

Memory and Religion. Central and Eastern Europe in a Global Perspective. The 8th Genealogies of Memory International Conference

Veranstalter: European Network of Solidarity and Remembrance (ENRS), Warsaw; Institute for East European Studies, Freie Universität Berlin

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Bericht von: Maria Josepa Cusido Fabregas, European Network Remembrance and Solidarity, Warsaw

„Religion is expected by many in our society to be in charge of the past.“ ALEXANDER AGADJANIAN (Moscow) opened his keynote lecture with this idea on the first day of the 8th Genealogies of Memory Conference. The conference comprised three days of speeches and discussions, as well as in-depth criticism of different theoretical concepts and framings characterised by a general tendency towards modernisation and secularisation. Apart from presentations of individual papers, the programme included a round table on the role of memory with representatives of different religions, as well as two film-screenings showing the influence of a traumatic past on local identity and heritage. There was also a final discussion serving as a means to summarise and conclude the entire event. The conference gathered 121 scholars from all over the world, mostly from Central and Eastern Europe.

Agadjanian gave his keynote lecture after a brief introduction on the main topics of the conference. According to him, official and vernacular memory are more often in contradiction than in harmony, as the past „is a huge world of colonisation“ as well as ground for competition between different stakeholders. He also pointed out what he sees as the most important narratives of the 20th century: triumph and trauma. In citing from contemporary Russia, he showed how these two discursive motives can become mutually intertwined and how they develop and change.

The keynote lecture was followed by the first panel „Religious Dimensions of Centenaries Commemorations.“ It discussed the role of religion, especially that of the Ortho-

dox Church in Russia in commemorating anniversaries of historical events such as the First World War, the Russian Revolutions of 1917 or the Great Terror of 1937-1938. The panel addressed their public reinterpretation and its patriotic purpose.

The second panel called „New Martyrs and Politics of Memory“ addressed issues such as the problem of sacralisation of the communist past and the current phenomenon of canonising ‘New Martyrs’. This ‘new martyrdom’ refers to priests who were imprisoned or who suffered during communism. It was also stressed that the Church did not play a clear role either as a victim or collaborator in countries such as Romania or Bulgaria during that time.

The day ended with a round table discussion with representatives of different faiths active in remembrance. Firstly, Pastor THOMAS JEUTNER (Berlin) began the discussion by explaining the role of the Chapel of Reconciliation. The temple is located at Bernauer Straße in Berlin, a street known for having the Berlin Wall run right across it. Archpriest KIRILL KALEDA (Moscow) presented the memorialisation of mass executions in Butovo, a district in the south of Moscow seized by the Soviets after the Revolution. Thirdly, Catholic priest PIOTR MAZURKIEWICZ (Warsaw) gave a speech on the role of Catholicism and Christian values in Poland, as well as efforts of the Polish Catholic Church toward forgiveness and reconciliation. The next speaker was Sufi ANDRZEJ SARAMOWICZ (Wólka Kozodawska), who emphasised the positive role of remembrance, the memory of God, as well as forgetting within Islam. Finally, Rabbi YEHOASHUA ELLIS (Katowice) discussed the difficulties of the Jewish Community in Poland in researching and commemorating mass graves from the Second World War.

The second day started with the keynote speech by GENEVIÈVE ZUBRZYCKI (Ann Arbor). In her lecture, she urged a severing of associations between religion and the sacred as well as the secular and profane. Zubrzycki referred to the sacralisation of national events or symbols such as the flag and, on the other hand, the loss of religious mean-

ing of certain 'holy days' such as Christmas. She also emphasised the use of religious (especially Christian) language in Poland to express opposition and rebellion against communism – a phenomenon with diverse layers of different narratives that accumulated with each generation. „Symbols that mean and mobilise power are also derived from the *historical narratives* they evoke and the *collective memory* rituals surrounding them [which they] come to embody,“ she stated.

After the lecture, the first panel of the day was „Secular vs Sacred: The Uses of Religious Language in Secular Memory Projects“. It was dedicated to uses of religious symbols or the influence of religion to memorialise and commemorate historical traumas in post-secular societies. During the panel the dichotomy between the sacred and profane was also discussed as well as how some expressions have a religious form, but secular content.

