

Robert Skidelsky

Geschichte auf den Barrikaden

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a Pandemic

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Capitalism at
a Crossroads

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Putin's
Memory War

Vejvoda, Shore, Snyder

In Memory
of Marcin Król

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Editorial

Das Cover der vorliegenden Ausgabe zeigt eine mit roter Farbe beschmierte Statue von König Leopold II von Belgien in Gent, die anlässlich der Feiern zum 60. Jahrestag der Unabhängigkeit Kongos entfernt wurde. Angriffe gegen Statuen sind zum typischen Ausdruck einer Protestwelle geworden, die sich gegen eine hegemoniale Geschichtserzählung und die Allgegenwart ihrer symbolischen Repräsentationen richtet. Geschichte ist zum Schlüsselterrain politischer Kämpfe unserer Zeit geworden.

Geschichte und Erinnerung bildet auch den zentralen Schwerpunkt des vorliegenden Heftes. Robert Skidelsky zeigt auf, wie Fragen der Interpretation und Positionalität den Anspruch objektiver Rekonstruktion der Vergangenheit im gängigen Geschichtsverständnis in den Hintergrund gedrängt haben. Weitere Essays des Fokus thematisieren die offizielle Erinnerungspolitik (Sergei Medvedev, Nikolai Antoniadis), die Notwendigkeit, sich den unangenehmen Seiten der eigenen Vergangenheit zu stellen (Teresa Reiter, Jerko Bakotin), die Probleme politisch kritischer Historiker in autoritären Regimen (Felix Ackermann) und die Funktion von Erinnerungsstätten und Denkmälern (Iryna Sklokina).

Drei Beiträge des Heftes behandeln die gravierenden Folgen, die die Pandemie unter sozial benachteiligten Gruppen wie MigrantInnen und Häftlingen hat (Giorgia Donà, Paula Banerjee, Eric Reinhart). Von der Pandemie aufgeworfene Fragen wurden auch in zwei Debatten im Wiener Burgtheater behandelt, von denen wir in diesem Heft berichten.

Eine Reihe anderer Beiträge nimmt sich des zeitgenössischen Kapitalismus an. Mit Auszügen von Texten von Branco Milanović und Mariana Mazzucato wird ein in Kürze erscheinender Sammelband des IWM zum Kapitalismus im 21. Jahrhundert vorgestellt. Ferner hebt Albena Azmanova die Bedeutung von Prekarität für den Kapitalismus der Gegenwart hervor, während Pedro Perfeito da Silva seinerseits die kapitalistische Revolte in Bolsonaros Brasilien erörtert.

Die übrigen Beiträge gehen auf aktuelle Herausforderungen des Liberalismus ein (Judy Dempsey, Michael Ignatieff), diskutieren Aspekte der Beziehung Russlands und Chinas zum Westen bzw. zur internationalen Ordnung (Volha Biziukova, Thomas Eder) und würdigen die Leistung von Marcin Król (Ivan Vejvoda, Marci Shore, Timothy Snyder), einem langjährigen Freund des IWM, der letzten November dahinschied.

Im Namen des IWM wünsche ich Ihnen viel Freude beim Lesen! <

The cover of this issue shows a statue of King Leopold II of Belgium in Ghent that was smeared with red paint and removed just as the country was about to celebrate the 60th anniversary of Congo's independence. Attacks on statues have become a typical expression of protest against a hegemonic narrative of history and the ubiquity of its symbolic representations. They demonstrate that history has become the central terrain of contemporary political struggles.

"History and memory" make up the central focus of this issue. Robert Skidelsky illustrates how questions of interpretation and positionality have pushed the claim of objective reconstruction of the past into the background in the mainstream understanding of history. The other essays in this focus address the official politics of memory (Sergei Medvedev, Nikolai Antoniadis), the difficulty but also the need to confront the unpleasant aspects of one's own past (Teresa Reiter, Jerko Bakotin), the problems of critical historians in authoritarian regimes (Felix Ackermann) and the function of memorial sites and monuments (Iryna Sklokina).

Three essays shed light on the severe consequences of the pandemic among socially vulnerable groups such as migrants and prisoners (Giorgia Donà, Paula Banerjee, Eric Reinhart). Questions raised by the pandemic were also addressed in two debates in our discussion series "Debating Europe" at Vienna's Burgtheater, reported on in this issue.

A number of essays address contemporary capitalism. Excerpts from texts by Branco Milanović and Mariana Mazzucato introduce a forthcoming IWM volume on capitalism in the 21st century. Furthermore, Albena Azmanova highlights the importance of precarity for contemporary capitalism, while Pedro Perfeito da Silva discusses the capitalist revolt in Brazil that went along with the rise of Bolsonaro.

The other contributions deal with current challenges to liberalism (Judy Dempsey, Michael Ignatieff), discuss aspects of Russia's and China's relationship to the West and the international order (Volha Biziukova, Thomas Eder) and honor Marcin Król, a long-time friend of the IWM who sadly passed away last November (Ivan Vejvoda, Marci Shore, Timothy Snyder).

I hope you enjoy the read. <

Evangelos Karagiannis

Immigration Policies and Public Health Responses to Covid-19

BY GIORGIA DONÀ

Migration, Governance, and Inequality: Covid-19 has disproportionately impacted the health, survival and livelihood of racialized groups, migrants and the poor in the United Kingdom. This piece argues that in addition to the literal reproductive capacity of the virus, which is biological, the virus has a secondary repetition, which is social: it reproduces and amplifies the scale and intensity of existing structural and intersectional inequalities in public health, differentially impacting the most vulnerable groups.

The direct negative effects of the pandemic have exposed existing economic, social, and health inequalities. Less is known about the indirect effects of the pandemic that are linked to governmental responses. Pandemic governance can also be discriminatory. It can negatively affect marginalized sectors of the population, such as when resources are unequally distributed, resulting not only in increased risks of contracting or dying from the virus but also the capacity of individuals to follow the recommendations to control the pandemic. Covid-19 has disproportionately prejudiced the ability of racialized, gendered and migrant groups to adhere to the Government's public health guidelines, putting them at increased risk from coronavirus than the general population.

The discriminatory outcomes of the pandemic, and its management, are experienced differently along intersectional lines of class, gender, ethnicity and generation. This is particularly significant for gendered and racialized non-citizens who are subjected to the Government's Hostile Environment immigration policies. Since 2010, UK immigration policies initially targeted at individuals with irregular status in the UK have created an intentionally "hostile environment" whose impacts have spilled into other categories of non-citizens. The most notable case is that of the Windrush generation of Caribbean migrants who arrived in the UK after World War II as Commonwealth citizens, with the right to reside permanently in the UK and who have faced deportations and been denied access to health care and welfare in recent years. The 2014 and 2016 Immigration Acts have restricted access to housing, healthcare, banking and legal representation, limited access to services, facilities and employment by reference to immigration status, and increased penalties for unauthorized working. The future predicament of European migrants after Brexit is still unclear, following the introduction of new restrictions for European citizens in November 2020, when the Immigration and Social Security Coordination (EU Withdrawal) Act was passed into law.

The first cases of Covid-19 were identified in the UK at the beginning of 2020. On March 23, 2020, Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced new measures to control the rapid spread of the pandemic, which continue to be partially in

housing, which increased their risk of contracting Covid-19. They were forced to share common spaces such as the kitchen and bathroom with strangers, in breach of strict measures to socially distance and unable to self-isolate.

During lockdowns, domestic violence in the home worsened. For

instance through the data sharing of a patient's non-clinical information from the NHS to the Home Office or the NHS surcharge, whereby non-EU patients are made to pay fifty percent more than it costs the NHS to treat them. Defaulting on the payment of bills has serious consequences for migrants and asy-

were linked to intersectional variables such as race, poverty and immigration status, and equally important housing conditions, access to health care and ability to survive below poverty levels, all of which were seriously constrained by the Hostile Environment. Since the inception of the pandemic the Trussell Trust, which coordinates a network of food banks, documented an 89 percent rise in the number of deliveries of emergency food parcels and a 107 percent increase in parcels donated to children. Gendered and racialized individuals who live below the poverty level in the asylum system, migrants with no recourse to public funds, and those heavily reliant on welfare support were at higher risk of coronavirus-related food starvation than the general population.

Covid-19 has exposed the ways in which migration and pandemic governance are interrelated. Hostile Environment immigration policies intersected with pandemic responses that exacerbated existing health inequalities for racialized, gendered and citizenship-based categories. The analysis of accommodation, health and survival unravelled the connections between race and migration, and governance and public health. In conclusion, in addition to the literal reproductive capacity of the virus, which is biological, the virus has a secondary repetition, which is social: it reproduces and amplifies the scale and intensity of existing structural and intersectional inequalities in public health, thus differentially impacting the most vulnerable groups. The Covid-19 virus, in its socially reproductive capacity, can thus be understood as a biological descriptor for a political crisis of intersectional inequality in the politics of health. <

This is a redacted version of Donà, G. (2021) Race, Immigration and Health: The Hostile Environment and Public Health Responses to Covid-19, *Ethnic and Racial Studies, Special Issue 'Race and Ethnicity in Pandemic Times'*, 44(5): 906-918 10.1080/01419870.2021.1881578

1) NHS is the National Health System.

Giorgia Donà is Professor of Forced Migration and Refugee Studies and Co-director of the Centre for Migration, Refugees and Belonging at the University of East London, United Kingdom. She was an IWM Visiting Fellow in 2021.



Photo: Kieran Clewes / PA / picturedesk.com

place. The government's announcement was captured by the slogan "Stay Home—Protect the NHS—Save Lives." Yet, this message presumes that accommodation is safe for all, that admission to health services is accessible and free at point of use and that all residents in the country can follow the guidelines to reduce mortality rates.

"Stay Home—Protect the NHS—Save Lives": Accommodation, Health and Mortality

The government's guideline to "Stay Home" assumes that home is a protected space for all, that UK residents have a home to stay in and that they have autonomy in the decision to stay home. Individuals and families who apply for protection are placed in temporary accommodation while their asylum claims are being heard. During lockdown, many non-governmental organizations reported that asylum-seeking families and their children were living in dreadfully overcrowded and unhygienic

women whose immigration status is linked to that of their partner, the likelihood of leaving an unsafe home was further restricted because of Hostile Environment policies. They are afraid of putting their immigration status at risk if they flee from their partner. Furthermore, the closure of women's refuges during lockdown meant that migrants with precarious immigration status who wanted to flee domestic abuse were blocked from accessing help.

Many key workers who keep the economy going during lockdowns are gendered and racialized migrants. Many do not have the financial autonomy to stay home and their ability to follow public health guidelines is hindered when protective equipment is not available and social distancing is not practiced at work.

The Government's second slogan—"Protect the NHS"—assumes equal access to health care. However, Hostile Environment immigration policies have created barriers to accessing the health service, for

lump seekers, who can be reported to the Home Office and have their application for settled status rejected due to non-payment. This system of immigration restrictions threatens migrants' ability to remain in the country and actively discourages them from seeking healthcare. Non-governmental organizations working with migrants and those in the health sector reported that during the pandemic, migrants with precarious status were less likely to report symptoms, go to the hospital, or seek help. Furthermore, individuals in the asylum system who live on £5.39 per day, a rate that is below the national poverty level, could not afford the costs of essential items like soaps and sanitisers during the pandemic. Lack of support disadvantaged them in their ability to adhere to public health guidelines about hygiene.

Finally, the government's third message to "Save Lives" sadly contrasts with the UK death toll that is among the highest in the world. Increased mortality risks to Covid-19

The Pandemic Tale: A Dangerous Time for Migrant Women in South Asia

BY PAULA BANERJEE

Contrary to mainstream expectations, the pandemic proved to be anything but a 'great leveller.' Paula Banerjee addresses the largely neglected but devastating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on migrant women in South Asia.

Thirty-five-year-old Avreena Khatoon lay dead on a railway platform. She was a female migrant worker who was attempting to return home. She was travelling by train from Ahmedabad to Katihar when she collapsed and died. This was after the second lockdown was imposed in India in May 2020. It was reported in media outlets that she died due to lack of food, water, and much exhaustion. Her little, clueless child was with her in this fatal journey. The picture of her child trying desperately to evoke some response from her inert body went viral, sending shock waves through most of South Asia for a day or perhaps a week. Then the nation waited for the next catastrophe to happen. This was the fate of many female migrant laborers during the pandemic and the subsequent lockdown in South Asia.¹

When the pandemic broke out in 2020, it was considered a 'great leveller' affecting, it was said, the rich and the poor, prince and pauper, celebrity and the ordinary, alike. But very soon cracks appeared in this theory. The disease may have been more brutal for some of certain age or of certain gender, the fact remains that in sheer numbers many more women than men were affected adversely by the pandemic. This is partly because the caregivers are overwhelmingly female in the context of South Asia. About eighty percent of all nurses, ayahs and people in the care industry are women. The responsibility of children in times of pandemic was also, as always, borne by women. They had to home school children, somehow gather food for families, look after the sick and infirm and carry-on life as usual. This life is one of many discriminations and insensitivity that they habitually suffer in this corner of the world. A few journalists wrote about why women were so adversely affected by the pandemic, but the drama lay elsewhere. It was the migrant workers who suddenly caught the nation's attention and rightly so. But what escaped many is that among the migrant laborers there are female migrant laborers who were already vulnerable due to systemic discrimination.

On March 24, 2020 the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a 21-day lockdown in the



Migrant workers waiting to get on a bus to reach a railway station to board a train to their home state of eastern Bihar, during an extended lockdown in Ahmedabad, India, May 20, 2020.

wake of the spread of novel coronavirus or Covid-19. The announcement was both destabilizing and unexpected. The country was totally unprepared for such a lockdown. When India announced a lockdown, the other South Asian states followed suit. The pandemic and the sudden lockdown were disastrous for most of the 400 million workers of India but it proved particularly catastrophic for the 139 million migrant workers. Within days migrant workers crowded bus stations to catch a bus to go back home or go someplace where they might live a life of dignity. News reached readers via the morning newspapers how: "Carrying their children and bags migrant workers, including women were standing in a long queue of about 3 km ... in the hope to catch any bus to return to their distant villages located in UP's different parts. Several migrants were also from states like Madhya Pradesh and Bihar."² News proliferated how the police were beating back desperate migrants trying to leave town by the end of March.³ But real desperation of migrants began when the first phase of lockdown ended, and the next phase started. Very few peo-

ple asked the question how ethical it was to begin a lockdown without any plans of sustaining the entire working class, let alone migrant workers, and driving them to desperate measures. When the next phase of lockdown started the migrants were in such desperate conditions that they decided to brave all odds to go back home. Now it was not just a question of livelihood but of life itself. Failing to get any help from the government the migrants started acquiring private vehicles and those who could not do so began a long trek to go back home thereby embracing death for life.

The fact that among the migrants there were many women is all but forgotten. Some of them appeared intermittently in news media such as Jamlo Madkam, a twelve-year-old *adivasi* (indigenous or tribal) girl who had come to work in a chili farm in Telangana from Chhattisgarh. When the lockdown continued her choice was either to go back home or starve. She started walking back with a few others after the second phase of lockdown was imposed in April. She walked for over three days and covered hundred kilometres. She collapsed eleven kilo-

metres short of her home in Bijapur district in Chhattisgarh due to dehydration and terrible exhaustion. Her cause for death could be given fancy names such as electrolyte imbalance and muscle fatigue but, perhaps it was endemic poverty and total abrogation of duties by an insensitive state.

Thousands of women migrate for labor in South Asia so that they can earn their keep and contribute to their families. A large majority of them are of lower caste and lower class. They usually get the riskiest jobs without any protection or security. In Bangladesh, many migrant women are employed in the garment factories. Because of lack of orders during the pandemic these women had to go back home. About one fourth of migrant labor force crossing international boundaries from India are women. Women are larger in number than men when one looks at internal migration. Many of them are associational migrants but there is a growing number that are migrating for their own labor. Among Sri Lankan labor migrants more than 49 percent are women. Yet most of these women lack any negotiating power. Many migrant women work

in the informal sector. Those women have no guaranteed insurance to fall back on. As Covid-19 portrays neither the government nor their kith and kin networks are interested in protecting them. The most vulnerable among them had jobs that are temporary and ad hoc such as that of Jamlo Madkam. They are part of the circular migrants and generally invisible. In most of these narratives on migration during the Covid-19 pandemic, what was clear is the total insensitivity to the question of gender when the issue is addressed. Women migrants are effaced from the narratives till they collapse and die. In much of South Asia the picture is the same. It is a dangerous time for migrant women unless one can be a super woman such as fifteen-year-old Jyoti Kumari. The state applauded that she cycled for 745 kilometres carrying her injured father from Gurgaon in Haryana to Darbhanga in Bihar. What was forgotten was that such superhuman efforts are not what should be expected from these women. There were women who during lockdown on their way back home gave birth in the roadside *jhupris* (shanties) and then after a few hours picked up their children and started walking back. But is this the standard that we should hold women migrant laborers to? If that is so, then this is indeed a dangerous time for female labor migrants in South Asia. <

- 1) In the context of India migrant laborers are internal migrants. They cross internal borders and not international borders.
- 2) "Migrant workers crowd Anand Vihar bus terminus to return to their villages." *The Economic Times*, March 28, 2020, economictimes.indiatimes.com, accessed on July 7, 2020.
- 3) "They are beating people who try to move further. I am here with my wife and 11-year-old son and we can't afford to be beaten up by police. Now we have only one option—go back to our home in Shahdara's Vishwas Nagar area," reported Joginder Singh, a fruit merchant from Moradabad living in Delhi, to a reporter from *The Hindu*. "Coronavirus | Exodus of migrant workers out of Delhi unabated but police block their entry into Anand Vihar ISBT." *The Hindu*, March 29, 2020, www.thehindu.com, accessed on July 7, 2020.

Paula Banerjee is Professor at the Department of South and Southeast Asian Studies, University of Calcutta, the President of the *International Association for Studies in Forced Migration*, and the Director of the South Asian think tank *Calcutta Research Group*. She is best known for her work on women in borderlands and women and forced migration.

Punishment in a Pandemic

ERIC REINHART IN CONVERSATION WITH SALMAAN KESHAVJEE

Physician-anthropologist and IWM visiting junior fellow **Eric Reinhart** explains in a conversation with Professor **Salmaan Keshavjee**, Harvard University, why epidemics outbreaks in prisons have consequences that extend far beyond the penal institutions themselves.

America's coronavirus management—the world's worst—is closely tied to the fact that the United States, with only 4% of the global population, contains nearly a quarter of the global incarcerated population. Jails and prisons have been recognized as breeding grounds for the virus across the world, but what has been less appreciated is that epidemics outbreaks in these facilities have severe consequences for surrounding communities and global biosecurity. In a national context in which more than 200,000 detainees flow in and out of U.S. jails every week alongside the circulation of 420,000 guards, it has become increasingly clear that conditions in U.S. carceral institutions are inextricably tied to public health.

Salmaan Keshavjee: For decades, I have been working with organizations like Partners in Health to address infectious disease spread, particularly tuberculosis, within jails and prisons around the world. Public health practitioners have long recognized that these densely populated facilities pose unique population-level health risks and are an extremely important site for addressing the spread of diseases like tuberculosis, HIV, influenza, and viral hepatitis. Now, your research shows that jails in the U.S. are acting as an epidemiological pump for the spread of Covid-19. What does this research tell us about what is required from the criminal punishment system in the U.S. in order to stop the pandemic?

Eric Reinhart: First, this point that our findings are unsurprising—and in many ways obvious—is important. It's this fact that makes the ongoing resistance to real changes in American punishment systems so frustrating. We already know that high rates of arrest and incarceration, in combination with allowing many diseases to go untreated in jails and prisons, have consequences for the entire national population—both socially and ethically, and also for our ability to prevent the spread of disease. We also already know effective solutions. What we lack is the mass action required to demand and implement ambitious policy changes. We need to dramatically improve the delivery of healthcare in jails and prisons, and we also need to address more fundamental dynamics driving the problem in the U.S.—namely, unnecessarily high rates of arrest and incarceration that put millions of people at high risk for infections, both inside detention facilities and well beyond.

In our research, my colleague Daniel Chen and I have found that arrests and subsequent cycling of individuals through jails is the most significant predictor of Covid-19 cases



Signs made by prisoners pleading for help are seen on a window of Cook County Jail in Chicago, Illinois, U.S., April 7, 2020, amid the coronavirus disease outbreak.

Photo: Reuters / Jim Vondruska

in both Chicago and the wider State of Illinois. People are being arrested, cycled through high-risk infectious spaces in the jail, and then returned to their neighborhoods where they often inadvertently infect their families and others. In fact, we found that jail cycling is far more significant than race, poverty, public transit use, education, and population density as a predictor of Covid-19 cases. Arrests and jailing are independently linked to nearly 1 in 6 of all cases in Chicago and statewide in Illinois last spring. Furthermore, despite the changes that have been implemented to date, our forthcoming research suggests that the magnitude of this association has become even greater since.

Keshavjee: Your early study found that, on average, for each person cycled through the jail, more than two additional Covid-19 cases appear in their home neighborhoods within weeks after their release from jail. What does this mean in concrete terms for Covid-19 epidemic control?

Reinhart: The implications of this “multiplier effect” that you are mentioning are striking when we consider the scale at play here. Cook County Jail alone cycles about 100,000 people every year, and approximately 75% of these individuals identify as Black. Nationally, there are 10.6 million jail admission-release cycles annually. If you take those numbers and then compound them by anything remotely near the multiplier effect we observed in our initial study, which grows substantially larger over time, you have a serious

public health crisis on your hands.

Keshavjee: What would you say to people that might argue that these arrests are taking dangerous criminals off the streets and are protecting public safety? As you know, the “tough on crime” paradigm has had long-term consequences in the U.S. and remains prominent in public conversations, even as its problems have come to be increasingly acknowledged.

Reinhart: This line of thought persists widely, but the data don't back it up. A large proportion of jail detainees—for example, over 40% in many large U.S. counties—are ultimately not convicted for any crime. Consider also that, before Covid-19 hit, 94% of people booked into Cook County Jail were jailed for non-violent alleged offenses; nationally, this figure is 95%.

There is no compelling public safety reason to incarcerate all these people, particularly when the cycling of non-violent offenders through jails is driving disease spread in American communities. Petty crimes and non-violent alleged offenses constitute the bulk of arrests in America every year. The vast majority of cases leading to arrest could be more effectively and safely addressed with food support, mental healthcare referrals, housing security, citations, community service, and various other alternatives to incarceration. It is notable that 49% of people who are arrested more than once within a year in the U.S. have incomes less than \$10,000—well below the national poverty line. This helps make clear that in order to address many

of the problems that are driving arrests and incarcerations, investments in public infrastructure rather than criminalizing the poor are essential. This kind of policy shift in the U.S. is the only viable route to genuine public safety.

The current system is very clearly not working. Covid-19 is exposing the enduring and previously often untraceable injuries inflicted by excessive policing and mass incarceration—policies that have severely harmed public health and affected communities of color for decades. Now, during this pandemic, we can see how excessive use of incarceration is having a direct harm on the population at large. What has been to date framed as an issue of racial justice and ethics is now, more clearly than ever, also threat to public health and global biosecurity. Even from only a crude economic perspective, this is an enormous problem that everyone, regardless of prior political convictions, should share an interest in addressing.

