

11 March 2021

International conference

**‘NATIONAL FORGETTING AND MEMORY: THE
DESTRUCTION OF "NATIONAL" MONUMENTS FROM A
COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE’**

Program | Abstracts | Lecturers

Organised by NISE and the Museum at the Yser



In cooperation with:



INDEX OF LECTURES

KEY NOTE 1.

Monumentality and Its Discontents: How the Past is Unforgotten.

A. Rigney

SESSION 1. Nation vs Regional vs Local Memories

Chaired by Bruno De Wever

City Monuments in Contemporary Kharkiv: Construction of the National and Regional Memory.

V. Sukovata

Nationalising Scorched Earth – Memory and destruction of monuments from Vukovar to Knin.

M. Piasek

Fascist monuments and their divided memories in Trieste and Bolzano .

I. Pupella-Noguès

SESSION 2. Nation-state, ideology and monuments

Chaired by Chantal Kesteloot

Reactions and counter reactions: The removal of Hoxha's monuments and Albania's tortuous transition.

K. Këlliçi

Present absence or absent presence. Monuments dedicated to the Yugoslav partisan struggle between future present and present perfect.

L. Lovrenčić. and T. Pupovac

«War on monuments» in Poland and its implications for the national historical policy.

M. Pavlova

KEY NOTE 2.

Animated Stones: drawing a picture of the “IJzertoren’s” destruction via the lens of editorial cartoons.

K. Swerts

SESSION 3. Global and contemporary perspectives

Chaired by K. Swerts

A Knee on the Neck: Problematic Commemorative Practices in the United States.

K. Shelby

Set in Stone? Monuments, National Identity & John A. Macdonald.

C. Spicer

A Fractured Door: The Contested History of the IRS.

J. Dawson

Portraying and preserving the South African past – a monumental challenge.

A. Bailey

SESSION 4. The politics of resurrection

Chaired by Marnix Beyen

Staged reconstruction: On the scenography of the IJzertoren’s building site .

W. Bekers

The Peculiar Case of the Monument in honour of the Viceroy Josip Jelačić at the Central Square of Zagreb; Between Forgetting and Memory, between National Identity and Communist Ideology, between Feminism and Patriarchy...

A. Grgic

From »Österreichs Nizza« to »Santa Gorizia«: Italian reshaping of cultural landscape in the Gorizia borderland in the interwar period.

M. Batic

KEY NOTE 3.

The Fall of Monuments: a Public History.

T. Cauvin

National forgetting and memory: the destruction of "national" monuments from a comparative perspective'

11 March 2021

TIME TABLE

10.00	Registration of participants in the meeting + Film broadcast	
10.45	Introduction and presentation of the conference	
10.50	Key Speaker 1 - 'Monumentality and Its Discontents: How the Past is Unforgotten' A. Rigney	
11.15	Q&A - 10 min max	
11.25	5 min break to prepare the next session	
11.30	Session 1. Nation vs Regional vs Local Memories Chair: Bruno de Wever	Session 2. Nation-state, ideology and monuments Chair: Chantal Kesteloot
11.30	Bruno de Wever	Chantal Kesteloot
11.35	1.1 - 'City Monuments in Contemporary Kharkiv' V. Sukovata	2.1 - 'The removal of Hoxha's monuments and Albania's tortuous transition' K. Këlliçi
11.50	Q&A - 5 min max	
11.50	5 min break to prepare the next lecture	
12.00	1.2 - 'Memory and destruction of monuments from Vukovar to Knin' M. Piasek	2.2 - 'Monuments dedicated to the Yugoslav partisan struggle' L. Lovrencic and T. Pupovac
12.15	Q&A - 5 min max	
12.20	5 min break to prepare the next lecture	
12.25	1.3 - 'Fascist monuments and their divided memories in Trieste and Bolzano' I. Pupella-Noguès	2.3 - '«War on monuments» in Poland' M. Pavlova
12.40	Q&A - 5 min max	
12.45	Lunch break	
13.55	Resuming of the symposium	
14.00	Key Speaker 2 - 'Animated Stones: drawing a picture of the "IJzertoren's" destruction via the lens of editorial cartoons' K. Swerts	
14.25	Q&A - 10 min max	
14.35	5 min break to prepare the next session	
14.40	Session 3. Global and contemporary perspectives Chair: Kasper Swerts	Session 4. The politics of resurrection Chair: Marnix Beyen
14.40	Kasper Swerts	Marnix Beyen
14.45	3.1 - 'A Knee on the Neck: Problematic Commemorative Practices in the US' K. Shelby	4.1 - 'Staged reconstruction: On the scenography of the IJzertoren's building site' W. Bekers
15.00	Q&A - 5 min max	
15.05	5 min break to prepare the next lecture	
15.10	3.2 - 'Set in Stone? Monuments, National Identity & John A. Macdonald' C. Spicer	4.2 - 'The Case of the Monument in honour of the Viceroy Josip Jelačić' A. Grgic
15.25	Q&A - 5 min max	
15.30	5 min break to prepare the next lecture	
15.35	3.3 - 'A Fractured Door: The Contested History of the IRS' J. Dawson	4.3 - 'From "Österreichs Nizza" to "Santa Gorizia"' M. Batic
15.50	Q&A - 5 min max	
15.55	5 min break to prepare the next lecture	
16.00	3.4 - 'Portraying and preserving the South African past – a monumental challenge' A. Bailey	
16.15	Q&A - 5 min max	
16.20	5 min break to prepare the next lecture	
16.25	Key Speaker 3 - 'The Fall of Monuments: a Public History' T. Cauvin	
16.50	Q&A - 10 min max	
17.00	Closing remarks - 5 min	