„The Sacred in Post-Conflict Memories“ was the title of the second panel of the second day. It addressed the role of religion in coping with traumatic experiences of the past and in forming memory in post-conflict societies. Case studies referred to the Crimean Tartars in the post-Soviet Era, the Tiananmen Square protests, the Polish Franciscan Maksymilian Kolbe and his memory as an Auschwitz Martyr and the commemoration of the massacre of Srebrenica.

The day ended with a screening of two movies showing the influence of traumatic past on local identity and heritage. The first film, *Islands of Memory: Memory and Religion in Russia's Far North* by PAWAS BISHT (Keele) and ALENA PFOSER (Loughborough) showed a tourist visit to the Solovetsky Monastery on the Solovetsky Islands in northern Russia. The site was turned into one of the first prisons and forced-labour camps of the Gulag after the Russian Revolution and Civil War. The second film was *Not to Judge!* by MAGDALENA LUBAŃSKA (Warsaw), which deals with the 'haunted or contaminated landscape' of the town of Przeworsk in the Subcarpathian province in south-eastern Poland. The film shows present-day conflicts in remembering the killings of Poles and Jews during and after the Second World

War near Przeworsk.

The third day of the conference began with a panel discussion: „Transitional Justice, Memory Laws and Wars“. It discussed the role of religion in dealing with a traumatic past and in fostering reconciliation, for example in South Africa after apartheid, and its legislative dimension. The panel also addressed the topic of religious narratives in contemporary military conflicts.

The last panel with individual presentations focused on vernacular memory practices and showed tensions between the sacred and profane in local memorialisation of historical events. It discussed the use of different religions to commemorate events and how several memories from different religious collectives interact in a shared landscape. The panel also discussed changing narratives of a memorial depending on the historical period and nationalist intent.

The 2018 edition of the Genealogies of Memory Conference focusing on memory and religion was concluded with a round table discussion that addressed different topics. For instance, the importance of knowing which institutions are interested in keeping memory alive and why. Other significant points were the reinterpretation and institutionalisation of tradition or the role of memory in creating identity and granting it a moral value. The round table concluded with a discussion of the importance of religious people, who create myths and legends filling the memory process.¹

Conference Overview:

Jan Rydel / Małgorzata Pakier (both European Network Remembrance and Solidarity, Warsaw) / Zuzanna Bogumił / Yuliya Yurchuk: Conference Convenors

Alexander Agadjanian (Russian State University for the Humanities): Keynote speaker

Panel A: Religious Dimensions of Centenaries Commemorations

Chair: Marcin Napiórkowski (Institute of Polish Culture, University of Warsaw)

¹ All presentations as well as commentaries and discussions will soon be available on the organiser webpage, European Network Remembrance and Solidarity: <https://www.enrs.eu/>

Commentator: Piotr Kwiatkowski (University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Warsaw)

Sofia Tchouikina (Institut des Sciences Sociales du Politique, Paris): How the Presence of Religion is Shaping Commemoration? The Centenary of the First World War in Russia in 2014

Tatiana Voronina (University of Zurich): A Time of Persecution or a Time of Glory? The Russian Orthodox Church's Celebration of the 100th Anniversary of the 1917 Revolutions

Panel B: New Martyrs and Politics of Memory
Chair: Marta Łukaszewicz (University of Warsaw)

Commentator: Agata Šústová Drelová (Slovak Academy of Sciences)

George Enache (Dunarea de Jos University of Galați): Rival Narratives, Competing Memoirs and the Issue of Canonisation of Martyrs of the Romanian Orthodox Church in the Communist Period

Katarzyna Korzeniewska (Polish Institute of International Affairs): Lithuanian Sanctity between Military Heroism and Martyrdom. Transformation of Visions of „National Saints“ in Lithuania (1980-2017)

Olga Khristoforova (Russian State University for the Humanities, Moscow): The Mouse, the Snake, and the Devil's Collar: Soviet Symbols in Old Believers' Memory

Momchil Metodiev (Sofia University „St. Kliment Ohridski“): Canonisation of Martyrs of the Orthodox Churches and the Communist State Security Archives

Round table discussion

Moderator: Zuzanna Bogumił (The Maria Grzegorzewska University, Warsaw) and Yuliya Yurchuk (Södertörn University, Stockholm)

Pastor Thomas Jeutner (Evangelical Reconciliation Parish/ Chapel of Reconciliation, Berlin)

Archpriest Kirill Kaleda (Church of the New Martyrs and Confessors of Russia, Butovo)

Priest Prof Piotr Mazurkiewicz (Cardinal Ste-

fan Wyszyński University in Warsaw)