Keshavjee: What you describe illustrates what we have been observing in many other settings. Paul Farmer and many of our colleagues at Partners in Health and Harvard have been emphasizing to all who will listen—and then some—that health and healthcare are defined by biology in tandem with social, historical, and political forces. Your findings demonstrate that we cannot address complex public health issues without a *biosocial* perspective. In some ways, the purely medical part is easiest. The difficult part in treating disease and stopping its spread

is the matter of addressing the historical and social structures—policies, power dynamics, and economic inequality—that produce and exacerbate illness.

Reinhart: My own research follows this lesson that you and Paul have been teaching. It is undeniably clear under pandemic reality that bodies are bound together by political structures at the most intimate, molecular levels. Because of this fact, it is now in the direct self-interest of everyone, no matter your income or where you live, to address the political conditions—like profound economic inequality and resulting precarity—that foster disease. But for many, simply acknowledging these general political factors shaping public health becomes an alibi for deferring real action that would substantively address these factors. Acknowledgment and witnessing are not sufficient. As you and your colleagues emphasize, we need also to realize and act upon our collective power to change these realities. <

Salmaan Keshavjee is the Director of the Harvard Medical School Center for Global Health Delivery—Dubai and Professor of Global Health and Social Medicine at Harvard Medical School.

Eric Reinhart is a junior visiting fellow at IWM. He is a social anthropologist and resident physician in the Physician Scientist Training Program at Northwestern University's Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences. He is also Lead Health and Justice Systems Researcher at Data and Evidence for Justice Reform (DE JURE), The World Bank, and an advanced candidate at The Chicago Center for Psychoanalysis.

Pandemie im Diskurs

BURGTHEATER-DEBATTEN

Auf der Bühne des Wiener Burgtheaters fanden zwei Podiumsdiskussionen der Reihe „Europa im Diskurs“ statt, die sich zentralen Herausforderungen der Covid-Pandemie gewidmet haben. Der Theatersaal war leer, aber zahlreiche ZuschauerInnen haben die Diskussionen per Livestream verfolgen können.

Impfung – ein knappes Gut

BURGTHEATER-DEBATTE AM 14. MÄRZ 2021

Am 14. März 2021 wurde über die weltweite Verteilung von Impfstoffen und die Bedeutung von globaler Solidarität in der Pandemiekrise diskutiert. **Shalini Randeria**, Rektorin des IWM und Moderatorin der Diskussion, machte auf Paradoxien der Problemlage aufmerksam. Eine solche Paradoxie sei die trotz der beobachtbaren massiven gesundheitlichen Folgen von Covid-19 weit verbreitete Impfskepsis in der Bevölkerung. **Barbara Prainsack**, Leiterin des Instituts für Politikwissenschaften an der Universität Wien und der Studie *Solidarity in Times of a Pandemic* (SolPan) sowie Mitglied der Österreichischen Bioethikkommission, bemerkte dazu, dass erst durch qualitative Interviews ersichtlich würde, dass häufig auch jene zu den „Impfskeptikern“ gezählt werden, die Impfstoffe schlichtweg zunächst bedürftigeren Menschen zur Verfügung stellen wollen. Zu-

dem sei zu beobachten: Die Impfbereitschaft steige mit zunehmendem Informationsgrad und mit der Aussicht, sich selbst und andere schützen zu können, so die ebenfalls an SolPan forschende Politologin **Katharina T. Paul**.

Während die Frage der Impfskepsis im nationalen Kontext ein viel diskutiertes Thema sei, führen wir „im globalen Vergleich Luxusdiskussionen“, so die Vakinologin **Ursula Wiedermann-Schmidt**, Leiterin des Instituts für Spezifische Prophylaxe und Tropenmedizin. Sie kritisierte eine „Überinformationspolitik“, die zu einem Vertrauensverlust in Impfstoffe und Zulassungsbehörden beitrage. Es gehe um die Rückkehr zu einer sachlichen Debatte, aber auch darum, die Situation in Europa im globalen Kontext zu bewerten. Dem pflichtete auch der aus Abuja, Nigeria zugeschaltete **Marcus Bachmann** (Advocacy & Humanitarian Affairs Representative für Ärzte ohne Gren-

zen Österreich) bei. In Ländern des Globalen Südens fehle vielfach jegliche Perspektive, überhaupt Zugang zu Impfstoffen zu erhalten, wovon besonders das Gesundheitspersonal massiv betroffen sei.

Randeria stellte eine Paradoxie auch im Hinblick auf die Knappheit von Impfstoffen fest: Obwohl in Ländern des Globalen Südens sehr viele ungenutzte Produktionskapazitäten vorhanden seien, gebe es aufgrund bestehender Rechte zum Schutz geistigen Eigentums einen Mangel an Impfdosen. Der von Indien und Südafrika bei der Welthandelsorganisation eingebrachte Antrag auf Aussetzung des Patentschutzes für Covid-19-Impfstoffe, Medikamente und Geräte für die Dauer der Pandemie wurde von westlichen Ländern abgelehnt. Marcus Bachmann bestätigte, dass bestehende Produktionskapazitäten in Schwellenländern und Ländern des Globalen Südens ungenutzt bleiben, obwohl sowohl

das notwendige Know-how als auch geeignete Entschädigungsmodelle für die PatentinhaberInnen zur Verfügung stehen. Für ein rasches Ende der Pandemie sei es zentral, dass „das derzeit bestehende Impfstoff-Oligopol überwunden wird“. Er rief in Erinnerung, dass erst ein globaler Pool an freien Lizenzen für HIV-AIDS im Jahr 2010 dazu geführt habe, dass Medikamente auf dem afrikanischen Kontinent leistbar wurden.

Da geistige Eigentumsrechte in manchen Kontexten innovationshemmend wirken, sei Patentschutz kontextabhängig zu beurteilen, meinte Barbara Prainsack. Wiedermann-Schmidt wiederum bewertet eine generelle Aufhebung jeglichen Patentschutzes kritisch, da die derzeitige Knappheit nicht auf die Entwicklung der Impfstoffe zurückzuführen sei, sondern darauf, dass nicht schnell genug produziert werden könne.

Eine weitere Paradoxie ist schließlich der Umstand, dass in einer Krise globalen Ausmaßes nationalstaatliche Denk- und Vorgehensweisen dominieren. Katharina T. Paul bemerkte, Gesundheitspolitik sei traditionell eine nationalstaatliche Materie, die Krise biete jedoch eine Chance, etablierte Denkmuster zu durchbrechen. Eine Fokussierung auf den Nationalstaat, so auch Marcus Bachmann, sei schlicht unpraktikabel und führe dazu, dass marginalisierte und vulnerable Gruppen unterversorgt bleiben. Vor diesem Hintergrund hält es Ursula Wiedermann-Schmidt für zentral, dass die WHO COVAX-Initiative, die einen weltweit gleichmäßigen und gerechten Zugang zu Covid-19-Impfungen ermöglichen will, nicht nur ein Lippenbekenntnis bleibt, sondern tatsächlich Umsetzung findet. Die Frage der globalen Solidarität sei aus moralischen und aus Public Health-Gründen von größter Relevanz. <



Albenaz Azmanova



Eric Frey



Lisa Herzog



Daniel Gros



Harald Oberhofer

Brauchen wir eine Wirtschaftsrevolution nach der Pandemie?

BURGTHEATER-DEBATTE AM 9. MAI 2021

Eine weitere Diskussion der Reihe „Europa im Diskurs“ fand am 9. Mai statt. Diesmal ging es um die Frage, ob nach der Pandemie eine Wirtschaftsrevolution vonnöten ist. An der vom Standard-Chefredakteur **Eric Frey** geleiteten Diskussion beteiligten sich die politische Theoretikerin **Albenaz Azmanova** (University of Kent und Brussels School of International Studies), die Wirtschaftswissenschaftler **Daniel Gros** (Centre for European Policy Studies) und **Harald Oberhofer** (Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien) und, zugeschaltet, die Philosophin **Lisa Herzog** (Universität Groningen). Zwei unterschiedliche Grundhaltungen machten sich im Panel schon früh erkennbar. Während Azmanova und Herzog von der Notwendigkeit eines radikalen Umdenkens in der Wirtschaft sprachen, waren Gros und Oberhofer eher der Ansicht, dass die Herausforderungen nach der Pandemie mit den vorhan-

denen wirtschaftlichen Instrumenten angegangen werden können.

Für Azmanova ist die Zeit für zwei Revolutionen (Klimawandel und soziale Gerechtigkeit) gereift. Die Wirtschaftspolitik sollte den Widerspruch ins Visier nehmen, dass die Menschen immer mehr arbeiten müssen, obwohl die Wirtschaft in der Lage wäre, mit wenig Input von der Arbeit ihre Bedürfnisse zu befriedigen. Priorität sollte der Sicherheit und Stabilität von Existenzgrundlagen eingeräumt werden. Sie plädierte für Job-Sharing aber vor allem für einen Abschied vom Versprechen der Prosperität im Sinne des materiellen Überflusses. „We need to live simple lives“, bemerkte sie. Sie machte das wesentliche Problem der gängigen Wirtschaftspolitik nicht am Wirtschaftswachstum, sondern am politischen Commitment zum Wirtschaftswachstum fest, das z.B. durch ein Commitment zur ökonomischen Stabilität ersetzt werden soll.

Auch Lisa Herzog plädierte für einen Paradigmenwechsel in der Wirtschaftspolitik und stellte die Zweckmäßigkeit gängiger Effizienz- und Produktivitätsvorstellungen sowie Indikatoren wie das BIP in Frage. Es sei dringend nötig, meinte sie, die Zukunft der Arbeit zu überdenken und dabei demokratische Strukturen und Partizipationsmöglichkeiten in Erwägung zu ziehen. Demokratische Rechenschaftspflicht müsse auch im ökonomischen Bereich gelten. Wie Azmanova ist auch Herzog der Ansicht, dass wir die Frage des Wohlstands und der Lebensqualität neu stellen müssen. Ferner meinte sie, dass Fragen der Verteilung und sozialen Gerechtigkeit, die auch für die Klimakrise zentral sind, stärker in den Vordergrund gerückt werden sollten.

Daniel Gros hält dagegen die Rede von „Revolution“ für eine Übertreibung. Nach der Pandemie würden die Mechanismen der Wirtschaft wie

zuvor funktionieren – die Wirtschaft würde nur grüner und digitaler. Zudem äußerte er sich optimistisch im Hinblick auf die Folgen des technologischen Wandels auf den Arbeitsmarkt, da im Gegensatz zur Vergangenheit heute mehr Menschen über allgemeine Fertigkeiten verfügen, die sich leichter an neue Bedingungen anpassen können. Zudem hätten wir heute einen besseren Wohlfahrtsstaat, der in der Lage sei, die Probleme aufzufangen. Auch im Hinblick auf die Klimakrise zeigte er sich eher optimistisch, dass der Bedarf erkannt wird und die Technologie die Kosten reduzieren wird. Gros äußerte sich dagegen skeptisch über die praktische Umsetzung einer Politik der Abkehr vom Wohlstand. Wichtig sei eher die angemessene Vorbereitung auf Krisen.

Auch Harald Oberhofer hält es nicht für sinnvoll, über eine ökonomische Revolution zu sprechen, und hob hervor, dass Probleme oft poli-

tischer und nicht ökonomischer Natur seien. Dass Unternehmen Kosten zu externalisieren pflegen, sei eine politische und keine ökonomische Frage. Die empirische Erfahrung spräche gegen das von Azmanova vorgeschlagene Job-Sharing, meinte Oberhofer. Weder neue Arbeitsplätze seien zu verzeichnen, noch ließe sich eine solche Maßnahme im Kontext eines globalen Wettbewerbs auf nationalstaatlicher Ebene durchführen. Auch sei Wirtschaftswachstum wünschenswert, da eine wachsende Wirtschaft die Bewältigung von Problemen einfacher macht. Oberhofer ist der Überzeugung, dass wenn der Kapitalismus den Menschen die richtigen Anreize gibt, diese kreativ werden und Lösungen finden. <

Europa im Diskurs ist eine Kooperation des IWM mit Burgtheater, Erste Foundation und Der Standard.

Kapitalismus im 21. Jahrhundert

VON MARIANA MAZZUCATO UND BRANKO MILANOVIĆ

Ein neuer Sammelband des IWM im Passagen Verlag enthält Beiträge führender KapitalismusexpertInnen, die die Grenzen des Kapitalismus aufzeigen und Wege zu seiner Zählung nachspüren. Die nachfolgenden Artikel von **Branko Milanović** und **Mariana Mazzucato** sind Auszüge aus diesem Band.

Der Kampf der Kapitalismen

VON BRANKO MILANOVIĆ

Der Kapitalismus regiert die Welt. Abgesehen von einigen wenigen Ausnahmen ist die wirtschaftliche Produktion auf der ganzen Welt gleich organisiert: Die Arbeit ist freiwillig, das Kapital überwiegend in privater Hand und die Produktion dezentral koordiniert und von Profit getrieben. Historisch ist dieser Triumph beispiellos. Früher musste der Kapitalismus mit anderen Organisationsformen der Produktion koexistieren. Heute jedoch ist er die einzige verbliebene Produktionsweise.

In der Menschheitsgeschichte folgt auf die Durchsetzung eines Systems oder einer Religion häufig ein Schisma von zwei Varianten desselben Kredits. In dieser Hinsicht ist der Kapitalismus nicht anders: zwei Modelle, die sich voneinander in politischen, wirtschaftlichen und sozialen Aspekten unterscheiden, sind vorherrschend.

In den Staaten Westeuropas und Nordamerikas und einer Reihe anderer Länder wie Indien, Indonesien und Japan dominiert eine liberale, meritokratische Form des Kapitalismus: ein System, in dem die Produktion überwiegend im Privatsektor konzentriert ist, Talente scheinbar rasch aufsteigen können, und das durch Maßnahmen wie kostenlose



Bund Bull in Shanghai.



Charging Bull in New York.

Photos: Joseph GTK, Victoria Lipov / Shutterstock.com

Schulbildung oder Erbschaftssteuern Chancen für alle zu ermöglichen versucht. Demgegenüber steht das staatlich gelenkte, politische Modell des Kapitalismus, dessen bestes Beispiel China ist, das jedoch auch in anderen Teilen Asiens (Myanmar, Singapur und Vietnam), in Europa (Aserbaidschan und Russland) und in Afrika (Algerien, Äthiopien und Ruanda) in Erscheinung tritt. Dieses System setzt auf hohes Wirtschaftswachstum und schränkt die individuellen politischen und Bürgerrechte ein.

Die beiden Modelle offerieren signifikant unterschiedliche Möglichkeiten, wie politische und wirtschaftliche Macht in der Gesellschaft strukturiert werden können.

Der politische Kapitalismus gewährt politischen Eliten größere Autonomie und verspricht den Normalbürgern höhere Wachstumsraten. Chinas wirtschaftlicher Erfolg untergräbt die Behauptung des Westens, es gebe eine notwendige Beziehung zwischen Kapitalismus und liberaler Demokratie.

Die Regierungen Chinas und anderer Staaten des politischen Kapitalismus müssen ständig wirtschaftliches Wachstum erzeugen, um ihre Macht zu legitimieren – ein Kraftakt, den zu bewältigen immer schwieriger werden dürfte. Sie müssen auch versuchen, die systeminhärente Korruption und die damit einhergehende rasant wachsende Ungleichheit zu begrenzen. Der Prüfstein ihres

Modells wird sein Vermögen sein, eine immer größere kapitalistische Schicht, die sich oftmals an der arroganten Macht der Staatsbürokratie stößt, im Zaum zu halten.

Der liberale Kapitalismus hat viele bekannte Vorteile, von denen Demokratie und Rechtsstaat zu den wichtigsten zählen. Diese beiden Merkmale stellen Werte an sich dar, denen auch eine schnellere Wirtschaftsentwicklung durch die Förderung von Innovationen und sozialer Mobilität zugeschrieben werden kann. Doch das System steht vor einer enormen Herausforderung: der Herausbildung einer sich selbst erhaltenden Oberschicht in Verbindung mit zunehmender Ungleichheit. Darin liegt derzeit die gravierendste Bedrohung für die langfristige Existenzfähigkeit des liberalen Kapitalismus.

Wenn es den liberalen, meritokratischen, kapitalistischen Systemen nicht gelingt, das Problem der wachsenden Ungleichheit anzugehen, riskieren sie, einen anderen Weg einzuschlagen: nicht hin zum Sozialismus, sondern zur Annäherung an den politischen Kapitalismus. Die wirtschaftliche Elite im Westen wird sich weiter isolieren und ihre Macht noch ungehinderter über angeblich demokratische Gesellschaften ausüben, so wie

die politische Elite in China über ihr Land herrscht. Je enger wirtschaftliche und politische Macht in den liberalen, kapitalistischen Systemen verschmelzen, desto plutokratischer wird der liberale Kapitalismus, der immer mehr Züge des politischen Kapitalismus annimmt. In letzterem Modell führt der Weg zu wirtschaftlichen Vorteilen über die Politik; im plutokratischen – ehemals liberalen, meritokratischen – Kapitalismus wird die wirtschaftliche Macht die Politik unterwerfen. Der Endpunkt beider Systeme wird der gleiche sein: sich schließende Reihen einer privilegierten Minderheit und eine endlose Reproduktion dieser Elite. ◀

Branko Milanović ist Ökonom und prominenter Ungleichheitsforscher. Er war mehr als zwei Jahrzehnte lang führender Ökonom der Forschungsabteilung der Weltbank.

Kapitalismus im 21. Jahrhundert Herausgegeben von Shalini Randeria, Wien: Passagen Verlag, 2021. Mit Beiträgen von Dani Rodrik, Branko Milanović, Nancy Fraser, Wolfgang Merkel, Claus Leggewie, Friedrich Lenger und Mariana Mazzucato.

Der Kapitalismus nach der Pandemie

VON MARIANA MAZZUCATO

Nach der Finanzkrise 2008 haben die Regierungen weltweit mehr als drei Billionen US-Dollar in das Finanzsystem gepumpt. Ziel war es, die Kreditmärkte aufzutauen und die Weltwirtschaft wieder in Gang zu bringen. Doch anstatt die Realwirtschaft zu unterstützen, landete der Großteil der Hilfen im Finanzsektor. Die Regierungen retteten die großen Investmentbanken, die unmittelbar zur Krise beigetragen hatten, und als die Wirtschaft wieder in Gang kam, waren es diese Unternehmen, die die Früchte des Aufschwungs ernteten. Die Steuerzahler ihrerseits blieben einer Weltwirtschaft überlassen, die genauso kaputt, ungleich und kohlenstoffintensiv war wie zuvor.

Jetzt, da die Länder von der Covid-19-Pandemie und den daraus resultierenden Lockdowns betroffen sind, müssen sie es vermeiden, denselben Fehler noch einmal zu machen.

Während sie sich aus der aktuellen Krise befreien, können sie mehr tun, als nur das Wirtschaftswachstum anzukurbeln. Sie können auch die Richtung dieses Wachstums lenken, um eine bessere Wirtschaft aufzubauen.

Zu lange haben Regierungen die Risiken sozialisiert, aber die Gewinne privatisiert. Die Öffentlichkeit hat den Preis für das Aufräumen von Schlamasseln bezahlt, aber die Vorteile dieser Aufräumarbeiten sind größtenteils den Unternehmen und ihren Investoren zugefallen. Fortgeschrittene Volkswirtschaften litten schon lange vor dem Ausbruch von Covid-19 unter großen Strukturmängeln. Zum einen finanziert sich das Finanzwesen selbst und untergräbt damit die Grundlage für langfristiges Wachstum. Ein weiteres Problem ist, dass viele große Unternehmen langfristige Investitionen zugunsten kurzfristiger Gewinne vernachlässigen.

Hinzu kommt die Aushöhlung der staatlichen Kapazitäten. Erst nach einem expliziten Marktversagen greifen die Regierungen in der Regel ein, und die von ihnen vorgeschlagenen Maßnahmen sind nicht weitreichend genug und kommen zu spät. Wenn der Staat nicht als Partner bei der Wertschöpfung, sondern lediglich als Reparaturinstanz gesehen wird, werden öffentliche Ressourcen ausgehungert. Sozialprogramme, Bildung und Gesundheitsversorgung bleiben allesamt unterfinanziert. Diese Versäumnisse haben sich zu wirtschaftlichen wie planetarischen Mega-Krisen summiert. Die Covid-19-Krise hat all diese Probleme nur noch weiter verschlimmert.

Generell müssen Länder öffentliche Investitionen weniger wie Almosen gestalten, und eher als Versuche verstehen, den Markt zum Nutzen der Allgemeinheit zu formen – was bedeutet, staatliche Unterstützung an Auflagen zu knüpfen. Während

der Pandemie sollten diese Auflagen drei spezifische Ziele fördern: erstens die Beschäftigung zu erhalten, um die Produktivität der Unternehmen und die Einkommenssicherheit der Haushalte zu schützen; zweitens eine Verbesserung der Arbeitsbedingungen, indem sie für angemessene Sicherheit, anständige Löhne, ausreichende Lohnfortzahlung im Krankheitsfall und ein größeres Mitspracherecht bei Entscheidungen sorgen; drittens das Vorantreiben langfristiger Aufgaben wie die Reduzierung von CO₂-Emissionen und die Nutzung der Vorteile der Digitalisierung für öffentliche Dienstleistungen, vom Verkehr bis zum Gesundheitswesen.

Der Staat kann nicht einfach investieren, er muss die richtige Vereinbarung treffen. Dazu muss er anfangen, wie ein „unternehmerischer Staat“ zu denken. Er muss sicherstellen, dass er bei seinen Investitionen nicht nur Risiken abfedert, sondern

auch einen Anteil an den Gewinnen erhält. Das könnte er beispielsweise gewährleisten, indem er sich in diesen Vereinbarungen Beteiligungen zusichern lässt.

Manche, die über die Erholung von der Pandemie sprechen, nennen ein verlockendes Ziel: die Rückkehr zur Normalität. Aber das ist das falsche Ziel; das Normale ist kaputt. Vielmehr sollte das Ziel sein, wie es viele formuliert haben, *to build back better*, also besser zurückzubauen. Vor zwölf Jahren bot die Finanzkrise eine seltene Gelegenheit, den Kapitalismus zu verändern, doch sie wurde vertan. Jetzt hat eine weitere Krise eine weitere Chance zur Erneuerung eröffnet. Dieses Mal kann es sich die Welt nicht leisten, sie ungenutzt verstreichen zu lassen. ◀

Mariana Mazzucato ist Professorin für Economics of Innovation and Public Value am University College London (UCL), wo sie auch Gründungsdirektorin des Institute for Innovation & Public Purpose ist.

Capitalism at a Crossroads

BY ALBENA AZMANOVA

Albena Azmanova's book *Capitalism on Edge* came out in January 2020—just before the coronavirus pandemic erupted. The book's main argument is that massive social and economic insecurity—precarity—is what ails the 99 percent. The pandemic has made this argument even more prescient. The book was published in German by Edition Konturen in March 2021 as *Kapitalismus an der Kippe*.

