

## DISPLACED MEMORIES & MEMORIES OF DISPLACEMENT

### Vanquished Others, Silenced Past, and the Burden of Implication in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

AN INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP,  
PRAGUE

9<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> OF JUNE 2021

**Institute of Ethnology CAS SAV21 and CEFRES**

This two-day Workshop seeks to provide a comparative, collaborative, and interdisciplinary platform to discuss many cases of how the silenced heritage of the displaced populations in Europe and beyond is being negotiated in the present day. Breaking away from the traditional nation-centred orientation, we will focus on the **memories of displacement**, focusing on the people who were forced to abandon their homelands and previous lives and to re-establish their lives and homes elsewhere, as well as on the **displaced memories** about the violent removal, both symbolic and physical, of the vanquished others from their social spaces.

Given the nature of the historical imagination, the dissolution of social spaces can potentially lead to the belief that the history of those who 'lost' cannot be afforded memorial sites as they are no longer represented by a symbolic or geographic region, or they have been subsequently denied connection with the region they once claimed as their own. Countries that re-hosted the expelled believed that the past and the expellees' former sense of belonging would not, or would no longer, be an issue in or with respect to the present. At the same time, the newcomers who repopulated the left behind spaces that were previously inhabited by the vanquished others, also found themselves in a difficult position. While some of them took an active role in the expulsion as perpetrators, many of them could be seen as what Michal Rothberg calls 'implicated subject' (2019), not fitting into either of the conventional categories of perpetrator, victim, and bystander. How do the newcomers understand and negotiate their role and positionality in the context of forced displacement?

The memories of displacement as well as displaced memories concern people in between several places, across different temporalities, and with multiple belongings. As such, they are notoriously difficult to grasp and therefore severely understudied, especially in direct dialogue. To amend this void in our knowledge and to question our taken for granted assumptions in this workshop we advocate multidirectional approach to memories of the displaced populations to answer these questions:

- How are social spaces redefined by their new inhabitants?
- What happens with the heritage of the vanquished Other?
- What is to be done with the heritage of the defeated and why does it matter for various and sometimes divergent segments of population?
- How has the heritage of displacement itself been ignored, forgotten, memorialised, transplanted, duplicated, and recreated and commemorated, despite the dispersion of people and the lack of material artefacts?

- Which sites of memory and what memorialisation practices for these pasts are no longer associated with their former 'milieux de memoire' (Halbwachs 1941; Lavabre 2007)? And why does this matter?
- Can contemporary attitudes towards current economic and forced migration (or 'migration crises'), which vary significantly across Europe and beyond, be traced historically in relation to each countries' own historical experiences and commemorative regimes of such phenomena? What are their similarities and differences, their points of contacts, and their divergences? Besides what happens to this heritage of the defeated on the places left behind?
- In what situations is this heritage left behind preserved, what is preserved and for what purpose? Is it destroyed, silenced, ignored, reappropriated or even absorbed as a part of national history and culture...? If so, how is this done and by whom? Is the heritage of the displaced perceived only as ruins and ruinations left behind (Stoler 2016) or is it transformed into a political resource and a framework for collective mobilisation and action (Lavabre forthcoming)?
- Is it possible to apply Michael Rothberg's notion of implicated subject to the post-forced displacement context and if so, what are its benefits and limitations?

**The key aims of the workshop are to:**

- Discuss how the displaced populations remember their collective experience of forced expulsion and how the displaced are (not)being remembered in their former homes.
- Facilitate an interdisciplinary discussion and knowledge exchange regarding memories of displacements.
- Explore the similarities and differences between individual case studies.

ORGANIZING COMMITTEE

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**WEDNESDAY 9<sup>TH</sup> OF JUNE 2021**

**Venue: Villa Lanna**

17:00 – 18:30 Keynote by **Johana Wyss** (CAS, CEFRES)

18:30 – 20:00 Evening reception

**THURSDAY 10<sup>TH</sup> OF JUNE 2021**

**First day of the Workshop**

**Venue: Villa Lanna**

<b>8:30 – 9:00</b>	Registration
<b>9:00 – 9:10</b>	Welcome by the organizers & housekeeping
<b>9:10 – 9:20</b>	Introduction

**9:20 – 10:50**

**PANEL 1, DISSONANT HERITAGES: VICTIMS, BYSTANDERS AND UNRECOGNIZED HEROES**

*Talking about Jews in Poland: an interactional, ethnographic perspective*, **Thomas VAN DE PUTTE**, University of Trento

