# Local Memories in a Nationalizing and Globalizing World

Edited by
Marnix Beyen
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*Cover:* The Red Army monument in Sofia painted pink by unknown activists, August 2013.

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# 1

# Introduction: Local, National, Transnational Memories: A Triangular Relationship

*Marnix Beyen*

This book is about the local articulation of collective memories – and therefore about places. Appropriately, it starts in a very concrete place: we begin our journey in a recent past and on a busy and somewhat messy square in the very centre of the small Belgian university town of Leuven (Louvain). For tourists the square had very little to offer, but for the population of Leuven it was more or less the pulsing heart of the town. On this square they stepped on or off the bus when going to school or to the market. It was also on this square that youngsters dated or spent their first money on fast food or a pack of cigarettes. The name of the place was 'Marshall Foch Square', abbreviated by the inhabitants of Leuven to 'Fochplein' (in Dutch), 'Place Foch' (in French), or simply 'Foch'. Obviously, the name referred to the Commander-in-Chief of the Allied military forces during the last months of the First World War. It had been given this name in 1920, at a moment when all over Europe streets and squares were renamed after heroes of the Great War. As such, this war both quickened and transformed the memory politics which state and local authorities had been pursuing since the end of the nineteenth century. In many towns, traditional names, often referring to local economic or religious practices, had been replaced by names of heroes or episodes playing a central role in the national master narrative.[1] Since wars were both eminently nationalist moments and transnational events, they tended to contribute both to a nationalization and an internationalization of street-naming. All the streets and squares in Paris named after the more or less exotic places where Napoleon had won his battles bear witness to this tendency.

Place Foch in Leuven did so in a very different, even opposite way: whereas the Napoleonic battlefields are far-off places where an eminently national hero has fought and won, the Place Foch celebrates a

foreign hero whose actions were deemed to have been crucial for the liberation of the nation and, more specifically, of the city. In fact, the impact of the First World War on Leuven had been particularly severe. A considerable part of the town had been burnt down, and the destruction of its library had become an international symbol of 'German atrocities'.[2] Hence, a square named Foch in this town had both an international resonance and a local and national significance. It was a site of memory in which the local, the national and the transnational were inherently intertwined.

Today, the Place Foch has acquired a new function, a new outlook and a new name. Indeed, the refurbishment of the square occasioned the mayor of Leuven, Louis Tobback, to call for its renaming. As a socialist, deeply entrenched in the tradition of pacifism, he could hardly live with the idea that the central square of 'his' town was named after a member of that military élite which he deemed responsible for the loss of thousands of innocent lives. He therefore declared, in February 2009, his wish that the square be given the name of someone associated with European values.[3]

Within Leuven civil society some groups were eager to respond positively to Tobback's call. The Leuven section of the Green Party proposed to name the square after the German female resistance fighter Sophie Scholl, whose fame had grown due to the German movie which had been dedicated to her in 2005, and which had been shortlisted for the Oscar for best Foreign Language Movie.[4] Another group of concerned citizens wanted to dedicate the square to the memory of Karl von Drais, the alleged inventor of the bicycle. As such, they obviously wanted to express their concern for the environment in the context of global climate change. The fact that both Scholl and Drais were Germans could in itself be read as a statement against the anti-German feelings which had accompanied the worship of Marshal Foch, and therefore as a statement of pacifism. More important in the context of this volume is the fact that neither of them referred in any way – not even in an indirect way, as in the case of Foch – to a local or even national context. They represented global values, and therefore appeared to herald a further globalization of memory. The advocates of both Drais and Scholl hoped to replace a hero of the epoch of patriotism and militarism with one of the 'postnational' and pacifist era.

Moreover, they both mobilized support using a global means of communication: Facebook. Within a little more than a month, Scholl's case was supported by 273 users of Facebook, while the Drais group was joined by 64 Facebook members.[5] These numbers are far from

overwhelming – and as such they indicate the boundaries of the globalization of memory. This is all the more true if we compare them with the more than 2,500 members signing up during the same period for the group that wanted to maintain the status quo.[6] Of course, these numbers should not lure us into easy conclusions. The users of Facebook are not necessarily representative of the population of Leuven. Nonetheless, it does seem true that the alternative, politically correct names were and are only supported by a small intellectual élite. Moreover, a group of citizens pleading for participative democracy succeeded in gaining more than 1,000 signatures for a petition against the name-change, and was therefore permitted to plead its case at a meeting of the city council.[7]

The comments posted on the forum of the anti-change group showed that loyalty to the name Foch was neither inspired by an ongoing gratitude to the great French commander, nor by the patriotic sentiments inherent to recollections of the First World War. The Facebook members first and foremost expressed loyalty to the square as they had always known it. 'Come on, Foch is Foch', one of the members wrote, 'and no one is bothered who it refers to'. Or, to quote another one: 'Foch may have been a Frenchman who drove people to death, but he had no other choice. But this does not matter, for at hearing the name Foch Square, I do not immediately think about Marshal Foch, but about a crowded bus stop and about the statue of Fonske [a small statue representing Leuven's archetypal student].' Tobback's proposal and the alternative solutions were rejected as symptoms of the paternalism of the political and intellectual élite. 'But what are these people fussing about?', one of these Facebook authors wrote. 'The only thing they can do is burden the life of the people of Leuven, nothing more.'

It would be easy to reject this general attitude pessimistically as a symptom of the conservatism, the anti-political stance or the lack of historical consciousness of the youth of today. I believe it is more fruitful to consider it as a sign of the resilience and the specificity of local memories. It shows that national and transnational memories cannot simply be forced upon the people, but that, on the contrary, people appropriate and adapt these memories in very original ways. In this process of adaptation, cultural memories can be turned into communicative memories, to use the words of Jan Assmann.[8] Foch is no longer remembered as the heroic victor over the Germans, but as the square where one experienced one's first kiss, stepped off the bus a thousand times or simply hung around for countless hours.

Ultimately, the Leuven city council opted for an intermediate solution. The square was renamed after Pieter De Somer, the first rector of

the new, Dutch-speaking, university which was founded in Leuven during the early 1970s after its Francophone wing had been forced to leave the town and create its own university in a new town called Louvain-la-Neuve. Unlike Scholl and Von Drais, therefore, De Somer was intrinsically linked to Leuven, but at the same time he had a national and even international stature. In national history, his name was closely linked to the struggle for more Flemish autonomy within the Belgian state; internationally, he had gained some popularity not only as an outstanding scientist, but also as an advocate of a progressive brand of Catholicism, particularly after having made a critical speech during the visit of Pope John Paul II to Leuven in 1985.[9] Moreover, he also actively pleaded against nuclear weapons. As such, Louis Tobback could undoubtedly consider him to be the European and pacifist antipode of Foch that he sought for, and at the same time intimately link his square to the history of Leuven. Whether he succeeded in convincing the inhabitants of Leuven of the appropriateness of the name seems doubtful at the moment. In any case, a new Facebook group has been started with the ironic title 'In mijnen tijd heette het Pieter de Somer Plein nog het Fochplein' ('*When I was young, Pieter De Somer Square was still called Foch Square*'). Started in November 2011, by the beginning of 2014 it had been liked 3,237 times.[10]

## The formal structure of memories

However idiosyncratic the case of Leuven may be at first sight, it has a much broader relevance for anyone interested in the workings of collective memory. First of all, it reminds us that these collective memories always are the result of a dynamic interaction in which an *absent object* of remembrance (in this case Foch and De Somer) is re-presented by means of more or less *material* and therefore more or less *localized bearers* (in this case signposts indicating the name of a square) by a more or less powerful *initiator* of memory (in this case the city council) to a more or less extended and diverse *audience* (in this case the inhabitants of and visitors to Leuven). Insofar as the interplay between each of these elements (object, bearer, initiator, audience) determines the direction of the commemorative process, they can all be considered 'vectors of memory'. Doing this, we extend the meaning Nancy Wood has given to that term in her seminal book carrying that very title.[11] The 'vectors' that Wood deals with (historiography, novels, films, war crimes trials) would in this book rather fall under the category of 'bearers of memory'.

Each of those vectors, the example further suggests, plays an active part in the process of meaning-giving of which memory consists.

In other words, vectors of memory are, simultaneously, *agents of memory*. The objects of memory are not merely invented by powerful political stakeholders, since their historical reality admits only a certain range of interpretations (thus, Foch could not be turned overnight into a pacifist). Moreover, the material bearers and places of memory determine to a large degree the practices and meanings that can actually be attached to those objects by diverse and changing audiences. The story of Foch Square might have been a different one if, for example, the city council had decided in 1920 to endow it with a statue of the marshal. In that case, the square might have become the place of commemorative practices – thus rendering less probable the transformation of the name of a military leader into that of a mere square. Tobback's proposal might have met more active resistance from a *milieu de mémoire* engendered by the statue, but it might equally have been the case that the commemoration of Foch would have been contested at an earlier stage, by a broader societal group, and in more radical forms. It is, indeed, not hard to imagine groups of protesting students at the end of the 1960s or in the early 1970s tearing down a statue of Foch statue, or at least covering it with graffiti.

The story would most certainly have been a different one if Louis Tobback had announced his proposal in, say, the 1950s (when patriotic memory was more predominant[12]), or if he had been the mayor of a Francophone or a French town. Indeed, in French and Walloon cities, references to Foch are still omnipresent in an unproblematic way. In Flanders, on the contrary, the reference to Foch was atypical anyway. This is hardly surprising, given the fact that a combination of pacifist and anti-French sentiments has been deeply entrenched in Flemish public opinion since at least the inter-war period. In order to use William Sewell's terminology, which also provides the foundation of Michael Wert's contribution to this volume,[13] the mental 'schema' was lacking in Flanders that would enable memorial 'resources' such as the name of a square to maintain a 'structure of memory' axized upon Marshal Foch.

By stressing the agency of place, of material objects, and of practices and mindsets of the audience, we should, of course, not entirely disregard the power of political initiators of memory. Again, the case of Foch Square is illuminating in this respect. It is very likely indeed that the polemics would not have taken place if someone other than Louis Tobback had been the mayor of Leuven. He combined the ideological viewpoints, the intellectual and historical interest and the political voluntarism which were needed to bring this symbolic proposal onto

the agenda, and to have it reach the outcome which he possibly had in mind from the start, thereby laying aside the proposals coming from civil society and from the Commission for Toponymy (which advised against changing the name).[14]

## A non-linear view on the history of collective memories

As the preceding paragraphs have shown, the story of Foch Square being transformed into Rector De Somerplein makes us aware of the complex *formal structures* of memory in a present-day European society. It is able to do so because in these societies we dispose of sources – most notably the social media – that uncover other voices than those of the political and cultural élites. Of course, they do so in very imperfect, incomplete and unrepresentative ways, but still no comparable sources exist for periods belonging to a more distant past. Yet, we should obviously not conclude from this paucity of sources that the formal structures of memory were less complex in the past than they are now. On the contrary, present-day cases such as these of Foch Square should invite us to re-examine the *historical evolution* of collective memory. Because of its focus on the agency of political élites, historical memory studies until recently have mainly scrutinized the *nationalization* of memory during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[15] National élites as well as nationalist local élites succeeded, according to this reasoning, in integrating local or regional memorial motifs into national master narratives, or in constructing new memories which were national from the start. The story of Foch Square shows us, on the one hand, the degree to which these nationalist commemorative efforts could contain, even at an early stage, transnational elements (Foch was not a Belgian), and, on the other hand, gives us a hint of the local appropriation of and resistance to both the nationalizing and globalizing tendencies of memory-construction. The fact that Foch's name was given to a square hardly seems to have contributed to his reputation as a liberator of the Belgian Fatherland or as an international hero among the population of Leuven. But it did make his name an important and resilient part of their cultural topography.

As such, the example should warn us against interpreting the evolution of memory merely through the lens of modernization, according to which the local would have been gradually transcended by the national, which itself would afterwards be replaced by more globalizing or at least transnational patterns.[16] Pieter De Somer certainly was a more local figure than Foch – a figure who is less likely to appear in both patriotic

and global histories. Moreover, the Leuven case shows that even in modern times, identities and memories are not exclusively shaped by élites making use of modern mass media. People, so it suggests, identify with other people not simply because they are told to do so by intellectuals and political leaders, but also because they simply live in the same spaces, and share – at least partly – the same spatial and material frames of references. These shared experiences can create a strong link between people even if they do not actually know one another.

By taking this commonsense view into account, we can further enrich Benedict Anderson's powerful concept of the 'imagined communities'.[17] Anderson's stress on the importance of the modern media as a means of forging identities across large distances has been very helpful in the development of a better understanding of the rise of national identities, but it has contributed to a de-spatialization of modern processes of collective identification. More specifically, it has sharpened the dichotomy between pre-modern and modern collective identities. Whereas the former where deemed to have been shaped through concrete social ties at a local scale (the family, the village), the latter were forged through representations beyond concrete, localized experiences. Because of the absence of *real* ties, modern identities had to rely on the conscious construction of spatial and temporal frameworks. Small-scale, pre-modern identities, on the other hand, were judged to be free from construction. Their spatial boundaries were determined by the social interactions from which they emerged. Their temporal frameworks, however, did transcend the limits of the present through the workings of memory, but this was deemed to have happened without the interference of conscious creation. Collective memory was, according to this dichotomizing view, embedded in oral and material traditions, which were transmitted in a more or less ritualized – and often religious – way from generation to generation.[18]

In modern societies, which were built on mobility and change rather than on sedentarism and tradition, these 'organic' forms of memory transmission would have become less and less feasible. In his influential early works, the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs described how, through these evolutions, 'real' collective memory was increasingly replaced by 'historical' memory, which was rather shaped by historians than 'lived' by communities.[19] The successful creation, or even invention, of national memories during the nineteenth and twentieth century has often been accounted for by the fact that they compensated for the loss of 'true' collective memories. This is the context in which Eric Hobsbawm and Terry Ranger situated the 'invention of traditions'

and Pierre Nora the creation of '*lieux de mémoire*'. More generally, attempts to make the entirety of history fit within national master narratives are presented as a part of this process.[20]

Without denying that historical consciousness was subject to processes of modernization and nationalization, this volume tries to transcend this dichotomy between 'pre-modern' and 'modern' forms of collective memory in two different, but complementary ways. First of all, it starts from the assumption that older, local forms of memory were not simply replaced by national memories created from above. People continued to identify with the past of their home town, village or region even when the national authorities tried to turn them into national citizens by impressing a 'national memory' upon them. On the other hand, local memories cannot simply be treated as the 'organic' remains of pre-modern times. Even at the scale of villages, quarters or small towns, 'mnemonic groups' do not necessarily consist of people who actually know one another, and 'mnemonic socialization' – i.e., the process of entering into a community founded on a set of shared memories – does not necessarily emerge from the physical interactions between people.[21] Even local communities are to a certain degree always imagined. Their identity is at least partly based on images that are more or less consciously created by people, and that can therefore also become the object of struggle and negotiation. However, in these processes of imagination, contestation and negotiation, the materiality of places does play a much larger role than in the construction of national memories. Even if people in a specific neighbourhood or city do not know one another, they are in a nearly tactile way acquainted with the same streets, the same squares, the same architecture, the same sounds, the same orderings of time. These elements together form the material framework of a common present, but also point in the direction of common pasts, which can be situated at several levels. The sound of a carillon playing from the tower of a town hall, for example, will remind local residents, in the first instance, of a former occasion (or occasions) on which they heard it, and which they can possibly connect to happy or sad moments in their lives. It can, however, also point them to the glorious medieval past of his or her city, or even of the Low Countries as such. Whether this happens largely depends on the degree to which constructed images of this glorious past have reached them through various, mainly élite channels (the school, official city marketing).[22]

Because of its materiality and its sheer 'presence', the local mnemonic framework cannot simply be downsized by memories which are constructed at a higher level. Rather, it serves as the context in which

these larger memories are articulated. This has been amply illustrated in recent works by Stéphane Gerson, Elizabeth Karlsgodt, Alon Confino and Xose-Manoel Núñez on respectively France, Germany and Spain.[23] By and large, these authors depict the relationship between local and national memories as harmonious. In their works, they describe how during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, loyalty to the 'small fatherland' (the home town or home region) was considered to be a necessary precondition for national patriotism. Nonetheless, Gerson himself stresses that it is necessary to 'situate the local in a dynamic of convergence, divergence, and negotiation with official and national memory'.[24] That is precisely what the discussions about Foch Square in Leuven made clear, and it is also what this volume proposes to do. It tries to unravel the social and cultural grammar of local memories by taking both their material situatedness and their relationship with national and global tendencies into account. In so doing, it aims to reconcile the culturalist and the more sociological, anthropological or cultural-geographical approaches to collective memory – a reconciliation that has often been pleaded for but seldom put into practice.[25]

## Triangular relationships

The basic assumption of this book is that the relationship between local, national and transnational memories during the nineteenth and twentieth century was necessarily triangular. This means that in the concrete articulation of collective memories, a constant but multifarious negotiation between the three poles was necessarily taking place.[26] First of all, the local, the national and the global could be unequally distributed over the various vectors of memory mentioned above. As such, local objects of remembrance could be nationalized through their insertion, by nationalist élites, into national bearers of remembrance (e.g. the mass media, but also a statue or a commemorative plaque in the nation's capital city), thus enabling other than local audiences to develop meanings and practices around it. But it is equally possible that international objects of remembrance gain local significance through materialized and localized means of remembrance. This could happen, for example, in the case of the statue of Ronald Reagan on the Szadasag Ter (Liberty Square) in Budapest, only a few metres away from the huge monument dedicated to the Soviet liberation in 1945.

However, the triangular relation does not only imply an unequal distribution of the different poles over the different vectors of memory, but also a dynamic and, as Michael Rothberg has put it, 'multidirectional'

interaction between these poles.[27] In the course of these negotiations diverse 'coalitions' could be forged, and diverse antagonisms could arise. Thus, local memories had the potential to form counter-memories[28] against *both* national and global narratives, but it was equally possible that they coalesced with transnational memories in order to resist patterns of nationalization. Conversely, it could occur that local memories formed an articulation of narratives stressing the nation's specificity.

As a case in point, the history of museums in the Western world might be invoked. Although they were by definition – at least until the rise of the digital media – localized places of memory, the institutionalization of museums in the nineteenth century was above all part of nationalizing strategies, which absorbed both local and transnational elements.[29] Even those museums dedicated to local or regional history and art were often set up to tell a part of the story of the nation.[30] At the other side of the spectrum, exhibiting international art or ethnographic collections was part and parcel of the cultural politics of Western nations, through which they tried to assert their place among civilized nations. Just limiting ourselves to the quintessential case of Paris, the Musée Carnavalet represents a case where the local and the national converge, whereas the Louvre (but at a later stage also the Centre Pompidou and the Musée du Quai Branly) absorbs the transnational or the global in a national enterprise.

During the later decades of the twentieth century, this centrality of the nation in the world of museums was fundamentally questioned, but it did not therefore disappear. A comparison between some of the recently created museums of migration can illustrate this point. If their object of remembrance is transnational by definition, they could be linked to a higher or a lesser degree to the local and/or to the national. The highly contested Parisian Musée de l'Histoire de l'Immigration, which opened its doors in 2007, is an example of a national museum, in which the story of migration is viewed through a predominantly French national lens – but precisely because of that reason, it has also been the object of a national controversy. The place in which it is situated, the Palais de la Porte Dorée, bears no connections to the history of immigration itself, but is deeply entrenched in the history of the French colonial enterprise, since it was built to house the Colonial Exposition of 1931. This is entirely different from the Ellis Island Museum of Immigration in New York (re-opened in 1990), built on the exact place where millions of immigrants arrived in the United States at the end of the nineteenth and during the first half of the twentieth century. The museum therefore, is a bearer of both local and global memories,

but at the same time these are cast in an eminently *national* narrative about the American population and culture. The recently opened Red Star Line Museum in Antwerp can be considered in many ways as the counterpart of the Ellis Island Museum. It was constructed in a building in one of those iconic places of departure, namely the port of Antwerp. Just as the Ellis Island Museum, it therefore commemorates both an eminently *global* phenomenon (transcontinental migration) and a crucial part of *local* history. Since it is a museum of emigration rather than of immigration, it is not surprising that in the Antwerp case, the national storyline is nearly totally absent. In that sense, the Red Star Line Museum could be seen as a typical representative of a post-national museum,[31] and therefore as a manifestation of what, since the work of Roland Robertson, has become commonly known as 'glocalization'.[32]

The recent boom in Holocaust Museums arguably also belongs in this category. Not only do they tell a story of a fundamentally transnational phenomenon (the systematic destruction of the Jewish populations throughout Europe, sometimes combined with that of genocides in other parts of the world), they also contain a more or less overt critique of earlier patriotic ways of telling the story of the Second World War. Nonetheless, the disappearance of the 'national' could take varying forms. For obvious reasons, the British Holocaust Exhibition could not connect the history of the judeocide to local memories of this transnational phenomenon. Still, the fact that it is housed in the premises of the Imperial War Museum – and is therefore juxtaposed with an eminently patriotic storyline – is not without ambivalence. The visitor can interpret this juxtaposition as an attempt to mitigate the jingoist overtones of the Imperial War Museum, but he or she is not explicitly invited to do so. In contrast, the Flemish Holocaust Museum, which opened its doors in November 2012, was created in the Dossin Barracks in Mechelen, the very place where, during the Second World War, more than 25,000 Jews were assembled before their deportation to the extermination camps in Central Europe. Without rendering this explicit, this museum combines local and transnational resources in order to construct an anti-nationalist and to a certain degree also anti-patriotic counter-memory. It also contains critiques of the willingness of large parts of the Belgian population and administration to collaborate with the Nazi occupier and (though rather obliquely) of the colonial rule of the Belgian monarch Leopold II in Congo.[33]

In this respect, the contrast with the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam is considerable. There, even more stress is laid on the local, since the visitor enters the house in which a Jewish girl was hidden before she was

discovered and sent to the camp of Bergen-Belsen, where she died. The Anne Frank House, however, never grew out to a focal point for a counter-memory highlighting the complicity of large segments of Dutch society with the Nazi rulers. On the contrary, the story of Anne Frank became an essential element in a canonical Dutch national narrative. This example, like that of Ellis Island, makes it clear that 'glocal' bearers and objects of remembrance do not necessarily lead to 'post-national' memories. Other examples in this book will corroborate that view.

In the case of these museums, the triangular relationship between the local, the national and the global was articulated in fundamentally different ways by the *initiators* of memory. On top of that, however, each and any of the visitors to these museums could re-articulate and re-appropriate this relationship in his or her own way. In this process, they could project memories from other contexts onto this specific place of memory, thus investing the latter with new meanings. For instance, Palestinian visitors to the Holocaust Museum in Mechelen might re-interpret the narrative with which they are confronted in the light of their own (direct or indirect) memories of oppression by the post-war Israeli State. For them, these Holocaust Museums can appear as legitimizing instruments of this state rather than as memorials of a people's suffering. In so doing, they de-localise and de-nationalise this commemorative place, and even fundamentally alter its transnational frame of reference. Grandchildren of people living in the neighbourhood of the Dossin Barracks, on the other hand, might 'hyper-localize' the museum's narrative by connecting it to the stories they heard from their grandparents about rows of captives being transported through the streets or about the silence surrounding these events.

Essentially, each visitor of a commemorative place produces a 'memory transfer' by projecting his or her memorial references onto it (as was also the case for the inhabitants of Leuven connecting their own personal memories to the name of Marshall Foch).[34] Often, therefore, memories are fundamentally 'palimpsestic', since they tend to overwrite older stories with newer ones.[35] In some cases, though, these processes of overwriting can take a more explicit and a more material form. They can be actively aimed at by people who want to alter the social meaning of the commemorative place. That is precisely what is happening in the cover image of this volume, showing the monument that was erected in 1954 in a central park of the Bulgarian capital Sofia. It celebrated the Soviet Army which, ten years previously, had supported the anti-fascist resistance against the country's autocratic and Germanophile leaders and had, as such, paved

the way for the Soviet rule of Bulgaria. Obviously, the initiators had in mind a monument whose local, national, and transnational meanings would mutually reinforce one another. Like all monuments, it was directed in the first at the local passers-by. Given its central position in the capital city, however, the monument was equally intended symbolically to express the entire nation's gratitude to the Soviet Army and its ongoing commitment to Soviet dominated state communism.

However, the most striking aspect of the monument in the picture is undoubtedly its being painted pink. This was done by anonymous artists during the night of August 21, 2013, and the paint was removed quickly afterwards. The choice for this date was not at random, since precisely 45 years before, the Prague Spring had been crushed by the Red Army, aided by troops from several Warsaw Pact countries, among which Bulgaria figured prominently. The pink colour only bore indirect reminiscences of the Prague Spring. It referred in the first place to the Soviet tank in Prague that between 1968 and 1990 had functioned as a monument for the Soviet Army's defence of Communism against the 'counter-revolutionary movement', which was painted pink in 1991 by the young artist David Černý – and later again by a group of deputies.[36] Hence, the anonymous Sofia artists probably wanted to honour Černý as much as the Prague protesters themselves. As such, they produced a double memory transfer with their act (projecting, in 2013, a 1991 commemoration of 1968 onto a 1954 commemoration of 1944). At the same time, however, they too gave an eminently national meaning to their action by writing (in Bulgarian and in Czech) the words 'Bulgaria apologises' underneath the monument. In that sense, they wanted to turn to the monument from a local expression of national gratitude and national loyalty into one of national guilt.[37] In the course of the event, the traditional international allies were transformed into enemies and *vice versa*.

Once more, it is doubtful whether the viewers of this ephemerally pink monument will have fully grasped this complex transfer of memory. Since the event occurred only two months after a controversial law against 'homosexual propaganda' was adopted in Russia, it is not impossible that they will have interpreted the action as a protest against this law – and it is even possible that the activists themselves have deliberately attempted to bestow their action with this double meaning. As such, the picture reveals to which degree transfers of memory can be multidirectional, multilayered and dynamic. This volume offers many more cases of comparable transfers.

## The structure of the volume

Although museums and monuments are powerful bearers of local memories, this volume does not limit its scope to them. Faithful to its basic assumption that memories are always the (unfinished) results of a dynamic interaction between a wide array of vectors, it chooses to show with regard to each of these vectors a broad diversity. The objects of memory can be historical persons (Erasmus, Goethe, Father Cícero, Bannerman Oguri...), concrete events (the bombing of Rotterdam and Dresden, the Liberation of the Netherlands...) or broader phenomena (slave trade, labour migration, state socialism ...). The creators of memory can be city administrations, intellectuals, museum directors, exhibition curators, activists,...; the bearers of memory are street names and statues as well as commemorative plaques, graffiti, urban planning, guidebooks, cemeteries or individual graves, (real or imagined) decapitated heads, folktales, television documentaries, theatre plays, specific words...; the practices of remembrance can be annual commemorations, pilgrimages, visiting exhibitions, laying wreaths of flowers on graves,.... Finally, the audiences vary (sometimes within one and the same contribution) from local subcultures to transnational movements.

However wide this range of entries into the matter may be, the contributions in this volume share a common approach. Each of them focuses precisely on the triangular relationship between the local, the national and the transnational, as it is described above. For every specific case dealt within this volume, the question is asked how local memories were constructed and experienced in relation to the other two poles of the triangle. Were they resilient to attempts at nationalization and/or globalization? Did they contribute to strengthening the national narrative in a context of globalization? Or did they, on the contrary, serve as vehicles of more globalized or multiethnic memories against the nation?

Most of the memory practices described in this volume took place in the twentieth century (whereas the objects of remembrance, of course, may have been situated in a much earlier period of history) and many of the contributions follow their developments up to the present day. The focus is primarily on Europe, although articles on Japan and Brazil show that the triangular approach can also be fruitfully applied to non-European contexts.

Part I of the volume deals specifically with the politics of urban memory, i.e. with the way in which urban authorities and dominant social groups create and successfully promulgate biographies of their own

cities, or give sense to specific events within such a biographical narrative. The cities studied in this part have in common that they have been confronted with traumatic events related to national and international evolutions: three of them (Dresden, Rotterdam and Sevastopol) were devastated during the Second World War, a fourth (Budapest) witnessed several dramatic regime changes in the course of the twentieth century, and the last (Strasbourg) was a bone of contention in three consecutive wars between France and Germany, as a consequence of which it switched national territory three times. As a consequence, these cities had to re-invent themselves, which gave a peculiar sense of urgency to their search for an appropriate memory.[38]

In spite of this common denominator, the authors in this first part of the book approach their subject in different ways. In his deliberately broad treatment of the writing of urban memories in Rotterdam, Willem Frijhoff unravels the different approaches through which inhabitants and, above all, political élites tried to transform the urban space of their largely destroyed city into a new 'civic' space with diverse connections to its past. He explores the construction of monuments as well as the urban planning decisions for reconstruction, the worship of a local hero with both national and international resonance (Erasmus), the politics of street naming and the development of 'civic rituals'.

The other chapters in this first part focus more on one aspect of these processes of symbolic (re)appropriation of urban space. By meticulously following the (manifold) changes of street names in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Budapest, Emilia Palonen tries to retrace the continuities and ruptures in its evolving 'city text'. Each regime change (and even the sweeping electoral triumph of Fidesz in 2010) urged city administrators to adapt this city text to the new circumstances, but none of them was able (or willing) to rewrite this text *ab nihilo*.

Mathias Berek centres his contribution on the various ways of telling and retelling the story of Dresden's bombing by the Allies in 1944. Obviously, these various strategies were heavily inspired by the ideological and political aims of the *milieux* from which they sprang, and in this light also articulated Dresden's local history differently against national and transnational patterns of remembrance. However, Berek insists that these local, national and transnational patterns, far from being mutually exclusive, constantly influenced one another. The 'transfer zones' between them, thus he argues, were also transfer zones between communicative and cultural memory.

In his contribution about the Crimean port city of Sevastopol, Karl Qualls follows two paths in order to show how this city managed to

'manufacture' a distinct memory in spite of the state-socialist directives. First of all, he demonstrates how those responsible for the city's reconstruction opted for neo-classical models and local traditions rather than for the grandiose and monumental style that was prescribed by the Stalinist administration. Secondly, he makes clear that this distinctiveness was equally stressed in the post-war guidebooks to the city, which did underline the heroic attachment of this Ukrainian city to its Russian Motherland both during the Crimean War and the Second World War, but focused less on the Soviet experience.

Finally, Tom Williams anchors his treatment of Strasbourg's multiple identities to the narratives that were created by successive German and French political élites with regard to two of the most iconic historical figures who had spent at least part of their lives in the city: the poet and intellectual Johann Wolfgang Goethe and the military leader Jean-Baptiste Kléber. Finally, he also examines the discourses and practices in which the memory of the two world wars was cast in this border city. The contribution shows how consecutive regimes partly generated new resources and partly re-interpreted older resources in order to make the history fit within their national narrative. Within the time-span of less than a century, therefore, Strasbourg could appear consecutively as a German cultural heartland, a bastion of French patriotism and, in the case of Goethe, as a 'bridge' between the Latin and Germanic worlds. This latter interpretation is the one that would become predominant during the post-war period, in which Strasbourg also became a central symbolic site for the creation of a European identity and memory.

In Part II, 'Places and Practices of Subaltern Memory', the focus shifts from the political élites to the ways subaltern groups (migrants, students, poor city-dwellers or inhabitants of disadvantaged regions) constructed their own collective memories in a sometimes painful, sometimes fruitful dialogue with the official or mainstream memories. However, these memories could also be subaltern because they were centred on the 'losers of history' – i.e. individuals or groups of people who had fallen in disgrace in the eyes of hegemonic forces in the country.[39] Most often, these subaltern memories were attached to places which were geographically smaller than entire cities. Some of these places were deliberately created as bearers of memory (museums, cemeteries), others were transformed into sites of memory because historical figures had been born and/or had lived and worked there, or because they had formed the theatre in which the commemorated historical phenomena had taken place.

As well as an extensive conceptual framework with regard to the notion of 'place' and its relationship with memory – which can also

serve as an introduction to this second part of the book – Geoffrey Cubitt offers an overview of his research on the British exhibits which were set up for the bicentennial anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade in 2007. It is a strong testimony to the degree to which local sensitivities – and the participation of local communities – can raise the awareness of the historical injustices caused by a global phenomenon. Through a comparison between two specific cases, however, he also convincingly shows how this relationship between the local and the global could be articulated in different ways, and how national narratives could also leave their traces.

In an article heavily inspired by William Sewell's 'eventful structuralism', Michael Wert describes how local resources together with altering national 'schemas' of memory, enabled Oguri, a leading samurai of the feudal Tokugawa regime, posthumously to overcome the disgrace into which he had fallen during the Meiji restoration. At the same time, Wert shows that 'the local' should not necessarily be equalled with societal forces from below. In the case of Oguri, the struggle for the rehabilitation was fought by and between competing political stakeholders. The transnational element is present in this contribution first and foremost at the level of the object of remembrance: Oguri's rehabilitation was not only furthered by local resources, but also by the fact that his achievements were largely to be situated in the field of international politics. As a reformer of the Japanese navy, he had strengthened Japan's military power (which was highly valued during the inter-war and war period); as a diplomat in the United States he could be depicted as a forerunner of Japan's 'internationalization' (which accounted above all for his second rehabilitation from the 1970s onwards).

Father Cícero, whose memory is dealt with by Gerald Greenfield, is another example of a historical figure who had fallen into disgrace, although he can hardly be depicted as a 'loser of history'. At a first level, this disgrace took the form of the Catholic Church refusing to recognise the miracles that had allegedly occurred during masses that he had celebrated. At a second level, however, this disgrace was bestowed upon him by Southern Brazilians who depicted him as a representative of a backward and superstitious north-east of the country. Greenfield describes a process in which Father Cícero's reputation grew precisely as a reaction to this marginalization, which he shared with the inhabitants of his small town, Jazueiro, and, more generally, with those of north-eastern Brazil. The local, and, at a later stage, regional, cult of Father Cícero not only accounted for his growing national and even international reputation, it also formed the basis of a sort of empowerment for its adherents.

Jazueiro was turned from a small village into a middle-sized town as a result of this cult (and of the active commitment of Cícero as a local politician), and Brazil's north-eastern regions found in it an alternative source of identification.

The actors as well as the objects of remembrance highlighted in Christine Gundermann's article were subaltern not only as they were foreigners in the Netherlands, but most of all because they originated from a country which in post-war Dutch public opinion was still considered to be 'the enemy'. Indeed, she describes the 'memory landscape' that came into being around the German War Cemetery Ysselsteyn in the small city of Venray in the east of the Netherlands (near the German border). Although this cemetery was administered by the Dutch authorities until 1976, the German Verein für Kriegsgrabenfürsorge (VDK) used it as a starting point for a memorial strategy aimed at German–Dutch reconciliation. Gundermann shows how this strategy was by and large successful at a local level. In the town of Venray – which had not known the harsh Hunger Winter of 1944–1945 – discourses on the Second World War centred more upon the suffering of all soldiers than on the questions of national heroism and national victimization which dominated the dominant national discourse in the Netherlands (and gave rise to feverish anti-German sentiments). Nonetheless, the fact that Dutch mayors only consented at a relatively late stage to deliver a speech at German commemoration ceremonies near the cemetery demonstrates the limits of this locally embedded transnational reconciliation.

Celebrations at graves also form a central commemorative practice in the article by Duncan Light and Gordan Craig. To a certain degree, these graves are those of former enemies too: not of large groups of more or less anonymous soldiers belonging to an invading army, but of hated Communist leaders of the Romanian state. Relatively soon after the fall of communism, a certain nostalgia around these leaders developed, which, particularly in their home villages or at their burial sites, could (and still can) take strongly ritualized forms. These nostalgic rituals are not necessarily based on an active communist commitment, but much rather on the willingness to fill the void which arose in the nation's collective memory as the result of the politics of oblivion promoted by the post-communist regime. In that sense, these local practices of remembrance can be considered as attempts to restore the national master-narrative rather than to return to the world order of the Cold War. At the same time, however, Light and Young situate these Romanian practices in a broader transnational context involving most of the former countries of the communist world in Europe.

In Marnix Beyen's contribution, the bearer of memory is non-material but nevertheless spatialized. More precisely, the contribution deals with a neologism referring to and originating from a local context, but at the same time pointing towards a wider transnational phenomenon, and becoming a common element of the cultural heritage of Flanders. As a contraction between the names of the Antwerp neighbourhood Borgerhout and Morocco, the word 'Borgerokko' was in fact a shortcut to evoke labour migration from Northern Africa and Turkey during the 1960s and early 1970s. It was first used by local natives, in order to express the sense of alienation they experienced when they saw the growing influx of these immigrants in their neighbourhood. Soon it was politically exploited by the main right-wing Flemish Nationalist party. At a later stage, some Northern African immigrants and left-wing intellectuals started to use the word in a positive way, as an expression of Borgerhout's multicultural microcosmos. A part of the immigrant community, on the other hand, deliberately continued to associate the term in a (self-)criminalizing way, thus turning their feelings of marginalization in Belgian society into a subversive sense of pride.

Finally, Andrea Hajek's contribution takes us back to the streets of Bologna in March 1977. The killing of the protesting student Francesco Lorusso by police forces became the object of a subversive counter-memory which at first was specific for left-wing youngsters in Bologna. These memorial practices were re-activated, however, when similar events occurred in other places. This happened a first time in 2001, when a young activist was killed during protests against the G8 summit in Genoa, and seven years later once again when a 15-year-old boy was shot dead in an Athens suburb. Around these left-wing victims of police violence a translocal and transnational – and in that sense 'glocal' – convergence of memories took place. In this process, the original memorial practices developed in Bologna were enriched by references to the other cases, and transferred to the culture of remembrance developing around these other victims.

## Notes

1. See M. Azaryahu, 1996, 'The power of commemorative street names'.
2. Horne and Kramer, 2001, *German Atrocities*.
3. 'Tobback wil "massamoordenaar" Foch uit zijn stad verbannen', *Het Nieuwsblad – afdeling Leuven*, 18 February 2009.
4. 'Maarschalk Foch ruimt plaats voor Sophie Scholl', *Het Nieuwsblad – regio Leuven*, 8 November 2010.
5. See, respectively https://www.facebook.com/groups/52563423758/ and https://www.facebook.com/groups/63544293893/, accessed 14 May 2014.

6. The Facebook-page https://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=5127081 9546&ref=nf is not accessible at the time of publication.
7. 'Duizend handtekeningen voor behoud Fochplein', *Nieuwsblad.be*, 31 October 2011, accessed 6 October 2014.
8. See, among others, Assmann and Czaplicka, 1995, 'Collective memory and cultural identity'.
9. With regard to De Somer and the Leuven University, see Tollebeek and Nys, 2005, *De stad op de berg*.
10. https://www.facebook.com/pages/In-mijnen-tijd-heette-het-Pieter-De-Somerplein-nog-het-Fochplein/114551391953738, accessed 6 October 2014. Officially, it is not the Pieter De Somer Square, but Rector De Somerplein – Rector De Somer Square.
11. Wood, 1999, *Vectors of Memory*.
12. See in that regard, for example, Lagrou, 2000, *Legacies of Nazi Occupation*.
13. Sewell, *Logics of History*, 2005, p. 132, and Chapter 9 of this volume.
14. For the final decision of the city council on 19 December 2011, see http://leuven.raadsinformatie.be/vergadering/97847/gemeenteraadszittingen+19-12-2011#ap1076373 (accessed 1 November 2014)
15. More generally on the limits of the nationalization from above in nineteenth-century Europe, see Van Ginderachter and Beyen, eds., 2012, *Nationhood from Below*.
16. The term 'globalization' is used in this book to describe the tendency towards an ever-greater interconnectedness of the world, and thus an increase in the number of transnational and transcontinental contacts and movements. Even if this book – as the title suggests – accepts the existence of a globalizing processes throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it tries to avoid presenting all transnational and transcontinental contacts and movements as 'global'.
17. Anderson, 1983, *Imagined Communities*.
18. On religion as a transmitting force of memory, see Yerushalmi, 1983, *Zakhor*; Hervieu-Léger, 1983, *La religion pour mémoire*; Assmann, 2008, *Religion und kulturelle Gedächtnis*.
19. See Confino, 'Collective memory and cultural history'.
20. Hobsbawm, 1997, 'Introduction: Inventing traditions'; Nora, 1984, 'Entre mémoire et histoire'; Berger and Lorenz, 2008, 'National history writing in a global age'; Berger and Lorenz, 2011, *Nationalizing the Past*.
21. For the concept of 'Mnemonic Socialization', see Zerubavel, 1996, 'Social memories'.
22. On the carillon as a *lieu de mémoire* in the Low Countries, see Beyen et al., 2009, *De beiaard*.
23. Gerson, 2003, 'Review essay. Une France locale'; Karlsgodt, 2006, 'Recycling French heroes'; Confino, 2001, 'On localness and nationhood'; Confino and Skaria, 2002, 'The local life of nationhood'; Confino, 1997, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor*; Núñez, 2001, 'The region as essence of the Fatherland'.
24. Gerson, 2003, *The Pride of Place*, p. 15.
25. For such a plea, see Olick and Robbins, 1998, 'Social memory studies'.
26. On the importance of considering memories as the result of processes of negotiation, see Hajek, 2013, *Negotiating Memories of Protest*.
27. Rothberg, 2009, *Multidirectional Memory*.

28. For a further conceptualization of counter-memory, see the contributions of Light and Young (Chapter 11) and Hajek (Chapter 13) to this volume.
29. See, for example: Bennett, 1995, *The Birth of the Museum*; Poulot, 2001, *Patrimoine et musées*; Crane, 1998, '(Arte)fakte: Nation, Identität, Museum'; Crane (ed.), 1998, *Museums and Memory*.
30. Confino, 1997, *The Nation as a Local Metaphor*.
31. See, for example, MacDonald, 2003, 'Museums, National, postnational and transcultural identities'; Mason, 2012, 'The postnational museum'.
32. Robertson, 1998, 'Glokalisierung'.
33. That this critique could have been much more explicit, is forcefully argued by Vandenberghe, 'Kwaad waar je beter van wordt'.
34. For the notion 'transfer of memory', see first and foremost Rigney, 2005, 'Plenitude, scarcity and the circulation of cultural memory'. The concept is also explicitly used in this volume by Christine Gundermann (Chapter 10) and Andrea Hajek (Chapter 13).
35. See Silverman, 2013, *Palimpsestic Memory*.
36. On this connection, see Tsolova and Piper, 2014, 'Bulgarian Red Army monument painted pink'.
37. As such their act certainly fitted within the more general tendency, occurring since the 1990s, to recognise the 'guilt of nations'. See Barkan, 2000, *The Guilt of Nations*.
38. On this same question, see, among others, Bélanger, 2002, 'Urban space and collective memory'; Rose-Redwood et al., 'Collective memory and the politics of urban space'; Thijs, 2008, *Drei Geschichten, eine Stadt*.
39. See in that regard: Wert, 2013, *Meiji Restoration Losers*, and the contribution of the same author to this volume (Chapter 8).

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# Part I
# The Politics of Urban Memory

# 2

# Physical Space, Urban Space, Civic Space: Rotterdam's Inhabitants and their Appropriation of the City's Past

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## Layers of community memory

Cities are communities of memory.[1] As a body of community-bound inhabitants the city constructs its historical awareness through the appropriation of past experiences and the attribution of meaning in local and supra-local narratives, historical, legendary, or mythical. Memories may be proposed, drafted and organized either by the city's authorities or by particular groups or individuals, but it is always their appropriation that decides about their use, function and meaning for the city's self-understanding.[2] However, when speaking of construction the historian should be careful. Image, narrative or identity construction is performed in the present but works with elements from the past, close by or far away, appropriated as multi-layered and multi-focused narratives. This is particularly so in local settings, where memory remains much closer to individual experiences and perceptions than at a national scale.

In fact, the city's memory is constantly shaped, appropriated and transformed through the dynamic interplay of the city's three dimensions as a meaningful space. Firstly the *physical* space: the geographical site, the buildings and the cityscape as they have grown throughout history and present themselves at a given moment. Secondly the *urban* space: the city as a planned and administered community (*civitas*), represented as a closed entity with a programmatic and recordable identity. And thirdly the *civic* space: the city as it is culturally appropriated by its inhabitants (*communitas*), as their own personally and collectively owned town. Civic memory discloses itself through the city's daily practice, in the cultural repertoires shared by the native inhabitants and the immigrants,

or incidentally in free play with the urban space and memory made available by the city.

Physical, urban, and civic memory do not necessarily coincide or even overlap, because inhabitants may go beyond the rulers' intentions or use alternative practices of social or urban intercourse, as Michel de Certeau (1925–1986) showed in his seminal analysis of the practice of everyday life.[3] They may also stick to images of the city's community that were once lively experienced but have become obsolete, whereas newcomers may import foreign urban practices or memories, trying to incorporate them into the city's global awareness of itself. Cultural memory, therefore, may well be in contradiction with the physical outlook of the city, and urban and civic memory may occasionally clash. This contribution wants to show some ways of appropriating the city's memory by the inhabitants of a major town of the Netherlands, with a particular history and of national significance: the city of Rotterdam, a conurbation of approximately 1.2 million inhabitants and boasting of its quality as one of the three biggest harbours of the world, and the largest in Europe.[4]

Local memory is particularly important in the Low Countries, perhaps more than in the former monarchies that constitute the bulk of Europe's nations. Ever since the Middle Ages the present-day Netherlands has been a country of virtually autonomous and competing towns. It was only after the Batavian Revolution and the Napoleonic era that a unified national consciousness was purposely promoted, but even now Dutch cities cherish a strong sense of identity, and indeed of 'particularism', as it is called in Dutch historiography. After the Dutch Revolt the importance of the local factor increased considerably. Instead of a vertical administration under a single head of state, the Dutch Republic organized itself as a horizontal confederation of seven autonomous 'provinces' (territorial states) within which sovereignty was vested in the councils, more precisely in their members, either co-opted or elected. Every city considered itself an independent unity, indeed a city-state, in particular the great commercial centres of Amsterdam and Rotterdam, considerably enlarged by the intake of thousands of immigrants from the southern provinces, from Germany, Britain and Scandinavia, not to speak of Jews from the Iberian peninsula and Central Europe.

In the major towns, this sense of civic autonomy was and still is physically expressed in the magnificent town halls in the city centre. Their decoration programmes magnify the city's fame, exalt the reasons for the city's pride, including its history, and proclaim the honour and responsibilities of the city's rulers. Beside the majestic Town Halls of Antwerp,

Brussels or Leuven in present-day Belgium, the best-known examples in the northern Netherlands are those of Middelburg (late medieval), Amsterdam (built in the 1650s, now the Royal Palace on the Dam square), and Rotterdam. The latter was built between 1914 and 1920 in an eclectic neo-renaissance style purposely incorporating themes and periods of city pride and reminders of local heroes and rulers.

## Physical space and urban space

The cultural memory of Rotterdam is embedded in its physical space, but the continuity of its perception has been stricken by the calamities of the Second World War.[5] Like many other Dutch cities, Rotterdam grew out of a fishing harbour on the river Meuse (Maas) pertaining to the county of Holland. It was only in the last centuries of the Middle Ages that the small market town became a commercial centre in growing competition with Holland's oldest merchant town Dordrecht, about ten miles away on the river Merwede, the major branch of the Rhine. From the sixteenth century, Rotterdam identified itself as a *koopstad*, i.e. a town with a predominantly commercial destiny, ruled by merchants and ship owners.[6] In the early seventeenth century, the so-called Waterstad extension, built to accommodate the town's expanding commerce, was laid out as a series of richly arrayed canals, next to an area dedicated to shipbuilding and fitting out. Rotterdam boasted an Exchange pre-dating that of Amsterdam, and it was the main harbour for commerce with England and Scotland. The Meuse embankment, called Boompjes after the trees that lined it, was unanimously praised by foreign travellers as one of the most beautiful cityscapes of the Dutch Republic.

It is this commercial self-identification that is probably the most durable element of Rotterdam's urban memory. Commerce, made material in the harbour with which the city developed a twin relationship, distinguished, then separated, itself socially, physically and culturally from the community of inhabitants, but at the same time played a leading role at all levels of the city's decision-making: engaged in the economy, industry, housing, social welfare, and even religion, the commercial elite being in favour of a regime of religious toleration. The dynasties, first of commerce-bound patrician families, then, after the Revolution, of male 'harbour barons' (*havenbaronnen*) and allied families of bankers and other professionals, quite often immigrants, have ever since constituted the town's social elite – such as the Van Hoboken, Van Ommeren, Ruys, De Monchy, Plate, Van der Vorm, Swarttouw, Veder, Kröller, Müller, Smit, Van der Mandele, Mees, s'Jacob and Dutilh families.

Perpetuating the city's commercial and shipping memory, they developed on a purely private basis characteristic practices in the urban space: charity, social housing developments, cultural incentives and sponsorship of local community assets such as foundations, societies, collections of art and history, and museums. [7] Among the most important are the Boymans–van Beuningen Museum – in the 1980s extended with a new wing for the latest van Beuningen collection[8] – and the Atlas van Stolk, the remarkable print collection of the timber merchant of that name. Much more than any other Dutch town, including Amsterdam, Rotterdam has been – and probably still is – the city of private initiative for the benefit of the community, including the construction of early garden cities like Tuindorp Vreewijk on the left bank, conceived as early as 1913 by Van der Mandele and Mees for the 'less well-to-do classes'.

## Urban space and civic space

Before the destruction wrought by war, Rotterdam's central area was very densely built – even more than Amsterdam, since, despite the fourfold increase in its population in the period up to the end of the nineteenth century, the city limits had not been extended after their early-seventeenth-century expansion. Rotterdam was above all a working city (*werkstad*), without any administrative institutions other than the commercial offices of the East and West India Companies and the Admiralty, and, after the Revolution, the bonded warehouse (*Entrepot*), maritime offices, and head offices of some financial giants.[9] Since it could boast of few really beautiful buildings, objects of public expenditure, or public institutions, the city's memory fixed itself much less on urban aesthetics than was the case with the much-lauded city outlay of Amsterdam. Ever since the nineteenth century Rotterdam had become a *transitopolis* with a public space lacking grace, of a rather common if not ugly aspect, dominated by the functionalism of the ever-growing harbour.

Rotterdam's civic memory fixed itself on the home-grown cultural practices of its commercial and patrician elites and its popular traditions, and on the civic dimensions of its social intercourse, appropriated as centuries-old features of the city's identity. It commemorated the character of its inhabitants as traditionally reflected in the unadorned design of the city and its buildings, in a spirit of working instead of spending, of living soberly together in the closely-knit communities of its numerous small alleys instead of displaying luxury in precious mansions, and of being tolerant towards the ideas and religious feelings

of other people – citizens, immigrants and foreigners alike. Gradually the town was redefined as a typical werkstad with a matter-of-fact and down-to-earth mentality, opposed to financial, cultural and highbrow Amsterdam and to government-bound The Hague, but also moving away from the beautiful physiognomy of the early modern koopstad it once had been.[10] Beauty had, in fact, become a purely private feature. Even the public park, 58 hectares in central Rotterdam, was the private property of the ship owner Van Hoboken until 1924.

In *Physiologie van Rotterdam*, a satirical description of the city's population published in 1844, four categories of citizens and their life styles are distinguished: the small but solid commercial and financial elite (the 'decent youngsters') close to the upper middle classes (the '*Jannen*', who follow and imitate the elite), oppose the lower middle classes (the '*Pieten*'), and the mass of the population 'at the crossing between man and brute animal', who consciously reject elite culture (the '*Huipen*').[11] What was then and probably remains characteristic of Rotterdam is the cultural distance between the city's traditional elites and the global population, native or immigrant. In the absence of a notable middling group, the social distance between the upper categories and the other communities continues to persist, notwithstanding the rise of modernity in the urban community during the pre-war period, and of present-day gentrification.[12]

Two major developments changed the physical space of the city in the nineteenth century: as population grew from 60,000 in 1809 through 90,000 in 1849 to 318,000 in 1900 and 580,000 in 1938, the city broke out of its seventeenth-century walls and started to expand on the right bank of the Meuse, around the old nucleus; simultaneously, the commercial elite developed both the harbour, by digging a new waterway towards the sea (Nieuwe Waterweg, 1872), and the city's new, industrial vocation on the left bank of the river. Industrial settlements linked to the harbour were created, factories for the manufacture of goods produced from the increasing masses of imported raw materials, including refined oil products and chemicals, and, in the Feijenoord area, shipyards devoted to vessels built to serve the growing transatlantic and Asian maritime traffic. The new industries provoked a mass immigration of workers who settled on the left bank in a completely new city with its own physical characteristics and its own sense of identity.

In the great werkstad that Rotterdam had become within the Dutch global economy, the left bank, called for short 'South' (*Zuid*), was a double-dyed working district. Generally speaking, the urban outlay on the left bank was much poorer; it was virtually destitute of public

facilities, with the exception of a few churches and social or health care institutions, and remnants of former villages. The first global development plan of this mostly privately constructed area was created in 1922. Since institutions of high culture remained reserved exclusively to the north side of the city right up to the last decades of the twentieth century, the south developed its own brand of popular culture with a particular civic memory. Whereas native middle-class inhabitants and, in the poorer quarters, dock-workers dominated on the right bank, immigrant labourers – first Dutch, then foreign – did so on the left bank. They favoured their own emblematic football team: Sparta in the north, Feijenoord in the south, Excelsior for the middle classes in the more well-to-do Eastern districts, especially Kralingen. Moreover, the immigrants were predominantly either stern, orthodox Calvinists from the Zeeland isles or the remote northern provinces, or Roman Catholics from Brabant, as opposed to the rather liberal colour of old-town Protestantism, with its strongly established Catholic, Remonstrant (Arminian), Lutheran, Mennonite, and Jewish minorities and its host of foreign seamen's churches.

## Local history and globalization

The two halves of the city, approximately of equal size, have grown apart in the city's civic memory, in spite of the city council's efforts to establish bridges between them in urban space and urban culture. The south has barely adopted the historical memory of the old town in the north, and the north has largely ignored the memory and indeed the very existence of the south. In recent decades, however, new developments have challenged this physical and cultural segregation: the decline of industry and shipbuilding and the gradual move of the harbour downstream towards the sea; the unifying efforts of the city council to relocate cultural facilities, financial and judicial institutions, and administrative offices in the south; but, above all, the influx of large numbers of immigrants from outside Europe into the urban space, constituting new ethnic communities all around the city. At present, 50 per cent (scheduled to rise to 55 per cent by 2015) of the population of Rotterdam, representing 173 nationalities, consists of first- or second-generation immigrants from non-Western ethnic groups.[13] In 2009 Rotterdam became the first great European city to elect a mayor born in an Islamic community outside Europe (Ahmed Aboutaleb, born in 1961 in Morocco).

These new population groups have changed radically the cultural and religious landscape of the town, not only by the mass introduction of Islamic culture and religion, including several huge mosques and an

Islamic university,[14] but also by reinforcing Roman Catholicism as well as free evangelical movements through the influx of immigrants from Caribbean and African countries, particularly from former Portuguese colonies. Moreover, upward mobility has played a centrifugal role in the physical space. The late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century districts surrounding the city centre have progressively been abandoned by the original white population as they migrated to suburbs at or outside the municipality's borders and subjected to a process of gentrification. Moreover, they witnessed the construction of expensive apartment towers in the new city centre and on the prestigious renovated Wilhelmina Pier on the left bank. At present the older districts around the city centre are predominantly occupied by communities of foreign origin. This urban redistribution has huge consequences for the civic memory of the town. On the one hand, it may redress the former divisions, linking the right and the left banks in one common cultural space. On the other, once the native population has left the renewed city centre, its ancient civic memory is in danger of disappearing. The appropriation of the historical memory of the old town by its present-day population is hindered by the fact that they barely recognize it as their own, and that the physical space provides very few clues to aid such identification, other than the memory of wartime destruction and subsequent reconstruction.

Although the ever-growing harbour has slowly crept towards the North Sea and moved away from the city centre, employing, moreover, many fewer workers than in the times of manual labour, it remains Rotterdam's pride. The alderman in charge of the harbour of the 'World Port World City', as Rotterdam calls itself, is still the virtual master of the city's infrastructure and public space. The memory of the ocean steamers and of the thousands of poor Europeans coming every year from as far afield as Russia to migrate from Rotterdam to the promised land of America is one of the strongest nostalgic elements of the city's historical memory.[15] The restored departure hall and the early twentieth-century office building (now the Hotel New York) of the Holland America Line are not only celebrated landmarks on the river but also much-visited places of memory for former emigrants. The annual 'World Harbour Days' in September, featuring a parade of giant ships, mercantile as well as naval, are still one of the most popular memorial events of the town.

## May 1940: the catastrophe

Everything changed for Rotterdam on 14 May 1940.[16] In the early afternoon of the fourth day after Germany had declared war on the Netherlands, a German air squadron carried out a bombing raid on

the city centre, intending to compel the local army forces to surrender, but apparently starting the attack before the ultimatum for the town's capitulation had expired, that is to say against the conventions of warfare. Right from the start things went wrong: the water supply for the town's fire engines was destroyed by accident, and in spite of the probably limited objectives of the bombing operation, the whole city centre almost immediately took fire. It proved impossible to save the densely built centre of Rotterdam. Over a period of days, the fire took hold and destroyed one street after another. Virtually every monument charged with historical memory was destroyed: St Laurent's Church, the former City Hall, the old Exchange, the municipal museum, all the historic churches of the different Christian communities and the two Jewish synagogues, the impressive rows of old and new merchant houses on the Meuse embankment and the main canals. In all, 850 inhabitants died, thousands were injured, 24,000 houses and 11,000 other buildings were destroyed, and 80,000 people lost their homes and belongings. The only buildings in the old centre that escaped the fire were those which had recently been built on larger plots, isolated from the common streets: the new City Hall, the central Post Office, and the Municipal Library, the new Exchange, still under construction when the war broke out, the so-called White House, one of the very first office towers in Europe built in 1897–98, and some department stores and bank offices.

For our theme, the destruction of the city centre is crucial for three reasons: physical, urban, and civic. Firstly, it was of the cause of a complete change of the *physical* space, and generated a continual discussion on urban policy in the following years. Secondly, the unending debate, nourished by civic nostalgia, on the motives, causes, and intentionality of the bombing has become one of the most vivid and durable elements of the city's *urban* memory.[17] Moreover, this discussion theme still animates a substantial proportion of the Rotterdam-born and Rotterdam-bred inhabitants who, as firm believers in their ill fate, distinguish themselves sharply from professional historians, 'impartial' observers, and the bulk of the immigrant population. In their civic memory, the 'terror bombing' was the result of a conspiracy, or a deliberate attempt at the total destruction of the city and its historical memory, and there is no place whatsoever in their narrative for elements of accident or for debate about German motives.[18]

**Victimization**

The key-word here is victimization. In the conscious dimension of urban memory, Rotterdam shares its experience with a range of 'twin'

cities such as Coventry, Dresden, and Warsaw, whose hearts were wiped out during the Second World War, as guiltless victims of massive bombing, sustained Blitz, or systematic destruction. Now including post-9/11 New York, these cities have long tended to consider themselves in their urban discourse as 'innocent towns', immolated by a malevolent enemy depicted in terms of sheer evil. Compressing their whole urban memory of wartime into a single event produced by their nemesis, they have obscured or deliberately 'forgotten' the bombings by friends, i.e. the Allied forces. Feelings of sorrow and other elements of civic memory have been almost exclusively redirected towards the disaster inflicted on the city by the demonstrable, demonized enemy. The catastrophe thus gradually became coextensive with the city's historical self-awareness, expelling all those memories that might harm the sense of uniqueness of the experience and the victimization of the city. The city's memory turned in upon itself and its 'glocal' dimension increasingly became merely local.

This self-sufficient urban memory was reinforced by the fact that the ancient city centre of Rotterdam enjoyed neither a symbolic status in the nation's history nor a reputation for urban beauty, as was the case for Amsterdam, The Hague, or Utrecht. Therefore, the catastrophe remained very much the subject of local emotions, an event which the Dutch population outside Rotterdam felt only remotely concerned with. Local and national memory interfered in the intellectual understanding of the event and its assimilation in national historiography, but the reconstruction of Rotterdam's city centre never became a truly national concern, either in discourse or in practice. In spite of the celebratory discourse of Dutch architects, Rotterdam's new cityscape remains more associated emotionally with foreign city planning and transnational architecture than with Dutch urban typology.

## Communicative memory and cultural memory

The third reason for the centrality of the city centre's destruction has to do with its role in the *civic* memory of the town. Indeed, the catastrophe has largely wiped out the city's centuries-long pre-war history, which has been replaced by a short-term resilient history starting from the fact of the destruction as a new beginning of the city's existence, quasi *ab ovo*. This is not to say that the city's earlier history has disappeared from urban self-consciousness, but for the elderly people who still feel concerned by the city's pre-war history it has become an object of incommensurable nostalgia, expressed, for instance, in the production

of endless series of picture albums with reproductions of postcards from the lost city, and in local exhibitions. Most popular are the visual enigmas asking identification of a vanished cityscape that are regularly presented to the readers in local newspapers. They invariably provoke a long series of enthusiastic and committed reactions.[19] Virtually all the comments concern either the former civic use of the city's space or the cultural practices of its inhabitants, revealing how strongly the physical appropriation of the ancient city has marked the identification of the readers with the town's civic memory and how much of the ancient civic memory survives only in a nostalgic form of urban anamnesis.[20] The rebuilt city has become a landscape of virtual memory for the native population recalling its lost liveliness and supposed splendour.[21]

In fact, during the slowly expanding fire many historical objects were able to be saved. In addition, fortunately, the municipal archives were located in a nineteenth-century area outside the bombing perimeter. Hence, local historical societies continue to flourish and a range of museums can display the town's pre-war history.[22] Whereas in the urban space the perception of the continuity of local history is still safe, in the civic space, that of the personal appropriation of the town's memory, there is a *before* and an *after*. The *before* is only recognized, and often charged with nostalgia, by those who either by personal experience or by shared transmission remember the pre-1940 past. The *after*-1940, however, dominates public perception of the city's history. May 1940 is its true limit and barrier.

We may use here the distinction proposed by Jan Assmann between the individually transmitted, informal and embodied *communicative* memory of the three- or four-generation chain of living experience, and the solidified, institutionalized and ritualized mediated *cultural* memory of those who no longer have a personal link with the perception of the past.[23] According to such analytical categories, the city's pre-war history is slowly sliding down into a phase of cultural memory that lacks the critical incentive of the committed witness. Moreover, in the now well established diversity of the civic memories of multi-ethnic Rotterdam there is barely any place for historical appropriation of that culturally distant and physically invisible past, wiped out from any form of everyday perception. In Rotterdam more than anywhere else in the Netherlands, the pre-1940 past has become 'a foreign country'.

## Trauma and commemoration

If the destruction of the city centre really made 1940 a watershed in the history of the city's physical, urban and civic space, that was due

less to the bombing itself than to the subsequent fire that destroyed most of the historical centre, and to the decisions taken by the city administration with regard to reconstruction.[24] Since the reconstruction period imposed a new beginning on Rotterdam, its physical consequences have been comparable in significance to those of the Golden Age for Amsterdam. Rotterdam's self-understanding is now closely knit to its own destruction and reconstruction. In 1948 the city's coat of arms was given a new motto: '*Sterker door strijd*' – 'Stronger by struggle', referring to what the town had gone through during the war. In fact, civic memory has focused much more on destruction than on survival.