Western democracies are at the tipping point of a tectonic policy shift. Over the past 100 years, two such great shifts have taken place in these societies: classical (liberal) capitalism entered a crisis in the late 19th century and emerged from it after the world wars in the shape of a market economy tamed by an interventionist “welfare state.” This shift, Karl Polanyi reminds us in *The Great Transformation*, was enabled by an overarching agreement among a wide variety of forces—Socialist and Conservative parties, trade unions and the Catholic Church. In the 1980s, a broad cross-ideological consensus propelled the ascent of neoliberalism, marked by a renewed political appetite for free markets and open economies. This policy formula is now in crisis, without being replaced by a new one. We inhabit what Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau have called a “space of indeterminacy”—the impetus for change is acute, but no clear path is in sight. Indisputably, an opportunity has appeared for our societies to venture into a new direction. Where should we go from here?

Since the utopian socialists began questioning the desirability and viability of capitalism in the mid-19th century, progressive social reform has been debated within a range that spans from the prosperity which capitalism generates to the solidarity which socialism nurtures. Prevailing policy solutions have been a shrewd mix of the two systems. There currently exists a longing for a return to the formula of inclusive prosperity that marked the golden age of welfare capitalism of the mid-20th century. One tends to forget that this prosperity relied on intensified production and consumption, and a vision of social justice that at least tacitly implied an entitlement to be middle class and affluent. All this exerted a heavy environmental cost.

If we want to advance, I claim in *Capitalism on Edge*, we need to abandon these blueprints of capitalism, socialism, or the right mix of the two, and think afresh. Much as we need a radical social transformation, we are currently missing the three typical levers of radical change—a systemic crisis, the likelihood of revolution and the availability of Utopia. We must therefore think without blueprints. This means scrutinizing the current state of democratic capitalism (I set aside the autocratic variations in China, Russia and elsewhere) in order to discern available paths for radical politics. Such an inquiry leads to the discovery that while we were discussing the crisis of capital-



A man displays a placard which translates as ‘precarity doesn’t pay, it muzzles’ during a protest against controversial labor reforms on June 28, 2016 in Rennes.

Photo: JEAN-FRANÇOIS MONIER / AFP / picturedesk.com

ism in the aftermath of the 2008 financial meltdown, neoliberal capitalism surreptitiously mutated into a new form, which I have called “precarity capitalism.” This new form is marked by the massification of insecurity which is affecting the material and psychological welfare of ordinary citizens beyond the group of what the sociologist Guy Standing called “the precariat” (akin to the proletariat)—poorly paid unskilled workers with insecure employment. Precarity, which has come to afflict the 99 percent irrespective of professional occupation, income levels and social class, is the great scourge of our times. It is at the root of such social pathologies as the rise of populism and the inability of liberal democracies to effectively manage crises. It has colored our attitude to poverty, the green transition and immigrants, as well as our response to the pandemic.

This condition of generalized precarity originated with the increased exposure of Western democracies to the competitive pressures of globally integrated markets at the end of the 20th century, especially to competition from countries with a cheap labor supply such as China. This incurred a shift in economic policy: from *competition* (the top priority under neoliberalism) to *competitiveness*. For the sake of ensuring the national economies’ competitiveness in the global market, center-right and center-left political elites undertook three sets of reforms. First, the liberalization of

labor markets reduced employment security, which allowed companies the flexibility they needed to compete globally. Second, states actively helped hand-picked companies “national champions” to enhance the competitive advantage they already had. Third, the efforts to retain corporations within their national jurisdictions brought down corporate taxation, which in turn led to reduced spending on essential public services. The austerity policy adopted as a response to the financial meltdown of 2008 further reinforced these measures and deepened their social effect. This fueled two trajectories of generalized precarity.

On the one hand, there is the dimension of *personal* fragility. The exposure to global competition increased the work pressures for all. Job insecurity is the reason why the “well-employed” do not dare to leave, or slow down in, the “rat race” even as they value leisure and family life. While the precarity of the poor is expressed in indebtedness and further impoverishment, the precarity of the rich is expressed in an epidemic of mental health disorders and burn-out. The great majority of people live in persistent anxiety over the costs of health, housing, education, the quality of public services and other formerly ordinary attributes of middle-class life.

On the other hand, there is the *societal* dimension of fragility, which has been dramatically laid bare by the pandemic. Our societies have become more fragile as the public sec-

tor has shrunk and public authority passed its responsibility for the common good onto individuals and markets. This depletion of the public sector and offloading of responsibility is at the root of the paradox that western societies, despite their scientific might, material affluence and political sophistication, have proven unable to cope effectively with the spread of a virus which is neither very deadly nor completely unknown. The Covid-19 pandemic was thus in fact first enabled, then further exacerbated, by an underlying epidemic of precarity. A good illustration of this problem is the failed attempt by the European Commission to pursue an idea it had in 2017 to start the development of a vaccine against pathogens such as coronaviruses within the Innovative Medicines Initiative—a public-private partnership between the European Union and the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations, whose function it is to fund health research and innovation. The scope and foresight of this project was laudable. But when the drug companies rejected the idea as being unprofitable it was swiftly abandoned. While one can expect a private pharmaceutical company to be driven by profit, the European Commission, as the executive arm of the European Union, is a public authority with the duty to safeguard public welfare. Not acting on the knowledge that a pathogen is likely to spread is tantamount to the abdication of political responsibility.

Generalized precarity is at the root of another paradox: the economic and social crisis of the Great Recession did not cause a radicalization of political sentiment in a leftward direction. Against the hopes and expectations of the Left, the celebrated crisis of capitalism in fact triggered an electoral shift to the right—to the center-right but also the far right. This is because when people’s lives are unstable, they long for stability and security. Especially when a positive utopia is missing, precarity nurtures conservative and even reactionary instincts.

Unfortunately, the Left has responded to the growing anxiety with a narrative about fighting inequality. This is a diagnostic error. People socialized within capitalist democracies tend to admire the rich; a few expect to get rich themselves, and most of the rest just ignore them. That is why moral outrage against inequality has proven to be a political loser. But it is precisely because we can no longer rely on a robust public sector that personal wealth becomes so important—hence our obsession with inequality. In this sense, the concern with inequality is a *symptom* of precarity: private wealth is king when public support is deficient. But no matter how equal our societies become, we will remain precarious—as individuals and as societies—without a robust public sector.

What do we do with the discovery that precarity, and not inequality, is the root cause of our societies’ gravest problems? This raises the stakes for progressive politics: fighting precarity, not just inequality, becomes a priority. A new path of reform opens: replacing the growth-and-redistribution formula with fighting precarity renders social justice compatible with environmental justice. Ultimately, this allows for radical progressive change without the crutch of crisis, revolution or utopia. ◀

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Bolsonaro and Brazil's Capitalist Revolt

BY PEDRO PERFEITO DA SILVA

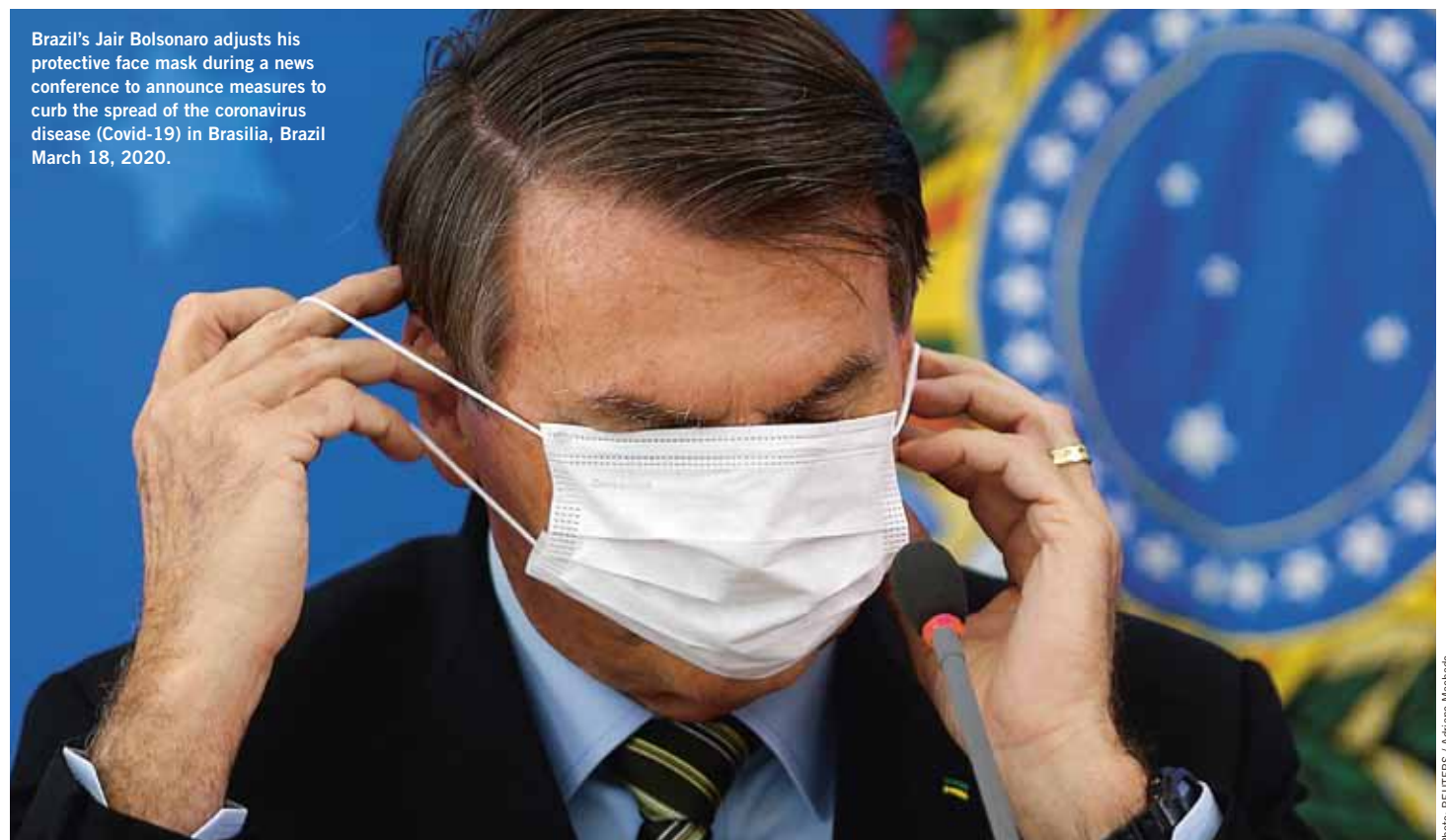
As pandemic negationism keeps taking lives in Brazil and turning the country into an international pariah, it is easy to conclude that removing President Jair Bolsonaro from power is a necessary condition for national recovery. However, an analysis of the social underpinnings of his economic strategy indicates that what has driven Brazil into this crisis will not go away when the wannabe autocrat leaves office.

To make sense of this pessimistic view, we need to take a step back and properly describe Bolsonaro's right-wing populism. In this regard, the parallels with Hungary under Prime Minister Viktor Orbán abound in the media. Among the many similarities, pundits highlight the mobilization of Christian voters in defense of a conservative lifestyle, the exclusionary policies towards ethnic minorities like Roma and Indigenous people, the heated rhetoric against "globalism" at international forums, the restrictions on academic and press freedom, and the characterization of political rivals as threats to national security.

Besides their similar mobilization strategies, both populist projects are also rooted in the revolt of domestic business groups against the political economy regime that emerged following the democratization of each country. However, the similarities stop at this point. In Hungary, national capitalists pushed for interventionist policies in order to reshape the relationship with foreign investors in sectors like banking, dairy production, and public utilities. In Brazil, on the other hand, the capitalist revolt had an opposite goal—releasing market forces from the shackles of social embeddedness as a means to boost private investment, recover external competitiveness, and attract capital inflows.¹

The Rise and Crisis of the New Republic²

During the three decades that followed the end of the military dictatorship in Brazil in 1985, a hybrid political economy regime characterized the New Republic. At the social level, for example, despite opposing structural changes that could tackle income and wealth inequality, business leaders acknowledged the need for socioeconomic inclusion through the incremental expansion of safety nets and public services. Similarly, in the economic realm, all relevant political forces gradually converged around the combination of moderate liberalization and targeted interventionist measures, conciliating the pursuit of external competitiveness with the protection of domestic companies. Finally, in foreign policy, all democratic governments prioritized the integration of South America and South-South dialogue with the aim of strengthening Bra-



Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro adjusts his protective face mask during a news conference to announce measures to curb the spread of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) in Brasilia, Brazil March 18, 2020.

Photo: REUTERS / Adriano Machado

zil's bargaining power on the international stage.

Instead of leading to a deeper policy reorientation, the rise to power of President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva and his leftist Workers' Party in 2003 consolidated this political economy regime by keeping their social-democratic agenda within the limits of the New Republic. Throughout the 2000s commodities boom, this pragmatism was successful in gathering the support of economic elites for inclusionary policies. It was possible to strengthen the domestic market, expand social protection, and institutionalize capital-labor bargains. In the 2010s, however, after the downward turn of the commodities cycle, the Workers' Party government, now led by President Dilma Rouseff, lost the capacity to accommodate contradictory societal interests, paving the way for fiscal deterioration, a falling GDP, and an inflationary surge.

Against this background, the main business associations—like the Brazilian Federation of Banks, the Federation of Industries of the State of São Paulo, and the National Industry Confederation—interpreted the crisis as a result of economic interventionism. Initially, this meant business's complete rupture with the Workers' Party, which led to the controversial impeachment of Rouseff in 2016 and the imprisonment of Lula in 2018. However, after defeating the left politically with the support of the

middle classes and the judiciary, this capitalist revolt reached the political economy regime as a whole, demanding deep liberalizing reforms. For example, even before the presidency of Bolsonaro, two legislative changes harmed the foundations of the New Republic: the twenty-year public spending cap that curbed the government's capacity to fund social investments and subsidize strategic industries, and the labor reform that made work rules flexible and abolished the union tax, reducing workers' bargaining power.

The Dilemma of Bolsonaro and What Comes Next

This "permanent revolution" of Brazilian capitalists lies at the core of the electoral triumph of right-wing populism in 2018. In little more than two years of Bolsonaro's presidency, it further attacked the foundations of the New Republic's political economy regime. On the social level, for example, the government has cut spending on education and health while approving a pension reform that has had a negative impact on the poorest workers. In the same vein, under the leadership of Paulo Guedes—a neoliberal economist who taught in Chile during the Pinochet dictatorship—the Bolsonaro administration's economic policies have included so far giving the central bank its independence, the

privatization of the state-owned oil distributor, the rejection of any sort of industrial policy, the abandonment of the public banks' countercyclical role, and the intention to ease restrictions on dollar-denominated accounts.

A greater rupture took place in foreign policy as the Bolsonaro administration departed from the usual prioritizing of relationships with South American and emerging countries. In practice, this has meant complete subordination to the United States, the weakening of the BRICS forum, the abandonment of the Union of South American Nations, foregoing the status of developing country at the World Trade Organization, and recurrent attempts at reducing the scope of the Southern Common Market.

Business leaders and policymakers expected that freeing the economy from the shackles of the New Republic would generate growth as a result of higher levels of private investment, which would be motivated by the reduction of labor costs, the removal of the fiscal burden, and the massive attraction of capital inflows. However, even before the Covid-19 crisis, this neoliberal strategy overlooked key aspects of reality. First, the cuts in public spending undermined the internal market, which is an important source of demand for the private sector. Moreover, neither U.S. nor European investors were in-

terested in moving huge amounts of capital to South America. Finally, Brazil's deindustrialization and geographical distance from supply chains make a pure export-led strategy an unrealistic project.

To some extent, the pandemic has only deepened this mismatch between ideas and reality, and yet capitalist leaders have fiercely resisted revising any aspect of the economic agenda they put forward in recent years. This creates a dilemma for Bolsonaro, who remains trapped between retaining the support of business elites and embracing economic interventionism to address the current crisis. So far, the government's paralysis has imposed an unacceptable human sacrifice on society. However, as there is no indication that business leaders will abandon their demand for economic liberalization and fiscal austerity, the same dilemma will haunt post-Bolsonaro administrations, risking Brazil's reconstruction by democratic forces. <

1) Saad-Filho, A., and L. Morais. 2018. *Brazil: Neoliberalism versus Democracy*. London: Pluto Press.

2) Silva, P., and J. Bandeira. 2021. *The political economy of neoliberalism in Brazil: towards a Polanyian approach*. *Third World Quarterly*, forthcoming.

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Geschichte auf den Barrikaden

VON ROBERT SKIDELSKY

Geschichte ist zum Schlüsselterrain politischer Kämpfe unserer Zeit geworden. Fragen der Interpretation, Perspektivität und Situiertheit haben den Anspruch der objektiven Rekonstruktion der Vergangenheit im gängigen Geschichtsverständnis in den Hintergrund gerückt. Diese Wende geht mit gewaltigen politischen Verschiebungen im Westen und in der Welt einher.



Die Christoph-Columbus-Statue vor dem Minnesota State Capitol in St. Paul, Minnesota, nachdem eine von Mitgliedern des American Indian Movement angeführte Gruppe sie am 10. Juni 2020 zu Fall gebracht hatte.

Photo: Tony Webster

Donald Trump hat während seiner gesamten Präsidentschaft sein so gut wie nicht vorhandenes Geschichtsverständnis unter Beweis gestellt, und dennoch hat er es geschafft, „Geschichte“ zum zentralen Schlachtfeld in den heutigen Kulturkämpfen zu machen. Eine seiner letzten Amtshandlungen als Präsident war die Veröffentlichung einer Studie über die Gründung Amerikas, die der Executive Director der American Historical Association als „eine Erzählung und Argumentation“ bezeichnete, „die kaum ein respektabler professioneller Historiker, auch bei einem breiten Interpretationsspektrum, für plausibel halten würde“.

Die prominente Rolle, die die Vergangenheit in den aktuellen politischen Debatten in den USA – ja, im gesamten Westen – spielt, macht es unerlässlich, genauer zu erkunden, wie Geschichte produziert wird – und, vielleicht noch wichtiger, wie sie gelehrt wird. Wir müssen jetzt einen neuen Anlauf unternehmen, um die Frage zu beantworten, die der

britische Diplomat und Historiker Edward Hallett Carr vor Jahrzehnten gestellt hat: Was ist Geschichte?

Geschichte kann durchaus starke Leidenschaften wecken. Seit 2015 zum Beispiel hat ein Bildersturm auf Statuen die westliche Welt erfasst, vor allem inspiriert durch die Black-Lives-Matter-Bewegung. Statuen und Denkmäler, die mit Kolonialismus und Sklaverei in Verbindung gebracht werden, wurden in den Vereinigten Staaten, Europa und Südafrika entfernt, enthauptet, verunstaltet oder bedroht. In ehemaligen Sklavenhalter- und Jim-Crow-Staaten der USA wurden Denkmäler für zivile und militärische Führer der Konföderation gestürzt. Trump bezeichnete solche Denkmäler als „wunderschöne Statuen“ und ordnete an, dass Truppen des Bundes sie vor der „Herrschaft des Mobs“ schützen sollten.

Die meisten Menschen in Großbritannien wurden sich der historischen Dimension dieses immer heftiger aufflammenden Kulturkampfes bewusst, als Black-Lives-Matter-

Demonstranten im Juni 2020 eine Statue des Sklavenhändlers Edward Colston in Bristol niederrissen. Dieser Episode war jedoch ein anderes wichtiges Ereignis im Jahr 2016 vorausgegangen, als Studenten die Entfernung einer Statue des Imperialisten Cecil Rhodes vor dem Oriel College in Oxford forderten.

Die Ermordung von George Floyd durch die Polizei im Mai 2020 in den USA hat die Anti-Rhodes-Proteste wiederbelebt. Die Statue steht noch, aber eine Untersuchungskommission wird einen Bericht über ihre Zukunft erarbeiten. Und manche fordern nun, dass die Statue von Admiral Horatio Nelson – einem entschiedenen Verfechter der Sklaverei – vom Londoner Trafalgar Square entfernt wird.

Colston und Rhodes waren freilich auch prominente Philanthropen. Rhodes gründete eine Stiftung, um Studenten aus der ganzen Welt Stipendien für ein Studium in Oxford zu verschaffen. Sollte das in die Waagschale geworfen werden? Sir Roy Strong, ehemaliger Direktor des Londoner Victoria and Albert

Museum, drückte die Sache noch deutlicher aus. „Wenn man einmal anfängt, die Geschichte in diesem Ausmaß umzuschreiben, wird keine Statue und kein historisches Haus mehr stehen“, bemerkte er. „Die Vergangenheit ist die Vergangenheit.“

Die Vergangenheit befragen

In diesen Debatten beschuldigen beide Seiten die jeweils andere, „Geschichte verbergen“ zu wollen. Aber die entscheidenden Fragen sind: „Wessen Vergangenheit?“ und „Welche Geschichte?“

Diese Fragen hätten für eine frühere Generation von Historikern keinen Sinn ergeben. Leopold von Ranke, einer der Begründer der „wissenschaftlichen“ Geschichtsforschung im 19. Jahrhundert, vertrat die Ansicht, dass Geschichte einfach das sei, was passiert ist, und Aufgabe des Historikers sei es, zu sagen, „wie es eigentlich gewesen“ ist. Ranke forderte eine evidenzbasierte Geschichtsschreibung. Die Ranke'sche Methode bestand darin, vermeint-

liche Fakten aufzuspüren, die Dokumente zu befragen und eine Geschichte zu schreiben, die auf den zuverlässigsten Quellen basiert. Die Historiker sollten diese Methode dann auf die überlieferten Darstellungen anwenden und so Wahrheit von Unwahrheit trennen. Das Schreiben von Geschichte war also vergleichbar mit der Befragung von Zeugen vor Gericht. Der forensische Charakter der Geschichtsschreibung im Ranke'schen Stil war eine mächtige Waffe gegen die mythologischen Anlagerungen, die der Vergangenheit anhafteten. Aber dieser Ansatz hatte zwei Schwächen.

Die erste betraf die Bedeutung. Ranke glaubte, dass die Fakten, einmal festgestellt, für sich selbst sprechen würden. Aber das tun sie nie, nicht zuletzt, weil es zu viele davon gibt. Der Historiker muss nicht nur die Zuverlässigkeit der Beweise beurteilen, sondern auch ihre Relevanz. Dazu gehören Diskussionen über Ursache und Wirkung, über unmittelbare und fernere Ursachen. (Was hat den Ersten Weltkrieg ver-

ursacht? Waren wirtschaftliche Faktoren mitverantwortlich?) Solche Fragen bieten massenhaft Raum für Meinungsverschiedenheiten, was zu einer endlosen Debatte führt.

Ein noch größeres Problem ist, dass der Historiker entscheiden muss, welche Geschichte er erzählen will. Für Ranke und seine Nachfolger schien das kein großes Problem zu sein. Ihr Hauptaugenmerk lag auf dem Aufstieg Europas (und insbesondere Deutschlands) zur Weltherrschaft. Sie richteten ihren Blick fest auf die Kriege, die Diplomatie und das Kalkül der Herrschenden sowie auf die religiösen, kulturellen und nationalen Besonderheiten, die zu dem geführt hatten, was sie für eine fortschrittliche Bewegung des menschlichen Geistes hielten.

