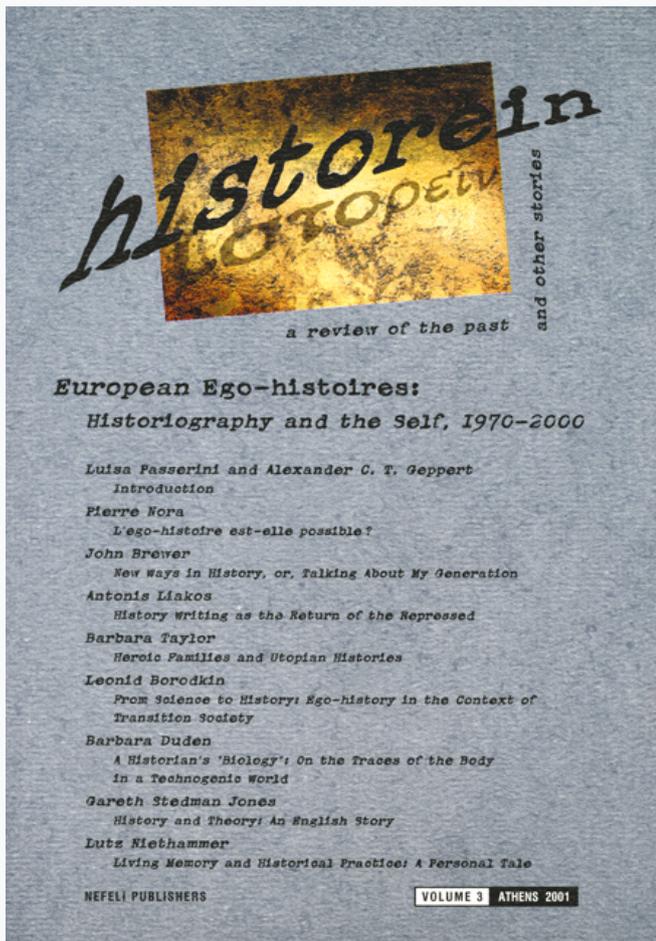


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## BOOK REVIEWS

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## REVIEWS

Pieter Lagrou,  
*The Legacy of Nazi  
 Occupation.  
 Patriotic Memory and  
 National Recovery  
 in Western Europe,  
 1946-1965*

Cambridge: Cambridge University  
 Press, 2000. xiii+327 pp.

István Deák, Jan T. Gross, and  
 Tony Judt (eds.)  
*The Politics of Retribution  
 in Europe.  
 World War II and its  
 Aftermath*

Princeton: Princeton University  
 Press, 2000. xii+337 pp.

by Polymeris Voglis

Since 1989 there has been a strong tendency among Eastern European historians to rewrite the history of their countries along the "victim" pattern: first of Nazi totalitarianism and then of Soviet totalitarianism. Interestingly enough this is the way that most Western European countries dealt with their wartime history as well. These countries, too, were the victims of Nazi aggression and occupation. The concept of Nazi victimization facilitated the transformation of wartime experiences into a memory of national

martyrdom. In this way their past was transformed into the past of another country, as Tony Judt aptly entitles his chapter in the volume that he co-edited. The first half of the 1940s in Europe became the past of German invasion and occupation, and the past of the postwar developments in Eastern Europe became the past of the Soviet Union's rule. Very powerful constructions and convenient myths indeed, since it took many decades to review them critically. And this is what makes the two books under review important. By focusing on postwar justice and the construction of national memory in the second half of the 1940s, the authors cast a new light on the understanding of postwar societies and politics.

Although most of the essays in the volume edited by Deák, Gross and Judt discuss the postwar prosecution and punishment of collaborators, some authors also address the question of the fate of Jewish populations during the war. The literature on the Nazi persecution of Jews and the Holocaust has become so vast in the last decades that one is left to wonder whether there is anything new to be said. Hundreds of books have been published on anti-Semitic laws and pogroms in Nazi Germany, on the deportation of Jews and the implementation of the Final Solution, on life and death in the Nazi concentration camps, and on the mass cold-blooded killings of Jews by ordinary soldiers. However, if the German atrocities are amply documented and discussed, what is missing is how the occupied societies dealt with the Holocaust. Did they know about the Holocaust, and if they knew did they try to help and protect their Jewish fellow-citizens? The answers to these questions are deeply troubling. In Hungary, as István Deák tells us, counter-revolutionary anti-Semitism was the order of the day after the suppression of the short-lived Hungarian Republic of Soviets in 1919, and a series of anti-Semitic laws passed in 1938 and 1941. The measures, however, of the Hungarian government were not enough for the Nazis who marched into the country in March

1944: the Hungarian Jews should be annihilated. But the point is that the persecution and deportation of half a million Jews was carried out not by the Nazis but by Hungarian gendarmes with only the minimal assistance of the Germans. We should remember that Hungary was an Axis partner and the reactionary Miklós Horthy was still in power at that time. However, when the deportation of Hungarian Jews who lived in the countryside was completed and it was the turn of the Budapest Jews, Horthy vehemently objected to further deportations and for that reason forty percent of the Hungarian Jews survived. Why were the Budapest Jews spared? The reason seems to be that for Horthy the Budapest Jews were part and parcel of the political and economic base of his regime. In this interesting intersection between anti-Semitism and class, it is worth adding that the Hungarian Jewish industrialists produced war material for the Wehrmacht during the Second World War. When the Germans entered the country they were compensated for the confiscation of their properties, and the Germans provided them with forged passports and visas to fly to Portugal.

But if the governments did so little to protect their Jewish citizens, what should one expect ordinary people to have done, especially since they might have faced the penalty of death for sheltering Jews? It was too dangerous to hide Jews; that's why only very few people (the heroes) did it. This simple premise, even today, would make sense for most people, but not for Jan Gross, who turns this argument on its head. He argues that because those helping Jews were very few and because "they were engulfed in a social vacuum," it became therefore extremely difficult and dangerous to help Jews. In other words, both the Nazi murder machine and Polish anti-Semitism made the decimation of Polish Jews possible. Although Polish anti-Semitism is not something new, Gross's account moves one step further. He discusses the case of the town of Szczebrzeszyn, where 934 Jews were deported and another 2,300 ruthlessly killed by the

Germans. The fact that all these Jews were killed in broad daylight bespeaks that the Holocaust was not a secret, well kept behind the walls of the concentration camps, but took place in front of the very eyes of the Poles. What did the Poles in Szczebrzeszyn do in the face of the massacre? Some literally stood and watch, while others looted Jewish shops and searched for Jews to hand over to the Germans or kill them themselves. In the book *Neighbors* that Gross published after this essay, he demonstrates that some Poles went even further. In the town Jedwabne the Poles killed as many Jews as they could and put the rest in a barn that they set on fire. No Germans were in the town at the time. The fact that Jews were seen as collaborators of the Soviet authorities ("Judeo-commune") helped them little in the aftermath of the Second World War, as the pogrom in Kielce in 1946 testified. Thus, it is a small wonder that a quarter million Jews left Poland by the end of 1948.

