



CALL FOR PAPERS

THE TRANSNATIONAL HISTORY AND MEMORY OF WORLD WAR II CRIMES IN CROATIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, SLOVENIA, AND THE NORTHERN ADRIATIC

With this call for papers, we invite submissions dealing with the transnational history and memory of marginalized and forgotten sites in Southeastern Europe where genocide and systematic murder took place during the Second World War. For project-related reasons, the geographical focus is on the territory of what was once called the "Independent State of Croatia", Dalmatia, the territories of Slovenia annexed by Germany, Italy and Hungary as well as the Italian, Slovenian, and Croatian territories on the Northern Adriatic, which were under fascist Italian control from 1941 and formed the Operational Zone of the Adriatic Littoral when Nazi Germany took control from September 10, 1943, onwards.

The research literature on the war crimes committed in Southeastern Europe during the Second World War and their (ever-changing) place in collective memory fills entire libraries. Nevertheless, these crimes are hardly anchored in the pan-European memory. This is partly due to the fact that, on the one hand, the political instrumentalization of the history of the Second World War in Southeastern Europe continues to this day—for example, through the simplistic assignment of victim and perpetrator roles along the lines of ethnicity or through historical-political and historical-revisionist debates about the number of victims of crimes. However, this is also due to the fact that the crimes committed by the occupying powers in Southeastern Europe and their victims are rarely present in the public culture of remembrance, for example, in today's Federal Republic of Germany or in Italy.

This call for papers therefore has a twofold objective: on the one hand, it is about counteracting the instrumentalization of history to legitimize ethnic-national arguments in the present day. On the other hand, our goal is to make Southeastern European sites of mass crimes in the Second World War visible as transnational sites embodying the experience of the war and as transnational, European sites of memory. We want to achieve this 1.) by focusing on marginalized and forgotten sites of mass crimes in this region, and 2.) by taking a distinct transnationally oriented empirical research approach.

1. Why are we focusing on marginalized and forgotten sites of war crimes?

There are numerous sites in the region that were forgotten and/or marginalized in the years after the Second World War—whether in socialist Yugoslavia or during and after the Yugoslav wars of disintegration. The reasons for this forgetting and marginalization were manifold. In socialist Yugoslavia, they were not only material (monuments and places of remembrance were mostly financed by the municipalities), but also, for instance, political: as the guiding principle of interethnic coexistence, brotherhood and unity were not to be endangered by such war memories that touched on interethnic conflicts. There were exceptions—such as the state-sponsored commemoration of the

victims of the Jasenovac concentration camp from the 1960s onwards. In contrast, the victims of the first (and many other) concentration and internment camps in the fascist Independent State of Croatia, the Jadovno concentration camp, were not commemorated with a memorial until the latter phase of the Yugoslav socialist state. The disintegration of Yugoslavia and the wars of the 1990s saw a further shift in remembering and forgetting. Some mass crimes no longer appeared as such, while others were considered crimes for the first time. Places like Jadovno, for example, which had been transformed into a memorial only a few years before, fell back into oblivion—the remembrance of Serbian victims had little place in the ethnically nationalizing Croatian public memory of the 1990s and years that followed.

2. Why a transnationally-oriented empirical research approach?

With our call for papers, we are focusing on the transnational dimensions of mass crimes committed in Southeast Europe during the Second World War. Transnational dimensions exist for several reasons. The most obvious transnational perspective arises from the actions and crimes of the occupying armies. Soldiers of the occupying armies who were involved usually left the sites of the crimes after the events and took the memory of them with them to their home states. However, these crimes rarely became public there. Are there still traces of these deeds in the archives of today's Italy or Germany? Or are there still traces in the Southeastern European archives that, for various reasons, have not yet been processed and thus have not become part of the memory? With the latter question, we do not just mean the traces of the occupying armies, which give the mass crimes of the war a transnational dimension.