This paper maps and analyses discourses about Jews and Jewish heritage by a group of inhabitants of the contemporary Polish town of Oswiecim, Auschwitz in German. The town had a majority of Jewish inhabitants before the Holocaust, became one of the centres of the Holocaust and now hosts its most iconic memorial museum. The data I use in this paper result from a triangulation of ethnographic data gathered in multiple interactional contexts. I have observed the same participants in their interactions online in different Facebook groups and offline in various face-to-face interactions. I also distinguish between observations made in thick communities and in light social groups.

My analysis shows that my participants are familiar with multiple, and sometimes contradictory macro-cultural narratives about Jews and the Holocaust and can switch between performances of those different cultural narratives when the concrete interactional contexts require them to. Especially their judgements of the norms governing those different interactions, and their interpretations of the expectations of their audiences are key to understanding these shifting usages of different cultural narratives. My ethnographic triangulation shows a flexibility of opinions on the level of the individual that is usually absent from studies based on survey or interview data.

*Salonica - Thessaloniki: Holocaust survivors & memories of absence*, **Kateřina KRÁLOVÁ**, Charles University

*Unrecognized Heroes and Conflicting Historical Heritage*, **Michal PAVLÁSEK**, Czech Academy of Sciences

In my paper I will follow the trajectory of a group of re-emigrants, which made them to form their own memory community. Czech members of a partisan unit, which was part of the antifascist Communist resistant movement in Yugoslavia during the Second World War, answered the call from Czechoslovakia, and they and their families replaced German residents who had been expelled. Those arriving were welcomed by the state as antifascist heroes, but they perceive the period of the fall of the Communist regime in 1989 and the subsequent production of a hegemonic anti-Communist narrative of the new liberal-democratic regime as a path to the unrecognition of their historical legacy, and, as a consequence, of their family honour. They see the occasion to return both of them in the definition of their position in entanglement of politics of memory, conflicting historical heritage, and interpretations of contemporary migrations.

Chair, **Evelyne RIBERT**, IIAC, CNRS, EHESS, ICM fellow

10:50 – 11:20

Break (30 minutes)

11:20 – 12:30

**PANEL 2, POLITICS OF NATIONAL IDENTITY AND VIVID MEMORIES**

*Newcomers in Czech Western Silesia 1945-1960: Between "Old" And "New" Identity*, **Ondřej KOLÁŘ**, the Silesian Museum in Opava

From 1945 onwards, thousands of newcomers settled in the western part of Czech Silesia to replace the expelled German population. The newly formed community included Czechs and Slovaks, as well as Greeks, Roma or Romenians. The new settlers brought with them their traditions and memories, but they also had to create a new collective identity. The paper focuses on forms of maintaining traditional identities amongst the newcomers, as well as on forming of the new "shared" regional identity. The role of state authorities and propaganda in the identity-making process is analysed, as well as the approach to pre-1945 memory of the region.

*Contested heritage of Istria. Between conflict nationalisation processes, identity foundations and bridges*, **Katja HROBAT VIRLOGET**, University of Primorska

The social changes made after the Second World War that are still observable in the Slovenian part of Istria make for an excellent case study of the almost complete transformation of an urban population due to the so-called "Istrian exodus". The Istrian case speaks about silenced memories, alternative heritage discourses, the appropriation and interruptions of histories along with questions of changeable national/ethnic identities and their "exclusions from histories".

The paper will discuss different uses and perceptions of heritage, linked to the emptied and resettled place of borderland and contested region of Istria in former Yugoslavia. It will be shown how heritage can be instrumentalized for political purposes. Knowing that heritage becomes heritage only through the process of heritageisation, when the material remains of the past are ascribed with symbolic values of the present, the question arises of what does heritage mean today to this pot pourri of Istrian society. On one side the lack of identifications of newcomers of different origins, but still different in relation to their place of origin, and on the other side the nostalgia and identity anchorage of the "remained" Italians, by which heritage can be used also as a 'scream' from the silence. Heritage will be analysed also through the lens of (dis)continuity, its cohesive, integrative role and as the medium of nationalisation processes. At the end the paper discusses the question of how to live today with all of the negative legacies of the past.