Conference organised by NISE and the Museum at the Yser



ABSTRACTS

KEY NOTE SPEAKER

Ann Rigney. University of Utrecht

Monumentality and Its Discontents: How the Past is Unforgotten

National monuments have traditionally been designed to honour particular figures or events in a durable form. Their often over-blown size bears testimony to a huge investment on the part of stakeholders and to their desire to shape collective memory for generations to come. If monument-building has a long history, however, so too does iconoclasm. Although the latter has often been construed in purely negative terms, the current iconoclastic way suggests that a new approach is needed. In my paper, I will develop such an approach with the help of a dynamic model that defines collective memory, not in terms of monumental stability, but in terms of cycles of stabilisation and contestation. Destroying a monument is not merely a matter of 'forgetting' what it stands for, but above all, a matter of 'un-forgetting' a hitherto occluded aspect of the past and bringing it into public visibility. 'Un-forgetting' is a driver of mnemonic regime change and monuments, precisely because of their public visibility and locatedness, offer a physical platform for enacting it. Using multiple examples from different contexts, my talk will show how monuments may matter most precisely at the point when they are being moved around, broken up, and vandalized. For this reason, they can be particularly powerful vectors of debate and conduits, not only for defining, but also for changing national identity.

SESSION 1. Nation vs Regional vs Local Memories

Chaired by Bruno De Wever

Viktoriya Sukovata. Kharkiv National Karazin University, Ukraine.

City Monuments in Contemporary Kharkiv: Construction of the National and Regional Memory

City monuments and memorials are forms of preserving the memory of significant historical events in public space. During the Soviet era the state mostly decided what monuments and memorials should be present in public urban spaces.

Three groups of monuments dominated in the Soviet urban space since the October revolution of 1917, they were: the monuments dedicated to the revolution of 1917 and the heroes of the Civil war of 1918-1921, to the heroes of the Soviet industrial modernization (hard-working workers, etc) and to the Soviet leaders. During the post-war period, many Soviet monuments commemorating World War II were erected.

After disintegration of the Soviet Union and changing political power after 1991, started transformation of public memory and many monuments were destroyed, especially those devoted to the Soviet leaders.

I plan to present the case studies of the memorials in the public space of the Ukrainian city of Kharkiv and their transformations in post-socialist times until today. I will narrate on the national and local specificities in construction of memorial sites referring to local history and to the political and cultural traditions of the city. Kharkiv is a big multiethnic city, located in northeastern Ukraine. In 1919-1934 Kharkiv served as the capital of Soviet Ukraine. It was considered to be the “students” and “scientific capital” of Ukraine since many universities and world-famous scientists worked in Kharkiv. During World War II Kharkiv survived the horrible Nazi occupation when the thousands of locals were killed. This contradictory history stipulated the specificity of the local attitude to the Soviet monuments after the end of the Soviet time.

In my paper I analyse how national and regional memories interacted in Kharkiv memorials and which feature dominated in Kharkiv's public space. I also investigate which monuments were destroyed in Kharkiv after the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991 and in the context of the post-Maidan transformations since 2014, and how these actions reflected the public consciousness.

Nationalising Scorched Earth – Memory and destruction of monuments from Vukovar to Knin

Croatia's historical metanarrative of the thousand-year struggle for independence has become a key element in nation formation since 1991 (Pavlaković 2014). However, the role of (national) self-determination linked with the destruction of "national" monuments in memory making within multiethnic and -religious areas, remains a relatively under-investigated dimension of sociological and anthropological studies.

Along the former Croatian and Slavonian Military Frontier, in today's Croatian Adriatic hinterland and eastern Croatia the Croatian War of Independence (1991-1995) left its indelible mark. "The destruction of the cultural artifacts of an enemy people or nation as a means of dominating, terrorizing, dividing or eradicating [...]" (Bevan 2016, 8). The presence of a certain minority does not fit the metanarrative. "If there is no suitable past, it can always be invented. The past legitimises. The past gives a more glorious background to a present that doesn't have much to show for itself" (Hobsbawm 1993).

Nationalist groups consider multiethnic(-cultural) coexistence as threatening and obstructing the nation-building process (Goldstein 2002). Therefore, after the war in the 1990's, they demolished monuments commemorating World War II, which had inscriptions in several languages like Croatian, Serbian, Hungarian and Ukrainian. It was also at that time, when the authorities erected new monuments, which show a Croat-centered self-victimizing language. They deny or silence the existing ethnic and religious diversity and aim to strengthen the national identity.

This study concentrates on artifacts in (former) multiethnic and -religious places within the former borders of the Serbian Krajina in Croatia, a region with its own conflicted remembrance (Jansen 2002, Radonić 2009). It draws on research conducted in villages once located along the historical Croatian and Slavonian Military Frontier and which before 1991 bore a multiethnic and -religious stamp. In this context, a striking moment is the destruction and removal as well as the recent restoration of multilingual monuments and reconstruction of sacred architecture.

I aim to follow various historical processes that instigated the (re-)use of revisionist and mostly politically tolerated symbols and inscriptions on monuments and sacred architecture. This research connects historical as well as anthropological approaches and fills a gap within the interdisciplinary web of memory studies which offers a heuristic lens that considers both distant (multicultural Military Frontier) and recent history (the 1990's war).

Fascist monuments and their divided memories in Trieste and Bolzano

Fascist Italy is the state that has the most politically invested architecture in Europe. Fascist architecture is an instrument of power from which the consensus of masses is reached and it participates to the totalitarisation process of society. In the cities of Trieste and Bolzano (annexed by Italy just after WWI), architecture and monuments were used to “italianise” urban spaces, to create a national collective identity at any cost (such as exploiting the WWI memory). The “Monumento alla Vittoria” of Bolzano or “Monumento ai Caduti” of Trieste, for example, became “national” monuments as they incarnated the victory of Italy over the Habsburg Empire and were used as symbols to represent the two cities to the rest of the country.