For this transnational dimension, and this is the second reason, also arises primarily through the perspective of local actors. For example, during the war Croatian Serbs were deported to occupied Serbia, and thousands of Jews from Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was part of the NDH, to Croatian Ustaša concentration camps. Today, and this is the point where we establish a link to marginalization and forgetting, these victims (and perpetrators), who physically moved in a transnational space, fall through the cracks of the ethnic-national perspective of public memory. Furthermore, participation on different sides of the war was not an isolated case, even within one family. Croats and Serbs, Slovenes and Bosnians encountered each other in the same as well as in very different roles—when it came to the mass crimes, they served as helpers, spectators, accidental eyewitnesses, resisters, or active supporters. But this, too, is largely ignored in today's public cultures of remembrance in the area under study.

A transnational perspective that captures the stories of these people and the crimes they committed, witnessed, or endured must therefore include the concrete places where these people stayed during the war (and afterwards)—as civilians, as soldiers, as perpetrators, victims, or bystanders, and across state borders at the time and today. This therefore requires the inclusion of historical archives in different countries.

Our call for papers is thus directed at research in the mentioned region that deals with sites of mass crimes that were in the shadow of public and official remembrance politics and culture after the Second World War or (until) today, and that have a transnational dimension in the sense described above. This includes (but is not limited to) crime sites such as villages and settlements where mass executions took place, prisons, concentration or transit camps. These include, for example, places such as:

- the transit camp Slavenska Požega (summer-autumn 1941), from which, for example, Serbian prisoners were deported to German-occupied Serbia (could include research in Croatia, Germany and Serbia)

- the concentration camps from the Gospić-Jadovno-Pag camp system (Jadovno, Slana and Metajna), whose victims were primarily Croatian Serbs and Jews (could include research in Croatia and Serbia)
- less known parts of the Jasenovac camp system, where mainly Serbs, Roma, Jews and political opponents of the Ustasha/occupation forces were victims (e.g. Stara Gradiška) (could include research in Croatia and other countries depending on the selected case study)
- fascist concentration camps on the territory of present-day Croatia, whose victims were mainly Slovenian and Croatian civilians imprisoned as political opponents (could include research in Croatia and Slovenia)
- the village of Podhum, where in July 1942 Italian soldiers and paramilitaries killed more than 100 boys and men and deported the remaining 889 inhabitants to the Fraschette concentration camp near Frosinone. Not one of the perpetrators was sentenced by the Italian Government after the war (could include research in Croatia and Italy)
- The village of Lipa, which in April 1944 members of the German military forces, the police and the SS razed to the ground and almost the entire population was murdered. (could include research in Croatia, Germany, and Austria)
- the village of Zatočnik, where in the first half of 1943, the Milizia Volontaria per la Sicurezza Nazionale (Voluntary Militia for National Security) arrested many families because of “aiding and abetting” the local partisans. Young boys labelled as Slovenes were deported first to the prison of Trieste and then to the concentration camp of Cairo Montenotte in Liguria. After September 8th the Italian administration handed them over to the Germans and they were transported to the Mauthausen and Gusen concentration camps (could include research in Slovenia, Italy and Austria).

Marginalized and forgotten mass crimes of the Second World War in this region are thus to be analyzed within a transnational perspective to counteract exclusive ethnic-national perspectives on the one hand and, on the other, to make Southeast European history(s) visible as part of the European entangled history of the Second World War.

How to apply

The call for papers is open to applicants residing in the Member States of the European Union whether they be in the early stages of their doctoral studies or are already senior scholars. We welcome multidisciplinary approaches as well as approaches from the disciplines of history, anthropology, cultural studies, social sciences and arts.

The deadline for applications is: October 1st, 2022.

To apply, please send a short CV and an abstract of the proposed research paper (length 1000 words) in English to:

Heike.Karge@geschichte.uni-regensburg.de

and

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Successful applicants (approx. 15) will be invited to present their research at an international conference to be held in Regensburg, Germany, in 2023, and will contribute to an English language edited volume scheduled for publication the following year.

The call is organized through the project "Between Memory and Oblivion" and financed by the European Union through the CERV program.