

Abstracts

Nikola Selaković

Serbia's Contribution to a United Europe

Full membership in the EU is one of the key foreign policy priorities of the Government of the Republic of Serbia, as it has been the case with all previous governments of Serbia in the last 20 years. A lasting and sustainable solution to the problem of Kosovo and Metohija is of the greatest importance for preserving peace and stability in the entire region. We are sincerely committed to the promotion of regional cooperation, which contributes to the reconciliation in the region and encourages its overall development on the path to full membership in the European Union. Together with North Macedonia and Albania, Serbia launched joint initiative in order to facilitate the free movement of people, goods, services and capital, aimed at the deepening of the Regional Economic Area which is open for the participation of all other countries from the Western Balkans. We deeply believe in the strength, unity and solidarity of the EU and are ready and willing to contribute to the even stronger role of the united Europe in today's globalized world.

Michael Roick

The Western Balkans in the “Great Game” – Geopolitical Rivalries as a Challenge for the EU

The growing influence of authoritarian powers in South Eastern Europe, and especially in the Western Balkan region, has recently become the focus of wider and intense debate. China and Russia in particular are trying to establish and expand dependencies in order to exert political influence. Against this background, experts discuss the EU's “political Achilles heel” (H. Münkler).

Political implications and dangers are also perceived and closely followed in the European Union. The Corona crisis has reinforced authoritarian trends in the region. The management of the pandemic has exposed both the geopolitical weaknesses of EU-Europe and the strengths of authoritarian powers to use such crises offensively in the geostrategic power game.

As the dominant economic and political power centre in Europe, the EU will have to face these geopolitical challenges to a greater extent than ever before. In order to permanently stabilize its “courtyard” in South-Eastern Europe, it will have to make greater political and material efforts.

Nikola Burazer

Media Capture – An Increasing Threat to Serbian Democracy

Media freedom and the state of democracy in Serbia significantly deteriorated in recent years, largely due to the establishment of a system of media capture by the ruling Serbian Progressive Party. While public funds are used to finance and purchase pro-government media outlets, independent media find themselves increasingly under pressure. Captured media are also the creators of different disinformation campaigns, including those directed against the European Union. Media freedom is becoming an increasingly important issue for Serbia's EU accession process. It is included in one of the key negotiating chapters and is expected to be under even more scrutiny within the new accession methodology. However, the problems with media freedom led to a political crisis that will not be easily resolved and will require more decisive action by the European Union.

Gazmend Kapllani

The Albanian Border Experience

Interview with Belfjore Qose and Christian Voß

Gazmend Kapllani (born 1967 in Lushnja/Albania) is an Albanian polyglot author, journalist, and scholar. He lived in Athens for over twenty years. He was graduated in Philosophy and received his PhD in political science and history from Panteion University in Athens. He was one of the most well-known columnists writing about migrants and minorities in the Greek Press. He is the author of two collections of poetry in Albanian and four published novels (three written in Greek and one in Albanian).

His work centers on themes of migration and minorities, borders, totalitarianism, and how Balkan history has shaped public and private narratives and memories. Kapllani's first novel, *A Short Border Handbook* (2006), has been translated and published into ten languages. It was published in German in 2020 by Converso Edition and has been adapted for the stage by Bornholm Theater in Denmark and The National Theater of the Deaf in Greece. In 2017 it won the International Literary Prize of the City of Cassino in Italy.

His three other novels, *My Name is Europe*, *The Last Page* and *Wrongland*, have been published so far in French, Albanian and Greek. *The Last Page* was short-listed for the French Cezam Prix Littéraire Inter CE 2016. *Wrongland* ("Lathos Hora" in Greek) is being adapted for the stage by the Greek theater director Pantelis Flatsousis and will be performed in Athens in fall 2021. Since 2012, Kapllani has been living in the US where he was a fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard University and writer-in-residence at Brown University and Wellesley College. He taught creative writing and European history at Emerson College in Boston, MA. In 2015 he decided to leave Greece permanently, citing systematic harassment by extreme right elements in the Greek police and secret services, threats from neo-nazi groups, and the refusal of the Greek authorities to respond to his application for Greek citizenship, filed in 2008. Currently, Gazmend Kapllani lives in Chicago, IL, where he directs the Hiday "Eddie" Bregu Program in Albanian Studies.

Arnd Bauerkämper

The Dominance of Particularistic versus Universalistic Narratives – Memories of World War II in Southeastern Europe in the European Context.

In the first two decades after 1945, memories of the Second World War in Western and Central Europe were framed in national categories. In the Communist dictatorships of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe, the political doctrine of “antifascism” predominated official remembrance. Nevertheless, particularistic memories that were geared to specific nations and ethnic groups persisted in small groups such as families. After the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Communist regimes, these narratives resurfaced and fuelled myths about national heroism and ethnic pre-eminence, especially in South-Eastern Europe. The wars that led to the disintegration of Yugoslavia included particularly violent conflicts about memories. In the face of divisions between remembrances in Russia and the newly independent nation-states of East Central Europe a unified European memory culture is a chimera. By contrast, a self-reflective and empathic cross-border dialogue about different and even contrasting memories “from below” appears more promising. The concept of “travelling memory” complies with this political perspective and research vista.

