts from a child's perspective, revealing how History and individual lives interrelate.

On first impression, these literary products engage purely with the past. However, their aim is to shape the present and future. The topics overlap with moments of transition that encourage groups – especially nations – to redefine their identity. Studying Portugal, for instance, Francesca Blockeel demonstrates how the need to redefine Portuguese identity after the loss of colonies and the beginning of European integration has expanded the market for literature. As a result, Blockeel argues, "Portuguese literature for the young has been contributing more than ever to the shaping of a strongly developed national conscience." (2003, 58; see also Richard, this volume) Historical fiction provides a privileged entry point into the visions that nations develop of themselves in moments of reorientation.

---

[1] In France, the genre of historical comics, "la bande dessinée historique", is popular and covers a variety of political backgrounds of topics, ranging from the Antiquity (Gallego 2015) to modern topics such as World War II and more recently colonialism (on the latter, see Connan-Pintado, this volume).

The way young people interpret such literature is, however, conditioned by the social context in which they encounter a given text (Schneider 2019a, 11). In liberal democracies, the critical voice that culture introduces should be a welcomed challenge to the prevailing visions. In autocracies, on the contrary, such correctives often are considered a threat, leading to more or less pronounced censorship (Parthé 2004; see Darnton (2014) for an historical overview). Irrespective of context, culture is one of the many voices portraying history for young people, who socialise in multiple realms. We must thus explore numerous spheres to understand the historical origins of young people's social and political worlds.

Formal and informal institutions also impact young people's perceptions of history. The family has a particularly critical role for socialisation, since young people's first encounter of history is often at the kitchen table with parents and maybe grandparents, who provide seemingly authentic and authoritative voices on topics pertaining to the past (Williams 2014, 4). Over time, the family's privileged position is likely to be challenged. The school history curriculum has a crucial role: the historical visions related at school have the potential to influence young people's historical views and, moreover, usually exist as the outcome of a long process of negotiation between political and cultural actors, further revealing the intersections and interrelations between history, culture, and the politics of the past and present.

History textbooks are today used by states across the political spectrum as a tool for social conditioning (Taylor and Macintyre 2017), which reflects a tradition of history teaching serving to construct national identity. During the long nineteenth century, the school emerged as the critical arena for turning children into citizens of a nation (Tröhler et al. 2011, 1; Weber 1977; Williams 2014, 2). History teaching remains "a tool through which to direct values, perspectives, and social direction" (Crawford and Foster 2008, 9). The development of a national educational system in Spain, for instance, occurred in tandem with both the emergence of a unified nation-state throughout the nineteenth century and with the church-state compromise that tipped the balance of power in favour of the former. Indeed, until Francisco Franco came to power, groups including "civic nationalists", authoritarian nationalists and modernisers competed for influence on the educational system in the context of a weak central state who was itself challenged by regionalists (Boyd 1997, 308; for the important regional variation see Regueiro Salgado and García Carcedo, this volume).

Discussions over the content of schoolbooks expose competing historical visions targeted at young people across and beyond Europe. However, since young people do not simply integrate the ideas of community that they encounter in such books into their lives, *prima facie* analysis of schoolbooks tells us more about what adults think their nation should mean for young people, than what young people actually *make* of national and historical ideas. In particular, the mechanism of "othering" (Gürsel 2018), which effectively highlights a country's unique value system or its regional embedding, is central to many textbooks (Williams 2016). Textbooks, therefore, never offer an objective view on a country's history. Rather, as James Williams contends, such books tend to "present a romanticized and inaccurate or at least selective portrait of a nation" (2014, 2; see also Krawatzek and Weller, this volume). In Eastern Europe's contested historical terrain, the battle over the content of history textbooks is particularly fiery. Lina Klymenko (2016) compares narrative structures and the foundational role in stories in Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian textbooks, as well as elements of resistance, suffering and being endowed with a specific civilising mission. Klymenko finds that ideas of national identity are on prominent display alongside historical content in works produced in these countries, each of which had embarked on a process of post-Soviet nation-building.

An individualisation of history cuts across the ways in which textbooks and teaching, literature and film, and museums have developed in recent years. Across the globe, a focus on individual narratives – those of victims, perpetrators and bystanders – is intended to render history accessible to the public. The importance of affect and the emotions generated in, for example, a museum, are important drivers of a purportedly more profound engagement of visitors with historical material (Watson 2020). While an emotional identification with individual stories seems easier than with institutions, treaties or economic indicators, this development runs the risk of atomising history and downplaying the significance of structural factors driving political and social developments.

The Warsaw Rising Museum, which commemorates the summer 1944 uprising led by the Polish Home Army and aimed at liberating the city from the German occupiers, illustrates this affective turn with striking clarity. The uprising was brutally subjugated, seeing approximately 200,000 lives lost and the almost complete destruction of Warsaw. Today, the Rising Museum celebrates the event as an example of Polish national heroism and selfless sacrifice. The institution's mission makes explicit the intention to strengthen the visitor's identification with the protagonists by using visual, audio, smell and other physical experiences to appeal to emotions. This immersive experience renders "reflective distance" difficult and encourages instead "experientiality" (Jaeger 2020, 80). The attempt to blend emotions and experiences is neither subtle nor hidden. The design brief for the permanent exhibit mandated that "the exhibition should appeal to the emotions of young people and make them understand (feel) the situation of the people of Warsaw during the Rising" (Żychlińska and Fontana 2016, 246–47).

The Warsaw Rising Museum is an extreme example of an institution that blurs the lines between knowledge and emotional identification – paying a visit to the museum is an act of emotional and patriotic duty – to suggest that today's young people need to be prepared to relive their forebears' experiences. The museum illustrates, albeit in a maximalist fashion, a global trend of experiencing history through the embodiment of a nation in individual heroic characters, making complex history seem accessible (while, in fact, functioning to reduce it). The difference between the visitors' present and the historical past are partially dissolved, yet centring the visiting experience on individuals simultaneously creates a distance between the museum's attendees and the structural factors that may have contributed to the historical events on display.

Nevertheless, museums can hardly shift a society's broader memory culture unless social and political dynamics support it. Duncan Light, studying the Memorial to the Victims of Communism and to the Resistance in northern Romania, highlights the museum's limited influence on views about the communist period since young visitors' preconceptions shape how they engage with the museum. However, that does not mean that the museum is irrelevant. A visit at least increases young people's awareness of the difference between the past and the present, reducing simplistic arguments about present-day shortcomings (Light et al. 2021).

Irrespective of the mode of transmission and the topic, a feature that unites the cultural and memorial approaches we have described is adults' desire to use them as a means to instruct and mould young people to perpetuate a delineated set of social attitudes and symbolic representations. Young people are to acquire the "correct" knowledge of their country and draw the "correct" conclusions from interacting with historical knowledge. At the same time, speaking to young people – not unlike the general audience – necessitates the reduction of historical narratives. The historical voices that speak to young people in this volume, therefore, serve as a magnifying glass to inspect the nation.

2 Youth as a magnifying glass for the nation

The social and political positions occupied by – or granted to – youth reveal much about how a given society relates to itself and to its past, present and future. Ideas projected onto youth point to societal experiences and expectations. Youth functions, then, as a screen for the projection of others' desires and ambitions. Young people, however, are not merely passive recipients of such projections. They are actors in their own right, which makes the very idea of youth a highly contested symbol (Krawatzek 2018).

Ideas of national identity are frequently entwined with ideas about youth. The symbol of youth played a significant role in developing notions of collective identity, pertaining to nations, classes and regions, expressed, for example, in analogies between the child's maturation and the development of the national body (Truglio 2017). Towards the end of the nineteenth century, discussions about youth in Europe became "the focal point for a series of strong images, ways of imagining and representing both the self and society in its entirety" (Levi and Schmitt 1997, 6). Actors assessed the broader socio-political questions of their era while discussing youth (Hobsbawm 1996 [1962], 118). By the early twentieth century, concerns about deviant youth – especially adolescents (Shore 2019) – motivated policies aimed at symbolic and institutional integration of the new generation as well as the introduction of disciplinary measures.

The symbolic and organisational power of youth has tended to be particularly prominent after moments of juncture. In Turkey, for example, youth has come to symbolise the entire nation when in 1908, the "Young Turks" reform movement assumed power after the Constitutional Revolution (Lüküslü 2005). At this juncture, multifaceted policies of nation-building intensified, gradually eradicating Arabic from the administrative and public realm (Ülker 2005). Though a group with diverse outlooks, the "Young Turks" shared an upbringing and socialisation with a swathe of peers born between 1875 and 1885. These young Turks were united in their opposition to the absolutist regime of Sultan Abdul Hamid II and their desire to pursue a programme of nation building – a forced assimilation of minority groups – that was inspired by their members' socialisation in European intellectual circles (Zürcher 2010). The concept of youth as a privileged category in Turkey conditions the reception and possibilities of young people's political and social participation to this day (Duygu Erbil and Lucie G. Drechselová, this volume).

Youth was particularly important for programmes of nation-building and renewal in the early Soviet Union following the 1917 Revolution. Young people were accorded an elevated position in Leninist ideology, a significance that created a perpetual tension between the USSR's purported goal of creating a transcendent, class-based unity and a feted category of youth. Symbolic and performative generational continuity was carried out within and by the *Komsomol*, the Young Communist League. The actual interests of young people, however, were never entirely uniform (Neumann 2011).[2]

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[2] Young people's interest in party-approved literature was, indeed, often low. Bureaucrats had to acknowledge this fact with some astonishment (Balina and Rudova 2013, 8).

Gaining interpretative authority over the meaning of youth was crucial to the early Soviet project – as was the unceasing depiction of a "happy childhood", which became a mantra in the USSR and other socialist countries (Erdei 2004).

The above examples highlight how the aftermath of decisive junctures is often followed by a focus – led by the new state – on transforming young people's political outlook and conveying symbolically changing meanings of youth itself (Edwards, this volume).

In recent decades, identities projected onto youth have moved beyond the national frame. The European integration project has, for instance, been accompanied by an ambition to transform young Europeans into more cosmopolitan citizens and to compliment the national with a European self-identification. As early as the 1950s, members of the European Parliament were striving to develop a sense of Europeanness among young people. Members of the Parliament sought to establish a narrative of a European community by combining arguments of a shared cultural heritage with references to post-war peace and prosperity (Roos 2021). Since the 1992 Maastricht Treaty, every EU national has automatically been a citizen of her own country *and* of the European Union. Since then, EU citizenship policies have emerged. Scholars have found that a sense of belonging to Europe is highest among young adolescents and, more intriguingly, that senses of national and European identification may actually reinforce one another (Landberg et al. 2018, 276). Nevertheless, what "Europe" means to any one person depends on national contexts and nations' historical relationships with Europe (Jugert et al. 2019; Trimçev et al. 2020). Regional characteristics remain crucial for the kind of transnational identity that young people embrace (Spannring et al. 2008; see also O'Donohoe, Regueiro Salgado and García Carcedo, this volume).

The ambition to transform the outlook of young people into a more overtly transnational European one is clearly conveyed in a range of cultural artefacts. Cédric Klapisch's *Pot Luck* (*L'Auberge Espagnole*, 2002), which – along with its sequels – follows the experiences of several Erasmus exchange students in Barcelona, markedly celebrating European integration. At first glance, the films appear to look beyond national framing, conveying the Euro-euphoria that prevailed before citizens in France and the Netherlands rejected the proposed European Constitution by referendum in 2005. Despite this eurocentrism, national stereotypes – notably a sense of French exceptionalism and republican universalism – inform the films' narrative (McCaffrey and Pratt 2011). Nevertheless, the Erasmus programme has since its establishment in 1987 had a transformative impact on young generations. Moreover, Klapisch himself endows his characters with culturally ambivalent features to produce an affectionate comedy of clashing cultures (Junkerjürgen 2019).

On the other end of the political spectrum, neo-conservative ideologies and states seek to root national identity in a limited historical narrative. Polish cinema illustrates that tendency with clarity. Andrzej Wajda's *Katyń* (2007) and Jan Komasa's *Warsaw '44* (*Miasto 44*, 2014) – the former about the Soviet mass execution of more than 20,000 Polish officers and elites; the latter about the Warsaw Uprising – both portray the Polish nation as a heroic force united in its struggle against external threats. In Wajda and Komasa's reading of the past, Poles – hemmed in by the untrustworthy Soviet Union and Nazi Germany – can trust nobody but themselves (see also Thaidigsmann, this volume). The films also draw on a broadly shared historical outlook in society and much older historical references. In this interpretation, their depiction of individual Poles and the nation as a whole, for instance, includes a religious element. Catholicism builds bridges across generations and creates unity in sacrifice – ideas that have been part of the Polish cultural arsenal since the nineteenth century (Zubrzycki 2009, 45–46).

Irrespective of their political intentions, cultural products also reflect the nostalgia spreading across societies as diverse as post-Soviet Russia, the former East Germany, today's England and the United States. Nostalgia, and its reach among young people, differs between states. Nevertheless, generations who never personally experienced the past that they express a longing for, express their interest in creating an alternative – and typically more united – society through the language of nostalgia. The phenomenon is particularly notable in post-Yugoslav societies (Bošković 2013; Milivojevic and Müller-Suleymanova, this volume) and also in contemporary German cinema (Brockmann 2020).

Citizenship education is a key arena for the transmission of identity to future generations – and therefore reveals much about how a nation understands itself. Such education is often controversial in post-conflict societies that are forced to reassess foundational national narratives (Quaynor 2012). Citizenship programmes define the bounds of legitimate historical knowledge, and often promote performative aspects of citizenship. Traditionally, these programmes were meant to transmit a state-endorsed vision of history or patriotism, but in several liberal democracies the emphasis has shifted towards the transmission of liberal norms and practices (Levinson 2011). Indeed, intergovernmental and supranational organisations – including the UN, the World Bank and the Council of Europe – see education as a tool to build future citizens and ease relations between states. For the Council of Europe, history teaching, and in particular Holocaust education, is linked with hopes of preventing future crimes against humanity.[3] The Council's ambitious slogan, "Better Education for Better Democracies", underlines the goal of citizenship education programmes and the normative framework within which young people are approached.

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[3] "Education at the Council of Europe." *Council of Europe*, https://rm.coe.int/16806ce22e (5 August 2021).

Nevertheless, education remains a national prerogative. Specific cultural and historical contexts dictate the resonance of supranational policies. Therefore, the social reality that historical education policies create may differ substantially from what was intended in autocracies and democracies alike. Educational reforms introduced in the newly democratic Spain and Portugal were intended to transmit a self-critical attitude towards the national past (see also Richard, this volume). However, the ideals of citizenship presented in school textbooks and interviews with practitioners perpetuate a persistent ambivalence towards the authoritarian past. Due to the attempt to convey a "balanced" view that considers the problems of pre-democratic era to be resolved, these ambivalences are continually restated (Ferreira et al. 2013, 220).

In Poland, on the other hand, tensions manifest themselves between a rhetorical emphasis on universal human rights, democratic values, on European identity and anti-discrimination on the one hand, and a national patriotic educational discourse that is gendered, racialised, militarised and focused on the Catholic Church (Rubin and Cervinkova 2020, 181–182). In practice, young people are exposed to contradictory messages about their country's history and find it difficult to navigate between these mutually exclusive worlds.

Across Europe, Holocaust education has emerged as a central topic of citizenship education. During the immediate post-war decades, Nazi crimes were considered so abhorrent that they were to be silenced altogether. In Germany, education about the Holocaust emerged during the 1960s, leading to the new generation rising against the generation of witnesses and perpetrators (Rathenow 2000). The German collective identity that would emerge was highly emotive insofar as the recognition of national guilt was integral to West Germany's democratisation process (Fulbrook 1999; Olick 2007; Schwan 2015). In this regard, Jürgen Habermas' demand to keep the memory of the German-inflicted suffering "alive quite openly and not just in our own minds" (1988, 44) was to preserve Germany's *emotional* national self-consciousness during the 1980s, when the political right was putting that national consciousness under pressure. Generations of young Germans were expected to incorporate or deal with the approved attitudes of collective guilt and shame.

Other countries too have wrestled with teaching the Holocaust. In Italy the topic has become ever more important to children's education, especially since the fiftieth anniversary of the end of World War II and as the country's traditional focus on a national history of anti-fascist resistance has shifted to a more nuanced position (Santerini 2003; see also Hennebert, this volume). Post-Soviet countries did not partake in the emergence of the Holocaust as a topic in citizenship education (Sawkins, this volume), and the extermination of Eastern Europe's Jews has always competed with narratives of national suffering at the hands of the Nazi and

Soviet forces. Examining Latvia, for instance, Thomas Misco finds that the avoidance of the Holocaust supports the perpetuation of stereotypes and forms of intolerance and exclusion (2015, 349).

Mobility and the integration of young people with a migratory background bring a multiplicity of national and transnational historical visions into contact, making further demands on programmes of citizenship education. In Germany, the unique position of the emotional memory of the violence of World War II is increasingly challenged by temporal distance to the event itself; migrants, however, bring their own experiences of violence as they integrate into twenty-first-century Germany.[4] Jessica Brown identifies the tensions that result from Germany's normative desire to transmit certain mnemonic aspects in order to prepare foreign residents for membership in the national body as "it is initially puzzling that most participants in this research placed so much importance on teaching migrants to remember, mourn, and even feel shame for, events that predated their arrival in Germany by decades" (2014, 439). A heated public debate as federal elections approached in 2021 pitted those arguing for the singularity of the Holocaust in Germany's memory culture against those who underlined that the violence of the Holocaust was in fact part of a broader European history of violence that included colonialism.

Literature, films, museums and citizenship policies all try to impact what young people make of history, be it the more recent or a distant, even mythological past. However, attempts to design narratives for the young may be thwarted by the fact that young people develop their own narratives that reflect the multiple other realms in which they have socialised and through which they have acquired knowledge. As agents, young people reject, endorse, and very often re-evaluate the past that they are exposed to – and therefore do not necessarily embed themselves in the nation in the ways that older generations envisage.

3 Youthful *Eigensinn*: Young people in their historical environment

In literature and other cultural artefacts addressed to a young audience, young people are often assumed to hold the key to a better understanding of political and social developments. A young person can thereby also act as a "passeur de mémoire" ("transmitter of memory") (Schneider 2019b, 34), a figure who perpetuates a given group's cohesion over time and therefore enables its projection into the future.

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[4] In France the challenge of mobility for memory crystallises around the historical memories of "jeunes Maghrébins" including a competition between these population's own experiences of historical violence and the singularity of the Holocaust (Brenner 2002; see also Chaumont 2017).

As "passeurs", the ways that young people imbibe and transmit historical memory also inform us about previous generations' memories and the extent to which those memories exist in the present. Building on and around the direct generational transmission of memories in the child-parent relationship, grandparents may offer authentic narratives of belonging from further back (Green 2019). The Spanish "Indignados" mobilisation included such a striking passing of memory across three generations. In 2011, the participants of the democratic transition of the 1970s rallied as the "Yayoflautas" movement. This mobilisation of senior citizens relied on the authority of the participants, who tried to challenge the hegemonic mnemonic narrative of the transition and who expressed solidarity with the generation of grandchildren (Schwarz 2019).

In spite of the heterogeneity of young people's memories, the interpretations of history among individuals who are temporally and geographically proximal often correlate with one another. Senses of shared generational belonging are sparked by exposure to a particular range of discursive practices and by belonging to an interpretive community. Generational positionality is so relevant because "generational belonging mediates access to memory" (Wydra 2018, 6).

Every individual enters her socialisation into politics and history under different biographical conditions. The offspring of highly politicised families, for instance, seem to exhibit greater intergenerational continuity in their attitudes (Jennings et al. 2009). Larry Griffin, meanwhile, demonstrates that precise local conditions are crucial to grasping the relationship that individuals maintain with history in his study of the memory of civil rights between black and white US-Americans (2004). Differences among members of any given generation are widespread and influential – and family and locale matter just as much as national and transnational politics and policy.

Generational belonging is thus in some ways comparable to class membership (Eyerman and Turner 1998, 92–94) and analytic instruments for classes – including class conflict, mobility or ideology – are thus useful for an analysis of generations and their shared memories. Nevertheless, a major difference relates to the role of time between generation and class. Whereas class membership does not necessarily expire with biological ageing, potentially hindering a natural replenishment and change of character, generations are constantly renewed and bound to a specific time period, leading to changes in the generational character of "youth" over the years (Krawatzek 2018, 11–18).

Youth integrate a generational mnemonic community which their predecessors have already pre-established (Palmberger 2016). They encounter a set of rules of remembering and reflecting on the continuous generational replenishment, they are going to affect these rules through their actions. Moreover, in a dialectical interplay, engaging with their mnemonic community will also impact on how the young generation understands itself. Meanwhile, older people, who are no longer part of an emerging generational community, affect the younger generation's character through the ideas that they project onto it.

Alongside this biographical process, major political events are turning points for generational positioning. These turning points define thresholds of experience which create interpretive frames that individuals draw on to make sense of their historical surroundings and what they expect looking forward. Studying the transmission of memories between first- and second-generation Holocaust survivors, Janet Jacobs (2011) notes that ritual observance has helped to emotionalise and transmit the trauma of the Holocaust across generations. Simultaneously, through what Jacobs terms "ritual innovation", descendants find ways to respond to the conflicting emotional needs of survivors and their children. That process inevitably alters the societal mnemonic framework. Along those lines, Achugar (2016) argues that the success of intergenerational transmission is a key criterion for understanding the sustainability of group identity over time. Knowledge shared over time creates continuities, even if changing social and political contexts alter how that past is understood (Hennebert, this volume).

The more a generation is removed from a given historical moment, the more the interpretational possibilities multiply. Hitler, even after Germany's reunification in 1990, "remained a delicate figure for re-enactment" (Bangert 2014, 4). Oliver Hirschbiegel's *Downfall* (*Der Untergang*, 2004), which depicts the bunker-bound last days of Hitler's life in Berlin from the intimate perspective of his private secretary Traudl Junge, demarcates a turning point in portraying the dictator. *Downfall* showed Hitler not as a cruel monster but as a human being, which led to criticism that viewers might develop sympathy for the wartime perpetrators at their victims' expense.

The memories that young people hold have been the topic of a flourishing field of research. Some young people actively engage with history and have challenged norms of remembering, whereas others affirm the mnemonic consensus that they may encounter in their given society. In all circumstances, youthful "Eigensinn" is an ever-present. Young people never simply absorb top-down narratives (Krawatzek, this volume). In the case of contemporary Russia, for example, the young generation seems distinct when it comes to memories of the Soviet period (Rabbia, this volume). Focus group discussions and surveys find that young Russians reiterate a hierarchy of historical topics presented in the wider public discourse, but their interpretations of those topics are significantly more critical of the country's current leadership and its abuse of history than might be expected (Krawatzek 2021). Olena Nikolayenko explores different forms of Soviet nostalgia in Russia and Ukraine by comparing attitudes towards the Soviet Union's dissolution among young people in both nations. She unravels differences between parts of Ukraine – notably the Russian-speaking East, the Ukrainian-speaking West, and the capital – but also, more surprisingly, in Russia, where respondents in the capital were more positive towards the USSR's dissolution (Nikolayenko 2008). Older generations were generally more positive towards the Soviet Union. Nevertheless, even among young people, only 31 per cent of respondents had a positive attitude towards the breakdown of the Soviet Union in a place such as Donetsk, in the East of Ukraine; the equivalent figure was almost identical in Tula, in western Russia, at 33 per cent. Young people's critical attitudes can also be observed in the nuanced young adult and children's historical fiction that has emerged in recent years (Friess, this volume).

The relationship one can discover between young people's historical outlook and that of their parents remains underexplored in the literature on political socialisation. Drawing on focus group discussions, Anton Popov has observed that parents influence what young people remember to a certain degree, but also notes that young people typically want to overcome parts of the historical world view that their parents embody: "Although many respondents emphasized the importance of older generation as a source of knowledge about the past, they also talked about the importance of distancing themselves from their parents' memories, which are charged with nationalist feelings." (2015, 42) The post-Yugoslav context, where young people generally wish to overcome the ethnic hatred that is associated with the older generation, provides a salient example in practice (Müller-Suleymanova, this volume).

4 Situating the volume

An increasing temporal distance to the profound turning points of European history implies that generational change must have altered the ways in which societies relate to history. The following chapters engage in dialogue with one another, incorporating case studies on often contested historical representations in culture and cultural artefacts across countries, historical themes and historical imaginaries transmitted to and expressed by young people. Across the contributions we encounter traces of hegemonic discourses but also unearth the ways in which cultural actors consistently seek to challenge dominant norms. Across the chapters the perspectives on cultural artefacts, institutions and policies, as well as young people's views on history and their generational situatedness are combined, promoting a future research agenda that pays more attention to the production and reception of historical narratives. Jointly, social scientists and humanities scholars have the potential to expand the methods that are being used for studying memory, while remaining sensitive to the culturally situated meaning.

The chapters contained in part I deal with specific countries; those in part II with a specific topic. The majority start with a co-authored introduction that provides background information and positions the ensuing individual contributions in the scholarly field. In each thematic block, the authors approach their topics from a humanities and social science background respectively, creating an interdisciplinary dialogue that enables readers to explore the logics of remembering and the relations between historical narratives that target youth and historical narratives expressed by young people. This volume is thus a rare dialogue across disciplines.

The first set of chapters is devoted to Belarus, where the political elite has imposed a particularly rigid and far-reaching historical setting that is centred on the country's contribution to the victory in the Great Patriotic War and its proximity to Russia. Historical interpretations are closely related with the country's political ambitions, yet they are challenged by cultural actors and by the many young people who do not simply reiterate what they are taught at school. Félix Krawatzek illustrates the extent to which young people reject state-crafted historical narratives, speaking to the limited reach of such top-down initiatives. Then Nina Weller shines light on the surprisingly polyphonic cultural realm and the diverse historical projects that have emerged from it.

The second set of chapters explores Russia's "wild nineties", the name often given in today's Russia to the country's first post-Soviet decade. Official narratives contrast the universal chaos following the Soviet Union's collapse with proclaimed stability under President Putin's leadership. However, Allyson Edwards and Roberto Rabbia show that the 1990s are the object of a contested memory. Young Russians in particular are less likely to share in the official narratives of doom and decay than their parents. Moreover, the authors identify memorial continuities between the Yeltsin and the Putin era, notably in the remembrance of Russia's "chosen glory", the victory in the Great Patriotic War, suggesting that memory of the "wild nineties" and Russia's past has not been constructed entirely by the current regime.

In the third set of chapters, Duygu Erbil and Lucie G. Drechselová explore Turkish youth activism of the 1960s and 70s, charting how the memory of the turbulent events of 1968 continues to frame youth cultures to this day. Analysing literary testimonies of the court case of the student leader and urban guerrilla Deniz Gezmiş, who was executed in 1972, Erbil demonstrates how Gezmiş became a cultural resource for youth political socialisation and participation which allows her to situate the case of Turkey in the volume overall. Drechselová then studies female memoirs of the period, noting that these memoirs are few in number when compared to male comrades' texts and uncovering alternate ways in which Turkish female activists managed to spread their version of the past in those memoirs that have been released and in alternative media.

The Spanish case, a fourth set of chapters, explores regional variation in the literature on the Civil War which is an important illustration of the revindication of memory that has taken place among young generations. These new perspectives focus on anti-militarism and transmit pacifist values but they also differ hugely across Spain's provinces. O'Donohoe's chapter then explores what the young generation of Spaniards makes of the changed narratives and the kind of historical socialisation that they have encountered in school.

In the fifth pair of chapters, which are dedicated to Yugonostalgia, Mirko Milivojevic and Dilyara Müller-Suleymanova deal with the nostalgic longing for a past that young people of Bosnian, Croatian or Serbian origin never directly experienced. While Milivojevic critically questions nostalgic moments in contemporary films and TV serials set in Yugoslavia in the 1980s, demonstrating that their nostalgia is reflective rather than regressive, Müller-Suleymanova shows how the contemporary Swiss "Yu-rock" scene has emerged as a space of alternative memories and narratives about the Yugoslav past, which enables young people to create an identity detached from ethnic attributions that they encounter in migrant communities and cultural products.

In the wake of these country-focused chapters, the volume's second part develops thematic perspectives. The sixth set of chapters tackles ambitions to transmit the "correct" version of history, which is central to patriotic education in Russia and Poland alike. Jade McGlynn argues that government-funded patriotic camps and history tours attempt to emotionally involve Russian youth in national history, but that they fail to develop space for critical reflection on the subject matter, thereby limiting their reach among young people. As Nina Friess and Karoline Thaidigsmann show by taking a closer look at historical narratives in contemporary Russian and Polish children's and cross-over literature that provoke critical engagement with the patriotic offerings, a plethora of alternative narratives for youth are in wide circulation in the former Soviet bloc.

In their comparative chapter on the memory of the Algerian War and the Northern Irish Troubles in contemporary France and Northern Ireland respectively, Paul Max Morin and Chris Reynolds assess two projects developed for school pupils' education. Both projects apply an agonistic memory approach, which promotes the encounter of conflicting historical narratives. The authors' analysis leads to an evaluation of the projects' general success; each has raised awareness of the existence of conflicting and controversial historical perspectives among young people, but also reveals the challenges involved in translating an academic approach to the world of the museum.

In the eighth set of chapters, Christiane Connan-Pintado and Thomas Richard focus on (post-)colonial myths, memories and amnesia in France and Portugal by analysing children's literature and cinema. In both countries, children's writers and filmmakers of the New Cinema movement have applied pressure to national colonial memories and attempted to develop a counter-memory that could both avoid the previous myths and euphemised imagery, and find spaces to include the voices of the colonised.

The final section of the volume is dedicated to Holocaust education and commemoration, which at first glance seems to be an example par excellence for transnational memory. Studying Russia and France, Isabel Sawkins and Solveig Hennebert show how both states integrate elements of cosmopolitan memory into their narratives, but also ignore or even suppress supposedly transnational and immutable elements of Holocaust education that would challenge official narratives. The authors, however, demonstrate that young people in both countries have their own, often independent, ways of engaging – or not – in history and processes of commemoration.

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Part I: **Regional Perspectives**

Félix Krawatzek & Nina Weller

A Former Soviet Republic? Historical Perspectives on Belarus

Following the falsified presidential election in August 2020 and the turmoil that ensued, Belarusian President Aliaksandr Lukashenka announced that parliament was to explore passing a bill making the "glorification of Nazism" a criminal offense.[1] In a meeting with the Israeli ambassador, Lukashenka emphasised that many neighbouring countries have similar anti-fascist measures in place. Yet what is considered a fascist symbol is dependent on political context. Days earlier, Lukashenka dismissed the white-red-white flag, the symbol of opposition to the regime in 2020, as a fascist symbol to be eradicated from society.[2]

During the 2020 protests, war-inspired rhetorical weapons were deployed in abundance. On the one side, Lukashenka and his supporters defamed the protesters as fascists and argued that during the war Belarusian nationalists had sought to collaborate with the Nazi occupiers to create their own state – and that they had brandished the white-red-white flag as they did so.[3] State institutions and government media echoed this line, accusing the protestors of "historical amnesia".[4] By

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[1] "Lukashenko anonsiroval zakon 'o nedopustimosti geroizatsii natsizma.'" *Argumenty i Fakty v Belarusi*, 24 November 2020, https://aif.by/politiks/lukashenko_anonsiroval_zakon_o_nedopustimosti_geroizacii_nacizma (19 November 2021); "Lukashenko anonsiroval zakon o zaprete geroizatsii natsizma." *Lenta.ru*, 24 November 2020, https://lenta.ru/news/2020/11/24/no_nazi/ (21 November 2021). "Lukashenka anonsiroval zakon 'o nedopustimosti geroizatsii natsizma'. Ranee fashistskim on nazval BChB-flag." *TUT.BY*, 24 November 2020, https://news.tut.by/economics/709017.html (16 April 2021). The law was passed under Article No 103–3 on 14 May 2021, "Zakony o nedopushchenii reabilitatsii natsizma i protivodeystvii ekstremizmu vstupayut v silu cherez mesyats." *Reformation*, 15 May 2021, https://reform.by/225244-zakony-o-nedopushhenii-reabilitacii-nacizma-i-protivodejstvii-jekstremizmu-vstupajut-v-silu-cherez-mesjac (16 November 2021). Please note, with the crackdown on independent media after the election in 2020, several links provided in the chapters dealing with Belarus are no longer accessible. In the course of the first half of 2021, numerous independent media in Belarus were banned, their websites blocked, and many employees arrested. Among them was TUT.BY, the largest media portal, which was closed by state authorities in May 2021.

[2] "Lukashenka o BChB-flagakh: My uberem etu fashistskuyu simvoliku iz obshchestva." *TUT.BY*, 24 November 2020, https://news.tut.by/society/708654.html (16 April 2021).

[3] The Pahonya symbol (a red field with an armed rider holding a silver sword) is the historical coat of arms of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, to which Belarus historically belonged. The Belarusian Central Council, an auxiliary organ of the German occupiers, used the symbol during World War II.

[4] Vyacheslav Danilovich, director of the Institute of Historical Sciences of the Academy of Sciences, stressed that the demonstrators, by using the white-red-white flag, had probably

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suggesting a direct relationship between past and present uses of the white-red-white, Lukashenka elided the reinterpretations and reappropriations that have occurred in the intervening decades. However, such memory campaigns are not new. To discredit the opposition as fascists opposed to the general population has been part of the state's rhetorical arsenal for years.

The regime's opponents, which include both intellectuals and – in the summer of 2020 at least – society at large (Douglas et al. 2021), rely just as heavily on the symbolic and rhetorical arsenal of World War II.[5] As arbitrary police brutality against civilians has increased, so too has the use of emotional and historically charged comparisons with National Socialism. Shock at the indiscriminate arrest of passers-by, the beating of protesters, and the large-scale psychological and physical torture of prisoners since August – which events left at least five peaceful demonstrators dead – was so profound that a comparison between the police and security forces (OMON) and the methods of the Gestapo seemed obvious. These comparisons were particularly widespread in social media networks and independent media.[6] As violence has escalated, so has the severity of the opposition's comparisons. The police's actions have been described as a "genocide" against the Belarusian people.[7] The Okrestina prison in Minsk, where most of the torture took place, has been compared to Auschwitz (Figure 1).[8] In turn, in early 2021, the

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forgotten that they were placing themselves in the tradition of the "fascist." "Nad simvolikoy tak nazyvayemykh mirnykh protestov nastoyatel'no rekomenduyut segodnya zadumat'sya istoriki." *BT*, 20 August 2020, https://www.tvr.by/news/obshchestvo/nad_simvolikoy_tak_nazyvaemykh_mirnykh_protestov_nastoyatelno_rekomenduyut_segodnya_zadumatsya_istor/ (16 April 2021).

[5] One of the country's best-known writers, Alherd Bakharevich, wrote about the multiple meanings of "fashist" as the epitome of evil. However, other opponents of the regime helped the term gain a new lease of life in an unreflected way ("Fascism as Memory." *pen/opp*, 7 December 2020, https://www.penopp.org/articles/fascism-memory [16 April 2021]).

[6] The poet Yuliya Tsimafeyeva wrote on 12 August on Facebook: "The brutality with which the special forces beat people in Gestapo style, threw stun grenades at their feet, aimed rubber bullets at unarmed demonstrators and into skyscraper windows from which they cursed is simply inconceivable." (https://www.facebook.com/yulya.tsimafiejeva/posts/10217538773476823 [16 April 2021]).

[7] The miner Yuri Korsun had chained himself at a depth of 305 m and refused to leave the pit. He deposited a statement on Vkontakte, including: "This year he [Lukashenka] has abandoned restraint and started a real genocide of the Belarusian people!" "Gornyak Yuriy Korzun o svoyey aktsii protesta: 'Po-drugomu oni nas ne slyshat.'" *Naviny.by.*,10 September 2020, https://naviny.by/new/20200910/1599750881-shahter-yuriy-korzun (16 April 2021).

[8] "Okrestino – nastoyashchiy Osventsim." "Olesya Stogova rasskazala, kak provela chetyre dnya v minskom izolyatore." *Voshod*, 26 August 2020, https://voshod.org/lenta/окрестино-настоящий-освенцим-ол/ (16 April 2021).

government responded in kind: in an audio recording released online, a voice attributed to Interior Minister Mikalay Karpyankou was heard proposing “a camp” with harsh punitive measures for “especially disruptive agitators.”[9]

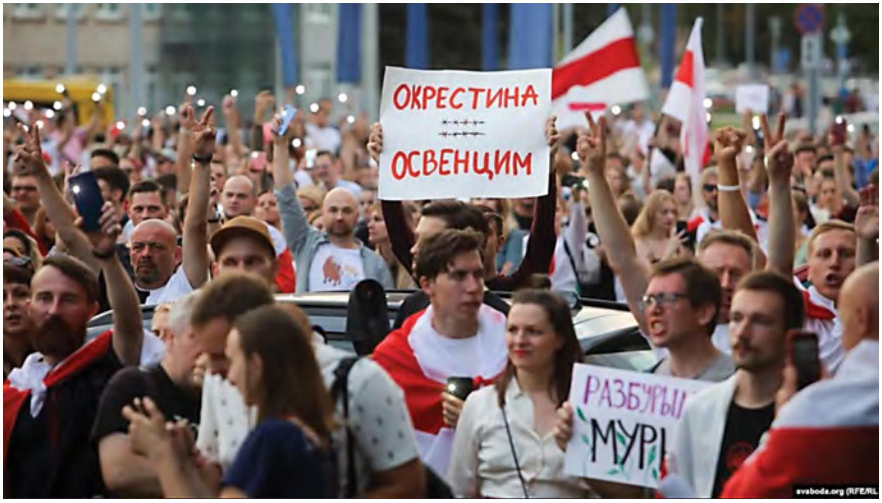

Figure 1: Protesters in Minsk in August 2020 with a poster stating Okrestina and Auschwitz © Radio Svoboda.

Such comparisons are emblematic of a public and political discourse saturated with historical references. However, such comparisons are also reductive, since they relativise the extent of the atrocities committed by the Nazis during the Holocaust and against the civilian population in Belarus and neglect the large-scale violence and destruction that occurred when the Red Army returned to Belarus in 1943 (Marples 2012, 16). The prominence of these analogies relates primarily to an emphasis in Belarus’ historical politics on the heroes and victims of the Great Patriotic War. Critical engagement with the past is absent or overlaid by affirmative identification with official historical interpretations. Indeed, opposition figures barely question the importance of the war, as doing so would offer few advantages (Goujon 2010). The historian Iryna Ramanava (2020, 116) argues that historically charged responses to recent events should be seen as the logical result of the contradiction between the obsession with the positive picture of history of violence on the one hand and the repression of trauma on the other.

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[9] “Deputy Minister of Internal Affairs of Belarus: A camp for political prisoners.” 15 January 2021, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T_KbwvUk9fI&feature=emb_imp_woyt (16 April 2021).

Belarus' current mnemonic landscape is therefore starkly divided between memories of positive, violent, and traumatic events. We contend that the country's historical views are centred around two broad camps and the varying degrees of control the autocracy has over the production of history can be illuminated via three realms: the tightly controlled discourse permissible in educational settings; a political discourse laced with contradictions and cracks; and the diverse narratives produced in the cultural sphere. Each of these realms interacts with the others in limited ways since the rigid state discourse cannot accommodate any modifications without endangering its own existence.

1 Historical representations in Belarus: A tale of two stories?

Despite the view from abroad that Belarus, allegedly the "last European dictatorship", has created a unified, loyal, obedient and monolithic society, despite the regime's emphasis on a homogeneous Belarusian post-Soviet people, and despite the nationalist opposition's demands for ethnic unity, Belarus is not a homogeneous entity. Indeed, the country's artistic, cinematic and literary cultures have long been extraordinarily vibrant (Lewis 2019).

In spite of this cultural vibrancy and the multi-layered protest movement visible in 2020, Belarusian society is still shaped by competing historical narratives that centre around two polarities. The first, pro-Soviet bloc, looks to the east and reflects the regime's historical line, maintaining that Belarusian culture flourished during Soviet times, when the country developed in harmony with the country's historical partner, Russia. In this account of the past, the sixteenth-century Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth is dismissed as a period of oppression. The second bloc cleaves to oppositional, pro-European views. Its scattered political and cultural references revolve around the image of Belarus in a broader pan-European history. That role is symbolised by the nation's position in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which spanned the thirteenth to the eighteenth centuries, and in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

The polarised division in Belarusian memory is most pronounced in relation to the short period of Belarusian independence in the early twentieth century, when the short-lived Belarusian People's Republic (BNR) and Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (BSSR) offered differing visions and experiences of national cultures and autonomies. The opposition between these visions is captured in debates on what are to be the national colours (Leshchenko 2004; Rudling 2017). The white-red-white flag first appeared as Belarus' flag in 1918 during the brief independence of the BNR. The flag returned in the early post-Soviet years. Following a referendum in 1995, Belarus reverted to the BSSR's red and green flag (without the hammer and the sickle). The white-red-white, although long unpopular, has today become the sign of a "new assertion of the nation", as the philosopher Tatiana Shchyttsova stated. It symbolises national solidarity and the value of human dignity shared by the majority of protesters (Shchyttsova 2020, 59).

A strong polarisation of historical views notwithstanding, the actual narratives presented in and about Belarus are significantly more multi-layered. Notions of Belarusian identity fail to map onto clear-cut distinctions (Kazakievič 2015). Indeed, Belarus is a striking illustration of the entangled nature of memory with competing layers of synchronic and diachronic interpretations visible in acts of remembering (Feindt et al. 2014). As a cultural borderland, Belarus has long been the place where influences from neighbouring regions came together – cultural influences often brought by minorities that no longer exist, such as the once sizeable Jewish population (Savchenko 2009).

Belarus was moreover late to the nineteenth-century nation-building stage. The first Belarusian language newspaper, *Nasha Niva* (*Our Cornfield*),was founded in 1906, but played a critical role in awakening a sense of national consciousness in the early twentieth century (Nadson 1967, 206). Thereafter, the first Belarusian history was published in 1910 (Lastoŭski 1910), and the first standardised Belarusian grammar appeared in 1918 (Tarashkevich 1918). Writers such as Maksim Bahdanovich, Maksim Harezki, Janka Kupala and Jakub Kolas produced books that accompanied this nationalising movement. Nevertheless, a Belarusian "national idea" had little currency in the following decades.

The lack of a historically unifying national project has ramifications for today's disputes about Belarus' historical roots. In the words of Serguei Oushakine, a "growing out of nothing" characterises post-Soviet Belarusian nation building. The potential emptiness of "nothing" should not be equated with outright rejection of historical memories. Instead, the absence of historical roots is elaborated, so that "nothingness is mined as a source of inspiration. To put it simply, this apophatic nationalism creates a discursive realm in which options are absent and commitments are impossible, yet these very absences and non-possibilities offer themselves as situations to be verbalized and as objects to be encoded" (Oushakine 2017, 437). Emphasising the "absence" of a Belarusian national idea, Oushakine draws on the work of philosopher Valentin Akudovich's *Code of Absence* (*Kod adsutnaci*, 2007), which focuses on the causes of the country's notoriously weak national identity. In *Code of Absence* and, earlier, in *Without Us* (*Bez nas*, 2001), Adukovich contends that Belarus is not – as the government and democratic opposition would suggest – a distinct nation, but a state of free and equal European citizens of different ethnic, cultural, linguistic and historical origins. Indeed, various national movements have also portrayed the multicultural and multilingual past as a specific feature of the Belarusian experience.

Discussions of alternative, socially and intellectually vibrant, historical visions of the country became particularly prominent in the early 1990s (Śleszyński 2017). However, after the election of President Lukashenka in 1994, official historiography started to emphasise present-day fraternity with Russia and historical unity with Kievan Rus'. These dual emphases underlined the nation's past and present opposition to the west (Rudling 2017, 77).

Today, official media and political discourses leave very little room for nuanced historical engagement. Instead, largely incompatible and polarised perspectives on the country's past circulate in the three historical realms we have identified (the classroom, political discourse and culture) and dogmatic views characterise vigorous historical debates.

2 The makings of history: Three realms, three types of control

2.1 History teaching and the rigid official historical viewpoints

After the Soviet Union's dissolution, Belarusian history teaching underwent a quick and profound reorientation. As in every other former Soviet nation, hitherto dominant Soviet historiography needed to be replaced with a vision articulating national consciousness (Zaprudnik 1993). The Belarusian classroom became witness to discussions of national identity that had been non-existent during the Soviet era (Zadora 2017, 185). Bringing pre-Soviet (especially medieval) history into the curriculum during the early 1990s enabled the newly independent country to articulate a narrative of Belarus being more than an artificial Soviet concoction.

Historical polyphony made way for politicisation under Lukashenka. His 1994 electoral promise to restore the Soviet legacy had significant consequences for the teaching of history, the narrative presented in textbooks, the state's collection of symbols and the prioritisation of the Russian over the Belarusian language (Lindner 2009, 402–422). Lukashenka insisted that the new post-Soviet history textbooks were replaced or rewritten to gradually conform to the historical view the regime wanted to disseminate among young Belarusians.

As a result, Soviet historiography dominates today's history textbooks with Belarus' contribution to the victory in the Great Patriotic War being at the centre. Emotional identification with the heroes of the war is, Lina Klymenko (2016, 45–46) contends, a key intention: identification is promoted by focusing on the events of the Nazi occupation and on Belarus's support for the Red Army, which enabled the country's liberation beginning in September 1943. Indeed, in the Soviet historiography, Belarus' symbolic unity in and support for the partisan movement is fundamental (Lewis 2017) and victory in the war sacred (Zadora 2017, 186). As a further consequence of that perspective, the Soviet Union is portrayed as having permitted Belarus' very existence. Belarusian history dissolves into Soviet history.

As the Soviet view on history has returned, so has an inferior treatment of the Holocaust. Holocaust narratives have served elsewhere as a key component for the attempted Europeanisation of historical narratives by portraying equal stories of victimhood across Europe (Pestel et al. 2017). In Belarus, however, and even though the proportion of Jews that perished was higher in Belarus than anywhere else, historiography has treated the Holocaust as an external phenomenon. Instead, the suffering of the Holocaust has become nationalised: history textbooks discuss extermination camps and the violence committed by the Nazi occupants as part of the narrative of Belarusian suffering and heroic liberation.

Pre-Soviet history is far from ignored in today's history textbooks.[10] The medieval roots of Belarus, and Belarus' "stateness" as part of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, have been particularly prominent for both nationalist thinkers and even for the president (Jakub 1999; Savchenko 2009). These non-Soviet roots have started to seep into the classroom. Official historiography under Lukashenka since 1995 had emphasised the "brotherhood" of the Belarusian and Russian peoples, including the notion of a continuity going back to Kievan Rus' (Rudling 2017, 77) until 2003, when a re-Sovietisation of the culture of memory was carried out. However, since 2003, and increasingly since 2014, recoding of the official image of history in the direction of a stronger nationalisation of narratives occurred. The place that Belarus had in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth is not presently considered to have had such a negative impact on Belarusian people as it once did.[11] Such references allow a certain symbolic distance from Russia and, simultaneously, a proximity to Europe.

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[10] "Uchebnik istorii Belorussii i problemy 'natsional'noy' istoriografii." *EAD*, 26 January 2018, https://eadaily.com/ru/news/2018/01/26/uchebnik-istorii-belorussii-i-problemy-nacionalnoy-istoriografii (16 April 2021).

[11] "Erinnerungskultur in Belarus (1988–2016): Von der Spaltung zum konservativen Konsens?" 27–30 October 2016, http://ibb-d.de/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Vortrag-Bratotschkin.pdf (16 April 2021).

2.2 Politics of history: Not merely our glorious war and Soviet continuity

In 1994, Lukashenka was elected on a programme of Soviet nostalgia and closer relations with Russia. The corresponding historical view suggests that the Belarusian national idea was first institutionalised as part of the Soviet project under the BSSR (Savchenko 2009, 8–9). In a 1995 referendum, four questions on language, state symbols, integration with Russia, and the president's right to dissolve the parliament were put to the Belarusian people. Lukashenka swept the board. The Russian language was given equal status with Belarusian, economic integration with Russia was reinforced, the green and red flag was introduced, and the president's unilateral right to dissolve the parliament was confirmed. Simultaneously, the calendar of national celebrations was refocused on World War II "to form a discursive connection between the legacies of Belarusian statehood and collective memories of WWII" (Rohava 2020, 9).[12] Lukashenka continuously describes the USSR's collapse as a catastrophic event that was particularly disastrous for the economy.[13] The president bemoans the nation's complicated economic relations with Russia and criticises its neighbour for disregarding both wider Soviet heritage and the loyalty it was supposed to express in relation to Belarus.[14] Only in the opposition's thinking did the USSR's breakdown give rise to national liberation. Viktar Babaryka, one promising challenger to Lukashenka prior to the 2020 presidential elections, for instance, has criticised the country's post-Soviet trajectory as a missed opportunity to ascertain real independence.[15]

Discursive continuity with Soviet times hinges in the political sphere, as in the classroom, on memory of World War II. The celebration of Victory Day on 9 May and Independence Day on 3 July (when the liberation of Minsk took place in 1944) are the most important events in the national calendar. Numerous monuments across the country are dedicated to Soviet soldiers and partisans (Goujon 2010, 11), which creates a continuity with the Soviet emphasis on heroic resistance to fascism and the neglect of war-time crimes and violence (Kuzmenko 1998).[16]

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[12] Lukashenka insists on the importance of Soviet symbols regularly. "Lukashenko derzhitsya ne tol'ko za bol'shevistskikh idolov, no i za ikh sistemu." *Naviny.by*, 30 October 2019, https://naviny.by/article/20191030/1572454339-lukashenko-derzhitsya-ne-tolko-za-bolshevistskih-idolov-no-i-za-ih (16 April 2021).

[13] "Obrashchenie k deputatam Palaty predstaviteley i chlenam Soveta Respubliki Natsional'nogo sobraniya shestogo i sed'mogo sozyvov." *Prezident Respubliki Belarus',* 05 December 2019, http://www.president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/obraschenie-k-deputatam-palaty-predstavitelej-i-chlenam-soveta-respubliki-natsionalnogo-sobranija-shestogo-i-22526/ (16 April 2021).

[14] "Lukashenko o raspade SSSR: Rossiya poluchila vse, a nas kinuli s sovetskim rublem." *TUT.BY*, 14 February 2020, https://news.tut.by/economics/672646.html (16 April 2021).

[15] "Babariko: Popast' na rabotu v Belgazprombank 'po blatu' mozhno, sdelat' kar'yeru – nel'zya." *TUT.BY*, 1. February 2019, https://news.tut.by/economics/626758.html (16 April 2021).

Victory in World War II is portrayed as a unifying historical event for modern Belarus, and the Soviet regime is depicted as an emancipatory force. This serves "to promote a selective, nostalgic rendering of the Soviet past, a patriotic tradition of which Lukashenka is the major guardian" (Rudling 2017, 78). Lukashenka, as Goujon argues, tries to pursue a "nation-building strategy of reconciling Belarusian sovereignty with Soviet structures to strengthen authoritarian rule in the country" (2010, 8).

In official discourse, the BSSR therefore remains all-important for the country's national development. On the occasion of Belarusian Independence Day 2018, the president bluntly stated that the roots of today's Belarus are in the BSSR: "The history of statehood is connected with the Soviet period. Almost a century ago, with the birth of the BSSR, Belarus first gained a political and legal status."[17]

At the same time, state-controlled media outlets have accorded some space to admitting the BNR's significance for the development of a Belarusian state. *Belta*, for example, cited Vyacheslav Danilovich to explain that the "proclamation of the BNR was not a random phenomenon".[18] Nevertheless, in official political discourse the BNR is reduced to being a precursor to the BSSR.[19]

2.3 Polyphonic re-writing of history in literature, film and popular culture

For decades after the fall of the Soviet Union, World War II remained the central point of reference for artistic, literary and cinematic engagement with Belarusian history. As the principal topos in literature even decades after the guns had fallen silent (Sahm 2010, 48), the war's presence could never have been instantaneously eliminated from Belarusian literature. However, just as in school textbooks, the end of the Soviet monopolisation of history has opened cultural artefacts up to a pluralisation of narratives and the presence of a series of overlapping traumas stemming from World War II. Both society and the cultural sphere have granted visibility to forgotten and marginalised memories. Artists and critics have even cautiously addressed controversial issues such as collaboration, the Jewish past, the Holocaust and Stalinist repression. Contrarily, and at the same time, many Brezhnev and Masherov-era practices of official remembrance that celebrate triumphant narratives in Belarusian-Soviet times were reinstituted – albeit usually in nationalised and therefore state-official form – during the 1990s and the 2000s. Producers of culture have continued to obsess over the Soviet heroic partisan myth. The pluralisation of Belarusian memory, therefore, has not seeped into official discourse, nor has it become widespread in today's culture.

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[16] Since the 2000s, several monuments have been dedicated to Jewish victims of the Holocaust (Kotljarchuk 2013, 16), in contrast to the Soviet historiography. Some museums have also granted space to the Holocaust, such as the museum of the Brest Fortress (Ganzer and Paškovič 2010, 94) or the memorial at the Maly Trostenets camp.

[17] "Torzhestvennoye sobraniye po sluchayu Dnya Nezavisimosti Belarusi." *Prezident Respubliki Belarus'*, 2 July 2018, http://www.president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/torzhestvennoe-sobranie-po-sluchaju-dnja-nezavisimosti-belarusi-19040/ (16 April 2021).

[18] "Blagodarya natsional'noy samobytnosti Belarus' nikogda ne byla koloniey Zapada ili Vostoka – uchenyy." *Belta*, 24 January 2018, https://www.belta.by/society/view/blagodarja-natsionalnoj-samobytnosti-belarus-nikogda-ne-byla-koloniej-zapada-ili-vostoka-uchenyj-285965-2018/ (16 April 2021).

[19] "Prezentatsiya Kontseptsii istorii belorusskoy gosudarstvennosti sostoyalas' v press-tsentre." *Belta*, 14 August 2018, https://www.belta.by/society/view/prezentatsija-kontseptsii-istorii-belorusskoj-gosudarstvennosti-sostojalas-v-press-tsentre-belta-314008-2018/ (16 April 2021).

In the post-Soviet period, film and literature initially remained the most important means for conveying both the traumatic and the official war narratives. We can trace an astonishing continuity of motifs and narrative structures focused on the moral and ethical human dilemma of wartime in Soviet-era and more recent World War II movies. Nevertheless, some recent reinterpretations of canonised views on World War II in Belarus have incorporated pluralistic and long suppressed narratives. The official reaction has not been positive. Sergey Loznitsa's *In the Fog* (*V tumane*, 2012) was strongly criticised for showing ordinary policemen and villagers as potential perpetrators. Andrey Kudzinenka's *Mysterium Occupation* (*Okkupatsiya. Misterii*, 2003) was banned from cinemas for its unfavourable portrayal of partisans (Lewis 2017, 390).

In recent years, more animated films, music clips or comics have been used for alternative historical storytelling in order to reconstruct "Belarusianness" and national roots growing from an imagined golden age of the sixteenth-century Grand Duchy of Lithuania (Rudling 2017, 79). This cultural-nationalist, anti-Soviet narrative aims to (re)shape Belarusian history and identity around a continuity constructed from the Principality of Polotsk, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the uprising of 1863, the BNR and up to independence in 1991. Its underlying ideas of autonomy and self-determination resonate clearly among young people. The creators of the popular NGO campaign "Let's be Belarusians!" ("Budzma Belarusami!") – which is explored in detail in the next chapters – aim to use this perspective on Belarusian history to help young people reappropriate their "own" history. The campaign has involved numerous artists, writers and musicians, using new media and above all music to make Belarusian history and identity attractive.

The shifts in relation to reference points in the mediation of history are especially being carried out in the field of popular culture focused on a mainly young audience of new media users. State television has fired back in response by airing animated films on national history for children and young people. The series *The History of Belarus* (*Istoriya Belarusi*), for example, was shown by Belteleradio (the National State TV and Radio Company of the Republic of Belarus) – and is available on YouTube.[20]

3 Conclusion

In Belarus, historical narratives are contestable, controversial and deeply connected with opposing political camps. Nonetheless, this introduction has uncovered a profound polyphony of motifs, views and sites of mediation. Historical tropes, notably related to World War II, are omnipresent in public and they also respond to the far-reaching attempts by the state to control historical discourse. This control is particularly visible in the school context but also in the limited space for discussion in political discourse. The cultural realm offers far more diversity. Diverging viewpoints are expressed frequently in films, music and the arts and often prompt reactions from the autocratic state.

The next two chapters explore the historical views that young people express in Belarus and the manifold historical discourses being produced in the cultural realm. They reveal the importance that the regime attaches to controlling state symbols like the white-red-white flag, recharging its symbolic rhetorical arsenal, and engaging in discursive warfare with its opponents. Simultaneously, they also expose the links between historical narratives and national identity on all sides of the political debate.

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[20] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGFZmedRlHI (16 April 2021).

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Félix Krawatzek

Without Roots? The Historical Realm of Young Belarusians

The red and white colours of the old Belarusian flag characterised the large-scale demonstrations after the Belarusian presidential election of 2020.[1] For many commentators and citizens, the reappropriation of these colours symbolised a national awakening (Kulakevich 2020). The symbolic occupation of Belarus' public space has been manifold: protesters – especially female protesters – dressed themselves in variations on the white-red-white theme, shops sold white-red-white cakes, and Belarusians arranged underwear in white-red-white to dry on their balconies.

The election catalysed young people's political interest, in turn changing the public expression of national identity. Young people had previously withdrawn from their country's political affairs or involved themselves, without much genuine commitment, in the Belarusian Republican Youth Union (BRSM, see Silvan 2020) – the state's hierarchical youth organisation. The possibility for political change before and after the 2020 election created reasons for active political participation.[2] However, the gulf that separates the state and large parts of society comes also clear in the historical realm. The regime's historical narratives are overwhelmingly detached from young people's views on history. For an authoritarian regime such as the Belarusian one, the projection of historical continuity is however a critical component for narratives about its own future. A failure to control these narratives threatens the regime's symbolic continuity (Krawatzek 2018).

In this chapter, I contend that Belarus' authoritarian setting includes a rigid and narrow historical discourse with little space for nuanced historical engagement. As a result, the regime is disconnected from young Belarusians' polyphonic societal and cultural memories. Two cross-sectional online surveys of 2,000 young Belarusians, carried out by the Centre for East European and international Studies (ZOiS) in February 2019 and 2020 (Krawatzek 2019), posed questions about young people's general political and social views, about their trust in institutions and about their historical views. Several historical questions were open-ended, inviting respondents to explain what they considered to be the most and second most important historical events for understanding Belarus today and what they associated

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[1] Many thanks for the excellent research assistance provided by Kseniia Cherniak.

[2] BRSM officially approved of the election result and repeatedly issued calls for an end to the protests. See for instance: "BELORUSY, OSTANOVITES'!" *BRSM Molodezh' Belarusi internet-portal*, http://brsm.by/news/belorusy-ostanovites/ (16 April 2021).

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with these events. This approach was intended to trigger their own language and thereby better understand their historical horizons beyond pre-imposed categories.

Open-ended questions that require the combination of personal judgement and factual knowledge might be intimidating and dissuade respondents from participating. Not all respondents are therefore equally likely to respond. Given the lack of face-to-face contact, conducting a survey online potentially diminishes this factor. Nevertheless, men were more likely to respond in 2020, but women in 2019. Across both years, higher self-assessed historical knowledge, higher level of education, and greater disposable income predicted a greater likelihood to respond.

In conjunction with this survey, I systematically analysed political speeches and the country's media for historical references. The analysis highlights that an overwhelming share of young people reject the state discourse surrounding them. This rejection, however, does not imply that they have developed a refined counter narrative. Instead, an abstract sense of Belarusian historical independence informs their views on history.

In the following sections I discuss the events that Belarusians rated as historically important. Then, I explore in inverse chronological order a range of themes relating to those events. By doing so, I illuminate the chasm between official historical discourse and young people's views and shed light on the patterns that sustain young people's interpretations of national identity. The polarised nature of Belarusian historical discourse identified in the previous chapter contextualises these findings. Young people have relied almost exclusively on the internet for news, and completely rejected state-controlled narratives even before the 2020 election.[3] The official historical discourse can hardly be encountered among the younger Belarusian generation: rather, an all-encompassing rejection of the official political framing clearly links with young people's critical historical views.

1 Young people's historical reference points

Young Belarusians express limits to their own historical knowledge. More than half believe that they do not know enough about history, while only 5 per cent, generally comprised of people with higher levels of education and income, state that their knowledge is good. Despite the enormous resources the regime has funnelled into crafting and controlling the country's historical discourse, young people seem aware of their own limitations in assessing information about the past they encounter in public.

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[3] In 2020, surveys conducted by ZOiS revealed that around 90 per cent of young people relied on online media as their first source of information, a number that was at 71 per cent on average in 2019. Although the extent to which online media discuss historical topics in a critical way remains limited, young people's turn away from the conventional, entirely state-controlled media outlets, indicates the extent to which young people turn their back to official views (Krawatzek 2020).

In spite of this recognition of their own limited knowledge, respondents maintain clear views on what they consider to be important historical events relevant to their understanding of Belarus. I aggregated open-ended responses into larger, thematically coherent categories (Table 1) – combining, for example, mentions of "Great Patriotic War", "World War 2", or "beginning of war" into one larger category. Overall, young Belarusians have a shorter historical horizon than their peers in neighbouring Russia and Poland. In the latter, for example, references to historical events such as the eighteenth-century partitions of Poland or the much older "Baptism of Poland" can be encountered.

Table 1: Most prominent historical events mentioned by Belarusian youth in 2019 and 2020.

	Most important event				**Second most important event**			
	2019		**2020**		**2019**		**2020**	
	Total	**%**	**Total**	**%**	**Total**	**%**	**Total**	**%**
Creation of Belarus in 1991	178	18.64%	142	18.98%	51	9.75%	35	8.43%
Collapse of USSR	161	16.86%	135	18.05%	79	15.11%	60	14.46%
World War II	156	16.34%	95	12.70%	59	11.28%	46	11.08%
Presidential elections (1994)	51	5.34%	40	5.35%	27	5.16%	17	4.10%
USSR	46	4.82%	23	3.07%	18	3.44%	11	2.65%
Creation of BNR	37	3.87%	27	3.61%	12	2.29%	8	1.93%
Grand Duchy of Lithuania	35	3.66%	25	3.34%	10	1.91%	4	0.96%
Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth	23	2.41%	32	4.28%	10	1.91%	8	1.93%

Compared to other post-Soviet countries, and even though Belarus shares important mnemonic traits with Russia, World War II was comparatively less prominent for young people's historical imagination. In neighbouring Russia, the so-called Great Patriotic War is key to political and public discourse and to society's historical self-understanding, even among young people (Fedor et al. 2017, Krawatzek and Frieß 2020). As a result, in Belarus the relationship of younger to older generations also does not have such a prominent place in historical consciousness. The relative importance of World War II to Belarusian respondents, moreover, was lower in 2020 than in 2019 – despite significant media coverage of and political rhetoric about the seventy-fifth anniversary of the war's end.

Moving further back in time, state and opposition actors have differing assessments of the brief period of Belarusian independence in the aftermath of World War I (when the white-red-white flag emerged as an official state symbol). In state political discourse and state-controlled media, the significance of this period for national development has long been downplayed. Contrarily, the period is a key historical reference for the opposition. Among young Belarusians, however, this historical independence is not particularly prominent and received few mentions. Interpretations of a Belarusian history stretching back into the medieval period – prominent though they may be in the cultural realm – hardly resonate among young people. Mentions of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth across both years' surveys were practically non-existent.

In their interpretations of such far distant episodes, young Belarusians tended to explain that such historical events are relevant for their grandparents only. The deep and controversial historical roots – roots that, from an intellectual point of view at least, might be connected with today's Belarus (Oushakine 2017) – are not closely linked to the way in which young people understand their nation. They prioritise historical events to which they have a more direct family relationship, such as the creation of Belarus in 1991.

2 Embracing autonomy and leaving the Soviet times behind

Many young Belarusians mentioned the Soviet Union's collapse or Belarus' independence as important events and they express enthusiasm for their country's 1991 independence, which they associate – albeit in a rather schematic fashion – with economic freedom and political and legal self-determination. Despite the lack of nuance in these assessments, they provide frameworks for interpreting political events and the visibility of historical symbols in the Belarusian protests of 2020 – for instance the reappearance of the leader of the 1863 January uprising against

Russia, Kastus Kalinoŭski[4] – demonstrate that they can become politically relevant in a moment of juncture. Moreover, the open-ended meanings of memory give rise to multifaceted appropriations and enable identity constitutive effects.

Positive views about the end of the USSR sharply diverge from official nostalgia for the Soviet period. Indeed, *perestroika* and *glasnost* arrived comparatively late in Belarus, and the country had no sizeable dissident movement. Ales Adamovich, capturing Belarus' reluctance to leave the USSR, described the nation as the "Vendée of Perestroika" in reference to the largest counterrevolutionary uprising of the French Revolution.[5] The nod to the Vendée implies a threat of civil war or even genocide within the country (Chaunu and Sécher 1986) – and suggests external intervention poses its own risks.[6]

Respondents nevertheless almost unanimously assessed independence positively. The idea that Belarus gained "independence from other countries", thereby realising its quest for autonomy and self-sufficiency/self-determination ("samostoyatelnost'"), is central to young people's understanding of what the USSR's collapse meant. Young people identify themselves in opposition to the external, occupying forces – which supposedly continue to "break the peace" to this day – and describe the situation in neighbouring countries as a "mess" ("bardak"). Given this emphasis on independence, Belarus' current relationship with Russia is a delicate issue. Several respondents express their concerns over Russia's persistent influence in economic, military and political matters.

Young Belarusians' desire for national sovereignty does not require a persuasive historical master narrative, since they frame their country's independence as an act of "historical justice". The country's "independent path" of development is a crucial component to their self-understanding and Belarus' recognition "on the world stage" is part of that longing. Despite young Belarusians' sharp criticism of their country's lack of political freedoms, they find value in having their "own constitution and own money" and even their own "laws, principles, rules of life, and its own government". For the young, independence is an anchor in their historical memory and must be maintained "at any cost". Despite frustrations about political shortcomings, vaguely patriotic statements are common: "Because I love my country, even with such a President" is a typical example. Interestingly, among the few answers written in Belarusian, one respondent referred to the "victory of democracy and the path to a new future".

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[4] Gershman, Carl. "Belarus reborn." 25 August 2020, https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/belarus-reborn/ (16 April 2021).

[5] Adamovich, Ales. "Oglyanis' okrest!" *Ogonëk* 39 (1988): 28–30.

[6] Only rarely was the defence of socialism by intellectuals such as Adamovich criticised: Bykov, Vasil'. "Dubinki protiv glasnosti?" *Ogonëk* 47 (1988).

Official political discourse and symbolic politics draw links between today's Belarusian state and the Soviet period, framing the Soviet Union as the creator of Belarus. While nostalgia for the Soviet era is ever-present in official language, it is nearly absent among the young respondents, who are all but unanimous: "We need to move on". Only two young people state that the USSR was the time when "the Belarusian people first declared themselves as a separate nation" and describe the territory's status as a republic within the USSR in positive terms. Another two respondents express regret for the "loss of friendly ties" with neighbouring countries or that Belarus is not a strong or internationally visible nation today. The vast majority, however, underline that they are relieved their country left "Russia". Others, when describing the effects of the Soviet Union's breakdown, declare that "people in Belarus live a little better than in Russia". The striking anti-Soviet tone among young people has had implications for how respondents think about today's Russia.

Nevertheless, the hopes for independence and progress which the rupture of 1991 symbolised have remained largely unfulfilled. "Change is not always for the better", state respondents, who contrast a historical moment of hope with their views on the last decades, "when everything got worse". Meanwhile, others point to the persisting Soviet legacy, both by arguing that "Belarus failed to secede from Russian influence", and when discussing their country's mentality and political system, bemoaning that "we continue to live under the old regime". When one respondent affirms that Belarus is situated "in the centre of Europe", a desire to burst out of the reality of the Soviet-Russian bubble is perceptible.[7]

3 The painful victory of World War II

The discourse around World War II in history teaching, in museums and in political speech frames the Belarusian nation as heroically united in its resistance against the fascist occupants. This myth of the "partisan republic", constructed immediately after 1945, became the *raison d'être* of the new Soviet republic (Lewis 2017, 377) and remains the central historical element of Belarus' war narrative (Rudling 2008). The myth has seen only minor adaptations since the war, which is clear during the Victory Day parade each May when young people are charged with reenacting, for instance, the partisan parades that took place on the day of the liberation of Minsk on 16 July 1944.[8] President Lukashenka annually connects the emergence of a lasting Belarusian spirit with the challenges of the war.[9] In this sense, older, Soviet historical narratives of World War II have been nationalised after 1994 (Goujon 2010, 8).

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[7] This framing of Belarus as a genuine European country gained prominence in 2020 when journalists picked up a quote by former US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice who called Belarus "the last remaining true dictatorship in the heart of Europe". See "Defiance in Belarus Tests Limits of 26-Year Rule." *New York Times*, 24 August 2020. In 2020, the body metaphor helped to amplify the importance of events in Belarus, see "The people of Belarus are demanding their freedom." *Financial Times*, 11 August 2020.

While the official narrative stresses heroism above all, young people's understanding of the war is not monologic. They voice rivalling interpretations, especially by referring to the human and physical destruction. Scholarship has increasingly recognised the extreme wartime violence that the population that lived on what is today Belarusian territory suffered (Gerlach 1999; Snyder 2010). Mentions of the suffering, however, are not absent from the official discourse either and we can discern an almost mythical inflation of the numbers of victims (Kotljarchuk 2013, 10). President Lukashenka has claimed that every third Belarusian was killed during the war,[10] as official interpretations see such losses as an integral part of the nation's heroism.[11]

In stark contrast to their Russian peers' understanding, young Belarusians often associate World War II with pain and loss (Krawatzek 2021): the war is associated with "numerous deaths", "pain, hunger, death, destruction", "blood and horror", and even "genocide of civilians on both sides". Some young people underline the irreconcilable nature of wartime losses. One respondent even expresses a wish to "remember the lost people" as a central part of memory culture. These reflections on loss are tinged by reflections on the futility of the war – the idea that Belarus should never have been involved – and the idea that Belarus' perspective has been ignored internationally.

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[8] "Bolee 700 parney i devushek rekonstruirovali partizanskiy parad 1944 goda." *Sovetskaya Belorussiya – Belarus Segodnya*, 25 March 2019 https://www.sb.by/articles/bolee-700-parney-i-devushek-rekonstruirovali-partizanskiy-parad-1944-goda.html (16 April 2021).

[9] "Vystuplenie na voennom parade v oznamenovanie 75-y godovshchiny Pobedy sovetskogo naroda v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne." *Prezident Respubliki Belarus'*, 9 May 2020, https://president.gov.by/ru/events/vystuplenie-na-voennom-parade-v-oznamenovanie-75-y-godovshchiny-pobedy-sovetskogo-naroda-v-velikoy-otechestvennoy-voyne (16 April 2021).

[10] "Vystuplenie na voennom parade v oznamenovanie 75-y godovshchiny Pobedy sovetskogo naroda v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne." *Prezident Respubliki Belarus'*, 9 May 2020, https://president.gov.by/ru/events/vystuplenie-na-voennom-parade-v-oznamenovanie-75-y-godovshchiny-pobedy-sovetskogo-naroda-v-velikoy-otechestvennoy-voyne (16 April 2021). There is no consensus on the casualties, but a reasonable estimate is that the death toll was at 20 per cent of the pre-war population (Gerlach 1999).

[11] "Vystuplenie na torzhestvennom sobranii ko Dnyu Nezavisimosti." *Prezident Respubliki Belarus'*, 2 July 2019, http://www.president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/torzhestvennoe-sobranie-po-sluchaju-dnja-nezavisimosti-belarusi-21487/ (16 April 2021).

Those young respondents who support Lukashenka's regime and indicate for instance that they voted for the incumbent, however, clearly express elements of the official narrative and referred to wartime "faith and solidarity" and national unity during the war. One respondent, for instance, vehemently insists that "the entire nation rose to fight, and most of its citizens remained human". For these Lukashenka supporters, the war has nothing to do with Belarusian independence. They rarely mention the emergence of Belarus within today's borders or its status as a republic in relation to World War II. Only one respondent states that the end of the war liberated the country from "invaders" and allows for its "sovereignty". The expression of these formulaic elements of the state discourse suggests a lack of personal engagement with history and adopting the regime's narrative leaves no room for nuance or disagreement.

Stalinist atrocities are largely absent from the official historical narrative and from the country's classrooms and museums. The 1930s were, however, a murderous time in the country. By the end of the decade, Belarusian nationalism had been totally suppressed. In the western part of Belarus, "the onslaught of the Polish authorities" (Rudling 2014, 273) eliminated any traces of cultural emancipation. In the nation's Soviet eastern part, Stalin's transformations were carried out with particular brutality (Rudling 2014, 302). The understanding of the violent 1930s, when "Piłsudski's and Stalin's mutual distrust of each other constituted a tragedy for the people who inhabited the border areas" (Rudling 2014, 301), could be a case of contested memory.

Nevertheless, Stalinist violence against Belarusians tends to be highlighted only by opposition or marginalised voices, such as the academic Igor Kuznetsov.[12] Acknowledging that Belarusians were victims of Soviet repressions might lead to comparisons of the violent Soviet and Nazi regimes, a symmetry that would contradict official historical interpretations. Young people's views on Stalin are significantly more critical in Belarus than in Russia. One third of young Belarusians agrees with the view that Stalin was directly to blame for imprisonment and torture or that he was a cruel tyrant. Only one quarter believe Stalin's pros outweigh his cons – for comparison, that view is shared by more than 40 per cent of young Russians (Figure 1).

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[12] "'Slushali. Postanovili: rasstrelyat'. Istorik Igor' Kuznetsov o sovetskikh repressiyakh v Belarusi." *TUT.BY*, 20 March 2017, https://news.tut.by/society/535835.html (16 April 2021); *Imperiya dukha*, n.d., http://imperiaduhu.by/gistoryia/gist-novychas/novy%20-21/slushali-postanovili-rasstreliat.html (22 November 2021).

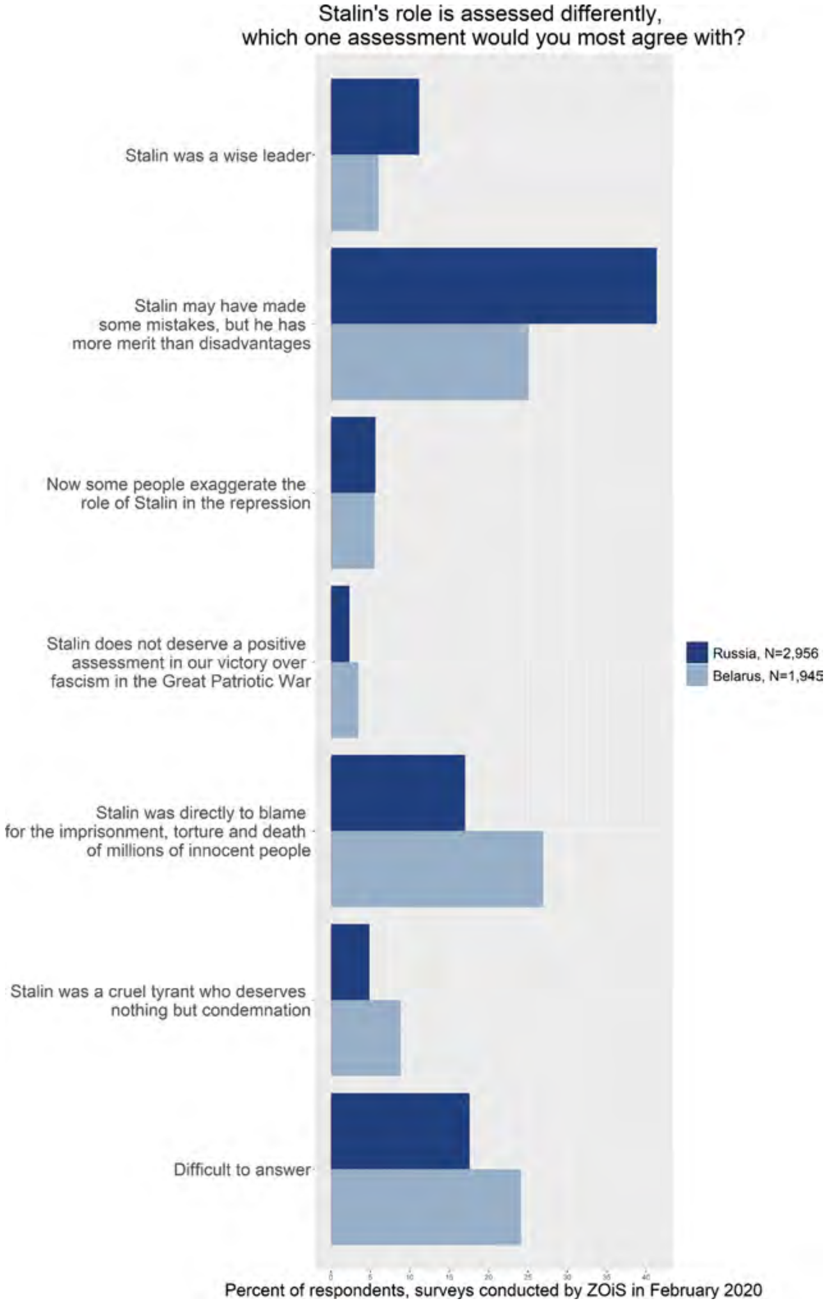

Figure 1: Assessments of Stalin between young people in Russia and Belarus © the author.

Belarusian memory of the war era is troubled by the extent to which Belarusians themselves were involved in the perpetuation of violence against the Jewish population (Rein 2011). More than half of young people acknowledge the Belarusian role in that violence – a remarkably high share given both that this topic is not part of public discourse and that neighbouring countries do not openly discuss this history either. Nevertheless, young Belarusians have much less a sense of a war victory that might be stolen and therefore less of an impression that they need to defend their history (Krawatzek 2022). Even if also opposition media outlets downplay the importance of collaboration[13] and only local activists and researchers occasionally broach the issue.[14] Nevertheless, a focus not only on national heroism but also on the Holocaust and civilian victims could provide for Belarus a potential for engaging with European patterns of remembering (Waligórska 2017).

4 State origin: Two competing visions

Memories of Belarusian statehood revolve around duelling interpretations of the Belarusian People's Republic (BNR) and the Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic (BSSR). President Lukashenka initially expressed allegiance to the BSSR and opposition to the BNR. However, as relations with Russia have become more difficult in the aftermath of the annexation of Crimea in 2014, and before the new proximity of the two countries in the aftermath of the presidential election in 2020, the historical stance has shifted slightly. Nationalist voices – including conservative youth movements such as Youth BNF[15] – continue to emphasise symbolic links with the BNR, while Lukashenka and his supporters have become more judicious. State-controlled media outlets began to acknowledge the BNR's significance for the development of a Belarusian state: "The BNR's proclamation was not an accident. It was during that difficult and extremely contradictory historical period that objective and subjective conditions for the implementation of the idea of national statehood appeared.” The BNR supposedly allowed the topic of Belarusian statehood to “enter the agenda of European politics”.[16]

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[13] Mentioning that 80–100 thousand Belarusians collaborated with the Nazis: "'Kazhdyy tretiy'. Kto voyeval na territorii Belarusi i kakovy byli nashi poteri." *TUT.BY*, 21 November 2019, https://news.tut.by/culture/661054.html (16 April 2021); *Seldon News*, 21 November 2019, https://news.myseldon.com/ru/news/index/219391893 (22 November 2021).

[14] For example, Anton Pisarenko, a 20-year-old student from Gomel, started investigating collaboration when working through photo archives. "Gomel'skiy student sobirayet snimki i dokumenty po kollaboratsionizmu v gody Vtoroy mirovoy voyny." *TUT.BY*, 25 February 2014, https://news.tut.by/society/388279.html (16 April 2021); "Gomel'skiy student sobirayet kollektsiyu snimkov i dokumentov po kollaboratsionizmu v gody Vtoroy mirovoy voyny (+foto)." *Pravda Gomel'*, 25 February 2014, https://gp.by/novosti/news/news28884.html (22 November 2021).

[15] "Plany 'molodezhi bnf': god VKL, god BNR i kampaniya 20/20." *Belsat*, 11 January 2017, https://belsat.eu/ru/news/plany-molodyozhi-bnf-god-vkl-god-bnr-i-kampaniya-20-20/ (16 April 2021).

The government’s approach to the centenary of the BNR’s proclamation of independence on 25 March 2018 was somewhat ambiguous. The existence of public celebrations accorded an unprecedented possibility to express alignment with the pro-BNR narrative. Authorities approved of activities across numerous cities, including a publicly organised concert in Minsk. Nonetheless, this more permissive approach did not exclude imprisonments before and during the celebrations themselves.[17]

Even if the regime has expressed a subtler attitude towards the BNR, the BSSR remains at the centre. Meeting young people in March 2018, Lukashenka underlined the need to better understand the BNR and BSSR periods, suggesting a new openness – albeit he then again accused the BNR of bearing allegiance to Imperial Germany.[18] On Belarusian Independence Day in July 2018, the president reaffirmed the BSSR’s significance for national developments: “The history of [Belarusian] statehood is entwined with the Soviet period. Almost a century ago, with the birth of the BSSR, Belarus first gained a political and legal status.”[19] Moreover, the official “Concept of the History of Belarusian Statehood”, adopted in 2018, reduced the BNR to a mere precursor of the

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[16] “Blagodarya natsional’noy samobytnosti Belarus’ nikogda ne byla koloniyey Zapada ili Vostoka.” *Belta,* 24 January 2018, https://www.belta.by/society/view/blagodarja-natsionalnoj-samobytnosti-belarus-nikogda-ne-byla-koloniej-zapada-ili-vostoka-uchenyj-285965-2018/ (16 April 2021).

[17] Kasmach, Lizaveta. “One Hundred Years of Belarus Independence Proclamation: Uniting the Nation or Dividing the Opposition?” *Belarus Digest*, 16 March 2018, https://belarusdigest.com/story/one-hundred-years-of-belarus-independence-proclamation-uniting-the-nation-or-dividing-the-opposition/ (16 April 2021); Kłysiński, Kamil. “The celebration of the 100th anniversary of the proclamation of the Belarusian People’s Republic.” *OSW*, 28 March 2018, https://www.osw.waw.pl/en/publikacje/analyses/2018-03-28/celebration-100th-anniversary-proclamation-belarusian-peoples (16 April 2021).

[18] “Vstrecha s tvorcheskoy molodezh’yu.” *Prezident Respubliki Belarus’*, 20 March 2018, http://www.president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/vstrecha-s-tvorcheskoj-molodezhju-18363/ (16 April 2021); similarly Lukashenko: “Belorusam eshche predstoit ponyat’ rol’ BNR.” Belta, 10 April 2018, https://www.belta.by/president/view/lukashenko-belorusam-esche-predstoit-ponjat-rol-bnr-298008-2018/ (16 April 2021).

[19] “Torzhestvennoe sobranie po sluchayu Dnya Nezavisimosti Belarusi.” *Prezident Respubliki Belarus’*, 2 July 2018, http://www.president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/torzhestvennoe-sobranie-po-sluchaju-dnja-nezavisimosti-belarusi-19040/ (16 April 2021).

BSSR.[20] In 2020, celebrations of the anniversary were forbidden – apparently due to Covid-19,[21] although Lukashenka also claimed that the virus was non-existent or the product of western hysteria, and the Victory Day parade still took place in May 2020.

The frequency at which young respondents mentioned the BNR and the BSSR was largely unchanged between 2019 and 2020. In spite of the oppositional and governmental links of the BNR and BSSR narratives respectively, respondents interpreted them in similar ways: each period was associated with a sense of independence; each had played a role in laying the foundation for an independent Belarus. Just as with their views on the Soviet Union's breakdown, young people are above all interested in how events conveyed a sense of autonomy and self-determination.

References to the creation of the BNR stress that the period of self-governance was the "official beginning of the existence of an independent country" or that it was the very first attempt to "define Belarus as an independent state". Some respondents took a more emotional stance, referring to the BNR as representative of "true independence". Many others link the struggle of the past to the country's ongoing and unfinished attempts to assert independence in the present. The BNR was "the beginning of the struggle for the independence of our state"; the period of historical independence demonstrated the country's "great prospects", which "continuously speak to the present to show that building a truly independent Belarus is feasible".

Those who mention the BSSR used almost identical terms, referring to historical independence, "territorial integrity", "autonomy", and the "beginning of the formation of Belarus as an independent state, even within the USSR". The existence of the BSSR proved that "Belarusians are a separate people and have the right to create their own Republic." However, young people's opposition to present-day Russian influence is easy to discern in associations of the BSSR with Russification. Some respondents complain that "Belarus could not separate itself from Russia's influence" and that an increasing "Russification of the population" occurred during the BSSR. This Russification was further linked with the presence of Soviet and Russian political and ideological baggage in the present: "We continue to use the approaches and means of the Soviet Union; we still live with the same ideas."

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[20] "Prezentatsiya Kontseptsii istorii belorusskoy gosudarstvennosti sostoyalas' v press-tsentre." *Belta*, 14 August 2018, https://www.belta.by/society/view/prezentatsija-kontseptsii-istorii-belorusskoj-gosudarstvennosti-sostojalas-v-press-tsentre-belta-314008-2018/ (16 April 2021).

[21] "BNR – 102 goda. Den' Voli v etom godu proydet onlayn." *TUT.BY*, 25 March 2020, https://news.tut.by/economics/677800.html (16 April 2021); "Den' voli v Belarusi proydet v rezhime onlayn." *Deutsche Welle*, 25 March 2020, https://www.dw.com/ru/день-воли-в-беларуси-пройдет-в-режиме-онлайн/a-52908864 (22 November 2021).

Understandings of the BSSR and the BNR link with an affirmation of Belarusian distinctiveness. Those respondents who spoke about the BNR underline its importance for the creation of a Belarusian national identity. Belarusians had found a way "to declare themselves as a self-sufficient people (nation) to the world", the BNR had "defined Belarus as a free country and Belarusians as an independent nation". Those who discuss the BSSR similarly note the recognition for Belarusians as a "real social people, not an administrative unit". A heightened interest in autonomy is pervasive among young people of all camps. They set great store in Belarus' "independent development as a separate state" even when discussing the BSSR. Whatever historical event young people ranked as most important, their views converge in their emphasis on independence, despite – or perhaps because of – their distance from more detailed historical interpretive struggles.

5 Unearthing deep roots?

Increased attention has been granted to Belarus' pre-twentieth-century historical roots in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth.[22] This medieval history might offer an alternative source of Belarusianness and numerous monuments dedicated to the medieval period have been constructed over the last decade.[23] Medieval origins are referenced in school textbooks (Zadora 2017) and celebrated during re-enactments and festivals across the country. Local administrations fund activities to cultivate an appreciation of medieval heritage, among other things with music and clothing.[24] Several projects, including one in the northern city of Polotsk, teach young people about regional medieval history.[25] In spite of these officially-encouraged activities, medieval symbols have been highly visible during the 2020 anti-Lukashenka protests.[26]

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[22] For an overview of the role of such references in Belarusian national historiography see Zejmis (1999).

[23] "Pamyatniki pravitelyam VKL v Belarusi." *Delaem vmeste*, 2 September 2019, http://delaemvmeste.by/pamyatniki-pravitelyam-vkl-v-belarusi/ (16 April 2021).

[24] "Belorusy zaskuchali po dukhu Srednevekov'ya." *Belta*, 17 November 2016, https://www.belta.by/culture/view/belorusy-zaskuchali-po-duhu-srednevekovjja-219642-2016/ (16 April 2021); "'Volat', sozdayushchiy Srednevekov'e. Reportazh iz kluba istoricheskoy rekonstruktsii." *Minsk-Novosti*, 27 February 2020, https://minsknews.by/volat-sozdayushhij-srednevekove-reportazh-iz-kluba-istoricheskoj-rekonstrukczii/ (16 April 2021).