The Jewish exodus from Poland after the end of the war belongs also to a different chapter of postwar history in Europe. That is the unprecedented demographic and ethnic changes in Central and Eastern Europe as a result of population movements and forced migration. The introduction and the concluding chapter of the volume under review provide some hints about this unprecedented phenomenon, which is one of the least studied. The extermination of European Jews was followed by the expulsion of between thirteen and fifteen million Germanic people from Poland, Czechoslovakia, Russia, Hungary, and Yugoslavia. Another seven million – mostly Poles, Czechs and Slovaks, Ukrainians and Balts – were evicted from their homes and resettled. Greece was not an exception: Albanians, Vlachs and Slav Macedonians had been expelled from the country before the end of the decade. With the Holocaust and the expulsion of their ethnic minorities, the countries in Central and Eastern Europe became more nationally homogeneous than they had ever been in their history.

For obvious reasons the expulsion of ethnic minorities was silenced. At the time, public attention was focused on the punishment of collaborators and the pain of reconstruction. The two were inextricably related. From the outset the trials of collaborators were a political rather than a legal issue, and the authors focus on the social and political context of the trials to illuminate the dynamics of postwar societies. In the immediate postwar period, the trials and punishment of collaborators, as Martin Conway argues in discussing the case of Belgium, were a means to gain political legitimacy and popular support for the government. On the other hand, however, for the postwar ruling elite it was clear that the punishment of collaborators should not impede postwar reconstruction, particularly structures of the social and political order. If the demand for swift and severe punishment of collaborators resonated with broader ideas for social justice and political reforms, the government focused on the punishment of crimes that were individual or ideological in nature. Political considerations, but in the opposite direction, conditioned the fate of collaborators in Czechoslovakia. In discussing the case of the trial and death sentence of Father Tiso, the head of the wartime Slovak state, Bradley Abrams suggests that postwar justice was intermingled in the web of politics along ethnic, party and religious lines. For the Czech communists the trial and death of Tiso was the opportunity to do away with Slovak nationalism, the Democratic Party, which was particularly strong in Slovakia, and the Catholic Church, from the ranks of which Tiso had risen.

Within two years after the end of the war, the impetus for bringing collaborators to trial had waned. The prosecutions stopped, amnesty for certain categories of crimes was granted, and collaborators were released. Even in countries like Belgium and the Netherlands where, as Luc Huyse shows, the prosecution had been sweeping, many convicted collaborators were punished with civic disqualification and/or short-term imprisonment. The need was to forgive and

forget. A new kind of national unity was forged that was based on political calculations and oblivion. Even the most horrendous crimes could be pardoned in the name of national unity, as Sarah Framer shows in the case of the 1953 trial of Alsatian soldiers involved in the massacre of Oradour-sur-Glane in 1944. By placing the responsibility for the wartime calamities on the "other," that is Nazi Germany, and because Germany was very soon becoming an indispensable ally in the Cold War, it became easier for the population in the Western European countries to forget. Fascist regimes and wartime collaboration were seen as short-term aberrations and individual misadventures.

In the case of Greece a different kind of silence covered the experience of the 1940s. It was a forced silence and the 1940s became a taboo or occasion for anti-communist propaganda. In 1982, that is thirty-eight years after the liberation of the country, the contribution of the leftist resistance in the struggle against the occupation was finally officially acknowledged – in the name of national unity and reconciliation. As Mark Mazower argues, in the newly fabricated and celebrated national resistance anything that could tarnish national pride and unity was again suppressed. The fate of non-Greeks (of the Jews to a certain degree, and mainly of the expelled Albanians and Slav Macedonians) remains until today a taboo, while the darker aspects of the occupation (collaboration and civil war) still await thorough study and discussion.

The trial and punishment of collaborators neither monopolized interest in the public debates of the postwar years, nor was it the only contentious issue. Pieter Lagrou, in his comparative study of the postwar developments in France, Belgium and the Netherlands, discusses how these societies dealt with the question of the resistance, the return of displaced persons and labourers from the Reich to their countries, and the victims of Nazi persecution. Drawing on Pierre Nora's concept of *milieux de mémoire*, he addresses how these different questions and social groups

shaped the memory of WW II and the Nazi occupation. For these three countries, but for other European countries as well, to turn their military defeat and the trauma of occupation and collaboration into a source of national pride and unity was not an easy task. Even more so because there was not any homogeneous and properly national figure, like the Great War veteran, which could provide an undisputed *milieu de mémoire*. Communist activists, Jewish survivors of the concentration camps, prisoners of war or voluntary labourers to the Reich represented quite different and often antagonistic experiences of war and occupation. How could all these experiences be integrated in a patriotic memory of the 1940s? Lagrou's answer is that they could not be integrated and they were not. In the complex process of constructing a patriotic memory of the 1940s, a process in which government agencies, state institutions and associations took part, some experiences were ignored or suppressed while others were prioritized and gained new significance.

Resistance, at the antipode of collaboration, became the sole basis for the reconstruction of national identity after the war. Despite the fact that a tiny minority of the population in these countries was involved in the resistance against the Germans, the resistance could counter the military defeat and the trauma of occupation. Moreover, the resistance, the author argues, was the only possibility for a nationalization of victory and liberation. The resistance myth was national and consensual: "the country had experienced an external aggression, it had suffered collectively and it had resisted, everyone according to his or her own means, collectively." (36) In a similar vein, the weaker the resistance was, the more consensual and state-sponsored commemoration was. From this viewpoint, the example of the Netherlands is striking. The erection of war memorials was so highly centralized and monitored for content and aesthetic form that the 1,500 (!) memorials reveal a very high degree of uniformity.

Resistance and resisters became the icons of the post-war national reconstruction.

The same cannot be said for other categories, like forced labourers. Lagrou rightly points out that the question of the character of labour migration to Nazi Germany, namely the distinction between voluntary and forced migration, is very problematic. In fact he argues that voluntary labour migration to Germany in the first phase of the occupation (until the spring of 1942) was less voluntary than is assumed, and the forced departures of the second phase in most cases were less forced than we tend to think. Moreover, the question of labour conscripts reveals how difficult it is to draw a dividing line between individual and collective responsibilities, between compliance and coercion. The ambiguity concerning the motivation and circumstances of labour migration to Nazi Germany turned these labourers into a disputed category. In France the position of labourers in postwar society was problematic, in Belgium they were successfully reintegrated, whereas in the Netherlands they were completely ostracized. In explaining these different attitudes the author suggests that the more the consensual myth of national resistance was solidified, like in the Netherlands, the more difficult it was to include ambiguous groups like the labour conscripts, who might disrupt the "collective martyrdom." (194) In France and in Belgium, where the past of Nazi occupation was contested, there was more room for different experiences and less heroic individuals.