During Fascism, cultural minorities (slavic, germanophones) were victimised by the regime, but they kept fighting, often targeting monuments to express their struggle (from “little gestures” such as graffiti on monuments to bombing attacks).

After the fall of Fascism and after WWII, monuments (which remained in the urban landscape also due to the absence of a specific policy to eliminate traces of the dictatorship) were still targeted as they incarnated the oppression experienced by cultural minorities during the regime. Yet, this war issue dynamic and the management of remains of Fascist monuments are radically different in Bolzano and Trieste. Comparing the two cities allows us to understand how important power relations between cultural communities are. How destroying, changing or even blending Fascist monuments into the urban landscape by depolicising them, contributes to modify the cities' identities at local and national levels.

By analysing local public debates and public history projects created in the two cities from the end of the WWII until today, this paper wants to discuss the (in)visibility of Fascist monuments in the urban landscape, the “divided memories” they generate among the inhabitants of these border regions and the role of historians in the memory-making processes.

SESSION 2. Nation-state, ideology and monuments

Chaired by Chantal Kesteloot

Dr. Klejd Këlliçi. University of Tirana, Albania

Reactions and counter reactions: The removal of Hoxha's monuments and Albania's tortuous transition

The removal and the destruction of Lenin's statues marked the visual and material departure of many East European countries from communism. In many cases such destruction involved what were considered to be alien or imposed monuments within a given territory. Their destruction marked the symbolic end of the communist regimes and propelled the former communist countries toward a new and regained national conscience (Verdery 1999). In other countries like Albania such destruction caused a reaction which would culminate in attempts to restore the so called 'figure of Enver Hoxha'. On 20 February 1991, a mob assaulted the statue of the deceased dictator Enver Hoxha in Tirana. Similar events were replicated in other important cities like Gjirokastra and Korça.

In other locations, lime stone busts which adorned the halls of local party offices were thrown in the dirt, apparently trying to mark a cleaner and material rupture with the previous regime. Yet such actions did not pass without reactions. Almost immediately after the fall of the statues of Hoxha, an association named 'The volunteers of Enver' collected almost a million signatures in order to re-establish the monuments and Hoxha's memory. According to the signatories, the changes in the country had to happen without touching the memory and the representation of Hoxha, by them considered one of the main founders of modern Albania. Starting from the above consideration, this paper aims to shed some light on the early days of Albania's transition, analysing the iconoclastic fury towards communist monuments and the counter reactions to it as well as the role of monuments as sites of memory and forgetting (Sørensen et al. 2019). This is done by analysing the policy of the moribund communist regime that tried to preserve the memory of Hoxha and the monuments in his honour, inscribing them within the logic of Albanian nationalism. Moreover, the paper will also tackle the counter strategies of other relevant actors who sought to preserve the monuments and the memory of the communist regimes in Albania.

Present absence or absent presence. Monuments dedicated to the Yugoslav partisan struggle between future present and present perfect

When thinking about the breakup of Yugoslavia and the bloody wars that followed it, the destruction of Monuments to the People's Liberation Struggle and the Socialist Revolution certainly points out to the political and ideological struggles which brought about the breakup. At the same time the prevalent number of destroyed monuments brings to light the more structural and complex causes which cannot be surmised either as war collaterals or as a simple case of *damnatio memoriae*.

Struggle of partisan fighters from all Yugoslav peoples, united under the leadership of the Communist party, combined with early 50' changes in the political and economic doctrine (break-up with USSR, introduction of self-management and the Non-aligned movement), formed a unique historical experience. Built monuments were not signifiers of a mere narrative nor abstract expressions of historical events or people but frequently complex conveyers of messages that were both embodying local pasts, the idea of brotherhood and unity of Yugoslav peoples, ideals of socialist state and prospects for the future that will come. Monuments *of the future and for the future*. Some designed as abstract forms, others having a more conservative appearance, they were frequently envisioned as more than just monuments: they were central points of memorial squares in villages and small towns, formed as public parks and memorial forests, memorial rooms in culture houses (that would be also facilitated with lacking libraries, radio-stations, youth clubs or even disco), taking not only the commemorative functions but also taking on public functions that were missing in the communities. In short, already in the 60' Yugoslav monuments were not only carriers of the memory on the antifascist struggle but also carriers of the processes of modernization and urbanization of Yugoslav society.

By showcasing some exemplary destructions, erasures or refurbishments of monuments to the Yugoslav partisan struggle, this paper will retrace the political structures and mechanism that brought about these actions. What we propose is that these mechanisms point not only to the blatantly visible destructions of monuments but more importantly to the crucial role that decay, neglect and slow and minimal changes of the legal regulations regarding these monuments have played (and still are playing) in the various shades of historical revisionism. Thus, the questions we want to raise are what were the newly created nation-states hoping to "forget" by the destruction and was the process of "forgetting" identical in all of the succeeding countries? But more importantly, we want to raise the question about the structural function of this "forgetting" in the process of nation-building as well as its function within the general discourses of totalitarianism and anticommunism. We argue that monuments of the Yugoslav partisan struggle have become precisely the places of struggle for the legacy of socialism and antifascism. Functioning at once as present absences of progressive politics and absent presences of its memory.

«War on monuments» in Poland and its implications for the national historical policy

Poland has become the first post-socialist country that launched an official systematic, centrally organised program on removing Soviet war memorials. Based on a special legal act the program started in 2016 and caused an unprecedented deterioration of Russian-Polish relations. An amendment to the 2016 law «prohibiting communist propaganda through the names of public buildings, structures and facilities» especially mentioned monuments «of the gratitude to the Red Army» and other war memorials. The law foresees that some exceptions can be made upon a special application, but at the same time it grants the government-appointed local authorities and government-affiliated Institute of National Memory wide interpreting and decision-making powers.