[25] Polotsk was first mentioned in 862 and was a uniquely powerful city until the early thirteenth century; "Vystuplenie bravykh druzhinnikov i srednevekovaya diskoteka. Kak polotskoy molodozhi privivayut lyubov' k maloy rodine?" *Vitebskie vesti*, 7 October 2019,

These deeper historical roots are to convey Belarus' European identity and, therefore, to reject the nation's Soviet heritage (Bekus 2010, 279): Europe is perceived as an ideal of enlightenment; Russia is dismissed as an aggressor. Moreover, the opposition often implies a direct link between the medieval or early modern period and BNR-era independence by tracing out a national timeline: the establishment of Rus' (862), the Battle of Grunwald (1410), the Battle of Orsha (1514), the printing of the first book in Old Belarusian (1517), the publication of the Statutes of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania (1588), the proclamation of the BNR (1918) and the declaration of Belarusian independence (1991). Belarusian nationalists, meanwhile, assign special importance to the sixteenth century, which, with its military, cultural and political successes – is described as a "golden age" (Savchenko 2009, 32).

This historical lineage has a certain ambivalence for the ruling classes. President Lukashenka uses references to these canonical events to warn about Belarus' domination by foreign rulers, heeding the population that they might once again become "someone's province" and subordinated serfs.[27] Lukashenka long dismissed the significance of pre-twentieth-century heritage in favour of lauding the Soviet political and economic union with Russia (Zejmis 1999, 395). In 2005, for example, the president stated that "anyone who talks seriously about the Grand Duchy of Lithuania but keeps silent about the oppressed and dependent situation of the Belarusians, which was their lot in that non-independent, Medieval principality", should be castigated as "haters of the Belarusian people" (Saganovich 2008, 72–73). More recently, the president has remained vague about the "events of past centuries",[28] placing the medieval period on equal footing with the Russian and Soviet heritage, thereby illustrating the prudent reorientation of the country's historical roots prior to the 2020 presidential election.[29]

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http://vitvesti.by/kultura/vystuplenie-bravykh-druzhinnikov-i-srednevekovaia-diskoteka-kak-polotckoi-molodezhi-privivaiut-liubov-k-maloi-rodine.html (16 April 2021).

[26] "Young Belarusians are turning away from Russia and looking towards Europe." *The Conversation*, 3 September 2020, https://theconversation.com/young-belarusians-are-turning-away-from-russia-and-looking-towards-europe-145562 (16 April 2021).

[27] "Poseshchenie Voennoy akademii." *Prezident Respubliki Belarus'*, 22 February 2019, http://www.president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/poseschenie-voennoj-akademii-20549/ (16 April 2021).

[28] "Vystuplenie na torzhestvennom sobranii ko Dnyu Nezavisimosti." *Prezident Respubliki Belarus'*, 2 July 2019, http://www.president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/torzhestvennoe-sobranie-po-sluchaju-dnja-nezavisimosti-belarusi-21487/ (16 April 2021).

[29] "Obrashchenie k deputatam Palaty predstaviteley i chlenam Soveta Respubliki Natsional'nogo sobraniya shestogo i sed'mogo sozyvov." *Prezident Respubliki Belarus'*, 5 December 2019,

In spite of official ambiguities about the significance of Belarus' medieval past, state-funded research purports to have discovered that young people identify the medieval period as being the most exciting time in their country's history.[30] Our survey scarcely supports such a contention. When respondents did mention medieval history, their comments reveal a rather schematic and selective understanding. Tellingly, when specifically prompted to describe the significance of the 1410 Battle of Grunwald (one of the key events of that supposed first "golden age"), few respondents had much to offer. More than 70 per cent stated that they could not relate to the event at all, stating for instance that it means nothing "for them personally". Another 6 per cent simply perceived of Grunwald as an abstract historical event. Less than one quarter articulated a somewhat more emotional stance that linked with how they understand themselves as Belarusians today. The medieval past exists for young people – if at all – as a set of rehearsed phrases. Belarus' medieval heritage poorly translates into a concrete political and social message for the twenty-first century. Nevertheless, despite their vagueness, these phrases are of socio-political significance and sustain a sense of independence and unique origins.

Indeed, for those young people who did mention the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth, those events connote state-building and the "first modern outlines of the Republic of Belarus". When discussing the Grand Duchy and the Commonwealth, respondents brought up ideas of national autonomy and cultural development (especially the development of the Belarusian language).[31] The Grand Duchy period supposedly allowed for "culture and the country's development". Contrary to the president's claims that the medieval era was a time of national subjugation, young people argue that pre-modern Belarus was not in thrall to "influential friends", but instead was part of a "powerful state". Of particular note was the association of medieval history with Belarus' European traits. Pre-twentieth-century history signifies – for those survey respondents who did mention the period, at least – that Belarus "is not part of Russia". One young person proudly explained that the Grand Duchy had "one of the first European constitutions". The fall of the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth, however, is then associated with the beginning of the nation's Russification: Belarus fell "under the

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http://www.president.gov.by/ru/news_ru/view/obraschenie-k-deputatam-palaty-predstavitelej-i-chlenam-soveta-respubliki-natsionalnogo-sobranija-shestogo-i-22526/ (16 April 2021).

[30] "Samoy interesnoy epokhoy v istorii Belarusi molodezh' nazyvaet period VKL." *Institut sotsiologii NAN Belarusi*, 12 October 2018, http://socio.bas-net.by/samoj-interesnoj-epohoj-v-istorii-belarusi-molodezh-nazyvaet-period-vkl/ (16 April 2021).

[31] For an analysis of the socio-linguistic developments on the territory that is today situated between Lithuania, Latvia, and Belarus, see Wiemer 2003.

Russian protectorate, from which it has not yet emerged"; the end of the Commonwealth led to an "influence of a Russian-speaking, Asian lifestyle".

6 Conclusion

The creation and dissemination of history in Belarus is highly politicised. Young people are central to the state's attempts at shaping the country's historical identity, which revolve around Soviet nostalgia and memories of the country's heroic contribution to victory in the Great Patriotic War. In spite of the state's efforts in this sphere, young people have not adopted these nostalgic and heroic narratives wholesale. Above all, narratives of national culture, independence and autonomy, and the suffering of wartime dominate young people's historical consciousness, also indicating a higher self-identification with Europe rather than Russia.

References to contested narratives of state independence in the 1920s and to the medieval period alike revolve around periods of cultural flourishing, linguistic development and political independence. Conflicting accounts of pro and anti-European and Russian meaning in historical events are parsed in limited fashion by youths who do not have detailed historical knowledge of these periods. Nonetheless, historical references inform their political and social values. Indeed, the golden thread woven throughout the responses is a desire for the recognition of Belarusian autonomy and self-sufficiency.

In 2020, as Belarusians took to the street and rejected Lukashenka's alleged electoral victory, historical symbols and their attempt to reframe the nation's colours into white-red-white were part of their mobilisation. During the mobilisation, a sense of self-determination and independence was a key mobilising factor. My analysis has highlighted how profound a reframed and reframing historical vision was for young people even before the contentious events of 2020.

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Nina Weller

“Let’s be Belarusians!” On the Reappropriation of Belarusian History in Popular Culture

Independent art and culture have played an important role for the Belarusian dissident democracy movement and for peaceful and creative resistance against the Lukashenka regime since the president was first elected in 1994. It was therefore no surprise that artists and cultural workers have played an important role in the protests since summer 2020 – be it in public or private spaces. Since August 2020, we have witnessed an enormous development of the public protest culture in Belarus, which is closely connected with the reawakening of a historical and cultural Belarusian (self-)consciousness and mediated chiefly by cultural artefacts too. New pride in protesters’ identification with Belarusian cultural and historical roots brought narratives, images symbolic of the national and anti-Soviet past and the long-protracted struggle for independence to the fore (Ljachoŭski 2020, 105).

Many of the images representative of the recent protest movement are reappropriations of Belarusian national history and folk culture.[1] Especially eye-catching was the use of the white-red-white Pahonya symbol – the historical coat of arms of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the Belarusian People’s Republic (BNR) – which has long represented the Belarusian opposition. Several protest posters showed variations of the Pahonya symbol by combining historical and recent events. For instance, one popular meme showed Lukashenka being chased by the charging knight on the Pahonya flag.[2] The reproduction of the historical Pahonya image speaks to Belarusians’ newly awakened desire to reclaim Belarusian history and, simultaneously, to “chase away” the Soviet-era historical narratives and symbols cultivated under Lukashenka. The artist Rufina Bazlova, meanwhile, embroidered motifs of and scenes from the protest in traditional style (“vyshyvanki”) in the white-red-white colours of the BNR-

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[1] “In Belarus, a New Civic Culture Is Born out of Recycled Historical Symbols in Urban Yards.” *Global Voices*, 21 December 2020, https://globalvoices.org/2020/12/21/belarus-civic-culture/ (14 March 2021).

[2] The heraldic meaning of Lukashenka, pursued by the Pahonian horse rider, speaks for itself in Belarusian, as “Pahonya” means “pursuit”. Even though this cartoon was created by the legendary Russian cartoonist Sergey Elkin, it says a lot about the newly awakened relationship of protesting Belarusians to their history.

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era flag.[3] Bazlova's creations were wildly popular, such as the motif "RUN from a GUN" (Figure 1). They were printed on t-shirts and accessories worn by many young people as a sign of protest and attachment to Belarusian tradition.[4] Bazlova's work shows that Belarus' historical narratives are not static – they are dynamic, and respond to the present as much as the present responds to them.[5]

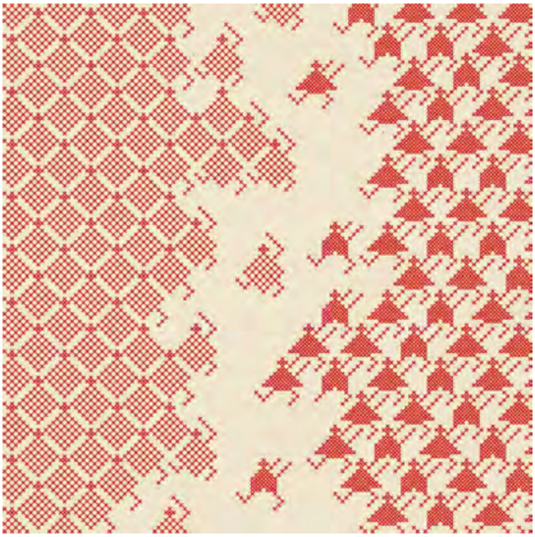

Figure 1: Bazlova: "RUN from a GUN" © Rufina Bazlova.

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[3] "Meet the artist embroidering Belarus' protests." *Global Voices*, 11 August 2020, https://globalvoices.org/2020/08/11/meet-the-artist-embroidering-belaruss-protests/print/ (4 June 2021).

[4] The Belarusian culture's newfound popularity has also sparked a real fashion trend, which is reflected in designs for t-shirts, blouses or underwear (Petz 2020, 10).

[5] In addition, songs, especially set to words in the Belarusian language, have played an important role for protesting Belarusians' reawakened historical consciousness. For example, numerous protest songs with references to Belarusian national history became part of a daily ritual that called for political change and celebrated a sense of togetherness. International protest songs such as the Polish *Mury* (*The Wall*, 1978), Viktor Tsoi's *Peremen* (*Changes*, 1989), and the French *La complainte du partisan* (*The Partisan's Lament*, 1943) were played in Belarusian versions throughout the country. Also Belarusian folk songs that referred to the nation's historical and cultural roots, as *Kupalinka*, *Mahutny Bozha* (*Prayer*, 1947) and *Pahonya* (*The Chase*) were regularly aired by the protesters and idols of protest culture such as Lyavon Volski performed Belarusian songs on the streets such as the well-known *Tri Charapachy* (*Three Turtles*, 2000). An overview on the role of songs in Belarusian protest movement 2020 are given by Ananka 2020, Khadanovich 2020 and by the Russian online Magazine *Meduza* ("Belorusskiy protest v musyke: pleylist Meduzy." 16 August 2020, https://meduza.io/slides/belorusskiy-protest-v-muzyke-pleylist-meduzy [14 March 2021]).

In this chapter, I address the fact, that such re-appropriations of Belarusian history are not a surprising novelty, but goes hand in hand with a recapturing of individuals’ (pre-Soviet) Belarusian past and culture language as it has been articulated in recent years in Belarusian culture and emanates from a fertile ground of mediatised historical images and popular memory narratives of pre-Soviet Belarus. By focusing on comics, graphic novels and animated film, I argue that not only do these popular genres offer an unusually open-minded swathe of perspectives on Belarusian history, but they also tend to question official state narratives and offer reinterpretations of Belarusian history more frequently than traditional genres.

1 Popular culture and history in Belarus

Popular cultural media play an important role in the reconstruction and consolidation of collective imaginations of history as well as in the renegotiation of points of orientation in the present political and social habitat (Korte and Paletschek 2009). As Jerome de Groot (2008) notes, society consumes history, which can help us understand popular culture and issues of representation against the backdrop of shifting historical models in a society dealing with the past. I argue that the popularisation of historical images and narratives shapes collective memory cultures and history for young people to a significant extent. Thus, in recent years popular imagery has seen in global as well as in Belarusian historical and memorial discourse an increase in representations of history in popular media and genres that entertain viewers while guiding understanding and reflection on the past and the present. We can assume that popular imagery of history has even more impact than literature or school textbooks.[6] These trends combine to make use of the affective and emotionalising effect of media to guide the interpretation of the past in a certain direction, thus even state media channels use popular forms to convey history.[7]

The Great Patriotic War and the violent German and Soviet occupation remain still at the centre of today’s Belarusians’ collective memory. However, there has never been an obvious, medial "memory boom" on World War II or other traumatic historical events of the twentieth century of the likes identified elsewhere.[8] One reason may be the ideologically and economically restricted conditions of the authoritarian state. The Belarusian cultural and literary market is divided between the official-state sphere and the independent, oppositional sphere. While state institutions for culture and pro-regime publishing houses, film production companies, etc. are well funded or enjoy state support for all their activities, independent institutions and publishing houses do not receive any official support. Moreover, their distribution channels and therefore the reach of their products are much more limited. A further reason for the lack of a "memory boom" is the ideologically entrenched framework – especially with regard to the teaching of history and interpretation of World War II – decided by the cultural and educational authorities (Zadora 2017a; 2017b).

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[6] On the subject of new approaches to history teaching in (Belarusian) textbooks, for instance “Ochevidtsy belorusskikh protestov v elektronnykh uchhebnikakh istorii.” *Onliner.by*, 15 January 2021, https://people.onliner.by/opinions/2021/01/15/svidetelstva-v-uchebnikax (14 March 2021).

[7] The state TV station BTRS, for example, produced *History of Belarus* (*Istoriya Belarusi*), an extensive series of animated short films for children on the history of Belarus from its beginnings to the present, for instance part 11 about Belarus in the sixteenth century: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wIJgSaJDkyk (16 April 2021).

On the one side, in recent years several works, dedicated to medial reinterpretations of Belarusian history appeared, for instance new films, graphic novels and animated adaptations of Vasil Bykaŭ's and Ales Adamovich's famous war stories have been released. On the other side, in contemporary Belarusian culture, there is hardly any surprising or provocative new aesthetic examination of Belarusian (traumatic) history. Nevertheless, a small number of Belarusian historical comics, graphic novels or animated films in the last year offered a more diverse field of interpretations and contestations through the aesthetics of their picture-text narratives – albeit these mediums still tend to reproduce historical images and interpretations of the past according to the polarised eastern/western historical narratives we discussed in the introductory chapter to this material on Belarus. By showing an unambiguous motivation to cross over the boundaries of the state's heroic narratives, several comics, graphic novels and animated films offer their viewers – who are, on the whole, younger – a means to interpret the past individually.

2 Belarusian comics "on a mission" for national identity?

Comics are more entertaining than graphic novels, usually told in many small episodes and less in one big story line. What they have in common with each other and with animated film is that the interplay between text and image breaks up classic historical narrative patterns and conveys individualised perspectives on the past (Cromer and Clark 2007). Comics and graphic novels are especially appealing to younger audiences. Indeed, Jan Witek attributes to the historical comic a tension between "didacticism and sensationalism" (1986, 43). Historical comic books and graphic novels transfer historical knowledge to a wider audience and appeal to and create individual perspectives on the past. Text-image based narrations are immersive and at the same time effective. Even if in Belarus the comic medium is not yet as popular as it is in neighbouring countries, it is not surprising that comics and graphic novels have still become a platform for the reassertion of an individual, collective and national rediscovery of the past.[9]

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[8] On the contemporary "memory boom" regarding World War II, the Holocaust, and Stalinism in history and memory studies and narrative media, see Winter 2006; Hoskins 2014; Blacker et al. 2013.

As early as the Soviet 1920s, comics were being used as a "genre for popularizing Belarusian classical heritage" – a heritage that spanned mythology, folklore, and history – by the Minsk children's and youth magazine *Birch* (*Biryozka*) (Sin'kova 2015, 156). Even into the 1980s, comic publications continued to combine Soviet aesthetic models with Belarusian stories (Sin'kova 2015, 156).[10] In the 1990s, non-state media began to publish comics. *Novelties* (*Navinki*), a postmodern satirical media project published in the late 1990s and early 2000s, often illustrated its cover with caricatures and comic collages. The project focused on political and social provocation while attempting to describe contemporary reality in Belarus. The *Navinki* comics contained few explicit references to the historical past.

However, a shift towards historical themes in comics began in the 2010s, when several comics focused on Belarusian history appeared on independent platforms and thanks to independent publishers.[11] Anatol Ivashchanka and Vladimir

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[9] Due to pandemic-related travel restrictions, my research on comics and graphic novels in Belarus, planned for summer 2020, could not take place. Therefore, I rely on internet sources for this brief overview. I am grateful to Aleksey Bratochkin for his helpful advice.

[10] If one were to delve more deeply into the history of comics in Belarus, one would not be able to avoid the name Adam Globus (Vladimir Adamchik). His art works, which oscillate between illustrations for children's books, collage and comics, are sometimes interpreted as the first Belarusian comics (Sin'kova 2015, 15–16).

[11] In 2015 the publishing house Lohvinaŭ presented the translation of a Polish children's comic about the Third Rzeczpospolita, *The Bartnik Ignat and the Treasure of the Forest* (*Bartnik Ignat i skarb puszczy*, 2015), by Tomasz Samojlik. Another Polish Comic on Belarusian history, *Trumian Show* by Patrycja Pustelnik and Agata Hop, appeared in 2020. It tells the story of Belarusian girl Alena who has a special gift. "It combines" so it says in a review, "East Slavic folklore, the nastiness of the USSR and Tarantinian sense of humor." ("'This country is worthy of it!' Polish authors create comics about Belarusian avenger." *Belsat*, 19 May 2019, https://belsat.eu/en/news/this-country-is-worthy-of-it-polish-authors-create-comics-about-belarusian-avenger/ [16 April 2021]). In 2018, the Russian-Belarusian comic collection *Legends of the Wild Forest* (*Legendy dremuchego lesa*) was published, mixing fantasy worlds with historical Slavic legends.

Drindrozhik's *About Kastus* (*Pra Kastusya*, 2013), written in Belarusian language and based on a song by Vladimir Korotkevich,[12] was published in 2013. The editors of *About Kastus* emphasised the opportunity offered by comics to popularise Belarusian history for all ages – adults, young people and children.[13] The comic was released by the non-government Union of Belarusian Writers to mark the sesquicentennial anniversary of the January uprising of the Belarusian National Comprehension Movement in 1863/64. Kastus Kalinoŭski (1838–1864), an anti-tsarist activist against autocracy and serfdom, was executed in 1864. Kalinoŭski's political writings are considered influential for the Belarusian language and nationalism. Revered by many in Belarus and Lithuania as a national hero, Kalinoŭski has been disparaged by President Lukashenka.[14] Ivashchanka and Drindrozhik's comic presents an alternative history in which Kalinoŭski's uprising ends successfully and Kalinoŭski remains alive.

Another alternate history is presented in the comic project *Let's Stir up the Country* (*Davaice zamucim krainu*, 2018), released through the independent online portal *Svaboda*. In simple, amusing images, the text shows two students from Minsk traveling to the past. Thanks to their and other Belarusians' struggle against the "Russian World" ("Russkiy Mir"),[15] the BNR in this alternative universe continues to exist beyond the Soviet era. In this telling, the BNR becomes the beginning of a new Belarus, the "motherland" of contemporary Belarusian identity and language. In large part, these and other recent historical comics focus attention on variations of the national myth that Belarus needs to be freed from the Russian colonial yoke and from the very idea of Belarusian-Russian fraternalism. Indeed, the editors of *About Kastus* emphasised the opportunity offered by comics to popularise Belarusian history and to make that history appealing to readers of all ages.[16] In this sense, they are symbolic of Witek's "didacticism and sensationalism", buttressing the former with lashings of the latter.

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[12] For further information, "Komiks 'Pra Kastusya'." *Delayem Vmeste*, 18 August 2013, http://delaemvmeste.by/komiks-pra-kastusya/ (16 April 2021).

[13] "V svet vyshel istoricheskiy komiks pro Kastusya Kalinovskogo." *Tovarishch.online*, 20 August 2013, http://www.camarade.biz/node/9565 (4 June 2021).

[14] "Why Lukashenka Fears Kastus Kalinouski." *Charter97.org*, 29 November 2019, https://charter97.org/en/news/2019/11/29/357322/ (4 June 2021).

[15] The ideologised geopolitical concept of Russkiy Mir assumes the legitimacy of Russian influence in the post-Soviet space on the basis of the binding power of the Orthodox faith and of the Russian language and culture (Pieper 2020).

[16] "V svet vyshel istoricheskiy komiks pro Kastusya Kalinovskogo." *Tovarishch.online*, 20 August 2013.

A further example is the magazine *Our History* (*Nasha historyya*) – part of the opposition newspaper platform *Our Cornfield* (*Nasha Niva*)[17] – which provides information about Belarusian and European history for children and young people in a visually and narratively appealing way. When its first issue was published in 2018, *Nasha historyya* was hailed as the first Belarusian-language glossy magazine in the country's history.[18] A central component of *Nasha historyya* has, from its first issue on, been the inclusion of a comic supplement in each issue. Sometimes the supplement is aimed at children, sometimes at young people and adults, and each supplement deals mostly with stories or even alternative stories on Belarusian national history.

The comic supplements in *Nasha historyya* engage in the creation of a certain national identity policy. Indeed, the editors at *Nasha historyya/Nasha Niva* make no bones about their mission: "There is an obvious gap between what academics know today about their people's historical path and what society knows about it. [. . .] It is our mission to bridge the gap between science and popular knowledge."[19] They see its main task as popularising historical knowledge and strengthening young Belarusians' national self-confidence. To appeal above all to young readers, the magazine includes historical jokes and comic strips for children and young people. For example, 2019's first issues include three comic series for different age groups: the semi-fantastic comic *The Last Vampire*, about the Stalinist post-war period in Belarus; a comic for schoolchildren about Francysk Skaryna, who is remembered as the first book printer in Belarus and a promoter of the Belarusian literary language; and, for pre-literate toddlers, picture stories about the adventures and daily life of a proud, little European tribe of plasticine snails from the Ice Age until the Middle Ages.[20]

The magazine's programmatic emphasis is on narratives that repudiate pro-Soviet and pro-Russian histories. The first issue of the magazine, for example, focused on the history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and the second issue on Kastus Kalinoŭski who appeared as cover boy of later issues, such as *Nasha historyya* No. 10/2019 (Figure 2).[21]

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[17] *Nasha Niva* is the oldest Belarusian weekly newspaper, founded in 1906 and re-established in 1991. It was one of the most important political and cultural media during the "Period of Belarusian rebirth" (Адраджэньне / Адраджэнне). Today it is an important platform for the Belarusian opposition. Since the middle of the 1990s, and increasingly since 2020/2021, the editorial staff has been subject to massive repression from the Belarusian state authorities.

[18] "Takoga yashche ne byvala." *Nasha Niva*, 26 August 2018, https://nn.by/?c=ar&i=214863 (16 April 2021).

[19] *TUT.BY*, 24 August 2018, https://news.tut.by/culture/605699.html (16 April 2021).

[20] *Nasha historyya* 1.6 (2019): 88–92, 94–98 and the following issues (2019): 3–12.

[21] See the cover of issue number 2, 2018: https://nn.by/?c=ar&i=216345&lang=ru (16 April 2021).

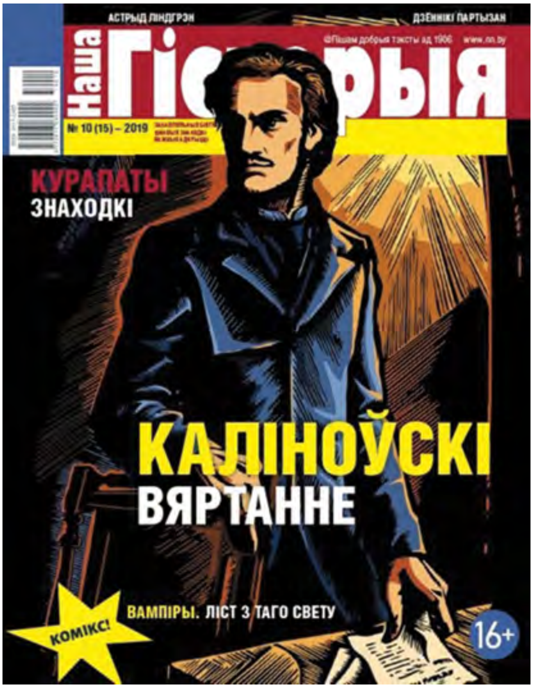
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Figure 2: "Kastus Kalinoŭski", Cover Nasha historyya Nr. 10/2019 © Journal Nasha historyya.

The children's pages printed comics depicting the lives of various Belarusian heroes.[22] Throughout 2018, the focus was principally on Belarusian history seen as part of European history rather than of Russian or Soviet imperial history. Even if there are some segments on Soviet history and on the Russian Empire, these are told from nationalistic perspectives, which do not coincide with the official version of the past. These segments are accompanied by material on the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, on the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth period and on Belarus' European neighbours. In short, the magazine's articles and its selection of supplemental cartoons convey a Belarusian national history that is deliberately distinct from Soviet-era narratives – and, therefore, from the state meta-narrative. An anti-Soviet interpretation of history is conspicuous in *Nasha historyya*: the Soviet period is presented as a history of repression and corruption.

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[22] See the table of contents of the corresponding issue, page 93: https://nn.by/?c=ar&i=216345&lang=ru (16 April 2021).

3 Aesthetic renegotiation of the World War II narrative in the graphic novel *Ours* (*Svayaki*)

Authors, artists and recipients from younger generations seem to be weary of the overused heroic war theme that dominates the public sphere of history. Thus, among new literary, visual and cinematic releases and in recent works of non-state art, there are markedly few artistic explorations and reflections on World War II. However, the theme does appear in the non-traditional graphic novel form, as, for example, in Jan Zhvirblya's *Ours* (*Svayaki*), which was published in 2017 by the independent Minsk publishing house Knihazbor (Figure 3). *Ours* mixes family narratives and images of partisan war rooted in the literary counter-narratives of Soviet and post-Soviet cultural memory.

The work is based on a 1967 short story by Vasyl Bykaŭ. The original text relates a family and social tragedy against the background of the wartime partisan struggle in Belarus. The focus is on a mother and her two sons in a German-occupied Belarusian village. The two young boys intend, against their mother's will, to join the partisans in their fight against German fascists. The mother's desperate attempt to dissuade the boys from their plan, supported by a male cousin who cooperates with the Germans by working as an auxiliary policeman, ends in a morally unsolvable disaster. The cousin goes to the family's hut with his accomplices. Instead of taking the two sons to task, he and his accomplices brutally kill them. The mother, aware of her moral guilt, throws herself down a well. In essence, the closeness of the story to Bykaŭ's original means that *Ours* is less a graphic novel – which would presuppose an independent story born of a specific combination of text and images – but rather an illustrated recreation of a literary text, offering a non-hierarchically arranged relationship between text and image.

Even if literature has lost its primacy as a vehicle for historical knowledge in recent decades, the example of *Ours* shows that literary narratives are still important vessels for cultural memory. In Belarus, those vessels often take the form of new adaptations, especially of works by Bykaŭ and Ales Adamovich. Bykaŭ and Adamovich are the most important examples of Belarusian war writers who pushed beyond the heroic canon in Soviet Belarus. Both authors received widespread praise in the Soviet period, even though their realistic and moral accounts on personal war experiences contrasted with Soviet-approved narratives of the Great Patriotic War. While Bykaŭ's works drew in the main on the author's experiences as a Red Army soldier, Adamovich's focused on the experiences the writer had as a young partisan. Adamovich in particular continually returned to the massacres of residents of hundreds of Belarusian villages by German occupiers and Belarusian collaborators.

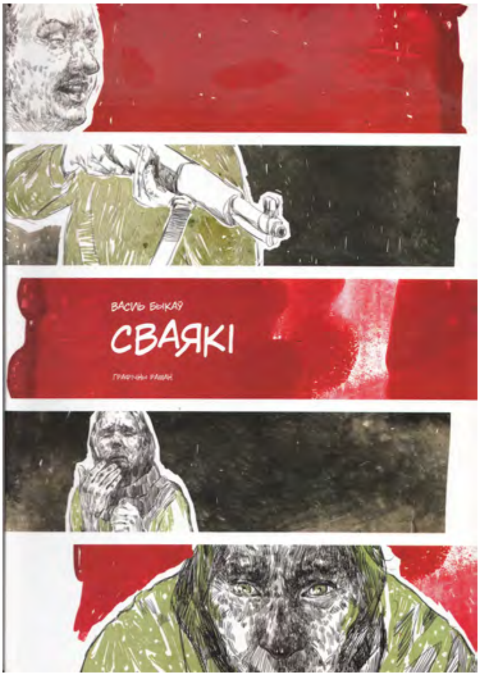

Figure 3: Bookcover “Svayaki” (2017, Jan Zhvirblya, Vasyl Bykaŭ), © Publishing house Knihazbor.

Bykaŭ and Adamovich’s relevance for today’s collective memory is evident not only in the fact that Belarus’ most renowned contemporary writers, such as Svetlana Aleksievich, refer to Bykaŭ and Adamovich as their role models and mentors (Weller 2018; Hniadzko 2018), but also in the fact that the majority of fictional Belarusian World War II films produced since the 1990s are – like *Ours* – based on their literary texts.[23] Russian filmmaker Sergey Loznitsa’s *In the Fog* (*V tumane,* 2012), for instance, is based on Bykaŭ’s identically named 1988 short story. Mikhail Segal’s *Franz + Polina* (2006), meanwhile, is based on Adamovich’s novel *The Mute* (*Nemoy*, 1993). Given this context, the publication of a graphic novel version of a Bykaŭ short story is neither surprising nor controversial.

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[23] Other examples are the film *On Black Ice* (*Na chornykh lyadakh*, 1995) based on the two short stories by Bykaŭ *On Black Ice* (*Na chornykh lyadakh* 1994/2001) and *Before the End* (*Perad kantsom*, 1997), the short film *Svayaki* (*Relatives*, 2020) by Dmitry Kargapolov based on the story of the same name by Bykaŭ. The documentary *Reading the Book of Blockade* (*Chitaem Blokadnuyu knigu*, 2009) by Aleksandr Sokurov is based on the famous documentary chronicle *Blockade Book* (*Blokadnaya kniga*, 1979) on Leningrad Siege by Daniil Granin and Adamovich.

However, we can make some conclusions about the choice of material in *Ours* by recognising Bykaŭ’s widespread influence. The book – or rather the booklet – was commissioned by the Union of Belarusian Writers to celebrate the ninety-third anniversary of Bykaŭ’s birth in June 2017. Although *Ours* was printed only in a relatively small number of copies, it was well received by the independent literary world for two reasons. First, the newly prepared material was linked with a global boom in historical comics and graphic novels, so it was proudly promoted as a “first graphic novel in Belarus”.[24] Second, combining the new, illustrated and visualised short-story and Bykaŭ’s image as the most important Belarusian writer and a national moral authority, a text on World War II was given a more contemporary and up-to-date look. Literary readers hoped that *Ours* would therefore appeal to a younger audience and teach that audience about the human-moral sides of the partisan narrative. Indeed, the disturbing effect of the story’s adaptation into the graphic novel emanates from the textual and visual representation of a morally and existentially hopeless situation in which it is no longer possible to distinguish between good and evil. The graphic and colour elements in green and red and the structuring of the events into single sequences reinforce this irresolvable dilemma of human (non-)guilt as a timeless quandary that reoccur in the present or the future.

4 “Let’s be Belarusians!”

The formal distance between the medium of comic and animated film is not significant; nor is the nature of the animation’s aesthetic reception distant from that of the comic. Animations are images set in motion and surrounded by audio. In contrast to comics, however, the moving space between image, text and sound allows history to be presented in a more entertaining and nuanced way. The campaign *Let’s Be Belarusians!* (*Budzma belarusami!*, 2011) made use of these formal facets in a 2011 animated video clip of the same name.

According to the creators, *Let’s Be Belarusians!* was founded in 2008 as a cultural campaign by the international NGO Belarusians of the Fatherland (ZBS, *Zhurtavanne belarusaŭ svetu ‘Batskaushyna’*). The campaign has been supported by public initiatives, companies, news agencies, sports clubs and creatives who purportedly wish to deepen the population’s feeling for and understanding of

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[24] “Pervyy belorusskiy graficheskiy roman vyshel ko dnyu rozhdeniya Bykova.” *Nasha Niva*, 19 June 2017, https://nashaniva.com/?c=ar&i=192646&lang=ru (16 April 2021).

Belarusian national identity.[25] Since 2008, the popular campaign has been promoting Belarusian language and culture by organising concerts and design and writing competitions and by publishing high-quality books, online journals and videos on Belarusian history. Well-known authors like Viktor Martinovich and Alherd Bakharevich have written columns for the campaign's official website. The whole campaign – which includes accompanying activities aimed at promoting new national sentiments with fashion trends, concerts, festivals and language courses in Belarusian – suggests that the target audience are primarily young Belarusians.[26]

Lyavon Volski, the lead singer of the punk rock band N.R.M. and icon of the independent Belarusian-language music scene, co-produced *Let's Be Belarusians!* eponymous 2011 animated video clip, which was promoted as the first Belarusian-language "mini-blockbuster" about Belarus' history (Figure 4).[27] The five-minute short deliberately re-appropriates national, regional and local forms of Belarusian identity, which are all subsumed into Volski's quickfire rap vocal. The clip fast-forwards through thousands of years of Belarusian history, highlighting events from the history of the Principality of Polotsk and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, the announcement of the BNR and the creation of the BSSR. Historical figures

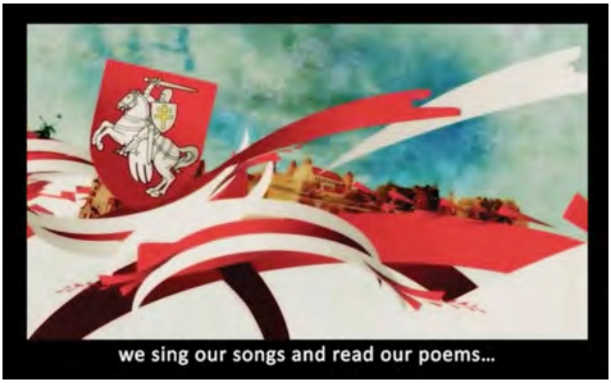
we sing our songs and read our poems...

Figure 4: Still, Animated film "Budzma belarusami!" [minute 4.46], © Campaign Budzma belarusami!.

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[25] "Pra nas." *Budzma.by*, n.d., https://budzma.org/about/ (16 April 2021).

[26] "Belarus: Between a Rock and a Hard Place." *Eurozine*, 22 March 2017, https://www.eurozine.com/between-a-rock-and-a-hard-place/ (14 March 2021).

[27] See the version on YouTube with English subtitles: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tuI63MCxZa0 (4 March 2021). The clip was a joint product of the *Belarusians* campaign and the media portals BudzmaTUT and TUT.BY. The original idea belonged to Julia Lyashkevich, the animation designer was Yulia Rudnitskaya, and accompanying lyrics and music are by Lyavon Volski and Aleksandr Tomidorov.

mentioned include Princes Vseslav Charodey and Mindovg, the first printer and enlightener Francis Skorin, Chancellor Lev Sapega, the first national poet of Belarus Janka Kupala and the famous scientist Boris Kit.

The film enacts a re-appropriaton of the historical past as an open and movable project, countering a supposedly widespread but rudimentary knowledge about Belarusian culture. As we highlighted in the introductory chapter, this is an example of establishing a narrative about Belarus' medieval, pro-European roots as an alternative to the Sovietised official version of history disseminated by the Lukashenka regime.

World War II, however, is just one of many events in *Belarusians'* chronology: "Completely devoid of victorious fervour; the war appears more like a tragic event, which had a detrimental impact on Belarusian sovereignty and which in fact resembled a civil war, with Belarusians fighting on both sides." (Lastouski 2013, 158) Instead of the monotonous focus on the war as the central event in the nation's history, the storyline carves out space for references to figures of the gods of Belarusian and Slavic mythology and worlds of folklore legends. Per Anders Rudling summed up the core of both pathetic and critically parodic rewriting of Belarusian history in the video by arguing that *Belarusians* "tells an alternative story of the origins of the nation, tongue in cheek. However, as in other nationalising discourses there is a heavy emphasis on blood, struggle, sacrifice, and heroic exploits on the battlefield. In this rendering of history, the Belarusians and their ancestors appear as fierce warriors." (Rudling 2017, 81)

The patriotic impetus of the film is compounded by the folkloric, fairy-tale-like animation's juxtaposition with modern, Belarusian-language rap. This semi-ironic method of contrast is also evident in the refrain: "Let's discover our roots! The Belarusian nation is a daring nation!" However, the text-image-music narrative is not wholly inclusive, since some historical events in Belarusian-European history simply go unmentioned. The clip to some extent creates a somewhat naive reduction of a complex history into stereotyped national, anti-Soviet patterns. This fact undermines the filmmakers' own claims to be filling in the gaps in Belarus' history.

The video clip is clearly motivated and limited by the tension between didacticism and sensationalism as described by Witek. Like the editors of *Nasha historyya*, *Belarusians*' makers claim (and perhaps genuinely seek) to fill holes in the Belarusian population's knowledge about history, but, more importantly, to promote *their* alternative version of Belarusian history – a history that for many decades has not been part of textbooks or that was (and, indeed, still often is) hidden behind Soviet nostalgic meta-narratives of official history policy.

According to Yuliya Lyashkevich, the original idea for the *Belarusians* clip was to make a video about the need to take an interest in history. Only afterward did the creative team decide that history is best told by history itself. Therefore, they concluded, the video should "convey the brightness, fullness, richness of what has happened in the history of Belarus, [. . .] the most striking and interesting events".[28] When producing the video, then, the filmmakers sought ways to emphasise an individual and emotional relationship to the past, highlighting and *creating* favourite episodes in the history of Belarus. The narratives and images of the film and its accompanying music thus aim to provide a space for Belarusians' individual self-confidence – a self-confidence that is overtly European – to flourish.

Belarusians, then, deliberately appeals to an opposition-leaning audience, addressing itself to young people who are at home in alternative culture, who wish for an independent, free and democratic Belarus, and who are looking for more domestically produced entertainment. Even producing a domestic clip in the Belarusian language can be a symbol of pride, given that in recent years many young and educated Belarusians have left the country. Indeed, Volski's political songs had been established as the most important Belarusian-singing band and an icon of the opposition culture since 1994. However, these oppositional and alternative cultural elements did not stop the clip becoming a roaring success. When the *Let's Be Belarusians!* clip was shown at medieval and folklore festivals, it received widespread praise. In 2011, the film was for a few days the most downloaded video on the Belarusian internet. It even reached the top-ten on YouTube. Just a week after its release, *Belarusians* had been viewed by more than 350 thousand people, 66 per cent of whom were located in Belarus.[29]

5 Conclusion

Belarus' centuries-old independence struggle and the dual traumas of World War II and Stalinism are the events that most strongly shape cultural and collective memory in Belarus. The situation of "divided memory" and Belarusians' struggle to reconstruct some sense of continuity in their national history, however, has led to a hardening of positions over the last decade or so. As a result, the political, social and personal aftermath of historical events and collective traumas have either not been part of the official narrative or have been excluded. Certain historical events have been emphasised in order to legitimise one group or another's respective own story of the national past.

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[28] "Belorusskie animatory sozdali istoricheskiy mini-blokbaster." Naviny.by, 28 May 2011, https://naviny.by/rubrics/culture/2011/05/27/ic_articles_117_173783 (1 March 2021).

[29] "Rolik ob istorii Belarusi 'Budz'ma belarusami!' voshel v TOP-10 Youtube." *Ale.by*, 7 June 2011, https://web.archive.org/web/20140909030243/http:/ale.by/news/rolik-ob-istorii-belarusi-budzma-belarusam-voshel-v-top-10-youtube (4 March 2021).

As we have seen from the examples presented, contemporary popular cultural history formats move in a fragile tension between Soviet heritage and the search for national identity, and between the monolithic historical myth of the Great Patriotic War of the official state discourse and an alternative anti-Soviet national historical interpretation. Many creators and artists vehemently ignore the one side in order to turn all the more strongly and obsessively towards the other.

Younger and adolescent recipients certainly feel particularly addressed by comics and animated films, because with its key themes, such as national identity, the independence movement in Belarus, cultural roots and local folklore, they strike a chord in a society in turmoil, which is searching for a new self-image as Belarusians in relation to the past and the future. National historical symbols and the rediscovery of Belarusian identities are just as much in vogue as democratic, pro-European perspectives on the country's multicultural past, which most of the examples discussed here directly or indirectly convey. Pro-European does not necessarily also mean pro-EU; rather, in this context, it means that Belarus is read as a European country with a long eventful European history.

It is striking that some of the works I have discussed accentuate the radical departure from the state's favoured image in paratextual terms. They do so by creating a completely new look at history when it comes to medium and genre: almost all of the cultural products in question advertise themselves as the "first comic book", the "first graphic novel" or the "first animated film" about the history of Belarus. These new formats promise to direct the target audience to their own historical roots in a completely new way.

The result is ambiguity: on the one hand, these popular historical formats actually open up the opportunity to interest more young people in the historical and cultural Belarusian past and to strengthen their self-confidence as Belarusians; on the other hand, these formats also tend to entail the danger of reducing complex and multi-layered historical Belarusian memory landscapes to simple stereotypes.

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Allyson Edwards & Roberto Rabbia

The “Wild Nineties”: Youth Engagement, Memory and Continuities between Yeltsin’s and Putin’s Russia

The psychiatrist Vamık Volkan (2013) recognised three markers that contribute to the formation of large-group identity: the “otherness” of other groups, the role of charismatic leaders and the mythologisation of past events. In the following chapters, we unpack how Volkan’s “mythologisation of past events” has played out in Russia since the collapse of the USSR by exploring memory of the victory in the Great Patriotic War and of the Soviet collapse as Russia’s respective “chosen glory” and “chosen trauma”.

Volkan’s term “chosen glory” describes an event ritually remembered so that it becomes a dominant source of “pride and pleasure” for members of the group: “Past victories in battle and great accomplishments of a political or religious nature frequently appear as chosen glories. For example, large groups celebrate their independence days. Some chosen glories and heroic persons attached to them are often heavily mythologized over time.” (Volkan 2013, 230) Volkan frames “chosen trauma”, meanwhile, as “the shared mental representation of an event in a large group’s history in which the group suffered catastrophic loss, humiliation, and helplessness at the hands of its enemies” (Volkan 2013, 231).[1] Both “chosen traumas” and “chosen glories” invoke history and memory yet inevitably cede ground to mythicised representations of the past. Duncan Bell argues that the resulting “mythscape” is the “discursive realm wherein the struggle for control of people’s memories and the formation of nationalist myths is debated, contested and subverted incessantly” (2003, 66).

In order for chosen glories and traumas to function as identity markers, Volkan argues, they must be passed from older to younger generations. Chosen glories are principally transmitted by parents, teachers and communal ceremonies (Volkan 2009, 211). Similarly, chosen traumas are confirmed when large-group members’ “injured self-images associated with the mental representations of the shared traumatic event are ‘deposited’ into the developing self-representation of children in the next generation as if these children will be able to mourn the loss or reverse the humiliation” (Volkan 2001, 87–88).

Even when “transmitted” to new generations, Volkan observes, chosen traumas – and the identities they carry with them – are not necessarily immediately or always

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[1] Trauma as a cultural phenomenon has been extensively addressed also in sociology, where scholars reached similar conclusions as Volkan. See Alexander 2004; Eyerman 2019.

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active; the same could be inferred for chosen glories. Political, social, and cultural leaders, in fact, can call on elements of this mythscape to bolster group identity.[2]

Inculcating and invoking chosen traumas and chosen glories promote specific values – and effectively boost a regime's legitimacy. Such is the case in Soviet and post-Soviet space, where the Great Patriotic War has been promulgated as a "chosen glory" by Soviet and post-Soviet leaders (Malinova 2017, 45).[3] Memories of World War II have been recycled and revived to legitimise power and to justify present and future policy.

In the 75 years since 1945, however, there have been moments when narratives of the Great Patriotic War have been particularly susceptible to change. The most acute of these periods was the 1980s. When Soviet premier Mikhail Gorbachev introduced a number of democratising reforms (Tumarkin 1991, 1–2; Jacobsen 1995, 103), the veil on defence expenditure and war fatalities was lifted. In response, a new generation of writers began to question the purported "success" of the war (Renz 2005, 63; Cooper 2005, 136; Frank and Gillette 1992, 239; Mathers, 1995, 231).[4] Mikhail Meltyukhov's *Stalin's Missed Chance* (*Upushchennyy shans Stalina*, 2000) followed works by Gorkov and Danilov (1993) and Suvorov (1987), outlining the strategic failures of Stalin and the Soviet Army. These new historians were accused of blackening the history of the war and considered a threat to creating a new patriotic generation. By opening the chosen glory to contestation, *glasnost* had proved to be a major contributor to the delegitimisation of communist society and its past military victories.

In the early 1990s, nascent media outlets and educational forums competed for popularity in the new market-driven society (Renz 2005, 66; Brown 1992, 56). Writers, historians and broadcasters used these newly available discursive sites to re-understand Russia's past, which impacted heavily on the government's use of the victory for its own political goals. However, historical discourse reverted to the Soviet narrative in 1995. Then Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov's words are emblematic of the time: "In the history of the twentieth century, there is no more significant and memorable event than the victory of the Soviet people and their allies over Hitler's fascism in the Great Patriotic War."[5] Despite emerging stories of Soviet cruelty, crimes and errors, veterans' organisations made calls to recognise the real "truth" or, as Vladimir Putin has recently framed it, "pure truth".[6] The Soviet Union, goes the dominant narrative, bore the brunt of and led the fight against fascism.[7] Russia's "chosen glory", the Great Patriotic War, has proven resilient despite occasional challenges.

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[2] Volkan cites the role of the Battle of Kosovo (1389) for Serbian collective identity as an example of a trauma, since it has been associated with feelings of lost greatness and victimhood. Although narratives of the military defeat changed over time, they retained their traumatic relevance until the end of World War II. It was not until Slobodan Milošević emerged as a force in Serbian politics in 1987 that the trauma of Kosovo Polje was reactivated and became a pillar of Serbian nationalism again, especially during the Yugoslav and Kosovan wars (Volkan 2001, 89–95).

[3] See also Gudkov, Lev. "The Fetters of Victory: How the War provides Russia with its Identity." *Eurozine,* 03 May 2005, https://www.eurozine.com/the-fetters-of-victory/ (3 April 2019).

[4] Viktor Suvorov's *Icebreaker: Who Started World War II* (*Ledokol: Kto nachal vtoruyu mirovuyu voynu?*, 1989) initiated debate on the claims that the Soviet Union planned an offensive attack on Nazi Germany in 1941. Gorkov and Danilov (1993) later published a study on this planned attack, titled *Was Stalin Preparing a Preemptive Strike against Hitler in 1941?* (*Gotovil li Stalin uprezhdayushchiy udar protiv Gitlera v 1941g?*, 1993). In addition, the arrival of NGOs like Memorial (founded in 1989) saw the launch of a number of educational studies that sought to uncover and perpetuate the histories of political repression relating to the Soviet period.

Russia seems spoiled for choice when it comes to selecting a "chosen trauma". Scholars of cultural trauma have usually highlighted the Soviet Union's collapse as the event that created widespread disorientation in daily life and Russians' perceptions of themselves and their society (Sztompka 2004). Nonetheless, Piotr Sztompka notes that the collective was not quick to acknowledge the collapse of communism as traumatic. In order for this to happen, "a set of conditions or situations, perceived as pernicious, dangerous or threatening" – that is, "precipitating factors" – had to coalesce (Sztompka 2004, 164). In other words, the "pain of transition", which encompasses the difficulties of social, political and economic transformation, catalyses societal trauma. Indeed, scholars have started to focus their attention on the 1990s, when the full effects of the "pain of transition" came to be felt, as particularly traumatic. Gulnaz Sharafutdinova has recently defined the so-called "wild nineties", the decade of Boris Yeltsin's rule, as Russia's "chosen trauma" (2020, 105–132). We contend that the "wild nineties" have indeed become the chosen trauma to mirror World War II as Russia's chosen glory.

1 The traumatic frame of the "wild nineties"

Much work has already explored the Kremlin's role in consolidating the public's negative memories of the Yeltsin era. Olga Malinova, for instance, has shown how the negative framing of the Yeltsin era has boosted the Putin regime's legitimacy, highlighting Putin's personal role in creating a narrative contrast between the 1990s and 2000s (2011, 112–115; 2018; 2021). Sharafutdinova noted the frequency with which Putin referred to the 1990s in his televised "Direct Line" (*Pryamaya liniya*) press conferences between 2001 and 2017. Malinova and Sharafutdinova agree that the president continually seeks to oppose weakness and strength, instability and stability, and highlights the population's suffering in the Yeltsin years (Malinova 2018, 53–60; Sharafutdinova 2020, 124). Finally, Belmonte and Rochlitz (2019) provide empirical evidence of the success of the government's mass media influence, especially in Russia's provinces.

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[5] "Dokumenty po voprosam, svyazannym s prazdnovaniyem 50-letiya Pobedy v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne (v t.ch. ob ob'yavlenii amnistii) (proyekty postanovleniy Gosudarstvennoy Dumy, obrashcheniya, zayavleniya, informatsii i dr.)" F. 10100, Op. 1, d. 1003, Gosudarstvennyy Arkhiv Rossiyskoy Federatsii, Moscow, February–March 1995.

[6] "Victory 75: Military Parades on Moscow's Red Square." *Russia Today*, 24 June 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z4pFnlr0zck (14 September 2020).

[7] F. 10100, Op. 1 d. 1003, l. 29–30, GARF, February–March 1995; also footnote 3.

The "wild nineties" trope, however, is not the Kremlin's political creation. Pop culture and mass media had long ago introduced the public to the era. Indeed, films, TV series and literature have consistently explored the topics of criminality, violence and "bespredel" – the chaotic and criminal lack of restraints in late and post-Soviet Russia[8] – since the 1990s. Cultural producers used history in particular to establish parallels between the 1990s and various other difficult historical periods (Norris 2012; Wijermars 2018). Indeed, it was the mass media that popularised the "wild nineties" moniker (Bonch-Osmolovaskaya 2018, 130–131).[9] Moreover, many Russians lived through and still remember what were very real difficulties for swathes of the population during the 1990s (Gudkov 2014, 192). Those living memories have facilitated the spread and a critical reception of the "wild nineties". All these causalities coalesce to encourage the older generation to pass on the traumatic memory of the 1990s to the younger generation.

Whatever its origin, the negative myth of the 1990s has – especially since Putin's third term began in 2012 – been a useful tool to promote conservative and patriotic values. Political rhetoric contrasts the Yeltsin era with present-day Russia. The contrast highlights the destructive sociocultural and security effects of lacking patriotism and of embracing western liberalism. While young Russians generally do not question the narrative of the "wild nineties", they are less likely than their parents' generations to hold conservative and patriotic values.[10] As a result, the

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[8] For a discussion on this term, its origins and use, see Borenstein 2008, 197–200.

[9] See also "'Likhiye' ili 'raznyye': pochemu v Rossii snova sporyat o 90-kh?" *BBC Russkaya sluzhba*, 24 September 2015, https://www.bbc.com/russian/society/2015/09/150924_90s_argument_russia (17 October 2018).

[10] A 2018 ZOiS report shows that the Russian youth seems to support a liberal understanding of nationalism (Krawatzek and Sasse 2018, 15–16). On patriotism, Omelchenko et al. (2015, 34) observe that "young people feel much less patriotic than elderly people, especially those who have unstable civic identification. Their representations, based on information, propagated by official educational institutions and mass-media mismatch their self-image as citizens and patriots."

Kremlin and its media have taken a particular interest in targeting young Russians, attempting to transmit the "chosen trauma" to them and shielding them from other sources of influence. Any attempts to revisit the Yeltsin era or to challenge the dominant narrative are bulldozed by the state's rhetorical power.

2 Cultural militarisation in 1990s Russia

The cultural reach of military ritual tradition remains remarkably absent from research on the Russian 1990s (which is itself a generally under-researched period). Only the physical dimensions of the military institution and its apparently diminished status have received any real attention.[11] Scholars of Russian militarism in tsarist Russia, the Soviet Union and under Vladimir Putin, however, note a continued physical, bureaucratic and military prioritisation. Scholars have explored the prominence of military-patriotic education, the large number of former military and security figures in elite political roles, and the high portion of state budgets allotted to the armed forces (Keep 1983; Pipes 1980; Odom 1976; Golts 2018; Trenin 2016; Renz 2006).[12]

The scholarly consensus is that the collapse of the Soviet Union was a break in the militarisation of society, while Putin's ascension to power marked the beginning of a new period of remilitarisation. In a sense, these scholars are correct. The "wild nineties" was a period of political, economic and military chaos. However, no clean "break" with the militarised past ever occurred. Militarised themes and tropes never receded from prominence in Russia's cultural arena. In particular, the image of the Great Patriotic War, and the Soviet role in that war – that is to say, the nation's "chosen glory" – contained great affective power and prominence in the commemorative and educational landscape.

The end of Soviet-era Victory Day parades after the collapse of the USSR was short-lived. The traditions and rituals of the annual May 9 holiday were revived for the fiftieth anniversary of victory in 1995, when a pair of parades in Moscow – one on Poklonnaya Gora and the other on Red Square – were choreographed to resemble the Soviet Victory Day parades.[13] Music and Soviet symbols were an integral part of the celebratory parade. The government and a number of civil associations (including, for example, the All-Russian Veterans' Union) organised dinners, meetings and award ceremonies to celebrate veterans. In addition to the recreation of old practices, new monuments and commemorative spaces – such as a monument to Marshal Zhukov and the Great Patriotic War Museum in Moscow – were unveiled.

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[11] When we say physical here, we refer to the size and make-up of the armed forces.

[12] See also Trenin, Dmitri. "The Revival of the Russian Military." *Foreign Affairs*, May/June 2016, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2016-04-18/revival-russian-military (25 September 2019).

[13] It was at Moscow's Poklonnaya Gora that the Patriotic War of 1812 turned in favour of Russia. Since 1995, Poklonnaya Gora has been home to Victory Park and the Great Patriotic War Museum. Plans to build a victory complex had been made in the 1960s, but did not come to fruition until 1995.

During this period, the role of the youth in the continued transmission of Russia's history became a topic of interest. Discussions in the State Duma and among veterans' organisations centred on connecting young people with veterans in the hopes of passing on key patriotic values. Now, veterans' organisations outlined plans for youth-veteran activities, for young people's involvement in memorial cleaning. These organisations further stressed young people's responsibility to perpetuate the memory of the war victors.

The trauma of the 1990s, and especially emerging narratives that challenged the picture of Soviet sacrifice and heroism, accelerated concerns about the Great Patriotic War receding into the past. Yeltsin-era political and state actors recognised that the perpetuation of a glorious history by Russian youth would be important for maintaining a positive image of the Great Patriotic War in Russian society, which led to a recreation of Soviet commemorative practices in 1995. Yeltsin's government, however, also added new traditions. The rituals (re)established by Yeltsin have formed the basis for Vladimir Putin's twenty-first-century militarisation project. While much has been said about how the Putin government has attempted to distance itself from its predecessors' personalities and policies, the militarisation efforts of the Putin era build on the foundations revived and cultivated during the Yeltsin period.

3 The use of history in post-Soviet Russia and the relevance of historical narratives

Russia's chosen trauma and glory play a role in forging a sense of nationhood and in strengthening certain values at the expense of others.[14] History, then, has an active role to play in the present. James Liu and Denis Hilton explain that history "provides us with narratives that tell us who we are, where we came from and where we should be going” (2005, 537). Based on this observation, the two scholars have developed the concept of a “historical charter”, defined as “[a] central part of a group’s representation of its history [. . .], an account of its origin and historical mission, which will have been amended and renegotiated over time to reflect changing circumstances, and frame its responses to new challenges” (Liu and Hilton 2005, 538). Historical narratives “communicate symbolic and practical meaning over and above the ‘bare facts’ of history”, which need to be based on “narrative features – time, plot, characters, perspective, narrative intentions, and evaluation” in order to be successful (Liu and Lászlό 2007, 87).

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[14] Regarding the Russian case, see among others Gjerde 2015; Vázquez Liñán 2010; Zajda 2010.

Such representations amplify group-wide emotions, both positive (e.g. pride) and negative (e.g. guilt or shame), as the case of Russia’s chosen glory and trauma suggests. Indeed, as János Lászlό puts it, “life trajectory”, “personal identity”, and national history are strongly linked (2014, 69). This emotional link means that contesting chosen traumas and glories is almost impossible. Such phenomena function as “anchors” that “‘make familiar the unfamiliar’, interpreting, shaping debate and ultimately integrating new information into historical representations [New information from public debate] will be absorbed into existing categories and at most slightly modify the existing system of understanding” (Liu et al. 2014, 59–60).

Post-Soviet Russian leaders have used the chosen traumas and glories of the post-Soviet period to maintain legitimacy and establish discourses of military glory and patriotism in society. As the following chapters show, the tactic seems to have paid off in some regards – but not in every way. Roberto Rabbia discusses the role played by youth as recipient of the trope, as well as the over-the-top reaction of pro-Kremlin media to any positive perspective on the 1990s. However, as Allyson Edwards shows, the gaps between the Yeltsin and Putin era highlighted in official and public discourse are much less significant than often thought. Greater links between Yeltsin’s and Putin’s Russia comes clear by considering the economic and political continuities – again, fiercely denied by pro-Kremlin commentators – but even more interestingly, by focussing on the connections between patriotism and the victory in the Great Patriotic War or Russia’s “chosen glory”.

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Roberto Rabbia

Russian Youth as Subject and Object of the 1990s "Memory War"

1 How young people remember the 1990s

Since Vladimir Putin first came to power at the end of 1999, Russians have come to widely accept the trope of the "wild nineties". Nevertheless, in recent years some attempts have been made to positively reframe the 1990s. In this chapter, I explore two such attempts, each of which sparked a heated media debate: the online flashmob *#My90s*, and the activities of the Yeltsin Center. The emergence of narratives that countered the official line garnered harsh reactions from pro-Kremlin commentators, who have been eager to uphold or re-establish the primacy of the 1990s as Russia's "chosen trauma" and to fight attempts to rethink the era.

In spite of the media battles, a 2020 Levada Centre poll shows that Russians aged 18–36 generally have a negative view on the Yeltsin decade, although less negative than older age groups.[1] Sixty-two per cent of respondents of all ages think that the 1990s brought more harm than good to Russia, compared to 53 per cent of the 18–36 sample. Twenty-four per cent of the 18–36 bracket positively assess the first post-Soviet decade – a comparatively difficult decade when it came to political, cultural, social and economic tribulations – compared to 19 per cent of the entire population. Scholars agree with the polling. Gulnaz Sharafutdinova (2020), for example, observes that the "heroicisation" of Vladimir Putin and the negative framing of the 1990s are views widely shared by Russians of all ages, classes and ethnicities.

Understanding perceptions of the Soviet past casts further light on the contrasts between the Soviet, Yeltsin and Putin eras. Young people's nostalgia for the USSR echoes their opinions on the 1990s. A 2018 Levada poll suggests that young people – albeit to a lesser extent than their parents' generations – are increasingly nostalgic for the Soviet period.[2] Recent studies show that, despite all the Kremlin's efforts, the Brezhnev era is still considered the period when daily life was "excellent". Yuri Latov suggests that this belief has established contrasting "white" and "black" legends about the Brezhnev and Yeltsin periods (2018, 131). Russian memory of the 1990s,

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[1] "Vospriyatie 'devyanostykh'." *Levada Centre*, 6 April 2020, https://www.levada.ru/2020/04/06/vospriyatie-devyanostyh/ (10 April 2020).

[2] "Nostal'giya po SSSR." *Levada Centre*, 19 December 2018, https://www.levada.ru/2018/12/19/nostalgiya-po-sssr-2/ (27 January 2021).

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then, is tied up with contrasting and comparative memories of the preceding and succeeding periods.

When it comes to the 1990s itself, Maya Yadova has shown how 17- to 19-year-old students, which she categorises as either “modernists” or “traditionalists”, see the 1990s and the 2000s in relatively uniform ways. Both groups believe the Yeltsin decade was detrimental but assess the 2000s more positively (2012, 188; 191). Yadova confirms the existence in public discourse of an artificial contrast between the Yeltsin and Putin eras propagated by the mass media: young people’s views were “mainly based on the cliché replicated in the domestic media about the ‘wild’/‘hungry’ 1990s and the ‘stable’/‘full’ 2000s” (2012, 194). Yadova, who conducted her research a decade ago, found that the contrast between the 1990s as negative and the 2000s as positive was shared widely at the time.

Later studies point to young people’s acceptance of negative views of the Yeltsin era throughout the 2010s. Interviewees in 2017 described the 1990s as “a time of gang violence” and as the “wild nineties”, but had little specific knowledge of the period (Kasamara and Sorokina 2017, 61–62). Elena Sinelnikova and Elena Zinoveva’s study of how Russians aged 19 and 52 see the present and the past are equally telling:

> [The 1990s] are perceived by the respondents as subjectively the least prosperous. This is the historical period among those we considered that is most frequently made the object of negatively-tinged associations by both the age groups (“unrest” in the younger group; “devastation” in the older one). Out of the six most common associations, four have a negative emotional connotation (“unrest”, “devastation”, “hunger”, “corruption”), one (“liberation”) has a positive one and another (“*perestroika*”) is a generalised assessment of the epoch. (Sinelnikova and Zinoveva 2018, 80)

Sinelnikova and Zinoveva also highlight how the two young and older groups formed their ideas about the different historical periods. For the older group, direct experience was the main source of knowledge, but television and newspapers contributed to the development of ideas too. The younger respondents relied on films, their parents’ stories, books and television, and the internet – which the older group did not use at all for this purpose (Sinelnikova and Zinoveva 2018, 81–82). Given this context, young people tend to reproduce and support negative interpretations of the 1990s, since the set of images at their disposal is provided by older members of their families and by cultural productions that still capitalise on the image of the 1990s as violent and criminal. Nonetheless, Sinelnikova and Zinoveva also found that their young people did not view the 1990s in absolutely negative terms: they valued the era’s increase in personal freedoms, implicitly comparing this with the situation in today’s Russia (Sinelnikova and Zinoveva 2018, 84). These findings are not unique (for example, see Emelyanova and Misharina 2019, 336). Russian youth, despite the predominantly negative views of the pre-Putin years, thus hold a wide range of views on the late- and post-Soviet past (Krawatzek 2021).

However, one of the best ways to understand how young people collectively remember the Yeltsin years is by exploring their own memories of the 1990s as "hungry" times. Young Russians frequently compare the present with life *before* the 1990s, when education seemed more accessible and medical care was free, which is likely linked with the surge in Soviet nostalgia among the younger generations. The past, then, is romanticised – a phenomenon caused by a global trend of youth losing interest in factual historical knowledge, and by the online accessibility of history, which plays an important role in the formation of civil and political ideals of today's youth (Omelchenko and Sabirova 2016, 261).[3] Meanwhile, some scholars have observed a growing nostalgia for the 1990s (Boele 2020; Ezerova 2020; Merzlyakova 2019), which can also provide a fertile ground for the emergence of positive counter-memories to the government-promoted negative interpretation. Due to shifts in memory transmission and political generations, youth are today at the epicentre of a "memory war" around the Yeltsin decade: young people are both the active co-creators and the targets of a series of developing narratives and counter-narratives. This chapter explores how opposing narratives on the 1990s attempt to shape the youth's collective memory of the period. I argue that while negative and traumatic framings of the decade are passively passed onto the audience by pro-Kremlin media, often remarking on young people's lack of memory and gullibility, recent positive memory projects ask for a greater active participation in building an alternative collective memory, deviating from the trope "wild nineties". Such a dual process, moreover, relates not just to how the past should be remembered, but also to the promotion of specific values.

2 The online flashmob #My90s: Nostalgia vs. liberal pseudo-conspiracy

In September 2015, the independent website Colta.ru and the Boris Yeltsin Presidential Foundation, which was established in 2008, organised the *Island of the 1990s* festival. The festival, which took place in a central Moscow park, was intended to display the best Russian culture of the 1990s while skirting the political and economic issues that – at least in the official narrative – plagued the decade. To advertise the event to a younger and online audience, the festival organisers planned an online flashmob[4] that revolved around the hashtag #My90s. The aim of the flashmob was to have users share pictures of themselves taken in the 1990s. The response was enormous. Thousands of photos, posted mainly by young people and urbanites, were uploaded and commented on (Sharafutdinova 2019).

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[3] The numerous groups on social media discussed by Merzlyakova (2019, 295–296) and presenting images of artefacts and memorabilia from the 1990s are illuminating examples of the nostalgia for the decade being more related to material objects, working as emotional anchors for the internet users, than for the period itself.

Even though some observers pointed out that the celebratory nature of these pictures and comments could implicitly suggest positivity about life in the Yeltsin decade (Boele 2020, 216) – a counter to "official" memory of the period – the flashmob is unlikely to have had a lasting effect (Sharafutdinova 2019, 3–4). Instead, we should read the event as a potentially powerful means to create a quasi-group around the recognition of moments of happiness in years presented as difficult. Such a phenomenon could give rise to momentary nostalgia, mediated and interpreted through quotidian experience (Merzlyakova 2019, 296).[5] In this sense, we can interpret the flashmob as an expression of what Svetlana Boym calls "reflective nostalgia" (2001, xviii). In this specific case, and unlike in similar examples of online groups questioning official interpretations of the Soviet past (Kalinina and Menke 2016, 68–71), nostalgia did not actually lead the online community to (re)negotiate the past.

Indeed, a selection of posts shows that what participating users "remembered" was never explicitly associated with the actual Yeltsin era. Users tended to avoid any reference to political or economic matters, concentrating on positive childhood or youth memories. They longed for childhood and youth, not for a different socio-political era. For example, one user from Saint Petersburg published a collage of pictures on Instagram, writing:

> #my90s [were] a happy time!!! We climbed trees and went to the clubs with @e_klyaus, I hung out with the lads (my husband is in the photo below by the way, the uniform is not his), [my] sister @milass87 was still little . . . And the cats, of course, more precisely the cat Max))) #90s, #goodwalks #funnypictures #your90s.[6]

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[4] This online phenomenon does not quite fall within the category of live flashmobs. Even labelling it as an i-mob, i.e. a flashmob taking place on the internet, is not without problems. However, I decided to maintain the organisers' and participants' original name.

[5] This does not mean that everyone who participated in the flashmob or commented on a post shared positive emotions. Nor were the possibly political implications of the flashmob ignored by everyone. To read a collection of posts published during the flashmob, as well as a differentiation according to gender and different degree of politicisation, see Maksimova 2016.

[6] zhiltsovaolesya. 24 September 2015, https://www.instagram.com/p/8BnN8DTS6a/ (10 August 2020).

Another Instagram user posted a picture with the comment: "I don't know what's going on with this stuff coming up on the web, but I couldn't just walk on by. #my90s and here I'm 4. Hmm, I could still cross my legs."[7] Finally, a post published in 2018, when a spontaneous flashmob developed (albeit this time not linked to an in-person event),[8] provides further evidence of how focused on everyday banality the commentary was. The journalist Darya Sutyrina wrote on her post:

> #irkru90. I don't know how old I am here, 9 or 10. But I remember this moment. Daddy said: "Come on, let's take a picture of you" and my neighbour and I decided that it had to be nice. I grabbed everything of value in the room: my sister's new umbrella and her stuffed animal, I combed my bob haircut to one side.[9]
> (that wonderful time when my fringe was not terrible) and I pulled up my skirt.
> Done. I'm gorgeous)))

Even if users did not intend their material to be political, pro-Kremlin commentators' response to both the *Island of the 1990s* festival and the flashmob reveals how the traumatic "wild nineties" trope is politically exploited. For instance, the state-owned *Rossiya-24* aired a short report on the festival and the flashmob on its news programme *Vesti*. The journalists and "experts" interviewed were unanimous: the event was a cunning plan to rewrite the history of the 1990s, and had been developed in a way to be particularly attractive for young people with scarce memory of what really happened during those years. The reporter Anastasiya Efremova explained that the "unsuspecting user falls into a very predictable psychological trap. A harmless photo report from the 'how young we were' series is not about social upheaval or economic collapse. It is about nostalgia for your own youth."[10] Efremova was typical in painting the event in conspiratorial tones.

The *Vesti* report further explored the origins and purpose of this conspiracy. A pair of nefarious "forces" – the Yeltsin Fund and the liberals[11] that, despite the festival's allegedly apolitical nature, took part as speakers – had joined forces to give a young audience a misleading view of the 1990s. Efremova maintained that "the vast majority of the participants to the festival do not remember the 1990s at all because of their age, so there is absolutely room for imagination. Whatever you tell them, they will believe you."[12] Here, Efremova alludes to a liberal conspiracy to exploit gullible youth. That view was reinforced by the economist and publicist Mikhail Delyagin, who stated a purported goal behind the attempted revision of the Yeltsin era:

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[7] makcim_kalinin. 23 September 2015, https://www.instagram.com/p/7_KPk3hje7VGqTK_VVVqzkKqlr-lrK3RA1p0c0/ (12 May 2019).

[8] The more spontaneous launch of the 2018 flashmob shows a persistent interest for some sort of nostalgic remembering. For a thoughtful reflection on the 2018 flashmob, see "Chto my zabyli v devyanostykh? Setevoy fleshmob '#90' kak diagnoz strane." *Republic*, 28 September 2018, https://republic.ru/posts/92178#_(2 May 2019).

[9] sutyrinada. 25 September 2018, https://www.instagram.com/p/BoI7gl4Bdtq/?utm_source=ig_embed (12 May 2019).

[10] "Idealizatsiya 90-kh: chego dobivayutsya organizatory vystavki v Muzeone? Novosti na Rossii 24." *Rossiya-24*, 21 September 2015, https://www.vesti.ru/video/2070307 (17 March 2019).

[11] Here, when I use the word "liberal" I refer not necessarily to those politicians or public figures that identify themselves as such, but more to the way the term is ideologically used in pro-government discourse. "Liberal", in fact, has recently become almost a swear word used to label

> The point was to introduce the idea into society that we all need to go back to the 1990s. [That] then there was freedom, there was a huge number of new opportunities. Those who did not fit into the market are to blame because they were fools and 'sovki';[13] but all normal people felt fine and this was the best time in the history of our country, so let's repeat it right now. This, in turn, is necessary because our liberals, who do not serve Russia, but serve global business – even while in power – make great efforts to return to the 1990s, when all the power belonged to them and the oligarchs they served.[14]

Other Kremlin media parroted the same line. The newspaper *Komsomolskaya pravda*, for instance, also discussed the flashmob and claimed the organisers intended "to play on nostalgia and bring it all back, to bring back everything: devastation, decay, 'bespredel' – the 'limitlessness' that supposedly defined the era. War. Hunger."[15] The debate continued throughout fall 2015. A late September edition of *TV-Tsentr*'s *Pravo golosa* show is indicative of the discourse. The pro-Kremlin guest Iosif Diskin, a member of the Russian Civic Chamber, explained his view, which centred on young people's gullibility:

> I just think that there is always (.) well, every generation goes through the previous [historical] stages and tries to rethink them [. . .] it was inevitable that they would start discussing it. Yes, because the generation that has already appeared – my son's generation, for example, has already grown up – which cannot imagine at all how it was in the 1990s

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pro-West – or anti-Kremlin – personalities, often accused of being anti-patriotic and even fifth columns.

[12] "Idealizatsiya 90-kh: chego dobivayutsya organizatory vystavki v Muzeone? Novosti na Rossii 24." *Rossiya-24*, 21 September 2015.

[13] "Sovok" (plural: "sovki") literally means "dustpan." Thanks to its assonance with the word "sovetskiy" – "Soviet" – the word has acquired a new derogatory meaning: it is used to describe people who maintain a Soviet mentality or behaviour.

[14] "Idealizatsiya 90-kh: chego dobivayutsya organizatory vystavki v Muzeone? Novosti na Rossii 24." *Rossiya-24*, 21 September 2015.

[15] "Napishem pravdivuyu istoriyu 90-kh." *Komsomol'skaya pravda*, 23 August 2016, https://www.kem.kp.ru/daily/26435.7/3306369/ (5 May 2019).

> and there are many temptations to take advantage of these silly little guys ["nesmyshlenyshami"] and show that, generally speaking, everything was . . . [*interrupted*].
>
> Anchor: That these were actually just the greatest years in the country's history, right?[16]

The discussion around the #My90s flashmob illuminates how Russia's youth are targeted by opposing narratives about the Yeltsin era. One side is utterly negative and reinforces memories of collective trauma; the other finds at least some room for positive memories. The latter side – of which the #My90s campaign is a good example – encourages direct participation from users, opening up spaces for contested or nuanced meaning. The government's narrative, however, is unidirectional, relying on the bleak messages widespread in cultural and political discourse to frame its rigid view as the only acceptable interpretation of the Yeltsin decade. Here, however, the level of the confrontation between the two "memories" of the 1990s seems to be fixed between these duelling narratives: the historical meaning of the decade must be accompanied by nostalgic feelings or conspiratorial undertones. But such contestation is not inevitable. In some circumstances involving the transmission of values, memory and counter-memory of the 1990s reaches a deeper, more nuanced level.

3 The Yeltsin Center: Historical revision vs. erosion of the national identity

In 2015, the Yeltsin Fund opened the Boris Yeltsin Presidential Center in Yekaterinburg.[17] The Center, which is partially state funded, encompasses a museum, an archive and a library through which it carries out a wide range of activities, including researching, lecturing and organising other events. The Center's remit extends well beyond discussion of the 1990s (Boltunova 2017; Rychkova 2018; Sidorkina 2018). The Center aims to reach a broad audience, but specially targets children and teenagers. An entire series of events labelled as "for children", for example, accounted for 12 per cent of the Center's activity in 2017 (Sidorkina 2018, 49).

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[16] "90-e: likhie ili lyubimye? Pravo golosa." *TV-Tsentr*, 28 September 2015, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6a-ZqpbkBCc&list=PLKydiP-xlBd8GHYqKDZjHH-E2xRbdiwCg&index=6&ab_channel=TVCenter (10 January 2019).

[17] The Center is most certainly a memorial place, in line with the American commemorative tradition (Boltunova 2017), but must also be considered a part of the modernisation and development that Yekaterinburg – Russia's fourth city by population – has undergone in recent years. For a discussion of this topic, see Müller and Trubina, 2020.

These children's events take multiple forms. For instance, the "The Wind of Change" game is designed for children six and up and allows participants to experience daily life in the 1980s and 1990s first-hand: "What kind of clothes people wore, what music they listened to, what they did in their free time, where they spent holidays, how they went shopping and what they could buy. Children will feel the wind of change – those changes that took place in people's daily lives at that time."[18]

Meanwhile, the monthly meetings of "Club 'My 1990s'" also target children. Speakers at the club share experiences of their life in the 1990s. Discussion is usually focused on a single topic and often linked with a temporary exhibition or an anniversary.[19] These discussions, which occurred monthly before the Covid-19 pandemic, involved roughly 20 people every time, with 5 to 7 of them – either volunteering before the event or specially invited by the organisers, and usually aged over 30 – sharing their stories. According to Aleksandra Lopata, who works in the Center's museum, the stories are mostly nostalgic. Sad or difficult experiences are rarely related.[20] These stories, moreover, are very short (usually about 5 minutes each) and thus they can be seen as the narrated, sketchy version of a photograph. This is in line with the themes encountered as part of the flashmob: the emotional impact of succinct individual experiences works to partially overcome the shared negative interpretation of the 1990s.

Furthermore, the Yeltsin Center has launched a number of liberal-leaning projects since its opening in 2015. The 2015 *Island* festival, which the Center co-sponsored, was repeated in 2016 and 2017 in Yekaterinburg. In addition, a cycle of seminars under the rubric "I Think!" was co-organised with the "Liberal Mission" Foundation. The seminars aimed to give "young people the opportunity to learn about Russian recent history from the mouths of those very people who took part in the most important sociopolitical and economic processes", and, further, to "provide objective information to students in higher education from different regions of Russia, so that they can form their own objective assessments about the past, the current situation and the prospects for the development of our country."[21]

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[18] "Muzeynaya igra 'Veter peremen' (6+)." https://66.ru/afisha/event/25631/ (16 August 2020).

[19] In March 2020, for instance, the topic was women's life in the late Soviet era, which linked to the "Girls of the 1980s" exhibition on display at the Center's museum (see "Klub 'Moi 90-e'. Nakanune devyanostykh: zhizn' zhenshchin v pozdnesovetskoe vremya." https://yeltsin.ru/affair/klub-moi-90-e-nakanune-devyanostyh-zhizn-zhenshin-v-pozdnesovetskoe-vremya/?id=39953 [16 August 2020]).

[20] Personal communication with Aleksandra Lopata.

[21] "Seminary dlya molodezhi 'Ya dumayu!'" *Yeltsin Center*, https://yeltsin.ru/program/seminary-dlya-molodezhi-ya-dumayu/ (16 August 2020).

Finally, seminars, games, exhibits and festivals are accompanied by the Center's fulsome cultural schedule, which encompasses concerts and movie screenings. The target for these events is clearly a mass audience. Though I have not been able to ascertain accurate visitor numbers, a thousand visitors registered every day in 2017, and the Center may have been visited by 350,000 visitors in just half of that year.[22] Moreover, the Center has attracted significant youth interest: in 2019, roughly 45 per cent of visitors were under the age of 40.[23]

Despite its commercial success, the Yeltsin Center has faced persistent criticism for the way it presents the 1990s. Kseniya Grigoreva and Darya Patrusheva (2016, 51–52) analysed comments on the Russian social network VKontakte to ascertain that more than half of those discussing the Center assessed it negatively. The chief criticism concerned the portrayal of an allegedly false interpretation of history and state money being wasted in order to fund the Center. Nevertheless, research indicates that young Russians not only show a greater willingness to visit the Yeltsin Center; they do not share many of their elders' negative views on the Center's work (Sivkova et al. 2017). The Yeltsin Center might, therefore, be able to spread its positive views on the 1990s and on liberal values. Indeed, since the Center "does not pose any threat to the integrity of the state" its chances of success might be higher (Sivkova et al. 2017, 2116).

Given the Yeltsin Center's limited impact, the vehement response of the pro-Kremlin commentariat is surprising. However, media pundits do not seem to link the threat the Center poses to its presentation of the 1990s. The well-known director Nikita Mikhalkov attacked the Center's interpretation not just of Boris Yeltsin and the 1990s but of the entirety of Russia's history in an edition of his video blog *BesogonTV*, which was also broadcast by *Rossiya-24*. Mikhalkov discusses a short animated video shown at the entrance of the Center's museum, which briefly – and in an oversimplified and occasionally erroneous way – depicts the historical development of the country. Here, Mikhalkov maintains that history is portrayed as a struggle of "good vs. bad" – until Yeltsin appears on the scene.[24] Mikhalkov also criticises the Yeltsin Center video's elision of Tsar Aleksandr III, "hated by the liberals because he was determined and powerful". Aleksandr, Mikhalkov notes, said that "Russia has no friend except the Russian army and the

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[22] "Ya rabotayu v El'tsin Tsentre." *The Village*, 25 April 2017, https://www.the-village.ru/village/business/wherework/261326-ycc (17 August 2020).

[23] Personal communication with Aleksandra Lopata.

[24] Boltunova (2017, 173) points out that "[t]he very concept of Russian history in the video is presented through two dichotomies – 'freedom vs. slavery' and 'Russian authorities vs. Russian society.'"

Russian fleet,"[25] a statement that the director believes still to be true.[26] Mikhalkov is perturbed by the high visitor numbers at the Center: "Well, imagine that this animated film, which in the course of ten minutes [*snaps his fingers*] tells us the history of our country, gets into the heads of those who we talked about in one of the episodes."[27] Mikhalkov, then, revives the fear around the gullibility of youth to suggest that the Yeltsin Center's narratives might somehow subvert every official and conservative narrative of history.

In December 2016, Mikhalkov reiterated his criticism before the Federal Council, the Upper House of the Russian Parliament, in a session dedicated to cultural politics. The director was even more forthright, claiming that the Center administers "a destructive 'injection' into children's national identity. [. . .] This is a matter of national security, because hundreds of children and young people go there daily, they get this poison, they get it every day, while today the main historical facts and so on are drawn from Wikipedia, and people don't read books."[28]

If other criticisms uttered against the Yeltsin Center highlight the political relevance of the "wild nineties" trope,[29] Mikhalkov's attack shifts the issue of the assessment of the 1990s from mere regime legitimisation towards an existential question of Russia's national identity and self-consciousness. In this narrative, the liberals and their "poisonous" ideas play a central role as opposition to many of the conservative traditional values that dominate political and public discourse in today's Russia. Mikhalkov fears that, simply through brief exposure to a short video in a museum, young people could come to believe that they do not live in a great country. The results might undermine their love for the Motherland, jeopardise the effects of patriotic education – which the government has made substantial investments in – and spread a set of liberal values that have been increasingly marginalised and attacked by state officials and the mass media.

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[25] "BesogonTV 'Est' li vykhod iz istoricheskogo labirinta El'tsin Tsentra'" *BesogonTV*, 27 March 2016, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WVeE3IP2YLc (12 July2021).

[26] It is interesting that Mikhalkov, who exposes the inaccuracies and lies in the video shown in the Yeltsin Center's museum, presents as historically true a potentially apocryphal quote (see Dushenko 2018, 304–306).

[27] "BesogonTV 'Est' li vykhod iz istoricheskogo labirinta El'tsin Tsentra'" *BesogonTV*, 27 March 2016.

[28] *Stenogramma parlamentskikh slushaniy na temu* "O realizatsii Strategii gosudarstvennoy kul'turnoy politiki na period do 2030 goda: regional'nyy aspekt." 9 December 2016, 10; 12. http://council.gov.ru/media/files/WoqtlREL8DyH3Z8qLNFhjSdENc40Ag9X.pdf (18 August 2020).

[29] The conservative Sergey Kurginyan, for instance, explained on a state talk show that the disavowal of the expression "wild nineties" attempted by the liberals was deliberate, pointing out that, "If the 1990s are not 'wild' but 'sacred', they need to be opposed to the next period and we see that this is exactly what the Yeltsin Center is doing [. . .] The Yeltsin Center has basically become the main anti-authority centre in the Urals." ("Likhie 90-ye. Vecher s Vladimirom Solov'evym ot 07.06.17." *Rossiya-24*, 8 June 2017, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJQsZPB3weo&list=PLKydiP-xlBd8GHYqKDZjHH-E2xRbdiwCg&index=77 [27 November 2019]).

Mikhalkov's denunciations of the allegedly destructive capacity of the Yeltsin Center are in some senses a continuation of protests against the 1990s liberal political project. The conservative political scientist Sergey Mikheev explained this phenomenon as it pertained to economic life:

> I was talking about the whole pyramid of values being turned upside down. Worse, there was an attempt – and, unfortunately, it was successful to a large extent – to turn the whole meaning of the history of the Russian civilisation upside down. Namely, they began to sculpt a business project from Russia. Not a state, not a society, not a civilisation, not a country with an historical mission, but a business project. All for business' sake. And the 1990s are scary in this sense: they could come back. And by justifying the 1990s, they try to bring them back.[30]

Mikheev links Russian conservatives' two main fears about positive re-evaluation of the 1990s: the destruction of values and a liberal attempt to return the country to the socioeconomic values of the 1990s. The widespread fears around young people's gullibility in media discourse suggest that many listeners might view young people as vulnerable to destructive liberal rhetoric.

4 Conclusion

As the discussion about the Yeltsin Center shows, state-promoted and state-marginalised memories continually clash with one another in Russia. This clash frequently revolves around the image and beliefs of young people, who are viewed as gullible and as important agents of the future. The situation is exacerbated since young people have not proven ideal receptacles for the state's narratives. The Yeltsin decade has become an important battlefield in which opposing views on history and values – one pro-liberal, the other conservative – are deployed. My examples have shown how this battle is fought across both the traditional mass media and the internet, which is young people's primary source of information on the past. Young people's political alignment with Yadova's groups of "modernists" and "traditionalists" suggests they are more likely to embrace one or the other opposing view of the 1990s, but the internet is blurring ideological barriers and opening up space for the creation and discussion of counter-narratives.

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[30] "Likhie 90-ye. Vecher s Vladimirom Solov'evym ot 13.11.18." *Rossiya-24*. 14 November 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zz2h-yAvLf4&list=PLKydiP-xlBd8GHYqKDZjHH-E2xRbdiwCg&index=13&t=2137s (12 December 2018).

Russia's youth, nonetheless, are on the one hand the direct object of, and the active protagonists in the transmission and perpetuation of, a "memory war". The Kremlin, which has a paternalistic view of a gullible youth, repeatedly tries to transfer the collective trauma of the 1990s onto the youth as an object; online flashmobs and, to some extent, the activities of the Yeltsin Center, encourage an active subjectivity on the other side. At the moment, it does not seem that any of these counter-narratives have had a significant impact on the collective memory of the 1990s, which is still predominantly negative.[31] However, the very fact that such attempts occurred and that they succeeded in capturing people's curiosity – albeit briefly – is notable and might bring about changes in the discussion of the 1990s in the long term.

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[31] The Covid-19 pandemic has shown that the trope "wild 1990s" is entrenched in people's minds, especially youngsters on the internet. However, the rise of comparisons between the Yeltsin decade and the current situation in the country has prompted the Kremlin and the aligned media to strongly reject the idea that "the 1990s are back" ("'Mesto vstrechi': I snova zdravstvuyte?!" *NTV*, 14 April 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9u7ggchtBs&list=PLKydiP-xlBd8GHYqKDZjHH-E2xRbdiwCg&index=78&ab_channel=%D0%9D%D0%A2%D0%92 [20 November 2020]).

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Allyson Edwards

“Dear Young Warriors”: Memories of Sacrifice, Debt and Youth Militarisation in Yeltsin’s Russia

1 Introduction: Investing in the future

Russia’s military institution was one of the biggest casualties of the economic and political crises of the early 1990s. Poor economic conditions resulted in budget cuts, reduced weaponry and inadequate training for recruits (Cooper 2006, 136; Herspring 2006, 515–516; Golts 2018, 6). Increasing reports of “dedovshchina” (the bullying of conscripts) and corruption hampered recruitment and increased draft dodging (Melnick 1994, 33–34; Odom 2000, 289; Herspring 2005, 609–610; Eichler 2012, 63).[1] *Glasnost* – Mikhail Gorbachev’s push for transparency between the government and society – unveiled military spending and fatalities, inspiring young historians to rewrite Great Patriotic War history, which challenged the memory of Russia’s most sacred event (Mathers 1995, 231).

