

ABSTRACTS

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Monuments for World War II: Memory and Oblivion in the Balkans and Central-East Europe

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Session 1. Monuments for the Second World War and their post-1989 fate in the Balkans (I)

Božo Repe, Full Professor / Lecturer in Contemporary Slovenian History, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia & **Božidar Flashman**, Research Associate in Contemporary History, Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia.

The fate of the monuments of the National Liberation Struggle and the socialist revolution on the territory of the former Yugoslavia

Socialist Federal Yugoslavia paid great attention to monuments and other forms of commemoration of the anti-fascist struggle and partisan resistance during the Second World War (1941-1945). In historical memory, the liberation of Yugoslavia and the "authentic" revolution were associated with the break with the Soviet Union three years after the war (1948), the specific self-governing socialism that prevailed from the 1950s (called "Titoism" in the West), open borders, non-aligned politics, and Western influences in everyday life, culture, and art as well. Together with the mythologization of the national liberation struggle and the cult of Josip Broz Tito, but also with the simultaneous turning from the postwar "socialist realism" style in the art, a unique mixture of remembrance was created that still attracts much attention today. One such example is the exhibition *Toward a Concrete Utopia. Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948-1980* at the Museum of Modern Art (MoMa) in New York, which also featured the top works of the most famous Yugoslav artists from the socialist period (<https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/3931>). After Tito's death in 1980, the anti-fascist and socialist culture of remembrance began to be replaced by a nationalist, even fascist one, which led to the bloody disintegration of the country. The political elites in each republic tried to consolidate their position and their vision of creating nation-states with imaginary ethnic borders by evaluating the Second World War and accusing others of crimes in inter-national struggle and civil war. Collaboration was relativized or praised, everything related to the appreciation of the anti-fascist and socialist past, and especially works of art, became the object of controversy, political attacks, and elimination. On this basis, both the new state and local authorities decided to demolish monuments, rename streets and schools, and otherwise retouch history. Local fascisms began to emerge. Anti-fascist monuments were interpreted as symbols of

the communist regime and the socialist past that finally had to be removed. Historical facts, quality, artistic value, and authorship of the best artists were not factors that would determine their preservation. However, the differences between the new states were pointed out. In Slovenia, the monuments were demolished in some cases mainly in the 1990s, later they were removed under the pretext of restoration (and still are), but then they are not returned to their place. One of the most famous 56-meter frescoes in Tito's villa in Bled (today a protocol institution of the Republic of Slovenia) by the painter Slavko Pengov from 1947, depicting the national liberation struggle of the Yugoslav nations, the liberation and restoration of the fatherland, is covered with a curtain to hide it from foreign visitors. At the local level, civil society organizations worked to protect partisan monuments. The largest destruction of monuments was carried out in Croatia. In Serbia and Montenegro, monuments were not destroyed "en masse", but with social change and new wars they lost their symbolic value, which led to their gradual deterioration. At the same time, new sites dedicated to the rehabilitation of Chetniks (i.e. Draža Mihailović) and local anti-Partisan (collaboration) movements emerged. The Serbian and Croatian attitude toward national liberation struggle was transferred to Bosnia and Herzegovina, where only Bosniaks still have a positive memory of the national liberation struggle, which was also the beginning of their statehood. Tito's Yugoslavia recognized Macedonia as a different nationality and created a republic under this name. There the inhabitants took refuge in a distorted past whose foundation in recent history is the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization (IMRO; VMRO), which has its own museum in Skopje; however, the process of historical revision goes deep into the ancient past and has led to historically unfounded, megalomaniac, anachronistic and kitschy solutions.

Neža Čebtron Lipovec, Lecturer and Researcher, Faculty of Humanities, University of Primorska, Lecturer on Ethnologic Conservation at the Department of Ethnology and Cultural Anthropology of the Faculty of Arts, University of Ljubljana, Slovenia *Idiosyncrasies of the public monuments to the Second World War in the 'Political Chessboard' border area between Italy and Slovenia*

The Upper Adriatic region faced an idiosyncratic chronology in the period after the Second World War due to its position between democratic-capitalist West and the communist East. Particularly the area around the city of Trieste/Trst and the northern part of the region Istra/Istria experienced a rather unique period of the buffer zone multicultural state, the Free Territory of Trieste (1947-1954), set-up as a temporary solution during the period of negotiations about the borderline between Italy and Yugoslavia. Having faced almost three decades of Fascist aggression (1922-1945) on the Slavic people of the area, and the exterminating policy of the Third Reich (1943-1945), the activities of the partisan freedom fighters' movement were key for the final liberation.

As a result, immediately after the war several public monuments were installed. During the Free Territory of Trieste, the monuments in the Istrian (alter Yugoslav part) of the FTT became vehicles of propagating the ideal of the FTT, this is the fratellanza, or the brotherhood, between the two ethnic groups historically present in the region, namely the Slovenes and the Italians. With the final split of the FTT in 1954, and the annexation of Istria to Yugoslavia, and of the Trieste urban area to Italy, both ethnic groups were split, major demographic changes took place in Istria, and discourses changed. While in Trieste region, public monuments of the liberation fight, in the Slovene communities, related primarily to the Slovene national identity and its national suffering and fight under Italian Fascism and worked as crucial symbolic markers of (Slovene ethnic) territory (in Italy), the few Italian monuments celebrated the victims of the Nazi period. On the other hand, in the now Slovenian region of Istria, the discourses were more refined and, specifically, different from those elsewhere in the country and the Yugoslav federation: national discourse of Slovene patriotism intertwined with topoi of socialist ideals, while specific attention was paid to celebrating also the multiculturalism and multilingualism of the area. Recent research showed that the selection of the sites for monuments, representing the multicultural identity of the area, followed the presence of use of both Italian and Slovene dialect. The dynamics in discourses can be observed in the different aesthetic idioms: these span from vernacular reuse of existing tombstones and simplified historicist shapes, through subversive uses of imposed Socialist Realist forms (oeuvre of sculptor Oreste Dequel), to modernist geometric monumental forms, and modern Henry Moore inspired monuments by the regionalist Jože Pohlen.