Although proclaimed by the government, the organized devastation of Soviet monuments caused not only a crisis in the relations with Russia, but also unforeseen inner conflicts within the Polish society. Firstly, conflicts arose in such Polish cities where monuments became important as touristic places of interest or landmarks. Thus Legnica, which served as headquarters of the Soviet army in Poland, had started using its own central «Polish-Soviet brotherhood» monument to market itself as «Little Moscow» for those who wanted to experience the atmosphere of a Soviet military town.

Secondly, some regions consider monuments dedicated to their «local communists» (especially Silesia) as one of the symbols of their limited independence from Warsaw. Thus their lack of will to destroy communist monuments turned out to be a method to demonstrate their political opposition (in the western regions of Poland) to the central government or national and local identity (or both at the same time). Yet another reason was that, simultaneously with the devastation of the monuments, the government relaunched the official historical policy in order to destroy the national memory of the Socialist period in Polish history. The authorities claimed that, since during the period of 1945-1989 Poland was part of the Soviet block and had no political independence, “ a normal Poland state did not exist” during these 45 years and everything connected to this period should be erased from the national memory.

The paper focusses on the following topics: the various implications of the “war on monuments” in the Polish society; the role of the destruction of monuments in the official historical narrative; the perception of the Polish «memory wars» in Russia and its impact on the bilateral Russian-Polish relations.

KEY NOTE SPEAKER

Kasper Swerts. Antwerp University / ADVN / NISE

Animated Stones: drawing a picture of the “Ijzertoren’s” destruction via the lens of editorial cartoons

The prominent scholar of nationalism Benedict Anderson once conjoined (editorial) cartoons with monuments as archetypes of political communication. As Anderson explained, both cartoons and monuments are a form of ‘symbolic speech’, conveying ‘visual condensations of significance’ to an anonymous and fleeting audience. This particularly rings true for cartoons, as their inclusion in daily newspapers or weekly magazines at once responds to the political issues of the day, whilst simultaneously attributing a symbolic visual narrative to said events.

So how do cartoons (and cartoonists) respond when another form of political communication, i.e. a monument, is destroyed? In this address, I will further explore the relation between a destroyed monument and (editorial) cartoons using the case of the Ijzertoren. Destroyed by explosives in 1946, scholars have hitherto neglected the role of cartoons in their analysis of the monument’s destruction and its significance for the postwar Flemish (national) movement. I will put forward two arguments that shed new light on this particular case. The first is to consider the portrayal of the Ijzertoren’s destruction as part of the larger visual narrative that cartoonists contributed to after World War II. Cartoonists’ visualization of the destroyed Ijzertoren must not be considered as an isolated case, but as an example of the burgeoning Flemish cartoon scene that was intrinsically transnational, borrowing from styles and representations that were not limited to the Flemish context. Secondly, cartoons functioned as a social locus that gave readers the opportunity to ascribe different meanings to the monument’s destruction. Via readers’ submitted subscriptions to weekly published cartoons, we can gauge how people ascribed different significances and meanings to the Ijzertoren during the years following its destruction and subsequent reconstruction after the Second World War. In this sense, cartoons functioned as the ‘thermometers of the culture’, simultaneously registering and shaping public opinion. It underscores the need to not only focus on written documents concerning destroyed monuments, but also consider the way visual representations might have ascribed different meanings to the destruction of a monument.

SESSION 3. Global and contemporary perspectives

Chaired by Kasper Swerts

Karen Shelby. Baruch College

“A Knee on the Neck: Problematic Commemorative Practices in the United States”

With the death of George Floyd on 25 May 2020, the deeply-rooted racial inequalities of the United States were, once again, brought to the fore in public discourse. The reactions to the protests that followed Floyd's death were extremely polarized reflecting a culturally fractured and structurally racist United States. While the laws and policies erected to institutionalize segregation have largely been overturned, the antagonism, intolerance, and indifference toward Black Americans remains. This is most visible in the built environment. Across fifty states and 9.834 million km², few Black Americans and their stories or contributions are monumentalized in stone. This is in stark contrast to the over 1,503 monuments alone that were raised in support of the short-lived Confederate States of America (1861-65). The majority of these monuments were raised in three periods: during the “reconciliation” of the North and the South United States after the Civil War solely through the initiatives of private groups colonizing public space; in the early 1900s in conjunction with the rise of Jim Crow laws and white supremacy in the South; and in the 1950s in reaction to the rise of the Civil Rights Movement. Placed in public sites, specifically outside court houses, statues of Confederate leaders were used to underscore white supremacy and the disenfranchisement of Black Americans. Discourse surrounding the dismantling of these monuments coincided with the waves of activism that rose from Black Lives Matter, a group dedicated to bringing justice, healing, and freedom to Black people across the globe. The BLM movement inspired not only structural reform, but also raised questions of whether the relics erected to a confederal past should be removed or re-contextualized given the violence toward Black Americans that these monuments celebrated. This paper explores the signs and symbols of Confederate monuments, the reactions to their removal, and an introduction to several contemporary artists who explore new visual languages in order to insert missing national narratives. It is much easier, in anger, to make a grand gesture by toppling what was intended be a permanent fixture in the landscape. As reported by the Southern Poverty Law Center, by October 2020, over one hundred Confederate symbols have been removed, relocated, or renamed in direct reaction to Floyd's death. The issue of replacement is much more nuanced. How should the history of Black Americans be inserted into a physical landscape? What new vocabularies are needed to expand upon the idea of the nation within the diversity of the United States? How can Black Americans publicly assert their *own* agency? This paper will discuss how the signs and symbols chosen by Fred Wilson (*E Pluribus Unum*, 2011), Nona Faustine (*The White Shoes Project*, 2012), and the National Memorial to Peace and Justice (a site built to commemorate the Black lynching victims) challenge dominant national myths serving as public agents to encourage re-assessment of social practices regarding race. These new public monuments are at the fore of creating an inclusive representation of identity and a multifaceted definition of the nation.