Consequently, many scholars view Yeltsin’s presidency as an era of demilitarisation. While the “wild nineties” could have changed the role and image of the Russian armed forces, that change never came. Despite the military’s traumatic experience, notions that Russia remained vulnerable to external threats, and that defending the Motherland was a sacred and heroic act, remained strong. These twin narratives drove Russian militarism throughout the 1990s. Scholars of the Tsarist and Soviet eras have examined Russian/Soviet militarism from numerous perspectives that encompass civil-military relations, education and ceremonial events (Keep 1973; Taylor 2003; Odom 1976). However, the same attention has not been paid to militarism under Yeltsin.

I categorise the revival of the traditional Soviet Victory Day parade and associated rituals under Yeltsin as a turning point for the military institution. The 1995 Victory Day parade was the first national parade to commemorate the Great Patriotic War in the post-Soviet period.[2] State and veteran organisations used the May 9

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[1] Braithwaite, Rodric. “Dedovshchina: Bullying in the Russian Army.” *Open Democracy*, 9 March 2010, https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/odr/dedovshchina-bullying-in-russian-army/ (13 September 2019).

[2] The first Victory Day, commemorating the Great Patriotic War, took place on 24 June 1945. While localised celebrations took place yearly, national parades that adorned Moscow’s Red Square were only held on special anniversary dates, for example, 1965. In 1991, the Victory Day

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holiday to reignite the nation's militaristic-patriotic spirit, especially among Russia's youth. Great Patriotic War memory has proven valuable to Russian authorities. As Olga Malinova (2017) notes, it has a "high level of social acceptance" because of its popularity with veterans and the families of the fallen. In addition, memory of the war has been used in society to historicise contemporary issues in Russia. Nina Tumarkin (2003) observes that the Great Patriotic War gained its mythological status as it is easily used to legitimate and contextualise contemporary political complexities.[3] Indeed, that mythical status has increased with each passing year. In 1995, there was still a sizable veteran community, unlike today. Even in the 1990s, many young Russians relied on the stories of their surviving family members for their historical education. As veterans have passed away, the state has had an increasingly important role in preserving and using mythologised narratives of World War II.

Russia's youth were central to the country's militarisation goals in the 1990s. Cultural militarisation – here I draw on the work of Joanna Waley-Cohen (2009), Henry Giroux (2008) and Catherine Lutz (2002) – acted in the Yeltsin era as a form of public pedagogy. Such militarisation transcended "true military purposes" (Vagts 1959, 13). By exploring this phenomenon across all strata of society – in discussions in the State Duma, in political speeches about the 1995 Victory Day parade, and in school textbooks published during the 1990s – I conclude that, throughout the 1990s, Russia's youth were deluged with traditional militarised discourses that emphasised sacrifice, state loyalty and heroism. Inspired by Tumarkin's (1994) notion of generational debt owed by younger generations to their veteran (or, indeed, non-veteran) forebears, I assess militarisation through a debt-militarisation paradigm, showing the role that the paradigm played in the 1990s' commemorative discourse. Through stories of martyred ancestors and youth's indebtedness, youth were burdened with a debt that could only be repaid through young people's participation in current and future commemorative activities, transmission of the heroic narrative and willingness to repeat their ancestors' sacrifices. However, the nature of the commemorative practices at hand meant that the debt could never be repaid: the annual return of Victory Day ensured that narratives of sacrifice, loyalty and societal indebtedness would return year after year.

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parade ceased to exist on a national level and was revived in 1995 on what would then become an annual national celebration.

[3] See the chapter on Holocaust education in Russia in this volume, which highlights the use of memory as a prophylactic: to learn from the mistakes of the past was to prevent that event happening again.

2 Sacrifice and loyalty: Commemoration as currency?

Sacrifice and loyalty were prominent themes across Russia's educational and commemorative landscape in the 1990s. Emphasis on Russia's present and future generations' indebtedness to the heroic wartime actions of historical figures and veterans established society's responsibility to commemorate. The Great Patriotic War's particular ability to generate this debt is best demonstrated in Yeltsin's use of this "chosen glory" in commemorative and educative practices. Representations of the Soviet defeat of Nazi Germany draw on militaristic-patriotic themes of victory, defence and heroism.[4] The Great Patriotic War used alongside "debt" analogies served to embed militarised themes into Russian society, inserting them, beyond memory of the victory itself, into ideas of civic duty and responsibility. Given World War II's prominence in this debt cycle, the Victory Day parade's return in 1995 – and associated events – serves as rich case studies for my approach. The anniversary events catalysed the regular exposure of Russia's youth to a comprehensive educational program of militarised patriotism premised on establishing debt.

2.1 Building debt

Boris Yeltsin's state mobilised Victory Day to promote ideas of sacrifice, state loyalty and heroism across both educational and commemorative spaces, aiming to instil militarised-patriotic narratives in Russians and especially in young Russians. Each narrative conveyed veterans' sacrifices and the youth's debt to those sacrifices. Young people were charged with a moral obligation to perpetually commemorate victory, which is a form of militarisation that asks individuals to support military ideals and glorify the military's historic achievements. By encouraging this militarisation across Russian society, the state reinforced the military's position in contemporary identity.

In a speech at the 1995 Victory Day parade on Red Square, Boris Yeltsin emphasised the veteran's sacrifice in World War II, as having paid an "unprecedented price".[5] Yeltsin's words are emblematic of how veterans' sacrifice and loyalty in the Great Patriotic War became a central theme of the commemorative event. At an award ceremony on 27 April 1995, Yeltsin also noted the "incredible hardships and sufferings [that] fell on the shoulders of the [wartime] generations".[6] The Great Patriotic War was emphasised as "never seen before", with descriptors like "unprecedented" highlighting the unique nature of the war. Discourses like this were even shared across political camps: Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov echoed Yeltsin's words to declare that "In the history of the twentieth century, there is no more significant and memorable event than the victory of the Soviet people and their allies over Hitler's fascism in the Great Patriotic War."[7]

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[4] "Dokumenty k Federal'nomu zakonu ot 19 Maya 1995 g. No 80-F3 'Ob uverkovechenii Pobedy sovetskogo naroda v Velikoy Otechestvennoy Voyne v 1941–1945 gg.' (Proekty zakona, postanovleniya, poyasnitel'naya zapiska, zakluchenie, informatsii i dr.)" F. 10100, Op. 1, d. 989, 1.2, GARF, Moscow, 1993–1995.

By highlighting the enormity of the war in 1995, political elites and veterans' and military organisations added value to self-sacrifice, cementing society's obligation to commemorate the war. In a draft law *On Perpetuating the Victory of the Soviet People in the Great Patriotic War, 1941–1945*, State Duma representatives Alevita Aparina and Anatoly Lukyanov noted that "the anniversary of the 50th anniversary of the Great Victory of the Soviet people over Nazism obliges us to take this federal law into force and to apply it to 9 May 1995".[8]

In the next phase of the process, the veteran was central. Political elites like Yeltsin described the Soviet Union's victory over Nazi Germany as "immortal" and "courageous"[9]. In a speech to veterans receiving the Order of Zhukov on 5 May 1995, Yeltsin explained that "the war is in the past, but its memory is timeless; the immortal feat of soldiers and underground commanders and the partisans of the Workers [. . .] who all ensured the defeat of the Nazi hordes; we will always remember the enormous efforts of deprivation and sacrifice, [in which] the Great Victory was achieved".[10] Framing war-induced fatalities as sacrifice was not a new phenomenon of the Yeltsin period. Varley notes that this took place in the nineteenth century, when the idea of inevitable war-death was replaced by emphasising soldier sacrifice to defend values.[11] Of course, after the USSR's collapse, the defence of the Soviet Union and the communist values it upheld could not remain central to the commemorative date. Instead, the state shifted Great Patriotic War narratives towards the veterans, providing the youth with a viable role model, someone who, through sacrifice and loyalty to the state, was worthy of national remembrance.

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[5] "Vystuplenie prezidenta RF B. N. El'tsina na Krasnoy ploshchadi, na parade, posvyashchennom 50-letiyu pobedy v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne." F. 21 Op. 1 d. 130, Yeltsin Center, 09 May 1995, https://yeltsin.ru/archive/audio/64420/ (13 May 2021).

[6] "Vrucheniye gosudarstvennykh nagrad prezidentom RF B.N. El'tsinym." F. 21, Op. 1, d. 126, Yeltsin Center, 27 April 1995, https://yeltsin.ru/archive/audio/64416 (12 November 2021).

[7] F. 10100, Op. 1, d. 1003, GARF, Moscow, February–March 1995.

[8] F. 10100, Op. 1, d. 989, l. 2, GARF, 1995. This law was adopted by the State Duma on 19 April 1995 and came into effect on 19 May 1995. It was associated with participants of the Great Patriotic War and covered commemoration celebrations, social welfare and search work for missing persons. This particular document was a project launched by State Duma deputies Aparina and Lukyanov.

[9] "Vrucheniye prezidentom RF B.N. El'tsinym gosudarstvennykh nagrad – ordena G.K. Zhukova, v svyazi s 50-letiyem pobedy v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne." F. 21 Op. 1 d. 128, Yeltsin Center, 5 May 1995, https://yeltsin.ru/archive/audio/64418 (12 November 2021); F. 10100, Op 1, d. 1003, 37–38, GARF, February–March 1995; "Dokumenty o podgotovke i prazdnovanii 50-letiya Pobedy v Velikoy Otechestvennoy voyne (obrashcheniya, zayavleniya, perepiska i dr.)" F. 10100, Op. 2, d. 135, GARF, Moscow, 1 March 1995; F. 10100, Op. 1, d. 1003, l. 37, GARF, February–March 1995.

Hero worship was (and remains) an important part of Russia's commemorative and educative landscape. Even before the 1995 parade, the history classroom exposed children to epic narratives of Russian heroism stretching back to Kievan Rus (Golovin 1992, 15; Dvornichenko et al. 1999, 42–43; Vedernikov 1997, 972). Russian historical textbooks described key figures as "heroes", "brave" and "fearless" (Ishimova 1996, 21–22; Skrynnikov 1997, 15). Typically, loyalty to the nation was a major part of a hero's feat. Textbook authors Valery Ostrovskiy and Anatoly Utkin (1996) noted that when it came to the Great Patriotic War, "people were not afraid of fighting for the freedom of the Fatherland", and that "the popular militia, while badly armed and untrained, went to fight knowing they faced certain death but would delay the enemy by hours and days".

When it came to World War II, words like "unprecedented" and "immortal" presented an exceptional and heroic veteran and categorised the experience of the Great Patriotic War as something the civilian – and subsequent generations – could not fully comprehend or replicate. In a letter to a World War II veteran written before the 1996 Victory Day, Boris Yeltsin emphasised this distancing: "The children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren of those who fought on the battlefields and did not sleep on the labour-front will never be able to do [defeat fascism]."[12] Kate McLoughlin (2011) draws on Carolin Emcke's "burden of witness", explaining that a spectator's observation of a conflict (or, here, of accounts about a conflict) can bring about feelings of failure, since they are unable to help those who fought. The idea helps us understand the significance of Yeltsin's approach. In this sense, commemoration participants were paying for it with the next best thing – through the perpetuation of their memory. Unfortunately, since this form of payment would not change the course or outcome of the war, save lives or stop further destruction, they were required to pay continual respects to those who did see action.

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[10] F. 21 Op. 1, d. 128, Yeltsin Center, 5 May 1995.

[11] Varley, Karine. "How Should We Commemorate Wars? Lessons from the Nineteenth Century." *History and Policy*, 4 August 2014, http://www.historyandpolicy.org/policy-papers/papers/how-should-we-commemorate-wars-lessons-from-the-nineteenth-century (13 May 2021).

[12] "Ilyushin V. Ob izgotovlenii pisem veteranam VOV s obraztsami otkrytok." F. 6, Op. 1, d. 102, Yeltsin Center, 15 April 1996, https://yeltsin.ru/archive/paperwork/10624 (11 November 2021).

Like Aparina, Lukyanov and Yeltsin, other political figures issued statements centred on veteran sacrifice with a special emphasis on society's indebtedness to their ancestors. For example, the Faction President of the All-Russian Volunteers of Victory announced that: "The current generations of Russian citizens, like other post-Soviet States, remain indebted to the heroic warriors and the workers of the rear."[13] In March 1995 State Duma chairman Ivan Rubkin encouraged society to "remember the names of the courageous sons and daughters of the Motherland, who gave their dearest life for the sake and freedom of the Motherland", while in February 1995 a speaker at the so-called "Meeting for the Heroes of the Soviet Union" noted that these martyrs "deserve honour and respect".[14] In a letter to a Great Patriotic War veteran in 1996, President Yeltsin noted the present generation's responsibility to the martyrs of the past, suggesting that the act of remembering itself was an important obligation: "We the children of the war, the younger generation, sacredly honour its [Great Patriotic War's] lessons and remember the whole bitter truth of the war."[15] These statements are indicative of how narratives shared around Victory Day and in textbooks were used to impress ideas of duty – especially the responsibility to continually commemorate the past – onto Russians. While not focused exclusively on the Great Patriotic War, school textbooks further promoted knowledge of Russia's history and the current generations' pride in the "glorious exploits" of their ancestors.

The commemorative events of the Yeltsin era were structured so that the population was overwhelmed with militarised narratives. When Victory Day became a national holiday in 1995, barriers that might previously have hindered public participation were removed.[16] Concurrent statements that Victory Day "will be a day of remembrance for all of us" shifted the duty of commemoration onto wider society.[17] Duty was in turn reinforced in other areas of society. A federal law of 1995 declared, "caring for participants and victims of war is a historical duty of society and the state".[18] Again, robust ideas of duty compelled society to take an active role in the memorialisation.

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[13] F. 10100, Op. 1, d. 1003, 1.24, GARF, 1995.

[14] F. 10100, Op. 1, d. 135, GARF, 1995; F. 10100, Op. 1, d. 1003, l. 37, GARF, 1995.

[15] F. 6, Op. 1, d. 102, Yeltsin Center, 15 April 1996.

[16] F. 10100, Op. 1, d. 989, l. 2, GARF, 1995.

[17] F. 21 Op. 1, d. 128, Yeltsin Center, 5 May 1995.

[18] F. 10100, Op. 1, d. 989, l. 2, GARF, 1995.

2.2 Debt collecting

The 1995 Victory Day was instrumental in the militarisation of youth. As "key agents of social and political change", the country's younger generations would play an important role in the continued memorialisation of the war and in the government's wider militarisation efforts (McKenzie and Marks 1998, 222). Commemorating the war, learning more about history, and showing willingness to sacrifice themselves were suggested as the only ways for younger generations to "repay" the debt to those who had achieved victory against Nazi Germany. The Russian government aimed to shame its citizens into participating in military-patriotic activities: their ancestors made sacrifices, and therefore they should too. The government hoped to use debt and memory as bargaining tools. The elaborate parades showcased exciting military technology and the flood of heroic tales were capable of improving the military's image. The state, then, was using war commemoration to popularise the armed forces, countering increasing draft dodging as "dedovshchina" became endemic in the army.

The discourse around Victory Day 1995 established expectations for the future and shifted responsibility for memory onto Russia's young population. A key facet of this shift of responsibility was the connection of physical labour and education. The exhumation and internment of unidentified corpses from the war was a particularly significant task that involved young Russians. One proposed law underlined the importance of this activity: "One of the most important tasks to perpetuate the memory of the defenders of the fatherland is to carry out a search work on the establishment of the fate of the soldiers who were missing during the Great Patriotic War."[19] Yuri Yarov, Deputy Prime Minister from 1992 to 1996, directed the Interdepartmental Commissions for the Social Affairs of Servicemen and their Family Members (now the commission of Veteran affairs). Yarov addressed the republics' government chairmen and regions and autonomous entities administrative heads in a letter, calling for improved material and technical support for those identifying battlefield remains. He suggested creating a regional and national "memory watch" organisation to examine and certify military graves.[20]

Similar projects took on many forms. In connection with the 1995 fiftieth anniversary of the end of the war, State Duma deputy Vladimir Volkov called for young people to work on the burial of remains and cleaning of monuments, memorial plaques, and busts of heroes.[21] In this sense, the debt of the youth to veterans and the fallen could be paid off through activity that entailed labour and developing an understanding of both the historical event and those who participated within it.

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[19] F. 10100, Op. 1, d. 989, l. 14, GARF, 1993–1995.

[20] F. 10100, Op. 1, d. 1003, l. 91, GARF, 1993.

[21] F. 10100, Op. 1, d. 1003, l. 28, GARF; 1995.

Volkov also called on Russian youths to connect with veterans: “It’s time to restore the link between our eras.” Volkov suggested young people should hold concerts and parties for the veterans.[22] This sort of connection was based on the hope that veterans would be able to educate Russia’s youth with the values that they displayed during the war. Intergenerational connection was an opportunity for veterans to impart their values and worldviews onto younger generations (Khrystanovskaya and White 2003, 289–306; Werning Rivera and Rivera 2006, 125–144; Renz 2006, 903–924).

This phenomenon was particularly evident in 1995. Many young Russians were invited to visit Vladivostok in September 1995 for a gathering of veterans who had fought against Japan. At the event, Boris Yeltsin explained the importance of connection between generations for memory and value transmission:

> I am grateful to you, dear veterans, for your unparalleled courage and heroism, for your victory. Your knowledge and experience, the traditions of sons’ love for their native land, hardened in fierce battles, are very important today for our people, especially for the young defenders of the fatherland, all the youth. I am glad that the link between generations has not been interrupted, that mutual understanding is growing between Russians of all ages; your meeting is clear confirmation of this.[23]

The sacrifices of the veteran community were what supposedly made them worthy of younger Russians’ respect. Boris Yeltsin highlighted this issue again in 1996, revealing that the fiftieth anniversary of 1945 had not been a flash in the pan – the events would be continually repeated. In preparation for the Day of Remembrance and Sorrow (usually remembered on the 22 June), Yeltsin addressed residents of Russia’s hero-cities (for example, Novgorod, Tula and Smolensk)[24] and those cities that had been occupied by the German military in a telegram of 21 June 1996:

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[22] F. 10100, Op. 1, d. 1003, l. 28, GARF, 1995.

[23] “Prezident RF El’tsin B.N. Privetstviye uchastnikam Vserossiyskoy vstrechi veteranov boyev s Yaponiyey v gody vtoroy mirovoy voyny s molodezh’yu i lichnym sostavom Tikhookeanskogo flota (kopiya).” F. 6, Op. 1, d. 125, l. 156, Yeltsin Center, 2 September 1995, https://yeltsin.ru/archive/paperwork/12143 (11 November 2021).

[24] Hero-city, “gorod-geroy”, is a title awarded to cities where significant events of the Great Patriotic War took place, and where citizens of this city performed heroic actions to hinder the advancements and defeat Nazi Germany. Leningrad, for example, is a hero city because of the Leningrad Siege of 1941–1944.

> In our country, there is hardly a family that would not have experienced the burden and hardships of war, that would not have sent their breadwinners, sons and daughters to defend the Fatherland. Not all of them returned from the battlefield. Therefore, for every Russian, every Russian family, this day has a special, tragic ring to it.
>
> The memory of war is especially vivid among those who survived the occupation: remember the executions and the gallows and the trains that took their loved ones to fascist slavery.
>
> Remembering today those who defended the freedom and independence of our homeland, we cannot but recall the partisans, underground fighters, and every civilian of the temporarily occupied cities, all of whose lives were cut short by the enemy.
>
> Eternal glory and eternal peace to all unconquered and unbroken![25]

The cultivation of the ideas that veterans were innately "deserving of respect" due to their past sacrifices strengthened the idea that society was in debt. Political and state institutions alike attempted to shame society into participating in commemoration by drawing on these ideas. The Veterans' Organisation of Novosibirsk, for example, suggested that citizens ought to "prepare to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Great Victory with dignity, as a national holiday; show your recognition and respect for the older generation [. . .] take your fate into your own hands".[26]

Veteran-youth collaboration had been important in the early 1990s. *Glasnost* enabled the emergence of revisionist historical accounts, threatening to deconstruct the myth of the Great Patriotic War. Veterans organisations and officials were particularly irked at ideas that new historians were "blackening the history of the Great Patriotic War", and ousting a "patriotic and military education from educational institutions".[27] One Novosibirsk-based organisation announced that, "we are aware that not everything was smooth in our history. However, this story cannot be blackened and crossed out. As you know, people who lose respect for their past have no future."[28] These fears led to the creation of new initiatives targeting youth.

Calls to revive military-patriotic education were particularly strong (Edwards 2022). A speaker at a meeting for the Heroes of the Soviet Union claimed: "In modern conditions, the importance of a military-patriotic education of youth is growing. Everyone sees our duty in doing this [. . .] to pass on our life experience to them. Youth [should be] proud of their Fatherland, [and] if necessary, be ready to protect the material and spiritual values of their homeland."[29] Funding and concrete support followed these declarations. In 1996, a Presidential decree diverted funds to a federal programme aimed at developing "the citizenship and patriotism of Russian youth, [and] support for military-patriotic youth and children's associations".[30] The Ministry of Defence used the decree to "strengthen and expand ties" between the military with educational institutions, and to launch groups which could tackle educational issues and training the youth for military service. The anniversary was therefore also used as an instrument in reviewing textbook narratives and increasing material resources for the fostering of a military-patriotic youth education.

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[25] "Obrashcheniya po sluchayu Dnya pamyati i skorbi k zhitelyam gorodov-geroev i gorodov RF, nakhodivshihyja na vremenno okkupirovannoy fashistskoy Germaniey territorii." F. 6. Op. 1. d. 129, Yeltsin Center, 21 June 1996, https://yeltsin.ru/archive/paperwork/12420 (13 May 2021).

[26] F. 10100, Op. 1, d. 1003, l. 29–30, GARF, 1993–1995.

[27] F. 10100, Op. 1, d. 1003, l. 37, GARF, 1995; F. 10100, Op. 1, d. 1003, l. 28, GARF, 1995.

[28] F. 10100, Op. 1, d. 1003, l. 29–30, GARF, 1993–1995.

A patriotic education was not only integral to the glorification of Russia's history but also in developing young people's desire to join the military. Defeat in Afghanistan, the ongoing war in Chechnya, and increasing accounts of "dedovshchina" tainted the prestige of the military (Eichler 2012, 63). Nikolai Golovin's classroom textbook *My First History of Russia: Tales for Children* (*Moya pervaya russkaya istoriya v rasskazakh dlya detey*,1992) was expressly written to inculcate "love of the homeland and self-sacrifice" (Golovin 1992, foreword). Other societal sectors followed suit. Parliamentary hearings on the social protection of military personnel in June 1994 culminated in an announcement that "the committee believes that it is necessary to take the initiative [. . .] for the improvement of the prestige of military service. It should revive the military-patriotic spirit of Russians as a nation, in a personal sense of the word."[31] The children's author Aleksandra Ishimova, who penned another textbook of "tales" for children as early as 1841, wrote about poor living conditions in the military, but stated that such a sacrifice was necessary because "Dear little readers [. . .] [at some point you will endure this] because you will eventually protect the motherland"[32] (Ishimova 1996, 19). She wrote, "you will be pleased to learn of the glorious deeds of your ancestors" – suggesting that the interest of youth in the country's past is a necessity (Ishimova 1996, 8). Golovin (1992) claimed, "It is known that children are interested in stories about heroes and exploits." Since commemorative memory is based on a model handed down by previous generations and interpreted and imagined by the current generations, it was important that stories of victory, military glory and veteran heroism remained a central part of the imagined memory that youth would in turn inculcate (Lavoie 2002, 304; Feindt et al. 2014, 26–27).

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[29] F. 10100, Op. 1, d. 1003, 1. 37, GARF, 1995.

[30] "Ukaz Prezidenta Rossiyskoy Federatsii ot 16 maya 1996 g. N 727 'O merakh gosudarstvennoy podderzhki obshchestvennykh ob'yedineniy, vedushchikh rabotu po voyenno-patrioticheskomu vospitaniyu molodezhi.'" Elektronnyy fond pravovykh i normativno-tekhnicheskikh dokumentov, https://docs.cntd.ru/document/9019915 (13 May 2021); "Ukaz Prezidenta Rossiyskoy Federatsii ot 16 maya 1996 goda, no 727. O merakh gosudarstvennoy podderzhki obschchestvennykh ob'edineniy vedushchikh rabotu po voenno-patrioticheskomu vospitaniyu molodezhi." Ukazy Prezidenta Rossii 1991–1999, Yeltsin Center, 16 May 1996, https://yeltsin.ru/archive/act/37014 (13 May 2021).

[31] "Dokumenty po podgotovke i provedeniyu parlamentskikh slyzhanii 'sotsial'naya zashchita voennosluzhashchikh lits, uvolennykh s voennoy sluzhby, i chlenov ikh semey, zhil'e dlya armii, sostoyane, problem, puti resheniya' (proekty rekomendatsii, spravki, informatsii)." F. 10100, Op. 2, d. 1126, 1. 17–24, GARF, Moscow, 7 June 1994.

State officials, veteran groups and textbook authors targeted Russia's youth with messages of their perpetual debt to the veterans' sacrifice and expectations that the youth should preserve this victory in both commemorative terms and in their duty to defend Russia. They were invited to participate in physical labour-type activities, while being told how they should feel about their nation's history. These messages, which were replicated across numerous Russian societal domains, ensured Russia's youth remained exposed to militaristic-patriotic worldviews – and contributed to tackling the nation's military recruitment issues.

3 Conclusion: Perpetuating memory and the persistence of militarisation

Rituals revived and developed in the Yeltsin era contributed to the Great Patriotic War's mythical status in the 2020s. The yearly revival of the anniversary event mythologised the Great Patriotic War as it forced an obligation for continued memorialisation onto newer generations, who, as the years go by, are distanced ever further from direct recollections of the war itself.

In the early 1990s, war in Chechnya and NATO expansionism raised concerns over the state of Russia's security. In response, the commemorative event was also used as a call to current and future generations to continue the victory of their ancestors and reemphasise the sacred role of the military in society. Indeed, reminders of Russia's historical vulnerability to invasion and war-induced hardships had always been useful in justifying the need for a strong military (Brown 1994, 863; Boje, Fedor and Rowland 1982, 18). Yeltsin demonstrated this phenomenon in his Victory Day speech on Red Square in 1995 by highlighting Russia's military history: "[Russia] stands and will stand [. . .] [as] centuries they have risen from ruins".[33] This rhetoric served as a reminder of the historical challenges Russia faced and overcame. As noted in a parliamentary hearing on the topic of social needs of military personnel, "We can for good reason state that the Russian army still guarantees our society's stability and safety today."[34] By acknowledging the military's past as a guarantor of stability and security, Yeltsin was amplifying the army's importance in the present.

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[32] Aleksandra Ishimova's book has been republished numerous times in the Tsarist, Soviet and post-Soviet period. It has remained an important text of reference beyond the breaks of regime and for the understanding of Russia's historical past.

The mythologisation of the Great Patriotic War, facilitated through the never-ending burden of debt placed on younger generations, aided the persistent militarisation of Russia's society. Each annual festivity enabled the repetition and intensification of narratives of glory, loyalty and indebtedness. In contemporary Russia, participants in the annual Immortal Regiment ("Bessmertnyy polk") parades carry images of their loved ones as they march towards Red Square on Victory Day.[35] Despite the huge death toll of the war, political and state organisations under the leadership of Boris Yeltsin revived and cultivated a set of cultural-militaristic rituals that found a place for the "chosen glory" of the Great Patriotic War in post-Soviet Russian identity.

Young people were militarised in their role as organisers of future commemorative activities, and in the imagining of their own role in the protection of the motherland. Calls to "protect" and "love the motherland" demonstrated the use of memory in the continued militarisation of society. Russia was not alone in underlining this link. In America at the same time, Bill Clinton's "support the troops" narrative emphasised current and future generations' obligation to commemorate the victory in a similar way (Danilova 2016, 208–218). For Russia, the Great Patriotic War, as opposed to Clinton's speech, which was about the present, reconciled various generations. Yeltsin's actions were about the past (and about appealing to the older generations) as much as the present. He praised the veteran's historic role, while warning the youth not to "dull the memory" of the war victors. He stated that "no one has to be forgotten and nothing should be forgotten".[36]

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[33] F. 21 Op. 1, d. 128, Yeltsin Center, 5 May 1995.

[34] GARF, f. 10100, Op. 2 d. 1126, 6–7.

[35] The Immortal Regiment was established in 2012 in Tomsk. Participants parade images of those who fought on both the battlefield and home front in the Great Patriotic War on placards. Those without a family member in the Great Patriotic War are encouraged to pick an image of any veteran and march with their memory in mind.

[36] F. 21 Op. 1, d. 128, Yeltsin Center, 5 May 1995; F. 10100, Op. 1, d. 135, GARF, 1995.

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Duygu Erbil

The Making of a Young Martyr: Discursive Legacies of the Turkish "Youth Myth" in the Afterlife of Deniz Gezmiş

When it comes to the memory of political events, there are few points of reference as ubiquitous as 1968. Whether constituted from manning the French barricades of May 1968, marching in the U.S. civil rights movement, or demonstrating in the Prague Spring, the idea of 1968 allows social movements and time periods to coalesce under one temporal marker that symbolises a period of world-wide political unrest. 1968 is a transnational "site of memory" (Nora 1989), a historical reference point subject to contestation over its meaning and subject to dynamics of cultural remembrance that shape both the meaning of 1968 and subsequent protest cultures. The year symbolises both the formation of a political generation of so-called *sixty-eighters* and the discursive formula of "youth in revolt". The cultural remembrance of 1968 imprints images of youth as a political category onto modern protest cultures: the memory of the young people of 1968 is instructive for youth cultures in the present. This first chapter sets the overall context for the so-called Turkish sixty-eighters. This will be followed up by Lucie G. Drechselová who delves deeper into one aspect of the case, namely the gendering of youth activists' memory in Turkey.

Although the "youth in revolt" formula was a transnational phenomenon, historically contingent conditions and their discursive legacies have shaped different images of politicised youth. Simon Reid-Henry writes that the year 1968 was "on one level a demographic event: a glorified coming of age party for the first generation of a mass higher-education society. And the where of 1968 is in this sense as important as the what." (2019, 41) This question of "where" is central to the study of cultural memory, for memory is constituted by situated remembrance practices. The discourse of protesting youth in Turkey, too, was deeply influenced by memory of the *sixty-eighters*, but the remembrance of this generation has coalesced around the memorability of a young "martyr", Deniz Gezmiş. Gezmiş, an urban guerrilla and Marxist-Leninist student leader, was executed by the state (alongside his comrades Yusuf Aslan and Hüseyin İnan) in 1972. But his cultural afterlife has been mediated and remediated in countless cultural artefacts from life writing to fictional television series; from protest songs to graffiti. To this day, Gezmiş serves as a cause and a model for Turkish youth political participation, whether the young politicos are Kemalists or Marxist-Leninist militants, due to his afterlife's availability as a reference point.

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Informed by the cultural turn in social movement studies (Williams 2004, 91–97) and recent interest in the dynamics of collective memory and contentious politics (Daphi and Zamponi 2019), I examine the function of cultural memory in constructing youth as a contentious political category by studying Deniz Gezmiş' afterlife. Above all, I ask: how has Gezmiş' afterlife been made available and how has it facilitated a discourse of youth as a political category to be appropriated by successive generations in Turkey? First, I outline the "memory-activism nexus" (Rigney 2018) and memory work's role in structuring the "cultural environment" (Williams 2004, 91) that shapes and is shaped by collective actions. I read cultural memory as a domain of "discursive legacies" (Coy et al. 2008) that define the boundaries of social and cultural practices of contention.

Focusing on two texts that have become central to the cultural remembrance of Deniz Gezmiş – lawyer Halit Çelenk's *1. THKO Case (Court File)* (*1. THKO Davası* [*Mahkeme Dosyası*], 1974) and poet and journalist Nihat Behram's *Three Saplings on the Gallows* (*Darağacında Üç Fidan*, 1976) – I analyse the dominant framing of youth in memory of activism in Turkey during the 1970s, asking how this framing positioned Gezmiş as the representative of youth politics against state oppression and thus mediated Gezmiş' lived experience into a resonant cultural resource for political socialisation. I conclude that Çelenk's work, which compiles documents from the court case that saw Gezmiş and two comrades executed, took advantage of the availability of judicial records as resources for memorialisation to publicise a story that had been censured; Behram's work was one of several which drew on the availability of the legal record to melodramatically poeticise Gezmiş and his comrades as representatives of revolutionary youth.

1 Memory and activism

Research on the role of social and cultural remembrance practices in contentious politics has developed to explore "the symbolic dimension of collective action" (Daphi and Zamponi 2019, 400). Scholars of social movement studies have addressed collective memory to understand the cultural capacities and constraints of collective identity formation (Anton 2016, 131) and recognised collective remembrance as a practice that establishes social movement continuity and legitimacy (Tarrow and Tilly 2007, 441; Gongaware 2010, 215). In turn, a growing scholarly interest in the role of memory in activism has proliferated the study of the "memory-activism nexus", a systematic approach to the interplay between "memory activism", "memory of activism" and "memory in activism" (Rigney 2018, 372).

Memory activism – “strategic commemoration of contested pasts” for political purposes (Gutman 2017, 19) – has produced the prolific cultural afterlife of Gezmiş. Memory activism, indeed, sustains the remembrance of state violence against revolutionaries through practices like annual protest commemorations or commemorative cultural production. Such sustained remembrance has in Turkey proved paramount for successive political movements and for political socialisation itself. The afterlife of Gezmiş functions as a common reference point for opposition to the state at both national and subcultural levels. For example, Gezmiş’ image adorned the façade of the Atatürk Cultural Center during the Gezi park protests marked by ideological heterogeneity as a recognisable reference to the memory of past activism. His image also acts as a resource for subcultural collective identity, for various Marxist, guerrilla, and youth groups that draw on memory *of* Gezmiş to legitimise their movements.

The availability of memory as a cultural resource *in* activism depends on the memory work of political movements. The limits of this memory work, however, are defined by the wider cultural environment, which determines the intelligibility and legitimacy of cultural repertoires (Williams 2004, 102). Memory work’s “resonance” establishes this dynamic between internal memory culture and external cultural environment (Armstrong and Crage 2006, 726). In the Turkish context, then, the resonance of Deniz Gezmiş as the symbol of contentious youth determines the degree to which new generations can appropriate the counter-memory of the 1960s/70s to define their own contentious political identity.

The extent to which Gezmiş has become a reference point for youth politicisation is immediately observable on the level of slogans employed by revolutionary and socialist youth organisations such as “Now we shall be Deniz” or “Our promise to the Denizes is revolution”.[1] Yet, what is obscure in this observation is the way Gezmiş’ afterlife has been predicated on its resonance with the Turkish “youth myth” (Lüküslü 2009). The youth myth suggests that Turkish youth played a major role in the formation of the Turkish state, identifying young people as the “symbol of the republic” (Lüküslü 2009, 14–15). On the one hand, cultural and political actors’ appeal to this “youth myth” was a facilitative factor in Gezmiş’ memorability by virtue of its resonance with the national cultural environment. On the other hand, this appeal reveals the discursive constraints of remembering the young revolutionary, given it channels the “discursive legacy” (Coy et al. 2008) of the masculinist and militarist definition of youth as determined by the “youth myth”.

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[1] Due to Gezmiş’ metonymic function standing for other executed revolutionaries or martyrs of the era, the name Deniz frequently appears in the plural to refer to “Deniz Gezmiş and his friends”.

2 Historical context and the discursive legacy of the “youth myth”

The formulation and reformulation of youth as a political category has been a crucial discursive mechanism throughout the history of modern Turkey.[2] In Turkey, the discourse of youth marked social movements even in the late Ottoman era, as is apparent in the names of the Young Ottoman and the Young Turk movements (Neyzi 2001, 416). Kemalist state ideology defined youth as “the guardians of the regime” (Neyzi 2001, 416) and established the political category of youth as the “constructors of the new Turkish state” (Lüküslü 2005, 31). Ironically, youth’s privilege as a political category – or the Turkish “youth myth” to use Lüküslü’s term (2009) – became the chief discursive resource for the 1968 student movement, which mobilised youth on grounds of protecting the Kemalist regime: “In fact, the youth of the 1960s and 1970s are still loyal to their mission as a vanguard. The difference is that the formal government is seen as illegitimate, and in referring to the war of independence, youth sees its duty in fighting an ‘illegitimate’ regime.” (Lüküslü 2005, 33)

The formation of youth as a political category simultaneously depends on the nation-state’s practice of addressing youth politically and on the young generation’s self-recognition as the agent of Kemalist revolution. However, during the late 1960s era of heated youth movements, young Turkish political actors were labeled “anarchists” by the political elite and mass media – and, eventually, criminalised by the 1971 Turkish military memorandum. The ultimatum of 12 March 1971, although addressed to Prime Minister Süleyman Demirel, targeted “anarchy” on the streets by demanding the formation of a credible and robust government that could end the political chaos caused by polarised youth in Turkey, and “carry out reforms ‘in a Kemalist spirit’” (Zürcher 1993, 258). The public discourse of “anarchy” referred to the radicalising student movement that was embedded in a network of political violence constituted by left and right-wing militantism during 1969 and 1970. In spite of the threat from both left and right, Turkey’s “high command by this time was mesmerised by the spectre of a communist threat” (Zürcher 1993, 258). When the National Security Council proclaimed martial law in eleven provinces on 27 April, a “witch-hunt” targeted leftist intelligentsia and students under the aegis of an anti-terror campaign (Zürcher 1993, 259).

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[2] Neyzi divides the construction of youth in public discourse into three historical periods: the representative of the nation between 1923–1950; “rebels” and “a major threat to the nation” between 1950–1980 due to violence between left and right-wing student groups, and “apolitical consumers” after the 1980 coup d’état (2001, 412).

In a nationwide surge of arrests, “Deniz Gezmiş and his friends” – that is, the People’s Liberation Army of Turkey (THKO) – became the country’s “most wanted” for bank robbery, kidnapping U.S. Sergeant Jimmy R. Finley and four American privates, and most importantly, expanding urban guerrilla warfare to rural areas to “overthrow the constitutional order” and establish a “Marxist-Leninist regime”. When he was finally arrested, Gezmiş was already a prominent public figure. Thus, when the THKO case began on 16 July 1971, to be concluded with the death sentence handed to 18 young revolutionaries, it immediately became known as the “Deniz Gezmiş Case”. Gezmiş’ role as a metonym for the 24 THKO members on trial was propagated even by the defence lawyers, who referred to “Deniz Gezmiş and his friends” in their appeals to the prime minister, the military commission and the Turkish Bar Association (Çelenk 1974, 16, 111, 27). The trial marked the institutional practice of martial law attempting to erase the political privilege of youth as “the guardians of the regime” (Neyzi 2001, 416), which undermined in turn the role of the military as the state guardian.

The “Deniz Gezmiş Case” crystallises the cultural memory of youth as a political category. It emerges as the martial law’s institutional practice of denouncing the discourse of youth as a privileged political category and situates cause lawyering and testifying at court as counter-practices that draw on the Turkish “youth myth” and the nonaccountability of youth as an impulsive, adventurous, inexperienced and innocent social category. I will show how Gezmiş’ memorability and symbolic status as the face of revolutionary youth was facilitated by these institutional counter-practices as they responded to the legal processes of martial law and its media in an attempt to navigate questions of culpability, responsibility for political action and the mechanisms of accountability for political violence.

3 Framing culpability, framing youth

Gezmiş was eventually executed during a period when coverage of activism was heavily censored. Journalism was censored during the case, while the leftist intelligentsia risked incarceration for making public comments about Gezmiş. Nonetheless, the Gezmiş trial was heavily documented. The law that sought to silence the event also functioned as a domain of remembrance, since “legal trials also serve as bookkeepers of history” (Savelsberg and King 2007, 193) and materialise collective memory in judicial textualities (Sarat and Kearns 2002, 12). The Gezmiş case is a strong example of the “regulation of mnemonic content by law” through production and dissemination of legal narratives (Savelsberg and King 2007, 197). As a result, a trove of legal documents relating to the trial has long been a central point for commemorative practices.

The "mnemonic capacity" of activists (Armstrong and Crage 2006, 726), in this context, was dependent on their ability to make use of such materials by accessing the legal archive, rendering it legible, and reframing it to remember revolutionaries not as criminals but as "martyrs". Cause lawyer Halit Çelenk played a crucial role in increasing this capacity by taking up a brokering position between the judicial and cultural fields. The publication of Çelenk's compilation, *1. THKO Case (Court File)*, would break the silence imposed by martial law by publishing court documents, both the accusation and defence, as a tactical navigation of legal restraints. Çelenk's revealing work would become a significant "revolutionary legal monument of '68" (Targan in Çelenk 2013, 5).

More importantly, *THKO Case (Court File)* made public the institutional contestation over the discourse of youth as a political category, suggesting that it was the youth movement and the radicalisation of youth itself that had been on trial. In the book, the trial of Gezmiş and 23 other "guerrillas" counterintuitively emerges as a political contestation over the discourse of youth as a political category, and not as a legal process per se. For example, far from being a judicial accusation, the indictment starts by providing an epic historical account of "turning points" in history, such as "tribes finding their national identity", "Judaism and Christianity", the emergence of Islam, and "the conquest of Istanbul" (Çelenk 1974, 37). Setting the scene of "the birth of a nation" in the "universal social order" of nation states preconditioned by monotheistic religions protecting the "oppressed" (37), the militant-nationalist narrative voice of the indictment frames history through wars.

The indictment reads as a national security mission statement. A militaristic mythologisation of history proceeds for fourteen pages before listing the actual events at the centre of the trial. The prosecutor first links the "wars as history" narrative to international post-war developments: "In Europe, a youth that wanted to live free was coming into existence. First, they were against authority. They wanted a natural life away from society's oppression, girl and boy together [. . .] they were destroying and attacking." (38) The prosecutor summarises the 1968 movement across the world and subsequent left-wing militantism to argue that radicalism was successfully contained in the west, but in "backward countries, especially in South America and Arab countries, an utterly different wind started to blow, Marxist-Leninist principles [. . .] were adopted by a certain coterie" (38). The ambiguity of a "certain coterie" seems to allude to the Cold War rhetoric of the "red scare", with an added Turkish nationalist twist. Despite the Marxist-Leninist "air" blowing in the world, the prosecutor continues, Turkish "people were spiritually ready and determined not to submit to foreign desires" (39). Instead of a text conditioned by judicial episteme and legal discourse, the indictment is a nationalist agitation defining the trial as a military mission.

The prosecutor's narrativisation of history then becomes even more convoluted. He praises the 1960 coup – the so-called "27 March revolution" – and positions university students *acting in unity* as a major force in this Kemalist "revolution" against the right-wing Democrat Party government. Drawing on the youth myth, the prosecutor deduces that *someone* from the Democrat Party had advised its descendant Justice Party to "Divide youth!" (44) to secure power. While the young Turkish generation was traditionally supposed to be the bearer of national identity and the guardian of the state, the 1968 youth are accused of betraying Atatürk: "They only embraced his Mustafa Kemal side. Atatürk has been bourgeoisified after taking this surname." (51) For the prosecutor, the youth of the present have lost their "national sentiments" after this mystified division, while language became contaminated by "so-called Turkish words" translated from western Marxism (47). Moreover, he states, the "Turkish nation, which presents a unity in terms of ethnicity, has been wanted to be divided" by recognising Kurdish identity (49). Once the constructor and protector of the nation state, the Turkish youth is now a major representative of the loss of national identity.

The logic of this accusation is structured by the "youth myth", hence the division of youth into left and right represents the entire nation's division: when leftist students let the Kurdish identity "rise from the dead" (49), they also supposedly divided Mustafa Kemal and Atatürk. However, youth's agency was not the cause of these ruptures: "Now, every revolutionary man was a SOSO, KOMO, GUEVARA, every revolutionary woman was a PILAR, a KURUPSKAYA [sic]. Their Lenin was waiting in ambush, their Plekhanov was watching his work of art." (52, emphasis in the original) Marxism-Leninism stole the Turkish identity of the youth. Here, the national security and Cold War narrative intersect with the myth of Turkish youth to suggest that Gezmiş and his comrades represented a particular threat: they are both influenced by non-Turks and have, in effect, become non-Turks. After his mythologising account of the "de-turkification" of the nation's youth, the prosecutor gives a detailed inventory of the actions of the THKO and adds an enumerated list of individual charges (77–83). This list of legal violations, however, is not what the defence contests.

The prosecutor's reference to the Turkish youth myth determines the defence's response: both sides are guided and limited by the discourse of youth as an idealised political category. Instead of addressing any criminal charges, the defence engages with the prosecutor's idealisation of Atatürk's youth by reframing the defendants' actions as a second war of independence, this time fought against American imperialism in the aftermath of World War II: “Exactly 42 years ago Mustafa Kemal Atatürk unfurled the flag for this fight. Today the young generations happen to believe in fighting this fight.” (114) Responding to the prosecutor’s deployment of both the national security narrative and Kemalist discourse of national independence, the defence lawyers deploy their own rhetorical weapon, connecting the memory of the radical Marxist-Leninist movement in Turkey with Kemalism and invoking the Turkish youth myth themselves. The defence suggests that the THKO revolutionaries and the army are equally opposed to the right-wing government. They accuse the government of violating the constitution and endangering Turkey’s economic independence, citing evidence such as an import/export table illustrating national debt (164). However, the defence’s attack on the government itself is built chiefly on a detailed retelling of the narrative of the youth movement in Turkey and the network of violence it was embedded in. As the lawyers put on record the ways in which the government violated human rights and human dignity by torturing activists, we see a judicial form of memory activism.

After noting the inclusion as evidence of photographs and medical expert testimonies on the use of torture (186), the defence lawyers embark on a section given the title “YOUTH AND ITS DUTY” (186, emphasis in original). The section begins with a long quote from Atatürk’s controversial Bursa Speech, which positions Turkish youth as “the owner and the guardian of the reforms and the regime” (186). The quotation is followed by a reference to Atatürk’s Speech to Youth, which assigns the duty of defending Turkish independence to the nation’s young people (187). After this direct appeal to the Turkish youth myth, the lawyers summarise the youth movement of 1967–1969, noting in particular that the movement began with university occupations (190–194). The defence’s inclusion of a detailed chronological table of the era’s student protests marks this section as a mediation of the memory of activism. By including this information, the defence positions Gezmiş and his THKO comrades – most of whom were university students – as Atatürk’s national guardians, repudiating the prosecutorial attack on the defendants as anti-Turkish security threats.

The defence lawyers continue to use this form of chronological judicial recording to document losses of the movement by listing the “revolutionary youth” confirmed killed by the riot police and right-wing nationalist commandos (207). They list twenty-three separate incidents, starting with the “first martyr” (207), Vedat Demircioğlu. By mobilising revolutionary discourse through key words such as “martyr” and “Bloody Sunday”, which had become a site of memory for the international revolutionary struggle (see Rigney 2016), and detailing causes of death like “killed with a gun” (Çelenk 1974, 208, 209), or “died of haemorrhage for not being hospitalised on time” (212), the lawyers inscribe anti-activist violence into the court record. This act of judicial remembrance establishes a discursive juxtaposition between the anti-Kemalist government's crimes and a Kemalist THKO fighting for Atatürk's revolution. The THKO's representation inscribed in the judicial archive resonates with national Kemalist sentiments.

The dialogic space between the prosecution and the defence, therefore, creates the institutional conditions for the memorability of the criminalised youth movement as the prosecution and the defence take their positions in the contestation over the militaristic national memory and the Turkish youth myth. Deniz Gezmiş uses this dialogic space to give a rhetorically powerful and tactical speech, which is included in the "Hearings" section of *THKO Case (Court File)*. His positioning in this memory contestation facilitates Gezmis' own memorability, as he speaks from the subject position of contentious youth. The staying power of this speech is apparent in the way it has become an important textual resource for the monumentalisation of Gezmiş as the symbol of dissident youth to the present, circulating in whole or part on everything from postcards to songs. Gezmiş' self-representation marks a discursive shift on youth as a political category, not contested by the older generation in the courtroom, but self-identified as a revolutionary subject position, albeit within the constraints of the youth myth.

Gezmiş uses his hearing in court to have his protestations against the court inscribed in the record, framing his dissent as an analytical critique:

> First of all, I have words to say against the indictment. The indictment is baying for blood. The analyses made are wrong, erroneous; the evaluations are also inaccurate. However, we have dedicated our existence to the Turkish people without expecting any return. For this reason, we do not hold back from death. (Çelenk 1974, 319)

The self-sacrifice discourse here references a line from the student oath that was recited daily in schools until 2013: "My existence shall be dedicated to Turkish existence." The subject position of contentious youth in this speech is constructed both by a mnemonic reference to the student oath and a defiant historicism that critiques the prosecution's parlous historical analysis of the student movement. Gezmiş' Marxist-historicist rhetoric would find resonance in his counter-memory work.

The speech does not defend the THKO and its radicalisation. Rather, it produces – and has recorded – a counter-memory of the student movement in Turkey as more radical and historically rooted than the global 1968. Gezmiş argues that the student movement began not in 1968 but before the 1908 Young Turk Revolution, with medical students protesting Sultan Abdul Hamid II (321). By embedding the THKO in a student movement that started in the Ottoman era, he creates a memory of activism that both fits into and moves beyond nationalist discourse. This negotiation with national memory does not sacrifice radicalism even as it seeks to incorporate elements of the institutionalised discourse of Turkish revolutionaries as nation-builders.

Gezmiş' history of Turkish independence, indeed, is both shared by and opposed to the military commission that sentences him to death: his production of counter-memory is not an attempt to erase the army's narrative but to radicalise it. He explains that Ottoman courts gave the death sentence to those who wanted to fight in the Independence War (320) and transcribes a historical lineage of Turkish revolutionaries leading from the Turkish National Movement directly to the THKO:

> In Istanbul in the 1920s the Karakol organisation's Group M fired bullets at the British and Ottoman police for whatever purpose, we fired bullets at the police for that same purpose [. . .] During the First War of Independence, Kuvâ-yi Milliye [National Forces] kidnapped the son of the governor of Izmir, Rahmi bey, and took 50 thousand gold coins. We are just as right to do this as them. *History will absolve us* just as it absolved those who did this before. (Çelenk 1974, 324–325, italics mine)

Gezmiş' testimony historicises the THKO's law-breaking by referencing illegal and revolutionary aspects of Turkish nationalist history. The young defendant draws anti-imperial parallels between the Marxist-Leninist movement and the Turkish National Movement's battles with the Ottoman Empire. By doing so, he frames Kemalist sentiments as *revolutionary* sentiments. Indeed, he goes on to suggest that the guerrilla warfare of the present is a war of independence that echoes the Turkish Independence War. Gezmiş draws on national memory but also amplifies its purportedly forgotten revolutionary dimensions. Quite intriguingly, he also draws on the transnational memory of the Cuban Revolution by alluding to Castro's iconic court defence that was published as the manifesto of the 26th of July Movement, "History Will Absolve Me", which also draws on the memory of the Cuban War of Independence. Just like Castro's, his defence and counter-memory production seek to absolve THKO not in the court of the martial law, but in the court of history: Gezmiş' youth is idealised and not morally culpable for any violence. They are Kemalists, but also Marxists-Leninists who lay claim on Castro's legacy.

Gezmiş' words in court deliberately appeal to the militaristic definition of youth as the protectors of Turkish independence. His self-framing as a young martyr is encapsulated in one widely disseminated quote: "And I am honoured to dedicate myself to Turkey's independence at the age of 24. We will uphold the idea of independence until the grave." (331) Gezmiş' reference to the Turkish student oath, his defiant rather than defendant mode of address and his rhetoric of political self-sacrifice make the court speech available for further commemorative practices. Navigating the rhetorical spaces between the prosecution and defence's opposing versions of nationalist history establishes Gezmiş' resonance with the youth myth, but his position in this resonant discourse is one of youth in dissent. The speech crystalises a subject position of contentious youth that can be adopted by later generations. On the one hand, it constructs a self-image of revolutionary youth to be adopted by leftist subcultures in Turkey. On the other, its resonance within the nationalist cultural environment makes the afterlife of Gezmiş available for appropriation even by ultranationalist organisations like the Youth Union of Turkey, despite the controversy that Gezmiş' last words included the line: "Long live the Turkish and Kurdish peoples' fight for independence." (Çelenk 2002, 86) His memory remains open for contestation.

4 Affective framing of youth

While facilitating Gezmiş' cultural memorability, Halit Çelenk's publication of *THKO Case (Court File)* was not sufficient to disseminate the discourse of idealised contentious youth– especially in the 1970s, when state propaganda depicted the youth movement as anarchist and Gezmiş as a criminal. The book's judicial discourse and format seems hardly to be addressed to the average reader. However, in an era when it meant incarceration or exile to commemorate Gezmiş and his comrades, Çelenk provided a legal means to remember the THKO, to be appropriated by other cultural actors. The most circulated memory works from the 1970s – Nihat Behram's *Three Saplings on the Gallows*; Erdal Öz's *Deniz Gezmiş Speaks* (*Deniz Gezmiş Anlatıyor*, 1976) and Burhan Dodanlı's *Gallows* (*Darağacı*, 1978) – used elements from the legal archive to produce literary journalism that memorialises "Deniz Gezmiş and his friends". These literary-journalistic works summarise and selectively quote from court documents, but expand the "human interest" narrativisation that Çelenk initiated by including personal letters, life stories and engaging literary reflections. They thus combine legal and poetic modalities to (re)frame the execution of the "three saplings" within the moral illegitimacy of the military commission, which has murdered three "children".

Behram's *Three Saplings,* which was published originally as a series of articles in the newspaper *Vatan* to contest the legitimacy and legality of the executions, led to serious trouble for the author despite his use of judicial documents. His work was banned and later, he was expatriated by the 1980 military junta (Behram 2006, 204). At stake for the state was its moral legitimacy, challenged by Behram's testament to young death as universal injustice. The book was written in Çelenk's line of cause lawyering that aimed at publicising law's crisis of legitimacy: along with the use of court documents, Behram includes legal expert testimonies at the end of the work. However, this judicial discourse is aided by an affective and moral framing of the law's crisis of legitimacy, which emphasises "children" and "youth" themes.

Behram's emphasis on youthfulness in the face of death has a "melodramatic" function that "dramatises and makes manifest a moral configuration where innocence is pitted against culpability, right against might, citizenry against the state, hope against its destruction" (Rigney 2016, 90). He introduces the execution itself in this melodramatic modality: the three revolutionaries die "when the sum of their ages was less than the sum of the number of their friends that had already died" due to countless political murders (Behram 2006, 4). In this literary witness account, the "very young" THKO members are "light headed" (21) as they enter the court; Gezmiş, İnan and Aslan wait for execution in a manner "so young, so curious" (43). When the three friends embrace each other for the last time, they look at each other with a "lively smile" that conveys "a childish, humoristic subtlety" (57). Throughout the work, these moments of poignant melodrama juxtapose youth and death, drawing on the notion of the innocence of youth to add an affective layer to the legal configuration of the nonaccountability and inculpability of the revolutionaries. In other words, the ethos of the law is rendered legible and morally recognisable by the pathos of youthful death. The Gezmiş case is made even more memorable with the addition of emotional appeal: the metonymic relation between Deniz Gezmiş and youth gained cultural staying power as successive cultural actors – Behram is just one typical and well-known example – made such melodramatic modality the norm. As emotion embraced and reconfigured legal text, the youthful image of Gezmiş became more and more collectively resonant.

5 Conclusion

In Turkey's era of censorship, traumatised democracy, political violence and coups d'état, remembering dissident youth movements was criminalised. However, the Deniz Gezmiş case was made publicly available thanks to Halit Çelenk and the literary journalists who published and reframed official narratives of Gezmiş. Mobilising the legal archive of evidence and testimony marked the court as a site of memory production. However, the most intriguing aspect of this legal archive – both on the military and opposition sides – is its deliberate and profound resonance with the Turkish "youth myth". The discourse of youth as a political category is evident in the prosecutor's descriptions of youth's division into right and left, in the defence lawyers' language and in

Gezmiş' own words in court. The court's collection of evidential texts – ranging from speeches to photographs – created a legal archive of contested images of youth as a political category. When that archive was more or less unavailable, Halit Çelenk's capacity to broker between the judicial and cultural fields in *1. THKO Case (Court File)* paved the way for successive memory agents to continue the debate over the questions of culpability for revolutionary action and the legitimacy of Gezmiş' execution.

The memorability of Deniz Gezmiş himself, however, was enhanced by the work of literary journalists. A succession of writers framed the inculpability of youth through the moral legitimacy of mourning premature death. Adopting a melodramatic modality assisted, as I have shown, Nihat Behram and others, to establish a metonymic relation between Gezmiş and youth beyond the political discourse. We can thus speak of a double movement in the monumentalisation of Gezmiş as the political symbol of Turkish youth: the discursive legacy of the Turkish "youth myth", as staged in the juridical setting; and the resulting shift of the image of youth from being one of privilege to one of contention. As a result, Gezmiş has come to represent in Turkey the very idea of youth in dissent. Gezmiş' perpetual youthfulness, on the other hand, is created by the melodramatic configuration of the memory of his execution. In turn, this vindicates the image of youth as a contentious political category. The afterlife of Gezmiş has thus proliferated widely as a cultural resource for youth political socialisation in Turkey, mediating various forms of youth dissent and conveying the memory of the Turkish 1968 movement, albeit setting some limits to the cultural memorability of the youth movement. As Lucie Drechselova shows in this volume, the hegemonising success of the discursive legacy of the militarist and masculinist "youth myth" in activist memory work resulted in the exclusion of stories that did not resonate like Gezmiş', which created a gender divide in remembering activism.

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Lucie G. Drechselová

Youth au Féminin: Gendering Activist Memory in Turkey

1 When youth means men

The student leader and guerrilla fighter Deniz Gezmiş, who was put to death by the Turkish state in 1972, became the symbol of Turkish youth activism of the 1960s–70s (Erbil, this volume). In a widely circulated photograph, Gezmiş stands in the courtroom during the first trial of the People's Liberation Army of Turkey (THKO), the far-left armed group, which he co-founded. Gezmiş has his finger pointed towards the invisible addressee while making what looks like a fervent speech. The image appeared on the cover of a 1974 book about the THKO trial, a unique collection of legal documents published by Gezmiş' lawyer Halit Çelenk (Figure 1, left hand side). However, the photograph was cropped to exclude a woman in light-coloured dress seated to Gezmiş' left. In most of the reproductions of the image, Sevim Onursal, the only female defendant in the 1. THKO trial, is either missing from the picture (as in Çelenk's book) or her presence is blatantly ignored, as exemplified by the description in Bedri Baykam's book (Figure 1, right hand side), which reads: "Gezmiş pronounces his defence during the THKO trial in 1971; immediately next to him is Yusuf Aslan" (Baykam 1998, 598)". Baykam notes a well-known activist to Gezmiş' right, but Sevim Onursal on the left goes unmentioned. Historical and cultural attention tends to be concentrated on Gezmiş and his male comrades.

Such male-dominated representation is particularly pronounced when it comes to Turkish youth's involvement in political struggles. Demet Lüküslü (2009), Berna Pekesen (2020), and, in this very volume, Duygu Erbil have shown that in Turkey, "youth" refers principally to young men. The martyred Deniz Gezmiş is central to and emblematic of these masculinist representations of political youth. In turn, it was mostly men – especially those men who wrote memoirs – who created and limited the image of womanhood in Turkish activism of the 1960s and 70s.

Academics such as Pekesen have noted the absence of female voices from this period. Commenting on female memory of 1968, for example, Pekesen laments that "the vast majority of these women have not yet given voice to their memories, which explains why their experiences still have not found their rightful place in the social memory" (2020, 237). Male activists of the 1968 generation have also commented on the issue. Journalist Tuğrul Eryılmaz, for

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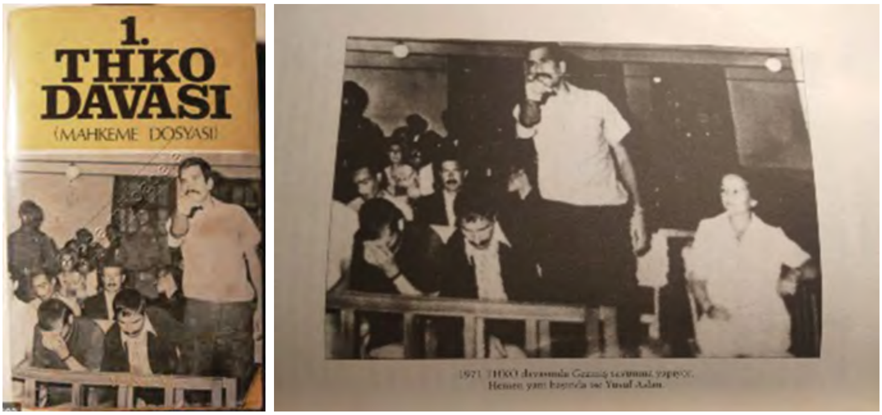

Figure 1: Cover of Çelenk's book, 1974 (left); Illustration in Baykam's book, 1998 (right).

example, wrote of Ülkü Ahmed, one of the few female leaders of the People's Liberation Party-Front of Turkey (THKP-C): "I wish she had sat down and wrote her memoirs or given an interview." (Eryılmaz 2018, 87)

In this chapter I argue that women's memory – at least, when both academics and activists actually record and disseminate it – should come to redefine the story of Turkish youth activism in the 1960s and 70s. Adopting a sociological perspective drawn from the work of Karl Mannheim and others, I survey the production of female narratives of Turkish 1960s and 70s activism, reflect on why women's narratives have been silenced, and conclude that women have penned few traditional memoirs. However, some with connections to renowned male leaders or with elevated reputations elsewhere in the arts have managed to do so. Taboos around discussing sexual torture have both discouraged some women from writing – while also permitting others to publish ground-breaking works. Finally, I outline how women have found spaces in alternative media to discuss their past, occluding the need to write memoirs at all. Since narratives of activism from the past have such an important role to play for contemporary young activists, these hitherto neglected strands of memory are crucial for the intergenerational transmission of memory in Turkey.

1.1 Youth and political generations in Turkey

The 1960s and 70s in Turkey were decades of social and political mobilisation on an unprecedented scale. In a country where 60 per cent of the population was under the age of twenty-five (Köknel 1970, 6), youth became an important agent of activism – especially when a new constitution expanded rights to political organising, labour unions and student associations in the early 1960s. Throughout the decade, left-wing activism became particularly prominent among urban university students. However, that group of urban university students comprised only 1.5 per cent of Turkey's youth at the time (Lüküslü 2009, 60): the 1968 political generation had an elite, or at least minority, core.

The situation changed in the 1970s. The left-wing social movements and left-wing activism grew in tandem with radicalisation on the political right. Both left and right became increasingly militarised. Most of the revolutionary activists had modest origins and came from the relatively poorer peripheral provinces of Turkey (Mardin 1978; Kaynar 2020). By 1980, the left-wing had grown to include high school students and manual and white-collar workers, although young people continued to be the principal actors. Even children as young as twelve displayed a good knowledge of political parties developed from extensive reading (Bozarslan 1999, 188). As radicalisation and militarisation became more widespread, violence broke out. Official estimates of 5,713 deaths and 18,480 injured between 1975 and 1980 (Bozarslan 1999, 192) are likely to be far short of the real total.

The two generations of political activists – the so-called *sixty-eighters* and *seventy-eighters* – continue to be active memory agents in today's Turkey (Drechselová 2021). Many members are influential public figures. They have established associations that seek to broach taboo topics from the country's past and to prosecute the perpetrators of the 1971 and 1980 military coups, which disproportionately targeted the left. These associations have also become the principal agents of public memory of the era, effectively demarcating the boundaries and establishing the standards for public circulation of memory of activism during the 1960s and 70s. Since 2000, several factors have produced a new environment particularly conducive to multiplication of activists' narratives: almost all of the activists had been released from prison; bans issued on political expression have started to expire; activists have begun to reinvent themselves in other contested areas, such as ecology or feminism; new social and political movements have gained momentum (culminating in 2013 in the Gezi Park protests); and the governing Justice and Development Party (AKP) showed a short-lived interest in questioning the legacy of the 1980 coup by putting on trial the military leaders who orchestrated the coup. Members of 1968 and 1978 political generations have used this context to establish a generational narrative that pertains to their past youth activism but also affects their positionality today. Crucially for this chapter, an emphasis on gender equality within activist structures is also part of the changing generational narrative, reflecting a retrospective change in minds about women's roles, rather than signifying an actual awareness in the 1960s and 70s.

1.2 Theoretical framework

From a sociological perspective, generations emerge from specific historical circumstances (Braungart and Braungart 1986; Escudier 2016; Mannheim 1972). A “generation” is generally a cohort of individuals who are collectively marked by a formative event during their youth (Stoker 2014, 378). Such formative events might be best understood as shared historical *experiences* (Georgeon 2007). In parallel, it is not just age but also the period of entering a political party (seniority) which is decisive for one’s generational belonging (Kriegel 1979; Lavabre 1981).

Scholars such as Karl Mannheim contend that historical conditions have their greatest influence on people as adolescents and young adults. Turkey’s sixty-eighters and seventy-eighters are examples of Mannheim’s ideas in practice: these generations are characterised by young activists who were politicised in the same period and by the same historical experiences. Youth, however, is not just an important life stage for developing political involvement. It is also an important trope in generational narratives. Political generations emerge as a result of collective sense of belonging which is acquired in the aftermath of the period of youth activism not necessarily during the youth activism. In consequence, I also draw on work from the field of memory studies to offer a present-oriented perspective on how political generations retrospectively construct their own identities (Wydra 2018).

The link between generations and gender, however, has received little attention. Gendered analyses of political generations in various sociocultural contexts have been sporadic (for France see Pagis 2009; for Egypt see Hammad 2016; for Italy see Hajek 2017). The Turkish case confirms that the issue of gender in activist memory has been mainly occluded and that gender-hierarchical discursive norm led to women’s exclusion from generational memory production (Colvin and Karcher 2018, 7). “Generation”, as Andrea Hajek shows for Italy’s 1968, “became ‘a hegemonising narrative’ which provoked ‘a reluctance to investigate other forms of conflict’” (2018, 36). This would mean that analysing activism of the 1960s and 70s through the generational lens hinders our understanding of cleavages such as gender. What I show in this chapter is that generational memory in Turkey has a gendered character, which sheds light on the male image of political youth in Turkey and offers to scholars of other contexts and times a new case study on gender and generation.

The literary genre of memoir holds a particularly prominent position as a vessel for public memory of activism. Memoir writers produce a sense of generational belonging through their reflections on the glorious past. Around a hundred memoirs have been authored by the members of the 1968 and 1978 political generations.[1] However, of those one hundred, only eight were written by women.[2]

One way to explain this gender imbalance among memoir writers is to quantify gender composition of the past social movements. In 1976, 28.3 per cent of university applicants in Turkey were women (Lüküslü 2009, 61) and women made up approximately 20 per cent of politically active students in the 1960s (Mater 2012, 78). While men did outnumber women in the movements of the 1960s and 70s, women are still severely underrepresented among the authors of memoirs. Moreover, as Köse Badur underlines, “female students have always been part of the ‘68 youth myth. They participated in an equal way with men in the protests of the 1968 [. . .] and haven’t felt deficient or insufficient in this regard.” (2019, 431) Similarly, Sevgi Adak notes that the 1970s was a time of rapid women’s politicisation (2020, 611). The most recent research thus proves that it is necessary to transcend the “proportionality argument”.

The most recent scholarship has used *qualitative* approaches to explain the scarcity of women-authored memoirs. These researchers have charged that there were few female political leaders, that violent struggles and the preponderance of guerrilla activities limited women’s involvement and that there was a lack of feminist critique of gender inequalities within activist structures in the 1960s and 70s (Cormier 2018; Köse Badur 2019; Beşpınar 2019). These factors certainly go some way to explaining the persistence of masculine images of youth activism. However, even this research on the past does not sufficiently address gendered exclusionary processes that are affecting today’s memory production market. In order to develop these lines of thinking, I address the roots of women’s absence among memoir-writers by focusing on the gendered conditions of, and gendered access to, the production of memory. By using sociological techniques to explore memory production by the 1968 and 1978 political generations, and by reading memoirs and autobiographical writing by members of these two generations, I catalogue the women who have published memoirs and analyse the themes and patterns that appear in published writing, the constraints limiting women memoirists, and women's pathways to visibility within Turkish generational memory.[3]

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[1] The estimate of a hundred of memoirs written by the members of the 1960s and 70s political generations is based on a review of publications by a number of publishing houses in Turkey which have issued thematic series featuring memories of activism, namely but not exclusively İletişim, Ayrıntı Yayınları, Can Yayınları, Nota Bene Yayınları, Ozan Yayıncılık, Belge Yayınları, Alter Yayınları.

[2] The ratio between male and female life stories is 92:8 (counting also Melek Ulağay’s contribution in Baydar and Ulagay 2011), including texts by Sevgi Soysal, Sevim Belli, Oya Baydar, Pamuk Yıldız, Yüksel Selek, Rahime Kesici Karakaş, Sakine Cansız. This list is by no means final or exhaustive but it does provide a sense of the disproportion of female narratives in the form of memoirs.

In the first part of the analysis, I examine themes, which pertain to men and militant masculinity within generational memory. I explore how those male-dominated themes affect the possibilities of women's autobiographical expression. I proceed to look into the conditions of women's access to memoir as a genre. To conclude, I suggest ways to look beyond the dominant genre to find memorialised aspects of women's life narratives.

2 The memory of men?

2.1 When the superhero is a man

Male guerrillas and martyrs dominate the story of the 1960s and 70s left in Turkey. Researchers suggest that this veneration of martyrdom and self-sacrifice renders women's stories less visible in the generational narrative (Pekesen 2020, 236). Symbolically, the image of the "male superhero" closes space to those who do not resemble him. The norm of heterosexual masculinity mediated through the memoirs and mourning of male heroes has an impact on the possibilities of public expression of those who do not conform to the hero's identity, including women activists.

References to Deniz Gezmiş are omnipresent in Turkish activist memoirs. However, the dominance of Gezmiş as male guerrilla superhero has not necessarily discouraged women from writing their own life stories. On the contrary, women have followed their male counterparts in weaving their life stories around that of Deniz Gezmiş. Every encounter with Gezmiş is mentioned explicitly and in detail. Oya Baydar, a renowned Turkish novelist who was sacked from a university in 1968 for her political beliefs, provides a salient example. In her biographical interview *We Were Talking About Love and Revolution* (*Aşktan ve Devrimden Konuşuyorduk*, 2018), Baydar recalls her first encounter with Gezmiş, who led a student boycott after Baydar's doctoral thesis had been rejected:

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[3] The list of themes is not exhaustive and evolves with the emergence of new narratives. Some of the considerations, such as women's contemporary socio-economic status are left out of the analysis for lack of data.

> I went directly to my office. It was a tiny assistant's office. Not even five minutes had passed and somebody knocked at the door. I opened it and saw an upstanding, handsome young man. Everybody thinks I knew Deniz Gezmiş before that; there have even been ridiculous utterances that we had been together. But I saw Deniz there for the first time.
>
> (Baydar 2018, 85)

The memory of Gezmiş, rather than constraining the narrative since Baydar cannot resemble the male "superhero", has an authorising function. Since memoir is a relational form of self-presentation, Baydar's having known Gezmiş acts as a memory anchor which connects personal activism with the larger narrative about the era and makes the writer "an intimate witness to history" (Smith and Watson 2017). As such, the widespread memory of Gezmiş also contributes to dissemination of memories – and memoirs – of other members of 1968 and 1978 political generations. The few women who published their memoirs did so in the context where the memory of Gezmiş kept their own testimonies relevant.

In turn, the media tend to exaggerate the mentions of Gezmiş in Baydar's memoir. By publicising the memoir with straplines such as "Oya Baydar talks about her life: 'They used to raid my house in search for Deniz Gezmiş'", the media inflate the place of Gezmiş in Baydar's own narrative.[4] Still, Baydar's reference to Gezmiş repudiates the idea that the image of the male guerrilla inevitably overwrites or constrains women's memory.

2.2 The memory of leaders

Memories of activism on the Turkish radical left have mainly been written by the leaders of student organisations, political associations, labour unions and paramilitary groups. Former leadership status legitimises the narrators of these memoirs as authentic voices about the past, such as in the five-volume series *The Liberation [Movement] Talks About Itself* (*Kurtuluş Kendini Anlatıyor*, 2016) which begins with narratives by the three founders of the movement. Many men who were not leaders have also written about their lives and activism. For instance, Tayfur Cinemre, a student and passionate motorcyclist who chauffeured the most well-known young revolutionaries of the 1968 generation, who recently published his autobiographical *Memoirs are the Guards of our Memory* (*Anılarımız belleğimizin bekçileridir*,

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[4] "Oya Baydar hayatını anlatıyor: Evimi basıp Deniz Gezmiş'i ararlardı." *T24*, 23 July 2018, https://t24.com.tr/haber/oya-baydar-hayatini-anlatiyor-evimi-basip-deniz-gezmisi-ararlardi,671625 (9 June 2021).

2020).[5] The fact of women's limited participation in 1960s and 70s activist leadership, therefore, should not inherently limit their ability to publish autobiographical narratives. Female-excluding mechanisms, such as the gender-hierarchical discursive norms (Colvin and Karcher 2018, 7), must also be in play.

A number of women have, however, written works about male leaders who never published their own autobiographies (in some cases, these leaders were killed in conflict; others have passed away prior to book's authoring). Şehriban Teyhani, for example, compiled a book of testimonies about her deceased husband, the union leader Kamer Teyhani, as "[her] last duty to Kamer" (Teyhani 2020, 9). In the work, *The Travellers Who Steal Fire #1: The Book of Kamer Teyhani* (*Ateşi Çalan Yolcular 1: Kamer Teyhani Kitabi*, 2020), Teyhani presents memories from seventeen of her husband's male comrades, and engages in dialogue with the former activists. Although the book might appear to be motivated and dominated by the memory of Kamer, Şehriban's female voice appears in its own right throughout the book. While women's names are often ignored in other autobiographies, for example, Teyhani insists throughout her interviews on including them, as, for instance, in the following passage:

> Şehriban Teyhani: [. . .] We always say that without women, the revolutionary movement cannot become a mass movement. So let's start with the topic of "the Revolutionary Path (Devrimci Yol) and women".
>
> Sedat Şeyhoğlu: The most difficult place to start. Women are in all social movements of the 1970s. It needs to be said that everywhere, women were poorly represented at the positions of power. [. . .] But we had numerous women comrades. We can mention Semra Kesim, Sevim Keleşoğlu, Kamil Sevinç's daughter Necla, Ayşegül Devecioğlu and Ayşenur Özdemir for the neighbourhood and workers' organizing. [. . .]. (Teyhani 2020, 94)

Şirin Cemgil's *Sinança* (2015), was written in memory of the author's murdered husband, Sinan Cemgil, a student leader and co-founder of Gezmiş' People's Liberation Army. The work, which is comprised of recollections and letters, which Cemgil exchanged with her husband, was published posthumously by Cemgil's son. Even though it bears the subtitle "Şirin Cemgil recalls Sinan Cemgil", the text represents more than an act of remembering a well-known male revolutionary. The use of recollections and letters turns the work both into a part-autobiography of Şirin: the female author establishes her status as on a par with the male revolutionary.

In the cases of Teyhani and Cemgil, the marital bond between the female authors and the male subject motivates both authorship and publication. However, the works also convey women's memory: the social bond is legitimising for women who author a biographical account, but it is also enabling, giving women a space to transmit their own memory.

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[5] In the Turkish original title, the word "anı" has both the meaning of a memoir and of a souvenir.

3 Women authors as tokens

3.1 Breaking gendered taboos

Young female activists who took part in the radical left movement were, just like their male counterparts, targeted by state repression. Many were also subjected to sexualised torture at the hands of the state. In a context where honour ("namus") is closely connected to shame, speaking publicly about sexual torture is difficult (Beşpınar 2019, 483). Discussing these aspects of their experience in memoirs is particularly sensitive for women. The experience of state violence, then, may inhibit transmission of women's memory.

Several women's accounts of torture have appeared in print. One of the first works was Pamuk Yıldız's *It Is Always on My Mind* (*O hep aklımda*, 2001).[6] Yıldız was arrested at the age of eighteen and spent seven years in prison. *It Is Always on My Mind* narrates the author's time in Ankara's Mamak prison, detailing every aspect of prison life – including the author's torture. Rahime Kesici Karakaş' *Being a Woman in Prison #5* (*5nolu'da kadın olmak*, 2017), meanwhile, offers another layer of testimony, since it deals specifically with Kurdish women's experiences at Diyarbakır's Prison #5, where torture was a means to repress Kurdishness. While the link between state-sanctioned sexual violence and societal shame may have inhibited the proliferation of women's autobiographies due to self-censorship by individual female activists, these openly descriptive testimonies were sought after by publishers precisely since they shattered taboos.

By ending the silence on gender-based violence and activism, these narratives – especially Yıldız's testimony – have changed the conditions of memory production for other women, who now find that they do not need to discuss their own traumatic experiences in great detail. Oya Baydar's account of her detention is an example of how women use allusion to avoid stark discussion:

> Kicking and slapping, throwing on the floor, these sorts of things . . . In the following years the torture done to people was so horrendous that my experience is nothing, a light stroke! Talking about it is not pleasant at all anyway. [. . .] It is not possible to talk about

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[6] Yıldız's testimony was reprinted several times (2001, 2007, 2012).

> it anyway; one is ashamed. It's not the person who does the torture but the one who endures it who is ashamed and won't talk about it easily. (Baydar 2018, 109)

Women addressing and confronting sexualised state violence inscribed their testimony as part of generational memory. Moreover, they also contributed to reduce the pressure of honour-related taboos on other women, who can write their life narratives without necessarily delving into open descriptions of sexualised torture.

3.2 Memoirs of established novelists

Breaking new ground or discussing one's own experiences in tandem with the experiences of a male figure has not proven the only way for women to get their memoirs in print. Established novelists for whom their memoir is one of many works, tend to find publication more straightforward. The cases of the novelists Sevgi Soysal and Oya Baydar are illustrative of how reputation influences both the publication and reception of female-authored narratives. Works by both Soysal and Baydar did not merely sneak into publication; each author had a track record of acclaimed works under their belt prior to publishing their autobiographies.

Soysal was incarcerated in the aftermath of the 1971 military coup in Turkey. Her autobiographical writing has redefined the conventions of the political autobiography written by men as "she narrates a more complicated version of the narrative of political prisoners that presents a gendered and polyphonic experience" (Yıldız 2019, 145). Baydar, meanwhile, stands out within the generational memory production since she has authored or co-authored three autobiographical works (Baydar and Ulagay 2011; Baydar 2014; 2018). Even though Soysal's and Baydar's narratives were written thirty-five years apart, the fact that so few female memoirs have appeared within this period testifies to enduring gendered inequalities within Turkish cultural production.

The selective profile of female memoir-writers is likely to have an inhibiting effect on others' willingness or ability to publish their own works. A self-censoring logic may be in play: women avoid the genre of memoir when acclaimed novelists like Baydar and Soysal have set the bar so high. In tandem with this self-censorship, female memoir writers often function as "tokens", to borrow Rosabeth Kanter's term (1977). Even other women may believe that one woman's memoir is "enough" to speak for the whole category of women. It is thus possible to argue that the memoirs of prominent novelists have contributed to narrow the space for women's narratives through self-exclusion, which only perpetuates the discriminatory features of generational memory production in Turkey.

4 Beyond memoirs: Media and alternative formats

Given the paucity of female memoirs and the elevated place of the memoir in Turkish cultural production, women's memory finds voice in television and radio appearances and in alternative formats such as multi-authored collections of testimonies. The media has played an important role in proliferating women's narratives by offering coverage to mark the anniversaries of military coups. The testimonies circulated through interviews often include female voices and tend to concentrate on experiences of state violence. Seza Mis Horoz's interview for *Express* magazine in 2005 stands out due to its detailed description of state-inflicted violence as well as her post-coup life: Mis Horoz devoted her post-repression life to aiding political prisoners even as she struggled with economic hardship. Like Pamuk Yıldız and Rahime Kesici Karakaş did in their memoirs, Mis Horoz described her experience of detention and torture (in this case in Elazığ prison in Eastern Anatolia).[7] However, activists' post-repression life was rarely discussed in interviews prior to Mis Horoz' testimony.

Media interviews have likewise brought accounts from the Turkish provinces to the fore. The internet-based Bianet featured the autobiographical interview with Gazel Gürbüz, a former youth activist from the city of Kayseri in Central Anatolia who was arrested and tortured in 1978 at the age of sixteen.[8] It is not by chance that Gürbüz's biographical account and Mis Horoz's interview are both accessible online: internet-based media offer additional opportunities for women to speak about their experiences.

Women who have direct access to media use their space to share memories of their own experiences and their recollections of other women. Ayşe Emel Mesci, an actor and member of the 1968 political generation, has direct access granted through her column in the daily *Cumhuriyet*. She chooses periodically to devote it to the issues of memory, as for example in a piece entitled "One Photograph" (*Bir fotoğraf*).[9] In it, Mesci describes a photograph of herself and two other women activists. They had met in prison in 1972. Mesci specifically offers her recollections of one of the women, Ayşe Bilge Dicleli, who had passed away a couple of days prior to publication. Mesci uses her personal encounter and the photograph to ruminate on Bilge Dicleli's wider contributions as a leftist activist and an influential member of the Turkish feminist movement.

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[7] The interview was republished online in 2020 to mark forty years since the military coup on 12 September 1980. "Haklılığımızdan korkuyorlardı. 12 Eylül cezaevlerinin tanığı Seza Mis Horoz" *Express Dergisi* n°53, https://www.birartibir.org/a-dan-x-e/838-hakliligimizdan-korkuyorlardi (9 June 2021).

[8] Kara, Selma. "'Ben Ne Bileyim, Küçücük Çocuğum', Gazel Gürbüz İle Söyleşi." *Bianet*, 17 September 2011, https://bianet.org/biamag/kadin/132781-ben-ne-bileyim-kucucuk-cocugum (9 June 2021).

[9] Mesci, Ayşe Emel. "Bir fotoğraf." *Cumhuriyet*, 6 December 2017, https://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/yazarlar/ayse-emel-mesci/bir-fotograf-758978 (9 June 2021).

Beyond memoirs, however, women are not restricted to publishing in newspaper columns, occasional media interviews and online. Women's voices can be found in print in volumes that compile multiple, autobiographical accounts. In such formats, however, the choice of the volume's editor influences how many – if any – women's voices are heard. Nadire Mater's *The Street is Nice* (*Sokak Güzeldir*, 2012), was, according to its author, written "to be able to regain the truth back from history". Of the twenty-one testimonies given by 1968 activists in the volume, six are narrated by females. Likewise, Sezai Sarıoğlu's *Pomegranate Seeds* (*Nar Taneleri*, 2018), which purportedly strives to demystify the "official histories of the left" by presenting the life stories of 1970s activists, makes a conscious effort towards women's inclusion: six of the book's fourteen subjects are women. Eylem Delikanlı and Özlem Delikanlı's *Nothing Will be the Same* (*Hiçbir şey aynı olmayacak*, 2019), provides accounts from 22 political refugees who were compelled to leave Turkey in the aftermath of the 1980 military coup. Exactly half of the accounts are given by women.

These examples show that women's life stories are increasingly presented outside of the traditional realm of memoirs. Turkey's memory production market is changing in response to the emergence of new media and women's changing access to media, but is also responding to a growing and deliberate valorisation of women's life narratives. Ironically, the existence of alternate avenues for dissemination of women's narratives may decrease the likelihood of women writing memoirs at all: having already shared their life story elsewhere, the format of memoir may become less relevant.

5 Conclusion: A narrow doorway to memory production

Sevim Onursal, the woman seated next to Deniz Gezmiş in the famous courtroom photograph from 1971, died in 2009. The *Milliyet Daily* published one of the few obituaries about Onursal. Its title sums up both Onursal's public image and symbolic silence: “She hid Deniz in her house and her memories in herself”.[10] Onursal did indeed hide Gezmiş and his comrades after they robbed a bank in 1971 before going on the run herself. She spent two years behind bars as a consequence.[11] Onursal may have addressed her experiences in a career as a painter, but she never wrote a memoir or spoke publicly about her life as an activist. The absence of Onursal’s own account also underscores other women’s silence: she and many of her peers appear only through allusion, in relation to male figures, or in memoirs and other works that proved difficult to publish at all. The dominance of male heroism, male leaders, straitjacketed gender roles, and the difficulty of discussing repression openly have combined to silence or suppress many women’s experiences of the 1960s and 70s activist circles in Turkey.

We can draw two conclusions from my argument. First, the norms of women’s memory production in Turkey have evolved and continue to do so. As a result, factors, which may seem at first glance to suppress women’s autobiographies have more ambiguous effects. The capacity of women to address gendered violence and trauma meant a breakthrough in the generational memory and ensured the circulation of their testimonies. But it also allowed other women not to address their traumatic experience in such an open way since the taboo has been broken by others. Those who otherwise may not have shared their narrative were able to do so as a result. Women have found ways to express their memory amid the dominance of the memory of leaders, either by using the male leaders as memory anchors or by penning books about these leaders in which they, as authors, introduce their own perspectives. In spite of these chinks of light, the situation for women who wish to share their activist narratives in a memoir remains difficult. Women who were not leaders in the past or renowned novelists in the present are still called upon to break gendered taboos in order to be heard.

Second, and more importantly, the absence of women’s memoirs does not mean an absence of women’s memory. The persistent sense that women’s narratives are somehow absent stems from the fact that we are looking for them where they are not: in the individual memoirs. Instead, women’s testimonies exist in alternative and non-traditional spaces. This should encourage us to enlarge the understanding of what constitutes generational memory, in the Turkish context at least, beyond memoirs. Dedicating further research to those alternative spaces should also cast further light on how the representation of youth, enriched by women's testimonies, from the politically formative period of the 1960s and 70s has shaped generational memory.

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[10] “Deniz’i evine, anılarını kendine sakladı.” *Milliyet*, 26 April 2009, https://www.milliyet.com.tr/pazar/deniz-i-evine-anilarini-kendine-sakladi-1087418 (9 June 2021).

[11] “Sevim Onursal’ı Kaybettik.” *Bianet*, 03 April 2009, https://www.bianet.org/bianet/toplum/113579-sevim-onursal-i-kaybettik (9 June 2021).

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M. Paula O’Donohoe, Begoña Regueiro Salgado
& Pilar García Carcedo

Official Narratives of the Civil War and the Franco Regime in the Twenty-first Century

Spain’s municipal elections on 12 April 1931 effectively constituted a plebiscite on the monarchy of King Alfonso XIII. A landslide victory for republican and left-wing parties, whose support proved particularly strong in bigger Spanish cities, ensued. The king was obliged to leave the country two days after the election to stave off the threat of civil war and street demonstrations. Simultaneously, the Second Republic was proclaimed on the basis of a new constitution. One of the most progressive constitutions in Spanish history, it sought to establish a secular state based on the rule of law, asserted universal suffrage, popular sovereignty, and made an extensive declaration of social rights such as divorce and abortion. A period of cultural and political enlightenment seemed to be in the offing.

Once the left-wing Popular Front coalition came to power in February 1936, however, social tensions increased. By April 1936, violence was rife. A traditionally monarchic military plotted against the Republican government, and on 17 July 1936, a military coup started in Ceuta and Melilla before expanding to the peninsula the following day. The coup quickly led to civil war. Spain was divided into two zones: Republican territory, including loyalist strongholds of Madrid, Catalonia and the Basque Country, where the government tried to remain in power and recover its legal authority; and the insurgent, so-called Nationalist part, where the military rapidly established a cruel and harsh dictatorship. The Spanish Civil War lasted for three years. On 1 April 1939, the Nationalist faction entered Madrid. The cruel and dictatorial Franco regime held power until 1975.