Nadège Ragaru

What We Talk About When We (Do not) Talk about the Holocaust in Bulgaria

This contribution explores the history of the politics of Holocaust memory in Bulgaria. During World War II, Bulgaria refused to deport its Jewish community. Until recently, the image of Bulgaria as a European exception prevailed – though at a cost: this narrative omitted the almost total roundup of Jews in the Yugoslav and Greek territories under Bulgarian occupation between 1941 and 1944 and their deportation to Nazi-occupied Poland where they were exterminated. How does one explain a complex past, a single facet, namely the non-deportation of the Bulgarian Jews? The “rescue” narrative has become the primary avenue of narrating the history of World War II in Bulgaria. This article traces the legal, political and cultural arenas, as well as the multiple local, regional and international spaces where these narratives of the past were formed. The author shows how Jewish wartime destinies became “satellized” around a broad range of topics and cleavages. Moreover, the contribution seeks to bring Jews back into the writing and transmission of these historical events.

Heike Karge

Remembering the Second World War in (Post-)Yugoslavia

The short essay outlines some hypothesis in order to mark the shifts, but even more so the continuities in the Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav cultures of remembrance. In the first part, which focuses on the practices and cultures of war memory in socialist Yugoslavia, the main arguments of the authors’ monograph – published a decade ago – are summarized, including references to more recent research results. In the second part, which deals with the post-Yugoslav era, the contribution summarizes contemporary developments in the

culture and politics of memory. The essay argues that the development of exclusive victim identities has prevented to this day a constructive understanding of the war's legacies in this region in the 20th century.

Kateřina Králová

Breaking out of Silence: Victims of the 1944 Distomo Massacre in Greek-German Relations

Besides the massacres in the Czech village of Lidice and Oradour in France, it is the Greek village of Distomo that symbolizes the extreme violence of the Nazis against the civilians of occupied countries in Europe during World War II. Later on, in the Cold War climate and following the policy of containment emerging from the civil war in Greece (1946–1949), this crime was often downplayed, and its narrative blunted for the sake of stabilization of the Western Bloc. But the atrocity was never forgotten. This contribution focuses on the post-war reconstruction of Distomo memory in Greek-German relations, in particular the perspective of justice and compensation. Based predominantly on archival and legal sources, it elaborates on the interstate negotiations relating to this massacre. Further, it follows the bottom-up actions of the survivors, thereby opening a possible path to an understanding of postwar reconciliation, not only on a trans-European, but global level.

Tobias Blümel

The Case of Alois Brunner and the Divided Consciousness in Processing the Holocaust in Greece

Alois Brunner was one of Adolf Eichmann's closest collaborators and in charge of deporting the Jews of Vienna, Berlin, Thessaloniki and Drancy, later in Czechoslovakia as well. Conservative estimates suggest that he was responsible for the deaths of at least 128,500 people. After the war, he escaped to Syria and was never caught and put on trial. From 1985 onwards, the Central Board of Jewish Communities of Greece (KIS) filed extradition requests to respective Greek governments and tried to move a lawsuit against Brunner in absentia. The KIS encountered a wall of political unwillingness across the party spectrum.

The Brunner case is a crucial example of the intertwined history of not processing the occupation, the Holocaust, and collaboration in Greece. The present article is a primary source-based reconstruction of contemporary Greek history, focusing on the debate about the denied prosecution of Alois Brunner. In the first part, the problem areas of processing the Holocaust in Greece are defined, underlining the thesis that a public debate about the annihilation of Greek Jewry remained an explosive socio-political issue. The second part deals with the numerous petitions submitted by the KIS to the respective ministers of justice and foreign affairs in Greece from 1985 to 2010.

Dino Mujadžević

Contemporary Croatian Encyclopaedias and WWII Commemoration

The author examines the contemporary role of encyclopedias in shaping the historical knowledge of the Croatian public concerning WWII, with an emphasis on web-based pro-

jects and debates. He points to the limits of the shared authority approach and user-generated content in the encyclopedic context. This leads him to reassess the possibility of the return of professionally edited encyclopedias as a tool to provide a balanced and factual approach to the painful WWII past of the country. In this framework, he examines various factors such as the limited reliability of the Wikipedia collaborative format, ethno-nationalist legacies and populism, global disinformation campaigns and post-factuality as well as European efforts to promote “cognitive resilience”.

Christoph K. Neumann

The Second World War in Turkish Memorial Culture

Though Turkey did not fight in the Second World War, it was deeply affected by it. Only few events and processes that relate to the era are present today in public and political memory. The author considers a number of issues that have retained a degree of prominence: German exiled scholars and the construction of a modern university system, the so-called tragedy of the Struma (*Struma faciasi*) in the context of the Jewish Holocaust, the “Tax on Wealth” (*Varlık Vergisi*), the radicalisation of Turkish state-nationalism and the emerging rift in Turkish nationalism as well as the trial of May 3rd, 1944. All of these events can be read through the prism of historical change in nationalism, arguably the most valiant ideology in Turkey to this day. Critical historiographical debates on the events and developments in question exist. However, they appear to only have a very limited impact on memory construction. For this reason, the observation that the Kemalist state nationalism of the era became more exclusive and hostile towards ethnic and religious groups not fitting the paradigm of Muslim Turks, is often missed in retrospect. To the contrary, the simultaneous emergence of a radical nationalist opposition makes the mainstream construction of identity seem more lenient than it de facto has been.