Set in Stone? Monuments, National Identity & John A. Macdonald

As national symbols often straddle the line between state and nation, in complex societies, the representation of a country's values within public space have become a battleground for struggle. In Victoria, British Columbia, a statue outside city hall of John A. Macdonald, Canada's first Prime Minister, was removed in August 2018 as a gesture of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission report (2015) contained 94 calls to action creating a realization in individuals, organizations and governments that reconciliation was not only about establishing and maintaining a mutually respectful relationship, but that there is a moral responsibility to make amends for the past. The Victoria City Council has been in conversation with the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations since 2017 on how best to approach reconciliation. Following the statues removal, there have been discussions regarding what should be included within Canada's national identity.

The bitter reality about life within colonial, multicultural societies is that there will always be various perspectives of history and memory competing for representation in the social sphere. Removing the John A. Macdonald monument, instead of focusing efforts on reconstructing the collective memory and identity, has enraged the Canadian right, galvanized nationalists and has not contributed to reconciliation within the broader society. Charles Taylor (1989), a predominant Canadian academic, argues that Canadians must 'learn how to live with these multiplicities of identity and yet achieve some kind of common understanding'. The people in Victoria, B.C, as well as the rest of Canada, need to 'work with each other to preserve these historical identities with their differences intact'. As the state will always maintain dedicated places of memory as a part of nation building, the City of Victoria should not subdue the complex reality of pluralities by removing monuments, but rather highlight Canada's contentious past to build an effective multicultural society.

The first half of this paper will define what is meant by the term 'monument', consider their purpose, and examine monuments in relation to history, memory, power and identity. Examples from the United States of America and South Africa will provide a broad framework to understand why there has been a rise in controversy over these stone figures. The latter half of the essay will use these definitions and theories to discuss the fate of the John A. Macdonald monument. It will be posited that a binary choice between the removal and the maintaining of the monument is misleading, and rather a third option is appropriate. The monument should be reinstated alongside a new monument to represent a new memory being added into the collective remembering of Canadian identity.

A Fractured Door: The Contested History of the IRS

The first six lines of “At the Mercy of the Sky” from Cree poet Billy-Ray Belcourt’s second collection *NDN Coping Mechanisms* conjure up the complex legacy of Canada’s Indian Residential School System (IRS):

In front of me:
1947, a fractured door,
Rotted wooden beams.
Behind:
an ancient forest of gone peoples.
This is what’s left of a residential school in Jousard, Alberta. (21)

Formally ended with the closure of Gordon’s Indian Residential School in 1996, the IRS as an institution as well as the individual schools that composed it were, by no stretch of the imagination, intended to serve as monuments of the modern Canadian state. The schools were, however, important cogs in the Canadian nation-building project as settler-colonial technologies, simultaneously producing social-control and the cultural erasure of Indigenous peoples in what is today known as Canada.

It was only with the destruction or, more accurately, the collapsing-in-upon-itself of the IRS and Canada’s half-hearted response to its lasting legacy, that the sites of the former schools transformed into the problematic set of ‘national monuments’ captured in Belcourt’s poetics. More specifically, it was only with the destruction of the IRS as an institution, that its few remaining structures revealed themselves as monuments to a history, and indeed to a nation that was unrecognizable to most settler-Canadians.

As problematic as the remaining IRS structures are to the sensibilities of settler-Canadians, for Indigenous peoples these same structures function as monuments and reminders to the effort of the Canadian government and churches to bring about their erasure. As a result, the IRS has become a fault line dividing an idealized image of Canada from a historical narrative implicating Canada in the colonial history of its imperial forebearers in Europe. In this essay, I propose to explore this contested history and the ways in which the memorialization and the monumentalization of the IRS has made it into a nearly omnipresent object in the consciousnesses of both Indigenous peoples as well as settler-Canadians.

Alana Bailey. Head of Cultural Affairs, AfriForum

Portraying and preserving the South African past – a monumental challenge

To state that the portrayal and preservation of all aspects of the South African past without polarising the nation even further, is a challenge, is an understatement. The influence of colonialization and apartheid has to be dealt with, while the culturally diverse population holds differing opinions on the most appropriate way in which the past should be commemorated.

In 2015 the country faced a spate of politically-inspired attacks against monuments. As polarisation amongst the country's residents reached dangerous levels, the Minister of Arts and Culture, Mr Nathi Mthethwa, appointed a task team to investigate the "transformation of the South African heritage landscape". The team held public consultation meetings in all nine of the country's provinces to ascertain the general public's stance on the memorialisation of the past. Diverse opinions were expressed, illustrating that a single solution that will satisfy all, will probably never be found.

Other problems in the country deflected attention from the issue and for a while monuments were relatively safe, except when being targeted by political groups to serve their own agendas. In 2020, international events however once again turned the spotlight back to the future of statues, monuments and other ways in which the past is being commemorated in South Africa.

The ruling political party, the ANC, prefers the solution of relocating all contentious (or as they phrase it, "offensive") monuments and statues to theme parks – ostensibly inspired by the Russian example in Moscow. Other groups opt for the total removal or even destruction of such objects, or for rather adding more memorials to the national landscape without removing anything. There are also calls for a reinterpretation of what exists in public spaces, but then the question remains how this can be achieved while still portraying historical events and role-players objectively and maintaining a culture of mutual recognition and respect amongst all South Africans. Also bear in mind that this has to be achieved in a country facing huge economic challenges.