Due to the regime’s longevity and violence, memories of the Spanish Civil War and the Franco Regime remain widespread in Spain. Although any historical event can be portrayed in a plethora of narratives, one narrative usually comes to dominate. The dominant narrative tends to be considered the “truth” and serves as the framework for a society to interpret and recall the past (Montoto 2014). Today’s Spanish state promotes one such narrative of the Civil War in commemorations, through monuments, official memory politics and memory laws. In turn, these physical and discursive phenomena shape the contours of permissible public discourse, limiting the possibilities of intergenerational transmission. Spain’s dominant narrative has changed over time, with different voices and

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terminologies emerging since the end of the war in 1939. Academics and politicians have long considered Spain to be a country of forgetting and silence since the Franco Regime's end and democracy's beginnings in the 1970s (Juliá 2003; Cuesta 2008).

In the following chapters, we cast light on how Spaniards today engage with narratives of the past. We explore interpretive patterns and narrative echoes by drawing on two perspectives: an analysis of children's literature, and an anthropological exploration of how Spanish youth acquire memories and knowledge of the past. We trace different memorial narratives from the 1930s through to the struggles for recognition of Franco's victims and their families in the twenty-first century.

Throughout its first decades in power, the Francoist state enforced a rigid collective memory of the past through repression, propaganda and commemorations. At the core of the state's narrative was its Civil War victory against the Republicans. The defeated opposition would, were it not for the brave national heroes and martyrs who won the war on Franco's behalf, supposedly have destroyed Spain (Rigby 2000). The official narrative strongly delineated the victors and the losers; the narratives of the losing side – those of the now repressed and oppressed – were subject to what Javier Rodrigo calls a "memocide" (2008).

The Civil War had been followed by a serious economic crisis, a period of autarchy, black market dealing and ration cards. For most citizens, the vagaries of daily life meant a focus on survival, which forced a retreat to the private domestic sphere. Spaniards were exhausted after the war, intimidated by the regime's repressive force and, moreover, feared breaking the newfound peace. Widespread political apathy, which only benefited the regime (Rigby 2000), became the norm. Indeed, being apolitical became a safeguard against political reprisal (Pérez 2004), further dampening opposition to the government and its memory narratives. The retreat of memory to the private sphere, in practice, meant: "extract the memory from history and strip it of meaning, put it in the kitchen and nullify its presence from the collective determination, avoid its footprint in institutions" (Vinyes 2016, 374). Anti-government resistance – both political and narratorial – was as undesirable as it was impossible.

During the 1960s, however, an increasingly vocal student opposition, influenced by transnational youth movements, disrupted the surface calm. By the 1970s, the opposition had organised itself into a broad coalition of socialists, communists, nationalists and radicals. The united opposition bloc demanded a clean break from Francoism and a complete political amnesty (Rigby 2000). Contrarily, the 1970s was the zenith of a period of extreme-right terrorism guided by a "strategy of tension" (Aguilar 2002, 144). Far-right terror groups aimed both to undermine the government and to discredit the united opposition, threatening as a result a second civil war. Facing the threat of another war and a violent transition of power, the opposition abandoned its demands for a radical break and agreed to a transition by negotiation, working within the state's legal and institutional framework (Rigby 2000). As a result, even the most radical opposition came to agree that there would be in post-Franco Spain no settling old scores, since that might reopen old wounds and provoke another civil war.

The post-1975 democratic transition was, therefore, neither a moment of oblivion for the old nor a total embrace of the new. Every political decision dripped in the memory of the Civil War; the past, in effect, established the bounds of the possible (Pérez 2004). However, the past offered only a model of negation, establishing what should or could *not* be done with vocal warnings about repeating historical tragedy or trauma (Juliá 2003). Consequently, there was in Spain no purge of political or military and security institutions. There were no attempts to prosecute the perpetrators of state violence. There was no overt political denunciation of the Franco regime and its obvious wrongdoings.

The transition was accomplished through negotiation, compromise and accommodation. Since change came from within the authoritarian state's legal framework, the dictator may have disappeared, but his power structures persisted (Cuesta 2008). A series of amnesties, intended to appease the outspoken opposition, came to symbolise a peaceful and conciliatory transition. The first (and partial) amnesty, announced in 1976, left many political prisoners incarcerated. Moreover, the crimes the released had committed – such as creating associations and engaging in protests – continued to be illegal. Consequently, many of those amnestied were returned to prison in short order. The opposition, however, demanded a full amnesty for political prisoners.

A further Law of Amnesty passed in 1977 pardoned all political and blood crimes and commenced a constitutional process of dealing with the past. The law was intended to ease matters for political culprits, yet it also forbade the pursuit of perpetrators and those who had committed abuses of power (Aguilar 2002). During debate on the law, several congressmen from different parties and ideologies shared Xabier Arzalluz's view that

> [the law] is simply oblivion. An amnesty of all, for all. Oblivion of all, for all. A law can establish oblivion, but that oblivion has to penetrate the whole of society. We must ensure that this conception of oblivion becomes general. Because it is the only way to shake hands without rancour.[1]

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[1] "El impactante discurso de la amnistía." *El Diario*, 15 September 2007, https://www.eldiario.es/canariasahora/canarias-opina/impactante-discurso-amnistia_132_4902475.html (30 July 2021).

In this reading, the 1977 law was a pact of "oblivion" that rejected accountability in favour of a peaceful transition and national reconciliation (Cuesta 2008). The supposed cornerstone of national reconciliation brought amnesty to anti-Francoism and amnesia to Francoism. Politicians had drawn a veil over the past and accepted that institutional violence would remain unpunished (Aguilar 2002). The cause and result of the law, then, was to encourage a sort of collective amnesia: a mass cultural effort to forget the recent past and foster a new collective memory that would uphold the democratisation process (Rigby 2000).

That new collective memory mandated a reinterpretation of the past – a reinterpretation governed by academics, politicians and public figures. The Second Republic was now dismissed as the chaotic ancestor of the Civil War rather than one of the most ambitious democracies of its time. The Civil War itself was related in more demure terms as an inevitable tragedy, "with the participants as hapless victims of forces beyond their control leading them towards an inevitable and dreadful outcome" (Rigby 2000, 77). The Spanish Civil War, then, appeared to have been inevitable, causeless and a necessary step between republic and dictatorship (Pérez 2004), rather than the product of a specific socio-political context whose main structures had survived the dictator Franco's death and even today influence how Spaniards deal with and understand the past (Bernecker and Brinkman 2009). A whitewashed, innocent, apolitical and dehumanised narrative of the Civil War provoked consensual blame sharing and reproduced a discourse of equidistance.

The transition to democracy was being reinterpreted even as it was happening, so that the transition itself became the foundational myth of Spanish democratic national identity and credibility (Pérez 2004). The official stance – widely shared in Spain and by international organisations and other countries – is that the transition was an inevitable and successful process that has served as an example for countries in South America and Eastern Europe (Labrador 2010). Academics and politicians have emphasised the peaceful nature of the transition to such an extent that it is easy to forget its violence (Aguilar 2002): the transition saw more than 600 deaths (Macé 2012) and a series of violent events. Today, historians are exploring the resulting emergence and actions of non-institutional social movements, thereby reopening the mythical paradigm to explore difficult and non-consensual trends in the narrative of the transition. As a result, the transition period is now widely understood as having caused an enduring democratic deficit, passive citizenship (Juliá 2003) and collective forgetfulness.

This selective amnesia and remembrance were driven by a fear (Rigby 2000, 78) that originated in the post-war period when revealing one's political past could be a fatal mistake, and continued unabated in the transition period, when resurrecting old conflicts seemed dangerously possible. Moreover, the political apathy that appeared as a survival strategy during the post-war period intensified during the transition. Consequently, the majority of Spaniards were passive observers and not active participants when it came to the transition. Over time, a simultaneous passivity and fear have caused a schism between the historical and the biographical record. Many of those who lived through the transition were aware of their status as agents and witnesses of a new era, yet now separate their personal experiences from the historical record – as if their lives and the transition were two entirely separate phenomena.

Since the 1990s, debates on the recovery of memory and reparation of the Franco regime's victims have become central to national politics (Ruiz 2007). Much of the political discourse, which has led to some autonomous parliaments passing legislation on historical memory, has been driven by young Spaniards – the grandchildren of victims – who have striven for the "recovery of historical memory" (Montoto 2014; Ruiz 2007; Ferrándiz and Baer 2008). In response to claims that Spanish society suffers from a lack of memory, victims and their families call for a renewed focus on historical memory (Ruiz 2007). These groups desire not continuity but a rupture with official memorial narratives.

Marina Montoto (2014), as a result, contends that Spain has been experiencing a "memory boom". Montoto argues that the "memory boom" began in the media's "memory market" before emerging in the sociocultural arena with the formation of associations and an "exhumation movement" that scientifically approached the unearthing of Civil War-era mass graves. The Civil War memory boom has continued in recent years. For example, the exhumation of Franco, which Pedro Sánchez's government approved on 15 February 2019, and carried out, several injunctions later, on 24 October 2019, proved a major controversy during the 2019 presidential election.

The memory boom's most significant mark on the political and legal sphere has been the 2007 Law of Historical Memory, which perpetuated the 1977 Law of Amnesty's logic of memory confined to the private sphere. The 2007 Law reproduces a discourse where the victim becomes a new political subject, creating "a space that brings everyone together based on the principle that all those killed, tortured or offended are the same" (Vinyes 2016, 369). By reproducing this discourse of equidistance and treating every Spaniard identically, the law implies that everything and everyone is praiseworthy and respectable. In turn, therefore, the law perpetuates the notion that both democracy and fascism are equally worthy.

The public sphere has become a site of competition between two narratives: the mythical and official discourse of the peaceful, exemplary transition, and the discourse of victims and human rights (Montoto 2014). Scholars such as Santos Juliá (2003) have referred to these developments to suggest that Spain is not a country of silence at all, that Spaniards were not uninterested in the past, and that plenty of academic research has been dedicated to exploring the Civil War's victims and victors. Juliá also points out, therefore, that Spanish historical memory is not afflicted by oblivion or silence but by impunity and injustice. Indeed, the new public and political interest in discourses of historical memory has ended the era of silence or amnesia. Instead, we can trace a revindication of memory. Within this context of revindication, there are new cultural products that address this past and introduce it to the new generations born during the democracy. An illustrative example is the literature for children and young adults, which is influenced by these radical narratives. The revindication aims to restore the purged, incarcerated, and killed during the war and the dictatorship, to bring the past to the present, and to establish a direct relationship with the past. The subsequent chapter by Begoña Regueiro Salgado and Pilar García Carcedo analyses the memorial narratives in Spanish children's literature with a focus on the anti-militaristic and pacifist values they convey. Children's historical novels play a significant role in the image of the past conveyed to new generations in Spain and the chapter includes texts from different regions, notably *Downward Sky* (*Cielo abajo*, 2005) by Fernando Marías, *Scorpions Night* (*Noche de alacranes*, 2005) by Gómez Cerdá, *Under the Bullet Fire, I will Think of You* (*Bajo el fuego de las balas, pensaré en ti*, 2014) by Roberto Santiago and Santiago García Clairac, and *A Year at the Lighthouse* (*Un año en el faro*, 2008) by Miren Agur Meabe.

Mnemonic narratives that circulate in literature aimed at young people have influenced how the past is narrated and transmitted to the younger Spaniards, which is the focus of M. Paula O'Donohoe's chapter. These changes are the result of both Spaniards' frustration at the renunciations and silences of the transition era – and the maturation of a new generation that experienced neither the Civil War nor the dictatorship (Pérez 2004). From an anthropological perspective, she tackles the question of how memory is transmitted to the younger generations, comparing the two younger Spanish generations: Millennials and Generation Z. Through her ethnographic interviews, she illustrates how memory is transmitted to young people in the public and private sphere, and what young people do with these memories.

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Begoña Regueiro Salgado & Pilar García Carcedo

Anti-militaristic and Pacifist Values across Spanish Children's Literature

Historical fiction facilitates a close examination of lesser-known historical episodes, and of what Miguel de Unamuno (1902) called "intra-history": the small occurrences and stories that happen below and around great battles or other significant events. Teresa Colomer (2009) has highlighted the socialising role of children's literature, revealing its importance in transmitting social and national values. Literature, in general, tends to contribute to ideological transmission, but the ideological influence in children's literature is even more evident, since young readers' attitudes are still open to being shaped (Etxaniz Erle 2004).

Xabier Etxaniz Erle argues, following Colomer (1999, 15), when literature shows the past through the social or cultural values of the present, it has an ideological aim. Therefore, we maintain that the children's historical novel can play a significant role in the image of the past that is conveyed to new generations. The Spanish publishing industry has released many children's books on historical topics throughout the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In *Critical History of Children's and Youth Literature in Today's Spain (1939–2015)* (*Historia crítica de la Literatura Infantil y Juvenil en la España actual [1939–2015]*, 2018), García Padrino explores Spain's recovery of the historical past, finding that works for children address every historical period. Meanwhile, Olaziregi (2008) points out that adult literature too has often addressed the Civil War. Indeed, the Spanish Civil War is the most popular historical theme in today's literary market, pointing to the conflict's persistent relevance in shaping twenty-first-century Spanish society.

Dolores Vilavedra (2006) and Regueiro (2011) have already explored how literary narratives of the Civil War have evolved in adult literature. The first works, such as those by Valenzuela or Fortún, were written by those who lived through the conflict and are striking for their lack of idealisation and *Manichaeism*, which we understand as the tendency to reduce reality to a radical opposition between good and bad. In the 1980s and 1990s, novels such as Manuel Rivas' *The Carpenter's Pencil* (*El lápiz del Carpintero*, 1998), turned republican heroes into something like lay saints (Regueiro 2003), but maintain a Manichaen position. Twenty-first-century works, however, tended to diminish that Manichaeism. They carved out above all spaces for the losers' perspective and for leftist ideology, yet nevertheless sought to humanise all the contenders, eliminating demonisation and idealisation, and bringing in principles such as pacifism.

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Children's authors avoided these topics for some time. The resulting lacuna reflected how sensitive the topic was considered to be for younger readers. Moreover, Caterina Valriu (2013) suggests that children's literature draws on closed and stable narratives. Blanca Ana Roig concurs that the socio-political and cultural context until the Spanish 1980s exerted "a tight control [over] the theme of literary works aimed at the young and [therefore] the existence of multiple taboo themes" (2008, 71). Such taboo themes only began to disappear in the 1980s and 1990s (Rogero 2008). Novel topics in children's literature included marginalisation, violence and new social models. That new inclusivity opened the doors to Civil War narratives that explored the war's impact on young people. The era's children's novels "stand out for their excellence [and which] transmit a desire to denounce [what had been] silenced before" (Roig 2008, 49).

After the Civil War finally entered the realm of Spanish children's literature in the 1990s, a miniboom ensued. Foundational works such as Bernardo Atxaga's *Memories of a Cow* (*Memorias de una vaca*, 1992) were followed by dozens more. Isabelle Gräfin counts more than eighty titles (2007), while Roig Rechou (2004) and Agra Padriñas and Roig Rechou (2004) have noted that the topic – if we take it to mean any work that is set in or discusses the Civil War (as Caterina Valriu does 2013, 313) – is covered even in peninsular languages and beyond the Spanish borders. Likewise, Pérez Reverte explores the topic from a teaching perspective in *The Civil War as Told to Young People* (*La Guerra Civil contada a los jóvenes*, 2015). Valriu (2013) lists some of the works that have critically analysed the presence of the Civil War in children's literature, noting that academic studies have been scarce, leaving aside scholarly works for instance by Portell (2001). On the other hand, Olaziregi speaks of wars as "creative inspiration for children's literature" (2008, 20) not just in the Spanish case.

The distinction that persists between the so-called historical autonomies – territorial entities that are endowed with legislative and executive power to govern itself – is striking. Galician, Basque and Catalan researchers have written studies of their areas and in their native languages. However, there is no academic overview of the children's Civil War literature written in Spanish – nor is there comparative work that considers works written in the four official languages of Spain. In this chapter, we therefore analyse books in these different languages to identify common characteristics and to illuminate the extent to which writers use children's Civil War literature as an instrument to instil nationalist values in their young readers.

The twenty-first-century memory boom in children's literature has seen the release of a trove of works written in regional languages, redolent with regional concerns and agendas. Valriu finds that nationalism is prevalent in children's literature on the Spanish Civil War (2013). She observes that works in the Catalan schools history curriculum "try to create historical references that typify their aspirations directed to create a country,[1] [and try] to build a sense of belonging and national identity in the reader" (2013, 316). The same holds for Basque texts, such as Miren Agur's *A Year at the Lighthouse* (*Un año en el faro*, 2008) and Fernando Marias' *The Battle of Matxitxaco* (*La Batalla de Matxitxaco*, 2002), which display elements of Basque nationalism (Rogero 2008, 46). However, all the regional variants share a common focus on pacifism, anti-war and anti-militarism.

Valriu indicates several commonalities in Catalan works: legitimacy versus illegitimacy; democracy versus dictatorship; national plurality versus Spanishness; religious freedom versus national Catholicism; feminism versus machoism; and education versus illiteracy (2013, 317). The ideology of these works, Valriu argues, can be defined in five adjectives: "republican, Catalan, feminist, anti-war, leftist" (2013, 317). Blanca Ana Roig, meanwhile, analyses a series of characteristics in Galician literature – testimonial literature; "shadows and clarity" from the Civil War (2011, 174), "rupture of life course and forced learning" (85), and finally, the Civil War remembered by adults (89) – that might be seen as parallels to Valriu's five categories.

In this chapter, we show how Roig and Valriu's conclusions apply to a swathe of Spanish children's literature on the Civil War. Across the board, the children's literature features simple language, young characters on a path of personal development, and clear (and often moral) didactic content that conveys experience and values to young readers. But above all, the work, whether it is Spanish, Galician, Basque or Catalan, is both pacifist or anti-war – and always nationalist.

1 A double war perspective and the Battle of Madrid: *Downward Sky*

Fernando Marías' novel *Downward Sky* (*Cielo abajo*, 2005) received the Spanish National Prize for Children's Literature in 2006. Marías, a novelist and filmmaker born in 1958 in Bilbao, tells the story of Joaquin Dechén, an orphan who ends up flying for the Francoist forces, and Ramiro and Cortés, two pilots on opposing sides of the Civil War. In this novel the narrator is a writer that lives in the twenty-first century and discovers the war story by hazard. Therefore, these military-historic elements, centered on the 1936 Battle of Madrid, have references to contemporary Spain and they are woven into a story of platonic teen love.

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[1] When Valriu writes "country" this refers to Catalonia, which is one of the reasons why we argue that books on Civil War written in Catalan are used as an instrument to claim nationalism.

Downward Sky offers a model of dialogue between opposing perspectives. The protagonist, the young Dechén, is exposed to a raft of Francoist perspectives in childhood. The protagonist, for instance, experiences the beginning of the uprising in July 1936 as follows:

> I observed, bewildered, that the flag didn't have the usual colours. Now it was red and yellow, without the purple stripe.
> 'Soldiers!' – the colonel screamed, after drawing his gun. 'Some hours ago, our glorious army rose in arms against the Republic and its corrupt rulers. It is time to save Spain! Scream with me! Long live Spain!' (Marías 2005, 29)

In the first part of the novel, the author shows how the sociocultural environment and education varied by region and, therefore, influenced young people's views in various ways. Further evidence for the social and political significance of geography become clear when Dechén is asked to infiltrate Republican Madrid. He falls platonically in love with Constanza, a young girl who lives in Madrid. He begins to listen to the other side's perspective for the first time. The protagonist summarises these contradictions and manipulations of reality in the novel's conclusion:

> How strange my *double war*! Inside Madrid, the heroes were the militiamen and the brigadiers; outside, they talked about the courage of the Moorish soldiers, the risks taken by the efficient Nazi aviators. And the only ones who seemed right were the fallen from one band and the other, the imperturbable, silent, dead. (161)

These lines recall the bipolarity of Spanish geography, although they did not refer exactly to the conflict. As the poet Machado said famously "one of the two Spains has to freeze your heart". It is a poem that everyone recognises in Spain as a symbol of the opposition between two opposing ways of thinking: right (francoist) versus left (republican). Marías' novel also offers us a dual narrative – a "double war" – that shows new perspectives on intolerance. Ultimately, this duality serves to expose human loss in the war. When a young woman, a victim of the nationalist bombing in Madrid, drops dead in the arms of the protagonist, we hear that "[e]veryone screamed, driven mad by the following explosions. But the girl I liked was silent in my arms . . . She was silent and did not breathe." (70) Thus, the novel presents, ultimately, a plurality of battling perspectives that coalesce into a pacifist narrative. Humans are the victims squeezed by the spatial and narrative compression of the "double war".[2]

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[2] We would also like to emphasise that this book for young people has garnered a remarkable reception in the classrooms of the Faculty of Education of the Complutense University of Madrid, where students created their own book trailers after reading *Downward Sky* (*Cielo abajo*, 2005),

2 A rural perspective on the post-war period: *Scorpion Night*

The young adult novelist Alfredo Gómez Cerdá's *Scorpion Night* (*Noche de alacranes*) was published in 2005, the same year as Marías' work. It received the Gran Angular Prize for youth literature and had by 2021 been reprinted a dozen times. *Scorpion Night* focuses on the post-Civil War period and the Francoist persecutions. Unlike the urban environment in *Downward Sky*, the work is set in the rural, mountainous Asturias. The protagonist, Catalina, looks back on the tribulations of the era. The author further foregrounds a female perspective by focusing the narrative on Catalina and her paramour Emilio Villarente.

While Marias' work is riven by geographical divides, Gómez Cerdá's rupture occurs when political differences collide in a confined space. The two protagonists meet at a village, dance and fall in love, yet they come from families on opposite sides. Catalina's brother warns her that her relationship with Villarente is impossible:

> 'Do not go near that one again,' he said suddenly.
> 'And why can't I get close to that one?'
> 'He is not one of us . . . Maybe in a different place and a different time, it wasn't bad but here and now it is.' (Cerdá 2017, 40)

In this second novel we encounter new perspectives on Spanish divided society during and after the war; the intolerance of the families is evident in both sides of the conflict, even in a small rural community. Looking back later, the narrator notes that Catalina links her youthful love and the hellish nature of the war and post-war periods: "Catalina felt an enormous sadness, which came to join other sorrows . . . She asked once again what had happened in that land so that years ago a war broke out and freed all the demons, demons that now were dominant everywhere." (41) The work constantly returns to these demonic tortures. It begins with references to the terrible retaliation and persecutions from the first post-war period, when Catalina remembers her brother and mother being taken away to be tortured. Months later, when they return, the brother again has to leave and hide in the mountains, dehumanising the period for Catalina further: "Why did some people have to take refuge there and live like vermin?" (43) Trysts with Emilio may soften the blow, but these tragedies always colour the romance.

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see: Malagón, Jorge and Justo Sotelo Melián. "Book Trailer Cielo Abajo", *YouTube* 12 November 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dufN0d1Ic_E&t=82s (25 November 2021).

Catalina's exposure to both sides of the divide and the horrific nature of war leave her wracked with guilt and anxiety. She volunteers also for the counter-fascists, but only out of ignorance and while distressed by endless terrible doubts about the repression:

> 'What bad thing have we done?' she asks.
> 'We haven't done anything bad, we are not doing it now,' he answered.
> 'Then, why do guards watch us at all times? Why has my father been in prison for years, if he hasn't killed or robbed anyone? Why did my brother have to go into the mountains?'
> 'Because since the war is over, there is no justice in this country . . . . That is why we fight, so justice returns.' (80)

This quotation highlights the sense of fear and injustice in this post-war period; it describes the political repression, including prison sentences and executions, which were carried out by the Nationalist faction during the war and, at least, the first years of the Franco regime. Historians of the Spanish Civil War, such as Paul Preston (2006, 307), concurred that the mass killings realised behind the Nationalist front lines were organised and approved by the Nationalist rebel authorities, like it happened in Ian Gibson's *The Assassination of Federico García Lorca* (1983, 168).

Scorpion Night, shows part of this fear in this post-war period and incorporates two social elements absent from Marías' work. First, the work explores the persecution of teachers during the post-war period: "How is it possible a teacher had to go to the mountain? – The barbarians who won the war think that culture and education brought all the evils to the country. They don't want clever and free men, they are afraid of them." (Cerdá, 2017, 141) Second, the work explores the Catholic Church's support for the Francoist rebels sectarianism and even denounces parishioners: "In the morning they had gone to mass, even though they weren't believers, because they knew the priest gave the guards a paper with the names of those who were missing, and that always brought problems." (44) It is rare to find official criticism of the sectarianism of the Catholic Church. It was a difficult topic in the past, especially during the forty years of Francoist censorship; and still in the twenty-first century, this kind of religious criticism is rare. In Spain, the political transition lacked a real cleaning of Franco's *National Catholic Regimen*, which was the significant name of a Regimen totally influenced by religion. Following Franco's death in 1975, the transition to democracy began in 1978, but the Spanish government approved the 1977 *Amnesty Law* (*Ley de Amnistía*) which granted a pardon for all political crimes committed by the supporters of the Francoist State. To this day, politicians on the political right are influenced by Francoism, and Catholics left in positions of political and social power prevent the topic from gaining visibility.

The final scene of the book leaves the old lady Catalina remembering the terrors and traumas of war on a sleepless night; the book's title, *Scorpion Night*, refers to the painful bite of such insomniac experiences: "She sat in the armchair and told herself that insomnia, the night of scorpions, was not going to distress her one more minute. On the contrary, she was going to let herself be cradled placidly by memories." (96) Even though the protagonist shows some kind of political apathy, it seems that Catalina – like many of her peers – chooses apathy as the easier path, despite being still personally tortured by her memories. In the end, this book is a beautiful love story made impossible by the sides of the war, marked deeply by the endless dictatorship; a severe and feminine rural perspective of that terrible post-war period accompanied by hunger and Francoist repression.[3]

3 Avoiding Manichaeism in *Under the Bullet Fire, I Will Think of You*

In 2014, Roberto Santiago and Santiago García Clairac published the novel *Under the Bullet Fire, I Will Think of You* (*Bajo el fuego de las balas, pensaré en ti*), focused on one of the most important battles of the Civil War, the Battle of the Ebro. It is a work of 311 pages, divided into sixty chapters and an epilogue, with a strong cinematographic and visual component, reminiscent of a film or theatre script. In their novel, Roberto Santiago and Santiago García Clairac endeavour to demonstrate how terrible war is and that there are no winners in it. The protagonists of the novel are a father and a son who are forced to fight each other because they are on opposite sides of the war conflict. Santiago García Clairac and Roberto Santiago, themselves father and son respectively, received very good reviews for the novel and the book was a finalist for the National Children's and Young People's Literature Award. However, it did not become a bestseller and only sold about 10,000 copies in total in both the Spanish and Catalan versions. Yet when we offer prospective high school teachers a list of books to choose from, they usually choose this book and very interesting work has already been done with it, such as book trailers. We can therefore assume that there is an interest in this topic.

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[3] Here, too, we would like to give an example of the didactic reception of this book. After reading *Scorpion Night*, students in the classrooms of the Faculty of Education at the Complutense University in Madrid created their own book trailer about the work. Here we present one of the trailers: Cando, Alexis, Paloma Díaz, and Alba Escamilla. "Booktrailer de 'Noche de alacranes'" YouTube, 13 January 2021, https://youtu.be/ANX8jpHWJZk (25 November 2021).

Regarding the topic of this paper, as we will try to show in this section, this book is a perfect example of how young adult literature on the Civil War teaches new values, such as pacifism and tolerance, while at the same time showing the nonsense of a conflict that was a tragedy for everybody and in which everybody became a loser. Similar to the novels analysed above, they develop stories whose protagonists "show the tragedy of the confrontation between fathers, sons and brothers" (Padrino 2016, 503) and try to offer a richer perspective of the conflict, selecting characters from both sides of the war.

On the other hand, *Under the Bullet Fire* bears all the thematic hallmarks of children's and young adult literature – love, friendship, adventure and mystery – so young readers find interest in the novel. This way, we witness the growth of the protagonist, Rodrigo Sandiego and how he falls in love with Sofía.

Rodrigo is the son of Florencio and Olivia, whose role is also important in the book. Florencio is a communist and Olivia, who comes from a nationalist family, becomes a communist when she meets Florencio. When the novel begins, Olivia has already died in the battle, and Rodrigo, having returned to his mother's family, has turned back to the nationalist ideology. This causes him to fight against his father and his sister Elena, but after seeing the horrors of war and the love of his family, he concludes that family matters more than ideology: "at that time, he didn't care about the war [. . .] suddenly, it wasn't a priority. Now he just wanted to help his sister." (Santiago and García 2014, 204) On the other hand, Sofía belongs to a nationalist family that does not agree with her relationship with Rodrigo, but which she rebels against in order to follow Rodrigo into the war and protect him.

However, while Rodrigo's evolution is the key topic in the work, Santiago and Clairac – unusually for work addressing young adults – project the themes of love and friendships onto the work's adult characters, most notably Rodrigo's father, Florencio. Even though the novel was marketed as a children's work, an important space is also dedicated to adults, whose experiences mirror their children's. The friendship between Florencio and Cambero, another soldier, is an example of this. Even when they speak of love, and not just the teenage love between Rodrigo and Sofía, but the true love, the love that lends the book its title, it is the one between Rodrigo's parents, Florencio and Olivia: "but he also knew that, no matter through how many battles, deaths or horrors he lived, even under the fight of bullets, he would always think of her. Of the love of his life." (311) We can observe that the novel has young main characters, but also shows the conflict and the different subjects from an adult point of view.

The position of women, as is the case in Gomez Cerda's work, is an important component in this work. Strength and determination characterises almost all the women we find on both sides. Olivia, Rodrigo's mother, dies defending Asturian miners; Elena, Rodrigo's sister, enlists as a militiawoman and one of many women fighting at the front. On the other side, Mariana, Rodrigo's aunt, presents herself as a canny woman who takes advantage of her relationship with Mueller, a Francoist general. Sofía, Rodrigo's girlfriend, emotionally more distant from the war at the beginning of the novel, leaves her home to care for and protect her loved one, Rodrigo; she is capable of going to the first line of the battle and of killing the two men who tried to rape her during the travel that she makes alone.

García Padrino suggests that *Under the Bullet Fire* stands out for its attempt to avoid falling into Manichaeism by adopting a more objective stance (2018, 603). Writers of the 1980s and 1990s tended to idealise Civil War narratives: characters ended up as one-dimensional, or even appeared "too good". The result was that "from the point of view of its literary efficiency you may miss [. . .] a dialectic tension, a breach in the unbreakable wall of [a character's] moral resistance" (Vilavedra 2006, 8). In *Under the Bullet Fire*, however, combatants seem to be normal people, pointing to the authors' anti-war and anti-militarist ideology. Where the barbarism of the war is clear, where anyone is capable of heroic deeds and heinous acts (characters both save or, in the case of Floren y Pau, shoot their friends), where characters mistakenly shoot their beloved ones or unthinkingly obey patently absurd orders, where characters become "not human" and where "a man could lose his life for any reason, or without one" (Santiago y Clairac 2018, 201).

When Florencio sees hundreds of men dying on both sides in battle, he reaches a conclusion that encapsulates the work's anti-war ideology: "Florencio Sandiego felt ashamed of being part of that war. [. . .] He knew that, whatever the outcome was, there would be no winners. Only losers." (241) In this case, the authors even elide regional differences: they seem to consider the Civil War as an evil that afflicted all of Spain and, as a result, many different places appear: Madrid, Barcelona, Logroño, Burgos and other towns are mentioned alongside frontline fighting, which is important because it is a difference with the novels on Civil War written in Cataluña, Bask Country or Galicia.

As in other Spanish children's novels written in the twenty-first century, *Under the Bullet Fire*'s authors attempt to avoid Manichaeism by eliminating the difference between good and evil, by showing that both civilians and participants suffered during the war, and by depicting the soldiers who die as anything but ideologues. We do not think that the authors of all the novels that defend this idea are defending both sides equally but they are highlighting very strongly that everybody suffered, no matter their side, and no matter whether they believed in what they were fighting for or if they were forced to fight.

In place of heroic narratives of war the authors valorise the traditional children's literary tropes of family, friendship and love. Consequently, they utilise their adult/child mirroring function to present a journey or path of discovery not just for the young character but also for the adult character who embodies the main conclusions of the book:

> From that moment on, he would not fight for his homeland.
> Nor for some ideas.
> Not for power.
> He would only and exclusively fight for the love of his daughter.
> A much greater reason than all the generals and politicians could have together. (156)

Under the Bullet Fire paints war as an immeasurable evil where everyone loses, where there are no good people, and where generous or heroic actions do not come from opposing sides, but from the ordinary, undervalued people who are sometimes wrong or afraid. It is a work that is probably closer to the visions of the war than those who lived it have left us with, like Ramón de Valenzuela and Elena Fortún,[4] which is its main value. As argued in the introduction, the narrative that deals with the subject of the Spanish Civil War has evolved, as reflected in the studies of Vilavedra (2006) and Regueiro (2011), so that the first works, written by those who lived through the war, the lack of idealisation and Manichaeism stands out. In the 1980s and 1990s, it developed into a narrative that, as in *The Carpenter's Pencil* by Manuel Rivas, presents republican heroes who almost become lay saints (Regueiro 2003). Finally, in the twenty-first century, we arrive at a less Manichaean look, one which reflects the vision of the losers but which, from a leftist ideology, seeks to humanise all adversaries (eliminating both demonisation and idealisation) and to incorporate other principles such as pacifism as a core value. That is what we find in *Under the Bullet Fire*.

4 Basque country: A nationalist perspective in *A Year at the Lighthouse*

Miren Agur Meabe's *A Year at the Lighthouse* (*Un año en el faro, Urtebete Itsasargian*, 2006) is the story of twelve-year-old Jon Iturri Mendieta. The writer publishes first in Basque (euskera) and in 2017 obtained the *Euskadi Prize of Children Literature*. In the novel, Mendieta tells us in the first-person of his experience in the lighthouse of Garraiceta – a proxy name for Lekeitio, the author Meabe's hometown – in the first days of the Civil War. Where the other works we have explored adopt clear Manichaean or anti-Manichaean principles – suggesting that war either divides communities or affects everybody equally – Meabe's work is marked by a particularly prominent nationalist streak that depicts Basque involvement in the Spanish Civil War as unique, which gives the reader the interesting opportunity to look at the war conflict from a regionalist point of view. In any case, however, this book is not one of the favourites of future high school teachers when we propose a list of books for them to choose from.

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[4] Ramón de Valenzuela (1914–1980) is one of the first to have written about the Civil War, in the work *I Did Not Wait for Anyone* (*Non agardei por ninguén*, 1957). Elena Fortún (1886–1952), famed for her children's work, also wrote a novel on the Civil War, *Celia in the Revolution* (*Celia en la revolución*) that could only be published in 1987.

In *A Year at the Lighthouse*, Spain seems to pose a threat to an idyllic Basque lifestyle. Meabe divides the Basque nationalists from the rest of the Republican Army, establishing a contrast between Basque "Mother Earth" and the Spanish bull that symbolises the war as a whole: "Think calmly where you put your heart: either in the bosom of Mother Earth, well-loved by our Lord, or the horn of a bull that mooing gets closer from those lands of Spain." (Meabe 2008, 20) Indeed, throughout the work, it is clear that the narrator's "we" does not refer to the Spanish or the Republicans. "We" means only the Basques: "The saddest thing is the division among us. Some, the supporters of Carlism, have already joined the rebellion along with the first armed groups; the others have aligned with the republicans." (27) Meabe has erected a divide that marks Basque experience of the Civil War and Francoism as different, and for the author and for the story the Civil War is not important as a Spanish conflict, but exclusively its impact on the Basque Country.

The work, moreover, pays tribute to the founding figures of the National Basque Party (PNV) and the first newspaper written in Basque, the *Eguna* ("Day"),[5] which is especially important for its connection with the defence of the Basque language. Meabe refers to prominent Basque nationalists (including Estepan Urkiaga "Lauaxeta", Eusebio Erkiaga, Bernat Etxepare and Agustín Zubikarai) throughout the work. The author adds historical or biographical information in footnotes.The didactic element of the work – recall that didacticism is one of the central features of children's literature – is not leveraged to develop a fulsome or nuanced historical understanding of the war. Instead, historical didacticism inscribes Basque nationalist narratives into the memory of the war.

Whereas the other works we have explored clearly support pacifism and anti-militarism, Meabe's stance is not so clear. At times, nationalism justifies violence as a means to defend the country. Against this idea, we find the voice of women who defend peace, like Katalin and Jon's mothers, but, as we said, the message is not as strong as in the other works we have seen.

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[5] The *Eguna* was the first newspaper written completely in the Basque language.

> ‘We do not bring children to this world to see them die in your wars’.
> ‘Why do you say your wars?’ Estepan got angry. ‘Doesn’t the homeland belong to all of us? Isn’t it our duty to protect her?’
> There was silence. The answer to that question was yes; a yes whose price no one yet knew. Estepan continued to think out loud.
> ‘Patriotism is the egg from which wars are hatched, according to the French writer Maupassant. Katalin, what do you say to this?’
> ‘Well, look, I also answer you with a phrase from Sorne: The child will become man, the seed will stand. Children must be taught to love freedom and peace as if they were one thing and to believe that men and women should be together with each other, and not one after another’. (30–31)

This dialogue might seem to suggest that males are the representatives of violence, nationalism and senseless war.[6] Perhaps, however, Meabe is just (re)presenting an age-old Basque question by wondering if it is legitimate to use violence to defend the homeland. Elsewhere, Meabe points to Basque nationalism’s sexism:

> My uncle said something to provoke him:
> ‘What about those? Are they of these Catholic and Apostolic people that cross as soon as they hear both the words socialism and homeland together? The nationalists are so blessed that the heart is placed almost to the right.’
> Katalin supported my uncle vehemently:
> ‘And you think that we are going to get in the way, or that we are not able to think for ourselves, and you want us locked up at home and in the sacristies.’ (30)

After this defence of women, Meabe includes – as did the authors in the other novels we have studied – a raft of strong women engaged in war work:

> What were women working on? They were driving the transports. They cared for the wounded. They reinforced the barricades. They organised day-care centres. They created schools for refugees. They were preparing the ammunition in the weapons factories. They sewed clothes for the soldiers. They cleaned the barracks. They replaced the vacancies of the workshops. They were getting the families through. And they fought in the war. (72)

Traditional children’s literary tropes, such as the psychological maturation of the main character, love and friendship, occupy little space in *A Year at the Lighthouse*. Jon does fall in love, but the plotline is treated only cursorily. Likewise, Jon’s sexual initiation is implied in a dream but abruptly cut off. The work, divided into two parts and twenty chapters – eight in the first part and twelve in the second (corresponding to the months of the year and the full year indicated in the title) – creates sequences of vignettes focused on a single incident, such as the appearance of a dead person in the water or the visit of the protagonist's mother. This approach leaves little space to delve into the psychology of Jon who, for that reason, we do not see grow or evolve, unlike other works to young adults with a similar topic. Perhaps, Meabe suggests, war has cut off Jon's development and maturation. The author plays with the readers' expectations about young adults' literature, subverting the literary genre to convey the awfulness of war.

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[6] Meabe is all the same not reluctant to reveal the horrors of battle. The protagonists are, for example, forced to kill wounded friends to shorten their agony (87). Meabe ends the work with a clear comment on the horror of war the young protagonist has encountered. As in *Downward Sky*, the protagonist’s path of discovery leads towards an understanding of the violent effects of war: “Katalin died under the bombs [. . .]. Mirra was gone, without a destination. [. . .] Estepanwas shot. [. . .] My uncle, tortured and killed. [. . .] And me? I was going to exile.” (121).

5 Conclusion: Pacifism and different perspectives

Children's literature has provided fertile territory for divergent readings of Spain's past. We have shown how children's literature balances didacticism and historical narrative to transmit anti-militaristic and pacifist values. Although Valriu describes Catalan work as "Republican, Catalan, feminist, anti-war and left-leaning", we have shown that parallel values exist in works written in the four different languages spoken in Spain. Works often connect with contemporary values (as in, for example, Gómez Cerdá's treatment of feminism). The Spanish Civil War proved a major test for international pacifism, which is one of the most prominent values in Spanish young literature about the war. Indeed, along with universal values such as pacifism, we have highlighted the presence of contemporary and historical local and nationalist views in the texts.

The works of fiction we have described are interspersed with real data and documents, whether they be photographs, as in the case of Santiago and García Clairac, or reproductions of letters, as in the case of Miren Agur, to provide greater historical plausibility – and to remind the reader that these dreadful events actually did take place. Similarly, in works focused on a young readership, we usually find general characteristics of children's literature, although, sometimes, these are barely developed, perhaps, due to the short sequences that focus more on the facts than on the psychology of the characters. The main value of these works is to make young readers remember what happened, maybe as a response to the "amnesia" and silence. But these memories are not objective or neutral, the authors rather give a message related to twenty-first-century values such as pacifism and tolerance: young readers must know what horrible things the war brings to us, and they must understand that we need other ways to solve conflicts.

The values expressed in literature are those that society expects younger generations to embrace (Colomer 2009). Judging by what we find in Spanish children's literature on the Civil War, the current generation of adult authors seeks to avoid conflict and recognise a plurality of identities. From an anti-war ideology and with the perspective that the passing of the years has given, the Spanish Civil War is seen in children's literature as an episode in which there were only losers. Contrarily, and simultaneously, the war has also become a nationalist weapon to enhance Catalan, Basque or Galician identities against the hegemonic Spanish "Other". Perhaps it is necessary to remove that opposition between "me" and the "Other" to achieve peace, not only in 1936 but also in the 2020s.

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M. Paula O’Donohoe

Transmitting the Civil War across Generations: How Spanish Youth Acquire their Memories

Ethnographic interviews and participant observation provide an in-depth perspective into how younger Spaniards acquire historical memories and, in turn, help us to understand who transmits which memories and through which media. In this article, I focus on memory transmission to Spain’s youngest generations, Millennials and Generation Z, in public, private, and institutional settings.[1] I conducted ten interviews with representatives of each group – the oldest was born in 1989 and the youngest in 2001 – from across Spain, though the majority now live in Madrid. All of the interviewees had completed higher education, mostly in the social sciences and the humanities. By inquiring into my subjects’ understanding and memories of the Spanish Civil War, I conclude that differing family settings and public transmission methods have led to Spain’s younger generations holding a mix of victims’ and perpetrators’ narratives.

Memory in Spain has become largely a private topic after 1939 – a process that culminated in the 2007 Law of Historical Memory, which is focused on private memories of Spaniards and considers the agents of memory the victims and their families, going as far as privatising the exhumation of the mass graves from the Civil War. Consequently, the family has turned into one of, if not the most, important setting for young people to learn about Spain’s past. The household, in effect, has become the refuge of memory (Pérez 2004). Family narratives based on the personal experiences of relatives that lived through the war and the dictatorship are often transmitted to subsequent generations even well into the twenty-first century. Different factors account for how those memories are shaped and told (Aguilar et al. 2011): political ideology and religious beliefs of those who speak, a particular relative’s involvement in events, regional identity, educational background, and if politics are discussed at home all go to influencing memory transmission; factors that also appear in and shape children literature. For example, a young person’s involvement in activist movements seeking the “recovery of historical memory” is more likely if a family member was repressed under Franco. However, my interviews reveal that events behind closed doors are not the only

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[1] The interviews and observations, and consequent analysis, are part of my ongoing PhD research.

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influences on memory transmission. External influences, such as whether a young person attended a state, private or religious school or exposure to the international discourse of human rights that favours replacing past impunity with prosecution through various political instruments, also had and have a role to play.

1 The family as the creator of memories: Three perspectives

Due to the status of the family as a "refuge" for memory (Pérez 2004), family memories in Spain are often told as private experiences – as if they were divorced from a historical and collective narrative. All of the interviewees knew which side their family members took during the war, what those relatives did during the Francoist era, whether or how they suffered, and if they benefitted from the regime. However, how many details young people know – and what they make of these details – greatly varies. Those that have greater access to memories are those who come from "implicated" families. *Implicated* families do not align neatly with the framework of victims and perpetrators. Rather, they "contribute to, inhabit, inherit, or benefit from regimes of domination [and] do not originate nor control such regimes" (Rothberg 2019, 1). The status of being *implicated* might arise from a lack of personal involvement in events; people who did not fight for either side or that did not suffer any kind of repression beyond the hunger and rationing of the post-war years might be described as such. One Millennial interviewee in her mid-twenties from Alicante, signalled this sort of stance: "It had nothing to do with us, that's why we could speak freely about it." Without guilty or traumatic memories, familial self-imposed silences, forgetting and censorship are diminished or disappeared.

Access to memory of the Francoist repressions and oppressions in victimised families varies according to the nature of their relative's victimhood, differentiating, for instance, among relatives of a disappeared buried in a mass grave, a relative of an anti-Francoist activist imprisoned and tortured, or being related to stolen babies. For those involved in the associative movement of grand-children (Ferrándiz 2014; Guixé, Alonso and Conesa, 2019) – those who publicly proclaim their status as victims and may even ask for reparations – memories are highly political, leading to the individual taking a stronger stance on narratives of the past and the present. For these young people, family identity is largely linked to the antifascist or anti-Francoist identity of the victimised relative. As a result, they are more likely to question and criticise official narratives told in the public sphere. There might nonetheless be self-censorship or self-imposed silences on the traumatic aspects of memories (for example, a Generation Z girl from Valencia explained how her relative who was detained and tortured during the late Francoism avoided explaining these highly violent parts to her). Half of the participants I interviewed come from victimised families – despite the difficulties in clearly distinguishing in some cases between victims and perpetrators – yet they did not know many details of what had transpired. Another girl from the Generation Z from Madrid said, for example, that her grandfather "was imprisoned, something must have happened to him while in jail but they never told me". The comment is typical: details such as how an arrest unfolded, if relatives were tortured or if they suffered any kind of public repressions are simply missing from memory. The interviewees only knew who was detained, who was killed and who survived.

Those who have not publicly proclaimed their victimhood but suffered severe repression due to their political or regional identity, such as Basques and Catalans who were not able to speak their language for decades, appear to have internalised repression through self-imposed forgetting and silence (Barahona 2002; Parramon 2014; Guixé 2016). These memories are not relayed even within households, leaving the younger generations unaware of – and therefore personally detached from – their family history. However, some young representatives of this demographic have become more aware of and involved in memory of the past thanks to books, films, documentaries and podcasts, which are increasingly available through services such as Netflix and Spotify. As one young Millennial from Alicante expressed it, "the documentaries I've seen have been on Netflix or Amazon Prime, but outside of them, it's impossible". In the same vein, another young Gen-Z from Madrid mentioned how Netflix helps to find new movies, "for example, they recently put on Netflix La Trinchera Infinita, so I watched it". All of my interviewees mentioned consuming cultural products that touched on historical themes: "yes, the truth is that it has interested me, especially so that I don't just have my own opinion", says the same Gen-Z from Madrid. The availability and expansiveness of these materials have helped such young Spaniards to find a breach in official narratives and build their own opinion on the topic. The process has sometimes even led to active involvement in associations that advocate for victims' rights, and the apparition of "prosthetic memories" as Allison Landsberg (2003) analysed. These prosthetic memories open up the possibility "for collective horizons of experience and pave the way for unexpected political alliances" (Landsberg 2003, 149), they make possible a public past across different nations, groups and generations encouraging engagement with mediated representations through mass media and culture.

The descendants of perpetrators – the direct agents of accessories to Francoist repression – are more conflicted about their family narratives than the descendants of the oppressed and repressed. This group's attitude to and knowledge of the past depends more on their relatives' present and past ideologies (if politics are discussed in the household in question), and on the personal development of those implicated in the events. Many of these relatives who were once perpetrators, have changed their view on the topics over time, explaining that they only found about shootings, mass graves, torture, concentration camps and repression after Franco's death. One of the Millennials, a man in his late-twenties from Madrid, illustrated this change of attitudes: "Whenever I confronted my grandfather about the repressions and the deaths, he said that he didn't know, he only said that sometimes during school, a classmate will come wearing black so you knew something had happened, but no one dared to ask." Three further participants reported similar details, explaining that they had confronted their family's narratives about Francoism when they found out about repression and violence. In response, their families had explained, "We didn't know." However, some perpetrators claim that the public airing of victims' stories helped them understand that Francoist propaganda manipulated their worldview. The interviews allowed us to see how many of these former perpetrators share their memories within the family setting as a way of clearing their conscience, but this issue of perpetrator memories is still relatively undeveloped in Spain as most of the research focuses solely on the victims.

However, other perpetrators and their families remain unremorseful, contending even today that Franco was right. Some of my interviewees expressed memories of a romanticised better time: "this didn't happen under Franco" or "under Franco life was much better". In contrast to the criticism of those coming from victimised families, these people do not question official narratives, uncritically agreeing with what they have heard at home. Dissenting from today's increasingly contested public debate around memory, they defend the *Transición*, the King, and the Francoist past and heritage in general. They firmly believe that granting victims' claims for reparations and transitional justice measures will provoke another civil war: such claimants purportedly "seek vengeance" and "are reopening old wounds".

2 Late Francoism and changing memories of the *Transición*

The situation changes when we ask about late Francoism and the democratic transition. When asked, all of the participants knew where their great-grandparents were during the Civil War. Few knew where their grandparents or parents were during the transition, nor how they experienced that period – albeit every interviewee was aware of how their family heard the news about Franco passing. If we are to speak of an "oblivion" of memory in Spain, then such oblivion failed to suppress diverse memories of the Spanish Civil War while simultaneously managing to establish the hegemonic myth of the transition as the "truth".

In the institutional sphere, where we consider the effects of primary, secondary and tertiary education, we can see a generational break between the Millennials and Gen Z interviewees. Developments in educational law and curriculum (Izquierdo and Sánchez León 2006; Domínguez and Santiago 2014), the Spanish "memory boom" of the early 2000s, and the changing generations of teachers, have resulted in increasing excursions and talks about memory issues, such as testimonies from victims and visiting Civil War-era bunkers.

Older Millennials are likely to have had more depoliticised and decontextualised history lessons. In my interviews, Millennials reported having learned about the Civil War and the Franco Regime only during the last year of high school, and only then because the topic was part of university entrance exams. One Millennial, who went to a private school in Madrid, mentioned how they talked about these issues in High School as "something very academic like to prepare for the selectividad or something like that". Rushing to finish the curriculum, they briefly heard a summarised, depoliticised and dehumanised version of what happened in Spain during the twentieth century. One Millennial girl explained how the history classes were for her: "the memory I have is that the teacher dictates or, well, she tells it. But a little bit like a dictation, not word for word . . . what I remember is that she was telling it and all I did was copy, copy, copy, copy, and write the notes and that's it, and I did my best effort to write it down and that was it. And then, I would take it [the notes], go home, learn it like a little parrot, take the exam and write everything I remembered."

For the majority, the history classes ended when Franco died, whereas they did not talk about how the *Transición* took place. Domínguez and Santiago (2014) have researched how these topics are talked about in schools and what information appears in the textbooks. They have noted how, during the twelve years that a student typically spends in the educational system, in only three of them do they study the Civil War following textbooks which only mention the war briefly and: "in a diluted way, responding to a didactic approach that obeys a cause-effect dynamic, establishing and naturalizing the Republic-Civil War-Dictatorship sequence" (Domínguez and Santiago 2014, 303).

For Generation Z, the type of school (whether state, private or religious) and place of residence affected the educational experience. In parts of Spain where the repression was tougher, there seems to be more emphasis on the Franco and post-Franco era in schools and high schools, especially in the state schools of Alicante and the Basque Country. In Catholic and private schools these changes and history lessons tend to follow the official narrative established during the *Transición*, and fall in the educational void that Domínguez and Santiago (2014) identify. Two of my interviewees, who studied in Catholic private schools in Madrid, described a depoliticised and rushed curriculum that resembled the Millennials' experiences. However, two participants who attended state schools in Alicante discussed excursions to sites of memory such as the city's bunkers; one participant who studied in a public school in Madrid described reading victims' letters, hearing testimonies from survivors and watching historical movies during lessons.

However, even though excursions and talks about the topic were frequent in state schools, private and religious schools do not discuss Franco-era history in greatly different ways. History classes, pressed for time in a packed curriculum, usually rush through the twentieth century. The Second Republic, the Civil War and Francoism are typically explained without mention of repression (Izquierdo and Sánchez León 2006; Domínguez and Santiago 2014). Pupils are left with an understanding of the past that lacks nuance: they have at best a vague understanding about what happened between 1931 and the year 2000. When discussing Spain's democratic transition, I encountered almost total silence. Only two participants of the total remembered talking about it in school: the young Gen-Z from Madrid told me, that "I think we didn't see the Transition until the last year of high school. I mean, we must have seen it but like Franco dies, Adolfo Suárez, you know like very pi-pi-pi [referring to just learning about the events in a chronological order but not critically]." In contrast, pupils study World War II, the Holocaust, and other fascist dictatorships like Mussolini's in detail. These pupils, then, are exposed to multiple modes of cosmopolitan memory but have a limited understanding of Spain's own, contested past.

One of the consequences of this approach to history is to atemporalise events, rendering them totally removed from today's Spain. There are few cases where schoolteachers made an effort to educate their pupils in recent history in a more humanised and political way, emphasising the connection between past and present. There were exceptions. One Generation Z girl from the South of Madrid who studied in a public school mentioned reading Francoist prisoners' personal letters; another Gen Z girl from Alicante that also studied in a public school, remembered a task to interview her grandparents about their experiences. However, such personal initiatives, which help to rupture the dehumanised and depoliticised hegemonic narrative by bringing personal narratives into the classroom, depend on individual teachers' involvement on the issue, as Jelin and Lorenz (2004, 60) say: "the work of teachers in the classroom is a reflection of the paths they travelled through or their own stories travel".

This memorial deficit continues into Spanish higher education. Some students take history classes, but science majors tend not to talk about the past at all in university. In their book, Izquierdo and Sánchez León (2006, 96) state that not even “in the university classrooms do we get to study the conflict of our ancestors”. One Millennial girl who studied architecture in Madrid explained how she learned about the development of architecture in Spain, including the 1940s to 1970s, but that the topic was never linked to Francoism. Even in the social sciences, moreover, twentieth century history classes tended to focus on the World Wars, the Cold War, and the Balkans. Another Millennial girl who studied medicine in Madrid mentioned how her university even went as far as organising yearly trips to former Nazi concentration camps around Europe, but never took them to the Valley of the Fallen in the same region of Madrid. So, Histories where Spain was not involved are not problematic to teach, while what happened in Spain is simply left out. As we can see, educational institutions do not equip young Spaniards with the tools to learn about and analyse their past.

3 Memory transmission in the public realm

The educational situation is not impossible to rectify, since family censorship or institutional rigidity no longer limit young people who seek out narratives of the past. Landsberg argues that today’s information society allows for an unprecedented circulation of images and narratives about the past, which allows in turn for the creation of intimate relationships with memories of events the reader or viewer did not experience (2003). The availability of cultural narratives that circulate online proves that young Spaniards find it easy to construct such prosthetic memories, as I mentioned previously.

Additionally, since 2019, several episodes related to Franco-era memories have been highly mediatised (Ferrándiz and Baer 2008). The most prominent such event was the exhumation of Franco’s body, which was the subject of both international news coverage and domestic protests. Victims protested the place chosen for the inhumation (another mausoleum paid for by the state); nostalgic Francoist supporters protested the exhumation itself. The year after the exhumation, Billy el Niño – one of the most notorious and famous torturers of the political police from late-Francoism – died with his medals and pension intact. His death prompted a media debate about Franco-era perpetrators’ impunity, the application of transitional justice measures and, in general, the question of how Spain is dealing with its traumatic past.

One of the consequences of these media events has been that younger Spaniards are discovering previously obscured parts of the past. Furthermore, a new bill of democratic memory has been passed to replace the Law of Historical Memory from 2007. The new law accepts part of the victims’ claims by making the

Spanish state responsible for the exhumation of mass graves and by forbidding pro-Francoist associations, such as the National Franco Foundation, which publicly advocate for the dictatorship. In terms of justice, the law creates a specialised public prosecutor's office on human rights and democratic memory to oversee the discovery, identification and localisation of victims. Furthermore, the law gives legal cover to those who suffered human rights violations during the Civil War and the dictatorship. However, the law still does not break with the Law of Amnesty and the hampering of the investigations to prove that those victims indeed suffered human rights violations. In this sense, the new bill still protects perpetrators' impunity. As the associations of victims and political parties such as Esquerra Republicana de Catalunya (ERC) and Euskal Herria Bildu (EH Bildu) point out: "the law continues to deny Justice for 'all the victims' due to the application of the Amnesty Law and the penal prescription for the crimes of the Franco regime".[2]

The main voice we hear in the public sphere is that of the Franco-era victim. The associative movement of victims has taken over the public arena since the beginning of the memory boom twenty years ago (Ferrándiz 2011; Gálvez 2006; Bernecker and Brinkman 2009). One-off protests and tours, and ongoing and recurring events such as the weekly Ronda de la Dignidad, a copy of the march from the mothers of Primero de Mayo in Buenos Aires, make the voice of victims highly public in the streets and squares of Spain.

However, few young people are involved in these events. The associations claim that the younger generations are not interested in their message. But most of my interviewees explained that they did not know about public initiatives, pointing out at a generational break: the older generations are leading the victims' associations and the younger generations are unaware of them. Here, then, one can observe the practical impact of the nature of memory transmission. Young people who learn history as something atemporal, depoliticised and dehumanised are less likely to see human agency in the past and how that past is linked to the present; young people who are taught family narratives as something private are unlikely to link those narratives to a wider narrative of Spanish history. Young people do not lack interest in the past; they have been poorly equipped to understand how the past is not something distant and unrelated to life today.

Nowadays, there are numerous books, documentaries, films, series and radio shows that focus on or are set between the 1930s and the 1980s (in the previous chapter, Regueiro Salgado & Pilar García Carcedo explored how even children's literature deals openly with the traumatic Civil War past in today's Spain). As such, young people seeking a more developed understanding of history do not have to rely on the willingness of a family member to speak or of a teacher to break institutional narratives. All of my interviewees mentioned consuming some sort of memory culture. The most consumed work was the documentary *The Silence of Others* (*El Silencio de Otros*, 2018), which follows victims of Francoism who filed a lawsuit against the impunity of the Francoist perpetrators in a Buenos Aires court (the so-called "Argentinian Lawsuit"). The film, which won a Goya, two Emmys and pre-selection for the Oscars, burst into the public sphere, giving voice to victims and their families. The documentary also took over Spanish media and many national and international newspapers followed its journey.[3]

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[2] "La ley de Memoria Democrática despega rumbo al Congreso: los socios del Gobierno piden que sea 'más ambiciosa'." *Público*, 19 July 2021, https://www.publico.es/politica/victimas-franquismo-ley-memoria-democratica-despega-rumbo-congreso-socios-gobierno-piden-sea-ambiciosa.html (16 July 2021).

Social media has also become an increasingly important space of memorialisation. However, the generational break in memory transmission is only amplified by victims' associations relatively sparse presence in online spaces. As a result, outsiders struggled to find information about meetings and events. One Generation Z interviewee highlighted this sense of being on the outside: "You need to belong to know about what is going on if you're not inside you never heard about what they do." The Franco and transition-era generations built their political identity in a context of concealment; now they have created their own clandestine communication channels and a language to communicate with each other. The culture of secrecy and behind-closed-doors memory further limits young people's ability to engage with and understand divergent narratives of the past.

Since March 2020, the pandemic and ensuing lockdowns have forced many associations to move into the virtual world altogether by organising online discussions, memorials or film screenings. This has forced older generations that are usually more involved in the movement to adopt the language and preferred media of youth. The older generations have opened a wider intergenerational dialogue and found a new way to transmit their memories in the public sphere. I encountered this phenomenon while conducting participant observation as my subjects were among the younger activists before the pandemic, when events took place in person. Now, as events have moved online and associations are using social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram to promote their activities, I see more young people increasingly joining discussions, protests and commemorative events. However, this involvement does not ease the generational break. In spite of these new areas of collaboration and engagement, the descendants of dissident movements speak of their experiences and attitudes using different dialects from different political times. This linguistic barrier further inhibits young people’s access to the past.

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[3] For example, see "Así es 'El silencio de otros', el documental sobre los crímenes del franquismo." *El País*, 28 October 2018, https://elpais.com/cultura/2018/10/28/actualidad/1540760973_745015.html; "'El silencio de otros' o cómo desenquistar el olvido." *El Diario*, 12 April 2019, https://www.eldiario.es/castilla-la-mancha/cinetario/silencio-desenquistar-olvido_132_1606853.html; "'The Silence of Others' Review: Franco's Victims Speak Out." *The New York Times*, 7 May 2019, https://www.nytimes.com/2019/05/07/movies/the-silence-of-others-review.html; "Franco's Cruel Legacy: The Film That Wants to Stop Spain Forgetting." *The Guardian*, 8 June 2018, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/jun/08/francos-cruel-legacy-film-wants-stop-spain-forgetting-silence-others (31 July 2021).

Young Spaniards have not learned – and cannot currently learn – the older generations’ language of protests. For example, those born under the regime talk of the “Nationalists” and the “Reds”, and *sacas* – the removal and execution of prisoners – not shootings. For those born after the *Transición*, using the term “Nationalist” implies acceptance of and alliance with the dictatorship, as it means acceptance and compliance of the Francoist language. Symbolic language has parallel connotations. For example, the songs played during victims’ association protests are anti-Francoist songs censored and prohibited during the dictatorship. Since these emerge from a realm of counter-memories, many young people struggle to comprehend these songs’ significance. Likewise, younger Spaniards are unlikely to recognise that many of the slogans chanted at the demonstrations are drawn from the 1970s. Each generation’s oral, visual and symbolic languages are mutually unintelligible, inhibiting intergenerational dialogue in the public sphere.

There are, however, some sites where such dialogue occurs. The exhumation of mass graves, for example, has produced discussions and performances in “family contexts, politics, historiography, the media, the arts, and the public sphere in general” (Ferrándiz 2008, 177). Volunteers and visitors of all ages from the surrounding area attend these events. This phenomenon has been particularly notable in rural areas, where silence, fear and censorship are stronger than in the anonymous metropolis; the exhumations create a space where stories that were told in whispers are now heard in the public space. They have become a special space to record testimonies from the last survivors, which fosters intergenerational dialogue, breaks silences and inscribes the public discourse with personal names and stories, reconciling autobiographies and the historical past.

4 Spanish history without today’s Spain

A depoliticised, dehumanised and atemporal official narrative of the Civil War, the Franco era, and the transition to democracy prevail in Spain today. The broad contours of that narrative echo the hegemonic memories established in 1977 and strengthened with the memory law of 2007. As a result, the family remains the primary source of memorial socialisation for Spanish children, adolescents, and young adults. Access to historical memories that deviate from the hegemonic official narrative depends on their family members' will to recall and transmit alternative discourses. Some families still do not talk about their past out of fear, humiliation, or adherence to a political ideology aligned with the discourse of rejection of memory. Nonetheless, as I have argued, a given family's past victimisation is a predictor of young people's involvement in or knowledge of grassroots movements. Likewise, the descendants of perpetrators fervently defend right-wing discourse – and, sometimes, even advocate for the legacy of Franco. Ninety years after the Civil War, the traces of the Franco-era's right/left divisions remain in a country that has yet to successfully face its pasts.

Since the educational and political system fails to provide alternate sources of memory, and since the family context is equally monological, Millennials and Generation Z use social media and the internet to access parts of the past that are otherwise sealed off. The Spanish "memory boom" and the marketisation of memory has been of great help to foster counternarratives and open a mediatised memorial socialisation. Additionally, children's literature has provided fertile territory for divergent readings of Spain's past, as this literature balances didacticism and historical narrative to transmit anti-militaristic and pacifist values. Its narratives have evolved from a position of Manichaeism towards the idea of humanising all the participants in the war.

There is a clear generational break between the generations that lived through and suffered the repression and control of the Franco era, and the younger generations born under democracy who are still suffering the consequences of an amnesiac transition. The different verbal, visual and symbolic language spoken by the various generations strengthen that beak, but also their attitudes to the past. The parents' generation has been historically more ambivalent towards Francoism, adopting a conciliatory attitude during the transition to democracy. Raised in the context of a domestic and international "memory boom" where multiple treaties on human rights and transitional justice were signed, criminals were prosecuted, and truth commissions abroad covered in the media, the younger generations are more inclined to reject the dictatorship in favour of demanding transitional justice and victims' rights.

However, not every young Spaniard has the same interest or involvement in memory. In some senses, they are the victims of the to-and-fro between amnesty and amnesia. Silence in schools and public, and the unintelligibility of voices that are heard, has stripped many young people of their connection to the past: how can you be interested in something you do not know? How can you be an active citizen if you do not know the past of your own country? And how can you strive to become an active citizen if silence is so pervasive, and voices so unintelligible, that education beyond the chaotic sphere of social media is exceptionally difficult? Spain could take one small step to resolve this issue by introducing works of children's literature on the Civil War into the mandatory school curriculum. The books speak for themselves, opening up multifaceted potential paths towards memory transmission and dialogue. Despite the small sample size, which prevents drawing more general and representative conclusions, this perspective serves as an initial step to raise important questions for future research including older generations and also as a contribution to a more meaningful conversation on how the past is being transmitted to the Spanish youth.

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Mirko Milivojevic & Dilyara Müller-Suleymanova

(Post)-Yugoslav Memory Travels: National and Transnational Dimensions

1 The breakup of Yugoslavia and post-Yugoslav memory regimes

The disintegration of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) and the ensuing wars have been life-changing events for those who remained in the region and those who departed to make new lives in Europe and beyond. The reasons for Yugoslavia's violent collapse and the nature of postsocialist transformations have been a common point of discussion in numerous historical and theoretical attempts to reconsider the broader history of Yugoslavia (Glenny 1996; Djokić 2003; Ramet 2005; Bieber et al. 2014). Despite the larger context of the Fall of the Berlin Wall and changes in the global geopolitical landscape, the dismembering of the Yugoslav state and especially the brutality that accompanied it, came as a great surprise. Events such as the three-year siege of Sarajevo and the genocide against Muslims in Srebrenica in July 1995 brought violence that had been considered unthinkable after World War II to Europe. Several decades later, the catastrophic fate and difficult experiences of post-Yugoslav states, continue to provide material for academic and public controversies. The break-up, the war and the region's ethnic nationalisms remain evergreen topics for public, cultural and political discourses in both the formerly warring territories and the rest of Europe.

The term "Yugoslavia" has long been used to signify various concepts, ideas, political entities and ideologies. Throughout the twentieth century, Yugoslavia's territory was the site of repeated attempts to implement political projects of identity and nationhood. As Tanja Petrović notes (2012), "Yugoslavia" and "the SFRY" are usually used as synonyms (unless explicitly marked by other adjectives) in the local public discourses in the region. The two notions, however, are not the same. Typically, "Yugoslavia" is intertwined with the ideology of "Yugoslavism" – or the Yugoslav idea – which was a key discursive and imaginative element in the constitution of both the pre- and post-World War II Yugoslav states. While ideological premises fluctuated, the central idea of uniting southern Slavs in a multi-ethnic, supra-national state remained. In its first iteration, the Yugoslav Kingdom's goal (1918–1941) was the creation of a unitary Yugoslav nation (Wachtel 1998; Djokić 2003). In its second incarnation, the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia, later on SFRY, founded in 1945 under the leadership of Josip Broz-Tito, the idea of building the Yugoslav nation was transformed into

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the ideology of "brotherhood and unity" among the main ethno-national groups residing in the six republics and two autonomous provinces.

While the socialist regime promulgated a collective memory of the conjoined Yugoslav nations' heroic martyrdom during World War II, in the post-Yugoslav period, nationalists in each of the former Yugoslav republics replaced this collective narrative with their own histories of national group suffering under the socialist regime. Reinterpretation of the socialist past was a key strategy to establish and legitimise ethno-national ideologies in the aftermath of Yugoslavia's collapse. At the same time, however, nostalgic discourses and narratives of the socialist past have emerged and became increasingly popular. The post-Yugoslav public sphere, then, has become the site of binary and conflicting memory regimes: on the one hand, ethnically-exclusive memories used to annihilate all things "Yugoslav"; on the other hand, *Yugonostalgia* is a wide range of counter-memory narratives and practices, commonly perceived as an idealisation of former community and ideology (Volčič 2007; Luthar and Pušnik 2010; Galijaš 2015).

Understood foremost as a transitional cultural phenomenon, nostalgia for socialism, including German *Ostalgie*, Soviet nostalgia and Yugonostalgia has attracted considerable scholarly attention in the last two decades (Boym 2001; Scribner 2003; Brunnbauer 2007; Todorova and Gille 2010). These various manifestations of nostalgia refer to forms of affectionate and popular memories about the former socialist regimes in the Eastern block or various features belonging to the everyday life of the period (Scribner 2003; Todorova and Gille 2010). The term *Yugonostalgia* itself has in a relatively short time passed through several semantic phases. It was coined in the 1990s by Croatian media that used it to attack people who criticised the hegemonic ethno-nationalist discourse and was a synonym to "a suspect person", "a public enemy", or "a person who regrets the collapse of Yugoslavia" (Ugrešić 1998). As Dubravka Ugrešić, the Croatian writer and one of the most vocal critics of the post-Yugoslav nationalisms, notes in one of her earlier essays:

> *Yugo-nostalgia* is one of the most loaded of political qualifications in a paranoid communicative situation, more loaded than many other labels in use today; such as *Chetnik, nationally colourblind, commie, Serb chauvinist*, and the like. [. . .] most of all, nostalgia is dangerous because it encourages . . . remembering. And in the newly established reality everything starts again from scratch. And in order to start from scratch, everything that came before must be forgotten. (Ugrešić 1998, 88–89, emphasis in original)

Gradually, however, artists, writers, film directors, cultural activists and entrepreneurs across post-Yugoslav nation-states have appropriated the term as they have produced alternative representations and interpretations of the Yugoslav past, grounding these visions in the mundane, everyday experiences of this period. Since the end of the 1990s, post-Yugoslav states have seen what Volčič described as "the reinvention and rebranding of nostalgic cultural products including Yugo-films and Yugoslav music" (2007, 25). Such representations have found expression across genres and environments, appearing in, for example, museum exhibitions, theatrical and literary works, films, popular music and internet culture (Perković 2011; Velikonja 2009, 2012; Bošković 2013; Pogačar 2016).

In the post-Yugoslav cinema, Yugonostalgic elements and tonalities were present as early as the 1990s. In their early manifestation, they related chiefly to Yugoslavia's former president Josip Broz-Tito.[1] Later, a number of films, TV shows and documentaries showcased various facets of everyday and popular culture of the Yugoslav period, offering personal accounts from the perspective of different generations (see Milivojevic, this volume). In most of these productions, nostalgia is combined with irony, humour or criticism of the past regime and its official ideology, offering a bittersweet re-construction of personal memory narratives (Daković 2008, 2014). In popular music, Yugonostalgia finds its expression foremost in the revival of the Yu-rock (Stankovič 2001; Volčič 2007; Spaskovska 2011). Yugoslav rock bands of the 1970s–80s, like *White Button* (*Bijelo Dugme*), *Electric Orgasm* (*Elektricni orgazam*) and *Azra,* were popular at home and abroad, making Yu-rock one of the socialist era's most significant cultural exports. In the post-Yugoslav period, Yu-rock experienced growing popularity and revival, becoming a way to reclaim a shared Yugoslav legacy (Stankovič 2001; Volčič 2007; Velikonja 2014). The two genres of movie and music reinforced each other in artistic articulations of Yugonostalgia. While Yu-rock songs were widely used in soundtracks for post-Yugoslav films, the Yu-rock bands became subject for numerous documentary movies and TV shows.

In the following chapters on post-Yugoslav cinema and reception of Yu-rock among diaspora youth in Switzerland, we demonstrate that Yugonostalgia is not a mere romanticisation of the socialist regime, but that there are a variety of nostalgic motives, narratives and thematic tropes related to everyday life and popular culture of the Yugoslav period. In its various cultural, artistic and individual articulations, Yugonostalgia is a transnational and transgenerational phenomenon widespread across the former Yugoslav region and the ex-Yugoslav diaspora (Petrović 2012; Velikonja 2008, 2009, 2012).

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[1] In this regard, these films can be related to as "Titostalgia", Velikonja's (2008) neologism, which represents another widely spread sub-category of Yugonostalgia and refers exclusively to the cult of Josip Broz Tito. It includes a broad range of products, media and narratives.

2 Memories of Yugoslavia in the diaspora

In recent years, scholars have paid close attention to the practices of remembering among transnational migrant communities (e.g. Erll 2011; Rigney and Cesari 2014; Rothberg 2014; Palmberger and Tošić 2016). Out-migration from the former Yugoslavia to the rest of the world has a lengthy history (Brunnbauer 2009). During and after World War II, it was mainly politically-motivated emigration of groups who opposed the socialist regime (Ragazzi 2009). In the 1960s–80s there was a boom of economically-driven labour migration to the countries of Western Europe. The only socialist country that officially allowed out-migration for economic purposes to the "capitalist West", the Yugoslav government encouraged this labour migration in order to tackle its own economic problems (Brunnbauer 2019). With the violent breakup of Yugoslavia, and the ensuing wars in Croatia (1991–1995), Bosnia (1992–1995) and in Kosovo (1998–1999), it was mainly war-related, refugee migration that dominated migration waves. These consequently resulted in the creation of large diaspora communities in European countries such as Germany, Sweden, Austria or Switzerland (Dahinden 2009; Valenta and Ramet 2011; Halilovich 2013).

The scholarly discussion of memories related to Yugoslavia among diaspora communities are scarce. Yet, it is clear that ways of remembering Yugoslav past are as diverse as the ex-Yugoslav diaspora itself. Here generational differences, circumstances and historical contexts of migration, families' socio-economic backgrounds (both in the country of origin and in the country of residence) and other factors play a role. For instance, the urban-rural gap characteristic for socialist Yugoslavia, often linked to different attitudes to religion and national identity, finds reflection in diverging memories of life under socialism. Some families' memories reflect experiences of religious and/or ethnic discrimination that diverge from the dominant Yugoslav narrative of "brotherhood and unity" (Eastmond 2016; Halilovich 2013; Palmberger 2008; van Gorp and Smets 2015). For refugee families, these were the experiences of violence and displacement that left the strongest imprint on an individual's relationship to the past (Eastmond 2016; Üllen 2017). Thus, traumatic experiences were often relegated to the realm of suppressed and silenced memories (Kidron 2009). Nevertheless, scholars such as van Gorp and Smets persuasively argue that nostalgia across the Yugoslav diaspora expresses longing for a lost home and familial environment – "a place that no longer exists" – rather than for the former political regime (2015, 81). They note that cultural artefacts like Yugoslav music, films and literature trigger memories and emotions related to a home and a past which is lost (van Gorp and Smets 2015).

The Yugoslav disintegration wars have divided diaspora communities along ethno-religious lines. In Switzerland, as in other countries of Western Europe, before the break-up migrants from Yugoslavia were collectively referred to as "Yugoslavs". Migrant workers were not particularly attentive to ethnic or religious differences themselves and socialised in joint migrant clubs officially linked to the Yugoslav state (Dahinden 2009; Behloul 2016). After the break-up, however, the "Yugoslav diaspora" was divided into ethnically homogenous migrant communities. Serbs and Croats, for instance, joined their respective ethno-religious organisations (diaspora churches), while Albanian Muslims and Bosnian Muslims organised themselves in Islamic cultural associations (Behloul 2016). These established migrant associations that claim to represent migrant communities as a whole often replicate ethno-national ideologies and narratives from the respective post-Yugoslav states (Behloul 2016; Dahinden 2009). In this context, memories of Yugoslavia were relegated into the private realm and are shared within family or closed private circles. Rarely, if ever, are there references to the Yugoslav past during community events and celebrations among particular diasporic groups.[2]

Nevertheless, the phenomenon of Yugonostalgia does exist in the diaspora, mostly beyond the realms of organised migrant associations.[3] It finds its articulation among youth of migrant background who never lived in socialist Yugoslavia itself or who have only fragmented memories of this time (Müller-Suleymanova 2020; Rossig 2008).

The analysis of the second-generation youths'[4] Yugonostalgia in the following chapter reveals how perception of the Yugoslav past by diaspora youth is based not only – and not even principally – on familial memories. Instead, it is driven by cultural production from the period, such as music. Yu-rock – the popular rock of the 1970s and 80s – has become a powerful point of attraction for particular segments of diasporic youth of ex-Yugoslav background who see themselves outside of ethno-nationally segregated migrant communities. These young descendants of immigrants seek to socialise in ethnically mixed groups and celebrate a shared cultural legacy of Yugoslavia (Müller-Suleymanova, this volume). In Switzerland, the Yu-rock scene consists of an informal network of people who organise their own parties and gigs at various venues and invite Yu-rock stars to perform. As one of the initiators of the Yu-rock parties put it:

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[2] Often, the memories of Yugoslavia are invoked in the form of popular music from this period. One of the authors have observed how music hits from the Yugoslav times have been played on several event of Swiss-Bosnian (Muslim) diaspora organisations.

[3] Van Gorp and Smets (2015) point to the existence of internet sites where transnational diaspora participate in the celebration of the Yugoslav legacy.

[4] The terms "second generation" and "youth of migrant background" are used interchangeably to refer to young people who were born or were raised in the countries of their parents' or grandparents' immigration (Levitt 2009).

> There were many Yugonostalgics in this bar . . . because, you know, my pub was like a little Yugoslavia, right? Somehow, no one would ask you there who you are in terms of ethnicity . . . and the language, you know, it was called Serbo-Croatian in Yugoslavia, and then afterwards it was Serbian, Croatian or Bosnian. And we said at some point, we just call it 'our language' ('naš jezik').

While members of this scene in Switzerland celebrate the cultural legacy of Yugoslavia and its shared past, they express a range of attitudes towards Yugoslavia as a political project. Some are nostalgic towards the entire idea of Yugoslavia, including its political ideas. Others are critical of its oppressive regime, especially towards national or religious identities. This variety of sentiments towards the Yugoslav project, however, does not preclude these young people to come together and celebrate its cultural legacy. The Yu-rock scene itself might be small or even marginal, but it has given rise to a remarkable space of alternative memories and receptions of the Yugoslav idea that fosters transethnic solidarity and new notions of belonging among (post-)migrant generation.

3 Popular culture, generations and nostalgia

In the following chapters, our exploration of two different cultural and social realms – film production and life-worlds of diaspora youth – highlights how the Yugoslav cultural legacy remains a powerful locus of attraction for post-Yugoslav generations, both at home and abroad. This should not come as a surprise, since popular culture – cinema, television and popular music – was widely used across socialist regimes to transmit the messages and discourses of official ideology to various audiences (Kolanović 2011; Perica and Velikonja 2012). At the same time, this popular culture was also subversive towards official ideology containing codes of resistance and non-conformism (Ramet 2019; Stankovič 2001). It contained multiple and ambivalent meanings and it could be read by the subsequent generations in myriads of ways. Yugoslav popular culture was therefore not only part of the state's utopian myth, but also a component of the Yugoslav past that outlasted the official state.

As Yugonostalgia has spread through various media, forms and contexts, it has become one of the key codes of cultural and political communication in post-Yugoslav societies at home and abroad (Velikonja 2009, 384). As Mihelj highlighted, publicly circulated memories embedded in genres such as films, popular songs, television or mass-mediated photographs have become "part of our personal relationship with the past" (2017, 244). This diversity of forms and contexts points to the "heteroglossing" or "polysemic" nature of nostalgia, which can have multiple articulations and meanings in specific contexts and situations (Nadkarni and Shevchenko 2004; Boyer 2010). As Mihelj rightfully pointed out, we should not interpret nostalgia as an "exclusive property" of post-socialist societies but "as a symptom of shared modes of engagement with the past characteristic of modern societies globally" (2017, 247).

Various scholars have argued that nostalgia is a de-politicised form of memory that relies primarily on consumerist products and the commodification of the past (Volčič 2007, Luthar and Pušnik 2010; Jansen 2005). Driven by increasing commercial consumption and competition, the recycling of old media content – in forms such as "retromania" – is widespread in contemporary pop-cultural production and practice (Reynolds 2011; Mihelj 2017). In our readings, however, we draw on conceptualisations of nostalgia that acknowledge the political and emancipatory potentials of Yugonostalgia (Velikonja 2009; Petrović 2012). In the following chapters, Yugonostalgia evokes an image of Yugoslavia as a space of limited but extant cultural freedom that is used to articulate a critique of present-day political and cultural realities. It opens up the tropes for young people to formulate alternative visions of the past that are simultaneously oriented towards the present and the future (Boym 2001; Palmberger 2008; Velikonja 2009; Petrović 2012).

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Dilyara Müller-Suleymanova

"I am something that no longer exists . . .": Yugonostalgia among Diaspora Youth

Young people of migrant background[1] identify not only with multiple geographical locations and homelands but also with various historical frameworks and narratives about the past. When Dragan, a young man of Bosnian descent raised in Switzerland, told me that Yugoslavia was the country he would like to live in, he expressed longing for a temporally and spatially distant past which he had never experienced first-hand. As the child of Bosnian migrants who arrived in Switzerland as seasonal workers and then resettled permanently due to the war in Bosnia (1992–1995), Dragan does not have any personal experiences of socialist Yugoslavia. He learned about the existence of Yugoslavia only later, during his adolescence. In this chapter, I seek to add to a growing body of scholarship on memory and transnational migration by exploring how second-generation youth – people like Dragan – come to identify with particular past(s).

This chapter is based on the data gathered within the framework of a research project on young people of ex-Yugoslav background in Switzerland. The bulk of data consists of narrative-biographical interviews with young people aged between 18 and 35 from various ethno-religious backgrounds.[2] Within this sample, a group of interviewees with similar sentiments towards Yugoslavia emerged.[3] The analysis in this chapter is based on life-stories of two interviewees whose biographic narrations are particularly illuminating for reconstruction of the broader discursive and biographical context in which nostalgic sentiments towards the Yugoslav past emerged. Interviews with representatives of migrant associations, cultural entrepreneurs and activists as well as participant observation in diasporic spaces complement the analysis and help to reconstruct the broader context of ex-Yugoslav diaspora in Switzerland.

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[1] I use the terms youth of migrant background, diaspora youth and second generation interchangeably to refer to young people and young adults who were born or were raised in the countries of their parents' or grandparents' immigration (Levitt 2009).

[2] So far, 30 interviews with young people, whose parents migrated from Bosnia-Herzegovina, then the constituent republic of former Yugoslavia, were collected. The data collection was carried out in 2019–2021 and is a part of a research project on second-generation youth of ex-Yugoslav and Turkish backgrounds in Switzerland and their relationship to their countries of origin and its political past, financed by the Swiss National Science Foundation (Grant Nr. 174164).

[3] Six interviewees, some of them were acquainted with each other.

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The method and theoretical approach of narrative-biographical interviewing is being increasingly used in migration and transnationalism studies. The approach encourages a close reading of an individual's biography within the context of larger socio-political structures and changes that shape the individual's biographic trajectory (Apitzsch and Siouti 2007; Rosenthal 2004). Biographical narratives reveal how individuals interpret and make sense of their own and of their families' experiences of migration, forced displacement and violence (Eastmond 2007). Biographic narrations thus always comprise a temporally specific reconstruction and interpretation of biographic trajectory, and reveal how individuals can continually reinterpret their life in the contexts in which they experience it (Apitzsch and Siouti 2007). Biographic methods are particularly fruitful for the analysis of the ways in which nostalgic views towards the past emerge and are shaped both – by personal experiences but also by memories, images and discourses on the past that circulate intergenerationally and transnationally.

Michael Rothberg notes that migration brings "disparate histories into contact with each other, reconfigures individual and collective subjects, and produces novel constellations for remembrance and commemorations" (2014, 125). For the children of migrants, these "novel constellations" are produced by the sense of belonging to multiple geographical locations and experiences of being raised in what Peggy Levitt and Nina Glick Schiller describe as "transnational social fields" (Levitt and Schiller 2004; Levitt 2009). In transnational families, young people are socialised in ideas, practices and rules of countries in which they live, but also into those their families come from (Levitt 2009, 1226). They grow up with their parents' memories and narratives about the homeland, they regularly visit their parents' countries of origin and through these various experiences and exposures appropriate multiple cultural repertoires (Levitt 2009).

My interlocutors' biographical narratives contained various references to the Yugoslav past. Some remembered old Yugoslav hits that their parents or aunts and uncles were listening to while anxious not to disturb Swiss neighbours. Others remembered how parents nostalgically described the pre-war peaceful and safe life in Yugoslavia juxtaposing it to the destruction and devastation of political, economic and social life in the region during and in the aftermath of the war in Bosnia. At the same time, ambivalent attitudes towards the Yugoslav past were voiced too when young people heard stories about religiously or ethnically-based discrimination in what was considered as officially atheist and multinational socialist state. Young people of diasporic generation who do not have first-hand experiences and memories of these times, engage with such family memories and narratives, developing their own, often diverging, views of the past (Müller-Suleymanova 2020; 2021).

In this process, media plays a significant role when young people appropriate mediated tropes in a search for authentic representations of the past (Bennett and Rogers 2016; Mihelj 2017). Old footage of concerts or music movies, films, TV series and other media often consumed on digital platforms like YouTube, become for young people their own ways of remembering the past (van Dijck 2007), or as one of my interlocutors put it, "experiencing what my parents have lived". Digitally circulated images function as windows for the younger generation into the past they have never experienced, fuelling nostalgic sentiments that prompt new and creative forms of engaging with cultural legacies.

Thus, as the following life-story excerpts demonstrate, for my interlocutors the family has not been the primary site for acquiring nostalgic views towards Yugoslavia. Instead, mediated encounters with the Yugoslav cultural legacy, such as rock music, have been the main catalyst for nostalgia. Their interest in Yugoslav rock, or Yu-rock, has set in motion a process of engaging with the Yugoslav past and its historical legacies (Stankovič 2001). Their passion for Yu-rock was cultivated within a diasporic circle of young people who positioned themselves outside the ethno-nationally segregated migrant communities from the post-Yugoslav nation-states in Switzerland. The Yu-rock scene has also seen itself in opposition to *Turbofolk*, a mainstream popular genre from the post-Yugoslav region, popular among diaspora youth (Stankovič 2001; Spaskovska 2011).[4] While established migrant associations from the post-Yugoslav region are divided along ethno-religious lines and translate narrow ethno-national narratives, the Yu-rock scene celebrates a common cultural legacy and memories of living together in multi-ethnic Yugoslavia (Rossig 2008; Milivojevic and Müller-Suleymanova, this volume).

By focusing on two biographical case studies, Dragan and Selma, I trace what individual experiences, biographic trajectories and personal encounters contributed to the development of longing for a country and a past that my subjects never experienced. I argue that Yugonostalgia helps my interlocutors to deal with two key experiences: first, the exclusionary and stigmatising discourses towards migrants from former Yugoslavia in Switzerland; the second, is the violent history of Yugoslavia's break-up and its consequences for communities and social life both within the region as well as in the diaspora. My biographical case studies come from different ethno-national backgrounds: Dragan is of Serbian

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[4] Turbofolk combines elements of traditional folk music with contemporary musical genres. It has a controversial reputation and was accused of stirring up nationalist sentiments during the disintegration of Yugoslavia (Archer 2012). Currently, it dominates the post-Yugoslav pop industry, in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia, and is also oriented towards Western European diaspora. Turbofolk pop stars from the region regularly give concerts in Switzerland.