The most sensitive of the sixty commemorative war monuments of Rotterdam, and probably the only *lieu de mémoire* of wartime that is shared by everybody, is not the official monument 'Resurgent Rotterdam' (*Herrijzend Rotterdam*) located in front of the City Hall, made in 1957 by the Dutch sculptor Mari S. Andriessen (1897–1979) and representing the resurrection of the town through the citizens' resistance to the oppressor. Rather, it is the statue designed by the Russian sculptor Ossip Zadkine (1890–1967) on the instruction of the department store De Bijenkorf that had partly survived the destructions and wanted to honour its many Jewish employees who had fallen victim to the war and the holocaust. Andriessen's monument is the site of official commemorations and remains linked to mass manifestations honouring resistance to injustice of whatever kind. It is the war monument of the urban memory, the object of formal commemoration and other urban rituals.

Zadkine's statue, in contrast, is the civic object of pride and sorrow, a place where mourning is permitted, and where trauma, nostalgia and emotion can express itself freely, eventually even against the official discourse on the war. Conceived by Zadkine himself in 1947 during a quick passage through still-ruined Rotterdam, designed in 1949 and unveiled in 1953 after a heated debate on its symbolism, it represents 'The Destroyed City' in the form of a distressed man deprived of his heart and with his hands thrown in the air in sheer despair. In spite of ongoing discussions on what it represents and where it is best placed, it has conquered the town's civic memory and is endowed with near-sacred status in the perception of those who remember the war as a meaningful episode in the history of the city. Affectionately called '*Jan Gat*' – 'John Hole' or '*Jan met de Handjes*' – 'John Little-Hands' by the local population, it is the subject of urban legends, just like the other iconic statue in the town, that of its most famous native, Erasmus. Its maker, Zadkine, has been adopted as a citizen of the Rotterdam, lending his name to educational institutions and private companies.

Only recently has civic memory managed to diversify its scope, to direct its attention towards other elements of the city's history, and to get over the all-empowering war trauma focused on the city's victimization. New attention is now given to the many other bombings of the city, those of virtually all harbour equipment by the German invaders, and those of peripheral districts by the Allied forces, such as the 'forgotten bombing' of 31 March 1943 that destroyed in error a whole quarter of the Delfshaven district and caused more than 400 deaths.[25] Allied Forces attacked the city 128 times causing 884 deaths – as many as the May 1940 bombing. The diversification of the war trauma is proof of the gradual rise of a more balanced cultural memory beyond the extremes of hitherto predominant communicative memory, and of the victory of the civic dimension in urban memory.

## Appropriations of the urban space

The destruction of physical space is vital for civic memory because it involves not only a terrible wartime episode, but also a strong element of urban memory. In fact, after the May 1940 bombing many buildings could have been saved or restored, but the destruction wrought by the German invader chimed with pre-war ideas about urban planning. As early as 1930, city architect Willem G. Witteveen (1891–1979) had been charged with planning improvements to the accessibility of the city centre, creating some major routes through the built-up area and more open space, and assuring a more fluid circulation. Several measures to relieve congestion in the city centre were initiated before the war, including the first tunnel under the river Meuse (1937–1942), part of a new major thoroughfare laid down at some distance from the old town. The construction of the new City Hall, the Post Office and the new Exchange along the Coolsingel, a former rampart converted into the main city boulevard, with department stores, cinemas and bank offices, had already eliminated a large number of small insalubrious alleys and inaugurated the gradual shift of the city's core towards the nineteenth-century extension on the west side of the old centre. The Coolsingel had become the central thoroughfare of the town and the location of its most prestigious buildings.

On 18 May 1940, four days after the bombing, while the city still burned, Witteveen was charged with the reconstruction. He intended to create a modern business centre with only limited housing potential, but his architectural preferences were rather traditional. In 1941 he proposed a compromise solution, respecting most of the old city grid but

permitting at the same time a rationalization of its physiognomy and building characteristics, and a redistribution of the city centre's urban functions. Parkways had to bring nature into the built area.

Others, however, were tempted by a *tabula rasa* policy. Although it was incompatible with the maintenance of a vigorous civic memory, the wiping-clean approach nevertheless seduced two parties concerned with the city's fate. There were the dreams of grandeur by the members of the so-called 'Club Rotterdam', a group of influential citizens, mostly industrial entrepreneurs and merchants personally concerned about the future of the city, several of them being also touched by the loss of their properties. The club was presided by Cees H. van der Leeuw (1890–1973), a theosophist and holistic thinker, and the ambitious director of the Van Nelle coffee, tea and tobacco factory, whose office and factory building built in 1925–1931 by Brinkman & Van der Vlugt is a masterpiece of modernist architecture. For van der Leeuw and his fellow club members total modernization was the way a renewed and expanding Rotterdam of global importance and worldwide influence had to go.

The Club was vehemently opposed to a historicizing reconstruction of the city in neo-gothic, neo-renaissance or neo-whatever style. In fact, during and after the war four different models were applied to the reconstruction of the destroyed Dutch cities. A historicizing, even nostalgic reconstruction in supposedly regional style marks Middelburg in Zeeland, where the ideology of the Delft school of architecture and urbanism has been applied; traditionalist repairs of damaged town neighbourhoods, conserving at least the old cityscape and the street grid have been carried out in Venlo and Tiel; modernist repair characterizes Arnhem, Nijmegen and Eindhoven; and *tabula rasa*, the most radical solution, applies in Rotterdam.[26] In spite of local appeals in favour of the Delft school ideology, the Club Rotterdam rejected any form of nostalgia or provincialism. It looked forward to a reconstruction using Manhattan's rational grid and aspired at the redevelopment of Rotterdam as a metropolis similar to its trans-Atlantic twin city.

The importance of the American connection cannot be overemphasized. The United States of America was not only a long-standing commercial partner of many Rotterdam companies, and the country to which the emigrants departing from Rotterdam were headed, but also provided the mental map for the city's future. In its campaign to overrule city architect Witteveen, the club found an ally in a second party – government officials at The Hague (by then controlled by the Nazis) who advanced arguments of efficiency, money and time. They pleaded in favour of a completely new city marked by another kind of grandeur,

inspired by Hitler's and Albert Speer's architectural taste. Against the explicit desire of the Rotterdam council that intended to preserve 144 of the damaged buildings, including the old city grid, the national government decided, therefore, to clear as soon as possible the whole central area touched by the bombs and the fire, destroying buildings that had survived or were restorable, and including even the buildings' foundations in the cleansing operation. Several of the many canals of the town were filled in with the debris, and a huge artificial ski slope outside the town constitutes another remnant of the past ignored by its users. Only two historic buildings escaped final destruction: the late medieval St Laurent's Church, and the baroque Schielandshuis built in 1662–1665 for the regional Water Board. A third building that was intended to be saved, the monumental Delftse Poort, a 1764 neo-classical city gate that was in the process of relocation when the bombs fell, was finally sacrificed. On 18 May 1995, the fiftieth anniversary of the start of the city's reconstruction, a steel replica of the gate designed by Cor Kraat (*1946) and incorporating some of its surviving remnants was inaugurated on a nearby location as a nostalgic place of memory of the old town.

## Urban space and civic memory

During the war, reconstruction of the city proved impossible for material reasons. In the years 1944–1946 Van der Leeuw became a delegate to the post-war Dutch government for the reconstruction of Rotterdam, which assured him of considerable influence on the process. The delay permitted in 1946 the elaboration of a new *Basisplan* by town architect Cornelis van Traa (1899–1970), who had taken over from Witteveen's in 1944.[27] It ran counter to Witteveen's idea of a harmonious cityscape but, in a spirit of perfectibility (*maakbaarheid*), insisted on modernity without totally sacrificing the reminiscences of the physical past in the new urban outlay. The result was a hybrid city map: broad thoroughfares bearing the name of former small alleys recalled lost buildings or urban functions without showing them physically, and the Grote Markt became a huge parking lot. The market was relocated, but recovered its former position in a huge Market Hall inaugurated in October 2014.

Van Traa's *Basisplan* certainly led to the realization of a new cityscape. Unrecognisable to the urban memory of past generations, it has prevented the appropriation of civic memory as a continuum between pre-war and post-war Rotterdam. Deprived of any form of global evidence of the physical past, civic memory now attaches itself

emotionally to spurious relics retrieved every now and then, almost at random, such as the remnant of a medieval city wall suspended in the Blaak subway station. Strong opposition by the local population in the 1990s prevented the removal of the last pre-war bridge on the Meuse, called the 'Hef' (the Lift-bridge), a 1878-built cast-iron construction charged with the nostalgia of the industrial phase of the city's past, and the most popular symbolic link between the right and the left bank. Similarly, after the removal of the nineteenth-century elevated railway through the city centre in the early 1990s, which met with a huge resistance from the population as well as from urban planners, the other urban elevated railway (the initial part of the Hofpleinlijn) has been saved and will be repurposed for civic use. The city authorities have finally rewarded the nostalgic memory of the vanished town with a virtual memory performance designed by architect Adriaan Geuze (*1960).[28] The boundaries of the great fire of May 1940, called the *Brandgrens*, still perceptible in the built environment for a keen observer, have been enhanced by a nightly son et lumière projection, a 30-stage audio tour, and a series of LED-armatures sunk into the pavement and marking the *Brandgrens* (Figure 2.1)

*Figure 2.1* A projection in 2007 of the Rotterdam 'Brandgrens' of 1940, commissioned by Rotterdam Festivals and conceived by Mothership, Rotterdam (photo by Bas Czerwinski)

## Reconstruction

Meanwhile, the reconstruction of the physical environment of the city centre after the war has created its own urban and civic memory. As early as 1947, when the city started to be rebuilt, 18 May was proclaimed Construction Day (*Opbouwdag*), renamed Reconstruction Day (*Wederopbouwdag*) in 1950, to commemorate the new beginning of the town's urban history and revive civic spirit. The major buildings of the first post-war reconstruction campaign have become physical landmarks in their own right, replacing and eliminating the memory of the pre-war built area, such as the Blijdorp Zoo and the Central Railway Station (1957, demolished in 2007), both by architect Van Ravesteyn, with the adjoining Post Office by the brothers Kraaijvanger (1959) and the Groot Handelsgebouw by Maaskant. With 110,000 square metres of useful surface for offices and showrooms, this was initially Europe's biggest shared office building, USA-inspired, conceived as early as 1944 and opened in 1951. The post-war city is now distinguished by several huge bank office buildings also designed by Kraaijvanger Architects along the Coolsingel, the Blaak and the Schiekade (former canals filled in with the city's 1940 ruins), department stores such as Vroom & Dreesmann by Kraaijvanger in 1950, Ter Meulen by Van den Broek & Bakema, 1951, and De Bijenkorf by Marcel Breuer, 1957, with the monumental, abstract, but highly popular sculpture by Naum Gabo in front of the store, facing the preserved new Exchange, office buildings such as Shell, 1960, and in particular the Lijnbaan shopping mall, the first pedestrian shopping centre in Europe, jointly designed by Van den Broek & Bakema and opened in 1953 parallel to the Coolsingel thoroughfare. Outside the city centre, harbour facilities play a similar role, not to speak of new town districts, such as Pendrecht on the left bank, conceived in the early 1950s with housing conditions which were then of a revolutionary novelty, now notorious as a pauperized problem area.

Under pressure from concerned citizens and local organizations for the preservation of post-war achievements, most of the great reconstruction-era buildings are now acquiring heritage status. They are preserved and remembered as material testimonies to the early days of the new, second history of the city. The Lijnbaan, in particular, continues to play the role of the emotional, physically embodied heart of the city's new civic memory. It is appropriated over and over again by citizens and users of the town in the often irregular, unconscious and uncontrolled ways that Michel de Certeau has characterized as citizens' tactics, as opposed to the city authorities' strategy. Every attempt to change its

physiognomy or to modernize its appearance provokes an upsurge of resistance to the urban authorities and the city planners. Yet, the city keeps changing. New idiom emerges for its urban identity and civic memory. Present-day Rotterdam has evolved from a post-war industrial city into a post-industrial phase, the ever-growing harbour moving away and becoming invisible to the general population. The harsh, masculine, twentieth-century working town ideology is being replaced by a sexier, feminized image of the 'city lounge', subject to 'gentrification', codified in the *Binnenstadsplan 2008–2030*.[29]

## Old and new civic narratives

At present, the diversity of problems – discontinuity of physical space, huge changes in urban space, and the varieties of city experience in the civic space – constitutes a tremendous challenge for the unity of the city's memory. In Rotterdam, local memory seems deemed to remain a fragmented group memory: disparate elements include the new civic memory of ethnic immigrants, the urban memory of privileged social groups, and the historical memory of the town restricted to the few still-cohesive areas. Paradoxically, the city's centre itself is less historicized now than at any previous time in civic memory. Through heavy deployment of city-marketing the cultural experts and the cultural elite, the 'creative classes' of Rotterdam, are trying to achieve the representation of the city, especially its new centre, as a true metropolis.[30] Although the image of Rotterdam as 'Manhattan on the Meuse' still holds as part of its citizens' pride, other, more convivial, images of the city are constantly being thrown up.

The physical discontinuity in the city's built area was addressed by Orhan Kaya (*1973), a former Alderman responsible for participation and culture (2006–2008), and himself of Turkish origin. In a public statement he reflected on the character of Rotterdam's real monuments for the future: instead of long-vanished buildings, such memories should be the narratives cherished by the members of the different ethnic groups, including the original Dutch population itself. For him, the pre-1940 history of the city – which he never experienced in person – is a world that has been irredeemably lost because of the disappearance of its physical evidence. This makes it virtually impossible for newcomers to appropriate its features, its functions and its meaning. Yet, in his view the narratives constructed by the various communities around the few surviving monuments of the past, such as multifunctional St Laurent's Church, Erasmus's statue, the City Hall and the Holland America Line

offices must be able in the future to unite the city's inhabitants in a shared, but richly diverse historical memory.[31]

Actually, some of those narratives underpin the genesis of a new civic memory. One of the strongest elements, acceptable to all population groups without exception, old and new, is the narrative of Rotterdam as a city of toleration or, in the present-day ethnicized idiom, of mutual 'respect'. In fact, the most important advocates of toleration in the Golden Age, during which the Dutch Republic became the European paragon of that civic virtue, are closely linked to the history of Rotterdam and its urban memory. This was personified in the life and work of two of the city's great attorneys, Hugo Grotius(1583–1645), the founder of international maritime law, and Joan van Oldenbarnevelt (1547–1619), the founder of the East India Company. Both are remembered as forebears of liberal thinking, and traditional Dutch tolerance. Their memory, and the city's reputation, attracted many refugees to Rotterdam, among whom are numbered John Locke (1632–1704) and Pierre Bayle (1647–1706), authors of the first mature theoretical treatises on religious and civic toleration.[32]

## Rotterdam's icon of toleration: Erasmus

A remarkable comeback in that field is that of the city's most famous son, Desiderius Erasmus (1466/69–1536).[33] In a public poll of October 2009, Erasmus has been elected Rotterdam's 'greatest inhabitant ever' with 56 per cent of the votes, before the immensely popular, legendary boxing hero Bep van Klaveren (1907–1992) who like Erasmus has been awarded with a popular statue, but in a district outside the city centre.[34] Immediately after Erasmus's death his birth-place became the object of veneration by his international admirers. As early as 1549 the city council erected a statue of Erasmus in the market square – probably the first statue of a secular person erected north of the Alps. In 1622, it was replaced by a bronze statue of the scholar reading a book, designed by Hendrick de Keyser (1565–1621), which still stands in front of St Laurent's Church. Having survived all the wars, it has attracted some urban legends, the oldest, dating from the seventeenth century, being that Erasmus will turn a page of his open book as soon as he hears the church bells striking midnight.[35]

Erasmus became the totem of Rotterdam, its icon and the secular saint embodying the values of toleration, moderation and learning that the town's elite stood for. The local university, the main bridge, several streets, subway and railway lines, and many societies and companies bear his name. The municipality actively promotes his reputation as

the typical representative of the city's spirit. Quite recently Erasmus has proved to be fit for the challenge of religious and ethnic diversity. In 2008, a joint picture of two Christian and Muslim champions of toleration, Erasmus and Rumi (or Mevlana, 1207–1273), was painted on the outer wall of a Rotterdam mosque. And the first tattooed Erasmus-addict has already been spotted on the streets of Rotterdam.

## New global civic rituals

The cultural diversity of present-day globalized Rotterdam has instilled new rituals in the civic memory, such as the already traditional Summer Carnival of the Caribbean and Cape-Verdian population, organized for the first time in 1984, the Dunya Festivals, or Poetry International. The Summer Carnival unites the Southern and Northern halves of the city in a unique parade. Neglecting the traditional pre-war urban memory, it adopts as its natural environment the newly coloured multi-ethnic districts of the nineteenth-century town, enabling the formation of a new global civic memory. Many other shifts in urban practices, rituals and memory may be mentioned related to the changing composition of Rotterdam's population, its distribution over the city area, and the interplay between the city's top-down policy and bottom-up popular initiatives. By memorializing in a 2011 exhibition the many urban rituals of the city, Rotterdam Museum has at the same time fostered their participation.

One of the most exciting initiatives to enhance the continuity of civic memory aims at the personal appropriation of the city's history by its youth.[36] Rotterdam Museum's Panorama Project, started in 2007, organized an exhibition of 300 photographs in 2011 showing young schoolchildren from ten town districts. Drawn from all the city's ethnic groups, each of them exhibited a personal or family object related to former times in Rotterdam. One boy showed a picture of his grandfather's delivery service, another exhibited a pre-war map of the city in homage to his grandparents, a girl displayed relics of her religious experience. All 300 children were visibly proud to expose their intimate relations with the recent or historic past. In the future they may well come to embody the global civic memory of a once more undivided town, proud of its urban history.

## Notes

1. For the city as a privileged *lieu de mémoire* in the Netherlands, Frijhoff, 1993, 'La ville: lieu de mémoire de l'Europe moderne?'; van Vree, 2008, 'Locale geschiedenis'.

2. For the theoretical background: Frijhoff, 1989, 'De stad en haar geheugen'; Erll and Nünning (eds.), 2008, *Cultural Memory Studies*; Assmann, 1999, *Erinnerungsräume*; Tilmans, van Vree and Winter (eds.), 2010, *Performing the Past*, pp. 35–50.
3. de Certeau, 1984, *The Practice of Everyday Life*.
4. On the changing relation between the physical space of the city and the harbour: Meyer, 1996, *De stad en de haven*.
5. This contribution focuses on the city as a whole, not on the community memories of particular groups or urban districts. On the history of Rotterdam: van der Schoor, 1999, *Stad in aanwas*; van de Laar, 2000, *Stad van formaat. Geschiedenis van Rotterdam in de negentiende en twintigste eeuw*; van de Laar and van Jaarsveld, 2007, *Historical Atlas of Rotterdam*. For the urban and civic memory of ancient and new Rotterdam: Frijhoff, 1989, 'Rotterdam herkend'; Frijhoff, 1993, 'Beelden, verhalen, daden: stadscultuur'.
6. van de Laar, 1998, *Veranderingen in het geschiedbeeld*.
7. de Klerk, 1998, *Particuliere plannen*.
8. ter Molen (ed.), *150 jaar Museum Boijmans van Beuningen*; van Wijnen, 2004, *D.G. van Beuningen*.
9. On the *werkstad* concept: Van de Laar, 2000, *Stad van formaat*, p. 301.
10. Van de Laar, 2000, *Stad van formaat*, p. 393.
11. Dutillieux and van der Voo, 1844, *Physiologie van Rotterdam*. On this work: van Ravesteyn, 1942, *Rotterdamsche cultuur vóór honderd jaar*; Rogier, 1948, *Rotterdam tegen het midden van de negentiende eeuw*.
12. Cf. the richly illustrated volume by Halbertsma and van Ulzen (eds.), 2001, *Interbellum Rotterdam*.
13. Cf. Engbersen, Snel and Weltevrede, 2005, *Sociale herovering in Amsterdam en* Rotterdam, pp. 26–28.
14. The Mevlana Mosque in the northern part of the city matches the Essalam Mosque in the southern part, near the Feijenoord stadium. The latter, put into use in 2010, is one of the five biggest mosques in Western Europe.
15. Zevenbergen, 1990, *Toen zij uit Rotterdam vertrokken*.
16. For a detailed analysis see the monumental synthesis by van der Pauw, 2006, *Rotterdam in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*.
17. Transcripts of emotionally charged testimonies about the catastrophe by eye-witnesses, recorded in 1968–1969, are conserved in the Municipal Archives of Rotterdam. A selection has been published by Wagenaar, 1970 [2008], *Rotterdam mei '40*. Testimonies from German eye-witnesses: Holl, 1998, *Die Tragödie von Rotterdam*.
18. Protagonists of the thesis of intentional destruction or terror bombing are: Elfferich, 1983, *Eindelijk de waarheid nabij*; Elfferich, 1990, *Rotterdam werd verraden*; Hasselton, 1999, *Het bombardement van Rotterdam*.
19. For instance, the 'Waar was dat nou?' ['Where was this?'] feature in the widely read semi-monthly newspaper for elderly citizens *De Oud-Rotterdammer*. See also the civic memory of everyday life in pre-war Rotterdam by van Geldermalsen, 2002, *Toen zij naar Rotterdam vertrokken*, and the website www.ditisrotjeknor.nl (accessed 11 October 2014), with links to other sites with pre-war photos or nostalgic memories. Rotjeknor is the popular nickname of Rotterdam in the realm of civic memory.
20. See for other examples of popular civic memory the very first collection going back to 1940: Hazelzet, 1940, *Rotterdam zooals wij het kenden*.

21. On a local level, this concurs with some of the perspectives developed by Gerson, 2003, *The Pride of Place*.
22. 'Roterodamum', the historical society founded in 1947 to cover the historical trajectory of the city, counted 2,700 contributing members in November 2009. Its yearbook goes back to 1888.
23. Jan Assmann, 2008, 'Communicative and cultural memory'.
24. Roelofsz, 1989, *De frustratie van een droom*; Wagenaar, 1993, *Welvaartsstad in wording*.
25. A similar evolution has taken place at Nijmegen, where the disastrous and murderous 'bombing by mistake' by the Allied Forces of 22 February, 1944, causing 500 deaths but long virtually concealed from public discourse, has recently been reincorporated into the canon of urban history. See J. Rosendaal, 2009, *Nijmegen '44*. As in the case of the 'terror bombing' thesis at Rotterdam, this event has also been the object of a conspiracy hypothesis; cf. Brinkhuis, 1984, *De fatale aanval*.
26. Bosma and Wagenaar (eds.), 1995, *Een geruisloze doorbraak*. On Middelburg: van Gent and Sijnke, 2010, *Middelburg 17 mei 1940*.
27. van Traa, 1946, *Het nieuwe hart van Rotterdam;* Couperus, 'The Invisible Reconstruction'.
28. *Rotterdam: De brandgrens van 14 mei 1940*, 2007. See also the comparison of pre-war and post-war images of Rotterdam along the Fire Boundary by van de Laar and Hage (eds.), 2010, *Brandgrens Rotterdam*.
29. On the post-war change of the city's image from commercial to working city, and after 1970 to a modern city of culture: van de Laar, 2007, 'Het beeld van Rotterdam'. Similarly: van den Berg, 2012, 'Femininity as a city marketing strategy'; Willem Schinkel, 2012, *Het geheugenverlies van Rotterdam*.
30. van Ulzen, 2007, *Dromen van een metropool*.
31. http://www.rotterdam.nl/wonen_en_leven (accessed 22 October 2014).
32. Po-chia Hsia and van Nierop (eds.), 2002, *Calvinism and religious toleration*.
33. Visser-Isles, 1993, *Erasmus and Rotterdam*; van Ruler and Verbrugh (eds.), 2008, *Desiderius Erasmus*. For the conservation of Erasmus's memory in Rotterdam: http://www.erasmushuisrotterdam.nl accessed 11 October 2014; Frijhoff, 1998, *Heiligen, idolen, iconen,* pp. 60–63.
34. http://www.nu.nl/algemeen/2103323/erasmus-grootste-rotterdammer.html accessed 11 October 2014.
35. Elfferich (ed.), 1986, *Astie de klok hoort slaan*, p. 85.
36. *Panorama Rotterdam: 300 kinderen, 10 wijken, 1 stad* (Rotterdam, Museum Rotterdam, 2011).

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# 3

# The Politics of Street Names: Local, National, Transnational Budapest

*Emilia Palonen*

Commemorative 'city-text' – including street names and memorials – in Hungary has experienced transformations with every major shift in power-holding elites and their ideologies. This chapter examines street names in Budapest, showing how the 'city-text' is a mixture of local, national and transnational elements. Focusing on the transnational, it explores the shifts from the nineteenth century to the present.

The term 'city-text' was coined by Kevin McCarthy and later developed by Maoz Azaryahu to denote street names.[1] Since then, it has been extended to include memorials. In those polities where names and statues change relatively frequently, the city-text is a site of politicking whose power lies in the way in which the set of symbols offers an ideological matrix.[2] Commemorative city-text is a device for connecting the city in a cultural, geographical and politico-ideological fashion to the dominant trends in those areas, thus defining the city's and power-holding elite's location. Seen as everyday political symbols, street names are indeed deeply embedded in everyday experience,[3] even when they are mundanely passed by or quoted.

Names carry memories.[4] They seem natural because their meanings become diluted through everyday usage. In reality, though, every street naming or renaming has political dimensions, as it can be seen as an attempt to forge collective memory. The politics of history and memory is embedded in the practice of commemorative street-naming. Connotations of political symbols reveal the values of their authors even as those symbols become part of everyday reality. Street naming, especially commemorative street naming, has been a powerful tool to analyse totalitarian or semi-totalitarian contexts or simply the values of past regimes. Maoz Azaryahu, who has been a pioneer in this study

of history and geography of transitional cities, focuses on the changing city-text, street names and memorials in the GDR, Germany and Israel.[5]

This article, too, concentrates on official commemoration rather than exploring local usage. Azaryahu argues:

> The norm is that national memory is integrated into both officially controlled channels of social communication and spheres of human activity that *appear* to be exempted from ideological modulation. […] Commemorative street names [and statues] are an example as to how national memory is introduced into ordinary settings of everyday life.[6]

This chapter shows that not only national memory, but also local and transnational memory is present in the everyday life. Capital cities are never simply localities but, rather, sites where nationhood is expressed or articulated through political symbols and architecture. Cities are also linked to international networks. Ultimately, the history of the city-text in Budapest tells a history of the city itself. [7] It also recounts Hungarian and international history in general, which alternately form the limits and open possibilities for the city-text.

Street names in Budapest from the nineteenth century to the present include national, local, and international or transnational names, with different choices for each of the periods. While street-naming praxis has taken place for longer, changes to street names started in earnest in the nineteenth century. They have been recorded on an encyclopaedic dictionary of street names published in 1998 and 2003, with the latter edition including names from 1255 to 2003.[8] Heino Nyyssönen, Kenneth Foote and others have been influential in outlining developments in the early period of post-communism.[9] More recently Bodnar and Palonen have investigated the past and continuous post-communist period in street-naming,[10] as others have done for neighbouring countries.[11] This chapter also relies on the Budapest street name lists produced by Budapest City Hall in December 2001 and 2011, updated to May 2012.[12]

In post-communist Budapest street-naming practice has been in the hands of the municipal council for commemorative names, but transformations to the code on street naming have been experienced in recent years, while the municipal council's power has been eroding. Engaging with the transformation of the decision-making process, nevertheless, must be a subject of another study. Here, our focus is on the contents of the city-text.

## National revival on Budapest streets in the nineteenth century

Located physically on both banks of Danube, on the edge of a great plain, Budapest has often been the battleground between the 'East' and the 'West'. The Spring of Nations in 1848 awakened Hungarian nationalism, and, after suffering defeat in 1849, Hungarians gained a degree of independence in the 1867 Compromise with the Habsburgs. This established a dual monarchy, in which the Hungarian kingdom, incorporating Slovenia, Transylvania, Croatia and parts of Serbia, became an autonomous part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The cities of Buda, Pest and Óbuda on the banks of the Danube became the fast-growing centre of a multicultural kingdom. In 1873, they became one city, the city of Budapest, and the metropolitan capital.[13]

As elsewhere, early street names and statues in Budapest marked local places and thereby reflected local values. Rather than commemorative they were locative. In the multicultural metropolis of the early nineteenth century, names were multilingual. As Budapest's administration was German-speaking, maps show German names. During the era of national awakening, not only did the authorities translate German street names into Hungarian, but the expansion of the Pest–Buda metropolitan area also produced many new streets to name. The Chain Bridge, the first permanent bridge between Buda and Pest in 1836, the corresponding tunnel under Castle Hill, and the expansion of the railway network to all parts of the Hungarian kingdom in the nineteenth century, made Budapest one of the most important nodes in the European trade network.[14]

It was also the fastest-growing city on the continent, with its population doubling between 1869 and 1896, making it the eleventh-largest city in Europe by 1896 and the eighth-largest in 1910.[15] After the Compromise of 1867, it held a new position as the capital of the Hungarian kingdom, and its industrialization and growing trade helped boost a project of metropolization of the city. Like its idols, Vienna and Paris, Budapest became a centrally planned European capital, the continent's third.[16] It experienced a period of Hausmannization on the model of Vienna and, of course, Paris. This rapid transformation and modernization swept away much of old Pest–Buda. In the same way that Paris stressed its role as the metropolitan centre of the French nation, Budapest sought to emphasize the long history of Hungarian nationhood, rather than recognizing the different ethnic traditions within the territory of the kingdom. Through intensive migration from

the Hungarian-speaking countryside, as well as from Austria, Slovakia and Czech lands, the policy of monolingualism, and consequent assimilation of Slovaks, German-speakers and Jews, Budapest was transformed from 'a multi-ethnic city at the time of unification, into a city with Hungarian majority population by the millennium'.[17]

The city-text of the growing metropolitan city reflected the values of nation-building. Changes in street names started in the 1840s, with loud calls for Hungarianization of street names in Buda and Pest. Thirty-seven names were translated from German into Hungarian and twenty other streets were renamed. Street signs in German that had been posted under Maria Theresa and Joseph II were not transformed overnight into Hungarian ones. Eva Bodnar argues that this was due to the advances made with Hungarian usage on the state and local level – and the fact that the locals in Budapest were accustomed to using a number of languages in their daily activities.[18] The 1848–49 independence struggle brought revolutionary street names, albeit briefly. In 1846 the local people in Pest named their most important square after Szechényi, a moderate Hungarian revolutionary leader, known as the 'Greatest Hungarian', and the father of the Chain Bridge. During the revolution of 1848, streets in the Castle Hill were renamed after St Stephen and two revolutionary leaders, Batthyány and Kossuth, and Pest received its Free Press Street (*Szabadsajtó utca*), Freedom Square (*Szabadság tér*) and 15th March Square (*Március 15. tér*), named after the first day of the Hungarian revolution.

Old names were reinstated after the crushing of the riots, and two more squares were named after the Habsburg rulers Franz Joseph and Elisabeth in 1858. Streets in the new city districts were given Habsburg names, including Leopold, Theresa, Joseph and Franz, later also Elisabeth. After the Compromise and the institution of the dual monarchy in 1867, the Hungarian reformer Ferenc Deák had a street named after him, although the new name only became official after his death ten years later.[19] National toponymy was suppressed by imperial.

Budapest's population increased rapidly and underwent a real boom in the 1850s. 'By the late 1860s every third inhabitant was a newcomer...',[20] and indeed, many were of non-Hungarian origin. In Buda, Hungarians were traditionally a minority. Most of the inhabitants were German speaking administrative personnel, merchants or wine-growers, among whom there also were many Serbs. In Óbuda in the mid nineteenth century nearly half of the population were Jews who, with the rising economy and industrialization, gradually moved to Pest. Most of the Greeks, an old minority in Pest, returned to Greece after the

successful war of independence against the Ottomans. Those who stayed were assimilated into the Hungarian population, together with Serbs, Germans, Jews and Slovak workers.[21] Pest–Buda grew into a full-sized European capital, the second-largest city in the Habsburg Empire and the 16th-largest city in Europe, overtaking Milan, Brussels and Rome.[22] Nation-building through new street names and the replacement of German street names could only start after the Compromise in 1867 and the unification of Budapest in 1873. For multilingual Budapest, a strong magyarization process brought monolingual Hungarian and commemorative street names.

A tension between the nation-building and metropolitanism developed. The united city of Budapest was born in the time of nation-building, and it expanded rapidly throughout the nineteenth century. Besides urbanization, modernism implied also a move to standardize language and to create a unified dominant culture based on the Hungarian nation. That discourse on the Hungarian nation was reproduced in the city-text in competition with or as supplement trans/international, imperial and metropolitan discourses.

## Inter-war: from the Soviet Republic in 1919 to Berlinization

It was not the Spring of Nations but the First World War that finalized the independence of Hungary from the Habsburgs. Budapest became the capital of a Hungarian state shrunken to approximately one-third of its previous size. In the aftermath of the First World War, the short-lived Hungarian People's Republic led by Béla Kun (1919) initiated a period of intensive changes in the city-text. Imperial and royal statues were wrapped up and plaster statues erected, but street names were easier to change. The street names of the People's Republic focused on Hungarian rather than international heroes – unlike the new statues, which celebrated the international, for example erecting a plaster statue of Marx in Heroes' Square and removing those of Habsburg emperors.

New street names honoured Szentmarjay (1767–95), one of the Hungarian Jacobins, executed for treason in Vérmező on 20 May 1795;[23] Queen Elisabeth (Sisi) was replaced with Ilona Zrínyi (1643–1703), the mother of Ferenc Rákóczy II, an anti-Habsburg national hero who had already been commemorated in street names of the 16th district in the 1910s. One of the longest standing revolutionary renamings concerned *Váci körút*. This old name – which indicated the road to the city of Vác – was restored to replace that of emperor William (Wilhelm, *Vilmos*), who had been commemorated in 1914. *Vilmos* returned in 1926, only

to be replaced by the martyr and anti-fascist hero of the Budapest siege Bajcsy-Zsilinszky in 1945. That name remains. The street names, then, commemorated various Hungarian historical figures, who were thereby elevated to the status of heroes. Commemorative city-text celebrated local and national history while statues and memorials embraced internationalism.

The Trianon treaty of 1921 reduced Hungary's territory to a third of its former size. In Budapest, post-1921 immigrants were predominantly peasantry and unskilled workers from backward areas of the former Hungarian kingdom. In contrast, immediately after the First World War the incomers had been educated professionals, such as officials, teachers and railwaymen, from the annexed areas.[24] New immigrants lived an alienated life in the city, either in overcrowded working-class areas or in the suburbs where they might be able to maintain aspects of a peasant way of life, such as growing vegetables, but were separated from public utilities, education and urban culture.[25] Populist calls for the return of 'historic' pre-Trianon Hungarian lands and for a 'Hungarian' Budapest found resonance in the city, and right-wing politicians like István Tisza (1920, and 1999) and, later, right-wing power-holders achieved recognition and commemoration in the city-text. Miklós Horthy (1929) was commemorated in 23 districts. During this period a strong peasant movement drew on anti-metropolitan and, thus, anti-Budapest, literature by writers such as Dezső Szabó and László Németh,[26] which fell on fertile ground in some areas of Budapest. Nevertheless, Dezső Szabó was commemorated only in 1948, posthumously, and for a second time in 1990.[27]

During the inter-war period Hungary moved from the Habsburg/Viennese sphere of influence into that of Germany. The country became tied to the German economy, and cultural links to the German-speaking world strengthened and multiplied. Hungary, as many other Central and Eastern European countries, pursued pro-German policies. Characteristically, the square in front of Nyugati (Western) railway station had been called *Berlini tér* since 1913. Maintaining the Germanic theme it was renamed after Karl Marx in 1945, and only adopted the name of the station in 1992.

Ideologies of the 1930s and 1940s were clearly manifested in the city-text, although Michalski argues that Nazi public monuments were fewer in number than visual symbols of power erected by communists in Eastern Europe.[28] Along the city's main avenue, Andrássy, international alliances became visible through the renaming of squares. *Oktogon* was named after Mussolini (1936) and the next, less central, square on Andrássy towards the Heroes' Square, *Körönd* (Circus), became

*Hitler tér* (1938). The name *Mussolini tér* was first proposed in 1928, but it was awarded to the square only after Mussolini's Milan speech of 6 November 1936 in which he expressly endorsed the need to solve Hungarian's territorial claims. Afterwards, two more squares and two streets were named after Mussolini.[29] Only one street was named after Adolf Hitler. Here, transnationalism was related to international politics and the position of the peasantist authoritarian states of Central and Eastern Europe, which preferred Mussolini's fascism to Nazism.

During the inter-war period, the city-text of Budapest commemorated key international figures – and highlighted allegiance first to Mussolini and then to Hitler. Simultaneously, national pride was celebrated and the Treaty of Trianon mourned, often in an irredentist fashion, in the streets of Budapest. Metropolitanism was on the decline.

## Socialism: national and international

After an authoritarian inter-war period and the Second World War, during the last years of which some 40 per cent of the once 250,000 strong Jewish population was exterminated, Hungary, liberated by the Soviets, established a Soviet style state communist state. An intensive period of changes in the city-text followed. The necessity of removing irredentist statues and fascist street names was a driver for both the conditions for a wide-ranging symbolic political change – the removal of royalist and aristocratic names, and the creation of a symbolic void which had to be filled through the creation and manifestation of a new anti-fascist, later socialist, identity.[30]

The first steps were to address the transnational and bourgeois heritage – by substituting either local names, or different transnational ones. *Mussolini tér* (1936) reverted to *Oktogon*, *Hitler tér* to *Körönd*, and then in 1971 *Kodály körönd*. Aristocratic titles disappeared from the streets, and the Habsburgs as well as much of the Hungarian aristocracy were removed from the street maps. The central squares named after Habsburgs were renamed after the leaders of the victorious nations of the Second World War. The same vocabulary emerged elsewhere in Eastern Europe and even in Western Europe.[31] This is how Budapest got its first street-sign dedicated to Stalin in 1946, with *Erzsébet tér* in the heart of Budapest becoming *Sztálin tér*.[32] Roosevelt received his square next to the Danube when the *Ferenc József tér* was renamed, also in 1946, and, as in many other East European cities, such as Zagreb, he kept his standing until the recent changes. Churchill never got his name on the map, perhaps because he lost his post as prime minister during the naming period.[33]

The national canon was also taking shape. National heroes of the 1848 revolution considered progressive, such as Kossuth, Petőfi and Attila József, became some of the most important names in the socialist Hungarian canon of heroes. In the political centre of Budapest, *Grof. Tisza István utca* (Count István Tisza Street, 1925) became *József Attila utca* in 1945. The new Hungarian identity was also articulated through the city-text's recognition of martyrs of the Second World War. The left-wing anti-fascist resistance was seen as an appropriate group for glorification. Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky was made the most prominent figure of the Hungarian national resistance, eternalized in numerous memorial plaques on one of the main streets of the capital, as well as in other Hungarian cities. Bajcsy-Zsilinszky was a cautious choice, as he had moved left, from an officer in Horthy's regime to an anti-fascist leader. Having been killed at the end of the war, his reputation could not be ruined.[34] In most cases these anti-fascists stayed on the map after 1949. Thus, Raoul Wallenberg street in the former Swedish quarter remained.[35] According to a survey made in the 1980s, 75 per cent of Hungarians were able to identify by name one or more members of the Hungarian resistance, although respondents felt that the anti-fascist resistance was either insignificant (52 per cent) or not really known about (46 per cent).[36] In other words, the popularization of the martyrs had been successful.

The process of Sovietization and the creation of a socialist Hungarian identity brought another round of street-naming. In post-war Hungary, the first new statues commemorated the Soviet heroes, the Red Army, that had liberated Hungary after the Second World War. Similarly, both international and Hungarian socialists made early appearances in the city-text with, for example, *Dimitrov tér* in 1949 and *Szabó Ervin tér* in 1948. In 1950, Hungarians renamed their 'Grand Avenue', Andrássy, after Stalin, *Oktogon* was again renamed *November 7 tér* and Lenin replaced Theresa and Elisabeth, the female Habsburgs, on the *Nagykörút* (Great Circular Boulevard), although *Ferenc* and *József*, the male rulers remained. The same year, a square was named after the Soviet military leader Molotov. In this transnationalist process, even Russian culture gained commemoration in the city-text: the aristocratic *Eszterházy utca* was renamed *Puskin utca* in 1949, and *Király utca* was renamed after another Russian writer, Majakovski, in 1950. Puskin still remains on the map.[37]

## DeStalinization

Criticism of the Stalinist regime in Hungary was voiced from within the Communist Party, led by Imre Nagy, but the revolution in 1956 was

crushed by Soviet tanks. After the failed revolution, economic liberalization took place under János Kádár. During this era of *gulyáskommunizmus* – 'goulash communism' – the city became a UNESCO heritage site and thrived on tourism and Western capital.

In the city-text, the pace of deStalinization that preceded the unsuccessful revolution of 1956 was rapid. Immediately after the Soviet leader's death in 1953, for instance, *Engels Square* replaced *Sztalin tér*. But the impact of Stalinism and the ideology of the socialist one-party state on the city-text was more extensive. Stalinism, with its statue politics, provided a cult in which political rituals established the power of the new elite.[38] One also could say that the protests in 1956 in front of the parliament building and on the statue of Stalin questioned the independence of the Hungarian state and communism, which Imre Nagy wanted to replace with increased national sovereignty and a different form of socialism. The development of the revolution is visible in the renaming process. Present day *Andrássy*, then *Sztalin út*, in 1956 was renamed *Magyar ifjúság útja* – Street of the Hungarian Youth – and after the revolution, in 1957, became *Népköztársaság útja*, Road of the People's Republic. Soviet military leader Molotov's name was removed and the original name *Vigado tér* reinstated in 1957.

Nonetheless, a new wave of commemoration of Soviet–Hungarian brotherhood started after the revolution of 1956. In addition, the martyrs of the 'counter-revolution' – those supporting the *status quo* – were remembered in both statues and street names. A good example was the posthumous commemoration in 1968 of Ferenc Münnich, the minister of interior following the 1956 revolution (whose statue was the first to be reversed in 1989). This process was followed by the rehabilitation of national left-wingers in the street names, starting already in the 1960s. Mihály Károly was given a street in the Inner City in 1964,[39] and the communist László Rajk, rehabilitated and reburied in 1956, gained a street in 1969. Both Marxist György (Georg) Lukács (1979) and, perhaps surprisingly, inter-war 'populist' writer László Németh (1978) were posthumously commemorated in the streets of Budapest in the late 1970s.[40]

During the Kádár era internationalization was strongly visible. Socialist internationalism replaced Hungarian–Soviet friendship: *Hanoi park* (1968) was named during the Vietnam war, in which Hungarian troops took part. Budapest got its *Allende park* in Kelenföld in 1973 and, during the 1987 visit of the Indian prime minister Indira Gandhi, its *Nehru park*.[41] Bodnar argues that these names were to 'validate the domestic credibility of the guiding political ideology' in the eyes of the Hungarian public.[42] However, in the same vein as erecting statues of

happy workers, these international names or workers' statues did not directly emphasize either the Hungarian nation or the Soviet empire. International or transnational names were a response to the fierce post-1956 commemoration, neutralizing internationally and politicizing the situation at the same time. Finally, even the Habsburg Queen Elisabeth, Hungarians' favourite 'Sisi', got her name on streets of Budapest in 1986. Her statue was also returned in the city in the 1980s.[43]

The period of socialism was again a period of internationalism on the one hand and nationalism on the other. Initially, this was visible in the articulation of Stalin as a member of the nation's pantheon of heroes. Another contrast is the commemoration of Soviet heroes alongside a set of Hungarian-born socialist heroes. During the Kádár era, internationalization extended to the commemoration of international socialists, nationalism to the defenders of the status quo of 1956 and finally to the re-appreciation of a wide range of 'national' yet left-wing or bourgeois heroes Georg Lukács, Mihály Károly, Béla Kun and Queen Elisabeth. Hungary's rulers sought legitimation from both internationalism and nationalism. One of the ways of expressing nationalism was the celebration of Hungarian-born socialism, such as was manifested in the 1919 revolutionary regime. During the 1980s, the regime progressed to embrace even 'bourgeois nationalism'.

## Post-communism: the 'return to nationhood'

The gradual, negotiated revolution in Hungary since the mid 1980s culminated in peaceful demonstrations, the reburial of Imre Nagy, and constitutional reforms in 1989 that led to the first free elections the following year.[44] The development of party politics sparked the street name changes of the post-communist period. The power-holding elite included the reform-wing of the former communists, national opposition and democratic opposition, to which were coupled the Party of Youth, Fidesz. National opposition, led by József Antall of the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF), took the first election victory. The Socialist Party became the second-largest party in the country in 1994, and its leader, Gyúla Horn, formed a government with the third-largest party, Alliance of Free Democrats (SzDSz). While in opposition, Viktor Orbán brought Fidesz closer to the MDF, and emerged victorious at the polls in 1998. Four years later, the Socialist Party, allied with a shrunken Free Democrat Party, won an extremely tight electoral campaign, and triumphed again in 2006. Leading politicians' lies about public deficits and recession accelerated the downfall of the left-wing coalition, and

Fidesz and its allies won a landslide victory in 2010, which enabled it to rewrite the constitution.[45]

The extreme right nationalist Hungarian Life and Justice Party of István Csurka lost popularity around the turn of the millennium and gave up its position of chief contender to the traditional parties to the populist, xenophobic Jobbik. They defended the heritage of the Árpád dynasty and revived the inter-war period's irredentism, calling for the reunification of the lands of the Hungarian kingdom lost in the First World War, while being associated with the paramilitary Hungarian Guard, racism and anti-Semitism. All parties, including Jobbik, who now have strong presence in some of Budapest's districts, sought to leave their imprint in Budapest. In 2010 the Liberal Free Democrats and Socialists also lost control of Budapest, and one of the longest-standing former dissident politicians and Mayor of Budapest since 1990, Gábor Demszky, lost to István Tarlós of Fidesz. New waves of street naming began.

The first post-1989 guidelines for street naming reveal a lot about the kind of canon envisioned by the city. According to the city code on street-naming for the municipality of Budapest,[46] besides aiming to impart directional, geographical and security values, the aim of street names is to *establish memories and guard tradition*. Hungarians who gain recognition in the streets of Budapest must have either played a positive role in national history, had outstanding performance in the fields of science, arts, sports or society, or played an outstanding role in the history or life of the capital or one of its districts. Non-Hungarians must have played an outstanding role in the history of mankind for their names to be honoured on the streets of Budapest. Also, historical tradition, geographical environment and appropriateness of language must be taken into consideration.[47] Politics was key in all modifications to the city code on street-naming, which as a whole demonstrates the importance of commemorative street-naming in Hungary. A rule of 25-year posthumous naming[48] and a rule of a minimum lifetime of 10 years for any new street name[49] emphasized the winner's position through deep-rootedness of names and preservation of the current order.[50]

In spring 2002 the city council decided that commemorative street names should also have a memorial plaque describing who the person was. This further emphasized the dedicatory and educative function of street names. The original proposal came from the city-planning and cityscape preservation councils, who suggested one plaque for each street in each district. The city councillors voting on the proposal thought it would also be good to have signs showing the changes of street names along the 'western model'. The closely controlled system of

street-names in Budapest is complemented by memorials which reflect lengthier political developments, but which are not so tightly regulated (although they do rely on city funding and City Hall's approval of their appearance and placement).

During the 1990s, the street name code made it difficult to commemorate newer personalities, as opposed to inter-war heroes, or the victims of 1956. A strong return to past traditions dominated the renaming of the streets. This highlighted the long-term stability sought in street names, while memorials could function as tools for public commemoration in the process of collective mourning.[51] Only four street names in Budapest commemorated 1956 – and only Imre Nagy was named personally, which suggests that the memory of 1956 became a contested issue.[52]

The waves of renamings decided by the City Soviet or the Municipal Assembly took place in June and September 1990 and main renamings were done by 1993. Renamings continued in 1996 and 1999 and restarted in earnest in 2010–12 (see Figure 3.1). Looking at the dates it is clear that the first government and city council were strongly involved with renaming, but changes in government, excluding that of 2002, also introduced changes. This is nothing new, however, in the light of the historical background. As Eva Bodnar has stated: 'In the twentieth century, the relative instability of political regimes made street signage part of a campaign to establish the legitimacy of successive governments.'[53]

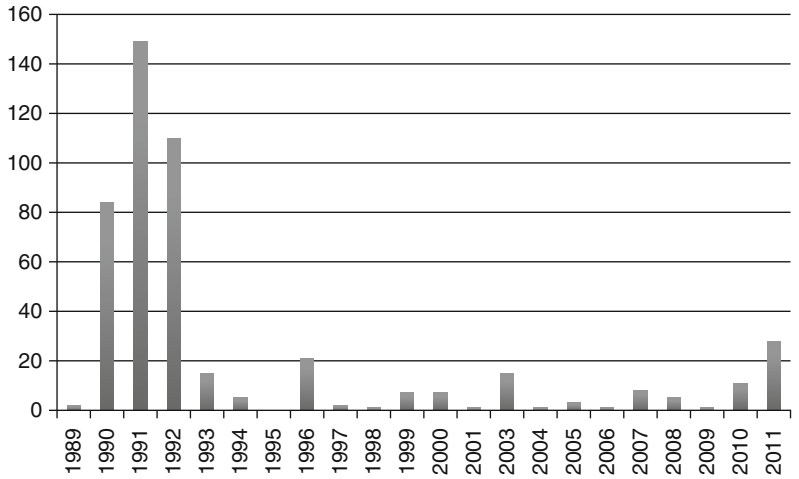


*Figure 3.1* Number of street namings per year in Budapest, 1989–2011

The removal of names does not demonstrate any radical difference. The first names to go were those seen as blatantly Communist, such as Road of the Red Army, Red Star or Red October, or those of Communist heroes of 1956 revolution. Similarly, names harkening to previous celebrations such as 1 May, 7 November, local martyrs such as Endre Ságvári and Kató Hámán, as well as international comrades such as Thälmann, Dimitrov and Tolbuhin, soon went. Renamings in April and June 1990 eliminated Lenin, Marx and Engels as well as Majakovski and Hungarian leftists, communists and other 1956 establishment martyrs. The changes were requested by the first post-communist government, led by the nationally minded Hungarian Democratic Forum, and the new names restored the past but also reflected themes associated with freedom, the inter-war period, Europe and religion.[54] After the high season of street naming, there were brief peaks in the naming process in 1996 and in 2003. These occurred during periods of left-liberal government, and the Budapest city council did not aim at outright political removals. The 2003 changes were largely technical, transforming number names to names of trees. In 2010, after the change of powers from left to right in the municipality, new waves of renaming occurred.

In 2010 and 2011 several transnational personalities were commemorated on the Lower Banks of Buda and Pest (*Budai alsó rakpart, Pesti alsó rakpart*), most of whom had been active in saving Budapest Jews during the Second World War and the Nazi occupation. They included Angelo Rotta, Carl Lutz, Friedrich Born, Jane Haining, Raoul Wallenberg, Gábor Sztehlo, and Valdemar and Nina Langlet. The list includes Count János Eszterházy, a Slovak Hungarian–Polish inter-war politician who voted against expelling the Jews and remains controversial figure in Slovakia. Names also included figures from the inter-war period. One of them was the first prime minister, József Antall senior, inter-war smallholder politician, minister in 1945–46, and father of József Antall, the first post-communist prime minister. The eighth section of the bank was reserved for Margit Slachta, a strong Protestant activist, who in 1920 became the first woman to be elected to the Hungarian Diet.

Nevertheless, there was also a move from transnationalism towards Hungarianism, as on 26 April *Roosevelt tér* was renamed *Széchenyi* after the greatest of Hungarians – following a commemorative law – and a hero of Fidesz, who in 2002, while in government, had sponsored a film on this historical figure. On the following day's list, some of the new street names were seen to emphasize transnational religious ethos, such as Pope John Paul II, Jerzy Popieluszko, a Polish Roman Catholic priest and activist in the Solidarity movement, St Florian, Gáspár

Károly, a protestant Wittenberg-educated reformer and translator of the Hungarian bible, Albert Wass, a Transylvanian Hungarian émigré and writer in the US, Ferencs Fáy, another writer who emigrated to the US, Artúr Görgey, a hero of the 1849 revolution, Péter Mansfeld, a hero of the 1956 revolution, and Sándor Bauer, who followed the example of the Czech, Jan Palach, and set himself on fire in January 1969 in protest against the occupation of Czechoslovakia and the presence of Soviet troops in Hungary.

Populism featured in different forms on the list, as inter-war writer Gyula Illyés gained a street. He did so alongside József Zakariás, Sándor Kocsis and Jenő Dalnoki, three members of Aránycsapat, the Hungarian football Golden Team of the 1950s. Ferenc Puskás had already been memorialized by giving his name to a stadium in Budapest in 2007. Reflecting on the addition of actor József Romhányi and actress Edit Domján to these football heroes, it becomes obvious that popular culture was emphasized in the replacement names. Of the locations renamed in 2010–2011, 25 received names hitherto absent from the Budapest city-text. These included *Elvis Presley park,* a promenade named after Lev Tolstoi and a park called after the political theorist István Bibó. In spite of this multitude of new names, however, one should not overstress the novelty of this new wave of renamings. Thus, in December 2012, *Szalmás Piroska utca* was renamed after populist writer László Németh, who had already been commemorated in the late 1970s.

Not all street names related to the workers' movement, and not all the personalities who had been celebrated during 1948–1989, were removed in the early 1990s, although they were easy targets for carrying out a visible reform. Heroes such as Endre Ságvári and Anna Koltói, who had become part of the socialist canon of street names, were now to be replaced. Interestingly, in the district of Óbuda, where a citizen consultation was held, the locals did not want to remove these names.[55] Among the names that were to be changed was that of the Square of the Republic, *Köztársaság tér*, which was renamed after the Polish pope, John Paul II. In essence, religion replaced republicanism. At this time, 'Hungary' became the country's official name; the term 'republic' was dropped.

One of the most visible renamings was that of *Moszkva tér*, a major transport hub in Budapest.[56] The old name, referring to Kálmán Széll, an inter-war politician, was reinstated. This largely forgotten politician, a former prime minister and minister of finance, became a hero of the Fidesz-led government, which also named its austerity packages after him. Kálmán Széll's name was therefore hard to avoid. He became a

household name, but not necessarily one with positive connotations, given that few austerity packages are popular among the wider public.

Finally, over 65 years after the tragedy, the local and transnational memory of the Holocaust began to be recorded in the street map of Budapest. This round of naming followed a transnational canon. Jews were absent from the new street names, since most heroes of the movement to save Hungarian Jews were actually of other religious backgrounds. A famous Hungarian Jew who had already officially been commemorated in the city was Theodor (Tivadar) Herzl. His name was given in 1994 to a park in front of the large synagogue and the Jewish Museum, which was built on the place where the house in which he was born had stood.[57] Hungarian Roma have also been under-represented in commemorative city-text. At the same time, political anti-Semitism and racism were on the rise in the Hungarian parliament, not only among the populist Jobbik's representatives.

Recent changes brought five females among 39 changed names (including one sharing a street name with her husband) and removed four. Out of the 74 new and replacement names in 2010–2011, including the Buda banks, 12 were women. These included names which were not connected to a concrete historical figure: Regina, Bianka, Angyalka, and Alíz, and Aelia Sabina. Transnational cultural emphasis also is visible in these names. Additional local commemorative names include Grácia Kerényi, a Hungarian-Polish literary figure, Sára Salkaházi, a Catholic Religious Sister who saved Jews during the Second World War, but was executed by the Hungarian Arrow Cross in 1944. In addition to the actress Edit Domján and the politician Margit Slachta, only four Hungarian females were commemorated. Added to that were two more contemporary female personalities, Jane Haining and Nina Langlet, bringing the total to six, a minuscule percentage of the total of 74 names. This indicates that women were a low priority for renaming. Moreover, the set of new female names is notably transnational – perhaps even at the expense of local commemoration.

In the beginning of the 1990s the general tendency was to remove the transnational toponymy reflecting Soviet ideology. In the 2010s this cleaning operation included Moscow, but indirectly, even Roosevelt was hit by this move. As a Yalta participant, he was seen as a close ally of Stalin. Nonetheless, this removal of the American president from the city-text can also be explained by the then reigning political atmosphere, in which the IMF and the EU were not popular among the Hungarians in power. Since 2010 the commemoration has relied heavily on religion, and embraces ethnic Hungarian personalities from

Hungary's past. Popular figures, such as the 1950s football Golden Team, become part of the canon of brave, fighting Hungarians. The inclusion of émigré Hungarians, football players, and others, also addresses the large expatriate Hungarian community. This can also be understood as transnational memory.

## Conclusions

Street names in Budapest show a tendency for commemoration and for exhibiting political transformations. The practice of street naming, from the nineteenth century to the present, is tied to nation-building. Why have there been so many changes of street names? George Schöpflin, a Hungarian-born political scientist, former professor of nationalism, and a Member of European Parliament, MEP, for Fidesz recognizes a constant process of politics on the symbolic level, which forms collective memory and political boundaries.

> The movement of politics, of political power, should be seen as operating at three levels: the institutional, the symbolic and what links the two, the atmospheric. […] Memory – perceived history, the continuous reinterpretations of the past – is an essential aspect of the symbolic level. This level sees the construction and maintenance of boundaries and the corresponding boundary markers, which may take any form – from language to diet.[58]

In Budapest, both left- and right-wing political communities have sought to articulate and symbolize their collective memories. Most recently, though, the political right has been particularly keen on symbolic politics.[59]

As with every major change of political power, the current power-holders also want to mark their era in the city-text. Around the general elections of 2010 the notion of 'revolution' was recurrent in Fidesz rhetoric. After gaining the two-thirds majority that offered a possibility for constitutional change, the party declared 2010 a 'revolution in the urns'.[60] Changing street names was part of the experience of revolution that Fidesz sought to offer. In spite of this revolutionary stance, the new regime most often opted for a return to old names – a strategy which had already proved to be relatively uncontroversial.

A set of transnational commemorative names always has been included in the Budapest city-text. There is always some section of the names that reflect the current power holders' values in the international community or transnational culture – be it Mussolini and Hitler,

Roosevelt and Stalin, Molotov and Majakovski, Allende and Dimitrov – or Elvis Presley and John Paul II. Through transnationalism Hungarians situate themselves in the world. They highlight their own figures of international repute, too: from Lajos Kossuth to Georg Lukács or Ferenc Puskás, and relate their struggles to the international ones through *Hanoi park* to the *Raoul Wallenberg rakpart*. Whether transnational, national, or local, the personalities and the periods they represent are juxtaposed, as we navigate our way from one street address to another.

## Notes

1. McCarthy, 1975, 'Street names in Beirut'; Azaryahu, 1990, 'Renaming the Past'.
2. Palonen, 2008, 'The city-text in post-communist Budapest'.
3. Cf. Billig, 1995, *Banal Nationalism*; Azaryahu, 1991, *Von Wilhelmplatz zu Thälmannplatz*; Levinson, 1998, *Written in Stone*.
4. Milo, 1986, 'Le nom des rues'.
5. Azaryahu, 1986, 'Street names and political identity'; Azaryahu, 1996, 'The power of commemorative street names'; Azaryahu, 1997, 'German reunification and the politics of street names'.
6. Azaryahu, 1999, 'Commissioned memory'.
7. See Németh, 1987, 'Public sculpture in Budapest', pp. 9–13.
8. Ráday and Meszáros, 2003, *Budapest teljes utcanévlexikona*.
9. Nyyssönen, 1993, 'Katujen uusi suunta Budapestissa'; Foote, Tóth and Árvay, 2000, 'Hungary after 1989'.
10. Bodnar, 2009, 'I have often walked down this street before'; Palonen, 2008, 'The city-text'.
11. E.g. Light, 2000, 'Gazing on communism'; Light, Ion and Suditu, 2002, 'Toponymy and the communist city'.
12. *Budapest Főváros Utcanévjegyzéke* (List of street names of the Capital City of Budapest), December 2001 and 2011, updates from the City Hall received in May 2012. I would like to thank the City Hall, and most recently Szilvia Ferge, for providing these.
13. Nagy, 1998, *Ces Villes Qui Ont Fait L'Europe: Budapest*.
14. Bácskai, Gyáni and Kubinyi, 2000, *Budapest története*; Nagy, 1998, *Ces Villes Qui Ont Fait L'Europe*; Gerő and Poór (eds.), 1997, *Budapest*.
15. Tóth, (ed.), 1981, *Budapest enciklopédia*, pp. 181, 222; Vörös, 1997, '*Birth of Budapest*', pp. 103–104.
16. Nagy, 1998, *Ces Villes Qui Ont Fait L'Europe*.
17. Vörös, 1997, '*Birth of Budapest*', p. 110; Gábor Gyáni, 2000, 'Budapest története 1873–1945', p. 143.
18. Bodnar, 2009, 'I have often walked down this street before...'.
19. Ráday and Meszáros, 2003, *Budapest teljes utcanévlexikona*, pp. 8–9.
20. Csorba 1997, 'Transition from Pest–Buda to Budapest', p. 110.
21. Csorba, 1997, 'Transition from Pest–Buda to Budapest'; Nagy, 1998, *Ces villes qui ont fait l'Europe*.
22. Csorba, 1997, 'Transition from Pest–Buda to Budapest'; Nagy, 1998, *Ces villes qui ont fait l'Europe*.

23. This street, *Mária Valéria utca*, was named (in 1874 and after the revolution in 1919) after the daughter of Elizabeth and Franz Joseph, was renamed twice by the post-war communists, after the writer Móricz Zsigmond in March 1951 for six months, and in September 1951 until the present after the Transylvanian academic and pedagogue Apáczai Czere János (1625–59). Ráday and Meszáros, 2003, *Budapest teljes utcanévlexikona*.
24. Lackó, 1997, *'Budapest during the interwar years'*, p. 142.
25. Lackó, 1997, *'Budapest during the interwar years*', p. 143.
26. Szabó's myth of the peasantry and the critique of the alleged Jewish, Budapest-based, dominance of Hungary became a powerful tool. The somewhat more moderate writer Németh, who was against mass culture in cities in general, also wished to replace the Jewishness with a Hungarian element in Budapest. Miklós Lackó, 1997, *Budapest during the interwar years, pp*. 139–189, 141–2.
27. Ráday and Meszáros, 2003, *Budapest teljes utcanévlexikona*.
28. Michalski, 1998, *Public Monuments*.
29. Ráday and Meszáros, 2003, *Budapest teljes utcanévlexikona*, p. 359.
30. In terms of statues and memorials, Pótó has divided the century into three periods of change in the statues and memorials: the destruction of the irredentist memorials, the removal of the aristocracy and the Habsburgs, and socialist commemoration. Pótó, 2001, 'Rendszerváltások és emlékművek', pp. 228–34.
31. Even in the English garrison town of Colchester one can find the Yalta victors, Roosevelt and Stalin, on the street map.
32. In East Berlin *Frankfurter Allee* was renamed *Stalinallee* only in 1949. Azaryahu, 1986, 'Street names and political identity', p. 588.
33. Heino Nyyssönen, 1992, 'Vain kadut ovat ikuisia', p. 16.
34. Also a figure like the Hungarian poet Miklos Rádnoti was a suitable example as a victim of the fascists.
35. Unlike the statue erected to him, see Pótó, 1989, *Emlékmûvek, politika*.
36. Csepeli, 1997, *National Identity in Contemporary Hungary*, pp. 201–202.
37. East Berlin, also named *Puskinallee* (1949) and *Tchaikovskystrasse* (1950) as 'signs of cultural Russification', Azaryahu, 1986, 'Street names and political identity', p. 590.
38. Katalin Sinkó, 1992, 'Political Rituals', p. 75.
39. The name of this former University Street was *Károly utca* in 1962–1964. Ráday, 1998, *Budapest teljes utcanévlexikona,* p. 212.
40. *Németh László sétány*, 1978 in Havannatelep, XVII district; *Lukács György utca*, 1979 in Békásmegyer, III district. Ráday, 1998, *Budapest teljes utcanévlexikona*, p. 259.
41. Ráday, 1998, *Budapest teljes utcanévlexikona*.
42. Bodnar, 2009, 'I have often walked down this street before...', p. 145.
43. The same rehabilitation of 'national' monarchy happened in Berlin when Frederick the Great was commemorated in 1983. Heino Nyyssönen, 1999, *Presence of the Past*, p. 118.
44. See e.g. Tőkés, 1996, *Hungary's Negotiated Revolution*.
45. See e.g. Korkut, 2012, *Liberalization Challenges in Hungary*; Palonen, 2012, 'Transition to crisis in Hungary'.
46. Set in 1991, with additions in 1993. 'Utcanévrendelet', in Ráday, 1998, *Budapest teljes utcanévlexikona*.