Today, this vast corpus of monuments is subject to very diverse heritage discourses that span from perpetuating the national-ethnic discourse, to progressive nostalgia (Smith and Campbell 2017), and oblivion. Finally, a key element in the heritageisation process (Harvey 2001) of this corpus of monuments is played by the digital media, since detailed databases about these monuments and the related historic events and personalities are being set-up, on both sides of the border, as entirely grass-root activities.

Vladana Putnik Prica, Senior Research Associate, Art History Department, Faculty of Philosophy, University in Belgrade, Serbia.

More than a museum? The role of memorial museums in the culture of remembrance on the Second World War in Yugoslavia

After the Second World War, the Communist Party came to power in Yugoslavia. Since the years of occupation were also marked by a civil war fought in the country, the newly established communist government was aware of how significant monuments were for collective memory and nation-building. At first, the monuments were based on the Soviet model, however after the Tito-Stalin split in 1948, Yugoslavia quickly fell into a political

and economic crisis. The Soviet Socialist Realism was no longer a desirable visual model for future monuments and, therefore, Yugoslavia slowly started to turn toward Western countries and their memorial culture. Yugoslav artists were given scholarships to study abroad and many Western artists, such as Henry Moore and Le Corbusier, had exhibitions in Yugoslavia during the 1950s. These events sparked an influx of very artistically bold and creative solutions for memorials that in some cases found their way to realization. After a significant number of more modest monuments, large complexes were started to be built in the 1960s and the 1970s. The monument became an integral part of the entire area, with a landscape specially designed to create an immersive experience for visitors. One of the key elements of such memorial parks and complexes was the inclusion of museums. The role of memorials was not limited to mapping the locations of significant historical events; they were also expected to have a didactic dimension by educating future generations about the value system of the Communist Party, including principles such as anti-fascism, socialism, gender equality, and class equality. This was one of the main reasons why so many memorial museums were constructed at the most significant sites of remembrance. Locations like Kozara, Tjentište, Kadinjača, Sremski front, and Šumarice all had different forms of memorial museums. Some examples were more modest in size, like the memorial house in Tjentište designed by the architect Ranko Radović, others were monumental in their form, like the memorial Petrova gora by Vojin Bakić and Berislav Šerbetić. The museums often were a coherent part of the entire memorial complex and used the specific terrain of the often desolate areas where battles were once fought to emphasize the dramatic landscape.

The main focus of this paper will be to examine the role of memorial museums in the complex culture of remembrance in socialist Yugoslavia. The conceptual dimension of such museums will be explored, including how they differed from other typologically similar building, and how their content and exhibitions built an official narrative about the Second World War. The stylistic and architectural development of these buildings will also be analyzed, as well as their relationship between the monuments, the landscape, and the audience. Finally, there will be a comparison of how these museums function today, in the post-socialist and post-Yugoslav eras.

Session 2. Monuments for the Second World War and their post-1989 fate in the Balkans (II)

Dimitrije Matić, Research Assistant, Institute for Recent History of Serbia, Belgrade, Serbia
Old Fairground Monument in Belgrade

The topic of this paper will be the analysis of the memorialization process at the Old Fairground site in Belgrade. The Old Fairground complex (Staro sajmište) was erected by the Yugoslav government in 1937 and was meant to host international fairs and serve as one of the key symbols of economic

development in the capital. However, after the outbreak of the war in 1941, the German occupying forces transformed the pavilions into one of the most brutal concentration camps in former Yugoslavia. Between 1941 and 1944 the Old Fairground was the site of three separate camps: Judenlager Semlin (central place of the Holocaust for the Jewish population of Serbia), Anhaltelager Semlin (camp for political prisoners and Serbian civilian population) and the Ustasha camp in 1944. The complex had already been abandoned and left in ruins during the liberation of Belgrade in October 1944. However, the new communist authorities did not have a clear vision for the future of the site. Until the 1980s the space of the former camp changed its purpose several times: weapons depot for the military, headquarters of the communist youth movement, as well as art studios. Socialist Yugoslavia faced challenges in memorializing sites that had little connection to the partisan struggle and resistance, particularly those that bore witness to the mass deaths of civilians. This was the primary reason for the delay in erecting a suitable monument. The final project of the monument was accepted in 1987, but the construction was finalized in 1995. The central focus of this article will cover the official politics of memory and commemorations at the Old Fairground monument, spanning from its installation in 1995 to the adoption of the Law on the Staro Sajmište Memorial Site in 2020. During Milošević's reign the Old Fairground was the place where two discourses were intertwined: the old partisan antifascist narrative and the new discourse of national victimhood that saw Serbs as the key victims of the war. After the fall of Milošević in 2000 several domestic and international factors influenced the commemoration practices: decommunization process saw the abandonment of the old partisan discourse and put the further emphasis on the Serbian victims of the Second World War, while the increased international significance of the Holocaust memorialization contributed to the visibility of Jewish victims during official commemorations. The tensions between such narratives, as well as between different agents of memory such as the state, Serbian Orthodox Church, Jewish community, international and domestic remembrance organizations, shaped the discussion in the years that lead to the adoption of the law on Staro sajmište in 2020. Ultimately, this paper intends to highlight the key elements of the politics of remembrance regarding the Old Fairground memorial site between 1995 and 2020, as well as to portray its crucial changes and the main factors that influenced such mnemonic developments.