The difficulties in integrating different experiences in a national and patriotic *milieu de mémoire* became more obvious when the victims of Nazi persecution belonged to groups that did not fit into the traditional nationalist or patriotic criteria, like the Jews, communist prisoners or immigration resisters. In that case the universalism of national martyrdom sought to shadow the specificity of the experience of these groups and to impose a general all-inclusive category, the deportee, to blur the differences. And as

Lagrou reminds us, the prevalence of the Holocaust debates in contemporary historiography came after two decades of silence about the distinct experience of Jews and their systematic extermination by the Nazis. The different and often incompatible experiences of the Nazi occupation could not be integrated into patriotic memory without at the same time challenging its very premises. The cases of resisters, collaborators, POWs, labour conscripts, Jews, and political prisoners, among others, speak to the multitude of experiences that the Nazi occupation generated. Some of these experiences were celebrated, while others were suppressed or ignored in the postwar years, and Lagrou deftly explains why and how this happened.

The two books are not without weaknesses. A point of criticism of the volume on postwar justice in Europe is that it does not include in the discussion Germany's wartime allies, Austria and Italy in particular. This would have enabled comparison between the victors and defeated of the war in the process of postwar reconstruction. Lagrou in his book assumes that the reader is familiar with the history of occupation and resistance in Belgium and the Netherlands and does not provide any background information, which is necessary for discussion of the place of the resistance in collective memory. Moreover, the fact that he does not discuss at all the fate of collaborators in postwar societies and memories deprives him of the opportunity to discuss the role of renegades in the construction of patriotic memory. In spite of these weaknesses the two books are major contributions in the current discussions about postwar reconstruction in Europe and the memories of Nazi occupation.

**Luisa Passerini,**  
*Europe in Love, Love in Europe. Imagination and Politics between the Wars*

**New York: New York University Press, 1999. 358 pp.**

**by Ioanna Laliotou**

*Itineraries*

The entwining of discourses on Europe and love is the central concept around which Luisa Passerini develops her inquiry into imagination and politics in Europe. The book is divided into seven chapters that – as the title indicates – are organized around two major lines of exploration: the European dimension in the literature of love (Love in Europe) and the role of sentiments and emotions in the development of the idea of Europe (Europe in Love). This two-fold exploration follows six open-ended itineraries. The first itinerary follows the course of the political idea of a United Europe through different stages, including the debate over the United States of Europe, the proposal for the institution of the Leagues of Nations in the 1930s, the discussions over the future of European civilization, the debate over federalism and the proposal for a Fascist Europe by the British Union of Fascists. The second itinerary enters the world of emotions through analysis of the correspondence between a couple – a British woman and German man – in the years 1928-45. This correspondence is vital for the exploration of the entwined discourses of love and Europe since it represents “an actual embodiment through internal conflicts and difficult choices, of the European dimension of a love relationship at a historical moment when nationality came to be, in spite of intentions, important in intimate relationships.” (13) The third itinerary goes a step further as it

explores the connections between the debate on the crisis of European civilization and the debate on the crisis of marriage, sex and love. The fourth itinerary traces the origins of the idea of courtly love in twelfth-century literature of Provence. A fifth itinerary finds the traces of the Europa and the bull myth in British popular and political culture of the 1930s. The sixth and final itinerary excavates the history of utopian Europe through the ideas of the New Europe group, which was active in Britain in the 1930s and whose members envisaged a future European federation based on regional autonomy and on the premise of a general psychic change resulting in new thoughts and feelings.

### ***Anti-Eurocentrism***

The author's intention in this book is "to explore, and whenever possible criticise, forms of Eurocentrism in some ideas of Europe and in the connection between identity and love once the rigid cage of Eurocentrism is broken." (20) The positionality of *Europe in Love* is defined by its proclaimed affinity with the critique against Eurocentrism that has developed in the fields of philosophy, comparative literature, cultural studies and anthropology. Passerini recognizes her kinship with critical projects to deconstruct Eurocentrism through analysis of the relations (conceptual, intellectual, cultural and economic) between Europe and the rest of the world. In this sense *Europe in Love* should be placed on the same shelf with other books that unravel the colonial and post-colonial dynamics of Europe and have contributed to the transformation of the scholarly canon in literary and cultural studies, and to a lesser extent in history.

*Europe in Love* however diverges from this critical tradition since it is presented as an attempt to "criticize Eurocentrism from the inside, i.e. through the history of some of its manifestations, and to expose their contradictions and hierarchies, trusting that this approach can erode them from within." (22) Passerini's line of argumentation is grounded on the contention that this

type of criticism-from-within needs to be based on the convergence between politics and emotions. Passerini reclaims the study of Europe from politics and political theory through invocation of the methodological artillery of the cultural and intellectual history of politics. In an attempt to revitalize critically the connection between European politics and the lives and interests of people she turns to intellectual history and psychoanalysis in order to reclaim Europeanism from "politicism and bureaucratism" and link it again with "imagination and feelings." The starting-point for Passerini's critique is that the contemporary idea of Europe has lost its connections with the tradition of utopianism and passion still present in the 1930s. "As the political idea of European Union progresses the cultural and utopian idea of Europe regresses," she remarks. (20)

Passerini's reclamation of the cultural and utopian idea of Europe is grounded on three conceptual devices that condition her anti-Eurocentric critique and ground the narrative of European history that *Europe in Love* seeks to elaborate:

### ***1. Vision of History***

In *Europe in Love* the narration focuses on stories that have not registered in the mainstream narrative of twentieth century history. As the author notes, "one assumption of the research is that there are unconscious aspects of history, ideas and themes that do not appear on the surface of literature and that, thanks to the indeterminacy of the past, can be rescued, interpreted, and elaborated. A corollary of the idea of exploring the indeterminate and hidden aspects of the past has to be an interest in the marginal, the unrepresentative, the interstitial."

Passerini's historical vision is set on political and intellectual trajectories that were, one way or the other, interrupted. The protagonists in *Europe in Love* are often immersed in political projects that did not develop into historical events but remained unfinished business as it were. They

are marginal not because of their social or political background – Passerini's project is not a new "history from below" – but because the course of history falsified their political visions and aspirations. Passerini's historical inquiry becomes then a search for these repressed themes, the unfinished business of history. *Europe in Love* develops as a history of critical absence. The stories that are retrieved do not aim at supplementing our knowledge of European history. They are not details in the puzzle. Through their marginality Passerini's stories point towards the understanding of European history as an open-ended process with multiple possibilities of realization.

## 2. Intersubjectivity

Passerini's use of micro-history and psychoanalysis in the study of intellectual history is grounded on a methodological position concerning the study of subjectivity. As in Passerini's previous work, subjectivity is traced in networks of interaction between subjects and collectivities. In this latest book, love – one of two thematic poles of the work – also operates as a conceptual tool in order to redefine the notion of interactive subjectivity. As the author notes, "placing love at the core of identity – rather than linking identities with an abstract and intellectual individualism or with an inherited patrimony based on class, race or region – would imply that elective affinities as well as inherited ones are constitutive of individuals and of their relationships with their collectives." (20)

The introduction and historical pursuit of a notion of community based not on kinship or patrimony but on horizontal relations between individuals based on intersecting imaginings of subjectivity is one of the major contributions of *Europe in Love* to contemporary cultural analysis.