47. 'Utcanévrendelet', 1.§ 2, 5.§ 2, 8.§ 1, 8.§ 2 and 5.§ 1 in Ráday, 1998, *Budapest teljes utcanévlexikona*, p. 24.
48. A street can be named after a person only 25 years after his or her death. This clause caused some political controversy with regard to the commemoration of recently dead dissident heroes, or for example the Hungarian first post-communist Prime Minister, József Antall, which the left, majority in the municipal council, opposed. Mészáros and Pór argue that the rule that streets can only be named 25 years after the death of the commemorated person is a partly practical, partly political decision, rescuing the local people from 'unworthy' names. Mészáros and Pór, 1993, 'Budapest új utcanevei', p. 45; 'Utcanévrendelet', in Ráday, 1998, *Budapest teljes utcanévlexikona*, p. 24.
49. The speedy re-renaming in 1991 of *Hercegprimás* (Archbishop) *utca*, inspired the adoption, in 1993, of a new rule in the city code for street names, according to which the streets can only be renamed after ten years. See for the code: 'Utcanévrendelet', (10.§), in Ráday, 1998, *Budapest teljes utcanévlexikona*, p. 25.
50. *Népszabadság*, 4 April 2002.
51. Since 1993, dates have not been allowed in street names, which then gives more importance to specific commemorations of people over abstract references to events which can be named differently. Thus, the *Október huszonharmadika* (October 23rd) *utca* commemorating the start of the contested and often renamed 1956 revolution was the last of its kind when it received its name in 1992. Ráday, 1998, *Budapest teljes utcanévlexikona*, 4.§ 2. and p. 297.
52. Nyyssönen, 1999, *Presence of the Past*. On street names, see Palonen, 2006, 'Creating communities'.
53. Bodnar, 'I have often walked down this street before', p. 145.
54. For party politics on street names and the themes of commemoration see Palonen, 2008, 'The city-text in post-communist Budapest'.
55. Out of 7077 survey letters 1400 were returned of which 1182 gave a negative response to the proposals. http://hvg.hu/itthon/20110303_obuda_nem_valtozik_kommunizmushoz_kotheto/ accessed 16 October 2014.
56. Bodnár, 1998, 'Assembling the square'.
57. The Utcanévlexicon does not explain the origin of *Tivadar utca* in the same district named in 1896, the same year as Herzl's famous work *Der Judenstaat* was published. Ráday, 1998, *Budapest teljes utcanévlexikona*.
58. Schöpflin, 2000, *Nations, Identity, Power*, p. 130.
59. Cf. in architecture Palonen, 2013, 'Millennial politics of architecture'.
60. Palonen, 2011, 'Rupture and continuity'.

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# 4

# Transfer Zones: German and Global Suffering in Dresden

*Mathias Berek*

## The story

Let me begin with typical stories widely believed by the German public about the bombing of the city of Dresden in February 1945. The first one is from a broadcast aired nationwide in 2000 and represents the most common perspective you can find in Germany today. According to the broadcast, the raid was the 'biggest conventional air strike', its aim was 'to annihilate the city of Dresden which was intact at that time. From a military point of view the attack was useless... The city perished in one night, in the biggest firestorm in military history so far. Dresden was absolutely defenceless and full of refugees. Almost one million suffered an existential catastrophe, tens of thousands died.'[1]

The second story was written by Max Seydewitz, prime minister of the state of Saxony in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) from 1947 to 1952. It has been published in seven editions from 1955 through 1983 and stands as example of a more detailed, local view:

> [The bomber pilots] flew over the dark square of the *Großer Garten* and dropped bombs with percussion fuses, incendiary and liquid bombs, phosphorus and petrol canisters. [...] The airmen knew that now they were dumping their bombs over tens of thousands of hounded, miserable humans who had sought shelter in the *Großer Garten* [...] And suddenly, within this chaos, tame and wild animals rushed out of the nearby zoo that had been hit by bombs, too. The maddened animals jumped over the fences of the zoo, running with their coats burning or frightened by the whirring and the flames, and roared.[2]

The third story, published in 1986 in both East and West Germany, is part of the memoirs of Otto Griebel, a painter in Dresden: 'It is no legend that in the early morning of the fourteenth a resident of Tiergartenstraße heard a scratching and scraping at the door, and when the woman looked outside, a mighty brown bear stood in front of her, his paws raised, begging, with a bleeding rhesus monkey sitting on his shoulder.'[3]

## The history of a memory

None of the assertions in these stories are backed by historical evidence. Although most parts of the old city were, indeed, badly damaged, Dresden was not 'completely wiped out'. Dresden had been hit by bombs before. The air raid was not the biggest one in the Second World War. Dresden was not defenceless. It was an important railway junction, especially for the eastern front, a site of armaments manufacture and a garrison town, surrounded by anti-aircraft defences. There were no such things as phosphorus bombs or strafers.[4] The wild animals had been shot by the zoo administration before they could escape. And there has been no further information on roaming brown bears.[5] But these stories are a crucial part of the collective memory of February 1945 in Dresden.

Today, the bombing of Dresden has become one of the most prominent symbols of aerial warfare during the Second World War, not only at a national, but at a European, even a global, level. How has this happened? Surely not because of the significance of the bombing itself. On three days from 13 to 15 February, and after several smaller raids, British and American air forces attacked Dresden and destroyed most of the old city. But this was not the incomparable event it often is described as. The death toll in Hamburg was higher. Würzburg and many other towns were bombed at a time much closer to the end of war. Many other German towns were destroyed to a greater extent.[6] And if we want to respond to an often-used personification: Dresden cannot be considered more innocent than other German cities.

The story of Dresden became so influential mainly because of two factors: first, the city's myth of being a site of culture and beauty, and second, the intensive political use of the Dresden bombing story. In both of them we can identify local as well as national and even global dimensions.

First, the myth of culture and beauty: It has been (and is) well established as part of the city's identity that it was a place of exceptional beauty and high culture – referring to the landscape, the baroque

architecture, the paintings in the picture gallery or the porcelain. This myth of its baroque prettiness not only fostered *local* self-esteem, but *nationally* 'personified' German culture and became an 'agent of German identity', as Susanne Vees-Gulani puts it.[7] According to Nazi propaganda after the air raid, Dresden was nothing but a centre of culture and hospitals.[8] And even the Allies had to deal with this myth, since the city was a *globally* famous tourist site. This is why the bombing of Dresden unleashed more global sorrow than that of other German towns.[9]

Secondly, the myth of the city as a place of amazing culture and beauty cannot be separated from the political utilization of the bombing narrative. In Dresden there was not much time for developing an institutionalized *local memory* since the event was instrumentalized for national purposes by the National Socialist German government from the very beginning – a symbol of German victimhood. The German Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda initiated its Dresden campaign in February 1945.[10] Official voices in German newspapers, journals and radio stations bemoaned the loss of cultural treasures and the death of innocent civilians, among them thousands of refugees. They accused the 'Anglo-American air bandits' who had conducted an 'act of terror' and 'barbarism' – with the destruction of Dresden supposedly a cultural centre of the occident had been eradicated.[11]

Journalists in neutral European countries like Sweden, fed by German official sources, first echoed these arguments. They, and the International Committee of the Red Cross, were the first to circulate the spectacular yet invented numbers of victims, the death toll of 100,000 or 200,000. Official documents of the Nazi-German police only spoke of up to 22,000 dead, and all Nazi-German publications mention no more than several tens of thousands. The six-figure assertions were first published *outside* Germany and the speculations persisted until 2008, when a commission of historians appointed by the mayor of Dresden published its findings. The scientists stated that between 18,000 and 25,000 people died in the air raids.[12]

Only four years after the end of the Third Reich the Dresden story had been recruited to serve not only national but also supranational aims. While the story of the innocent city had been adopted by almost everyone in the GDR after 1945, in 1949 Dresden became a symbol for global 'imperialist terror'.[13] The *Politbüro* of the *Sozialistische Einheitsparty Deutschlands* (SED) took the lead in the construction of memory to start a national campaign against the 'Anglo-American warmongers'.[14] The story of the coalition against Hitler's Germany was replaced by a

version where only the Soviet Union had fought the Nazis. The relatively moderate tone that had characterized official manifestations in newspapers and books in the immediate post-war period disappeared in the 1950s. The emphasis was no longer on mourning and German guilt: now it lay on 'American Imperialists'. They were accused of having destroyed an 'innocent city' without any military justification, merely because they did not want to leave an intact city to the socialist enemy – which, by the way, was not true since the Soviet Union was informed of the attack and had approved of it. Stalin had, on many occasions, actually demanded an intensification of British-American air strikes against Germany.[15] Remembrance of Dresden now became part of the confrontation of the Cold War, and memorial rallies thereafter became an indicator of the intensity of the confrontation.[16] The GDR's propaganda had no problem in using elements, and indeed the very same terms, that the Nazis had used for the air raids. Its representatives did not hesitate to equate the US with National Socialism. Former allies now appeared as enemies not only of the Soviet Union, but also of the German people. An early globalization of the remembrance occurred when GDR officials tried to overcome international isolation by invitations and city partnerships around the memory of Dresden.[17]

Despite its supranational, anti-Western, Cold War-connotation this remembrance of the air strikes still reproduced a *national* perspective focusing on German victims.[18] The same applies to another supranational narration. The peace movement in Dresden in the 1980s combined German commemoration of aerial warfare with the fear of a nuclear war, thus bestowing a global dimension on the Dresden remembrance. In this process of universalizing by decontextualizing, the town became one of the symbols of human suffering. Now Dresden was prepared to stand alongside towns the Germans had destroyed – and even next to Auschwitz.

Precisely this equalizing interpretation of history manifested itself in the official memorial for the victims of the air raid at Dresden's *Heidefriedhof*. Begun by the National Socialists as a Germanic *Thing* place of commemoration of German victims of World War I, instead the dead of the bombing were buried there. In 1964, the memorial as it looks today was completed. It consists of fourteen stone blocks bearing the names of seven German concentration camps, including Auschwitz, and of seven villages or cities destroyed in war. But, unlike the camps, not all the cities and villages memorialized there are places of German action: next to Coventry, Leningrad, Lidice, Oradour-sur-Glane, Rotterdam and Warsaw, all partly or completely destroyed by the Germans, we find the name of Dresden.

Also to the west of the Iron Curtain Dresden has been the dominating symbol for German suffering and undeserved losses. West German national ideology was not forced, though, to take the anti-American detour of equating the US with National Socialism in order to accentuate German victimhood and to forget about German crimes. And despite some changes in tone, the mainstream recollection of Dresden in today's Germany still follows this line. The story of the innocent city of culture, of the unnecessary attack, of 'the burning of children and women', and sometimes even the terminology first used by the Nazis and reused by GDR's propaganda, like that of the 'Anglo-American terrorists', are still present – in newspapers, TV documentaries, movies, and even in recent Saxon schoolbooks[19] and books published and distributed freely by Die Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung (the German Federal Centre for Political Education).[20]

## Local collectives – local memories

Many people in Dresden still see themselves or their town as *the* greatest victim of bomb war.[21] But since German society does not consist of one homogeneous collective it would also be wrong to speak of only one homogeneous group of Dresdenians. And because every collective memory is bound to a certain group, there are different collective memories about the Dresden air raids.

Despite some intersections we can distinguish the dominant memory culture of *German victimhood and 'reconciliation'*, a *civic* memory movement stressing *responsibility and peace*, the *Nazis'* nationalist memory culture of German victimhood, a *critical civic antifascist memory culture* and the antifascist yet also *anti-national counter-memory*.

### Victimhood and 'reconciliation'

Although there have been some major shifts in weight during the last few years, we can still ascertain a locally *dominant* memory culture of German victimhood and 'reconciliation'. It is represented by local authorities, politicians and artists, supported by the Saxony state government, Christian churches, local enterprises and the mainstream media, but also manifests itself in statements by Dresden citizens in public events or the letters to the editors of local newspapers. Although the official *Arbeitsgruppe 13. Februar*[22] includes all political parties and also the civic movement, to be discussed later, this memory culture is dominated by the conservative memory politics of the Saxon *Christlich-Demokratische Union* (CDU). The main narrative within this memory culture has been

the aforementioned tale of the innocent city of culture and refugees, of the German victims that died in the firestorm. But although German victimhood has always been at the centre, it also contains the topic of 'reconciliation', that is between the German and the British (and generally all) people. This conception is very much a Christian one, based on the ideology of everybody being guilty, as though the Germans and the Allies had been engaged in a bar brawl, sharing responsibility, and not in a World War where the latter had to fight fiercely to end German conquests and annihilation efforts.[23]

Typical February activities within this memory culture are the collective lighting of candles at was at first the ruin, later the construction site and nowadays the rebuilt *Frauenkirche*, the city-wide ringing of church bells and, particularly, the ceremony at the Heidefriedhof cemetery. The latter is of interest not only because it dates back to GDR times but because, year after year, representatives of the city of Dresden, of the state of Saxony and of the parties in the town council, lay wreaths at the memorial in the company of avowed Nazis from the *Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands* (NPD) and other groups. In 2011, roughly half of the participants were Nazis.[24] After heavy criticism there were some half-hearted attempts to exclude them at least from the official ceremony, but at least since 2005, when the NPD was elected into Saxony's *Landtag* and on to the town council, the efforts proved to be futile. It is no coincidence nor mere ineptness that has led officials to confine themselves to administrative tricks to defer the appearance of the Nazis to the end of the programme rather than attack their ideological substance. Actually, it is inevitable, since all participants are basically doing the same thing: commemorating the German victims of Dresden in what is probably the only way you can do it at this memorial, by conflating the victims with the perpetrators. While the Nazis mourn only the German dead, the official remembrance, adhering to the 'reconcilation' discourse, achieves the goal of bemoaning German victims through the universalistic move of turning everybody who died into a victim (of course, there will always be a priority for German victims). And if there is nothing left but victims of an inhuman fate called the Second World War then talk of responsibility and guilt is unnecessary or mere lip service.

This universalistic move is emphasized even further in a poster distributed by the city of Dresden in 2005: the name Dresden was put on a list with Guernica, Warsaw, Coventry, Leningrad, Hamburg and Hiroshima, but also Baghdad, New York, Monrovia and Sarajevo.[25] Another example is the *Gedenkweg* project organized by the mainly church-oriented

Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Frauenkirche (Society for the Promotion of the Frauenkirche) in 2010. The participants of this 'path of remembrance' stopped not only at National Socialist- and war-related stations like the location of a former synagogue that had been destroyed by the Nazis or that of the Frauenkirche that burned down during the bombing. They also called at places connected with the demolition of church ruins in GDR times or where important events during the *Wende* in 1989 had occurred.

This memory culture has been undergoing some changes in the last few years. First, German guilt has become a live topic – Dresden is not seen only as an innocent city of culture any more. But to be clear, after a sentence about German, and thus also Dresden's, guilt there always follows a mention of German suffering and then a plea for 'reconciliation'. Secondly, because of the ever-proliferating Nazi marches and the rising antifascist resistance against them, followed by Germany-wide public critique – not only by the left – protagonists of the official memory culture had to change their remembrance practices. After years of strictly confining the official remembrance to so called *Stilles Gedenken* (silent tributes) and demonstratively ignoring the marching Nazis, city representatives began to organize events that were not only focused on the events of the past but also the present. However, the actions that were vaguely directed at the Nazis were a *Menschenkette* (human chain) around the old city, an installation of candles showing the slogan 'This city is fed up with Nazis', and a gathering far away from the Nazis' marching route.

At the same time, local and state authorities continued to criminalize anti-Nazi activists as well as actions that might possibly get in the way of the official commemoration. When the opposition to the Nazi march grew to tens of thousands of participants, including elected members of the federal and state parliament from the Left, the Green and the Social Democratic parties and was organized not only by antifascist groups but by unions like the *Deutsche Gewerkschaftsbund* and the political parties, Saxony's police, ministry of interior and department of prosecution even intensified their efforts. Blockades of the Nazis' route were prosecuted as criminal offences, affecting hundreds of people. In February 2011, police retrieved more than a million data sets of active mobile phones, effectively of every person who happened to be in the centre of Dresden that day. And even the constitutional division of powers got in the way of criminalization when a judge in Dresden recently sentenced a blockade activist to prison without evidence but merely on the grounds that the 'population of Dresden'

was 'fed up with the riots'.[26] However, despite all this, since 2010, the blockades have been successful,[27] and the majority of residents now even approve of them.[28]

As a paradigmatic act of memory politics, the CDU–FDP coalition in the Saxon parliament did change the law regarding public meetings. Since 2012, the area around the *Frauenkirche* has been one of several spaces, and 13/14 February are two of the dates, where the right of free speech and free assembly is restricted: the authorities can now easily prohibit public meetings there and then.[29]

Finally, the local Liberal–Christian-Democratic coalition in Dresden city council decided to change the remembrance – to move its focus away from activities against the Nazis and back to the 'reconciliation between people' – and about a new air raid memorial.[30] Both decisions were voted for by the governing Christian Democratic and Liberal parties together with Nazis from the NPD. The decision about the new memorial, in particular, has been heavily criticized by other parties and civic memory activists for returning to the concept of silent remembrance, excluding all other parts of the local public from the decision and putting the names of Nazi perpetrators next to the names of their victims.[31]

**A civic memory movement stressing responsibility and peace**

Another important protagonist is the civic initiative *Interessengemeinschaft 13.Februar* (*IG 13.Februar* – Community of Interest of 13 February). Its roots date back to unofficial, church-related memorial activism in Dresden during the GDR, but as IG it has been active since 2004. Today, it can be depicted as representing the biggest civic commemoration – although it remains distinct from the official one. Its main element, however – remembering the victims of the air raids – is the same. For example, every year the IG invites survivors of the bombing nights. But apart from that, the IG openly criticized the city council's CDU–FDP–NPD decision on reshaping the commemoration as well as the decision of the very same parties to refuse to name a street in Dresden after Guernica*:* 'How can it be explained to the supporters of the initiative in Guernica and all over the world that there cannot be a public remembrance of the crimes of the German Luftwaffe because the mayor's party allies with the ideological descendants of the perpetrators of 1937 […]?'[32] The IG even expressed its approval of London's new memorial for the airmen of the Royal Air Force Bomber Command who died in the Second World War. In their press release they wrote that those men and women 'died in a necessary war against an inhuman regime' and

the IG is proud to have been organizing meetings with surviving members of Bomber Command for years[33] – speaking in such a way about the Bomber Command would never come to the mind of Dresden's or Saxony's CDU officials.

The IG considers itself as 'part of an international civic network for peace and human rights', a self-image rooted in its very beginning as an unofficial peace movement in the GDR.[34] Within this network, it also organizes events and meetings with Japanese activists commemorating Hiroshima and Nagasaki – a connection to the bombing of Dresden that was also made by GDR's official memory politics. Out of this reference to peace, and its Christian roots, the IG clings to a universalizing, or globalizing, position: 'We have met and discussed our experiences and convictions with people from other places around the world which similarly bear the scars of war and violence […] whether in New York, Israel and Palestine, or in Poland and Spain'.[35] In 2009, it drew them to a decision, because of Dresden's suffering, to demand peace from US President Obama.[36]

The IG played a crucial role in an important event within local remembrance in 2004: The *meta-discussion* about the commemoration itself had reached the local public. *Whether* and, if so, *how* the airstrikes were to be remembered had long been unquestioned in mainstream discourse. Discussion and criticism had been confined to radical left groups. But in 2004, the permanent critique of elements of the remembrance itself and the so-called abuse of the proceedings by the Nazis had led to a broader discussion and to the widely accepted *Rahmen für das Erinnern*. This 'framework for remembrance' was signed by the 'local political, artistic-cultural, academic and religious elite'[37] and defined 'what' and 'why we remember', 'what we deny' and 'what we want'. The *Rahmen* stresses that the air strike did happen in the historical context of a world war that had been started by Germany, that German guilt is a crucial part of this context. It states that the goal of the memory is to foster peace, that it builds on its own tradition, but in a critical and self-critical way, and that every signatory agrees on being against 'misuse' of the memory as well as against the offsetting of guilt. But nevertheless it also opposed – and this was directed at the left-wing critique of the commemoration – any attempts to 'ridicule the victims'.[38] Despite these statements in the *Rahmen*, however, local officials continue to celebrate the public mourning at the *Heidefriedhof* memorial in the company of Nazis.

Within the mainstream memory culture of the last 20 years, one that considers itself civic and centrist, there have been diversions. From

time to time, there have been critical remarks about aspects of the remembrance in both big local newspapers;[39] there have been several gestures and activities to bring to notice, to remember, the fact that the air strikes made it possible for the last surviving Jews of Dresden to escape – their deportation to the death camps was scheduled for the days immediately following the raids. In 2008 the Jewish community withdrew from the remembrance ceremony at *Heidefriedhof*.

**Nazis' nationalist memory culture of German victimhood**

It is difficult to pinpoint the moment when Nazi activities around the memory of Dresden began. After all, the main narratives about 13 February 1945 stem from the Nazi ministry of propaganda in Berlin. It can be stated with certainty that the mourning of today's Nazis was not imposed from outside but derived from the very memory of Dresden itself. The only difference between their memory and the mainstream's is that they remember *only* German victims and consequently hold on to the exaggerated numbers of victims, the legends about phosphorus etc. The most important author referred to by today's Nazis is David Irving. But for decades, before the British historian lost his scholarly reputation and was finally convicted for Holocaust denial, he had been the most important author for mainstream Dresden memory, too.[40] Even now, his books, including the one about Dresden, are reprinted and sold in Germany. The way in which Irving connects mainstream remembrance to that of the Nazis can be seen in the events of 1990. German neo-Nazis had organized a tour under the title 'An Englishman fights for the honour of Germany'. During the tour, Irving not only spoke at a neo-Nazi congress in Munich under the slogan *Wahrheit macht frei*,[41] he also visited Dresden. In the *Kulturpalast*, a large and renowned centre for cultural events in the old city, he spoke to an audience of enthusiastic Dresdenians and was given friendly attention in the local press.[42]

In 1998, local and regional Nazi groups initiated their own mourning march in Dresden. But, as the Irving case shows, the topic of Dresden has a significance for the Nazi scene far beyond the local or Saxon level. So, the march soon began to attract more and more Nazis of all ages and groups, not only from every corner of Germany but also from all over Europe. It became the most important event of the German and the European Nazi scene, assembling up to 6,000 participants. Dresden's and Saxony's authorities in most of the years worked hard to make the marches possible against the growing anti-fascist protest that strived to block or attack the Nazis.[43]

**A critical civic antifascist memory culture**

In the end, the big Nazi marches, at least, seem to have been stopped by antifascist activity.[44] Although there is not much coherence between the left and/or antifascist groups involved, two movements within the left can be discerned.

The first is a plain antifascist approach supported by parts of the local antifascist scene and some organized groups from other regions of Germany: its goal is to prevent the Nazis from marching in order to end this annual event. But in order to be *bündnisfähig* (able to ally) with less radical and more civic-minded opponents of the Nazis, such as the SPD, *Grüne* and *Linke* parties or labour unions and religious groups, compromises had to be made. The biggest one was *not* to criticize the Dresden memory itself too much. There have been some harsh debates within the German radical left about this question.[45] But by successfully mobilizing large numbers of people the big Nazi marches, at least, have been blocked since 2010. Beyond the blockades, the *Nazifrei – Dresden stellt sich quer* (Nazi-free – Dresden will not tolerate) alliance also criticized the 'myth of Dresden' – meaning the narrative of the innocent city – and established a city tour of places of Nazi crimes.


*Figure 4.1* A sticker anonymously produced and spread by an anti-fascist group or individuals in Dresden and other cities around 2007. © Mathias Berek 2014

Within the alliance, we find a diversity of opinions, reaching from the Green party – which clings to the rhetoric of peace and misuse, but criticizes the conservative position – to the radical left group *Avanti* which clearly states that because of its Nazi context Dresden does not belong in the general memory of war and annihilation.[46]

**Anti-fascist, anti-national counter-memory**

This position is quite close to the other antifascist approach – the more radical thus less *bündnisfähig* one. Always a criminalized minority in Dresden, anti-fascist groups[47] belonging to the *Antideutsch* stream in Germany's radical left deny the legitimation of the Dresden memory at all. They emphasize the necessity of the air raid, the National Socialist character of Dresden 1945, and the elements of National Socialist ideology still present in today's Germany (Figure 4.1). They have always tried both to stop Nazi marches *and* to disturb the official ceremonies. While the above-mentioned civic antifascists became active only during later years, these groups have been active from the moment that the Nazi marches began, and even earlier. One of their first actions was to disturb a memory event in the *Kulturpalast* in 1995. A small group of activists sneaked into the venue, threw flyers and unrolled a banner with the slogan 'No Tears for Krauts'.[48] Since then, every year Dresden antifascist groups together with others from all over Germany have demonstrated against remembrance activities. Among their mottoes have been: 'We thank the allies for the military destruction of Nazi Germany', 'Demolish Frauenkirche', 'Do cry', 'Against the German victim myth', and 'German perpetrators are no victims'. And every year there are attempts to light fireworks at the moment the church bells start their memorial ringing.[49] Particularly since the mainstream memory culture started to universalize itself by embracing a global victim narrative and even adopting Shoah vocabulary for the description of the bombing, the conceptual focus shifted to 'The repeated expropriation of the victims': as the 2005 call for counter-action states: 'This is why it is important for us to impede the public seizure of the memory of Shoah and National Socialism by a German collective disguised as Liberal.'[50]

Both streams of antifascist groups have two things in common. First, their positions are not only relevant locally but shared by other groups at a federal level. This is why there has always been support from groups elsewhere in Germany. And second, their activities over the years have definitely influenced the local memory and pushed it to the position it occupies now. Without the persistent and uncivil interventions from the radical Left today's mainstream memory culture would be even less self-critical and aware of the National Socialist context than it is.

## Local, national and global memory ties

As we have seen, none of Dresden's local memory cultures can be considered as being separated from national or global memories. After that horizontal profile, we now will look at vertical differentiations.

Here, national memory culture relies on the local bombing stories of Dresden in order to emphasize Germany's legitimation as a nation that had suffered like all others – or even more. Protagonists are politicians, journalists and authors that use the Dresden example for the national narration and thus retroact to the local memory culture, strengthening its self-esteem based on being the site of the biggest catastrophe. Certainly, one of the first to do so was Joseph Goebbels. Others have been the *Politbüro* of the SED, which used Dresden for its anti-imperialist yet national narrative; more recent German politicians such as Chancellor Helmut Kohl or President Roman Herzog in their visits in February in the 1990s ('act[s] of state of highest presence in federal politics');[51] the journalist Guido Knopp in his documentaries about the Second World War; and the author Jörg Friedrich in his book *Der Brand* where he used Shoah-related vocabulary to equate Dresden's victims with those of the Nazi Germans' extermination politics. Today's most radical representatives of the national view are the Nazis who march the streets of Dresden around every 13 February.

Beyond the local and national level, within the realms of the academic universe, some *historians* have been challenging both local and national memories through disproving aspects of the Dresden bombing story. Frederick Taylor, Helmut Schnatz and Götz Bergander dismantled the popular legends of strafers, liquid phosphorus bombs ('phosphor rain') or numbers of victims reaching 300,000.[52] They often have found a rather hostile public in Dresden. But now these critical perspectives are slowly being integrated into the official discourse. As mentioned earlier, the city of Dresden itself inaugurated a commission of historians to finally determine the correct number of casualties and other aspects of the air strike. The representatives of the locally dominant position in Dresden, at least, do accept now that there were no strafers, no phosphorus bombs and no roaming brown bears. Nevertheless, one way for Dresdenians to handle the new situation regarding the numbers is to avoid numbers at all, as was written by 'a survivor' on a wreath placed at the *Heidefriedhof* memorial in 2011: 'Who begins to count begins to err. […] Remember the uncounted victims!'[53] What has not changed for them at all is the centrality of the topic of German victimhood.

And this is embedded ever more firmly in the global context of a universalizing narrative. The war–peace–suffering–reconciliation discourse, in which everyone is guilty and a victim, wars and atrocities come out of nowhere, but everyone can be in favour of peace and reconcile with everyone else, has strong support in Dresden. And the support is mutual, as the melodrama *Dresden* shows. The then most expensive German TV feature film was aired by the German public station ZDF in 2006 as part of an undeclared series of big German movie productions about German suffering in the Second World War.[54] All of them bear upon the universalizing narrative of suffering and reconciliation within a dramatic medium: 'In the moment of defeat, the nation whose soldiers just had trampled down half Europe graciously condescends to forgive the enemy its cruelty.'[55] Even if outright revisionism won't be found in the text of these movies or TV documentaries, and even if the authors explicitly mention historical context and German guilt, the globally available pictures, narratives, communicative genres and the rules of the medium itself twist the outcome to the opposite.[56] 'Dresden is the absolute projection screen, good for everything. For nuclear phase-out, peace in Iraq or support for gangs of murderers. For instance when demonstrators at Berlin's *Al-Quds-Tag* […] shout: "Germans, have you forgotten Dresden? 50,000 Germans were killed by America and its Zionist wirepullers."'[57]

## Dresden, the paradigmatic memory culture

In historiography and memory studies it is no longer questioned that collective remembrance of Dresden, 13 February, has always been and still is instrumentalized politically.[58] Dresden-based historian Matthias Neutzner states that 'memories and feelings of the survivors played a role in public only insofar as they were needed for the production of memorial events and fitted into the frame of what was officially prethought'.[59] He is wrong if he meant this as a *lament*; but as a simple *statement* it describes exactly what happens within collective memory. Individual perceptions, feelings, thoughts, stories or pictures can only become part of collective memory if they meet its conditions. They have to be objectified, communicable and typified, and they must serve the functions of collective memory: assuring individuals of their place and time within their groups, legitimizing institutions and collective identity types, constructing present reality. If personal memories do not meet these criteria they will not become a part of collective memory.[60]

The Dresden bombing memory is an intriguing example of memory culture. It demonstrates impressively how deeply memory culture is interconnected with memory politics on a local and a national level. Which personal story of 13 February 1945 would become part of collective memory has always been dependent on how much it was in line with the respective political needs. And at the same time the political needs of the corresponding collective have shaped individual remembering. In the case of Dresden, personal memories and collective memory also interact: the collective narration about the air raid needs personal stories of survivors for a bottom-up justification and illustration. It needs the stories of individual suffering in order to legitimize its key message – that Germany was a victim of this war, too.

From a top-down vantage point, collective memory provides a frame for the personal memories. So the trope of the innocent city of culture and beauty can be found in almost every single narrative of real or alleged eyewitnesses. It can assure the individuals that they are innocent victims, too. And it helps them to forget or suppress what they had done or refused to do during twelve years of National Socialism. The same function is fulfilled by the other myths around the air raids which emerged years after the end of the war but have spread quickly and entered many personal recollections since then – like the tale of fighter planes attacking people on the banks of the Elbe or the legend of liquid phosphorus burning people even after they had jumped into the river. These two legends have been rejected as untenable by historians, but they continue to exist in personal memories regardless of what historians say. What makes them persist is not only the stubbornness of the 'witnesses' who have tied their identity to them but also their function of stressing German victimhood against allied barbarism as a part of their national identity type.

## Transfer zones of memory

If personal, local, national and global memories are intertwined this way it is hard to separate the different levels. A very famous distinction by Jan and Aleida Assmann describes the difference in terms of communicative and cultural memory.[61] It tries to separate the recollections of the individual *contemporaries* from *institutionalized* cultural memory – in our case these would be the memories of the *local* collective of Dresden survivors versus the *national* memory of the Second World War.

According to the Assmanns, *communicative* memory means memory in biographical mode: living recollection in organic memories,

non-permanent, shared by contemporaries, restricted to a time of four to five generations and to direct and mostly oral communication, and focused on everyday life and biography. *Cultural* memory in contrast would be memory in foundational mode: it transcends the life of individuals and generations, is ritualized and culturally formed, managed and mediated by experts and institutions and lays the foundations for identities and realities. This definition is used frequently, particularly to describe the time when contemporary witnesses of historical events die and only their recorded stories and other sources are available.

But there are some inconsistencies in this theory. Since language is a product of culture, communication already implies cultural forming. And every oral conversation about the past of a collective always happens within medial forms that carry much more than, and reach far beyond, the particular 'living memory'. Not least, *every* communication takes part in stabilizing identities, especially the talk of contemporaries about their common past.

On the other hand, all the phenomena that the Assmanns define as cultural memory are dependent on features of communicative memory. They need communication and social interaction of contemporaries, and they can just as well refer to recent events and biographical experiences. In the definition given by the Assmanns, communicative memory is presented as independent from any cultural form and from any influence of the media. Moreover, they seem to deny it the function of legitimizing identities. Cultural memory, in their view, is in contrast deprived of its connection to the individuals and the interaction between them. Against this strong dichotomy, I argue that collective memory as a whole comprises attributes of both modes of memory.

But the distinctions drawn by the Assmanns are useful to define *transfer zones* between individual and collective memory and between the memory of groups and that of groups superior to them. Thus, the phenomena the Assmanns described as communicative memory can be understood as *proto-collective memory* – memories in the frame of biographical experience, informal, not as a whole culturally pre-formed, spread orally by a community of contemporaries. In contrast to the actual collective memory the remembering here is still very much bound to subjective experiences, not yet embedded in static narratives or objectified in a material medium. But these memories have already left the realm of individual memory. In this *state of passage* it will be decided whether or not the memory contents will become a part of collective memory.

A paradigmatic example for this proto-collective memory could be the situation in a Dresden air-raid shelter on 15 February 1945: the first

stories about the air raid are exchanged and it is possibly here that the story of the bear and the monkey appeared for the first time. Only later, when this narrative was merged with other anecdotes into a knowledge that was *real* for everybody in Dresden, it can be regarded as part of the collective memory.

The same applies to the next stage, the transfer from the collective memory of the residents of Dresden to a collective memory that comprises many collectives: national memory. For becoming a part of the bigger collective memory the recollections of the smaller collective have to be disassociated from their originating group and to be abstracted. They have to refer to a wider, superior, symbolic universe.[62] What has been exchanged in a social inter-relation where the members could communicate directly has now to be conveyed via media of national memory culture. That means in our case that the story of the bear and the monkey leaves the local narrating collective of Dresden. It is written down, printed and spread to a national public far beyond the town. And it does so because it suits the needs of the national collective memory to represent German suffering, not because somebody really saw the miserable bear and its little companion.

These transfer zones reach up to a global level. Although, as long as there is no global collective of humans as such, there is no actual global memory culture, there are elements of it. They exist in narratives, pictures and vocabulary that are spread globally by entertainment products like movies.[63] When a director makes a feature film about the bombing that later on is also shown in French, British, Polish, US or Japanese television then the elements he or she presented as being part of the event can become globally relevant memory elements; in this case they become elements of a larger and very abstract memory of a past century when terrible wars have let civilians suffer and destroyed precious works of culture.

## Notes

1. From the TV documentary *Zeichen der Versöhnung. 55. Jahrestag der Zerstörung Dresdens* by Titus Richter and Jens Stubenrauch, aired 13 February 2000, in the TV show *Kulturweltspiegel* (an ARD/MDR production). Cited after Schubert, 2006, *Die kollektive Unschuld*, p. 15. All translations in this article by the author.
2. Seydewitz, 1955, *Zerstörung und Wiederaufbau von Dresden*, p. 123f. Cited after G. Schubert, 2006, *Die kollektive Unschuld*, p. 24.
3. Griebel, 1986, *Ich war ein Mann der Straße*, p. 453. Cited after Schubert, 2006, *Die kollektive Unschuld*, p. 23.

4. A popular belief that fighter planes attacked people seeking safety on the banks of the Elbe.
5. G. Schubert, 2006, *Die kollektive Unschuld*; F. Taylor, 2004, *Dresden, Dienstag, 13.Februar 1945*; Bergander, 1994, *Dresden im Luftkrieg*; Schnatz, 2000, *Tiefflieger über Dresden?*.
6. See e.g. F. Taylor, 2004, *Dresden, Dienstag, 13.Februar 1945*, p. 409ff.; Arnold, D. Süß and M. Thießen (eds.),2009, *Luftkrieg*.
7. Draft of Vees-Gulani's paper '"Phantom Pains": New Directions in the Literature about the Air War', p.4, held at the conference on aerial warfare memories *Der Luftkrieg im europäischen Gedächtnis. Erinnerungen von 1940 bis 2005*, Jena Center *Geschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts,* oct. 17–18, 2008, Jena University. See also Vees-Gulani, 2009, '"Phantomschmerzen".
8. Taylor, 2004, *Dresden, Dienstag, 13.Februar 1945*, p. 404.
9. Vees-Gulani, 2009, "Phantomschmerzen".
10. A campaign that had already been waiting in the ministry's drawers, according to Matthias Neutzner at the Jena conference on aerial warfare memories.
11. Taylor, 2004, *Dresden, Dienstag, 13.Februar 1945*, p. 403ff.; Schubert, 2006, *Die kollektive Unschuld*, p. 57.
12. Schubert, 2006, *Die kollektive Unschuld*, p. 55ff.; The report of the *Historikerkomission* online: http://www.dresden.de/media/pdf/presseamt/Erklaerung_Historikerkommission.pdf, accessed 17 October 2014.
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14. Fache, 2009, 'Gegenwartsbewältigungen', p. 223.
15. Margalit, 2002, 'Der Luftangriff auf Dresden', p. 194f.
16. Groehler, 1995, 'Kleine Geschichte der Aufrechnung', p. 139.
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26. http://www.lvz-online.de/nachrichten/mitteldeutschland/knapp-500-dresdner-protestieren-gegen-umstrittenes-blockierer-urteil/r-mitteldeutschland-a-171022.html, accessed accessed 17 October 2014. For a detailed description of the repression see the report of the *Komitee für Grundrechte* (committee for basic rights): http://www.grundrechtekomitee.de/sites/default/files/Dresden-Bericht-30_01_2012.pdf, accessed 17 October 2014.
27. For information on the alliance against the Nazi march see their website: http://www.dresden-nazifrei.com accessed 17 October 2014.

28. http://www.dnn-online.de/dresden/web/regional/politik/detail/-/specific/DNN-Barometer-Mehrheit-der-Dresdner-befuerwortet-friedliche-Blockaden-von-Nazi-Demos-797623438, accessed 17 October 2014.
29 A first version of the law – initiated by the Saxon state government (at that time: CDU and SPD) on 26 February 2008 (parliament document 4/11380) – has been abolished by the Saxon constitutional court; and the opposition parties announced they would also bring the new one to the court (http://www.mdr.de/sachsen/versammlungsgesetz104.html, accessed 06.01.2013).
30. See *Dresdner Neueste Nachrichten*, 7 April 2012.
31. See the speech of historian Matthias Neutzner on 18.10.2012 in the city council on behalf of the parties *Die Linke*, *SPD* and *Bündnis 90 / Die Grünen*: http://www.dresden-1945.de/download/12_10_18_Rede_Neutzner_Stadtrat_Dresden.pdf, accessed 17 October 2014.
32. Press release, 25 June 2012 (http://www.dresden-1945.de/download/12_06_25_Pressemitteilung_IG_13Februar1945_Guernica_Strasse.pdf, accessed 17 October 2014).
33. http://www.dresden-1945.de/download/12_06_28_Pressemitteilung_IG_13Februar1945_BomberCommand_Memorial.pdf, accessed 17 October 2014.
34. The group's self description in its press releases, e.g. the one mentioned in note 33.
35. Open letter to Obama (http://www.dresden-1945.de/dresden_2009/2009_visit_obama.html, accessed 17 October 2014).
36. *Ibid*.
37. Fache, 2009, 'Gegenwartsbewältigungen', p. 233.
38. http://www.dresden-1945.de/veroeffentlichungen/rahmen_text.html, accessed 17 October 2014.
39. Some examples noted in Fache, 2009, 'Gegenwartsbewältigungen'.
40. See his *Der Untergang* (1967). For his conviction in 2000, see for instance http://jungle-world.com/artikel/2000/16/27937.html, accessed 17 October 2014, and Evans, 2001, *Lying about Hitler.*
41. Schmidt, *Heute gehört uns die Straße*, 1993, p. 125.
42. http://venceremos.sytes.net/archiv/13februar/onlinedoku/irving90indd.htm, accessed 17 October 2014, and: *Die Union*, 15 February 1990.
43. See the online archive of the events at http://venceremos.sytes.net/archiv/13februar/onlinedoku/index.html, accessed 17 October 2014, and the previously mentioned report of the *Komitee für Grundrechte* (note 26).
44. There have always been torchlit marches with a regional mobilization in the evening of 13 February *and* big marches on the nearest Saturday mobilized for nationwide or internationally. Only the latter saw the heavy blockades; the former do not face much opposition and still attract around 1,000 Nazis every year.
45. See BgR Leipzig, 'Konsens und Tabu', online: http://phase2.nadir.org/rechts.php?artikel=326&print=, accessed 20.01.2013; J. Gerber, 'Der linke Dresden-Schwindel. Wieso eine Kritik der deutschen Erinnerungskultur', *Phase 2*, 23 (2007), online: http://phase2.nadir.org/rechts.php?artikel=455&print=, accessed 20.01.2013; and the statement of *Antifaschistische Linke Berlin* with its main sentence: 'Primäres Ziel war es im Gegensatz zu der Antifa-Mobilisierung der letzten Jahre, sich nicht an den BürgerInnen abzuarbeiten,

sondern den größten Neonazi-Aufmarsch in Europa zu verhindern.' – http://www.antifa.de/cms/content/view/1049/32, accessed 17 October 2014.
46. For the statements and activities see the website of the alliance: http://www.dresden-nazifrei.com, accessed 17 October 2014.
47. Often rather loosely considered as *Antifa Dresden*.
48. Originally in English.
49. For these events see the chronology at http://venceremos.sytes.net/archiv/13februar, accessed 17 October 2014.
50. http://venceremos.sytes.net/archiv/13februar/2005/mobisite.htm, accessed 17 October 2014.
51. Fache, 2009, 'Gegenwartsbewältigungen', p. 230.
52. Bergander, 1994, *Dresden im Luftkrieg*; Schnatz, *Tieffflieger über Dresden?*; Taylor, 2004, *Dresden, Dienstag, 13.Februar 1945*.
53. http://venceremos.sytes.net/artdd/galerien/13.02.2011-heidefriedhof.html?page=3, accessed 17 October 2014.
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55. From a critique in the weekly *ZEIT* – http://www.zeit.de/2006/10/Dresden, accessed 17 October 2014.
56. See Schmid, 2007, 'Der "Feuersturm"'; Berek, 2009, 'Medien und Erinnerungskultur'; Luckmann, 1986, 'Grundformen der gesellschaftlichen Vermittlung'.
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62. According to Berger and Luckmann, 1996, *The Social Construction of Reality*.
63. For the question of global memory see Levy and Sznaider, 2001, *Erinnerung im globalen Zeitalter*.

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# 5

# Manufacturing Local Identification Behind the Iron Curtain in Sevastopol after the Second World War

*Karl D. Qualls*

Since 1991, Sevastopol, an ethnically Russian city in Ukraine, has been undergoing a re-examination of its heritage. On the eve of Ukraine's 'Orange Revolution' in 2004, one could see a wall on Soviet Street with graffiti that read: 'Sevastopol is Russia.' Graffiti is a common form of self-expression, but it can also be a political statement. The persistence of the name 'Soviet Street', which ends at a large statue of Vladimir Lenin that towers over the city, also seemed anachronistic in democratic and independent Ukraine. Cities throughout Eastern Europe have been westernizing by erecting glass and steel skyscrapers while also destroying remnants of the communist past by tearing down buildings and statues and renaming streets and squares.[1] Although many post-Soviet cities have removed traces of the Bolsheviks and the communist past, Sevastopol retains street names and Lenin's statue still looks down over the city from the central hill. Because after the Second World War Sevastopol's urban biography preferred two centuries of war heroism to revolutions, the city's local history survived in a way that was virtually impossible for many other cities in Eastern Europe after the collapse of communist governments. It should not surprise us, then, that the streets of Sevastopol were filled with joyous revellers in March 2014 as Crimea voted to be annexed by Russia.

We often assume that only democracies allow for public participation and that dictatorships, especially the heavy-handed rule of Joseph Stalin, would not allow any interference from outside the elite. Scholars, particularly social historians, of the Soviet Union have been challenging this misconception for decades. The case study of urban planning and rebuilding in Sevastopol, Ukraine, shows much contestation and negotiation between local and national authorities

that resulted in a resilient urban biography that outlasted changes in governments and ideologies.

Sevastopol, home to the Soviet Black Sea Fleet, suffered 97 per cent destruction in the Second World War, and planners in Moscow and Sevastopol had very different visions of what should arise from the ashes. With the war over, a centre–periphery battle ensued to gain control of the planning of the city. Life in the rubble was harsh – people lived in caves, dugouts, bank vaults, and elevator shafts for years after the war – but local officials, conscious of the city's past military history and future importance as a Cold War naval base, consistently flouted the law and sought to accommodate the local population with the few resources at hand. With so much of the pre-war population evacuated, at the front, or killed, access to labour became a major bottleneck for reconstruction. In repopulating the city, planners also realized that they needed to re-forge the city's urban biography to provide a sense of place for war-weary residents and thereby create a more stable labour pool. A clear narrative (or shared memory) eventually emerged, but it was not without debate and challenges. As with all myths, this one was flexible and adaptable to changing circumstances. What one might call 'local memory' was a confluence of lived experience, centrally created propaganda, and local residents' need to have a sense of direction and purpose in the past, present, and future. For Sevastopol, that purpose was defender of the Motherland; this was made tangible through urban rebuilding and proliferated and perpetuated through, among other media, guidebooks.

## The politics of re-planning a destroyed city

Destroyed cities were a central concern as the regime sought to redefine its relation to society and repair its image in the eyes of the population after nearly thirty years of revolution, civil war, famines, and purges. Reconstructed buildings and reborn cities became new symbols of progress and economic strength. New structures rising from and above the ruins offered more than space for housing, production, convalescence, and education. Each new building was a marker of healing and recovery. Because city building throughout the Soviet Union was an all-Union affair, without international support like the Marshall Plan, it became a leading symbol for the Soviet system's strength and resilience up to the time of the Korean War and beyond. But each of the destroyed cities had its own history and tradition, which also made the rebuilding process intensely local. How could a regime so used to central planning

and a command system respond to the need for local memories and identification?

The first instinct of Soviet central government was predictable: the formation in Moscow of the Committee on Architectural Affairs to oversee all planning and rebuilding and to ensure proper 'Soviet' construction throughout the entire country. Most architects and planners by the 1940s understood 'Soviet' to mean grand neo-classical buildings fronting wide avenues named for Marx, Lenin, or revolutionary heroes. This had become the pattern since Moscow had been redesigned a decade earlier.[2] However, the post-war period was much different. Local architects, planners, historians, and everyday citizens decided to voice their objections to Moscow- and Leningrad-based architects' visions of what to do with the near tabula rasa provided by wartime destruction. Two prominent architects, Grigorii Barkhin and Moisei Ginzburg, represented powerful Moscow-based institutions in a competition to redesign Sevastopol. Ginzburg failed to provide adequate detail for his concept, so Barkhin was granted permission to draft a full reconstruction plan.

Chief city architect Iurii Trautman became the leader of the fight for local customs and traditions. Like Barkhin, Trautman sought to highlight the city's naval heritage, but he wanted to highlight not just its activity in the latest war but all its past achievements,. The city's new architectural style, Trautman argued, should be patterned on the ruins of Khersones (Chersonesus), a 2500-year-old Greek city just outside the city centre. Most of all, Trautman and his staff wanted to eliminate the grandiose monuments and memorials to Stalin and others who had no direct connection to the city and its history. Restoration of Sevastopol's monuments to past heroes – most importantly Crimean War leaders E.I. Totleben, V.I. Istomin, V.A. Kornilov, and P.S. Nakhimov – took precedence over erecting new memorials to current leaders, and the ancient Greek styles rooted the city's identity in something much older and awe-inspiring. Trautman and his sense of proportion and history eventually won out over Barkhin.

In a 1945 review of Barkhin's plan for city squares, a brigade of experts in Moscow echoed local criticisms by noting that the Square of Parades was out of scale with neighbouring buildings.[3] They complained that the naval buildings and the new Panorama of the Great Patriotic War were much too large.[4] Barkhin had created inordinately large buildings for agitational purposes, such as his 100-metre high 'Glory' monument that would have dominated the Square of Parades at the ancient sea entrance to the city. One review panel saw 'Glory' as a hideous eyesore that would disrupt transportation, parades, and demonstrations in one

of the most important and beautiful regions of the city.[5] Barkhin's sycophantic and enormous statue of Stalin – 'the great organizer and inspiration for victory' – was similarly out of scale.[6] His redesign of Commune Square, the Square of the Third International, and Malakhov Kurgan also received criticism. Barkhin's plans for Commune Square impinged on Historical Boulevard, a key defence point during the Crimean War. Malakhov Kurgan, the hilltop site of bloody fighting during the Crimean War that took the lives of several Russian military leaders, was also redesigned as a locus for all the Crimean War memorials in the city, which included moving the headless statue of Totleben and the Panorama of the Great Defence from Historical Boulevard. Barkhin attempted to follow contemporary trends of monumental architecture, not knowing that it would be his downfall. The joint conclusion of a three-member architectural review panel went so far as to say that 'even if one takes into account [Sevastopol's] significance as a hero-city, a city of two defences', the scale of Barkhin's plan for the city centre was much too large.[7]

Barkhin's tampering with local sites of remembrance and homage, however, did not withstand local opposition that wanted Crimean War memorials to remain scattered throughout the city rather than concentrated in one area. Trautman, Sevastopol's new chief architect,[8] emerged from a November 1945 planning review in Moscow as the bearer of a new vision for the city, one which openly confronted Barkhin's plan. At the beginning of 1946, Trautman used this opportunity to present his counter-plan, 'A Short Consideration for the Experts on the Draft of the Plan of Sevastopol's Centre', in opposition to his new-found rival.[9] Trautman objected that Barkhin neither knew nor incorporated 'local conditions and traditions' in his plan.[10] He condemned Barkhin for planning as if Sevastopol was a blank page on which he could create without consideration for existing buildings, streets, and landmarks. Barkhin's reduction of Primorskii and Michmanskii boulevards – the 'traditional places of rest for the citizens of Sevastopol and sailors'– for his massive Square of Parades stood out as the ultimate expression of his lack of interest in local tradition.[11] Trying to preserve the familiar buildings of the city and to reduce the cost of reconstruction, Trautman admonished Barkhin for proposing the erection of the city's party and government buildings on Commune Square and for widening main traffic arteries.

Trautman made it clear to his audience that Barkhin's 'abstract academism' did not answer the 'real needs of the city' and therefore must not be implemented.[12] He urged, in contrast, that he and his staff 'rework

the draft of the centre on the basis of the new general directives and more favourable *initial qualities*'.[13] The 'new general directives' referred to a November 1945 Council of People's Commissars decree that called for rapid reconstruction of architecturally valuable structures, city centres, housing, and the 'improvement of the everyday conditions of the population of cities'.[14] Either because Trautman presented a superior plan or because it conformed to the latest wave of official cultural policy, or both, the experts accepted most of his counter-plan as the basis for their criticism of Barkhin.

Once the local team had stated its case and couched it in the proper language of cultural criticism, a number of men who reviewed the plan began to focus on architectural matters of scale, aesthetics, and symbolism. In April 1946, architect A. Velikanov, while noting the 'academic and abstract' characteristics of Barkhin's plan, also expressed concern for the destruction of Sevastopol's tradition and history. He pointed out that construction of the Square of Parades would encroach on the

> distinctive, customary and most memorable places of Sevastopol [...] These places entered literature, all the history of the city is connected with these places, even the city's heroic defences are connected with them. To change the city's appearance means to fully destroy it, to make a new city, a different city, a city not having a continuous connection with the old Sevastopol.[15]

Velikanov's attempt to return Sevastopol to its historical roots buttressed Trautman's arguments and reinforced the foundation for reworking Barkhin's schemes to meet local demands for preservation of nineteenth-century traditions. Another critic complained that Barkhin's design was 'connected neither with the traditions nor scale and character of Sevastopol's ensemble'. Moreover, Barkhin had 'deviated to the point of abstraction' and his proposal carried the 'imprint of abstract academism'.[16] Following such charge, the Committee on Architectural Affairs officially rejected Barkhin's proposal and called for further elaboration by mid November 1946, seven months later.[17] The battle initiated by local architects and taken up by prominent colleagues in Moscow brought Sevastopol's demands to the fore. Trautman was able to use official rhetoric espousing individuality (anti-formalism) to justify his recalcitrance to Barkhin's ill-informed planning. Likewise, speaking in the name of the population, if not always directly on their behalf, he secured a place for himself in history as the architect of a hero city attuned to its imperial Russian past.[18]

Trautman transformed more than just the built environment envisioned by Barkhin; he and his staff used linguistic symbolism as well as geography and aesthetics.[19] The naming and renaming of streets, squares, and parks was an integral part of the post-war programme of urban agitation.[20] Name changes suggested political shifts. After the revolution, Catherine the Great Street had been renamed for Lenin (as it remains today). More telling, however, is the number of streets that after the Second World War permanently reverted to their pre-revolutionary names. The Soviet obsession with making the revolution omnipresent led to the three streets of the ring road taking the names of Lenin, Marx, and Frunze. During Trautman's re-planning, however, the latter two changed to Great Naval and Nakhimov streets. When judged as part of a larger plan, this transformation heralds a new emphasis on local identity, historical depth, and national pride. Civil War commander Mikhail Frunze was essential to Sevastopol's 'liberation' from the Germans and Whites after the revolution, but he was not considered a local hero. Karl Marx, of course, had no direct link to the city, only to its ruling ideology. Admiral Nakhimov, on the other hand, stands atop the pantheon of heroes from the Crimean War for leading the defence. Great Naval Street, much more than Marx, carried the city's identity as a military and commercial, port. Although the reversion to pre-revolutionary names could be viewed as abandoning socialist goals, it was more important to the city's stability and rapid reconstruction to resurrect a unique, local character to which residents could attach their ideals and aspirations. Socialist competitions to speed reconstruction, therefore, were designed to rebuild Sevastopol the 'hometown' more than socialism, an approach which was not unlike similar retreats to Russian identity during the war.[21]

The names of the city's central squares also went through a radical transformation. Local planners transformed Commune Square to Ushakov, another of the city's admiral-heroes. Whole regions also changed. With the Tatar population forced from the city for allegedly collaborating with the Germans, Tatar Settlement became known as Green Hillock. Buildings also changed. The Karaite Jewish prayer hall became the Spartak sports club; the mosque, with minarets removed and the façade 'erased' of Koranic inscriptions, became the naval archive. The perceived reversion to tradition meant a Russian ethnic identification wrapped in a Greek architectural façade, yet devoid of all hints of competing identifications. Local unity demanded visual unity.

Local specialists also asserted their authority over the form of reconstruction. Tamara Alëshina, the head of the local planning

organization argued successfully that Moscow should not change the city's main central park into a site for Second World War memorials. Her plea noted that plans for Primorskii Boulevard 'must preserve its historically complex arrangement' and include the well-loved chestnut trees that were marked for destruction in Moscow's plans.[22] Teachers demanded more and better schools with proper pedagogical tools. Physicians argued for more beds, X-ray machines, and medicine.[23] Sanitation inspectors wanted more green spaces, trash collectors, and organized hunting for rabid dogs.[24] Factory bosses called for more housing for their workers and better food to increase productivity and reduce labour flight. Architects of course wanted to build beautiful and functional buildings that fitted the local character rather than central planning schemes.

Everyday urbanites, with their diversity of backgrounds and training, also petitioned local and central officials, in a multitude of ways, to pay attention to local conditions and traditions. One Sevastopol resident lambasted a plan to build the new theatre on the central hill because climbing the icy steps of the hillside in winter would be impossible for the city's elderly.[25] Specialists from the nearby archaeological preserve sent sketches of what a 'local' building should look like in order to prevent the typical Soviet five-story apartment block taking over the city.[26] When central authorities began pushing for more and higher construction in the late 1940s, local officials reminded them that Sevastopol sat on a fault line and would suffer a similar fate to Ashkhabad's in the 1948 earthquake.[27] Central officials also continued to press for wooden construction into the early 1950s, only to be reminded that this was out of character for the city because there were no nearby forests, but there were abundant stone quarries.[28] Sevastopol's officials, specialists, and residents participated in the re-planning of their city and foregrounded a local architectural aesthetic and a connection to the city's pre-1917 naval heritage. But how might these ideas have been resonant 60 years later for the graffiti writer who started this chapter?

## Guidebooks and the scripting of the past

Tour guidebooks are one of the most common ways to transmit a sense of place to a touring audience, even in non-authoritarian regimes.[29] Soviet Sevastopol's guidebooks maintained a focus on the city's military history, but throughout the second half of the twentieth century the relative weight given to the Crimean War, the October Revolution and Civil War, and the Second World War shifted. In the act of writing,

guidebook authors in the post-war decades have perpetuated a connection between city and fleet as they have led Sevastopol's visitors and residents through an understanding of the city. Guidebooks, whether Soviet or post-Soviet, have stressed the city's naval heritage and continued the identification of Sevastopol with heroism. Through omission and excision, guidebooks reinforced the process of forgetting discredited leaders, but they also actively created a selective 'remembering' of the past. In addressing the Turkish Wars and the Crimean War, authors across the decades remained consistent in the types of sites they highlighted and the language they used to describe the themes of heroism and sacrifice. However, coverage of the revolutionary period and the Second World War varied dramatically among guidebooks. Each shift in presentation helped to redefine the relative importance of military, Party, and the 'Russian masses' in Sevastopol's history.

Soviet travel guidebooks were another medium for transmitting an official image of the city to readers throughout the USSR and reinforcing the identifications set in stone by Iurii Trautman. Guidebooks instructed readers where to look and how to interpret what they saw and how it fitted into a larger urban and national biography. Because Second World War destruction and dislocation– physical, psychological, and ideological– was of the highest magnitude in cities like Sevastopol and Stalingrad, it was imperative in the post-war decade to rebuild not only structures but also ties that bound state and society. The regime's legitimacy and power had been questioned during the war, and it was imperative that new identifications be (re)constructed to restore allegiance. The rebuilding process restored the necessities of life, but monuments, toponyms, and the travel guidebooks that discussed them also reoriented people's thinking about a city's place within the Soviet world.[30] Although much of the post-war architectural style varied little from one urban area to the next, guidebooks clearly delineated a unique history and contribution for each city.[31] This was a paradoxical attempt to re-impose authority by celebrating uniqueness. For Sevastopol, this also meant disaggregating the city's naval character from the image of Crimea as a peninsula of pleasure and resorts, thereby giving residents a special role.[32] The 'individuality' of a given city supported and complemented the greater Soviet identification and helped to re-establish authority and traditional culture. While some cities, such as Magnitogorsk, had primarily an economic identity, others, like Novgorod, based their myth primarily on their heritage. Whether as a centre of mining and metallurgy or of ancient Russian culture, each city served as a component of the larger Soviet whole. Thus city residents

could celebrate the unique and special role of their locale while still supporting central Soviet ideals of labour and culture.

Guidebooks provided readers with the 'correct' understanding of the city's past and its role in Russian and Soviet history. Like guidebooks everywhere, they prescribed and proscribed meaning when authors decided what merited attention and provided context for the sites to be explored. As time passed and new generations were born with no first-hand knowledge of war, it was important to transmit the mythic images of Sevastopol's past to residents and visitors alike. As the Soviet Union collapsed and opportunities for tourism increased, subtle shifts occurred in the prioritization and presentation of the past in guidebooks, but they remained one of the chief media for introducing and explaining the importance of Sevastopol's place names and 2000 memorials.

Wartime propaganda and post-war reconstruction had built on pre-revolutionary images of the city. Leo Tolstoy's famous Crimean War sketches, *Sevastopol Tales*, provided generations of readers with a portrayal of the hero-city:

> The chief thing is the happy conviction that you carry away with you – the conviction that Sevastopol cannot be taken, and not only that it cannot be taken, but that it is impossible to shake the spirit of the Russian people anywhere– and you have seen this impossibility not in the numerous traverses of breastworks, and winding trenches, mines, and guns piled one upon the other without rhyme or reason, as it seemed to you, but in the eyes, the speech, the mannerisms, and in what is termed the spirit of the defenders of Sevastopol.[33]

People, not military preparations, counted most. Here Tolstoy established the equation that a battle for Sevastopol was a battle for Russia. He also marginalized the importance of political and military leaders and instead focused on the everyday heroes who would become examples to future generations. For Tolstoy, heroic examples could be effective in catalysing similar behaviour in others. Tolstoy was somewhat derivative because the city's first monument (Figure 5.1), erected in 1839 to honour Captain A.I. Kazarskii's miraculous defeat of the Turkish fleet ten years earlier, states eloquently and simply on its pedestal that his feats were 'An Example for Posterity'. Learning from the past was nothing new in Sevastopol.