Die Darstellungen, die sie verfassten, hatten unweigerlich etwas Triumphalistisches an sich. Alles andere, was geschehen war, war nicht Geschichte oder allenfalls eine Nebenhandlung. Die Lehrpläne der Schulen und Universitäten wurden dementsprechend gestaltet und Schüler und Studenten entsprechend unterrichtet.

Geschichte für Sieger

Geschichte war traditionellerweise die Erzählung von Siegern, wie das Beispiel einer der hartnäckigen Eigenheiten der britischen Geschichte zeigt, nämlich des „Whig-Narrativs“. Der Historiker Herbert Butterfield, der den Begriff prägte und den dahinterstehenden Dünkel attackierte, fasste es zusammen als „die Tendenz [...], auf der Seite der Protestanten und Whigs zu schreiben, Revolutionen zu loben, sofern sie erfolgreich waren, bestimmte Prinzipien des Fortschritts in der Vergangenheit zu betonen und eine Geschichte zu produzieren, die die Ratifizierung, wenn nicht die Verherrlichung der Gegenwart ist“.

Die „Verlierer“ in der Whig-Erzählung vom Fortschritt hin zu Liberalismus und Demokratie waren Katholiken und Tories. Tatsächlich kamen sie kaum vor; die Whig-Interpretation der Geschichte kann gar nicht anders, als ihre Rolle verkürzt darzustellen oder zu marginalisieren.

Der Zeitpunkt von Butterfields Angriff war wichtig. Sein Buch *The Whig Interpretation of History* wurde erstmals 1931 veröffentlicht, zur einer Zeit also, da der Erste Weltkrieg und die Weltwirtschaftskrise die Unterstützung für die bürgerliche Geschichtsinterpretation hatten schwinden lassen. Nicht zufällig erlebte die konservative Geschichtswissenschaft um diese Zeit ein massives Comeback, angeführt von dem Oxford-Historiker Lewis Namier. Die Perioden und Themen, über die Namier schrieb, eigneten sich gut für eine „anti-whiggische“ Betrachtung. Sein 1929 erschienenes Buch *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III.* beispielsweise fängt einen Zeitpunkt ein, bevor sich die große Fortschrittserzählung verankert hatte.

In einem anderen Buch, 1848: *The Revolution of the Intellectuals* (1944), konzentrierte sich Namier auf die gescheiterten Revolutionen von 1848 in Mitteleuropa und nicht

auf die vielen Revolutionen, angefangen bei der Französischen, die erfolgreich waren. Ein Großteil dieser Art von Geschichtsschreibung schilderte, wie geschickt die herrschenden Klassen die Kräfte des Fortschritts schwächten und behinderten.

Der andere Erbe der verblasenden Whig-Interpretation war die sozialistische Geschichte. Als die Labour Party nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg die Liberalen als bestimmende Kraft auf der Linken im Vereinigten Königreich verdrängte, wurde die Stimme des Volkes nachdrücklicher vernehmbar. Das führte zur Entstehung einer linken Geschichtsschreibung, die Demokratie als eine Errungenschaft der Mobilisierung und des Protests des Volks und nicht als Geschenk der herrschenden Klasse betrachtete.

Diese Verschiebungen zeigen, dass das, was war, nie von Dauer ist. Butterfield griff eine Geschichtswissenschaft an, die moralische Klarheit zu erreichen suchte, indem sie vergangene Handlungen und Ereignisse im Lichte der aktuellen Politik und Werte interpretierte. Die Vergangenheit, so behauptete er, muss für sich selbst sprechen dürfen. Dies halte zumindest die historische Tür offen für zukünftige Werteveränderungen.

Geschichte neu schreiben

Jede Generation schreibt die Geschichte im Schatten ihrer eigenen vorherrschenden Interessen um: Die einzige verlässliche Geschichte im Ranke'schen Sinne ist die, die uns nicht mehr interessiert. Niemand streitet heute zum Beispiel über die Moral der römischen Sklaverei, weil wir uns nicht mehr persönlich involviert fühlen.

Mit dem Aufkommen von Demokratie und Feminismus, den Veränderungen in der ethnischen und religiösen Zusammensetzung der westlichen Bevölkerung und dem relativen Niedergang des Westens und dem Aufstieg Asiens begannen zuvor ausgeschlossene Gruppen und Länder eine Anerkennung als Opfer und eigenständige historische Akteure zu fordern. Andere Sachverhalte, die schon immer vorhanden waren, fanden zum ersten Mal Eingang in die Geschichtsschreibung. Die politische Geschichte wickelte sich der Sozialgeschichte, und die Erzählung von der „Last des weißen Mannes“ (*white man's burden*) wurde zu einer Erzählung der „Unterdrückung durch den weißen Mann“ (*white man's oppression*).

Die Historiker gaben die Ranke'sche Methode natürlich nicht auf, aber sie benutzten sie nicht mehr, um nur eine Geschichte zu erzählen. Die Sieger der Ranke'schen Geschichte hatten die historische Schlacht schon lange, bevor ihre Statuen gestürzt wurden, verloren. Die neue Geschichte, die erzählt werden sollte, betraf die Schäden, die sie angerichtet, nicht die glorreichen Taten, die sie vollbracht, oder die nützlichen Dinge, die sie geschaffen hatten.

Das ist im weitesten Sinne das, was mit der westlichen Geschichtsschreibung und -lehre im letzten Jahrhundert passiert zu sein scheint. Und im Allgemeinen bildete der Marxismus die Speerspitze dieser Verschie-

bung. Karl Marx war der ursprüngliche Begründer der „Geschichte von unten“, als er zum ersten Mal den Klassenkampf als Motor der Geschichte und den Kapitalismus als das bürgerliche Stadium der historischen Entwicklung identifizierte, dem der Triumph des Proletariats folgen würde.

Historische und literarische Studien sind seither Fußnoten zum marxistischen Grundschema. Der Marxismus wurde zwar politisch besiegt, doch kulturell hat er triumphiert. Im zeitgenössischen Sprachgebrauch sind wir *woke* geworden für die Wahrheit unserer Situation.¹

Abrechnung mit dem Empire

Von zentraler Bedeutung für diesen Perspektivenwechsel war die Betrachtung des Imperialismus. Ohne Zweifel war der moderne Imperialismus schon immer ein umstrittenes Konzept. Das musste er auch sein, denn er widersprach den republikanischen Idealen von Frei-

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heit, Gleichheit und Brüderlichkeit, die von der Französischen Revolution proklamiert wurden.

Aber interessanterweise konzentrierten sich die frühesten modernen Kritiker des Imperiums auf die Schäden, die der Imperialismus den Großmächten selbst zufügte, und nicht auf die Schäden, die er bei den imperialen Untertanen verursachte. Adam Smith brachte einen Großteil des Antiimperialismus seiner Zeit auf den Punkt, als er Großbritanniens amerikanische Kolonien als „Mühlsteine um unseren Hals“ bezeichnete. Smith war der Ansicht, Großbritannien könnte alle wirtschaftlichen Vorteile, die angeblich aus imperialen Monopolen erwachsen, durch Freihandel viel billiger bekommen. Diese Sichtweise auf das Empire hält sich bis heute, wobei sich Wirtschaftshistoriker darüber streiten, ob das britische Weltreich unter dem Strich eine Last oder ein Nutzen für das Mutterland war.

Marx war überraschenderweise kein Kritiker des britischen Empire, denn er glaubte, die britische Herrschaft in Indien werde diesen schlafenden Riesen aus seinem vor-kapitalistischen Schlummer erwecken. Und seine Anhänger, wie Lenin, betonten nicht den Schaden, den das Imperium den kolonialen Untertanen zufügte, sondern konzentrierten sich ganz auf die Probleme, die der Imperialismus den imperialen Mächten verursachte. Sie glaubten, dass die Aufteilung der Welt in Imperien unweigerlich zu einem Kampf zwischen den Imperialmächten um ihre Neuaufteilung führen werde, der, so hoffte Lenin, die endgültige Krise des Kapitalismus einleiten würde.

Historiker begannen erst in den 1960er Jahren, dem Schaden, den die europäischen Imperien ihren nicht-weißen Untertanen zufügten, mehr Aufmerksamkeit zu schenken, da zu diesem Zeitpunkt die Imperien selbst bereits zusammengebrochen waren. Ich erinnere mich, wie ich in den frühen 1980er Jahren das Schulgeschichtsbuch meines zehnjährigen Sohnes durchblätterte, in dem es nüchtern-sachlich hieß, die Völker der damaligen „Dritten Welt“ seien arm, weil sie ausgebeutet worden seien. Ich beschwerte mich, dass dies eine umstrittene Meinung und keine Tatsachenbehauptung sei. Aber zu dieser Zeit war eine solche Ansicht bereits orthodox.

Fakten und Gefühle

Diese Debatte geht in spezialisierten Enklaven von Wirtschaftshistorikern weiter. Einige stellen eine interessante kontrafaktische Frage: Was wäre aus der Wirtschaft der indigenen Bewohner Indiens, Chinas, Afrikas und Amerikas geworden, wenn sich die Europäer nicht in ihre Angelegenheiten eingemischt hätten?

Wirtschaftshistoriker wie Kenneth Pomeranz und Thomas Piketty behaupten, China und Westeuropa hätten bis circa 1800 wirtschaftlich in etwa gleichauf gelegen. Sie argumentieren, dass die Einmischung der Europäer, insbesondere der Briten, in China im 19. Jahrhundert (z. B. durch die Opiumkriege und den Abschluss ungleicher Handelsverträge) die Ursache für die nachfolgende divergente Entwicklung und den anschließenden Niedergang des Landes gewesen sei.

Andererseits haben Angus Maddison, Stephen Broadberry, Joel Mokyr und andere die Ansicht vertreten, Chinas wirtschaftliche Entwicklung sei schon lange vor 1800 hinter Westeuropa zurückgefallen. China war nicht schwach, weil es kolonisiert wurde; es wurde kolonisiert, weil es schwach war.

Faktenfreie Geschichte

Viele aktuelle historische Auseinandersetzungen haben wenig mit Fakten zu tun, sondern eher mit Wahrnehmung und Gefühlen. Edward Saids Buch *Orientalism* von 1978 war in dieser Hinsicht ein Wendepunkt. Said war der Meinung, dass westliche Imperialismusforscher durch die imperiale Vergangenheit ihrer eigenen Länder kulturell darauf konditioniert seien, unterworfenen Völker als minderwertig zu betrachten, ähnlich wie die Römer ihre Eroberungen als Bestätigung der eigenen Überlegenheit gegenüber den eroberten Sklavenvölkern angesehen hatten.

Vermeintlich knallharte Ranke'sche Argumente verwandeln sich so in moralische und psychologische Geschichten darüber, wie der weiße Rassismus People of Color Vorurteilen, Diskriminierung und Beleidigungen ausgesetzt hat und weiterhin aussetzt, was zu sozioökonomischer Ungleichheit und physischen wie psychischen Schäden führt. Als Reaktion darauf haben westliche Universitäten begonnen, ihre Lehrpläne zu „dekolonisieren“ und „Gleichstellungsbeauftragte“ zu installieren. Dies, zusammen

mit vielen anderen Zeichen des „Wokismus“, ist der Punkt, an dem wir uns heute befinden.

Eine Warnung für den Westen

Der gewaltsame Sturm des Mobs auf das US-Kapitol ist vielleicht der bisher deutlichste Beweis dafür, dass der aktuelle Kulturkampf über die Maßen aufgeblasen wurde. Geschichte war schon immer eine Mischung aus Tatsachen und Werten, und die Interpretation der Vergangenheit hat sich schon immer entsprechend den gegenwärtigen Hauptinteressen verschoben. Aber das Kaleidoskop der Interpretationen, in dem sich auch ein paar reine Fantasien befinden, weist ein konstantes Merkmal auf: Alle, die mit der Auslöschung (*cancelling*) einer Kultur und ihrer Ersetzung durch eine andere befasst waren, haben geglaubt, dass ihre Kultur überlegen sei. Selbst diejenigen, die die Auslöschung als Liquidierung aller Kultur interpretieren, glauben wie die Romantiker, dass eine aus dem Gefängnis der Kultur befreite Welt ein bisher erträumtes, aber unerreichtes Reich der Freiheit und Authentizität wäre.

Doch der gegenwärtige Kampf um das Anrecht auf die Vergangenheit weist zwei besorgniserregende Charakteristika auf. Erstens wurde die Debatte durch die sozialen Medien enorm verstärkt und beschleunigt, denn diese üben unablässig Druck auf die Historiker aus, ihre Texte umzuschreiben und die Sprache auf eine neue Art zu verwenden. Der Druck der Minderheit, die Kultur zu verändern, hat die Fähigkeit der Mehrheit, sich an „woke“ Sichtweisen anzupassen, bei weitem übertroffen. Dadurch drohen gewalttätige Gegenreaktionen.

Zweitens mögen Optimisten zwar behaupten, dass der gegenwärtige, historisch befeuerte Kulturkampf im Westen (zumindest bei einigen) eine aufgeklärte moralische Sensibilität widerspiegelt, ist er auch Ausdruck einer dramatischen Machtverschiebung von westlichen hin zu nicht-westlichen Zivilisationen. Die Sieger von gestern haben ihren Glauben verloren, die ehemaligen Verlierer hingegen strotzen angesichts ihrer Geschichte vor voller leidenschaftlicher Überzeugung.

Vor einem Jahrhundert behauptete ein anderer deutscher Philosoph und Historiker, Oswald Spengler, dass sich die westliche Zivilisation in einem unumkehrbaren und endgültigen Niedergang befinde. Kommt man zu einem anderen Ergebnis, wenn man „woke“ ist? <

Die englische Fassung des vorliegenden Essays erschien am 22. Januar 2021 unter dem Titel „History at the Barricades“ auf der Website von Project Syndicate. Übersetzung aus dem Englischen von Andreas Wirthensohn.

1) Der in den letzten Jahren im US-amerikanischen Kontext entstandene Begriff *woke* („erwacht“, „wach“) verweist auf ein ausgeprägtes Bewusstsein für soziale Ungleichheit, Unterdrückung, Diskriminierung und Rassismus. (Anm. d. Hg.)

Robert Skidelsky ist ein britischer Wirtschaftshistoriker und öffentlicher Intellektueller. Er ist Autor einer dreibändigen, mehrfach prämierten Biografie über John Maynard Keynes. Er war Krzysztof Michalski Fellow 2018 und IHS Fellow 2019 am IWM.

Was ist politisch am 18. Jahrhundert?

VON FELIX ACKERMANN

In der Republik Belarus bezahlen WissenschaftlerInnen einen hohen Preis für ihre politische Haltung. Nach Protesten gegen staatliche Gewalt stehen sie im Exil vor dem Neubeginn. Ihre Erfahrungen zeigen, dass es unmöglich ist, keinen Standpunkt zur Verschärfung der Politik des Regimes von Alexander Lukaschenka einzunehmen.

An der Nationalen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Minsk verloren Ende 2020 zwölf HistorikerInnen ihre Arbeit und ihre akademische Anbindung. Sieben von ihnen wurden die Arbeitsverträge mit dem Institut für Geschichtswissenschaften nicht verlängert, nachdem sie öffentlich an der Protestbewegung gegen Wahlfälschungen und Gewalt teilgenommen hatten. Fünf kündigten aus Solidarität.

Vadzim Anipiarkoŭ erklärt im elektronischen Interview für das Projekt „Stimmen aus Belarus“, das ähnlich dem Belarus Chronicle des IWM aktuelle Übersetzungen von belarussischen Texten anfertigt, warum es sich bei den Entlassungen zugleich um Berufsverbote handelte: „Ich glaube nicht, dass ich nach der Beteiligung an Petitionen, Streikposten, Videobotschaften, Medienberichten usw. in diesem System wieder eine Arbeit finden kann, ohne dafür im Gegenzug auf mein ethisches Rückgrat und mein Gewissen verzichten zu müssen. Andererseits betrachte ich das als eine neue persönliche und berufliche Herausforderung, die mich dazu zwingt, nach neuen Wegen zu suchen, um in der Wissenschaft zu bleiben.“ Anipiarkoŭ hat einen ersten Anschluss als Stipendiat des Deutschen Historischen Instituts in Warschau gefunden.

Seine Kollegin Kacjaryna Kryvičanina erhielt ein Kalinowski-Stipendium der polnischen Regierung für verfolgte WissenschaftlerInnen. Sie benennt die historischen Bezüge der derzeitigen Verfolgungen in der Republik Belarus ganz klar: „Sofort treten Parallelen aus der jüngsten Vergangenheit vor Augen – der totalitäre sowjetische Staat, in dem das Leben des Einzelnen mit seinem Standpunkt, seiner Meinung völlig wertlos war. ‚Verräter‘, ‚Spione‘, ‚gekauft‘ usw. – ebensolche Anschuldigungen bekommen die Protestierenden heute zu hören. Wie sehr das alles an die 1930er Jahre erinnert! Das Verkommen der Gerichte zu Straforganen; die Zerstörung des Gerichtsverfahrens als solchem; die Rückkehr zur Praxis anonymer Anzeigen; das Verwandeln der Sicherheitsstrukturen in Straforgane gegen das eigene Volk; die Erschaffung von staatlich besetzten ‚Tascheparlamenten‘, usw. Das ist die Usurpation der Macht durch eine kleine Gruppe von Menschen.“

Die Gewerkschafterin Kryvičanina ist überraschender Weise die einzi-



Belarussische Historiker in Warschau. V.l.n.r.: Siarhej Rybčonak, Mikola Volkaŭ, Aleś Žlutka, Vadzim Anipiarkoŭ, Kacjaryna Kryvičanina, Aliaksej Šalanda, Andrej Macuk, Uladzimir Šypila.

ge Historikerin unter den Entlassenen, die zum 20. Jahrhundert forscht. Alle anderen Opfer der jüngsten Repressionswelle sind Spezialisten für die Frühe Neuzeit oder das Mittelalter im Großfürstentum Litauen. So verlor etwa Aleś Žlutka seine Arbeit, obwohl er in Minsk der einzige Spezialist für Handschriften und frühe Buchdrucke in lateinischer Sprache war. Vadzim Aniperkau erklärt, dass just die Verträge derjenigen nicht erneuert worden, die offen und gemeinsam ihre politische Position zum Ausdruck gebracht und somit die symbolische Ordnung am Institut für Geschichtswissenschaften gestört hatten. Andererseits seien dies zugleich wichtige VertreterInnen zentraler Bereiche der Geschichtswissenschaften in Belarus: etwa der Heraldik, der Forschungen zum Buchdrucker und Übersetzer Francisk Skaryna, der Geschichte der ersten belarussischen Zeitung *Naša Niva* oder der Eindämmung der Folgen von Tschernobyl.

Vadzim Anipiarkoŭ forscht am Beispiel der Konföderation von Targowica zur Geschichte russischer Interferenzen in die Belange des Polnisch-Litauischen Reichs im Umfeld der zweiten Teilung 1793. Er ist überzeugt, dass aus der wissenschaftlichen Beschäftigung mit der Geschichte der Endphase des Reichs auch die politische Dimension dieser Geschichte klar hervorgeht. Darunter versteht Anipiarkoŭ „die russische Vorherrschaft, eine anhaltende Souveränitäts- und Legitimitätskrise, die Besonderheiten der Beziehung zwischen einer gewaltsam durchgesetzten politischen Macht und der

Gesellschaft sowie unterschiedliche Strategien des Verhaltens von Menschen in instabilen politischen Verhältnissen.“ Allerdings fügt der Historiker selbstkritisch hinzu: „Ich glaube jedoch, dass die Versuchung, in all diesen Ereignissen nach direkten historischen Analogien zu suchen, die Achillesferse eines jeden Historikers ist.“

Bei der Begrüßung der belarussischen WissenschaftlerInnen am Manteuffel Institut der Polnischen Akademie der Wissenschaften im Februar 2021 fragt der Direktor Maciej Janowski nach der besonderen Bedeutung der Frühen Neuzeit für die belarussischen Kollegen. Der gerade aus Minsk eingetroffene Andrej Radaman antwortet: „Diejenigen, die sich mit dem 18. Jahrhundert beschäftigen, zeigen bei uns mehr Haltung als andere Kollegen, denn das Großfürstentum Litauen war eine besondere Zeit für die Geschichte unseres Landes.“ Radaman meint, das Polnisch-Litauische Reich habe eine Blütezeit der Souveränität dargestellt, die er vor den Teilungen durch Russland, Preußen und das Habsburger Reich als eine Form der Eigenstaatlichkeit versteht. Darin liegt der inhaltliche Minimalkonsens zwischen denen, die jetzt im Exil neu beginnen, um ihren Beruf weiter ausüben zu können, und denjenigen, die in Belarus in der Akademie der Wissenschaften die offizielle geschichtspolitische Linie verteidigen: Es habe eine längere Tradition staatlicher Eigenständigkeit gegeben, obwohl ein souveräner belarussischer Staat erst 1991 als Zerfallsprodukt der Sowjetunion entstand.

In der Diskussion an der Polnischen Akademie der Wissenschaften wird ein weiterer Grund deutlich, warum sich politisch denkende Historiker gerade der Frühen Neuzeit zuwenden. Die Bedeutung des 20. Jahrhunderts ist für die ideologische Substanz der Republik Belarus unter Alexander Lukaschenka so groß, dass kritische Forschung zu ganzen Themenbereichen nach 1919 heute unmöglich ist. Zu diesen gehören neben der jüngsten Geschichte von Lukaschenkas Herrschaftssystem die Geschichte des westlichen Territoriums der Republik Polen von 1919 bis 1939, der sowjetischen Besetzung dieses Gebiets vom September 1939 bis zum Juni 1941, des Holocausts sowie der lokalen Beteiligung an der deutschen Besatzungsherrschaft in der Sowjetunion und den anschließenden sowjetischen Repressionen in der Belarussischen Sozialistischen Sowjetrepublik. Die an der Nationalen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Minsk angesiedelte Oberste Attestierungskommission schließt diese thematischen Korridore, in dem sie wissenschaftliche Qualifikationsarbeiten nicht bestätigt. Iryna Kaschtaljan etwa musste ihre Dissertation zur Alltagsgeschichte im westlichen Belarus nach dem Ende des Zweiten Weltkrieges nach einer Ablehnung durch diese Kommission nochmals an der Freien Universität Berlin verteidigen. Dem langjährigen wissenschaftlichen Leiter des Nationalen Archivs der Republik Belarus, Anatoly Vjaliki, wurde die Verteidigung seiner Habilitati-

onsschrift über die sowjetisch-polnischen Beziehungen während des Zweiten Weltkrieges verwehrt, weil er nachweist, dass die Besetzung der Ostgebiete der Polnischen Republik im September 1939 durch die Sowjetunion völkerrechtswidrig war. Als er im Frühjahr 2021 unbezahlten Urlaub beantragte, um seine Habilitation in Warschau einzureichen, wurde er vom Nationalen Archiv nach über dreißig Dienstjahren zur Kündigung gezwungen.