This is an ongoing debate, and national and international best practices are being studied in an effort to find an outcome that will not only provide a temporary solution to satisfy the current generation, but will also serve future generations. After all, we are but the custodians of heritage for our descendants.

For more than three decades, I have been involved in heritage conservation in South Africa. I also served in the abovementioned ministerial task team and had the privilege to hear many divergent opinions on solutions in this regard, including from academics (nationally and internationally), politicians, conservationists, historians and people from all walks of life with a passion for the past – an inspiring and insightful journey that I would like to share.

SESSION 4. The politics of resurrection

Chaired by Marnix Beyen

Willem Bekers. Department of Architecture & Urban Planning, Ghent University.

Staged reconstruction: On the scenography of the *IJzertoren*'s building site

Whereas the historiography of the *IJzertoren* has been claimed almost exclusively by scholars of Flemish nationalism and by art historians focusing on the iconography of the tower's statues (Shelby, 2014, De Wever, 2008, Seberechts, 2003), it remains somewhat of a blind spot in architectural and construction history. This is a remarkable fact, not in the least because the *IJzertoren* memorial is the only architectural object currently included as such in the attainment targets of Flemish primary education. Recent scholar work has tried to remedy this by approaching the memorial from a construction history perspective, at the same time emphasising its contribution to the process of nation building (Bekers et al., In press). The proposed paper builds upon this work and looks deeper into the operationalization of a so-called "vocabulary of the construction site" into the nationalist rhetoric of the *IJzerbedevaartcomité* during the annual rallies in the period 1952-65, timeframe of the *IJzertoren*'s reconstruction. Building cranes, site equipment, scaffolding, scale models and reinforcement bars featured prominently throughout these pilgrimages and its visual culture, indicating how the reconstruction embodied the renewed aspirations of the postwar Flemish movement. Operating on different levels, the translation of this formal language of the building site into a staged event, impacted considerably on the iconography of the pilgrimages. On one hand, the construction site was used and designed as a stage, as a pulpit and as a canvas. On the other hand, successive pilgrimages centred on milestones in the construction, such as the driving of the first foundation pile, the ground-breaking ceremony or the erection of the maypole. The fetching of building materials even became the central theme of the 1955 pilgrimage. Interestingly, less important events were also celebrated and mediatised, such as the geotechnical survey or the drainage works. The paper aims to assess the impact and modus operandi of this "symbolism of reconstruction" as a metaphor for the Flemish movement's post-war resurrection, taking advantage of the destruction of the old *IJzertoren*. This implies that the interplay between the monument and its commemoration (Allais, 2018, Gillis, 1994) is not a one-way process: nationalist ideologies bestowed the bricks and concrete of the *IJzertoren* with ideology, but also the other way around, since the very act of building and reconstruction fuelled nationalist rhetoric.

Allais, L. 2018. *Designs of destruction : the making of monuments in the twentieth century*. Chicago : The University of Chicago Press.

Bekers, W., De Meyer, R. & De Kooning, E. In press. Bricks of wrath : (Re)constructing the *IJzertoren* memorial (1925-30, 1952-65). *Building knowledge, constructing histories*. Leiden: CRC Press/Balkema.

De Wever, B. 2008. Diksmuide: de *IJzertoren*. In Tollebeek, J., Deneckere, G., Buelens, G., Kesteloot, C. & De Schaepdrijver, S. (Eds.), *België, een parcours van herinnering*. Amsterdam: Bert Bakker.

Gillis, J. R. 1994. *Commemorations : the politics of national identity*. Princeton (N.J.) : Princeton university press.

Seberechts, F. 2003. Slechts de graven maken een land tot vaderland. Van Heldenhulde tot *IJzertoren*: een stenen hulde aan de Vlaamse Ijzersoldaten. In Seberechts, F., Art, J., Beyen, M., De Wever, B., Tyssens, J. & Verschaffel, T. (Eds.), *Duurzamer dan graniet : over monumenten en Vlaamse Beweging*. Tiel: Lannoo.

Shelby, K. 2014. *Flemish nationalism and the Great War : the politics of memory, visual culture and commemoration*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Antonio Grgić. Institute of Architectural Theory, Art History and Cultural Studies at TU Graz.

The Peculiar Case of the Monument in honour of the Viceroy Josip Jelačić at the Central Square of Zagreb; Between Forgetting and Memory, between National Identity and Communist Ideology, between Feminism and Patriarchy...

The monument for the Viceroy Josip Jelačić depicting a horseman on a stallion with a highly raised sword, was erected in 1866 as the first political monument in Zagreb. The monument was placed in the main square of Zagreb, making that square the political and symbolic center of Croatia. The Viceroy Josip Jelačić played an important role in overcoming the revolutionary movements in the Habsburg Empire in 1848, but at the same time he sought to realize Croatian national interests, thus becoming the most important Croatian national hero. His contemporary Karl Marx wrote extremely negatively about him on several occasions, because of his role in quelling the revolution in Vienna. For that reason, when the communists came to power in Croatia in 1945, an interesting paradox appeared on The Viceroy Josip Jelačić Square: the coexistence of communist ideology based on the writings of Karl Marx, with the Viceroy Josip Jelačić, who was regarded by Marx as a symbol of reaction. Socialist realist parades with images of communist leaders were organised at the feet of the monument for the Viceroy Josip Jelačić, but it soon became clear: the pictorial representation of Marx and Josip Jelačić in the same square was ideologically undesirable, there was no room for both of them. That is why the monument to the Viceroy Josip Jelačić was covered and hidden from view by different socialist-realist architectural constructions. One of the first constructions covering the monument was dedicated to the Anti-Fascist Women's Front of Croatia and had the shape of two giant women, a female warrior and a farmer. In 1945, women were allowed to vote for the first time, and in a way a monument for patriarchal power depicting a horseman on a stallion with a highly raised sword, was covered by a symbol of women's political emancipation. After two years of concealment by different socialist-realist architectural constructions, on the night of 26 July 1947, the entire monument for the Viceroy Josip Jelačić was secretly removed from the square. The name of the square was also changed and the singing of popular songs dedicated to the Viceroy Josip Jelačić was banned in an attempt to erase every material and immaterial trace of the memory of the monument. The square was left empty for the next forty-three years. This lasted until the fall of communism in 1990, when the square was renamed The Viceroy Josip Jelačić Square again, and the monument re-erected in the square with an organised mass event which was covered by live television broadcast.