Tolstoy's image of a city and population at war has resonated for over a century. An 1857 travel guide noted that the 'subject and source of inquisitiveness of visitors in Sevastopol is its defence [during the


*Figure 5.1* Sevastopol's first monument, erected in 1839, to honour Captain A.I. Kazarskii's miraculous defeat of the Turkish fleet ten years earlier states eloquently and simply on its pedestal 'An Example for Posterity'. © Karl Qualls

Crimean War].'[34] The tragic and heroic military past, rather than the beautiful bays and beaches of the city, assumed centre stage. As the Second World War raged, newspapers carried stories of the new heroes and linked them to the heroes of a century earlier. Newly arrived sailors and builders came into contact with lectures, newspaper articles, and short films on local history, such as the Crimean War, that appeared as soon as the Red Army recaptured the city in May 1944.[35] Long-term residents wanted the restoration of the familiar environment and, in order to stabilize the workforce, new residents had to be convinced that the

city, with its special role within Russian and Soviet history, was worth sacrificing for. And children's school lessons on history, literature, culture, and even science derived first from local examples.[36]

Guidebooks after the Second World War emphasized sacrifice, teamwork, unity, and fighting against great odds much as the Second World War newspapers and newsreels had.[37] For example, in 1829 Captain Aleksandr Kazarskii decided to blow up his ship's magazine rather than surrender to two Turkish battleships. Guidebook author Zakhar Chebaniuk, writing in the 1950s, reminded his readers that 'in an uneven fight an 18-gun Russian brig won a victory over an enemy that had more than a tenfold superiority in artillery'.[38] Emiliia Doronina, writing two decades later, called Kazarskii's feat an 'example of fortitude to the warriors of the two defences', which the Soviet Black Sea Fleet was continuing.[39] Doronina consciously connected her readers not only to the past, but showed the continuity of behaviour from Kazarskii to the present. A 2001 guidebook noted that the inscription 'An example for posterity' on Kazarskii's pedestal came from Tsar Nicholas I, an admission unthinkable in Soviet times.[40] Moreover, Kazarskii now represented a democratic choice because the city's first monument was 'dedicated not to an emperor or an admiral, but to a captain-lieutenant!'[41]

The representation of Kazarskii in these three books and periods underscores some of the changing dynamics in the post-war decades. Chebaniuk presented Kazarskii as a hero who was willing to die, but who instead succeeded in an unequal fight. Doronina, on the other hand, felt obligated to explain to her readers that Kazarskii served as an inspiration to all those who came after him. The post-Soviet texts not only attributed the veneration of Kazarskii to a tsar, but they also returned to the image of the everyday hero in Sevastopol in which an officer of average rank could become the first symbol of the city. This was a clear echo of Tolstoy's lessons in *Sevastopol Tales*.

Together with Kazarskii, the Crimean War stands at the centre of guidebooks' attention. The gates of Malakhov Kurgan appeared on the cover of Chebaniuk's 1957 text. The hill's Crimean War complex remained 'one of Sevastopol's most famous places'.[42] Doronina validated the importance of the Second World War memorial space at Sapun Gora by noting that its eternal flame was lit from that at Malakhov Kurgan, thereby 'symbolizing the continuity of glorious combat traditions.'[43] In other words, Malakhov Kurgan and the Crimean War gave legitimacy and historical depth to the veneration of the Second World War. Doronina was telling a new generation of readers what their predecessors had learned from wartime media: the Second World War and the

Crimean War, collectively known as the 'two great defences', were two parts of the same whole. Out of losses came victories, and the mettle of the everyday Russian withstood the test and prevented the destruction of the Motherland. Doronina, by uniting the two wars symbolically, continued the trend started by wartime writers of positing a clear and direct line of succession from one generation of sailors and fighters to the next. It was as if the anthropomorphized city continued to give birth to men and women willing to sacrifice their lives to protect what they loved most: Russia. Like Kazarskii, Crimean War tales served explicitly as examples of fortitude and sacrifice against a superior force; however, the focus on heroes as examples also precluded mention of cowardice.

Unlike the Crimean War, the city's revolutionary heritage in 1905 and 1917 played a remarkably minor role in guidebooks despite the centrality of many local events to the Soviet revolutionary mythology. Chebaniuk did little more than blame 'Menshevik ringleaders' for the failure of the 1905 Revolution.[44] Doronina, writing well after Stalin's version of history had been overturned, gave considerably more attention to the revolutionary period, but it was still quite brief in the larger scope of the book (only 23 of 143 total pages). She noted that the First Sevastopol Soviet 'endured a drubbing but the revolutionary spirit of the people remained unbroken'.[45] Thus, death was a perfectly acceptable fate when it led to greater good. In post-Soviet Ukraine, authors further marginalized the revolutionary tradition, which had lost most of its importance. Aleksandr Dobry lamented that children in 2001 knew little about the revolutionary movement. By devoting only three pages to the revolution, however, Dobry contributed further to its marginalization. Other post-Soviet authors rejected the revolutionary past entirely noting how it ushered in 'one of the most excruciating periods' of Russian history– the Soviet Union.[46] Another author went further and called the 1917 Revolution and Civil War 'A microscopic, laughable segment of time in the scale of history. ...Horrible! … Bloody! ... Destructive!'[47] He tried to minimize both the duration and importance of the revolution and thereby show that it had little effect on the longer history of Sevastopol. By casting the communist period as short-lived (and not three-quarters of a century), the author also suggested that this was grossly out of character with Sevastopol's heroic image and past. In many cities this type of rescripting may have been more difficult. But because architects and other mythmakers in the 1940s and 1950s had already championed Sevastopol's Russianness over its Sovietness, a new localism that ignored or despised the Soviet period was possible without dramatic change to the cityscape.

The Second World War became the defining event for a new generation of Soviet citizens, and guidebooks bear this out. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Chebaniuk focused on individual heroes and thereby personalized the war for his audience. In the first days of the 1941–42 defence, Chebaniuk noted, five members of the naval infantry initiated an 'unparalleled duel' as they destroyed 16 tanks by themselves and thus 'fulfilled their debt' as they fought to their death.[48] They were repaying the Soviet system for their upbringing. Doronina also recounted the feats of the 'five daring Black Sea sailors' and their ability to twice repel the German advance.[49] The fighters in Pillbox No. 11 similarly staged a valiant defence against all odds. Bombarded from the air and on the ground, they held out for more than three days until all but one were dead. Chebaniuk recorded the soldiers' oath, but Doronina distilled it to its three main points: 'Under no condition surrender to captivity. Fight the enemy the Black Sea way, to the last drop of blood. Be brave, masculine to the end.' She conveniently omitted point one of the oath which repeated Stalin's infamous directive to take 'not one step back'. She aided the remembrance of what she viewed as positive and heroic, but she omitted reference to Stalin and his order to shoot any Soviet soldier who tried to retreat. Doronina aided the process of forgetting fear and Stalin's brutal repression. She also conveniently 'forgot' that some people did run away from the fight and had to be kept fighting by threats.

Post-Soviet authors generally omitted detailed discussion of individual heroes and instead directed readers' attention to the larger complexes of communal remembrance such as in the Monument to Young People, the Monument to the Defenders of Sevastopol, and the Monument to the Aviators of the Black Sea Navy. Individuals from the Crimean War, however, were still honoured robustly. As the demystification of Second World War heroes like partisan Zoia Kosmodemianskaia advanced in the post-Soviet period, it certainly raised questions about all individual hagiographies. In addition, without state censorship and subsidies, authors had to be selective in order to minimize the size of the texts and thereby manage profitability. Rather than laboriously cover each example of heroism, guidebook authors have opted for portraying the overall collective heroism of the defenders of the Second World War. The explosion of commemoration in the last-quarter century that added roughly 1300 monuments to the city landscape made comprehensive coverage impossible and likely seemed excessive for generations with no direct contact to the war.[50] Besides, as one guidebook noted: 'one must judge that many monuments are either excessively grandiose or simplistic'.[51]

Thus, guidebooks more recently have decided to focus primarily on nineteenth-century feats and monuments.

But the city of Sevastopol has not remained entirely in the past. Sevastopol today boasts several fashionable restaurants, jewellers, clothing stores, and more. Many stores promote foreign products with foreign advertising, but even modernized stores for local Russian and Ukrainian products have transformed the aesthetic of the urban environment. However, some commercial interests in the city embraced the Russian past. Advertisers have learned to target local consumers by associating their products with the city's past. A restaurant name Traktir is named for the 1855 Crimean War battle that attempted to remove the French from the city, and the interior is covered with paintings on nautical and military themes. An advertising campaign for the meat products firm KAMO placed billboards around the city stating that 'There are Sausages. And there are KAMO Sausages.' This unimaginative slogan was typeset against a background showing the Monument to Scuttled Ships (Figures 5.2 and 5.3), the most beloved monument in the entire city, which honours the intentional scuttling of ships at the mouth of the main bay in order to prevent enemy


*Figure 5.2* 'There are Sausages. And there are KAMO Sausages', set on a background showing Sevastopol's Monument to Scuttled Ships. © Karl Qualls

*Figure 5.3* The Monument to Scuttled Ships, Sevastopol's most beloved monument. Created in 1905. © Karl Qualls

ships from entering during the Crimean War. Photos of the monument are ubiquitous in calendars, on postcards, and the covers of many city guidebooks and histories. It is the symbol of the city. In short, such advertisers draw not only on the city's Russian past but also on residents' sense of local identification. The intent is to associate KAMO with the city and create modern brand loyalty. As Sevastopol adapts to the world of capitalism, its image as a stalwart defender of the Motherland is strengthened through advertising and marketing of its past, but it is also diluted through the multiple images that city leaders and entrepreneurs are now projecting about leisure and ethnic tourism.

Sevastopol and the countries of which it has been a part have seen dramatic changes: multiple regime changes, the Cold War and its conclusion, becoming a city in independent Ukraine, and now (2015) part of Ukraine annexed by Russia. Throughout, however, Sevastopol has maintained the image so consciously created in the wake of war because it had already subordinated the 1917 revolution to war exploits in the middle of the last two centuries. During the war and post-war decade, mythmakers and urban planners alike worked hard to (re)fashion and keep alive the myth of Sevastopol as a bastion defending the Russian Motherland.[52]

Although it might appear to be counterintuitive, local identification was one strategy of re-imposing central authority after the Second World War. Disoriented and homeless citizens needed somewhere to root themselves after a traumatic era. In a city like Sevastopol that almost ceased to exist after the Second World War, many of the people who inhabited the rubble after liberation and rebuilt the city came from elsewhere. In order to mobilize, settle, and motivate the new labour force for reconstruction, various strategies of local identification became common.

As long as an urban biography promoted the city in concert with the Russian/Soviet state, then the process of local identification posed little threat to the central regime. With the Soviet Union forming a Russocentric identification in the 1930s, Sevastopol was free to reach back to its nineteenth-century Russian heritage to construct a mythology that trumped even the Bolshevik Revolution. The construction of an urban biography was both a reflection of and catalyst for local identification. Authors, artists, architects and other creators of urban biographies did not start from a tabula rasa; they selectively remembered the past and transformed it to meet contemporary conditions and to promote their own values and beliefs or those of their patrons. Urban identification was manufactured for travellers, but also for new arrivals needing to learn what it means to be 'local'. Guidebooks told visitors and residents alike what they should understand about monuments and the names of squares and streets fashioned by post-war urban planners.

Sevastopol shared many of the same problems of physical reconstruction with other destroyed former Soviet Bloc cities, but it is likely a unique case of a city outside Russia that benefited from the turn to Russocentrism during the Stalin years. Today, one can see the attachment to the city's past in both its built space and its residents' understandings of self and place. Soviet Russocentrism and a revival of localism after the Second World War created a Ukrainian city that today

still views itself as Russian and in March 2014 voted overwhelmingly to rejoin Russia. Monuments, street names, and a particular building style constructed a unique image for the city. Guidebooks were one medium to perpetuate the image constructed during the post-war decade and came to pose a challenge for post-Soviet newly independent Ukraine, which, in 1991, assumed control of a city with an overwhelmingly Russian biography and demography. The agents of identification in Sevastopol created a relational web with the city and its population serving as defenders of the Russian Motherland. This means that much of Sevastopol's perceived place in the world was connected to Russia and the USSR. As one of the first designated hero-cities, Sevastopol carried a categorical identification shared initially only with Leningrad, Stalingrad, and Odessa. Because the categorical, but especially the relational, mode of identification tied Sevastopol to Russia, the city's incorporation into the post-Soviet independent state of Ukraine has been fraught with challenges, but the city's Russian identification remains mostly unchanged.[53]

Although near total destruction during the war made radical re-planning possible, locals argued that maintaining past traditions was essential to the stability and happiness of the population in a vital military city. Since Sevastopol's history focused on military sacrifice in defence of the Motherland, the new localized vision for Sevastopol complemented rather than competed with larger Soviet objectives. The irony is that local officials had to fend off central attempts to change the city's built space and sites of memory and in the process they created a stronger link with the centre.

The resilience of the post-war decade's localization project, embedded in built space and rehearsed in classrooms, tourist guides, and festivals for decades, is now the source of tension with the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv. When Sevastopol's citizens took to the streets in March 2014 to demand and then celebrate annexation by Russia, it was not only a response to the perceived threat of losing the right to speak Russian or the hope for higher pensions and wages. Rather, many were motivated by a long held and continuous historical connection, manifested in built space, to Russia and its military history.

## Notes

1. Czaplicka, Gelazis and Ruble (eds.), 2009, *Cities after the Fall of Communism*, presents case studies in post-communist eastern European cities in which changes in toponyms were often central.

2. For more on the Moscow Plan, see Day, 2003, 'The Rise and Fall of Stalinist Architecture'.
3. Russian State Archive of the Economy (hereafter, RGAE), f. 9432, op. 1, d. 241, ll. 11–12.
4. RGAE, f. 9432, op. 1, d. 241, ll. 126–31. Architects were befuddled by confused 'official' policy. Whereas monumental architecture was encouraged for agitation, 'technical planning' (or planning based on economic models) searched for the most efficient and cost-effective way to accommodate the population.
5. RGAE, f. 9432, op. 1, d. 243, ll. 42–43ob.
6. State Archive of the City of Sevastopol (hereafter, GAGS), f. R-79, op. 2, d. 30-a, l. 9.
7. 'Hero-city' was a designation given to cities that had survived long sieges or that had been the location of 'heroic' battles. Cities' place in the pantheon of heroes afforded them high status in the press and special consideration in post-war rebuilding; hero cities were to become monumental sites of remembrance. 'City of two defences' became a common phrase in the Second World War, linking the battle against the Nazis with the city's defence in the Crimean War.
8. Georgii Aleksandrovich Lomagin, the pre-war architectural leader, had been re-appointed chief architect in January 1945 by the Directorate of Architecture (GARF f. A-150, op. 2, d. 26, l. 11). On 9 October 1945 the Directorate demoted Lomagin and placed Iurii Andreevich Trautman in his place. At the same time, Trautman's friend from his school days in Leningrad, Valentin Mikhailovich Artiukhov, became the head of the building inspectorate (GARF f. A-150, op. 2, d. 30, l. 17). This was an obvious attempt to replace a local official with two outsiders from Leningrad. Artiukhov eventually became chief architect and proved to be as 'local' in his approach as Trautman. For more on how municipal officials transferred from other regions refashioned themselves into 'locals', see Qualls, 2009, *From Ruins to Reconstruction*, pp. 73–80.
9. RGAE, f. 9432, op. 1, d. 243a, ll. 52–58; GAGS, f. R-308, op. 1, d. 21, ll. 9–14.
10. RGAE, f. 9432, op. 1, d. 243a, l. 52.
11. RGAE, f. 9432, op. 1, d. 243a, l. 55.
12. RGAE, f. 9432, op. 1, d. 243a, l. 57.
13. RGAE, f. 9432, op. 1, d. 243a, l. 57. emphasis mine. Most interesting is Trautman's use of Zhdanov's language in his critiques nearly six months before what is generally regarded as the beginning of Zhdanov's cultural attacks – the 14 August 1946 condemnation of *Zvezda* and *Leningrad*. The use of 1930s-style criticism was revived in the architectural community well before Zhdanov's pronouncements on formalism and apathetic art.
14. GARF f. A-150, op. 2, d. 20, l. 1.
15. RGAE, f. 9432, op. 1, d. 243a, ll. 5–8; GAGS, f. R-308, op. 1, d. 21, ll. 28–31. Quotes from RGAE, f. 9432, op. 1, d. 243a, ll. 8, 7. Note his use of the plural *defences* to link the Second World War with the Crimean War.
16. For the Planning and Construction Directorate's decision on Barkhin's plan for the centre see RGAE, f. 9432, op. 1, d. 243, ll. 106–10; GAGS, f. R-308, op. 1, d. 21, ll. 55–59; RGAE, f. 9432, op. 1, d. 154, ll. 159–63.
17. RGAE, f. 9432, op. 1, d. 243, ll. 111–15; RGAE, f. 9432, op. 1, d. 154, ll. 155–58.

18. Barkhin's daughter continued to argue into the 1980s that her father was the true architect of Sevastopol. See A. G. Barkhina, 1981, *G. B. Barkhin*. (Moscow, Stroiizdat, 1981).
19. For an introduction to the language of built space see *The Signature of Power;* Agrest and Gandelsonas, 1977, 'Semiotics and the Limits of Architecture'; Prezios, *The Semiotics of the Built Environment*.
20. For a comparative perspective of other Soviet name changes, see Murray, 2000, *Politics and Place-Names*.
21. On increasing 'Russianness' in the 1930s and after, see David Brandenberger, 2002, *National Bolshevism*.
22. GARF f. A-150, op. 2, d. 254, ll. 38–39.
23. GAGS f. R-59, op. 1, d. 10, ll. 1–5.
24. GAGS f. R-359, op. 1, d. 4, ll. 32–39ob.
25. See in the column 'Vosstanovym rodnoi Sevastopol v 3–4 goda!' the following articles: 'Vpered, k novym trudovym pobedam!', *Slava Sevastopolia* (6 November 1948), p. 1; 'V plenum Sevastopol'skogo gorodskogo komiteta VKP(b)', *Slava Sevastopolia* (17 November 1948), p. 1; 'Vse vnimanie stroitel'ei blagoustroistvu shkol FZO', *Slava Sevastopolia*, (19 November 1948), p. 1.
26. Four letters have been preserved in the central archives noting the reservations of various groups (RGAE, f. 9432, op. 1, d. 154, ll. 263–68). Workers at the State Khersones Museum, the archeological museum for 2500-year-old Greek ruins, would obviously be concerned with tradition and preservation.
27. The Directorate for the Reconstruction of Sevastopol SSSR discussed the issue in 1949. See RGAE f. 9432, op. 1, d. 387, ll. 330–335.
28. GAGS f. R-308, op. 1, d. 107, ll. 16–18; GAGS f. R-79, op. 2, d. 221, l. 26; GARF f. A-259, op. 6, d. 6563, l. 4. This type of local knowledge informing the centre was not limited to peripheral cities. As Steve Bittner has shown, even at the heart of power in Moscow, residents pressed for greater attention to their desires. Bittner, 2008, *The Many Lives of Khrushchev's Thaw*.
29. A sampling of approaches can be found in Mosse, 1991, *Fallen Soldiers*; Winter and Emmanuel (eds.), 1991, *War and Remembrance*; Koshar, 2000, *German Travel Cultures*; Koshar, 1998, '"What Ought to be Seen"'; Gorsuch and Koenker (eds.), 2006, *Turizm*.
30. Kosenkova, 2000, *Sovetskii gorod*; Qualls, 2001, 'Local–Outsider Negotiations'.
31. Strong similarities with the books under investigation in this chapter can be found in guidebooks on Smolensk and Novgorod. For example, see *Novgorod: putevoditel'*, 1966; Zaitsev and Kushnir, 1975, *Ulitsy Novgoroda*; Belogortsev and Sofinskii, 1952, *Smolensk*; and *Smolensk: spravochnik-putevoditel'*, 1960.
32. Layton, 2006, 'Russian Military Tourism' shows Crimea as part of the 'pleasure periphery' in nineteenth-century military tourism.
33. Lev Tolstoy, 1982, *Sevastopol Tales* (Moscow, Progress, 1982), p. 34.
34. Afanas'ev, 1857, *Putevoditel',* p. 1. See also Popov, 1889, *Pervaia uchebnaia ekskursiia*, and Petrovna (Munt) Valueva, 1904, *Sevastopol' i ego slavnoe proshloe*.
35. 'Segodnia', *Krasnyi Chernomorets*, 21 February 1945, p. 4.
36. GAGS f. R-79, op. 2, d. 63, ll. 64–65ob.
37. For a discussion of how wartime newspapers, newsreels and more set the tone for Sevastopol's post-war biography, see Qualls, 2009, *From Ruins to Reconstruction*, chapter 1. In addition to the texts that are cited later in this chapter, see Garmash, 1972, *Gorod-geroi Sevastopol*; Olshevskii, 1977,

*Sevastopol: spravochnik*; Olshevskii, 1981, *Sevastopol: putevoditel*; Orlov and Gassko, 1985, *Gorod-geroi Sevastopol*; Rosseikin, 1960, *Sevastopol*; Rosseikin and Semin, 1961, *Sevastopol*; Rosseikin, Semin and Chebaniuk, 1959, *Sevastopol*.

38. Chebaniuk, 1957, *Sevastopol*, p. 34.
39. Doronina and Iakovleva, 1978, *Pamiatniki Sevastopolia*, pp. 22–24.
40. Dobry and Borisova, 2000, *Welcome to Sevastopol*, p. 74. The Russian edition is Dobry, *Dobro pozhalovat' v Sevastopol'*.
41. Khapaev and Zolotarev, 2002, *Legendarnyi Sevastopol',* p. 102.
42. *Ibid*., p. 126.
43. Doronina and Iakovleva, 1978, *Pamiatniki Sevastopolia*, p. 123.
44. Chebaniuk, 1957, *Sevastopol: istoricheskie mesta i pamiatniki*, pp. 98–101.
45. Doronina and Iakovleva, 1978, *Pamiatniki Sevastopolia*, p. 65.
46. Khapaev and Zolotarev, 2002, *Legendarnyi Sevastopol'*, p. 42.
47. Olshevskii, 1981, *Sevastopol': putevoditel'*, p. 22.
48. Chebaniuk, 1957, *Sevastopol: istoricheskie mesta i pamiatniki*, pp. 113–14.
49. Doronina and Iakovleva, 1978, *Pamiatniki Sevastopolia*, pp. 103–104.
50. In 1978 Doronina counted 739 total monuments, and in 1999 there were 2015 monuments registered with the city. See Doronina and Iakovleva, 1978, *Pamiatniki Sevastopolia*, p. 3; Dobry and Borisova, 2000, *Welcome to Sevastopol*, p. 46.
51. Olshevskii, 1981, *Sevastopol': putevoditel'*, p. 37.
52. Qualls, 2009, *From Ruins to Reconstruction*, chapter 4.
53. For more on relational and categorical identification, see Brubaker and Cooper, 2000, 'Beyond "Identity"'.

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# 6

# The Local Past in a Contested Borderland: Commemoration in Strasbourg Between France, Germany and Europe[1]

*Thomas Williams*

In the summer of 1840, the city of Strasbourg celebrated the quatercentenary of the invention of printing by Johannes Gutenberg.[2] This event had a particular local significance: even though Gutenberg did not build his first working printing press until returning to his native Mainz in 1444, he first experimented with moveable type while resident in Strasbourg during the late 1430s. The 1840 celebrations were shaped by a friendly local rivalry between these two cities on the Rhine, both claiming to be the birthplace of modern printing.[3] Perhaps more surprisingly, given that Strasbourg had only belonged to France since 1681, Gutenberg's achievements were also celebrated in 1840 as local contributions to French *civilisation* and the French national community.[4] However, despite occasional manifestations of local and national pride, the celebrations above all had an international atmosphere. After the unveiling of a bronze statue of Gutenberg on the *place du marché-aux-herbes*, subsequently renamed *place Gutenberg* in his honour, a local printer, Gustave Silbermann, declared that Gutenberg's work 'n'est plus le patrimoine d'une ville ou d'une nation; c'est le patrimoine de l'Europe, de l'humanité entière'.[5]

After the Second World War, such evocations of shared European heritage would play an important role in Strasbourg's reinvention as a symbolic site of Franco-German reconciliation and European co-operation. During the intervening century, however, the local past was mobilized in support of competing national claims as Strasbourg, the largest city in the contested borderland of Alsace-Lorraine, passed back and forth between France and Germany as the prize of military victories in 1870, 1918, 1940 and 1945. After each shift in the Franco-German frontier, the local past was repositioned within new national and international

frameworks and used to justify, or challenge, national territorial claims. In the selective process of reshaping the past into a model for the present, usable elements of local history were appropriated and celebrated, while problematic elements were concealed, removed or disavowed. Local organizers of commemorative activities could either opt to support the dressing up of the local past in national colours or, as was often the case, could seek to portray the local past in more nuanced terms.[6] To celebrate the local past as either part of a wider 'European' heritage or as only part of a narrowly regional traditional would very often imply a rejection of either the French or German national project in Alsace, though not necessarily a rejection of both.

The commemoration of Gutenberg followed the vicissitudes of the shifting national boundary. At the time of the quincentenary of Gutenberg's birth in 1900 Strasbourg (Straßburg) had become the capital of the *Reichsland* of Elsaß-Lothringen in the German Empire and Gutenberg could be celebrated as a 'deutscher Meister', while Mainz and Strasbourg were presented not as rivals but as sister cities within a single German nation.[7] Nevertheless, the international atmosphere of the 1840 events was still very much present during 1900 celebrations.[8] Under French rule after 1918, this German-speaking printer from Mainz could not convincingly be transformed into a French national figure, but by insisting that Gutenberg's influence transcended national boundaries, the French authorities could at least attempt to denationalize a historical symbol that had previously been used to underline Strasbourg's ties with the German nation. This was very much the case in the late 1930s as the city of Strasbourg set about planning the quincentenary of printing. Faced by the threat of expansionist German nationalism across the Rhine, French planners sought to use Gutenberg to highlight Strasbourg's role as a bastion of European civilization and, in so doing, they formulated their plans in direct opposition to the National Socialist celebrations of Gutenberg being organized in Mainz.[9] Before these plans could even be put into practice, however, Strasbourg had changed hands once more, and an exhibition in Nazi-annexed Strasbourg in 1942 celebrated Gutenberg as the embodiment of eternal Germanic struggle in the Reich's western borderlands.[10] Finally, in the context of Franco-German reconciliation after the Second World War, Gutenberg re-emerged as a symbol of shared 'European' heritage in Strasbourg. The Europeanization of Gutenberg, along with many other aspects of Strasbourg's past before 1681, at once undermined German nationalist assertions and reinforced Strasbourg's claim to become the permanent seat of European institutions, which in turn served the

interests of both the municipal authorities and the French national government. When Strasbourg celebrated the bi-millennium of its foundation in 1988, the statue of Gutenberg was draped in three flags: the city banner of Strasbourg, the French *tricolore* and the twelve-starred European flag.[11]

This chapter examines the shifting spatial meanings – local, regional, national and European (and, occasionally, universal) – that were projected onto elements of Strasbourg's history over the course of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. It focuses on the reinvention of three historical symbols, each represented by a monument on one of Strasbourg's main squares and each associated with a particular set of narratives regarding the historical role of the border city within the national and international communities. Two of these symbols, Strasbourg's most celebrated student, Johann Wolfgang Goethe (1749–1832), and the local military hero, Jean-Baptiste Kléber (1753–1800), were used to articulate competing visions of Strasbourg's role as, respectively, a German cultural heartland, a bastion of French patriotism or, in the case of Goethe, as a 'bridge' between the Latin and Germanic worlds. A third aspect of the local past, the memory of military service (primarily for Germany) during the two world wars, is less visible in the urban landscape but is represented, at least partially, by the war memorial that stands at the centre of the *place de la République*. While used under Nazi rule from 1940-1944 in an attempt to reinforce a local sense of patriotic duty to the German nation, these memories of military service have most frequently been employed to represent the borderland as a victim both of modern national conflicts in general and of German rule in particular. Strasbourg's post-war role at the centre of the European project relied on a subtle reading of the local past which combined these narratives of borderland history in order to present the city simultaneously as unambiguously French in its patriotism, uniquely European in its cultural heritage and quintessentially Alsatian in both its folk traditions and, above all, in its status as a victim.

## German *Kultur* and French *civilisation*: Goethe's transformation in Strasbourg

As Strasbourg shifted between French and German rule, the commemoration of Johann Wolfgang Goethe, who studied law at Strasbourg University in 1770/71, followed a similar trajectory to that of Gutenberg. Proclaimed as a national symbol during periods of German rule, Goethe was celebrated under French rule as a symbol of Strasbourg's role as

a cultural crossroads at the heart of Europe. While almost all parties agreed that Goethe's experience in Strasbourg represented a period of profound personal and intellectual transformation, the question of whether this transformation resulted from, or in spite of, an encounter with either German or French culture in the city has remained an issue of much controversy. Goethe's discovery of Alsatian folk poetry has been interpreted in both regionalist and nationalist frameworks, while his celebration of the Gothic architecture of Strasbourg cathedral, published as the 1771 treatise *Von deutscher Baukunst*,[12] has in turn fuelled debates regarding the 'national' origins of Strasbourg's most famous landmark.

While Strasbourg was under German rule from 1870 to 1918, Goethe's experiences in that city a century previously were put forward as evidence that, even if Strasbourg belonged to the French crown at the time, its ties to the German nation, as defined by a shared language and culture, had never been broken.[13] As a symbolic gesture, the university library, which had been destroyed by fire during the German siege of 1870, was re-inaugurated on 9 August 1871, precisely 100 years after Goethe received his doctorate from the university. At the inaugural ceremony it was proclaimed that, after encountering Alsatian folklore, the poetry and architecture of the German Middle Ages and the theories of Johann Gottfried von Herder in Strasbourg, Goethe abandoned his previous admiration for French culture and became a truly German poet.[14] Drawing on Goethe's own description of his years in Strasbourg in the memoir *Dichtung und Wahrheit* as 'Deutschheit emergierend',[15] his time in Strasbourg was portrayed as a form of national conversion experience.[16] In May 1904, these arguments were put forward in grand style during the inauguration of a statue of the young poet on a square in front of the university (renamed G*oetheplatz* in his honour; Figure 6.1).[17]

Unlike many other monuments built under German rule, the Goethe monument was neither damaged nor removed when French rule was restored in the city in November 1918.[18] Goethe's transformative years in Strasbourg were instead given a new meaning by the city's new rulers. In a speech during his visit to Strasbourg in December 1918, the French president Raymond Poincaré proclaimed that it was in Strasbourg that Goethe had discovered 'l'élégance et l'harmonie latines', while the nationalist writer Maurice Barrès, speaking at Strasbourg university in 1921, evoked Goethe's experience in Strasbourg as a symbol of 'le meilleur effet que la civilisation française peut se flatter d'exercer sur les régions en éternel suspens qui avoisinent le grand fleuve historique'.[19] Both saw Goethe as a symbol of a French 'civilizing mission' on the


*Figure 6.1* The statue of the young Goethe, inaugurated in May 1904, on a square in front of Strasbourg University (renamed G*oetheplatz* in his honour, now *place de l'Université*). Photo et coll. BNU Strasbourg, M.CP.000.239

Rhine, a mission that they hoped to continue in the French-occupied Rhineland after 1918. In his 1925 work *Goethe en Alsace*, the historian Jean de Pange, who was closely involved in French cultural efforts on the Rhine after the First World War, expressed his hope that Goethe's experiences in Strasbourg would demonstrate to other Rhineland cities 'combien leur culture peut s'enrichir en s'associant à l'esprit français'.[20] While conceding that Goethe had also, to a degree, turned away from French culture while in Strasbourg, de Pange reassured his readers that was not because Strasbourg was a German city, but because, on the contrary, it had been 'en train de se franciser'.[21] To German nationalists protesting against the territorial provisions of the Treaty of Versailles, meanwhile, the fact that Goethe's memory could be manipulated in support of French cultural claims was the ultimate symbol of a mendacious and artificial French project to 'Latinize' (*verwelschen*) the border city.[22]

In the second half of the 1920s, particularly following the attempts of the left-wing coalition government of Edouard Herriot to impose the French language and extend the secular legislation of the Third Republic to Alsace, a wide range of regionalist movements gained

ground in Alsace.[23] They sought, to varying degrees, to challenge French centralizing policies and emphasize the regional specificity of Alsace, including its linguistic ties to the German-speaking world and its role as a 'bridge' on the Rhine between French and German culture. Reflecting this shift in local opinion, the portrayal of Goethe's experience in Alsace had become more nuanced by the time of the centenary of his death in 1932, the centrepiece of the Strasbourg centenary commemorations being an exhibition on 'Goethe et l'Alsace' that emphasized his admiration for the Alsatian landscape and Alsatian regional culture (albeit without placing Alsatian *Volkstum* within a wider German national context).[24] During a ceremony at the university, the university's rector spoke of Strasbourg's historical role as the 'crossroads' of European civilization, and a collection of essays published for the occasion noted that even the highest achievements of 'la civilisation allemande' also belonged to Europe as whole.[25] In this work, the Germanist and historian Edmond Vermeil stressed the historical complexity of Goethe's experiences in Strasbourg, condemning their propagandistic manipulation in the name of either French or German nationalism.[26] Vermeil noted, nevertheless, that Goethe's description of the Gothic architecture of Strasbourg cathedral as 'German' in his 1771 study had been 'évidemment absurde', although Vermeil attributed Goethe's error to the fact that, despite its incontestably 'French' origins, medieval Gothic architecture had not been widely appreciated in eighteenth-century France.[27]

The nationalist manipulation of Goethe's memory in Strasbourg reached its peak under National Socialist rule from 1940 to 1944, when Strasbourg was presented as a historic bastion of German culture against the West. A few carefully selected passages from Goethe's *Dichtung und Wahrheit* – particularly the phrase 'so waren wir denn an der Grenze von Frankreich alles französischen Wesens auf einmal bar und ledig' (thus, on the border of France, we suddenly became rid of and free from all things French) – were repeated in speeches and in the regional press in order to demonstrate that in the borderland, contrary to the French 'legend', Goethe had found himself repelled by French culture and had instead become fully aware of his German nationality.[28] In May 1943, a programme of festivities was organized in Strasbourg to mark the foundation of an 'Oberrhein' branch and the 'Goethe-Gesellschaft Weimar'.[29] After a performance of Goethe's *Urfaust* in Strasbourg's municipal theatre and the laying of a wreath at the Goethe monument Gerhard Fricke, Professor of German language and literature at the university (now re-inaugurated as the *Reichsuniversität*), gave a lecture on Goethe's conversion experience in Strasbourg, proclaiming that it

was Strasbourg and Alsace 'die Goethe eigentlich zum Deutschen und zum Dichter gemacht haben'.[30] When it came to Goethe's admiration of the cathedral, Fricke continued, the French origins of Gothic art were quite entirely irrelevant, since Goethe was struck only by the cathedral's 'deutsche Seele'.[31]

Finally, after the violence and destruction of the Second World War, Goethe would be reinvented as a symbol of Franco-German reconciliation on the Rhine, reinforcing Strasbourg's claims to be the historical 'capital of Europe'. During the inaugural meeting of the Council of Europe, held at Strasbourg University in August 1949, Goethe's memory was evoked by the Council's acting president (none other than Edouard Herriot whose reforms in the 1920s had led to the regionalist crisis of the 1920s) as 'l'exemple d'une intelligence dépassant et dominant les frontières'.[32] Whether consciously or unconsciously, Herriot was echoing the comments of the Germanist Albert Fuchs who had spoken in the same hall a few months earlier at a ceremony to mark the bicentenary of Goethe's birth, describing Goethe as representative 'd'une civilisation et d'une pensée qui dépassent les frontières nationales'.[33] The bicentenary year also saw great efforts in the French Zone in Germany to denationalize the commemoration of Goethe and to present him as a European and a Francophile.[34] By the time of the bicentenary of his studies in Strasbourg in 1970, and even if his experiences in Alsace continued to generate lively discussions among academics, the appropriation of Goethe's memory to advance national claims had all but disappeared from view, to be replaced once more by a nuanced portrayal that at once celebrated Goethe as a European figure and highlighted his admiration for Alsatian regional culture.[35]

Goethe's experiences thus remained a regular point of reference in Strasbourg throughout the border changes of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and his statue (along with that of Gutenberg) is one of only a handful of monuments that was never damaged or removed during this turbulent period. This capacity for survival owes a great deal to the fact that, during periods of French rule, the symbol of Goethe's stay in Strasbourg could be either denationalized by reference to his significance as a European figure or put forward as evidence of the civilizing effect of French culture on the Rhine. Whether used to portray Strasbourg as a bastion of German *Kultur* on the edge of the German national space or as a bridge between two civilizations, the figure of Goethe was used to point to the unique historical destiny of the border city. This 'borderland' narrative featured strongly, albeit in different ways, in the commemoration of almost all aspects of the local past.

## The local hero as a national symbol: The cult of General Kléber

While the figure of Goethe can be seen as representative of a German cultural definition of nationality in Alsace, the commemoration of General Kléber has become inseparable from a French civic definition of nationality based on political will and shared historical experience. Kléber was a popular local symbol, and had been a prominent part of Strasbourg's urban landscape since the inauguration of a monument in his honour in the middle of the large central square (the *place-des-armes*, subsequently renamed *place Kléber*) in 1840, under which his mortal remains are kept in a vault. On one level, the commemoration of Kléber, a local-born hero of the French Revolutionary wars killed during Napoleon's Egyptian Campaign in 1800, is representative of a broader argument that the French nationality of Alsace was forged through the historical experience of the French Revolution and Napoleonic wars, most famously put forward by the historian Numa Denis Fustel de Coulanges, a professor at Strasbourg University in the 1860s, in opposition to the German annexation of 1870.[36] The memory of the French Revolution and Empire featured heavily in attempts to reinforce French patriotism in Strasbourg after 1918, which included the new Musée Historique intended, as Strasbourg's mayor wrote to French prime minister Georges Clemenceau in 1919, to familiarize the local population with 'son glorieux passé français'.[37] In 1935 and 1936 large patriotic displays were organized to mark the bicentenary of the birth of Marshall Kellermann, the locally born hero of the French victory at Valmy in 1792, and the centenary of the death of Rouget de l'Isle, who had first performed the 'Marseillaise' in Strasbourg the same year.[38]

Among the many local symbols of the French past, the figure of Kléber had a double significance, representing not only the glories of the French Revolution but also becoming a symbol of enduring local attachments to the memory of France during the period of German rule from 1870 to 1918. During this period, Kléber's statue became the focus both of French patriotic displays on Bastille Day and of ritualistic nocturnal commemorations by student societies.[39] As a result, the Kléber monument was one of the main focal points of the 'liberation' celebrations at the end of the First World War. Arriving in Strasbourg on 22 November 1918, French troops paraded past Kléber's statue and, in the night which followed, the decapitated head of the toppled statue of Kaiser Wilhelm I on the *Kaiserplatz* (subsequently renamed *place de la République*) was laid at the foot of the Kléber statue in a grand display

of the triumph of revolutionary liberty over Prussian despotism. A few days later, Ferdinand Foch, the liberator of 1918, saluted the statue holding Kléber's original sabre, which had been brought from Paris specifically for the occasion.[40] When President Raymond Poincaré visited Strasbourg on 9 December 1918, he declared before the citizens of Strasbourg that their city had remained unchanged despite German rule, reciting a canon of local historical events – including Goethe's stay and the first performance of the Marseillaise – which portrayed Strasbourg as a bastion of French liberty and *civilisation* on the Rhine. He concluded with reference to Kléber, who not only represented military prowess and French grandeur but whose statue 'a silencieusement représenté, pendant l'occupation allemande, la résistance indomptable du peuple strasbourgeois'.[41] As such, the act of commemoration itself could be portrayed as an act of national resistance.

After the German invasion of 1940, the identification of Kléber with French nationalism was a cause of particular concern for a new regime hoping to avoid the mistakes of the previous period of German rule.[42] There was even a degree of grudging admiration on the part of Alsace's new rulers for the successful way in which the French had used a 'cult of memory' in Alsace to bind the region to France.[43] In a survey conducted in 1942 by the historian Andreas Hohlfeld, General Kléber was found to be the best-known of all local historical figures among school children: of 110 school children interviewed, 87 had heard of Kléber, while the best known figure of Strasbourg's 'German' heritage, the protestant reformer Jakob Sturm (1489–1553) could only be identified by 27 pupils.[44] Given the undoubted local popularity of Kléber, the removal of his monument from its central position in Strasbourg was considered an issue of utmost sensitivity.[45] Having been packed under sandbags from 1939–40, the Kléber statue was not destroyed as other less well-protected monuments had been during the summer of 1940, including those dedicated to the Marseillaise and to Kellerman. Its removal and the exhumation of Kléber's remains from below the square took a number of months and were closely followed by the Nazi-controlled press which sought to draw a distinction between Kléber the French 'legend' and Kleber the brave, Germanic soldier.[46] As a professional, Bavarian-trained officer, Kléber was even given a dignified 'retirement' with full military honours. On 30 September 1940, his statue was removed in a harness and taken through the streets to the historical museum.[47] On 5 November, the exhumation of his remains was carried out with great pomp and ceremony, the casket transferred to the Kronenbourg military cemetery on a gun carriage towed by six horses, accompanied by a military band and two choirs.[48]

At the same time, Kléber's military prowess was ascribed entirely to his German racial origins.[49] Following this line of argument, the enduring popularity of Kléber in Strasbourg was also attributed to the Germanic and warlike local population's admiration for military figures and was certainly not, it was argued, to be understood as proof of the strength of French national feeling in Alsace. At a ceremony to rename the *place Kléber*, Strasbourg's soon-to-be mayor Robert Ernst admitted that the Alsatian population had certainly been drawn to Kléber, but only because 'wir Elsässer sind gute Soldaten'.[50] The square subsequently became known as *Karl-Roos-Platz*, named after the pro-German 'autonomist' executed by the French in 1940. Despite being given a dignified 'retirement' ceremony, the Nazi attempt to remove Kléber from public view proved extremely unpopular, as did his replacement with the 'traitor' Roos.[51] While public displays of French patriotism were far more severely punished than they had been during the previous period of German rule, the *Sicherheitspolizei* in Strasbourg reported, for instance, that in the night before Bastille Day 1941, a handwritten notice appeared in the suburb of Schiltigheim calling on Alsatians to remember that 'der General Kleber war ein Elsässer, Roos ein deutscher Spion'.[52] After the war it was even reported that the gardeners of the Kronenbourg military cemetery had tended the flowers on Kléber's grave with such loving attention that they had been punished with a fine of 20 Marks.[53]

When Strasbourg celebrated its liberation from German rule in November 1944, no greater compliment could be made to the liberators than to compare them to Kléber, and the re-inauguration of Kléber's monument was organized to coincide with the first anniversary of the liberation on 23 November 1945 (Figure 6.2). Speaking at the ceremony, the city's mayor Charles Frey equated General Kléber, 'le soldat-citoyen des armées de la liberté', with General Leclerc, 'le jeune et hardi général de l'armée de la Libération', blurring the distinction between the political and social liberation of the Revolution and the national liberation from foreign rule. Echoing the comments of Poincaré in 1918, Frey declared that Kléber was 'd'abord et avant tout un symbole du patriotisme français de notre population et sa volonté de rester français'.[54] Building on the memory of acts of patriotic 'resistance' during the *Kaiserreich*, the notion that the local population had remained faithful to the symbols of its glorious French past was put forward as evidence that Alsace never abandoned hope in its liberation and, by this logic, had never truly collaborated with the enemy. As the Commissaire de la République for Alsace Emile Bollaert had declared in Colmar earlier that

*Figure 6.2* The re-inauguration of the Kléber monument, 1945. Photo et coll. BNU Strasbourg, M.PHOT.2689.NBI 1

year: 'Terre de fidélité, l'Alsace fidèle à elle-même, fidèle à son passé, fidèle à ses grands morts, les Kléber, les Rapp, elle n'a jamais douté, jamais pactisé, jamais abdiqué'.[55] Such sweeping statements said nothing, of course, about the complex realities of Alsatian life under German rule during the Second World War. Indeed, the celebration of Kléber, the liberators of 1918 and 1944 and the long tradition of Alsatian military service for France only served to obscure the most problematic aspect of local memory in the twentieth century: how to commemorate those who had fought in German uniform during the two world wars,

including the 130,000 'malgré nous' who had been conscripted into the Wehrmacht and Waffen SS from 1942 to 1944.[56]

## The borderland as victim: local memories of the two world wars

In the course of the First World War, 50,000 Alsatian men had died fighting in German uniform. In the name of national unity during the reintegration of Alsace-Lorraine into France after 1918 this potentially divisive issue was often subtly circumvented in inscriptions on memorials, where phrases such as 'à nos morts' were used in the place of the unambiguous categories 'morts pour la France' or 'gefallen für Deutschland'.[57] This perceived obfuscation and denial on the part of the French authorities prompted protests in the regionalist press. Most notably, the autonomist lawyer (and future Nazi *Kreisleiter* of Strasbourg) Hermann Bickler dedicated an article in February 1931 in the *Elsaß-Lothringer Zeitung* to all those Alsatians and Lorrainers who died for Germany, describing them as the 'most unknown soldiers' of the Great War.[58] In 1935, work began on the construction of an alternative, regionalist war memorial at the Hünenburg castle site belonging to the publisher Friedrich Spieser, where a vast stone tower, dedicated to all 'im Weltkrieg gefallenen Elsaß-Lothringer' ('Alsace-Lorrainers who fell in the First World War'), was completed in July 1937.[59]

The fact that such a monument could only be constructed on private property away from the urban centres of Alsace was symptomatic of the difficulties faced by municipalities in constructing, and funding, monuments on which all parties in Alsace could agree. In Strasbourg, tense deliberations continued for almost two decades before a monument, backed by private donations, was finally erected in the centre of the *place de la République*. The monument depicted three figures: a mother holding the naked bodies of her two dying sons in her arms, representing the two sides on which the region's sons had fought.[60] The inscription contained no mention of nationality, reading simply 'à nos morts, 1914–1918' (Figure 6.3). Moreover, the meaning of the monument, particularly the central female figure, was left open to interpretation: at the inauguration ceremony, attended by the President of the French Republic Albert Lebrun, Strasbourg's mayor Charles Frey suggested that it could be interpreted as referring to Strasbourg, to Alsace, to France, to all of humanity or simply to 'ce que Goethe a appelé l'Eternel féminin'.[61] Certain elements of the monument and ceremony were undoubtedly orientated towards the French nation: no German

*Figure 6.3* Monument aux morts, Strasbourg. Photo. et coll. BNU Strasbourg, M.CP.000.268

inscription was included on the monument, the city was decked out in the French national colours in honour of the president's visit and the ceremonial dinner included desserts named after Kléber, Rouget de l'Isle and Joan of Arc.[62] Nevertheless the ceremony as a whole was as inclusive as possible, at once underlining the unique challenge of dealing with the regional experience of the war and expressing hope both for a bright future within the French Republic and, above all, for peace between France and Germany. Even the autonomist *Elsaß-Lothringer-Zeitung* announced that it welcomed the new monument.[63]

The hopes for peace expressed during the 1936 ceremony would prove short-lived, however, and the period of Nazi rule that followed the invasion of 1940 saw a concerted effort on the part of the new regime to renationalize the memory of the First World War as a means of reinforcing German national feeling in Alsace. Veterans were encouraged to wear their German medals and to join the National Socialist *Kriegerbund*, which organized a commemorative ceremony at the monument to the 'unbekanntester Soldat' at the Hünenburg on 3 August 1941, the anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War.[64] During his first public address in Alsace, held on Strasbourg's *Karl-Roos-Platz*, the *Gauleiter* Robert Wagner spoke of the 'historical proof' of the region's German nationality offered by the voluntary inscription of Alsatian soldiers in the German army in 1914. Even if one were to refuse to accept

the cultural (or racial) definition of nationality as represented by 'die deutsche Herkunft, die deutsche Sprache und das deutsche Volkstum des Elsaß' ('the German origins, the German language and the German folklore of Alsace'), the fact that 10,000 young Alsatians volunteered to fight in German uniform in 1914, Wagner argued, should be ample proof of the region's German nationality.[65] Wagner seemed to be offering the population a civic definition of German nationality, using the 'spirit of 1914' in direct opposition to French attempts to base Alsatian nationality on the 'spirit of 1789', the transformative historical experience of the French revolution. In the summer of 1940, an office was set up to oversee the removal of French inscriptions on all war memorials in Alsace and their replacement with unambiguous German formulations. Owing to wartime shortages of labour and materials, wooden panels were often placed over inscriptions as a temporary measure and the task had only been partially carried out by the summer of 1944.[66]

The pacifist overtones of the Strasbourg monument meant that it did not feature in National Socialist commemorations in Alsace, which tended to centre on *Karl-Roos-Platz*, using Roos as a symbol of local struggle and sacrifice for the German fatherland. It is unclear whether the inscription 'à nos morts' on the monument on Strasbourg's *place de la république* (renamed *Bismarck-Platz*) was removed or simply covered up during the war years, but the monument was at least left intact when the Germans withdrew from the city in November 1944.[67] After the war, the dates '1939–1945' were added underneath the inscription 'à nos morts', later to be joined by the dates of France's wars of decolonization in Indochina and Algeria. While the memory of the Second World War was tagged on, in this way, to a narrative of regional victimization that was already present during the inter-war years, very little was said in public about the war experience that did not serve to reinforce a narrative of patriotic resistance and regional suffering. Commemorations focused on the moment of liberation itself rather than the period of annexation, a central figure being General Leclerc, who had vowed on 2 March 1941, after Free French forces captured the Italian-held fort of Koufra in the Libyan desert, 'de ne déposer les armes que lorsque nos couleurs, nos belles couleurs, flotteront à nouveau sur la cathédrale de Strasbourg' ('not to to lay down arms until our colours fly once more on top of Strasbourg Cathedral'). These words were inscribed on an obelisk monument erected in his honour on the *place Broglie* in 1951.

Building on the narratives of patriotic 'resistance' during the previous period of German rule, Strasbourg was thus portrayed after 1945 as a bastion of French patriotism on the Rhine. In 1948, during a visit of

President Vincent Auriol, the city was awarded the Croix de Guerre for its unwavering patriotic 'resistance'.[68] Prime minister Robert Schuman, who accompanied Auriol, read out the official citation, awarding the medal to Strasbourg, 'cette ville de patriotisme légendaire', for having 'incarné l'esprit de résistance de la Nation toute entière'.[69] Auriol even made use of the occasion to claim that the Alsatian people had given France a tradition of resistance ('d'avoir donné à la France une tradition de résistance') from 1870 to 1918.[70] This did not mean that the service of Alsatian men in German uniform was shrouded in complete silence. However, during these grand displays of national unity after 1945, the distinction was blurred between the experiences of Alsatian conscripts, deserters and escapees in order to suggest that all Alsatians had secretly been hoping for the same French victory. On 12 June 1948, General de Lattre presented a tricolour flag to Robert Bailliard, head of the veterans' association, ADEIF (Association des Déserteurs, Evadés et Incorporés de Force) in the Bas-Rhin, proclaiming that 'quels que soient les rangs dans lesquels aient servi les jeunes Alsaciens, je sais qu'ils ne faisaient qu'un pour le succès de la France et le triomphe de ses armes'.[71]

The 1953 Bordeaux trial shook the foundations of this historical narrative of patriotic Alsatians held hostage by rapacious Germans. Fourteen Alsatian recruits into the Waffen SS, of whom only one had engaged voluntarily, were put on trial alongside a number of low-ranking German Waffen SS members, and all were found guilty, to differing degrees, of involvement in the massacre of French civilians at Oradour-sur-Glane.[72] Although the Alsatian conscripts received lighter penalties than the Germans on trial, the verdict of 13 February 1953 was met by widespread protest and consternation in Alsace. The association of Alsatian mayors published a message of solidarity with the condemned men, flags were hung at half-mast in municipal buildings and, most notably, a crowd of 6,000 took to the streets in protest in Strasbourg, where the memorial on the *place de la République* was draped in black cloth.[73] This dramatic gesture, using the local memory of the twentieth-century conflicts in direct opposition to the national government in Paris, raised the spectre of the inter-war autonomist crisis.[74] Fearing a rupture between Alsace and France, the French national assembly hastily drafted a bill of amnesty, and by 21 February the Alsatians had been released from prison, an act which restored calm in Alsace despite leaving lasting tensions between Alsace and the Limousin region and a feeling of resentment and distrust on both sides.[75] The whole event had been extremely regrettable, the prefect of the Bas-Rhin department reflected at the end

of February 1953, because the experience of Nazi rule and wartime conscription had in fact made the local population feel more French than ever before: 'les Alsaciens se sont sentis d'autant plus Français qu'ils se rappelaient être les victims de l'Allemagne'.[76] After 1953, the Alsatian population felt a double sense of victimization, first as victims of German tyranny and subsequently as victims of French distrust and suspicion, a discourse of victimization that has shaped the memory of the war in Alsace ever since.[77]

As these examples suggest, three main narratives have dominated the presentation of the local past in Strasbourg since 1945, portraying Strasbourg simultaneously as a bastion of French patriotism, as a cultural crossroads at the heart of Europe and as the victim of national conflicts. These narratives are closely intertwined and often mutually reinforcing. While memories of suffering under German rule have served to strengthen French national sentiment in Alsace, the associated narrative of victimization is also central to the status of the Strasbourg as a symbol of post-war Franco-German reconciliation and European integration. Writing in 1979, Strasbourg's mayor Pierre Pflimlin claimed that Alsace was particularly attached to its 'mission européenne', because 'notre région, plus qu'aucune autre, a été la victime des luttes fratricides qui ont déchiré notre continent'.[78] Pflimlin wrote these words in the catalogue of the historical exhibition 'Strasbourg et l'Europe', held during Strasbourg's campaign to become the permanent seat of the European parliament, an exhibition that in fact concentrated not on Strasbourg's status as a victim but on its role as site of cultural exchange between Latin and Germanic Europe. Crucially, however, neither of these European claims fundamentally undermines French national claims to the city. Even the narrative of Strasbourg as a historic crossroads plays its part in strengthening French national claims, insofar as it suggests that Latin or French *civilisation* was a permanent feature of cultural life in the city, even during the thousand-year period before 1681 when the city was firmly tied, both culturally and politically, to German-speaking Central Europe. Moreover, by Europeanizing those aspects of the local past which had been most essential to German national claims (including medieval art and architecture, the Protestant Reformation and Goethe's studies in Strasbourg) all aspects of the local past could be celebrated in a way that did not undermine the city's French nationality in the present. This careful division of the past between regional, national and European categories has been crucial in maintaining Strasbourg's largely uncontested post-war status as a city that is at once Alsatian, French and European.

## Notes

1. The author would like to thank the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Alfred Toepfer Stiftung F.V.S. for their generous support of the doctoral thesis 'Remaking the Franco-German Borderlands: Historical Claims and Commemorative Practices in the Upper Rhine, 1940–1949' (University of Oxford, 2010) on which this chapter is based.
2. See Stoskopf, 1990, 'Il y a cent cinquante ans à Strasbourg'.
3. *Relation complète des fêtes de Gutenberg*, 1841, pp. 1–2.
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 32–34.
5. 'is no longer the heritage of one city or one nation; it is the heritage of Europe, of all of humanity', *Ibid.*, p. 44.
6. Fischer, 2011, 'The Trophy of Titans', p. 228.
7. Archives de la Ville et de la Communauté Urbaine de Strasbourg (subsequently AMS), 234 MW 163: 'Festzeitung zur 500 jährigen Geburtstagsfeier Johann Gutenbergs, Straßburg, 24. Juni 1900'.
8. Riederer, 2004, *Feiern im Reichsland,* pp. 372–373.
9. AMS 234 MW 181: 'Proposition de résolution tendant à inviter le Gouvernement à organiser une exposition internationale du 5e centenaire de l'invention de l'imprimerie par Gutenberg, à Strasbourg, en 1940'.
10. See *Einführung in die Gutenberg-Schau*, 1942, pp. 1–2, and Scheuermann, 1942, 'Gutenberg und Straßburg', p. 347.
11. On the 1988 celebrations see Müller, 1989, *Strasbourg à 2000 ans*.
12. *On German Architecture*.
13. Riederer, 2004, *Feiern im Reichsland*, pp. 373–6.
14. *Die Neugründung der Straßburger Bibliothek*, 1871.
15. *Poetry and Truth*, 'emergent German-ness'.
16. See for example Henning, 1899, 'Der junge Goethe', p. 47.
17. Schmidt, 1904, 'Goethe und Strassburg'. See also Martin, 1904, 'Das Strassburger Standbild des jungen Goethe'.
18. On the destruction of monuments in 1918 see Maas, 1997, 'Zeitenwende in Elsaß-Lothringen'.
19. 'the best effect that French civilisation can claim to exercise upon on those eternally unresolved regions which border that great historic river'; Barrès, 1921, *Les bastions de l'est*, p. 17; Poincaré's speech is reprinted in *Le président de la République*, pp. 29–30.
20. 'how much their culture can be enriched by associating themselves with the French spirit', de Pange, 1925, *Goethe en Alsace,* pp. 212–213.
21. 'in the process of becoming French'; *Ibid.*, p. 47.
22. See for example Traumann, 1923, *Goethe der Straßburger Student*, p. 362–364.
23. See, especially, Fischer, 2010, *Alsace to the Alsatians*, pp. 128–206.
24. Haug and Lang, 1932, *Exposition à l'occasion du centenaire de la mort de Goethe*.
25. 'Goethe-Gedächnisfeier im Universitätsgarten', *Elsässer Bote*, 21 March 1932, and Edmond Vermeil, 1932, 'Avant Propos', in *Goethe: études publiées pour le centenaire de sa mort*, p. v.
26. Vermeil, 1932, 'Goethe à Strasbourg', in *ibid.* pp. 3–95, here pp. 89–90.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 33.
28. See, among many others, Könitzer, 1941, 'Die Straßburger Wiedergeburt', and Albert Becker, 1940, 'Goethe im Banne elsässischen Volkstums'.

29. AMS, 7 MW 514: 'Gründungsfeier der Landesvereinigung Oberrhein der Goethe-Gesellschaft Weimar, Einladung/Programm'; Decker, 1943, 'Straßburger Goethetage'; 'Festliche Goethe-Tage in Straßburg', *Kolmarer Kurier*, 20 May 1943.
30. 'that actually made Goethe into a German and into a poet'; Fricke, 1943, *Goethes Straßburger Wandlung*, p. 5.
31. Ibid, p. 26.
32. 'the model of an intellect that surpasses and prevails over frontiers'; Conseil d'Europe, 'Compte-rendu officiel de la première séance 10 août 1949: discours d'ouverture', in *Conseil d'Europe: compte-rendu, première session, 10 août au 8 septembre 1949*, vol. 1 (1949), pp. 7–11.
33. Fuchs, 1949, *Aspects de Goethe*, p. 56.
34. See above all, Haut-commissariat de la République Française en Allemagne, 1949, *Goethe et la France*.
35. See the collection of essays edited by Bauer, 1973, *Goethe et l'Alsace*.
36. Fustel de Coulanges, no date, 'L'Alsace, est-elle allemande ou française?', in Fustel de Coulanges, *Questions contemporaines*, 3rd edn (Paris, Hachette, 1923), pp. 96–97.
37. Archives Départementales du Bas-Rhin (ADBR), 121 AL 1091: Jacques Peirotes to Georges Clemenceau, 7 May 1919.
38. ADBR, 286 D 307: 'Bicentenaire de Maréchal Kellermann et commémoration des 135 généraux strasbourgeois: programme des grandes fêtes d'inauguration'; 'Une grandiose manifestation patriotique devant le monument de la Marseillaise place Broglie', *Dernières Nouvelles de Strasbourg*, 12 July 1936.
39. Denis, 1994, 'Fêtes et manifestations'; Riederer, 2004, *Feiern im Reichsland*, p. 363–70.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 377; 'Encore un grand jour: le salut de Foch à Kléber', *Journal d'Alsace-Lorraine*, 28 November 1918.
41. 'silently represented, during the German occupation, the indomitable resistance of Strasbourg's population'; *Le président de la République en Lorraine et en Alsace*,1919, pp. 29–30.
42. Schall, 1942, 'Die Legenden der französischen Propaganda'.
43. ADBR, 126 AL 1657: Adolf Schmid, 'Jahr der Geschichtserziehung im Elsaß', 5 December 1941.
44. Hohlfeld, 1942, 'Auswirkungen des französischen Geschichtsunterrichts'.
45. ADBR, 125 AL 137: Bürgermeisteramt Straßburg to Wagner, 20 August 1940.
46. 'Klebers Abmarsch', *Straßburger neueste Nachrichten*, 20 September 1940; W[ilhelm] Sch[euermann], 'Das Ende der Kleber-Legende', *Straßburger Monatshefte* 5 (1941), p. 276.
47. 'General Kleber fährt durch die Stadt: das Kleberdenkmal dem historischen Museum einverleibt', *Straßburger neueste Nachrichten*, 1 October 1940.
48. ADBR, 125 AL 137: 'Überführung des Sarkophags des napoleonischen Marschalls [sic] Kleber', 1 November 1940; 'General Kleber feierlich überführt: der napoleonische General mit militärischen Ehren würdig bestattet', *Straßburger neueste Nachrichten*, 6 November 1940.
49. Schall, 1942, 'Die Legenden der französischen Propaganda', p. 190.
50. 'we Alsatians are good soldiers'; Ernst, 1940, 'Zur Umbenennung der Plätze in Straßburg', p. 158.
51. See, for example, the comments of Bopp, 2004, *Ma ville à l'heure nazie*, p. 46.

52. 'General Kléber was an Alsatian, Roos a German spy'; Bundesarchiv (Berlin Lichterfelde), R83-Elsaß/33: Der Befehlshaber Sicherheitspolizei und des SD Strassburg, 'Demonstrative Vorkommnisse aus Anlass des französischen Nationalfestes', 18 July 1941.
53. 'Das Grab unseres Generals Kleber… 20 RM Strafe für allzu liebevolle Pflege', *Echo de l'Est*, 18 March 1945.
54. 'first and foremost a symbol of the French patriotism of our population and of its desire to remain French'; AMS, 198 MW 53: 'Discours de M. Charles Frey, Maire de Strasbourg, 23 novembre 1945'. Similar comments were made by Emile Bollaert: AMS, 198 MW 53: '23 novembre 1945, inauguration du monument Kléber'.
55. 'Land of fidelity, Alsace [was] faithful to itself, faithful to its past, faithful to its dead heroes, the Klébers and the Rapps; it never doubted, never colluded, never abdicated' ; 'Le discours de M. Bollaert à Colmar', *Dernières nouvelles du Haut-Rhin*, 18 September 1945.
56. Herberich-Marx and Raphaël, 1985, 'Les incorporés de force alsaciens'.
57. Petitdemange, 2002, 'Ils ne sont pas morts pour la patrie', and Kohser-Spohn, 2006, 'Der Staat in Stein'.
58. Hermann Bickler, 'Der unbekannteste Soldat', *Elsaß-Lothringer Zeitung*, 7 February 1931. See also Ernst, 1934, editorial, and Friedrich Metz, 1934, 'Der elsaß-lothringische Soldat im Weltkrieg'.
59. Spieser, 1940, 'Die Hünenburg'.
60. Fischer, 2010, *Alsace to the Alsatians*, pp. 166–167.
61. AMS 234 MW 197: Text of speech Frey's speech, p. 3.
62. AMS 234 MW 197: 'Déjeuner offert par la municipalité de Strasbourg […] 18 octobre 1936'.
63. 'Die Einweihung des Straßburger Gefallenendenkmals', *Elsaß-Lothringer Zeitung*, 17 October 1936.
64 Archives Nationales, AJ 40 1443: Gaupropagandaamt, 'Terminliste: öffentliche Veranstaltungen, Kundgebungen', 14 July 1941 and 'Verordnung 232: Kriegsauszeichnungen 1914–1918', in Stadtverwaltung Straßburg, *Amtliche Mitteilungen der Stadtverwaltung Straßburg*, 1/ 1 (1940), p. 3.
65. Robert Wagner, speech of 20 October 1940 reprinted as 'Der elsässische Schicksalsweg', in *Der Aufbruch des deutschen Elsaß,* 1940, no page numbers.
66. Archives Départementales du Haut-Rhin, 1 AL 3 Altkirch 404 (Purg. 195): Report sent to Landeskommissar in Altkirch entitled 'Bereinigung der Denkmäler im Elsaß', 7 March 1941; Bundesarchiv (Berlin Lichterfelde), R83 Elsaß / 28, 'Bereinigung der Denkmäler im Elsaß', 11 August 1944.
67. Ernst, 1954, *Rechenschaftsbericht eines Elsässers*, p. 292.
68. 'Le Président de la République en Alsace et en Lorraine', *Cahiers Français d'Information*, no. 112, 15 July 1948.
69. 'city of legendary patriotism', for having 'embodied the spirit of resistance of the whole nation'; *Commémoration du rattachement de l'Alsace à la France*, 1950, p. 43.
70. *Ibid*., p. 54.
71. 'whichever the ranks in which young Alsacians served, I know they were united behind the success of France and the victory of its arms'; *Ibid*., p. 16.
72. Farmer, *Martyred Village,* pp. 135–170.
73. *Ibid*., pp. 155–162.