Die zentrale ideologische Bedeutung des 20. Jahrhunderts bewirkt, wie schon vor 1991 in der Sowjetunion, dass es für WissenschaftlerInnen interessanter und weniger gefährlich ist, sich mit früheren Epochen zu beschäftigen. Zwar existieren auch für das 18. Jahrhundert ideologisch geprägte rote Linien, aber es gibt dennoch insgesamt mehr Freiheit zur Entwicklung eigener Fragestellungen. Diejenigen, die jetzt in Warschau und Wilna die Hilfsangebote für belarussische Wissenschaftler wahrnehmen, nutzen den Aufenthalt im Exil, um ihren eigenen Forschungen nachzugehen. Solange sich die politische Situation in Belarus nicht verändert, wird ihnen die Rückkehr in die Wissenschaft in Belarus verwehrt bleiben. ◀

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Europa kann sich seine Vergangenheit nicht aussuchen

VON TERESA REITER

„Mein Geschichtsunterricht hat nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg aufgehört,“ ist ein Satz, den man oft hört, wenn man Leute fragt, welche Rolle die jüngere Geschichte bei ihnen im Schulunterricht gespielt hat. Allerdings ist von 1945 bis heute noch viel passiert, was den EuropäerInnen immer noch in den Knochen steckt und ihre politischen und wirtschaftlichen Entscheidungen beeinflusst.

Hunderttausende in Österreich lebende Menschen haben einen Bezug zu den Staaten des ehemaligen Jugoslawiens. Viele von ihnen kamen als Kriegsflüchtlinge oder haben Angehörige, die als solche nach Österreich kamen. Allerdings nimmt der Krieg, vor dem diese Menschen geflohen sind, weder im europäischen Geschichtsbewusstsein noch im österreichischen Geschichtsunterricht einen bedeutenden Stellenwert ein. Häufig heißt es in offiziellen Mitteilungen der Europäischen Union und ihrer Mitglieder oder auch in Qualitätszeitungen, die EU hätte Europa „70 Jahre Frieden“ beschert. Das ist nicht ganz richtig, liegt doch Jugoslawien in Europa – ebenso wie die Ukraine, die heute nicht in Frieden leben kann. Dabei geht es nicht um eine Spitzfindigkeit, sondern um ein Gefälle zwischen Westeuropa, also dem Europa, dessen Kriegserfahrungen im Geschichtsbewusstsein heute zählen, und einem Teil Osteuropas, dessen Geschichte ausgeklammert wird. Der Westbalkan und auch die Ukraine sind für die EU nur dann europäische Staaten, wenn es für sie bequem ist.

Die Jugoslawienkriege werden noch lange nachwirken

Neben der Tatsache, dass sie Beitrittsverhandlungen mit Nachfolgestaaten Ex-Jugoslawiens führt, die prägende und traumatische Erfahrungen im Zuge des Konflikts der 1990er Jahre gemacht haben, hat die Europäische Union auch weitere Gründe, sich um die Aufarbeitung dieses finsternen Teils europäischer Geschichte besser zu kümmern: Nicht wenige EU-Mitgliedstaaten spielten eine bedeutende Rolle im Jugoslawienkonflikt. Diese hat sich wiederum nicht nur auf Hilfsmaßnahmen – wie die während des Bosnienkrieges in Österreich gegründete Aktion „Nachbar in Not“ – oder die Aufnahme von vielen Flüchtlingen beschränkt. Der Konflikt spielte sich geradezu in Sichtweite europäischer Mächte ab und wurde nicht verhindert. Rechtzeitig verfügbare Informationen über einen drohenden Genozid in Srebrenica führten nicht zur Verhinderung des Massakers. Niederländische Soldaten, die die „Schutzzone“ Srebrenica bewachen sollten, konnten mehr als 8.000 Leben von bosnischen Muslimen nicht retten. In einem anderen Fall waren es dänische Blauhelme, die im August



Luftaufnahme der Völkermord-Gedenkstätte Srebrenica in Potocari, Bosnien und Herzegowina, 22. Februar 2012.

1995 dabei zusahen, wie acht ältere und teilweise behinderte Menschen in einer Schule hingerichtet wurden (s. dazu den Beitrag von Jerko Bakotin auf S. 16). 1999 bombardierte die NATO Jugoslawien; etwa 500 serbische und kosovarische ZivilistInnen kamen dabei ums Leben. Neben den USA stellten auch mehrere europäische Staaten, nämlich Großbritannien, Belgien, Dänemark, Italien, die Niederlande und Spanien Kontingente dafür bereit. Unabhängig davon, ob man diese Einsätze für gerechtfertigt hält oder nicht, hat die Bombardierung die Wahrnehmung des Westens durch viele Serbinnen und Serben entscheidend geprägt. Es ist also unleugbar, dass die Jugoslawienkriege nicht nur die Geschichte Jugoslawiens und seiner Nachfolgestaaten sind. Sie sind europäische Geschichte.

Die EU blendet Teile ihrer Geschichte weitgehend aus

Viele Faktoren, die die Handlungsfähigkeit der Europäischen Union damals lähmten, sind bis heute nicht behoben. Würde diese heute einen europäischen militärischen Einsatz durchführen wollen, um tausende Leben irgendwo in Europa zu schützen, so müsste das von den Mitgliedstaaten immer noch einstimmig beschlossen werden. Die jüngere Erfahrung mit der Entscheidungs- und Einigungsfähigkeit in den entsprechenden Gremien bei strittigen Fragen

zeigt: Das Verfahren würde womöglich zu lange dauern, um den Menschen rechtzeitig zur Hilfe zu kommen. Srebrenica offenbart, dass das „Niemals wieder“, zu dem sich Europa nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg bekannte, nicht eingehalten wurde. Auch nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg fand ein Völkermord auf europäischem Boden statt. Obwohl ein unvergleichliches Friedensprojekt, war die Europäische Union nicht in der Lage, Krieg und Genozid in Europa nach 1945 zu verhindern. Müsste man dies nicht anbringen – allein schon aus Respekt vor den Opfern der Jugoslawienkriege –, wann immer von „70 Jahren Frieden in Europa“ die Rede ist? Wäre diese selbstkritische Betrachtung heute stärker, könnte sie wie ein Reformmotor für die europäischen Institutionen und Entscheidungsprozesse, besonders im Bereich der gemeinsamen Außen- und Sicherheitspolitik, wirken. Das wäre im Interesse einer handlungsfähigen Europäischen Union.

Jugoslawienkriege in den Schulunterricht!

Um diesen Denkansatz im Interesse einer künftig besseren Politik gegenüber dem Westbalkan gesellschaftlich zu verankern, ist es von entscheidender Bedeutung, die Ereignisse der 1990er Jahre in dieser Region einschließlich der Rolle der EU-Mitgliedstaaten mehr EU-Bürgerinnen und Bürgern näherzubrin-

gen. In Österreich sind die Voraussetzungen dafür nicht die schlechtesten. Erstens leben hier viele Menschen mit Bezug zur Region und einschlägigen Sprachkenntnissen. Zweitens ist das Österreichische Bundesheer bis heute in Bosnien und Herzegowina wie auch im Kosovo stationiert. Als größte Auslandseinsätze Österreichs stellen sie eine wichtige aktuelle Verbindung zwischen diesem Land und dem Westbalkan her. Drittens ist Österreich – zumindest auf Papier und in Sonntagsreden – ein großer Unterstützer der Westbalkan-Erweiterung der Union. Da jede Regierung für ihre Politik eine gewisse Unterstützung bei den eigenen Wählerinnen und Wählern braucht, wäre es sinnvoll, wenn die Wählerschaft mit den Themen, Problemen, Potentialen der Region vertraut wäre. Viertens gibt es auch in Österreich verschiedene Diaspora-Organisationen, die ganz bestimmte und mitunter einseitige Geschichtsdarstellungen vermitteln. Es könnte dagegen gesteuert werden, hätten junge Menschen die Möglichkeit, in der Schule, wo es Regeln für Debatten gibt, Input für eine eigene Meinungsbildung zu erhalten. Fünftens könnten die Jugoslawienkriege aufgrund ihrer zeitlichen Nähe aber auch ihrer räumlichen Nähe zu Österreich und des Ausmaßes von Zerstörung und Leid, die damit einhergingen, ein wichtiges Beispiel in der Friedenserziehung jener Generationen werden, die selbst keine Erin-

nerungen an einen Krieg haben. Wo ist also das Problem?

Es ist nicht notwendig, den Lehrplan zu ändern. Lehrpläne sind in Österreich mittlerweile kompetenzorientiert, das bedeutet, Schülerinnen und Schülern sollen bestimmte Muster erkennen lernen und zum Beispiel überbordenden Nationalismus und Völkermord in unterschiedlichen Kontexten feststellen können. Der Lehrplan für Geschichte erhält verschiedene Überthemen, die Möglichkeiten bieten, die Jugoslawienkriege als Beispiel dafür herzunehmen. Es ergibt wenig Sinn, dieses konkrete Beispiel verpflichtend zu machen. Schließlich unterrichtet man als LehrerIn sehr unterschiedliche Klassen mit unterschiedlichen Interessen. In Gesprächen mit vielen in unterschiedlichen Schultypen tätigen Lehrkräften in ganz Österreich gaben dennoch nur wenige an, das Thema Jugoslawienkriege im Unterricht zu behandeln. Der Hauptgrund dafür war, dass sie viel zu wenig Zeit – also zu wenige Unterrichtseinheiten im Jahr – hätten, um auch das noch im Curriculum unterzubringen. Viele andere gaben an, sich bei diesem Thema inhaltlich zu unsicher zu fühlen, und dass es wenige brauchbare Unterrichtsmaterialien und deutschsprachige Quellen dazu gebe. Auch in den meist genutzten Schulbüchern steht wenig darüber. Der Großteil bemerkte außerdem, bei einer sinnvoll gestalteten Fortbildung in diesem Bereich teilnehmen zu wollen, wenn so etwas angeboten würde. Die Lehrkräfte wünschen sich einen historischen Gesamtüberblick, genauere Kenntnis über Ursachen und Folgen dieser Kriege und Fortbildung bei der Moderation der Diskussion mit den Schülerinnen und Schülern über solch komplexe und kontroverse Themen.

All diese relativ einfach bedienbaren Bedürfnisse sind vermutlich der beste Weg, um das Thema im Schulunterricht zu stärken. Eines noch: Ausnahmslos alle Befragten schätzten das Interesse Ihrer SchülerInnen diesbezüglich hoch oder sehr hoch ein. Das gibt Hoffnung für einen künftig besseren Umgang mit diesem Teil europäischer Geschichte. <

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Putin's Memory War

BY SERGEI MEDVEDEV

Today, historical narratives are supplanting political ideologies, notes political scientist Sergei Medvedev. He explores Putin's politics of memory with its focus on Russia's victory in World War II and shows how this modern myth-making reflects both international relations and a transition to authoritarianism.

Back in 1992, as Francis Fukuyama published his book *The End of History*,¹ in which he outlined a neo-Kantian Utopia of liberal-democratic eternal peace, the French historian Pierre Nora was completing publication of his fundamental oeuvre *Les Lieux de mémoire*,² a 7-volume catalogue of France's realms of memory. In his work, Nora described something completely different to Fukuyama's vision: a world-wide upsurge in attention to memory, a rediscovery of history, a growing interest in "roots" and "heritage" and a quest for a historical identity.

As the new century dawned with a dramatic clash of civilizations in the form of the attacks of 9/11, it became clear that Fukuyama's universalist Utopia had failed and a new age of identity had begun (as recognized by Fukuyama himself in his latest book *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment*).³ Rather than universalism, the end of the Cold War has brought us particularism, identity politics and memorialism, as defined by Nora. History and memory have become a new field of international relations. Indeed, memory sits at the nexus of security and identity; serving as so-called 'societal security', a matter of survival for the political community, memory is politicized and securitized. Today, historical narratives take the place of political ideologies, and one's political position is more often defined in relation to historical events and figures (e.g. Stalin, or Franco, or Robert E. Lee), rather than by party or ideological affiliation. As a result, interstate conflicts take on the form of *memory wars*, reflecting a more general turn towards identity, morality and emotions in 21st century politics.

Putin's Retro-politics

The politicization of memory has been especially evident in Putin's Russia. History and memory politics have played a key role in building an authoritarian regime. State propaganda has adroitly used Soviet nostalgia and post-imperial *ressentiment* to construct a consolidated narrative of history that stresses greatness and military victories and whitewashes the crimes of the past, such as Stalin's atrocities (e.g. the Katyn massacre of Polish officers in 1940) and Soviet colonial aggression (Prague in 1968, the war in Afghanistan in 1979–1989). Memory in Russia has been "nationalized" by the state, taken away from individuals, families and history aficionados, and private historical investigations that run coun-



ter to state ideology can lead to persecution. Take, for example, Karelian civil activist Yuri Dmitriev, who was digging up the graves of the victims of Stalin's terror in Sandarmokh in Karelia, just to find himself facing falsified accusations and sentenced to 13 years in prison.

A history crusade has been led by former minister of culture Vladimir Medinsky, an officially-sanctioned historian debunking "myths about Russia," and by his Russian Military-Historical Society (RVIO). In 2009, a special "commission to counter attempts to falsify history" was established under the auspices of the President of Russia, and in 2020, an amendment obliging the state to "defend historical truth" was added to the Russian Constitution. Indeed, Putinism is a kind of retro-politics: having failed to modernize Russia, it turned to the imaginary past as the only reliable source of legitimacy, as a mobilizing and consolidating force. The late Zygmunt Bauman called this kind of politics "retrotopia,"⁴ and Svetlana Boym wrote in her *Future of Nostalgia* about "epidemics of nostalgia" that construct the imaginary past as a compelling political myth.⁵

The Victory Religion

The cornerstone of Putin's memory project is Victory Day, celebrated in Russia on May 9th. It has grown

in importance over the past twenty years, and as the numbers of World War II veterans and witnesses have dwindled, the celebrations have become ever more pompous, chauvinistic and militaristic. In fact, May 9th has become the principal national holiday, a symbolic centerpiece of the annual cycle, rather than the recently invented holidays of June 12th (Russia Day) or November 4th (National Unity Day). In Russian mass consciousness, the nation has its origins in the 1945 victory in World War II; this is the country's true foundational myth.

Victory Day has become a quasi-religious occasion, a secular Easter, with a complete set of rituals: mass state-sponsored processions called "The Immortal Regiment" in which demonstrators carry portraits of their ancestors as soldiers or war heroes. These portraits can even take on the properties of true icons—according to popular mythology, they sometimes have the power to heal. In 2020, a Victory Temple was built in Patriot Park, a military theme park in Kubinka outside Moscow. The temple is full of numerological codes: for example, in honor of the 75th anniversary of the victory, it is 75 m tall, and the 14,18 m diameter of its main dome marks the 1418 days the war lasted. The original plans called for religious mosaics with portraits of Stalin, Putin and defense minister Sergei Shoigu, but

these were removed at the last minute before the opening.

To mark the holiday, people engage in spontaneous celebrations, dressing themselves and their children as soldiers and disguising kids' beds and prams as tanks or war trucks. Metaphors to World War II seize the political imagination: during the war in the Donbas in 2014–2015, the Russian press regularly referred to Ukrainians as "fascists," and skirmishes in the town of Debal'tsevo, outside Donetsk, were likened to tank battles in the same area during World War II. Indeed, Victory has become the optic through which Russia sees the outside world—millions of cars in Russia sport a sticker on the rear windshield that reads "1941–1945. We can repeat it."

The 2020 Memory War

Given the prevailing culture of memory, the 75th anniversary of the victory, commemorated in 2020, was seen in Russia as a crucial date. It was intended to consolidate the domestic audience around an important symbolic event at a time when post-Crimea euphoria has faded away, and to send a powerful message to the West regarding Russia's geopolitical importance. But the whole thing went wrong from the start. On September 19, 2019, the European Parliament passed a resolution "On the importance of Euro-

pean remembrance for the future of Europe," largely at the urging of the East European delegations. Citing the 1938 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the resolution laid equal blame for the start of World War II on Germany and on the USSR, and also accused modern Russia of attempting to rewrite history. The resolution greatly annoyed the Kremlin, which started its own propaganda campaign aiming to prove that East Central Europe shared responsibility for the start of the war and for the Holocaust. In his comments in December 2019, Vladimir Putin accused Polish war-time leadership of anti-semitism and of provoking the war, and called Józef Lipski, who served as the Polish ambassador in Berlin until 1939, a "bastard" and "antisemitic pig." These statements elicited sharp responses from Polish PM Mateusz Morawiecki and from a number of European political leaders.

The memory war continued in January 2020, with the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz. Putin was not invited to the ceremony in Poland. Instead, he attended a memorial conference at Yad Vashem in Jerusalem which promoted the Russian version of history—omitting any mention of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and of the division of Poland and portraying Russia as the sole liberator of Europe. This caused yet another

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Holy Places and Leisure Spaces

BY IRYNA SKLOKINA

Second World War Memorial Sites as International Tourist Destinations in the Soviet Union. *Monuments are not only propaganda efforts of the state or the mere effect of architects' and artists' intentions. They are rather a process, as their meaning is recreated in interaction. International tourism allows us to better understand the performative aspects of commemoration culture, as the interaction with the "other" can explain the dynamics of local society itself.*

In 1966, a group of tourists from East Germany visited the city of Kharkiv in Soviet Ukraine, which turned out to be quite an impressive and surprising experience for them. Beyond the tour of the city, they were invited to an informal meeting with the local society of friends of the German language, headed by distinguished persons with a German background. These included someone called Schmiedel, who had personally known Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, and someone called Weis, who had participated in the Schutzbund uprising in Austria in 1934 and was now a professor of German at Kharkiv University. Some of the members of the society were former inmates of the Buchenwald concentration camp. The hosts impressed the visitors with their deep knowledge of German culture and poetry. Then Ukrainian songs and dances were performed by university lecturers and students.

"Chatting over a cup of coffee provoked the tourists to become sincere," the tourist guide reported. "One of the female tourists with tears in her eyes said that during the war her younger 18-year-old brother was killed in action, and that the blame for his death and for the death of thousands of Soviet people lay on Hitler and German militarism." Another tourist said during such an evening: "I should disclose that back then I was on this land as an enemy. Now I am a communist."¹

This description of the tourist experience through the eyes of the tour guide is emblematic of the interrelation between the Soviet Union's consumer culture, modernization, heritage tourism, the memory culture of the Second World War, and the making of late Soviet Ukrainian identity. It reveals the interconnection of several important issues of late Soviet history.

The memory of the Soviet victory in the Second World War was instrumentalized in international relations to strengthen the socialist bloc, to condemn everything "fascist" and "alien," and to legitimize Soviet domination. There were also other trends such as the turn to experiential and entertaining tourism that included more "national flavor" and more person-oriented service. The sharing of wartime experiences, though structured and "orchestrated" by the hosts, still left the op-



Trenches near Kyiv where the commandment of the 1st Ukrainian front has been located, turned into an experiential tourism site.

Photo: Puteshestvie v SSSR, 1975, #3, p. 19

portunity for exchanging personal memories and opinions. Last but not least, local pride—as in the case of Kharkiv, one of the leading cultural and intellectual centers of Soviet Ukraine—was instrumentalized to present Soviet people as highly cultured and educated, another important task of international tourism in the competition between the capitalist and socialist countries and blocs to win "hearts and minds."

The kind of conversations like the one described above, with the sharing of personal memories, was most effectively stimulated by visiting Second World War memorial sites—the must-see part of any guided tour to the Soviet Union. These sites as tourist destinations were much more than places of the official memory cult and for the propaganda of "international friendship" and "peacemaking."

In the late Soviet decades many of them became much more oriented towards entertaining and an "experiential" approach, inviting visitors to bodily feel the reconstructed elements of the past—for example, at recreated trenches near Kyiv where the command of the 1st Ukrainian Front was located (see photo), or at the numerous mud huts of the Belarusian partisans reconstructed as museums.² In excursions to cities and

villages, visiting Second World War monuments was inevitable, alongside diverse (and more entertaining) elements such as visits to local enterprises, kindergartens or other elements of social or cultural infrastructure, and historical monuments of previous centuries, or eating in a themed ethnic restaurant.

One example of successfully balancing these diverse elements (described in the regional Inturist report as one case of "best practice") was a guided tour of the collective farm named after Mykola Gogol in Myrhorod district in Ukraine. In 1974 it reported welcoming more than 1,500 visitors over the twelve previous years, mostly from capitalist countries. They were shown the fields, production facilities, the village of Velyki Sorochyntsi, the Gogol Museum, the monuments to the October Revolution and the Second World War, and a group of 18th-century buildings.³

A mix of national flavor, industrial pride, and the pleasures of wandering in a natural landscape was accessible at one of the most visited venues in Soviet Ukraine: the giant Dniyehydroelectric plant in Zaporizhia. There, the laudation of human technical genius was coupled with the story of the unknown Soviet soldier who reportedly pre-

vented the dam from being blown up by retreating Nazi troops to the cost of his life, and who was buried there and honored with a monument. The tour was completed by a visit to the ancient oak, supposedly from the Cossack epoch, and the story of the "glorious" Cossacks on Khortytsia island (and in the 1980s with a tour "in a real Cossack chaika," a reconstructed historical boat).⁴

Another revealing case is the tour of the Livadia Palace in Crimea, the site of the Yalta conference in 1945. This combined instructive narration about the conference and the peacemaking politics of the Soviet Union with the presentation of the excellent conditions for vacationing of Soviet people at the sea resort and wine-tasting at the local winery. With time, one more element became prominent: the palace's other layer of heritage as a "former Czarist residency," which manifested the turn to Russian national and imperial themes in late Soviet society.⁵

The national flavoring of such tours had a clear commercial purpose, but it also fitted the expectations of visitors from diaspora groups, who were especially sensitive to issues of national rights in the land of their (or their ancestors') origin.

Of course, the consumerist turn and entertaining approach in tour-

ism had limits in Soviet everyday reality. As many studies have showed, the limited resources and capacities of the Soviet tourist infrastructure was quite a pressing issue, and in many cases securing a decent hotel or a pleasant seat in a restaurant was not so easy to achieve. However, the shortcomings of life in the Soviet Union could be justified by reference to the tremendous wartime destruction. Typical guided tours of cities and villages included references to the enormous scale of damage and to the very quick post-war reconstruction. The contrast between wartime ruins and contemporary achievements was also a widespread advertisement strategy in a specialized press for foreigners, such as the *Travel to the SSSR* journal. Some tourist guides even criticized visitors for being "obsessed" with comfort and consumerism—visiting "sacred" places related to the Second World War could bring a sublime, and emotional, dimension into their experience.

In fact, these two aspects of the wartime commemorative sites—one connected to the sublime experience of heroism and solidarity, and another to spending leisure time—were not contradictory. The commemorative culture of the Second World War was presented to foreign visitors as a part of an alternative modernity in which one could experience not only technical advancement and consumerism but also feelings of solidarity and gratitude to heroes. And the ability to absorb and socially frame personal experiences of the war, as well as the merging of its memory with leisure and entertainment practices, laid the ground for the endurance of wartime commemorations also after the fall of the Soviet Union. <

- 1) Tsentralnyi derzhavnyi arkhiv vyshchykh organiv vladly ta upravlinnia (TDAVO), f. 4672, op. 1, spr. Spr. 30, Ark. 24–30.
- 2) Pamiatniki rasskazyvaiut, in: *Puteshestvie v SSSR*, 1975, #3, p. 18–22; "Pochemu Belorussia?", *Puteshestvie v SSSR*, 1972, #2, p. 37–38.
- 3) TSDAVO, f. 4672, op. 1, spr. 200, ark. 83–87.
- 4) Thomas, Hannes, Gorod na dvukh moriakh.
- 5) "Belyi dvorets v Livadii," *Puteshestvie v SSSR*, 1985, #3, p. 39; Osinskii, Viacheslav, Yaltu nado uvidet samomu, in: *Puteshestvie v SSSR*, 1988, #1, p. 18.