From »Österreichs Nizza« to »Santa Gorizia«: Italian reshaping of cultural landscape in the Gorizia borderland in the interwar period

This paper focuses on the Goriška/Gorizia/Görz border region, noted for its history of changing political and symbolic borders. Since the beginning of the 20th century, the area has experienced regular re-drawings of state-borders and reconfigurations of political systems. Following the dissolution of the Habsburg monarchy in late 1918, Italian armed forces occupied the former Gefürstete Grafschaft Görz und Gradisca, which had previously been part of the Habsburg crownland of Austrian Littoral (or Venezia Giulia, as Italians named it). The region was then formally annexed following the Treaty of Rapallo in late 1920. This nationally mixed region was subjected to an often-brutal policy of forced Italianization, which represents one of the most pronounced and far-reaching policies of the Italian administration in these territories. The ideological dimension of various spatial interventions (such as building of public monuments, renaming local toponyms, introducing new architectural styles etc.) represents one of the so far mostly neglected aspects of this process. Only in the last decade has this topic come into focus within international historiography and art history, but so far this research has remained limited both methodologically and geographically. Thematically, researchers have focused mainly on the most ideologically marked spatial interventions, such as monumental Fascist-style ossuaries built during 1930s. Methodologically, research approaches have mostly remained confined to a classic cause-effect analysis combined with analysis of architectural style, done mainly by scholars of architectural history.

In order to go beyond this state-of-the-art this paper will contribute a new perspective on local spatial politics. Geographically, I will focus on until now mostly neglected case-studies from the former Province of Gorizia, specially the town of Gorizia itself. Although the town was of much lesser economic and cultural importance compared to nearby Trieste, it nevertheless played a symbolically highly important role in interwar Italy, mostly because it was the only major urban settlement captured by the Italian army during the battles along the Isonzo Front. Consequently, the Italian (after 1922 Fascist-led) authorities undertook a significant number of building initiatives, starting with the imposing Monumento alla Vittoria (Monument to Victory) on the Gorizia castle hill, designed by Armando Brasini (1879–1965) in 1923, but never realized. The town identity, due to its mild climate and multicultural character formerly widely known as “Austrian Nice” was thus progressively reshaped according to Fascist memory politics. Gorizia was supposed to represent one of the main symbolic points of “reborn Italy.”

Methodologically, the paper will provide further insights into the inner workings of this process. Although monuments are often understood as being a form of communication “from above,” recent research has increasingly come to emphasize its ingrained meaningfulness in an interactive relationship with the public. This process of communication is therefore anything but straightforward. Furthermore, the research that has been done up to now has remained mostly focused on the state-led interventions, but spatial interventions were not undertaken solely by the agencies of Italian government.

On the contrary, in many cases the decisive impulses came from local private actors, such as nationalist or veterans' organisations, which were sometimes the initiators of interventions, but also the doers. The paper will examine, how the spatial policy was not only the result of impositions "from above," but was also actively influenced "from below."

KEY NOTE SPEAKER

Thomas Cauvin. University of Luxembourg

The Fall of Monuments: a Public History

Monuments have, for a few years now, been hitting the headlines all over the world. Public debates do not focus so much on the erection of new monuments as they do on acts of vandalism, removal, and destruction. If destructions of monuments are not new – for example during the French Revolution – their multiple examples all around the world (United States, England, Australia, Spain, Argentina, South Africa for instance) raise questions about their origins, meanings, and consequences. In my presentation, I propose to understand those synchronous destructions and removals through the angle of public history. Developed as a process to include publics into its production, interpretation, and communication, public history helps to better understand the issues at stake in destroying monuments. In the words of Ludmilla Jordanova, the past is more than ever considered as a public property subject to many different interpretations. Remembering and interpreting the past has become more democratic, more participatory, more diverse but has also shaken power relations. New participatory practices have impacted how we memorialize and interpret the past at official levels. Questions such as who owns the past and who can decide what historical events, actors can be remembered through monuments are being reconsidered. In this reinvention of our relations to monuments – and indirectly to the past – I propose to reconsider the role of historians. I argue that more than simply interpreting the past, historians can help communities deciding what to do with (unwanted) monuments.

KEY NOTE SPEAKERS & LECTURERS

KEY NOTE SPEAKERS

Name:	Ann Rigney
Affiliation /Institution:	Utrecht University
Academic title(s):	Prof. Dr.
Current position:	Professor of Comparative Literature
Main research field: (50 words max)	Cultural memory, with a particular focus on issues relating to mediation and transnationalism, and the history of memory practices in Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Intersections between narrative, collective identity, and contestations of the past. Currently directs the ERC-funded project Remembering Activism: The Cultural Memory of Protest in Europe (www.rememberingactivism.eu).

Name:	Kas Swerts
Affiliation /Institution:	University of Antwerp/NISE/ADVN
Academic title(s):	Dr.
Current position:	Post-doctoral researcher
Main research field: (50 words max)	My main fields of research are nationalism studies and historiography from a comparative perspective. My research right now focuses on the history of tourism in Belgium/Flanders, and how the methodologies of digital humanities and historical anthropology can be interlinked.