74. Archives Nationales, F/ICIII/1313: Monthly report of the Prefect of Bas-Rhin, January 1953, p. 3.
75. Farmer, 1999, *Martyred Village*, pp. 145–147 and 167–168.
76. 'Alsatians felt all the more French when they remembered being the victims of Germany'; Archives Nationales, F/ICIII/1313: Monthly report of the Prefect of Bas-Rhin, February 1953, p. 5.
77. Boswell, 2008, 'Should France be ashamed of its history?', p. 243. A sense of injustice continues to pervade regional historical accounts of the subject. See, for example, Vonau, 2003, *Le procès de Bordeaux*, p. 201.
78. 'our region, more than any other, has been the victim of the fratricidal struggles that have torn our continent apart'; Pflimlin, 1979, 'Avant-propos'.

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# Part II
# Places and Practices of Subaltern Memory

# 7

# Displacements and Hidden Histories: Museums, Locality and the British Memory of the Transatlantic Slave Trade

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From 2007 to 2009, I and a number of colleagues at the University of York conducted a research project entitled '1807 Commemorated'.[1] The aim of this project was to analyse the museum activity that was developed in Britain in 2007 to mark the bicentenary of the 1807 Act of Abolition – the Act which formally ended British participation in the transatlantic slave trade. Our assumption at the beginning of this research was that we were studying a national commemorative event, and one which might also, since the slave trade was obviously a transnational rather than a purely national phenomenon, have an international significance. Our plan was therefore initially to focus our attention fairly intensively on a small number of museums – places like the British Museum or the new International Slavery Museum in Liverpool – whose contributions to the bicentenary we felt would constitute significant interventions in a national and international debate on slavery and abolition, and on their long-term legacies. What we did not fully anticipate – and we were not the only ones who did not[2] – was the amount of activity that the bicentenary would generate at a much more local level, and the significant part that a much wider range of museums – including many local and regional ones – would play, along with other local institutions and community groups, in defining its meanings and implications for British society.[3] Once we began to realize this, we were forced to extend our project quite significantly, and we ended up visiting over 60 exhibitions across the country, and gathering information on a great many others. What I myself gathered from this experience – apart from an improved knowledge of provincial bus timetables – was a sense of the continued importance of the local as a mental category for organizing collective engagements with the past

even in today's nationalized and increasingly globalized society. This article seeks to explore this theme further.

What follows is in three parts. The first part formulates some general observations about the concept of local memory, and its relationship to nationalizing and globalizing tendencies. The second discusses the social and political challenge of remembering transatlantic slavery as a force in the making of modern British society, and explores some of the methods used by museums to make this larger history locally meaningful. The third reflects on the significance of museums as 'places of memory', and uses a comparison of two examples – the International Slavery Museum (ISM) in Liverpool and the 'London, Sugar, and Slavery' gallery at the Museum of London Docklands – to reflect on different strategies for connecting the local to broader frames of reference in presenting slavery's history and contemporary legacy.

## A sense of place: local memory in a nationalizing and globalizing world

The nature of a sense of place, and the role of that sense in shaping human behaviour and conceptions of identity, is nowadays a matter of scholarly discussion in a very wide range of academic disciplines – for anthropologists, geographers, sociologists, and students of architecture not surprisingly, but also and increasingly for historians, political scientists, philosophers, and others, and across a range of policy-related disciplines like urban planning studies and refugee studies.[4] Although the interest in place has different origins and different implications in different disciplinary areas, most thinking about place seems to involve some kind of transaction between two perspectives. The first views place as a universal aspect of the experience that human beings – as embodied beings – have of the universe that contains them. We are always positioned, always constrained – but also perhaps protected or empowered – by our immediate surroundings, always therefore conscious of emplacement as a condition of our being. But place, if we confine ourselves to this point of view, remains thin and abstract; it retains a kind of infinite mutability and a purely subjective quality that is at odds with what we usually mean when we talk about places in everyday speech. From the second perspective, therefore, place is put in the plural. Places are thought of as specific locales, identifiable and separable – concrete settings for human life and social interaction, which are sufficiently durable and sufficiently stably inhabited to acquire distinctive histories and to give rise to memories embodying and interpreting those

histories. Place in this more concrete and particularizing conception becomes something in relation to which human beings can experience a feeling of belonging or attachment, a sense of identity, or alternatively a sense of alienation or of nostalgic separation. While most discussions of place tend to privilege this more concrete conception, it is important not to forget the more abstract one entirely. Arguments about the mental effects of globalization, and of modernity more generally, often play in both registers, without the boundary between them always being entirely clear: on the one hand, locally specific mnemonic cultures are seen as being eroded by increased mobility and standardization; on the other, arguments pitched at a more existential level see modern technologies of communication as loosening the connections between our horizons of consciousness and our physical locatedness.

Our starting point for discussion is the idea of local memories. Local memories are understood here not simply as memories that refer to particular places, but as memories that take shape within a particular locality, and which come, at least to some extent, to be shared by members of a localized group or community. To put it in more assertively constructivist terms, when we speak of local memories, what we are speaking of are constructed relationships to the past that are framed by, and that also contribute to, simultaneous constructions of place and of community. Constructions of memory, of place and of community – of our relationships to the past, to the spatial environment, and to our fellow human beings – may indeed be seen here as interconnected facets of the human construction of social identity. In some cases, in relatively static and traditional kinds of society, the relationship between these three facets may be a very tight one. In other cases, especially in modern societies, the relationships are more complex, more shifting, and less easily made sense of through a narrow attention to a single location. Places, after all, have an external as well as an internal aspect: they are always themselves positioned in relation to other places, to larger territories and to broader frameworks of political organization and commercial interaction, in ways that are always likely to impinge on the way local memories and local identities are constructed. People's relationships to places are contingent on a wide variety of factors, and even in relatively stable and traditional societies are by no means always to be characterized in terms of stable residence and membership of homogeneous local communities. The experiences that contribute to local memory include experiences of dislocation, of migration, of transience, and of the different forms of social exclusion and discrimination and uneasy cohabitation that these can give rise to.

The shaping of local memory involves a complex interplay between mundane social interaction and purposeful intervention. The life of any locally based community will naturally generate a circulating fund of memories, some of which are likely over time to acquire a kind of established status as shared knowledge, at least within certain groups. Some of these memories will refer to regular performances or activities – social habits, customs, etc. that have a structuring role in the life of the community. Others will refer to particular occurrences – events or conversations, births and deaths and other moments in the lives of individuals, moments of danger, occasions of rejoicing, etc. – some of which will get linked together in remembered narratives that possess a historical or symbolic value. To the extent that the community reproduces itself over time, elements in this corpus of memories may be transmitted transgenerationally and may contribute to a sense both of the place and of the community as entities that have a certain enduring value and temporal depth. But while the process of memory formation may be rooted in the mundane interactions of the community, it is also a political process – part of a public negotiation of identities that is frequently inflected by the mental strategies of power and of resistance. It is a process subject to interventions – sometimes momentary, sometimes sustained – by a wide variety of political and cultural agencies representing an assortment of social interests and managerial or contestatory concerns. Such interventions are sometimes prospective – seeking to fix and codify the social meanings of events as they occur, and thus to influence the way they will later be remembered – and sometimes retrospective – seeking to reform or reconfigure, or alternatively to reinforce, the ways in which the past is currently remembered. It is a mistake to see such interventions – or memory projects[5] – as always an external imposition on the community, or as always embodying the priorities of an elite within that community: memory activism can operate at different social levels and in differing relationships to organized power; it can be exercised with conciliatory or subversive as well as authoritative or hegemonic intentions.[6]

The twin processes of nationalization and globalization, operating sometimes in tandem with each other and sometimes against each other, are rightly seen as having wrought profound transformations in human experiences of place, and in the forms and political and social significance of local memory. How far these changes are to be understood as working towards a systematic erosion or downgrading of local memory as a constituent in social identity remains a matter of dispute. In the case of nationalization, the lines of argument are relatively clear

cut. A now classic line of argument views the national as the inveterate enemy of the local.[7] The nation needs places, such an argument holds, but it needs them for its own symbolic purposes. In giving certain places – capital cities, battlefields, the sites of national monuments, etc. – a formal status within the symbolic frameworks of national memory, it transposes them to a realm in which it is no longer local memory that determines their meanings; other places, meanwhile are pressed into a subordinate status in which their function is simply (in Arjun Appadurai's phrase) 'to incubate and reproduce compliant national citizens', rather than representatives of a vibrant local identity.[8] Against the schematicism of such a view, however, scholars have drawn attention to the ways in which the national and the local can sometimes be understood as mutually supportive. The nineteenth-century heyday of European nationalisms was, as we now appreciate, a heyday also of local museums, local history societies and so on. Although nationalism could certainly be intolerant of local separatism, it was by no means necessarily opposed to the idea that the territory of the nation was a territory enriched by local particularities and local histories, and that pride in these might be not just permissible but positively appropriate in a national citizen. It may be necessary, in Stéphane Gerson's phrase, to 'situate the local in a dynamic of convergence, divergence, and negotiation with official and national memory', rather than systematically opposing them.[9]

Arguments over locality and globalization are harder to pin down, if only because the term 'globalization' is often used to describe a number of rather different ongoing processes, the intersection of which is felt to be carrying the world in a particular direction. Arguments highlight – with varying emphases – contemporary increases in geographical mobility, the erosion of distinctiveness through transformations of urban topography, the standardizing, commodifying and connecting effects of global capitalism, and the escalating social and cultural impact of new communications technologies, especially in the digital era, which are seen as plunging contemporary humanity into a world of virtual communities, disembodied social exchanges and 'prosthetic' rather than localized mnemonic experiences.[10] Together, it is suggested by many critics, these aspects of modern and contemporary experience have produced a world in which, as Paul Connerton puts it, 'place … is less and less a determining fact of our lives', and 'our life-spaces bear the marks of mobility rather than locatedness'.[11] But again there are counter-arguments, not just from those who seek to promote a new politics of the local as a way of resisting these globalizing tendencies, and

of resisting the forms of power that go with them, but also from those who argue that the diagnosis is misconstrued – that globalization, rather than eroding the significance of place, should prompt us to reconsider how place should be conceptualized. Doreen Massey, for example, argues against the conception of places as the possessors of unitary and neatly-bounded identities, 'constructed out of an introverted, inward-looking history', and essentially defined 'through simple counterposition to the outside'. Rather, she suggests, the specificity of place is constituted partly by internal differences and conflicts, and partly through a set of outside connections: 'what gives a place its specificity is [...] a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus'. The 'accumulated history' of a place is an important ingredient, but this history itself should be conceptualized as 'the product of layer upon layer of different sets of linkages both local and to the wider world'. Contrary to what is sometimes implied, globalization does not simply homogenize, but generates and reproduces patterns of inequality and differentiation; while the impact of these may restructure a sense of place, and may diversify the understandings of place within a particular locality, it does not deliver us to a world in which place is no longer a meaningful reality.[12]

A continuing interest in place as an analytical or experiential category need not therefore necessarily be linked to a nostalgic rejection of nationalizing and globalizing processes, but may reflect the fact that it is precisely at a local level, and as refracted through local relationships, that the transformative impact of these processes is apt to be encountered. Concern with local memory, in such circumstances, is less the assertion of a straightforward continuity between past and present collective experiences than a reflection of the need to confront and register the always in some measure dislocating and disruptive effects of real history; the politics of local memory may accordingly be shaped less by the defining of stable identities than by repeated revisions of perspective, recoveries of lost history, and the projection of alternative ways of remembering.

## The British memory of transatlantic slavery, museums, and local meanings

These ideas have obvious relevance to the history and memory of Britain's involvement in transatlantic slavery. Transatlantic slavery, as it developed in the seventeenth, eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, offers, after all, an early example of capitalism operating on

something that begins to resemble a global scale – of the development of complex integrated networks of trade, expropriation, production and investment connecting Europe, Africa and the Americas. The functioning of these networks had profoundly dislocating and transformative effects on the lives and relationships of individuals and of communities right across the Atlantic world. The experiences of transatlantic slavery have bequeathed complex, varied and difficult legacies of remembering and forgetting to the affected societies, which historians, despite a flurry of distinguished studies, are only beginning to explore.[13] In considering how the history, memory and legacy of transatlantic slavery were engaged with in the museum sector in Britain around 2007, the '1807 Commemorated' project investigated one corner of this larger picture.

Transatlantic slavery is a past which inevitably carries different meanings for different groups in British society.[14] The reasons for this have to do partly with the racially divisive nature of the atrocity of slavery itself, but also with the effects of displacement and distance. The relationship that many black members of British society have to the memory of slavery is shaped by a double displacement: the displacement brought about by the slave trade itself, which brutally transplanted their ancestors from their African communities of origin, and the displacement involved in the twentieth century migrations which have also distanced these descendants of the enslaved from the Caribbean locations within which social memories of slavery and of resistance had developed over time. For black people in Britain today, the memory of slavery may be important, and may distance them in certain ways from white members of British society, but it is also a memory filtered through successive or overlapping experiences of colonialism, post-colonial migration and identity politics. It is a memory often framed in terms of social identities that transcend the local – pan-Africanism, black Britishness, diasporic identity – but also influenced in its modes of articulation by localized experiences of community, of political activism, of racism and social disadvantage in a British setting. A powerful sense of the need for recognition of slavery's place in British history and of its enduring legacy within contemporary British society is linked, for many people of African descent, to a wariness of forms of public engagement with this history that marginalize the perspectives of the enslaved and that tacitly reinforce the disadvantaging of their descendants within the national community – a fact that was brought home to several museums through their consultations with local black communities in 2007.

If displacement has been important in shaping black memories of slavery, distance has been crucial in shaping the attitudes of the white

population. Even at the height of Britain's involvement with transatlantic slavery, the visible brutalities of slavery took place at a substantial distance – and hence at a crucial imaginative remove – from the immediate experience of most members of British society: the presence of enslaved Africans as servants in British households and the occasional gravestones of such individuals buried on British soil notwithstanding, the realities of slavery were not deeply inscribed in British local memory.[15] Such awareness as British people had of these realities was an awareness heavily mediated through the descriptions provided in anti-slavery or pro-slavery literature and visual culture. From at least the 1830s onwards, the British memory of slavery would in practice be a memory largely dominated by the visual imagery and commemorative culture of the abolitionist movement – by familiar images like that of the kneeling slave imploring freedom, mass-produced and nationally distributed, stylized, stereotypical, and not in any obvious sense referring to any specific local context.[16] Imagery of this kind lay at the heart of a mythical vision of abolitionist moral triumph whose dominance had the effect – as many critics have pointed out – both of obscuring the memory of Britain's long and deep and shameful involvement in transatlantic slavery, and of obstructing any efforts that might be made to re-remember this whole history from the standpoint of the enslaved or of their descendants.[17] It is against this backdrop of an absence of obvious slavery-related *lieux de mémoire* on British soil and of a hitherto dominant abolitionist vision that the efforts of museums to bring the history of slavery to public attention must be considered.[18]

Thus, if locality emerged as a key framework in the memory work that museums performed in 2007, it was not because local memories relating to slavery had had a strong continuous existence in British society. Rather, it was because, in circumstances where the need to recognize the fact of slavery in Britain's past had been brought to the fore nationally, locality offered an imaginative terrain on which museums and other cultural agencies could seek to engage audiences in a process of re-remembering. At the broadest level, this process had two objectives: to bring the memory of slavery to the forefront of public consciousness, and to find ways of framing that memory that would do something to reduce the gap between black and white perceptions. I have argued elsewhere that the task facing museum curators in 2007 in some respects resembled that which had faced abolitionist campaigners two hundred years earlier – that of persuading the British public that slavery was not something distant (geographically and now also temporally) but something intimately connected to their history – and that a focus on the

local ramifications and implications of slavery and antislavery was an important strategy for doing this.[19]

It is also possible to see the cultivation of local meanings as a rhetorical reversal of the dehumanizing logic of slavery itself. Paul Connerton's account of modernity's systemic propensity to certain forms of forgetting reiterates a traditional critique of capitalist reification. By commodifying both labour itself and the products of labour, capitalism obscures the human aspects of the productive process: a focus on global flows, exchange-value and consumerist demand replaces an awareness of the local conditions – social relationships, formative processes, personal creative impulses and locally embedded cultures – that shape production as a human activity.[20] This process of abstraction was particularly starkly present in the case of transatlantic slavery, a system founded on the brutally systematic conversion of locally and socially rooted human beings into a tradeable commodity – 'slaves' – and an exchangeable and redeployable (and insurable) productive resource, within an intercontinental network of trading relationships whose logics were all too readily regarded as natural and inexorable. Most museums presenting the history of slavery in 2007 incorporated an often large-scale diagrammatic map of the so-called 'triangular trade', showing the flows of tradeable goods from Europe to Africa, captive Africans from Africa to the Americas, and slave-produced commodities like sugar, cotton and tobacco from the Americas to Europe. Such maps were a convenient short-hand way of conveying and simplifying a complex set of economic relationships, but on their own they might seem to reinforce the very tendency to an abstracted emphasis on the flow and exchange of commodities that had underpinned slavery itself. Museums were therefore generally careful to balance such representations with strategies geared precisely to countering the dehumanizing effects of commodification. Commodified 'slaves' became 'enslaved Africans', people uprooted from African societies whose cultural vibrancy and sophisticated material culture were repeatedly stressed. 'Goods' or 'commodities' exchanged for human beings on the coast of Africa or shipped from the Caribbean to meet the needs of British manufacturers or satisfy the appetites of British consumers were reinterpreted as the products in the first case of local British industries and in the second of enslaved Africans in a plantation setting.

Often working in conjunction with local libraries and archives, museums traced the implicating traces of an involvement with slavery beyond the great slaving port cities like Liverpool, Bristol and London, to manufacturing regions like Lancashire with its dependence on

American cotton, to naval centres like Plymouth and Chatham, to the metal-producers of South Wales and the gunmakers and chainmakers of the West Midlands, and to producers, consumers, investors and estate-owners right across the country.[21] A panel in the 'Trade Links' exhibition at the Walsall Museum, to give just one example, gave striking precision to the connections between slavery and local industrial traditions:

> A man was interviewed in Cradley Heath in 1934 who recalled making slave chains, as his father and neighbours had done before him. Evidence was recently found by associates of The Black Country Museum and Willenhall Lock Museum, who identified slave chains held in a collection in the Iziko Museums of Cape Town, South Africa, as having been made in Cradley Heath, while the locking mechanism had been made in the lock factories of Walsall.[22]

By uncovering the 'hidden history' of such local connections, museums not only invited visitors to reflect on the foundations of Britain's growth as an economic great power.[23] They also, by emphasizing local agency in its multiple forms (also including local participation in abolitionist campaigns), presented the history of slavery as a history which for all its global economic and commercial dimensions was always also a history of connections between and within localities.

Exhibiting institutions used a range of devices to draw visitors into the project of remembering slavery as part of local history. Some, for example, combined the theme of hidden history with the convention of commemorative naming. In the Archive Centre in Norwich, for example, a single long display case housed documents relating to slavery from the Norfolk county archives, in an exhibition structured by the inclusion of a series of panels commemoratively listing the names of enslaved Africans shown in those documents to have been owned by families with Norfolk connections.[24] At the Leamington Spa Art Gallery and Museum, the name of Myrtilla, an enslaved woman buried in a local Warwickshire churchyard in 1705, was used to label a museum trail highlighting objects in the galleries with connections to the history of slavery. A leaflet describing the trail referred to Myrtilla's 'story' as 'one of the millions of hidden histories' of Africans sold into transatlantic slavery, and expressed the hope that the trail named after her would help to uncover the similarly 'hidden histories' of Warwickshire's slaving connections.[25] Myrtilla's story is, however, an absent story, as were those of almost all the enslaved on the Norwich panels: the act of naming them, and of naming things after them, does not restore them to local memory as knowable individuals.

The rhetorical thrust of such naming is rather to engage museum visitors in a recognition that something in local history has been forgotten.

Mapping particular localities in terms of their slavery connections was another mnemonic device. Museums, together with other local agencies, were active in promoting trails linking the sites within a particular locality – streets, buildings, waterfronts, etc. – that could be linked to slavery or abolitionism. Trails of this kind were available to be walked physically, map in hand, on the actual ground of the city, or in some cases to be followed virtually and electronically, as part of the interactive experience of visiting an exhibition, or as a separate internet experience.[26] Like the gestures of commemorative naming, such projects utilized the idea of hidden history: here, however, this was envisaged as a history capable of being at least partially recovered, through the revelatory potential of the map itself, allowing those who follow the trail to re-inscribe a consciousness of slavery on their own awareness of locality.

A different use of cartography to promote the imaginative construction of a local tradition was evident in the opening panel of an exhibition entitled 'Faces of Freedom: Hammersmith and Fulham and the Slave Trade', at the Fulham Palace Museum. The panel presented a map of the present-day London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham, marked with portrait images indicating the places of residence (or of brief appearance) of a number of individuals – one a slave trade investor, the others all connected to abolitionism or later anti-racist struggles – all of whom had lived in or visited the area at some point between the seventeenth and the twentieth century. By plotting the places associated with these figures geographically, the map conferred an illusion of simultaneity on chronologically scattered and sometimes fleeting moments of local impact, imaginatively collapsing the complexities of a shifting local history and of often unstable individual existences into an image of stable community. Present-day residents, assisted by the map's discreet inclusion of the sites of present-day London Underground stations, were gently encouraged to view their own present familiarity with the territory as entailing a kind of mnemonic connection to a locally embedded – and significantly also racially mixed – tradition of anti-racist activism.[27]

A final set of strategies for building local memory looked more actively to the local community in the present to generate, through individual subjectivity, the imaginative resources to bring past and present together. 2007 saw a wide variety of community-based projects, both within museums and outside them, that sought to do this

in one way or another. One example was a touring exhibition called 'Interwoven Freedom: Abolitionist Women in Birmingham', the outcome of an English Heritage supported project involving a community group known as the Sparkbrook Caribbean and African Women's Development Initiative (SCAWDI for short). Members of SCAWDI visited a number of archives and heritage sites with connections to slavery, and then worked with a creative writer and a textile designer to produce an exhibition which included conventional display panels, but which had at its centre a collection of textile workbags, inspired by those which local abolitionist women had produced two hundred years earlier for use in distributing anti-slavery manifestos. But the SCAWDI women's bags were also personal statements. As the exhibition publicity put it, 'they wove [...] references from their past and personal histories along with images of slave ships, photographs and Jamaican and Ghanaian flags into workbags made from Fair Trade cotton and African cloth'.[28] What was produced was on one level an exhibition designed to celebrate the contribution of local women to abolitionist campaigning. On another level, however, it marked an appropriation and a reworking of local abolitionist memory by a group of African-Caribbean women positioning themselves within the very different political, ethnic and gender configurations of the present-day community. As the English Heritage website put it: 'Women weave the past into the present'.[29]

## Linking the local and the global: museums as 'memory places'

Museums themselves are places, and hence both located – within larger places and in relation to more extensive networks or spatial frameworks – and arranged, internally, as environments for certain kinds of interaction. As places, 'facing inward to local constituencies and outward to wider audiences', they are intimately caught up in – and involved in mediating – the interpenetrations and interdependencies of local, regional, national and transnational or global frames of reference.[30] Museums' relationships to these different frames of reference are both notional – a matter of the claims that institutions and communities make on each other – and organizational – a matter of funding structures, management hierarchies and institutional collaborations. These relationships are interwoven with various different ways of conceptualizing the museum itself as a place – a place of education, of recreation, of sociability, a 'contact zone', or public forum.

In relation to local communities, museums – especially ones presenting history – are 'memory places', each defined as such by its 'self-nomination as a site of significant memory of and for a collective', and by the at least partial acceptance of this within the community itself.[31] Understood in this way, a museum supplies both a content and – through the contacts and interactions it promotes both within and beyond the exhibition space – a managed social context for the imaginative crafting of local identities, and for the connecting of those identities to other discursive frameworks. The representation of locality within the space of the museum (and the increasingly important digital extensions of that space) engages both local and outside audiences, though the emphasis varies with the nature of the museum. Also variable may be the readiness of groups within a local community to embrace the museum as an appropriate or promising site for discussions of collective identity: reluctance to do so may stem both from the inherently divisive character of the history represented in the museum – as in the case of slavery – and from the fact that museums themselves have traditionally not been neutral spaces, but have – at least in some cases – long institutional associations both with cultural elitism and with imperialist and colonialist projects. Persuading black members of British society to view museums as places within which their own historical perspectives and their own claims to membership of British society could be adequately registered and reflected was, for many museums in 2007, still an uphill struggle and one for which museum staff were imperfectly prepared.[32]

The content and layout of museums, their framing of visitor experiences, and the institutional priorities they project to outside audiences reflect their often complex self-positioning in relation to local, national and transnational or international frames of reference. A final comparison of two of the more substantial and permanent museum initiatives relating to slavery opened in the Bicentenary year – the new International Slavery Museum (ISM) in Liverpool (opened on International Slavery Day, 23 August) and the new 'London, Sugar and Slavery' gallery in the Museum of London Docklands (opened on 10 November) – will help to illustrate this. Unlike the myriad temporary displays mounted in 2007, each of these was planned and constructed as a permanent display. Each was situated in former dockland buildings in a major port city whose associations with the slave trade and with the trades in slave-produced commodities were well-known, and each in that sense might be seen at first sight as reinforcing what has sometimes been seen as a narrowly 'maritimizing' tendency in the public

presentation of slavery's history.[33] Both, however, offered a substantial and wide-ranging presentation of that history, which incorporated local elements, but which also dealt, in detail, with life on the plantations, with slave resistance, and with slavery's global legacies. Closer inspection, however, reveals differences in the way local and other dimensions are cross-woven.

Organizationally, the International Slavery Museum is part of National Museums Liverpool; spatially it is located on the third floor of the Merseyside Maritime Museum, whose own earlier Transatlantic Slavery gallery (opened in 1994) the new museum effectively replaces.[34] The museum is thus national in status, international in aspiration and intended scope, yet locally embedded: indeed, the very fact of situating a national and international museum on slavery in Liverpool is itself a clear reminder of the city's long and entrenched prominence as a slaving centre – a statement about local history. But although this local dimension is significant, and is played on to particular effect in certain sections of the museum, the way the museum frames its narrative strategy prioritizes a larger story.

Visitors to the ISM are confronted, at the point of entry, with a barrage of quotations, from figures ranging from Thucidydes to Mandela, dilating on the theme of slavery in general; on passing into the exhibition space they encounter a similar universalizing rhetoric – 'The story of transatlantic slavery is a fundamental and tragic human story that must be told and retold, and never be forgotten'. The next sentence directs the visitor's attention not to Liverpool, or to Britain more generally, but to Africa. 'Africa and its peoples are central to this story', and this indeed becomes the most convincing unifying thread in the displays that follow: the suffering and endurance of enslaved Africans, the strengths of African identity and culture, and the long struggle of people of African descent to preserve and develop that identity and culture in the face first of slavery itself, and then of its global legacies of imperialism and racism, are the central themes of a display that opens out to encompass Africa, Europe, the Caribbean and the Americas, and that leads on from transatlantic slavery to, for example, the American Civil Rights movement and African movements for independence, as well as anti-racist struggles in British society.

Liverpool references and materials are drawn on by the museum in developing the larger narrative of slavery: reference is made, for example, to local street-names with slavery connections, and to the involvement of local merchants and local abolitionists. For the most part, however, these elements remain subsidiary to the broader logic

of a display whose frames of reference are diasporic and transnational. Indeed the museum's most striking efforts to capture or elicit a sense of place, whether through detailed reconstruction (of a St Kitts sugar plantation around 1800 presented in a scale model) or through the arrangement of place-like enclaves within the exhibition space designed to concretize the evocation of generic experiences (an African village, a story-teller's hut, the horrifying insanitary conditions of a Middle Passage slave-hold), relate not to Liverpool, but to Africa, the Atlantic crossing and the Caribbean. In the later stages of the display – the 'Legacy' section – the museum brings issues of Liverpool local memory more to the fore, presenting family stories from the city's local black community and highlighting the memory of Anthony Walker, the local black student killed in a racist attack in 2005, after whom the museum's education centre is named.[35] Liverpool references are juxtaposed, however, with exhibits transposed from other settings: notably a prominently displayed outfit from the American Ku Klux Klan. The faces shown on the 'Black Achievers' wall, another prominent feature of this section, are a conspicuously international and cosmopolitan selection. While the museum supplies perspectives from which Liverpool's local history can be viewed, and punctuates its larger narratives with reminders of this local significance, the need to comprehend Liverpool as a place is not its principal interpretative point of entry.

At the Museum of London Docklands, a different approach to the conjunctions of the local and the global is on view. Unlike the ISM, the Docklands museum is not a national institution. Organizationally, it is a separately located offshoot of the Museum of London. It is situated in a former sugar warehouse on the West India Dock, in the heart of London's Docklands district – a place once of course absolutely central to Britain's maritime activity, but radically transformed in the later twentieth-century by the closure of the docks themselves and by the subsequent construction of the Canary Wharf business complex. The primary function of the Museum in Docklands is in one sense commemorative – to evoke the history of the docks and of the East End working communities that supported them, though its interpretation of that remit is often a broad one, opening up onto London's history more generally, and through that onto larger histories. The 'London, Sugar and Slavery' gallery opened in 2007 is conceived very much in that spirit.[36] It was also conceived in a spirit of community interaction, which sought particularly to involve black community voices, some from across London but some more particularly from the local area of Tower Hamlets. The Museum in Docklands was conspicuous in 2007, in fact, for the extent

to which it enlisted community representatives actively in the planning of its display, even eventually revising the whole of the exhibition text at a late stage to make it more authentically expressive of the feelings and priorities articulated in this community consultation.[37]

What resulted from this process was certainly not a narrowly focused exhibition: the display ranges from London to Africa and the Caribbean, and seeks to contextualize transatlantic slavery within the broader history of British imperialism. What is striking, however, is the way in which this wide-ranging exhibit is framed as an interrogation of local identity. This emphasis is already clear in the way the language of hidden history is used in the Museum's promotional literature, where the new gallery is presented as one which will reveal the 'untold history' of 'London's dirty big secret' – her involvement with slavery. It is made concrete at the very entrance to the gallery, where the visitor is immediately confronted with a wall-high panel dramatically presenting the details – the owners, the captains, the cargoes, the destinations etc. – of slaving vessels sent out from the Port of London. The introductory textual panel highlights two essential themes. The first is the central contribution of slavery to London's emergence as a globally significant financial and commercial centre – a theme explicitly connecting the local to the national and the global. The second, however, addresses the nature of the local community, by insistently reminding the viewer that part of the legacy of this involvement with slavery has been the development of London as a vibrantly multi-racial and multi-cultural city. The opening exhibition space is shaped, essentially, as an articulation of these themes, juxtaposing images of London and Londoners in the eighteenth century with ones of the modern city, conspicuously peopled by black and white together. Only after passing through this foundational space are the vistas of larger histories opened up to the visitor. And even then, the museum is at pains to keep locality and issues of local identity in view. So, for example, the museum uses its own physical location as a mnemonic peg for the connectedness of local and global histories: 'Some of these slaving ships', it informs visitors, 'sailed from the dock outside this museum. The sugar and rum they carried back was stored where you are now standing'. It also, in several places, conspicuously deploys the first person plural, encouraging and even challenging visitors to participate in the collective identity of Londoners striving for an adequate recollection of what slavery has meant in the making of their community: 'How are we as Londoners to come to terms with these legacies?' reads one panel; 'In our everyday lives, do we […] remember that Africa beats in the heart of our city?'

reads another. The museum, in other words, turns London's history repeatedly both inwards and outwards, opening up its connectedness to the world in general, moving it back in towards the question of what it means to be part of this particular local community.

The ISM links and assimilates local Liverpudlian experiences to a transnational diasporic story of African endurance, resistance, and political and cultural achievement; the Museum of London Docklands uses London and its imperial and international connections to tell the story of the painful but constructive making of a vibrantly multicultural society. Each museum addresses locality in ways which reflect its broader institutional agenda and thematic emphases, but each also participates in a broader movement of museums to exploit the local meanings of larger histories. In part, no doubt, this turn towards the local simply reflects the need, in an age of financial stringency and accountability, to make museums 'relevant' to local communities, as a means of justifying their existence and improving visitor statistics. It also, however, reflects an appreciation of locality as a discursive angle from which broader agendas can be advanced. Locality, in this sense, is always a discursive construct, deployed persuasively as well as analytically, to prompt new forms of social recognition and new ways of thinking not just about the past, but about contemporary society.

Viewed not as places for the celebration of fixed and homogeneous local identities, but as spaces capable of hosting and provoking explorations of the ways in which localities and the communities within them have been shaped by interconnection and by participation in larger histories, museums have the potential to contribute both to a joined up understanding of complex histories and to ongoing debates about citizenship and community. Tracking the impact and the variegated legacies of a globalizing system like transatlantic slavery requires a sensitivity both to multiple displacements and cultural dislocations and to the now sometimes 'hidden' – or at least imperfectly recognized – histories of connectedness that bind people and groups and places and activities together in networks of dependency and interaction, generating bonds of mutual interest in some areas and embedding tensions and conflicts in others. The lens of locality is a powerful one through which to view these always fluid and shifting relationships.

## Notes

1. Principal publications arising from the '1807 Commemorated' project are Smith, 2011, *Representing Enslavement* and a special issue of *Museum*

*and Society* 8(3) (2010). See also the project's website http://www.history.ac.uk/1807commemorated, accessed 21 October 2014.

2. See, e.g., Walvin, 2009, 'The slave trade', p. 141.
3. Cubitt, 2009, 'Bringing it home'. On bicentenary museum activity more generally, see Bernier and Newman, 2008, 'Public art'; Kowaleski Wallace, 2009, 'Uncomfortable commemorations'; Hamilton, 2010, 'Representing slavery'; Wilson, 2010, 'Rethinking 1807'; Smith, 2011, *Representing Enslavement*; Cubitt, 2012, 'Museums and slavery'. For more general studies of the bicentenary, see Tibbles, 2008, 'Facing slavery's past'; Paton, 2009, 'Interpreting the bicentenary'; Walvin, 2009, 'The slave trade'; Hall, 2010, 'Afterword'; Wood, 2010, *The Horrible Gift*, pp.296–353.
4. For a useful introduction, see Cresswell, 2004, *Place*; for assorted approaches e.g. Casey, 1993, *Getting Back Into Place;* Feld, 1996, *Senses of Place*; Glassberg, 2001, *Sense of History;* Slyomovics, 1998, *The Object of Memory;* Kaufman, *Place, Race, and Story*.
5. The term is borrowed from Irwin-Zarecka, 1994, *Frames of Remembrance,* ch. 8.
6. See, for example, the 'social agency' approach to memory developed by Winter, 1999, 'Forms of kinship', pp. 59–60.
7. For an influential exploration of the erosion of the local cultures and identities by nationalizing forces, see Weber, 1979, *Peasants into Frenchmen*.
8. Appadurai, 1996, *Modernity at Large*, p. 190: 'Locality for the modern nation-state is either a site of nationally appropriated nostalgias, celebrations and commemorations or a necessary condition of the production of nationals'. See also e.g. Cubitt, 1998, 'Introduction', pp. 6–7; Löfgren, 1989, 'The nationalization of culture', pp. 5–24.
9. Gerson, 2003, *The Pride of Place*, p. 15. See also e.g. Applegate, 1990, *A Nation of Provincials*; Confino, 1997, *The Nation*.
10. For a useful short account of theories of globalization, see Savage et al., 2005, *Globalization*, pp. 2–7. Significant discussions of particular aspects include Huyssen, 1995, *Twilight Memories*; Augé, 1995, *Non-Places*; Appadurai, 1996, *Modernity at Large*; Landsberg, 2004, *Prosthetic Memories*; Connerton, 2009, *How Modernity Forgets*.
11. Connerton, 2009, *How Modernity Forgets*, p. 89.
12. Massey, 1993, 'Power-geometry', pp. 65–69; Massey, 1991, 'A global sense of place', p. 27.
13. In a constantly growing literature, see e.g. Bilby, 2005, *True-Born Maroons*; Horton and Horton, 2006, *Slavery and Public Memory*; Reinhardt, 2006, *Claims to Memory*; Holsey, 2008, *Routes of Remembrance*; Araujo, 2010, *Public Memory of Slavery*.
14. For reflections on memories of slavery and abolition in British culture before 2007, see Kowaleski Wallace, 2006, *The British Slave Trade*; Oldfield, 2007, *'Chords of Freedom'*. For discussion of the different emotional responses of different categories of visitors to exhibitions on slavery and abolition in 2007, see Smith, 2011, 'Affect and registers of engagement'.
15. For examples of such burials see Rice, 2003, *Radical Narratives*, pp. 210–217; Walvin and Tyrrell, 2004, 'Whose history is it?', pp. 164–165.
16. This point has been developed most influentially by Marcus Wood: see especially Wood, 2000, *Blind Memory*; Wood, 2007, 'Popular and graphic images'.

17. See especially Oldfield, 2007, *'Chords of Freedom'*; Hall, 2011, 'Troubling memories'.
18. For representations of slavery in British museums before 2007, see Oldfield, 2007, *'Chords of Freedom'*, pp. 117–139.
19. Cubitt, 2009, 'Bringing it home', p. 260–261.
20. Connerton, 2009, *How Modernity Forgets*, pp. 53–67.
21. For examples, see Cubitt, 2009, 'Bringing it home'; Cubitt, 2012, 'Museums and slavery', pp. 170–171.
22. 'Trade Links: Walsall and the slave trade' exhibition, Walsall Museum.
23. The notion of 'hidden history' was widely used in connection with local slaving involvement: for critical discussion of its implications, see Cubitt, 2009, 'Bringing it home', pp. 266–267.
24. 'Norfolk and Transatlantic Slavery' exhibition, Norfolk Record Office.
25. Leamington Spa Art Gallery and Museum and Brenda Tai Layton, 'Myrtilla's Trail: Guide around the galleries'.
26. An early example of such a trail was Dresser, 1998, *Slave Trade Trail*; see also Kowaleski Wallace, 2006, *The British Slave Trade*, pp. 43–65. Examples launched around 2007 include 'Greenwich: Transatlantic Slavery Trail', http://www.rmg.co.uk/upload/pdf/Transatlantic_Slavery_Trail.pdf, and Liverpool's 'Slavery History Trail', http://www.slaveryhistorytours.com/, both accessed accessed 21 October 2014.
27. 'Faces of Freedom: Hammersmith and Fulham and the Slave Trade' exhibition, Fulham Palace Museum. For illustration of the panel, see Cubitt, 2009, 'Bringing it home', p. 264.
28. 'Interwoven freedom: Abolitionist women in Birmingham' travelling exhibition, described in English Heritage press release, at http://wayback.archive-it.org/866/20080110230922/http://www.english-heritage.org.uk/server/show/nav.17514, accessed 21 October 2014.
29. *Ibid*.
30. Kratz, 2006, 'Introduction', p. 4.
31. Dickinson et al., 2010, 'Introduction', p. 25.
32. For critical analysis of museums' efforts to engage with communities of African and African-Caribbean descent in and around 2007, see Lynch and Alberti, 2010, 'Legacies of prejudice', Fouseki, 2010, 'Community voices'; Smith and Fouseki, 2011, 'The role of museums'; and on specific cases, two further articles in the same collection: Smith, 2011, 'Science and slavery' and Spence, 2011, 'Making the London, Sugar and Slavery Gallery'. For an earlier discussion, see Small, 1997, 'Contextualizing the black presence'. For broader discussion of relevant issues, see Sandell, 2007, *Museums*.
33. For a critical view of this tendency, see Beech, 2001, 'The marketing of slavery', pp. 103–104.
34. For an account of the ISM and its development, by its Director, see Benjamin, 2010, 'Museums and sensitive histories'. For critical discussion from different angles, see Cubitt, 2010, 'Lines of resistance', pp. 153–156; Arnold-de Simine, 2012, 'The "moving" image'. On the Merseyside Maritime Museum's slavery gallery, see Tibbles, 1996, 'Against human dignity'; Leffler, 2006, 'Maritime museums'; Kowaleski Wallace, 2009, *The British Slave Trade*, pp. 30–43; Oldfield, 2007, *'Chords of Freedom'*, pp. 122–125.
35. Benjamin, 2010, 'Museums and sensitive histories', p. 190.

36. For an account of the planning of the gallery by the museum's Director, see Spence, 2011, 'Making the London, Sugar, and Slavery Gallery'; for critical comment on certain aspects, see Wood, 2010, *The Horrible Gift,* pp. 318–323.
37. Spence, 2011, 'Making the London, Sugar and Slavery Gallery', pp. 158–159.

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# 8

# Structures of Collective Memory: The Last Bannerman in Local Japan

*Michael Wert*

In his critique of memory studies as a field of study, Alon Confino challenges scholars to start moving beyond two commonly used methods of writing about history and memory. The first method demonstrates how the portrayal of a topic changes over time, for example, an historical event (memory of the Holocaust, memory of the Nanjing Massacre, etc.). The second method, related to the first, studies the memory vehicle of a particular topic (The American Civil War in film, the First World War in graphic novels, etc.). These studies might lead to interesting conclusions, but by now, memory studies have made it clear to even non-specialists, that memory of the past is being constantly recreated and contested over time and in different forms. Instead, Confino wants to use memory as a tool for answering larger historical questions, in his case, to elucidate the connections among social, cultural, and political experiences.[1]

My response to Confino's cogent charge is to look at memory as a process, not simply as back-and-forth constructions of alternate narratives, but in the concrete formation of collective memory structures. In this chapter, I will analyse how memory activists in local Japan shape the structure of collective memory by rehabilitating an ignored, and sometimes vilified, historical figure, Oguri Tadamasa (1827–1868). I cover the period most associated with Japan's imperialist expansion, from the late nineteenth century to the end of the First World War, the formative years of the local, national, and global memory structures formed around Oguri's legacy. Here, I appropriate and recalibrate William Sewell's notion of structure to provide a convenient model for articulating how collective memory affects other types of social relations. The notion of collective memory *structure* allows me to tie together the diverse topics covered in this paper: building sites of

memory, awarding posthumous imperial court rank, competing for a disembodied head, and searching for buried gold.

Like Confino, William Sewell is interested in moving beyond concepts as labels, employing them, instead, to answer larger historical questions. Reformulating the vocabulary of Anthony Giddens, Sewell defines structure as a combination of resources and schemas. Resources refer to 'anything that can serve as a source of power in social interactions'; schemas are the informal rules of social life, procedure, or underlying principles of action that can be generalized and extended to fit changes in society.[2] Resources and schemas constitute structures when they sustain and reproduce each other over time. In Sewell's example, the factory (a resource), with its assembly line and punch card system, validates the rules of the capitalist contract (a schema).

Sewell avoids the trap presented by a theory of structuralism that totalizes society. Structures are characterized by multiplicity, the existence of distinct structures operating differently throughout society as a consequence of varied types of resources and schemas.[3] Most importantly, Sewell's definition of structure allows for agency:

> As I see it, agents are empowered to act with and against others by structures: they have knowledge of the schemas that inform social life and have access to some measure of human and nonhuman resources. Agency arises from the actor's knowledge of schemas, which means the ability to apply them to new contexts.[4]

Oguri's commemoration was couched in the shifting interpretations of Tokugawa-period Japan (1603–1868) that coincided with multiple schemas salient in society at any given moment. At one extreme, this period served as the backwards other against which intellectuals defined an enlightened modern Japan. On the other hand, the Tokugawa period represented a past untainted by encroachment from the barbaric, Christian West. Often the two depictions existed side-by-side, with popular sentiment waxing and waning in each direction. Depictions of the samurai also mixed two extremes: an elitist class that stood at the top of putatively rigid social hierarchy, or, as a model for the modern, militarized man.

Not all samurai received equal treatment within the shifting historical memory, and Oguri belonged to the most problematic group. For nearly 270 years, the Tokugawa clan and its relatives supplied shoguns to the warrior regime located in the capital city Edo (Tokyo). While Edo might have served as the country's centre of political power, Japan was

hardly centralized. It had been carved into semi-autonomous domains ruled by warlords (*daimyō*) who agreed to a peaceful, yet often tense, co-existence with the Tokugawa hegemon. There existed no national tax, and no national army. Samurai served their local warlord, while the shogun depended on thousands of his own samurai to staff his offices and, if need be, fight for him.

Oguri Tadamasa was born in Edo (1827) and, like his father before him, served as a bannerman; one of roughly 5,000 thousand direct samurai retainers to the Tokugawa. Most of them passed into obscurity. The shogunate awarded fief villages to fewer than half of those bannermen, though few of those villages attempted to commemorate those bureaucrat-lords in the modern era. Oguri was the rare bannerman who distinguished himself. By historical chance, he was appointed to the first embassy to the United States (1860) which led to a career in foreign and financial affairs, positions that became important in domestic and international politics that plagued the shogunate before its collapse in 1868.

During the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the mythic origin of modern Japan, the Satsuma and Chōshū domains led the Meiji emperor's forces against the Tokugawa regime, and after defeating it, controlled the new Meiji government. For over a millennium, emperors lived in Kyoto, but during the early modern period, they had little salience in the lives of most Japanese. Starting in the eighteenth century, the imperial institution gradually became popular among samurai with the writing of a new historical narrative. By the mid nineteenth century, pro-emperor zealots were attacking Westerners who arrived in greater, yet limited, numbers, and assassinating Tokugawa supporters seen as having insulted the emperor. The two largest domains that opposed the Shogunate, Satsuma and Chōshū, 'seized the jewel,' the legitimating symbolism of the emperor.

Unfortunately for Oguri, he was on the losing side, and even worse, he had once advocated fighting against Satsuma and Chōshū instead of surrendering peacefully, a position which was the cause of his dismissal in 1868. After this loss of office he left the capital and moved to his fief, Gonda Village, (Gunma Prefecture). Shortly after his arrival, however, local gangsters led a group of about 500 rioters against him; because he was the last financial commissioner they believed that he brought Tokugawa money with him to Gonda. He successfully routed the mob but was later arrested and beheaded under suspicion that he planned to attack the newly installed Meiji government. Decades later, the victors who wrote the dominant narrative of the Meiji Restoration often portrayed Oguri as an anti-emperor stalwart who blindly served the Tokugawa until his execution.

Those who elevated the importance of the emperor may have created the first memory schema in modern Japan. Since the Meiji Restoration, for example, year naming has been associated with the emperor (the current Heisei period, for example, started in 1989 with the ascension of Emperor Akihito). Even the commonly used term 'Meiji Restoration' is based on two erroneous assumptions, first that the emperor was in a position to be politically 'restored' in the first place, and second, that the Meiji emperor himself had any say in the matter; he did not. Nonetheless, as Fujitani has ably shown, the emperor became a central figure for the new *lieux de mémoire*. The vehicles employed to promote the importance of the imperial institution were heavily influenced by the West. Imperial symbolism appeared in museums, parades, statues and the like, objects that constituted, not reflected, the modern nation-state, a subtle yet important difference from Nora's own use of *lieux de mémoire*.[5]

History writing sponsored by the Meiji government had little to say about the former shogunate and its loyalists, opting, instead, to avoid controversy with ex-Tokugawa men who worked in key ministries in the new government, and avoid highlighting the traditional rivalries among the domains that led the Meiji Restoration. Government histories tended to depict the progress of Japanese history as a shared experience in which all survivors of the Meiji Restoration could participate. Still, history needed to assign blame. The shogunate and its stalwarts, like Oguri, were held responsible for much of the disorder experienced in the 1860s. Some former Tokugawa samurai who became famous as post-Restoration intellectuals supplied personal histories of the Restoration in journals like *The Former Shogunate* (*Kyūbakufu*), and by publishing their own memoirs and historical monographs. They rehabilitated the Tokugawa's image by using the memory resources first used to celebrate the emperor. In festivals that celebrated the Tokugawa, supporters shouted 'Long live the Tokugawa (Tokugawa banzai)!' a phrase first used for the emperor. They also passed out photos of the former Tokugawa shogun, imitating the public relations effort to promote the emperor.[6]

Saigō Takamori, the Japanese protagonist in the movie *The Last Samurai*, was the first modern hero whose image was articulated through shifting structures of collective memory. A samurai retainer from the Satsuma domain, he led the Meiji emperor's forces in overthrowing the Tokugawa regime and served as one of the early oligarchs in the Meiji government. Political and personal conflict with fellow oligarchs precipitated his resignation in 1873. In 1877, disaffected ex-samurai rebelled because they were angry with the Meiji government for a list of reasons,

including abolishing the samurai status entirely.[7] Saigō, their leader, died during the fighting, and he was initially vilified as a criminal by the Meiji government.

Saigō's diverse career as samurai, oligarch, rebel, and supporter of the emperor, allowed a broad range of people to project various schemas onto him for their own collective memory. During the 1880s, for example, ex-samurai involved with the People's Rights movement, which advocated greater political rights for wealthy men, appropriated him as one of their own.[8] Not surprisingly, Saigō's official pardon that accompanied the proclamation of the Meiji constitution in 1889 was due largely to schemas that emphasized his loyalty to the emperor. The basis of Japan's imperialist project that began, at the latest, during the Sino-Japanese war (1894–1895), became another schema for celebrating Saigō as the original expansionist. His ambiguous stance in the debates for invading Korea led to the popular idea that he even intended to sacrifice his life in Korea as a pretext for invasion.[9]

Former colleagues occasionally wrote about Oguri in the post Restoration years. They bemoaned his execution, which they felt was unjustified due to the lack of any consistent investigation into his putative crimes. They used Oguri's death to critique what they believed were arbitrary actions of the Meiji oligarchs. But Oguri's background could not fit into the dominant schemas of the time. Oguri argued that the emperor had no say in the national policies initiated by the Tokugawa shogunate. Thus, unlike Saigō, Oguri could never be considered part of the pro-emperor schema. Some ex-Tokugawa men argued, with good reason, that as a reformer, Oguri worked for the greater good of Japan. As a samurai bureaucrat, however, he would never be included as one among 'the people' either during the Meiji Period, or after the First World War, another popular schema that boosted Saigō's rehabilitation over someone like Oguri.

Thus, the difference between Saigō and Oguri's rehabilitation lay not in the absence of resources to sustain interest in Oguri throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, but the inability to locate him within the popular schema of the time. He never became a figure for local celebrations during that time, unlike Saigō's homeland where Saigō became a hero. Many of Oguri's former colleagues died of old age, and critiques of the Meiji oligarchy's actions during the Meiji Restoration began to fade. In fact, some former government critics began to reverse their positions as Japan embarked on a series of imperialist projects.

As Japan's military presence throughout East Asia increased, military prowess became a defining schema for Japan's modernity, and

opportunities for Oguri's rehabilitation grew. His contributions to military reform, in particular to the Japanese navy, were highlighted after Japan's victory over Russia in the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905). Pride over Asia's first victory over a 'white' country did little to mitigate the high cost in lives for Japan, mostly borne by the Japanese army – many credited Japan's success to naval victories.

New heroes emerged as naval histories created memory lineages that asked, in essence, to whom Japan should credit for founding Japan's navy. Sakamoto Ryōma was doubly useful in this role. Sakamoto was a low-ranking, wandering samurai (*rōnin*) from a domain (Tosa) that led the Meiji forces during the Restoration. Like Saigō, he was an imperial loyalist, and worked towards the fall of the shogunate. Unlike Saigō, however, Sakamoto did not survive to participate directly in the Restoration itself because he was assassinated, most likely by pro-Tokugawa shogunate vigilantes. This untimely death sanitized his image for later memory activists who would appropriate his legacies in a similar fashion as Saigō. People's Rights activists saw Sakamoto as one of their own, superseding even Saigō, who, after all once served as a bureaucrat.[10] Still, Sakamoto did not appear in mass media until the Russo-Japanese war.

The structure of collective memory that formed around Sakamoto's legacy illustrates how the potent combination of schemas and resources work. His pro-emperor past and naval experience, modest though it was, made him the ideal candidate as a historical forerunner for the imperial Japanese navy. In 1864, Sakamoto founded a merchant ship company, the Kaientai, to purchase naval equipment for the loyalist cause. This turned into a small Tosa domain navy, which did not make any significant contributions to the Meiji Restoration itself. But Sakamoto's background and its fit within the dominant schemas were not enough to create meaningful structures of collective memories about him until a local memory activist from Sakamoto's native Tosa, Tanaka Mitsuaki, used his position in the national government, a resource, to his advantage.

Even before the war with Russia was fully under way, Japanese newspapers reported that Sakamoto appeared to the Meiji empress in a dream and told her that Japan would win. The story caused Sakamoto to emerge as both a national and local hero, but the empress's dream was not a lucky coincidence for Sakamoto memory activists. Like most Japanese at the time, the empress probably did not know anything about Sakamoto. She simply told Tanaka about a figure who appeared to her in a dream. Tanaka, who served as the minister of the Imperial Household Agency, which manages the imperial family's affairs, told her

that this figure was none other than Sakamoto.[11] The empress became an unwitting resource for Tanaka's effort to promote local history onto the national stage. Who better to validate Sakamoto's pro-imperial credentials than the empress? Although Sakamoto had been appropriated by other groups within other schemas, a People's Rights hero and imperial loyalist, it was the commingling of schemas with resources, Tanaka's government post and the empress, that solidified Sakamoto as a national and local hero.

## Oguri: The last bannerman and the struggle for heroism

The local and national mix of schemas and resources also elevated Oguri to the status of hero. Unlike Saigō and Sakamoto, however, Oguri's image needed a greater degree of rehabilitation due to his perceived image as a Tokugawa diehard who opposed the emperor. His first national rehabilitation occurred in 1915, on the fiftieth anniversary of the Yokosuka Naval base. Of his many reforms, Oguri's Yokosuka project contributed to imperial Japan's naval victories over China and Russia. In the early 1860s, Oguri argued that Japan should begin to build its own ships instead of buying them from Western countries. Despite objections from colleagues and superiors, who felt that Japan could not afford to build their own shipyard, Oguri convinced the shogunate to fund the project. The Meiji government inherited Yokosuka and it became one of Japan's first modern shipyards.

Interest in the Japanese navy grew at home and abroad, as did the number of naval publications and Oguri's prominence as a founding father of the navy. Tōgō Heihachirō, a former Yokosuka base captain and hero of the Russo-Japanese War, publicly acknowledged Oguri's contributions, arguing, in 1912, that Japan's victory was largely due to Oguri's construction of Yokosuka.[12]

Global, national, and local memories of Japan's modernization converged towards Oguri's rehabilitation during the Yokosuka anniversary. At the global level, Yokosuka represented an important episode in Japan's opening to the West, and the keystone to Franco-Japanese relations. The French architect, François Verny, was responsible for much of Yokosuka's construction, and he helped open a Western-style school in Yokosuka where Japanese students learned a range of topics, including the French language. The Tokugawa shogunate had once looked to France for assistance in its reform and modernization efforts. French representatives in Japan during the 1860s were thus heavily invested in the shogunate's continued reign over Japan. After the shogunate

collapsed, the Japanese government gradually turned away from France and relied on more powerful European allies, the British and Prussians.

Even at this global level, however, the structures of collective memory overlapped with national and local ones. The legacy of both the late Tokugawa shogunate and that of its partner, Napoleon III's reign, suffered. At a more intimate level, the French were aware of Oguri's vilified reputation in Japan. Then French ambassador, Paul Claudel, compared Oguri's rehabilitation to that of Saigō's, 'the animosity towards Oguri would disappear […] and honour the memory of the rebel Oguri just as it does the rebellious figure Saigō.'[13]

Yokosuka City organizers and naval men ensured that Oguri's role would be celebrated in the anniversary events, but a small group from Gonda village used the occasion to rebut accusations of Oguri's criminality. Gonda participants included village officials, the monk of Tōzenji Temple where Oguri lived his last days, and a member of the Gunma Prefecture government. Oguri only lived in Gonda for a few months, and the violence that accompanied his arrival did little to redeem him in the eyes of many locals. Still, some village elites had benefited from the training they received at his residence in Edo during the 1860s, or accompanied him during his work in Yokosuka. He provided them with an opportunity to break the monotony of village life. Nearly forty years after his execution, he again provided a bridge for rural elites to work for him beyond the village.

Among the overlapping layers of collective memory about Oguri, only the local memory activists from Gonda had access to resources that could clear Oguri's name. They brought with them objects and documents related to Oguri to display during the celebration, resources that supported the structure of collective memory about Oguri and bestowed his legacy with a physical presence in Yokosuka. Tsukagoshi Yoshitarō, a teacher from Gonda and Oguri's first biographer, wrote a booklet distributed throughout crowds in Yokosuka. In it, he highlighted two parts of Oguri's story ignored in most of the Yokosuka anniversary literature, Oguri's interaction with Gonda Village and his death:

> The biggest source of misunderstanding about Oguri's sad end really has to do with his plans to establish a peasant militia […] this would have been part of his former job as the army magistrate. There just aren't enough documents to clarify whether he intended to use this group to fight the imperial army.[14]

For Tsukagoshi, Yokosuka functioned not only as a symbol of Oguri's value to modern Japan, but also helped reject accusations of Oguri's

violent intent against the emperor. Since Oguri's putative criminality originated in his activities around Gonda Village, Tsukagoshi, as a native, had a more authentic role in rehabilitating Oguri's image than outside professional historians, especially regarding Oguri's death. He was careful not to blame the imperial government for Oguri's demise, lest he undercut the schema of imperial benefice that could help rehabilitate Oguri's image. Instead, Tsukagoshi argued that general local unrest, not imperial army malice, led to the execution.

From the anniversary to the erection of Oguri's bust in 1922, Oguri slowly became a Gunma Prefecture hero rather than being confined to Gonda Village. Toyokuni Kakudō, founder of the Gunma history journal *Jōmō and the Jōmō People* (*JOJ*) wrote much about Oguri for a local audience. Unlike Tsukagoshi, however, Toyokuni avoided implicating locals in Oguri's death to avoid alienating anyone in the growing collective memory. Even local soldiers who were sent to arrest Oguri found redemption through Toyokuni's work. He downplayed the local riot that other scholars saw as a precursor to Oguri's arrest. Moreover, the narrative of greedy local gangsters attacking Oguri for his money, was transposed onto the imperial army officers in the area. According to Toyokuni, they took advantage of the antagonistic feelings towards Oguri, and, 'hearing about the large amount of money that Oguri brought with him, took it upon themselves to go after him in the hopes of gaining profit. They persecuted him for being a traitor without even investigating him'. To promote Oguri as a tragic Gunma hero, not just a village hero, Toyokuni needed a *local* villain who was not *of* the local.

The anniversary itself was not enough to spur the inter-war period Oguri 'boom', local discourse about him accelerated during the creation of his bronze bust in Yokosuka. When discussing 'sites of memory', scholars debate how much traffic they attract, whether viewers understand the intended meaning behind the site, or whether it can be read accurately at all in the future. But this is a secondary issue to the discourse produced during the creation of a site. In this case, local Oguri supporters needed to convince people to donate money for the project, and in so doing, promoted him as someone worthy of attention. The editor implored his readers, 'as country-loving Gunma citizens, send donations to the Yokosuka City Mayor'.

More importantly, the Taishō empress donated money to help erect Oguri's bust. Who better to clear accusations that Oguri was anti-emperor than an endorsement from the empress herself? She unwittingly became a resource appropriated by local people who used her

to place Oguri within the schema of emperor-centred nationalism, just as Tanaka used the Meiji empress to boost Sakamoto Ryōma's image. Thus, the structures of collective memory within a particular locale were never isolated from interaction with national or global figures or memory schemas. Far from struggling against any top-down articulations of national identity, local memory played an integral role in the very formation of national memory and identity.

The empress's participation was especially important after Oguri supporters failed to obtain posthumous court rank (*zōi*) for him. Although the awarding of posthumous court rank was an ancient practice in Japan, it took on new significance in the emperor-centred schema of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The first to receive such elevation were those who died fighting for the emperor during the Meiji Restoration, but, gradually, even former Tokugawa men deemed important to the development of regional and national culture were so honoured.

The awarding of posthumous court rank was a site for commemorative interaction between the local and national. Lists of potential recipients were compiled by low-level bureaucrats and were then submitted for approval. Tanaka Mitsuaki spent his early career working in such a capacity, and, thus, it might be no surprise that nearly 70 per cent of those who received posthumous court rank were from his homeland, Tosa, far outnumbering recipients from the former Satsuma and Chōshū domains.[15] The government also accepted nominations from the public and from historical study associations. Even in this 'national' level schema, an award bestowed, as if from 'above,' to the families of worthy heroes, the structure of collective memory only existed with the support of local memory activists.

Oguri's memory activists drew upon a range of national resources to obtain court rank for him. Gonda villagers and Oguri's grandson provided documents to members of the *Shidankai*, an historical association, and asked former Tokugawa men, one of them Speaker of the House in the national Diet, to petition the government for posthumous rank. The *Shidankai* became a resource particularly useful for those who supported Meiji Restoration 'losers'. Initially an organization connected to the government to gather historical materials related to the Meiji Restoration, it lost government support, and its leadership sought to balance the pro-victor's narrative of the Restoration with writings that portrayed the 'losers' in a more favourable light. Moreover, they published biographies of 'war martyrs' to commemorate men on both

sides of the Meiji Restoration killed in battle, including those who were vilified by the government – illustrating how history and memory are not separate, since historians themselves are often agents of commemoration.[16] Unfortunately for Oguri supporters, and for reasons that are unclear, the campaign failed.

## Structures of collective memory as sites of conflict

The Oguri boom engendered as much conflict as it did cooperation in the countryside. In 1931, villagers from Gonda formed an organization to erect a commemorative stone. They asked law scholar and distant Oguri relative, Ninagawa Arata, for suggestions regarding what to write on the monument. Ninagawa sent them two epitaphs; the first read, 'The final resting place of Oguri Kōzukenosuke [Tadamasa], a great man of the late Tokugawa regime'. The second inscription, eventually chosen by the villagers, read, 'Here lies the great Oguri Kōzukenosuke, killed without having committed a crime.' By choosing the latter inscription, villagers highlighted a controversial interpretation of the Meiji Restoration during a time of growing ultra-nationalist ideology and violence.