Nenad Lajbenšperger, Historian, Institute for the Protection of the Cultural Monuments of Serbia, Belgrade, Serbia
Memorial complex Boško Buha: From Yugoslav important site dedicated to young fighters who died in war to unwanted and neglected heritage of Serbia

Boško Buha was a seventeen-year-old partisan who died during the Second World War near the Serbian town Prijepolje. During the war he showed

extraordinary courage. He was a leader among young fighters and held great respect among the older partisans. A significant memorial complex was constructed at the site of his death and in its vicinity, dedicated not only to him but also to other young partisans. It contained several monuments, Memorial home, Museum, facilities for accommodation, and ski tracks for children. It was financed by the state, various state institutions, and most importantly, by the children of Yugoslavia, who made small contributions that, when added, amounted to a significant sum. Beside Boško Buha Yugoslav youth which participated in the war were represented by one young fighter from all six Yugoslav republic and two provinces. The memorial complex became a famous resort for children. With the beginning of the collapse of Yugoslavia, and after the Civil War broke, the decay of the Memorial complex began. The barracks destined to accommodate children were now housing refugees from Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina. The museum was closed, and parts of the exhibition were moved to the Museum in Prijepolje. Living in difficult conditions, the refugees used the barracks for more than a decade. After they had left, the barracks stayed empty, and their decay also began.

In the 21st century problems regarding ownership of the land and of the objective purpose of the memorial complex arose. To facilitate management of the memorial complex, which was also a touristic destination, during socialist Yugoslavia, the administration of the complex was assigned to the Tourist Organization Putnik. But, when the Republic of Serbia privatized Putnik handing it to a new owner, the memorial complex was sold with it. This caused a public outcry. As a result, Putnik returned the memorial complex to the state. But the state didn't even try to revitalize this complex. Furthermore, in 2019, and then again in 2022, the state again tried to sell objects from the memorial complex. This again was stopped due the significant opposition of the public.

The Boško Buha memorial complex also carries other historical burdens, one of which is the lingering conflict between partisans and Chetniks. The village of Jabuka, where the complex is located, had a higher number of Chetniks, so their descendants do not typically support memorials dedicated to partisans. This sentiment is also prevalent among the broader population of Serbia, particularly among politicians. Another problem is the different views on the role of children during the war. Some people consider it propaganda, and maintain that children were forced to participate in the war. On the opposite side, others still think that these children were real heroes. Lack of money for restoration is also the problem, as is the fact that the complex lies far from the capital city.

Davorin Vujčić, Art Historian and Museum Curator, Museums of Croatian Zagorje, Croatia
Antun Augustinčić Gallery in Klanjec: Antun Augustinčić, Monument of Gratitude to the Red Army - "ideological beacon" and litmus monument

One of the greatest monuments built in postwar Europe was the Monument of Gratitude to the Red

Army in the Croatian town of Batina on the banks of the river Danube. The monument commemorates one of the bloodiest battles of the Second World War, when in 1944 the allied units of the Red Army and the People's Liberation Army of Yugoslavia attempted to cross to the right bank of Danube that were defended by German military forces. Thousands of people died in the Battle of Batina, which ended with the victory of Soviet and Yugoslav forces.

Immediately after the war ended, the Yugoslav and Russian governments decided to erect a monument that would symbolize the gratitude of Yugoslav people to the Red Army and its soldiers. The work was entrusted to a famous Croatian sculptor, professor and academician Antun Augustinčić (Klanjec, 1900 – Zagreb, 1979).

Augustinčić and architect Drago Galić developed this monumental complex together, positioned it on a spacious plateau that opened towards the Danube. Atop the 20 meters high obelisk stands the statue of Victory, a 7-metre-tall female figure with a lowered sword in her right hand and a torch with a five-pointed star raised high in her left hand. The monument was unveiled on 9 November 1947, on the thirtieth anniversary of the October Revolution.

The monument in Batina represents an important point in Augustinčić's oeuvre. This is also an example of a monument in which the autonomy of form was sacrificed to the greatest extent for the benefit of explicit content and its glorification. It was Augustinčić's first monument that showed absolute conformity of sculptural intention and the official government ideology. In his rich 50-year career as a sculptor, Augustinčić came closest to the established notion of socialist realism in Batina.

The interpretation of the monument as a whole is not possible outside the discourse of the postwar political situation, because it was built on the basis of the war alliance and created during an ideological proximity of Yugoslavia and the USSR before the Cominform resolution.

During the past 76 years, this monument has been facing the changes of time, crossing the path from an "ideological beacon" to the litmus on which natural, social and political fractures have left their mark. As early as 1948, the Cominform resolution caused the termination of many close ties of the Yugoslav regime with the USSR, so the monument changed its function to some extent: it ceased to be emphasized as a heroic symbol of celebrating the common victory and became a place of remembrance for the fallen. In 1962, an ossuary was arranged at the foot of the monument. During the Homeland War in Croatia, that monument, unlike many others, remained undamaged. In 2022, the foot of the monument was secretly painted blue-yellow as a memorial to the fact that most of the members of the Red Army in the Battle of Batina were Ukrainians.

Session 3. Monuments for the Second World War and their post-1989 fate in the Balkans (III)

Ina Belcheva, PhD in Art History, Postdoctoral Researcher at EIREST, Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University, France

Liberation from the liberators: (De)Construction of narratives of the Monument to the Soviet Army in Sofia after 1989

During the communist regime, all monuments dedicated to the Red (Soviet) Army or to the Russian Army (end of the 19th century) in Bulgaria are unified under one common narrative: that of the "double liberators". In essence, this narrative establishes a continuity between the Russian-Turkish war of 1877-1878 that resulted in Bulgaria's liberation (term still used today) from the Ottoman Empire, and the entry of the Red Army in Bulgaria in September 1944. The Sofia Monument to the Soviet Army (1954) makes explicit reference to the term: "To the liberating Soviet army, from the grateful Bulgarian people".

After 1989, the contestation of this particular monument has concentrated greatly around the deconstruction of this dominating narrative and the establishment of a new one, this time about the "yokes" imposed by the Russians on Bulgarians. The calls for the dismantlement of the monument have thus been inscribed in a rhetoric appropriating the concept of "liberation", calling for the public space to be "freed" from its encumbering symbolic, political and aesthetic presence. Heritage concepts have been strongly mobilized in these debates, and in particular the meaning behind the concept of a "monument". In this presentation, I analyse the process of disqualification of Monument to the Soviet Army (MSA) through its political and memorial narratives. Focusing my attention on a crucial aspect of the debates—the 'monumental' status of MSA which implies historical accuracy, memorial significance, and aesthetic value—I suggest a contemplation of how heritage concepts evolve during times of political transition.