## 3. Writing History

Imagination also operates as a methodological force in *Europe in Love*, particularly in the way in which Passerini presents the material and allows her own narrative to unravel, so to speak.

Passerini exposes her material in a detailed narrative manner devoid of theoretical statements. The text is in general free from signposts that would direct the reader to view the historical information in a particular way and reach certain conclusions. In this sense Passerini's historical narration promotes interactivity. Details compose an image that invites the reader to interact with the available information, select the stories that s/he wants to restore and trace the itineraries that s/he is interested in. The detailed historical description operates as an impressionistic picture open to subjective conceptualization and interpretation.

In conclusion, *Europe in Love* opens up a terrain for new forms of debate around issues of Europeanness as well as historical vision and narration. The book implements the rich tradition of critique against Eurocentrism with a new perspective that resets European self-imagination and intra-European emotions at the heart of hegemonic as well as counter-hegemonic constructions of Europeanness. The redirection of analysis towards the world of emotions, imagination and relationships promotes the idea that Europe remains an "unfinished business" both on the level of historical exploration as well as on that of imaginary creation and political vision.

**Mark Mazower,**  
*Dark Continent. Europe's  
 Twentieth Century*

**London: Allen Lane, 1998/  
 New York: Knopf, 1999.**  
 xvi + 496 pp.

by **Nicholas Doumanis**

For those of us who teach twentieth-century European history, the two questions that rarely figure in the texts we prescribe are: what is the "Europe" being referred to, and does the ascribed periodisation have any useful meaning? One often begins such history courses with the First World War, followed by how it precipitated the Russian Revolution, the rise of Fascism, and ultimately the Second World War. The Cold War provides the context in which unresolved tensions are played out, and which are unexpectedly unravelled later with the implosion of Communism. Undeniably, the string of crises that span the period 1914-1990 are intimately connected, but what precisely are the factors that made for this intimacy? What gave Europe's twentieth century its unity? In short, how do we account for a truly comprehensive European historical experience? In his recent tome on Europe since antiquity, the Oxford historian Norman Davies begins by criticising Western historiography for having privileged the histories of the "Great Powers" in their narratives, and for habitually excluding Eastern Europe. (*Europe. A History*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996.) Promise of a new inclusive reading of European history is not fulfilled, however, as the author proceeds with a conventional narrative, albeit richly embellished with non-Great Power and Eastern European material. More recently, another British historian, Richard Vinen, produced another large book subtitled *Europe in the Twentieth Century*, which provides acute insights into the dominant

features of this most tumultuous epoch, but the signposts are well known, and standard time-frames are not really reappraised. (*A History in Fragments. Europe in the Twentieth Century*. London: Little, Brown & Company, 2000.)

Of the spate of massive tomes on massive subjects that adorned our bookshops recently – on Europe, the World, the Universe, each, no doubt, seeking to cash in on some lingering *fin de siècle* mood – few have the analytical depth of Mark Mazower's *Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century*. What is striking about this book is that it takes so little for granted. In questioning the nature of the subject and its allotted time frame, it can make us think differently about what is arguably the most historiographically contested field there is. The author's sense of European history is not guided by paradigmatic national pathways (Britain, France, Germany), nor is it determined by end points, especially the collapse of Communism and European unification, which may seem to substantiate long-held conceits about Europe as the natural home of democracy and liberty. Rather, Mazower's *Dark Continent* is one which also conceived of the "racial state," and whose collective destiny could well have been shaped by Nazi Germany, had fortune twisted slightly differently. That historically plausible scenario problematises "Europe" as a symbol of positive values, but Mazower's task is not to show that the "real" Europe is its dark side. Rather, time and again he asserts that hindsight inhibits our understanding of the course of European state formation through the twentieth century. The continent's future was contested by competing ideologies after the complete demise of the *ancien régime* in 1918, and each had to contend with the realities of mass society rendered unstable in a violently fluctuating postwar economy. As the text convincingly shows, the Europe of today was not at all inevitable.

The opening chapter on the post-1918 era gives the reader an indication of the originality and erudition that characterises the entire book. Whereas most commentators focus on the struggle

between Left and Right, Mazower draws our attention to the fact that the political map of Europe, with some prodding from Woodrow Wilson, was quite suddenly dominated by liberal democracies. The disappearance of the *ancien régimes* allowed for political reconstruction along democratic lines, but while statesmen were happy to draw-up constitutions embodying liberal values, what citizens wanted much more were better living standards. For Mazower, the leitmotif of twentieth-century state formation is the social contract, that after 1918 the citizenry now expected the state to guarantee its welfare and good living standards. Given that such expectations had been raised and entrenched by the war experience, one might have expected the narrative to begin earlier. The author nevertheless argues that liberal democracies crumbled through the interwar years because states could not uphold their part of the contract, owing mainly to the economic chaos that afflicted the entire globe through to the next war, as well as deep-seated bourgeois desires for a return to *laissez faire* capitalism.

Democracy's roots had proven shallow, whereas those of nationalism had been embedded deeply by the war, and it was nationalism more akin to Maurras than Mazzini. Nationalism's myths and symbols rapidly filled the cultural void left by the *ancien régime*, but whilst nationalism confirmed "the people" as the embodiment of the nation, it also demarcated rigid boundaries of exclusion, ushering in an age of unprecedented persecution of minorities and especially Jews. Liberal democracies were replaced by right-wing authoritarian regimes that convincingly beat the drum of nationalism, and Mazower argues, *pace* Eric Hobsbawm and Arno Mayer, that the debate over Europe's future was carried out not between Left and Right, but *within* the Right. Communism was a compelling factor in European politics, but it was successfully confined to the Soviet Union, meanwhile the choice was between backward-looking authoritarian regimes (e.g., that of Admiral Horthy in Hungary) and fascism. The latter prevailed because it responded most

vigorously and imaginatively to the political challenges posed by mass society, and Mazower explores the wider significance of Hitler's *Volksgemeinschaft* and Nazism's urge to obliterate the distinction between state and society.

However, Hitler's New Order, as exemplified by German administration in occupied territories during the Second World War, was so horrifying that it did much to foster renewed interest in liberal democracy. Hitler's racially exclusive vision for Europe promised enslavement and murder, which is one reason, Mazower insightfully points out, the more ethnically inclusive Soviet empire survived the war and the Nazi empire did not. The war had discredited right-wing nationalism, whereas the prospects of liberal democracy, with support now forthcoming from conservatives, appeared especially promising in 1945. Moreover, war-weary Europeans were also weary of ideology, and sought a future in which they could immerse themselves in domestic life and the fruits of consumerism, so much so that they tacitly approved the failure of postwar governments to bring more than a mere token of war criminals to justice. Liberal democracy's prospects in the West, however, much as that of communism in the East, depended on state commitment to societal welfare. Mazower does not bemoan the passing of welfare state capitalism because it persisted, albeit in significantly watered down-form, even in Thatcherite Britain.