Police with jurisdiction over the area refused to allow the villages to erect the stone because the epitaph suggested that the emperor's forces killed Oguri unjustifiably. Ninagawa contacted the police to explain Oguri's story, and the monument was successfully unveiled a year later close to Oguri's execution ground. Over one thousand people turned up for the event, including Ninagawa, who announced, 'Oguri's spirit now protects the region, not as a government god, nor a god for self-gain, but a god of the people.'[17]

The Oguri boom also caused conflict over who could legitimately represent his legacy. Abe Dōzan pushed his temple, the Fumon'in, into the spotlight of Oguri commemoration. The Fumon'in enshrined the souls of Oguri's ancestors, but not Oguri himself, while the Tōzenji in Gonda village is where Oguri lived before being executed and is his final resting place. In 1935, Abe unveiled a commemorative monument that attracted numerous celebrities including the prime minister, high-ranking officers of the navy, the chief of the Yokosuka Naval Base, Ninagawa, and a Tokugawa descendent who wrote the calligraphy etched into the monument. There is no evidence that the Fumon'in played a prominent role on the memory landscape relating to Oguri before the 1930s. According to Abe's own account, people only started visiting the Fumon'in after the publication of a 1933 article that mentioned his temple as the location

of Oguri's family grave. Memory activists in Gonda reacted jealously to Abe and the Fumon'in's new fame:

> Fumon'in is nothing more than the cemetery for the Oguri family's ancestors. The group there is a result of Abe's zeal. But Gonda in our prefecture (Gunma) is where Oguri bones are buried… We have the support of Oguri's grandson and other family members who have visited many times…[18]

Abe attacked the Gonda Villagers for trying to obtain recognition from the Oguri family. 'The ungratefulness of the Gonda villagers struck at the heart of the Oguri family. Oguri's daughter Kuniko said she would never visit the Tōzenji'.[19] He claimed that Oguri's wife Michiko hated the Gonda villagers for turning Oguri over to the Takasaki domain. The Fumon'in received more legitimacy when Oguri's adopted grandson visited the cemetery there; Abe even received a letter from him stating that the Fumon'in was Oguri Tadamasa's official grave. Abe also appropriated Ninagawa's authority, who noted that although there were many Oguri graves, the one at the Fumon'in was the most legitimate.

This battle to activate commemorative resources centred on the location of Oguri's decapitated head. A *JOJ* article by Toyokuni argued that although the Fumon'in had recently tried to claim Oguri's head, '… Gonda has superior evidence (of possessing Oguri's head) but people there are completely silent […] we have no choice but to promote the Gonda theory for them.'[20] The 'we' here refers to Toyokuni and others in Gunma Prefecture who, by the 1930s, had adopted Oguri as a Gunma Prefectural hero against competing claims from Abe and the Fumon'in in nearby Saitama Prefecture.

It is no surprise that Abe responded with his own counter attack; that Oguri's head was, in fact, buried in his temple's cemetery. Since the 1930s, Abe had been promoting the Fumon'in as a site of Oguri memory. He completed an Oguri biography in 1941 in which he included an interview with Oguri's putative executioner. Leading the witness, Abe asked, 'Did you know that Oguri's head had been displayed on a pole, was stolen, and then brought to his family grave in Fumon'in?' Hara, the executioner, responded, 'It's a fact that it was stolen. I heard some rumour that it was taken somewhere, maybe out your way, but I had no use for his head so I just cut it and then went off to Echigo to take care of some rebels'.[21]

The growing structure of collective memory around Oguri's legacy also attracted treasure seekers. Since the late nineteenth century,

stories that Oguri secretly buried shogunate gold when he left Edo, had spread throughout the area around Tokyo, especially in Gunma. Even in the twenty-first century, treasure hunters have been digging holes in local mountains, but booms occurred during times of economic desperation, including the 1930s. The most famous mountebank, Kawahara Hidemori, was singled out for appropriating Oguri's name in his treasure hunting, by claiming to be descended from Oguri through an illicit affair. At the Fumon'in, Kawahara once told Abe that he possessed a treasure map, and if only Abe would help him find the treasure, he could have a new gate for his temple, while the rest would be donated to the navy. In Gunma, Toyokuni warned his readers that Kawahara was a fake, 'the Oguri family stays away from him, and others who get to know him even a little bit will do the same'.

Despite competition between Gunma memory activists and Abe over who could legitimately represent Oguri's legacy, they shared an intense dislike for those who used Oguri's image for selfish material gain. Oguri could only be discussed within the schemas of patriotism, loyalty to the state and the people, and military prowess. When Kawahara visited the Fumon'in, dressed in Kimono with the Oguri family crest, Abe disavowed any connection between him and the hidden treasure during a public sermon:

> Oguri's greatest quality was his integrity. He also worked to westernize the country's military installations. He was the epitome of Japanese *bushidō*. There are many things that future people should learn from him and my job is to teach people about him […]. As for buried money, this mountain temple has nothing to do with it […]. I let people visit Oguri's grave to understand his greatness and this is why people should come.[22]

Structures of collective memory are full of inherent tension. On the one hand, the competition between Gunma claimants to Oguri's legacy and their rival, Abe, at his temple, the Fumon'in, illustrates how resources within the structure become the commemorative 'prize'. Simply stating that one's temple or village was deeply connected to Oguri was not enough; both sides tried to convince Oguri's relatives, scholars, political figures, and naval men – human resources – to participate in their commemoration while undercutting the other side.

Despite fighting over the access to resources, however, both sides could agree on the schemas used to promote Oguri. He was not, and could not, be portrayed as a pro-emperor fallen hero, but a military

reformer who helped found the imperial navy, or helped Japan 'open up' to the West. On this point they both attacked treasure hunters, who took advantage of the Oguri boom for personal gain. They played upon the fears, economic and otherwise, that had rippled into Japan from the global crisis during the 1930s.

## Shifting structures of collective memory: the First World War and beyond

Oguri's legacy boomed from the 1910s to the 1940s through the interaction of local and national collective memory structures. Oguri historical memory gained salience during this time due to the creation of physical markers, or using structuralist vocabulary, resources, that anchored him to the present. The most potent resources were human: nationally recognized politicians, writers, and scholars, who supported local efforts to shape local and national memory. The central government initiated many schemas within the structure of national memory that gave meaning to these resources, for example, commemoration through modern statue building and the posthumous bestowing of court rank. Sometimes the efforts were successful. Yokosuka and Gunma citizens transformed Oguri into a regional and national hero, ultimately erecting a bust in Yokosuka, a site of memory with deep connections to Japanese identity as a world naval power. Abe Dōzan attracted prominent visitors from around Japan by invoking the religiosity associated with Oguri's memorial stone and gravesite, making a name for himself and his temple. Gonda villagers used Ninagawa Arata to prevent the Takasaki city police from banning an Oguri monument, and appropriated the empress's donation to rehabilitate Oguri's history and subdue his reputation for being an enemy of the emperor.

The goals established through the activation of schemas and resources did not need to succeed to have meaning. Gunma supporters failed to obtain posthumous rank for Oguri despite decades of trying, but the discourse created through this activity strengthened his presence in local memory, further marking him as a tragic figure in Meiji Restoration history. Even the would-be treasure hunter Kawahara, who failed to gain recognition from anyone with a stake in Oguri's memory, still convinced people to lend him money for his ne'er-do-well adventures.

The Oguri boom experienced during the inter-war period also illustrates the complex interaction between the local and national. Typically, local interests and entities are delegated to a passive role in the creation of modern nation state, national identity, and national history

production, even though scholars acknowledge local ability to negotiate and participate in the variety of initiatives begun at the national level. The countryside is often depicted as a reservoir from which folktales, local heroes and history are plucked by nationally recognized scholars, and subsequently used to define 'Japan'. But as the process of awarding posthumous court rank illustrates, local interests can define national phenomena, just as Gonda villagers played a key role in determining how Oguri would be portrayed at the Yokosuka anniversary.

Observing how memory activists compete for resources, and argue over schemas, used within the structure of collective memory, prevents over-romanticizing the local role in producing history. Village and prefecture officialdom strengthened their respective identities by appropriating Oguri. The village used prefectural recognition to broaden its audience, while the prefecture gained access to Gonda Village's unique history, its connections to Yokosuka, and nationally recognized celebrities who supported Oguri's legacy. This was also a source of competition as increased status recognition also brought in tourists and possible revenue.

After the end of the Second World War, the very structures of collective memory shifted. First, the schemas had changed: no longer were historical figures promoted as pro-emperor, nor did military prowess act as a source of pride. Instead, non-elites who worked for 'the people' instead of the state were deemed to be appropriate heroes. Thus, people like Saigō Takamori briefly experienced criticism, especially in the historical works of leftist scholars who saw him as a leftover from feudal Japan. Sakamoto Ryōma's legacy was only slightly readjusted in the post-war period. Again, his death purified him from criticism; he never worked as a bureaucrat and was less guilty of pro-emperor zeal than other Meiji Restoration samurai who were celebrated in the first half of the twentieth century. During the 1960s, Sakamoto became a hero for young, single men who participated in student protests.

The memory resources also changed after the war. The awarding of posthumous rank was completely abandoned. History writing, history textbooks, and popular culture, especially film, was subject to censorship by the Allied Occupation government. For example, military virtue, articulated through the samurai *bushidō* ideal, was completely proscribed from movies. Historians, many of them with leftist political leanings, some who were jailed during the war, turned towards 'people's history'. When Oguri was discussed at all, he was typically described, negatively, as part of the 'feudal' era, who endangered Japan in his dealings with France, opening Japan to 'semi-feudalism'.

Local memory activists also faced challenges in the immediate post-war era of the 1950s. Censors prohibited one local educator from including Oguri and several other local heroes in an educational card game for children. Oguri, as a samurai, represented Japan's militaristic past.[23] Oguri fans had more success beginning in the 1970s, when Oguri became a forerunner of Japan's 'internationalization', a buzzword among politicians and pundits who felt that Japan was too shut off from the rest of the world. Oguri's work as the finance commissioner for the Tokugawa shogunate also helped memory activists promote him as a modernizer of Japan's economy, which dovetailed nicely with Japan's own post-war economic miracle.

Since the 1990s, Oguri has enjoyed another boom in national attention. As Japan's economy slipped into a 'lost decade', highlighted by economic recession, but also accompanied by political scandals, terrorism, and natural disasters, people looked for new heroes. Writers compared the late-twentieth-century crisis to the fall of the Tokugawa period. Oguri's reputation as a Tokugawa stalwart was used to portray him as an ideal bureaucrat who worked for the good of the country and did not simply change his affiliations with the shifting political currents. Local memory activists became native informers for those seeking to portray Oguri in literature, film, or historical works, and their narratives of Oguri's history meshed with national ones, affecting both local and national structures of collective memory. Instead of seeing Oguri's legacy as the centre of a local–national binary, then, it should be understood as the very web that comprises the multi-directional network of local and national interaction.

## Notes

1. Confino, 2006, *Germany*, p. 171.
2. Sewell, 2005, *Logics of History*, p. 132.
3. *Ibid*., p. 140.
4. *Ibid*., p. 143.
5. Fujitani, 1996, *Splendid Monarchy*.
6. Karlin, 2004, 'The tricentennial celebration', p. 217, 221.
7. For a recent biography of Saigō see Ravina, 2004, *The Last Samurai*.
8. For more on Saigō's commemoration see Morris, 1975, *The Nobility of Failure*. More recent studies include Berlinguez-Kōno, 2008, 'How did Saigō Takamori become a national hero?', p. 6, and Ravina, 2010, 'The apocryphal suicide'.
9. Berlinguez-Kōno, 2008, 'How did Saigō Takamori become a national hero?', p. 234.
10. Miyazawa, 2005 *Meiji ishin*, p. 193.
11. Jansen, 1994, *Sakamoto Ryōma*, pp. ix–x.

12. Oguri, 1989, 'Nichirō sensō', p. 12.
13. Claudel, 1959, 'Inauguration du buste', p. 160. Claudel has several long speeches about Yokosuka, Oguri, and Verny.
14. Tsukagoshi, 1915, *Oguri*, p. 1.
15. Takada, 007, 2 'Ishin no kioku', pp. 76–77.
16. This is an observation made by Saeyoung Park, 2010, 'National heroes', fn 85.
17. *Nihon shinbun*, 12 May 1932. Reprinted in *Tatsunami*, 1, p. 14.
18. *Tatsunami*, 1, p. 8.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 32. In the next sentence he stated that she never visited the Fumon'in.
20. *Jōmō and the Jōmō People,* 220 (1935), pp. 61–62.
21. Dōzan, 1941, *Kaigun no Senkusha*, p. 174.
22. Dōzan, 1941, *Kaigun no Senkusha*, p. 289. Abe noted with satisfaction that not long after their visit, the whole gang was arrested.
23. *Yomiuri shinbun*, 22 December 2008. He was also faulted for having built the Yokosuka naval base. Nishikata, 2002, *Jōmō karuta no kokoro*, p. 127.

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# 9

# Remembering Father Cícero: Local, Regional and National Memory in North-eastern Brazil

*Gerald Greenfield*

Father Cícero was born in 1844 in Crato, at the time the largest city in the Cariri Valley in the province (later state) of Ceará. While Ceará's interior (commonly known as the *sertão* or backlands) was semi-arid and subject to devastating cyclical droughts, the Cariri received more ample rains, and was known as the 'bread basket' of Ceará.[1] Though he initially suspended his studies when his father died in 1862, three years later, assisted by his godfather, a well-known Crato potentate, he entered the seminary in Fortaleza, the provincial capital. Ordained on 30 November 1870, on 11 April 1872 he took up residence in Juazeiro, at the time an insignificant settlement with a dozen or so modest houses and a small chapel. He developed a reputation for being an attentive priest who truly cared for the poor, and for having a mystical bent.

On 10 March 1889, Maria de Araújo, a humble, mixed-race woman, knelt to take Holy Communion from Father Cícero. Miraculously, the host transformed into blood. Ceará's bishop, Dom Joaquim Vieira, sent a commission to investigate. It reported that the incident could only be explained by supernatural means. Rejecting that finding, Dom Joaquim sent another commission, which declared the incident a hoax. The bishop then suspended Father Cícero's holy orders, but said he would restore them if he recanted and left Juazeiro. Father Cícero refused that offer. The following year Dom Joaquim issued a pastoral letter condemning the miracle, an action echoed by the Holy Office in Rome in 1894.[2]

Father Cícero remained in Juazeiro because of a dream in which he saw Christ and the apostles at what appeared to be the Last Supper. Suddenly a group of poor people who suffered from the ravages of drought entered the room. Christ turned, pointed his finger at Father Cícero, and commanded him to take care of those people.[3] This dream has become so well established that it can be referred to obliquely, with

full understanding of those conversant with the traditional story. For example, in a 1994 article, Luitgarde Oliveira Cavalcanti Barros wrote of Father Cicero that his 'single desire was to mitigate the suffering of the unfortunate backlanders who came to Juazeiro, as Jesus showed him in a dream'.[4] A central element in the collective memory of Father Cícero, the dream affirms his standing as 'the people's priest', a man who stood with the humble masses and, because of that, was punished by the powerful.

Though Father Cícero never regained his holy orders, he grew in stature as both a religious and political figure, and as word spread about the miracle, Juazeiro grew in population, wealth, and political influence. Increasingly resentful of its subordination to the jurisdiction of Crato, Juazeiro began agitating for self-rule. It gained 'independence' on 22 July 1911, and Father Cícero became its first mayor. He also won election as the third Vice President of Ceará. The following year, however, state president Marcos Franco Rabelo dismissed Father Cícero from his municipal post. That both reflected and intensified a factional struggle in Ceará, one in which the national government also took a hand. In 1913, forces loyal to Father Cícero deposed the prefect appointed by Rabelo, and in 1914, Rabelo lost his position.[5] His replacement, Antonio Pinto Nogueira Acióly, belonged to one of the state's most powerful political oligarchies, and counted Father Cícero a friend. As a result, Father Cícero was elected first Vice President of the state in July of that year.

When Father Cícero died in 1934, an obituary in Rio de Janeiro's *Correio de Manhã* noted that he had become known nationally due to his activities in the north-east, and was regarded as having supernatural powers. It also cited his positive impact on Juazeiro, pointing to his role in founding schools and contributing to its ongoing development, but remarked that he was just another *coronel,* a political boss who used pilgrims as his henchmen. His appeal rested on the ignorance of the people in the north-east, a remote place 'where civilization is slowly making its way', so as the region modernized, the 'cult' of Father Cícero would disappear.[6] A São Paulo newspaper acknowledged his largely positive impact on the masses, and especially on the area's bandits, but nevertheless pointed out that the notorious Lampião, known widely as 'the bandit king' was one of Father Cícero's numerous godchildren, and wrote that he had 'abused his prestige' to become wealthy.[7]

Those characterizations reflected a long-standing elite view of the masses as ignorant and prone to fanaticism, and a national geography conceived in terms of a 'progressive' south and a 'backward' north.[8] Belying predictions that the spread of education and material progress

ultimately would eliminate the 'cult' of Father Cícero, in the years since his death he has become more widely known and venerated. A voluminous bibliography – scholarly, polemical, and popular – discusses his life and legacy, and his story has been recounted in documentary and commercial films, a nationally televised mini-series, news magazine articles, and in popular songs and folk music. He also is a major figure in the *literatura de cordel*, the popular poetry of the north-east.[9] In 2001, Father Cícero was selected as Ceará's outstanding figure of the twentieth century.[10] Influenced in part by the suggestion that Father Cícero was a precursor of liberation theology, who focused on the poor as being the 'children of God', the Catholic Church in Brazil has asked the Vatican to reconsider Father Cícero's case, and a movement for his rehabilitation and 'reconciliation' with the Vatican has been gaining support within Brazil.[11] In 2006 a north-eastern bishop, accompanied by a large delegation of Ceará dignitaries travelled to Rome for an audience with Pope Benedict XVI to present a petition bearing some 150,000 signatures urging the Vatican to begin that process.[12]

In 1969, at the initiative of Juazeiro Mayor Dr Mauro Sampaio, an enormous statue of Father Cícero was erected on a mountain that overlooked the city, on a spot known as the *Horto*, or garden, a direct reference to the olive trees where Jesus prayed prior to his crucifixion, and a place that Father Cícero favoured for contemplation.[13] At 25 metres in height, only slightly shorter than the Statue of Liberty, the monument was Brazil's second largest, eclipsed only by Christ the Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro. The inauguration received national attention, and the monument immediately became a focal point for the ongoing pilgrimages, and is the iconic symbol for both Juazeiro and Father Cicero (see Figure 9.1).

The Juazeiro pilgrimages provide the context for an ongoing process of communication about Father Cícero, and while there are several traditional sites that are visited, the statue of Father Cícero remains the preferred point for pilgrims, although it commonly is remarked that Juazeiro itself is a monument to Father Cícero. This calls to mind Pierre Nora who wrote of *lieux de mémoire* as places

> where memory crystallizes and secretes itself […] at a particular historical moment, a turning point where consciousness of a break with the past is bound up with the sense that memory has been torn – but torn in such a way as to pose the problem of the embodiment of memory in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists.[14]

*Figure 9.1* The giant statue of Padre Cícero in Juazeiro do Norte

Subsequently, scholars have identified a wide variety of such sites, including museums, art galleries, monuments and memorials, as well as public commemorative events and fairs. According to Carrier these can be seen as 'a cultural support for a particular shared memory (and as) vehicles for shared memories underpinning social cohesion', that therefore can create, alter, and communicate local, regional, and national memories.[15]

Research on memory sites contributes to an understanding of what has been referred to as the 'ethnography' or 'genealogy' of memory, which seeks to trace the origins and ongoing development of memory,

including, for example, the various ways in which it is expressed and the purposes for which it is used. This relates as well to memory as to cognitive ethnography.[16] Marea Teski and Jacob Climo observed that 'forgetting or changing memories is done to serve the present' by endowing it with meaning, and with creating a memory that links past and present to create a positive future.[17] Such concerns relate to the 'practices of memory', which suggest that 'processes of remembering are always embodied and action oriented reconstructions of the past, which are highly dynamic and malleable by means of communication and context'.[18] Pilgrimages, therefore, may be seen as an 'action oriented' memory practice. Mike Rowlands and Christopher Tilley suggested that 'monuments and memorials exist as a means of fixing history,' and that 'they provide stability and a degree of permanence through the collective remembering of an event, person, or sacrifice around which public rites can be organized'.[19] However, the Juazeiro pilgrimages can be seen as 'action oriented reconstructions' since both during their journey and while participating in 'public rites' that take place at the monument, they create opportunities for new narratives that may incorporate and/or emphasize new actors, events, and issues.

Jacob Climo and Maria G. Cattell observe that collective memories 'involve issues of cultural norms and issues of authenticity, identity and power' and that 'they can be, and often are the focus for conflict and contestation', while Frazier remarks the 'shape of memory' and 'how it produces emotion to bring people on board with particular political projects'.[20] I suggest that for the lower classes in the Brazilian north-east, the collective memory of Father Cícero has a resistive agenda. It represents him as an advocate for the powerless, who confounds the powerful and acts on behalf of the *sertanejos*, the poor backlands inhabitants of north-eastern Brazil, and as a true saint, one 'canonized by the people'.[21] The fact that numerous church leaders and powerful political leaders now support Father Cícero indicates that his memory has spread beyond the confines of his initial supporters. Though varying somewhat by social class, regional memory now represents him as an authentic hero who has not been accorded the respect he deserves because of the historic and ongoing disadvantaged state of the north-east relative to the south.

In addressing the remarkable life and legacy of Father Cícero through a focus on collective local, regional, and national memory and the role of the monument in promoting both his memory and the growth of Juazeiro, I suggest that his followers, both in the north-east and in other parts of Brazil, comprise communities which are defined by

shared memories. Jan Assmann notes that Maurice Halbwachs stressed the importance of seeing collective memory as 'socially mediated' and related to a specific group,[22] and argues that both Warburg and Halbwachs shifted 'the discussion concerning collective knowledge from a biological framework to a cultural one'.[23] This again suggests that memories remain fluid in the sense that they may incorporate new persons, places and events into an existing narrative.

I use the term 'collective memory to refer to memories embraced and represented by a group, in this case, the lower class masses of the Brazilian north-east. I see national (as opposed to local) historical memory as an 'official' history, in this case, an account of Brazil's past that is largely shared throughout the nation, is reflected in school texts, and legitimizes the celebration of specific events and heroes. I use the term 'regional memory' to identify collective memories that are shared beyond the boundaries of specific social classes and the borders of governmental units. It is important to note that some of the nuances in local collective memory may have less salience or be absent in regional memory, though dominant motifs are retained. These collective memories, which inform both behaviours and conversations, also function as a *lingua franca* that identifies people as members of a community, regardless of where they live.

For example, Father Cícero's followers typically refer to him as *meu padrinho* (my godfather), and refer to themselves as being his *afilhados*, or godchildren. They speak of him as being a champion of the poor, a caring godfather, who is also an approachable saint. A pilgrim to Juazeiro drew a critical distinction between those who speak of *Father Cícero* and those who use the term *padrinho* when referring to him: a *padrinho* 'helps people' who are in need,[24] so its use communicates that a person has faith in Father Cícero and his supernatural powers. Over the years, collective memory has created a community of believers throughout the north-east, and among north-easterners who, driven by drought, economic uncertainty and poverty, have migrated south to São Paulo and Rio de Janeiro. Both within and outside the north-east Father Cícero remains part of their regional identities, for he is the north-east's saint. Such terms as *a nação romeiro* (the pilgrim nation), attributed to a recent Juazeiro priest, Father Murilo (Francisco Murilo de Sá Barreto) who was at times referred to as both 'the north-east's priest' and 'the north-east's Vicar', capture those elements of memory-based identity, and the sense of belonging to a broader community.[25]

The veneration of Father Cícero exemplifies religious beliefs and practices of north-eastern Brazil generally referred to as 'popular'

Christianity or 'folk' Catholicism. Herminio de Oliveira notes Brazil's regional developmental disparities, and then identifies an analogous religious divide between 'official' religion with a 'well-defined liturgy and theology', and popular religion, with its ritual base in symbols, and marked by 'feasts for patron saints, pilgrimages, processions, and the cult of the dead', as well as making and paying promises, and asking for blessings.[26] Patricia Pessar identifies this tradition as 'a constellation of beliefs and practices that developed among non-elite Brazilians in dialogue with, and sometimes in opposition to, the official tenets of the Catholic Church'.[27] These include a messianic vision, pilgrimages, numerous sacred sites, holy people not formally designated as such by the Church, and the belief that saints communicate visions to chosen people. A powerful identification with the passion of Christ and an understanding that suffering was an inextricable part of life also marked those traditions. The world appeared as a web of relationships that included both the living and the dead, including divinized holy people and formal saints. Furthermore, as evidenced by Father Cícero, holy people could become 'saints' though canonized 'only by popular practice'.[28] Pessar refers to this as a 'sacralizing process', and defines it as 'those cultural conventions and symbolic operations through which backlanders produced their charismatic leaders'.[29] As such, death enhanced Father Cícero's standing. Now in heaven, seated by the side of God, Jesus, and the Holy Mother, he enjoyed even greater power to intercede on their behalf. The ongoing pilgrimages evidenced the people's faith in their *padrinho* and helped create new opportunities for recounting his life and work, whether in works by popular poets and singers, accounts of pilgrims, or in newspaper and magazine articles that reported on and analysed this ongoing, indeed burgeoning devotion to a 'popular' saint'. Contemporary composer and singer Gilberto Gil remarked in an interview that he had grown up in the backlands of Bahia, 'a region that presented many visible signs, emblems and signifiers, and elements of north-eastern music', including religious processions and drought'.[30] As a north-easterner, Father Cícero understood and valued those 'signs, emblems, and signifiers'.

Pilgrims travelling to Juazeiro usually are making or fulfilling a promise to Father Cícero, a procedure which can be seen as a transaction in the sense that a pilgrim makes a request, promises to do something in return, and later returns there as a part of fulfilling that promise.[31] Kaplan reminds us that Ricoeur 'shows how promising binds us to do something or to be someone in the future, and suggests that 'the dialectic of promising [...] established identity and predictability in to future'.[32]

This has particular importance to poor north-easterners whose lives depend on factors over which they have little control, including for example, devastating cyclical droughts and precarious conditions of labour.

Representing difference lies at the heart of identifying regions. An allied process, 'othering', takes the self as normative and positive, thereby ensuring that difference is seen negatively.[33] Such representations become 'knowledge' used to stereotype the other. Meaning emerges through a dialogue that involves a producer and consumer. A shared culture implies shared meanings and memories, so different groups 'consume' or view those representations and practices differently. Meanings are expressed in practices and cultural products, which are 'read' differently by insiders and outsiders.[34] This speaks to the importance identified by Stuart Hall of seeing culture as 'primarily [...] concerned with the production and the exchange of meanings'. He suggests that 'we give things meaning by how we represent them – the words we use about them, the stories we tell about them, the images of them we produce, the emotions we associate with them, the ways we classify and conceptualize them, the values we place on them'.[35] As such, collective memory is created, refreshed, modified and communicated through a broad array of commemorative acts.

Through works of fact and fiction, songs, film, art, and ritual observances, including pilgrimages, the remembered life of Father Cícero has coalesced into an almost canonical set of understandings and assertions. As cultural products, these may be mediated by social class, place of origin, and residence, and as a result interpretations of the key elements in Father Cícero's life and legacy may vary to an extent, but the central elements of the 'canon', implicit in referring to him as a Godfather and priest of the people, focus on his compassionate mission to the poor and the injustices he suffered at the hands of the powerful. To assert the legitimacy of Father Cícero, then, is to speak on behalf of the region. As one author has put it, 'The historical Father Cícero died. Who walks alive today is the myth, lodged in the guts of the north-easterner'.[36] To outsiders, on the other hand, his story confirms stereotypical understandings of the north-east as tradition-bound, backward, and corrupt.

The city of Juazaeiro, referred to by the pilgrims as 'the poor people's Rome' is itself a monument to Father Cícero.[37] He is widely acknowledged as its founder and protector, and credited with setting it on a path toward material growth and prosperity. Many of the people who came to Juazeiro seeking shelter from drought, and spiritual and material assistance from Father Cícero, became labourers on his lands or on

those of his allies. They also found employment in the realm of handicrafts'.[38] 'Father Cícero's artisans' crafted many products that were sold to pilgrims, for example, religious stamped-metal images, as well as small statues of wood and clay.[39] Wood-cuts or engravings became an important element in the *cordel* literature as cover illustrations.[40] From the 1920s onwards, *cordel* poets turned in ever-greater numbers to focus on his life and message. Many of them lived and worked in Juazeiro, as many still do today. Examples include João Mendes de Oliveira, whose song *Proteção da Mãe de Deus* ('Protection of the Mother of God'), included the assertion that that Father Cícero was a member of the Holy Trinity, and João Quintino Sobrinho, better known as João de Cristo Rei, who has been referred to as the 'prophet' of Juazeiro and as Father Cícero's poet'.[41] Another poet, José Bernardo da Silva, who first came to Juazeiro in 1926, achieved greatest prominence through his printing shop, which became the leading producer of *cordel* literature.[42]

Juazeiro is sometimes is referred to as 'Father Cícero's Juazeiro', and as 'the land of Father Cícero'. The Prefecture's home page features two pictures of Father Cícero's statue, and its brief description of the city notes the link between the municipality's progress and Father Cícero and the pilgrims.[43] It is difficult to pass through any street without seeing images of Father Cicero displayed in store fronts, and there is a Father Cícero Square, which includes a Father Cícero Memorial that displays artifacts from his life, and often hosts exhibits relating his life and accomplishments. Many business establishments also bear his name and image. For example, one can find lodging in the Hotel Cicerôpolis, fill prescriptions at the *Farmácia Padre Cícero*, or buy bread at the *Padaria Padre Cícero*. His name is similarly used in other north-eastern cities. Aarons states that, 'Every small town in north-eastern Brazil has at least one street, pharmacy, hotel, or municipal building named after Father Cícero', and remarks that Father Cícero 'is as ubiquitous as the drought'.[44]

The greatest celebrations and (re)creation(s) of the life and memory of Father Cícero occur in the massive pilgrimages to Juazeiro. These include a formal religious cycle, the Day of Our Lady of Sorrows (15 September), All Souls Day (2 November), and Candlemas (2 February), as well as the anniversaries of his birth and death. Pessar estimates an annual tourism of two million people.[45] Through the actions and tales of these pilgrims, Juazeiro has become a sanctified location, a 'New Jerusalem', and a celestial city. Pilgrims travel to Juazeiro because they have received a call (*o chamado*), which itself is regarded as a blessing from Father Cícero.[46] They come from towns and cities throughout the

north-east, as well as from other parts of Brazil where north-easterners have migrated. Pilgrims typically travel with others, and both on the journey and while in Juazeiro they share their stories of Father Cícero with people they meet along the way and in Juazeiro. Analysing these stories, including ones recounted by Juazeiro residents, Candace Slater observes: 'The Father Cícero whom we have met in the preceding pages is a symbol of resistance to oppression. He is also a trusted personal friend'.[47] As described by one of the *cordel* poets, Juazeiro is 'a resplendent star in the interior of the backlands, a refuge for the afflicted, a land of promise and redemption for the penitent'.[48]

The Father Cícero monument has provided opportunities for creating new meanings, new memories and, even new histories. Both the decision to build the statue and its multiple meanings for different audiences over time evidence dynamism, and the (co)existence of multiple, nuanced layers of memory in which some aspects have greater salience for different audiences. Those public rites also provide dynamic opportunities for communicating and (re)shaping memory, by functioning as 'focal points of dialogue for the continual negotiation of historical self-understanding'.[49] Janet Hoskins suggested that 'meanings change through time and in relation to the manner in which they are circulated and exchanged and pass through different social contexts'.[50] As such, meanings may be received and interpreted differently and, therefore, multiple versions of memories also exist, which reflects an interactional process in which the 'audience' is not a passive receptor for the thoughts and emotions the monument was intended to communicate. Rather, people actively participate in creating meaning and, subsequently memory. In a sense, then, they engage in a dialogue with the monument about themselves and their lives.

Fittingly, the origins of the statue partake of the mystical. Dr José Mauro Castelo Branco recalls that he was having breakfast when a *beato* approached him and suggested that the prefecture erect a large cross on the *Horto*. Dr Mauro told him that many hills already had crosses, and asked, 'what about a statue of Father Cícero?'[51] According to Dr Geraldo Menezes de Barbosa, a leading citizen at the time and an ally of Dr Mauro, there always had been talk about building a new statue larger than the small bronze bust placed in a central city plaza in 1925. That bust, said Dr. Geraldo, might have been adequate for a plaza, but not for a city, and he and Dr Mauro also recalled that the pilgrims believed that Father Cícero merited something larger.[52] Both men mentioned the statue of Christ the Redeemer in Rio de Janeiro and remarked that given all his accomplishments, Father Cícero merited something grander than

a simple bronze bust. Furthermore, according to Dr Geraldo's nephew, João Carlos Rodrigues de Menezes, since Father Cícero had lost his holy orders, 'in those days, his name was not allowed to be mentioned inside a church, so it was important to have a place where the faithful could gather and make their devotions'.[53] As noted earlier, Father Cícero regarded the *Horto* as a special place, but an additional contextual element was the nearby church of the Salesians, and the fact that they had prohibited him from entering it. To his advocates, it seemed fitting to have his massive statue looking down on that church.

The official inaugural speech by Mozart Cardoso de Alencar, who was Father Cícero's personal physician, and would become Juazeiro's prefect in 1973, attracted a crowd estimated at 300,000, including dignitaries from the north-east, and a representative of the national government. His address sounded several themes which bespoke Juazeiro's special relationship to Father Cícero and the narrative of his life and accomplishments. He began by asserting that Father Cícero's first miracle was to make himself 'admired and understood by the people of the north-east', and referred to the people in Juazeiro at the time as 'living under the domination of Crato'.[54] Those people came to see Father Cícero as someone on whom they could rely, and word spread widely. That, not the miracle of the host, was the origin of the pilgrimages. Speaking to the city's growth, he posited Juazeiro as an exception to the importance of a favourable geographical location, and suggested that the city's growth could be explained by the 'spiritual geography of the north-east'. Father Cicero's 'capacity to love and understand his people' became the fundament for all he accomplished. Referring to Father Cícero as 'the first saint canonized by the people' he closed by noting the statue of Christ the Redeemer on Corcovado, 'blessing Brazil' and 'Father Cícero, on the *Serra do Horto* blessing the north-east'.[55]

Fortaleza's *Gazeta de Noticias* printed a special section on the statue's inauguration that noted the reference to Father Cicero as 'the people's priest'. It quoted a prominent Juazeiro citizen who characterized the religious pilgrim as being 'the north-east's most authentic representative', noted his 'civilizing influence' and his success in promoting economic development.[56] This last directly refuted characterizations of the north-east from outside the region which emphasized its backwardness. Since the memory of Father Cícero had become the key to Juazeiro's continued prosperity, it was clearly in the interest of political leaders, merchants, artisans, and shopkeepers to perpetuate his memory. Members of the Lion's Club's Junior Chamber (of commerce) and the Rotary Club also participated in the event, and the newspaper insert

carried photos of their presidents and directors. A special section included a large picture of the monument, and referred to Father Cicero as the founder of the 'Metropolis of the Cariri'. It predicted that the monument would increase commerce that would contribute greatly to the city's economy.

A close reading of the inaugural discourse indicates that politics, religious concerns, and regional grievances and resentment of Crato stood at the core of the decision to build the statue. The statue asserted Juazeiro's dominance in the local area, befitting its status as the largest city in the state other than the capital Fortaleza. It confirmed Juazeiro as the owner and steward of Father Cícero's life and legacy, and as evidenced by the term 'the north-east's Saint,' laid claim to the spiritual leadership of the region. The assembled dignitaries and television and print news coverage further confirmed the stature of Father Cícero, and, therefore, of 'his' city, Juazeiro. This claim reflected the long-standing rivalry with Crato, both secularly and religiously.

As well, the assertion of Father Cícero as both a caring and progressive figure whose wisdom and compassion explained his initial and continuing attraction for people of the north-east directly challenged national memory and its dominant narrative, which largely cast him as one of many charismatic figures whose appeal bespoke the fanaticism of the poor, uneducated north-eastern masses. While Mozart de Alencar had spoken of a 'spiritual geography', Brazil's normative cultural and economic geography drew distinctions between a progressive, modern south, and a backward, underdeveloped north. The 'invention of the north-east' reflected power relations within Brazil, and symbolic representations of the region in terms of drought, banditry, messianism and fights among family clans, created a stigmatizing regional description that also provided an explanation for the slow pace of progress in the north-east.[57]

Father Cícero was associated with other religious figures, one of whom, José Antônio Pereira, known as Father Ibiapina, had abandoned a law career to become a missionary, and founded charity houses and lay sisterhoods which served backlands poor in the north-east. He also had difficult relations with the church hierarchy, and was expelled from Ceará by Bishop Vicente Mendes Maciel (1828–1897).[58] While the memory of Ibiapina informed accounts of the life and legacy of Father Cícero, the memory of Father Cícero informed accounts of another 'priest of the people', the Capuchin Damião de Bozzano. Born in Italy in 1898, Frei Damião came to Pernambuco in 1931 and engaged in an ongoing mission to the people of the north-east for more than fifty years. Like

Father Cícero, he valued the people, not earthly riches, and therefore he encountered problems with the official church hierarchy. A *cordel* poem, 'Why the Crato Bishop Banned Friar *Damião',* tells his story.[59] Written by Abraão Batista, author of numerous accounts of Father Cícero, the verses focus on Crato Bishop Vicente Matos, who along with five other north-eastern bishops prohibited Father Damião from carrying out his missionary activities in the parishes in their districts. Batista pointed to the contrast between the bishop and Damião: the bishop represented wealth and authority, while Damião stood with the people.[60] Having praised Damião for his work among the poor, Batista then noted that the church had similarly erred before 'when they expelled the beloved Padre Cícero'.[61]

Another mystical religious figure, Antônio Vicente Mendes Maciel (1830–1897), known as Antônio Conselheiro, established the religious community of Canudos, in the backlands of Bahia. At the time of Canudos, rumours circulated that Father Cícero was allied with him, and was sending his own 'fanatics' to aid 'the Counsellor'. The siege and destruction of Canudos by the Brazilian army formed the basis for Euclides da Cunha's *Os Sertões, a* seminal classic for analysing the Brazilian nation and its people. The rich complexity of that book lost much of its nuance, and, as Robert M. Levine noted, 'entered the Brazilian consciousness as a fearful symbol of primitive impulses of racially mixed persons manipulated by a false messiah'.[62] The book reflected the conflict of 'civilization versus barbarism', a theme for many Latin American intellectuals of that era. This merged with and reflected Social Darwinism and allied geographical, climatological and racial explanations for the backwardness of tropical places and darker peoples.[63] In official memory, the dichotomies of coast versus interior and north versus south facilitated representations of the 'cult' of Father Cícero as based on the credulity and fanaticism of the north-eastern masses.

These conflicting portrayals indicate that Juazeiro and the life, work and legacy of Father Cícero are (re)remembered differently, mediated by social class, origin, and residence. As well, collective memory has a dynamic quality in that it is (re)created, refreshed, and communicated through commemorative acts. Among the largely illiterate masses of the traditional north-east, these practices include religious celebrations, pilgrimages, processions and holy images, and the songs and popular poetry performed by itinerant singers (*cantadores* and *repentistas*) at fairs and celebrations.[64]

Literate north-easterners are more likely to 'know' Father Cícero through print and mass media, or as observers rather than participants

in the commemorative acts of the masses. Print and mass media, along with formal education are the main channels through which the middle and upper classes in other regions of Brazil have knowledge of Father Cícero. Newspapers in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo have cast him as typifying backward people in a backward region. In 1969, Rio de Janeiro's *Jornal do Brasil* ran a story with the title 'Father Cícero. The End of a Myth', that repeated the erroneous link between Juazeiro and Canudos, and ascribed his appeal to ignorance and poverty.[65] A 1970 feature story in *Manchete*, a leading news and public interest magazine based in Rio de Janeiro, took a similar approach. Entitled 'Father Cícero, Holy Warrior', it included pictures of poor backlanders on pilgrimage, and asserted that 'Juazeiro's wealth was built on their misery'.[66] It ascribed his dominance throughout the north-east to the fact that 'he awakened the fanatic confidence of the [...] masses who saw poverty as a punishment from God', and contrasted the enduring poverty of the people of the north-east with the burgeoning progress of Juazeiro.[67]

In 1975, a São Paulo newspaper wrote of those who believed in Father Cicero as representing faith 'degenerated by fanaticism', for once the miracles had occurred, the promise payers appeared: 'crazy people, lepers, bandits, those with malaria, the blind, the lame', and Juazeiro became a great market, and an army of *beatos,* many of them thugs and outlaws, stood ready to defend Father Cícero'.[68] The article concluded by ascribing Father Cícero's ongoing importance to the misery, ignorance and primitive mysticism of a bygone era, an historical and social situation in which there flourished *coronel*s with their armed thugs, and bandits.[69] A 1984 television miniseries on Brazil's leading network, TV Globo, also portrayed Father Cícero in a fashion that the guardians of his memory regarded as highly disrespectful, sacrificing historical accuracy for sensationalism. Luitgarde Oliveira Barros referred to Father Cícero as 'the most famous personage in the north-east,' and asserted that the miniseries 'totally perverted historical reality'.[70]

I have emphasized the dynamic multi-faceted nature of collective memory, and indicated the ways in which the collective memory of Father Cícero at the local/regional level differs from national or 'official' memory, and I have suggested that these differences find explanation through a dynamic, creative function that occurs when people filter these messages though their own knowledge and experience. The subsequent memory of events emerges from that interaction, and, therefore, region and social class, among other factors, selectively filter and (re)shape memory. The Father Cicero monument has formative power not only for residents of Juazeiro, but for all those who consider

themselves his godchildren. It appears on the covers of numerous *cordel* poems, articles, and on book covers. News reports of the pilgrimages, both print and televised, also centre on the monument, and a process now is under way to have both it and the Juazeiro pilgrimages recognized as part of the nation's historic and artistic heritage.[71]

Nonetheless, representations of the continuing issues of poverty and backwardness of the north-eastern masses continue to portray them as ignorant people exploited by cynical elite. This intersects with the long-standing equation of progress with the south, and traditionalism with the north. That latter also partakes of a nostalgic sense of cultural authenticity – customs, music, and traditions associated with an older Brazil seem to live on in the north-east. The deeply religious nature of the north-easterners, therefore, bespeaks a humble credulity and an attempt to explain and if possible, mitigate the ills of their existence through devotions, petitions, and processions. Nonetheless, as indicated by the support for Father Cícero within Brazil's Catholic Church, the continuation and growth of the pilgrimages, and the ongoing production of scholarly and popular books exploring his life and legacy, Father Cícero remains a significant figure in contemporary Brazil, one who stands at the centre of the imagined divide between civilized Brazilians and retrograde masses.

## Notes

1. See Macedo, 1985, *Povoamento* and Webb, 1974, *The Changing Face*.
2. Della Cava, *Miracle*, 1970, pp. 18–19.
3. For a recounting of this story see Rios, 2001, *Padre Cícero*, pp. 33–34 and Arruda, 2002, *Padre Cícero,* p. 54.
4. Barros, 'O *Sesquicentenário*', p. 17.
5. Interpretations of the 1914 movement vary with regard to its underlying causes and the culpability and actions of the leading protagonists. A study sympathetic to Father Cícero, is Camurça, 1994, *Marretas*. For an opposing view, see Theóphilo, 1922, *A Sedição do Juazeiro*.
6. *Correio de Manhã*, Rio de Janeiro, 21 July 1934, p. 3.
7. *Correio de São Paulo*, 21 July 1934, *p.* 2. On the association between the memories of Father Cícero and Lampião see Greenfield, 2009, 'Lampião, Luiz and Padim Ciço'.
8. Greenfield, 2001, *The Realities of Images,* pp. 104–106.
9. See Curran, 2010, *Brazil's Folk-Popular Poetry* and Kunz, 2001, *A Voz do Verso*. This literary form receives additional discussion at other points in this chapter.
10. The award resulted from a campaign promoted by the television network *Verdes Mares,* in conjunction with Brazil's largest television network, *Rede Globo*. Centro de Memória Cearense, 26 Aug. 2011, http://centrodeestudos-damemoriacearense.blogspot.com, accessed 27 October 2014.

11. On liberation theology see Serbin, 2006, *Needs of the Heart*, and Comblin, 2004, 'People of God'.
12. In a 2012 interview with the *New York Times*, the bishop of the diocese of Crato referred to Father Cícero as being like an 'antivirus to [...] Evangelicals'. Neto, 2009, *Padre Cícero,* p. 522.
13. Braga, 2008, *Padre Cícero*, p. 343.
14. Nora, 1989, 'Between Memory and History'.
15. Carrier, 2005, *Holocaust Monuments,* p. 188.
16. Hutchins and Nomura, 2011, 'Collaborative Construction'; Blanes, 2011, 'Unstable Biographies'.
17. Teski and Climo, 1995, *The Labyrinth of Memory*, p. 3.
18. Bietti, 2012, 'Towards a cognitive pragmatics', p. 1.
19. Rowlands and Tilley, 2006, 'Monuments and memorials', p. 500.
20. Climo and Cattel, 2002, *Social Memory*, p. 4; Frazier, 2007, *Salt in the Sand*.
21. Graziano, 2006, *Cultures of Devotion* identifies many popular saints in Latin America, and defines them as 'deceased people [...] who are widely regarded as miraculous and receive the devotion of a substantial cult, but who are not canonized or officially recognized by the Catholic Church' (p. vii). He also suggests that an element in the appeal of these 'saints' is that they come 'without the mediation, restrictions, and costs' (p. 7) and' the belief that folk saints are more miraculous than canonized saints' (p. 29).
22. Assmann, 1995, 'Collective Memory', p. 127.
23. *Ibid*., p. 125. An art historian, Aby Warburg (Abraham M. Warburg, 1866–1929), published an Atlas, *Mnemosyne, A Picture Series Examining the Function of Preconditioned Antiquity-Related Expressive Values for the Presentation of Eventful Life in the Art of the European Renaissance*. See Johnson, *Memory, Metaphor*.
24. *Depoimentos sobre a vida de Padre Cícero dados ao radialista João Eudes, do Rádio Congresso de Juazeiro do Norte*, 22 March, 1979, Juazeiro do Norte (Fortaleza, *Museu da Imagem e do Som*, FK7000036). Slater, 1986, *Trail of Miracles*, captures multiple reminiscences in which pilgrims use the term *padrinho*. She also notes (p. 70): 'Even that handful of local storytellers who cannot claim any sort of contact with Father Cícero feel a special closeness to the priest whose presence continues to permeate his adopted city'.
25. http://3.bp.blogspot.com/_FRs28VYXBw8/R7Hsfq15UJI/AAAAAAAAAe0/4ikwsWAZo-8/s1600-h/blog50anos1+c%C3%B3pia.jpg, accessed 27 October 2014; this site is maintained by a leading Juazeiro historian Daniel Walker.
26. Oliveira, 1985, *Formação histórica*, p. 9.
27. Pessar, 2004, *From Fanatics to Folk*, p. 10.
28. Bercht, 1985, *Brazilian Ex Votos*.
29. Pessar, 2004, *From Fanatics to Folk*, p. 10.
30. Meyers, 1990, 'Brazilian popular music'. *Caatinga* is scrub vegetation typical of the *sertão* or backlands; *procissão* refers to the religious processions; *gado magro* refers to cattle than have become thin because of drought.
31. These practices were portrayed in a prize-winning 1962 Brazilian film, *O Pagador de Promessas* (*The Promise Payers*). Directed by Anselmo Duarte, and shown in several other countries, the film won a *Palme d'Or* in France, and an academy award in the United States as the best foreign film. It formed part of a cycle of commercial films about the north-east that appeared in the 1960s

and 1970s, referred to as the *Cinema Novo* ('New Cinema'). See Johnson and Stamm, 1995, *Brazilian Cinema*.
32. Kaplan, 2008, *Reading Ricoeur*, p. 11.
33. Gillespie, 2006, *Becoming Other.*
34. Hall, 1997, *Representation, Cultural Practices and Signifying Practices*.
34. Hall, *1997, Representation, Cultural Practices and Signifying* Practices, p. 2.
35. *Ibid.,* p. 3.
36. Barroso, 1989, *Romeiros*, p. 16.
37. In the words of a popular expression, '*Quem têm dinheiro vai a Roma, o resto para Juazeiro*,' – 'Those who have money go to Rome, the rest go to Juazeiro.'
38. Oliveira, 1985, *Formação*, p.113.
39. Rabello, 1987, *Os Artesãos*, pp. 70–72.
40. Engraving remains an important artistic tradition in Juazeiro and Ceará. See Sobreira, 1984, *Xilógrafos do Juazeiro*.
41. de Lima, 2000, *Narradores*, pp. 54–55; 62–63.
42. José Bernardo da Silva established the *Tipografia São Francisco*, known today as the *Lira Nordestina*. In the words of *cordel* poet and typographer, the printing firm gained fame throughout Brazil 'Thanks to the blessing it was given by the saint of Juazeiro.' Kunz, 2001, 'Cordel do mar', p. 64.
43. http://www.juazeiro.ce.gov.br/, accessed 27 October 2014.
44. Aarons, 2004, *Waiting for Rain,* p. 117.
45. Pessar, 2004, *From Fanatics to Folk*, p. 219.
46. Barbosa, 2007, *Joaseiro Celeste,* p. 59.
47. Slater, 1986, *Trail of Miracles*, p. 70.
48. Barbosa, 2007, *Joaseiro* Celeste, p. 116. The poet was Expedito Sebastião da Silva. For a discussion of his life and examples of his poetry, see Silva, 2000, *Expedito Sebastião da Silva*.
49. Carrier, 2005, *Holocaust Monuments,* p. 172.
50. Noted in Tilley et al., 2006, *Handbook of Material Culture,* p. 9.
51. Interview with Dr Mauro, 27 May 2009. Dr Mauro said that he never saw the *beato* again.
52. Interview with Dr Geraldo, 27 May 2009.
53. João Carlos Rodrigues de Menezes uses the nickname Joca Carirí, after the Carirí Valley in which Juazeiro is located.
54. Alencar, 1999, *Discurso,* p. 1.
55. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
56. *Gazeta de Notícias* (Juazeiro do Norte), 1 November 1969.
57. Albuquerque, 1999, *A invenção do Nordeste*.
58. Barros, 1997, 'Do Ceará, Três Santos do Nordeste'.
59. Batista, 1983, *Proibição do Bispo de Crato*.
60. 'O Bispo rico é autoridade; e o frade é pobre da multidão'.
61. The strong popular tradition linking these two dedicated clergy, also resonates in the song by Oliveira de Panelas and Otacílio Batista, *Encontro no Céu,Frei Damião com Padre Cícero* ('Encounter in Heaven, Friar Damiao with Padre Cicero'). Compact Disc, *No Coração do Povo, Frei Damião de Bozzano*.
62. Levine, 1988, 'Mud hut Jerusalem', p. 527. See also Levine's 1992 monograph, *Veil of Tears*.
63. See Peard, *Race* and Schwarcz, 1999, *The Spectacle,* p. 19.

64. *Cantadores* are singers who are skilled at improvisation and well versed in the *cordel* literature. They typically accompany themselves on the guitar. *Repentistas* refers to those who engage in sung poetic duels, or *desafios*, each attempting to top the other. See Crook, 1999, 'Northeastern Brazil', p. 194.
65. *Jornal do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro), 2 August 1970, Caderno B, p. 4.
66. *Manchete* (Rio de Janeiro), 26 December 1970, pp. 108–109: 'Padre Cícero. O Santo Guerreiro' and 6 December 1975, pp. 114–119: 'Padre Cícero. A Indústria da Fé'.
67. *Jornal do Brasil* (Rio de Janeiro), 2 August 1969, Caderno B, p. 4: 'Padre Cícero. Fim do um Mito'.
68. *Ibid*.; *Diario de São Paulo,* 21 December 1975, Review by Teresa Linhares. Rio de Janeiro, Fundação Nactional de Arte (FUNART), 1060.
69. *Ibid*.
70. Barros, 1984, *O Padre Cícero*.
71. http://www.estadao.com.br/, accessed 28 October 2014. The *Instituto do Patrimônio Histórico e Artístico Nacional* (IPHAN), has begun the process.

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# 10

# 'Reconciliation across the Graves'? The German War Cemetery at Ysselsteyn as a Place of Remembrance between Local and (Inter)national Areas of Conflict 1945–2000

*Christine Gundermann*

On 10 May 1940 German troops crossed the Dutch border. Four days later – as Willem Frijhoff extensively recounts in Chapter 2 of this volume – the centre of Rotterdam was almost completely destroyed by a massive German bombardment. The Netherlands surrendered and faced five years of occupation with a dreadful result: more than 250,000 Dutch died or were murdered, over 102,000 of them Jews; the accrued substantive damage was about 26 billion gulden.[1] The Second World War became a *historisches Bezugsereignis* as M. Rainer Lepsius has put it, a historical event of reference, not only for both nations and their self understanding, but also for their relationship.[2] The most important factor in Dutch–German coping with the past has been a clear distinction between German perpetrators and Dutch victims. The Dutch demanded, mostly unsuccessfully, recognition of what the Germans did during the occupation, as can be seen in the negotiations for the *Ausgleichsvertrag*, the peace treaty between the Federal Republic of Germany and the Netherlands that was finally ratified in 1963, the external and public debates about a pardon for arrested German war criminals that persisted until the 1980s, cultural clashes at Dutch–German football matches, or the results of the so called Clingendael survey in 1993, that showed a deep mistrust of Germans among Dutch youth.[3]

Beyond a prospering Dutch–German relationship in economics and international politics, the Second World War remained a problem for both nations and their inhabitants that influenced most civil Dutch–German encounters. To focus Dutch–German relations beyond

historical stereotypes, it is helpful to look at those civil encounters and ask for the meaning of the Second World War and practised memory in such contacts. In this chapter I explore a *lieu de mémoire*, a place of remembrance, as a microcosm of the Dutch–German relationship as well as its contested memories: the German war cemetery at Ysselsteyn in the community of Venray (province of Limburg).

Although Pierre Nora understood his concept of *lieux de mémoire* mainly as a site of national memory culture, places of remembrance are never completely absorbed by one nation.[4] On the contrary, the focus on the nation leads to a state- and elite-centred homogenization of multiple memory cultures.[5] The historical event itself is not the object of analysis, rather the interpretations of the event. Those interpretations become manifest in various forms of historiography as well as through memorials and, most importantly, in rituals referring to that event. The *performed* memories are the objects of analysis. *Lieux de mémoire* are referred to by those, who feel these memories as pertaining to them.

The war cemetery at Ysselsteyn serves as a transition point of Dutch as well as German memory of the Second World War, because here was inaugurated in 1946 the only German military cemetery in the Netherlands. The cemetery at Ysselsteyn became one of the most important German *lieux de memoire* of the Second World War on Dutch soil. Therefore, the community of Venray had to cope not only with the events of the *bezetting*, the Occupation: it had to face hosting a German war cemetery, a place of remembrance and honouring German soldiers killed during that very same occupation. Furthermore, the *Volksbund für Kriegsgräberfürsorge* (VDK), the German War Graves Commission, put on a youth programme associated with the cemetery, bringing German volunteers to the war graves and into contact with the local population.

The war narratives at that place of remembrance have been primarily shaped by local events of the war. These memories predominantly did not reflect the national memory culture of the 'small and innocent but brave country' that suffered under the German occupation but stood its ground.[6] The focus on local history has led to practised memories that can be described as transnational and that differ considerably from Dutch national memory culture.[7] The Dutch, the Germans and people from other countries mostly remembered the war here as a universal suffering, making no clear distinction between perpetrator and victim. The 'sacrifice', all nations had to make during the war became the leading narrative. The manifold secular and religious attempts at 'conciliation' clearly show that. This harmonious remembrance and conciliation, performed over a long period by both Dutch and German people, was

based on a highly fragmented history of the Second World War. The distinct handling of the national memorial days on the other hand and the negotiation of the conditions of commissioning the cemetery into the hands of the VDK give a hint of the contested memories beyond the publicly asserted narratives of 'brotherhood' and 'sacrifice'. The history of the memories of Ysselsteyn are only to a small extent the expression of an increasing Europeanization of the remembrance of the Second World War, but can better be understood in terms of 'glocalization', as Roland Robertson has put it, or of 'multidirectional memory', a concept developed by Michael Rothberg.[8] Both concepts underline that processes of globalization or universalization do not simply have a homogenizing effect, but always have a certain local and fragmented design and therefore arise from a use for a special situation – in this case, a particular memory helps to build up a communication and contact structure with the former enemy.

In the following section, I will present a brief history of the memory landscape in which Ysselsteyn is embedded. In the second section I will develop my arguments by three examples from the decades up to 2001, focusing on the protagonists acting at those places, their rituals of commemoration and their transnational contacts.

## The memory landscape

The war cemetery at Ysselsteyn is only one part of a memory landscape. Around the community of Venray there are, for German as well as for Dutch people, many places involved in commemorating the dead. The most important of these places are the former battlefield between Venray and Overloon, where the Vergeten Slag ('Forgotten Battle'), a major battle in Operation Market Garden, took place in 1944, the memorial and the Vredeskerk ('Church of Peace') in Venray.[9] All those places form a pattern of commemorating the dead. Each of them tries to present the story of the Second World War, which turns out to be a fragmented one.

Venray was one of the communities that were liberated in October 1944. Although over 15,000 people had to be evacuated in the last weeks of the battle, the region did not have to suffer the hunger winter of 1944/45 that afflicted the rest of the northern Netherlands.[10] Today, the historical event the place of remembrance refers to is almost invisible. Properties destroyed during the war have been repaired and mostly rebuilt, and the battlefield of fall and winter 1944 has been turned into farmland once more. Only a small piece of the actual place of Operation

Market Garden, where allied troops fought against the Germans, was turned into a museum park at Overloon, exhibiting old tanks, cannons, airplanes and other military machinery as well as a few trenches. Some of the weapons were left behind; others were donated to the *Nationaal Oorlogs- en Verzetsmuseum* ('National Museum of War and Resistance') in Overloon. Next to those militaria the museum informs visitors about the Dutch resistance, the years of occupation and, since the 1980s, about the Dutch Holocaust. Since militaria are the major component of the exhibition, the museum is perceived in the Netherlands and throughout Europe as a war museum that creates an atmosphere of admiration for the 'hero in the battlefield' by telling a story of war focused on military strategies of armies, the soldiers and their equipment.[11]

The German war cemetery in Ysselsteyn was set up in 1946. The property, mostly moorland, was chosen primarily for its closeness to the border, which simplified a planned repatriation of the bodies to Germany and served the purpose of keeping German visitors close to the border. The cemetery was originally administered by the Dutch ministry of defence and so the Dutch government was responsible for its construction. In 1952, the main work was finished and the war cemetery opened for visitors. By then, more than 25,000 German soldiers had been interred there. In the years to come the number of graves rose to 31,500, including 300 of Dutch people who had collaborated with the *Wehrmacht*, SS or related organizations.[12] As there were no mass graves, and every individual body had its grave and cross, the effect is that of an overwhelming mass – and this is the fragmented story the cemetery tells. An incomprehensible number of graves shocks the visitor and confronts him or her not with war itself, but with crosses as symbols of heroic sacrifice, victimhood and mourning for the dead. The war, its origins and course, and the role the dead soldiers played are invisible.[13] The fragmented story of the war in that case begins with a '*Stunde 0*', when the war ended (see Figure 10.1).

The administrator in charge was Dutch – Captain Louis Timmermans. He co-operated with the VDK, but the cemetery itself remained Dutch property until 1976. The German war cemetery is one of many in this area. Next to Venray there is a cemetery for the soldiers of the British Commonwealth and in nearby Margraten there is the Netherlands American Cemetery.

The monument of the war in Venray is located between the town hall and the Church of St Peter in Chains. It is important because it gives us a hint of how the war was commemorated in the community of Venray. The memorial, made of French sandstone, was raised in 1949. It is about


*Figure 10.1* German war cemetery Ysselsteyn. © Christine Gundermann 2014

four metres high and three metres wide. In the centre it shows Christ on the cross, a symbol of the ultimate sacrifice. Under the cross are two dying soldiers, also making the greatest sacrifice. Figures of women to the left and a fleeing old man to the right evoke for whom the sacrifice was made as well as the compulsory evacuation during Operation Market Garden in 1944. (See Figure 10.2.)

Final and important parts of this landscape of memory are the *Vredeskerk* in Venray and the *Vredesmonument* ('Monument of Peace') in front of it. In the late 1950s, the Catholic priest H.P.M. Litjens promoted the idea of building a church as a visible sign of a wish for conciliation and 'co-operation with the former enemy', raised with the help of 'all those who fought so determinedly for this place', including the Germans, represented by the Catholic archbishop of Cologne. The church was also supposed to be a monument for the Dutch churches that were destroyed during Operation Market Garden.[14]

The war narratives shown in these memory places are unique in the Netherlands. They did not represent the common national remembrance culture of the 1950s to 1970s that emphasized the brutal regime of the Germans, the outstanding role of the Dutch resistance and

*Figure 10.2* War monument in Venray, designed by Karel Lücker and raised in 1949. © Christine Gundermann 2014

the suffering of the people during the occupation. Thus, the battle of Operation Market Garden must have been such a far-reaching experience that it transcended the years of the *bezetting*. The main narrative seems to be the sacrifice by the (Dutch) soldiers who died for their country. A military interpretation of the events is thus a guiding memory of the Second World War in this area.

The following three examples will illustrate how Dutch and German people dealt with those sometimes contested and sometimes harmonious memories.

## Three examples

### 1 The German war cemetery: Between international politics and local remembrance

The VDK was established in 1919 as a registered association. Ever since, it has administered war graves, constructed war cemeteries in Germany and all over the world, served as partner of attendance for the bereaved,

and organized the memorial day it established itself, the *Volkstrauertag* ('People's Mourning Day'). The VDK propagates a remembrance culture closely related to experiences of the First World War, thus emphasizing the sacrifice of soldiers. Since the VDK was responsible for the German war graves in Germany and most of the world, it sought to gain control and responsibility over the cemetery at Ysselsteyn as well. Taking care of German graves was seen as a German duty and also as a way of demonstrating a kind of civility and moral responsibility for the dead.[15] Therefore, the VDK and the German government tried to gain competencies over the cemetery. The Dutch ministry of Foreign Affairs and the German Federal Foreign Office bargained for more than thirty years, until 1976, about competencies over the cemetery, and finally about the conditions that would apply to the commissioning of the cemetery into the hands of the VDK. These bargains were heavily influenced by the actual foreign policy of both countries and their national image of coping with the war, but the resultant frictions were seldom visible in Ysselsteyn itself. The length of negotiation for the commissioning is a subtle, but reliable indicator of the tensions and difficulties. Another one is the controversy over one of the most important German contacts of the VDK in the Netherlands, Josef Oechsle. He worked as an intermediary between the VDK, the *Oorlogsgravenstichting* ('War Graves Foundation') and the Dutch Red Cross from 1949 onwards. Although he was honoured for his work by the Dutch Red Cross in the 1950s, the Dutch Ministry of War decided in 1960 to treat him as a *persona non grata*, because research for a promotion by the German government revealed that Oechsle had been a member of the *NSDAP-Auslandsorganisation*. How it became known to the Dutch is not clear, but Oechsle seemed suddenly *fout* ('on the wrong side'), a collaborator in the eyes of the government. Despite of his good work, it was resolved that he should be immediately dismissed. In the endgame of the bargaining over the so called *Ausgleichsvertrag*, and on the eve of Eichmann's trial in Israel, the German foreign ministry as well as the VDK decided to abandon Oechsle.