This presentation is part of the research, which I have conducted within the framework of my PhD thesis *Artistic Memory of Bulgarian Socialism: Heritage Debates 1989-2021*, defended in 2022 at Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University.

Șerban Liviu Pavelescu, Senior Research Fellow, Department of Security Studies, Institute for Political Studies of Defense and Military History, Romania *Memory, historiography and monuments of the Second World War in communist Romania. An analysis of the ideological impact on societal memory*

The five decades of the communist regime in Romania represent, in terms of the memory of the Second World War, the history of an experiment of historiographical structuring and restructuring of historical events in order to respond to the needs of a political regime in a continuous search for legitimacy and meaning.

The Romanian societal context imposes and favors, after the initial phase of the Sovietization process, the synthesis between the communist ideology and the national political, cultural, and ideological vein. The autochthonization and legitimacy of the regime, inscribing some places of memory in the public consciousness and developing an acceptable

narrative for the regime are only possible in this context. Under these circumstances, the memory of the Second World War is limited, constantly open to interpretation, and influenced by an interpretative framework encompassing both its documented representation (historiography) and the commemorative sites designed for public consumption. In this paper I analyze the politics of the monumental construction of the memory of the Second World War as part of a wider action plan, aiming at the total rewriting of the Romanian monumental landscape. During the Sovietization of the Romanian society, the elimination or conservation, the destruction or just the withdrawal into storage of some monumental ensembles, the legacy of some historical times or part of previous programs of identity, political and ideological construction, acquires a dual character, both deliberate and accidental.

Factors such as risk, cultural significance, visual perception, and political conformity, all play roles in determining whether a monument integrated into the urban landscape is preserved or removed. How else can we explain the survival of monuments such as that of the sanitary heroes in Bucharest, with a bas-relief depicting Queen Maria on its frontispiece, and the destruction of an allegorical monument dedicated to the celebration of the sacrifices made by teaching staff during the years of the First World War, which did not contain any of the symbols of the old royal political regime?

The politics of the monumental construction of the Second World War memory is marked, in this context, by the ideological embankments of the Second World War memory. Out of the Romanian participation in the world conflagration that spans across five years, only nine months are remembered in terms of military and monumental memory: the campaign of the Romanian army on the Western Front from August 23, 1944 to May 9, 1945. The military events, significant battles, collaboration with United Nations allies, and particularly with the Red Army, all evolve in their historiographical narratives and commemorative representations.

The construction of monuments, their significance, and their placement all undergo transformations over time, mirroring an ongoing process of interpretation and reinterpretation, not only of the memory of the Second World War but also of the broader national history. These developments culminate in a monumental synthesis that blends elements of both the new and the old within its artistic representation and historical significance. This synthesis results in the establishment and construction of commemorative sites bearing potent political and ideological connotations, while also relying on the national-communist interpretation of national history.

Claudia-Florentina Dobre, Director of the Center for Memory and Identity Studies (CSMI) and Researcher, "Nicolae Iorga" Institute of History, Bucharest, Romania

Remembering the Second World War and the Holocaust in post-communist Romania: Memory politics and monuments

Remembering the Second World War has always been controversial in Romania. It was controversial during communist times, as the official propagandistic discourse did not fit with people's attitudes and memories of the Second World War. It remained controversial at the end of the Ceausescu era, when important figures of the war were officially rehabilitated, while the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact was denounced as illegitimate by Ceausescu himself. It stayed controversial during the post-communist period, which has witnessed both continuity in discourse in line with the national communism of the Ceausescu epoch as well as a new narrative, which condemned the genocide against Jews and Roma while acknowledging the Holocaust.

Romanian communists' ascend to power was due to the might of the Soviet Red Army and the will of the soviet leaders. They were small in number, and therefore, lacked legitimacy to assume power. The 1946 general elections were won by the National Peasant Party, but the results were eventually falsified by the communists, already controlling the government and the main institutions of the country. In order to gain legitimacy, the communists started to forge a new mythology, to create new heroes and symbols. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the Red Army was the first to be glorified through monuments as early as the end of 1944, when a monument representing a Soviet tank was built at the city center of Cluj. In the following years, new monuments dedicated to the Red Army were unveiled in several cities and towns of Romania. After the fall of communism, most of these statues were removed from the city centres and relocated at the periphery. Some of them disappeared permanently and none is now considered a national monument. In the 1990s, perpetrators of the Holocaust, such as Ion Antonescu, the Head of the State during the Second World War and a Hitler ally, were celebrated even in the Romanian Parliament as victims of communism. Monuments dedicated to him and his followers were built in several parts of the country. In the 2000s, the condemnation of the Holocaust in Romania brought along the disavowal of the Antonescu's regime and politics, while new monuments were built to honour the victims of the Holocaust in Romania.

My presentation aim is twofold: on the one hand, I am interested in politics of memory regarding the Second World War and the Holocaust in Romania during post-communism, and, on the other hand, in how these politics of memory are reflected into the monumental space, namely, how they are inscribed in the public space through statues, monuments and other type of memory items.

Session 4. Monuments for the Second World War in Greece

Konstantinos Argianas, Postdoctoral Researcher, University of Ioannina, Greece
References to classical antiquity in monuments to the Second World War in Greece

The style that dominated the monuments erected during the first post-1945 decades to honour events

and persons relating to the Second World War in Athens was one with many references to Greek classical art. These references were supposed to showcase “greekness” through a right-wing interpretation of the public memory of the war. Thematically the army is celebrated as a symbol of resistance, while the left-wing resistance groups seems to have faded into oblivion. These monuments served the dominant postwar ideology and celebrated the martial virtues of the “Hellenic Race”.

The rise of PASOK [Panhellenic Socialist Movement] to power in 1981 marks a political and mnemonic paradigm shift, as left-wing social and political groups, that for decades had been considered “enemies of the nation”, were historically vindicated. As a result, dozens of monuments dedicated to these political groupings were erected. Although some of these monuments draw inspiration both from socialist realism and from western modernism, yet others show clear references to Greek antiquity.