There is a great deal more in this book that will challenge standard assumptions and make us rethink. Mazower has already won well-deserved acclaim for his work on modern Greek history, and has followed in the footsteps of other specialists in the field, such as William H. McNeill, in casting his sights on much bigger subjects. Although I did not find the title of the book particularly apt – Europe after 1950 does not seem so "dark" – I cannot think of a better discussion on the course of post-1918 European history. Those of us who have been teaching twentieth-century European history will no longer think about our subject in quite the same way.

**Mark Mazower,  
*The Balkans***

**London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson,  
2000. viii+159 pp.**

**by Vangelis Kechriotis**

The publication of Mark Mazower's book on the Balkans may, at first glance, be challenged on at least two grounds. First, why another book on the Balkans? Isn't it too fashionable, during the last decade, not only for historians, but also for journalists, politicians, and "observers" of one stripe or another to account for what they think "has taken place" and what they think "should be done" in this infamous region? Second, how can you manage to talk adequately about such a huge issue? Isn't it just too ambitious to try to cover some eight centuries of history of such a large area in 160 pages?

The first of these issues is addressed by the writer himself in his introduction.

Whether it is possible to take a fresh look at the Balkans, without seeing them refracted through the prism of 'the Balkans' we have lived with for so long, is the main challenge of this work. (5)

As far as the second issue is concerned, the reader cannot have a picture, anyway, unless one follows the narration up to the very end. What I'll try to elaborate on here will be this notion of a "fresh" look, what exactly it consists of, and how "fresh" it is.

There are at least two significant steps taken by the writer in regard to this point. The first of his analytical contributions lies in the fact that by tracing the origin of narratives through the long *durée* he delineates, he can draw, for instance, the powerful impact of Western stereotypes back to "the tension between Orthodox and Catholic or... the rift of incomprehension that lies

between Christianity and Islam." This should not be read, however, as corresponding to theories such as the "clash of civilizations," as advocated by Huntington. Mazower explicitly states later that "whatever the merits of this as a vision of the future, it must now be evident that it cannot serve as a model of the region's past." (64)

The second analytical challenge of the book, as he programmatically declares, is its textual approach: "A truer and less jaundiced understanding of the Balkan requires us to try to unravel the ways in which attitudes to the region have been shaped not only by the events which took place there but by more sweeping narratives of the development of European identity and civilisation."

The outcome of such an approach is that he structures his arguments around an elaborate endeavour to deconstruct historiographical debates intimately connected to the problem of "broader perception." In this effort, he mainly targets two issues. On the one hand, he refers to the "cradle" of Balkan cultural and demographical amalgamation, the Ottoman Empire. He points out that the delicate task to be achieved now is how to incorporate the history of Ottoman rule into the narrative of the Continent. At the same time he points out:

More recently a disillusionment with nationalism has bred nostalgia for the days of Empire. A new trend in Ottoman historiography emphasises ethnic and religious coexistence under the Sultans, and turns the Empire into a kind of multi-cultural paradise *avant la lettre*... If there was no ethnic conflict, it was not because of 'tolerance' but because there was no concept of nationality among the Sultan's subjects, and because Christianity stressed the community of believers rather than ethnic solidarity. (15)

On the other hand, his second historiographical task is to challenge the genre of normative Western historiography which has been built on the back of theories of modernity, since recently the classic binarism of concepts such as

progress-backwardness has proved problematic. Still, the “universal models of economic development and political democratisation” seem to be more valid than ever, as tools, not only for understanding the problems the countries of this area suffer, but also the necessary apparatus for any “reconstruction” formulas to be adopted. It seems that the Balkans have to be re-educated in “Western” ideas and practices, in order to cover the distance. In criticising this attitude, Mazower suggests that:

We might find that the story we tell does not so much affirm as undermine any sense of European superiority. For just as Europe gave the Balkans the categories with which its people defined themselves, so it gave them the ideological weapons – in the shape primarily of modern romantic nationalism – with which to destroy themselves. Trying to understand the Balkans, in other words, challenges us to look at history itself as something more than a mirror which we hold up, blocking out the past to reflect our own virtues. (15)

The book is structured in an introduction, four chapters, and an epilogue. One could say six chapters, if the beginning and the end had not been of a clearly paradigmatic character. In his introduction, Mazower elaborates on the terms used in different historical periods, especially during the last two centuries, in order to describe, what we tend, in “politically correct” terms to call Southeast Europe (even if, by that, not everybody means the same thing). He demonstrates how the term “Balkans,” which is taken for granted but also bears negative connotations both to insiders and outsiders, was not always the term in use.

In the first chapter, entitled “The Land and the Inhabitants,” and which, very predictably so, opens with the Braudel quote “Mountains come first...,” Mazower discusses the immense influence that geography, the morphology of the land, and the climate had on economic and social developments. He also studies the pat-

terns of communication or detachment that this morphology entailed and the delicate relation between urban and agrarian populations which, by its alterations, has put its stamp on ideological developments of the age of nationalism.

In the second chapter “Before the Nation,” the writer describes a historical era, the late Byzantine and mainly Ottoman period, which, as we often tend to forget, was very different from the world of nation-states that we have been accustomed to. The priority of religion, the importance of local identities and thus of inter-communal relations, the continuities of pre-modern societies and the first seeds of nationalism are the main themes.

In the third chapter “Eastern Questions,” he deals with the long course of national movements which were (very much so) related to the aspirations of the Great Powers for hegemony in the area. Therefore, he chooses the plural in order to refer to the way the prolonged disintegration of the Ottoman Empire has been generally described. The “Eastern Questions” emerge under several circumstances over time. To apply a solid view of these would end up in oversimplification and deduction.

In the fourth chapter “Building the Nation State,” he touches upon the issue of how state élites (especially the liberal ones) tried and managed to produce and apply an ideology of homogenisation and suppression of minorities in order to embark themselves “on a policy of state modernisation in which a strong central power would drag their country into the 20th century through active social and economic reforms.” (109)

A very important part of this chapter refers to the statist policy of the communist period, and attempts a comparison on both social and economic grounds, in the process both bridging the historiographical gap between the two sides of the “Iron Curtain” and bringing countries such as Greece into debates which only recently have taken non-communist countries into consideration. One wonders whether bringing Turkey in would make the picture more complete, since

there is a certain lack of balance present in the fact that Muslim Turks (whom I would differentiate from the Ottomans) are always present before 1923, only to disappear after that.

In the epilogue "On Violence," Mazower comments on concepts of violence developed in the West and the way violence in the Balkans has been reiterated as a result of their "Otherisation." He is thus attempting to deconstruct the view, very widespread in the West, that the violence which broke out in the area was nothing more than the latest in a series of massacres so frequent in the history of the area that as British Prime Minister John Major put it, it "was a product of impersonal and inevitable forces beyond anyone's control."