Ever since the opening of the cemetery the Dutch government had been concerned that it would turn into a commemoration place for Nazis and neo-Nazis once control had been given away. Over more than fifty years such incidents have indeed occurred, at least every three to five years, as the international neo-Nazi movement tried to hold a *Heldengedenktag* ('Heroes' Remembrance Day', the name used for the *Volkstrauertag* in National Socialist Germany) at Ysselsteyn. The Dutch administrator Captain Timmermans always found ways to avert or disturb these performances. From the 1950s to 1970s predominantly

Dutch and Belgian ex-Nazis and neo-Nazis, such as those organized in *HINAG* (*Hulp aan invalide oud-oostfrontstrijders, nabestaanden en politieke gevangenen en anderen* – 'Help for disabled ex-eastern front soldiers, relatives and political prisoners and others'), used the cemetery for commemorations. German Nazis never seem to have tried to take the cemetery as a specific German place of remembrance. They came either as unnoticed individuals or as part of German visitor groups with other mourners in journeys organized by the VDK. Although they were carefully watched, these incidents were only minimally discussed in public. The community of Venray never used them to argue against the war cemetery or the presence of German visitors. On the contrary, in 1953 the *Venray vooruit* association was established to take care of provision and accommodation for the German visitors of the war cemetery. The people of Venray came to an arrangement with the German war cemetery and the more than 50,000 annual German visitors in a period when many other contacts between Germans and Dutch people were heavily tainted by the Second World War.[16]

The VDK attempts to involve the entire German *Volk* within Germany and especially abroad in the commemorations of the so called *Kriegstoten*, the 'dead of the war'. It is the only organization of its kind that has a youth programme. Within the rituals of the *Volkstrauertag*, as well as in publications of the VDK, the fragmented narratives focus on the soldier who sacrificed himself for his country and the *Volksgemeinschaft* ('national community'). 'Destiny' or 'the war' are marked as the origin of the terrible losses. A simple explanation was provided for not talking about personal guilt and responsibility. All hostilities as well as all discussions about perpetrator and victim, should end with death: '*Im Tod sind alle gleich*' – 'In death all are equal'. This fragmented story of the war fitted extremely well into Venray's landscape of memory: the soldiers' sacrifice was a centre of commemoration on both sides.

The reason for bringing young volunteers to the cemetery was connected with a very important issue for the VDK: by working on German war cemeteries the volunteers were supposed to learn to abjure further war, performing 'Reconciliation across the Graves' (by then the slogan of the youth programme of the VDK) and overcoming hatred: the hatred of other nations against Germany. This interpretation – the overcoming of the negative feelings of the people in the countries formerly attacked by Germany – was based on a very common German perception of Dutch behaviour from the 1950s onward. It is only understandable, if we assume from the German side an a-historical viewpoint of the relationship that did not require an examination of their own guilt or responsibility for the war and its terrible outcomes. Most Germans

saw themselves as victims of the war and regarded disputes about the war as a duty reserved to national governments. As citizens, we may assume, they wanted to engage with the Dutch and be perceived by them as equals.[17] As of 2005, more than 5,400 youngsters had participated in the work camps of the VDK at the graveyard.[18] Captain Timmermans served as a role model for the supposed Dutch hatred as well as for its overcoming. Timmermans changed his opinion of the enemy after a German soldier took care of him in an allied military hospital. In order to achieve such a change of mind in general, the volunteers were supposed to meet the inhabitants of the Venray community regularly and to present the Germans as a cultural nation, serving their dead.

The first German group of volunteers in 1963 came from the small Catholic Bavarian village of Bonbruck. Their chaperon cooperated with the Catholic priest in Ysselsteyn to bring Dutch and German teenagers together. Through the work of the German and Dutch priests a friendly and rich exchange developed, resulting in Bonbruck and Ysselsteyn becoming twin towns. The Bonbruck volunteers not only held a commemoration at the German war cemetery but also at the Venray monument and later the Church of Peace. They were regularly officially invited by the mayors of Venray. This kind of transnational remembrance was possible because the German youths did not participate in the Dutch remembrance days. Their honouring did not interfere with the national and local remembrance culture itself but merely added a transnational note. Through the German commemorations in Venray, the VDK-narratives partially permeated the Venray culture of remembrance; it was acknowledged that the Germans 'wanted to give something back' although they worked as Germans on a German cemetery. It happened only very seldom that a journalist questioned the kind of reconciliation that could be achieved with this work.[19] Another fixed component of the work camps of the VDK was a visit at the *Nationaal Oorlogs- en Verzetsmuseum* in Overloon. The only information the German volunteers received about the historical events in the Netherlands and Venray was thus the military history at Overloon. Again, here can be seen an extraordinary complementarity between the remembrance cultures of Venray and the VDK.

## 2 The Church of Peace, its purpose and use

The *Vredeskerk*, as mentioned earlier, was built in the 1960s. Pastor Litjens and the members of the *Actiecomité Vredeskerk* intended to erect

the church as a sign of an 'ehrlichen Willen zur Zusammenarbeit mit den früheren Gegnern' – as an explicit sign of reconciliation.[20] The members of the committee successfully solicited donations not only from local people but also from the Catholic archbishops of Cologne, New York and Montreal and the bishop of Roermond. The Church of Peace was thus not an expression of a wish for reconciliation by all the people from Venray but most of all by the Catholic inhabitants of the community. They remembered the war explicitly as a loss of lives on all sides, especially in the last battle in the winter of 1944, as can be seen in the local advertising for donations and the news coverage of the project.[21] The foundation stone ceremony took place on 3 May 1964, the Sunday before de *Nationale Dodenherdenking* ('National Remembrance of the Dead'). Since most of the money had come from Germany, the ceremony was led by the auxiliary bishop of Cologne, Wilhelm Cleven. He spoke about the gratitude of the German *Volk* to participate in this project and he underlined the wish of the Germans for a 'ehrliche Versöhnung' with the former enemy.[22] Afterwards he held a commemoration on the German cemetery in Ysselsteyn and on the British war cemetery near Venray. Although the mayor of Venray was not present, the *Loco-burgemeester* ('substitute mayor') and several aldermen were present.

One year later, the church was consecrated. The committee had planned the ceremony for 5 May 1965, *Bevrijdingsdag* ('Liberation Day'). After inhabitants of Venray protested against using the twentieth anniversary of Liberation for this event however, the consecration was shifted to 30 May. Cleven was again the guest of honour as well as the governor of the province of Limburg, Charles van Rooy. Cleven underlined the positive idea of the church as a part of a 'Brücke zwischen den verschiedenen Nationen und Völkern' – a bridge between the various nations and peoples. The war appeared in his speech as a 'reign of evil' and Cleven did not distinguish between perpetrator and victim, or aggressor and those who were subjugated. He remembered the soldiers as 'Söhne von Völkern, die sich niemals nach dem Willen Gottes in unseligem Streit zerfleischen und vernichten sollten' – 'Sons of peoples who, according to the will of God, should never have tormented and destroyed themselves in a disastrous fight.'[23]

During the consecration, members of the 'Lamp of Brotherhood', an Italian association founded in 1950, placed such a lamp in remembrance of *all* dead soldiers within the church. In the Church of Peace, Christian and military memory fragments of the Second World War melted into a narrative commemorating all dead soldiers, no matter on

which side they had fought or for what purpose. The German soldiers were not treated any differently to the Allied, as can be seen in the memorial services after the foundation stone ceremony or the speeches given at the consecration of the church. Furthermore, the involvement from other nations shows a transnational aspect of this kind of memory that was based on the engagement of civil society, veterans and their dependents. This harmonious and homogenized interpretation of the past is very unusual for the national Dutch and German cultures of remembrance.

This tendency was emphasized further in the following years, when pastor Litjens and Lambert Geerits, the priest finally responsible for the building of the church, wrote to various major cities all over Europe in order to collect money for a proper monument. This *Vredesmonument*, to be built in front of the church, was to remind the people of the futile destruction of Venray and other cities. Litjens and his followers did not distinguish between German and other European cities. They clearly wanted to add a 'civilian' memory to a place of remembrance that was dominated by the military events of the battle of Operation Market Garden. The local council did not contribute any money to the monument because its members considered it as a partial initiative that would not represent the whole population. But neither did they officially interfere with the project.[24] As a result, in 1971 a monument was erected in front of the Church of Peace in the form of several steles, engraved with the names of all cities that had given money for it: Aachen, Bonn, Friedrichshafen, Hannover, Kiel, Koblenz, Krefeld, Mannheim, Osnabrück, Paderborn, Rheydt and Stuttgart as well as Bristol and Liverpool. Obviously, German cities, above all, appreciated the idea of this kind of homogenized memory in which *all* cities appear as equal victims of war.

The early and consistently emphasized interpretation of the war as a great suffering on all sides, combined with an equalization of the military and civilian losses during the war, is exceptional. Even more important is the integration of Germany and the German cities. The difference between perpetrator and victim, the ones responsible for the invasion, the suffering and the destruction were not marked; all were juxtaposed as victims of the war. The local history of Venray offers a unique way of coping with the past, almost anticipating or proposing a European narrative of the war. Moreover, the installation of the 'lamp of brotherhood' clearly marks a transfer of memory culture, as those lamps were also placed at the war cemeteries in El Alamein and Monte Cassino. Thus, Venray as a place of remembrance shows entangled

national, local, trans-local and transnational interpretations of the war. However, the discussion about the date of consecration and the rather detached policy of the municipal administration show that this memory culture was not unambiguously supported by all the inhabitants of Venray or the local authorities. The members of the *Actiecomité Vredeskerk* ('Church of Peace Action Committee') and later the *Stichting Vredeskerk Nederland* ('Dutch Peace Church Foundation') had clearly formed their remembrance culture alongside a national one. This was possible only because it did not interfere with the national remembrance culture in the form of the *Dodenherdenking* and *Bevrijding*.

The archival data do not show whether or how the *Vredesmonument* or the Church of Peace was used as commemoration place in the following years. But other initiatives used the Church of Peace for their purposes. From the late 1960s on the peace movement and more precisely the *Interkerkelijk Vredesberaad* ('Interdenominational Peace Council') arranged once per year a so called *Vredesweek* ('Week of Peace') in the building, and in the 1980s the organization *Vredesplatform Venray* ('Venray Peace Platform') gathered their followers in the church to demonstrate against nuclear weapons and the use of a nearby military airbase. The *Vredesplatform* even arranged an unofficial *Dodenherdenking* on 4 May 1984 at the nearby German war cemetery in Ysselsteyn.[25] With this dislocation of the highest Dutch remembrance day to the German place of remembrance they wanted to set a highly symbolic sign for a peace movement overcoming national borders. They used the established transnational memory fragments of the Second World War for a new purpose – a phenomenon described by Michael Rothberg as 'multidirectional memory'.[26] This kind of memory transfer was very rare however.

## 3 Shared commemoration and the limits of Dutch–German reconciliation

The last case study focuses on the commemoration rituals at the *Volkstrauertag* and *Dodenherdenking* from the 1970s onwards, in order to show how Dutch and German representatives developed a ritualized shared memory of the Second World War in and around Venray.

During their time in Ysselsteyn in the summer months the young volunteers of the VDK arranged small memorial services at the memorial next to the church of St Peter in Chains in Venray. From the 1970s on they also performed these ceremonies in the nearby Tienray and Meerlo-Wanssum, because of the good connections to the Dutch youth in those places. Also, they visited the British war cemetery in Venray. As

almost always, this behaviour of the German volunteers was received extremely positively in the local press.[27] Since 1975 the VDK has conducted the summer camps under the new slogan 'Freundschaft für den Frieden' ('Friendship for Peace'). This indicates a slight change compared to the former 'reconciliation across the graves' that is still used until today, but the new slogan indicates a kind of normalization in the relationship with foreign nations and a stronger focus on the present.

The *Volkstrauertag* was organized by the VDK and the German consulates in the Netherlands. Since the opening of the cemetery the local authorities of Venray and Ysselsteyn had been partially present at official holidays, special anniversaries or for example the dedication of a new carillon at the graveyard. Since 1976 the mayors of Venray had attended the cemetery during the ceremony of the *Volkstrauertag*, but did not make speeches or lay a funeral wreath. When, in 1991, Jos Waals became the new mayor of Venray, he decided to change the *status quo* of memory, to make a sign of agreement with German remembrance culture and to honour the work of the VDK more officially.[28] In 1992, he was the first mayor to give a speech at the German cemetery during *Volkstrauertag*. Afterwards, this practice became the tradition. He took this engagement further by discussing, from 1997 on, a possible participation of Germans in the *Dodenherdenking* with the local *Oranjecomité Venray* ('Venray Orange Committee') and the *Bond van Wapenbroeders* ('Association of Brothers in Arms'). The focus of these discussions was on the *Dodenherdenking*, because the *Bevrijding* was seldom celebrated in Venray after the area was liberated in October 1944. The *Bond van Wapenbroeders* was strongly opposed to a shared commemoration.[29] According to the *Bond* the *Dodenherdenking* was a national holiday and should therefore only be solemnized by Dutch people. At the time this view on German participation in the national *Dodenherdenking* was widespread – the discussion had been going on since 1994. In 1995, the German foreign minister, Klaus Kinkel, and the Dutch prime minister, Wim Kok, had agreed that the time was not ripe for such a step.[30] Most of Venray's inhabitants engaged in the *Dodenherdenking* seemed to feel the same towards their German guests. It is interesting to note that, despite the ongoing discussions about the *Dodenherdenking*, the *Bond van Wapenbroeders* already participated regularly in the *Volkstrauertag* at Ysselsteyn at that time.

In 1998, Jos Waals was able to negotiate a compromise. He had invited the German ambassador and a high representative from the VDK and wanted to allow them to lay a funeral wreath. However, the *Bond*, and also *Expogé* (*Nederlandse Vereniging van Ex-Politieke Gevangenen*

*uit de Bezettingstijd,* 'Dutch Association for Ex-Political Prisoners of the Occupation'), had objected to this idea, so although the German guests were finally allowed to be present, they did not lay a wreath or make a speech of any kind. Local press reported positively on this decision, interpreting it as a good and meaningful step within a unified Europe. The local newspaper, *Peel en Maas*, also mentioned, in connection with the discussion around the *Dodenherdenking*, that Venray was not the first community to take such a step. Dutch and German borderers had founded the *Vredescentrum Nijmegen* (Nijmegen Peace Centre) and this association had laid funeral wreaths at the *Dodenherdenking*.[31] So Venray was not breaking a taboo in its area. After the *Dodenherdenking*, the mayor announced that from now on German delegates would be participating in the commemoration day. That would only be fair, according to Jos Waals, since he himself was actively present at the *Volkstrauertag* and he considered it a way to hold the memory alive.[32] Although many participants in the public discussions around the *Dodenherdenking* in Venray were against a demonstration of equality with the Germans, they avoided a clear statement of the national historical perpetrator–victim relation that militated against a shared commemoration. Over the following years, Waals managed to initiate a step-by-step inclusion of the Germans: in 1999 the German ambassador was invited and allowed to lay a funeral wreath, and in 2000 he made, for the first time, a short speech in Venray.[33] Although the German ambassador never failed to mention National Socialist Germany's responsibility for the war, sixty years on a 'commemoration of all victims' seems to be a settled transnational narrative in and around Venray.

These changes in memorial culture in Limburg were not unique. In 1980 Rotterdam and its twin town Cologne had held a shared commemoration for the first time to remember the destruction of Rotterdam on 14 May, and in the Euregio, a cross-border region between the Netherlands and Germany, the Dutch community of Denekamp invited the mayor of German Nordhorn for the *Dodenherdenking* for the first time in 1996.[34] However, the systematic mutual attendance of the commemoration rituals in Venray, starting with a participation of Dutch people on the *Volkstrauertag*, is unique in a national context. This is not only due to the fact that most German communities did not celebrate 8 May, since neither the government nor the communities had developed a ritual for this day. It also shows a specific harmonized and homogenized memory culture that developed in and around Venray, based on fragmented memories of the war that allowed a mutual ignoring of the details of the war and focused on the suffering of all sides.

## Conclusion

Analysing Venray as a place of remembrance from the viewpoint of transnational and entangled history reveals memories of the Second World War beyond the 'grand national narratives' of Germany and the Netherlands.[35] For both nations, classical theories of coping with the past as a 'Internalisierung von Täterschaft' ('internalization of perpetratorship'), as M. R. Lepsius has put it, or, in a more detailed metaphor, as a three-step history of silence, accusation and the beginning of a *Aufarbeitung* and finally historicizing on the German and on the Dutch side, cannot be found in this *lieu de mémoire*.[36] On the contrary, there is a diversity of memories of the war that can be explained by two major factors.

First, there is the history of the place during the Second World War itself. Venray did not have to suffer bombing and destruction as Rotterdam did, nor annihilation of Jews like Enschede, since there was no Jewish community in Venray, nor the hunger winter: instead it experienced an all-defining battle in late autumn 1944.[37] The historical events laid a focus on these last weeks of the war that minimized the German occupation in the reception of the war. The destructions during the *Vergeten Slag* that the allied forces caused were so dramatic for some people, that today one can read in the introduction to the catalogue of the City Archive in Venray the words of a contemporary witness: 'they had caused us more damage and burdens than the Teutons ('de Germanen') during the entire period of the occupation'.[38] Most people of Venray opposed the German occupation and there is no proof or reason to assume a higher rate of collaboration or accommodation than in other parts of the Netherlands. It is true, however, that after the war Germany was not considered to be *the* enemy on account of being a former perpetrator as it happened in other parts of the Netherlands.[39]

Secondly, there has to be considered a factor of *civilness*.[40] Members of the civil society, associations and religious communities have shaped other kinds of narratives than those offered by their nations. These narratives are based on fragmented memories that tend to describe war as a shared destiny and to avoid any causal nexus. Both the German and the Dutch memories have been centred on victims. But while the German commemoration concentrated on the soldiers and their sacrifice, and slowly turned to 'the sacrifice and all victims of the war', the Dutch memories offer a slight change from commemorating the sacrifice of the 'Dutch victims' and 'allied victims' to 'all victims of the war'. The acceptance of the death of the soldiers as a sacrifice, as a category worth

commemorating, unifies the German and the Dutch narratives in this special area.

While the national narratives of Germany and the Netherlands seemed to be those of perpetrator and victim, depending on guilt and salvation, the trans-local memories that became visible in Dutch–German encounters offer a unique and compatible narrative of one history of victims of the war; the local Dutch narrative was therefore melting the limits of historical responsibility on the German side and allowed a shared commemoration. The suffering from the war was experienced foremost as mourning for the dead and as a responsibility to remember their sacrifice.

The emphasis on the sacrifice rather excluded the victims who did not give up their lives by choice. The *Shoah*, since the 1980s the crucial element of the remembrance cultures in both countries, is therefore not included in the commemoration or the memories of the Second World War – again the regional historical events itself can explain this blind spot.

The Dutch and German citizens involved in the manifold commemorations experienced their action as a meaningful part of Dutch–German reconciliation. Reconciliation was thus mostly understood as forgiveness from both sides that did not require a special German acceptance of guilt or responsibility. Reconciliation happened in Venray 'between former enemies'. The Venray memories can therefore be characterized as de-nationalized, breaking national narratives through civil and local influences. The question arises whether these factors have a global signature as well. Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider's work on Holocaust memory confirms Michael Rothberg's suggestion that we should not only consider a globalization of the Shoah, transforming the memories into useable frames for actual purposes, but also the possibility of the equal transformations of war memories.[41] A shared history of suffering would then be a transnational approach to cope with the war in a Europe with fewer and fewer boundaries. A certain Europeanization of war memories, on the other hand, may not be easily asserted. Although many memory studies emphasize such an effect since 1995, the speeches for various memorial days show that Europe is one, but not the most important, point in interpreting the need for reconciliation or understanding the war as a transnational phenomenon.[42]

## Notes

1. Blom, 1992, 'Die Niederlande'; Moore, 1997, *Victims and Survivors*.
2. Lepsius, 1993, *Demokratie in Deutschland*, p. 229.

3. Wielenga, 2001, *Vom Feind zum Partner,* pp. 229, 232, 261; Piersma, 2005, *De drie van Breda*; Wijkmans, 2007, *'Wollt Ihr den totalen Fußball?'*; Jansen, 1993, *Bekannt und unbeliebt*.
4. Nora, 1990, *Zwischen Geschichte und Gedächtnis*.
5. Hahn et al., 2009, *Deutsch–polnische Erinnerungsorte*.
6. Blom, 2000, 'Leiden als Warnung', p. 324; Wielenga, 2001, 'Erinnerungskulturen'.
7. For an introduction see Tops, 2004, 'Niederlande Lebendige Vergangenheit'.
8. Robertson, 1998, 'Glokalisierung'; Rothberg, 2009, *Multidirectional Memory*.
9. The most important battle in this fight for liberation took place in nearby Arnhem in September 1944. See Cammaert et al., 1994, *Limburgse Monumenten*, p. 118; Stichting Herdenking Slag om Overloon (ed.), 2004, *Overloon*.
10. See also Derix et al., 1996, *Pioniers,* p. 45.
11. See Nationaal Oorlogs- en Verzetsmuseum Overloon, 1985, *Nationaal oorlogs- en verzetsmuseum*.
12. In 1952 there were 25,087 graves; in 1976 the VDK gave the number as 31,454 graves. Today (October 2014), on its homepage the VDK reports 31,598 commemorated dead at the cemetery. See 'Deutscher Soldatenfriedhof in Holland', in: *Frankfurter Rundschau* from 20 Augustn 1952; Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (PA AA) B 85/Bd. 1419: Rede General Oppens zum Volkstrauertag auf Ysselsteyn 1976; 'Ysselsteyn, Deutsche Kriegsgräberstätten von Ägypten bis Usbekistan', in *Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge* e.V., http://www.volksbund.de/kgs/stadt.asp?stadt=1087, accessed 28 October 2014.
13. This is a common interpretation for the VDK, as Manfred Wittig has pointed out: Wittig, 1990, 'Der Tod'.
14. Gemeentearchief Venray (GAV): Parochie Christus Koning/ Vredeskerk Doos 13, Album 1.
15. E.g.: Archiv des Volksbundes Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge (AVDK) A 10 25. Denkschrift from 9 February 1950 and also: Kriegsgräberfürsorge. Eine Ehrenpflicht des deutschen Volkes, Kassel 1955.
16. In the 1950s German visitors came into conflict with the local Dutch during remembrance days. In 1955 German and Dutch newspapers waged a so called *Tulpenkrieg* over how the Germans should behave during the *Dodenherdenking* in the Netherlands and whether they should visit the Netherlands during these remembrance days at all. See Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (PA AA) B 24/180, Microfiche 3; Wielenga, 2000, *Vom Feind zum Partner*, p. 297.
17. Gundermann, 2014, *Die versöhnten Bürger*.
18. Statistics from the VDK, Referat Workcamps Kassel from 26 January 2005. In comparison, in Belgium, some 6,300 German youngsters worked in the summer camps of the VDK at German war cemeteries until that year, in Austria 5,900 and in France about 116,000.
19. As happened in 1967: 'Spring in het Duitser… Vieze radioreportage', in *Peel en Maas*, 18 August 1967.
20. GAV 6374: Letter from H.P.M. Litjens to the B&W College, Venray on 2 April 1968.
21. An example: the committee advertised in the newspaper *Peel en Maas* for donations with titles like 'Slag om Venray' or 'Venray bevrijd' and all

involved parties referred to the military cemeteries in the area. GAV Parochie Christus Koning/ Vredeskerk Doos 13.

22. GAV Duitse Militaire Begraafplaats te Ysselsteyn. Archief en Documentatie Doos II: 1964.
23. GAV Parochie Christus Koning/ Vredeskerk Doos 13, Album 2: Ansprache Weihbischof Wilhelm Cleven zur Konsekration der Vredeskerk am 25. Oktober 1965.
24. GAV (5) 6374.
25. Vgl. GAV 6606.
26. Rothberg, 2009, *Multidirectional Memory*. Rothberg analyses these phenomena for Holocaust memories, but the principle itself is not confined to those memories.
27. AVDK Microfiche A 01 6 001: Arbeitsbericht Ysselsteyn Niederlande 1977.
28. Interview, Christine Gundermann with Guus Spelbos, who worked since 1981 as a close contributor with mayor Jos Waals, 18 June 2008.
29. 'Verontrust over deelname Duitsers aan dodenherdenking. Geen Duitsers op 4 mei herdenking!', in *Peel en Maas*, 16 April 1998.
30. 'Können wir gemeinsam gedenken?', in *Westfälische Nachrichten*, 3 December 1994.
31. 'Dodenherdenking 4 mei', in *Peel en Maas*, 29 April 1998.
32. 'Duitsers ook in toekomst welkom', in *Peel en Maas,* 7 Mai 1998.
33. Booklet from the JBS Ysselsteyn: *Venray und Ysselsteyn – eine Gemeinde und die Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorg* (Ysselsteyn 2008).
34. Historisches Archiv der Stadt Köln Acc. 1802/594: Letter from mayor van der Louw, Rotterdam, to lord mayor Nes Ziegler, Köln, 27 March 1979; Gemeentearchief Rotterdam 444.04/166: Speech from mayor van der Louw at the symposium for the history of the destroyed cities, 13 May 1980; 'Zeven steden, hun lijden en hun bodschap', in *Rotterdamsch Nieuwsblad*, 14 Mai 1980; 'Herdenking op 4 mei voor eerst samen met Duitsers', in *Twentsche Courant,* 2 May 1996.
35. Bauerkämper, 2011, 'Wege zur europäischen Geschichte'; Zimmermann et al., 2002, 'Transfer, Verflechtung'.
36. Lepsius, 1993, 'Das Erbe des Nationalsozialismus'; Hettling, 2004, 'Die Historisierung der Erinnerung'; Rüsen, 2001, 'Holocaust, Erinnerung, Identität'; Lorenz, 2005, 'Der Nationalsozialismus'; but also Schneider, 2004, 'Der Holocaust als Generationenobjekt'; Wielenga, 2001, 'Erinnerungskulturen'; Van Vree, 1995, *In de schaduw van Auschwitz*; Van Vree and van der Laarse, 2009, *De Dynamiek van de Herinnering*; Withuis, *Erkenning*; Blom, 'Die Besatzungszeit'.
37. Strupp, 2009, 'Stadt ohne Herz'; Van den Doel, 2005, 'Rotterdam'; Schenkel, 2003, *De Twentse Paradox*.
38. GAV Introduction main catalogue, translation: 'They caused us […] more damage and burden than the Teutons did during the whole time of occupation'.
39. Hirschfeld, 1981, 'Collaboration and Attentism'.
40. Today, the concept of *Zivilgesellschaft* or civil society is used in historiographic studies mostly in its descriptive dimension. Nevertheless, it is generally agreed that the term always inherits a normative dimension that should be taken into account in an analysis as well. This normative dimension is

here comprised as civilness, as a congeries of moral rules of a society and a time that administer the members of society with each other. Gosewinkel et al., 2003, 'Einleitung'; Hettling, 2004, '"Bürgerlichkeit"'; Kocka, 2001, 'Zivilgesellschaft'.

41. Levy and Sznaider, 2001, *Erinnerung*.
42. Jureit and Schneider, 2010, *Gefühlte Opfer*, p. 86. Jureit speaks critically of an identification with the victims of the war as an 'europäisches Gemeinschaftsversprechen' – 'an EU promise'. See also the informative and critical contributions in: Pakier and Stråth, 2010, *A European Memory?,* but also Raaijmakers, 2013, 'A new European myth?'.

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# 11

# Local and Counter-Memories of Socialism in Post-Socialist Romania

*Duncan Light and Craig Young*

Any radical political change produces a dramatic reformulation of national history and public memory among both elites and publics and at a variety of scales. The post-socialist states of East-Central Europe (ECE) represent one of the best contemporary examples. In the two decades since the overthrow of authoritarian socialist regimes, the countries of this region have struggled with their recent past. Debates around history and memory in the post-socialist period have predominantly focused on the Second World War, the Holocaust and various inter-war periods of independence. However, at the heart of this issue, and the focus of this chapter, is the tension between remembering and forgetting the socialist era. At the 'official' level – the arena of national politics – there is generally little interest in remembering socialism. In some countries there is the possibility of officially recognizing anti-Communist resistance (such as Solidarity in Poland) or the victims of Communism, and in some cases there is recognition of the importance of some Communist figures for the nation (for example, the reburial of Imre Nagy in Hungary in 1989). However, the dominant imperative to demonstrate allegiance to global political and economic orthodoxies (and make a claim for membership of transnational organizations such as NATO or the EU) requires an emphatic repudiation of socialist rule. None the less, at a more local scale, individual memories of the socialist era cannot be simply erased or denied. Instead, within their everyday lives many people may remember socialism in a more ambivalent and nuanced manner. Such local memories can constitute a form of 'counter-memory': practices of remembrance that are out of alignment with the efforts of the state to shape and define the remembrance of the socialist era.[1] Such local counter-memories of socialism are discordant with the 'official' imperatives to repudiate socialism.

In this chapter we examine such local memories of socialism in post-socialist Romania. To establish a context for the later discussion we start by considering the nature of official and popular memory under state socialism. We then consider the fluid and dynamic nature of memory in post-socialist societies focusing on two, seemingly contradictory trends: the 'official' rejection of the socialist era, and popular nostalgia for, and remembrance of, that same past. We go on to explore this tension between remembering and forgetting with reference to locally-grounded memories of major socialist-era Romanian politicians. Such figures are condemned at the level of official discourse for their involvement in the socialist regime, but such disapprobation is contested at the local level where they are remembered in far more approving terms.

## Antecedents: official and local memory under socialism

To understand the nature of local memory and counter-memory under post-socialism it is necessary to consider the historical context of memory formation in state socialist regimes. Communist Party regimes came to power throughout East-Central Europe after the Second World War intent on a radical transformation of society and the creation of a 'new world'.[2] The founding principle of socialist regimes was a decisive break with the past, so that almost everything inherited from the pre-socialist order needed to be dismantled. Political pluralism was abolished to be replaced by uncontested rule by the Communist Party. Capitalist economies were replaced by nationalized ownership of the means of production, followed in turn by centralized economic planning intended to eliminate the social and spatial inequalities created by capitalism. The social structures of the former regime – education, religion, the judicial system – were all remade in accordance with the agenda of state socialism.

In this context socialist party-states also sought to transform senses of individual and collective identities in order to create a 'new socialist man'.[3] Initially this involved attempting to eliminate senses of national identity – since the nation was conceived as a specifically bourgeois concept – and replace them with a new sense of class solidarity and socialist internationalism. In order to remake identities it was necessary to remake the past in order to reshape collective memory (particularly since memories of the pre-socialist era were an implicit threat to the new regime).[4] Thus, Communist regimes swiftly set about rewriting history to legitimate their rule. The party-state was in a position to do this since it enjoyed a monopoly over the production of history through

its appointment of academic historians and control of the educational system.[5] Revising the past took a number of familiar, Orwellian forms. Formerly central events and personalities (such as monarchs or liberal politicians) were erased from the historical narrative, while the statues that had commemorated them were removed and the streets that honoured them were renamed. At the same time, new figures who exemplified class struggle were elevated to hero status, while the events in which they had participated were celebrated and commemorated. In some cases, historical revisionism was intended to eliminate historical senses of identification with Western Europe, since the West was now the ideological enemy. For example, in Romania, the socialist rewriting of history involved downplaying cultural ties with Western Europe (particularly France), whilst asserting (or inventing) long-standing historical ties with Russia.[6]

However, while socialist regimes sought to falsify and obliterate memory in their efforts to transform historical consciousness they were only partially successful.[7] Communist party-states were much less powerful than is often supposed and did not enjoy absolute hegemony.[8] Thus, the attempts by party-states to shape individual memories were refracted through a range of other experiences, including personal, family and community memories.[9] Socialist regimes were therefore unable to prevent the circulation of alternative and local visions of the past, present and future that diverged from the 'official' line.[10] They included memories of events and personalities from the pre-socialist period that remained alive within popular memory. Similarly, despite attempts to discourage religious observance, memories of religious practices and traditions persisted stubbornly at the local level. Efforts to create collective farms failed to erase local memories of private property boundaries.[11] Indeed, sometimes such local counter-memories were circulated as a deliberate act of resistance to state power.

In addition, socialist regimes were not entirely successful in their attempt to eradicate national identities. Indeed, as Verdery argues, the national idea was so effectively inculcated in East-Central Europe that Communist Party regimes were unable to expunge national sentiments.[12] Thus, some socialist states came to accept national ideology and sometimes used it within powerful programmes intended to shape memory and national identity.[13] For example, the Communist authorities in post-War Poland made considerable efforts to establish a sense of Polishness which involved a rewriting of history combined with the expulsion of other national and ethnic populations, cultures and memories within the newly established state boundaries.[14]

## Memory in post-socialist societies

The socialist states of East-Central Europe collapsed between 1989 and 1991, while the Soviet Union was dissolved at the end of 1991. All these countries (to varying degrees) renounced single-party rule and centralized economic planning, and committed themselves to radical political and economic reform. As they exited from socialist rule, post-socialist societies faced a dilemma similar to that experienced by other countries at the end of a period of authoritarian rule: how is society to come to terms with a problematic and traumatic past founded on values that are now rejected, and which represents the very antithesis of the country's future aspirations. In post-socialist societies the recent past has become highly politicized and a range of actors (both elites and publics) have participated (and often competed) in efforts to shape the ways in which society approaches and negotiates its relationship with the socialist era.[15] All shifts in political power generate 'a reconfiguration of the 'known past' and in this context memory in post-socialist societies is fluid, dynamic, fractured and contested.[16] Hence, it is hardly surprising that dealing with the socialist past has consumed considerable time and energy in post-socialist societies.[17] Moreover, different countries have approached their socialist past in different ways. Some (such as the former East Germany and Czechoslovakia) have 'dealt' swiftly and decisively with their socialist past, while others (such as Romania, Bulgaria, the former Yugoslavia and Albania) have found the process more problematic.[18] Nevertheless, throughout the formerly socialist states of East-Central Europe two broad trends can be identified: an emphatic rejection of the socialist past, and a more nebulous popular nostalgia for the recent past.

## The rejection of the socialist past

Throughout East-Central Europe and the Soviet Union the exit from socialism was marked by an immediate and public rejection of socialism. Socialist regimes had enjoyed little popular support or legitimacy in their final years among a populace eager for change. Consequently, beyond socialist diehards or those whose livelihood depended on the socialist system there were few voices calling for a retention of Communist Party rule. The opposition groups that, in many countries, had played a key role in bringing about the downfall of socialist regimes had based their platform on dismantling the political and economic structures of state socialism. The new model was the 'West' and most

East-Central European countries regarded a rejection of socialism and a 'return to Europe' as different sides of the same coin. Having long been 'Other' in political terms, post-socialist countries now sought to convince the West that they had definitively renounced socialism. Instead, post-socialist governments sought to establish new political identities as liberal 'European' states with which the West could do business. This entailed demonstrating their commitment to the transnational orthodoxies of multi-party democracy and neoliberal capitalism.

Within this political project, there was no place for the socialist past. Indeed, socialism represented the very antithesis of the political and economic values to which the East-Central European states aspired. In this context, socialism was treated as a huge aberration that was best forgotten: there was little to be learned from the socialist era and little to be gained from remembering it. Thus, in most post-socialist states, the socialist era was virtually erased from official memory, a strategy which Tismaneanu terms the 'politics of forgetfulness'.[19] Such a situation is not, of itself, unique to the post-socialist world since it is well established that forgetting is as central to the formation of collective memory and national identities as remembrance and commemoration.[20] It does, however, illustrate a distinctly post-socialist understanding of history in which a substantial part of the recent past can be simply erased from the national timeline. Verdery argues that this practice

> reveals an interesting conception of time, in which time is not fixed and irreversible. One can pick up the time line, snip and discard the communist piece of it that one no longer wishes to acknowledge, paste the severed ends together and hey presto! One has a new historical time line. One has not accepted and incorporated the recent past, one has simply excised it'.[21]

In effect, post-socialism was about 'returning' to the historical trajectory of the pre-Second World War period, which had been disrupted by the Communist Party takeover. The four decades of socialism were – initially at least – treated as if they had not happened. Instead, narratives of the past frequently focused on a variety of pre-socialist eras, especially those that could be reclaimed as a 'Golden Age' of the nation.[22]

This eradication of socialism from collective memory manifested itself in many ways.[23] It involved the familiar and iconic processes of 'landscape cleansing' in which the public symbols of the socialist era were erased from public space.[24] Thus, statues were torn down, streets renamed, and monumental socialist buildings given new uses

appropriate to a post-socialist state.[25] Museums closed their galleries which dealt with the recent past. Similarly, the socialist era disappeared from the school history curriculum. Other practices seek to reverse the events of the socialist period in an attempt to restore the situation that existed before socialism. Thus, property restitution seeks to restore property nationalized by the state to its former owners. Similarly, agricultural land that was forcibly absorbed into collective farms was returned to the original owners or their descendants.

This strategy of attempting to extirpate the socialist era from collective memory was not confined to political elites. Instead, it enjoyed widespread tacit support among much of the wider populace. Those who had harsh experiences of repression and suffering under totalitarian rule were reluctant to relive them. Others had dismal memories of austerity, shortages and harassment which they had little desire to remember. In addition, there were many who had an uneasy conscience and were unwilling to reflect on their own record of participation and complicity with the former regime.[26] This was particularly the case in countries which had had an extensive internal security service (such as East Germany or Romania) where significant numbers of people were 'informants' of some kind. Rather than deal openly with such issues, most post-communist societies preferred to bury them: it was far easier to leave skeletons in the closet rather than disinter them and potentially face the resulting recrimination. While there have been many critics of this strategy, it is entirely understandable as a personal response to dealing with a traumatic and unhappy past.

Over time, post-socialist societies developed a more ambivalent approach to their recent past. Efforts (among both elites and the wider public) to forget the socialist era were challenged by many civil society groups and NGOs. Such bodies actively face up to the collective desire to forget by promoting remembrance of the socialist era, and particularly its atrocities and victims. In many cases, NGOs were active in the construction of memorials to the victims of totalitarian rule, and often sought EU support for their activities.[27] Such activities represented a form of counter-memory (and counter-memorialization) that challenged the dominant collective amnesia about the socialist past. Political pluralism and personal freedom have opened up space for a variety of evaluations of the socialist past to co-exist, especially in societies where decades of Communist rule have left a legacy of mistrust of official narratives about the past. The marketization of the economy and the mediatization of society have opened up new avenues for constructing memories of the socialist era, from television documentaries

and web pages to new publishing houses producing a variety of memoirs and histories, and private tourism companies seeking to exploit interest in the socialist past.

Moreover, as the time interval between the present and the socialist era has increased, attitudes to that past started to change among both political elites and the wider public. While socialism was still repudiated in most countries, there was an increasing acknowledgment (although sometimes tentative) of the socialist era and its place in collective memory. There was increasing commemoration of the victims of the socialist era through the establishment of monuments, memorials and museums with a wide variety of sponsors.[28] Gradually, museum displays started to address the socialist era, while school history textbooks introduced a discussion of this period (that had hitherto been entirely absent). Socialist-era archives were opened to researchers, including in some countries the records of surveillance undertaken by internal security services. In some cases there were formal reports or investigations into the socialist era (the best example being Romania's 'Presidential Commission for the Analysis of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania').[29]

## Nostalgia for the socialist past

The second defining characteristic of post-socialist memory is a paradoxical inversion of the desire to forget: nostalgia for the socialist era. Nostalgia can be defined as a 'sentiment of loss and displacement'.[30] In this case, it takes the form of a wistful and sentimental remembrance (and sometimes a yearning for) the socialist era. In extreme forms it can involve an idealization of the past and, in some cases, a desire to return to authoritarian Communist Party rule. More commonly, it takes the form of a belief that not everything was bad under socialism and a longing for some of the certainties of the socialist era.[31] Such nostalgia is an individual sentiment but is so widespread that it can be identified as a distinctive collective mood. The emergence of such post-socialist nostalgia was so unexpected that it shocked and surprised many in both Western Europe and the East-Central European countries themselves.[32] Given the elation at the overthrow of socialist regimes few expected that, within a few years, many would be remembering that era with fondness.

The extent of post-socialist nostalgia is impossible to dismiss. As early as 1993, Eurobarometer surveys were indicating that significant minorities in all post-socialist countries (ranging from just over 5 per cent in the Czech Republic to more than 25 per cent in Bulgaria) approved of

a return towards Communist Party rule.[33] Over time, the number of people reporting such sentiments has steadily increased and numerous studies have reported large minorities – and sometimes a majority – who feel that their lives were better under communism and that they would welcome a return to communist rule. Such nostalgia seems to be most pronounced among older people who lived and worked during the period of Communist Party rule, and this group is also more likely to be sceptical towards democratic government.[34] However, surprisingly, young people (who may sometimes have few direct memories of socialism) are also undogmatically appreciative of the former regime.[35] The fact that nostalgia for socialism is so widespread among such a broad segment of society illustrates how the socialist era has become a firmly established part of collective memories in East-Central Europe, despite efforts to erase the socialist past from official memory.

Nostalgia for the socialist era takes many forms but is most apparent in popular culture. Since nostalgia is easily commodified, numerous products have appeared that cater for the apparently enthusiastic remembrance of socialism.[36] For example, recent films evoke the everyday conditions of life under socialist rule. Perhaps the best known is *Good Bye Lenin* which tapped into a popular vein of what has been termed 'ostalgia' in the former East Germany. Similarly, in Romania *Tales from the Golden Age*, a collection of short films that played with various communist-era urban myths enjoyed considerable success. In 1998 the state television channel in the Czech Republic, rebroadcast *30 Cases of Major Zemen*, a television series from the 1970s about the work and home life of an ordinary police office. This was greeted by almost universal approval among Czechs of all ages.[37] In Romania, a socialist-era brand of chocolate bar – 'Rom' – has been rebranded and relaunched and is reported to be now the most popular chocolate in the country. In Hungary a CD of patriotic socialist songs was a surprise hit in 1998, reaching number one in Hungary's music chart.[38] And in Romania a businessman even opened a 'Museum of the Socialist Republic of Romania' offering an overtly nostalgic experience of Ceauşescu's Romania.[39] In many other ways throughout East-Central Europe, socialism 'sells', and products that overtly recall the socialist era find a ready market.

How, then, is this nostalgic remembrance of the socialist era to be explained? The answer lies in the profound upheaval that accompanied the dismantling of the socialist economy. The economic model adopted by almost all post-socialist states was that of Western neoliberal capitalism; while individual countries differed in the pace at which

they sought to arrive at this goal, the end-point was the same. But while the populations of the socialist countries had been enthusiastic about political change, they had often not anticipated the economic shock that post-socialism necessarily involved. Restructuring and privatization of formerly state-owned industries resulted in huge job losses and rising unemployment, ending the socialist-era practice of a guaranteed job with a reasonable wage. The liberalization of formerly state-controlled prices generated rapid inflation, and, since wages rarely kept pace with rising prices, most people experienced a decline in their living standards. The liberalization of international trade meant a rapid inflow of imported Western goods and full exposure to cultural globalization and Western consumer culture.[40] Moreover, the elaborate social care system developed by socialist states was dismantled so that free health care and social security could no longer be guaranteed.

Along with the deteriorating material conditions of post-socialism, many people experienced a profound challenge to senses of personal identity. Post-socialist restructuring produced a severe 'cultural shock' among large sectors of the population.[41] A system that had seemed permanent and invincible had disappeared almost overnight. This sense of upheaval was superbly captured in the phrase 'Everything was forever, until it was no more.'[42] Many people were profoundly unsettled to find that the system that had formed the entire context for their lives – within which they had lived and worked, and which had given their lives dignity and meaning – was now written off as a historical mistake.[43] Some groups – such as the 'engineer class' created and exalted by socialism – found that their professional skills and training were now redundant in the new era of neoliberal capitalism.[44] Many people who would never have described themselves as communists had taken pride in their work, and many more recognized that they were working within a system that sought to build a better and more equal world. They now discovered that everything they had worked for counted for nothing.

In these circumstances it is hardly surprising that many look back nostalgically to the socialist era. As Maria Todorova argues, this nostalgia comprises both a longing for something (order, stability, security, prosperity and a specific form of sociability and 'togetherness') and also a sense of loss for the certainties of socialism (jobs, houses, health care).[45] However, such nostalgia is not a delusional form of escapism, neither is it a malady (as some critics have suggested).[46] Instead, it is an individual and collective strategy for coming to terms with change. At times of shock or upheaval, it is a normal human reaction to search for

solace and security, and this can frequently be found in the past. In this sense remembrance – and the activation of memory – is a purposeful strategy for coming to terms with change. Indeed, Boym identifies post-socialist nostalgia as a form of defence mechanism.[47] Those who are nostalgic for socialism may miss those times but are not usually seeking to return to them.[48] Instead, they are using memory as a way of dealing with the present. Moreover, this positive (and selective) way of thinking about the socialist era is transmitted from parents to children who, in turn, become curious about socialism and are not necessarily inclined to reject it out of hand.

In the context of state-sponsored projects to forget (or deny the legitimacy of) the socialist past, post-socialist nostalgia represents a significant form of counter-memory that keeps the memory of the socialist era alive. Counter-memory can be defined as a 'refusal to remember in a conformist fashion'.[49] It embraces social rather than political history and ordinary rather than elite memories.[50] It can also be explicitly associated with a refusal to forget.[51] Nostalgia for socialism – which remembers the socialist era in positive terms, through the lens of the experiences of ordinary people – therefore directly confronts 'official' efforts to forget or reject the socialist past. Indeed, nostalgia for the socialist past can be a deliberate act of defiance: 'a resistance strategy of preserving one's personal history and group's identity against the new ideological narratives, historical revisionism and imposed amnesia'.[52] As a form of counter-memory post-socialist nostalgia therefore problematizes the whole process of forgetting the socialist era. It also opens up the possibility of local memories of socialism that are discordant with state projects to reject the socialist era as a historical aberration. In the following section we explore such local counter-memories in post-socialist Romania.

## Local memories of socialism in post-socialist Romania

### The national context

Romania exemplifies both trends discussed above: the repudiation of the socialist past and also nostalgia for that past. Under Nicolae Ceauşescu's autocratic rule during the 1980s Romanians had experienced extreme austerity (with almost all the population experiencing severe rationing of food and power) along with intrusive harassment and surveillance by the internal security services. Ceauşescu was overthrown and executed in the 'revolution' of December 1989, and the Romanian population was united in hoping for a better future. There

was an almost unanimous condemnation of socialism among both the political elite and the wider public. Many of the leaders of the 1989 'revolution' were former members of the Romanian Communist Party with deep roots in the former regime. Thus they were eager to bury communism and avoid any questioning of their own pasts.[53] It was perhaps for this reason that Romania was the only post-socialist state to formally ban the Communist Party. In addition, many Romanians were reluctant to confront their own complicity and co-operation with the former regime and preferred instead to forget.[54] There followed a long period of amnesia in which the socialist past was erased from collective and individual memory: indeed, Romania was the exemplar of the authorized amnesia outlined above.

The 'official' repudiation of socialism culminated in the report commissioned by President Băsescu in April 2006 into the illegality and crimes committed by the socialist regime. This investigation was undertaken by a team of historians led by Vladimir Tismaneanu. The final report unequivocally condemned the socialist regime that had ruled between 1947 and 1989.[55] It was formally accepted by President Băsescu, who issued a public condemnation of the socialist era in a speech to the Romanian parliament in December 2006 (shortly before Romania's accession to the EU). However, the report was largely disregarded by the Romanian legislature.[56]

At the same time, nostalgia for the socialist era is pervasive among middle-aged and older Romanians. Various rounds of economic restructuring during the 1990s produced economic recession and a sharp decline in living standards. Neoliberal restructuring after 1996 increased the rate of closure of socialist-era industries and subsequent job losses. In addition, Romanians have looked on appalled as the socialist-era *nomenclatura* have enriched themselves at the expense of the state. Unsurprisingly, there are many who feel that their lives were better during the socialist era, and opinion polls consistently confirm this. For example, in 1993, 13 per cent of the population reportedly approved of a return to communist rule.[57] By 1998, 51 per cent of the population stated that life before 1989 was 'better than now'.[58] By 2003 two-thirds of the population claimed to be nostalgic for communism.[59] Indeed, many older people directly praise Nicolae Ceauşescu and speak of wanting to return to the order and certainty of the communist era.

## Local memories of socialism

Within this national context, Romania, in common with other post-socialist states, exhibits a multitude of local memory formations which

challenge official repudiation of the socialist past. Understanding memory in the post-socialist context also requires consideration of memory formation in different local and regional contexts, as memory is shaped by different histories and post-socialist trajectories, and rural and more peripheral contexts require consideration as much as the shaping of memory in the capital. In this section we explore a number of these local memories (in both rural and urban locations) in relation to key Romanian Communist leaders and politicians.

The first examples consider the local memories in remote rural areas of two significant former Romanian socialist politicians – Dr Petru Groza and Emil Bodnăraș. Groza (1884–1958) was born in the small Transylvanian village of Băcia. He led the first, communist-dominated government after the Second World War, was prime minister (1945–1952) and later titular head of state (1952–1958). After the Second World War he played a key role in securing the return of northern Transylvania (which in 1940 had been annexed by Hungary) to Romania, an event which was organized by the Soviets to win him popular support. In the late 1940s he was instrumental in overseeing the Communist Party takeover of power and remaking post-war Romania as a socialist state following the model of the Soviet Union. He was also involved in enforcing the abdication of the king in 1947. His historical role in Romania's development is thus a complex one: although he was the prime minister of a socialist state he also remained a lay member of the Romanian Orthodox Church. After his death in 1958 he was buried in a Bucharest cemetery until 1963, when his body was moved to a monumental mausoleum constructed in a Bucharest park. In early 1990 his family moved his body from the mausoleum to his home village where he was reburied in the local churchyard.

Emil Bodnăraș (1904–1976) was born in the small settlement of Iaslovăț in the far north of Romania to a German mother and a Ukrainian father. He had close links with the Soviet security services and worked as a Soviet spy in Romania. He was in charge of the internal security services during late 1940s when, with Soviet support, the Romanian Communist Party progressively took over the entire apparatus of state power. A committed Communist and an army general he was minister of defence (1947–1955) and subsequently minister for transport and also held a number of other senior positions in the state apparatus. He is also credited with influencing Nikita Krushchev to withdraw Soviet troops from Romania in 1958. He showed total loyalty to Nicolae Ceauşescu when the latter rose to power in 1965. At his request he was buried not in Bucharest but in the village of his birth.

Both Dr Petru Groza and Emil Bodnaraş were closely associated with the Communist takeover of power and the transformation of the country into a totalitarian socialist state. Both were senior politicians in a state that ruled through repression and terror in the late 1940s and 1950s. Unsurprisingly both are condemned in the 2006 Presidential Commission.[60] Groza is described as an opportunist 'fellow traveller' who was exploited by the Romanian Communist Party to give a pretence of legitimate and representative government. Bodnăraş is portrayed as a shadowy power broker who was thoroughly implicated in the Communist Party's internecine internal conflicts. At the level of the Romanian state seeking to re-integrate itself into a regional European and global context they are repudiated figures from a rejected past. However, even at a national scale this state-led shaping of memory is differentiated, with, for example, several biographies and historical studies of Groza emphasizing other aspects of his achievements, such as his active involvement in the Romanian Orthodox Church. Both are recognized for their achievements (such as Groza's role in regaining northern Transylvania after the Second World War, and Bodnaraş's apparent involvement in securing the withdrawal of Soviet Troops from Romania).

However, it is when local memory formation around Groza and Bodnăraş is considered that the way that memory is formed in tension between the local, the national and the global is most explicit.[61] Despite condemnation by the post-socialist Romanian state, local memories of the two Communists are almost overwhelmingly positive. For example, the Mayor of Băcia described Groza to be 'foarte apreciat' ('very much appreciated') by the majority of the local population in his home village. Similarly, Bodnăraş is admired for his patriotism: a local man stated 'He was a patriot, he fought for the country, he was an officer. A good man'. Of course, it is a feature of these positive counter-memories that they are highly selective and involve as much forgetting as remembering. In neither case was mention made of any of the negative aspects of their actions or roles in Romania's development as a socialist state. In fact, the construction of their memories involves the exclusion of less favourable issues. In Groza's case people are keen to stress that he was not a Communist at all (despite being prime minister he was never a member of the Romanian Communist Party) while for Bodnăraş people emphasize that stories about his having been a Soviet spy and a murderer are wrong. Instead, both are held in high regard, as 'local men made good' who did much for the nation and for their places of birth. Their role in national affairs and their activities for the benefit of the nation (such

as regaining Transylvania or 'resisting' Soviet control) are a particularly strong part of these positive counter-memories. In addition these local communities express a strong sense of ownership of both figures – they were 'ours' but went on to lead the nation. As one man in Băcia stated: 'he [Groza] left here and he led the country very well'. Both politicians are credited with having helped the church at a national and local level. Moreover, both are remembered for what they did to benefit their home villages while in power. As one woman commented about Bodnăraș: 'He was a good man. He did lots of things for the village – a school, church.' In fact, such narratives often suggest that they would have done more in both cases but they were constrained by the Communist apparatus of which they were a part.

This de-linking of their characters and achievements from the Communist regime is a key aspect of the selective remembering which takes place. As a very elderly man in Iaslovăț repeated several times: 'Bodnăraș was not such a passionate Communist.' In the case of Groza the emphasis is on his role as a national leader who was capable and developed the nation. As respondents in Băcia remembered: 'He spoke personally to Stalin and convinced him to cede northern Transylvania to Romania' and 'He was the only man who opposed the Soviets.' In both cases these attributes are contrasted with present-day Romanian politicians. Thus these local memories are produced and reproduced in relation to the national in complex ways – simultaneously linking to notions of national pride but denying that accolade to post-socialist political parties and politicians, and reclaiming and maintaining positive memories of these local figures in a way running counter to state-led evaluations of their role during the socialist era. Indeed, in the case of Groza his memory is a source of contemporary pride which is used to distinguish the commune of Băcia and to build a sense of local identity. One respondent stated that 'He's a symbol of the commune' and the village's mayor made the point that when people ask what Băcia is known for he is keen to stress the fact that it is the birthplace of Petru Groza.

These local counter-memories are also inter-twined with the fate of socialist-era statues in both Băcia and Iaslovăț. After his death, Groza was commemorated through large statues in Bucharest and the Transylvanian city of Deva (where he had many associations). A smaller bust of the prime minister was erected in Băcia. One of the stereotypes of the end of socialist rule is the tearing down of statues as part of the 'de-Communization' of the cultural landscape. However, the situation is more complex and these statues can have unexpected post-socialist

trajectories.[62] Certainly the statues of Groza in Bucharest and Deva were taken down and removed from public view (the Deva statue was abandoned at the back of the county hall in Deva). However, the bust of Groza in Băcia was not removed, although it suffered some minor vandalism. Unexpectedly the Deva statue was recently moved to Băcia at the request of the commune authorities who wish to re-erect it as a small tourist attraction intended to commemorate Groza's connections with his home village.[63] Far from being despised symbols of the former regime, the statue and bust of Groza in Băcia are now material sites of counter-memory, symbolizing the importance of local memories in shaping local identity in a way that runs counter to the efforts of the post-socialist state.

The situation in Iaslovăţ is even more unexpected. A bronze bust of Bodnăraş was erected in his home village after the politician's death and placed in front of the cultural centre (for which Bodnăraş had arranged funding in the early 1970s). The bust was removed in the early 1990s by local people during the period of elation that followed the overthrow of Nicolae Ceauşescu. However, local stories say little about it being removed as an unwanted Communist symbol or as evidence of contempt for Bodnăraş. In 2003, on the initiative of the village authorities, a copy of the statue was produced and erected on the original pedestal where it still stands.[64] Again, it confounds the popular stereotype that the collapse of socialist regimes was accompanied by a purging of socialist symbols from the public landscape. The re-installation of the bust of Emil Bodnăraş testifies to sincerely held local appreciation of him and it represents a significant manifestation of local memory that runs counter to the 'official' imperative to shape post-socialist memory by 'forgetting' socialism. (See Figure 11.1.)

However, local memories of socialism are not confined to remote and rural parts of the country. Instead, counter-memories of socialism can also be found in the heart of Romania's capital, Bucharest. Again, we can illustrate this through the graves of socialist politicians, particularly the two General Secretaries of the Romanian Communist Party: Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej (1947–1965) and Nicolae Ceauşescu (1965–1989). Nicolae Ceauşescu was buried (initially under a false name) in Ghencea Cemetery in western Bucharest, although the location and identity of the grave seem to have been well known. In the upheaval of the post-socialist period Ceauşescu's grave quickly became the focus for those nostalgic for the era of his rule. It is now a significant site of counter-memory in Bucharest. As early as 1992 the grave was being carefully maintained.[65] A fence was erected around it and the original wooden

*Figure 11.1* Bust of Emil Bodnaraş in Iaslovaţ, erected in the post-socialist period. © Duncan Light and Craig Young 2014

cross replaced by a stone one (which features a red star; see Figure 11.2). The grave is invariably covered with fresh flowers, candles and ribbons, and it is not unusual to see individuals or groups assembled by it. During a visit to the grave one of the authors was told by a passing Romanian that 'He [Ceauşescu] deserves something much bigger and nicer'. It is the focal point for spontaneous and unorganized acts of remembrance by individuals who regret the passing of Ceauşescu. It is also the site for more formal acts of commemoration on the anniversaries of Ceauşescu's birth and death. These are often organized by the successor to the Romanian Communist Party and are attended by small crowds (not all of whom are elderly).

More surprisingly, the grave of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej has also become a site of counter-memory, although to a lesser extent than that of Ceauşescu. Gheorghiu-Dej was a cynical and ruthless political operator who oversaw a period of state terror during the late 1940s and 1950s. On his death he was buried in the same mausoleum as Petru Groza and


*Figure 11.2* Nicolae Ceauşescu's grave in Bucharest. © Duncan Light and Craig Young

in the early 1990s his body was removed and reburied in Bucharest. There are few with any reason to have fond memories of Gheorghiu-Dej's period of rule and yet even his grave has become a quiet site of counter-memory. Small groups of flowers can sometimes be seen on the grave and it is also the site for formal remembrance ceremonies (some of which are posted to YouTube). Both examples illustrate how local memories of socialism which contest the state-sponsored condemnation of Romania's socialist regime persist (and seemingly flourish) in the centre of the capital.

## Conclusions

Tismaneanu talks about the 'still unmastered past' of socialism in East-Central Europe, and in many ways the socialist era still haunts the present in this region.[66] At the centre of this dilemma is the tension between remembering and forgetting. Post-socialist regimes have generally been eager to draw a line under state socialism and treat the socialist era as a historical aberration that is best forgotten. Moreover, the political imperative to demonstrate allegiance to multinational norms of political and economic development, along with national aspirations of a 'return to Europe', has demanded a repudiation of socialism in order to demonstrate adherence to 'Western' values. However, at the level of the individual, attitudes towards the socialist era are more ambivalent. For those who lived through the socialist era senses of personal identity are founded on, and grounded within, memories of that era. Socialism was the context within which people lived and worked, and which structured everyday lives. Many people are, therefore, reluctant to write off an entire period of their personal biographies. Add to this the sense of upheaval and disorder that has characterized the 'transition' to democracy and a market economy and it is unsurprising that many people feel nostalgic for the certainties of the socialist era. Looking back in this way is a strategy for dealing with the present.

This context creates circumstances where popular and local memories (or counter-memories) of socialism can collide with state-sponsored projects to repudiate the socialist era. In this chapter we have examined some examples of such local/counter memories in post-socialist Romania. The cases of Petru Groza and Emil Bodnaraş illustrate how socialist politicians who are condemned in official discourse can be held in high esteem in local contexts. Their role within the repressive apparatus of the socialist state (which is highlighted in official censure of their activities) is not denied, but other aspects of their lives and deeds are highlighted in more positive terms. In particular, both figures are venerated for their contribution to their home villages: it was their local activities and projects that had the greatest impact on the lives of people in those villages and it is these activities for which they are predominantly remembered. Lest such local counter-memories should be regarded as unique to isolated and peripheral parts of the country, the graves of Nicolae Ceauşescu and Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej also illustrate how popular counter-memories of socialism can flourish in the capital city. These examples illustrate the fluid, contextual and contested nature of memory in a post-socialist context. Of course, the experience

in Romania cannot be generalized to every country of post-socialist East-Central Europe. The tension between remembering and forgetting is worked out in different ways in each post-socialist country and will be influenced by circumstances such as the nature of the experience of socialism, the strength of civil society in the post-socialist era, and the will of the political elite to draw a line under state socialism.

Finally, a key point to emerge from this analysis is the need to consider the formation of memories of the socialist period which are more complex than outright condemnation or nostalgia. These two extremes have been the focus of most studies focusing on post-socialist memories to date. However, the case studies in this chapter have revealed the need for analyses which explore a more nuanced understanding of post-socialist memory that incorporates those two perspectives but also opens up the multiplicity of memories of the experience of socialism. Such memories might be condemnatory; nostalgic; about the everyday and the mundane (shortages, queuing, schooldays and holiday-making); about pride in achievement (both personal and national); and pride in the socialist nation and its national leaders. What the case studies in this chapter have shown is that the majority of memories are not clear-cut. The post-socialist Romanian state may have developed a strategy firmly based on the repudiation of the socialist past, but for the vast majority of Romanians their memories of the socialist era are much more nuanced and complex. Elites and publics are not monolithic entities and they have a vast range of personal and group experiences of socialism to draw on and a considerable diversity of social and political goals in the post-socialist context. Memories are formed at overlapping scales which bring the local, the national and the global into contact in complex ways. If contemporary memory is characterized by its democratization (with the ability to form and promote different memories increasingly open to all) then in the post-socialist context it is vital to explore the perspectives of 'ordinary' citizens in those countries where political elites have repudiated the memory of socialism. Future studies of post-socialist memory formation need to let their voices and memories speak.

## Notes

1. S. Legg, 2005, 'Reviewing geographies'.
2. Boia, 1999, *Mitologia Ştiinţifică,* pp. 39–40.
3. *Ibid*., p. 122.
4. Kligman and Verdery, 2011, *Peasants under Siege*, p. 17.