Orthodox and Selma of Bosnian Muslim background. However, they both reject ethno-national categorisations and articulate a sense of belonging to a category that goes beyond national divisions and embodies common cultural and historical experiences. Their cases demonstrate how engaging with particular narratives of the past, in this case the Yugoslav one, opens ways for alternative articulations of belonging and trans-ethnic solidarities and friendships. Yugonostalgia among diaspora youth should be understood in the context of young people's confrontation with exclusionary discourses both in their actual and ancestral homes and their multiple positionalities which span diverse geographical, political and cultural reference points.

1 Dragan: From Serb nationalist to "Yugoslavist"

Dragan is a young man in his late 20s. His father came to Switzerland as a migrant worker (Gastarbeiter) from a small town in Bosnia in the 1970s. His mother stayed in Bosnia and when the war broke out in 1992, she left the country and joined her husband in Switzerland. Dragan was two when he arrived in Switzerland. He was socialised and schooled in Switzerland and knew Bosnia only from summer holidays. His parents' social life unfolded in extended family networks and a larger, predominantly Serb Orthodox, migrant community.

In his biographical narration, Dragan consistently refers to a period when he identified himself as neither Bosnian nor Swiss but exclusively as a "Serb". The sudden death of his father seemed to become a trigger for this, in his eyes, problematic period in his life. During this period, which lasted much of his adolescence, Dragan was – as he put it – "on a Serbian track". Dragan's nationalist orientations were cultivated not so much in the family as in the circle of second-generation diasporic youth that lived in Switzerland but had strong patriotic sentiments towards their parents' homeland. He made friends with this circle during his regular summer holidays in Bosnia. Dragan recounts that during this period, he was "allergic towards critique of Serbs" and was opposed towards persecution of Serbian political and paramilitary figures involved in war-crimes during the Yugoslav disintegration wars. Dragan's peer circle, consisting mainly of young second-generation men of Serb background, celebrated Serb national identity, wearing clothes and adorning themselves with tattoos depicting ethno-religious symbols.

At some point however, Dragan's nationalist worldview began to change. This transformation was triggered by a number of biographic turning points. He started his university studies and moved to another city, distancing himself from his previous social circles. Simultaneously he entered Swiss military service during which he started to explore his identification with Switzerland more deeply. These experiences paved a way for the major break with his views. In his life-story narration however, Dragan accords music, namely the Yugoslav rock, a central role in this transformation:

> I started to distance myself from this whole Serbian thing actually . . . it is very interesting, through music. I was listening to different styles of music and back then also a lot of Turbo-folk. But then, at some point at university, I discovered rock music and that was truly the Yugoslav rock, from the good Yugoslav years, like the 1970s–80s. And this truly began to change my worldview a little bit, right? I began to discover Yugoslavism for myself, that togetherness . . . not . . . not you are Serbian, I am Croatian and so on, I began to leave that behind . . . It was a long process . . . It started with music and then I learned more about the history. In secondary school I was more interested in the history of Serbs, at the university it was the history of Yugoslavia. So, I started to move into this direction. And at the same time in the direction of 'I'm here in Switzerland', more oriented towards Switzerland.

In the course of this transformation, Dragan opened himself up to a different worldview and different interpretations of the past. He started to engage more deeply with the history of multi-ethnic Yugoslavia, with its cultural, political and intellectual legacies. While Dragan's family was not nostalgic towards Yugoslavia and rarely shared memories of that time with him, listening to Yugoslav rock and watching old footages of Yu-rock concerts have conveyed to Dragan an image of how "Yugoslavia might have been":

> Yes, for example, rock concerts. If one imagines it like that, the Yugoslavia of the 1970s, one sees concerts with 200,000 people, with Western rock, that was a feeling like the West for me! So free, so truly hippy and liberal and all that, and that was an image that seemed very modern for me . . . and also the intellectuals of that time, I read a lot of books in that time. If this is good, I do not know, but it conveyed an image of how Yugoslavia might have been. I feel . . . I am convinced that it was never as good in this region as in the golden times of Yugoslavia, in spite of all the negative aspects. One can see all that quite critically and say that it was only a powder keg [. . .]. But my wish would be that it could function like that. And if someone says to me 'but you are a Serb' then I would say, 'no, I do not feel like that, I am something that no longer exists'.

Watching videos of the 1970s–1980s rock concerts on YouTube, gave Dragan an affective sense of Yugoslavia. It suggested an alternative perspective on his parents' homeland in which despite socialist ideology, remarkable rock music was produced and intellectual life thrived. The discovery of Yu-rock enabled him to de-stigmatise and de-colonise the image of Yugoslavia. This reading of the Yugoslav past stood in stark contrast to the images of the region – as an exotic, backward Balkan "Other" – prevalent in popular imagination of Swiss majority society (Todorova 2009). Contrary to this conception, Dragan imagined

Yugoslavia as the site of vibrant cultural and intellectual life, embedded in global cultural trends, home to the new wave and rock music (Ramet 2019).

Such experiences were important for Dragan, who like other diasporic youth had to cope with stigmatising, exclusionary discourses and practices that targeted him as a migrant “Other”, as a “Yugo”[5] (Fibbi et al. 2006; Allenbach et al. 2011). Exclusionary projections – both from within the diaspora communities and from Swiss majority society – precluded Dragan from developing and realising his own sense of multi-layered, multiple belonging. In contrast, the Yu-rock subculture opened for Dragan a different ideological universe in which exclusivist national identifications were renounced in favour of belonging to a common, shared identity and heritage. This growing identification with Yugoslavia went along with questioning “Swissness” as a one-dimensional, unproblematic category. As he put it:

> I do feel myself to be Swiss, although it is a fuzzy category, but I do identify with it but at the same time this whole . . . [long pause] . . . I’m a little bit nostalgic towards Yugoslavia . . . If there was a different country than Switzerland where I can imagine myself living, then it would be Yugoslavia. But it does not exist, that’s clear to me . . .

Dragan sees “Swissness” as a fuzzy category lacking the boundedness and cultural congruity ascribed to it by some political actors, above all on the political right. Both here and later in the interview, Dragan challenges the ways the category “Swiss” is constructed in public and political discourses as a homogenous category excluding all those perceived as “culturally different” – refugees, migrants and religious minorities (Lüthi and Skenderovic 2019).

At university, Dragan’s interest in Yu-rock brought him into contact with other diasporic youth of ex-Yugoslav background who were critical of the prevalence of nationalist outlooks within their diaspora communities. They celebrated Yugoslav rock music on various occasions building a whole Yu-rock scene in Switzerland (see Milivojevic and Müller-Suleymanova, this volume). Though not all in this circle were explicitly nostalgic towards socialist Yugoslavia, they shared a sense of cultural bondedness and an appreciation of this common historical heritage. Thus, both in the post-Yugoslav region itself as well as in the diaspora, Yu-rock became a point of attraction for people who have seen themselves outside of the prevalent ethno-nationalist framework of identification (Stankovič 2001; Spaskovska 2011; Velikonja 2014; Milivojevic and Müller-Suleymanova, this volume).

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[5] A derogatory term to refer to people of ex-Yugoslav background.

2 Selma: Yugoslavia as a utopia

Selma is a young woman in her early 30s. She was born in Bosnia to a Bosnian Muslim family. Her family's migration story is remarkably similar to Dragan's: Selma's father came to Switzerland as a migrant worker in the 1960s; she and her mother fled Bosnia to join him when the war broke out in 1992. Though Selma spent her early years in socialist-era Bosnia, she has little memories of that time. Selma grew up in a small industrial town in central Switzerland. Like Dragan, she was surrounded by other families from the former Yugoslavia and socialised primarily with the youth of migrant backgrounds. Selma completed a vocational education and entered the workforce at a relatively young age.

One of the precursors to what would become the major turning point in Selma's biography was the beginning of a relationship with a young man of Serbian origin. Her parents were opposed to this relationship, so Selma moved out of the family home. Traumatised by events of the war, Selma's parents became, in their daughter's words "defensive nationalists" and cautious towards those whom they perceived as the main perpetrator group. This turning point in her biography illustrates the repercussions that the legacies of a political conflict can have on the lives of young people. The war cemented ethno-national boundaries and divided people in the diaspora, not only through segregated associational life but also on the interpersonal level. As a result of the war her family became more religious, a visible tendency among Bosnian Muslims – both at home as well as in the diaspora – in the aftermath of the war (Bougarel 2017; Eastmond 1998). In Switzerland they joined the local Bosnian cultural-religious association (džemat), where Selma attended language lessons and religious courses.

While Selma was forced to confront and tackle ethno-religious divides that have been reproduced in diasporic communities, her social life within peer circles was a different reality. She grew up with young people of migrant background for whom ethnic categories have been less relevant than socio-culturally framed categories of distinction such as the "migrant"[6] versus the "Swiss" (Allenbach et al. 2011). Youth of migrant background found themselves in similar socio-economic and educational tracks and had to overcome similar obstacles on the ways to social mobility (Juhasz and Mey 2003). Thus, it was quite common that Selma met her Serbian boyfriend at a vocational school, where she pursued a professional path similar to that of many other second-generation youths in her surroundings.

Music was an important part of Selma's life, especially during adolescence, when she was preoccupied with challenges of belonging and sought positive recognition of her migrant roots. She became interested in Balkan music, but did not share her peers' fascination with mainstream genres like Turbofolk. She preferred rock and alternative genres, music which she was exposed to within her extended family. Her uncle was a fan of Yu-rock and already as a child she sang some of the hits. Later on, in her adolescence she rediscovered the Yugoslav rock, which had a profound impact on her. As Selma explains:

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[6] "Ausländer" in German, can be translated as a "foreigner" or a "migrant".

> I had always loved music. I began discovering Yugoslav music in my youth. And I realised that we have great music, great rock, and for me engaging with this music was part of finding an identity. Of course, we were labelled "Yugo" and I did feel that. But to discover that we have such great music was a little bit healing. To know that already back in the 1970s–80s we had this great rock music, means we were not so bad, right? We are also worth something!

Selma describes that (re-)discovering the Yugoslav rock was a "healing" experience that enabled her to claim belonging to a culture that produced internationally acclaimed music. A source of pride, the Yugoslav musical legacy has fostered identification with her migrant background in more positive and rewarding ways.

Selma deepened this engagement with music from the region during her studies at university. After parting ways with her boyfriend, she decided to fulfil her long-standing wish to study history and completed an additional qualification that enabled her to enrol at university. Here she found a circle of young people of ex-Yugoslav background who shared her passion for the Yugoslav music. While she distanced herself from the Bosnian Islamic association, Selma maintained her connection to the Bosnian diaspora through cultural initiatives.

While for Selma, like for Dragan, (re-)discovering Yu-rock was an entry point for the engagement with the Yugoslav legacy, in Selma's case, Yugonostalgic attitudes also draw on family histories and memories. Selma recounted stories about her grandfather, who was a partisan during World War II – an important symbolic figure of the socialist Yugoslavia (Zimmerman 2010).[7] Selma remembered her mother's fascination with Tito and the album her mother compiled of Tito's photos after his death. In many ways, Selma's family experiences stand for the positive experiences that many other Bosnian Muslims made under the Yugoslav regime, which gave Bosnian Muslims national self-determination and actively co-opted their elites (Bougarel 2017). These family histories and memories enabled her to make intimate connections with the Yugoslav past. Selma's Yugonostalgia was also more political than Dragan's. In particular, she identifies more with political ideals and symbols of socialist Yugoslavia as she explicates in the following excerpt:

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[7] For the similarly important role of the partisans in Belarus, see Krawatzek and Weller in this volume.

> For me actually, the day of statehood of Socialist Federative Republic of Yugoslavia is more important than that of Bosnia, or Croatia, or Serbia for that matter . . . because I'm a little Yugo-nostalgic. And it seems to me, I'm Yugo-nostalgic because I simply cannot . . . cannot overcome it. I always say, states are founded and states decay. That is a normal process in history. But it just hurts me so much that it came to an end so violently. I cannot cope with it; that is why I grieve. And also because everything that came later is much worse than Yugoslavia. Yugoslavia wasn't great, it wasn't perfect, there were many problems, but it was still much better than what we have now.

For Selma, the violent dissolution of Yugoslavia remains an open, unhealed wound. Though she did not experience it first-hand, she constantly remembers – by consuming media, reading books or watching documentaries – the brutality of the Bosnian war. Moreover, she realises the ongoing violence in the form of pervasive corruption, political misrule and aggressive ethno-nationalism of current political regimes in the region. Since she still has family members in Bosnia, Selma is familiar with the daily challenges of life in post-conflict, transitional settings where people are economically deprived and where the wounds of war have not yet healed. For Selma, the Yugoslav past is the only way to look positively at the past of a region which, since the fall of Yugoslavia, finds itself in a state of political, economic and social devastation. Her imaginings of Yugoslavia are informed both by family memories of a peaceful and stable pre-war life as well as by her own mediated memories of Yugoslavia's liberal cultural atmosphere that has given birth to Yu-rock. Selma "needs to hold on somehow" to this nexus of memories and imaginings in order to avoid falling into ever deeper pessimism about the future. Ultimately, Yugonostalgia is a form of utopia, a way to have ideals and guidance in life, and to imagine a better future:

> I do believe that one needs a romantic ideal, a utopia, which has nothing to do with reality. And I think that the very idea of Yugoslavia is a beautiful one. It didn't function at all, for various reasons. But it could have been such a beautiful country. It was big. It followed its own political course . . . [. . .] All these elements, they have created nostalgia because I somehow need some kind of ideal to orient myself in life. And this collective, this anti-nationalist, this . . . yes, communist, but actually the social thought behind the communism. It is just a utopia that never became real, and yet it is a beautiful dream. And this dream I'd still like to hold on to somehow.

The ideals that the Yugoslav past embodies – social justice and equality, including gender equality, rejection of exclusivist nationalisms – inform Selma's life and political attitudes as a young woman of migrant background in Switzerland. From this perspective, she criticises Swiss anti-migrant political rhetoric and policies. Yet simultaneously, she uses the same perspective to criticise the traditionalism and narrow ethnic orientation of Switzerland's ex-Yugoslav diaspora communities, including the Bosnian Muslim one. Thus, Selma's Yugonostalgia expresses her current positionality between multiple geographical, historical and political contexts and brings her various biographic experiences together. Yugonostalgia acts as a point of orientation in complex (post-)migrant realities.

3 Nostalgia, popular culture and diaspora youth

Nostalgia is not a unitary language. It is a mode of expression for a range of various sentiments and voices. Dominic Boyer suggests that “beneath the surface of speech, we should work to recognize and represent the dialogical gossamer of idiosyncratic references, interests, and affects that are channelled through nostalgic discourse” (2010, 20). The two portraits that I presented above reveal how Yugonostalgia can express a range of sentiments: a need to regain a sense of adequacy and value against the backdrop of discourses targeting youth as the migrant, uncivilised “Other”; a need to look beyond the violent past; and a need for a utopian vision of social justice, equality and inclusiveness.

Both Selma’s and Dragan’s families’ social lives revolved around family networks and diasporic communities dominated by representatives of their own ethno-religious group. The migrant associations in which their families were involved to various degrees have cultivated religious values and a sense of attachment to ethnic homelands – Serbia or Bosnia – rather than to a vanished state of Yugoslavia. In these spaces, memories of the multi-ethnic Yugoslavia have been silenced and supplanted by post-war ethno-national discourses. Selma’s and Dragan’s Yugonostalgia marks a departure from these positions and reveals the existence of alternative diaspora spaces where Yugoslav memories and narratives are lived by young adults that grew up and were socialised in Switzerland. For Dragan, nostalgia is a departure from an exclusivist focus on Serb identity; for Selma, it is a departure from the narratives of trauma, victimhood and religious traditionalism. Growing up and moving in hybrid, (post-)migrant social realities, both of my protagonists sought out alternative ways of dealing with ethno-national and religious differences. Yugoslav ideas of unity and solidarity, encoded in Yu-rock, offered a source of inspiration.

The (re)-discovery of Yu-rock at particular biographical junctures, was an important moment that shaped the development of Selma’s and Dragan’s views. Yu-rock was not only about partying and consuming music. For my interlocutors, it was about discovering and becoming part of an open, cosmopolitan and vibrant cultural universe. It was about opening one’s own horizons and developing alternative visions. As Bennett and Rogers highlight, popular music should be seen in terms of its cultural legacy – it’s shaping of particular attitudes, understandings and socio-aesthetic sensibilities over time (2016, 37). Yu-rock, as a transnationally and intergenerationally circulating memory of the Yugoslav period, was received and appropriated by Selma, Dragan and other diasporic youth who grew up both at geographical and temporal distance from it. Yugoslav cultural legacy received new meanings in the context of their post-migrant lives, serving the needs, longings and visions of a new diaspora generation. These examples thus illustrate how travelling memories can be "localised": translated and integrated into local repertoires (Erll 2011, 15). Yugoslav pop culture enables them to acquire a sense of positive belonging, to "de-other" themselves.

At the same time, their nostalgic attitudes towards the Yugoslav period are also a response to political events in their parents' homeland – a way of dealing and processing the traumas and memories of the violence. Deeply unsettled by current events in the region, young people turn to the Yugoslav period as a period of – to use Dragan's words – "golden times" when, even if things went wrong sometimes, they were better than today. Such acts of comparison are inherent to nostalgia, which is always a partial reaction to the present (Davis 1977). Nostalgia here functions "as a means of talking about the present and the future" (Mihelj 2017, 239; Palmberger 2008). In Selma's case, it is also a means to orient oneself in life. For many young people like her, the Yugoslav legacy embodies not only a positive vision of their parents' homeland to which they feel connected but also ideals which help them orient themselves in their complex (post-)migrant realities.

The case studies furthermore suggest that the possibility of sharing and exchanging these views and memories with other peers proved crucial for the evolvement of nostalgic sentiments towards the Yugoslav past. Both Selma and Dragan – though with differing degrees of intensity – socialised in a circle of young people of ex-Yugoslav background who shared similar ideological premises. The Yu-rock scene is not only a space of alternative memories and narratives about the Yugoslav past, it is also a space of sharing and celebrating these visions in the circle of friends. This attests to the importance of contexts of intimate social interaction – peer groups, milieus, or music scenes – to the ways in which young people form and transform their relationships with the past, present and future (Bennett and Rogers 2016).

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Mirko Milivojević

The Yugoslav 1980s and Youth Portrayals in Post-Yugoslav Films and TV

The Yugoslav 1980s have been depicted in literary fiction, essays and memoirs, in works of fine art and photography and in popular music over the last three decades. Literary authors have reflected above all on childhood and adolescence and highlighted the interplay between memories and identity construction, and the Yugoslav breakup as the central rupture relating to both collective and personal identity.[1] Filmmakers, meanwhile, have turned to the period to create what at first appear to be simplistic Yugonostalgic narratives of the past. In fact, recent screen works suggest with far more nuance that the 1980s were not merely the "before" to the 1990s "after", but the site of a complex negotiation between multiple forms of identity.

The writer Miljenko Jergović concludes his review of *Black and White World* (*Crno-bijeli svet*, 2015–2021) – the first Croatian television depiction of 1980s Zagreb – thus: "The eighties are what eventually came out of them."[2] Jergović's remark conveys the shared experience of the last Yugoslav generation, whose members entered adulthood in the years before the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's (SFRY) break-up and whose hopes and lives were torn apart by war. Moreover, the comment highlights the liminal nature of memories of the socialist and post-socialist periods: the Yugoslav 1980s, also known as the era of "decadent socialism" (Duda 2009; Kolanović 2011), were bookended by the death of Josip Broz Tito in 1980 and the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The liminal 1980s saw a gradual "demystification" of socialism (Perica 2002; 2012) that manifested itself as a crisis of questioning. Contrarily, the 1980s also saw some of the cultural highlights of the SFRY period: the emergence of the popular Yugoslav New Wave music scene, international accolades for Yugoslav cinema and success in a number of sports (Perica 2002; 2012).[3] The 1980s may have been the beginning of the end of the socialist era (Kolanović 2011, 328), but the

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[1] For a detailed insight into the literary and cultural production, the dominant motives, generic forms and modes of representation of these texts, especially in the Croatian context, see Kolanović 2011, 2018, 165–194.

[2] "Mit osamdesetih." https://www.jergovic.com/sumnjivo-lice/mit-osamdesetih/ (28 August 2020).

[3] The New Wave style in rock music is by no means exclusively Yugoslav but a transnational phenomenon, closely related to the youth (sub)cultures, first emerged in the USA and UK. In both contexts, it dates back to the mid-1970s (Reinkowski 2014).

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collective identity of the decade's young adults did not simple belong to the before or the after; their identity was influenced by official and unofficial discourses, by successes and failures, and by beginnings and ends.

I examine recent depictions of the 1980s in the films *ZG80* (2016) by Igor Šeregi and *The Border Post* (*Karaula*, 2006) by Rajko Grlić and in Goran Kulenović's television series *Black and White World*. These works challenge the dominant post-Yugoslav memory discourse which is either ethno-nationalist and historical revisionist, radically erasing the SFRY period, or Yugonostalgic, thus idealising it (Luthar and Pušnik 2010; Galijaš 2015). Nevertheless, the works at hand have generally been interpreted as Yugonostalgic – Grlić's film in particular was viewed as a prominent manifestation of Yugonostalgia by the critics (Petrović 2010, 72–75) – since they portray official and public cultural events and people and symbols of the socialist Yugoslav state.

Such interpretations subscribe to a derogatory discourse on nostalgia, typically reading the phenomenon as an unreflective form of memory. I turn to more recent accounts on post-socialist nostalgia (Boym 2001; Velikonja 2009; Petrović 2012; Mišina 2016) to suggest that these screen works, thanks to their multifaceted plots and social agents, actually suggest an emancipatory, rather than regressive and unreflective, potential in Yugonostalgia about the 1980s. This essentially follows Svetlana Boym's (2001) re-conceptualisation of nostalgia, which makes a distinction between "restorative" and "reflective" nostalgia. By delineating opposed narratives and potential political uses of the past, restorative nostalgia "puts emphasis on *nostos* and proposes to rebuild the lost home and patch up the memory gaps", whereas reflective nostalgia "dwells in *algia*, in longing and loss, the imperfect process of remembrance" (Boym 2001, 41). Thus, instead of emphasising its passive nature, or simply being invested in restoring and idealising the past, nostalgic tonalities can be deployed in critical reflection and re-evaluation of the past. These explorations are often coupled with humour, irony or elements of retro – and are equally often used to highlight the shortcomings of the present.

The directors of *ZG80*, *The Border Post* and *Black and White World* foreground a negotiation of various collective identities in the 1980s. As a result, they articulate a memory framework that acts as an alternative to both the idea of a multi- or supranationally unified Yugoslav past and to the ethno-national identities of the post-Yugoslav present. The perspective of the last Yugoslav generation in these works highlights the specific set of experiences and sensations of the 1980s and its actors (Perica 2012; Spaskovska 2017). This perspective therefore highlights the heterogeneity of group and collective identity and reveals how Yugoslavs and post-Yugoslavs attempt to resolve interconnected and sometimes conflicting identities.

My interpretation challenges the paradigm of “binary socialism” as one of the common approaches to the socialist period, which relies on clear-cut dichotomies between the official and unofficial discourses, and opposition if not antagonism between the official state actors and society (Yurchak 2006). Rather, as I argue, these works deploy the dominant binaries – inflected with Yugonostalgic tonalities – not only to potentially present the re-mediation of various features and significance of Yugoslav popular culture and Yu-rock. My interpretation serves to further examine the potential dynamics, relations and interconnection between various discourses and social actors and to underline the heterogeneous depictions of Yugoslav socialism and the decade prior to the break-up of the SFRY.

1 The Yugoslav 1980s, youth and popular culture in post-Yugoslav cinema and TV

The period of “decadent socialism” and explorations of the era’s popular culture are the topics of many recent documentary movies or TV shows. Igor Mirković’s *A Happy Child* (*Sretno Dijete*, 2003) and Pjer Žalica’s *The Orchestra* (*Orkestar*, 2011), for example, explore pop culture and rock music; *The Last Yugoslavian Football Team* (Vuk Janić, 2000) and *Once Brothers* (Michael Tolajian, 2010) address sports; *The Store House* (*Robna kuća*, 2009), *Rockovnik* (2011) and *SFRY for Beginners* (*SFRJ za početnike*, 2012) touch on several decades, but also focus on consumer and popular culture in the 1980s. Screened on the national, regional and international stage, these documentaries explore some of the well-known and the long-neglected cultural practices of the period. Figuring among the most popular programmes in the post-Yugoslav production in both national and transnational contexts, these works created a noticeable narrative shift, adding nuance to a depiction of the Yugoslav 1990s in which the post-Yugoslav war has served as the dominant topic.

Unlike these documentary examples, the fictional works by Grlić and Šeregi, and the TV series by Kulenović offer different structural and generic aspects while thematising the Yugoslav past. Each of the works dramatises different stages of the 1980s, with each stage corresponding to the formative years and experiences of the main characters. Depicting the experiences of young protagonists, the directors emphasise the significance of a multitude of different events and modes and ways of identification. Thus, even though they include a familiar cluster of motifs related to coming of age and everyday experiences, the generational conflicts and relations these works offer a different version of the late Yugoslav period.

Released in 2006, *The Border Post* was the first post-SFRY movie in which production houses from every post-Yugoslav country participated. The film was also financed by official institutions from each of these countries.[4] The work adapts popular Croatian writer Ante Tomić's novel *Nothing Should Surprise Us* (*Ništa nas ne smije iznenaditi*, 2003). According to Grlić, *The Border Post* was supposed to serve as a nuanced allegory of Yugoslavia itself. The film's official website states that the production is a tale of "the not so distant past, with no nostalgia and no hatred", describing the work as "a comedy about the people on the virtue of a tragedy".[5] Set in an isolated Macedonian post on the Yugoslav-Albanian border, the movie focuses on two young soldier-protagonists, the Croat Siniša and the Serb Ljuba, and their commander, Bosnian Safet Pašić. The action follows two parallel stories: in the first, Ljuba frequently provokes Pašić; in the second, Siniša offers help to the syphilitic Pašić, which eventually leads to a romance with the commander's wife Mirjana. The lieutenant avoids revealing his secret illness or confronting his wife by declaring a state of emergency, claiming that the Albanian Army is preparing an attack on Yugoslavia.

Šeregi's *ZG80* was released ten years after *Border Post*. Although set in Belgrade in the late 1980s, it also plays with allegorical and metaphorical images in representing the dynamics between different identities. The movie is set on a single day, following a group of 'Bad Blue Boys' – the football club Dinamo Zagreb's hooligan-fans – on a trip to Belgrade for a derby against rivals Red Star Belgrade. In Belgrade, the fans encounter a group of rival hooligans. In an effort to run away from both the opposing supporters and from the local police, the Zagreb fans get lost. They struggle to find a safe way back to the railway station to get back home.[6]

Finally, the television series *Black and White World* differs from the two movies I study in structural and formal generic elements and, especially, in terms of temporal and spatial setting. The work is chiefly set in the Zagreb of the 1980s. Through a combination of family drama, humour, nostalgia and irony and centred on two branches and three generations of the Kipčić family, the series' producers look to revive the everyday life of the period. Unsurprisingly for a long-running family drama, *Black and White World* deploys the usual topoi of coming of age, family and generational issues and refers to numerous symbols of the period's popular culture.

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[4] The movie was also co-produced by production houses from other European countries.

[5] "Director's statement." *Border Post*, http://www.borderpostmovie.com/directors_statement.php (28 August 2020).

[6] The movie is also set as the unofficial prequel of the Croatian popular social drama *Metastaze* (Branko Schmidt, 2009), which dramatises the post-socialist and post-war Croatian society through the portrayal of the small group of neighborhood friends and points to the social disorientation of the entire generation.

While we might assume Yugonostalgia is aimed at older audiences who are wistful of bygone days, the works at hand all combine generic elements from family drama, action and – above all – comedy to appeal to a transgenerational audience.[7] By framing the 1980s within these diverse and appealing narrative modes and more popular and communicative genres, the works' directors amplify the generic potential of cinema and television to circulate memory narratives.[8] These works can thus also be viewed as "memory films", to use Astrid Erll's term (2011) and, since they disseminate and produce cultural memory and images of the past, they figure as "memory productive" rather than explicitly "memory reflexive".

Moreover, production and cast mirror the diverse audiences targeted by the creators. While they can nominally be designated as Croatian, figuring as significant national productions (especially in the case of *Black and White World*), the works – in particular *The Border Post* – explicitly highlight numerous cinematic features related to the setting, cast members or actors from former Yugoslav republics. The productions' diverse provenance was ground-breaking in post-Yugoslav cinema, and it resonated with broad audiences, who flocked to cinemas or to tune into these productions in great numbers.[9] Given the post-

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[7] In this respect, a debut feature movie by Slovenian director Andrej Košak, *Outsider* (1997), serves as another noticeable example that can make an exception regarding the depiction of the 1980s and popular/rock culture in post-Yugoslav cinema production. It was released already in the 1990s, during the post-Yugoslav wars, and figured as the most popular Slovenian film of the decade. However, unlike other works analysed in this chapter, *Outsider* is a realistic romantic drama and tells the story of young Sead, who being a son of the military officer moved with his family to Ljubljana where he feels alienated and gets involved in the emerging local Punk scene. It highlights a series of topoi represented in the case of the other three films/series and suggests the significant role of the sub-cultural and pop-cultural scene serving as identity markers for the Yugoslav youth. The original score was made by Saša Lošić, the leader of New Wave band *Plavi Orkestar*, and makes a direct homage to the Yugoslav New Wave Rock scene, and also implicitly re-establishes the connections between the Slovenian and Sarajevo's bands of the period.

[8] The directors belong to different (post-)Yugoslav generations and have different relations to the Yugoslav 1980s. Grlić was one of the most popular and highly relevant figures that shaped the popular culture of the period. On the other hand, creators of the TV series, Kulenović and Mirković, are direct witnesses of the New Wave scene during the 1980s, and Šeregi belongs to the younger generation whose period of coming of age largely coincided with the breakup of the country.

[9] For instance, Grlić's movie was one of the most popular movies and topped the box offices in each of the former Yugoslav republics – as many as 7,500 people came to the first screening of the film in Sarajevo. *ZG80* also received the "Golden Gate Pula" Audience Award at the Pula Film Festival in 2017, which was established and figured as the most prominent film festival in

Yugoslav memory context, the remediation of the particular content enables these works to make a substantive contribution to the creation of the cultural (post-)“*Yu*niverse” (Pogačar 2010, 200).

In the following sections, I examine both the works’ plotlines and their depictions of their protagonists, delving into the set of motifs and structural aspects at the heart of the productions to examine the negotiations and articulations of different frameworks of collective identities among the youth in the depiction of the period. I further reveal how they highlight different layers and aspects of (Yugo-) nostalgia by underlining the significance and representation of various features of Yugoslav popular culture in both past and present contexts.

2 The last Yugoslavs and re-negotiated ‘brotherhood’

The depiction of the main protagonists in Grlić’s and Šeregi’s movies highlights the interplay between dominant frameworks of identity. Rather than offering unilateral representations of Yugoslavia, the characters embody heterogeneous discourses: the idea of Yugoslav “brotherhood” and dominant late Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav discourses. Oscillating between the state-sponsored and unofficial realms, and challenging the emblematic notion of “brotherhood and unity” among the Yugoslav nations, the depiction of the characters forces us to question differences between the Croatian and Serbian ethnic-nationalisms in the post-Yugoslav context. In this respect, Grlić’s and Šeregi’s comedies offer a plethora of possibilities for observing the complex relations and dynamics between collective identities and thus provide a new allegorical image of the SFRY’s 1980s.

The treatment of the idea of Yugoslav brotherhood in *The Border Post* and *ZG80* suggests two different ways in which official narratives and symbols can be re-evaluated. The idea of a pan-Yugoslav “brotherhood and unity” was an important feature of socialist ideology. While initially conceived as a counterweight to ethno-nationalist agendas, the idea of brotherhood and unity became the country’s central myth – its “civil religion” – in the latter years of Yugoslav socialism (Perica 2002, 99, 100; Wachtel 1998, 128–134). Grlić’s and Šeregi’s films alternate between two different designations of this fraternal collective

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the SFRY. *Black and White World* had four seasons, and figures as one of the most popular Croatian Television series in this century; it was also successfully shown in other former Yugoslav republics.

identity: on the one hand, unity exemplifies Yugoslav identity; on the other, its role and significance are explicitly challenged. Notably, though, the phenomenon transcends gendered and social hierarchies.

In *The Border Post*, Grlić uses a military setting to interrogate discourses around brotherhood. This setting is dually significant. First, the Yugoslav People's Army (JNA) is symbolic of the state security apparatus. Second, as Tanja Petrović notes, military service was perceived in the SFRY as a step toward manhood. Military service was "ideologically shaped both as a central embodiment and the main agent of brotherhood and unity of all people living in Yugoslav state and was usually referred to as 'the forge of Yugoslavism' and 'a school of brotherhood and unity'" (Petrović 2010, 62).[10] Thus both the army and Lieutenant Pašić are symbolic protectors of the official state-sponsored brotherhood and unity. Siniša and Ljuba's friendship only comes about due to their military service. But their relationship – an interaction between a Croat and a Serb – is framed by a grassroots and generational identity drawn from pop culture and particularly Yugoslav New Wave rock. The two soldiers are depicted mainly through the representation of their leisure time, during which they constantly seek ways to escape military discipline – and to listen to Yugoslav rock music.

The importance of Yugoslav rock music to the two soldiers' friendship reflects its historic centrality to the last Yugoslav generation (Volčič 2007, 78–79). As Vjekoslav Perica notes, however, not only had Yugoslav rock music and popular culture shaped the generations of Yugoslavs since the 1960s, it became a site for the intergenerational transfer of partisan and socialist mythology in the 1970s and 1980s (2012, 55–62). Ljiljana Reinkowski notes that the Yugoslav New Wave scene transcended music to become a mirror for sociopolitical developments and concerns. By the end of the socialist period, the rock scene finally addressed societal circumstances and official discourses critically (2014, 394–395).

Reinkowski thus reminds us that the entire New Wave scene in Yugoslavia was more than just a rock music scene. It included other artforms and embraced diverse forms of social bonding and identification. She further argues that New Wave and Yu-rock offered alternative frameworks of brotherhood beyond official and ethnonational lines: these genres are uncompromisingly Yugoslav and supranational, yet also decentralised in structure and content (Reinkowski 2014, 395). This decentralisation hinges on transnational relations as international sources and cultural practices. Thus, as two frameworks seem to be both intersected and opposed to each other, the negotiation between two versions of brotherhood – the state's sacred military service and the rock scene's universalism – stresses distinctions along generational lines. The appeal to these differences recalls Perica's distinction between two Yugoslav eras: the "partisan" and the "post-partisan" generations (Perica 2014, 104; 2012, 245). Perica's delineation and differentiation between these two (heroic) Yugoslav generations does not necessarily imply conflict. Rather, it invites a transgenerational and heroic continuity and, therefore, does not exclude the possibility of a dialogue between the two. In Grlić's movie, however, not only does the "New Wave brotherhood" appears to be more favoured, but it also seems to remind the viewers which one of the two managed to outlive the Yugoslav state and official ideology.[11]

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[10] Petrović highlights three main memory narratives related to the experiences of JNA service among male Yugoslavs: "the narratives of male friendship, 'school of life' narratives, and narratives of subversive strategies undertaken by soldiers" (2010, 66).

Šeregi's *ZG80* also portrays negotiations between official and unofficial forms of brotherhood. In this film, however, the state's idea of brotherhood and unity is opposed by football fans' grassroots subculture, which is based on explicitly regional and national symbols. Both groups of fans display regional and local dialects. Club symbols replace overarching Yugoslav imagery. The state's patriotic songs are even deliberately subverted. As in *The Border Post*, one narrative line in particular underlines fraternal links. In this case, *ZG80* establishes the image of tied 'brothers': a Zagreb and a Belgrade fan are arrested and handcuffed together, then we watch as the pair cooperate to escape the police.

ZG80 portrays the Yugoslav socialist state as an entirely repressive entity that can only use force – handcuffs and police activity – to impose its vision of supranational brotherhood. Real brotherhood, as displayed by the football fans on both sides, emerges spontaneously and organically only because of and through resistance to the state. Unlike the dialogue and interplay at the heart of *The Border Post*, fraternal relationships in *ZG80* are part of an "involuntary brotherhood" (Zimmermann 2014, 12). The eventual liberation of the two cuffed protagonists metaphorically connotes the separation of the two nations. The period of collaboration and cooperation, which only comes about through force in the first place, ends in a re-imagining of the separation of two nations: the reality of the 1990s' violent break-up is subverted, but only by excluding Yugoslavian socialism's key tenet of brotherhood.

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[11] In turn, however, the movie's ending displays Grlić's allusion regarding the allegory of Yugoslavia and its ending. As one of several plot elements that were changed from Ante Tomić's novel, the movie concludes its depiction of the late Yugoslav period rather tragically, and thus via the tragic death of Mirjana, being represented as an innocent victim in cross-fire which resulted after the fight between Ljuba and the lieutenant.

3 Yugoslav New Wave and multiple layers of (Yugo-)nostalgia

By depicting youth and popular culture of the Yugoslav 1980s and by highlighting diverse frameworks of collective identities, the three works I explore invite multiple delineations and usages of (Yugo-)nostalgia. The works at hand include elements of critical reflection, retro-irony and self-reflexive mythologisation of collective identities. Mieke Bal understands nostalgia as a relation to the past, and not as essentially false or regressive (1999, xi), so the tonalities resulting from such multiplicities may include critical reflexivity and point to often marginalised aspects of the past (rather than, for example, making moral, ethical or negative judgements on socio-political matters).

ZG80 foregrounds a retrospective narrative view of late socialist Yugoslavia by explicitly parodying official socialist discourses and events. For example, in several scenes, patriotic Yugoslav songs are lyrically appropriated, Tito's picture and slogans are ridiculed, and security personnel is depicted one-dimensionally and through parody. This narrative view, though, should not be mistaken for a regressive, static nostalgia: through parody and high level of irony, the "retro" mode de-mythologises the past, and thus "ruptures us from [what] came before" (Guffey, cited in Velikonja 2008, 32–33). Moreover, the depiction of the past in the main protagonists' actions shows no affective bond with the state symbols. The past, in this respect, is mainly viewed as a playground for ironic re-creation from a safe distance. Furthermore, *ZG80* does not afford any space for elements of retro-utopia, which would seek for the utopian elements from the past to be re-mediated and re-articulated in the present (Velikonja 2008).

The Border Post reveals the potential of re-evaluating and reflecting on the past period and official discourses. The official setting is coloured by recurring subtle and ironic criticism of official hierarchies shown in Ljuba's constant pranks and in the relations between the protagonists (who metonymically represent diverse generational identities). Here, generational differences suggest the outdated nature of official discourse in the 1980s (Perica 2012, 51–55) in a clash between the lieutenant, who represents the state and the older generation, and the younger Ljuba. In the movie's pivotal scene, this includes an act of subversion of the cult of Tito and socialist mythology of martyrdom. Ljuba scrawls the name of a popular rock band, *Electric Orgasm* (*Električni Orgazam*), by rearranging the letters from a Tito quote that hangs on the wall of the border post: "Let us protect brotherhood and unity like the apple of our eye." Ljuba explains to Lieutenant Pašić that he intended to bring a more "contemporary look" to the venue and the army's slogans. By deconstructing Tito's famous quote, Ljuba re-evaluates the legacy of official discourse in the present. Moreover, by replacing it with the name of a popular New Wave Yugoslav rock band, Ljuba also articulates the younger generation's desire to see non-official culture gain visibility. Ljuba opens up a narrative space for the subversion of the past, for yearning for missed opportunities, and suggests that the potentiality of the new and non-official culture will "overwrite" the discourses of the past.

Black and White World also draws on pop culture – especially New Wave music – and youth culture, using these tropes to inscribe new trajectories into micro-stories that seem uncoupled from the master narratives of the 1980s. As a result, and unlike in Grlić's and Šeregi's movies, Kulenović's television series highlights a generational plurality among the main characters. As Martin Pogačar observes, in contrast to the cinema, the television "endowed everyday life with the specific rhythm of the continuous presence of 'action', event and entertainment" (2010, 205). Indeed, through the seriality of the medium, the work mimics everyday reality and has a potential to grasp the more nuanced depiction of the past, i.e. the society through the representation of various generations. Similarly, it suggests the normalisation of the Yugoslav New Wave, or to convey at least the co-existence of diverse generations.

Black and White World recreates the mythology of the 1980s counter-cultural scene as an alternative collective identity. In this televisual world, Yugoslav's young are influenced above all by New Wave music. The work's soundtrack is a de facto playlist of the period: indeed, even the name *Black and White World* alludes to a hit by the Zagreb-based New Wave band *Prljavo Kazalište*, and the actual song appears in the entry credits of each episode. Each episode's title refers to a song by a band of the period, and the nicknames of two protagonists, Voljen Kipčić ("Kipo") and Marina, allude to works by *Azra*, a cult band from Zagreb. The self-reflexive relationship between fiction and reality is further buttressed by the direct and indirect involvement on screen of fictional characters and protagonists from the New Wave scene. Various characters take part in constructing the mythological narrative of the New Wave rock scene as an alternative to the official brotherhood identity. Taken as a composite, they show us every part of the scene: Željko is a fan and a witness, as we frequently see him buying records and attending concerts; Una plays bass in a band, showing the viewer life on the inside of the scene; Voljen, a journalist for a student newspaper, figures as the movement's commentator and chronicler. Kulenović describes the past but also reaffirms and further constructs its significance to youth, providing new testaments and comments in Voljen's newspaper: the series is both memory-making and memory-reflective (Erll 2008, 391; 2005, 269).

In the same way that *Black and White World* re-collects and self-reflexively produces various features of New Wave, it also serves as a site of re-mediating collective memory of the period. In this respect, the serial is similar to two other proto-Yugonostalgic televisual and multimedial texts: *Reckless Youth* (*Grlom u jagode*, 1976) – one of the most popular Yugoslav television series – and *Lexicon of YU-Mythology* (*Leksikon YU Mitologije,* Adrić and Arsenijević 2004; cf. Bošković 2013). These works are similar in thematic scope and structure and in their treatment of pop-cultural/generational features. Martin Pogačar, examining *Reckless Youth*, speaks of "Yugoslav interfilmic referentiality" as one of the signalling features in the visual production of the period and its memory-making. This referentiality "creates a commonly recognizable symbolic universe", and viewed in retrospect, "constitutes the symbolic universe of the past" (Pogačar 2010, 208). However, in Kulenović's *Black and White World*, there are no predominant referential elements explicitly related to other films from the period. Instead, through the involvement of both characters and actors, and via re-created and re-mediated images of the events and original takes, *Black and White World* does not just construct a nostalgic narrative for the new generation, but outlines the contour of what might be termed as the "(post-)Yugoslav inter-pop-cultural referentiality".[12]

By including a variety of generations and a greater range of pop-cultural re-mediations, the series also conveys the multiple layers of (Yugo-)nostalgia. It alludes equally to different frameworks and nostalgic evocations of collective identities and mythologies – to the generation of the 1980s and to New Wave especially – and invites the generational transfer of remediated memories. Moreover, Kulenović also deploys nostalgia to highlight the continuity in personal and collective biographies. As suggested by Tanja Petrović (2012, 131–132), this is one of the dominant features of nostalgia, which also serves as a form of resistance to another generalisation regarding the images of the Yugoslav past.

Lastly, *Black and White World* links the memory of Yugoslav youth to the emergence of the New Wave scene. Each episode culminates to the tune of a rock song from the period. The music and ending highlight the dramatic situation in the plot, then refer to each of the protagonists. By stripping the last word from the narrator, and by emphasising the interplay of the New Wave sound and the everyday images of numerous protagonists and members of different generations, the series offers the potential (post-)Yugoslav soundtrack version of the period. Moreover, the sound makes a clear interference into the everyday dramas, issues and relations among different protagonists and generations, and thereby explicates the absolute involvement and emergence of the generation of ‘Last Yugoslavs’.

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[12] The series is highly self-reflexive and self-referential also in re-mediating the pop-cultural/Yu-rock material. The most interesting example could be in the last episode of the fourth, i.e. final season, and its ending in particular. Namely, the episode *Mind the last song playing* (*Obrati pažnju na poslednju stvar*) by *Azra*, the series' closing soundtrack is the ballad *Nostalgic song* (*Nostalgična*) by the Split Fusion Rock band *The Beat Fleet*, released in 2004.

4 Conclusion: (Yugo-)nostalgia and memory transfers reconsidered

Dalibor Mišina, writing on Yugonostalgia among younger generations, warns us to move beyond “nostalgia reductionism” – that is, reading every representation of the socialist past as a post-socialist nostalgia narrative (2016, 339). Likewise, Petrović states that Yugonostalgia is frequently defined in general, and yet deconstructed in particular terms (2012, 134). *The Border Post*, *ZG80* and *Black and White World* do not dismiss the tropes of nostalgia altogether. However, they inject dynamism and irony into the set of binaries – official/unofficial, before/after, old/young, unity/disunity – that has often framed the memory narratives of the Yugoslav past. As a result, these works are involved in active reflection on a series of sites of memory that range from the official to the unofficial.

Therefore, these texts fit easily into Svetlana Boym’s category of reflective nostalgic narratives. They negotiate various identities, memory sites and rarely offer conclusive stories about the past or final readings of the past made in the present. They thus combine both affect and critical reflection. Inevitably, as they strive to represent the Yugoslav past, they draw to the surface a set of identity markers from the period. By doing so, however, they do not merely restore them. Instead, they draw various lines of intersections around the official, unofficial and pop-cultural. These works show not a static, retrogressive past, but function as sites of memory in the making: this dynamism reflects, and is reflected in, the idea of the 1980s not as the “before” to the 1990s’ “after”, but as a temporal site of generational and cultural transition. If, as Mitja Velikonja argues, Yugonostalgia is an inevitable code of cultural and political communication in post-SFRY societies (2009, 384), then the screen provides opportunities to ensure that such nostalgia is reflective rather than regressive. I have shown the capacities of cinematic Yugonostalgia to question the one-dimensional image of the late Yugoslav period and act as a site of negotiation between different identities.

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Part II: **Thematic Perspectives**

Jade McGlynn, Karoline Thaidigsmann & Nina Friess

Promoting Patriotism, Suppressing Dissent Views: The Making of Historical Narratives and National Identity in Russia and Poland

1 Russia's 'single stream history' for a nation united

Since 2012, the field of memory studies of post-Soviet Russia has become increasingly crowded, in part because of the Russian government's creation of a Great Patriotic War cult. The Great Patriotic War has become an integral element of the Russian state's definition of patriotism. Politicians and state-aligned media alike have helped to compensate for the diminishing memory of the war as a lived experience by introducing policies designed to inculcate the population with respect for the war legacy, by codifying official historical narratives in legislation, and by excessively using historical analogies. Politicians and the media have invoked the Great Patriotic War as a lens through which to understand more recent crises spanning the war in Ukraine to worsening relations with the USA and EU.

Citing the tragedies and triumphs of 1941–1945 as if they were innate Russian characteristics, Russian politicians' mnemonic discourse recalls Bernhard Giesen's (2004) theory that triumph and tragedy/trauma function as the two extremes against which national identity is discursively constructed. As the successor state to the USSR, Russia's great power status is, perhaps, even dependent on the legacy of the Great Victory of 1945. Consequently, any challenges to Russia's status as victor and liberator in World War II threaten to damage Russia's sense of identity and its geopolitical ambitions (Torbakov 2011). This fragility has led to what Elena Rozhdestvenskaya has described as "the hyper-exploitation of the past Victory" of 1945, which involves "the constant making present of the war experience" (2015). While the Great Patriotic War plays the most prominent role in Russia's standard cultural historical narrative, the "making present" of historical episodes extends beyond the Great Victory. Depending on the political needs of the moment, politicians and the media also try to "make present" periods from the Cold War, the Brezhnev-era, and the immediate post-war years. Indeed, the "making present" of selected episodes of Russian and world history is an integral part of ensuring the government's own political legitimacy and disseminating its approach to patriotism.

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The Russian government and media use selected historical episodes – all of which carry broadly heroic and positive connotations – to construct a standardised cultural historical narrative. This narrative is collage-like and eclectic, yet the government insists it be interpreted in the 'correct' patriotic way due to the cultural significance and continued political relevance of the events it contains. To embrace an incorrect interpretation would demonstrate a lack of Russianness. That conflation, of one's Russianness and one's interpretation of history, is made possible by the promotion of 'single-stream history' or the notion of Russian history as 1,000-years of continued tradition.

This emphasis on history's potentially unifying characteristics was mirrored in changes to the way the government promoted patriotism during President Putin's third term. Prior to 2012, the government sought to demonstrate a visible state identity that legitimised the worldview of "derzhavnost", or the importance of a strong state (Sanina 2012). Scholars of patriotism in Putin's first and second term had noted that the government was then openly assertive about organising patriotic movements, such as the youth organisation *Ours* (*Nashi* [Atwal and Bacon 2012]). By contrast, more recent studies of Russian nationalism (Kolstø and Blakkisrud 2016, 2018; Roberts 2017; Aridici 2018; Laruelle 2018), have concluded that the state prefers to outsource its funding for such patriotic groups – the chief beneficiaries are the so-called "government-organised NGOs" (GONGOs) – which allows the state to create the impression of an organic upswell in patriotism.

The post-2012 reduction in the state's visible involvement in patriotic activity was accompanied by a heightened mediatisation and the widespread depiction of images that appeared to show ordinary people performing unextraordinary, everyday patriotic actions. While the 'for-show' ("pokaznoi") patriotism of Victory Day is unlikely to be abandoned, it is now accompanied by government-managed and appropriated grassroots patriotic activities, which provide additional legitimation to the state. Recent studies have further charted a symbiotic relationship between the state's appropriation of everyday patriotism and the increased commodification of patriotism across the population (Efremova 2017; Kalinina 2017; Rann 2016; Skvirskaja 2016). The government and media sought to reinforce and realise state-approved depictions of patriotic activities by creating opportunities for citizens to engage with a standard cultural historical narrative at, for example, military-patriotic or military history clubs (Le Huérou 2015; Dahlin 2017; Sanina 2017).

The Russian state has also introduced negative reinforcements to inculcate its view of history. Scholars have noted the deleterious effects of Russian legislation restricting different historical narratives and catalogued the harassment of those who voice alternative views of history (Edele 2017; Koposov 2017, 207–237; Khrebtan-Hörhager 2016). This legislation has been part of the government's efforts to unite the population around an unambiguous and presentist interpretation of the past. An interpretation of the past that privileges stability and continuity also maintains the political status quo (Bassin et al. 2017; Ferretti 2017). Oleg Reut notes the Putin government's "zeal" for encouraging young Russians to identify with the official memory of the war. He notes, however, that the state is also set on turning this identification into support for the government itself.[1] As a result, it has become ever more challenging to discuss alternative historical narratives in Russia. Cultural artefacts – especially books – are one of the few remaining means to present history in a way that deviates from official interpretations as Nina Friess will show in her following chapter.

However, the Russian government is not alone in using populist and nationalist history to cohere and unify cultural memory. There are clear – and somewhat ironic – parallels with other countries in Eastern Europe that have engaged in similar memory politics, often while engaging in memory wars with Russia (Ágh 2016; Schellenberg 2016). Russia's use of memory laws and employment of the media and state organisations to conduct memory politics should thus be contextualised within the memory culture of the wider region.

2 Competing narratives for Poland's divided nation

Conventional ideas of patriotism – understood as devotion to one's home country, readiness for self-sacrifice and heroism have traditionally played an important role in Poland. This importance has generally been explained by the country's history and its lack of state sovereignty for long periods of time: Poland was partitioned by Russia, Prussia and the Habsburg Monarchy at the end of the eighteenth century; the country regained its sovereignty only in 1918. In the long period of "statelessness", Polish culture – in particular Romantic literature – fostered ideas of national unity and identity and emphasised the obligation to dedicate one's life to the fight for Poland's independence. There was, culturally and patriotically speaking, little room for diversification or for individual needs. The German and Soviet occupations during World War II and the communist period prolonged the narrative that individuals ought to be subordinated to the common cause. After the fall of communism, this attitude did not vanish. However, it was contested by other ideas about the relationship between the nation and the individual more strongly than before. Poland's integration into the European Union in 2004 further fuelled the evolution of these ideas. The simultaneous relevance and rejection of the traditional concept of patriotism in contemporary society is expressed in singer-songwriter Maria Peszek's 2012 hit "Sorry Poland": "Poland, I would not give you a single drop of my blood / Sorry, Poland / Don't make me fight / Don't make me die / Do not claim my blood, Poland." Peszek both alludes to and rejects the traditional "canon" of Polish patriotic values.

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[1] Reut, Oleg. "Posleslovie k Dnyu Pobedy: kuda uidet 'Bessmertnyi polk'?" *Chernika*, 12 May 2016, https://mustoi.ru/posleslovie-k-dnyu-pobedy-kuda-ujdet-bessmertnyj-polk/ (9 May 2020).

The national conservative Law and Justice (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*, PiS) party's victory in the national elections of 2015 (and the following elections in 2019) marked a turning point. The party's triumph led to a strong renationalisation of Polish cultural identity and brought about significant changes in patriotic education, historical policy and culture. Prime Minister Beata Szydło outlined her new government's agenda in parliament on 18 November 2015:

> We have to reshape our state – once it was the object of Polish pride. This concerns the entire educational policy, but also cultural policy. It must serve to strengthen patriotic attitudes. It must make broad use of the great opportunities that the realm of culture offers for reconstructing and for building Polish memory. Supported by public funding, works should be created that will tell Poland and the world about our outstanding compatriots, our heroes. They will be an inspiration for future Polish generations. Let us not be ashamed to build the ethos of the Polish heroes. Let us always remember them.[2]

A "pedagogy of shame" – a term used by PiS to defame both the previous liberal government and liberal cultural institutions and artists – was to be substituted by an attitude of national pride (Kaluza 2018). According to the party's election campaign slogan, the new approach was a nationalistic "good change". In order to promote its ideas on Polish cultural identity, PiS has fostered a social policy focused on the promotion of the traditional family. At the same time, the government has tried to gain control over judicial, medial and cultural institutions. Job and funding applications in education, science and culture have increasingly been subject to screening for traditional patriotic attitudes. In recent years, this policy has led to numerous dismissals and replacements. For example, Paweł Machcewicz, the liberal founding director of Gdansk's Museum of World War II, which sought to present the Polish war experience within an overarching narrative of European and global war experiences, was dismissed shortly after the museum's opening in 2017 (Logemann and Tomann 2019).[3]

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[2] "Regierungserklärung von Ministerpräsidentin Beata Szydło. Stenogramm (Auszüge)." *Polen-Analysen* 173 (2015), https://www.laender-analysen.de/polen/pdf/PolenAnalysen173.pdf (15 May 2021).

Since PiS' ascension to power, society has increasingly been divided into ideological camps – or at least the public discourse about such a division has become omnipresent.[4] This presents a contrast with Russia, where the government's narratives dominate public discourse to such an extent that little space remains for differing opinions. The divisions in Polish society can also be seen in the attitudes of the younger generations, which an example taken from the realm of social activities neatly demonstrates. In recent years, young Poles have participated in chauvinistic Independence Day marches in Warsaw, organised by radical right-wing organisations and openly displaying xenophobic and antisemitic attitudes on 11 November. At the same time, other young Poles take part in annual "marches of equality", advocating a more open and (sexually) diverse society. These marches of equality demonstrate that politics in Poland is not homogenous. The social climate in different parts of Poland strongly depends on the attitude of local politicians and groups. While a number of municipalities have proclaimed "LGTB-free zones" since 2019,[5] in other places leading politicians were quick to join the crowds of equality marchers, thus giving official weight to the pro-diversity movement.[6]

The cultural realm is equally divided. In the arts, there are strong liberal currents – and sometimes openly left-wing sympathies, as can be seen in the agenda of the publishing house *Krytyka Polityczna*. Simultaneously, news books, plays and particularly films propagate a selective, heroic picture of Polish history and celebrate traditional patriotic values. The animated short film *The Unconquered* (2017; Michał Misiński), which depicts Poland's role in twentieth-century history, exemplifies the binary narrative of victimhood and heroism that the government promotes. The film was produced by the Institute of National Remembrance to mark the centenary of Poland's independence and was used to promote Polish history and culture abroad (Kaluza 2018). In spite of such examples, and while the government can use its state power to determine the narratives of state run cultural institutions like museums, PiS cannot exert total control of narratives in literature, film or in the theatre. Nevertheless, artists and writers who question the government's cultural and historical politics are often defamed by national conservative circles and excluded from funding.

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[3] On the idea of the museum see Machcewicz (2019).

[4] Analysts see one reason for the PiS' success in the fact that a division in society had already occurred under the former liberal government, and that the government then did not take countermeasures. This resulted in what the PiS likes to call propagandistically the division between "the people" and "the elites" (Buras 2018, 137).

[5] "Parliament Strongly Condemns 'LGBTI-Free Zones' in Poland." *European Parliament News*, 18 December 2019, https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/en/press-room/20191212IPR68923/parliament-strongly-condemns-lgbti-free-zones-in-poland (21 May, 2021).

[6] The city president of Poznań, Jacek Jaśkowiak, was the first Polish city president to take part in a march of equality in 2015. In 2017 the city president of Gdansk Paweł Adamowicz (who in 2019 was killed in an assassination attempt on him) followed Jaśkowiak's example ("Prezydent Jacek Jaśkowiak obejmie patronatem Marsz Równości." *Gazeta Wyborcza (Poznan)*, 18 July 2018, https://poznan.wyborcza.pl/poznan/7,36001,23680361,prezydent-jacek-jaskowiak-obejmie-patronatem-marsz-rownosci.html?disableRedirects=true (21 May 2021).

3 Interrogating engagement and introducing engagingness

In the three chapters that follow, we interrogate the different ways in which independent cultural practitioners and government organisations in contemporary Poland and Russia engage primarily young audiences in implicit and explicit questions of patriotism and national identity. How do artists, writers, cultural practitioners and government-funded organisations elicit their audiences' interest in questions of patriotism – and to what end do they do so? Across the papers, we examine the objectives of everyone from writers who encourage readers to reflect critically on narratives of cultural identity to state-funded initiatives that encourage participants to internalise and reproduce politicised conceptions of national and cultural identity. This shift in objective is reflected in the various actors' approaches.

Our chapters are best read with an eye to the difference between the potential to truly engage audiences, on the one hand, and the ability – and desire – to merely simulate such engagement, on the other. We delineate different types of engagement. These include the critical intellectual engagement encouraged in children's literature – analysed in Nina Friess' and Karoline Thaidigsmann's chapters on Russia and Poland respectively – that challenges dominant government narratives. In her chapter, Jade McGlynn introduces the concept of 'engagingness' to describe government-funded activities or works that encourage young audiences to reproduce set narratives without developing independent critical interests in the topic, thereby discouraging the intellectual agency needed for true engagement. Broadly speaking, we could define such approaches as *critical* and *non-critical* forms of engagement.

Anne Hamby et al. (2018) emphasise the need to differentiate between critical and non-critical engagement. In their view, true engagement requires a critical reflexivity towards the narrative itself, a certain amount of distance. This notion of critical reflection is central to our working definition of engagement.

Even though dictionaries fail to provide a suitable working definition of engagement against which to measure the activities of our research subjects, some entries distinguish between transitive and intransitive uses of engagement (i.e. engagement as a *state* versus engagement of *someone*).[7] We are primarily interested in intransitive engagement. Most academic literature on youth engagement and participation has, however, tended to focus on how young people engage with politics or society or the question of how and whether young people participate (Weiss 2020). In contrast, we look at engagement from the perspective of the production of narratives and activities: how do authors and organisers attempt to engage – and *do* they truly attempt to engage – their audiences?

Literary reception theory and communication studies provide useful ideas that help to differentiate (narrative) engagement and to better understand the interaction between producer and recipient. In *The Act of Reading*, Wolfgang Iser (1978) explores how authors induce engagement in their audiences and stimulate them, producing meaning as a result. Iser suggests that neither the text nor the reader can produce meaning on their own. Instead, the use of specific text structures and elements by the author can be understood as a way to endow the text with a potential for meaning. To realise this meaning, the text requires readers that may or may not take up this potential and interpret it differently on the basis of their literary, cultural and lived experiences. This, however, does not mean that interpretation becomes random. Quite the opposite: textual structures limit and direct possible interpretations (albeit they do not narrowly define them). To realise its potential, a literary text needs its readers' cooperation or – we could say – their engagement.

The engagement *of someone* can be understood in our case studies as an effort to stimulate readers' interest and participation in a topic or activity. Active participation denotes a critical and reflexive stance that assumes agency on the part of the audience: it requires more than simply receiving or enjoying the information. This active and critical reflexivity denotes a state of *engagement* in the intransitive sense. This definition helpfully delineates the methods for eliciting interest that the authors of the following three chapters identified in their respective research subjects. While Friess and Thaidigsmann examine cultural actors who share an intention to engage their readers, McGlynn's state-aligned actors do not meet the criteria for inciting true engagement. While they seek to elicit interest, absorption and emotional connection, they also actively dissuade their audiences from reflecting critically on the subject matter: audiences are allotted copycat roles and thus dissuaded from measuring the narratives they hear against their own sense of self. To characterise such activities as efforts that interest but do not engage fully, we use the term ‘engagingness’. We hope that the following chapters show the usefulness of differentiating between engagement and engagingness, particularly within the Polish and Russian contexts, where the governments actively promote politicised narratives of the past that privilege emotional connection over intellectual or critical response.

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[7] See "Engagement" in *Cambridge English Dictionary*, available at https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/engagement and in *Oxford English Dictionary*, available at https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/62197 (19 January 2021).

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Jade McGlynn

Living Forms of Patriotism: Engaging Young Russians in Military History?

1 The prominence of the past

In 2012, Vladimir Putin met with representatives of self-proclaimed patriotic youth organisations, delivering a speech on the need for "living forms of patriotism",[1] which in practice meant bringing the memory of Russian military history to life. Foremost among these organisations was the Russian Military Historical Society (*Rossiyskoe voenno-istoricheskoe obshchestvo*; RMHS), established by presidential decree No. 1710 in 2012 to encourage and curate the study of Russia's military past.[2] The RMHS' remit covers an extensive range of historical "infotainment" and patriotic education: blockbuster films, street murals, textbooks and Russia's largest online history portal, *istoriya.rf*. Tasked with framing Russia's past as triumphant and forming a historical and cultural consciousness in young people, the RMHS has played a pivotal role in realising the Kremlin's political uses of history since 2012.[3]

In the last decade, the Russian government has centred narratives of the past on a selective vision of patriotism. Nowhere is the battle over the nation's youth more heated than in the context of history, and military history in particular. While the prominent role of the Great Patriotic War in Russian society is hard to overstate, the government's historical narrative does extend further. Tsarist-era battles like Borodino, the dynastic crises and invasions at the turn of the seventeenth century and other so-called Times of Troubles, such as the chaotic 1990s, all feature in the state's programme. The government has selected – and selectively interpreted – past events to create a historical collage that emphasises a strong state, social stability and an aggressive defensive posture towards the west. The government presents this collage as a point of unification, bringing the country together around a shared narrative and view of the past (Malinova 2019; Kalinin 2011; Bækken and Enstad 2020).

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[1] "Vstrecha s predstavitelyami obshchestvennosti po voprosam patrioticheskogo vospitaniya." *Kremlin.Ru*, 2012, http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/16470 (27 June 2021).

[2] It should be noted that the RMHS claims continuity with an organisation begun by Nicholas I and so describes itself as 110 years old. This claim reflects the government and the president's obsession with creating a sense of continuity between Russia's past and present.

[3] "Otchet o deyatel'nosti 2013–2017. Rossiyskoe Voenno-Istoricheskoe Obshchestvo 110 let." *RVIO*, 2017, http://online.pubhtml5.com/oafa/ihiv/#p=1 (27 June 2021).

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The government uses patriotic historical narratives as part of its efforts to unite an ethnically diverse population and legitimise the Kremlin's great power aspirations, fuelling what Emil Pain (2016) described as an imperial, as opposed to ethno-nationalist, consciousness and nationalism. The Russian language has two words for 'Russian': "russkiy", which generally denotes ethnic Russians, and "rossiysskiy", which encompasses all those belonging to the multinational Russian Federation. Any focus on a purely ethnic Russian identity ("russkiy") would alienate other Russian ("rossiyskiy") nationalities. The sphere of history, by contrast, is more inclusive, and continues the imperial and Soviet tradition of accentuating Russia's role as first among equals in an ethnically diverse country. The government's collage of historical narratives underscores Russia's leadership role and emphasises the collective. This creates the impression that "all of us [. . .] ethnic Russians and minorities [alike] have something in common, something that is very important for all of us. At this moment anything that makes us different or sometimes divides us is not important."[4]

Oleg Reut notes both the current government's "zeal" for people to identify with its memory of the Great Patriotic War and its enthusiasm for turning this identification into support for the government itself.[5] Nikolai Koposov (2017) has argued that political culture in both Russian and Europe has left the age of ideology and entered the age of memory, in which historical narratives play an increasingly important role as signifiers of political belonging and belief. In this chapter, I explore how government-funded organisations have sought to bring the "age of memory" to a younger audience, paying close attention to how those organisations have attempted to make selected historical events relevant to adolescents. The establishment of RMHS and its promotion of state-sponsored historical narratives in youth and popular culture has been a key part of the effort to enlist youth participation in patriotic history. The Ministry of Culture's annual reports reveal that the government declared young people the priority target audience for their historical narratives and activities.[6] As such, the government is actively creating the conditions to bring history to life but, as I argue, the purpose of these activities is not to elicit true engagement. Instead, the government seems to produce the quality of *engagingness*.

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4 "Bessmertnyy Polk zakladyvaet podlinnuyu osnovu grazhdanskoy solidarnosti." *NKO22*, 20 November 2015, https://www.nko22.ru/news/bessmertnyy-polk-zakladyvaet-podlinnuyu-osnovu-grazhdanskoy-solidarnosti/ (27 June 2021).

5 "Posleslovie k Dnyu Pobedy: kuda uidet 'Bessmertnyi polk'?" *Chernika* (blog), 12 May 2016, https://mustoi.ru/posleslovie-k-dnyu-pobedy-kuda-ujdet-bessmertnyj-polk/ (27 June 2021).

6 "Godovoy otchet 2015." *Ministerstvo Kul'tury Rossiiskoy Federatsii*, 2016, http://www.mkrf.ru/activities/reports/report2015/ (27 June 2021); "Kul'tura – deyatel'nost' i otchety." *Ministerstvo Kul'tury Rossiiskoy Federatsii*, 2019, https://www.mkrf.ru/activities/reports/ (27 June 2021).

2 Methodology and sources

To date, studies focused on military history in youth-oriented patriotic activities have tended to apply the lens of militarisation and/or securitisation (Laruelle 2015; Le Huérou 2015; Konkka 2020). In contrast, I concentrate on the importance of engaging youth in patriotic education as a key objective for the military history clubs and tours. Engendering interest in, and encouraging and provoking critical engagement with, narratives of the past are two different phenomena. The latter involves allowing the audience agency and reflexivity towards those narratives; the former does not. If an outreach or promotional activity does not encourage reflexivity and a critical approach, then it cannot be said to meet the definition of engagement. I argue that the Russian government's efforts – at least as reflected in the RMHS – cannot be described as seeking the engagement of young people. Instead, their actions form a sort of pseudo-engagement that discourages critical reflection; they are thus better read as the product of engagingness.

To explore the nature of this engagingness, I draw upon a framing analysis of 72 statements, documents and interviews in which Vladimir Putin, Vladimir Medinskiy (Minister of Culture 2012–2019 and now presidential aide) and RMHS representatives elucidate their aims and objectives in creating military history camps and tours for young people. I draw on Jim Kuypers' approach to explore the framing of the patriotic activities. According to Kuypers (2009, 181–204), a frame functions to define a problem and its causes, to assert the moral dimensions of the problem and then to propose a solution. To contextualise these and other findings, I also use excerpts from an interview I conducted with an RMHS employee in 2018.

I supplement this framing analysis by examining which history is included within a range of government-funded activities for 12–17 year olds: the *Roads of Victory* (*Dorogi Pobedy*) military history tours,[7] the *Country of Heroes* (*Strana geroev*), *Nevsky Pyatachok Bridgehead* (*Platsdarm* "*Nevskiy pyatachok*"), and the *Forgotten Feat* (*Zabytyi podvig*) military history camps/festivals.[8] I chose to analyse camps and tours with direct funding and involvement from RMHS, so that the activities could reasonably be viewed as a part of a wider government effort to engender patriotism through history. Through personal interviews with organisers and topical analysis of published marketing brochures and websites, I identify the type of activities used at the camps and tours to "bring history to life" (that is, to make the past relevant and relatable). I do not examine participants' feedback, since the scope of the research is limited to the production of patriotism and whether certain narratives and activities are intended to engage. Assessing whether or not the audiences do actually engage is beyond this purview.

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[7] RMHS established the *Roads of Victory* tours in 2014 together with *Rosturizm* (the federal tourism agency, which operates under the Ministry for Culture). By 2019, over 718,000 children from across Russia had taken part in one of the 33 available tours, which I analyse for historical topic(s) and types of activities through the downloadable programmes provided on the website. All the tours were provided free to successful applicants, with all costs covered. Most of the tours were based around Moscow and lasted one-and-a-half to five hours. These tours were often little more than an excursion and guided tour around one or two museums. However, there were also several two-day tours outside of the capital.

[8] These camps were fully or partly organised by the Russian Military Historical Society and are mainly targeted at secondary school children. The *Country of Heroes* camps, held in 2019 and 2020, have five streams: Defenders; Media of Victory; Guardians of History; Post No.1

3 Justifying the centrality of history

The Russian government's framing of patriotic historical initiatives targeted at the young largely assumed the following form: the speakers defined the *problem* as the threat of historical and cultural corruption from outside, positioned foreign or "wrong" interpretations of the past as the *moral dimension*, and then depicted patriotic activity, namely the active interaction with a patriotic history, as the *solution* to the aforementioned problem. For example, Putin, Medinskiy and RMHS representatives all positioned the establishment of military history camps and tours as a means of solving the perceived problem of (chiefly western) historical falsification by instilling resilient patriotism in young people.[9]

The securitisation of history on the level of discourse, legislation, and even military doctrine, reinforces the RMHS' activities. Politicians have even described

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(which instructs students how to be an honour guard); and Volunteers of Victory. There are six different camps in different locations with plans for 28 camps by 2024. The *Country of Heroes* and *Nevsky Pyatachok* camps are run directly by the RMHS. The RMHS originally organised the latter camp to honour the seventieth anniversary of victory, when the organisation put on a wide variety of activities to bring the battles around Leningrad to life. The final object of analysis is the annual *Forgotten Feat* festival in 2018 and 2019, which also focuses on the war around Leningrad but is run in participation with, rather than exclusively by, the RMHS. The festival, founded by the historical re-enactor Pavel Zheltov, runs for several days.

[9] "Otchet o deyatel'nosti 2013–2017. Rossiyskoe Voenno-Istoricheskoe Obshchestvo 110 let." *RVIO*, 2017, 82–83, http://online.pubhtml5.com/oafa/ihiv/#p=1; "Vstrecha s predstavitelyami obshchestvennosti po voprosam patrioticheskogo vospitaniya." *Kremlin.Ru*, 2012, http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/16470; "O Gosudarstevnnoy programme Patrioticheskoe vospitanie grazhdan Rossiyskoy Federatsii na 2016–2018 gody." *Government.Ru*, 30 December 2015, http://static.government.ru/media/files/8qqYUwwzHUxzVkH1jsKAErrx2dE4q0ws.pdf; "Vstrecha s predstavitelyami obshchestvennosti po voprosam patrioticheskogo vospitaniya." *Kremlin.Ru*, 2016; http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/16470 (27 June 2021).

the "falsification" of history in terms that suggest an existential threat (Gaufman 2015; Bækken and Enstad 2020; Koposov 2017, Ch. 6).[10] Russian politicians and RMHS organisers justify the extensive scale of their activities – the RMHS has established more than 200 clubs and camps since 2013 – by portraying Russians as victims of an external attack.[11] This militaristic interpretation is surmised by Medinskiy's quip that "if you don't feed your own culture, you feed someone's else's army", a paraphrase of the traditional Russian expression that "if you do not feed your own army, you are feeding the enemy's".[12]

The camp organisers themselves stress the relevance of historical episodes to the present by promoting the idea of an ongoing war against Russian history, suggesting that external and internal enemies are trying to falsify history.[13] RMHS employee Konstantin Pakhalyuk explained in an interview that the government – supported by RMHS – was turning history into a national idea. He argued that the government needed a secure concept around which to unify the Russian people, and that history was to be that concept. When others sought to "undermine this idea (of history)", argued Pakhalyuk, the government needed to fight back and reinforce its efforts to propagate its historical narrative.[14] This notion of a "war on history" renders historical interpretation itself a contested site in which participants must emulate the preservers of history described in the *Country of Heroes* camps. Similar language is found in the *Nevsky Pyatachok 2015* literature. The camp's purported aim is to "raise patriots [. . .] to tell the *truth* about Russian history" (my italics).[15] This goal of truth-telling exists somewhat paradoxically alongside the fact that some of this history promoted by RMHS is dubious or outright false, as discussed later in this chapter with reference to the 28 Panfilovtsy.

Medinskiy has cited two main reasons to focus historical-patriotic education on young people. First, he claims that youth are at particular risk from the west. Second, he purports that young people represent the future. As such, historical-patriotic education is a way of safeguarding the "correct" historical narrative for years to come, thereby in turn securing Russia's "spiritual" ("dukhovnyi") development.[16] When culture minister, Medinskiy frequently referred to what he perceived as a moral dimension to improving children's patriotism through knowledge of history. On one occasion, when asked what a father should do if their son were to encounter a historical interpretation that contradicts the official narrative, Medinskiy replied "You need to explain to him that there is good and there is evil, ideally through your own example."[17] The quasi-religious tone of language – the idea of history as an ultimate truth and part of a wider battle between good and evil – had been a recurring feature in government discourse.

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[10] "V Rossii poyavilas' nauchnaya rota po bor'be s fal'sifikatsiey istorii." *Lenta.ru*, 12 October 2015, https://lenta.ru/news/2015/10/12/inthearmynow/ (27 June 2021).

[11] RMHS does not provide a page listing all the clubs and camps but you can find details of their camps and clubs on their website and the affiliated websites of their local RMHS branches, https://rvio.histrf.ru/soobshestvo.

[12] "Kto ne kormit svoyu kul'turu, budet kormit' chuzhuyu armiyu." *Izvestiya*, 17 June 2015, https://iz.ru/news/587771 (27 June 2021).

[13] "V Rossii poyavilas' nauchnaya rota po bor'be s fal'sifikatsiey istorii." *Lenta.ru*, 12 October 2015, https://lenta.ru/news/2015/10/12/inthearmynow/.; "Vladimir Medinskiy: Pravda nashey istorii 'kruche' lyuboi propagandy." *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, 26 August 2015, https://rg.ru/2015/08/26/pravda.html (27 June 2021).

[14] Interview with RMHS employee, Konstantin Pakhalyuk, conducted on 24 August 2018, in Moscow, Russian Federation.

[15] Zabelina, Anastasiya. *Platsdarm glazami uchastnikov*. Moscow: RVIO, 2017, 2.

Politicians have also been forthright in their assessment of the solution to the problem of historical falsification. They have vigorously promoted a patriotic view of Russia's past that would help young people relate to historical – and especially World War II heroes – such as Marshal Zhukov, Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya and anonymous but brave Red Army soldiers. This approach is captured in President Putin's call for living forms of patriotism[18] and in interactive forms of engaging with patriotic ideas and narratives of the past. The idea is also evident in several RMHS sources. The RMHS' manual for the administration of military history camps, for example, instructs clubs to teach only positive versions of Russian history and to encourage students to imagine themselves as fighters from the past.[19] Meanwhile, the official aim of *Roads of Victory* was to "preserve Russian cultural historical traditions and engage children and young people with the history of our country" (Medinskiy 2016).[20] Likewise, camps were intended to raise patriotic citizens who are proud of their country and to popularise – as opposed to *teach* – patriotic history among young people.[21] Another rationale for the activities was the need to address an unknown topic or to "uncover" certain historical episodes. This rationale was less widespread but did feature in the *Forgotten Feat* marketing literature.[22]

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[16] "Vladimir Medinskiy: Ya russkiy evropeets." *Snob.ru*, 1 November 2013, https://snob.ru/magazine/entry/66861; "Vladimir Medinskiy: Pravda nashey istorii 'kruche' lyuboi propagandy." *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, 26 August 2015, https://rg.ru/2015/08/26/pravda.html (27 June 2021); Zabelina 2017.

[17] "Vladimir Medinskiy: Pravda nashey istorii 'kruche' lyuboi propagandy." *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, 26 August 2015, https://rg.ru/2015/08/26/pravda.html (27 June 2021).

[18] "Vstrecha s predstavitelyami obshchestvennosti po voprosam patrioticheskogo vospitaniya." *Kremlin.Ru*, 2012, http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/16470 (27 June 2021).

[19] RVIO. *Organizatsiya Raboty Voenno-Istoricheskogo Lagerya*. Moscow: RVIO, 2016.

[20] "Besplatnye ekskursii." *Agentstvo razvitiya vnutrennego turizma*, 2020, https://anoarvt.ru/tours/besplatnye-ekskursii/ (27 June 2021); see also.

[21] "Voenno-istoricheskie lagerya." *RVIO*, 2020, https://rvio.histrf.ru/activities/lager (27 June 2021).

Despite the emphasis on military history and the 'war on history', the authors and organisers of the RMHS camps and tours rarely cited military preparation as an objective. The only references emerged where some form of military preparation was available; for example, for the "Defenders" stream at the *Country of Heroes* camps.[23] Instead, the participants' engagement with history was depicted as an end in itself: a means of raising patriots. Indeed, Medinskiy openly differentiated the purpose of the military history clubs from militarisation: "The most important thing about this camp is that it hardens the spirit. The aim of the camp is not to prepare soldiers, there are special educational establishments for that sort of thing. Rather, it is to raise citizens and genuine patriots to tell the truth about the history of Russia." (Zabelina 2017, 2) Increasing knowledge of, and interest in, military history through military history camps and tours should be understood as separate from military-patriotic formation. Instead, military history activities are a self-contained element of the government's uses of history and youth patriotic formation aims, which seek to make history relatable and entertaining for participants.

4 Selecting the history

Some historical narratives are more attractive than others to young people, in turn affecting their interest in engaging with patriotic formation activities. The RMHS' choice was limited to those events which the Kremlin views as politically useful. Recent studies of political uses of the past in Russia have shown that this list of "useful" events is restricted but not hegemonic (Malinova 2019; Bækken and Enstad 2020). While the Great Patriotic War is the most prominent historical topic in Russian popular and political culture, it is not the only usable episode from the past. This is reflected in the historical topics covered by the *Roads of Victory* tours, which encompass a range of historical events – sometimes even within one tour. However, the camps all focus on the Great Patriotic War. Within that focus, however, camps tended to highlight different, mainly localised, aspects of the war (see Table 1 and Table 2):

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[22] Information taken from a *Forgotten Feat* PowerPoint presentation for marketing material made available to the author by Pavel Zheltov.

[23] "Voenno-Istoricheskie lagerya." *Strana Geroev*, 2020, https://xn–80aagdka6clmfem.xn–p1ai/ (27 June 2021).

Table 1: Camp and festival historical topics.

Camp/festival	Topic
Platsdarm 'Nevskii pyatachok'	GPW (Leningrad region)
Zabytyi podvig	GPW (72nd Shock Army, Novgorod, Leningrad)
Strana geroev	GPW (general, focus on 1945)

Table 2: Number of tour events dedicated to each historical topic.

Historical topic	No. of tour events
Great Patriotic War	13
General overview of history	5
Medieval	4
16th – 18th Century	3
Russian Navy	2
Weaponry	2
Rus' (incl. Mongols)	1
Russo-Japanese War	1
Napoleonic Wars	1
Space	1
Borders and Security	1
Chechen Wars	1
Theatre	1
Cinema	1
Uniform	1
Sport	1
World War I	1

Just one third of historical events covered by the tours involve the Great Patriotic War. Other events include the Battle of Borodino, thematic histories (e.g. of border guards or weapons production) and, perhaps more surprisingly, the Russo-Japanese War and the Chechen Wars. On closer inspection, the inclusion of the latter two events appears to be dictated by geographical proximity to other, more heroic, sites of history. Moreover, the narratives around these events in the tour literature are bland to the point of misleading. For example, the tour guide description of the visit to Admiral Rudnev's house does not reference Russia's defeat in the Russo-Japanese war, focusing instead on heroic myth: "Russian soldiers on the Varyag cruiser and Koreets canon ship chose a heroic death, not wishing to bring down the Andreev Flag, and they gained renown across the whole world for this."[24] There are no visits to sites related to the October Revolution or the Civil War. The former event is often disparaged as a negative example of state collapse; the latter is treated more carefully but disparaged for its divisiveness.[25] As such, they do not problematise the depiction of Russian history as patriotic or heroic in any meaningful way, suggesting that engagement is lacking throughout the official presentation of Russian history.

While there are some surprising inclusions in the camps' thematic programmes, and the Great Patriotic War is less prominent than expected, the narrative produced by the combined events uniformly supports the idea of Russian/Soviet heroism and sacrifice. Learning the real facts of history did not constitute a key aim of any tours or camps. For example, the 28 Panfilovtsy tour promotes the story of a long-disproven myth about a multi-ethnic group of soldiers who allegedly died heroically defending Moscow from German tanks in World War II. Medinskiy's Ministry has funded not just these tours but a major film based on the legend; Medinskiy himself argues that, "This legend [of the 28 Panfilovtsy] became a material force more terrible and more wonderful than any fact from any real battle."[26] Heroic deaths function to symbolise the patriotic valour of sacrificing oneself for the state, rather than to aid discussion on, for example, the large number of deaths and casualties the USSR suffered in World War II.[27] For the government, eliciting emotional responses – terror and wonder – is more important than intellectual or critical engagement.

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[24] "Gorod Tula (Gorod-geroy) – Kulikovo pole (Muzey federal'nogo znacheniya)." *Agentstvo razvitiya vnutrennego turizma*, 2020, https://anoarvt.ru/tours/besplatnye-ekskursii/g-tula-gorod-geroy-kulikovo-pole-muzey-federalnogo-znacheniya/ (27 June 2021).

[25] For more details on the treatment of the Civil War in Russian political discourse, see Laruelle and Karnysheva 2020.

[26] "Interesnaya istoriya." *Rossiyskaya gazeta*, 4 July 2017, https://rg.ru/2017/07/04/vladimir-medinskij-vpervye-otvechaet-kritikam-svoej-dissertacii.html (27 June 2021).

[27] As in the media, questioning the large number of war casualties suffered during World War II is deemed beyond the acceptable limits of discourse. For example, the government orchestrated a crackdown against the independent television channel *Dozhd'* after it ran a poll asking whether Leningrad should have been abandoned to the Nazis to avoid the shockingly high mortality numbers that resulted from the Nazi invasion and blockade ("Russia's Only Independent TV Channel Has Felt the Full Force of Censorship." *The Guardian*, 30 January 2014, https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/jan/30/russia-independent-tv-channel-censorship-tv-rain-leningrad [27 June 2021]).

5 Making history engaging?

Organisers of the RMHS' tours and camps do not encourage critical engagement with the past. Indeed, presenting a purely patriotic interpretation of history while also allowing for free and fair discussion would be difficult. As such, the emphasis on "patriotic history" limits the potential for engagement. However, the camps and tours appear to counteract this by offering activities that allow attendees to imagine themselves as active participants in the past, rather than passive observers of history. This approach suggests engagingness; the events fall short of offering engagement, however, as they offer audiences little to no scope for critical engagement in this participation. By analysing descriptions and marketing material distributed by the camps and tours, I collated examples of engagingness.

5.1 Imagining oneself in history

The camps and tours sometimes use veterans as educators or guests, which reduces temporal barriers by reminding participants that many of the events in question occurred within living memory. The inclusion of veterans individualises the participants' experience, which is brought to life and framed in intimate language. Moreover, the veterans often encourage the participants to imagine themselves as a young person during World War II, drawing connections between the veterans' and the participants' experiences (Zabelina 2017, 3). In the opening pages of the *Nevsky Pyatachok 2015* camp brochure, one veteran describes how, despite the awfulness of the enemy, "all the peoples living in the Soviet Union united against a common enemy [. . .] This unity was possible because of the immense work the Soviet government had put into patriotic formation." (Zabelina 2017, 3) In this way, history is brought close to the participants and then used to legitimise the history camps themselves, since young people's patriotic formation might contribute to national defence should the past be repeated.

Pavel Zheltov, founder of the *Forgotten Feat* festival, suggests that the festival, like many others, brings the past into the present, but also brings participants in the present closer to the past: the festival, Zheltov claims, was founded to help Russians discover their "roots" and to meet "a demand for stories about people's own history".[28] Indeed, the geography of the camps and tours has a parallel function: almost all of the camps and tours in question take place in the historical sites under discussion, adding a sense of authenticity to participants' experience. Participants in the *Country of Heroes* and *Nevsky Pyatachok* camps also have the chance to join a "search battalion" in the hunt for the remains of Red Army soldiers who died in these fields.

Other methods encourage participants to view themselves in the position of World War II fighters but rely on technology rather than geography or veterans' presence. For example, the site of one of the very first *Roads of Victory* tours, the Museum of the Great Patriotic War in Moscow, has a photo booth outside the main World War II exhibition. After being provided with a Red Army uniform, participants are photographed against their choice of backdrops that include scenes such as the Storming of the Reichstag (see Figure 1). Elsewhere in the museum, young people were able to imagine themselves taking the Reichstag in a life-size replica (Figure 2).

The invitation to imagine oneself as – and act as if one really were – a hero of the past has been an important part of the RMHS' tours and camps. At *Forgotten Feat*, young people learned about a battle, then watched it being staged in front of them. Zheltov, who runs several historical re-enactment societies in addition to the festival, explains that he and his colleagues obsess over "the authenticity of every detail, even down to the buttons".[29] This attention to detail reflected a desire to make the historical events as realistic and engaging as possible. After watching the professional re-enactors, young people could then try their hand at re-enactment at the *Forgotten Feat* festivals. Stage settings have proven to be elaborate: tanks and other period military equipment were brought to *Nevsky Pyatachok* in 2015 and to the *Forgotten Feat* festival every year, adding a veneer of "authenticity" to the experience. The *Nevsky* event was something of an apogee for the re-enactment approach. Over 30 pieces of military equipment from the Great Patriotic War accompanied the young participants, who were dressed in wartime uniform throughout a 30km, three-day march in memory of those who died defending Leningrad.

5.2 Playing on emotions and history as entertainment

The efforts to have schoolchildren place themselves in their forebears' shoes emphasise emotion, inspiring sympathy for the tragic experiences, admiration

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[28] Skype-Interview with Pavel Zheltov, founder of the Forgotten Feat festival, conducted on 12 September 2018.

[29] Interview with Pavel Zheltov.

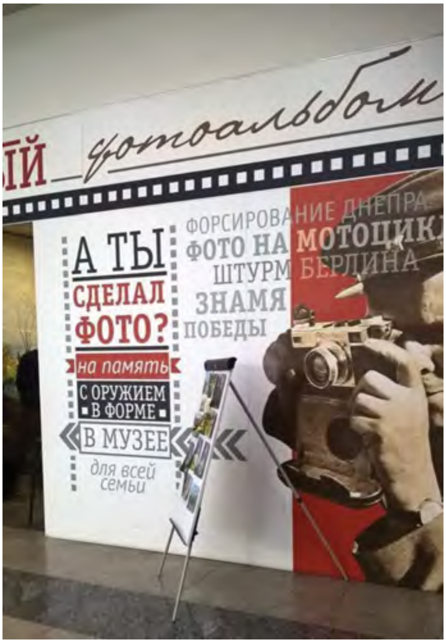
фотоальбом
ФОРСИРОВАНИЕ ДНЕПРА
ФОТО НА МОТОЦИКЛ
ШТУРМ БЕРЛИНА
ЗНАМЯ ПОБЕДЫ
А ТЫ СДЕЛАЛ ФОТО?
на память
С ОРУЖИЕМ В ФОРМЕ
В МУЗЕЕ
для всей семьи

Figure 1: Photo booth 'for all the family' calling visitors to take a photo in uniform at the Museum of the Great Patriotic War in Moscow, 2018, © the author.