Discussant, **Philip HERZA**, Czech Academy of Sciences

12:30 – 13:40 Lunch Break (70 minutes)

13:40 – 15:10

**PANEL 3, UNMAKING BELONGING, MAKING “INTERNAL STRANGERS”**

*Namibian Czechs – their identity and search for home*, **Kateřina MILDNEROVÁ**, Palacký University Olomouc

The presentation focuses on the exile history of Namibian Czechs, originally a group of prominent child war refugees from Angola who were admitted by the Czechoslovak government in 1985 for education as an expression of international solidarity assistance to SWAPO, a liberation movement fighting for the independence of Namibia. This educational project with elements of social engineering was interrupted in 1991, after Namibia achieved its independence and Czechoslovakia had overthrown the communist regime. The political decision to relocate the children to Namibia had a dramatic impact on their future lives. The experience of displacement, living in two culturally different environments and especially the realisation that both societies denied their belonging have led to their fatal discovery that they are doomed to remain outsiders living on the border between two worlds. Even after almost thirty years, the Namibian Czechs living in Namibia proudly proclaim their belonging to the Czech Republic which they consider to be their only and true home.

*Memories and relationship to otherness in contemporary Portuguese society: the case of displaced populations following the independence of African colonies*, **Irène DOS SANTOS**, URMIS, CNRS, Université de Paris, ICM Fellow

Forty years after the independence of the African colonies, with the repatriation of nearly five hundred thousand *retornados* at the end of what is referred to as the Colonial War, and then followed by postcolonial immigration, a noticeable multiplicity of narratives on various aspects of the historical experience of (de)colonization has emerged in Portuguese society. Critical voices have arisen within civil society, and within the research community. Some want to escape from the illegitimacy and the silences surrounding the topic of decolonization; others want to denounce a post-dictatorship society without memory, or even the racism of postcolonial society. Using Stephen Lubkemann’s metaphor of “internal strangers” which designates the *retornados* upon their arrival in Portugal, my paper aims to question the proximity between *retornados* and postcolonial immigrants from Africa and its impact on the emergence of “postcolonial memory”.

*“And then they all left.” Recollection of forced migration and negotiation of the past in three-generation families of Germans in the Czech Republic*, **Jana NOSKOVÁ**, Czech Academy of Sciences)

After World War II, about three million German-speaking persons were forcibly displaced from the Czech lands. Only a small part of the German population could (or had to) stay in Czechoslovakia.

In my paper, I will use data collected within the grant project that focused on mechanisms and strategies of transmission of family memory in three-generation families of German origin living in the Czech Republic. The oldest members of these families belonged to the so-called generation of experience, it means they experienced (mostly as children or teenagers) the events at the end of World War II. They had to cope

with the departure of their relatives and acquaintances and with the anti-German attitudes of the Czech society after World War II. Although the members of the oldest generation were not forcibly displaced, forced migration affected their lives and changed their living world.

In my paper, I will analyze the ways of negotiating forced migration in two three-generation families. Through biographical and oral history interviews with members of three generations I had the opportunity to gain access to an insider's viewpoint of the post-war migration and observe the metamorphoses of generation interpretation of the family narratives concerning this event. I am interested in the main contents of family memory, i.e. the central narratives that had been handed down, including the semantic shifts that had taken place in their intergenerational transmission within the family. Subsequently I will place the constructed knowledge about family history within the context of discourses created about the past on the level of the Czech nation state. It allows me to analyze different ways of "negotiation of the past" and show the strategies and mechanisms of transmission of memory that are applied within the chosen families.

Chair, **Kateřina ČAPKOVÁ**, Czech Academy of Sciences

**15:10 – 15:30**

Break (20 minutes)

**15:30 – 17:00**

#### **PANEL 4, MEMORYSCAPES OF DISPLACEMENTS**

*Landscape and the memory of loss and absence in Germany, Austria and Czech Republic,*

**Paul BAUER**, Charles University

Starting with the examination of the intertwined intellectual conceptions of romantic landscape history in Germany, in Austria and in Czech Republic, the presentation will focus on the circulation of landscape representations and its link with the memorialization of post WWII forced migrations. Drawing, on the one hand, from visual art theory on perception and representation, and, on the other, from the sociology and the geography of memory, the analysis will focus on the production and the circulation of landscape images (paintings and photographs) in the three countries and will question how a form of landscape representation can be introduced in different languages and gain a transnational meaning in different social contexts. The presentation will then discuss how the mobilization of landscape artefacts informs the memory of loss in Germany and in Austria, and helps to include, in Czech Republic, the traces left by the Czechoslovak Germans into the heritage process.