Name:	Thomas Cauvin
Affiliation /Institution:	University of Luxembourg / International Federation for Public History
Academic title(s):	PhD
Current position:	Associate Professor of Public History
Main research field: (50 words max)	I have been working on public history, especially the communication of history to popular audiences, and public participatory practices in making history in the public spaces.

LECTURERS

Name:	Viktoriya Sukovata
Affiliation /Institution:	Kharkiv National Karazin university, Ukraine
Academic title(s):	Ph.D. in Cultural studies, Doctor Habilitation
Current position:	Professor of Kharkiv National Karazin university
Main research field: (50 words max)	Cultural and Memory studies, Gender and Postmodernist critique, Cinema and Visual arts studies, Soviet and post-Soviet identity, World War II and Holocaust studies, Jewish identity and Comparative studies,

Name:	Michał Piasek
Affiliation /Institution:	Humboldt-University, Berlin
Academic title(s):	
Current position:	PhD student
Main research field: (50 words max)	Memory studies, cemetery culture, Jewish heritage sites

Name:	Iris Pupella-Noguès
Affiliation /Institution:	University of Paris-Est and University of Trieste
Academic title(s):	Graduate Student – MA
Current position:	PhD Candidate in Contemporary History
Main research field: (50 words max)	My research concerns the history of Italian fascism in the areas of Trieste and Bolzano, it focuses on several fields of study such as: Border studies, urban history, Italian Fascist architecture and monumentality, informal politics, heritage studies, public history

Name:	Klejd Këlliçi
Affiliation /Institution:	University of Tirana, Albania
Academic title(s):	Ph.D.
Current position:	Professor of Comparative Politics
Main research field: (50 words max)	Communist and post communist studies in Albania with particular focus on memory and political history.

Name:	Lana Lovrenčić
Affiliation /Institution:	Institut za povijest umjetnosti / Institute of Art History, Zagreb, HR
Academic title(s):	/
Current position:	Assistant – PhD candidate
Main research field: (50 words max)	Main fields of interest are history and theory of photography, archives, cultural heritage, memory practices and planning practices after WWII.

Name:	Tihana Pupovac
Affiliation /Institution:	Institute of philosophy, SRC SAZU Ljubljana
Academic title(s):	/
Current position:	PHD student; coordinator of the cultural centre MaMa and Kooperativa – regional platform for culture
Main research field: (50 words max)	History of socialism, Rousseau and modern European philosophy, French post-Marxist theory, radical politics and feminism, theoretical psychoanalysis

Name:	Maria Pavlova
Affiliation /Institution:	Primakov Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO)
Academic title(s):	PhD (History)
Current position:	Research Associate
Main research field: (50 words max)	Foreign and domestic policy of Poland, International Relations in Central and Eastern Europe, Memory studies, Historical Memory Policy, History of Poland, History of the Baltic states.

Name:	Karen Shelby, Ph.D.
Affiliation /Institution:	Baruch College, City University of New York
Academic title(s):	Associate Professor
Current position:	Associate Professor
Main research field: (50 words max)	Karen Shelby's publications focus on the visual culture of the Great War including the politics of exhibition narrative; memorials and cemetery design; and the role of pilgrimage in First World War remembrance. She is currently writing on public art, contemporary Belgian artists, curators, and exhibition practice.

Name:	Christina A. Spicer
Affiliation /Institution:	University of Edinburgh
Academic title(s):	MSc Nationalism Studies
Current position:	Masters Student
Main research field: (50 words max)	I'm interested in the embodiment of nationalism and national identity in common, everyday artefacts. My research focuses on monuments and maps, as both are powerful tools to establish authority, symbolise identity, and evoke an emotional sentiment. I explore how this power enables them to become iconic symbols in political discourse.

Name:	Josh Dawson
Affiliation /Institution:	Comparative Literature Department at SUNY Buffalo
Academic title(s):	
Current position:	Ph.D Candidate
Main research field: (50 words max)	My research explores silence in the context of traumatic narratives and focuses upon the experiences of the Holocaust alongside Canada's Residential School System. More specifically, my dissertation argues for a more expansive understanding of traumatic silence than has traditionally been found in literary trauma studies.

Name:	Alana Bailey
Affiliation /Institution:	AfriForum [South Africa]
Academic title(s):	Ms
Current position:	Head of Cultural Affairs
Main research field: (50 words max)	Language and cultural rights, minority rights, heritage conservation, historicity and cultural history in general, all in particular with a South African focus

Name:	Willem Bekers
Affiliation /Institution:	Dept. of Architecture and Urban Planning, Ghent University
Academic title(s):	MSc in Architecture
Current position:	PhD candidate, assisting academic staff
Main research field: (50 words max)	Architectural and construction history Digital humanities and computational design

Name:	Antonio Grgić
Affiliation /Institution:	Ph.D. student at The Institute of Architectural Theory, Art History and Cultural Studies TU Graz
Academic title(s):	Mag. arch.
Current position:	Free researcher
Main research field: (50 words max)	Architectural history/Design, Architectural Theory, Visual communication, Semiotics, Politics, Balkan history, Political history, Cultural Studies, Aesthetics and studies on art, Fine art history, Sculpture, Cultural anthropology

Name:	Matic Batič
Affiliation /Institution:	Study Centre of National Reconciliation, Tivolska 42, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia
Academic title(s):	PhD in History
Current position:	Research Associate
Main research field: (50 words max)	My research targets various issues related to the history of the northern Adriatic area in the 19 th and 20 th centuries. Initially, I was focused on German cultural activity in the Austrian Littoral. Later, my research has mostly dealt with the ideologically bound interventions into the cultural landscape in the <i>Provincia di Gorizia</i> between the two world wars.