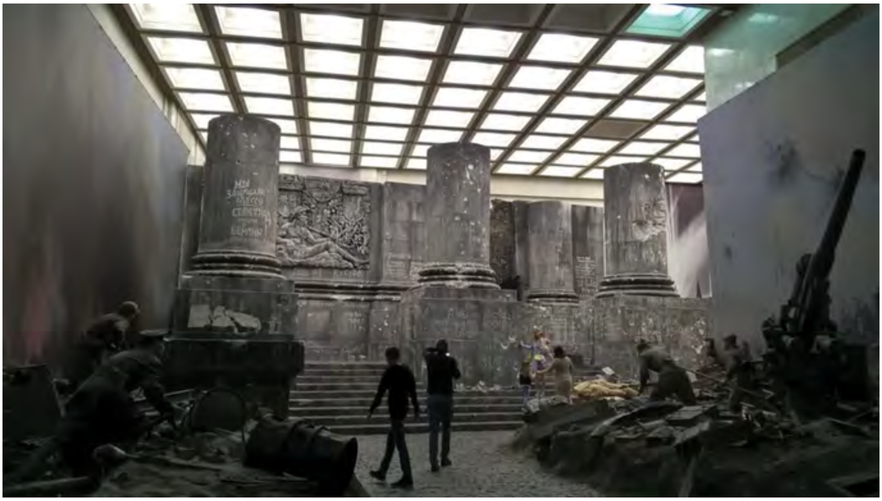

Figure 2: Visitors and waxwork figures are barely distinguishable at the Museum of the Great Patriotic War, where guests can simulate the storming of the Reichstag in a life-size replica, 2018, © the author.

at the heroism their ancestors displayed, righteous anger towards the invaders of the Motherland and pride at their relatives' determination and ability to overcome trials and tribulations. The appeal to emotion rather than education is also obvious in the more recent tour exhibitions and museums. As well as organising the tours, RMHS has contributed directly to establishing or expanding many of the museums visited on the tours. On the RMHS tours and at RMHS museums and exhibitions, participants would often visit sites that privileged multimedia experiences above exploration of documents and artefacts. While an immersive, multimedia approach can be seen throughout museums in Russia and beyond, the approach is taken to an extreme in some of the RMHS tour sites. The *Russia – My History* exhibition in Moscow, which combines experiential approaches with a personalised narrative and everyday focus, stands out from the many examples since it contains no artefacts whatsoever. Originally located on Moscow's Manezh Square in 2015, the exhibition was so successful that it was permanently relocated to a pavilion at the All-Russian Exhibition Centre. Thanks to its lack of real artefacts, the museum has since easily been reproduced across a further twenty locations.

In the words of a former senior employee of the Museum of Modern History, "this format of multimedia entertainment exhibition-show, located outside the museum, was now playing the role of alibi, to construct an anti-academic narrative. The museum, however conservative it may be, must respect the facts and documents, but at this exhibition there were almost no documents at all."[30] The former museum official went so far as to describe the emergence of the *My History* exhibition as a sign of societal degradation, whereby people preferred to see Russian history as a multimedia project rather than as a topic of historical analysis. The Russian Ministry of Education seems to have shared the public's preference, electing to include a visit to one of the *Russia – My History* exhibitions as a recommended activity for all schoolchildren. The RMHS has used the *My History* approach as a template for several of their museums, which they describe as a "new type" of exhibition due to its emphasis on immersion.[31] The approach is a means to engage young people more readily with historical narratives being produced at sites of memory, yet it simultaneously reduces the scope for interpretation of artefacts by the visitor: in a narrative exhibition, the material has already been interpreted. Consequently, such sites provide little scope for critical engagement with the material, offering the participants engagingness as opposed to engagement.

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[30] "Pobedila li 'Istoricheskaya Rossiya'?" *Colta.ru*, 25 March 2016, https://www.colta.ru/articles/raznoglasiya/10454.2015 (27 June 2021).

[31] "Muzey voennoy istorii 'Streletskie Palaty.'" *Agentstvo razvitiya vnutrennego turizma*, 2020, https://anoarvt.ru/tours/besplatnye-ekskursii/muzey-voennoy-istorii-streletskie-palaty/ (27 June 2021).

6 History as a unifying force for the future

The purpose of the tours and camps is not to elicit true engagement but rather to produce the quality of engagingness. As is evident from the government's aims in creating the activities, the military history camps and tours are oriented around patriotic formation rather than education. The purpose is to promote history as a unifying force, as something that must be defended. Likewise, while the state's and the RMHS' efforts connote militarisation, that militarisation does not revolve around military preparation. Rather, this form of militarisation aims to defend an idea of the past informed not by historical fact but by what it means to be a good Russian today.

Bringing historical narratives to life reduces the abstraction of these notions. In practice, organisers strive to remove geographical or sartorial barriers to true engagement and to facilitate realistic play-acting and re-enactment activities. The RMHS' marketing literature makes it clear that the camp organisers assign and explain to the participants their historical re-enactment roles. As such, participants are not permitted to truly engage even with the most immersive activities. Instead, they re-tread the – largely imagined – footsteps of valiant soldiers from yesteryear. This act constitutes *repetition* and not *rediscovery* since young people are unable to develop their own agency vis-à-vis a given historical topic. Moreover, even the soldiers whose lives participants are re-enacting have often been deprived of their own individuality by RMHS' insistence on upholding patriotic narratives of the past that force Red Army soldiers into archetypal categories: heroic warrior, tragic sacrifice, etc.[32]

However, a lack of true engagement does not mean that the tours' and camps' activities are boring or dull. The RMHS seeks to have audiences physically and discursively replicate the government's narrative of the past. The organisation's leaders have no desire to see participants truly engage with these narratives beyond set confines or in a way that exposes the "black spots" of this history. The embrace of re-enactment, multi-media, and physical activities demonstrates an effort to bring history to life but not to set it free. As such, it is better to describe the type of activities promoted by the RMHS as deliberately offering engagingness rather than pursuing engagement. Indeed, the engagingness of activities designed to help participants imagine themselves as the heirs to past heroes reinforces the importance of patriotic history beyond any narrow goal of militarisation.

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[32] Although the RMHS has promoted greater understanding and commemoration of POWs, there are no POWs included in the tours or camps. For more detail on RMHS's commemoration of POWs, see Amos 2019.

Writing about the Kremlin's approach to youth formation in 2005, Félix Krawatzek argues that "with the generational label, the dominant discursive formation elaborated a distinct Russian future; thanks to the energy of youth, it was anticipated that present problems would be overcome and that Russia would find its unique way to national grandeur and its righteous place in the international system" (2018, 265). In this sense, the Russian government's approach has not changed greatly. However, each generation has its own conceptions about the possibilities of the future. A 2020 Russian Public Opinion Research Centre study showed that young Russians are patriotic about the past but keen not to simply "repeat" it. They prefer to use the past as a foundation upon which to build the future, something to feel proud about, rather than to endlessly recreate history. This suggests that young Russians, who prefer activities or cultural products that allow for the types of intellectual and critical engagement described elsewhere in this volume, may not be receptive to the government's highly restrictive uses of the past.

Apathy or disengagement is a very real obstacle to the Russian government's idea of using history to inculcate "living forms of patriotism". However, these limitations are not such a hindrance to the state's aim to use history as a unifying construct in the multi-ethnic Russian Federation. Given the growth in size and number of youth-focussed military history activities, future generations are likely to be bonded by their experiences of the historical activities described in this chapter. These activities, rather than history itself, offer a unifying experience. Provided the government continues to promote its initiatives across the country, activities like historical re-enactment, search brigades, or blogging historical information campaigns at summer camps will at least become a shared memory, perhaps even a rite of passage, for the current generation of young people, much like the "vypusknoy bal" (the Russian high school's equivalent to an American prom). These shared experiences may provide future generations with new common memories of engagement with patriotic history – and especially the Great Patriotic War. The government's active and practical promotion of history as a unifying force could, therefore, become self-fulfilling. Whether this unifying historical narrative would have much in common with the past events as they actually happened is, of course, a different question; answering it would require the type of critical and reflexive engagement missing from the RMHS' activities.

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Nina Friess

Engaging Young Readers in History: Alternative Historical Narratives in Contemporary Russian Children's Literature

Transmitting the "correct" version of history to young people is an important part of patriotic education in Russia. At school, in youth organisations and in the cultural realm, the government spends huge resources to spread its chosen historical narratives, which gravitate around the Great Patriotic War.[1] Despite the omnipresence of state narratives, however, various alternative historical narratives persist.

Literature in Russia has long functioned as a counterweight to government positions by criticising rulers and providing alternatives to dominant narratives. Though literature has lost its role as a key medium for opinion formation, it remains an important medium for public discourse and cultural transmission (Erll and Nünning 2005, 187–188; Dobrenko and Lipovetsky 2015, 18). Literariness continues to inspire non-literary cultural artefacts, which often draw on literary strategies of storytelling. Literary texts, especially on historical events, serve as templates for adaptations in other media.[2] Moreover, while the Russian regime closely observes and censors traditional media and the "Runet" – the Russian-language internet community (Lonkila et al. 2019)[3] – it pays little attention to literature.[4] Thus, despite the imposition of significant restrictions from 2013 onwards,[5] literature remains a relatively free medium in contemporary Russia.

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[1] Asked about the most important event in Russian history, young Russians most frequently mention the Great Patriotic War (Krawatzek and Frieß 2020). On the commemoration of World War II and its political instrumentalisation in contemporary Russia see Wood 2011; Koposov 2017; Fedor et al. 2017; Malina 2017.

[2] For example, most Soviet war films are based on previously published literary texts, among them cult films like *The Dawns Here Are Quiet* (*A zori zdes' tikhie*, 1972) based on the novel of the same name by Boris Vasilev (1969).

[3] See also "Russia." *Reporters without Borders*, https://rsf.org/en/russia (17 May 2021).

[4] In Boris Akunin's words: "Fortunately, Vladimir Putin doesn't read books and fiction. So, he doesn't think that literature is important. He thinks that television is important, mass media is important. About books, no, he doesn't care. So the publishing industry is still free in Russia, they publish practically anything" ("Emigranti – 1917 Revisited." *BBC*, 5 November 2017, https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/play/b09czx19 [17 May 2021]).

[5] Laws like the Law Against Rehabilitation of Nazism (art. 354.1 of Russian Criminal Code) and the Blasphemy Law (art. 148.1) potentially limit the freedom of speech in literature. However, it

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In this chapter, I explore alternative historical narratives in contemporary Russian literature for children, especially in Olga Kolpakova's biographical text *The Wormwood Tree* (*Polynnaya ëlka*, 2016), Yulia Yakovleva's novel *The Raven's Children* (*Deti vorona*, 2016), and in Aleksandra Litvina and Anya Desnitskaya's picture book *The Apartment: A Century of Russian History* (*Istoriya staroy kvartiry*, 2017). Although the authors depict twentieth-century Soviet and Russian history for children and young adults differently in terms of genre, plot structure and narratology, they all address historical episodes that are often neglected in today's official discourse. Widely neglected themes that appear in these works include Stalinist repression, losses in the Great Patriotic War and the limitations of freedom in the post-Stalin Soviet Union. Such topics have typically been erased because they are difficult to integrate into the state's heroic narratives (Roginskij 2009, 41; Langenohl 2002, 105). These works' otherness is also conveyed by the authors' choice of form, which is distinct from that used to portray state narratives. Moreover, I argue that each of these texts aims to stimulate their readers' engagement with history. In contrast, and as the introduction to this series of chapters on Russia and Poland explained, the Russian state seeks to have younger generations parrot formulaic narratives without ever really developing critical interest in historical topics.

1 Persistent dominance of Soviet narratives in the cultural realm

Soviet and Russian history, especially the victory in World War II, are the main pillars for identity construction in contemporary Russia (Wood 2011; Fedor et al. 2017; Malina 2017). The government is keen to transmit historical narratives centred on acts of heroism that demonstrate the strength of the state and the unity of its people. Little space is left for events that do not fit into this scheme.

In the cultural realm, history is depicted in a slew of literary works, films, television series, video games and other cultural products. Russia's book market in particular offers a wide selection of fiction and non-fiction historical books for children and young adults.[6] The Great Patriotic War is the dominant theme, yet there are hardly any new fictional texts for young readers on the topic. Older Soviet

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is not transparent how these laws are applied. For authors (and publishing houses), this results in complete uncertainty, which might lead to increasing self-censorship.

[6] On the general meaning of literature for memory, see Erll and Nünning 2005. Since minors' literary consumption is often, at least until a certain age, dictated by parents, these media have to attract children, young people and grown-ups alike.

texts, reprinted in new editions, continue to persist in (non-)governmental organisations' reading lists and on the school literature curriculum. The narratives of these Soviet-era texts typically match those promoted by today's government.

Children's literature, and literature about children in war, has been widely published for several years. For instance, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of victory in the Great Patriotic War in 2020, AST, one of Russia's leading publishers, released the *The War for Children* (*Detyam o voyne*) series, which comprised seven volumes of chiefly Soviet-era poetry, songs, short stories and novels.[7] In addition to texts describing the actual fighting at the frontline by grown-ups, many works have dealt with children's wartime experiences. Typically, narratives centre on a child becoming the breadwinner for the family after their father has departed for the front and/or on a child who attempts to join the Red Army or the partisans to fight the Nazi occupiers. Even the youngest Soviet citizen is prepared to sacrifice himself (the protagonists are almost always male) to protect the motherland. Today's dominant narrative of the Great Patriotic War – that of ordinary citizens' self-sacrifice as the central plank of victory – is projected onto children and into children's literature.

Government (or quasi-government) organisations recommend reading materials that focus on narratives of heroic self-sacrifice. Works like Boris Polevoy's *The Story of a Real Man* (*Povest' o nastoyashchem cheloveke*, 1946), which is recommended reading for members of the Yunarmiya movement,[8] and Valentin Kataev's *Son of the Regiment* (*Syn polka*, 1945), which was republished with additional eyewitness materials by the Immortal Regiment movement in 2017,[9] exemplify this trend. The heroes of these Socialist Realist texts overcome dreadful losses – a Red Army pilot loses his legs after a dogfight; a young boy's entire family is killed – thanks to the strength of their Soviet character, their will to protect their motherland and the help of elder friends who obviously symbolise the country's wise leadership. The protagonists, therefore, find their metier in Soviet wartime society: helping to fight the Nazis.

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[7] Ozon.ru, Russia's leading online shop, lists four volumes of the serial as "bestsellers". Given that each volume has a circulation of 3,000 copies and that it is (officially) not available as an eBook the significance of this label is, however, limited.

[8] Yunarmiya is a military educational organisation for children and young people, founded by a presidential decree in 2016. The whole list of books that "should be read by every member of Yunarmiya" is available for members only. *The Story of a Real Man* is available in various editions and as an eBook.

[9] The Immortal Regiment is a Russian social movement with the aim of 'immortalising' the memory of the war generation. The volume had a print run of 2,000 copies, but is also available as an eBook.

Surprisingly, the Russian government does not currently have restrictive requirements about what Russian students should read in literature classes.[10] Teachers are relatively free to choose what World War II literature they wish to cover (Krawatzek and Friess 2022). Perhaps even more unexpectedly, many texts included in the Ministry of Education's 2016 curriculum – for example, Viktor Nekrasov's novella *In the Trenches of Stalingrad* (*V okopakh Stalingrada*, 1946), short stories by Boris Vasilev (e.g. *The Dawns Here Are Quiet* [*A zori zdes' tikhie*, 1969]), and Vasiliy Grossman's novel *Life and Fate* (*Zhizn' i sud'ba*, 1961) – are openly critical of officialdom and official narratives.[11] These works discuss, for instance, the Red Army's chronic supply shortages and poor leadership, which cost the lives of hundreds of thousands of Soviet soldiers (Whitewood 2015). *Life and Fate* even – among a host of other criticisms – compares Stalin with Hitler, which is one of the reasons why it was first published in the USSR only during the *perestroika* period.[12] None of these works, however, develops a competing narrative of Russian or Great Patriotic War history. Indeed, each features elements of today's dominant historical narratives, particularly examples of brave, self-sacrificial and unified Soviet soldiers.

Notably, no new texts that repeat official narratives of World War II for children have been published. This reflects a waning official interest in literature. Literary production is poorly supported by the government (cinema, on the other hand, receives lavish funds to produce works specifically targeting children and youth [Krawatzek and Friess 2020, 12–13]). The government seems content to recycle older, Soviet texts to introduce its favoured World War II narratives to children. The private sphere, however, led by the upmarket publishing houses *KompasGid* and *Samokat*, has in recent years released a number of texts depicting the war and the wartime period in a way that deviates from the official narratives.

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[10] This is all the more interesting since history lessons at school have become a battlefield of politics of history since the early 2000s. For more details, see Tsyrlina-Spady and Stoskopf 2017.

[11] It is remarkable that none of the texts were originally written for young readers.

[12] The novel was written in the 1950s and first published abroad. For more details, see Chandler 2019; Garner 2018, 158–208.

2 Other stories . . .

2.1 *The Wormwood Tree*: A tale of Stalinist repression of and for children

Olga Kolpakova's *The Wormwood Tree* deals with Stalinist repression during World War II, focusing in particular on the deportation of ethnic Germans – here, the family of five-year-old Marrikhe – to Siberia in 1941,[13] which undermines the widespread narrative of the Soviet peoples' wartime unity.[14] In thirteen short chapters, Mariikhe narrates disparate events from her exile: the journey to Siberia, the constant lack of food, the detention of family members, her work as a swineherd, her sister's death and her first year at school. In the fourteenth and final chapter, an authorial narrator briefly outlines Mariikhe's post-war life, concluding with her emigration to Germany.

Wormwood Tree combines elements of the purportedly true stories told by the author's teacher Mariya Fitts and her husband Gennadiy Fitts and by Kolpakova's own grandfather, Andrey Volf. In the last twenty years, many memoirs by children of the wartime generation – the last remaining witnesses of World War II – have been published. Generally, these memoirs have been published in small quantities by regional publishing houses and written for adults.[15]

Even though *The Wormwood Tree* reads like a typical memoir due to its chronological structure, the work was, unlike traditional memoirs, targeted at children aged twelve and up. The cover of the book, the rich, childlike illustrations and the paratexts are intended to appeal to children. The narration itself, however, is the most important feature orienting the work towards children. Mariikhe tells her story from a child's perspective, using language a young child would use. Her needs and problems are those of a child, as are her explanations for what is happening around her. The following example is illustrative:

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[13] During World War II, the Soviet government accused several ethnic minorities of collaboration with Nazi Germany, then deported them to Siberia and other peripheral regions such as the Kazakh steppe. Besides Germans from Crimea and the Volga region, the Soviet government forced Poles, Tatars, Chechens, Koreans and many more peoples to leave the territories where their ancestors have lived for generations. Many did not survive the deportations (Kappeler 2001, Ch. 9).

[14] ZOiS data shows that this narrative is also shared by young Russians (Krawatzek and Friess 2020, 15).

[15] For more details, see Leingang 2014. Most of these texts continue today's official narrative. However, they hardly gained any attention.

> [The Soviet Union] is the largest country in the world. And lots and lots of different peoples live in it. But mostly Russians. There are lots of Germans too. But the main person in the country is Stalin, who's a Georgian.
>
> We are Germans. It was the Germans who attacked us. And all because every nation has good and bad people, evil and good people, and greedy and generous people. Then everybody started to call the bad Germans 'fascists'. That's how daddy explained it.
>
> (Kolpakova 2017, 13)

Here, we see that Mariikhe interprets the world through stories adults have told her. However, the abundant adult-focused memoirs of Stalinist repression that are available suggest that grown-up Soviets also struggled to make sense of what was happening to them.[16] Mariikhe's perspective as a witness is, therefore, inevitably limited – a fact tempered somewhat by the book's appendix, which explains some of the story's significant historical events and central terms in simple language. Kolpakova's goal does not, therefore, seem to be to enlighten readers about the historical facts of the wartime deportations. Rather, the child narrator's status as innocent, naïve and vulnerable underlines the excesses of Stalinist repression in an impressionistic manner. Many of *The Wormwood Tree*'s readers may be learning about Stalinist repression during the Great Patriotic War for the first time when reading the work: the intent seems to be to raise awareness of events that are rarely discussed, rather than to investigate the raw facts of those events. The book, like the vast amount of texts written in memoir style by ordinary people, did not attract much public attention either in Russia or abroad, above all probably on account of its rather conventional form.

2.2 *The Raven's Children*: The Great Purge in a fantastical world

In contrast to *The Wormwood Tree*, Yulia Yakovleva's *The Raven's Children* focuses on Stalinist repression against the broader Soviet population. Set in 1938 in Leningrad, a third-person narrator tells the story of seven-year-old Shura, whose family is taken away by one of the "black ravens" – the cars that ferried detainees to prison or for interrogation in the Stalinist period. In the novel, however, the raven metaphor is transposed: Shura imagines that a huge raven has taken away his parents and younger brother. Shura and his nine-year-old sister Tanya follow the trail of the black raven until the Soviet authorities pick up the boy and bring him to a prison-like orphanage, where they try to re-educate him. Shura eventually manages to escape and reunites with his brother and sister. The search for the siblings' parents continues in several sequels, which combine to form the *Leningrad Fairy Tales*.[17]

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[16] As Evgeniya Ginzburg put it in her famous memoir *Journey into the Whirlwind* (*Krutoy marshrut*, 1967, 417): "During those years I experienced many conflicting feelings, but the dominant one was that of amazement. Was all this imaginable – was it really happening, could it be intended?".

The Raven's Children is significant in two ways. First, while a vast amount of literary texts deal with Stalinist repression for an adult audience,[18] Yakovleva's book, like *The Wormwood Tree*, is one of the few aimed at readers aged ten and up. Second, most works depicting Stalinist repression are written by authors who were repressed themselves. Their texts are bound to a largely realistic narration of events, especially since many such texts were written to document and testify the events in question (Toker 2000, 6).[19] In contrast, since it was written by an author who did not witness the events in question – like Kolpakova, Yakovleva bases her work on her grandfather's life – *The Raven's Children* is what Marianne Hirsch (2012) would term a "postmemorial" text.

By including overt fictional elements in the narrative, Yakovleva breaks a taboo in dealing with World War II and Stalinist repression in literature. Yakovleva's text resounds with elements of magical realism. Animals speak, ears and eyes grow out of walls and repressed people become invisible. One of those 'invisibles' is the protagonist, Shura:

> "Why can't they see us?"
> Shura and the King weren't transparent in the slightest. They were normal people. They got hungry and they ate, they needed the toilet, they slept, they felt cold and tired like everybody else.
> The King snorted. "They don't want to see us, so they don't." (Yakovleva 2018, 183)

These metaphors, which are widespread in Soviet and post-Soviet culture but not meant to be taken literally, are interspersed with historically accurate depictions of Stalinist repression. Like Kolpakova then, Yakovleva has a more impressionistic goal. These metaphors-come-to-life stimulate the reader's imagination and engagement with the text: walls have no ears, so readers are challenged to find ways to understand what really happened. Moreover, these wild metaphors might be a way to force children to vicariously experience some similar form of traumatic disjunction. Yakovleva pushes this strategy to the limits by adopting some metaphors that defy interpretation altogether. Take, for example, one of the text's final episodes, when the novel's hero overcomes the Stalinist regime's indoctrination:

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[17] In spring 2021, four of five planned volumes of *Leningrad Fairy Tales* are published. Although the story includes fantastical elements, it is, to judge by Vladimir Propp's terms (1928), by no means a typical Russian fairy tale.

[18] Unlike in the Soviet Union, in today's Russia, these texts are easily available in bookstores and online.

[19] This is the main reason why scholars for a long time did not pay attention to the literary quality of these texts. Leona Toker (2019, 18) has convincingly argued that the "artistic qualities of the text[s] [. . .] move to the foreground of our attention when the narratives in question no longer have to be read 'for the facts.'".

> It felt as if something was erupting inside him and he gagged as it rushed up to his throat. Shura bent over, his mouth stretched open as though he were about to be sick. But instead of vomit, out of his mouth slithered a strange grey creature, which plopped to the ground, like a writhing sausage. Shura was shocked to see it wriggle away, this strange fat worm with a mouth gaping wide, full of tiny sharp teeth. (Yakovleva 2018, 209)

In contrast to Russia's official narrative, which meanders between praising Stalin as an effective leader and half-heartedly condemning the cruelties of Stalinism (Frieß 2017, 68–71), Yakovleva portrays Stalinist indoctrination as a parasite that has infected and occupied the minds and bodies of Soviet people.

Unlike *The Wormwood Tree*, *The Raven's Children* attracted great public interest in Russia. Positive reactions were accompanied by, as Samokat's PR director Mariya Orlova put it, "harsh aggression from those who were not ready"[20] to see a frank children's book on the Stalinist repression. In spite of these public challenges, the book was published in at least three editions and nominated for several prizes, including the prestigious *Yasnaya Polyana* award.[21] Moreover, in 2018, Puffin published an English translation, which gained international acclaim.[22] In spite of the vast amount of pro-government narratives that are created for children – albeit not in literary form – the success story of *The Raven's Children* shows that Russia's literary market still has room for alternative texts dealing with the past in a complex and thought-provoking way.

2.3 *The Apartment*: A search-and-find game within twentieth-century Russian history

At just 56 pages long, *The Apartment: A Century of Russian History* – written by Aleksandra Litvina with illustrations by Anya Desnitskaya – may be short, but the work manages to take the reader on a journey through the whole of twentieth-century Russian history. Just like Kolpakova and Yakovleva, the work's creators use small-scale personal histories to paint a broader historical picture. The authors follow the life of the Muromtsevs, an ordinary Russian family, across thirteen episodes dated to the years 1902, 1914, 1919, 1927, 1937, 1941, 1945, 1953, 1961, 1973, 1987, 1991 and 2002. While the actors change, the scene remains the same: the family's apartment in Moscow, which is shown in part or in its entirety in each episode. Text and illustration function in harmony to reflect historical changes. For example, as living conditions become more cramped after housing was nationalised in the wake of the October Revolution, the detailed illustrations of the apartment's interior take on the air of a *Where's Wally?*-style hidden picture book, inviting the reader to look more closely to find familiar items. Residents visibly age and household chattels – furniture, technology and toys – come and go, further reflecting changing times.

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[20] "Detskie knigi na vzroslye temy: kniga pervaya – «Deti vorona» Yulii Yakovlevoy." *Esquire*, https://esquire.ru/letters/156733-detskie-knigi-na-vzroslye-temy-kniga-pervaya-deti-vorona-yulii-yakovlevoy-cikl-leningradskie-skazki/#part0, 18 February 2020 (17 May 2021).

[21] "Deti vorona." *Samokat*, https://samokatbook.ru/catalog/knigi-shkolnik/knigi-samostoyatelnoe-chtenie/deti-vorona/ (17 May 2021).

[22] See, for instance, "Children's book of the week: The Raven's Children by Yulia Yakovleva." *The Sunday Times*, https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/childrens-book-of-the-week-the-ravens-children-by-yulia-yakovleva-trans-ruth-ahmedzai-kemp-rr338nl7r, 22 July 2018 (17 May 2021).

Young readers are invited to see themselves reflected in the work's child protagonists, to view typical scenes from daily and historical life, and to read facts and view cultural artefacts from the year of each historical episode. Each section is narrated in the first person by one of a series of children from successive generations of the Muromtsev family. The narrators, who are all aged between five and twelve, reflect the book's target age group (6+).[23] In their stories, the protagonists use children's language to recount a day in the life of their family. These days are usually during or linked to a specific historical event. These narratives show, for example, how the narrators perceive certain events – Stalinist repression, World War II, Yuri Gagarin's spaceflight and so on – and reveal the impact of those episodes on daily life.

A picture of the flat and its changing inhabitants illustrates each episode, then a double-page spread of age-appropriate background information on the historical event in question follows. These pages include fragments of poems and songs,[24] articles and advertisements taken from Soviet newspapers and real images of objects such as photographs, ration cards or tickets. This collage of text, illustration, literary narrative and historical writing provides a multifaceted and polyphonic insight into quotidian experience in tsarist, Soviet and post-Soviet Russia.

The authors depict events – such as Stalin's purges in 1937 and the systematic suppression of dissent under Brezhnev – that are left out of state-promoted historical narratives. While some of these crucial events are shown as an entire episode, others are depicted in a footnote. For example, the episode set in 1973 focuses on Genka Muromtsev's wedding, which is shown on the first double-page. On the pages following this joyful event, the reader learns about the negative sides of the 1970s, which today are often described as an era of stagnation – but also stability.

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[23] The book's English and German translations are recommended for children from 8 and 12 years, respectively. Depending on their age, readers will focus on quite different aspects of the book.

[24] References to texts by Aleksandr Blok, Bulat Okudzhava, Iosif Brodskiy and others indicate the significance of literature not only for Russian culture but Russian history.

The readers meet the grown-up Fridrikh (or Fedya) Shteyn, whom they already know from the 1945 episode, which was told by the then eight-year-old Fedya. In 1973, Fridrikh wants to leave for Israel, but he does not get permission from the Soviet authorities to leave the country. The character relates his experience in the first of two comic-like strips: "And he [a Soviet official] says, 'You are an engineer, you could give our military secrets to the West.' But I don't know any secrets! It's a good thing I found a job as a night watchman. Otherwise, they could arrest me for parasitism." (Litvina and Desnitskaya 2019, 40) Fridrikh explains in the second strip that it is only in 1976 that he is suddenly allowed to leave the Soviet Union.

The lexicographical entry on the same double-page clarifies that once people got permission to leave the country, "they had to say farewell to their homeland and their families [forever]" (Litvina and Desnitskaya 2019, 40). In Fridrikh's personal fate, the authors reflect the fate of a whole generation of well-educated young people, mostly of Jewish origin, who were discriminated against by Soviet authorities. At the same time, the wedding presents for Genka and his wife – a vacuum cleaner, dishes, a reel-to-reel tape recorder – and some cultural artefacts – theatre tickets, a poem by Iosif Brodskiy, an "on bones" vinyl record[25] – shown on the very same pages demonstrate the modest prosperity and the flourishing (underground) cultural life of this period in Soviet history.

The more nuanced version of history presented in *The Apartment*, which puts the individual at the heart of the narrative, struck a chord with the Russian public. *The Apartment* has been reprinted several times since 2017 and reviewed in laudatory terms online and in the press.[26] The work has also become an unlikely export, opening doors to the European book market for the publisher.[27] By spring 2021 the book was available in German, French, English and Italian translation. The reason for this unprecedented success of a Russian picture book seems to be its unusual and highly individualised aesthetic. Desnitskaya's detailed illustrations, which, despite their accurateness, retain something childlike, are simply appealing. Moreover, people outside of Russia are interested in Russian history, as the continuous wide range of published fiction and non-fiction dedicated to this topic – though mostly written by non-Russians – illustrates.[28]

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[25] This unusual artefact goes with the following explanation: "Popular Western music that couldn't be bought in the USSR was recorded on old X-rays in underground studios. This was called 'music on bones'." (Litvina and Desnitskaya 2019, 41).

[26] See, for instance, "Aleksandra Litvinova i Anya Desnitskaya. Istoriya staroy kvartiry." *Komsomol'skaya Pravda* 22–29 December 2016, 42; "Pravda s imenami i litsami." *Colta.ru*, https://www.colta.ru/articles/literature/13311-pravda-s-imenami-i-litsami, 6 December 2016 (17 May 2021).

[27] "Istoriya staroy kvartiry." *Samokat*, https://samokatbook.ru/catalog/knigi-malyshy-doshkolniki/knizhki-kartinki/istoriya-staroy-kvartiry/ (17 May 2021).

3 . . . different history?

Litvina and Desnitskaya, Yakovleva and Kolpakova address historical events that are often neglected in official narratives for children, tackling in particular Stalinist repression. Unlike official narratives, all three texts tend to focus on victims – especially innocent and vulnerable children – rather than victors. While Litvina and Desnitskaya do find space to mention Soviet feats, they tend to pair these with depiction of losses. For example, the episode dated to 9 May 1945 – Victory Day – depicts mourners and the wounded, including a one-legged Red Army soldier. The next page, which offers more context on World War II, includes the stories of seven deceased soldiers and civilians, relatives and friends of the Muromtsev family. The dead characters explain how they died: "[Petia Simonov, soldier]: On the morning of June 22, 1941, I immediately went to sign up for the army, but they rejected me. I received a draft letter in August. I was killed near Tula on November 21, 1941." (Litvina and Desnitskaya 2019, 29) While giving voice to the dead would be impossible in memoir literature, which, as the Holocaust survivor Ruth Klüger (1992, 210) put it, "has the disadvantage that it is concerned with survivors", and where the Russian government's narratives seem increasingly to push losses to the background (Malina 2017), this literary strategy helps to give a face to Soviet victims of an event that is increasingly portrayed in purely heroic terms. In a sense, this approach revisits a pre-Putin approach to memory of the war: until the 1990s, Victory Day was an ambivalent holiday that involved commemoration as much as celebration. In their book, Litvina and Desnitskaya also show that repression continued in the post-war and post-Stalin period, albeit at lower levels. This does not affect today's dominant historical narrative. Nevertheless, it undermines the Russian population's and government's widespread longing for Soviet times.[29]

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[28] See, for example, the popular genre of crime novels that take place in Soviet times (Frieß 2016).

[29] "Nostal'giya po SSSR." *Levada-Tsentr*, https://www.levada.ru/2018/12/19/nostalgiya-po-sssr-2, 19 December 2018 (17 May 2021).

The authors of each of these works seem to be driven by an ethical compulsion to discuss events in a more nuanced way than has been typical in recent Russian children's literature. In her foreword, Kolpakova explains that it was "terrible" to listen to the personal histories on which *The Wormwood Tree* is based and that it was "even more terrible" to imagine what her interlocutors experienced. However, she adds, it was also "impossible not to know" these stories (Kolpakova 2017, 8). Kolpakova makes explicit, therefore, a moral obligation to tell, remember and engage with these parts of history.

To publicly act on such a moral compunction is a bold political act in today's Russia. It is no surprise that the authors avoid making sweeping political statements, instead choosing to highlight the personal dimension of their works.[30] Each author refers to their grandparents' biographies as the (at least partial) basis of the stories, and each dedicates their work to this older generation. In this way, they seek to have their stories read as individual experiences, although the constant references to widely known historical experiences, key dates, and linguistic tropes make the works inextricable from a wider, national narrative. This sort of understatement is particularly obvious in *The Apartment's* original Russian title, which literally translates as *The History of an Old Apartment*. In contrast, the English translation includes a subtitle (*A Century of Russian History*), which – aside from all marketing considerations – suggests that the "individual" stories clearly have a broader historical significance.[31]

Indeed, each of the three works in question encourages the reader's active engagement in the narrative. This is particularly true for the sole picture book under analysis, *The Apartment*. Picture books are, after all, intended for adults and children to share and read together (Nodelman 2017, 11). *The Apartment* is designed to encourage the readers to search for certain objects,[32] ask questions and recount stories of their own. Often read simultaneously by parents and children, picture books encourage intergenerational dialogue and can inspire readers to explore their own family history. Litvina and Desnitskaya even explicitly broach this topic in their afterword: “There were times in Russia when many events and even members of your own family could not be mentioned. [. . .] And now, it is sometimes hard to bring up these stories. Our book may suggest topics for such a conversation.” (Litvina and Desnitskaya 2019, 56) The same is true for the other texts, albeit in a less overt way: both texts target slightly older, and therefore more independent, children. However, as they include topics that are at very best reluctantly discussed in other contexts, they may stimulate young people to engage with their family’s history, which to some extent always corresponds with history on the macro level. By reading these successful and widely available works, young Russians discover a national past that is not just heroic. Yet while that history might be tragic or conflicting, these works – especially Litvina and Desnitskaya’s – do not present that past as exclusively negative. These works, then, present historical narratives that differ from official Russian narratives not just in content, but in an approach that encourages readers to reflect on and engage with what they read in a nuanced and thoughtful way.

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[30] The only clear political statement on *The Apartment* was given by its publisher Irina Balakhanova, who stated that it can certainly be read as an "alternative to the state's version of history" ("Istoriya staroy kvartiry: 100 let neodinochestva." *Pravmir.ru*, https://www.pravmir.ru/istoriya-staroy-kvartiryi-100-let-neodinochestva/, 13 January 2017 [17 May 2021]).

[31] In the Russian original, the reader finds this information only in the book's afterword, where the authors write: "Many objects in our homes preserve our family history. And through the family history, they preserve the country's history." (Litvina and Desnitskaya 2019, 56)

[32] The cover of the US-version even shows a circular overlay saying "Includes a search-and-find game and hundreds of objects to discover". The Russian version goes without this advertisement but (as does the English translation) encourages the young reader to look for certain objects marked with a question mark on page 2.

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Karoline Thaidigsmann

Engaging the Reader – Revising Patriotism: Polish Children's and Crossover Literature in the Twenty-First Century

> This land is one huge elementary school.
> You'll never leave its walls.[1]

In 2011, the left-wing publisher *Political Criticism* (*Krytyka Polityczna*) released Tomasz Piątek's *First-Grade Primer* (*Podręcznik dla klasy pierwszej*; illustrations by Hanna Gill-Piątek). The work's title and cover, which from a distance appears to resemble an old-fashioned schoolbook, were seemingly aimed at school-age children. Piątek is known for authoring provocative books on his past drug addiction and for producing journalism on what he considers to be the malaises of Polish contemporary society. That a figure like him should release an educational children's book seemed something of an oddity. However, even a brief examination of the book's cover reveals that the primer is not intended for children at all, but "for grown-up readers (18+)". The cover is illustrated with a line drawing of a little boy cutting off his own arm, intimating tones of violence and self-harm. The dominant colours on the cover – red and white – meanwhile recall the national colours of Poland (Figure 1). By ironically imitating and subverting both the covers and contents of traditional school books, Piątek suggests that a typical Polish education may be a damaging introduction into "Polishness".

However, Piątek's book also engages in a deeper polemic with a specific pre-text that was and still is an integral part of many Polish primers: Władysław Bełza's poem "Catechism of the Polish Child" ("Katechizm polskiego dziecka", 1900).[2] Bełza's poem may be considered one of the best-known templates of traditional patriotic education in Poland, propagating the idea of the individual's absolute devotion to and self-sacrifice for one's homeland. Piątek is not the only author to have attempted to deconstruct Bełza's "Catechism" in recent years. The most intriguing works to have engaged in these acts of deconstruction are those by children's writer Joanna Olech and her illustrator Edgar Bąk and the poet and literary scholar Michał Rusinek and his illustrator Joanna

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[1] From Polish musician Taco Hemingway's song "Mister, This is the Way Out" ("Panie, to Wyjście").

[2] Bełza's poem has also been known as "Who are you?" ("Kto ty jesteś?") or "Little Pole" ("Polak mały").

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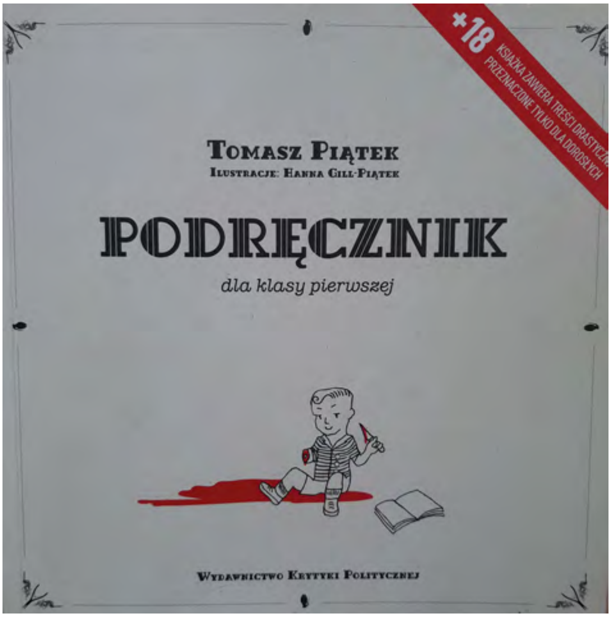
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KSIĄŻKA ZAWIERA TREŚCI DRASTYCZN
PRZEZNACZONE TYLKO DLA DOROSŁYCH
TOMASZ PIĄTEK
ILUSTRACJE: HANNA GILL-PIĄTEK
PODRĘCZNIK
dla klasy pierwszej
WYDAWNICTWO KRYTYKI POLITYCZNEJ

Figure 1: Cover Tomasz Piątek: *First-Grade Primer*. © Hanna Gill-Piątek.

Rusinek. Olech's *Who Are You?* (*Kto ty jesteś?*, illustrations by Edgar Bąk, 2013) and Rusinek's *What is Your Sign?* (*Jaki znak twój?*, illustrations by Joanna Rusinek, 2018) explicitly invoke Bełza's poem – only to attempt to replace its ideas with a modern, child-oriented understanding of patriotism.

In this chapter, I explore how Piątek, Olech and Rusinek subvert Bełza's patriotic agenda. I argue that the authors of the three books in question discuss the necessity of new forms of communication and exemplify shifts in communication that encourage child and adult readers to critically engage with notions of patriotism and Polishness in contemporary Polish society.

I first discuss the main ideas of Bełza's "Catechism" and its lasting impact on Polish patriotic education. Then, I show how Piątek's *First-Grade Primer* unveils the manipulative potential contained in child-oriented language. By taking advantage of this potential, Piątek's book can be regarded as a necessary intellectual prerequisite for the development of new conceptions of patriotism in child education. Lastly, I explore how Olech and Rusinek try to put into practice these new conceptions.[3]

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[3] The research in this chapter is based on elements of my book *Poetik der Grenzverschiebung. Kinderliterarische Muster, Crosswriting und kulturelles Selbstverständnis in der polnischen*

1 The tradition of blood and scars: Bełza's "Catechism of the Polish Child"

"Catechism of the Polish Child" was not the sole piece of patriotic literature aimed at Polish children when it was published at the beginning of the twentieth century. Due to Poland's political situation – in particular the absence of state sovereignty from 1795 to 1918 – narratives about Poland's heroic past and patriotic works intended to inculcate devotion to the nation became a central element in literature produced for children.[4] Bełza's poem is, according to Monika Graban-Pomirska, the patriotic children's genre's most clichéd example. The work proved easy for children to memorise thanks to its simple literary form and catchy rhymes. In "Catechism of the Polish Child" "we find all of Polish culture's deeply rooted motifs, images and symbols condensed; those which are generally regarded as the foundation of Polish national identity" (Graban-Pomirska 2010). The poem takes the form of a dialogue:

> "Who are you?"
> "A little Pole."
> "What is your sign?"
> "The White Eagle."
> "Where do you live?"
> "Among my own."
> "In what country?"
> "In the Polish land."
> "What is that land?"
> "My homeland."
> "How was it won?"
> "By blood and scars."
> "Do you love it?"
> "I love it truly."
> "And what do you believe in?"
> "I believe in Poland."
> "What are you before it?"
> "A grateful child."
> "What do you owe to it?"
> "To give my life for it."
> (Bełza 1912, 3–4)

Literatur nach 1989 (funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft [DFG, German Research Foundation] – TH 2013/2–).

[4] On the emergence and development of patriotic literature for young readers in Poland see Krajewska (2009) and Graban-Pomirska (2010).

In Polish, the short dialogues rhyme and create a quasi-religious dialogue that encourages a child interlocutor to confess their faith in the homeland. In this nationally reinterpreted catechism, the nation seems to stand in for God. In addition to these religious elements, the poem alludes to a military context, as if soldiers were responding to questions from their superiors with predefined slogans in order to express their devotion and subordination to the common cause. The second part of the poem invokes Polish history, emphasising the need for self-sacrifice. The "land won by blood and scars" brings to mind the country's seventeenth-century battles with invaders, while the commitment to give one's life for the country suggests Poland's loss of independence and its unsuccessful national uprisings during the nineteenth century.

In later editions, Bełza's poem offers a gendered version of the first stanza for girls: "Who are you?" / "A little Polish girl." / "What is your sign?" / "The white lily." (Bełza 1912, 4) However, this modification is not an emancipatory gesture. On the contrary, the alternative version deprives girls of the national symbol of strength: the eagle is replaced by the white lily, a loaded symbol of religious purity that alludes to Maria as the Madonna of the Lilies in Christian culture (see Lurker 1991, 435–436).

Bełza's poem still has significance for the idea of patriotism and patriotic education in Poland's twenty-first century. Agnieszka Kania notes that even "in the second decade of the twenty-first century, this work is still known not only to preschoolers but, as it turns out, even to children attending nursery" (2017, 44).[5] The Ministry of Education makes poems by Bełza compulsory reading in grades four to eight,[6] but "Catechism of the Polish Child" is taught even earlier.[7] These works are generally taught without a great deal of historical contextualisation (Kania 2017, 46). However, some teachers have – and realise in the classroom – more progressive ideas on the education of patriotism than the Ministry of Education and official school curricula (see Gajak-Toczek 2018, 118–120).[8] The way in which patriotism in general and Bełza's poem in particular are taught strongly depends, therefore, on individual teachers. Indeed, in spite of nationalistic works like Bełza's poem in classrooms, a recent survey of seventh graders showed that Polish children today prefer to think about patriotism in terms of peaceful citizenship rather than fighting and bloodletting (Gajak-Toczek 2018, 110).[9]

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[5] See also Agnieszka Doberschuetz in an interview with Michał Rusinek: "Bełza's poem is probably engraved in us". "Jaki znak twój? Język polski! [KL dzieciom]. Z Michałem Rusinkiem rozmawia Agnieszka Doberschuetz." *Kultura Liberalna* 513.45, 6 November 2018, https://kulturaliberalna.pl/2018/11/06/rozmowa-z-michalem-rusinkiem-kl-dzieciom/ (29 August 2020).

[6] See the ministry's programme of education from 2017 (valid still in 2021): https://podstawaprogramowa.pl/Szkola-podstawowa-IV-VIII/Jezyk-polski (27 February 2021).

[7] For example, in first grade: http://spnierada.szkolnastrona.pl/index.php?c=page&id=66 (26 August 2020).

[8] For example, some teachers planned to read fragments from Mirosław Białoszewski's *A Memoir from the Warsaw Uprising* (*Pamiętnik z powstania warszawskiego*, 1970), a book that

Regardless of whether teaching of the "Catechism" in schools successfully inculcates Bełza's vision of patriotism or not, since almost all Poles know the poem and connect it to a specific idea of patriotism, the work is easily adopted as a cultural code to either reinforce or subvert Bełza's ideas.[10] Tomasz Piątek's *First-Grade Primer* provides one such subversion of Bełza's template – one that not only sheds critical light on the values propagated by Bełza and the patriotic tradition that draws on the older author's work, but one that also uncovers the manipulative potential contained in child-oriented modes of communication.

2 Uncovering manipulative modes of communication: Piątek's *First-Grade Primer*

Piątek's *First-Grade Primer* is a crossover book. On the surface it looks like a book for children, but its target audience is adults. Piątek's book is based on the thesis that the first step to cultural change is a change in education, which necessitates making adults aware of problems in education. To achieve this awareness, Piątek forces his adult readership to adopt the position of child readers. *First-Grade Primer* confronts its readers with the typical genres and categories of didactic literature, which is intended to provide young children with basic knowledge about their country and people, about other countries, and about broader questions of life and death. In Piątek's work, we come across parodies of well-known nursery rhymes juxtaposed with stylised renditions of folk tales and robber stories. The texts are complemented by instructions for children's games and handicrafts. The readers are also provided with an animal companion – the dog Lubo – to guide them through the book. Each of Piątek's texts in the primer concludes with reading comprehension questions. Piątek

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offers an explicitly unheroic, civilian perspective on national resistance. Others intended to talk with their pupils about the difficult Polish-Jewish relations.

[9] The survey was conducted among 611 seventh graders from Lodz.

[10] One of the latest examples confirming this hypothesis is the song "Polish Tango" by the young Polish rapper Taco Hemingway. The song, which was released a few days before the 2020 presidential elections, includes a radical rewriting of Bełza's "Catechism of the Polish Child".

deliberately emulates the forms and styling of real didactic works, but the apparently pedagogical content of his work is starkly different from what is expected. Piątek sarcastically rails at traditional ideas of Poland and Polishness and presents the hypothetical consequences of an education based on these ideas.

Polish readers would certainly be familiar with Bełza's "Catechism of the Polish Child", which allows Piątek to use the work as a touchstone without ever referring to it explicitly. This can be seen in the poem "A Fertile Heart" ("Żyzne serce"), which introduces the (anti-)patriotic question in Piątek's textbook. The poem describes the country of Poland and defines a relationship between the homeland and its citizens. The poem ends with the stanza:

> For remember, my son, the homeland,
> Is one vast plane. On it there are lines straight and curved
> And maybe, in some way this is alive.
> (Piątek 2011, 10)

The reference to fertility in the poem's title is contrasted with the inanimate country described in the poem.[11] This lifelessness culminates in the stark illustration accompanying the text (Figure 2). A pink line runs from the last word of the final verse ("fertile") to the graphic, which is positioned on the opposite page. The line becomes a rope holding a guillotine shaped like a Polish map. The message is clear: the Polish homeland itself is a death sentence. For Piątek, the willingness to sacrifice your life for the country – which Bełza suggests is central to Polish patriotism – is a consequence of the willingness to give up your individual identity to the national collective. The "reading comprehension questions" following "A Fertile Heart" emphasise the toxic relationship between individual and homeland by condensing it into two basic questions: "Do you know where your country ends? Do you know where you begin?"

Piątek's poem "The Good Boy" ("Dobry chłopiec"), meanwhile, draws on another line from Bełza's "Catechism": "I'm living among my own". Piątek interprets the confession of living among one's own not as an expression of familiarity and comfort, but as a commitment to uniformity, sameness and conformity. In "The Good Boy" this conformity is presented as the result of a violent process of (de)formation and assimilation. The text centres on a boy who misbehaves at the family dinner table by refusing to eat. The boy's resistance is broken by his family, who

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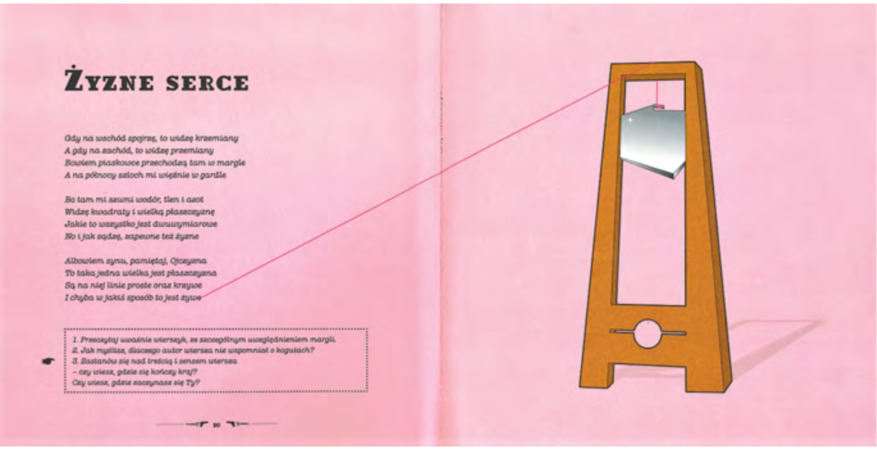
[11] In Polish the expression "żyzne serce" ("a fertile heart") does not exist. The word "żyzne" ("fertile/productive") that belongs to a higher language register, is used in connection with "land", "earth" or "soil", but not in connection with "heart". Its use in the poem signals a false pathos.



ŻYZNE SERCE

Gdy na wschód spojrzę, to widzę krzemiany
A gdy na zachód, to widzę przemiany
Bowiem piaskowce przechodzą tam w margle
A na północy szloch mi więźnie w gardle

Bo tam mi szumi wodór, tlen i azot
Widzę kwadraty i wielką płaszczyznę
Jakie to wszystko jest dwuwymiarowe
No i jak sądzę, zapewne też żyzne

Albowiem synu, pamiętaj, Ojczyzna
To taka jedna wielka jest płaszczyzna
Są na niej linie proste oraz krzywe
I chyba w jakiś sposób to jest żywe

1. Przeczytaj uważnie wierszyk, ze szczególnym uwzględnieniem margli.
2. Jak myślisz, dlaczego autor wiersza nie wspomniał o kogutach?
3. Zastanów się nad treścią i sensem wiersza
– czy wiesz, gdzie się kończy kraj?
Czy wiesz, gdzie zaczynasz się Ty?

10

Figure 2: *First-Grade Primer*. “A Fertile Heart” (pp. 10–11) © Hanna Gill-Piątek.

cook and eat him. The boy is thus ‘reintegrated’ into the family circle and harmony at the dinner table is restored.

The horrifying, cannibalistic content disappears behind a wall of cheerful, child-oriented language and – in the Polish original – catchy rhymes:

> What is there white and shining on the table? [. . .]
> It’s Christopher naked and cooked
> Lying on the table, covered with sauce
> He was the most difficult family member
> “Always naughty”, “Always different!”
> “And now – please see how he has improved
> The miracle of cooking has done all of this [. . .].
> Look how beautifully the children have eaten
> At our lovely family dinner.”
> (Piątek 2011, 53)

In Piątek’s interpretation of Bełza’s poem, being a good Polish boy and “living among one’s own” at the same time means embracing distrust towards others. This is on display in Piątek’s pseudo-factual text, “Poland, Europe and the World” (“Polska, Europa i świat”): “West of Poland live the Germans. The Germans murder people now and then, then apologise and start making cars.” The following sentences, which each imitate the syntactical construction of the first, explain that the Japanese, a people that “murder people from time to time, do not apologise and start making cars” and that the Russians “murder people, but almost never make cars” (2011, 30). As in “The Good Boy”, in “Poland, Europe and the World”, Piątek uses the manipulative potential of techniques familiar from children’s literature, which encourage the reader to embrace the text without hesitation or distrust. Schematic repetition is both easily memorised and suggestive of an inner logic that is in fact absent.

Piątek deliberately reduces complex facts to knowledge that seems unchallengeable and elementary. In reality, that knowledge is formed from illogical stereotypes and conspiracy theories. Through exaggeration Piątek makes obvious a literary mechanism that he finds at work in traditional patriotic literature such as Belza's "Catechism". In both "The Good Boy" and "Poland, Europe and the World", Piątek demonstrates how child-oriented modes of communication can be used to cover up a cruel, stereotyped, and xenophobic reality. The rhythm of the short texts runs so smoothly that they instinctively resonate with the readers even though the content is nonsense.

While familiar and catchy forms briefly hide the *Primer*'s jarring content, the stark contrast between childish modes of communication and violent content eventually establishes a critical distance between Piątek's readers and the book. This disjuncture encourages new intellectual engagement in questions of patriotic education. By addressing his primer to adults, Piątek intends to increase his readers' general awareness of language and literary form as a means of ideological manipulation. However, even though Piątek encourages critical reflections on mechanisms of communication in Polish society and calls for a change, he does not offer an alternative model of communication either for adults or for children. Joanna Olech and Michał Rusinek would fill that gap and propose new modes of communication on patriotism with children.

3 Bełza reloaded or dethroned? New conceptions of Polish patriotic children's literature

Joanna Olech and Michał Rusinek are both well-known authors in Poland. Olech's publisher Wytwórnia collaborated with Warsaw's New Theatre (Nowy Teatr) on a public campaign on patriotism to mark the release of the picture book *Who Are You?* in 2013. The campaign, which encompassed an exhibition, a poster campaign, online activities and meetings for children, was further supported by several cultural institutions like the National Audiovisual Institute and the leading Polish newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza*.[12] Rusinek's illustrated children's book *What is Your Sign?* seemed destined to garner public attention.

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[12] See https://nowyteatr.org/pl/kalendarz/ktotyjestes.

The work was released in 2018, when Poland celebrated the centenary of its independence and interest in patriotism was widespread. However, neither *Who Are You?* nor *What is Your Sign?* became part of the state's official curricula.

The books' titles are both lifted verbatim from Bełza's "Catechism of the Polish Child". The authors of the works thus openly assert – presumably to an intended audience of parents and educators – that they intend to deal with questions of patriotism.[13] In both cases, however, the authors offer transformative rewritings of the "Catechism", and suggest alternative forms of patriotism in place of Bełza's conception and Piątek's deconstruction.

Olech's and Rusinek's visions seem account for the fact that young Poles struggle to identify with Belza's messages of self-sacrifice and even find the category of "homeland" itself too abstract to be easily grasped or identified with (see Kania 2017, 48). The two books exclude notions of heroic wartime patriotism and commitments towards abstract ideas of "homeland". Instead, they outline a patriotism of everyday life rooted in experiences familiar to children. Both texts depict examples of socially desirable behaviour in a modern pluralistic society. They address the responsibility of individuals towards other people and peoples, towards origins and history and towards the natural world. A commitment to diversity is underpinned by openness towards the world – exemplified in the praise of travel and other languages – whereas questions about religious beliefs are treated with reserve.

Although both works share a patriotic vision, they are quite different in terms of language and literary form. The double-page spreads of Olech's *Who Are You?* consist of full-page illustrations by Edgar Bąk and an accompanying short text. Most of the accompanying texts have an identical structure, thus creating a rhythm that is both repetitive and catchy. The indication of an activity like "I help others'" (Figure 3) or the negation of an activity like "I don't insult others" (Figure 4) (Olech and Bąk 2018, without page) is always followed by the statement "I am a patriot" – varying only in number of persons and, in the Polish language, in terms of gender ("We are patriots", "I'm a female patriot", etc.). In the illustrations, the question of racial and gender diversity is resolved by keeping the characters neutral or – in most cases – by not depicting characters at all.

Despite its content being radically different from Bełza's poem, Olech's text alludes to the confessional character and the sloganeering of "Catechism of the

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[13] Another 2013 book, Eliza Piotrowska's *And I'm a Little Pole, the Whole World is My Country* (*A ja jestem Polak mały, moim krajem jest świat cały*), explicitly refers to Bełza's poem in its title.

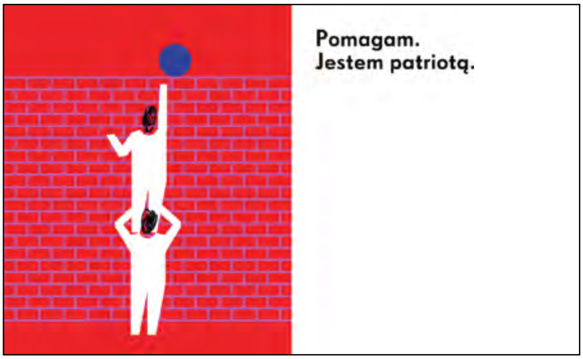


Figure 3: Joanna Olech, and Edgar Bąk: *Who Are You?*. “I help others. I’m a patriot” (without page) © publishing house Wytwórnia.

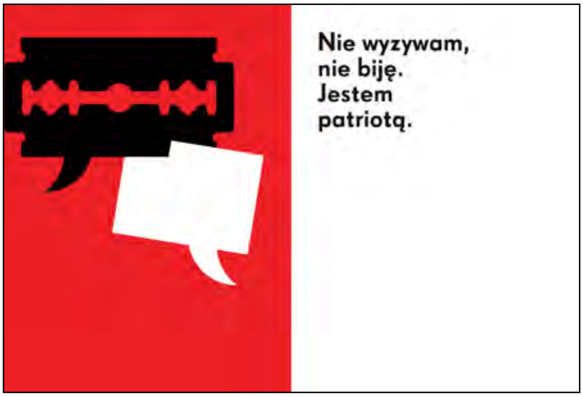
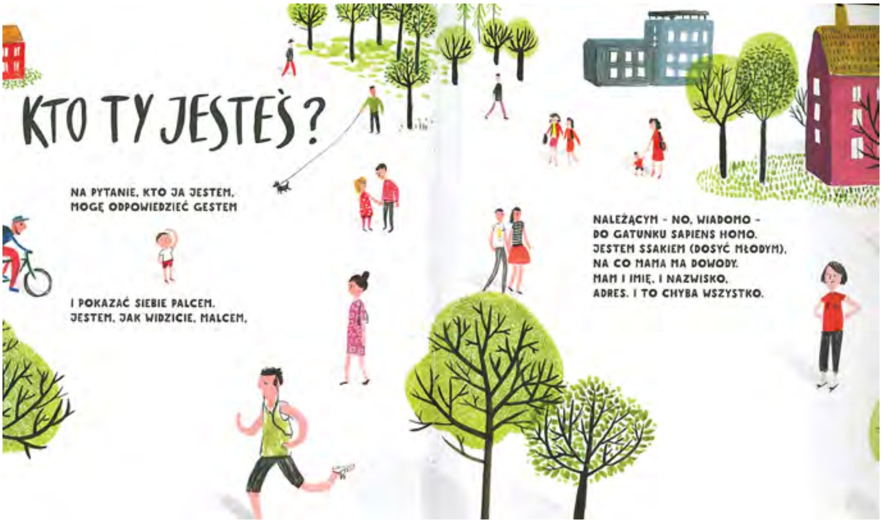


Figure 4: *Who Are You?*. “I don’t insult others, I don’ hit. I’m a patriot” (without page) © publishing house Wytwórnia.

Polish Child”. While Bełza’s text is structured as a series of questions and answers (e.g. “What do you owe to it [your country; KT]?” / “To give my life for it”) and thus presents the child’s answers as required from the child by an external authority, Olech depicts socially desirable behaviours as intrinsically motivated by the child (e.g. “I don’t waste water. I’m a patriot”). Nevertheless, the statements made by Olech’s speakers are as apodictical as the answers in Bełza’s poem. At the end of Olech’s book, the child reader is directly addressed with the ambiguous question “And you?”. This question might engage children in thinking about how their behaviour might contribute to the community. Yet it might also be understood as an obligation to commit oneself to a particular form of patriotism. In either case, the young readers of *Who Are You?* (the work is intended for those five and up) would struggle to understand the connection between the activities portrayed in the book and the term “patriotism” without adult guidance. The artistically accomplished but abstract illustrations also seem to mandate an assisted reading experience. To engage children in the book’s subject matter on an intellectual level, the author and illustrator rely on the communication between children and an older, more mature person reading to them.[14]

Author Michał Rusinek and illustrator Joanna Rusinek’s *What is Your Sign?* is intended for a slightly older age group (8–12) than Olech’s work. Throughout the text, Rusinek adopts communicative approaches that might enable children to access the book’s subject matter without explanations by parents or other adults. Instead of slogans and graphic abstraction, *What is Your Sign?* offers humorous rhymes and illustrations with a relatively straightforward narrative structure (Figure 5).



KTO TY JESTEŚ?

NA PYTANIE, KTO JA JESTEM,
MOGĘ ODPOWIEDZIEĆ GESTEM

I POKAZAĆ SIEBIE PALCEM.
JESTEM, JAK WIDZICIE, MALCEM,

NALEŻĄCYM - NO, WIADOMO -
DO GATUNKU SAPIENS HOMO.
JESTEM SSAKIEM (DOSYĆ MŁODYM),
NA CO MAMA MA DOWODY.
MAM I IMIĘ, I NAZWISKO,
ADRES. I TO CHYBA WSZYSTKO.

Figure 5: Michał and Joanna Rusinek: *What is Your Sign?*. “Who are you?” (without page) © Michał and Joanna Rusinek and publishing house Znak.

Rusinek replaces the confessional character of Belza’s poem and Olech’s book with an explanatory structure. Borrowing the ten questions posed in Belza’s

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[14] On the complexity of children’s picture books in general see Nodelman (1988, Ch. 1, “Pictures, picture books, and the implied reader”).

"Catechism", Rusinek encourages his readers to define their own position and response to these questions. Rusinek first explains the meaning of the questions to his child audience: "What is your sign? What's that supposed to mean?" Then he reveals that one question may have many different answers. Rusinek's answer to Bełza's first question demonstrates the approach:

> Who are you?
> [. . .]
> I am, as you can see, a little boy,
> Belonging to – obviously – the species *homo sapiens*.
> I am a mammal (quite young),
> My mother can tell you a thing or two about it.
> I have a name and a surname,
> an address, that's probably all.
> But, of course, it depends on who is asking
> If an alien asks me,
> I say – making a proud face – that I'm an inhabitant of the Earth
> However, if other inhabitants of the Earth ask me, I shout:
> "I am a European.
> Primarily, however, I'm a Pole!"
> [. . .]
> (Rusinek 2018, without page)

Rusinek's answers to the other questions from Bełza's catechism follow the same principle, continuing to emphasise a multitude of possible answers and allow for changing perspectives between the micro level – a child's room, home or hometown – and the macro level – the child's country, world and universe.[15] Responses that directly refer to Poland are always presented as one of many possible answers. Indeed, the nation recedes from the text: Rusinek does not use the term "patriotism" or other ideologically charged terms such as "homeland" at all; even the word "Poland" scarcely appears. As a result, the author drives the text towards a de-emotionalisation of Poland's heated public discourse of patriotism and cultural identity. Rusinek treats Bełza's questions not as utterances requiring confession and commitment, but as prompts that allow the reader to locate themselves as an individual and as part of a community.[16]

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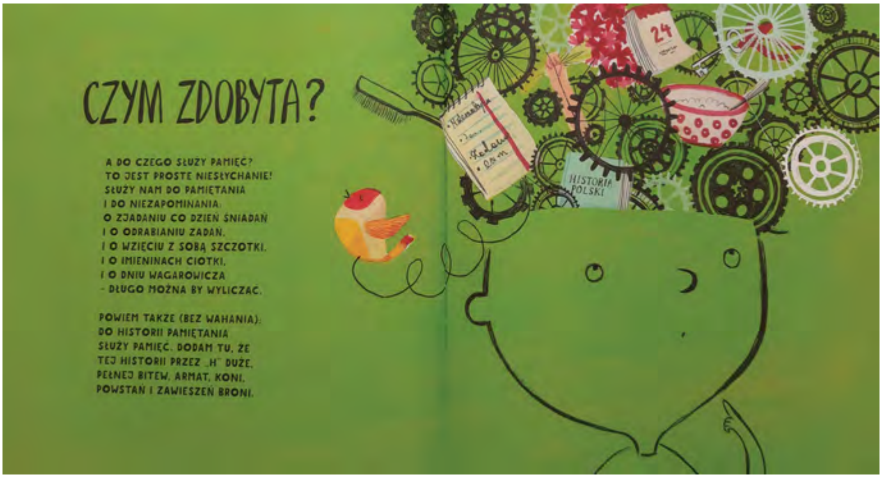
[15] And like Joanna Olech in *Kto ty jesteś?* Rusinek takes care to include male and female child characters.

[16] Interestingly enough on the last double-page spread of *What is Your Sign?*, the answer to the question "What do you owe to it?" suggests that Rusinek does not fully trust the mode of communication he has adopted throughout the book. The book ends with an unadorned list of socially desired behaviour that is almost identical to the activities mentioned in Olech's *Who Are You?*.

Olech and Rusinek also communicate with their child readers differently when it comes to the treatment of history and the past. Rusinek presents the past as a repository of memory, allowing him to reflect on the value of memory and the complexity of memory processes. Memory, for Rusinek encompasses collective and individual experiences, recollections that are both heroic and shameful. Responding to Bełza's question "How was it won?" Rusinek emphasises the meaning of the past for the individual's as well as the community's present and future:

> And what is memory for? [. . .] It is for remembering and for not forgetting: to eat breakfast every day and to do homework. [. . .]. I will also say (without hesitation): memory is for remembering history. Let me add here that means for history with a capital "H" [. . .]. And for history with a small "H" [. . .]. Well it happens with these histories that they are sometimes intertwined: the great with the small; the small with the great [. . .] There are things to be proud of in these histories, but there are also things to be ashamed of, so why should we remember them? We remember them in order not to make the same mistakes several more times. (Rusinek 2018, without page) (Figure 6)



CZYM ZDOBYTA?

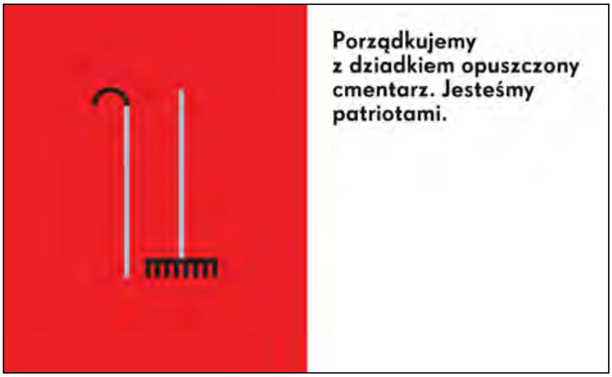
A DO CZEGO SŁUŻY PAMIĘĆ?
TO JEST PROSTE NIESŁYCHANIE!
SŁUŻY NAM DO PAMIĘTANIA
I DO NIEZAPOMINANIA:
O ZJADANIU CO DZIEŃ ŚNIADAŃ
I O ODRABIANIU ZADAŃ,
I O WZIĘCIU Z SOBĄ SZCZOTKI,
I O IMIENINACH CIOTKI,
I O DNIU WAGAROWICZA
– DŁUGO MOŻNA BY WYLICZAĆ.

POWIEM TAKŻE (BEZ WAHANIA):
DO HISTORII PAMIĘTANIA
SŁUŻY PAMIĘĆ. DODAM TU, ŻE
TEJ HISTORII PRZEZ „H" DUŻE,
PEŁNEJ BITEW, ARMAT, KONI,
POWSTAŃ I ZAWIESZEŃ BRONI.

Figure 6: *What is Your Sign?*. "How was it won?" (without page). © Michał and Joanna Rusinek and publishing house Znak.

In contrast to Rusinek's critical reflection on the impact of personal and collective history, Olech presents first and foremost the factual knowledge about the events and figures from national history as an expression of patriotism. For example, she refers to Napoleon Bonaparte and to Jan Henryk Dąbrowski, the hero of the Polish National anthem and the commander of a Polish legion fighting in the service of the French Republic in order to free Polish territories from occupation: "I know where the French emperor came from in our anthem. And what this command is all about. I am a patriot." (Olech and Bąk 2018, without page)

However, history and the past are not merely matters of knowledge for Olech. They also inform daily "patriotic" activity. Thereby Olech does not avoid difficult and painful chapters of history. She does, however, leave the decision to engage in these difficult chapters up to children's desire to ask questions and to adults' willingness to elaborate on these topics. For example, on one page, the narrator explains that, "Me and my grandfather are cleaning up an abandoned cemetery. We are patriots." (Figure 7) (Olech and Bąk 2018, without page) In a culture where the dead and memory of the dead play such a significant role as in Polish culture,[17] neglect of entire cemeteries implies a community that would take care of its graves no longer exists. This might be the case with Polish cemeteries in abandoned regions of the countryside, but it is more likely that Olech alludes to the cemeteries of Jewish communities destroyed during the Holocaust. The Polish boy and his grandfather who clean up the cemetery reclaim the past from oblivion. The speaker's statement can thus be read as an affirmation of responsibility towards Poland's former Jewish citizens and as a stand within the conflictual discourse on Polish-Jewish relations in Poland. However, without further explanation, a child would struggle to understand the deep contextual connotations or significance of the depiction of cemetery cleaning.



Porządkujemy
z dziadkiem opuszczony
cmentarz. Jesteśmy
patriotami.

Figure 7: *Who Are You?*. "Me and my grandfather are cleaning up an abandoned cemetery. We are patriots" (without page) © publishing house Wytwórnia.

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[17] On the significance of the dead in Polish cultural identity, see for example Janion (2000).

4 Conclusion

In her analysis of contemporary Polish school programmes, Magdalena Ochwat (2018, 45) makes a distinction between patriotic education and citizenship education, highlighting that the latter is neglected in favour of the former in the Polish education system. In *Who Are You?* And *What is Your Sign?,* Joanna Olech and Michał Rusinek discuss citizenship – the rules of responsible coexistence.[18] While Rusinek favours excising the term "patriotism" altogether, Olech remains attached to it, promoting new, civic ideas under the aegis of patriotism. Rather than leaving the term to the forces of political propaganda and to those who promote a simplistic, old-fashioned and catechistic view – as exemplified in the state's inculcation of Belza's "Catechism" – Olech seizes the term for herself, trying to reassert some agency over its interpretation both semantically and in practice.

However, changing content from unquestioned devotion and self-sacrifice to critical and responsible citizenship alone may not prove sufficient to change a culture's ideas on patriotism. It seems to be equally important to change the nature of communication in a way that allows child (and, for that matter, adult) readers to critically engage with the topic. As we saw in the first part of this chapter Tomasz Piątek's *First-Grade Primer* drew attention to the need for such a change in communication by ironically deconstructing Władysław Bełza's agenda. In Joanna Olech's *Who Are You?*, we were then confronted with the challenges of finding a literary form that is suitable for engaging children in new ideas on patriotism. Martin Rusinek's *What is Your Sign?* in turn developed a mode of communication which takes child readers seriously as autonomous participants in the discourse on patriotism, and which at the same time offers them the information and knowledge they need in order to engage themselves unassisted in the matter. Taken together, all three books contribute to a heightened awareness of the necessity for cultural change regarding patriotism as well as to a better understanding of the key role that modes of communication play in this change.

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[18] In an interview Rusinek stated: "I once came across a very poignant statement by Adam Hanuszkiewicz on the internet, in which he says: 'Enough of patriotism! Patriotism is needed when there is slavery, occupation, war . . . But in times of peace you need citizenship.' And that, for me, is the patriotism of peace." "Jaki znak twój? Język polski! [KL dzieciom]. Z Michałem Rusinkiem rozmawia Agnieszka Doberschuetz." *Kultura Liberalna* 513.45, 6 November 2018, https://kulturaliberalna.pl/2018/11/06/rozmowa-z-michalem-rusinkiem-kl-dzieciom/ (29 August 2020).

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Chris Reynolds & Paul Max Morin

Dealing with Contested Pasts from Northern Ireland to French Algeria: Transformative Strategies of Agonism in Action?

> "In primary school, they used to teach us about colonisation of Ireland by England and how the fight for Independence was a good thing. Two countries, two religions separated by a sea. To me, it mirrored so much the situation in Algeria. I couldn't stop thinking if the Irish got the Independence then Algerians should do the same. I never understood why we had to go to war against them." Christian, a French veteran of the Algerian War, speaking at a school in Paris, May 2018

The Northern Irish 'Troubles' and the Algerian War of Independence have left numerous deep, persistent marks on Irish and French societies. For decades, memories of these events have been described as "toxic", "padlocked" or "dangerous". Despite some efforts, the inability to ensure peaceful dialogue about the past has fuelled contemporary political and social tensions, making historical narratives a politically sensitive issue in both countries. Dealing with contested pasts and their memories is, irrespective of varying local contexts, one of the most challenging aspects in post-conflict societies' peacebuilding process.

Institutions dealing with the past – for example museums, governmental bodies, education systems – often bear the responsibility for producing and disseminating narratives that are supposed to ease social relations, build up cohesion, and question representations of the Other and the Self. More specifically, those institutions that engage with young people are often charged with the task of laying the foundations for the constructive management of difficult histories.

In recent years, scholars have worked to establish the limits of public policies of memory by demonstrating their relative inefficiency in building cohesion and, in some instances, even pointing to their unintended reinforcement of antagonisms (Gensburger and Lefranc 2017; Oeser 2010; Rosoux et al. 2017). Following World War II, official memory policies evolved towards a cosmopolitan mode of remembering that focuses on individual victims. Such "cosmopolitan memory" tends to neglect the social and political causes of events. As a result, its manifestation can appear detached from local contexts (Pestel et al. 2017).

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The cosmopolitan mode of remembering may nevertheless feed nationalism. For example, populist movements in Europe encourage the view that cosmopolitan memory practices are imposed by the international elite (Bull and Hansen 2016). A surge in memory policies and discourses based on the belief that talking about the past would help solve contemporary identity tensions has failed to expunge intolerance. Indeed, in some cases, the focus on discussing the past has actually encouraged that intolerance.

Anna Cento Bull and Hans Lauge Hansen (2016) have conceptualised an agonistic mode of memory that aims to negate the reinforcement of antagonisms. Agonistic memory acknowledges the existence of conflict, the role of emotions and the need to focus on political and social contexts in the transmission of memory. The theory promotes oral history as a methodology that empathetically incorporates all voices – victims, perpetrators, witnesses, bystanders – to understand the effect of context on the past and present. Agonistic memory's aim is to produce neither conflict nor consensus but, by focusing on frameworks, to encourage open-ended dialogue.

National Museums NI (Northern Ireland; NMNI) and the French Ministry of Armed Forces have recently developed two projects, *Voices of 68* and *History and Memory of the Algerian War* (*Histoire et Mémoires de la Guerre d'Algérie*) respectively, that apply an agonistic approach. By showcasing a dialogue between conflicting views on the past, they both seek to raise awareness among the young people they target. Both projects deploy educational tools (in the shared space of a museum and in classrooms), using oral history to break down dominant, reductive and divisive narratives. They promote multiperspectivity via inclusive and balanced treatments of difficult memories with the objective of increased empathy and understanding.

In this chapter, we present the motivations behind each project's methodologies, designs and institutional arrangements. Then, we identify the historical narratives the two projects seek to break down and chart those narratives that the projects produce in return. We address the transformative character of the two projects by assessing the way young people actually receive and reinterpret narratives. We ask whether the efforts have affected young people's civic attitudes. Finally, we outline how our comparative approach has allowed us to refine the theory of agonistic memory.

1 Dealing with contested pasts in France and Northern Ireland

1.1 Voices of 68

In the two decades since the signing of the Good Friday Agreement (GFA) in 1998, Northern Ireland has been moving further away from the violent conflict of 1968–98 commonly known as the Troubles (Hennessey 1997; McKittrick and McVea 2001; Patterson 2007). Since 1998, the Province has made huge strides towards bringing about some degree of normalcy. Significant economic, social and political progress has accompanied and resulted from peace (Bairner 2016; Boyd 2019; Byrne 2014; Tonge 2013, 92–93). However, as in most post-conflict contexts, the transition has not been trouble-free (Armstrong, Herbert and Mustad 2019; Cochrane 2013; Power 2011): political institutions have in recent years been all but stalled by a series of controversies and challenges (Tonge 2016).[1]

Of all the issues politicians in Belfast, Dublin and London face in relation to the peace process, managing the conflict's legacy is the most sensitive and arguably the most challenging (Beiner 2018; McDowell and Braniff 2014; Smyth 2017; Viggiani 2014). The explanation for this resides in the very nature of the peace achieved. The GFA may have ended the conflict, but it did not solve the issues that characterised and continue to define divisions (Dingley 2005; Lawther 2014). As a result, narratives of the past continue to cause tension (Bell 2003; Dawson 2014; Lundy and McGovern 2008). The divided communities of the Province recount contested perspectives on the past via communal optics, which continue to hinder future-proofing of the peace.

Northern Ireland's experience of 1968 is a pertinent example of how pivotal moments from the past continue to be the source of tension. Between October 1968 and February 1969, Northern Ireland experienced an upheaval that started with protests over discrimination before turning into a mass movement that boiled over to expose sectarian hostility. Arguably, these events set the region on course for the Troubles (Prince 2007; Purdie 1990; Reynolds 2015).

During the Troubles, divergent narratives were forged on how 1968 should be understood (for example, see Farrell 1988; Kingsley 1989). For the Catholic/

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[1] See also "'New culture war': Northern Ireland's LGBT+ community fights for gay marriage." *Thomson Reuters Foundation News*, 27 March 2019, https://www.reuters.com/article/us-britain-lgbt-politics-idUSKCN1R80UO; "How the Irish Language Became a Pawn in a Culture War." *New Statesman*, 5 July 2019, https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/northern-ireland/2019/07/how-irish-language-became-pawn-culture-war (12 July 2021).

Nationalist/Republican community, 1968 represented genuine concerns about discrimination that were met with state brutality, leaving members of the community with no option other than to turn to violence. The opposing Protest/Unionist/Loyalist narrative painted 1968 as yet another attempt by Republicans to achieve their goal of a united Ireland. In their reading, 1968 was just a front for the Irish Republican Army (IRA). Against the antagonistic backdrop of the Troubles, these two narratives became dominant and were widely perpetuated. Only with the onset of peace in 1998 did an opportunity emerge to frame the period differently (Reynolds 2017).

The *Voices of 68* project, an oral history collaboration between Chris Reynolds, one of the co-authors of this chapter, and National Museums NI, seeks to ensure the opportunities of the peace-time context are not missed (Reynolds and Blair 2018). As the peace process has matured it has become evident that without a carefully considered strategy, the legacy of the past runs the risk of undermining the progress of peace. *Voices of 68* draws on the theory of agonism in order to bring together a range of contested perspectives on the period (Black and Reynolds 2020). The project led to interventions in the permanent galleries of Belfast's Ulster Museum, temporary and travelling exhibitions, the creation of a range of online resources and a whole plethora of public-facing events. All of these outputs were defined by agonistic multiperspectivity.[2]

There has been a notable educational output (Parr and Reynolds 2021). The Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA) asked for resources that would tie together the content and approach of exhibition material with the needs of the curriculum. This led to the creation of a set of bespoke online resources, developed with the assistance of CCEA, teaching bodies and several teachers.[3] Building on these resources, a series of study days have been held at the Ulster Museum. Each session has seen around 200 local school pupils attend. The organisers sought to ensure that the educational programme was suffused with the agonistic credentials of the museum content. The target audience represents the peace-time generation who never experienced the direct consequences of the conflict. They will, moreover, go on to help shape future narratives of the past. Addressing the audience with agonistic content that showcases and underscores the necessity of openness, polyvocality, and constructiveness explains why *Voices of 68* has been such a success.

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[2] For example, "Panel discussion and exhibition marking 50 years of Civil Rights in Northern Ireland." *University of Liverpool*, 5 December 2018, https://news.liverpool.ac.uk/2018/12/05/panel-discussion-and-exhibition-marking-50-years-of-civil-rights-in-northern-ireland/; "Voices of 68 Exhibit." *Boston College*, 29 March 2019. https://events.bc.edu/event/voices_of_68_exhibit#.X0-QmdNKgnV; "Voices of '68 Exhibit Launches." *National Museums NI*, 17 September 2018, https://www.nmni.com/news/voices-of-68-exhibition (12 July 2021).

[3] "Northern Ireland's 1968. Ulster Museum Learning Resource: CCEA GCSE History, Section 2, Option B." National Museums NI, 22 December 2017, https://www.nmni.com/learn/1968-history-resource/Home.aspx (12 July 2021).

1.2 Histoire et Mémoires de la Guerre d’Algérie (HMGA)

More than 130 years of colonisation in Algeria, a violent war of independence (1954–62), and waves of exile and migration between Algeria and mainland France have left numerous traces on contemporary French society. The experience of Algerian independence has significantly impacted on institutions, laws, the political system and national and individual identities (Shepard 2012; Stora 1991). The demographic record alone speaks to the independence movement’s impact on the mainland. In 1962, millions of individuals and families poured into France: two million soldiers; 1.2 million “pieds-noirs” – French settlers who “returned” to the mainland; 150,000 “Harkis” – Algerians associated with colonial power who were forced to leave their native country; and 500,000 Algerian immigrants (by the early 1980s, a million had arrived). Today, 39 per cent of young French people declare a family link with one of these Algerian or Algerian-related groups.[4] Many more young French might have inherited colonial representations of in-groups and out-groups.

The history and memory of colonisation and the war in Algeria have been described as “padlocked” by the state, and “rotten” and “dangerous” for society (Stora and Jenni 2016). While the French state refused to acknowledge the war for decades, groups affected by the conflict have developed their own discourses on the past, creating a “rich undergrowth of non-official narratives” (Eldridge 2018). Far from neglecting the colonial period, the social fabric of France is actually criss-crossed by vivid and multiple manifestations of memory. A “kaleidoscope of divided memories” is transmitted and elaborated by different groups who poorly interact with one another (Ageron cited in Stora 1991, 520). In this patchwork interaction of memories, stereotypes and unquestioned resentments are transmitted to younger generations. Since the 2000s, conflicting views on the past have even fuelled a “memory war” in which former actors competed to impose their narratives in public space and in the sacred national narrative (Savarèse 2007).

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[4] National Census conducted in October 2020 on a representative sample of 3,000 young people by Paul Max Morin (Sciences Po, Cevipof) and IFOP – Institut Français de l’Opinion Publique on behalf of ONAC – Office National des Anciens Combattants (to be published in 2022).

Memories of the Algerian War are today used by political actors and identity entrepreneurs to legitimate contemporary political projects, especially those centred on identity (Morin 2022). Conservatives rehabilitate the colonial past to feed nationalism (Bertrand 2006), while radical far-right movements use it to stigmatise Muslim and Arab citizens. In turn, Islamist groups use colonial frustrations and victimisation strategies to recruit members. Finally, the political left expresses critical views on the past in order to promote a more inclusive society in the present and future. As cultural insecurities and views on the past coagulate, they pour fuel into the flames of this discursive fire.

Narratives on Algeria in particular have become a social issue as antagonistic views of the past create political competition in France (Morin 2020). On 19 March 2016, mere months after the Islamist terrorist attacks on the magazine *Charlie Hebdo* and at the Bataclan in Paris, and while commemorating the fifty-fourth anniversary of the end of the war, then President François Hollande asked the the National Veterans and War Victims Office (Office National des Anciens Combattants et Victimes de Guerre, ONAC)[5] to develop a programme to raise awareness on the history and memory of the Algerian War in schools.[6] In response, ONAC in 2017 commissioned historians to develop a touring exhibition summarising the history of France in Algeria from 1830 to the present. The exhibition *Algerian War: Common History, Shared Memories?* (*Guerre d'Algérie: Histoire commune, mémoires partagées?*) has been recreated in 110 copies across France, while the creators also produced digital material for teachers and a

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[5] ONAC was created in 1916 to support veterans of World War I and their families. It presages a social security system by enacting national solidarity towards veterans (pensions, benefits, job security, health expenditures etc.). Since then ONAC has been looking after the different generations of soldiers, war veterans, victims of war (including civilians and victims of terrorism) and their families. For that purpose, ONAC has offices in each French department, a quite valuable administrative specificity. Since the 1980s, ONAC has taken the memory turn. Memory policies have integrated the politics of reparation. With the generations of previous conflicts disappearing, ONAC naturally deals with war veterans from Algeria, Harkis enrolled in the French Army and French civilians impacted by the war.

[6] See François Hollande's declaration on 19 March 2016: "The education system should be involved. The National Veterans and War Victims Office will launch this year a global programme: 'common history and shared memory of the Algerian War.' This programme will include an exhibition and will also allow interventions of witnesses in class to support teaching in history and civic values."

"Déclaration de François Hollande." *Elysée*, 19 March 2016, https://www.elysee.fr/francois-hollande/2016/03/19/declaration-de-m-francois-hollande-president-de-la-republique-sur-la-guerre-dalgerie-a-paris-le-19-mars-2016 (12 July 2021).

YouTube channel with videos of historians and witnesses.[7] ONAC has complemented this historical repertoire by organising training sessions for teachers, who often lack basic knowledge of the Algerian War.[8]

This research focuses on the 130 two-hour in-class testimony sessions that have taken place across France as part of ONAC's initiative.[9] These testimonies involve a dialogue between a former veteran, a pied-noir, a Harkis and a former pro-independence *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN) activist.[10] During the sessions, witnesses who had different positions during the Algerian War, were theoretical adversaries, or have diverging views on the past, talk to pupils. Each participant has fifteen uninterrupted minutes to recount their experiences of the war. The second hour of the session is a questions and answer period with the class.