All the memorials I examine in this paper relate to different aspects of the Second World War (Memorial for Fallen soldiers, Army Monuments, National Resistance Monuments, Memorial for National Reconciliation, etc.). However, they all have one thing in common: they make references to Greek classical antiquity. Focusing on the aesthetic, political, and ideological dimensions of the above-mentioned monuments, I will scrutinize the ways in which references to classical antiquity have been used in the second half of the 20th century. To what extent does the Greek classical style intersect with the different postwar commemoration(s) in public space in Athens? The question of whether this style serves as a political legitimization for both right- and left-wing commemoration of the Second World War will also be addressed. Last but not least, I will examine these monuments by placing them in a wider context, as references to classical antiquity are not only a Greek phenomenon but a wider European one.

Achilleas Fotakis, Postdoctoral Researcher, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece
The monopoly over the dead. Memories of the Second World War in the Greek Police

In relation to the heritage of the Second World War, the police found itself in a uniquely unsettling position, as different representatives of the police forces —committed to the docile government, EAM/ELAS or the Allies— both cooperated with and resisted against the Occupation, pursuing different goals. Furthermore, the end of the war, found the police taking active part in the *Dekemvriana* rebellion, where competing mnemonic aspects of the war, interwoven with political positions of the present and visions for the future of the country were essentially taking the force apart.

This presentation employs psychoanalytical notions, such as that of pattern repetition and working through the trauma, in order to engage in an historical analysis of the mnemonic strategies the Greek police, as a specific part of the state apparatus, made use of while aiming to cope with and re-process

its own experiences during the Second World War and the German Occupation. Drawing mainly from the (police) Press and archival material of the 1940s and 1950s, I will discuss how postwar police ceremonies, memorials and rituals commemorated the war experience and what we can understand of them. I will argue that the memorial practices and mnemonic strategies unleashed by the police leadership aimed to produce a solid and unitary narrative about the past events among the personnel of the forces of Gendarmerie (Chorofylaki) and City Police (Astynomia Poleon); based on this narrative, the headquarters and the Ministry of Public Order attempted to build the future politics of the force.

Raymondos Alvanos, Phd in Political Science, Department of Political Science of the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki & **Paraskevi-Danai Manola**, MA in Public History, Hellenic Open University
Monuments of the Second World War: Contesting political identities and the politics of memory in the Greek island of Corfu

On the island of Corfu, three primary monuments are linked to the events of the Second World War: The monument of National Resistance, the Hellenic-Italian Friendship Monument which commemorates the massacre of the Acqui division by the Germans and the Holocaust memorial for the Corfiot Jews who were deported to the German concentration camps. The aim of our paper is to present the historical conditions and the political necessities that made the construction of these monuments feasible, as well as to connect these monuments with specific representations of the past and of corresponding identities.

We will try to answer the following questions: What do these monuments symbolize, and why were these particular representations chosen? What types of commemorative events have taken place at these monuments, and did these ceremonies evolve over time in response to shifts in political or social contexts? How do the Jewish community and political party representatives participate in these ceremonies? Why was the construction of these monuments delayed compared to the erection of similar memorials in other Greek cities? What roles did specific individuals play in the establishment of these monuments, and what did these local figures represent?

Yet, it is worth exploring not only the monuments of the war and the memory they represent and seek to reproduce but the indications of oblivion as well. A striking lack of a monument can be detected in the tiny island of Lazaretto which is situated in a distance of two nautical miles from Corfu Island. Lazaretto served as a concentration camp by Italian occupation forces in 1943, while during the Greek Civil War was a place of execution for communists fighting for the Democratic Army of Greece (DSE). Despite numerous calls from local residents for the construction of a monument in Lazaretto, this goal has not been realized as yet. What are the reasons behind this? How has the divided memory of the Occupation and the Greek Civil War been expressed and shaped local politics? What are the conflicting memories and how

do they intersect with contesting political identities? And, last but not least, how ideological uses of the past came to serve personal ambitions, political interests and needs?

Session 5. Monuments for the Second World War and their post-1989 fate in East and Central Europe

Petra Hudek, Postdoctoral Fellow, Institute of Contemporary History, Czech Academy of Sciences & Institute of History, Slovak Academy of Sciences
Soviet war memorials in Czechoslovak territory. Glorified remembrance after 1945 and the controversial historical heritage after 1989

This paper focuses on statues and memorials dedicated to the Soviet army erected on the territory of Czechoslovakia after the Second World War and their transformation after 1989 in the contemporary European context. Construction of war monuments began in Czechoslovakia after and sometimes during the Second World War. In this period, the public space in Eastern Europe changed in connection with political purposes in its territory. The Soviet war monuments legitimized and marked the boundary of geopolitical power and redistribution of forces after the Second World War. The fall of communist regimes resulted in the radical reshaping of the public space, including the shrine of communist propaganda – monuments, statues, and busts. Monuments from the communist period illustrated certain continuity with a very undesirable past; however, the memorials commemorating the Second World War represented certain taboos compared to monuments commemorating communist leaders. The Soviet war memorials in Central Europe have changed their connotations, especially since the invasion to Ukraine in February 2022 and the unscrupulous brutality of Russian troops. These monuments started to be seen more as symbolic objects of Russian dominance than as historical mementos.

The main objective of this presentation will be to analyze physical and doctrinal transformation and the impact of Soviet war memorials in Czechoslovak public space after the Second World War, after 1989, and their role during Russian aggression in Ukraine.