*Contested heritage and progressive nostalgia in the urban centres of northern istria,* **Neža ČEBRON LIPOVEC**, University of Primorska

In territories that have undergone thorough population changes mononational official discourses are usually set up, and the creation of new identity is accompanied by interventions in the built environment. At the same time, the different groups in the territory (the various newcomers' groups of different provenances,

the few remaining former inhabitants) create diverse collective identities and attachments. These can be identified also in their attitude towards the built environment, especially the historic one. Such is the case of the urban areas of northern Istria, a land of post-war mass population change. The contribution will thus present the insights from fieldwork research on the different values-assessments of built heritage and the related place attachments by the different groups (generational; class; ethnic) in the broader urban area of northern Istria. We shall read these results through the lens of the recently developed concept of "progressive nostalgia" (Smith 2017) which offers a new tool for investigating the heritageisation processes (Harvey 2001) as well as the place attachment in post-industrial communities, but also in areas population changes.

*Saving German heritage in Central Europe: discourse, praxis, challenges. Mapping patrimonialisation efforts around Podersam/ Podbořany*, **Catherine PERRON**, CERI-Sciences Po

My investigation starts from a joint Czech German heritage rescue project of restoration of old tombs and cemeteries in the region of Podersam/ Podbořany - a small town in the North-West of Bohemia in 2018. This project and the actors involved in it, seem to acknowledge the existence of a feeling of shared responsibility for the local heritage beyond cultural property.

The research I will present tries to grasp the nature of the relations that have been (re)created or not in the last decades through a range of similar attempts at patrimonialisation/heriticization around Podbořany, undertaken - or not-, by the different communities that relate to the place: (German, Czech, Jews, Czechs from Wolhynia and Roma). It is a work in progress, until now exclusively based on the analysis of patrimonialisation efforts in the virtual space of the web and of the social media. There, two relatively recent initiatives: the website of the *Heimatkreis Podersam-Jechnitz* created by German expellee associations, and the Czech Facebook / Instagram accounts *Podbořansko info*, will be analysed more closely. Beyond the sociological questions of who the initiators of these projects are, which groups participate and which ones they are targeted at, it is the semantic status of the "patrimonialized" past and its potential for relating to the others or not, that will be examined.

Discussant, **Anežka BROŽOVÁ**, Charles University

18:30 – 21:00

Evening Reception

**FRIDAY 11<sup>TH</sup> OF JUNE 2021**

**Second day of the Workshop**

**Venue: Villa Lanna**

**9:00- 9:10** Opening of the second day

**9:10 – 10:20**

**PANEL 5, SITES OF MEMORY WITHOUT 'MILIEUX DE MÉMOIRE'**

*Returning as a minority experience? A comparison between Albanians and Jews in Greece during the first decade of the 21st century*, **Pierre SINTÈS**, Aix-Marseille Univ, CNRS, TELEMME, Aix-en-Provence, France

Since the end of the cold war, Greek peripheries have been affected by an increasing number of international mobilities such as working migration from the neighbouring Balkan countries, transit migration from the eastern Mediterranean, temporary mobilities from western Europe and a greater tourist inflow. However, some of these people arriving in Greece during these decades are also members or descendants of different communities (minorities) that have long since disappeared from the Greek territory. In this presentation, I will raise the case of the descendants of two distinctive groups: the Albanian speakers from Epirus (also known in Greece as *Tchamidès*) and the Jewish population of Rhodes, whose both descendants have come back to Greece since the 1990s in search of the places where their ancestors lived. These visitors hold the key to an alternative version of the historical narrative of the places: their presence creates the possibility of revitalising dissonant elements of belonging or claiming their autochthony, questioning one of the central tenets upon which the legitimacy of contemporary Greek nationalism rests. The presence (albeit temporary) of the descendant of groups that disappeared from Greece since World War II provide an opportunity to consider the conditions in which their spatial memory can be expressed – a memory that challenges the official version of the past typically presented to tourists by tour guides and most of the museums to which they have access.