Witnesses depict differing visions of what French Algeria used to be: a system of domination for some; an Eden-like paradise for others. Coexisting and conflicting narratives, then, make it possible to talk about colonial inequalities and the desire for independence but also about how young French men were turned into soldiers, how Harkis were enrolled, used and abandoned by the French government and how pieds-noirs and Algerian Jews were uprooted from their homes.[11] All in all, the multiperspectivity offers a non-binary reading of the past in which apparently opposing voices are rendered complementary. It introduces complexity, makes the link between micro and macro history, and helps assimilate knowledge through an emotional collective experience. The programme dismantles stereotypes but also enhances students' critical thinking and capacities to reflect on the fluidity of identities.

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[7] "Présentation (1/9) 'La guerre d'Algérie. Histoire commune, mémoires partagées?" *ONAC-VG YouTube Channel*, 4 December 2018, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3TlZ3NToDP8&t=1s (12 July 2021).

[8] Since 2016, ONAC organised 63 training sessions for teachers. For an example see: "Un plan académique de formation sur l'histoire et les mémoires de la guerre d'Algérie." *ONAC-VG*, 12 February 2019, https://www.onac-vg.fr/actualites/un-plan-academique-de-formation-sur-histoire-et-les-memoires-de-la-guerre-algerie (12 July 2021).

[9] Detailed presentation of the programme: "La guerre d'Algérie.Histoire commune,mémoires partagées?" *ONAC-VG*, 3 October 2018, https://www.onac-vg.fr/sites/default/files/2018-10/livret%20p%C3%A9dago%20sans%20repr%C3%A8res-ilovepdf-compressed.pdf (12 July 2021).

[10] Founded in 1954 at the very beginning of the war, the FLN is the main pro-independence party in Algeria. It organised the first terrorist attacks that triggered the war. With its armed branch (ALN), it defeated colonial power. The party has remained in power in Algeria since the independence.

[11] For a visual example, see "Séance de témoignage." *France 3 IDF YouTube*, 3 July 2019, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OYLbfbNubQs (12 July 2021).

2 Comparing projects' methodology, design and implementation

There are clear differences between the contexts of the Northern Irish and Algerian cases that affect the comparative analysis. However, the two contexts are united in some ways. Actors in both contexts need to work constructively in a post-conflict environment. The period following the immediate to mid-term aftermath of each conflict was characterised by a degree of myopic memory construction. In both cases, the passage of time has paved the way for a more critical and constructive approach to how the period is remembered and passed on. In both cases, the time is ripe to deal with the past in ways that transgress, deconstruct, or question dominant yet reductive paradigms. This fertile – but not unique – shared terrain suggests that the projects' innovative approaches may well provide broader lessons that could be applied in other contexts.

2.1 Methodology

Both projects enacted multiperspectivity. The *Voices of 68* exhibition curators took care not to privilege any single narrative. A clash of perspectives was, for example, prominent in the range of online material as the educational resources combined a range of contested perspectives to convey the inadequacy of simple, binary narratives. Confronted with divergent viewpoints on important moments, students were challenged to question their preconceived ideas. In turn, they were to learn to appreciate that contemplating contested views is an essential step in making sense of the past. Meanwhile, *HMGA*'s touring exhibition was curated by three well-known historians: one was an expert on the Harkis, a second on the pieds-noir and the last on repression carried out by the French Army, respectively Abderahmen Moumen, Jean-Jacques Jordi and Raphaëlle Branche. As a result, the French exhibition accords ample space to each of these different histories and accords a third of its content to each respective memory group. The same approach applied to the online material. However, the best example of the antagonistic multiperspectivity at the heart of the projects – and the best example of how each project treated competing narratives in different ways – is in their differing approaches to the live testimony sessions.

The *Voices of 68*'s study days at the Ulster Museum continued to put agonism into action through live witness testimony. Following a morning of lectures and talks by academic and museum experts, as well as a tour of the galleries, pupils witnessed the live encounter of contested perspectives. A range of witnesses representing a fair diversity of views shared their reflections on 1968 with the students. Then students were able to ask questions of the witnesses. The complexities of a multiperspectival memory were thus laid out then laid open to interactive challenge and elucidation.

Moreover, the project's authors sought out heterogeneous testimonies. The story of Northern Ireland's 1968 has traditionally been the preserve of a small number of protagonists from each conflicting side of the community. In order to break out of this narrow and restrictive paradigm, the project's leaders gathered the testimonies of people beyond the nationalist community and included perspectives that question any positive framing of the 1968 events in the Province. There was an additional focus on demonstrating how divisions existed also within respective communities to appreciate the fragmented nature of what occurred and how memories have been constructed over the years, even from an intra-communal perspective.

Testimony sessions are also central to *HMGA*, where witnesses representing diverse layers of voices guarantee multiperspectivity. Like in Northern Ireland, narratives of the Algerian past have been the preserve of a small number of active "memory entrepreneurs" (Pollak 1993). The creators of *HMGA* therefore displayed heterogenous voices that had not been heavily affected by memory activism. The selection of witnesses was made to avoid vindictive positions – unlike in *Voices of* 68, where project leaders encouraged the voicing of confrontational and even uncomfortable perspectives.

Memory activists have since the end of the Algerian War crafted stories that reflect and serve their interests when dealing with public authorities (Eldridge 2018). As a consequence, narratives on the Algerian past are often one-sided. Therefore, when choosing witnesses to participate in the *HMGA* sessions, the project's organisers considered not just *what* was said but *how* it was said. They excluded activists seeking revenge and sought only those who possessed the capacity to address a young audience. As preparation, the project organisers recorded potential participants' stories, hoping to assess whether their perspectives would be of interest and evaluate whether their mental and political dispositions would enable them to participate. The chosen witnesses then met in a non-formal event to assess their compatibility with the project's aims. In the French school environment, some narratives were deemed unfit for teenagers. In a sense, this process of selection and preparation means that *HMGA*'s witnesses have been professionalised.

Despite apparently welcoming divergent perspectives, the project organisers made an effort to display reconciliation in front of pupils: witnesses agreed that hate speech and colonialism were undesirable, that reconciliation was important, and that politics – and not people – was to blame for the violence. If both projects seem to apply an agonistic methodology, comparing their design and implementation helps identify mechanisms that prevent the translation of agonism into action in each.

2.2 Design

Both the *Voices of 68* and the *HMGA* set out to construct a new narrative intended to challenge the limited perspectives that informed preconceived ideas and memories. Each project sought to transmit the new narrative through educational outreach. Contested perspectives were to be introduced to school pupils with the explicit goal of encouraging young people to see beyond their previously held convictions and to appreciate alternative narratives. The accompanying objective was to facilitate school teachers' ability to confront what are difficult moments to teach.

In spite of these shared intentions, there were fundamental differences in terms of how these projects were approached from an institutional perspective. *Voices of 68* was grounded in a collaboration between one of the co-authors of this chapter and a national museum. NMNI became the project's hub; its institutional heft aided outreach to local schools and curriculum bodies. The non-governmental, and therefore flexible, nature of the project impacted *Voices of 68*'s design. The project was able to expand to include additional partners (such as CCEA, the History Teachers Association of Northern Ireland [HTANI] and the fiftieth anniversary of 1968 Civil Rights executive committee) and to adapt to different situations that saw exhibitions and public-facing events hosted in a range of venues that included local visitor attraction, libraries, cultural centres and universities. In so doing, *Voices of 68* was able to contribute to broader reflections on the challenge of managing the legacy of the past in Northern Ireland (and elsewhere) for the heritage and education sectors.

HMGA, however, emerged from a different institutional collaboration that did not incorporate NGOs or official education and curriculum bodies. ONAC, whose role is to manage reparations policies, is housed within the Ministry of Armed Forces. The ministry has an uneasy history with the Algerian War – merely working on memory of the Algerian War within the institution is a novelty. *HMGA* was first conceived to raise awareness about the role of Harkis and to dismantle the stereotypical view of the Harki as a traitor to Algerian Independence. Veterans, pro-independent witnesses, and pieds-noirs were also included in the programme to support a balance in exposed narratives. Moreover, recent Jihadist attacks in France have forced institutions to reflect on what keeps citizens together: the divisions left by the Algerian war are seen as the source of contemporary identity tensions.[12] State bodies charged with preventing radicalisation, racism and antisemitism thus offered additional funding to the project.[13] As such, *HMGA* has taken on a novel role as it seeks to contribute to solving contemporary issues. In this sense, memory and current security were intertwined in the project's state-led design.

Compared to the Northern Irish project, *HMGA* shows how powerful projections on young people are in influencing project design. The French Ministry of Armed Forces has found that policy makers and teachers alike believe addressing the Algerian past is a sensitive topic that might spark in-class tensions. The Ministry and other institutions cautiously limit *HMGA*'s deployment and visibility. Policy makers worry that children with Algerian or North African origins have culturally specific visions of the past that centre on supposed resentments over colonial history and might therefore find these projects particularly problematic.[14] Developing a more complex understanding of the past would supposedly help these children develop a sense of belonging and feel more represented in national curricula, which is significant when narratives of the Algerian War have long been perceived as being the history of the Other. As a result, *HMGA* received funding to operate in disadvantaged neighbourhoods where children with a migratory background live.

However, there is little evidence that ethnically Algerian young people cling to these communal historical identities, while the classroom experiences of projects like *HMGA* are mostly tension-free.[15] Regardless of their backgrounds, pupils have complex and diverse knowledge of the past.[16] However, the dual myths of sensitivity and communal identity influence and limit projects' impacts. Policy makers, and French adults more generally, project both their own sensitivities and biased narratives onto young people.[17] The *HMGA* project's design could therefore be improved by conducting short preparatory studies on what young people actually know, feel and expect from such memory programmes. All in all, *HMGA*'s governmental identity offers an inverted image of the non-governmental nature of *Voices of 68*. The rigidity, verticality and above all political caution of the Ministry of the Armed Forces have limited *HMGA*'s implementation.

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[12] President Emmanuel Macron has made a couple of public statements underlining the need to "end mourning" on the Algerian war as a necessary step to fight both racism and Jihadism in France; contributing to connecting the past with contemporary issues.

[13] More precisely DILCRAH (Direction Interministerielle contre le racisme, l'antisémitisme et la haine anti LGBTQI+) and CIPDR (Comité interministeriel pour la prévention de la radicalisation).

[14] Policy makers mention them in various notes produced for the Minister in preparation of the sixtieth anniversary of the end of the war in 2022.

[15] For instance: In a focus group organised in May 2019 with teachers in Draguignan (South of France), local history teachers declared being afraid of in-class tensions especially coming from children from Algerian background. "This programme will just light a fire in my class, and I won't let you do that!" Then, when asked to actually name or list any of these tensions, none of the ten teachers were able to do so.

[16] A survey on 3,000 young people and interviews conducted with grand-children of FLN activists show how young people from Algerian background, as all grand-children in families affected by the war, have a stronger politicisation in general. However, it shows no direct link between community belonging and specific views on the past or any feeling of resentment. Children of Algerian background have for instance a stronger sense of sharing a common

Similar assumptions about the possible exist in the teaching of Northern Ireland's difficult past. The current GCSE curriculum does not oblige teachers to engage with the period. Given the ongoing sensitivities and divisions in Northern Irish society, it is unsurprising that many teachers choose to study other, less problematic areas of the history curriculum. Such choices are determined by the assumption that any critical examination of this difficult past potentially runs the risk of exposing and exacerbating communal tensions. There is also a sense that young people are ill-equipped, unprepared or unwilling to be exposed to the associated challenges of confronting such contested periods in their history.

However, the positive reception of the *Voices of 68* project suggests that such assumptions are misplaced and must be overcome. Indeed, it is clear that the generation of young people who have grown up in the peacetime era are willing to engage with the multiperspectivity that has underpinned this project and are able to recognise the benefits of such an approach. The caution of the previous generations is perfectly understandable. However, projecting such caution on today's treatment of these issues does little to contribute to the changes required to build a constructive approach to the region's problematic past.

Both projects demonstrate how policy makers need to support the development of sophisticated approaches in the educational sphere. However, the experiences of each project's organisers show that initial objectives should be limited to clear goals such as raising awareness about history. Social transformation is a slow and different process. Both projects demonstrate the importance of creating safe spaces for such difficult conversations. These spaces then permit the engagement of a broad range of governmental and non-governmental stakeholders.

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history with other French people (80 per cent of them, when the average rate for young French people is 67 per cent) (Data from this survey are published in Morin 2022).

[17] In different notes at the Ministry, policy makers specifically target young people describing them as "crisscrossed by identity" or as being influenced by unrepublican political discourses. This is clearly considered as a democratic concern such policies need to address.

Building all-important trust is only possible through complete transparency in process and objectives: representatives of contested perspectives must be made to feel welcomed and understand exactly what they are investing in. In addition, both projects have demonstrated how it is possible to go beyond the perceived sensitivities surrounding contested pasts. Indeed, the importance of the passing of time, combined with the explicit focus on putting young people at the centre of outputs, has demonstrated that students are able and ready to face up to the difficulties of the past.

2.3 Implementation

Overlapping aspects of the two projects' implementations also offer worthwhile lessons for scholars and policy makers. For example, in both cases, stakeholders expressed commitment to seeing the project through to completion. *Voices of 68* was successful because of the strong relations and shared commitment of both the organiser and NMNI. In addition, strong institutional support and engagement from stakeholders meant that there was a constant level of engagement across the project's iterative development.[18] The entire collaboration was underpinned by openness to feedback so as to ensure all contributors felt at ease and included.

The same characteristics were evident in the *HMGA* project, which drew particularly heavily on the dedication of individuals with a personal history or interest in Algeria. Working on the Algerian War at the Ministry of Armed Forces, however, inevitably sparked institutional resistance. Anticipating this challenge, ONAC recruited a dedicated team, which reported directly to the head of ONAC. As a result, the team worked relatively quickly and freely even within the confines of institutional caution. External political, institutional and financial support further helped to circumvent resistance inside the Ministry.

In both the French and Northern Irish cases, then, implementation was facilitated by a willingness to embrace non-traditional modes of working directed towards creating the "narrative hospitality" (Ricoeur 1995, 8) central to the agonistic theoretical approach. Great care was paid to ensuring that both projects reached beyond, but did not exclude, dominant voices. This approach ensured balance and appropriate representation of all concerned. In each context, disagreements over what happened and how the past should be remembered are not diminishing. In the Algerian case, for instance, former FLN activists and the Harki often disagree on Indigenous support for French rule and on the FLN's violent methods. The former are critical of colonial achievements in Algeria, claiming most Algerians supported the fight for independence; the latter claim the opposite. In Northern Ireland, to this day, the memory of 1968 is dominated by questions about the true extent of discrimination that led to the emergence of the Civil Rights movement, the involvement of elements of the Irish Republican Army, and what role these events played in precipitating the onset of the Troubles. However, despite such differences, in both cases there was a general consensus on the processes and overall objectives.

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[18] The project benefitted from internal Nottingham Trent University strategic research funding to the tune of £50,000 between 2015 and 2019. This sum was matched by NMNI in its investment on the project's iterative development.

If both projects apply a similar agonistic methodology, they were implemented in and informed by different institutional contexts. Where *Voices of 68* takes shape in an academic and educational framework with pedagogical innovation at the heart of the project's design, *HMGA*'s governmental origin means that other public issues influenced implementation and design. Although both projects ensured a certain number of partners were able to contribute, *Voices of 68*'s flexibility to adaptation contrasts with *HMGA*'s institutional caution.

The experience of the two projects, however, suggests a number of lessons that stakeholders should heed when it comes to implementing similar public multiperspectival historical explorations that seek to go beyond traditional gatekeepers and make space for individual, silenced and marginalised memories. First, stakeholders must, above all, support the overall objectives of such projects: not to find consensus on the content but to find constructive means of handling contested perspectives. Second, even when working within the limits of the institutional partners, openness to broadening the stakeholder and partner base is a useful trait. Third, flexibility is also required of project leaders, who need to allow the project to take new directions in terms of outputs, and institutional collaborators. Fourth, when it comes to output, educational activities are effective both in and beyond the classroom. Nevertheless, moving dialogue outside of schools may help overcome the sensitivities of the difficult history being confronted. Finally, there must be an insistence on and an openness to taking on board the feedback and comments of all contributors and making changes to ensure the continuation of the "narrative hospitality" so central to everyone's buy-in and the project's overall success.

3 Reception and impact

Analysing both *Voices of 68* and *HMGA*'s reception and impact tells us whether the goals of the antagonistic concept were actually met in spite of the limitations outlined above. Both projects received positive media coverage and were the subject of visits and praise by politicians. In order to analyse the successes of *Voices of 68*, we survey pupils' study-day feedback and teacher testimonies, the reflections of teaching and curriculum bodies, the views of policy bodies tasked with finding solutions for the challenges of dealing with the past, and the views of the NMNI educational and curatorial team. The survey of *HMGA*'s reception, feedback and impact is based on three sets of data: three years of observations in class and at ONAC's and a pre- and post-testimony questionnaire. Questionnaires in class are handed before and weeks after the testimony. They are nearly identical and measure change in knowledge and attitudes about the past and its actors among pupils. This comprehensive data – roughly equivalent in nature and scope for each project – gives us a detailed understanding of how the projects affected participants. If both projects appear to raise awareness on historical events, they do not necessarily impact civic attitudes. The non-governmental nature of *Voices of 68* guarantees its independence and efficiency; governmental and political control have strongly limited *HMGA*'s impacts.

3.1 Reception: Politicians and the wider public

Bringing together contested perspectives in both the French and Northern Irish programmes led to positive institutional and political responses, positive publicity and wide public dissemination. In the case of *HMGA*, building political and media support was always part of the institutional arrangements to reinforce the project's support at the Ministry. Testimony sessions were covered by local press and TV channels. The programme received media attention in *Le Monde* and other national broadsheets.[19] Politicians made their support clear in public. A Member of Parliament and the Deputy Minister of Veterans attended sessions.[20] President Emmanuel Macron also plans to participate in the programme's activities.[21]

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[19] "Des lycéens face aux mémoires de la guerre d'Algérien." *Le Monde*, 19 March 2019, https://www.lemonde.fr/societe/article/2019/03/19/des-lyceens-face-aux-memoires-plurielles-de-la-guerre-d-algerie_5438065_3224.html; "Bachir, Héliette et les autres." *La Croix*, 1 December 2020, https://www.la-croix.com/France/Bachir-Heliette-autres-memoires-guerre-dAlgerie-2020-12-01-1201127670 (12 July 2022).

This political success has been matched on an institutional level. *HMGA* eventually launched a monitoring committee involving nearly ten different institutions and administrations, which was an unusual step for the Ministry of Armed Forces. The addition of partners, moreover, nurtured new perspectives and side-projects such as conferences, new teaching material and policy recommendations.[22] However, recent changes in the Ministry's leadership have undermined the project's institutional dynamic.[23] The new leadership planned to institutionalise *HMGA* by ensuring that its programmatic work could be implemented through the usual chains of command.[24] However, those recruited to run versions of *HMGA* at a local level were not equipped with the necessary training or guidance to meet such a challenge. Though knowledgeable about World War II, these local organisers lack knowledge on the Algerian War. Worse, they also lack networks needed to find regional teams of witnesses, especially former FLN activists or to work with youth NGOs to intervene in disadvantaged neighbourhoods.[25] Such obstacles proved too great to overcome. Among all the project's outputs, only the training sessions for teachers continue on a regular basis today.[26] *HMGA* could not survive governmental rigidity and political caution.

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[20] "Exposition sur la guerre d'Algérie à l'Assemblée Nationale." *ONAC-VG Actualités*, 7 June 2018, https://www.onac-vg.fr/actualites/exposition-sur-la-guerre-algerie-presentee-assemblee-nationale; "Exposition Guerre d'Algérie: Histoire commune, mémoires partagées." 5 April 2019, https://www.fadilakhattabi.fr/exposition-guerre-dalgerie-histoire-commune-memoires-partagees/ (12 July 2021).

[21] Visit planned in June 2021 following the publication of Benjamin Stora's report on Memories of the Algerian War for the President.

[22] A steering committee composed by different institutions (Education Nationale, Ministry of Armed Forces, CIPDR, DILCRAH, Audiovisual Agency (INA) etc.) used to meet twice a year in 2018 and 2019 but was left aside by the new leadership.

[23] The Memory advisor of the President, the general director of ONAC, the deputy general director of ONAC, the head of the memory department at ONAC changed. The leadership that had launched and supported the programme had been entirely replaced.

[24] The initial team in charge of HMGA was dissolved and tasks formerly assigned to this team were reassigned to local ONAC representatives and the memory department's team. Consequently, expertise and institutional dynamism were lost. The change in leadership also corresponds to a conservative turn less willing to promote a critical programme on the colonial past.

[25] Observatory work in the North of France shows how local project holders had never intervened in disadvantaged neighbourhoods before the implementation of *HMGA*. They would not work with local NGOs in these neighbourhoods. They only worked with former soldiers, pieds-noirs and harkis and failed to recruit former pro-independence activists.

[26] On a Zoom meeting on 29 March 2021, the memory department even announced that balanced testimonies between former actors was not a requirement anymore and that witnesses

An agonistic approach should therefore be an independent one. Agonism hinges on giving society and professionals the tools, the frames and opportunities to work freely without political and governmental interference.

The innovative combination of oral history and the deployment of agonistic memory has been central to the success of the *Voices of 68* collaborative venture. The fact that the project grew from a minor intervention in the permanent galleries of the Ulster Museum to encompass a multitude of outputs is in itself evidence of the project's positive reception. Stakeholder and user feedback provides further testament to this success. NMNI Director and CEO Kathryn Tomson highlighted how the museum is today more open to innovative methodological and theoretical approaches and keen to invest resources into the opportunities *Voices of 68* has brought. Such receptiveness was equally discernible in visitor feedback with a general acceptance that the inherent 'unsettling' and 'discomforting' elements are an essential part of providing the space for a range of viewpoints.[27] More broadly, visitors demonstrated openness to *Voices of 68*'s attempts to move beyond traditional paradigms. This was helped by the fact that the national museum was the project's central partner and that the project surfed a wave of interest in the fiftieth anniversary of 1968. The combination of approach, timing and trust invested in NMNI led to positive receptions with a range of NGOs and local and regional bodies. As an "example of what can be achieved with joint societal responses"[28] to the challenge of the past, *Voices of 68* demonstrated how Northern Irish society can engage with "difficult events that are within our lived memory".[29] Some of the most significant areas of impact, and those which are most pertinent for this present publication, are to be found in relation to the project's educational programme. Schoolteachers who brought their students to the study days and made use of the resources were open to and recognised the merits of the project approach, describing it as "essential viewing for all students on NI in the 1960s".[30] Young people's responses to *Voices of 68*'s radical multiperspectivism were even more striking with some highlighting the "mindblowing" experience of engaging

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should only be linked to ONAC (former soldiers, harkis and pieds-noirs), thus seriously compromising the originality of the project and its agonistic approach.

[27] Visitor feedback on 'Voices of 68' exhibition.

[28] Gemma Attwood, Policy Development Officer at Community Relations Council, Northern Ireland; written testimony.

[29] David Robinson, Good Relations Officer at Belfast City Council; written testimony following hosting of exhibition.

[30] Greg Toner, Head of History at Assumption Grammar School, Belfast; written testimony on participation at GCSE study day.

with such primary sources as highly effective for gaining a stronger sense of the complexity of what happened and why.[31]

That both *HMGA* and *Voices of 68* were so well received underscored participants' and institutions' appreciation of their shared methodological and theoretical underpinning. The agonistic, multiperspectival approach is not in and of itself unpopular as a means of addressing contested pasts. However, where *Voices of 68*'s dynamic allowed the project to expand and go beyond its initial targets, the attempt to normalise and institutionalise *HMGA* limited its expansion.

3.2 Impact on participants

The tangible impacts of both projects offer our most potent reflections on the rewards of the agonistic approach. They suggest lessons for theoretical refinement. By bringing together a diverse range of voices and setting out to lay the foundations for a new type of conversation about Northern Ireland's 1968, *Voices of 68* had an impact on how those who experienced this period were able to discuss and transmit memory. As one interviewee described, the project helped participants reconsider their experiences, emboldening them to take part in a discussion that had, for some, been exclusionary: "All perspectives were respected and validated and that is where the core of this approach fascinates with its richness – it allows people to participate without judgement."[32] The project's approach also left a mark on NMNI which, in recent years, has played an increasingly important role in helping to manage the legacy of the past. William Blair (Director of Collections) outlined how the *Voices of 68* project – and, in particular, the focus on oral history and agonism – has been a "successful and influential pilot" in shaping future policies around this vital insititution's role in memory (re)production.[33] As the project has expanded and gained momentum, its potential to influence state policy decisions on managing the legacy of the past as part of the peace process has become clearer. NMNI, for example, submitted a response to a public consultation on the issue that emphasised the influence of their experience with the *Voices of 68* project: "[A] more discerning and critical approach is included in structuring the Oral History Archive, that rather than acting only as a repository, people could record their experiences in a more meaningful way and invest in something that has wider application. This would present much greater opportunities for effective dialogue."[34] The influential Commission on Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition (FICT),[35] established to draft a set of proposals to help overcome the challenges of the peace process, has noted that the *Voices of 68* project's innovative model could be deployed more broadly. One independent FICT commissioner, highlighted how the project's educational strand provides an example of "how teaching Northern Ireland's contested history might be appropriate in a society emerging from conflict".[36] The project's educational work, however, has not just affected regional political bodies. Local teachers have highlighted the great potential for wider roll-out of such an approach "in order to inform discussion around the broader challenge of dealing with the difficult legacy of Northern Ireland's past".[37] In particular, they emphasised how "projects such as this underscore just how important it is for our young people to make sense of our past and understand how it is that we find ourselves in our current predicament. [. . .]. It is so vitally important that our young people improve their understanding of all sides in the debate."[38] The local curriculum body and the HTANI both also voiced their support for a broader application of the approach of the *Voices of 68* model that importantly makes it "easier for teachers to confront the difficulties of teaching such a sensitive area of our recent past".[39]

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[31] Student feedback on GCSE study day.

[32] Bernadette McAliskey, project participant; written testimony.

[33] William Blair, Director of Collections, NMNI; written testimony.

The methodological and theoretical approach is the source of the wide-ranging impact of the *Voices of 68* and, albeit to a more limited extent, the *HMGA* project. Both projects are above all tools to aid teaching and learning, since they help pupils assimilate knowledge more easily. The quantitative analysis of *HMGA*'s questionnaires reveals that 90 per cent of participants said they knew much more about colonisation and the war in Algeria after the intervention of witnesses. Where only 50 per cent of pupils knew about the Toussaint

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[34] NMNI. "Addressing the Legacy of Northern Ireland's Past: A response from National Museums NI." 2019.

[35] For more information on FICT see "Commission on Flags, Identity, Culture & Tradition."' *Community NI*, 1 January 2017, https://www.communityni.org/organisation/commission-flags-identity-culture-tradition (12 July 2021).

[36] Tom Hennessey, independent commissioner on the Flags, Identity, Culture and Tradition (FICT) commission; written testimony.

[37] Jim McBride, retired history teacher, current member of HTANI, Assessor for the Council for Curriculum, Examinations and Assessments (CCEA), and member of the 50th anniversary of 1968 Civil Rights executive committee; written testimony.

[38] Declan White, Head of History at Edmund Rice College, Glengormley, Northern Ireland; written testimony.

[39] Helen Parks, Education Manager for History, Government and Politics at Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment (CCEA); written testimony.

Rouge (the beginning of the war on 1 November 1954), that figure rose to 88 per cent after the testimony session.

The multiplicity of voices broke down antagonistic or binary views on the past. Pupils appeared as a result to adopt more critical views of colonialism, even in conservative neighbourhoods. When asked about the causes of the Algerian War, pupils now pointed out inequalities, the desire for independence, and the fading enthusiasm for colonialism, rather than simply terrorist attacks. Pupils tended to see colonisation as being a much more violent system after engaging in the testimony sessions.[40] Their perception of the Harkis was even more nuanced. Before the testimonies, pupils generally thought of Harkis as traitors or collaborators. Sixty-eight per cent initially agreed or fully agreed that Harkis betrayed Algeria. Following the testimony sessions, 64 per cent disagreed with such a statement. After the sessions, they used more neutral terms to describe Harkis as soldiers.[41] Therefore, such programmes appear to create the conditions for pupils to understand that people are historically situated in social and political contexts that influence or force their choices – a central aspect of agonism – and to adopt appropriate and nuanced language to describe both historical actors and their contexts.

Pupils highlighted the opportunity of engaging with witnesses as particularly significant at *HMGA*. The role of emotions in the agonistic learning process as pupils connected history and the individual was, rather than something to be feared as a source of potential tension, central to transformation. Seventy-six per cent of pupils said *HMGA*'s sessions were very emotional. In the case of *Voices of 68*, pupils were struck by how direct testimony brought home the reality of their own and/or their family's history. Both projects, indeed, fuelled engagement with family and older generations. Seventy-one per cent of pupils – reported talking about *HMGA* with their mothers, and a further 41 per cent with their fathers. While talking about Algeria at home after the sessions, many discovered they also had one family member affected by the war.[42] Such programmes provide opportunities for discussions in families. This evidence suggests that the most valuable aspects of these projects have been the creation of spaces and dynamics in which different generations talk to one another at a time when such opportunities are scarce. This outcome raises possibilities for more dynamic and fluid intergenerational transmission of memories.

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[40] Out of a list of both positive and negative terms, pupils are asked to pick up three terms they associate with colonisation. Selected items are in their vast majority negative but after the testimonies they are 70 per cent to place violence as first when it used to be ranked fourth before the testimonies.

[41] Terms used after the session to describe harkis are more neutral: militaries, injustice, victims, war, Algerians.

[42] For instance, in the case of a school in a Parisian suburb, 16 per cent of the class declared having a family link with Algeria two weeks after the session while not being aware about it before.

However, contextual and institutional differences between the two projects suggests the limits of agonism in action. *Voices of 68* organised the coexistence of opposing opinions: witnesses disagreed with one another, sparking collective discussion and reflection. The relative freedom of the project's museum and academic context ensured this could take place. *Voices of 68* is not limited by the framework of the classroom. It takes children to the stimulating environment of the museum, where exchanges are disconnected from evaluation and school's social dynamics. The *HMGA* programme, however, experienced strong institutional constraints which means that reconciliation dominated testimony sessions and other materials. Conflicts and controversies were left out or pushed to the periphery of the programme. *HMGA*'s core ambition was indeed to produce consensus, reaffirm common values and promote narratives of peace and reconciliation. Institutional caution strongly limited the effect of the agonistic approach at a foundational level. Its institutional constraints left *HMGA* more closely aligned with universalising and consensual modes of cosmopolitan memory, even if the project still introduced into the public sphere voices long considered illegitimate.[43]

Both projects impacted their participants in ways that the creators and administrators planned. Agonism created tools to assimilate knowledge, aired voices to challenge simplistic narratives and created dynamics for intergenerational transmission. In turn, the projects had a significant impact on institutions and professional bodies, witnesses and professionals. However, the comparison shows us how strong institutional constraints can be. The fact that *Voices of 68* is managed by non-governmental actors conferred more freedom for an agonistic approach.

4 Conclusion: Six lessons to refine agonistic memory

France and Northern Ireland are two societies where past conflicts have left deep scars. Contradictory narratives borne and voiced by specific groups, historical actors, and identity entrepreneurs jostle with one another. On contact with frustrations around society and identity in the present, these narratives can fuel tensions. Since the 2000s, the belief that the past is both the source of and solution to these problems has fuelled a memory boom in public policies. The theory of agonistic memory, which centres the coexistence of and dialogue between different narratives, provides a framework to design memory policies with democratic and inclusive transformative effects on their targets. National Museums NI and the French Ministry of Armed Forces have developed two projects that apply an agonistic approach. By comparing them, we have identified six lessons to help refine practical applications of the theory of agonistic memory.

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[43] Additional observatory work is also presented in the work of Alice Baudy (2019).

1. Project creators should avoid overly ambitious goals. Agonistic memory programmes are about the transmission of oral history but they cannot buttress national security. Policy makers and professionals should not expect such programmes about the past to solve swathes of contemporary tensions. They remain tools to raise awareness about the past in its complexity, but they cannot replace other social, cultural or security policies. Putting such high expectations on the shoulders of pupils, teachers and project leaders is unrealistic.
2. Institutional design and constraint deeply influence a project's impact. The comparison demonstrates the greater independence of a non-governmental initiative, leading to a more fluid exposition of contrasting narratives. Indeed, multiperspectivity should be reflected among project stakeholders. A diversity in founding partners is more likely to maintain the necessary equilibrium at every step of the project's implementation. Building alliances and trust among partners that are both institutional and non-governmental is also key to securing an agonistic approach. Indeed, looking for partnerships beyond ministries and national education systems offers the possibility to discover innovative spaces and ways of working that promote agonistic modes. In turn, targets and participants should reflect the multiperspective foundations of agonism. Dialogue appears more efficient when pupils from different social and cultural backgrounds are mixed.
3. Individuals, whether they are public officers, teachers, researchers, or project leaders, are central to a project's success. Such controversial projects would not be possible without the dedication of such individuals. In *Voices of 68*, the project leader and the head of the NMNI had both personal and academic connections with the issue. The same applies to *HMGA* where the former leadership and project leaders also had personal connections with the topic. Their departure simply put an end to the project's ambitions. Resistances to change are numerous and powerful. Project leaders may face important challenges. Policy makers need to provide and/or adapt institutional,

political and financial support to such individuals to equip them against conservatism.

4. Representations projected onto young people or project targets should not go unchallenged. Preparatory studies in project design are necessary to identify bias and stereotypes projected onto young people. Indeed, our comparison shows how preconceived ideas of what young people think and feel influenced each projects' implementation. Short preparatory studies should identify young people's frustrations, needs and expectations. Our work also demonstrates how young people better assimilated knowledge when they were active participants. Project participants should engage in productive exchange and interaction with witnesses giving testimony.
5. In an agonistic approach, the road is more important than the destination. Merely bringing a diverse group of stakeholders together in the same room, rather than blindly marching towards a common goal, should be considered a success. Cooperation between different witnesses and different institutions offers a common framework in which further dialogue is possible. Opportunities are more important than narratives. An agonistic approach should focus on creating the conditions for dialogue. In doing so, intergenerational transmission, memory dialogue and institutional collaborations can lead to a truly transformative impact.
6. Lastly, project organisers should actively seek to prevent hate speech. In both cases, certain narratives carried by specific actors continue to feed hate, target other actors and reproduce stereotypes. Agonism is not about giving voice to everyone. Discourses that remain founded in resentment and violence can be part of history lessons, but should not be displayed and legitimated as perspectives that have any role to play in the process of approaching the past in a constructive manner.

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Thomas Richard & Christiane Connan-Pintado

The Dark Corners of European Colonial Memory in Films and Literature

Understanding how to deal with the four centuries of European colonial presence in the Caribbean and Africa is a question that has been tackled by states seeking to define postcolonial identities. Colonial myths have had a long-lasting hold over definitions of identity in both colonising and colonised states. Myths have in particular shaped representations of the Self and the Other within former colonial spaces (Nicolaïdis, Sèbe and Maas 2014). As states attempt to reorient themselves in the postcolonial reality, there have been heated debates about remembering and forgetting in the public and private discourse between and within newly independent states and former colonial powers (Bijl 2012). In this chapter, we explore how these debates have unfolded in France and Portugal – which both controlled large colonial empires and which faced particularly brutal decolonisation processes – by examining children's literature and cinema. These mediums reveal how representations and myths aimed at a wide audience have become the site of a memory dialogue between the colonisers and the colonised, leading to the evolution of key colonial tropes and narratives.

1 Transmitting colonial myths in literature and film

Cultural products, and literature in particular, are a vehicle for the development and transmission of myths (Dirks 1992). Literary mythologisation of an empire has a long history across Europe. The Portuguese author Luís Vaz de Camões' sixteenth-century epic poem *The Lusiads* (*Os Lusíadas*), for example, gave mythical dimensions to the modernity of Portuguese overseas expansion (Willis 2009; Klein 2013). Following in Vaz de Camões' footsteps, John Milton's *Paradise Lost* celebrated the colonisation of the New World (Evans 1996) and extended the genre to depict the British Empire with its far-reaching cultural influence.

However, more modern novels – particularly adventure novels and serials that border on pulp literature – are the most persistent creators and transmitters of key images of colonialism: plantations, brave explorers discovering faraway lands, conquering heroes in battles against "hostile natives", and so on.

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Large sections of this literature aim to convey entertaining and didactic messages to a young audience (Goswami 2012, 79). For example, Rudyard Kipling, who was widely read across Europe, framed the Raj with adventurous imagery in his poetry and prose (Hotchkiss 2001; Sullivan 1993, 48). The success of such literature across Europe saw young characters become central to the colonial imaginary (Walsh 2016, 31, 117). The young protagonists were swathed in layers of colonial wrapping. Like the colonial power itself, these literary children are supposedly innocents exploring hostile territories; they also embody the new world that colonisation was supposed to create. As such, young heroes function as embodiments of the empire with which equally young readers could identify. In *Mythologies* (1957), however, Roland Barthes explains that young characters served a more nefarious purpose. Barthes demonstrates how the colonial narrative builds the opposition between the white child and the surrounding so-called "n—s", establishing binary oppositions between innocence and darkness, civilisation and savagery. Moreover, Barthes emphasises that such representations did not disappear even when empires were crumbling after the end of World War II.

Cinema, which emerged at the height of European imperial power, served to further these literary images and myths. At first, this process occurred through appeals to exoticism. Lumière operators were sent around the world to capture "typical scenes" from the colonies for European audiences' consumption (Seguin 2014). In the ensuing decades, this process became self-reflexive: cinema, even as it amplified binary narratives of coloniser/colonised, was hailed as one of the wonders of civilisation that Europe brought to the colonies (Goerg 2015), then deployed to propagandise continued colonial rule (Sébastien 2009; Miranda 2018). An entire genre of "imperial film" had emerged. Films of the genre (for example, *Sanders of the River*, Korda 1935; *The White Squadron* [*L'Escadron blanc*], Chanas 1949) showed domestic (and colonial) audiences the strength and vastness of the empires, which was connoted by exotic sets, objects, and characters that were considered to embody these empires. At the same time, these works justified European control with appeals to history (as seen in fascist-era Italian cinema with films such as Gallone's 1937 *Scipio Africanus: the Defeat of Hannibal* [*Scipione l'Africano*]), and stories of European powers bringing peace, justice and progress to poor, dangerous and disease-stricken lands.

As with literature, colonial tendencies were most apparent in material aimed at popular audiences. Stereotypical tales of overseas conquests, of subjugating a rebellious indigenous population and of exalted expatriates establishing thriving factories and farms, healing social and physical wounds of the natives and staving off unrest, were considered great entertainment (Slavin 2001; Chowdhry 2000).

Motifs and tropes made their way from the colonial mythologisation of one nation to that of another. Such cinema idealises the actions of the French Foreign Legion, a unit so popular that it even made its way into British and American cinema (Slavin 2001, 138) as one of the symbols of masculinity and adventure in the overseas territories, as well as Gunga Din and Dr. Schweitzer's medical mission in Central Africa as embodiments of the civilising mission of European powers (Jaher et al. 2008).

Equivalent examples can be found across the imperial powers' cultural output (Ben-Ghiat 2015, 21, 43). Mass-market adventure novels, which emphasised seriality (Letourneux 2010), and children's literature across Europe succeeded in creating the image of "a romantic Africa synonymous with savagery and danger, and [. . .] helped to convey to the general public a stereotype of Africanness, including characters such as the cannibal or the African seen as a grown-up child." (Malanda 2015, 234) These tropes, as Roland Barthes suggests, lingered long in the memory. Moreover, their production was incessant: comic strips printed between the end of World War II and the 1970s continued "to highlight white liberating heroes against a backdrop of colonial ideology" (Rouvière 2020, 166).

In the post-war decades, the colonies became a moral, military and economic burden for the European states. Instead of being a source of prestige, wealth and heroic conquest, these sites of imperial pride were now the location of troubled wars of independence. Gradually, a shift in thinking occurred across the continent. France and Portugal were among the last to give up on the colonial idea, a situation linked in part to the presence of numerous European communities in their overseas territories and to their integration policies aimed at including these territories within the national political space. France, with its tradition of direct rule in the colonies, was particularly keen on securing its rule in Algeria, which had been almost fully integrated within the national territory. As then Minister of the Interior François Mitterrand famously put it in 1954: "Algeria is France." In Portugal, the Estado Novo regime, obsessed with the country's imperial heritage, developed the idea that the colonies were integral parts of a pluricontinental and multiethnic Portugal, dubbing them "oversea provinces".

2 The reinterpretation of the imperial heritage

With the end of the colonial period, films and books aimed at legitimising conquest were produced in ever smaller quantities. Such productions had lost their purpose and meaning (Jaikumar 2005, 107), since the colonial idea itself had lost its legitimacy. Some exceptions have been made for supposed literary or cinematic landmarks, leading to difficult and heated public debates. Hergé's *Tintin in the Congo* (*Tintin au Congo*, 1931), for example, contains stereotypical and racist depictions of Africans. The question of (re)publishing Hergé's work has become the subject of polemical debate in recent years (Girard 2012). Hergé's work is defined by the context of its publication: it reflects the colonial paternalism of its time, but that paternalism was subject to challenge from the 1970s onwards.

Even though explicitly pro-colonial and stereotypical publications gradually become less common (as Roland Barthes showed), narratives and myths rooted in colonial imagery have continued to prevail, especially in popular culture. This continued existence has contributed to the perpetuation of an imperial culture of memory (Richards 2017). The postcolonial cinematic careers of classic colonial characters illustrate this point, as can be seen, for example, in the continued cultural presence of Alan Quatermain, an adventurous white hunter-explorer created by Rider Haggard in 1885, and in the various adaptations – most recently by Shekhar Kapur in 2002 – of A.E.W. Mason's influential novel *The Four Feathers* (1902), a story of military self-assertion set against the backdrop of the Mahdist Wars.

In contrast, former colonial powers have also tended to develop a kind of amnesia (Donadey 1999; Isaacman and Seddon 2003), "forgetting" the most upsetting aspects of the colonial period: systemic violence, racism and the exploitation of the colonies and the colonised for the benefit of European powers. This socio-cultural amnesia is most notable in European countries that, like Germany, Italy and the Netherlands, lost their colonies quite early on (Göttsche 2013, 21, 63; Bijl 2012). In countries that had identified with the imperial idea more deeply and for a longer time, such as France, Britain and Portugal, a form of imperial nostalgia went hand in hand with the amnesia (Rosaldo 1989; Lorcin 2013). In this context, the colonial era is presented in rosy, euphemisitc tones, whereby the illegitimacy of the colonial endeavour is dismissed as mere lip service and the more positive aspects, such as the celebration of the abolition of slavery, are brought to the fore.

The purveyors of such selective nostalgia, especially those from repatriated settler communities in France and Portugal, typically believe themselves to be good, moral people. Members of these communities have developed their own memories of the colonial period. These memories gloss over colonial violence and focus more on the pain of repatriation than on the evils of colonialism itself (Esclangon-Morin 2004; Loff 2014; Roche 1992). In this narrative, metropolitan populations abandoned their settlers when the decolonisation process occurred. This type of selective imperial memory has to some extent found its way into mainstream European culture, for example in pieds-noirs cinema in France, embodied by Alexandre Arcady's work in films such as *The Gust of Sirocco* (*Le coup de sirocco*, 1979) or *The Great Carnival* (*Le Grand Carnaval*, 1983; Stora 2008).

Pieds-noirs cinema centres on characters and narratives from the former French community, particularly French Jews, living in French North Africa or, more commonly, on repatriates' postcolonial life in France. Directors and actors with strong links to the pieds-noirs community explore and catalogue an identity embodied in food, social relations, accent and memory. African colonial suffering is more or less erased through its absence, its euphemisation, or the development of narratives that emphasise mutual understanding.

Since the 1990s, but with increasing speed today, global activism has challenged this mix of amnesia and nostalgia (Choudry 2009). A movement led by the third generation of colonial descendants now living in Europe – and aided by white European youth's conscious of colonial violence – strives for recognition of colonialism's problematic nature. In tandem with the disappearance of the last generation of former settlers, a growing desire to recognise the colonial memory of the formerly colonised and the development of subaltern studies in academia (Morris 2010, 87, 117, 156), European imperial amnesia has come under sustained challenge.

Heated debates in the political and cultural spheres have led to legal developments designed to catalyse and sustain dialogue with the painful memories of the former colonised. France offers a number of examples of concrete developments. The country's landmark *Taubira Law* (2001), for example, recognised slavery as a crime against humanity (Garraway 2008; Bonniol 2007). State institutions, museums and public television channels have entered the discursive fray with exhibitions[1] and TV programmes (*Sour Tropics* [*Tropiques amers*] 2007; Toussaint Louverture, 2012) and series such as *The Slave Routes* (*Les Routes de l'esclavage*) and *Slaves* (*Esclaves*) in 2020. Such cultural products have contributed to the transformation of memory and commemoration (Hourcade 2013).

Nonetheless, new cultural policies have not been accepted without challenge. A 2005 law that underlined the "positive aspects of colonisation", for example, was at the core of a particularly violent political dispute (Boilley 2005; Jahan 2005; Deslauriers and Roger 2006).

Indeed, the debate has shown no signs of abating in recent years. The Black Lives Matter movement has resonated with young descendants of former colonial subjects and slaves across Europe. The movement's significance in France – its entrenchment in the memory of the former colonial power – is echoed in Pap Ndiaye's essay *The Black Condition* (*La Condition noire*, 2008), in which Ndiaye analyses the struggle of coming to terms with dark corners of colonial memories without amnesia or euphemism in a way that explains why this movement had such resonance in France. Ndiaye seeks to study Black French as a minority marked by slavery, colonisation and, more recently, immigration. He addresses ideological issues that relate to Black identity, from racism to racial discrimination, through Black experiences in different eras: as soldiers during the two world wars, or as immigrants taking part in the different waves of migration from Africa to the former colonial metropolis.

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[1] *The Black model* (*Le modèle noir*) at the Musée d'Orsay, for example, opened in spring 2019.

In Portugal, following the 1974 Carnation Revolution that put an end to colonial wars, debates about the country's colonial legacy were quickly ended or isolated in favour of a euphemised vision of the past. This vision centred on a non-racist colonisation with its roots in Portuguese discoveries of the sixteenth century, harnessed by the army and school textbooks (Cruz 2007; Loff 2014). Still, thanks to the work of academics and artists – especially film directors such as Manoel de Oliveira or Miguel Gomes – this rosy narrative gradually came under closer scrutiny. The presence of a black minority in Portugal, originating in the former colonies and with its own colonial memory, was again instrumental (Santos 2017). However, Portugal's debates were not as heated as they were and are in France, staying focused on Portugal's role in the global colonisation process and on its national and imperial mythologies.

The following two chapters explore minority experiences, memory and amnesia in France and Portugal by analysing children's literature and cinema, two fertile cultural domains for the inception and dissemination of colonial myths. Writers and filmmakers in both countries have challenged national colonial memories and attempted to develop a counter-memory that could both avoid the myths and euphemised imagery of the previous decades, and find spaces to include the voices of the colonised. We will show that such counter-memories are intended for transmission to younger generations. We show how French children's authors have found it difficult to avoid euphemising the harsh reality of slavery when addressing children: authors are constrained by the sensitivity of the subject matter even as they seek to dispel stereotypes and shed light on a painful time. In the Portuguese case, the hopes that accompanied the 1974 Carnation Revolution and the interest in exposing the brutality of the colonial wars have slowly given way to a solipsistic memory of Portuguese colonisation. Portuguese society is split: postcolonial activists and residents of the former colonies view Portugal's imperial military exploits as the epitome of colonial horror; their opponents compare the country favourably to its European neighbours. Meanwhile, we will show how Portuguese film directors have interjected themselves into the space between these two poles, attempting to develop a dialogue between these contradicting views of the past, to question myths linked to Portugal's history of discovery and exploration, to interrogate Portugal's legacy to the world and to reinterpret the very idea of empire in poetic terms.

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Christiane Connan-Pintado

Fictionalisation of Slavery in Children's Books in France

Imperial France never experienced slavery on its mainland territory. The nation has therefore been slower than some other colonising countries, such as the United States, to come to terms with its slave-trading and slave-owning past. A notable change occurred at the beginning of the twenty-first century, when France's parliament passed the *Taubira Law*, which recognised slavery as a crime against humanity and mandated the topic as a part of the school curriculum. As a result, France's historical involvement in slavery is now receiving greater attention in books for children and young adults, in teaching and in research.

In this chapter, I offer an overview of how school curricula and scholarly work on children's literature have developed in the aftermath of the *Taubira Law*. I focus particularly on the ways that books for young readers portray French involvement in slavery, highlighting the important role that reading is expected to play in developing future citizens. I conclude that, due to the age of their readership, authors find themselves subject to many constraints that reproduce elements of the amnesia their texts seek to eliminate. Nonetheless, although subject to many constraints, works on slavery for young people are also capable of dealing with the issue of slavery by combining educational and artistic approaches that span first-person and autobiographical narratives, allusions to societal difficulties and sympathetic and representative heroes. While I show that reductivity is an issue, I also reveal how the authors and illustrators who create graphic and prose works for children do succeed in exploring the topic of slavery in some depth, so that some of the most difficult episodes are portrayed even for children.

1 Expanding editorial production: The current state of play

Historical fiction dealing with the period of slavery has had the greatest impact on and in the United States. Whether they reconstruct the stolen genealogy of the slave or place his torments and struggles within the framework of individual human destinies, works by African Americans such as Alex Haley's *Roots* (1976), Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987), and Colson Whitehead's *Underground*

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Railroad (2016), have had enormous social, cultural and artistic significance even beyond the USA. Paula Connolly (2013) has shown the extent to which the representation of slavery in American children's literature has reflected political and social anti-slavery movements since 1790. While American literature touching on Black and anti-slavery themes has been written for centuries and has had significant impact on society, the French situation is rather different.

The handful of children's titles about slavery published in nineteenth-century France have received occasional scholarly attention. Michel Manson (2012), historian of children's literature, shows, for example, how the socio-historical dimension of Julie Gouraud's novel *The Two Children of Saint-Domingue* (*Les deux enfants de Saint-Domingue*, 1874) echoes the biography of the author, whose mother was Creole. However, I focus my attention here on a review of more modern fictional works, beginning with a summary of fictional works published over the past five decades.

Bertrand Solet's 1969 work *The Saint-Domingue Revolt* (*Les Révoltés de Saint-Domingue*) is of lasting significance. The novel is regularly republished by various publishers (such as Robert Laffont, Gallimard and Flammarion), and deals with a foundational event for the emancipation of slaves at the beginning of the nineteenth century: the slave-led insurrection in today's Haiti. Since Solet's work was released, about a hundred further titles have been published. Even a brief survey of the releases reveals the *Taubira Law's* impact: 75 per cent of the fifty titles were published after the law was passed in 2001. While a quarter of the total are translations of mostly American authors, the law's appearance has altered the frequency of French-authored works: ten of the 25 pre-2001 titles were translations; only fifteen of the 75 post-2001 titles are not original French works. French authors are increasingly invested in writing about slavery for young people.

The corpus of published works spans multiple genres. In my count, I have not included purely documentary works, but do make space for fictionalised documentaries that draw on literary methods and sources to capture the young reader's attention. Indeed, all works dealing with (semi-)historical topics history and fiction are either "informed narrative" or "narrativised information" (Chelebourg and Marcoin 2007, 74–77). Works of historical fiction in the corpus I have documented address all ages from young children to adolescents. For the youngest, image replaces the ellipses of text in illustrated stories and albums; for older readers, the novel, which allows for detailed description and narration, is the dominant form. In addition, numerous comics and graphic novels have been released.

The attitude to the slaves' cause in the corpus works has evolved sharply according to the political context of their publication, particularly as the era of colonisation has drawn to a close (Rouvière 2020). Nonetheless, the topic of slavery is not dying as direct memories of the French colonial era disappear in the wake of the collapse of empire in the post-war decades: the last edition in my survey, 2020's *Alma* by the renowned author Timothée de Fombelle is the first novel in a planned trilogy. In some ways, the trajectory of publications on slavery echoes broader interests in postcolonial and memory topics: the Holocaust, also the topic of state and regional law and policymaking, has also seen increased interest in children's literature. For a long time, the *Diary of Anne Frank* was the only title related to this question. Today it is dealt with by a rich collection of albums and novels that have inspired various research projects (Hamaide-Jager 2020).

The boom in production has been driven by the move to teach slavery in classrooms. Article 2 of the *Taubira Law* mandates that slavery should be taught in school and university classes on history, civics and literature. To this end, the Ministry of Education has provided a list of literary titles to support teachers: these include translated works, such as Harriet Beecher Stowe's American abolitionist novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, but also domestic and contemporary graphic and prose novels. Sometimes, domestic and international origins intersect: Gilles Rapaport's *One Man* (*Un Homme*, 2007), which depicts the condition of slaves by giving them a voice based on the articles of the Black Code, was supported by Amnesty International. The Ministry occasionally revises the list, introducing yet more titles that teachers are invited to take up. Although some of these books fall short of literary quality and teaching is exclusively focused on citizenship education (Louichon 2014; Connan-Pintado and Plissonneau 2013), children have access in this curriculum to a potent cultural site to learn about and discuss the colonial and postcolonial history of slavery. In turn, as more and more new works aimed at children are being produced, scholars have begun to explore the phenomenon from different disciplinary angles (Lalagüe-Dulac 2016; de Suremain and Mesnard 2020; Connan-Pintado et al. 2016, 2020).

2 Child's-eye slavery: Text under constraints

Writing about slavery for children and young people involves careful adaptation of the subject matter to match the linguistic, cognitive and cultural skills of the young readers, who demand entertainment as much as instruction. Historical and didactic children's literature is therefore constrained by the need to balance "docere" and "placere" – "instruction" and "pleasure". The troubles that authors encounter create paradoxical demands: their work "instructs or it pleases, and if it is necessary to instruct while pleasing, it runs the risk of being torn between two irreconcilable objectives. For one cannot instruct completely by pleasing completely." (Prince 2010,

25) In the case of French works about slavery, authors seem hamstrung as they seek to negotiate these contradictory polarities.

Authors are further hemmed in by cultural and legal frameworks. Slavery is a socially and ethically sensitive topic that necessitates a cautious approach to didacticism in books and in the classroom. Indeed, in France, publications for young people are regulated by a law from 1949, "On Publications Aimed at Youth", which regulates traumatic representations in works for children that could affect a child's sensitivity and/or moral sensitivities (Jobs 2003). As a result of these ethical and legal restrictions, publishers and authors engage in acts of self-censorship that temper, simplify and water down published material. Such is the problem of literary adaptation, which aims to transform a discourse with the aim of bringing it closer to the reader. Authors have adopted a number of processes that simultaneously strive to engage and protect children who read about slavery: adaptation itself, the choice of protagonists of the reader's age, the linking of past and present, and the adoption of the first-person narrative viewpoint.

Adaptation can take several forms. Most commonly, a book is rewritten and redacted. For example, the variations on Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* seem countless. Although the Gallimard publishing house published the full 476-page text in 1979 in the "Folio Junior" collection, with an attractive layout and illustrations, the anonymous translation leaves a lingering sense that the text has been rendered with a certain freedom. Newer adaptations, which are often heavily illustrated, have been much shorter. Some have even taken the form of comic strips, as in Jean-Pierre Kerloc'h's 2012 effort, which condenses Beecher Stowe's novel into just 46 illustrated pages. The cover blurb is nonetheless keen to suggest that Kerloc'h has remained faithful to the author's abolitionist message: "This novel [. . .] was one of the decisive elements that led President Abraham Lincoln to the abolition of slavery and the Civil War against the slave-owning southern states." However, the brevity of Kerloc'h's version necessitates many changes. Moreover, the last two chapters are inverted so that the work ends on a positive note. Instead of describing the agony of Old Tom, Kerloc'h's culmination evokes the future of Eliza's son, a young slave refugee in Canada: "Harry could now read, write, count, reason. And he, the little Black boy, had lots of white boyfriends. One day, when he grew up, he would be like his parents, a real citizen." The accompanying illustration depicts a black and a white hand shaking. This intervention attests to a desire to use adaptation to soften the work's sharp edges, but also to imbue it with a new intention that could be described as a Human rights based understanding of equality (Bruno and Geneste 2008, 422). Modern ideology and the desire to actualise take precedence over literary-historical verisimilitude.

The centering of young protagonists as immersive objects for the reader's identification is a constant in children's literature, and French stories about slavery are no exception. Typically, they follow the adventures of young slave heroes to help the reader discover a sensitive historical period.[1] Dominique Joly's fictionalised documentary work *At the Time of the Slave Trade* (*Au temps de la traite des noirs*, 2002) is aimed at readers aged seven and up. The book alternates between two narrative modes. The first comprises informative pages that document the trade in Black slaves, the triangular trade, the fortune of European traders and the struggles of slaves themselves. The second mode relates a fictional narrative centred on Biolo, a young Malian whose journey is mapped against common milestones in the slaves' experience: abduction in Africa, Atlantic crossing, sale on arrival in America and work on a plantation. It may be framed by the documentary mode, but Biolo's story is shorn of the harshest realities. For example, while the documentary sections describe slave revolts on board transport ships, Biolo himself establishes a friendship on board, which makes the journey more bearable; likewise, when Biolo is sold and assigned to a plantation, he is comforted by a reunion with one of his uncles. These attempts to smuggle feelings of friendship, relief and joy into the fate of those who had been reduced to mere chattels show how difficult it is to talk to children about slavery.

Isabelle Wlodarczyk likewise tries to sugarcoat the vagaries of slavery in her picture book *Yehunda* (2015), which depicts the almost amorous friendship of a black girl and a white boy. The blurb on the black cover alludes to characteristics of a romance novel, yet situates the diegesis in the context of the history of slavery:

> Yehunda has a secret that she only finds at nightfall.
> Her secret has blonde hair and skin as light as hers is dark.
> Together they build their dreams, relieving themselves of the crushing weight of the discipline imposed by the masters.
> But one day, perhaps they will be free to make their dreams come true.
> *A story about slavery, sensitive and poignant.*
> *A call for hope and perseverance to overcome injustice.*

The picture book, which is aimed at children, may be more rigorous than Joly's *At the time of the Slave Trade* in its approach to the historical truth, but it is still usually based on a young hero, girl or boy, who serves to transmit the events to the young reader. However, authors attempt to give access to the period of slavery by strongly involving the reader and using *mise en abyme* to insert the past into the protagonist's present. This act provides the stepping-stone from the realistic into the fantastic.

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[1] Some works intended for very young children even go so far as substituting an animal for the child. For example, Alan Mets' *John Cerise* (1995) explores the slavery theme within the conventions of the pirate novel: yet the eponymous protagonist, who rescues slaves imprisoned in the hold of a slave ship, is a mouse.

Indeed, in the works I have studied, the protagonist frequently travels back in time in order to experience the hardship of slavery for themselves. Delia Sherman's *The Freedom Maze* (2011), which is on the Ministry of Education's list of recommended works, for example, is a "hetero-chronic" novel (Dunn-Lardeau 2009, 12) that situates its action in two eras a century apart. The protagonist, Sophie, is suddenly transported back in time to her ancestors' plantation in Louisiana. Alternating its episodes between 1860 and 1960, the novel suggests parallels between the period of slavery at the dawn of the Civil War and the struggle for civil rights one hundred years later. Sherman therefore invites the contemporary reader to compare their present with the past and to reflect on the lessons of this confrontation.

Another way of bringing the young reader closer to the history of slavery is to use first-person narratives. Some works are based on the multitude of authentic slave stories that have appeared in English works: Thierry Aprile's *Live Free or Die Trying* (*Vivre libre ou mourir*, 2007) adapts the life of Frédérick Douglass into an illustrated story for young people that has been recommended as a teaching aid for history lessons (Mesnard 2020). These texts bring the emotions and adventures of the slave to life, sharing them as a kind of "neo-story of a slave" (Misrahi-Barak 2010, 386). Making the slave's voice heard, or even adopting their point of view, allows authors to imaginatively rehabilitate life stories that archives have left unrecorded or that white historians and storytellers of slavery have neglected. Maryse Condé's approach in *I, Tituba, Witch . . . the Black from Salem* (*Moi, Tituba, sorcière . . . Noire de Salem*, 1986) is typical. By giving voice to the character of the slave, Condé highlights his character's humanity in two ways: the protagonist is accorded a status as the centre of attention and, moreover, permitted to share his interiority with the reader. Similar narratives that centre on the first-person have taken forms ranging from the autobiographical novel to the diary. Patricia C. McKissak's *A Picture of Freedom: The Diary of Clotee, a Slave Girl, Belmont Plantation, Virginia 1859* (2005), which relates how a young slave girl is taught to read and write by her master at the dawn of the Civil War, is a good example of these imagined first-person narratives. Finding ways to access or imagine the slave's interior life is a way of bridging the divide between the reader in the present and the history of the slave trade, providing both engaging reading for pleasure and a means of didacticism.

Whether written in or translated into French, and although their content and approach depend on the context in which they are published, works for young people on slavery available in France address the same issues. Historical topics of interest may vary: American works, for example, often evoke the Civil War and the flight of slaves to the abolitionist north, whereas those written in France tend to revolve around the triangular trade and the transatlantic treaties. In both cases, however, the aim is to use literary means – especially by manipulating adaptive techniques, combining fantasy and reality, and playing with first-person voices and formal elements – to draw young people close to the experience of slavery and emancipation.

3 A children's literature linking memory and literary issues

Many of the works in the corpus I have catalogued, especially since the *Taubira Law* was passed in 2001, have addressed the issue of slavery on a historical level in a way that seeks repentance rather than reparation. Today's America is riven by debates about (re)publishing ideologically or culturally sensitive works and about the notion of reparations – whether moral or financial. Although the French quest for repentance is distinct from the American experience, many of the literary methods for resolving the knotty relationship of historical children's fiction to wider society are the same. Paula T. Connolly's distinguishes three genres of American books that address the issue of slavery for youth: "the autobiographical slave narrative; its ideological opposite, the pro-slavery plantation novel; and, often situated some place between the two, white-authored abolitionist fiction" (2013, 24). By giving a voice to the slave, the slaveholder or the abolitionist, books published in the United States over two centuries have highlighted ideological categories rooted in the history of slavery and in the American context. Moreover, by exploring slave heroes and topics around slavery, children's literature inscribes a poorly known historical period into sociocultural discourse. In this sense, the works on slavery I study demonstrate how literature plays the role of a "memory watch" (Schneider 2020) that sheds light on the flaws of history and offers ethical models to young citizens.

The works I have catalogued attempt to construct a narrative that engages with and structures the reader's experience of culture. The resources of fiction are decisive in helping children to understand the past and its impact on the present. Historians who rely on children's books find many points of reference that make those books valuable aids to history teaching (Lalagüe-Dulac 2017; Mesnard 2020). Indeed, many of these works manage to combine historical details – dates, events, and characters rooted in history – with fictionalisation, where young characters and adventures create a stimulating and entertaining "narrative tension" (Baroni 2007). When the turbulent history of slavery is married to captivating literary forms, from adventure novels to fantastic and educational novels, the author creates a simultaneous engagement and tension with culture that exists beyond a given work's pages. The theme of characters' mixed or troubled family pasts illustrates the processing of these connections in some slavery texts. Many novels are based on the identity quest of a hero who questions his origins and sets out in search of a troubled family past, which is usually intertwined with the history of slavery. The recurrence of mixed-race characters in particular illustrates the complexity of the master-slave relationship. The typical trajectory of this character – the "bastard" confronted with his "family novel" (Robert 1972) – runs parallel to the reader's experience: the character discovers the secret of his birth; the reader discovers a hidden page from history. Evelyne Brisou-Pellen's novel *Two Cocoa Beans* (*Deux graines de cacao*, 2001), which appears on the French Ministry of Education's reading lists, is a typical example. Some authors try incorporate several voices representing antagonistic points of view on slavery, revealing the intertwining of human and economic arguments: the novel *From the Other Side of the Sun* (*De l'autre côté du soleil*, Davy 2011), for example, includes the diary of an officer on board a slave ship; *Day of Tears* (Lester 2007) is a choral tale that makes it clear that those involved in the slave trade had at least some rationale for their work.

The work of the numerous French authors who descend from slaves and have written on the topic is particularly significant. Their writing functions as an act of testimony that forces the confrontation of the present and the past. Purveyors of the "descendants' novel" include Julius Lester, Régine Joséphine and Évelyne Trouillot (Misrahi-Barak 2010, 386). For these authors, "the impossibility of separating fact and fiction, history and memory, gives rise to a hybrid text in which imagination reshapes the historical fact" (Misrahi Barak 2010, 391). In practice, this often means – for example, in the case of Maryse Condé – refusing to submit to the convention of the happy ending (Franchini and Mouloungui 2020). Like the American authors Alex Haley and Toni Morrison before them, these descendants of slaves set out in search of a past long neglected by history books. Motivated by their intimate involvement in the subject matter and refusal to compromise even for young audiences, their writing is close to a "poetic of testimony" (Ngamaleu et al. 2022).

The issue of depicting trauma and suffering, however, poses a particular challenge to artists of graphic novels and comic strips, who cannot call on their descendant status to justify refusing the "happy end." Artists often resolve this problem through allusion, distancing, or techniques such as *mise en abyme*. *The Slave Who Spoke to Birds* (*L'esclave qui parlait aux oiseaux*, Pinguily and

Zaü 1998), for example, uses twenty-first-century children as mediators to address the question of slavery. The album alternates between two iconographic modes: full colour images illustrate a legendary past as told by a twenty-first-century girl with African heritage; in parallel, black and white engravings or archival images reveal the abuses endured by slaves. The same process is used in Piotr Barsony's *Tanbou* (2000), which inserts an episode of different graphic and plastic fracture into a contemporary tale. In this instance, Barsony uses a different style of painting and colour to relate how a slave is hunted by dogs, separating this incident from the main text. Other artists choose more elliptical, yet no less convincing, iconotextual methods: in *Cotton Blues* (*Coton blues*, 2007), for example, the artists make use of variations of scale, dreamlike sequences, symbolic chromaticism to connote a mixture of pain and hope. Likewise, Gilles Rapaport's *One Man* establishes a dialogue of text and image that echoes the slave-master hierarchy. The work's title and recurring close-up depictions of the slave protagonist's face drive home the work's humanitarian focus. Nonetheless, the use of these jarring and stark graphic elements mean that some works are deemed unsuitable for children: the Ministry of Education classifies *One Man*, for instance, as suitable only for pupils aged thirteen and up.

4 Conclusion

Almost two hundred years after slavery's abolition, and despite a gradual change in public attitude, the consequences of slavery continue to weigh on French society. This is evident in the work of historian Pap Ndiaye, *The Black Condition* (2008), as well as the fringe of French cultural studies which is marked by the post-colonial approach to cultural objects. Notably Ndiaye demonstrates the extent to which the colonial past and slavery in particular continue to penetrate contemporary French society.

The inclusion of slavery in French legislation under the *Taubira Law* has had a significant impact on many cultural and educational institutions. Youth publishing tackles the issue with a range of documentary and fictional works that aim to inform young readers and awaken their awareness. However, the nature of children's literature – which negotiates allusion and statement, truth and fiction, entertainment and didacticism – means that watered down or decontextualised representations of events and characters frequently soften or distort both intention and historical truth. There are, however, many titles that are both literary and enlightening for young readers – a finding echoed in work carried out by researchers exploring the didactics of the history of slavery in literary texts

(Lalaguë-Dulac 2020; Mesnard 2020). In such texts – whether written for adults and children – authors aim to help French readers build both literary and ideological skills that will make them lucid, responsible and sensitive citizens.

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Thomas Richard

King Sebastian and Lost Paradise? Amnesia and Opposing Myths

During the final years of the Estado Novo regime, Portugal fought three colonial wars against liberation movements in the colonies that it had started to conquer during the "Great Discoveries", the period of Portuguese overseas exploration and conquest during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Between 1961 and 1974, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, Angola and Mozambique all became independent. Both Portugal's 400-year-old empire and European colonialism as a whole in Africa were over.

The country's authoritarian leaders had considered the colonies to be crucial for national identity. As a result, they dragged these difficult wars out for a decade and a half despite their unpopularity among Portugal's young people, many of whom chose to evade conscription through emigration (Pereira 2007). Foreign support at the height of the Cold War further encouraged the continuation of these wars, even as the Portuguese population grew to consider them unwinnable.

The end of these wars, however, was abrupt. On 25 April 1974, middle- and low-ranking officers opposed to colonial repression staged an almost bloodless coup. Within hours, the Caetano government had fallen. A transition to modern democracy accompanied the start of negotiations with colonial liberation movements (Saldanha 2010). By 1975, Portugal's colonial wars – and its empire – were over.

The Carnation Revolution, the democratic transition and the end of the empire would play a key part in the development of Portuguese contemporary identity. Memories of these events, embedded primarily in culture, consistently re-emerge in the present (as in, for example, the anti-austerity movement of the 2010s; Baumgarten 2017).

Indeed, the revolution itself is remembered as a cultural as much as a political event. In music, for example, Zeca Afonso's 1971 song *Grandola, Swarthy Town* (*Grandola, vila Morena*) served as a call to arms for the military insurrectionists. The piece has since gained an almost official status in Portugal (Rendeiro 2018), being played at anniversaries of the revolution, and renditions of it being recorded by acclaimed artists such as Amalia Rodrigues. The Revolution has also been portrayed widely in Portuguese literature and television programmes (de Menezes 2016).

However, the period of the Revolution was accompanied by a key transition in cinema as the "Novo Cinema" ("New Cinema") movement emerged. This politically

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and socially conscious genre, which was inspired by Italian neorealism and by the French Nouvelle Vague, influenced the aesthetics and themes of Portuguese cinema during and after the transition to democracy. It questioned the production of images under Caetano and sought to develop a counter-discourse that questioned official narratives of Portuguese identity. Above all, Novo Cinema mounted a counter-cultural attack on narratives of the country's empire (do Carmo Piçarra 2009). Since the 1970s, Portuguese cinema has therefore been a site of production, dissemination and deconstruction of identity and memory.

The issue of transmitting and questioning memory of the Portuguese 1970s has become particularly pertinent in recent years. As the events in question grow more distant, film directors have dived into the (re)production of Portugal's identity, exploring its "national projection" (Frodon 1998): images of the national self, mythical self-representations and perceptions of the self abroad (Rothberg 2009, 1). To question these memories, we must comprehend Portuguese memory as a projection of the self that targets both foreign and domestic audiences, who have different pre-conceptions of the nation's past.

In this study, I focus on half a dozen Portuguese movies – a large sample, given that the country typically produces only 20–30 films each year – and a series of foreign productions. Portuguese films I examine include Miguel Gomes *Taboo* (*Tabu*, 2012) and Manoel de Oliveira's *No, or the Vain Glory of Command* (*Non, ou a Vã Gloria de Mandar*, 1990); foreign productions include Goran Olsson's *Concerning Violence* (*Om våld*, 2014), and Damian Nenow and Raùl de la Fuente's *Another Day of Life* (*Un Dia màs con vida*, 2019). I explore how cinema directors and producers have attempted, especially since the 1990s, to dissect and reconstruct Portugal's "national projection". As a result, a new memorial narrative of the turmoil of the 1970s and the end of Portugal's empire has developed: this narrative revolves around thematic and interpretive patterns that question the national and international collective memories of these events. In this sense, the cinema I explore reflects and prolongs Novo Cinema's self-reflective approach to collective identity and counter-memory.

The multi-layered discourse of memory that emerges in these films consists of, and addresses, a renewed understanding and appreciation of Portuguese national myths, a perceived national amnesia that these films seek to contest, and a critique of overly simplistic foreign representations and memories of those who have been colonised.

My aim is to question how these traumatic events and a reflection on the end of colonisation have led to the creation of a new and renewed identity in Portugal. Film directors address the renewal and revision of memory by forcing layers of memory, myth and representation into an ongoing dialogue that spans time, space and discourse. This dialogue functions on two levels. On the one hand, Portuguese cinema is a space that allows the country to engage in a conversation with itself by addressing its myths, its relationship to the past and its cultural and political development. On the other hand, these colliding and converging dialogical layers catalyse a reckoning with the colonial and European Other.

1 A dialogue with the other: Confronting Europe and the former colonies in film

Portuguese cinema has developed narratives about its colonial wars in response to representations and understanding from and in its former colonies, but also in response to those phenomena in the rest of Europe and the Western world. The aim is either to affirm the specificity of the Portuguese colonial experience or to challenge, from the outside, a Portuguese narrative perceived as too positive.

Productions from abroad have generally reduced the Portuguese decolonisation wars to a few symbolic images that juxtapose the colonised and the colonisers. Amilcar Cabral, the leader and intellectual powerhouse behind the revolts in Guinea and Cape Verde, is one of the icons of the wider African decolonisation process (Martinho 2017). Indeed, the wars are frequently presented – as in William Klein's *Algiers Pan-African Festival* (*Festival Panafricain d'Alger*, 1969) – as the epitome of European violence (Hadouchi 2011): Marxist guerrillas fight a far-right Portugal in league with apartheid-era South Africa and Rhodesia. Gayatri Spivak (2014) interpreted these wars as self-defence struggles against an imperialist power. These narratives of resistance provided ample fodder for the anti-European liberation theories developed in the waning years of colonialism (Meghelli 2014).

Moreover, such narratives have survived to the present day. Goran Olsson's documentary *Concerning Violence*, based on Frantz Fanon's essay of the same name (Krautwurst 2003) and on *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) – one of the most influential books of the decolonisation movement[1] – praises Cabral. Olsson combines symbolically resonant archival footage of colonial repression and, in the commentary, quotations from Fanon. The combination of footage and quotation serves to equate Portugal's empire and military with those of Rhodesia. The resistance fights of the FRELIMO (Mozambique Liberation Front) and the MPLA (People's Movement for the Liberation of Angola) struggles are, likewise, compared to those of the ZANU (Zimbabwe African National Union).[2] The situation in the Portuguese colonies is thus presented as directly equivalent to the situation across Africa, encouraging the viewer to read Portuguese postcoloniality as part of a pan-European experience. Indeed, Spivak herself appears on screen to affirm this interpretation and to praise the filmmakers.

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[1] Originally published in 1961, just days before Fanon's death, and written during the Algerian War in which Fanon had joined the Algerian National Liberation Front, *The Wretched of the Earth* focuses on the dehumanising effects of colonisation, on the othering process of the colonised, and on the use of violence in the decolonisation movements.

The Portuguese wars have thus become part of a general process of assimilation in films from abroad, particularly from France. Directors have found it easy to create visual links, enhanced by the strong cultural connections between the two countries. Moreover, there are a number of historical parallels between the two nations. In both cases, conscripted soldiers were sent to fight against guerrillas, torture was used to extort information and the war was not popular among the population. Wearing their double-visored caps, French and Portuguese soldiers themselves even looked alike. French films about the Algerian War have proved particularly influential for public perceptions of the last years of colonialism, and have created a somehow hegemonic visual grammar to discuss the topic (Stora 2020).

However, at the core of foreign representations of the colonial wars is an unexpected nostalgia for the anti-imperialist struggle for decolonisation supposedly brought to a close by the Portuguese wars. Works such as *Another Day of Life* (Nenow and de la Fuente 2018), based on the Polish correspondent Riszard Kapuscinski's memoir of his time covering the war in Angola, paint the conflict in realist yet somewhat romanticised terms. The work is visually influenced by the critically acclaimed *Waltz with Bashir* (*Vals im Bashir*, Folman 2008), which is about the Israeli intervention in Lebanon in 1982. Nenow and de la Fuente clearly draw on the earlier film's use of animation and poetry to explore traumatic memory. The film displays a kind of nostalgia for the liberation struggle, and dwells on the characters of the reporters and the fighters so that, while the narrative acknowledges their weaknesses, it also tends to insist on the "magic realism" and brutal poetry that Kapuscinski himself conveys (Wood 1998).

Therefore, while these films commemorate the brutality of colonial rule and celebrate its end, they also tend to develop a memory directed at those who supported these wars of decolonisation from abroad. They particularly tend to focus on the romantic aspects of the global anti-imperialist struggle, which has long been an important theme in the former colonies' cinemas. Angola and Mozambique's national film industries, for example, emerged during their wars of independence. Artists and filmmakers from abroad, motivated by idealistic decolonising ideas, joined the independence movements and assisted in this development.[3] This is exemplified by the trajectories of the Brazilian film director Licínio de Azevedo in Mozambique (Mulliken 2020) developed in the documentary *Licinio de Azevedo, Mozambican Chronicles* (*Licínio de Azevedo, chroniques du Mozambique*, Cardoso 2011), or the French directors Maurice Bonfanti, Bruno Muel and Marcel Trillat in Angola (*Guerre du peuple en Angola*, 1977). The film industries of the former communist bloc – particularly those of Yugoslavia and Cuba, which were both deeply involved in anti-imperialist conflicts – supported this development and produced films such as *Viva Frelimo* (Maksimov and Yegorov 1971; Bamba 2012).

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[2] Following the end of apartheid in the country, Southern Rhodesia changed its name to Zimbabwe in 1980.

2 The Portuguese response

Portuguese film directors have not always rejected these universalising and simplistic representations of the country's colonial wars. Indeed, when compared to what has been a euphemistic and amnesiac approach to discussing the past in Portugal – especially in cinema (Faulkner and Liz 2016; Ferreira 2005) – these representations can appear necessary. Following Benjamin Stora's analysis (2020), Joaquim Leitão demonstrates how the Portuguese, Algerian and Vietnam war can be deliberately assimilated in *20,13 – Purgatory* (*20,13 – Purgatório*, 2006). Leitao portrays an army embroiled in a war that undermines the very essence of Portuguese society and attacks the family and patriotic values promulgated as crucial to imperial ideology. By drawing parallels with other nations' much more widely discussed wars, Leitao builds an image of the colonial wars as a trauma that afflicted the nation at home, its soldiers at the front and its effect on the soldiers. In this sense, Leitao recreates the process of cinematic memory creation around the Vietnam War (Eyerman, Madigan and Ring 2017). Assimilation between international memories is used here to overcome imperial amnesia and replace it with a discourse on the war – albeit a crude one.

Portuguese directors have paid particular attention to the idea that the colonial wars led to a degradation of Portuguese society and Portuguese values. The theme was portrayed using a common film grammar established in films about conflicts such as the Algerian or Vietnam wars. This idea of a decaying society stands out at the beginning of, for example, Ivo Ferreira's *Letters from*

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[3] Their trajectories in this regard can be compared and may have been inspired by René Vautier's work in support of the Algerian National Liberation Front (Voltzenlogel 2016).

War (*Cartas da Guerra*, 2016). Ferreira shows a ship bringing soldiers to Angola, where officers are revealed to be stuck in habits and references that have lost their meaning. In due course, as the hero witnesses the depth of social issues among soldiers, they become gradually traumatised. In Manoel de Oliveira's *No, or the Vain Glory of Command* (1990), this aspect is emphasised through the character of a soldier who shouts empty slogans and brags about his manliness, but remains the most uneducated of his comrades. Later on, the soldier realises the emptiness of his discourse, understanding that it is used by authorities to hide the brutalisation they inflict on Portuguese society through authoritarian rule and war (Ferreira 2005; Martins 2012). Traumatised soldiers are also at the core of Maria de Medeiros' work *April Captains* (*Capitães de Abril*, 2000). All the main characters, including Salgueiro Maia[4] and his friends mention their participation in the colonial wars as the event that made them join the revolution. Among this group, Gervasio is a good example. He lost a lover and a child in the war and returns from conflict as a broken man. Gervasio is a tragic, guilt-ridden figure who uses his last strength to atone for what the war has done to him. Such characters, which echo models from films about Vietnam and colonial veterans in other European countries, emphasise the idea of a common experience in these conflicts, and draw on a shared visual grammar to unpack its memory.

The Portuguese director Miguel Gomes (born in 1972) contends that belonging to the post-war generation has allowed him more freedom to tackle the memory of these conflicts.[5] In *Taboo*, Gomes establishes a dialogic relationship between filmic and historical references to transcend the assimilation of the Portuguese colonial wars with the generalised fight against imperialism. His interpretations are reflected in the black and white he uses as he tries to engage with and add nuance to Manichaean interpretations. By adding areas of doubt and greyness, Gomes finds complexity.

Gomes does not dispute the idea that Portuguese colonialism was a manifestation of Western imperialism, yet rather than tracing the process of assimilation of the Portuguese colonial wars with those of other European countries, he dwells on the colonial experience. He demonstrates this view by opening his film with images of a Portuguese explorer wearing a pit helmet, an image more associated with nineteenth-century imperialism than the Portuguese Great Discoveries (Owen 2016). Gomes thus avoids the euphemised Portuguese Sonderweg narrative. On the other hand, rather than painting the Angolan War of Independence as yet another anti-imperialist violent struggle, he plays on the audience's knowledge of a "cinematic Africa".

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[4] During the Carnation Revolution, Salgueiro Maia was the officer who forced Caetano to surrender. He is credited with being instrumental in limiting casualties during the revolution.

[5] "Miguel Gomes: 'Entre l'Afrique réelle et une Afrique de cinéma.'" *Le Monde*, 4 December 2012, https://www.lemonde.fr/culture/article/2012/12/04/miguel-gomes-entre-l-afrique-reelle-et-une-afrique-de-cinema_1799162_3246.html (22 May 2021).

Gomes' film depicts a colonial social life that resembles in particular Michael Radford's interpretation of Kenya's Happy Valley set in *White Mischief* (1987).[6] He further quotes F. W. Murnau's docu-fiction *Taboo* (1931), which interrogates paradisiac and colonial imageries, and Jean Renoir's *The River* (*Le Fleuve*, 1951), which portrays the end of British rule in India.[7] While quoting these albeit clearly anti-colonial works, Gomes distances his work from the prevailing anti-imperialist discourse. Rather than insisting on realism to portray colonial abuse, in *Taboo*, Portuguese rule in its colonies is articulated through fiction and a web of disparate images. The work therefore questions binaries in its visual approach in particular – whether depicting the Portuguese or the anti-imperialist side (Ferreira 2014). Gomes is one of a number of directors working in similar ways: Zézé Gamboa, the prominent Angolese director, for example, uses similar approaches (Volker 2016). At the same time, the film creates the space for a specifically Portuguese self-reflexive interrogation.

3 A conversation with Portugal: Facing national myths, questioning identity

Rather than endlessly confronting or recycling representations from abroad, Portuguese film directors have attempted to use cinema to enter in a critical dialogue with Portugal's own colonial memory. This self-reflexive aspect is particularly apparent in Ferreira's *Letters from War*. The work includes relatively little dialogue: most of the film's speech consists of extracts from letters written by António Lobo Antunes, one of Portugal's most influential contemporary novelists and the film's protagonist, to his beloved. Born in 1942, Lobo Antunes' experience in a military hospital in Angola provided the inspiration for his first three novels, which started the author's public questioning of Portuguese identity and history. In *Letters from War*, Lobo Antunes acts as a witness to the horrors of life and the war in Angola. However, he simultaneously and repeatedly addresses Portuguese society through his dialogue with his wife and daughter at home. His texts describe or allude to soldiers' lack of education under the Estado Novo regime, their psychological traumas and the absurdity of the ideology they are supposed to defend. Lobo Antunes exemplifies the soldier who despises what he is forced to do, insisting on the absurdity of what he views as a pointless "duty". Indeed, Lobo Antunes suggests that the nature of his duty has brutalised him, despite the fact that he genuinely cares for the soldiers he commands (Guerra 2017). The anti-imperialist and pacifist narrative, then, suggests that the violence and horror of colonialism is not only a foreign trope; it is also distorting the humanity of Portuguese abroad and of their families at home.

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[6] The Happy Valley set was a group of mainly British hedonistic aristocrats and socialites famous for their decadent lifestyle, drug abuse, and sexual promiscuity, who settled in the "Happy Valley" region in Kenya between the 1920s and 1940s.

[7] See also "'Tabou', un film-fleuve." *Le Monde*, 7 December 2012, https://www.lemonde.fr/culture/article/2012/12/07/tabou-un-film-fleuve_1801843_3246.html (22 May 2021); "'Tabou': Miguel Gomes et la splendeur perdue de l'Occident." *Le Monde*, 4 December 2012, https://www.lemonde.fr/culture/article/2012/12/04/tabou-miguel-gomes-et-la-splendeur-perdue-de-l-occident_1799705_3246.html (22 May 2021).

This kind of self-reflexive fusion of classic anti-war tropes allows the filmmakers to question the role of Portuguese intellectuals, some of whom kept rather quiet about their reservations about their country's military deployment, in the political process of the 1970s. In *Letters from War*, Lobo Antunes is presented as a lucid and honest witness of the realities of the war. However, his unease, apart from a few exchanges with other officers, remains confined to the domestic triangle established between the author, his wife and his daughter. His work about the war is published after the conflict's end and questions its memory; there is no suggestion here that Lobo Antunes openly opposed the war while he was at the front.[8] The film makes it clear that as a soldier, any open criticism of the regime would have been extremely difficult for him and could have cost him dearly.

Maria de Medeiros is far more incisive in her 2000 film *April Captains*. Medeiros establishes a juxtaposition between intellectuals and soldiers during the Carnation Revolution (Sabine 2016), illustrating the former's opposition to the Portuguese regime as driven by self-interest and the latter as paragons of pacifist virtue. As intellectuals themselves, film directors are confronted with their desire to contribute to a visual memory of wars and a revolution, in which intellectuals of the time had only a minor role or remained silent despite private doubts. As with Lobo Antunes' filmic proxy and with the officer that teaches his men about Portuguese history and political reflexion in *No, or the Vain Glory of Command*, intellectuals find a space in this memory through the character development of a humanist soldier who questions his action, builds his political consciousness during the wars and disappears immediately after the revolution, leaving the process of memorialisation to intellectuals.[9]

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[8] The same phenomenon is also evident in Leitao's *20,13 – Purgatorio*. Dissenting officers appear weak and ineffective, failing to audibly voice their concerns.

To avoid caricature, such an issue required developing a careful process for the production of images intended to do justice to soldiers, who embodied the Carnation Revolution's ideals yet either failed or were unable to question the blind spots of what intellectuals consider an overly euphemistic memory of the colonial wars in Portugal – be it within the army, or the educational or political arenas (Sapega 2008). Miguel Gomes' *Taboo* exemplifies this new approach to (re)producing images. Although Gomes plays on images of pan-European colonialism his focus is most explicitly turned to "decolonizing the mind" (Ferreira 2005). Aiming to force a confrontation between different parts of the postcolonial Portuguese debate about its colonial past, Gomes combines images inspired by the pro-colonial films of the authoritarian regime with some that mimic home footage shot by settlers (Martins 2012). This dialogic relationship revolves around the key concepts of "paradise" and "paradise lost", which are the titles of the two parts of his film. Gomes explicitly sets memory against counter-memory, the official against the unofficial, the public against the private. In this clash of images, Gomes unravels the anti-paradise "taboo" of Portugal's colonial myths (Owen 2016): instead of the taboo – the silence – Gomes offers a boisterous dialogue about Portugal's supposedly noble past.

The image of that noble past has proven particularly significant in Portuguese historical memory. Portugal built an empire in which local cultures and population mixed to such an extent that, when European Portugal was under threat of invasion by Napoleon, it continued to exist and resist foreign domination from its overseas territories. As such, unlike other European powers, Portugal developed a self-image – a "national projection" – of a non-racist colonial history. European Portugal was, supposedly, just one part of a global empire, rather than itself a European power exerting dominance over African and American populations (Pinto 2015). This idea developed ideologically and mythically into the notion of a "fifth empire" (Ribeiro 2002), which gives its title to another of Manoel de Oliveira's films. In this narrative, Portugal founded and led a global and benevolent empire, yet here the post-war "overseas provinces" appear on screen as an ugly distortion of that vision.