Indrė Urbelytė, Art Historian and Curator, Lithuanian Culture Research Institute, Vilnius, Lithuania
The uninvited liberators: Imagery of victory and liberation in Soviet Lithuanian monumental art (1940–1990)

While the end of the Second World War (1939–1945) was generally perceived as the liberation of the European continent from the Germans, it also marked the beginning of the second Soviet occupation in the Baltic states, including Lithuania, which became part of the Soviet empire and regained independence only in 1990. For fifty years the status of a Soviet colony determined the overall strategy of memory politics in Lithuania, including the perception of the Second World War. In Lithuania, as in the rest of the USSR, the Second World War was presented as the Great

Patriotic War (1941–1945, GWP) –the war between the Third Reich and USSR. In this narrative, the history of the Holocaust and USSR aggressions against Finland, Poland, and the Baltic states in 1939–1940 and 1944 were forgotten. This narrative manifested itself as an ideological tool for shaping the mentality of the newly conquered populations –it was supposed to cultivate patriotism, unite society, and legitimize the illegal occupation of these countries. It was reinforced by an extensive network of artistic creation and dissemination controlled by a multi-layered censorship apparatus. Arts and culture became a tool to spread the propagandist clichés of GPW –monuments commemorating the Soviet victory were erected, and artists were commissioned to depict heroic deeds of the Red Army and the joyous greeting of liberators. Thus, most of the images of the GPW are the results of the implementation of the Soviet political program. Themes of victory and liberation emerge in the art of occupied Lithuania as highly problematic subjects. Thus, this paper analyses the myth of victory and liberation in Soviet Lithuanian monumental art from the perspective of Soviet colonial politics. First, it examines the primary thematic discourses developed in Soviet Lithuanian art to commemorate the memory of the GPW. Then, the Victory Monument in Kaliningrad, which was built in 1945 by a group of eminent Lithuanian sculptors, serves as a case study for the deconstruction of related ideological discourses. As Juozas Mikėnas' sculpture *Victory*, which adorns the Monument in Kaliningrad, won the prestigious Stalin prize in 1947, and it rose to prominence as an icon of GPW remembrance in Soviet Lithuania. This monument, which is the first example of Soviet monumental sculpture in Lithuania, served as a marker for the start of Sovietization in Lithuania and East Prussia. In this section, the iconography and history of the memorial's creation are analyzed, it is compared to related postwar monuments in Soviet-controlled territories and set within a broader context of GPW imagery in Lithuania. To achieve this goal, the Kaliningrad monument is compared to other significant Soviet Lithuanian monuments that commemorated liberation and victory, such as the Victory Memorial project and the general Ivan Chernyakhovsky monument in Vilnius, Kryžkalnis and Salduvė memorials. Finally, the public celebrations and rituals that surrounded these artworks are examined along with the respective distribution mechanisms of this imagery.

Kostas Korres, PhD Candidate in History, University of the Aegean, Greece.

Historical revisionism of the Second World War: The Monument to the Victims of the German Occupation and its anti-monument in Hungary.

National identities in Central and Eastern Europe states were reconstructed after 1989 and the fall of the Communist Regimes. In this frame national memories of the Second World War were built on the basis of a historical revisionist narrative, which presented the nations as double victims of both Nazism and Communism.

As James Young has argued: “the Memorial Sites reflect the historical and political specificities of each era and serve as a reflection of State ideologies” (Young 2000). Under this light, and departing from Memory Studies and Public History theories, I intend to analyse the official revisionist memory policies of the Hungarian state by examining the erection in 2014 of the “Monument to the Victims of the Nazi Occupation in Hungary”. The monument represents Hungary as an innocent victim of the Nazi aggression and caused a storm of reactions both locally and internationally. Many voices accused the Hungarian government of hiding Hungary’s anti-Semitism, of concealing the collaboration of Nazis and Hungarians before and during the war and of forsaking responsibility for the Holocaust. The “Monument to the Victims of Nazi Occupation in Hungary” was placed on Liberty Square / Szabadság tér, one of the most important Hungarian national memory sites, where different monuments and narratives co-exist. The reactions to the erection of the monument were so intense that engaged citizens, along with artists, art historians, historians, and members of the Jewish community of Budapest, constructed a bottom-up anti-monument entitled “The Living Monument – My History / Eleven emlékmű – az én történelmem” just in front of the “Monument to the Victims of the Nazi Occupation in Hungary”.

In this paper I will examine the symbolic power of monuments erected in public places, and reflect on the “wars of memory” (Fleischer, 2008) between the official top-down state historical narrative and the unofficial bottom-up civilian re-construction of historical narrative on the Second World War, using the “Monument to the Victims of Nazi Occupation in Hungary” and the anti-monument on Liberty Square at the center of Budapest as a case study.

Session 6. Holocaust Monuments in the Balkans

Vladimir Huzjan, Senior Scientific Associate, Croatian Academy of Science and Arts, Zagreb, Croatia
Holocaust and socialist monuments today: Memory or provocation? Cases in Varaždin, Croatia

In continental Croatia, the first organized Jewish community was founded in 1777 in Varaždin. During the 19th century, the Jewish community developed a rich economic and cultural activity, which persisted until the beginning of the Second World War. Then, with the establishment of the Independent State of Croatia (ISC, orig. NDH), the process of discrimination, persecution and arrest of Jews began with tragic consequences. On the night of July 12, 1941, almost all the Jews in the city of Varaždin were rounded up and deported to German concentration camps. During these arrests, about 90% of the Jews were captured in Varaždin. Their property was confiscated, turned into state property and distributed. After the war, the Jewish community of Varaždin, the oldest in Croatia, was abolished in 1949. It wasn't until 2020, that the first monument to the exiled and assassinated Jews was erected in Varaždin, which in the next few days was defaced

with Nazi symbols. The symbols have been removed, but the scars are, quite literally, still visible. However, this is not the only case of monument defacement. In socialist Yugoslavia thousands of monuments and various commemorative plaques were erected, but after the establishment of the modern Republic of Croatia many were neglected or removed. Almost a hundred sculptures and memorial plaques were installed in Varaždin and its surroundings. Some were removed completely, some had only the “Red Star” removed, and some were left to their fate. Only few remained undamaged to this day. However, the trend is changing and forgotten monuments are being restored.

In my paper, I will showcase aspects of the city of Varaždin’s abundant Jewish heritage. I will illustrate how certain elements were utilized during the Second World War, such as the city’s synagogue, and examine their contemporary usage. Finally, I will highlight contemporary monuments of the Holocaust and explore how today’s society engages with symbols of anti-fascism.