5. Ciobanu, 2009, 'Rewriting and remembering'.
6. Boia, 2001, *History and Myth*, pp. 70–73.
7. Tismaneanu, 2010, 'Coming to Terms', p. 17.
8. Verdery, 1991, *National Ideology,* pp. 83–87.
9. Kligman and Verdery, 2011, *Peasants under Siege*, p. 13.
10. Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*, 2001, pp. 61–62.
11. Verdery, *What was Socialism*, 1996, p. 157.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 85.
13. Young and Light, 2001, 'Place'.
14. Ziólkowski, 2002, 'Remembering and forgetting'.
15. Forest, Johnson and Till, 2004, 'Post-totalitarian national identity'.
16. Kligman and Verdery, 2011, *Peasants under Siege,* p. 9.
17. Welsh, 1996, 'Dealing with the Communist past'.
18. Gledhill, 2011, 'Integrating the past'.
19. Tismaneanu, 2008, 'Democracy and memory'.
20. Lowenthal, 1985, *The Past is a Foreign Country*, p. 204.
21. Verdery, 1999, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies*, p. 116.
22. Young and Kaczmarek, 2008, 'The socialist past'.
23. For an overview see: Stan, 2013, 'Reckoning with the Communist past'.
24. Czepczyński, 2010, *Cultural Landscapes*, p. 109.
25. Forest and Johnson, 2011, 'Monumental politics'.
26. Tismaneanu, 2010, *Coming to Terms*, p. 15; Forest et al., 2004, 'Post-totalitarian national identity', p. 360.
27. Gledhill, 2011, 'Integrating the past', p. 501.
28. Czepczyński, 2010, *Cultural Landscapes*, pp. 138–143; Forest and Johnson, 2011, 'Monumental politics', pp. 276–281.
29. Ciobanu, 2009, 'Criminalizing the past'.
30. Boym, 2001, *Future of Nostalgia*, p. xiii.
31. Ekman and Linde, 2005, 'Communist nostalgia'.
32. Velikonj, 2009, 'Lost in transition', pp. 535–551.
33. These figures are reported in Ekman and Linde 2005, 'Communist nostalgia', p. 359.
34. Ekman and Linde, 2005, 'Communist nostalgia', pp. 363–364.
35. Velikonja, 2009, 'Lost in transition', p.544; Ekman and Linde, 2005, 'Communist nostalgia', p. 366.
36. Velikonja, 2009, 'Lost in transition', pp. 540–541.
37. Roberts, 2002, 'The politics and anti-politics of nostalgia'.
38. Nadkarni, 2010, '"But it's ours"'.
39. Preda, 2010, 'Looking at the past'.
40. One of the authors has heard many times in Romania a lament along the lines of 'Then [during the socialist era] we had money but there was nothing to buy. Now we can buy anything we want but we have no money to do so'.
41. Ekman and Linde, 2005, 'Communist nostalgia', p. 371.
42. Yurchak, 2006, *Everything was forever.*
43. Todorova, 2010, 'From Utopia'.
44. Boia, 1999, *Mitologia*, pp. 133–4.
45. Todorova, 2010, 'From Utopia', p. 7.

46. *Ibid*., p. 2.
47. Boym, 2001, *Future of* Nostalgia, p. 64.
48. Velikonja, 'Lost', p. 546.
49. Legg, 'Reviewing', p. 460.
50. Legg, 'Contesting and surviving'; Hutton, *History*.
51. Legg, 'Sites of counter-memory'.
52. Velikonja, 2009 'Lost in transition', p. 547.
53. Gallagher, 2005, *Romania*.
54. One of the authors recalls visiting Romania during the mid 1990s and attempting to engage various people in a discussion about the Communist period. The response was invariably a polite but insistent refusal to talk about the subject.
55. Tismaneanu, 2013, *Comisia Prezidenţiala*.
56. Stan, 2013, 'Reckoning with the Communist past', p. 137.
57. *Ibid*.
58. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 'Most Romanians believe life was better under Ceausescu', RFE/RL Newsline Vol.2, Nr. 229, Part II, 30 November 1998, http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1141792.html, accessed 28 October 2014.
59. Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, 'Poll shows Romanians inclined towards authoritarian leadership', RFE/RL Newsline Vol. 7, Nr. 199, Part II, 20 October 2003, http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1143025.html, accessed 28 October 2014.
60. Tismaneanu, 2006, *Comisia Prezidentiala*, pp. 647–648, 654.
61. The quotes in the section that follows draw on field interviews with residents of Băcia and Iaslovăţ. While there were some dissenting or apathetic attitudes, the local memories of these two figures are overwhelmingly positive.
62. Light and Young, 2011, 'Socialist statuary'.
63. Interview with the *Primar* (Mayor) of Băcia.
64. Interview with the *Primar* (Mayor) of Iaslovăţ.
65. Kideckel, 2004, 'The undead'.
66. Tismaneanu, 2010, 'Coming to terms', p. 15.

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# 12

# Greetings from Borgerokko: An Antwerp Neighbourhood as a National Icon of Globalization and Anti-globalism[1]

*Marnix Beyen*

In November 2013, the left-wing district government of the Antwerp neighbourhood of Borgerhout organized a referendum about the name of a square which had hitherto commonly been called *Terloplein*. ('Terlo square'). Apart from sticking to this old name, the citizens could choose between two options, which had emerged from a first online poll. The first of them was Maria Rosseels, a female novel writer of the post-war period who was born close to the square, the other one Muhammad Ibn'Abd al-Karim al-Khattabi, the leader of the Moroccan Berber resistance who in the 1920s had succeeded in creating a (short-lived) Rif Republic against the Franco-Spanish occupation. By offering this transnational option, the district government deliberately created the opportunity to create a local site of memory which would be recognisable for the large, mainly Moroccan-Berber, immigrant community in the neighbourhood.

The support of 393 citizens for Al-Khattabi did not suffice to dethrone the name that the square had by then acquired in common parlance, which received 475 of the votes.[2] Nonetheless, the initiative did succeed in arousing debates about the question whether the history of the immigrants' home countries should be included in the memory of multi-ethnic societies in Belgium. Far from remaining restricted to the population of Borgerhout, these discussions were held in the broader Flemish public and above all in a vast array of forums on the internet. The arguments of those who resisted the name Al-Khattabi were hardly surprising. Giving the name of a Berber – a resistance fighter at that – to a square in Flanders would support the migrants of Moroccan descent in their alleged unwillingness to integrate into the Flemish society, or even in their attempt to 'islamize' Europe. Less predictable was the

precise wording in which they framed their discontent. Most notably, the recurrence of the uncommon toponym 'Borgerokko' strikes the reader of these blogs and internet reactions. 'Will Borgerhout really be Borgerokko?' was the title of one of these blogs.[3] Another of these uses of the term Borgerokko appeared after the extreme right-wing party Vlaams Belang (Flemish Interest) had advised protesting against the prospect of an Al-Khattabi square by renaming another square in Borgerhout for one day after an inhabitant of Borgerhout who in 1980 had died at the age of eighty after an aggression by foreigners. This proposal inspired another internet-writer to make an even more radical suggestion. For him, a street in the neighbourhood should even be permanently renamed after this martyr of aggression by migrants, and he added: 'that would mean a beautiful symbolic presence of our own people [het eigen volk], also in Borgerokko, wouldn't it?'[4] This rhetorical question bore an unmistakable reminiscence of the old – but still notorious – slogan of the Vlaams Belang, which had formerly been known as Vlaams Blok (*Flemish Bloc*): 'Priority to our own people' (*Eigen Volk Eerst*).

In the context of these blogs, even those readers who are not particularly familiar with Flemish politics and society will be able to interpret the neologism 'Borgerokko' as a fusion of Borgerhout and Morocco. Most people living and working in Flanders, on the contrary, would not need these contextual elements. More than barely understanding its meaning, they would probably recognize it as part of their common, though unofficial vocabulary – and thus of their linguistic heritage. Indeed, if such a thing as a Flemish collective memory exists, the term 'Borgerokko' undoubtedly forms part and parcel of it. Even those Flemings who do not have personal recollections of the time when the term was frequently used and those who never used it themselves will probably understand – in more or less conscious ways – its etymological origin as well as its politically incorrect connotations. And probably they will associate the word with a not so far-off period in which xenophobic feelings towards Northern African and Turkish migrants – in Borgerhout and elsewhere – tended to be uttered in more overt ways than today.

The referent of the term Borgerokko is, therefore, both a local and a transnational one – and, as such, it contains tensions aroused by processes of globalization on a local scale. As a marker of collective memory and identification, on the other hand, it functions primarily at a national level, and more precisely at that of the Flemish nation. Indeed, the term is rather unlikely to arouse immediate recognition either in the Francophone part of Belgium or in the neighbouring Netherlands.

However recognisable the term was – and partially still is – among the inhabitants of Flanders, it functioned in radically different ways dependent on the social and/or ethnic groups by which it was used and on the context in which this happened. It served both as a means to exclude groups from the Flemish moral community and as a vehicle to integrate them in it. In this contribution, I will try to reveal this complexity by drawing a genealogy of the term, thereby paying close attention to processes of appropriation and other forms of discursive migration.

## From the pub to the party

The precise origin of the term Borgerokko is impossible to trace, but the context can be sketched in which it must have made its first appearance. In the 1950s and 1960s, the formerly densely populated Antwerp neighbourhood of Borgerhout, particularly that part of the neighbourhood which was situated within the boundaries of the city of Antwerp (Borgerhout *intra muros*), fell prey to the ongoing process of suburbanization, and to the connected phenomenon of social downgrading. There was a significant exodus, resulting in a large number of unoccupied properties. The labourers who started occupying the abandoned houses during the 1950s, instilled the neighbourhood at first with a traditional, 'white' labour culture with socialist overtones. From the early 1960s, however, the state authorities organized a programme of labour immigration from the Mediterranean countries in order to supply the needs of Begium's then flourishing industry.[5] Many of those impoverished migrants were attracted, too, by the cheap housing market of Borgerhout. By the beginning of the 1970s, about one-quarter of the population of the neighbourhood was of North African or Turkish descent – a figure that has risen today to 35 per cent.[6] The most numerous, and above all the most conspicuous, group was Berbers coming from inland Morocco. Even more than the other migrants, they originated from agrarian regions where a Western form of modernization was still largely absent.

For the 'original' inhabitants of Borgerhout, this evolution entailed a far-reaching and above all alienating experience. It transformed the neighbourhood in which they had grown up into a place they hardly recognized. The popular labour culture which had become prominent in the 1950s was juxtaposed with a more rural cultural pattern in which religious rituals were highly visible. The traditional Borgerhout labour culture retreated more than ever in the intimacy of the popular

pubs – often displaying a sign with the text 'Prohibited for North Africans'[7] – where the growing feelings of alienation freely found their way into more or less xenophobic jokes, puns and popular wisdoms. It is highly probable that the term 'Borgerokko' was coined in this *milieu* in the early 1970s. The substitution of the familiar suffix '-hout' by the exotic '-occo' formed a perfect expression of the feelings of alienation that were experienced by many locals of Borgerhout.

The proliferation of the theme outside this local context seems to have been brought about in the first place by the iconic Antwerp music band De Strangers, who specialized in more or less ludicrous adaptations of international music hits in Antwerp dialect. They prided themselves in expressing the 'Antwerp popular soul', and were often presented as such. Unavoidably, the xenophobic feelings abounding in Antwerp labour culture found their way also in the repertoire of this band. Probably their most iconic – and most controversial – text in this regard was entitled 'Health insurance' and told the story of a Moroccan who works during some months in an Antwerp factory before becoming allegedly ill and profiting for a long time from Belgian health insurance. At the moment of its first appearance in 1973, the song provoked little indignation, in spite of it containing a line such as 'Allah is great, but health insurance is greater'. Only when the band decided to play the song at a congress of the Vlaams Blok in November 1992, did it expose itself to severe criticism and to an official media boycott.

In the meantime, the band had continued on this same path by turning, in 1985, the Beatles' song 'Obladi-Oblada' into 'Borgeri-Borgerhout-Borgerocco'. The key idea presented ironically in the song was that the Moroccan immigration into Borgerhout had made it unnecessary to go on holiday to Morocco – an idea that was brought home through the use of some crude stereotypes ('It looks like Marrakesh here, that's not exaggerated/Apart from the fact that there are no camels to be seen'). Nonetheless, this holiday-motif was also explicitly combined with a political warning: 'And if they are given the suffrage, take care/ We might get a new star again in the city hall – mayor Muhammad!').

Nearly fifteen years after the song of De Strangers, the same 'holiday-motif' was still prominent in discourses about Borgerhout. In 1999, a group of worried citizens dropped into every post box in the neighbourhood a postcard containing the words: 'I like to live in Borgerhout, because...'. The sentence could be completed at will by those receiving the card. In some of the cards that were sent back, the motif of the permanent holiday popped up again. 'I like to live in Borgerhout', thus one of the respondents wrote, 'because... I save money by not going on

holiday to Morocco or Turkey. When I walk through Borgerhout, I feel like a tourist in my own country.' That this was not merely some sort of mild irony, was revealed by the last sentence of the letter: 'I have no rights, I don't get anything and I haven't got anything to say, for I am Belgian'. In a similar way, the 'Greetings from Borgerrocco' [sic] with which another respondent finished his or her letter, was in sharp contrast with the deep frustrations that were uttered in the short text.[8]

For all their brevity, these texts reveal that the term 'Borgerokko' did not merely express a feeling of cultural alienation. Particularly since the petrol crisis of 1973 had shown the limits of the welfare state, popular discourse about Northern African immigrants had become harsher. As well as a cultural threat, the latter became competitors on the shrinking labour market. Their compulsory return to their home countries was pleaded for by a growing segment of public opinion.

From the end of the 1970s, these sentiments were adroitly exploited by the then newly created right-wing party Vlaams Blok, whose populist discourse had largely grown out of Antwerp's popular culture.[9] Nearly unavoidably, therefore, the term 'Borgerokko' entered into this party's campaigns, as well as into that of other, smaller right-wing formations. 'More Borgerhout, less Borgerokko' was the slogan created in 1987 by the Vlaams Blok in its action against the construction of a new mosque. One year later, a nearly identical slogan ('Make Borgerokko into Borgerhout again') was used during the campaign for the local elections by a smaller and even more extreme right-wing party, The New Party.[10] Thirteen years later, the Vlaams Blok exported the theme to the neighbouring suburb of Deurne, which was being confronted with broadly the same societal problems as Borgerhout. The Vlaams Blok successfully campaigned for the 2000 local elections with the slogan 'No Borgerokko in Deurne'. Only after the party had abandoned, in 2003, its overtly xenophobic 'seventy-articles-programme' did the term Borgerokko disappear from its publications. In the everyday discourse of party activists and voters, however, the term has kept its force. As the disputes about Al-Khattabi square illustrate, the term Borgerokko still pops up fairly frequently in diverse Flemish right-wing web pages. A part of this right-wing discourse presented Borgerokko as a continuing reality, another part warned that the *real* Borgerokko was yet to come ('Will Borgerhout really be Borgerokko'?). Since Vlaams Belang has recently lost a sizeable proportion of its voters to the more moderately right-wing party Nieuw-Vlaamse Alliantie (N-VA), its radical wing has returned to a more overtly racist discourse, in which Borgerokko had its place. When in September 2012 an enormous doll of a veiled Fatima was carried

through the streets of Borgerhout as part of its age-old 'giants pageant', Vlaams Belang's populist spokesman Filip Dewinter reacted furiously on Twitter: 'Giants pageant in Borgerokko. Veiled Fatima goes through the Turnhoutsebaan. A clear symbol of islamization!'[11]

## The weakening boundaries of a politically correct moral community

Appropriation by the Vlaams Blok charged the term 'Borgerokko' with an iconic meaning in the *cordon sanitaire* that the self-proclaimed 'democratic Flanders' built around the Vlaams Blok during the 1990s. That *cordon* did not only consist of the formal agreement reached in 1989 between all other parties never to engage in a political coalition with the Vlaams Blok – it also implied an attempt to exclude that party and its followers from the 'moral community' of Flanders.[12] Avoiding the language that was used within the right-wing subculture formed part and parcel of a strategy to delineate that moral community in a clear-cut way. By using the term 'Borgerokko' – a strong marker of more or less consciously politically incorrect behaviour – one risked being ostracized from that moral community. This was even experienced by Hugo Claus, Flanders' most famous writer who since the 1960s had consistently fought right-wing and allegedly retrograde tendencies in Flemish society, and who in the 1990s actively engaged in the mobilization against the rise of the Vlaams Blok.[13] In 1995, Claus wrote the screenplay for an opera which he called *Borgerocco of de Dood in Borgerhout*. [Borgerokko or Death in Borgerhout]. As a contemporary adaptation of the myth of Thyestes, the text also contained a sharp complaint against racial prejudice. In the end, however, the opera was not performed. The official reason for this was that the composer, Frédéric Devreese, could not find a musical form for the text, whose literary quality was judged rather poor by many critics.[14] There can be little doubt, however, that the board of the Royal Flemish Opera was also afraid to venture outside the mental territory of politically correct Flanders by associating itself with the controversial term 'Borgerokko'. In spite of his enormous symbolic capital within left-wing Flanders, even Hugo Claus could not afford to blur this line between politically correct Flanders and its dark side.

The need to draw clear boundaries between 'us' and 'them' was also felt by the young journalist and author, Tom Naegels, when he was confronted by the coverage in the international press of the migrants' riots that took place in Borgerhout in 2002. Many commentators

had stressed the salient detail that Borgerhout was commonly named 'Borgerokko'.[15] Naegels, himself born and grown up in Borgerhout and a fiery though not uncritical advocate of multiculturalism,[16] was exasperated by this label. According to him, those foreign observers forgot to add that the term 'Borgerokko' was merely used by a racist minority.[17]

The ostracism with regard to the *term* Borgerokko also betrayed the wish to end the *social reality* to which it referred. 'Borgerokko should once again become Borgerhout' was an often-heard motif of this discourse. By the end of the 1990s a more optimistic variety of this same slogan appeared in the discourse of this same *milieu,* which noted with a sigh of relief that 'Borgerokko can be called Borgerhout again'. Nonetheless, when a left-wing coalition won the district elections in 2000, exactly the same observation was made once more. Borgerokko had not been that dead, after all? Only by the end of the first decade of the 21st century, this left-wing discourse more or less consistently situated the term in the field of memory: 'in the past, this neighbourhood was called Borgerokko'.[18]

Self-evidently, when left-wing intellectuals reiterated this dichotomy between Borgerhout and Borgerokko, they gave it another meaning than the Vlaams Blok and its adepts. In their view, the 'return of Borgerhout' should not be – and finally, was not – brought about by the exclusion of the Moroccan (or, more in general, North African and Middle Eastern) community, but by an active policy of urban renewal and intercultural collaboration. Nonetheless, the discursive kinship with the rhetoric of the Vlaams Blok was ambiguous. This ambiguity was all the more striking since within this left-wing discourse the recent influx of young, highly educated and culturally interested people from socially privileged native backgrounds was presented as an important symptom of this renewal of the neighbourhood. If these intellectuals interpreted the disappearance of Borgerokko in favour of Borgerhout as a cultural enrichment, their concrete diagnosis pointed more in the direction of a return to a more Flemish and 'white' character.

For those new inhabitants of Borgerhout, however, the term Borgerokko no longer served merely as an insult. In their discourse, the term appeared more or less regularly as an ironical inversion of the aggressive Vlaams Blok-motif.[19] As such, it expressed a positive expectation toward their self-chosen new surroundings. In their discourse, 'Borgerokko' did not symbolize a sense of alienation from what once had been familiar, but, on the contrary, an identification with an adventurous, multicultural world. Those expectations equally become

manifest in some of the aforementioned postcards. Without actually using the term 'Borgerokko', several of them did convey the motif of Borgerhout being a good place for an 'internal holiday' in a positive way. 'I like living in Borgerhout', thus one of them read, 'for ... I do not have to travel around the world in order to get acquainted with other cultures'. Recently, some intellectuals and artists living in Borgerhout have explicitly identified with Borgerokko.[20]

In these positive re-appropriations of the term, it was not the regained 'whiteness' of the neighbourhood that was highlighted, but rather the ever more diverse and therefore multi-coloured character of its immigrant community. Recently, the main chronicler and admirer of this new multicultural Borgerhout, Walter Lotens, coined the term 'Borgerokko-Plus' in order to describe the neighbourhood of his choice.[21] During the preceding decade, however, alternative combinations had started to be disseminated. Between 2001 and 2005, a music festival was organized under the title 'Borgerock'. The district mayor of Borgerhout, the Christian Democrat Walter Van den Branden, found this name unacceptable because of its kinship with Borgerokko, but he was unable to get it changed.[22] When in 2007 a local multicultural festival funded by the city of Antwerp was baptized 'Borgerrio', even this kind of reticence had disappeared. Self-evidently, that part of the notion which had been experienced as problematic ('-rokko') had been replaced by a notion bearing predominantly a festive and exotic connotation.

Not all recent re-adaptations of the term, however, bear these positive connotations. Very recently, district mayor Marij Preneel of the ecology party Groen! asserted that the time of Borgerokko had long gone, and that nowadays the term 'Borgeroshka' was already starting to be heard in the district.[23] This new neologism contains a reference to a newer wave of Russian and Eastern European immigration, which is often associated with criminal and mafia-style practices. The fact, however, that both positive and negative derivatives of the original 'Borgerokko' flourish, shows to which degree even progressive inhabitants of Borgerhout are prepared to reckon this initially abhorrent term to their generally accepted cultural heritage. At the same time, however, variations of the word – with its originally negative connotation – have been introduced in other Flemish towns where the massive presence of North African immigrants (often second or third generation) is experienced as a societal problem. Thus, Antwerp's neighbouring town, Boom, suffering from massive unemployment due to the decay of its traditional industry, has recently been labelled 'Boomerokko'.[24]

## A divided immigrant community

With this creative appropriation of the term 'Borgerokko' and of the 'Borgerhout holiday-destination' motif, those new inhabitants of Borgerhout did what Hugo Claus had attempted years before: they tried to close the profound gap between the politically correct progressive intellectuals and the strong ethnocentric tendencies in popular culture. Interestingly, in Claus's opera libretto, the only figure actually to use the word 'Borgerokko' is the Northern African women migrant Fadoea. She is learning Dutch with the help of a tape recording of the Assimil courses which were extremely popular throughout the 1970s and 1980s. When the voice on the tape asks her where she is, Fadoea answers impulsively:

> In Borgerhout, sir policeman
> Or to be more precise in Borgerokko
> In Borgerokko, where I live
> And where my child will be born,
> Where my children will be born[25]

This explanation reveals a certain, though not unproblematic identification of Fadoea with her place of immigration. This kind of identification did not only exist in Claus's world of fiction. One year before the appearance of Claus's opera libretto, it had already been publicly manifested by Fatima Bali, who during that period was famous for being the first politician of North African descent in Flanders. The then 28-year-old politician of the Green Party Agalev (later to become Groen!) published an autobiography in 1994 with the title *Mijn leven in Borgerokko* [*My life in Borgerokko*]. On the first page of this book, she acknowledged that many readers would blame her for the use of that term. But, she replied thus: 'Borgerokko is [...] not an insult for me. It is the only word I know describing poignantly the image that Borgerhout evokes for me'.[26] That image was of two cultures living harmoniously side by side.

The critics of Bali's use of the term were probably to be found both among her native fellow party-members and within the Moroccan community to which she herself belonged. If the resistance of the first group was directed against the racist potential of the term, the attitude of the Moroccan community appears to have been more complex. Instead of plainly rejecting the term, a part of the Moroccan community in Borgerhout appropriated it in order to use it in the context of an internal Moroccan dispute. Asked in 1999 by a social geographer whether

she liked to live in Borgerhout, a young Arab-speaking Moroccan woman gave a generally positive answer. She disliked, however, being time and again associated by her family members living in the Northern suburbs of Antwerp with 'Borgerokko'. 'I hate that word Borgerokko', she added. 'It is as if we are coming from the mountains or such a thing'.[27] This suggests that at least some Arab Moroccans used the term in order to distance themselves from the (predominant) Berber part of the Moroccan immigrant community.

The negative use of the term Borgerokko within the immigrant community bore in some cases even more similarities with the meaning that had been given to it by the Vlaams Blok. By using the term in a negative way – as is attested by several posts on the internet – some of them distinguish themselves from what they consider to be the 'bad', the uprooted Moroccans, notably youngsters who hang out on the streets and engage in criminal behaviour. This was the kind of reaction that urged the Moroccan-born Antwerp politician Mimount Bisakla in May 2007 to leave the socialist party in favour of the right-wing populist Lijst-De Decker. For Bousakla, the socialist party was too dominated by multiculturalist ideology to see the real problems aroused by a part of the immigrant community from which she had sprung.

Although Bousakla did not use the term 'Borgerokko', she was confronted with it in an extremely violent reaction to her political choice. A video clip uploaded to the internet by the rap-band Bagdad 2060 contained the sentence 'Mimount Bousakla, I tell you once more, come to Borgerokko and I shoot you to dead'.[28] This use of the term 'Borgerokko' suggests that its initially stigmatizing connotations are appropriated by at least part of the immigrant community in Borgerhout in order to strengthen their subversive collective identification. For them, Borgerokko served as a sort of beggars' name, symbolizing both the social marginalization and the staunch resistance of the immigrant community. That was also the meaning given to the term in 2006 by a young man with Moroccan background at the occasion of his release from prison. Addressing his guards, he had shouted: 'I return to Borgerokko and then I will fuck your mothers and sisters'.[29] Whereas Fatima Bali had used the term as a symbol and a vehicle of integration, these subversive youngsters recur to it in order to preach a self-chosen isolation.[30]

Borgerhout citizens of Moroccan descent could, however, also combine the 'integrationist' and the dissident use of term 'Borgerokko'. This stance is illustrated by a young woman who has been very active since 2005 on the Dutch internet-community marokko.nl under the profile name 'borgerokko'. In more than 5000 interventions on the forum, she asks and

gives advice on nearly all aspects of the life of a young Muslim woman in a Belgian town, and persistently does so from the viewpoint of the Koran. As such, she pleads for the maintenance of religious identity and orthodoxy as well as for integration into Belgian society.

## Conclusion

Whoever invented the term 'Borgerokko' must have been a sociolinguistic genius. Although probably entirely unconscious of it, he (the chance that it was a she seems rather small given the term's origins in the predominantly male *milieu* of the popular pubs of the 1970s) created with this contraction of words a powerful metonymy for all confrontations between identity and alterity. As such, it could start a more or less unlikely – and therefore also sinuous – rise up the cultural ladder, making it the opposite of what anthropologists call *gesunkenes Kulturgut*.[31] 'Borgerokko' manifestly expresses the alienation brought about by this encounter, and also, at least implicitly, the hope of restoring identity by removing 'the other' from the local society. This was probably the originally intended meaning of the term, and certainly the one that the right-wing populist party Vlaams Blok applied to it when using it in its electoral campaigns. But precisely because the metonymy has a much broader reach, these right-wing populist forces have never been able fully to monopolize it. Other segments of society did abhor the term, but used it nonetheless, because it could equally express the hope for a successful integration in a new surrounding, or on the contrary the refusal to be integrated at all. Still others exploit the term – in an ironical and mainly non-public way – in order to express their longing for a more tolerant society. As such, Borgerokko is much more than a site of memory for an extreme-right and intolerant Flanders. Essentially, it has become a locally embedded icon for the hopes and despair of a globalizing world.

## Notes

1. This is an extended, fully referenced, translated and updated version of an essay first published as 'Borgerokko. Hoop en wanhoop van de multiculturele samenleving', (Beyen, 2006).
2. Jonathan Beirnaerts, 'Borgerhout kiest Terloplein boven Al-Khattabiplein', *Nieuwsblad.be*, 2 December 2013.
3. http://www.clint.be/actua/wordt-borgerhout-echt-borgerokko, accessed 29 October 2014.
4. http://rechtsactueel.com/2013/12/02/vb-voert-morgen-in-borgerhout-actie-al-khattabiplein-wordt-terloplein-goed-maar-dit-is-slechts-het-begin/, accessed 29 October 2014.

5. Attar, 1993, 'De geschiedenis van de Maghrebijnse immigratie'; Khoojinian, 2006, 'L'accueil et la stabilization des travailleurs immigrés'; Specifically for Borgerhout, see: De Vroey, 2011–2012, 'De Turnhoutsebaan in Borgerhout'.
6. *At Home in Europe Project, Muslims in Antwerp*, 2011, pp. 22–23.
7. For an example, dating from as early as 1968, see: http://www.europeana.eu/portal/record/09003/1BF1EFF5A6CA553FAA8AB401BADFB6E498649F71.html, accessed 30 October 2014.
8. All the texts of the postcards are to be found in: Schepers and Leenders, 2000, *Groeten uit Borgerhout*.
9. On the history of this party, see: Beyen, 2006, 'Flemish Bloc'.
10. 'Extreem-rechts geïnfiltreerd in partij Paul Marchal', R. Gollin, *De Volkskrant*, 14 September 1998.
11. https://twitter.com/FDW_VB/status/247581505503772672, accessed 30 October 2014.
12. On this *cordon sanitaire,* see: Beyen and Destatte, 2009, *Un autre pays*, pp. 134.
13. On Hugo Claus's political commitment, see: Absillis et al. (eds.), 2013, *De plicht van de dichter.*
14. In 2010, it was announced that music for the text would be written by the famous Dutch pop composer Henny Vrienten, and that the opera would ultimately be presented at the Rotterdam Opera Days of 2012. However, the project seems to have failed once more. See: 'Henny Vrienten schrijft Claus-opera', *Volkskrant.nl*, 15 April, 2010.
15. See, for example, 'Wijk "Borgerokko" na rellen soort oorlogszone', C. De Gruyter, *NRC*, 28 November 2002.
16. This stance is amply illustrated in his novel *Los* (Antwerp, Meuleunhoff/Manteau, 2005).
17. 'Internationale sterreporters. Buitenlandse journalisten maken er een potje van', Tom Naegels, *De Standaard*, 19 February 2005.
18. See, for example, 'Anne Provoost, schrijfster, en Manu Claeys, activist. Gesprek met een Borgerhouts koppel', S. Tormans, *Knack*, 20 March 2013.
19. As such, the author of this article received an email from one of his friends who moved to Borgerhout in 2008, stating: 'moved to our new paradise [...] Borgeri-Borgerhout-Borgerocco'.
20. Among them the poet and performer Vital Baeken, better known as Vitalski ('Hoe vervang je een allochtoon?') and the actor Bart van Avermaet, known for his role in the extremely popular soap *Thuis* ('Borgerhout is mooiste stukje België dat er bestaat', *Gazet van Antwerpen*, 18 January 2013).
21. Lotens, 2010, 'Het leven zoals het is: het Krugerpark', as well as his 2010 monograph *Groeten uit Borgerhout*.
22. 'Borgerock op de wip', *Gazet van Antwerpen*, 8 April 2003.
23. 'De verkleuring en verjonging van Borgerhout vallen niet te stoppen', W. Pauli, *Knack*, 1 May 2013.
24. 'Bij Rita en Robert in Boom: "We willen wel doorgaan, maar onze spirit is gebroken"', *Het Laatste Nieuws*, 23 July 2012.
25. Claus, 1998, *Borgerocco*, p. 16.
26. Bali, 1994, *Mijn leven in Borgerokko*.
27. I would like to thank the social geographer Kathleen Peleman for offering me this quotation, which she gathered in the context of her doctoral research

on the social participation of Moroccan women in a spatial perspective (see her unpublished PhD-thesis 'De rol van de buurt', 2001).

28. See 'Politici en Antwerpse politie bedreigd in rapnummer', *Het Laatste Nieuws*, 5 March, 2008.
29. 'Gevangene vecht met cipiers op moment van vrijlating', *Gazet van Antwerpen*, 2 September 2006.
30. That this use of the term is fairly generalized among male youngsters in the Moroccan community of Borgerhout, is also suggested in: Foblets, Djait and Pieters (eds.), 2004, *Mietjes en macho's*, 206.
31. The reproduction of elements of high culture by lower social classes. A similar movement was noted by Dorothy Noyes in the adoption of peasants' dress by the late eighteenth-century Madrilese aristocracy ('La Maja Vestida', p. 202).

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# 13

# Memories on the Move: The Italian Student Movement of 1977 between Local, National and Global Memories of Protest

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In December 2008, the following graffiti text appeared in a street in Bologna, a popular university city in the north of Italy: 'Francesco and Alexis are alive!' (Figure 13.1). The text was written beneath a glass plate which covers the bullet holes that serve as a painful reminder of the death of left-wing student Francesco Lorusso, killed by a police officer during clashes between students and police forces, on 11 March 1977. On 6 December 2008, a similar incident occurred in Greece, when 15-year old Alexandros 'Alexis' Grigoropoulos was killed by two policemen during riots in Exarchia, an Athens suburb with a high population of far-left activists and anarchist groups. Much like in Bologna, when the public prosecutor investigating Lorusso's death ignored eyewitness accounts and other suggestions that the police officer had aimed at Lorusso's body and had been in no real danger at the time of the shooting, the Greek police officers claimed they acted out of self-defence and did not aim at head height.[1] The graffiti text written under the glass plate in Bologna represents, then, a very clear re-activation of the collective memory of the Lorusso incident in the present. In the field of memory studies this phenomenon is referred to as 'memory transfer', which Ann Rigney defines as follows: 'With the help of various media and memorial forms later generations recall things *other* people experienced, and do so from the conviction that those past experiences have something to do with the sense of "our history"'.[2]

The case of Lorusso's death on 11 March 1977 represents an important incident in the local history of Bologna, producing a deep wound which has never really healed and which turned Lorusso into a symbol of victimhood and resistance for years to come. This memory has been fundamental in the maintenance and creation of alternative, left-wing


*Figure 13.1* A glass plate in Bologna covering the bullet holes left by a police officer who shot dead left-wing student Francesco Lorusso in March 1977. © Andrea Hajek 2014

group identities in Bologna throughout the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s, both for the former members of the student movement of 1977 and for younger generations of (radical) left-wing activists. However, globalization and technological innovation have widened the array of potential models and modes of anti-authoritarian resistance. Drawing on the case study of the 1977 incidents in Bologna, this chapter addresses the question of how contentious memories of protest circulate and travel across time and space, and what the impact of globalization and decentralization is on the creation of collective memories and identities

of protest in the present.[3] I shall trace developments in the collective memory of Lorusso and the events of March 1977 over the past thirty years by exploring how the former student movement of 1977 has used this memory for the construction of a group identity, and how this memory was fitted into a wider, national and global perspective in different periods of time.[4]

## The moral duty of remembering

The cases of both Francesco Lorusso and 'Alexis' represent memories 'from below', or what have also been defined counter-memories.[5] These memories are produced by marginalized communities which oppose themselves to hegemonic views of the past, 'who have been "left out", as it were, of mainstream history'.[6] In recent times, the cultural demise of 'authoritative memory' has allowed counter-memories to proliferate, leading to the spread of 'community-based small memories' and, subsequently, the 'pluralization and problematization of memory'.[7] Counter-memories are therefore mostly locally or regionally based memories, often related to traumatic experiences: 'The core meaning of group identity, namely a sense of sameness over time and space, is sustained by counter-memory, which, as a source for continued confrontation with and reflection about the past, provides a unique representation and interpretation of traumatic events'.[8]

From this it follows that counter-memories often represent a moral duty to remember traumatic incidents that have been silenced by dominant master narratives, and which risk repetition.[9] This duty is transmitted to future generations through 'memory transfers', a particularly relevant concept for the understanding of the relation between Francesco Lorusso and more recent victims of police violence like Alexis in Greece. Although the student protests that erupted in early 1977 were the direct reaction to a disputed educational reform, their origins must be traced back to the economic crisis of 1973, which affected young people most. The politics of austerity and sacrifices, in particular, worsened the situation as they went against the changing lifestyles and expectations of younger generations. Other crucial factors in the rise of a new protest movement in 1977 include the decision of the Italian Communist Party (hereafter, PCI) – after coming in second in the national elections of 1976 – to indirectly support the oppositional Christian Democratic Party, in view of the so-called 'historical compromise', a political project which foresaw an alliance between the two parties.[10] This led to a sense of betrayal among both old and young generations of

left-wing militants, who had voted for the Communists in the hope of some sort of radical political change. The crisis and dissolution of the so-called extra-parliamentary groups of the alternative left further contributed to a sense of political void among many young, disillusioned left-wing activists.

Bologna was the most successful Communist governed city at the time. Consequently, the conflict between the authorities and the student population during the protests of 1977 was particularly intense: after all, any flaw in this perfect example of Communist leadership was highly inappropriate in a time when the PCI was attempting to gain more political authority and respect. Nevertheless, Bologna became the stage of a highly dramatic incident when, on the morning of 11 March 1977, clashes between police and left-wing students got out of hand, resulting in the death of Francesco Lorusso at the hands of a police officer. In the afternoon, Lorusso's outraged companions devastated parts of the city centre during a protest march, which provoked an even severer repression by both the local and national authorities: on Sunday 13 March, the army was called to intervene, literally occupying the university zone – which had by now become a battlefield, complete with barricades. The incident provoked a downward spiral in the protests, and at the end of 1977, the student movement eventually collapsed.[11]

The incidents of March 1977 have come to represent a traumatic memory for large parts of the community, from Lorusso's family and political comrades to the local community at large, which has been commemorated in different ways by different memory agents. If Lorusso's family focused its efforts on obtaining truth and justice for Lorusso as a *person*, trying for example to have the police investigations reopened by putting pressure on local politicians, and Lorusso's figure rehabilitated in the public sphere, the alternative left remembered him rather as a symbol of the ideological values the student movement of 1977 had fought for as well as a victim of state repression.[12] In this perspective, Lorusso was more than a dead person to be commemorated, and his memory was used instead to denounce not only Lorusso's death but any form of violence or repression used against left-wing militants. In other words, it provoked a very strong, moral duty to remember not simply a personal, but especially, a social injustice.

## 'Francesco is alive and fights along with us'

This is most evident in the first memory site, or *lieu de memoire*, that was dedicated to Lorusso in Bologna.[13] Memory sites help preserve and store information, thus offering a communal reference point where

memories converge, providing 'common frame-works for appropriating the past'.[14] Almost instantly after the incidents of 11 March, friends and political comrades placed an unauthorized, marble plaque dedicated to Lorusso on a wall near the spot where he had been shot, in Via Mascarella (Figure 13.2). The plaque was placed during the 32nd celebration of the Liberation from Fascism and Nazism on 25 April 1977, a symbolic date which suggested an ideological connection – between the anti-Fascist Resistance movement and the student movement of 1977 – which was frequently made in left-wing circles in those years.[15] The


*Figure 13.2* The unauthorized marble plaque commemorating Lorusso on a wall near the spot where he had been shot, in Via Mascarella, Bologna. © Andrea Hajek 2014

plaque thus represents a spontaneous and anti-institutional, highly political memory site, created almost instantly after the incidents and placed without permission or intervention from authorities. This, as well as the specific form of this memory site, that is, a marble plaque, allowed Lorusso's friends to produce a more tangible counter-memory than, for example, a graffiti text or a bouquet of decaying flowers. Although the choice of a marble plaque as the *medium* through which to transmit this message reflects a highly traditional and conventional form of commemoration, it may indeed give this counter-memory a more visible and enduring form, hence perhaps also the choice of revealing the plaque during a national bank holiday. This was all the more necessary considering the lack of public 'agreement' or consensus on the injustice of Lorusso's death, Lorusso not being an entirely innocent victim and the public opinion on the student movement being predominantly negative.[16] In other words, it required a more institutional and commonly shared form of remembering for the transmission of this memory to a wider public.

In striking contrast to the official, monumental medium of the remembrance, the commemorative text is unconventional and strongly opposed to the official interpretation of Lorusso's death as a 'tragic' incident.[17] It reads as follows:

> THE COMPANIONS OF / FRANCESCO LORUSSO /
> HERE / ASSASSINATED BY THE FEROCIOUS REGIME'S ARMY /
> ON 11 MARCH 1977 /
> KNOW / THAT HIS IDEA / OF EQUALITY LIBERTY AND LOVE /
> WILL SURVIVE ALL CRIMES /
> FRANCESCO IS ALIVE AND FIGHTS ALONG WITH US

Clearly the text does not focus on Lorusso as a person but on the persistence of the ideals he had died for, and which he shared with the rest of the student movement: thus the grammatical subject of the text is not Lorusso but his 'companions'. This demonstrates that the plaque is, first and foremost, an attempt at reinforcing a sense of belonging within the Movement of 1977 as well as a rejection of the concept of 'commemorating' in the traditional sense of the word. This links in with the fact that the student movement performed an experimental and collective way of remembering, which reflected a tendency – in the 1970s in general – to represent the past as 'live' history rather than dead memory.[18] As one of Lorusso's former companions and friends observed, 'nobody ever wanted to create a "commemoration", because it doesn't

belong to us, it's not the "commemorating": it's keeping alive, so to speak, a memory, being present, but we don't like the idea of commemoration'.[19] At the same time the text recalls the local plaques commemorating partisan heroes who had been killed during the anti-Fascist Resistance in Bologna, thus again creating an ideological link with the Resistance movement. This as well as the fact that the commemorative text does not make explicit references to Lorusso's person or the specific historic context of his death allows connections not only with previous moments of repression, such as the anti-Fascist Resistance, but also keeps the text open for future interpretations. As such it represents a duty to remember and a monument that aims at '[precipitating] new actions in the social or political sphere'.[20]

The idea of a memory as 'a source for continued confrontation with and reflection about the past' was furthermore reflected in an annual protest march that took place in the afternoon of 11 March, from 1978 to 1997.[21] The march was intended as a sort of political statement and contrasted with the commemoration that was held in the morning, in front of the commemorative plaque in Via Mascarella which had eventually become the 'official' memory site for Lorusso. In the first years, the march attracted thousands of people, but throughout the 1980s, the number of participants in the march gradually went down and 'living' memory started to make way for discussions about the appropriate manner to *remember* the events. This was also due to internal conflicts and divisions, which were particularly evident during the tenth anniversary of the incidents: in 1987, a number of former protagonists in the student movement organized a so-called 'human chain of solidarity', where they attempted to encourage some sort of reconciliation both with the city and with other members of the former student movement. The latter did not, however, agree with this initiative and strongly criticized it.[22]

Tensions between the various subgroups of the former student movement of 1977 had indeed grown throughout the late 1970s and 1980s. Often these were nurtured by divergent opinions about violence. In 1980, for example, Autonomia Operaia – an extra-parliamentary group which represented the more radical side of the alternative left in the 1970s – criticized the former student movement for linking Lorusso, on a banner for the annual procession on 11 March, to a member of the Prima Linea (Front Line) terrorist group who had collaborated with police and who had subsequently been killed by his former terrorist companions.[23] Lorusso was in fact often connected to other victims of political violence in those years, mostly

students and left-wing sympathizers who had been killed by police or by neo-fascists, most notably Roberto Franceschi, a left-wing student killed by police forces during an occupation of the Bocconi University in Milan, in 1973.[24]

Local authorities, on the other hand, equated Lorusso to victims of terrorism in an attempt to inscribe themselves into the collective memory of the incidents and, eventually, come to terms with this difficult past. The 1970s had witnessed various bomb attacks.[25] With the dramatic increase in terrorist attacks during the second half of the 1970s, the incidents of 1977 in Bologna were interpreted – by the governing Communist Party in Bologna – as a significant rupture which had created a breach between the local youth community and authorities. Considering the ambiguous role of the authorities in Lorusso's death, the only way to try to regain confidence and credibility – all the while maintaining its position as a respectable and uncompromising party, worthy of governing the country along with the Christian Democrats – was by stripping Lorusso of his ideological identity and inserting him into a wider discourse on violence, where the fact that Lorusso's killer was an employee of the state and not a terrorist was omitted. This equation mostly occurred on a local level: thus Lorusso's memory was connected to that of a Bolognese woman who had died in a terrorist attack in 1979, and to the victims of a bomb massacre at the Bologna railway station in 1980.[26] This as opposed to the student movement which, as we have seen, commemorated Lorusso not as an individual victim but as a symbol of values that were shared by the entire student movement, in Bologna as in the rest of Italy, and as a symbol of injustice, another problem which affected – again – the entire student movement in Italy.

In the early 1990s, generational tensions added to the situation. This began back in 1987, when younger generations of students had grasped the occasion of the annual political march to assault hamburger houses while chanting anti-American slogans, which was not much appreciated by some of those who simply wanted to commemorate Lorusso. In 1990, the new student movement 'Pantera' openly criticized both the Italian Communist Party and a few former leaders of the student movement.[27] During the twentieth anniversary of Lorusso's death in 1997, finally, some former leaders of the movement literally clashed with a group of students involved in a protest of their own against the University of Bologna. The conflict began with a discussion over who was to lead the annual protest march, which was eventually 'won' by the students. More incidents occurred during the march, including a

so-called 'expropriation' by the students of a book store founded by left-wing revolutionary legend Giangiacomo Feltrinelli, one of the icons of the alternative Left in the 1970s. Exponents of the older generation had tried to stop the students and subsequently criticized their behaviour, although it must be said that the expropriators did not, of course, represent the entire student movement of 1977. Nevertheless, this demonstrates that the incidents of March 1977 – and Lorusso's status as a left-wing rebel and a victim of dominant the state – had become a model for a new struggle against institutions, and was incorporated into the current students' own, collective memory.

## The convergence of memories

If, back in 1997, this was still a predominantly local memory, in the late 1990s and 2000s Lorusso's memory opened up to national and global influences, in particular after the death of Carlo Giuliani at the G8 summit in Genoa, in 2001 and – more recently – the death of Alexis in Greece, as we have seen.

The similarities between the Giuliani and the Lorusso case went beyond the fact that both were killed by police officers – who were absolved – during violent clashes: the incidents in 2001, as in 1977, were accompanied by polemical debates about what exactly happened, and resulted in Giuliani becoming a symbol for the left, much like Lorusso. Local and national memories of the two cases most explicitly converged in 2002, during the 25th anniversary of 11 March, which was also the first anniversary of Giuliani's death in Genoa.[28] Giuliani's parents were present at the ceremony, which was attended by some 100 – mostly young – people, a record compared to the previous years when attendance of the commemoration had plummeted to a low. Indeed, from 2002 onwards younger generations of sympathizers began participating increasingly in the commemoration, and the following words by Giuliani's father perhaps best illustrate the value of a direct, living memory of similar traumatic events: '[T]hose who have not experienced 1977 in person can perhaps only now appreciate the profound significance of an event which has marked an entire generation'.[29] Thus, younger generations of activists got their 'own' Francesco Lorusso on whom to draw in the creation of a political identity, and Lorusso became part of a wider spectrum of (national and international) models of resistance.

In 2003, Lorusso's memory was inserted into a global perspective as well, when the Iraq war was used to connect the values of Lorusso and

of the student movement of 1977 to contemporary anti-war sentiments. A rainbow peace flag was hung underneath the commemorative plaque in Via Mascarella, and a well-known pacifist and left-leaning priest close to the *Movimento no-global*, the anti-globalization movement, participated in the commemoration. Lorusso's father Agostino noted the importance of commemorating Lorusso 'in this period of renewed impulse of pacifist sentiments, for which Francesco, too, had fought'.[30] At the same time the deaths of Lorusso and Giuliani were linked back to the local sphere, as both Lorusso's father and Giuliani's parents participated, that same year, in the annual commemoration of the Bologna railway massacre on 2 August, where they switched paper signs with the names of their sons written on it, carrying them around their necks during the protest march.[31]

The convergence of the memories of Lorusso and Alexis, finally, occurred in a different political and economic context and was 'performed' mostly by young activists from local social centres. In 2008 the financial crisis had only just begun, and the clashes in Athens, in December of that year, were thus placed into a wider discourse of anti-austerity and anti-capitalism protests. Moreover, during a violent demonstration on 10 December 2008, a few days after the death of Alexis in Athens, where activists protested in front of the Greek embassy in Bologna, the memory of Alexis was explicitly connected to that of Giuliani in the reproduction – during the demonstration – of the slogan used also in the commemorative plaque for Lorusso: 'Carlo is alive and fights along with us / Alexis is alive and fights along with us'.[32] At the same time, the death of Alexis called back memories of the incidents in 1977, as we have seen at the beginning of this chapter. This demonstrates how younger generations in the 2000s do not draw purely on global memories of protest and injustice, and that local memories such as the death of Lorusso continue to have importance for the development of a political identity for these generations, as we shall see in the next section.

## Local, global and 'glocal' memories: Two case studies

A good example of how memories of 1977 have been appropriated by younger generations who did not experience the events personally but who look to the past for models on which to base their own identity is presented by Crash, a political collective that originated around 2003, drawing on close connections with members of the former Autonomia Operaia (Worker's Autonomy). The group began manifesting itself in

particular after the election of Sergio Cofferati as mayor of Bologna in 2004 – Cofferati proved to be particularly intolerant towards the collective and its squatting activities.[33] Crash builds on both the legacy of the Proletarian Youth Clubs that originated in 1975, and on the 'tough' and violent image of the *autonomi*, or what one former participant in the Movement of 1977 defined as a 'barricade myth'.[34] The name of the group, its logo (a crash helmet) as well as other symbols reproduced in graffiti or on banners, for example, have strong connotations of violence, while the dark dress code, the anti-institutional slogans – often echoing the rhetoric of protest groups in the 1970s – and the almost militaristic attitude during demonstrations and confrontations with the police evoke further memories of Autonomia Operaia.[35]

Throughout the years, Crash has attempted to construct a social centre which would incarnate the ideal of 'making society' that characterized the ideology of the social movements in the 1970s, most notably the *autonomi*. Contrary to the groups of the past, though, the crisis of the traditional self that inhabits our postmodern age has promoted a form of 'making society' not in a territorial or local sense but in 'glocal' terms. This refers to the creation of 'other places' not just in opposition to the nation state, but also in opposition to the capitalist world economy. As Aldo Bonomi states, 'no locally grounded agent exists independently of the ways in which that agent is shaped by global forces'.[36] In other words, these groups do not exist in a local or territorial context, nor in a purely global one. Society is 'made' by creating networks where people 'simulate a community'.[37] As philosopher Paolo Virno observes, nothing now unites these groups with respect to the productive process, though everything unites them with regard to processes of socialization: 'What is common are their emotional tonalities, their inclinations, their mentalities, and their expectations.'[38] 'Making society' is, then, not a belonging to a specific group but a belonging as such.

The political identity of Crash is not, however, limited to the legacy of the Italian 1970s alone: it identifies with a variety of recent and older, national and international models of rebellion and protest against authorities, e.g. the Palestinian resistance in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, the struggle for independence in the Spanish Basque Country or the more recent Occupy movements across the world. In 2009, for example, Crash reopened an archive that the former Autonomia Operaia had dedicated, in 1994, to Lorusso: the Antagonist Documentary Centre 'Francesco Lorusso'.[39] The name of the archive was changed to 'Dans la rue' ('In the street'), which called back to mind the clashes of 2005

between immigrants and authorities in the Parisian *banlieues*. This was reflected in graffiti art painted on the walls of a building Crash had occupied in that period, which depicted burning cars and silhouettes of what looked like the French rioters of 2005, accompanied by the slogan 'From the peripheries of the metropolis, let's take back the streets!'. Graffiti generally play an important role not only in the re-appropriation of public space, much as the graffiti in 1977 did, but they also help give shape to and consolidate the group's political identity.

Nevertheless, Crash maintains a strong connection with the specific incidents of March 1977 in Bologna, for example by participating in the annual commemoration in Via Mascarella and, more importantly, through the re-issue of one of the key texts of the Movement of 1977: *Bologna marzo 1977… fatti nostri…*, during the 30th anniversary of 2007. Two younger members of Crash had involved one of the older members of the local Autonomia Operaia group in the writing of an afterword to this re-issue, where they connected March 1977 to the contemporary situation in Bologna.[40] The new edition is, therefore, not intended as a form of commemoration in the classical sense of the word, but as an instrument to help understand the origins of current problems in society and, in particular, in the local context of present-day Bologna, and to learn from the choices that were made in the past in order to deal more adequately with future issues. In other words, it expresses a duty to remember in the present and for present purposes:

> [W]e are convinced that it is possible to believe that *fatti nostri* could be useful for companions and militants today, or simply for anyone who believes that it is fundamental to continue reinterpreting the history of a generation, that of '77, for it is alive, still speaks to us who live in a diverse reality. For it can be of value to return to the origins of phenomena which are currently deployed [...] in order to engage in dialogue with the protagonists of a cycle of struggles and to understand and evaluate the choices that were made in the antagonist movement, and more generally in order to further refine our arms for a future cycle of battles.[41]

During the presentation of the volume, furthermore, Crash sold a CD which consisted of photographic and audiovisual material of 1977.[42] Cartoon images of *autonomi* launching Molotov bottles at armoured vehicles in Bologna on the front and back cover of the CD again revealed the presence of the 'barricade myth', as well as a strong visual identification with, and collective memory of, the former Autonomia

Operaia in the specific context of Bologna, which is made recognisable by the outline of its characteristic porticoes.

A second local youth community that has appropriated the memory of 1977 in Bologna is the Rete Universitaria, a network of political collectives within the university that originated in the wake of the G8 summit in Genoa and the mobilizations against the war in Iraq. The Rete was most active during the national protests against educational reforms in 2005. It aimed at the re-appropriation of important public spaces of youth gathering and socialization, among which was the Piazza Verdi square in the heart of the university zone, an important place in the collective memory of the student movement of 1977.[43] This was largely a reaction to the severe public order measures taken by Mayor Cofferati in 2004, which obviously also affected university life, and so again we see how present issues bring memory communities to 'recuperate' and reactivate past memories.

Similarly, recourse to ironic and satirical graffiti as a means of protest and identity construction during these protests again brought back memories of the 1970s: thus, the walls of one of the occupied university buildings were covered with a series of ironic graffiti which recalled the work of local cartoon icon Andrea Pazienza and other graffiti drawings that have become famous in the local, collective memory of 1977.

An even more explicit reference to the protests of 1977 consisted in the renaming of a lecture hall after Lorusso, during the protests of 2005, which again reflected the idea of reclaiming public spaces. A former member of the Rete Universitaria explained to me that all students active in the network were relatively familiar with the story of Lorusso's death: in his judgement, this incident was well known among the local, left-wing antagonist groups, perhaps due in part to the wide attention given to the protests of 1977 in a popular alternative magazine of the left, *Zic*.[44] Apparently Lorusso's name popped up somewhat 'automatically' during discussions about the occupation, and although the death of Carlo Giuliani in Genoa represented a more direct memory for this generation, considering also that many of the students involved in the protests had physically been in Genoa, in 2001, the incidents of March 1977 nevertheless seem to have weighed more in the discussion. This is due both to the strong local component in Lorusso's memory, as well as to the similar contexts of the protests:

> Considering that the initiative was conducted in an *academic* context, the university being the political counterpart, we felt it was appropriate to link the memory of Francesco's story to the occupation: and in

> order to underline, [...] the (repressive) role of the university *also* in the days of March '77.[45]

Although this implies the existence of a collective, local memory of 1977 among these younger generations, personal contacts between the Rete Universitaria and former members of the student movement of 1977 also played an essential role in this appropriation of the memory of 1977. Thus, the Rete collaborated with the Documentary Centre 'Francesco Lorusso – Carlo Giuliani' which is located in a local social centre. It holds a collection of newspapers, material produced by the student movement as well as documentation on the Giuliani case, and its principal aim is that of transferring the historical memory of cultural, political and social experiences of the recent past to the present, which is precisely what happened in its interaction with Rete Universitatia.[46]

The appropriation of the local memory of 1977 by the Rete Universitaria is furthermore reflected in the rhetorical style of a flyer distributed during the inauguration, where Lorusso's memory again converges with that of Giuliani:

> The images of 1977, *as* the images of Genoa, had to be protected from that enemy which, [...], cannot claim the final victory for as long as there is *a present which recognizes its own significance in that past*, which sees, in that struggle, a chapter of its own fight.[47]

The memory of Lorusso's death serves as a lesson for the present, and needs to be protected from oblivion so as to continue the battle which the two movements have in common, 'with the knowledge and the strength that result from being a part of a conflict which is older than many lives, the outcome of which is still uncertain':

> [I]t is not enough to preserve the memory: one must claim its currency. To return a memory to the present, to make it current, means having the courage to trace and to claim lines of continuity which connect those battles with our battles, the homicide in Bologna with the homicide in Genoa, in the common horizon of a hope; a hope more pressing than ever.[48]

In 2006, finally, the connection with the Giuliani case was once again put in the spotlight in two banners the Rete Universitaria brought to the annual commemoration of 11 March in Via Mascarella, one of which read 'Francesco and Carlo live in our battles', once again recalling the

famous slogan 'Francesco is alive and fights along with us'. The second banner, which employed an even more dramatic vocabulary, reflects that sense of memory duty we also witnessed in the case of Crash, as well as the transfer of a public memory of 1977 to modern times: 'We must not forget the silence and the lies. We will not forget Carlo and we will not forget Genoa. We shout that Francesco and Carlo live on in our battles'.[49]

## Conclusion: From urban to rural resistance

Over the past few years a different trend has, however, set in. Since the rise of the anti-globalization movement and the involvement of the alternative left in the No Tav battle in the Valle di Susa near Turin, since the late 1990s, protest identities have increasingly drawn on this second frame of protest.[50] Initially a local battle promoted mostly by environmental associations and inhabitants of the Valle di Susa area, with the explosion of the Movimento no-global it subsequently extended beyond regional borders, involving young people from across the country. In the last couple of years, members of various social centres such as Crash have indeed engaged in what has become a truly national battle, and hence an intrinsic part of the collective identity of left-wing activists in Italy. In other words, the No Tav movement represents a local conflict which has been appropriated by activists on a national scale.

I believe that this has contributed to a move from a predominantly urban to an extra-urban and, increasingly, rural context of protest which was reflected, most recently, in the active involvement of a number of left-wing youth groups in a grassroots human aid project, following an earthquake that struck the hinterland of Bologna in May 2012. Crash and a social centre from Modena, a city to the north of Bologna which was particularly affected by the earthquake, set up a tent camp in a small city near the epicentre, where they distributed basic necessities to evacuees and promoted an alternative, grassroots form of human aid which was highly critical of institutional intervention and reconstruction policies, while placing emphasis on the necessity to re-establish connections between citizens and their habitus. The project thus allowed these groups to transfer the No Tav protest, which shares similar ideas about fostering relations between citizens and their territory as well as an anti-capitalist critique, to their own territory and incorporate this experience into their own political and collective identity, reflecting a wider trend that originated with the increasing involvement of

radical left-wing activists in the No Tav battle in the 2000s. In other words, it represents a more general, 'geographical' shift in the 'habitat' of contemporary social movements in Italy, from urban to rural and from national/global to local mobilization.

In conclusion, we could say that memories of protest in Italy have widely circulated and travelled across both time and space. I have shown that, building on the example of the 1977 protests in Bologna, the local memory of 1977 as represented by memory sites and commemorative rituals dedicated to Francesco Lorusso has been appropriated, from the late 1980s onward, by younger generations of left-wing activists with no direct memory of 1977. This demonstrates that the memory of the dead – as Jan Assmann writes in his celebrated work on cultural memory – is one of the basic forms of cultural memory, which creates a common ground on the basis of which a collective identity can be established.[51] However, these younger generations increasingly draw on national, international and global models of resistance. Rather than a local or a purely global memory, we may therefore perhaps best speak of a 'glocal' memory of protest.

## Notes

1. Menneas, 2003, Omicidio, p. 37; 'Alexis Grigoropoulos: What happened on December 6, 2008? (shooting video)', n.d., *http://www.keeptalkinggreece.com/2010/12/06/alexis-grigoropoulos-what-happened-on-december-6-2008/, accessed 29 October 2014*.
2. Rigney, 2005, 'Plenitude, Scarcity', p. 25.
3. The chapter draws on a case study analysed more thoroughly in Hajek, 2013, *Negotiating Memories*.
4. All translations are mine.
5. Foucault, 1980, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*.
6. Rigney, 2005, 'Plenitude, Scarcity', p. 13.
7. Misztal, 2004, 'The Sacralization of Memory', p. 68.
8. *Ibid*., p. 78.
9. Irwin-Zarecka, 2009, *Frames of Remembrance*, p. 58.
10. See Amyot, 1981, *The Italian Communist Party*; Ginsborg, *Storia d'Italia*.
11. For an analysis of the origins and composition of the student movement of 1977 in Bologna, see Hajek, 2011, 'Fragmented Identities'. For a full historical account (in Italian) of the various incidents that occurred both in Bologna and in the rest of the country, see Cappellini, 2007, *Rose e pistole*.
12. On commemorative practices and the memory work performed with regards to the Lorusso incident, see Hajek, 2013, *Negotiating Memories*.
13. Nora, 1989, 'Between memory and history'.
14. Rigney, 2005, 'Plenitude, Scarcity', p. 18; Rigney, 2008, 'Divided Pasts', p. 93.
15. Left-wing terrorist organizations (most notably the Red Brigades), for example, also claimed a continuity with the Resistance battle. See, in particular, Cooke, 2006, 'A (ri)conquistare'.

16. This was due both to an old dispute between the city and its university population, dating back to the Middle Ages, and to the media reports of the clashes in March 1977, where the student movement was predominantly depicted as violent and undemocratic, with the exception of militant newspapers and the Communist daily, *Il manifesto*. See Hajek, 2013, *Negotiating Memories*.
17. This reading of the events was, instead, expressed in a second, 'official' memory site created in the 1990s.
18. Dogliani, Guerra and Lorenzini, 2004, 'Il monumento', p. 88.
19. Hajek, 2013, *Negotiating Memories*, p. 127.
20. Margry and Sánchez-Carretero, 2011, 'Rethinking Memorialization', p. 2.
21. Misztal, 2004, 'The sacralization of memory', p. 78.
22. Hajek, 2013, *Negotiating Memories*, pp. 133–134.
23. Hajek, 2013, *Negotiating Memories*, p. 131.
24. The connection between Lorusso and Franceschi was in large part a result of Franceschi's mother Lydia actively engaging with Lorusso's parents during commemorative rituals. Hajek, 2013, *Negotiating Memories*.
25. Hajek, 2010, 'Teaching the history of terrorism'.
26. Hajek, 2013, *Negotiating Memories*, p. 101.
27. *Ibid.*, pp. 107–108.
28. On the convergence of memory see Rigney, 2008, 'Divided pasts'.
29. Hajek, 2013, *Negotiating Memories*, p. 87.
30. *Ibid.*, p. 86.
31. The sign related to Lorusso read: 'Pier Francesco Lorusso. Killed in the street'; Hajek, 2013, *Negotiating Memories*, p. 87.
32. This slogan was frequently used during protests in the 1970s.
33. Balestrini and Moroni, 2005, *L'orda d'oro*; Hajek, 2013, *Negotiating Memories*, p. 193.
34. Hajek, 2013, *Negotiating Memories*, p. 142.
35. E.g. monkey-wrenches or the A.C.A.B. (All Cops Are Bastards) acronym.
36. Cited in Henninger, 'Post-Fordist Heterotopias', p. 184.
37. Henninger, 2006, 'Post-Fordist Heterotopias', p. 186.
38. Virno, 'The ambivalence of disenchantment'.
39. Hajek, 2013, *Negotiating Memories*, p. 142.
40. Hajek, 2013, *Negotiating Memories*, p. 141.
41. *Bologna marzo 1977...fatti nostri...* (Rimini, NdA Press, 2007), p. 274.
42. The project was part of the BAZ (Bologna Autonomous Zone) medial network. Laboratorio CRASH!, *Non ci fermerete mai! Frammenti della nostra storia e delle nostre lotte*, 7 (2007), p. 17.
43. Hajek, 2013, *Negotiating Memories*, p. 144.
44. *Ibid.*, p. 145. In an issue of 2002, a direct connection was made between the incidents of 1977 and the recent Genoa incidents, as well as a number of police actions against the autonomous media network *Indymedia*; 'Blitz nel 'covo' no global', *Zic* 144 (1 March 2002), p. 1.
45. Hajek, 2013, *Negotiating Memories,* p. 145. My italics.
46. *Ibid.*, p. 194.
47. *Ibid.*, p. 145.
48. *Ibid.*
49. *Ibid.*, p. 146.

50. TAV stands for High Velocity Train, a much disputed project which has been contested, since the early 1990s, by the No Tav movement. Della Porta and Piazza, *Le ragioni del no*. See also Hajek, 2013, 'Learning from L'Aquila'.
51. Assmann, 2007, *Das kulturelle Gedächtnis*.

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