The use of caricature in films on the colonial wars of independence indicates the extent to which filmmakers expect their audiences to be aware of these narratives: in *Letters From War*, officers imagine themselves as the successors of Vasco de Gama while sailing to Africa. However, caricature does not emerge from widely shared expectations. The image of noble Portugal and its colonial paradises has had a postcolonial afterlife in official and repatriate discourses.

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[9] Lobo Antunes goes back to civilian life at the end of the film, the teaching officer is killed, and the characters in *April Captains* step back from the political scene at the end of the revolution.

The exploration of contrasting notions of “paradise” and “paradise lost”, which also appear in *A Portuguese Farewell* (*Um Adeus Português*, Botelho 1986) and Manoel de Oliveira’s *No, Or the Vain Glory of Command*, is enduringly profound in the Portuguese context (Jimenez-Sandoval 2001). The idea of “paradise lost” seems coherent with Portuguese repatriates’ discourse: Kapuscinski, for example, reports that many settlers have left Angola furious and embittered; their lost properties and social world in Africa appear as a paradise lost (Kapuscinski 2007, 4). The repatriates’ amnesiac discourse has deeply influenced the colonial wars’ memory, particularly when it comes to its cinematographic representations, which long downplayed the most brutal aspects of life and war in Portuguese Africa (Arenas 2012).

Directors like Gomes draw on this expectation of colonial “paradise” to show that the reality of life in colonial Africa differed from the official two-dimensional narratives of the empire (Vargaftig 2016). *Taboo*’s iconography is carefully constructed to encourage viewers to feel that this paradise, which makes natives invisible and hides brutality, is beyond lost. This is a paradise that never existed beyond the literary and mythical imagination (Nagib 2017).

Such distancing of reality and myth has appeared in several other works. In Ivo Ferreira’s film, for example, Portuguese soldiers discover that what one official pompously describes as “overseas provinces” of the “multicontinental empire of a multiethnic nation” is nothing more than a violent, poverty-stricken and dusty landscape, lacking education and medical care. Manoel de Oliveira and Joaquim Leitão likewise film these territories and the colonial occupiers as deeply estranged from their African subjects: there is nothing to suggest that the Portuguese soldiers are able to build a common memory with the people they encounter, among which the settlers are remarkably absent from these landscapes. Perhaps Gomes’ work is the sole exception to this lack of integration. By engaging in dialogue with, then destroying, the popular idea of a paradisiacal imperial past, these films create if not new narratives then at least a disjuncture in the audience’s understanding of the past.

Deconstructing the narrative of colonial paradise has also necessitated deconstructing the narratives of its heroes. Sebastian I (1554–1578), an early proponent of the imperial idea, became a mythical character in Portuguese identity. Sebastian I embodied the very idea of a romantic, global Portugal: his return was to mark the beginning of the fifth empire (Tahtinen 2012). De Oliveira appears particularly eager to question this image in his work (Ferreira 2008a; Martins 2012), following

Pessoa's – Portugal's most important poet and writer of the twentieth century – literary interpretation of the fifth empire (Swida 2012) as a spiritual construction. De Oliveira builds another dialogical opposition into his work, this time in the form of a mirror of the heroic colonial narrative. *No, or the Vain Glory of Command* retells Portugal's history through its defeats, in an anti-heroic movement that places Sebastian I at its core. In the teaching officer's words, "Portugal's legacy to the world" is not the actual empire that they established in Africa, but rather the "Discoveries, and their scientific and literary heritage" (Macedo 1998). As he lies wounded, the officer is identified with Sebastian I. The same actor who plays that part also appeared in a previous re-enactment of the Battle of Alcàcer Quibir (in which Sebastian I died), and the camera melts the two characters' attitudes and costumes as they are dying. In this new role, as he is about to draw his last breath, he imagines the possibility of a return to Portugal and a peaceful empire, as a humanist warrior. The character dies on the day of the Carnation Revolution, paving the way for a renewed Portuguese identity, in which "Sebastianism" has gained a new, democratic and peaceful meaning (Ferreira 2005; 2008). From dialogue and confrontation – and not through a process of neglect or forgetting – de Oliveira manages to convey the symbolic death of the ideals of the past and the birth of a different, cosmopolitan future.

4 Conclusion

Memory of Portugal's colonial wars has been highly contested in Portuguese film. In recent years, directors have drawn on the lessons of Cinema Novo to create a multi-faceted dialogue between two sets of representations, each equally contested. The first nexus is formed around the idea that Portugal's colonial wars have little specificity other than being the epitome of European imperialism; the other focuses on the exceptionality of the supposedly noble and paradisiacal Portuguese colonial experience.

Most of the films that I study were shot after 1990, when the passing of time and the strengthening of democracy made confronting the colonial past easier. As personal memories started to fade and the first post-imperial generation matured, self-reflection on contemporary identity became an important task for residents of Portugal. The country questioned its myths, particularly as it faced economic and political hardships linked to globalisation that echoed the first global world, that of the empires (Baumgarten 2017).

Simultaneously, these films also act as a way for film directors to question their status as intellectuals and memory entrepreneurs. The fact that this cinematographic memory is so overladen with domestic and foreign references, and that it reinterprets key identity myths, is itself a tribute to its contemporary relevance: this cinema tries to offer elements of an answer to a country that redefines itself and aims at confronting its fundamental myths, while questioning its image abroad. Directors' enthusiasm for engaging with both internal and external discourses about Portugal's heritage suggest that, as the country's former colonies also start to develop a more complex memory of their independence wars – as exemplified by *The Battle of Tabato* (*Abatalha de Tabatô*, Viana 2013), which focuses on former black Portuguese colonial troops – Portugal may also engage in a new direction of memorial dialogue, coming to terms with or sharing its legacy in new ways with its former colonies.

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Solveig Hennebert & Isabel Sawkins

Beyond the Normative Understanding of Holocaust Memory: Between Cosmopolitan Memory and Local Reality

In 2020, a pair of international ceremonies – one in Jerusalem and the other in Poland – were organised to commemorate 27 January, designated as International Holocaust Remembrance Day since the introduction of UN Resolution A/RES/60/7 in 2005.[1] The Israeli and Polish events marked the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Soviet army's liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, a site which has become symbolic of the atrocities committed during the Holocaust. The presence of delegates from countries representing both perpetrators and victims of the Holocaust at both commemorative events is in turn symbolic of what some consider to be a moral consensus on Holocaust memory (Mintz 2001).[2] Nowadays, most European countries pay tribute to the victims of the Nazi genocide.

Such remembrance practices can be seen as examples of "cosmopolitan memory", a mode of remembering that spreads and highlights human rights values (Levy and Sznaider 2010). Grounding their work in an examination of Holocaust memory in Germany, Israel and the USA, Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider (2002) argue that changes in Holocaust memory have transcended the borders of nation-states, leading to the tragedy's deterritorialisation. The spread of the idea has been particularly noticeable on the European continent, where the Holocaust has been framed as "one of the foundational stories of the European Union" (Subotić 2019, 17). Indeed, the European Union has played an important role in the development of this memory (Kucia 2016, 98), and in recent years dedication to Holocaust memory has become a critical element of "the entry ticket into the EU" (Assmann 2014, 549).

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[2] For a list of state representatives at the commemorative event at Yad Vashem (as of 20 January 2020), see "List of Leaders of Nations Attending the Fifth World Holocaust Forum taking place at Yad Vashem." *Yad Vashem*, 21 January 2020, https://www.yadvashem.org/press-release/21-january-2020-12-36.html (27 November 2020).

For a list of state representatives at the commemorative event at Auschwitz-Birkenau, see "State delegates." *Memorial and Museum Auschwitz-Birkenau*, http://auschwitz.org/en/state-delegations/ (27 November 2020).

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In this chapter, we explore how the diversity of Holocaust memories in practice problematises the conception of a cosmopolitan Holocaust memory. We unearth French and Russian examples that do not subscribe to the key tenets of cosmopolitan memory. These examples reveal how the local realities of Holocaust memory are moulded by national, political, social and cultural context. Even though memory frameworks and figures common to cosmopolitan Holocaust memory are employed in both France and Russia, they are adapted to fit the national historical and political contexts and requirements in the present. Cosmopolitan memory practices are thus repurposed to fit national purposes.

1 Is cosmopolitan memory universal?

Levy and Sznaider contend that sharing Holocaust memories "provide[s] the foundations for a new cosmopolitan memory, a memory transcending ethnic and national boundaries" (2002, 88). They observe that the nation-state, which was long considered the vessel for collective memory, began to fracture in the post-Cold War period (Levy and Sznaider 2002, 96–97), and that "issues of *global* concern" were becoming "part and parcel of everyday local experiences and moral life worlds of an increasing number of people" (Levy and Sznaider 2002, 88; italics our own). In this reading, national particularities of Holocaust remembrance have been obfuscated. Nations across the globe have taken a more homogeneous approach to commemorating the apparently universalised values of the Holocaust. This cosmopolitan narrative of the Holocaust is explicitly based on the opposition between good and evil – and especially between good victims and evil persecutors (Levy and Sznaider 2002, 102). Those figures and organisations (such as the European Union) that develop such narratives generally contend that through the projection of a unified narrative everyone who partakes in such commemorative practices will both absorb a given set of moral and ethical lessons and discover ideals about human rights. Countries and institutions such as the EU then further developed this concept through the idea of "universalizing memory practices [. . .] in which interpretational patterns of the past lose contextual references and enhance their potential to be linked or even transferred to other memories" (Pestel et al. 2017, 498).

We argue that memory is neither performative nor consensual. Memory is a political and social process. Indeed, even if the mnemonic narrative of the Holocaust rests upon moral values, public memory policies are nonetheless political, and history is frequently instrumentalised in order to reach political goals (Andrieu 2006). This fact complicates both the theory and practice of cosmopolitan memory.

The admission of numerous countries from the post-Soviet bloc to the European Union in the early 2000s is an illustrative example of memory instrumentalisation. These countries had to engage with a global memory framework in order to become EU members (Neumayer 2019). However, once admitted to the EU, these nations attempted to refashion EU Holocaust memory so that it reflected their own experience of the twentieth century. Their shared post-communist identity is based on the "memory of Stalinism and Soviet occupation, as well as precommunist ethnic conflict with other states, rather than the memory of the Holocaust" (Subotić 2019, 11). The cosmopolitan Holocaust memory paradigm seeks to engage with the past to frame moral values in the present, but these nations have instrumentalised Holocaust memory for nationalist intentions. That instrumentalising approach to Holocaust memory bears similarity to Russia's approach.

We suggest that localised readings of Holocaust memory add nuance to the notion of cosmopolitan memory. Some countries might be considered bearers of cosmopolitan memory narratives due to their memorial focus on good victims versus evil perpetrators. In the Polish context, Janek Gryta notes that "scholars such as Montserrat Guibernau, Michael Meng, Ewa Ochman and Sharon Macdonald" might consider memory activism in Kraków to be cosmopolitan because of its focus on "openness, tolerance and inclusivity" (2020, 36). However, Gryta argues – as do we – that local particularities challenge the prevailing cosmopolitan narrative. In 2018, for example, the Polish narrative of innocence during the war was given legal backing. A group of lawmakers took issue with terms that might be interpreted as suggesting Polish responsibility for the atrocities of the Holocaust (Hackmann 2018, 600–601). The group proposed an ultimately successful amendment to the *Act on the Institute of National Remembrance – Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation*. The amendment sought to "protect the 'good name' of the Polish state" (Soroka and Krawatzek 2019, 157) by fighting against the use of phrases which could be understood as implying Polish responsibility for the Holocaust, such as "Polish concentration camps" (Hackmann 2018, 601). Through this recent legal intervention, a Polish national narrative based on Polish and Jewish victimhood has been solidified. On the other hand, in France a similar law was implemented to impose a narrative about the crimes against humanity committed during World War II. However, the rhetoric was rather different: indeed, the *Gayssot Law* (1990) made Holocaust denial illegal (Wieviorka 2010, 268). Even if there is an international convergence of memory public policy implementation, especially in the EU, the narrative is different, dependent on the national context.

Memory practices regarding the *Righteous Among the Nations*, an honorific title awarded by Israel to any non-Jewish person who helped to save Jewish people during the Holocaust, are a further example of such local nuances. This globalised figure of the *Righteous Among the Nations* is seen as a vector for the defence of Human Rights. Yad Vashem argues that the programme is "essential to emphasize that Man was also capable of defending and maintaining human values".[3] However, Sarah Gensburger (2015) has shown that this notion draws on differing foundations in Belgium and France. In Belgium, the humanitarian figure is presented by the state as a symbol of religious cohabitation between Jews and Catholics. In France, the same figure is grounded in the universalist ideal of the Republic, which led to the erasure of the religious component. Indeed, the state deploys a universalist rhetoric centred on Human Rights without mentioning the religiosity of the Israeli title. Moreover, a service from the French National Assembly refused to include the word "Jew" in the law introducing the commemoration of the Righteous Among the Nations due to the state's conception of secularism (Gensburger 2015, 552). Despite Belgian and French memory practices referring to the same figures, the implicit meaning behind the memory is different. To understand the diversity of the narrative's appropriation, one needs to go beyond normative perceptions of Holocaust memory.

Even if that memory relies on humanitarian ideals based on the lessons everyone can supposedly learn from the Nazi genocide, it is still inexorably adapted to national contexts. The tenets of cosmopolitan memory are, Lorraine Ryan has argued, "nationalized and its discourse distorted, in some cases, to serve the national interest" (2014). One needs to consider national framework(s) in order to grasp this phenomenon in its entirety: hence our case studies of France and Russia in this chapter.

Understanding national memory necessitates considering the role of the individual's social and family identities (Muxel 1991). Each individual belongs to a variety of demographic groups (gender, nation, religion, political ideology, age and so on) which, when combined, form an individual's social identity (Pollak 2000 [1990], 13). The proclamation of the global narrative and humanitarian ideals of the Holocaust is thus not performative – it is adapted to each country's own national context – and reception can vary depending on the social frameworks in place. The diversity of Holocaust commemorative practices on 27 January 2020 in France and Russia (and the general context of Holocaust memory in both countries) is a good illustration.

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[3] "About the Program." *Yad Vashem*, https://www.yadvashem.org/righteous/about-the-program.html (27 November 2020).

2 The diversity of commemorations of 27 January in France, beyond the international narrative

76,000 Jewish people living in France – a quarter of the country's Jewish population – were deported to Nazi concentration and extermination camps between 1942 and 1944. Most were killed in gas chambers or by other forms of violence. The Vichy government, French policemen and some citizens collaborated with the Nazi occupiers to deport and kill Jews (Wieviorka 2003). In the first decades after the war, this genocide was not remembered as a specific genocide at all. Deported Jewish people were lumped in with other groups and simply categorised as "political deportees". Moreover, the fact of collaboration between the Germans and the French state and its citizens was denied in order to preserve unity and "restore the confidence of a divided nation" (Wieviorka 2010, 27) after the war. Instead, the state and the public disseminated a narrative of "la France résistante". Indeed, Charles De Gaulle (French president from 1944 to 1946 and 1959 to 1969) and many others – including a mostly silent population – threw their weight behind the narrative of a victorious France (Wieviorka 2010). Official memory gave no room to discuss collaboration and complicity in the Holocaust.

That silence, however, began to dissipate in the 1980s as a result of work by historians, social scientists and Jewish grassroots activists (Wieviorka 2010). In 1995, Jacques Chirac finally recognised the crimes committed by the French state. At the same time, French secondary schools began to teach the history of the Holocaust (Schneider 2005). July 2000 saw the first iteration of the legally enshrined "National day for the Memory of the Victims of Racists and Antisemitic Crimes of the French State and Tribute to the 'Righteous' of France". This memory has seemed to overlap seamlessly with the UN-led day. Every year the Ministry of Education organises events to mark 27 January, following the recommendation of the EU and the UN (Gensburger 2015). French educational institutions purport to view 27 January as an occasion to promote human values,[4] so France may appear to have embraced global narratives and "cosmopolitan memory".

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[4] "27 janvier: journée de la mémoire des génocides et de la prévention des crimes contre l'humanité." *Ministère de l'Éducation*, https://www.education.gouv.fr/27-janvier-journee-de-la-memoire-des-genocides-et-de-la-prevention-des-crimes-contre-l-humanite-11057 (30 November 2020).

However, 27 January in France is also appropriated by a variety of associations, foundations and museums, which each organise their own ceremonies.[5] For instance, every year the Auschwitz Deportees Union organises a commemoration at the tomb of the unknown soldier at the Arc de Triomphe in Paris. The ceremony's leaders partake in the rite of reviving the flame under the Arc. Since 1923, this flame has burned as a tribute to all soldiers who have died in battle. Every night a veterans' or war victims' association revives the flame so that these soldiers will not be forgotten. By doing so on 27 January, the Auschwitz Deportees Union links the history of the Auschwitz deportees not to the figure of the victim of genocide, but to the symbolic representation of all soldiers. International Holocaust Remembrance Day is also subject to more overt criticism by some groups representing the memory of political inmates, who argue that the day should commemorate *all* victims of Auschwitz, and not just Jewish victims.[6] While the state interprets international memory narratives and commemorations, other individual reconstructions of memory seek to contest and reinterpret 27 January in ways that belie the idea of a "cosmopolitan memory".

3 Soviet liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau moulded by contemporary geopolitical concerns

Commemoration of the Holocaust has been a relatively recent development in the Russian Federation. For a long time, the tragedy was incorporated into the wider national narrative of the Great Patriotic War. The genocide inflicted upon Europe's Jewish population was rarely acknowledged as a distinct tragedy (Gershenson 2013, 2). Following the Soviet Union's disintegration, which resulted in the limited opening of archives and a more open examination of the Holocaust (Altman 2018, 227), both official and local discourses have found space to acknowledge the nature of the Nazi genocide to some extent. The memory of the

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[5] "Journée internationale à la mémoire des victimes de la Shoah – 2020." *Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah*, https://www.fondationshoah.org/memoire/journee-internationale-la-memoire-des-victimes-de-la-shoah-2020 (30 November 2020).

[6] These observations were made during previous research conducted on an association (Hennebert 2014). Some members of this association, which commemorates two convoys of political inmates who were deported to Auschwitz, are opposed to the Holocaust Remembrance Day. The latter is understood as a means to silence the diversity of the people who were imprisoned and murdered in the camp.

Holocaust has, however, been employed in Russia to make a more general argument about the Soviet contribution to the war effort, as opposed to acknowledging the Holocaust and the suffering of European Jews in particular.

Much of the commemoration surrounding the Holocaust is grounded in the role played by the Soviet Red Army in the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau on 27 January 1945. Indeed, 27 January has taken on an increasingly central role since the Russian state co-authored the UN Resolution to make 27 January Holocaust Remembrance Day.[7] However, the Russian state does not at present commemorate the day officially (Altman 2014).

What is more, and despite its role in establishing Holocaust Remembrance Day, the Russian state continues to challenge the cosmopolitan narrative. The official narrative of the Holocaust has sometimes been framed by Russian political actors as a reminder to the world of the USSR's heroic role in the liberation of Europe. Following accusations from abroad that Russia (or the USSR) was partially responsible for the outbreak of war and for Soviet occupation in Central and Eastern Europe – Russo-Polish tensions flared particularly sharply in 2020 as the two countries engaged in a rhetorical and public battle about the implications of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the start of World War II – this heroic national narrative has been employed to bolster Russia's international legitimacy.[8]

For example, in June 2020 Vladimir Putin published an editorial in the conservative-leaning American magazine *The National Interest*. In the article, Putin examined what he considered to be the "real lessons of the 75th Anniversary of World War II".[9] Released just days before the Russian state's rescheduled Victory Day parade, the president argued that he was "compelled" to publish the article to prevent repetition of the tragedies of the Holocaust from repeating themselves.[10] Whilst the piece predominantly served as a weapon against the disputes about the start of the war, it also reinforced Putin's heroic approach to memory, albeit not necessarily in the context of the Holocaust in particular. He reminded the reader that it was the Soviet Union "that claimed an epic, crushing victory over Nazism and saved the entire world".[11]

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[7] "Privetstvennoe poslanie Ministra inostrannykh del Rossii S. V. Lavrova uchastnikam memorial'nogo vechera, posvyashchennogo Mezhdunarodnomu dnyu pamyati zhertv Kholokosta." *Ministerstvo inostrannykh del Rossiiskoy Federatsii*, 29 January 2007, https://www.mid.ru/web/guest/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/382962 (27 November 2020).

[8] For an example, see "Vystuplenie Ministra inostrannykh del Rossii S. V. Lavrova pered grecheskoy obshchetsvennost'yu, Afiny, 2 dekabrya 2009 goda." *Ministerstvo inostrannykh del Rossiiskoy Federatsii*, 3 December 2019, https://www.mid.ru/web/guest/maps/gr/-/asset_publisher/D4tBbKa1q61C/content/id/270818 (27 November 2020).

[9] "Vladimir Putin: The Real Lessons of the 75th Anniversary of World War II." *The National Interest*, 18 June 2020, https://nationalinterest.org/feature/vladimir-putin-real-lessons-75th-anniversary-world-war-ii-162982 (19 June 2020).

[10] "Putin Publishes Essay on 'Real Lessons' of WWII." *The Moscow Times*, 18 June 2020, https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2020/06/18/putin-publishes-essay-on-real-lessons-of-wwii-a70623 (25 January 2021).

Vladimir Putin was also one of the speakers invited to the "Remembering the Holocaust: Fighting Antisemitism World Holocaust Forum" event held at Yad Vashem on 23 January 2020. Speaking at the event, Putin used his platform to remind the world of the prominent role played by the Soviet Army in the defeat against Nazism more generally, noting: "We paid a price so terrible that no nation had ever before dreamed of such a thing: 27 million dead."[12] In this instance, the Holocaust was framed by issues of national concern about supposedly Russophobic narratives propagated by states in the former Soviet bloc.[13] The incident, however, was not unique. In a speech to commemorate the seventieth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau, Putin argued that "the Russian people bore the main burden on their shoulders in the fight against Nazism. 70 percent of all the soldiers and officers of the Red Army were Russian people."[14]

These two examples are emblematic of the state's emphasis on the Soviet contribution to the war effort, rather than on Jewish or individual suffering, when it comes to Holocaust memory. The USSR's role in the war and in the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau had become a hot topic by 2020. The focus on the "Soviet" contribution to the war effort is a means to restore Soviet camaraderie to the Russian imagination of the former Soviet bloc and thereby highlight a shared contribution to this heroic feat. For this reason, Russian state memory of the Holocaust does not in these instances align closely with the idea of cosmopolitan memory. Rather, Holocaust memory, specifically that of the role of the Red Army in liberating Auschwitz-Birkenau, seems to be employed in circumstances in order to bolster Russia's international legitimacy.

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[11] "Vladimir Putin: The Real Lessons of the 75th Anniversary of World War II." *The National Interest*, 18 June 2020, https://nationalinterest.org/feature/vladimir-putin-real-lessons-75th-anniversary-world-war-ii-162982 (14 November 2021).

[12] "Forum 'Sokhranyaem pamyat' o Kholokoste, boremsya s antisemitizmom.'" *Sayt Prezidenta Rossii*, 23 January 2020, http://www.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/62646/audios (17 March 2021).

[13] For an example, see "Brifing ofitsial'nogo predstavitelya MID Rossii M. V. Zakharovoi, Moskva, 23 yanvarya 2020 goda." *Ministerstvo inostrannykh del Rossiyskoy Federatsii*, 23 January 2020, https://www.mid.ru/web/guest/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/4004544 (27 November 2020).

[14] "International Holocaust Remembrance Day." *President of Russia*, 27 January 2015, http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/47529 (17 November 2020).

4 Conclusion

Local examples of Holocaust commemoration in France and the Russian Federation challenge a supposedly dominant "cosmopolitan memory" of the Holocaust. The official narratives in both nations engage with elements of the cosmopolitan memory narrative by commemorating cornerstones of that memory, including 27 January in Russia and the Righteous Among the Nations in France. These are indications of some narratives surrounding the Holocaust that are, indeed, globalised. However, cosmopolitan memory has been variously instrumentalised in order to present a positive image abroad and challenged for national and local purposes by state and non-state actors. Cosmopolitan memory, far from being universal, is constantly reinterpreted and reappropriated. Topics that might complicate the local narratives of heroic and united opposition to fascism and fascist crimes – collaboration in France and the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in Russia – are either open to challenge or deliberately suppressed or elided. Instead, countries are able to appropriate elements of certain globalised narratives that support their self-identification as heroic individuals and ignore those topics that contradict the broader sense of national and local pride. The following chapters examine local resistance to the cosmopolitan narrative in the format of Holocaust conferences for schoolchildren in Russia and the individual appropriations of memory frameworks among young Jewish people in France.

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Isabel Sawkins

Understanding Terrible Crimes: Youth Memory of the Holocaust in the Russian Federation

> A world without war is possible only with realistic views on events in our history. Therefore, people, remember! We live in order to preserve memory, to pass on accumulated knowledge and experience from generation to generation. Our future and the future of our children depend on the level of our understanding of the causes of terrible crimes.[1]

Russian schoolchild Kseniya Sheveleva came to this realisation following her participation in an annual conference for pupils and teachers, *The Holocaust: Memory and Prevention*, which is held in Moscow each January by the Russian Research and Educational Holocaust Centre (RREHC).[2] Established in 1992, the RREHC was the first institution in the post-Soviet space to "preserve the memory of the victims of the Holocaust, create documentary exhibitions, include themes of the Holocaust in educational programmes and standards at schools and universities, hold memorial evenings, create memorials, collect documents, testimonies and memoirs".[3] Originally headed by historian Mikhail Gefter, the institution is now co-run by historian and archivist Ilya Altman and writer and journalist Alla Gerber.[4] The Holocaust is barely present in state education, so the RREHC conference has played an important role in raising awareness of the tragedy within the Russian Federation. Indeed, this assessment is echoed in the centre's focus on Holocaust memory and prevention of its repetition.[5]

The RREHC website contains a plethora of information about the organisation's publications and activities. Reviews written by attendees at some events are also available. I examine reviews written by teachers and schoolchildren about the RREHC conference to assess how they believe the conference has inspired them to promulgate or pursue Holocaust education in the future. These reviews reveal how

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[1] Sheveleva, Kseniya. "Mir bez voyny vozmozhen lish' pri trezvykh vzglyadakh na sobytiya nashey istorii." *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, 30 January 2016, http://www.old.holocf.ru/Editor/assets2/otzyv%20konfa%20studentov%20sheveleva.pdf (14 November 2021).

[2] The research for this paper was conducted as part of my PhD, which is funded by the SWWDTP. I would like to thank my supervisors, Professor James Mark and Dr Jenny Mathers, for helpful comments and feedback on earlier versions of this chapter.

[3] "Istoriya." *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, http://holocf.ru/история/ (6 June 2020).

[4] "Istoriya." *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*.

[5] *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, http://holocf.ru/. (18 November 2020).

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participation at the conference leads children to feel that they are empowered to commemorate the Holocaust and prevent its repetition. According to participants' own reviews, the RREHC conference provides attendees with the information, skills, and supportive and creative atmosphere needed to further their Holocaust education and research activities, conducted under the guidance of their teacher.

The RREHC conference, then, differs starkly from the children's limited experience of Holocaust education in school classrooms. Almost no time in the curriculum is accorded to teaching the history of World War II (Altman 2012, 122).[6] The state-mandated curriculum allots little time to teaching the Holocaust. Following participation in the RREHC conference, however, students hope to continue their study of the Holocaust, to attend the conference again, and to spread information about the topic among their peers. In this way, children who have attended work as memory activists.[7] Moreover, attendees' own rhetoric of "never again"[8] seems to align closely with the framework of cosmopolitan memory promulgated in the European Union. This is, perhaps, a striking fact, given that the Russian state's broader focus on Soviet heroism and victory dominates the classroom and state-funded culture. Even within the Russian Federation, where the state's monolithic narrative dominates historical discourse, Holocaust memory is full of nuance – and, indeed, exists in a dialogic relationship with cosmopolitan memory. Whilst these two memory frameworks are not necessarily incompatible, they are employed for different purposes.

Some academic studies of the RREHC's work have been produced (Altman 2019; Altman 1999). However, the voice of the RREHC conference's audience – teachers and schoolchildren – does not crop up in this literature. Indeed, children's voices are more generally underrepresented in research on Holocaust education and memory in the Russian context. There is currently no academic analysis of how children use or perceive the RREHC's materials, or of how young people engage with the centre's competitions, conferences and seminars. This scholarly vacuum effectively neglects the agency of Russian schoolchildren in memory practices by ignoring their contribution to the nature of Holocaust memory.

I analyse the two main aims of the conference according to children's reviews, specifically looking at the preservation of Holocaust memory and prevention of its repetition, and how these foci sit within broader societal and political understandings of the Holocaust in Russia. By focusing my analysis on children's written reviews of the RREHC's work, I seek to introduce young voices into the subfield. Besides simply acknowledging their voices, my analysis foregrounds both the unique insights of the children into Holocaust education and the ways in which those children believe that the RREHC is addressing potential gaps in their education.

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[6] "Voyna za sem' urokov." *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*, 25 December 2017, https://rg.ru/2017/12/17/eksperty-predlozhili-vesti-uroki-istorii-v-shkole-po-modulnomu-principu.html (10 July 2021).

[7] For more on the topic of youth mobilisation and activism, see Krawatzek 2018.

[8] Omarov, Magomed. *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, n.d., http://www.old.holocf.ru/Editor/assets2/konfa%20v%20moskve%20magomedov.pdf (14 November 2021).

The sample of available reviews is, however, limited to the opinions of those students who chose to write a review to be published on the RREHC website. Indeed, out of the 28 students who attended the 2020 RREHC conference, only seven reviews were published online.[9] The provenance of this source material is also limited: the 15 reviews I analyse seem to predominantly reflect the views of older students from Russia's western regions.[10] Given this geographic and age bias, it might be argued that the opinions of these reviewers do not reflect the opinions of Russian youth and society at large. In order to highlight that these reviews do indeed reflect wider ideological trends, I position them within a broader socio-political discourse. By doing so, I will show that some of the principal tenets of socio-political discourse on the Holocaust are being supported in the setting of the conference. In doing so, I ascertain two primary motivations for pupils to educate themselves and others about the Holocaust: to remember the tragedy and to prevent its repetition. These views echo wider Russian societal and political understandings of the Holocaust. The RREHC conference reinforces the Russian state's narrative that it is essential to preserve the memory of the Holocaust as just one part of the memory of World War II, and that doing so will help ensure such events will never happen again. However, the conference also introduces an understanding of the Holocaust which is somewhat more rounded than that promoted by schools, by offering a platform for engagement with new topics and employing new creative formats in which pupils can display their work.

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[9] "Otkrytie konferentsii shkol'nikov." *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, 19 January 2020, http://holocf.ru/открытие-конференции-школьников/ (20 January 2021). "Several dozen" students took part in the event in 2015 ("Otkrytie mezhdunarodnoy konferentsii shkol'nikov i studentov." *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, 23 January 2015, http://holocf.ru/открытие-международной-конференции/ [3 June 2020]). Seventy participants took part in the event in 2016, which was also held for university students and "young scientists" ("Konferentsiya shkol'nikov i studentov oprovergnet mify o Kholokoste." *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, 22 January 2016, http://holocf.ru/конференция-школьников-и-студентов-о/ [2 June 2020]).

[10] Two students were in the eighth grade (14–15 years old), two students were in ninth grade (15–16 years old) and four students were in tenth (16–17 years old) and eleventh grades (17–18 years old). Three pupils did not disclose their age. The pupils came from schools predominantly in the Western regions of Russia (Samara, Bryansk, Vologda, Pskov, Tambovsk, Saratov, Orel). One student came from the northwest region of Arkhangelsk, and one came from the west-central region in the Ural Mountains, Chelyabinsk.

1 RREHC Conference: “An experience that cannot be forgotten”

The annual RREHC conference is one of the key events of the “Week of Memory” (“Nedelya Pamyati”).[11] Organised by the Russian Jewish Congress and the RREHC, and supported by the Moscow City Government, a programme of memorial and educational events has been held in the week around 27 January annually since 2015.[12] Those who perform well in the RREHC’s *Road to Tolerance* competition are invited to present their material at the conference.[13] At the conference itself, schoolchildren present the findings of their research projects and engage in a multitude of other activities, such as attending film screenings.[14]

Like many of the RREHC’s activities, the organisation of the conference is collaborative. The 2016 conference was supported by the Moscow City Government, the Russian Jewish Congress, and the Russian State University for the Humanities.[15] These groups likely supported the RREHC Conference because of their own dedication to preserving what they would claim as truthful historical memory,[16] their own efforts to commemorate the Holocaust,[17] and their professional links with employees of the RREHC.[18]

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[11] “Konferentsiya shkol’nikov i studentov oprovergnet mify o Kholokoste.” *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, 22 January 2016.

[12] “Gorodskoy metodicheskiy tsentr opublikoval spisok meropriyatiy ‘Nedeli pamyati’.” *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, 13 January 2019, http://holocf.ru/городской-методический-центр-опубли/ (28 May 2020).

[13] “Otkrytie mezhdunarodnoy konferentsii shkol’nikov i studentov.” *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, 23 January 2015.

[14] “IX Mezhdunarodnaya konferentsiya shkol’nikov «Kholokost: Pamyat’ i Preduprezhdenie.»” *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, 26 January 2015, https://holocf.ru/ix-международная-конференция-школьник/ (14 November 2021).

[15] “Konferentsiya shkol’nikov i studentov oprovergnet mify o Kholokoste.” *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, 22 January 2016.

[16] This dedication was mentioned at the 2020 Conference in a speech given by the mayor of Moscow (“V stolitse proshel blagotvoritel’nyi memorial’nyy vecher ‘Khranitel’ pamyati’.” *Informatsionnyy Tsentr Pravitel’stva Moskvy*, 28 January 2020, https://icmos.ru/publications/v-stolitse-proshel-blagotvoritelnyy-memorialnyy-vecher-khranitel-pamyati [1 December 2020]).

[17] For an example, see the “Restore Dignity” (“Vernut’ dostoynstvo”) project of the RJC and RREHC, dedicated to bringing “the graves of victims of mass executions in line with Jewish tradition and the laws of the countries where they are located” (“O proekte.” *Vernut’ dostoynstvo*, http://victimsdignity.ru/о-проекте/ [3 June 2020]).

[18] In 2016 an International Educational and Research Centre of the Holocaust and Genocides History was established at the Russian State Humanitarian University, which “conducts research on issues of the First and Second World Wars history, ethnic and religious conflicts, participates in

This support, moreover, highlights the inextricable links between state and non-state institutions in their dedication to Holocaust memory. Mariëlle Wijermars has explained that "differentiation between state and non-state actors [. . .] is notoriously murky" in Russia (2019, 3). This merging between state and non-state in memory politics has become even more "murky" since the 2012 "foreign agent" law against foreign funding of NGOs and the government's own launch of a "large-scale grant operation" (Lipman and Miller 2019). This coalescence of state and non-state, however, does not seem to affect the way in which the conference is perceived by pupils, nor the types of pupils who participate in the event.

2 "After this conference, I know exactly what we should remember"

The reviews are dominated by the idea of preserving the memory of the Holocaust and by the supposition that schoolchildren have a special role to play in that preservation. This attitude reflects a broader Russian socio-political discourse – encouraged by the state – on the need to preserve the memory of World War II. In a speech at the Jewish Museum and Tolerance Centre in 2019, Vladimir Putin argued that "such tragedies, crimes against humanity cannot and should not be forgotten".[19] In a 2020 speech, however, he went further to elucidate the nature of the memory to be preserved: memory of the war is "a matter of our conscience before the entire generation of victors".[20] This narrative of indebtedness and responsibility to those who fought for the Motherland is a common theme in Russian narratives of the Great Patriotic War.[21] The Russian state is charged with passing this memory onto "future generations, great-

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the preparation of thematic textbooks, and organises scientific events" ("Center for the History of the Holocaust and Genocides." *Russian State University for the Humanities*, https://www.rsuh.ru/en/faculties-departments-and-international-centers/center-for-the-history-of-the-holocaust-and-genocides/ [6 November 2020]). Altman is Director of the Centre, which renders the university support for RREHC activities somewhat unsurprising ("Historians Discussed Holocaust-Related Internships." *Russian State University for the Humanities*, 10 June 2020, https://www.rsuh.ru/en/news/historians-discussed-holocaust-related-internships/ [18 November 2020]).

[19] "Poseshchenie Evreyskogo muzeya i Tsentra tolerantnosti." *Sayt Prezidenta Rossii*, 4 June 2019, http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/60657 (12 January 2021).

[20] "Obrashchenie k avstriyskim grazhdanam po sluchayu 75-letiya osvobozhdeniya Evropy ot fashizma." *Sayt Prezidenta Rossii*, 8 May 2020, http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/63316 (12 January 2021).

[21] For more information on this theme of indebtedness, see Edwards, this volume.

grandchildren of the victors, instilling in them a grateful memory to those who gave us freedom and at the cost of their lives proved the enduring value of peace and justice".[22] Yet the memory that is preserved at the RREHC conference goes beyond some of the state's own narratives by offering a warm, inviting atmosphere for discussion of the Holocaust – one which contrasts starkly with the topic's treatment in schools and elsewhere.

Indeed, the topic of the Holocaust was only introduced to the Russian state education system in 2004 (Zinnatov 2017, 46). In spite of this innovation, Ilya Altman has argued that very few school pupils in Russia have actually learnt about the subject (Carrier, Fuchs and Messinger 2015, 34). Those teachers that do want to teach their students about the Holocaust are constricted by the lack of time afforded to the topic (Altman 2012, 122). Textbooks are just as scarce: the eight history books approved by the Ministry of Education and Science for use in schools between 2013 and 2018 contained only 92 references to the Holocaust (Panchenko, Zinnatov and Kadyrova 2019, 680).[23] Teachers are therefore limited in their use of state-approved pedagogical material for use in classrooms. Some might turn to materials published by the RREHC (76.6 per cent of the 273 respondents to an RREHC survey noted that they use the organisation's website to access publications by the RREHC[24]). One of the attendees at the RREHC conference commented on the "superficial" engagement with the Holocaust in state-approved textbooks, which suggested a "reluctance to engrave this terrible crime against humanity that claimed thousands of innocent lives in the minds of students".[25] This exemplifies the scholastic gap addressed by the conference, which is contrastingly praised as an "interesting and unforgettable" event which allows participants to "take a deeper look at the Holocaust, from different points of view that were new to me, and also to meet people who can talk about their research on this topic and talk about something that I did not know".[26]

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[22] "Otkrytie monumenta v chest' zhiteley i zashchitnikov blokadnogo Leningrada 'Svecha pamyati.'" *Sayt Prezidenta Rossii*, 23 January 2020, http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/62642 (12 January 2021).

[23] The same research does, however, acknowledge that this is an increase from previous periods (29 sentences in textbooks published in 1995–2005, 72 sentences in textbooks published in 2006–2012).

[24] "Holocaust. The Newsletter of the Russian Research and Educational Holocaust Center and the Holocaust Foundation." https://holocf.ru/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Newslettter-of-the-RHC-№-88-4-2020.pdf (16 November 2020) Eds. Gideon Frydman and Darid Ruzmanova. 88.4 (December 2020).

[25] Sheveleva, *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, 30 January 2016.

[26] "Otzyv o XVI Mezhdunarodnoy konferentsii shkol'nikov «Kholokost: pamyat' i preduprezhdeniye» uchastnitsy Gilëvoy Aliny, uchenitsy 10 klassa MAOU «SOSh No 6 s uglublennym

Besides the opportunity to present one's work, the RREHC offers a range of other activities, including "discussions, training activities, presentations of documentary films, conversations with filmmakers, visits to the State Duma, to the Museum of Jewish Heritage and the Holocaust on Poklonnaya Hill, viewing the 'Right to Life' performance of the Moscow Pedagogical Theatre for Teenagers, participation in the memorial requiem evening at the Helikon Opera Theatre".[27] The conference thus also provides attendees with the opportunity to learn from non-academic individuals and sources connected to or with the Holocaust. For one participant, Ekaterina Pautova, listening to speeches elicited an emotional response: "The words of many [speakers] touched me deeply."[28] Individuals from outside the academic realm are not invited to talk to students about the Holocaust in state-endorsed classes, so the RREHC offers novel opportunities for knowledge absorption as well as creation. The range of activities prompted strong reactions among those participants who had written online reviews. Pupil Darya Chebanova argued that attendance offered her "a lot of new and useful information about the Holocaust".[29] She attended lectures which allowed her "to replenish [my] knowledge of the Holocaust".[30]

The breadth of topics discussed across the conference's many activities is far greater than that found in the state curriculum. While, as I have noted, the Holocaust is officially supposed to be taught about in history classes, the state's history curriculum stipulates that it can only be explored in the context of an extremely limited number of topics:

> Nazi occupation regime. "Master Plan for the East". Mass crimes of Nazis against Soviet citizens. Death camps. Holocaust. Ethnic cleansing on the occupied territory of the USSR. The Nazi captivity. The murder of Soviet prisoners of war and medical experiments on inmates. The theft of Soviet people to Germany. The looting and destruction of cultural values. The start of mass resistance against the enemy. The uprisings in the Nazi camps. The deployment of the partisan movement.[31]

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izucheniyem inostrannykh yazykov», G. Severodvinsk." *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, 30 January 2016, http://www.old.holocf.ru/Editor/assets2/otzyv%20konfa%20gileva.pdf (16 November 2020).

[27] Sheveleva, *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, 30 January 2016.

[28] *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, 28 January 2017, http://holocf.ru/xvi-международная-конференция-школьник/ (14 November 2021).

[29] *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, n.d., http://www.old.holocf.ru/Editor/assets2/konfa%20v%20moskve%20chebanova%20d.pdf (16 November 2020).

[30] Chebanova, *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, n.d.

[31] "Mezhdunarodnyy den' pamyati zhertv Kholokosta. Istoriya i metodika prepodavaniya." *YouTube*, 24 January 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s94lhodLYAg (13 July 2020); "Istoriko-kul'turnyi standart." *Rossiyskoe istoricheskoe obshchestvo*, 24 August 2015, https://

The RREHC conference, by contrast, is usually split into thematic sections. Examples include sections on pupils' own research, the Holocaust in literature, and the Righteous Among Nations.[32] Teachers explicitly mentioned a number of topics in their reviews: the Holocaust on the territory of the former USSR and abroad, falsified acts of history, Holocaust denial and the use of Holocaust sources in education. These topics delve into areas of the Holocaust totally untouched by the state's curriculum.[33] One such topic not included in the state standard is Holocaust denial. Pupil Aleksandra Polivko commented on the novelty of several of the topics presented at the conference, noting that "I thought I knew a lot about the Holocaust, but after listening to my colleagues talk about their academic work, I realised that I did not even know a tenth of what was spoken about the Holocaust."[34] By touching on topics beyond the state standard's purview, the conferences give pupils the opportunity to conduct and learn about research on topics that might be neglected within the narrow confines of the school curriculum. Here, the scope for non-state agency in the Russian Federation's memory landscape is, perhaps, surprisingly broad.

At the RREHC conference, indeed, children are not only taught new narratives. Attendees are taught skills (including, for example, "analysis of information [and] methods of collecting documents"[35] that enable them to research and construct their own narratives. Such work is not entirely absent from the state classroom, where children are supposed to be given practical instruction about how to work with archival documents, as well as methodological recommendations for the search for names and biographies for the "Liberators" ("Osvoboditeli") project on the liberators of Auschwitz-Birkenau.[36] The state's curriculum suggests that

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historyrussia.org/proekty/kontseptsiya-novogo-uchebno-metodicheskogo-kompleksa-po-otechestvennoj-istorii/istoriko-kulturnyj-standart.html (21 January 2021).

[32] Sheveleva, *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, 30 January 2016.

[33] "Kontseptsiya prepodavaniya. Uchebnogo kursa 'Istoriya Rossii' v obrazovatel'nykh organizatsiyakh Rossiyskoy Federatsii." *Ministerstvo prosvesheniya Rossiyskoy Federatsii*, 23 October 2020, http://docs.edu.gov.ru/document/b12aa655a39f6016af3974a98620bc34/download/3243/ (21 January 2021), 62. Albeit a new draft of the standards in 2020 did refer to the Righteous Among Nations.

[34] *Tsentr i Fond Kholokos*t, 28 January 2017, http://holocf.ru/xvi-международная-конференция-школьник/ (14 November 2021).

[35] Omarov, *Tsentr I Fond Kholokos*t, n.d.

[36] Filippova, Anetta Aleksandrovna, and Kaitmazova, Yana. *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, n.d., http://www.old.holocf.ru/Editor/assets2/konfa%20v%20moskve%20kaitmazova.pdf (12 November 2021).

"Osvoboditeli Aushvitsa." *Osvoboditeli*. http://osvoboditeli.com/ (28 February 2019). The project searches for "information about the lives and fates of soldiers and officers of the Red Army who liberated Auschwitz, doctors who saved freed prisoners, war correspondents who recorded crimes in the worst of Nazi camps." Schoolchildren are encouraged to participate in developing research skills is an important part of a student's education. Children should, according to the curriculum, learn to obtain "historical knowledge from other sources, and the teacher should promote the mastery of student research techniques, the development of critical thinking, teaching the analysis of texts, methods of searching and selecting information, comparing different points of view, facts and their interpretations".[37] Children are meant in turn to use these skills for "the study of local history, the history of their family, and the collection of oral history".[38]

Indeed, pupil Ekaterina Puzynya's work at the conference focused on the impact of the Holocaust on her own family.[39] The conference thus allows school pupils the opportunity to develop these state-mandated skills. Whilst the school curriculum may give children the opportunity to develop such critical thinking skills, the lack of time afforded to the Holocaust might mean that the Holocaust is seldom the specific topic chosen for this task.

State discourse on the Holocaust is restricted. Yet, where students are fortunate enough to have a particularly motivated or inspiring teacher, they may be encouraged to do their *own* research on the subject. Sometimes this research is presented at the conference – indeed, preserving the memory of the Holocaust through sharing one's own work is critical for the development of a pupil's Holocaust education.[40] Several conference attendees, such as teacher S. F. Makartsova, praised the school-aged participants' work, specifically their "research skills, the ability to find information in various sources and academic literature, to compile and systematise material, to conduct interviews, and to conduct excursions".[41] Several teachers and academics also commended those pupils who had worked with a variety of sources and praised those who "demonstrated the ability to work with documents, periodicals, to analyse academic texts, to use interviews as a historical source".[42] For pupil Aleksandra Polivko, to hear and to be heard was the

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the project ("Tsentr Kholokost – v chisle pobediteley ocherednogo konkursa grantov prezidenta RF." *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, 30 November 2017, http://holocf.ru/центр-холокост-в-числе-победителей/ [1 June 2020]).

[37] "Istoriko-kul'turnyi standart." *Rossiyskoe istoricheskoe obshchestvo*, 24 August 2015, 10.

[38] "Istoriko-kul'turnyi standart." *Rossiyskoe istoricheskoe obshchestvo*, 24 August 2015, 12.

[39] *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, 30 January 2016, http://www.old.holocf.ru/Editor/assets2/otzyv%20puzynya.pdf (14 November 2014).

[40] Polivko, *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, 28 January 2017.

[41] *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, n.d., http://www.old.holocf.ru/Editor/assets2/konfa%20v%20moskve%20makarcova.pdf (14 November 2021).

[42] Khlistunova, Natal'ya, Svetlana Tikhankina, and Tat'yana Pasman. "Shestnadtsataya ezhegodnaya mezhdunAarodnaya konferentsiya shkol'nikov «Kholokost: Pamyat' i Preduprezhdenie.»"

most important aspect of the conference.[43] Such discursive openness contrasts with the more restrictive experience of state history teaching.

Some schoolchildren presented their work in creative form, their efforts receiving praise from adult attendees. For example, the teacher Vera Bogdanova noted she was particularly impressed by ninth-grader Pavel Alekseev's orchestral composition, which was performed at the Helikon Opera Theatre.[44] Teacher Elena Merkulova was impressed by pupil Alexei Epifantsev's film *The Great Tragedy of a Small Town.*[45] Given the lack of time afforded to studying the Holocaust in state schools, and the fact that teachers tend to stick closely to state-endorsed textbooks (Winkler 2015, 27),[46] such creative displays of work on the topic are unusual – and, presumably, appealing to potential school-aged participants. Rather, the creative showcasing of work similar to those mentioned is likely to be conducted outside of state-endorsed classes, under the guidance of a passionate, motivated teacher. Examples of creative outputs outside of the conference have included "scripts and stage performances on books about the Holocaust", conducted by pupils under the guidance of their teachers.[47] However, this sort of effort is both local and reliant on individual teachers' dedication, as opposed to the national and collaborative nature of the RREHC conference.

3 "The memory and study of the reasons that led to the massacre of civilians is a guarantee that this will never happen again"

School pupils' reviews broadly agreed that attending the RREHC conference was inspirational, especially when it came to further study. Darya Chebanova

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Tsentr i Fond Kholokost, 30 January 2016, https://holocf.ru/шестнадцатая-ежегодная-международна/ (14 November 2021).

[43] Polivko, *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, 28 January 2017.

[44] "Otzyv." *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, n.d., http://www.old.holocf.ru/Editor/assets2/konfa%20v%20moskve%20bogdanova.pdf (14. November 2021).

[45] *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, n.d., http://www.old.holocf.ru/Editor/assets2/konfa%20v%20moskve%20merkulova.pdf (14 November 2021).

[46] "Minprosveshcheniya Rossii obnovilo federal'nyy perechen' uchebnikov." *Minprosveshcheniya Rossii*, 29 December 2018, https://edu.gov.ru/press/970/minprosvescheniya-rossii-obnovilo-federalnyy-perechen-uchebnikov (1 September 2020).

[47] *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, 30 August 2019, https://holocf.ru/завершилась-летняя-сессия-преподава/ (14 November 2021).

noted that after attending she felt motivated to "continue to develop and study new information about the Holocaust".[48] When school lessons offer such a paucity of time and detail on the topic – livened only by the extracurricular efforts of the occasional passionate teacher – this is no surprise. However, the contrast led pupils to reflect more broadly on the state of Holocaust education and commemoration in Russia. Some of the reviews mention the need to commemorate the Holocaust widely. Pupil Kristina Sysoeva noted that "the theme of the Holocaust is a source for humanity's education. This was not only the tragedy of the Jewish people, but also the tragedy of many peoples subjected to mass genocide. Therefore, it is necessary to preserve the memory of the Holocaust for future generations."[49] Sysoeva's words speak to an all-encompassing understanding of the Holocaust that does not focus on the uniqueness of the tragedy, or of Jewish victimhood, but rather on the applicability of the topic to understanding broader questions of humanity.

This universalisation reflects societal understanding of the Holocaust in contemporary Russia not as the tragedy of the *Jewish* people but as the tragedy of *Soviet* victims, which results in the elevation of broader narratives of Soviet victory in World War II. Even after attending the RREHC conference, pupil Tatyana Nefedova contended that, "the memory of tragedies, troubles, catastrophes, including those such as the Holocaust, unites people, and prevents us forgetting the horrors that people experienced during the years of World War II".[50] Nefedova acknowledges the Holocaust as just one of several wartime tragedies, negating claims of the Holocaust's historical uniqueness or the singularity of the messages that it might teach. This focus on Soviet suffering also serves as a convenient tool for avoiding sensitive questions in the Russian Federation about collaboration with Nazi Germany – as well as Russia's own history of antisemitism. A universalised, broader Holocaust memory is tied to a broadly promoted and popular Russian memory architecture.

However, the repetition of prevailing narratives did not diminish participants' certainty that the Holocaust deserves continued attention. One reviewer, Polina Kochetkova, focused specifically on the importance of studying the Holocaust in the Russian Federation: “the tragedy of the Jewish genocide in our time is not widespread in society. That is why today educational projects for schoolchildren and students are playing a huge role. Books, exhibitions of documents, films, conferences tell the truth, warn, make you think.”[51] Kochetkova seems almost to be cognisant of how the silencing of Holocaust narratives during the Soviet era has impacted the ways in which the Holocaust is understood in today’s Russia.

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[48] Chebanova, *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, n.d.

[49] "OTZYV o Mezhdunarodnoy nauchno-prakticheskoy konferentsii shkol'nikov i pedagogov «Kholokost: pamyat' i preduprezhdeniye» 20–23 yanvarya 2018 goda." *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, 2018, http://www.old.holocf.ru/Editor/assets2/konfa%20v%20moskve%20sysoeva.pdf (14 November 2021).

[50] "OTZYV o Mezhdunarodnoy nauchno-prakticheskoy konferentsii shkol'nikov i pedagogov «Kholokost: pamyat' i preduprezhdeniye» 20–23 yanvarya 2018 goda Uchenitsy 11 klassa p. Strugi-Krasnyye, «Strugo-Krasnenskoy sredney obshcheobrazovatel'noy shkoly» Nefëdovoy Tat'yany." *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, n.d., http://www.old.holocf.ru/Editor/assets2/konfa%20v%20moskve%20nefedova.pdf (14 November 2021).

Scholars have noted the consequences of reductive Soviet-era historical narratives in present-day discourse around the Holocaust. For example, Alexander Loshkin notes that current Russian Holocaust education suffers as a result of “the heritage of Soviet historiography, in which the topic of Jews is missing, as are the topics of pogroms, the Holocaust, and state-sponsored antisemitism”.[52] Altman believes that “this reactionary and revisionist impact [of Soviet silencing] is stronger than elsewhere in the post-Soviet European space” (2018, 231). Altman elsewhere observes that “while the Holocaust’s place in history has been the subject of widespread public debate in many former Eastern Bloc countries and former Soviet Republics, this has not happened in Russia” (2014). He lists a number of deeper social and political trends that further suppress Holocaust memory in Russia: the fact that the state does not officially commemorate International Holocaust Remembrance Day; the absence of Russian media interest in the day; a lack of events outside Moscow and other large cities to remember the Holocaust; and lingering antisemitism among the Russian population (Altman 2014).[53] As a result of these difficulties and the precarious state of classroom teaching, educational programmes such as the RREHC conference represent one of the few chances for children to engage with the Holocaust and thereby preserve the memory of the tragedy.

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[51] “Otzyv o konferentsii «Kholokost: pamyat’ i preduprezhdeniye» Kochetkovoy Poliny uchenitsy 11 klassa Munitsipal’nogo obshcheobrazovatel’nogo uchrezhdeniya «Srednyaya obshcheobrazovatel’naya shkola No 20 imeni geroya Sovetskogo Soyuza Dolgova Vladimira Konstantinovicha» g. Vologdy.” *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, 30 January 2016, http://www.old.holocf.ru/Editor/assets2/otzyv%20polina%20kochetkova.pdf (14 November 2021).

[52] “Nedetskaya istoriya.” *Nezavisimaya gazeta*, 13 February 2008, https://www.ng.ru/politics/2008-02-%2013/3_history.html (17 June 2020).

[53] It is odd that International Holocaust Remembrance Day is not celebrated in Russia given that the state co-sponsored the UN initiative behind the designation of the date (“Privetstvennoe poslanie Ministra inostrannykh del Rossii S. V. Lavrova uchastnikam memorial’nogo vechera, posvyashchennogo Mezhdunarodnomu dnyu pamyati zhertv Kholokosta.” *Ministerstvo inostrannykh del Rossiyskoy Federatsii*, 29 January 2017, https://www.mid.ru/web/guest/foreign_policy/news/-/asset_publisher/cKNonkJE02Bw/content/id/382962 [27 November 2020]). This implies that the Russian co-sponsorship of this initiative may not have been entirely noble. Altman specifically notes the adverse popular reaction to an erroneous news story in 2012 about a 72-hour long course at school on the Holocaust as an example of widespread antisemitism.

In spite of the interest in and weight of the past, some RREHC reviewers were strikingly forward-thinking, acknowledging the need to remember the past in order to protect the future. Kseniya Sheveleva explicitly made this connection, claiming that "indeed, without the past there is no future, no present".[54] Attending the conference and engaging in the "study of the reasons that led to the massacre of civilians is a guarantee that this will never happen again".[55] Pupil Magomed Omarov, meanwhile, wondered, "Can I do something so that this horror never returns? I think that I can. First of all, to know and remember, and to tell others about it."[56] Building on this sort of reflection, Alina Gileva succeeded in linking the present, past, and future:

> The reasons why six million Jews were dying remain relevant in our time. Human life and reason are extremely fragile matters; they are so easily destroyed, crushed, turned to dust. And sometimes ideas that seem sound and right to us, in fact, can turn out to be monstrous and inhumane. And when these monstrous ideas are combined with the fragility of life, the most terrible crime is born. Unfortunately, now this tendency is emerging again, and I would very much like to prevent the possibility of a recurrence of the Holocaust through my creativity and actions.[57]

School-aged reviewers also commented on the need to unite schoolchildren in order to prevent such a repetition. Valeriya Akulina, for instance, drew a link between collective action and specific developments happening in the Russian Federation: "We must unite to counter the growing manifestations of antisemitism and nationalism in our society."[58] Akulina's peer Tatyana Nefedova hoped that "every year more and more children come to the conference who are interested in this, who are not indifferent to the memory of the past and the fate of the future of our country".[59]

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[54] Sheveleva, *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, 30 January 2016.

[55] Kochetkova, *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, 30 January 2016.

[56] Omarov, *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, n.d.

[57] Gilëva, *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, 30 January 2016; Kseniya Sheveleva makes a similar contention, linking contemporary actions and humanity with one's understanding of history. She argues that: "Our level of humanity and morality, which is reflected in our actions, directly depends on the awareness of the role of history in the modern world. It is possible and necessary to correct humanity, but for this it is necessary to remember history. To remember in order to prevent the mistakes of the past!" (Sheveleva, Tsentr i Fond Kholokost, 30 January 2016).

[58] "Otzyv o Mezhdunarodnoy konferentsii shkol'nikov i studentov "Kholokost: pamyat' i preduprezhdeniye." *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, 28 January 2017, http://holocf.ru/xvi-международная-конференция-школьник/ (14 November 2021).

[59] Nefedova, *Tsentr i Fond Kholokost*, n.d.

This focus on memory activism is, however, not unique. In fact, it echoes parts of the state's discourse on the Holocaust. For example, at a speech during a visit to Moscow's Jewish Museum and Tolerance Centre, President Putin said that memory of the Holocaust serves as a "guarantee that the horror of the Holocaust, the cold-blooded, deliberate destruction of entire nations will never happen again".[60] These words came amid an increasing political concern about growing antisemitism, xenophobia, and nationalism in former Soviet countries such as Ukraine and in Russia itself.[61] I suggest that Putin's line of thinking is that by uniting against a common foe, the Russian Federation can prevent repetition of a crime like the Holocaust.[62] Nevertheless, these apparently local and national interests are, ironically, closely aligned with cosmopolitan memory's mantra of "Never Again."

4 Conclusion

In conclusion, the RREHC's annual Holocaust conference is an important opportunity for Russian schoolchildren to supplement their otherwise limited Holocaust education. The reviews published on the RREHC's website are broadly aligned with societal and political narratives surrounding the Holocaust in the

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[60] "Poseshchenie Evreyskogo muzeya i Tsentra tolerantnosti." *Sayt Prezidenta Rossii*, 4 June 2019.

[61] A report written by the Russian Jewish Congress in 2018 noted that there was an increase in antisemitic vandalism, whereas the level of antisemitism expressed in mass media remained constant ("Report on Anti-Semitism in Russia 2018." *Russian Jewish Congress*, https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Religion/Submissions/WJC-Annex2.pdf [16 November 2020]). A Pew survey in the same year indicated that only 40 per cent of Russians would be willing to accept Jews as members of their family, in comparison to 57 per cent of Poles and Hungarians ("Eastern and Western Europeans Differ on Importance of Religion, Views of Minorities, and Key Social Issues." *Pew Research Center*, 29 October 2018, https://www.pewforum.org/2018/10/29/eastern-and-western-europeans-differ-on-importance-of-religion-views-of-minorities-and-key-social-issues/ [18 November 2020]). In 2020, whilst Head of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Russia Aleksandr Boroda argued that a US State Department report on religious freedom across the world indicated that Jews are not the main enemy in Russia, he did note that latent antisemitism is high in the country ("Prezident FEOR zayavil o vysokom urovne skrytogo antisemitizma v Rossii." *Interfax*, 15 June 2020, https://www.interfax.ru/russia/713200 [18 November 2020]).

[62] Indeed, Putin himself argued that "our memory is a warning against any attempts to ride the idea of world domination, to declare, build, and assert our greatness on the basis of racial, national, or any other superiority, which Russia categorically rejects" ("Meropriyatie, posvyashchennoe dnyu pamyati zhertv Kholokosta i godovshchine snyatiya blokady Leningrada." *Sayt Prezidenta Rossii*, 29 January 2018, http://kremlin.ru/events/president/news/56740 [12 January 2021]).

Russian Federation, and especially with the need to preserve memory and therefore prevent repetition. However, conference attendees were motivated to continue their own Holocaust research activities and to share information about the tragedy with their friends. This moral obligation to share information with their peers ties into the role that pupils can play in preventing repetition of the tragedy in the twenty-first century. In this way, the reviews seem to reiterate the key tenet of cosmopolitan memory, "Never Again". However, the understanding of the Holocaust as presented at the conference is slightly different to that presented in official discourse: the conference provides the pupils who wrote these reviews with information about new topics, including those that are not currently included in the state curriculum, and new skills, methodologies, and sources to support their own independent research activities about the Holocaust.

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Solveig Hennebert

“I am not comfortable with that”: Commemorative Practices among Young Jewish People in France

On 13 March 2019, the French Prime Minister Edouard Philippe delivered a speech at the Holocaust memorial in Paris. Philippe mentioned the “collective duty” of both the state and historians. Since the end of the twentieth century, the expression “duty of memory”, which refers to the need to remember violent events – especially crimes against humanity committed during World War II – has been widely used in France (Lalieu 2001). In practice, multiplication of public policies and events dedicated to the commemoration of the genocide of Jewish people during World War II[1] have multiplied (Gensburger and Lefranc 2017). Hundreds of commemorations – gatherings “organised in the intent to be publicised beyond the circle of its participants, whose motives, among others, is a tribute to one or several deceased persons” (Latté 2009, 116) – are organised by a variety of state institutions and cultural, political, memory and religious organisations in Paris and the surrounding areas alone. Across France, such commemorations of the anti-Jewish genocide are expressly intended to teach French citizens about the atrocities of the war and, therefore, to avoid the repetition of such events. Transmission of memory is highlighted as a particularly significant part of the “duty of memory” when policies are drawn up and events are organised (Lapierre 2007). However, neither commemoration organisers nor researchers regularly interrogate how those events are perceived (Antichan et al. 2016).

In this chapter, I seek to study how young Jewish French people commemorate – or do not commemorate – the anti-Jewish genocide, using sociological interviews and observations of twenty-two ceremonies in and around Paris over the course of three years. I use this source material to find out what young people really think of the anti-Jewish genocide memory in modern France, to explore the grief practices of young French Jews, and to understand why young people’s attendance at commemorations is particularly low. I explore how the French national context impacts the memory practices of Jewish people by questioning how young

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[1] I will refer to the genocide of Jewish people during WWII as “the anti-Jewish genocide” to ease the understanding for the reader. I do not use the expression Holocaust because, even if it is the most common expression in English, and as I explain below, the use of the term is contested in France.

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French Jews perceive public policies and I interrogate the appropriation of religious and biblical commemorative practices.

I argue that, beyond the injunctions to commemorate, the duty of memory and the religious laws, and the expectations that young Jewish people will attend ceremonies, individuals approach memory pluralistically and appropriate both secular and religious memory practices in heterogeneous ways. Even when those injunctions are conveyed by strong institutions, I conclude that many young Jewish people do not take part in the anti-Jewish genocide remembrance practices in a unique way: their investment is shaped chiefly by familial, religious and educational socialisations.

Jewish people – those who identify and are identified with Jewish heritage – are one of the most important target audiences for World War II-related remembrance ceremonies.[2] This fact speaks to the large number of Jewish victims of the genocide, but also to the idea of the Jewish people as the "people of memory". This discursive formulation is often invoked during contemporary ceremonies. The President of the Holocaust Memorial in Paris, for example, opened a speech to commemorate the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in 2019 by using the phrase. Meanwhile, researchers such as Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi (2008 [1984]) also draw on the idea of the Jewish people as the "people of memory" to imply that the conceptions of memory and history in the Bible and in the sacred texts of Judaism suggest that Jewish people are inclined to have strong remembrance practices: "Jewish people have, after all, the reputation to be both the people guided by history, and the people for whom the memory is the greatest and the most tenacious." (2008 [1984], 12). Judaism is, moreover, perceived as a religion of memory, partly because it incorporates many religious rituals thought of as commemorative or grief practices: the Jewish law (some commemorations may be rabbinical, which means they are not in the Bible per se) itself guides many practices ranging from holidays to individual or collective mourning rituals. In spite of the common idea that Jewish people are the people of memory, attendance at memorial ceremonies in modern France by young Jews is low.

Scholars widely agree that collective memory is strongly linked to social identity and the groups with which individuals align themselves (Rothberg 2019; Feindt et al. 2014). My interviewees are all Jewish and French and may have been exposed to different interpretations of the same events. In spite of these common experiences and identities – and the idea of the Jewish people as the "people of memory" – my research suggests that young French Jews do not have particularly strong remembrance practices. Indeed, considering they belong to a variety of groups beyond being Jewish and French, this plural identity is central in the analysis of the appropriations of the memory rites. We showed in the introduction to this series of chapters on the anti-Jewish genocide that the concept of "cosmopolitan memory" does not necessarily bear much scrutiny in national contexts, as the diversity of remembrance practices even within a single group can vary strongly.

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[2] Some people may identify themselves as Jewish people even if they are not believers and do not practice Jewish religious rituals; others may be seen as Jewish based on discriminatory factors (Hennebert 2018, 158).

In order to reflect the wide range of practices of my interviewees, I classify each of the anti-Jewish genocide memorial events I study as belonging to one of three groups: secular commemorations, religious commemorations and biblical commemorations. Secular commemorations include ceremonies organised by the state or an association such as the "National Day for the Memory of the Victims of Racists and Antisemitic Crimes of the French State and Tribute to the 'Righteous' of France", which I discuss in depth later in this paper. Secular commemorations may involve some element of religious rituals, but such practices are neither prescribed by scripture nor organised in a religious context. Religious commemorations, meanwhile, are organised by religious organisations but not governed by strict adherence to religious law. For example, one synagogue in Paris hosts an annual conference to remember the deportation of the Jewish people from France. This event includes religious elements, such as prayer, and is inspired by Sabbath services, but is not strictly religious. Finally, biblical commemorations make use of remembrance and mourning practices outlined in the tradition. For example, Tisha Be'Av, a commemoration of the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem, is marked with a fast.

While I focus on youth interaction with these events, the category of "youth" is a social construct that may refer to several realities depending on when and where it is used (Galland 2011; Bourdieu 1978). However, especially when it comes to commemorative practices, the term "youth" is somewhat fluid. Indeed, most of the people who attended the events I observed in and around Paris were over the age of sixty – I have heard forty-year-olds referred to as "young"! My analysis, however, focuses on young adults. The shift in the official memory of the anti-Jewish genocide in the France of the 1990s means that people born at that time are now in their late twenties, so they are the first generation to be totally exposed to the new memory narrative. However, in order to combine both the general category and the particularity of the field of memory, I have included subjects up to 30 years old.

I conducted interviews – focusing primarily on memory practices – with six young Jewish French people from different religious and family backgrounds who had recently attended some or other commemorative event; all of them went to a memorial, a commemorative demonstration or a ceremony at some point, which allowed me to question what the triggering factor was. Two of the interviewees are members of the same liberal synagogue: Yanis and Leo are both 24 years old; the latter converted to Judaism in his 20s. Two further interviewees were raised in traditionalist families: Romi (20 years old) and David (30), who now rarely attends synagogue. The final pair, Romain (29) and Camille (25), received a non-religious education and rarely attended synagogue in their youth, but today both appropriate or reflect on religious practices as adults.

All were educated in the state school system, except Romi, who went to a Jewish school. They all grew up, and still live, in Paris and its surroundings except for Yanis who grew up in Lyon and now lives in Paris. Camille, Romain and Yanis come from families that were persecuted during World War II; some of their ancestors were murdered in the anti-Jewish genocide. Five of the six rarely – if ever – attend commemorations. Leo, the late convert to Judaism, is the exception. He regularly attends secular, religious and biblical commemorations. This plurality of interviewees allows me to show that despite many differences (in age and religious practices for instance), most of my interviewees share at least one commonality: they go to commemorations because they are taken there by others. Indeed, despite being Jewish, and despite family members' wartime persecution, they do not attend remembrance ceremonies on their own. By studying the national and religious frameworks, I intend to explain how young French Jewish people appropriate the frameworks and narratives given to them – especially considering they do not necessarily commemorate the anti-Jewish genocide as they are expected to.

1 The national framework of the memory of the anti-Jewish genocide

Young Jewish people in today's France have grown up in a society with a relatively stable national memory framework of the anti-Jewish genocide. In 1988, the study of the anti-Jewish genocide was incorporated into the French secondary school curricula and the programme regarding this subject was expanded throughout the 1990s (Schneider 2005). During the 1990s, the French state passed several pieces of memory legislation, such as the *Gayssot Law*, which made anti-Jewish genocide denial illegal. In 1995, President Jacques Chirac acknowledged publicly the responsibility of the French state and its functionaries for the deportation of the Jewish people living in France during the war.

1.1 Is the genocide a Shoah or a Holocaust?

Exploring the rhetorical framework for discussion of the anti-Jewish genocide in France allows an extended analysis of "cosmopolitan memory": even if many countries agree on a broad outline for remembering the crimes against humanity committed during the war, national frameworks must be studied to understand what young Jewish French people appropriate from that transnational outline. Globally, for example, there are two main expressions to refer specifically to the anti-Jewish genocide: the "Holocaust" and the "Shoah". Etymologically, Holocaust means "religious sacrifice by fire".[3] In France, historians and some Jewish people encouraged the removal of this term from school textbooks because of its connotation of sacrifice and because of its religious implication (Schneider 2005). The word "Shoah" (which means "catastrophe" in Hebrew) or the expression "Genocide of Jewish people" are the only expressions used in museums and classrooms in France. The expression "Shoah" was first used among some Jewish communities since it is a Hebrew word. On the other hand, despite the use of the expression "genocide" by some older people, the way the anti-Jewish genocide was taught in French schools has impacted the younger generations, who refer to the event as "the Shoah". Commemorative habits – here embodied in the way people name events – are related to people's socialisation, and not necessarily to transnational frameworks and therefore to cosmopolitan modes of memory.

English speakers, meanwhile, do not distinguish between "Holocaust" and "Shoah", even if they attended French schools. Camille, for example, went to a French state school and learnt about the Jewish genocide as the Shoah, but also spent time with her extended family in Australia and the USA:[4]

> Camille: So, I used to say Holocaust, but now I tend to say Shoah. And . . . I am not sure why. I've seen there are many criticisms of the word Holocaust . . . I didn't really dig into that. But I try, I say to myself, at least Shoah it's a word that is, how can I put that, that is Hebrew, given by Jewish people, so I think it's a word that seems safer. But sometimes I still have the reflex to say Holocaust.

Different socialisations – in particular the anglophone influence – have left her perplexed: Camille knows that one word is seen as more appropriate, especially in the French context, even if she cannot explain why. For others, the term "Shoah" is important and offers a space for internal resolution:

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[3] "Holocauste." *Le Robert Dictionnaire*. https://dictionnaire.lerobert.com/definition/holocauste (14 May 2021).

[4] The use of English is important to note here because many French organisations translate Shoah to Holocaust in English. For example, the Shoah Memorial of Paris is called "Holocaust Memorial" in English.

> Leo: The word Shoah is very good; by the way "Shoah" is in the Bible, it's a natural catastrophe, it is incredible. That's what is beautiful, it is a disaster that we are not looking to explain. The word is very much sought after. Holocaust, it's a catastrophe to use that word.

Leo's quote shows that the naming of the genocide is not incidental: naming in and of itself is an opportunity to understand more about the way people remember events. Leo was raised in a Christian family and questioned his relationship to G.od[5] when he was a teenager. For a while, any evocation of the anti-Jewish genocide was enough for him to reject religion altogether. In Leo's statement, the interpretation of the anti-Jewish genocide as something "that we are not looking to explain" can be understood as a way for beliefs and historical knowledge to coexist in his mind. The way Leo now considers the anti-Jewish genocide allows him to think about it not as a punishment by G.od or as something over which G.od had control. His historical and religious beliefs can peacefully coincide by using the term "Shoah".

Commemorative habits – here, the way people name events – are clearly related to their socialisation. However, the national framework is not imposed on people's practices; it interacts and intersects with their other socialisations. Indeed, teaching is often legitimised – or not – through other experiences. Just as a museum visitor projects a specific meaning onto an exhibition based on their pre-existing values (Doering and Pekarik 1996), a person studying the anti-Jewish genocide will appropriate the meaning of lessons according to their pre-existing knowledge. Similarly, international recommendations do not define national narratives; in turn, national frameworks are appropriated by a plurality of individuals who make sense of them based on their heterogeneous socialisations.

1.2 Remembering the genocide with the French state

During the anti-Jewish genocide, Jewish people were killed because they were Jewish or were identified with Jewish heritage. Because of that, in France, and despite the official policy of state secularism – "laïcité" – commemorations have always blended secular and religious traditions (Wieviorka 1993). Consequently, most ceremonies, even those organised by the state, include religious rituals such as Jewish prayers. However, even if young Jewish people feel affected by the events of the wartime and have studied the anti-Jewish genocide in schools, they do not necessarily choose to attend commemorations spontaneously as adults. The choice to attend depends on socialisation, not the state-encouraged "duty of memory".

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[5] Out of respect for my interviewees, I chose to write "G.od" because for very religious people it is forbidden to write the whole name for non-sacred purposes. As many of my interviewees are very religious, I chose to respect their practices.

The state organises or co-organises many of the major national commemorations. Sometimes, as in the case of the "National Day for the Memory of the Victims of Racists and Antisemitic Crimes of the French State and Tribute to the 'Righteous' of France", these dates are enshrined in law. The National Day is co-organised by the French Representative Council of Jewish Institutions and held every year on the Sunday following the anniversary of the Vel' d'Hiv' Round-up. It commemorates both the crimes and the acts of solidarity of French citizens during the war.[6]

I attended ceremonies marking the National Day in 2017 and 2018. Few of the hundreds of participants were young. Those who did attend tended to accompany an older family member who was persecuted during the war. For instance, one woman in the audience explained to me that "I came here with my grandmother. She is in the front row." This commemoration, despite its size, and despite sometimes being broadcast on television, does not attract young people. Indeed, the commemorations that young people do attend tend to take place in and around schools. The National Day takes place in July, when schools are closed, which may be one of the reasons why there are few young attendees.

Those who do attend are at the National Day with family. The importance of socialisation to remembrance practices within the family context is therefore paramount to young people's interest in and attendance at such ceremonies. When I asked Camille if she goes to commemorations, for example, she answered thus:

> Camille: I thought about it, but I feel like it would make me uncomfortable. [. . .] Like, if my parents, or my grand-mother, people more concerned in terms of generational closeness don't go, I would feel like it is indecent. I thought about going, maybe I will someday, but it's not something I'm . . . I am not comfortable with that. It is something I would not do on my own.

Camille's quote confirms that the "duty of memory" and the injunction to remember the victims is not necessarily appropriated by young people, even those who – like her – lost a family member to the anti-Jewish genocide. However, Camille's argument that she is not comfortable with attending a ceremony must be understood sociologically: first, because she has never been to such ceremonies in the past, doing so is not part of her habits; second, since her family does not commemorate the great-grandfather who died, she is afraid to hurt her family by doing it alone. It is not uncommon to find that attendance of public and collective commemorations is related to personal grief (Roberge 2018), which might include, for instance, the loss of a great-grandparent. However, there are very few survivors of the Vel' d'Hiv' Round-up today: this family factor is not central for the National Day.[7] Moreover, even when there is a surviving family link to this sort of event, the appropriation of family history varies based on a young person's position in both their family and wider society (Muxel 1991).

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[6] During this round-up (16–17 July 1942), more than 13,000 Jewish people (including more than 4000 children) were arrested by the French police in Paris then deported to Auschwitz. Few survived.

Studying the national framework shows us how young Jewish people remember the anti-Jewish genocide in France. Remembrance is linked to the classroom teaching, but also to state commemorations. While these public policies contribute to shaping an official narrative within a given society, young people's interest in engagement with memory is dictated by family and other socialising factors. Despite the injunction of the "duty of memory", young Jewish people appropriate commemorative rites differently. The French national framework and French teaching interact with socialisations, which is why not all young people abide by the "duty of memory" or participate in its rites.

2 Appropriations of religious remembrance practices

Religious institutions and religious education within the family offer another socialising space for transmission of memory practices. However, religious laws are not necessarily put into practice unless they are taught, and more importantly appropriated (here by young Jewish people) – even by those young people socialised in religious institutions.

2.1 Remembering the genocide within religious institutions

Yom Hashoah, the annual commemoration often known in English as Holocaust Remembrance Day, is another major commemoration in France. It exemplifies the importance of socialisation.[8] In France, Yom Hashoah is organised by the Paris Holocaust Memorial organisation and by liberal Jewish organisations. Initiated by the Knesset (Israeli Parliament) in 1951, I consider this ceremony as religious because it was imported to France and is today organised by a religious organisation.

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[7] There are fewer and fewer survivors of World War II in general, but some commemorations such as Yom Hashoah (mentioned below) are about all the Jewish people who were deported from France, not a specific event.

Every year in Paris on the day of Yom Hashoah, the names of Jewish people deported from France are read uninterrupted for twenty-four hours. Some young people do attend this ceremony, which seems to play a significant role in their engagement with public commemoration. Details of the ceremony are often shared in liberal synagogues, so young attendees learn about Yom Hashoah and are encouraged to attend. Leo, for example, attends as a result of his synagogue attendance.[9] Yom Hashoah is, moreover, usually on a weekday, so the organising committee invites classes of schoolchildren to participate. Some young people who lost family members in the anti-Jewish genocide join in the readings. Given that Yom Hashoah is a major commemoration organised every year, people may come to expect and mark it as a routine event. Moreover, every year about half of the 76,000 names of people deported from France are read. This large number has increased the number of families that get involved to read the names of the members of their extended families who were deported. However, they do not attend the ceremony just because *their* ancestors were persecuted. If paying a tribute to their family was the main driving force, then most Jewish people whose families were persecuted would be present. Young Jewish people mostly come with school groups, with their parents, or with their grandparents. Indeed, a young person's presence at a commemoration like Yom Hashoah should not automatically be assumed to be the result of personal and conscious reflection:

> Camille: No, I've been to the Holocaust Memorial, because . . . It wasn't really my initiative, a friend of mine worked there. We met by accident on the eve of Yom Hashoah. It came up in conversation because some people were talking about it next to us [. . .] And I think I mentioned that one of my great-grandfathers disappeared in Paris during the Shoah. And she told me that I should go to the Memorial with her the next day. And I went [. . .]. But I don't think I would have done it on my own.

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[8] It should be noted that Holocaust Remembrance Day (organised every year on the 27 Nissan of the Hebrew Calendar) is in April or May. Most importantly, it is different to the International Holocaust Remembrance Day which falls on the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau (27 January).

[9] This may explain the difference with the Vel' d'Hiv' round-up commemoration, which may be less well advertised in synagogues.

Camille attended Yom Hashoah not out of some deep-seated personal sense of loss, but because her friend convinced her after they had overheard someone mention the event. Similarly, Romi visited Auschwitz on a school trip. She also listened to two survivors telling their stories (not during a specific commemoration): the first spoke during a class, the second at a Jewish scouting organisation (the Jewish Guides and Scouts of France).[10] Camille and Romi have their own particular family histories. Camille's family survived the persecutions, while Romi's family was in Northern Africa during the war and was not persecuted. Neither of them, however, intended to go to a public commemoration – even if both were taken to a commemorative event at some point in their lives.

Leo, meanwhile, is a convert to Judaism. He has no Jewish ancestors, and therefore no personal links to anti-Jewish wartime persecution. Nevertheless, Leo attends most commemorations, including Yom Hashoah, Yom Haatzmaut[11] and biblical holidays. Attendance at a commemoration is based on family socialisation and/or a triggering external factor like being invited by a friend: family links in and of themselves do not make attendance at such ceremonies either a certainty or a likelihood. The "duty" to remember is hardly upheld – at least in the terms envisioned by the state – even in the case of young Jewish people with family links to the past.

Nevertheless, the French Jewish cases I explore here are not unusual. Taking part in public commemorations can, as Fanny Jedlicki (2001) explains, be motivated by many factors: even different members of the same family may (or may not) commemorate and pass down the memory of traumatic events in the family. My examples show that, by considering all the groups that constitute an individual's identity – school, family, religion and so on – we can see that motivations for participation in memorial events extend far beyond what the state or the Holy Scripture suggest or prescribe.

2.2 Remembering the genocide during biblical commemorations

From Tisha Be'Av to Passover, the Bible is filled with narratives of persecutions and religious ceremonies that commemorate them. Jewish remembrance, however, is not limited to specific holidays. Guided by a plethora of prescriptions for mourning, Jewish people incorporate remembrance into everyday life (Hidiroglou 2013).

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[10] The organisation is known as "Éclaireuses et Éclaireurs israélites de France" in French.

[11] This secular holiday is the celebration of the creation of the State of Israel.

As in any religion, involvement in rituals is influenced by familial socialisation by the individual’s personal path:

> SH: So, Yom Hashoah is the only commemoration you go to?
>
> Leo: I also go to commemorations at the [Synagogue] [. . .] for Yom Hatzmaout, the day, the year, the creation of the State of Israel [. . .] It is right after [Yom Hashoah], in May. But Yom Hashoah, the liberals . . . for that, I’m really proud of them. It’s a huge victory for the liberals, because the orthodox had said that there was already Tisha Be’A. I like this holiday, it’s a great holiday.

For Leo, the secular and biblical commemorations are inextricably linked: Yom Hashoah is associated with the biblical holiday of Tisha Be’Av. Since his conversion, Leo has been a regular Synagogue attendee: he always goes to Sabbath services and attends the celebrations of each and every religious holiday.

Leo’s personal commemoration practices are interlinked with his commitment to religious practices and beliefs. The way he describes Tisha Be’Av is notable: for Leo, the biblical commemoration of Tisha Be’Av is an occasion to commemorate every historical persecution the Jewish people have suffered.[12] Indeed, many religious Jews are of the opinion that Tisha Be’Av renders secular commemorations unnecessary. I discussed this with two student rabbis who attended Yom Hashoah in 2019. One of them explained that he was present because he had been asked to attend. However, for him, Yom Hashoah was pointless: the anti-Jewish genocide was meant to be remembered religiously and on Tisha Be’Av, and not on Yom Hashoah at all. Taking part in biblical commemorations is closely tied to religious education.

Finally, attending some biblical holidays is often linked to family gatherings. Yom Kippur, or the Day of Atonement, is a holiday that involves repentance and remembrance. At the end of the day, for the Yizkor,[13] people recite the name of their deceased loved ones and the entire congregation prays for the elevation of the souls of the dead. Moreover, liberal communities have introduced specific prayers to remember the anti-Jewish genocide. However, practices around Yom Kippur show how collective commemoration can be an intimate moment to remember a personal loss, and how attendance may not be related to the community. Romain, for instance, explained that he had taken part in Yom Kippur to avoid hurting his relatives, who considered it an important holiday. His “duty” was to his family – and not to history, to the French state, or to religion:

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[12] This habit of assimilating recent events and major events of the past is partly inherited from the Middle Age Rabbinical tradition (Yerushalmi, 2008 [1984]).

[13] *Yizkor* can be translated as “remembrance” and is a part of the Yom Kippur service.

> SH: Do you fast for Kippur?
>
> Romain: Hmm . . . Yes. Yes, I don't know why I hesitated [to reply], yes, I do it. I must have done it twice. I think . . . but yes I do it. Yes, I do it with my family. For a while, it was to not hurt them, because I know it's a founding holiday, and it's the most important for them, but now I do it [. . .] We go to the synagogue for the whole day, and it's kind of traditional, a family gathering.

Family socialisation is central even to involvement in biblical commemoration for Romi and Romain. However, attendance at or celebration of biblical holidays is not a must even for young Jewish people who grew up in more traditional families. Indeed, for some, participating in such events may be related to their religious path (as is the case for Leo). For others, it may simply be about spending time with family. In short, even if religious laws tells people to do something, people will not always act accordingly: they first have to be socialised with a particular set of principles. Indeed, like any other teaching, religious laws and traditions are appropriated and made individual. As my examples show, appropriation of any given biblical law may vary between two people, each of whom is inevitably socialised through multiple institutions.

3 Conclusion

In France, there are a plethora of public policies that aim at transmitting the "duty of memory" regarding the anti-Jewish genocide. However, the declaration of this principle is not performative, and the ceremonies and commemorations are not necessarily appropriated personally by young people. Young Jewish people do not necessarily adhere to it even if they are linked to this history. Moreover, Jewish people are considered to be a people of memory. Yet Jewishness itself does not define people's remembrance practices. As Yerushalmi explains in *Zakhor Jewish History and Jewish Memory* about Jewish people and History (2008 [1984], 42), the reason why the idiom "Jewish people are the people of memory" does not match the reality of practices derives from a linguistic inadequacy: memory in the Bible, memory as a social concept, and memory as a sociological theoretical debate are different subjects, yet the same term – "memory" – is used in each case.

Indeed, my study of six young Jewish people's memory practices shows that their engagement with history is significantly more nuanced than the theory would suggest. Being Jewish certainly affects their remembrance habits, especially because they may feel related to people who were murdered for their

Jewishness. However, this fact alone does not explain why people attend public commemorations and ceremonies. Indeed, Yanis, Romain, David, Camille and Romi rarely or never go to remembrance ceremonies, even though they all are Jewish. Family history, which is often seen as a driving force for attendance at such ceremonies, likewise has a limited predictive factor, as shown in the cases of Camille, Yanis and Leo. Even though Camille and Yanis' families were persecuted during the anti-Jewish genocide, they rarely attend ceremonies. On the contrary, Leo, whose family was not persecuted as Jewish, participates in ceremonies. The state's influence is just as non-pervasive as familial or historical Jewishness: the way my interviewees learnt about the anti-Jewish genocide in schools certainly impacts the way they talk about it; even if they went to different schools, their history curriculum was the same.

By studying the memory of the anti-Jewish genocide, I have demonstrated how a global anti-Jewish genocide narrative is not the only way young European Jews interact with history. The anti-Jewish genocide is remembered as a part of the war and has become an integrated part of the French secondary school curriculum. However, "globalised" and even national memory do not provide the sole narratives that impact remembrance practices. To understand the phenomenon of my interviewees' remembrance practices in its entirety, one needs to look beyond normative speech on remembrance to consider the intersecting strands of an individual's socialisation – family, religious associations etc. – and the differing connotations of religious, secular and biblical commemorative practices. Moreover, it should be noted that beyond socialisation, context and social interactions can also impact individuals' appropriation of memory practices. Indeed, Camille went to a commemoration because she was taken there by a friend. She took part in the event once, but she did not return later on her own.

The transmission of memory is not linear, but as with any social process, it is appropriated by individuals depending on how they were socialised, driving transmission beyond the realms of the "duty of memory" and religious laws. As we explained in the introduction to these chapters on memory of the anti-Jewish genocide, individuals appropriate national narratives – just as states like France and Russia translate international memory frameworks to fit their national framework and narrative.

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