Pierre Sintès, Associate Professor in cultural and social geography, Aix-Marseille University, France
The memory of the Shoah in two Greek secondary cities. Crossed examples of Rhodes and Ioannina

Apart from the two largest cities in Greece (Athens and Thessaloniki), the memory of the victims of the Shoah has been making its way into the public spaces of the country’s secondary cities for several decades. However, the appearance of these monuments or commemorations is the outcome of original processes, the dynamics of which are interconnected with a diversity of processes whose dimensions go far beyond the strict borders of the country. Although the transnationalisation of memory is a significant fact at the beginning of the 21st century (Assmann and Assmann, 2010), its expression in the context of secondary cities is little studied in comparison with its impact on the largest major urban centers. However, this context is important for the singularity of the memorial displays observed as well as of the practices that they give rise to. In Greece, as Varon-Vassard (2016, 2019) has noted, the memory of Jewish communities and their tragic fate during the Second World War has been progressively formalized, allowing it to be expressed in the public spaces of the cities in the country. This process affects first and foremost, and for understandable reasons, the cities of Thessaloniki and Athens which, despite their very different histories and temporalities, have been progressively provided with monuments and museums of national importance recalling the memory of the victims of the Shoah. But, at the same time, the implementation of such memorial facilities has also continued in the space of secondary cities, in very different ways that bear the hallmark of the evolution of memorial stakes at the local level, as well as the effects of an increasingly important transnationalisation in the elaboration, support and expression of the memories of the Jews of Greece. Based on material collected through several

ethnographic surveys conducted between 2006 and 2014 (recently resumed), I will propose in this paper the cross-analysis of two examples of memorial revitalization in secondary cities in Greece: those initiated by the Jewish communities of Ioannina (Epirus) and Rhodes (Dodecanese). Both communities shared the same fate during the Second World War (deportation and extermination), but also during the postwar decades (the almost total disappearance of traces of their centuries-old presence in the city). In each of these cities, however, at the end of the 20th century, a process of revitalization can be observed, as evidenced above all by the construction of monuments dedicated to their memory. This first phase is followed at the beginning of the 21st century by the complexification of commemorative displays with the multiplication of markings and manifestations of memory. The displays thus produced bear the traces of the variety of actors who gave birth to them as well as the great diversity of functions that result from them: they are places of official commemoration or, on the contrary, of remembrance of a forgotten (or even occulted) history, signs of a memory often maintained in diaspora, or even stops on the route of memorial journeys or occasion for a tourist enhancement of certain districts of the city. I will show how the dissonances generated by such expression of memory, in connection with the polyphony of the communities involved, can be expressed locally in the materiality of this memory as well as in the complexity of the relations maintained with the local society.

Anna Maria Droumpouki, Senior Research Associate, University of Munich, Germany
"It has taken nearly 70 years...": Memorialisation of the Holocaust in Athens

The historiography of the Holocaust in Greece has recently seen a steep increase in volume and output. Within this promising, ever-expanding field of Holocaust research in Greece, there are still very few efforts to understand the Holocaust in geographical and spatial terms. Despite the growing interest for the highlighting of memorial sites that follow the proliferation of scholar and public debate around the Genocide, especially around landmark events tantamount to the material obliteration of Jewish communities, there are simply too many obstacles in telling the Greek Holocaust story on location, an assumption which applies to all scales, from killing sites and individual hiding places to deportation routes and big cities.

Speaking of cities, one of the most strikingly underappreciated topoi of the Holocaust is the Greek capital itself. Athens has definitely not been granted a similar treatment in literature as Thessaloniki, which understandably epitomizes, in both spatial and conceptual scope, the Greek Jewish experience of the Holocaust. For a variety of reasons, Athens has not yet embraced its Jewish past and holds a secondary place in Holocaust historiography and memory. This distortion is part of the overall problematic integration of the Jewish story into any aspect of the general Greek wartime experience,

while modern scholarship discusses the absence, negligence –or destruction– of memorial sites within the wider context of socio-economical contest over the possession of physical space, part of which were the German extermination policies.

This paper will explore interpretations of Holocaust representations that prevail among Jews in Athens. I will examine how the Holocaust, which has been so influential on Jewish contemporary culture and identity, is represented in Athens, the capital of Greece. What do Jews of Greece tell us of their visits to these sites of memorialization? I also address the significance of shifting the sites of memorialization from their geographical and historical sites. Taking into account the ways in which cultural geographies, memories, and histories are formulated, articulated, negotiated, and lived, popular representations of history gain new significance. When reading, interpreting, or experiencing forms of public history, we apply a set of conceptual balancing acts that are relevant to the perspective on public history employed in this paper.

Session 7. Monuments for the Second World War in contemporary art and culture

Styliana Galiniki, Archaeologist and Head of the Department of Sculpture and Lithography, Mural and Mosaic Collections of the Archaeological Museum of Thessaloniki, Greece

Potential city: Embodied ephemeral memory of the Second World War in early 21st Century Thessaloniki

During the Second World War, Thessaloniki suffered one of the worst war crimes, as its Jewish community was exterminated, a loss that was sealed by the subsequent looting of its property, the destruction of its cemetery and the long-term silencing of even its existence. In addition, many other citizens were tortured and executed for their resistance activities against the occupying forces and their local collaborators. For Thessaloniki, the period of occupation became a "difficult heritage", and the silencing included every aspect that would call into question the dominant national narrative about the city's long-standing "Greekness" and the resistance spirit of its entire wartime inhabitants.