What Mazower argues in this context is that:

for centuries, as this book has attempted to show, life in the Balkans was no more violent than elsewhere... ethnic cleansing... was not the spontaneous eruption of primeval hatreds but the deliberate use of organised violence against civilians by paramilitary squads and army units. (128-29)

Or elsewhere:

Was there really, then, a special propensity to cruelty which lingered on in the Balkans into modern times?... On the lookout for evidence of Balkan bloodthirstiness, however, western observers have often mistaken the myths spun by nineteenth-century romantic historiography for eternal truths. (128)

Nevertheless, many of the points made by the author are not new. They are inscribed in a debate which has been articulated in books such as Maria Todorova's *Imagining the Balkans* (Oxford University Press, 1997) or Elli Skopetea's *Η Δύση της Ανατολής* [The Sunset of the East] (Γνώση, 1992), or, with a different geographical and chronological focus, Larry Wolff's *Inventing Eastern Europe* (Stanford University Press, 1994). What is new, and I would argue exemplary, about Mazower's work, though, is that he has managed to organise in an eloquent and cohesive

way, arguments which have been developed in works of a more specialised character, and he has created a very useful handbook. Two dangers lurk here. The first concerns whether the range of secondary sources, including sources in Balkan languages, can compensate for the lack of original research. On this point, the writing holds up, despite the fact that in some cases, inevitably, particular views of experts are adopted and are not presented as part of a debate, which would otherwise be the case. The second danger has to do with the selection of examples. It is very difficult to refer to such a vast number and range of controversial issues (such as conversions to Islam or the bias against Muslims) without being in danger of taking sides. The writer has picked his examples in such a way that, if his book is read *in toto*, it leaves no doubt that he has avoided the danger.

On the whole, Mazower's work on the Balkans, by way of overcoming post-colonial bipolarity, leaves no doubt that, to quote Todorova: "In such places it is possible to live both in and beyond the West." (*Imagining the Balkans*, p. ix.)

**S. Kedourie (ed.),**  
*Turkey Identity,*  
*Democracy, Politics*

**London/Portland-Oregon:**  
**Frank Cass, 1996. 257 pp.**

**S. Kedourie (ed.),**  
*Seventy-Five Years of*  
*Turkish Republic*

**London/Portland-Oregon:**  
**Frank Cass, 2000. 237 pp.**

**by Alexandros Petsas**

First of all, this series includes another book, brought out under the title *Turkey Before and After Atatürk. Internal and External Affairs*, also edited by Kedourie (Frank Cass, 1999). It was a personal choice not to deal with this collection. Indeed, we are talking about collections of articles, originally published as special issues of *Middle Eastern Studies*. Actually, these books should be used as journals. Inter-chapter coherence is not, of course, usually found in such a publication. The cohesive substance in the works being reviewed here is the word "Turkey," that is to say, something over-general. It is in this sense that the titles could be misleading if someone is interested, say, in a general history of Turkey. The papers are not meant for readers unfamiliar with (at least) basic historical and political discourses on Turkey. Hence I would not recommend these books for "wandering" in the country's past and present, the problems of which are otherwise fascinating and serious.

Before starting, I would like to point out that the overwhelming majority of the contributors are political scientists, which gives the series a certain character. To make reviewing the collections a bit more manageable, I have applied several

criteria, focusing on those articles that may be viewed as: a) breaking with commonly accepted historical myths and political theses; b) staying away from a line of reasoning geared to domestic (Turkish) consumption yet facing passionately the object under study, and c) placing themes and problems in a broader socio-political space and historical discourse.

I shall start with the chapter by A. Kadioğlu treating "The Paradox of Turkish Nationalism and the Construction of Official Identity" [*Turkey Identity...*]. According to her, in Turkish nationalism there is the paradox of the so-called Eastern nationalisms (i.e. as non-Western), which consists in the desire to adjust national culture to (Western) progress and at the same time to maintain its distinctive identity. Kadioğlu believes that this paradoxical synthesis "enhanced the power of the state élites in Turkey and paved the way to a manufactured, official identity." Her bibliography is excellent (note the citations from P. Chatterjee's *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse*, Minneapolis, 1993). Comparison of the French and German nationalist models and their relations with the Turkish case, examples from Ottoman literary works at the end of the nineteenth century (helping us to comprehend what Ş. Mardin calls "just discourse" in Turkish society), the republican regime's ideological choices, the reappearance of Islamic and Kurdish identities after the junta of 1980 (identities which had remained blocked and suppressed till then by the official identity constructed from above)... these are the strong points through which Kadioğlu's analysis unfolds, without leaving us in obscurity and confusion. She has a clear point and offers it in a fascinating way.

Two articles treat the Kurdish issue in a very different way: M. Yeğen's "The Turkish State Discourse and the Exclusion of Kurdish Identity" [*Turkey Identity...*] and A. Mango's "Atatürk and the Kurds" [*Seventy-Five Years...*]. Yeğen deals with an issue that really divides Turkish studies: whether Kurdish resistance (not the current one)

was national or not. As sociologist, he analyzes it in sociological terms. He does this as well because "Kurdish resistance has mostly been analyzed in exclusively political terms in Turkey... Most accounts approached such resistance on the basis of a premature question," (the above mentioned) and the answer was almost always that it was not national (this view has been also maintained by dissident Kurdish scholars and Kurdish activists of the 1970s alike). Yeğen's reasoning could be summarized as follows. Turkish state discourse and the texts produced since the middle of the twentieth century in its framework, certainly never mention the Kurdishness of the Kurdish question (the Republican Turkish state denied that the Kurds exist). What has been typically reported is the state's fight against reactionary politics (Caliphate and Sultanate), tribal resistance (autonomous political structures), and regional backwardness (smuggling and resistance to taxation and military recruitment). Yeğen's point is that it is exactly these elements that comprise the socio-political space wherein Kurdishness was constituted in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

I consider A. Mango's chapter a classic example of the interaction between Turkish studies and politics. As St. Pasmazoglou in *Ευρώπη-Τουρκία. Αντανakλάσεις και διαθλάσεις*, [Europe-Turkey. Reflections and Refractions] (Athens, 1993), Sp. Vryonis in *The Turkish State and History* (Thessaloniki, 1991) and F. Ahmad in "La politique étrangère de la Turquie dans les années 80," P. Dumont, Fr. Georgeon (eds.), *La Turquie au seuil de l'Europe* (L'Harmattan, 1991) each show, area studies in the U.S.A., and even more so in Europe, are deeply and sometimes crudely politicized. Mango's paper gives us the chance to detect some typical methods used to transform in an intangible way an academic text. The general concern is to justify Turkish positions, i.e. accounting for the soundness and sanctity of such intentions. For example, on p. 19 Mango poses the question, "why

[did] Kurdish self-government drop [...] out of Ankara and Istanbul politics" after the War of Independence (1922)? The argument-response is the priority to create a modern, secular Turkey. This priority is presented as indisputable and, so to speak, sacred. The matter might be considered minor if this was the only case. Yet, further on, the writer's ideological choices become clearer. On p. 21, without any references, he deals with the huge question of what the model and principles of Turkish nationalism are. He mentions, "[T]he model was, as *ever* [my emphasis], France, where Bretons, Occitanians, Savoyards, Flemings etc. had all been assimilated to French culture." On p. 22, closing his chapter and leaving us with his final message, Mango refers to the utilization of Kurds in the War of Independence as "successful management." Afterwards, the "requirement of creating a modern nation state" justifies everything, and the final blow is given in the statement that "there was no vocal demand in Turkish society for the preservation of distinct ethnic cultures, let alone the introduction of local self-rule." After all this, the hope and optimism expressed in the last paragraph concerning the future of the Kurdish question fit the expediencies of the article, though I believe that being optimistic in the Balkans and Turkey is at very least a naïve position.