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The Moral of the Dvor Massacre

BY JERKO BAKOTIN

In August 1995 a group of mentally disabled people was massacred in the Croatian town of Dvor. More than a quarter century later, neither the murderers nor the army they belonged to have been identified. Jerko Bakotin argues that the postwar collective identities of Croats and Serbs are damaged by their inability to accept guilt. He also points out the European-wide aspects of this story.



The school hall in Dvor, 1995.

Photo: Danish State Attorney

The massacre: In the evening of August 4, 1995, a group of around fifty people boarded a bus in Petrinja, a town in central Croatia. Among them were the patients from the local psychiatric hospital and residents of the local retirement home. The following morning these terrified civilians arrived in Dvor, a municipality sixty kilometers to the south. A day before, Croatia had started “Operation Storm,” the largest military action in Europe since 1945, attacking the internationally unrecognized Republic of Serb Krajina, which included Petrinja and Dvor. In 1991 its secession from Croatia had been accompanied by widespread killings and the mass expulsion of Croats. In 1995, the roles were reversed as close to 200,000 Serbs fled their homes in front of the Croatian army and hundreds of civilians were killed.

The group from Petrinja found shelter in the elementary school in Dvor, where local authorities organized care for them. However, very soon the rebel Serb army and the population started to flee in despair and panic. Chaos reigned as tens of thousands of Serb civilians and soldiers from northern Krajina escaped through Dvor to Bosnia and Herzegovina, leaving in motorized vehicles, in horse-drawn carriages, or on foot. The border was, and still is, only a mere couple of kilometers away from the school, across the river Una.

By August 8, most of the refugees from the school had made it to Bosnia. Left behind were nine who had serious mental or physical disabilities. In the days between August 7 and August 9, the area around the school changed hands several times between the Croatian Army and Serb forces, who desperately tried to keep control of the nearby road in order to ensure the safe passage of the refugee convoy.

A Danish UN battalion also had its base on the school’s playing field, less than twenty meters from the school building itself. It had strict orders not to interfere unless attacked. Around 14:30 p.m. on August 8, the Danish troops saw a group of men, whose uniforms carried no markings, approaching the school. Within minutes they witnessed the civilians being assembled in the school hall and executed. The murderers left and the peacekeepers did not react. The corpses were left laying in the summer heat for four days.

The movie

The passivity of the UN soldiers was fiercely debated in Denmark. In 2015 the journalists Georg Larsen and Kasper Vedsmand made a movie about the crime. Titled “15 Minutes—Dvor massacre,” the film was in a minor part financed by the Croatian Audiovisual Centre (HAVC), a public institution. Although the film points out that the executioners remain unknown, it locates Croatian

soldiers near the place of the crime. Soon a witch hunt began in Croatia in reaction to the documentary. In a lynching atmosphere the public broadcaster HRT fired the veteran journalist Saša Kosanović who had cooperated with the filmmakers. Aggressive pressure by powerful war veterans’ unions forced the HAVC’s director to resign. Mainstream media reported extensively on this “anti-Croat scandal.” The film was never screened in Croatia.

The sanctified war

The political scientist Dejan Jović names the dominant public discourse in Croatia “ethnototalitarianism,” in which the very existence of “others” is perceived as a threat. Between 1991 and 2011 the minority population in Croatia fell from 22 percent to 9.6 percent. Termed the “Homeland War,” the 1990s conflict is the central element of the new Croatian identity, with the dominant national consensus being its “sanctity.” In 2000, the left-liberal government introduced the Parliamentary Declaration on Homeland War, prescribing official truth according to which Croatia was exclusively the victim.

In reality, although “Operation Storm” was in itself not illegal under international law—as the international community always recognized Krajina as part of Croatia—its aftermath was more dubious. The behavior of certain Croatian units and the acts brought by the Croa-

tian state make it clear that the expulsion of Serb population and the prevention of its return was the desired outcome. Several hundred civilians were murdered and thousands of houses were burnt or razed to the ground. Officially, the office of Croatia’s State Attorney counts 218 civilians killed in 33 different war crime cases, but this is most probably a significant underestimation.¹ To this day, only two low-ranking soldiers have been sentenced for war crimes.

Especially after the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY) acquitted Croatian Generals Ante Gotovina and Mladen Markač in 2012, the “cleanness” of Operation Storm is almost untouchable. The situation is not significantly different in Serbia, where war criminals sentenced by the ICTY belong to the executives of the ruling parties. In all post-Yugoslav countries “our” criminals are venerated and accepted by broad segments of both public and political establishment as heroes, while their crimes have been negated and the victims neglected.

In 2012 Serbian and Croatian prosecutors started a joint investigation of the Dvor massacre that came to nothing, with both sides blaming each other for the unwillingness to solve the crime. A quarter-century since the massacre, its perpetrators are still unknown, and all the victims have still not even been identified.

Damaged identities

In a study of debates about Nazism in the postwar Bundestag in Germany, the sociologist Helmut Dubiel notes that the collective identity of Germans “was permanently damaged by their inability to accept the guilt,” which resulted in their self-reduction to mere objects, as “when somebody accepts the guilt, he attributes to himself an action which is accompanied with a guilt. Who refuses the guilt, in fact negates himself as a subject who can act freely. He sees himself as a mere part of a causal chain which started before him, and on which he cannot exert any influence. [...] man is able to autonomously act in the direction of the future only so far as he is accepting responsibility for the actual consequences of the past acts.” Inability to accept responsibility is directly linked to nationalism as well, as “corpses in the basement of his-

tory create existential feelings of community, conditioned by the repressed guilt.”

Furthermore, the dominant political and religious elites draw direct symbolic and material profit out of it. They use it to solidify their control over society and to legitimize their privileged access to public resources. These goals require avoiding a proper remembrance of the Dvor victims. In Croatia they are mostly banned from public memory and in Serbia their fate is mostly used for nationalist manipulation. As the cultural theorist Aleida Assman writes, “Memory is in the last instance related to the question of power. ‘Sovereign’ is [...] also the one who self-sufficiently decides about his memories and national myths.”

The moral of Dvor and other crimes in former Yugoslavia is by no means a mere Balkan story. This holds true however senseless the killing of the disabled people, who did not present any threat to anyone, may seem. The Yugoslav wars were a complete folly, with the vast majority of the population only ending up poorer and devastated. Therefore one can say that the Dvor massacre symbolizes the entire wars in their absurdity.

The Hungarian writer Péter Esterházy has rightly noted that “European consensus about our knowledge of ourselves as murderers and victims has not yet been established.” Looking at the crises of the European project, the rift between “rich” and “poor” member states, the rise of nationalist parties, and the willingness to blame only others, many observers have remembered the breakdown of the Yugoslav federation. It would be prudent to keep its fate in mind as a warning. Already in 1990 the Slovenian philosopher and cultural theorist Mladen Dolar asked: “Can one venture to say that Yugoslavia is the *Schauplatz* of the European unconscious, or that the unconscious is structured like Yugoslavia? ❧

¹) According to the Croatian Helsinki Committee, 667 Serb civilians were killed. The real number is presumably somewhere between these two figures. The Croatian authorities did prosecute a significant number of people for atrocities against Serb civilians and property after “Operation Storm.” However they were not indicted for war crimes but for common murder, looting, and “normal” property destruction.

Jerko Bakotin is an award-winning journalist for the political weekly *Novosti* from Zagreb. He is currently working on a book about the Dvor massacre. In spring 2021, he was a Milena Jesenská Fellow at the IWM.

Sie sollen sich erinnern, wen sie vergessen sollen

VON NIKOLAI ANTONIADIS

Am 22. Oktober 2020 hat das albanische Parlament eine Ergänzung des Sondergesetzes Nr. 10242 verabschiedet. Damit wird dem staatlichen Institut für das Studium der Verbrechen und Folgen des Kommunismus (ISKK) untersagt, Ereignisse vor November 1944 zu untersuchen. Was aussieht wie eine administrative Petitesse, ist tatsächlich das jüngste Zeichen eines erbitterten Kampfes, der in Albanien um die Vergangenheit geführt wird.



Pavillon des Antifaschistischen Nationalen Befreiungskampfes, Nationales Historisches Museum, Tirana.

Am Anfang dieser Episode steht ein Buch, *Kriegsverbrechen kommunistischer Partisanen*, geschrieben von dem Historiker Çelo Hoxha, veröffentlicht vom ISKK. Schon der Titel ist ein Sakrileg. Partisanen werden als Helden verehrt. Sie sind Protagonisten beliebter Filme, Romane und Volkslieder, Schulklassen unternehmen Wanderungen auf den überlieferten Pfaden berühmter Partisanen, ihre Denkmäler sind allgegenwärtig. Das Problem ist, dass die Partisanenfolklore untrennbar mit der Diktatur verbunden ist. Nicht nur waren die meisten Führungskader bis 1990 ehemalige Partisanen, sondern der unter dem Namen „Nationaler Antifaschistischer Befreiungskrieg“ formalisierte Kampf schuf in der kommunistischen Historiographie die Grundlagen für den Auf-

bau des Sozialismus. Er ist, in Ermangelung einer Revolution, der mythische Geburtsakt der befreiten Nation. Funktionäre der Diktatur werden so zu Befreiern Albanien.

Gleichzeitig wird heute versucht, die Diktatur von der Befreiung zu trennen. Das kommunistische Regime, heißt es in der Gesetzesvorlage, könne „nicht mit der Zeit des Antifaschistischen Nationalen Befreiungskrieges in Verbindung gebracht werden, der mit dem Blut Tausender Märtyrer gewonnen wurde und die Unabhängigkeit des Landes sicherte“. Dieser geistige Spagat, der Aspekte des Totalitarismus auf legitimen Untergrund holt, durchzieht die gesamte offizielle Erinnerungskultur: Es wurde zum Beispiel nur wenig Anstoß daran genommen, dass zum 75. Jahrestag der Befreiung im November 2019 der Boulevard der

Märtyrer der Nation in Tirana mit Bildern kommunistischer „Märtyrer“ geschmückt wurde.

Die Erinnerungsarbeit wird zusätzlich erschwert: Weil die „Patriotenrente“ ehemaliger Partisanen deutlich über der üblichen Rente lag, versuchten Tausende Albaner, dem Staat Belege zu liefern, dass sie oder ihre Eltern im Krieg auf der richtigen Seite gekämpft hatten. Das Verhalten im Krieg, die persönliche Biografie gewann eine ungeheure Bedeutung. Während eine „gute Biografie“ spürbare Privilegien mit sich brachte – etwa eine besser bezahlte Arbeit oder die Erlaubnis zu studieren –, bedeutete eine „schlechte Biografie“ ein lebenslanges und generationsübergreifendes Stigma. Davon zeugt nicht nur die Sippenhaft, die Familien von Oppositionellen teils jahrzehntelang in Internierungslager

verbannte. Auch die Staatssicherheit begann ihre Dossiers immer mit einer Biografie und einer akribischen Auflistung der Angehörigen.

Hunderte Anträge, alle ohne Erfolg

Çelo Hoxhas Buch wurde, als es 2014 erschien, kaum öffentlich kritisiert. Der Sohn eines darin erwähnten prominenten Partisanen bat sogar um eine signierte Ausgabe. Fünf Jahre später reichte derselbe Mann Klage wegen Verleumdung und Beleidigung ein. Was war geschehen?

Das Jahr 2019 markiert einen vorläufigen Höhepunkt im Kampf zweier staatlicher Institutionen, dem ISKK und der sogenannten Dossierbehörde. Letztere war geschaffen worden, um nach dem ausdrücklichen Vorbild der Gauck-Behörde die Archive

des Sigurimi zu öffnen. Der damalige Direktor des ISKK, Agron Tufa, beklagte aber bald, dass seine Anfragen unbeantwortet blieben; er habe Hunderte Anträge auf Akteneinsicht gestellt, alle ohne Erfolg. Weil ihm für seinen Auftrag, die Verbrechen des Kommunismus zu studieren, die nötigen Quellen vorenthalten wurden, konzentrierte er sich auf Erinnerungen politisch Verfolgter, die er in einer mehrbändigen Buchreihe publizierte. Dabei fragte er aber immer auch explizit nach Namen von Sigurimi-Offizieren – und machte sie öffentlich: darunter Personen, die heute hohe Polizeibeamte sind, bekannte Schriftsteller, der Chef der auf Druck der EU eingesetzten Antikorruptionsbehörde. Schließlich trat der sozialistische Abgeordnete Spartak Braho eine massive Kampa-

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Poland's New Transformation via Legal Impossibilism

BY JUDY DEMPSEY

The European Union's rule of law is being systematically eroded by the Polish government. Along with other member states, Poland is putting the country on a new path of a transformation that challenges the post-1989 transitions to democracy and constitutionalism.



Policemen guard Poland's Supreme Court as a protester lies on the pavement in Warsaw, Poland on Thursday, April 22, 2021. A disputed disciplinary body within Poland's Supreme Court is examining motion that could result in the arrest of a judge who has become a symbol of the fight for an independent judiciary.

Photo: AP Photo / Czarek Sokolowski / picturedesk.com

Sixteen years ago, Jarosław Kaczyński, leader of Law and Justice (PiS), launched his assault on Poland's post-1989 transformation. PiS had just won the 2005 parliamentary elections. It used its victory to introduce a "Lustracja" bill. The goal was to identify individuals who had cooperated with the communist secret police. The legislation was rejected by the Constitutional Tribunal. Kaczyński railed against the decision, calling it "legal impossibilism." For him, the courts got in the way of promoting his definition of real justice and real reform. Thus began Kaczyński's transformation of Poland's post-1989 transformation. It continues to this day in ways that leaves the EU weaker and divided about how to defend the rule of law and how to deal with the post-1989 past.

Kaczyński had little success at first. PiS's stint in government lasted only two years, too short to emasculate the Constitutional Tribunal. But it was a foretaste of things to come when PiS was swept into power in 2015. That was when "legal impossibilism" began in earnest. Late that year, the PiS government cancelled the appointment of five Constitutional Tribunal judges. Kornel Morawiecki, a fearless dissident during the communist era and father of Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, justified the decision: "Law is something important but it is not sacred," he said. "Above law stands the good of the nation. If law interferes with this good,

we shall not treat law as something inviolable or unchangeable. What I say is this: law shall serve us! Law that does not serve the nation is lawlessness!" In essence, if the law, the judiciary and the constitutional order challenged PiS's agenda, they were betraying the Polish nation.

But what is Kaczyński's agenda? One is political revenge. Another is about power. And a third is about transforming Poland along a path of social conservatism, underpinned, but fraught with problems in terms of a social backlash, by the Catholic Church.

First, revenge. Kaczyński and his supporters have never forgiven the 1989 round table talks between Solidarity and the communists, even though Kaczyński had a seat at that table. The talks led to the peaceful transition to democracy and to the writing of a new constitution introduced in 1997. PiS believed the round table talks let the communists off the hook: there was no reckoning with the communist past; no overhaul of how the judiciary functioned. As for the first post-communist constitution that is based on EU liberal values, the protection of acquired rights and the safeguards of procedural justice, it was enacted without the support of Kaczyński and the opposition. To this day, they don't regard it as their constitution. Such is the sense of grievance.

As for the issue of power, having had uninterrupted power since

2015, PiS has moved quickly to make the law, the judiciary and the courts subservient to the Parliament, with the PiS-backed president doing the party's bidding for certain appointments or decisions. The safeguards in the Constitution have been discarded. The checks and balances have been reduced to almost irrelevance.

The damage PiS has inflicted on the rule of law cannot be underestimated. Here is how Professor Marcin Matczak, Associate Professor at the Institute of Theory of State and Law at the University of Warsaw, described the crisis affecting Poland's judicial and constitutional order:

"Procedural justice... is the right to have a case heard by an independent court, the right to a defense, the freedom from self-incrimination and the lawfulness of the evidence submitted. Substantive justice is achieved by giving every person what they deserve: penalizing the bad, rewarding the good, giving the innocent peace of mind."

Procedural justice is an obstacle to PiS's "ideology" of revenge. It is an obstacle for PiS's determination to shape the courts to fit its agenda. It's as if PiS's ultimate aim is to transform Poland from the post-1989 transformation into a different transformation based on an interpretation of a specific Polish sovereignty. Even if PiS wants to turn Poland into a country that could regain its sovereignty based on "legal impossibilism," it's a big gamble. If taken

to its logical conclusion, "legal impossibilism" amounts to Poland challenging the *acquis communautaire*, the battery of EU legislation that Poland signed up to when it joined the EU on May 1, 2004. That's when it ceded elements of sovereignty, including the practice and definition of the rule of law, to the EU.

By robbing the Constitutional Tribunal of its independence, by imposing political control over the judges, by interfering in the independence of the Supreme Court over the issue of judicial independence and the retirement age, PiS has challenged the EU's rule book.

This complex mix of revenge, of making the law subservient to the government and of challenging the basic rule of law and values enshrined in the EU treaty, is transforming Poland's post-1989 transformation into a new kind of transformation. It is leading towards a special "hybrid" democracy. It abides by the ballot box but gives the government immense leeway to exploit it.

Transformations from authoritarian or totalitarian regimes to a democracy are shockingly disorientating and painful. PiS has tapped into those grievances. And even though democracy is messy, the institutions that underpin it are designed to facilitate compromise.

However, what is happening in Poland and in other countries in the region is that the democratic structures are being exploited to

erode the rule of law. The culture of consensus, of dialogue, of listening has been replaced with competing, vindictive narratives about the past. PiS's assault on the public television channels, now under its control, means that a common narrative, even of daily news events, does not exist. There is only "Us." There is only "Us" and "Them."

A divided, bitter opposition doesn't help matters. There are few attempts to build a political center. For the moment, the language of revenge, reprisal and victimhood is deeply entrenched.

As for the EU, it is using the treaty to sanction or warn Poland. Maybe this kind of pressure should be coupled with—dare I say it—a roundtable. There is an urgent need for a dialogue to stop further "legal impossibilism." The longer the stand-off between Brussels and Warsaw continues, the greater the devastating effects it will have on Poland. Right now, the post-1989 transformations are up for grabs. And with it, unless checked, Europe's future as a continent anchored on the rule of law. ◀

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Can Liberal Democracy Outlive Climate Change?

PODCAST WITH MICHAEL IGNATIEFF

In a podcast with Shalini Randeria, Michael Ignatieff argues that slow and incremental liberal democratic processes and institutions are the only ones up for the fight against climate change.

Shalini Randeria: Let me start with your recent essay, *Liberalism in the Anthropocene*. You make the argument against liberalism's left-wing critics that they are mistaken in assuming that it is unable to deal with the existential threats posed by the climate catastrophe as well as the Covid-19 crisis. How in your view are the ecological crisis and the current pandemic interrelated?

Michael Ignatieff: What I am chiefly interested in is the impact of the Anthropocene on our ideas of liberal democracy. I am neither a climate expert nor an expert on the question you just raised. But there is no question that there are linkages here. We are aware that there is a complicated ecosphere, a balance of relationships between species that has been substantially disrupted by human behavior. Instead of being part of nature, we are the chief drivers of natural processes everywhere and our management of these processes has been terrible. We have done extremely serious damage to other species and to our own natural habitat. And that is a challenge to liberalism because it is a challenge to liberalism's account of history. Liberalism is intimately tied to the idea that we can and have mastered nature using science and knowledge.

Randeria: You make a very strong argument in this essay that liberalism is not only able to provide plausible answers to the crisis, but that it is the only political set of values and institutions, which will be able to show a way forward. Could you explain your optimism, given the massive challenges we face?

Ignatieff: That is an absolutely accurate version of my narrative. The whole piece wants to be very self-questioning about liberalism. But I think probably the target of this piece is a certain kind of radical left-wing environmentalism that says capitalism is the problem.

Since 1970, you see a transformation in the global energy system. It is not complete, but it will be complete within 15 and 20 years. And that is the move from fossil fuel dependence to essentially renewables. That change has been market-driven and regulation-driven. The story that we can tell from 1970 to 2020 is not the story that liberal market and government regulations have failed; it is a story about we have not got there yet. The only place in the world which has now plateaued in terms of CO₂ emissions is Europe. One of the reasons this has happened is because there has



Environmental activists at a climate change protest in Amsterdam, Netherlands, March 14, 2021.

been consistent pressure from below. This is where democracy does its job. And that constant pressure over the last 50 years has been one of the key drivers of policies towards environmental change. But that is a vindication of liberal democracy, not a criticism of it.

Randeria: I think you made a very interesting point, when you wrote, "The one big problem is, in fact, many smaller problems. And the art here is to disaggregate those problems and then prioritize. [...] This liberal politics, as opposed to the progressive summons to the barricades, we might call the politics of policy." What kinds of steps do you think it could consist of?

Ignatieff: The politics of policy is basically saying, divide a big problem into as many little steps as you can. It is a defensive liberal gradualism. If we had serious recycling, that would make a difference. It is a small step but if you add a lot of small incremental steps together, you get big effects. You have system effects from small behaviors, and liberalism turns on that instinct. That is why liberals like markets—because a tiny change to a price signal has a system-wide effect. That's how you get economic change. But in radical environmentalism, all this incrementalism is seen as just a waste of time as in such a view we haven't gotten enough time to do anything that liberal gradualism can hope to

accomplish. And that mindset gives the game away before you have even started. I think our problem about enacting good environmental policy is just this broader historical pessimism about gradualism.

Randeria: Another important question you raised is on the politics of scale. At what scale should we be aiming to change these things? To my surprise, you are wedded to the nation-state scale, and voice skepticism of the international scale at which some of this change can happen.

Ignatieff: I could be wrong about this. I don't want to say that these global climate summits are a waste of time. I think anything that is multilateral is better than nothing. But it is just a fact of the modern world that political power is allocated to sovereign states. You want to do activism where the levers are. And I think the levers tend to be in sovereign states, and also in municipalities, and in regional governments. If we can get something multilateral, fine. But we have wasted a tremendous amount of time over the last 30 years with rich countries lecturing poor countries at international forums saying, "Do as I say, not as I do."

Randeria: What would you say in response to activists, who argue that unless there is a radical break with fossil fuel-based capitalist production now, all the measures we take are too little and too late?

Ignatieff: This is a serious ques-

tion and a good one. But it is a question that liberals have faced from radicals for two centuries. There has not been a time in which a radical, a socialist, someone to the left of us in the spectrum, hasn't said, "You're going too slow on social welfare, or on votes for women." The other thing I really hate is the misanthropy in certain kinds of radical environmentalism. The rhetoric that says, "The human species is a parasite, a violently dangerous species on the planet." That neglects millennia of human care of the environment.

My difficulty with radicals has always been the same difficulty: "Show me how to get there. I don't disagree with you about the timing but show me how to get there." The strength of liberalism has always been its rather boring emphasis on process. It focuses on the levers we need to use to get where radicals want to go. One of the reasons why the Greens are stuck politically in most countries is because people think, "These guys aren't telling us how to get there."