The gradual end of silence began at the end of the 20th century and was marked by the establishment of monuments to the Holocaust and the National Resistance, but after the second decade of the 21st century, public sculptural compositions seem inadequate, stiflingly static, hermetically silent in a changing city. The commemoration of the war period is now largely associated with nostalgia for an alienated Thessaloniki, still hinted at by the few surviving material traces of its modernity, such as the facades of buildings that have been abandoned or changed use and owners. Claiming the memory of the war and the dramatic events associated with it seems to be like claiming a potential city. Commemoration seeks the embodied act of walking in anticipation of the emergence of memory through brief surprises such as "stones you stumble upon", "signs of memory" that

invite pause and contemplation, ruined or restored buildings that four narratives represent as full of sound and life. Memory is performed as a theatrical event, as a cleavage in everyday time and space, through which the participants can see the city and themselves in tests of self, founding with their gestures and steps ephemeral monuments on the pavements and train rails. Does memory transform us into those the Others we could be? Does remembering mean performing a potential self?

Melody Robine, MA in Political Science, University of Sciences, Paris, France

How to forget your past: Artistic interventions on the monumental heritage as a symbol of Bulgaria's fragmented memory of the Second World War

Bulgaria's relation to its monumental heritage has been largely conflictual since the fall of the regime in 1989. As the country was going through the violent transformations of the 1990s and the 2000s, its relation to its past has been a shaping element in the constitution of a new relation to its transitioning public space, and the subject of many artistic interventions. In this context, my presentation intends to demonstrate that Bulgaria's specific relation to its monumental heritage of the Second World War is a particularly revealing prism for the study of the current political and identity crisis in the country. In this perspective, I will particularly focus on artistic interventions that have attempted to bring attention to the memorial and political debates on these monuments.

As an introduction to the subject, I will present the case of the Monument to the Soviet Army in Sofia as an example of the crystallisation of political tensions in the public space concerning memorials of the Second World War; and will then analyze the collaborative project *ReForget Your Past* (2015 - ongoing) by the artist and photographer Nikola Mihov (1982, Bulgaria) revolving around the public perception of the lesser known monumental heritage.

The discussions about the fate of the Monument to the Soviet Army are not a recent phenomenon: in 1993, a municipal council decision acted on its demolition, but it has never been endorsed since. Because it raises so dramatically in the center of the country's capital, the monument erected in 1954 to commemorate the "liberation" of Bulgaria from the Nazis has been the symbol of the fragmented memories of the Second World War and the Cold War period in contemporary Bulgaria, and the dissensions in public opinion concerning its relation to Russia to this day. It was for this reason the center of many artistic interventions surrounding the wars in Ukraine in 2014 and 2022. As many performances from artistic collectives as well as degradations continue to take place around the monument, the municipality council approved in March 2023 a new proposal to relocate it to the museum of socialist art, and its future is now more than ever uncertain, reflecting the nation's conflicted relation to its past and its representations.

In his project *Forget Your Past*, Nikola Mihov proposed an analysis of the lesser-known monuments constructed to celebrate the victories of the Soviet

army, which are now for the most part neglected and left to the ravages of time. Mihov works on the conflicted histories of the events commemorated as well as of the monuments themselves, trying to go behind the exoticization and fascination to raise awareness on this complex issue within the Bulgarian public space, by documenting the monuments through a thorough archival and photographic research. Since 2015, the artist has started a collaborative project with over 30 artists, offering them to appropriate his photographs and to actively play with these images of a petrified past.

For this presentation, I will focus on Martin Atanasov's (1991, Bulgaria) proposition, named *How to forget your past fast*, in which he reappropriates the space and the symbolic load of these decaying monuments by creating baroque collages that playfully convey the chaos of the 1990s in Bulgaria through the kitsch esthétique of Chalga4 music.

Through these case studies, this presentation will show that the contemporary relation to monuments of the Second World War in Bulgaria can be studied as a symptom of the quest for identity and the difficulty of national reconstruction after the fall of the communist regime in Bulgaria and the Balkan area.

Fotini Gouseti, Visual Artist and PhD Candidate in Anthropology, Department of History, Archaeology and Social Anthropology, University of Thessaly, Greece & **Eva Fotiadi**, Lecturer, St Joost School of Art & Design and Researcher at the Center for Applied Research in Art, Design and Technology, Avans University of Applied Sciences

Art monuments and artistic research: Diverse approaches to the traumatic events of Second World War and of the Greek Civil War in the Greek town of Kalavryta, and the public spaces that these approaches produce

The small town of Kalavryta in Northern Peloponnese is the symbol of the establishment of the Greek State thanks to the popular history myth according to which the Greeks' revolution against the Ottomans in 1821 started in this region. On 13 December 1943, the Wehrmacht burned down the village, destroyed food reserves and executed all male inhabitants over the age of fourteen. Modern Kalavryta's cultural identity is mainly structured on its traumatic memory.

Since 2012, artist Fotini Gouseti has been working on the research-based project *The Present as a Result of the Past* (PRP), through which she has been studying trauma in Kalavryta in pursue of an understanding of a persistent demand in the local community experienced as "a need for catharsis". She focuses on the ways society evolves carrying their divided memory and collective trauma, by which she is referring both to the aforementioned massacre of 1943 as well as the local impact of the Greek Civil War (1946-1949), the latter being a taboo subject for Kalavrytans. Throughout PRP Gouseti addresses such areas as divided memory, gender, class and the local versus the Other. Since the beginning of this research, her methodology has drawn from the field of anthropology and parts of its results have taken the

form of artworks. Starting in 2018, the PRP project led her to undertake a PhD research in anthropology. In her PhD thesis Gouseti uses the monuments of Second World War as a narrative tool in her attempt to explore and analyse the functions of the past in the present of Kalavryta. At the same time, Gouseti's entire artistic-ethnographic research and resulting artworks that relate to Kalavryta, propose a different approach to, and process of the remembrance of local events during the two consecutive wars, as well as of the population's trauma.

In this shared paper, we will present our artistic research and work, and reflect on what kinds of public spaces are produced -or are aspired at- in Kalavryta by other monuments, as well by Gouseti's artistic-ethnographic approach and work. Taking as analytical tools concepts that have received attention in public art discourses, such as Chantal Mouffe's "agonistic public sphere", and the recently popular "safe space" that originates from queer activism, we will explore what kinds of impact art might have on working through historical, collective traumas in the present, as well as how the functions and forms of monuments could be revisited by contemporary artistic research.