Now let's look at articles taking up aspects of Turkey's foreign policy during the late Ottoman period: H. Ünal's "Young Turk Assessments of International Politics, 1906-09" [*Turkey Identity...*] and B. Gökay's "Turkish Settlement and the Caucasus, 1918-20" [*Turkey Identity...*]. Ünal proves that the foreign policy of the Young Turks between 1906-09 shows that the received view that the Young Turks originally had Anglophile leanings but moved away from friendship with Britain and towards Germany following the cold-shouldering by the British, needs some fundamental revision. In practice, the new regime in Turkey had no preference for either side; in fact, it hardly had any coherent foreign policy strategy at all. As the Central Powers were

defeated in World War I, the demonization of them by the Entente Powers before and during the war dominated the postwar years as well. Certainly, the image of the defeated powers' allies could not be positive in the victors' eyes after a devastating world war. The assumption that the Young Turks originally had Anglophile leanings, served, and still serves, as an argument against reproaches concerning the choice of the "wrong" camp (especially ideologically, as the victors represented the constitutional regimes). At the same time, the reception of this view serves Turkish domestic consumption: entering into alliance with the Central Powers and ultimate defeat had had disastrous consequences for the future of the Ottoman Empire, the territorial past of which (to say the least) sometimes functions as the Republic of Turkey's historical legacy and can be found as well in Turkish political discourse. Moreover, tracing the articles and correspondence cited, we have the chance to follow the factors affecting the Young Turks' policy towards the Great Powers, which, of course, reflect the period's ideological conflicts (various expressions of Turkish nationalism). For all these reasons it is a chapter that deserves attention.

Gökay's paper deals with a topic now back on the Turkish foreign policy agenda. He shows that while Ankara may now be concerned with preventing the re-establishment of Russian hegemony in Transcaucasia, during the critical years of 1918-20 it pursued the opposite policy. At that stage Ankara and Moscow were driven into a diplomatic coalition by their joint opposition to the project of the partition of Turkey and the establishment of Britain as the dominant power. With this paper, Gökay successfully manages to present with clarity something finally very difficult: the whole military-political setting that came into being between the Aegean and Caspian seas from the Mudros armistice in October 1918 until mid-1921, when the Bolsheviks dominated in Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan.

I would like to move to present-day Turkey and an interesting paper prepared by two academics: the very famous M. Heper from Bilkent University who treats "The Press and the Consolidation of Democracy in Turkey" [*Turkey Identity...*] together with T. Demirel. They show the partisan attitude of journalists in Turkey. In the cases they examine, the columnists' aversion to T. Özal and their love-hate relationship with S. Demirel overcame their rhetoric of democracy. This is useful, because through their examination one can realize the completely different terms in which politics function in Turkey (although this is not the aim of the writers), at least in comparison with, for example, Greece during the last twenty years. What I mean is that we have the chance to discover through journalistic citation aspects of public opinion about some of the pressing questions of Turkish political life over the last twenty years, such as the social and political rise of Islamists and civil-military strife. What I find most interesting is the writers' general treatment and comments, which could be characterized as *öztürk* (originally Turkish), i.e. they cannot be easily understood by somebody not following the actualities of Turkish political life. The analytical framework they choose is that of seeing Turkey in a transitional stage between West and East, which means neither West nor East and also a little of West, a bit of East, expressing their hopes that in the future everything will be better, which implies closer to the West than is perceived in Turkey.

Next, we can take a look at two very interesting chapters on Evren's junta in 1980 (or the 12 *Eylül İhtilali*, meaning the September 12th Revolution, still referred to this way by a majority of Turks). The one is I. Dağı's "Democratic Transition in Turkey: 1980-83: The Impact of European Diplomacy" [*Turkey Identity...*], and the other G. Karabelias' "The Evolution of Civil-Military Relations in Post-War Turkey, 1980-95" [*Seventy-Five Years...*]. Dağı finds that external pressures from the Western powers, especially Turkey's European allies, were crucial in speed-

ing the generals towards the restoration of elected civilian government. "K. Evren and his predecessors as temporary military ruler may well have had foreign policy considerations at the back of their minds in formulating domestic strategies, but they were extremely reluctant to admit it, if only because of the need to maintain their credibility and prestige with the home constituency." The paper is of great importance as it treats a political myth that is not put forward only in Turkey, but generally in Turkish studies: the commitment of the Turkish military to a democratic form of government and its legacy as a modernizer. The chapter also elucidates the factors affecting the attitudes of European countries, the Council of Europe, and the United States towards Evren's junta.

Karabelias offers us, first of all, a very good bibliography. His main interest lies in placing and analyzing the military class in Turkish society. He presents its evolution since the Republican period, opening a big debate in Turkish studies. Karabelias upholds F. Ahmad's (and others') view of the military's role in Turkish society from the 1960s on, that "the High Command became more involved with the defense of the system than with any particular party. The primary concern was with stability..." (F. Ahmad, *The Making of Modern Turkey*. London, 1993, p. 131) The opposite camp is used to underestimate the role of the military in Turkish society, resorting to historical relativism or, even worse, to justification and support of its role (e.g. St. J. Shaw-E. K. Shaw, *History of the Ottoman Empire and Modern Turkey*, Cambridge University Press, 1987, vol. 2, last chapter).

O. Tekelioğlu offers us another very interesting chapter. The topic might seem bizarre: "The Rise of a Spontaneous Synthesis: The Historical Background of Turkish Popular Music" [*Turkey Identity...*]. Tekelioğlu gives us the historical background of Turkey's musical trends, their transformations and current situation. Of course, his perspective is not that of a reviewer in a music magazine. The most important element of

Tekelioğlu's exhaustive analysis concerns the policies adopted by the Republican regime on questions of music and culture generally, during nationalization. The East-West or West-East synthesis, the role of the T.R.T. (Turkish Radio and Television Broadcasting Corporation), arabesque as a spontaneous synthesis which the cultural élite had not expected and had failed utterly to comprehend, are issues all unexpectedly interesting, since they reveal the absolutely mandatory nature of the Republican regime's cultural policy, which came into being "within a positivistic framework and conceived as [a policy] of social engineering."