Randeria: One aspect of the politics of transformation I want to talk about is the generational divide. The question that a lot of young climate change activists are asking is, "Doesn't liberal incrementalism, which is so slow, have a generational bias?" Is it not a betrayal of the future of our children?

Ignatieff: Sure. A lot of the people who are saying, "Go faster," are in

a generation or even two generations younger than mine. But I also think that the older generation has a stake in this as well. Just because you are old doesn't mean you do not have a stake in the future. We want to hand the world off to the next generation in better shape than we found it.

One of the reasons I am such a passionate defender of liberal democracy is, in fact, that liberal democracies can change very quickly when the political climate changes. The younger generation does not remember because they were not alive when there were no recycle boxes at any corner, when there were no windmills. All the power generation was based on coal. In 50 years, this has changed enormously, and it is up to the older generation to say, "There has been unbelievable change in this area in my lifetime." And the other, probably the most important, thing is that when I was

in that younger generation, we had none of the systemic understanding of the interaction between carbon emissions and climate change that we have now.

All of this has changed massively. Part of the message that the older generation can give to the younger generation is, "Don't give up because we have seen more change in our lifetimes than you perhaps understand, and that tells us that things are changing more rapidly than you suppose. So don't give up. Don't get discouraged. Keep pushing, keep fighting." ◀

Michael Ignatieff is Rector of the Central European University based in Budapest and Vienna. He is a historian of ideas and a political philosopher, who is an author of several prize-winning books among them a highly acclaimed biography of Isaiah Berlin (*Isaiah Berlin: A Life*, New York: Metropolitan Books, 1998). He has served as a member of Parliament in Canada, where he was the leader of the Liberal Party.



This is a slightly edited excerpt from the podcast *Democracy in Question* hosted by Shalini Randeria, Rector of the Institute for Human Sciences (IWM), Vienna. She is also Professor of Social Anthropology and Sociology at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies, Geneva, and directs the Albert Hirschman Centre on Democracy.

Condemning ‘the West’ and Redrawing the Realm of the Political in Russia

BY VOLHA BIZIUKOVA

How can we understand the usage of civilizational rhetoric, which became ubiquitous in today’s public and political debate in Russia and in other places across the globe? Instead of thinking about it as a wieldy tool of propaganda or as a cover up for vested interests and profiteering, we can ask what implications this rhetoric has for redrawing the very realm of the political.

On February 10, 2021, the major independent Russian newspaper *Novaya Gazeta* published a piece with an ambitious title: “The abduction of Europe 2.0. Manifesto.” The author, Konstantin Bogomolov, is a celebrated contemporary theater director and an icon of the culturally progressive local public. In a blunt and feverous tone, the article condemns the “West” for the “evils” of multiculturalism, feminism, Black Lives Matter, etc.—calling this emerging society no less than the “new ethical Reich” and discerning in progressive activists “new storm troopers.” Russia, in its current condition—though admittedly not an ethical or aesthetical ideal for Bogomolov—is likened to the “last car” in “the crazy train heading towards the Boschian hell, where it will be met by multicultural gender-neutral demons.” Fortunately, Russia still retains a chance to unhook itself from the doomed locomotive and embark on a homegrown project nurtured by “a new right ideology anchored in a complex man.”

The piece sparked wide public debate. Commentators picked on the confusing style and sloppy argumentation, and the possible vested interest of its author. All this criticism might well be justified. Still, as the current husband of Ksenia Sobchak (a journalist and a liberal rival of Vladimir Putin in the last presidential election) and a representative of the broad public mainstream, Bogomolov is no fringe figure. Falling within the broader strand of the Russian public discourse, his text vividly exposes a general tendency of using civilizational language for redrawing the realm of the political in contemporary Russia. Rather than seeking to reconstruct a coherent political program from Bogomolov’s outburst, we can look at the function the civilizational rhetoric filled with dystopic prophecies serves in his text. In this respect, the timing of his piece is particularly instructive.

The article appeared a week after a Moscow court changed a suspended sentence into a jail term for Alexei Navalny, who was arrested immediately upon his return to Russia on January 19 after surviving the attempt on his life through poisoning with the nerve agent Novichok. Mean-



Valentin Aleksandrovich Serov, *The Abduction of Europe* (1910).

while, the Russian-speaking Internet space was exploding over the investigative documentary about “Putin’s palace” published by Navalny’s team, which exposed the astonishing scale of embezzlement and conspicuous extravagance of the lifestyles of the political elite, garnering more than a hundred million views. These events provoked several protests over two weeks, which led many domestic and foreign commentators to anticipate the possibility of countrywide mass mobilization.

Such expectations pointed to an accumulated potential for protest activity. Pressure was believed to have built up as a result of the combined effect of several factors: the coronavirus pandemic in which the state prioritized the preservation of reserve funds over aid to the population, voting on the amendments to the constitution that nullified Putin’s earlier presidential terms, targeted political repression and persecution, and the seventh year of declining or stagnating real incomes. Given that none of these developments had precipitated mass protests, there was a sense of a possible tipping point. But the scale of the eventual protests that rallied around Navalny, though significant, remained within the scope of major mass mobilizations of the past decade and did not demonstrate anything qualitatively new (except, arguably, for a wider national reach

and the active involvement of regional urban centers). Facing excessive suppression by police forces, the protests soon waned, and life returned “back to normal.”

All of this, however, was conspicuously absent from Bogomolov’s essay. As he commented later, what he dwelled upon—the anticipated moral bankruptcy and oppressiveness of the West and Russia’s *Sonderweg*—represented the “real” issues of importance, while current events and “individual inadequacies of authorities” were of less interest for him. However, it was not only recent events that were left out but also the ongoing situation in Russia, with its entrenched inequalities, multiple injustices, and excesses of power at different levels.

This silence represents the key message of this piece, revealing a common feature of the uses of “civilizational” language. The latter serves to frame the substance of public discussion by supplying “valid” and meaningful categories, and by representing the reified “civilizational units” of Russia and the West as the actual subjects of history. Without necessarily offering or imposing a comprehensive ideological program, this rhetoric effectively displaces and substitutes the subject of sociopolitical and material realities. Referencing meta-entities and value-loaded meanings, these catego-

ries also provide a powerful framework for affective attachments and modes of identification, forging an important link to people’s existential experiences.

By this means, in Russia’s contemporary political context, the use of civilizational language redraws the realm of political debate by rendering the imagined scene of civilizational processes and interactions as its worthy and legitimate subject, and the corresponding categories as representing the supposed substance of the political. Simultaneously, it excludes from this scope—and thus facilitates depoliticizing—the sphere of socioeconomic development and state governance. Bogomolov’s manifesto makes this more general tendency intelligible by taking it to the extreme.

Recognizing the effects of redrawing the boundaries of the political provides another angle for thinking about the role of the ideological factor in today’s politics of the Russian state and popular compliance. This is usually described in terms of a “trade-off” between ideology and socioeconomic performance (that is, partially sacrificing material wellbeing “in exchange” for Russia’s “greatness”) or as the indoctrination by the propaganda media. Instead, the relations between these spheres are reconfigured by the pairing of politicization and depoliticization.

The appeal of this move should be understood within the current context of the effective disentanglement of individual lives from the situation in the country in the perception of Russian citizens. This leads to the disintegration of the notions of public good and public interest, and substituting them with nothing but state good and state interest. This tendency also reveals itself in the dynamics of the recent protest movement in large cities that emerged as instantaneous expressions of individualized moral indignation sparked by particular, isolated events (for example, Boris Nemtsov’s assassination in 2015). These protests remain sporadic and short-lived; they have not managed to sustain and acquire the character of goal-driven collective action as a mode of political participation.

Such tendencies of refashioning the political realm and politicizing culturalist and civilizational paradigms that, in turn, help to depoliticize the sphere of socioeconomic processes and governance are, of course, not unique to Russia, but their configurations are always specific to a place and time. They reemerge across many different localities and global political contexts, from the increasingly widespread talks about promoting and protecting “Europeanness” in the EU to rising nationalist authoritarian regimes in countries like Brazil, India, or Turkey. While investing in reactionary nationalist and civilizational rhetoric, these authoritarian regimes also largely embrace neoliberal economic arrangements and strategies of governance. In a way, we can also think about how such projects manage to tap into and exploit the ideas about multiple paths to modernity for their own purposes. Still, exploring the tendencies of redrawing the realm of political debate might shed further light on the political dynamics in different places, including Russia. ◀

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China's Distinct Path to Engaging International Courts

BY THOMAS S. EDER

China differs starkly from other large emerging economies in how it approaches international courts. A review of almost two decades of case law and academic debates shows that one key reason is its level of ambition. China is cautious; it takes more time than others to engage. But it steadily moves forward, aiming to become a “leader country” in international law to consolidate its power.

President Xi Jinping declared in 2017 that China should now “guide” the international legal order, instead of merely “contributing its share.”¹ He diagnosed a glaring need for reform and pronounced his country well qualified to lead the effort towards a supposedly fairer system. Influential Chinese scholars had earlier called for China to attain “great power” status in international law, as the only way to consolidate its economic and diplomatic gains.²

China's practice and academic debates since it joined the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2001 show that it made a strategic choice to also—cautiously, but progressively—engage international courts to build its influence. A review of its approach in the areas of investment, trade, and the law of the sea demonstrates that this distinguishes China from other large emerging economies, represented here by the other BRICS states (Brazil, Russia, India, and South Africa).

Why China Could not Join the Restrictive Turn on Investment Arbitration

The other BRICS states have taken a clear restrictive turn in international investment law. South Africa and India started to unilaterally terminate their investment treaties in 2012 and 2016 respectively; Russia severely limited substantive protection for foreign investors from 2016; and Brazil never even ratified a treaty allowing for international arbitration. Controversial cases preceded the shift away from arbitration: *Piero Foresti vs. South Africa*, *White Industries vs. India*, and several against Russia involving former shareholders of the oil giant Yukos. All three governments complained about bias against host states and in favor of investor rights.

For its part, China increased its openness to investment arbitration in this period. The most prominent policy recommendations of Chinese scholars used to be to improve litigation capacity and to gain regulatory influence, which was considered as important in investment law as at the WTO. Only recently did they also counsel active participation in arbitration. Such advice mirrors the shift of China becoming a prominent outward investor. Increasingly focused on investor rights, Chinese scholars have advocated for a



Courtroom of the Permanent Arbitration Court in the Peace Palace located in Den Haag, Netherlands.

Photo: Ankor Light / Shutterstock.com

capital-exporting-country mindset and further investment treaties with developing countries. Cases of arbitration involving the country began to pile up, following three decades in which it had built an extensive network of investment treaties but avoided a single case. Beijing viewed the outcomes in several of these cases (such as *Tza Yap Shum, Sanum*, and *Ping An*) very critically but in response it merely recalibrated its treaties instead of withdrawing from them.

Why China Took a More Linear Path on Trade Litigation

Brazil and India have been models for developing countries in expanding their litigation capacity at the WTO and achieving impressive victories even against the United States and the European Union. They demonstrated how to overhaul domestic institutions, gather experience at the WTO as a third party, and take one's time before actively launching complaints. India—China's most comparable BRICS partner—has been more willing to settle, though, and from the late 2000s it became a less active complainant as the caseload involving the country was lopsided against it and it incurred some stinging defeats. By contrast, Brazil was less of a target for others' complaints, while Russia only joined the WTO in 2012, and South Africa remained disengaged.

Facing an avalanche of complaints at the WTO, China intensified its offense in launching complaints of its own. It was an avid student of the experiences of Brazil and India. It invested heavily in trade-law research and training of

its officials, overhauled its institutions, and sought to join core influence groups on WTO reform. It was only five years after joining the organization that China started to refuse to settle disputes and to defend its positions all the way to the Appellate Body. Over the following years it has grown ever quicker to launch complaints.

Bitter disappointment about the United States and the European Union rejecting its claim to “market economy status” in 2016 did not make China change course. One key reason, again reflected in scholars' recommendations, was its determination to gain regulatory influence via interpretations by the Appellate Body and, most importantly, to undermine the easier adoption of trade restrictions against it due to its WTO Accession Protocol. In the escalating trade dispute with the United States since 2018, China has taken to defending the Appellate Body and, after Washington paralyzed that mechanism, joined the new interim appeal arrangement.

Why China Will Move from Economic to Law of the Sea Disputes

Reviewing the record of BRICS states in adjudication on the law of the sea, three paths emerge. The first is to remain disengaged, like Brazil and South Africa. The second is Russia's ambivalence, as it oscillates between embracing and rejecting jurisdiction and participation. It refused participation and vowed non-compliance in the *Arctic Sunrise* case (concerning the release of a Greenpeace vessel seized by the Russian authorities in 2013). It then appeared for pro-

ceedings in one case launched by Ukraine (concerning coastal state rights around the Crimean peninsula), only to refuse to show up for another one (concerning the release of Ukrainian naval vessels). The third path, India's, is one of full engagement, where even maritime border delimitation is submitted to international arbitration (*Bangladesh vs. India*).

Although China refused participation in *The South China Sea Arbitration* initiated by the Philippines in 2013, it is on a trajectory towards engagement. The patterns of its debates on the law of the sea are strikingly similar to those seen before or in the early phases of its engagement on trade and investment law. Chinese scholars recommend to study and prepare for eventual litigation, and to gain influence on regulatory judicial mechanisms, and many are open to full engagement in the coming years. China has already participated in advisory proceedings on due-diligence obligations in fishing and seabed mining, and on continental shelf limits. Here too China's identity is shifting, from being a developing coastal state to a technologically advanced power seeking to exploit maritime resources worldwide. On adjudication, a more influential and confident China will likely move on to an approach resembling Russia's eclectic one and then even India's more substantive engagement.

No Way but Forward

There are three key takeaways from the three different stories described above. First, the experiences of the

other BRICS countries are not necessarily indicative of what steps China will take. Their approaches diverge most clearly in investment law. Second, the main difference lies in China's (sometimes very) slow but steady path towards deeper engagement. Third, China is convinced that eventually all legal tools must be used to best protect its national interest in the form of consolidating power and economic gains. Scholars advising the government counsel comprehensive preparation for an eventual “day in court.” Caution reigns, pitfalls are taken seriously, and standing back on individual cases might be necessary (see *The South China Sea Arbitration*). China's leadership is willing to offend, to reject and undermine awards, and to tolerate tension between its rhetoric and actions. However, its ambition to be a “great power” in international law does not allow for isolationism. Eventually, the entire system must be engaged, shaped from within, and made to work for China. <

1) People.cn, “习近平首提‘两个引导’有深意” (Xi Jinping's first mention of the ‘two guides’ has deeper meaning) *People.cn* (Beijing, February 20, 2017) accessed February 11, 2021 [Chinese].
2) Zhipeng 志鹏 He 何, “走向国际法强国” (Becoming a Great Power in International Law) [2015] (1) *Dangdai Faxue* 148 [Chinese].

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In Memory of a Friend

BY IVAN VEJVODA, MARCI SHORE AND TIMOTHY SNYDER

The great Polish political philosopher, historian of ideas, and dissident **Marcin Król** passed away last November. Król was an intimate friend of IWM founding director Krzysztof Michalski and had close ties with the Institute for decades. In the following texts, **Ivan Vejvoda**, **Marci Shore** and **Timothy Snyder** honor the memory and intellectual legacy of a companion, a friend, and a supporter of the Institute.



Photo: Albert Zawada / Agencja Gazeta

Marcin Król

BY IVAN VEJVODA

The passing of Marcin Król (May 19, 1944—November 25, 2020), a very close friend and colleague of the IWM and of many of its fellows, leaves a great void for all.

Marcin was a recurrent guest and visiting fellow at the IWM from its founding in 1982. He participated in many conferences and events, contributing to *Transit*, the IWM's journal, and its other publications. He was a close friend of IWM founder and first rector Krzysztof Michalski with whom among others he helped set up in 1995 the Institute for Public Affairs (ISP) in Warsaw. He was the chair of the ISP Founding Board.

Marcin was a member of the IWM Academic Advisory Board and participated in the IWM's Summer Schools on Philosophy and Politics in Cortona, Italy. In 2004, for example, he taught a course with John Gray entitled "What can we learn today from the conservative thinkers of the past." Since 2005, he was in charge of the Józef Tischner Debates from the Polish side. These debates were launched jointly by the IWM and the University of Warsaw in memory of Tischner, a prominent Polish priest and philosopher who was founding president of the IWM. The debates were always chaired by Marcin Król and Krzysztof Michalski, with the latter's role subsequently filled by Shalini Randeria and IWM fellows.

In March 2020, Marcin chaired the 29th Tischner Debate in Warsaw under the title "History and Justice."

Most of all, Marcin always felt a sense of responsibility to the IWM. After Krzysztof Michalski's untimely death in 2013, he helped ensure that the institute's work could continue. His support was rooted in an unwavering commitment to the IWM mission.

Marcin Król was a philosopher and historian of ideas. He graduated in 1972 from the Faculty of Sociology and Philosophy at the University of Warsaw. Later he obtained academic degrees—first a PhD, then a habilitation. In 1999, he received the academic title of professor of humanities. He served as dean of the Faculty of Applied Social Sciences and Rehabilitation of the University of Warsaw and was a member of the Stefan Batory Foundation Council and the author of numerous books and journalistic pieces.

In 1979, together with a group of Polish intellectuals, he founded the independent journal *Res Publica*. He was its founding editor-in-chief and remained chairman of the *Res Publica* Foundation Board. He was a staunch advocate for liberal democracy and civil liberties, and *Res Publica* served as a vehicle for spreading ideas and fostering debates on key philosophical and political issues. He was an engaged intellectual and prominent thinker with a keen eye

for philosophy and social sciences but also current events.

I met Marcin in Madralin near Warsaw in 1991 thanks to the New School for Social Research from New York and its East and Central Europe Program, at a meeting of the Democracy Seminar, a program that had been convening since 1986. It was Jonathan Fanton, president of the New School at the time, and professors Ira Katznelson, Jeffrey Goldfarb and Elzbieta Matynia—the *spiritus movens* of the project—who brought together intellectuals from the US and Western Europe with those of us from East, Central and South Eastern Europe.

We continued meeting throughout the early 1990s as part of the Democracy Seminar network. We were all keen to learn from each other's experiences in the early days of democratic transition. We were all in uncharted waters, and Marcin was not only an insightful observer but also someone who saw further and more broadly than many others. Even with his many other endeavors, he made the time to closely follow the events in my former country of Yugoslavia and the conflict that led to enormous suffering and, ultimately, the country's disintegration. He would call and inquire about specific developments and events. He was a man of great empathy and understanding.

It has been said that Marcin was not a revolutionary, but he was aware of the need for radical change. In June 2015 he published an article in *Visegrad Insight* titled "Let us become radical."

Klaus Nellen has pointedly noted that in Marcin's article "Polen zwischen Ost und West", published in *Transit* 25 (*Polen im neuen Europa*, 2003, 12–22), he wrote at the end: "... muss man sich wohl damit abfinden, dass Polen wegen seiner Zwischenlage und seiner schieren Größe immer ein Problem für Europa darstellen wird – mal ein kleineres, mal ein größeres. Dies soll keine Warnung sein, bloß die Feststellung einer Tatsache, die immer klarer zu Tage tritt, je näher der Beitritt des Landes zur Europäischen Union rückt." It turned out to be a warning, more than Marcin or anyone else would have imagined at the time, Nellen remarked.

We have lost a dear friend, an irreplaceable loss. ◀

Ivan Vejvoda is Permanent Fellow at the IWM.

Conversations, before and after death

BY MARCI SHORE

"We were Stupid," a stunning interview with Polish philosopher Marcin Król, appeared in *Gazeta Wyborcza* in 2014, during the revolution in Ukraine. I no longer remember who sent it to me, or whether I chanced to come upon it. I do remember where I was when I read it: sitting on the floor of the bedroom in an apartment we were renting in Vienna's 6th district, where I was watching the livestreaming of the Maidan.

It was the beginning of February. By then something had already turned. In November no one had expected to die on the Maidan. By the end of January, even from a distance, an existential shift was palpable—a critical mass of people had made a decision: they were willing to die there if need be. I was terrified—and captivated—waiting for the violence to come. I didn't then understand myself why I had been so drawn in.

In the midst of this, I read the interview with Marcin Król. The journalist, Grzegorz Sroczynski, had been fifteen years old in 1989; he is of my generation. He was responding to Marcin's 2012 book *Europa w obliczu końca* ("Europe in the face of the end") which opened with disquieting pessimism: "We are dealing with a moderate economic crisis, a serious political crisis, a dramatic civilizational crisis, and perhaps a fatal spiritual crisis."

Grzegorz Sroczynski, not unreasonably, asked, "What is the fatal spiritual crisis?"

"We've stopped asking ourselves questions," Marcin answered.

"What kind of questions?"

"Metaphysical questions. No one, for instance, contemplates where evil comes from."

And just then I understood something: the Maidan was the reappearance of those metaphysical questions we had stopped asking ourselves. That was why I could not turn away.

Those questions had drawn me to Eastern Europe when I was the same age as Marcin had been when he began to study philosophy. I was coming from suburban America—the world of *Gilligan's Island* and station wagons and TV dinners; I was working at an after-school job at a Benetton store in a strip mall when the Berlin Wall fell. I wanted to learn about evil, and about truth. I wanted to go *there*, where those conversations were happening.

When as a student, I crossed for the first time the Iron Curtain that was no more, I went looking for philosophers, erstwhile students of Jan Patočka, signatories of Charter 77. The first word I learned in Czech was *pravda*, the word for "truth." I'd had no idea that this word could be so tangible, could carry so much weight.

(In November 2019 I watched Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman testify at Donald Trump's first impeachment hearing. Forty years earlier, Vindman, his two brothers and his widowed father had come to the United States as refugees from Soviet Ukraine. A Eurasian specialist fluent in Ukrainian and Russian, Vindman had been on Trump's July 25, 2019 phone call to Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky. "Dad, do not worry," Vindman said in his opening statement, "I will be fine for telling the truth." And as I listened, I thought: this was not the American "truth." This was *pravda*, bearing the sense it bore for Marcin Król and the signatories of Charter 77 and other dissidents under communism.)

Yet I arrived in Eastern Europe precisely when the time of conversations about truth was ending, when people stopped asking themselves those metaphysical questions—the questions we were not asking ourselves in the America I had come from either. And now Marcin Król's self-critical "*we were stupid*" helped me make sense of the past quarter-century.

I knew Marcin as a friend of Krzysztof Michalski. Once upon a time at Warsaw University both of them had been students of the philosopher Leszek Kołakowski. In 1966, Marcin had approached Kołakowski with a proposition to write his thesis about the Camus-Sartre split. Marcin could write about that later—Kołakowski told him—right now he was going to write his thesis about the epistemological absolute in Descartes and Husserl. (Long afterwards, when his children were behaving badly, Marcin would tell them to memorize passages of his thesis about the epistemological absolute.)

For Kołakowski—explained Marcin—philosophy was about two fundamental questions: the question of meaning, and the question of truth. Both he and Krzysztof had taken Kołakowski's idea of a "horizon of truth" intensely seriously.

"Of course, it's possible to go through life and never ask ques-

tions about its meaning,” wrote Marcin, “but what kind of life is that? It’s the life of a ram—which I say with all respect for rams.”