In addition to sensitivity towards the migration issues, the (long-)disputed nature of the Greek borders provides fertile grounds for studying this kind of ‘memory-based return’. This is because of the complex allegiances brought about by the relatively recent disappearance from these regions of plural principles of social regulation from the Ottoman Empire, favouring the more monovalent management of the nation-state. The ease of displacement which has prevailed from the 1990s to the present enables the increase of such an original kind of visit to the border territories of Greece. It introduces a new element that challenges some of the constructions of collective identity. Moreover, this research leads to questioning the origins of a common misconception about the Balkan countries. Where this region is concerned, both the academic and the political world generally portray a society grounded in small, bounded areas, where local belonging strongly influences how groups are defined. These observations make me wonder just how this society, supposedly anchored in tiny spaces, is today confronted with, reacts to or interacts with, the increased mobility of actors who become, at the same time, both ‘locals’ and ‘strangers’, ‘tourists’ or ‘inhabitants’, ‘returnees’ or even ‘ghosts from the past’.

*An absence that still matters: Jews in Egypt and Egypt inside the Jews*, **Michèle BAUSSANT**, CEFRES, ISP, CNRS, ICM Fellow

Nowadays in Egypt, synagogues, along with the cemeteries, archives, Jewish artefacts and books, are the last post signs of a multi-millennial Jewish presence in the country. This presence came to an end during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Whoever can enter these synagogues today is confronted with the presence/absence of the Jews, whose names on the benches embody ghosts of a bygone past in Egypt. Often located in the heart of urban areas, these material remnants of the Jewish presence, one of the country's stable identities over the long term, remain invisible or blurred into the landscape and often inaccessible for the Egyptian population and the Egyptian Jews in diaspora themselves. Moreover, it is almost impossible to imagine



when walking in Cairo or Alexandria streets that only a few decades ago, more than 80,000 Jews were still living in the country. The landscape they shaped was re-invested, transformed or destroyed after their departure, neither thoroughly chosen, nor wholly forced. It becomes barely recognizable, eroding the connections with the country the Jews once claimed as their own.

Based on multi-situated fieldwork in the many places where Jews settled and in Egypt, this communication explores how, by whom et why these "post signs of memory" still matter, both in Egypt and among Egyptian Jews in diaspora and are transformed, reappropriated at different levels and by different actors. It focuses on how these visible/invisible traces and objects revealed, through their current uses, crossed and parallel social constructions of the presence and absence of the other and the self, both among Egyptian people and Jews from Egypt. They challenge the very idea of home-making and the binary identifications framed by nationalisms and propose possible ways out of the painful alternative of 'remembering everything' and/or 'forgetting everything'.

Discussant, **Barbora SPALOVÁ**, Charles University

**10:20 –10:40**

Break (20 minutes)

**10:40 –11:50**

**PANEL 6, RELATING TO THE PAST OF DISPLACEMENT: WHEN “HISTORY” AND REMEMBRANCE BEGIN WITH ARTEFACTS**

*Displacement of the sources: the circulation of historical documents during the post-WWII decades*, **Máté ZOMBORY**, Hungarian Academy of Sciences

The paper discusses the role of the political context in the creation and circulation of historical documents following the second world war. Schematically, it sketches out three periods of political demand for historical sources. During the war, the seizure of archives of the German Nazi administration was a war effort of the Allies. The migration of files influenced the condition of knowledge production following the war. The second period is postwar reconstruction, when the main social domains where historical documents circulated were the war crimes trials. Here the importance of the IMT and the NMT cannot be underestimated. The third is the Cold War and the "second wave" of war crimes trials during the "long 1960s". The paper aims to identify the main actors and channels of circulation with a particular attention to holocaust documentation as a case study.

*"Greek exiles, communist legacies and heritages of waiting in the Czech Republic and Central Europe*, **Maria KOKKINO**, CEFRES, Charles University

This presentation aims to share an ongoing reflection on the photographs of refugees and on the photographs of refugees from the Greek Civil War (1946-49) hosted in Eastern Europe. It is a continuation of a doctoral study on refugees who found shelter in socialist Bulgaria and feeds its problematic from a situated presence, namely, a geographical displacement, from Paris to Prague, thus broadening the question of refugees from Bulgaria to other spaces and other research angles.

Chair, **Rose SMITH**, Charles University

**11:50-12:20** Closing remarks by **Michèle BAUSSANT**, **Maria KOKKINO**, **Johana WYSS**

**12.30 - 13:30** Farewell lunch