Sufi Andrzej Saramowicz (Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī Sufi Polish Foundation)

Rabbi Yehoshua Ellis (Shavei Israel in Katowice)

Geneviève Zubrzycki (University of Michigan): Second keynote speech

Panel C: Secular vs Sacred: The Uses of Religious Language in Secular Memory Projects
Chair: Yuliya Yurchuk (Södertörn University, Stockholm)

Commentator: Andrzej Szpociński (Polish Academy of Sciences)

Rasa Balockaite (Vytautas Magnus University, Kaunas): Non-theistic Catholicism: telling national suffering through Catholic discourse

Małgorzata Głowacka-Grajper (University of Warsaw): Martyrdom in Local Communities, the Interplay between Religious and Secular Language in Memorial Projects in Contemporary Poland

Brendan Humphreys (University of Helsinki): Statues and Shadows: Personality Cults in the sacred/profane dichotomy

Ekaterina V. Klimenko (The Maria Grzegorzewska University / Polish Academy of Sciences): Nation Building, Producing Legitimacy: Church, State and Memory of the Revolution in Contemporary Russia

Panel D: The Sacred in the Post-Conflict Memories

Chair: Elina Kahla (University of Helsinki)

Commentator: Stella Rock (Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam)

Elmira Muratova (Crimean Federal University, Simferopol): Collective Memory and Religion: The Case of the Crimean Tatars

Lap Yan Kung (Chinese University of Hong Kong): Rest in Peace: Religious Rituals, Memory and the Tiananmen Square Incident

Jie-Hyun Lim (Sogang University, Seoul): Martyrdom in Strange Juxtaposition: Saint Maksymilian Kolbe and the Catholic Sublimation of the A-Bomb Victims in Nagasaki

Julianne Funk (University of Zurich) & Ioan-

nis Armakolas (University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki) – Remembering Srebrenica: the Sanctification of a Massacre and Implications for Cycles of Violence and Transformation

Panel E and Film screenings

Commentator / Moderator: Matilda Mroz (University of Sussex)

Magdalena Lubańska (University of Warsaw): “Not to Judge!”: Religion, Suffering and Inconvenient Past in the Post-Secular Perspective

Pawas Bisht (Keele University, UK) / Alena Pfoser (Loughborough University, UK): Islands of Memory: Memory and Religion in Russia’s Far North

Panel F: Transitional Justice, Memory Laws and Wars

Chair: Simon Lewis (University of Potsdam)

Commentator: Oksana Myshlovska (The Graduate Institute, Geneva)

Patryk Wawrzyński (Nicolaus Copernicus University, Toruń): The Rainbow People of God: A South African Lesson of Ubuntu. Hoping on Relationships between Religion and Remembrance

Nadia Zasanska (Ukrainian Catholic University, Lviv): Religious Echoes of the Donbass Conflict: Contrasts Between the Rhetoric of Christian, Muslim and Jewish Communities in Ukraine

Tomasz Wiśniewski (Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań): Post-secular Struggles for Epistemic Justice

Panel G: Vernacular Memory Practices

Chair: Juliia Buyskykh (Centre for Applied Anthropology, Kyiv)

Commentator: Maciej Krzywosz (University of Białystok)

Karina Jarzyńska (Jagiellonian University, Kraków): Post-secular Prayers, Gravestones and Rituals. Utilising Religion at Unmemorialised Genocide Sites

Naum Trajanovski (Polish Academy of Sciences, Institute of Advanced Studies Koszeg): Panikhida, Liturgy and a Parastos: Servicing the Local Memory of a Contested Historical

Event in the Contemporary Republic of Macedonia

Vera Herold (The Lisbon Consortium – Catholic University of Portugal, Lisbon): The Protestant Lissaboner Deutsche between Wars. A Palimpsestuous Reading of a Pacifist War Memorial in Bellicose Times

Alla Marchenko (Polish Academy of Sciences, Warsaw): Vernacular Memory of the Hasidic Pilgrimages to Uman: Reborn After the Soviet Union

Final Discussion

Moderators – Zuzanna Bogumił and Yuliya Yurchuk

Michał Łuczewski (Centre for the Thought of John Paul II, Warsaw)

Paweł Śpiewak (Jewish Historical Institute, Warsaw)

Grace Davie (University of Exeter)

Kathy Rousselet (Centre for International Studies, Sciences Po, Paris)

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