A few years had passed since Krzysztof’s untimely death in 2013 when Marcin and I began an epistolary conversation about him. We never finished it, if there is such a thing as finishing this kind of conversation. In 1968, Marcin, like so many of their mutual friends, had gone to prison. Krzysztof had not. In Krzysztof’s biography, this not having gone to prison mattered very much:

He considered our collective pretending that the devil existed only in fairy tales to be a tragic feature of our modern world. Why did Poland ban the publication of *Mein Kampf*? Marcin wanted to know. Out of fear? Fear of what—of reminding ourselves that evil exists? These questions—of truth, meaning, evil—were related. Rather than admitting the existence of evil—he wrote shortly before his death this past autumn—our contemporary culture has contested truth’s very existence.



At the Tischner-Debate 2019.

Photo: Bartek Bartosiński / Intasmat

he had not been proud of it. Marcin did not hold this—his friend’s cautiousness, perhaps his lack of bravery—against him. “Not everyone has a suitable temperament for that,” he wrote to me. “After all, not everyone is able to treat a several-month stay in prison as an opportunity to gather anthropological insights.”

Their differences in temperament were philosophical as well. Marcin was not especially fond of Kant. He preferred Tocqueville and Rousseau. “In general,” he wrote to me, “I have the feeling that German idealism is superfluous, but don’t tell anyone.”

As far as Heidegger was concerned, Marcin recognized his value, but he bore no love for him. For Krzysztof, in contrast, Heidegger was the philosopher of responsibility, the eyes in the portrait that appeared to be staring at him, wherever he might be, reminding him of the weight of each step of his life. For Marcin it was Hannah Arendt who played this role: she was the one who insisted on the responsibility, always and everywhere, to *think*.

Thinking meant pursuing the search for truth. Patočka and Kołakowski, like both Marcin and Krzysztof, resisted the postmodern turn. None of them died harboring any utopian illusions, be they epistemological, political or otherwise. The search for truth—however unlikely to succeed—was impermissible to give up. “Truth must remain our guidepost, even though the direction of our path is uncertain, and the destination barely known,” Marcin insisted.

Likewise was it impermissible to lay aside the question of evil.

The pursuit of these questions demanded intensive conversation. Long after Krzysztof’s death Marcin still had conversations with Krzysztof in his head. When he said this, I remembered an afternoon years earlier, when Krzysztof and I had been walking down Chapel Street in New Haven towards a very small coffee shop I have not visited since. We were talking about the philosophy of history. And at one moment Krzysztof said to me, “It’s a shame that Jan Patočka isn’t here, he would have a lot to say on this subject.” Krzysztof said this to me in a tone which would have caused someone who overheard us to assume that Jan Patočka was a friend or colleague, perhaps, inconveniently for us, out of town at the moment, surely to return.

In 1987, Marcin came to Vienna for IWM’s commemoration of Patočka on the tenth anniversary of the Czech philosopher’s death. The evening took place at Schwarzenberg Palace, where Krzysztof had arranged for live jazz music. In the unadulterated tone of the trumpet Marcin heard a challenge, calling us to truth. He felt the presence of Patočka, who loved jazz, and wondered what it really meant to depart from the world.

“After all,” he wrote, “only those among the dead with whom we still have conversations remain alive for us.” ◀

This is an abridged version of the introduction to a forthcoming volume of Marcin Król’s last texts.

Marci Shore is Associate Professor of History at Yale University and a regular Visiting Fellow at the IWM.

“We were stupid.”

INTERVIEW BY GRZEGORZ SROCYŃSKI / TRANSLATED BY TIMOTHY SNYDER

Translator’s note: Marcin Król was one of the leading oppositional thinkers during the last decade of communist Poland, in the 1980s. He set himself the task of reviving conservative political thought, not for immediate application in politics, but rather as an exercise that allowed for a discussion of political purposes beyond the pressing demands of the moment. He remained a very prominent political and social thinker of the first three decades of the Polish transformation. This interview, in which Marcin Król points to neoliberalism as a founding error of postcommunism, was a turning point in east European discussion of the transformation. It cannot do justice to the sense of adventure and erudition on display in his thirty or so books and countless essays. It does however give a hint of how a ceaselessly critical spirit can cohabit with an unbroken desire to ask the deepest questions. Marcin Król was a friend of the IWM from the beginning. Among many other services, he helped to organize the Tischner Debates in Warsaw. The 30th Tischner Debate, held on May 19, 2021, was devoted to Marcin Król’s legacy.

The excerpt begins at a point where Marcin Król is describing a certain kind of illusion about the automatic self-preservation of liberal democracy.

Marcin Król: So long as liberal democracy is the final stage of humanity, then it will go on by itself, just like that, no need to worry about it. Maybe the world is not ideal, but it is bearable; we have to correct it, neaten things up, poke around a bit, so that economic growth is 4% and not 3%, and we’ll somehow get by. Nothing bad can ever happen again. And just that, exactly that way of thinking, is what is very threatening.

Grzegorz Srocyński: Why?

Król: Because something bad will happen, and when it does we’ll be swinging from the lampposts. Just like that. By not doing anything, we are cultivating the forces that will change the world in their own way. And they will not negotiate.

Srocyński: Who?

Król: Let’s say the nationalists. That wave is coming. For liberal democracy to last for another fifty years, there will have to be essential changes having to do with regaining the idea of equality in some sensible form. This isn’t easy and no one knows how to do it. In any case I don’t. I only know that we live in a world where eighty-five people have more wealth than half of humankind, than 3.5 billion people. An absolutely sick situation. I have never been one to panic; even when Gomułka put me in prison in 1968 I thought that everything would turn out well. And so I wrote a gloomy book to spread this fear to others. Maybe it will move someone to act. This will all end badly if reasonable people do not take up the universal ideals of equality and fraternity.

Srocyński: That’s new.

Król: New? Those are the old slogans. Liberty, equality, fraternity.

Srocyński: Yes. It’s just that from that triad your generation chose liberty and spoke mainly about that. Free and enterprising people will do wonderfully well, so long as no one hinders them. The quarterly *Res Publica*, which you edited, was full of texts like that.

Król: We were stupid. In the 1980s we fell under the influence of neoliberal ideology; I bear a lot of responsibility here. (...) My enthusiasm died out pretty quickly. I figured out that the individualistic element in liberalism was beginning to dominate, driving out other important values and killing the sense of community. This is not very hard to explain. Individualism has strong support from the forces of the free market, which make money from the individualistic model of life. Social and civic values, by contrast, don’t have that kind of rocket fuel behind them. From an economic point of view they are “ineffective.” Everyone was under the illusion that each person could live separately, in the framework of personal freedom work somewhere or other, earn as much as possible, enjoy life as much as possible, and someone or other will run the government. That it was possible just to be concerned with one’s own pleasure, and not be concerned with the actual issues of the world. (...) Liberal democracy is just a happy coincidence. And human rights as well. It’s very possible that our ban on torture is nothing more than a little interval in history. That it is not the crowning point in some natural process in the development of humanity, as Fukuyama and some others fancied.

Srocyński: It’s not a very encouraging thought—that human rights are just an accident.

Król: Right. But if you think it that way, then you’ll stop sitting in front of the television drinking beer. Because so long as it is a coincidence and not an inevitable stage of development, then perhaps you have to take an interest in what direction things are taking, right? No one will sort this out for you: not the experts, not the laws of history, not even the fatum of the free market. You have to sort it out for yourself. (...) There is a boundary, which no group of experts can define, but which nonetheless makes itself known from time to time. The boundary, speaking in the most general way now, is the boundary of injustice. And so it goes on, until a spark appears and then the next shock comes.

Srocyński: Revolution.

Król: A change. A revolt of a large group of people who were wrongly given hope. Because what society does today is create hopes that it cannot fulfill, on a scale that is historically unprecedented. Millions of people are educated, exposed to the allure of the world, told by television and self-help books “you can

do more,” “develop yourself,” “be better,” “live at full throttle.” And then it all turns out to be a joke. So long as the social classes were open and there was a general chance for advance, this could function. But all of that has gotten worse. America kept itself afloat for quite a while with the myth of the ‘self-made man’: someone who through hard work alone attained high social status and can now flaunt it, ride around in a Rolls, buy villas and yachts. The idea is that you might be envious of such a person but you don’t resent him.

Srocyński: Because you think that will be you in about thirty years.

Król: Right. Hope. That was the mechanism that allowed people to bear increasing social inequality without a peep. But it no longer works. The chasm is too great. No matter how long of a running start I get, I am never going to jump across.

Srocyński: In your book you speak of “a moderate economic crisis, a serious political crisis, a dramatic civilizational crisis and a perhaps mortal spiritual crisis.” What is a mortal spiritual crisis?

Król: We no longer ask ourselves questions.

Srocyński: Which ones?

Król: Metaphysical questions. No one gives any thought to the question of whence evil arises. And that question was the source of intellectual progress in Europe for eighteen centuries. (...) The source of all of our problems is the decline of thinking. That’s what this is all about, fundamentally. Thinking which took itself seriously. To concentrate and read four newspaper columns of something serious, without little jokes, little interruptions, cute little pictures—this is a deed like a voyage to Mars. Hannah Arendt, my guide to intellectual and moral life, thought that thinking was the most important thing under the sun and that if we do not take thinking seriously we cannot understand the world. And today we do not take thinking seriously, it is just one more attraction available on the market.

Srocyński: (...) How to live? (...)

Król: No! Not how to live. That is the typical question of our times. You’ll find that question everywhere, along with every possible answer, in thousands of self-help books piled up in bookstores. We ask that question constantly because of the false belief that it is possible to have an instruction book to life, to check the boxes and then to be liberated from thinking. So one more time we land in the lap of the experts, whose job it is to unburden us from responsibility. We shouldn’t ask ‘How to live?’ We should ask ‘Why?’ ◀

Gazeta Wyborcza, 7 February 7, 2014, excerpted. Translation by Timothy Snyder.

Timothy Snyder is Richard C. Levin Professor of History at Yale University and a Permanent Fellow at the IWM.

Sergei Medvedev continued from page 14

international scandal and compelled Yad Vashem's leadership to issue an official apology for misrepresenting historical facts.

Apart from Poland, Russia's other arch-enemy in the 2020 memory war was the Czech Republic. At issue here were two war memorials in Prague. In April 2020, a monument to Soviet Marshal Ivan Konev was dismantled there—in addition to liberating Prague in 1945, Konev was also responsible for suppressing the Hungarian uprising in 1956 and the Prague Spring in 1968. Later that month, a tiny monument and a memorial plaque commemorating soldiers from the Russian Liberation Army (ROA) was installed in Řeporyje, a district on the outskirts of Prague. (In Russia, General Vlasov's ROA is considered to have collaborated with the Nazis). Both episodes prompted major anti-Czech campaigns in the Russian press, as well as new allegations of the "falsification of history."

A series of conflicts over historical memory and Russia's growing isolation, plus the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown, ruined Putin's plans to organize a major celebration in Moscow on May 9, 2020, with world leaders attending. The festivities were postponed until June 24, 2020 and were held in an abridged, quarantined, format. As if compensating for this PR failure, Putin published an article in the June issue of *The National Interest* titled "The Real Lessons of the 75th Anniversary of World War II" in which he once again blamed the West for its policies of appeasement in the lead-up to World War II, culminating in the 1938 Munich Agreement; the article repeatedly criticized Western hypocrisy and double standards.⁶

To sum up, instead of promoting Russia's historical role and geopolitical importance, Putin's 2020 memory war contesting the roots, causes and consequences of World War II has further isolated and alienated Russia in the world. For domestic audiences, it has reinforced the image of Russia as a besieged fortress, betrayed by former allies, a lonely protector of common history and memory. Fueled by memory policy and militaristic rhetoric, disciplined by the quarantines and sanitary regulations, and bound by the amended Constitution that allows Putin unlimited rule until 2036, Russia has continued its slow descent into its own authoritarian past. <

- 1) Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*. New York: Free Press, 1992.
- 2) Pierre Nora, *Les Lieux de mémoire*. Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1984, 1986 and 1992.
- 3) Francis Fukuyama, *Identity: The Demand for Dignity and the Politics of Resentment*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2018.
- 4) Zygmunt Bauman, *Retropia*. Cambridge: Polity, 2017.
- 5) Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books, 2001.
- 6) Vladimir Putin, "The Real Lessons of the 75th Anniversary of World War II." *The National Interest*, June 18, 2020, nationalinterest.org

Sergei Medvedev is a Moscow-based political scientist and writer, the author of the prize-winning *Return of the Russian Leviathan* (Cambridge, Polity Press, 2019). He was an IWM Visiting Fellow in 2020.

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gne gegen das ISKK los, nannte Tufa einen Verräter, verlangte seine Entlassung und brachte eine Gesetzesinitiative in Gang. Tufa, selbst nicht zimperlich, veröffentlichte daraufhin ein ihm zugespieltes Gerichtsurteil aus dem Jahr 1985. Ein 16-Jähriger namens Gjergj Hani hatte den zweifelten Versuch unternommen, über den Ohridsee nach Mazedonien zu schwimmen. Das Urteil lautete auf „Vaterlandsverrat“: fünf Jahre im Gefängnisbergwerk von Qafë Bari. Unterzeichnet: Richter Spartak Braho.

Am Ende musste Tufa aber abgeben. Nach Morddrohungen gegen ihn und seine Familie suchte er im Dezember 2019 Asyl in der Schweiz. Sein Nachfolger Çelo Hoxha sieht sich nun denselben Widerständen gegenüber. Zwar wurde die Verleumdungsklage eingestellt. Aber im Oktober 2020 wurde er trotzdem abgestraft.

Der Staat ist ein unzuverlässiger Erzähler

Die ganze Hilfslosigkeit der albanischen Erinnerungskultur zeigt sich im Nationalen Historischen Museum in Tirana. Der „Pavillon des Antifaschistischen Nationalen Befreiungskampfes“ hat sich seit 1990 kaum verändert; in Vitrinen werden Reliquien ausgestellt: die Zahnbürste von Nazmi Rushiti, eine Handstickerie von Margarita Tutulani, der Regenmantel von Enver Hoxha, trocken kommentiert mit dem Satz: „Er führte den Nationalen Antifaschistischen Krieg an und leitete nach dem Krieg den albanischen Staat. Er starb am 11. April 1985.“ Wenige Schritte entfernt dann der „Pavillon des kommunistischen Terrors“. Dieselbe Konzeption, in Vitrinen T-Shirts, Brillenetuis, ein versteinertes Stück Brot, an dem jemand vor seiner Hinrichtung gegessen hat. Ein skurriles Nebeneinander unvereinbarer Positionen, in dem es keine Einordnung gibt, keine qualitative Unterscheidung der Opfer.

Besonders eindrucksvoll zeigt sich dieser Kampf der Narrative in den persönlichen Briefen, die Albaner zwischen 1947 und 1985 an das Zentralkomitee der Partei oder direkt an Enver Hoxha schrieben. Diese privaten Schreiben beginnen fast alle mit einer ausführlichen Autobiografie, denn ihre Autoren wissen, dass sie ihre Anliegen allein durch die Bekräftigung des staatlichen Narrativs geltend machen können. Die Empfänger hingegen versuchen, die Autoren zu entlarven (wobei sie immer zuerst die Biografie prüfen, indem sie Erkundigungen bei der Staatssicherheit einholen). Was sich zwischen den revolutionären Grüßen, den euphorischen sozialistischen Floskeln, dem egalitären Duzen herauslesen lässt, ist ein tiefes gegenseitiges Misstrauen – das zusehends größer wird, weil das staatliche Narrativ sich regelmäßig ändert. Denn auch der Staat ist ein unzuverlässiger Erzähler. Etwa alle zehn Jahre kommt es zu Säuberungswellen: erst die „Kriegsverbrecher“, später die Trotzkisten, die Titoisten, russische Revisionisten, chinesische Revisionisten, Indifferenzialisten. Die

Hochzeit mit einer Serbin oder ein Studium in Moskau – ehemals ein Privileg – konnte über Nacht zur Belastung werden. Über die Jahre und Jahrzehnte entwickelte sich ein beinahe calvinistischer Providenzgedanke. Menschen durchkämmten panisch ihre Biografien und suchten nach Indizien dafür, dass sie zu den Auserwählten gehörten und nicht zu den Verdammten.

Mein Vater war Kommunist, und er stand auf der richtigen Seite der Geschichte

Die übergeordnete Bedeutung der Biografie hat sich bis heute erhalten. So stellt etwa die Verleumdungsklage, die 2019 gegen Hoxha eingeleitet wurde, gleich im ersten Satz auf die gute Biografie des Klägers ab, seinen „sehr guten Namen und Ruf in der öffentlichen Verwaltung und unter seinen Freunden und Verwandten“. Die eklatanteste Demonstration lieferte aber der sozialistische Premierminister Edi Rama selbst, als er sich im Juli 2020 in einer live übertragenen Debatte im Parlament zu der Aussage hinreißen ließ: „Mein Vater war, wie viele andere, Kommunist, und er stand auf der richtigen Seite der Geschichte.“ Jeder Albaner weiß, wer Edi Ramas Vater war. Als bekannter kommunistischer Kader hatte er 1988 den Hinrichtungsbefehl für den systemkritischen Dichter Havzi Nela unterzeichnet.

Die Politik des verordneten Vergessens hat in Albanien eine lange Geschichte. Nach jeder Säuberungswelle wurden die staatlichen Publikationen bereinigt, die „Feinde des Volkes“ wurden wegretuschiert, alte Bücher mit neuen ausgetauscht. Menschen verschwanden, als hätte es sie nie gegeben. Auch solche, die jeder kannte, Minister, Architekten, beliebte Schlagersänger, Menschen, die gestern noch „Volkshelden“ waren, wurden über Nacht aus der öffentlichen Erinnerung getilgt. Im House of Leaves, dem kleinen Sigurimi-Museum in Tirana, zeigt ein Video die Erinnerungen von Irina Sollaku. Nachdem ihr Mann verhaftet wurde, habe die Staatssicherheit alle Fotografien von ihm mitgenommen, erzählt sie. Natürlich vergaß sie ihn deshalb nicht, im Gegenteil, der leere Platz an der Wand erinnerte sie viel schmerzlicher als jedes Foto. Die Logik des Terrors: Sie soll sich erinnern, wen sie vergessen soll. Es ist eine Demonstration der Macht – und der Ignoranz. Denn paradoxerweise hat diese Methode zur Folge, dass die zahlreichen parallelen, konkurrierenden, privaten Narrative so beharrlich erhalten bleiben. <

Nikolai Antoniadis arbeitet als freier Journalist und Autor in Hamburg. Er war vom November 2020 bis Januar 2021 Milena Jesenská Visiting Fellow am IWM.

Books by Fellows

Thomas S. Eder
China and International Adjudication Caution, Identity Shifts, and the Ambition to Lead
Baden-Baden: Nomos-Verlag, 2021, 589 pp.
ISBN 978-3-8487-7108-0



China aims to become a "leader country" in international law that "guides" the international legal order. Delivering the first comprehensive analysis of case law and Chinese academic debates from 2002 to 2018, this book shows that gradually increased engagement with international adjudication is part of a broad effort to consolidate China's economic and political gains, and regain great power status. It covers trade, investment, territorial and law of the sea matters—including the South China Sea disputes—and delineates a decades-long process between caution and ambition. Both in debate patterns and in actual engagement, this book finds remarkable similarities in all covered fields of law, merely the timetables differ.

Bernd Marin
Die Welt danach: Leben, Arbeit und Wohlfahrt nach dem Corona-Camp Taschenbuch
Wien: Falter-Verlag, 2021, 140 S.
ISBN-10: 3854396937
ISBN-13: 978-3854396932



Wie kann Leben, Arbeit und Wohlfahrt nach der akuten Gesundheits- und Wirtschaftskrise nachhaltig erneuert werden? Das Buch bietet verständliche Antworten auf häufig gestellte Fragen rund um

die Corona-Krisen; genaue evidenzbasierte Beobachtungen an Hand von Zahlen und Fakten; spannende Fallgeschichten und anregende Denkanstöße, sowie originelle Reflexionen über Europas mögliche Zukunftsszenarien inmitten großer Ungewissheiten und Halbwissen. Ein Mix von Interviews, deren sozialwissenschaftliche Analyse und investigativer Recherche ergibt eine informative Chronik der Verschränkungen von objektivem Pech und institutionellem Versagen – etwa der „italienischen Tragödie“ und ihrer gesamt-europäischen Bedeutung. Denn in der Pandemiepolitik interagiert schicksalhaft schierer Zufall (Glück/Unglück) einerseits mit häufig wechselnden, mitunter kuriosen bürokratischen Fehleinschätzungen, und Fehlleistungen, – oder auch kollektivem Lernen, kluger Strategiewahl und legislativer Steuerung sowie administrativem Geschick und Improvisationsgabe – andererseits.

Ranabir Samaddar (ed)
Borders of an Epidemic: Covid-19 and Migrant Workers
Kolkata, India: Mahanirban Calcutta Research Group, 2020, 150 pp. (e-Book). Free download.



Migrant workers from different parts of India trekked back hundreds of kilometres carrying their scanty belongings and dragging their hungry and thirsty children in the

scorching heat of the plains of India to reach home in the wake of the sudden announcement by the government of a complete lockdown of the country amid the spectre of coronavirus. Yet while scenes of migrant workers walking in long processions caught the attention of the journalists, it still requires to be asked: What lay behind these long marches? How do caste, race, gender, and other

fault lines operate in governmental strategies to cope with a virus epidemic? If the fight against an epidemic has been compared with a war, what are the forces of power at play in this war against the pandemic? What indeed explains the sudden visibility of the migrant workers in the time of a public health crisis? What measures could have been taken and need to be taken now? This online publication by Calcutta Research Group highlights the ethical and political implications of the epidemic—particularly for India's migrant workers.

Upcoming Events

October 2021

October 5

Jan Patočka Memorial Lecture
The Ratline—From Vienna and Back, with Love, Lies and Justice

In early October we will welcome world renowned author and legal scholar **Philippe Sands** to give our annual Jan Patočka Memorial Lecture. There, he will present his recent best-selling book *The Ratline*, the sequel to the prize-winning *East West Street*. The book explores the life-story of Otto Wächter, accused mass-murderer and member of the SS, through personal stories of himself and his family. This event was originally planned as the Jan Patočka Memorial Lecture in 2020 but had to be rescheduled due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

October 28–29

Workshop
Existential and Phenomenological Perspectives on Sacrifice and Gender

Sacrifice is a popular theme in philosophical and theological discussions. The concept remains ambiguous, however, and the field is contested across anthropological, ethnological, sociological and ethical perspectives. In this workshop, **Katerina Koci**, Lisa Meitner Fellow and Research Director of the Program "Woman without a Name: Gender Identity in Sacrificial Stories" at the IWM, invites scholars from around the world to explore the prominent society-wide issue of sacrifice and focuses on the relationship between sacrifice and gender.

November 2021

November 2

Panel Discussion
Geopolitical Talks

After a hiatus in 2020, this autumn we will restart our "Geopolitical Talks" Debate Series. At each of these events, IWM Permanent Fellow, best-selling author and political scientist **Ivan Krastev** meets scholars, diplomats and activists from around the world to discuss contemporary questions of security and cooperation in an ever-evolving world. His first guest will be **Thomas Bagger**, German diplomat and current Undersecretary for Foreign Policy in the Office of the Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

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