I would switch the spotlight to two papers that provide much needed information and elements for a clear view of the electoral and political setting of the 1969-1991 period on the one hand, and of the 1990s on the other: respectively, A. Shmuelevitz's "Urbanization and Voting for the Turkish Parliament" [*Turkey Identity...*] and Sv. Cornell's "Turkey: Return to Stability?" [*Seventy-Five Years...*]. Shmuelevitz tries to find the connections among an increase in population, rapid and fierce urbanism, and voters' electoral preferences. His remarks on what he describes as a unique phenomenon, i.e. voters' shift from the Left or extreme-Left to the religious or extreme-Right and vice versa, deserve our attention. So does his analysis of the Left's success in urban centres, southeastern Turkey's traditional support of the Left and, above all, Islamists's electoral rise since 1991.

On the other hand, Cornell's approach treats exclusively the 1990s and especially the post-1995 period. Avoiding tedious details, Cornell manages to give us the whole of the views put forward by domestic and Western political analysts. In the process, he succeeds in something considerably difficult: the writer does not take a stand on the points he raises and does not advance his personal sympathies.

Next, I shall move to E. J. Zürcher's "Kosovo Revisited: Sultan Reşad's Macedonian Journey of June 1911" [*Seventy-Five Years...*]. Zürcher

is an eminent person in Turkish studies. In this paper he offers us a vivid account of the situation and atmosphere in the Balkans right before the Balkan wars that have completely altered everything. It can really be read very pleasantly, and chapters like this remind us of the qualitative differences between history and political science. His remarks and descriptions concerning Albanians, Thessaloniki and the battle of Kosovo are absolutely remarkable. We should also note Zürcher's views on the four objectives put forward by the C.U.P. (Committee of Union and Progress), which actually organized the Sultan Mehmet V's, or Prince Reşad's (April 1909-July 1918), tour in Macedonia. Zürcher mentions that the objectives were: a) "Unity of the Elements"; b) cementing ties with the Albanian Muslim population; c) increasing C.U.P.'s popularity; and d) strengthening Ottoman-Muslim consciousness. Zürcher argues that the tour failed in the first three of its four objectives.

Before concluding, I have to mention the chapters that were not consistent with the criteria I posed at the outset. I believe there can be a grouping of E. Athanassopoulou's "Western Defense Developments and Turkey's Search for Security in 1948" [*Turkey Identity...*], B. K. Yeşilbursa's "Turkey's Participation in the Middle East Command and its Admission to NATO, 1950-52" [*Seventy-Five Years...*] and C. Göktepe's "The 'Forgotten Alliance'? Anglo-Turkish Relations and CENTO, 1959-65" [*Seventy-Five Years...*]. These are papers regarding Turkey's role in the Western camp, as it developed after World War II and during the first period of the Cold War.

In other papers, S. Yılmaz deals with Enver Paşa, one of the most important Ottoman political and military leaders in the Empire's twilight. M. Aydın's essay, though it offers a promising title: "Determinants of Turkish Foreign Policy: Historical Framework and Traditional Inputs," does not fulfil its objectives. A. İçduygu, Y. Çolak and N. Soyarik collectively treat the citizenship question in Turkey. S. T. Wasti is interested in

the Ottoman period's last chroniclers, and Ü. C. Sakallıoğlu in the True Path Party.

I would like to conclude with T. Nichols and N. Sugar's "Small Employers in Turkey: The OSTIM Estate at Ankara" [*Turkey Identity...*]. They give us insights into the lives and problems of small-scale manufacturers on an industrial estate in Ankara. I think the topic is quite indifferent from the perspective of a genuinely Turkish sociology. What I find interesting in their research and, for all I know, what is quite original, is the method followed in order to collect the data, including extensive field research and interviews. Their chapter closes with small-business owner Abdullah's citation: "...in the end, honesty, goodness and kindness will be rewarded... Certainly by Allah." Indeed, Allah looks like the only thing to believe in low and medium income groups that have been going through the economic crisis of the last twenty years.

**Dimitra Lambropoulou,**  
*Γράφοντας από τη φυλακή.*  
*Όψεις της*  
*υποκειμενικότητας των*  
*πολιτικών κρατουμένων,*  
*1947-1960*  
*[Writing from the Prison.*  
*Aspects of Political Prisoners'*  
*Subjectivity, 1947-1960]*

**Athens: Nefeli, 1999. 168 pp.**

**by Pothiti Hantzroula**

Dimitra Lambropoulou's book deals with one of the most traumatic experiences of twentieth-century Greek society. The country's civil war has consistently undergone repression, oblivion, and silence as the measure of its impact and status in contemporary Greek society. (See, "Fifty years after the Civil War," special edition, *Το Βήμα*, 17-10-1999.) More than fifty years in its aftermath, the civil war remains a ghost haunting public life. The national reconciliation established through the official recognition of the resistance was fostered on the premise of silencing the civil war. Today, every mention of the civil war in political discourses is anathematized, as this is perceived as divisive for the nation.

Despite the repression of the civil war in political discourse, almost immediately in its aftermath and especially after the fall of the colonels' dictatorship (and again more densely after 1989), diverse genres of civil war memory construction, such as autobiographies, memoirs, and testimonies as well as novels, works of art and movies, have shaped our sense of the past. And, quite recently, archives and publication of material together with new perspectives and methodologies enabled researchers to shed light on hidden and neglected aspects of the civil war.

Dimitra Lambropoulou's book marks a change not only in terms of the insertion of the civil war in historiography but in the insertion of a new subject of the war, namely political prisoners. Its title and subtitle is eloquent about the kind of history of the Greek civil war she has set out to write. Its aim is to shed light on political prisoners' understanding of the experiences of imprisonment and exile, which were articulated and communicated in and through writing.

*Writing from the Prison* engages with an active subject in the most confining of situations, a subject who is both the subject of writing as well as its object. The elaboration of this interaction between the writing subject and the making of a political subject is the most important contribution of the book. Writing is treated neither as a means of conveying the experience of political penalization nor simply as a vehicle of political prisoners' subjectivity. The writing process is understood as one of the means through which the subjects made sense of the experience of imprisonment. Writing created a space for the articulation and communication of this experience, as well as for the construction of memory, and thus had diverse effects on the formation of political identity. Writing emerges as a multi-dimensional practice, whose political, psychological and symbolic dimensions are fully presented to us thanks to Lambropoulou's sensitive and multi-layered analysis.

The sources consist of letters of political prisoners which are divided methodologically into three categories: a) letters of those executed during the period 1947-1949; b) personal correspondence of prisoners between 1950-1958, addressed to prisoners' families and friends; and c) individual or collective letters to authorities and organizations published in the press whose aim was to publish the claims and grievances of prisoners as well as communicate the conditions of prison and exile. These documents, which are now held in the Archives of Contemporary Social History (ASKI) in Athens, previously belonged to the archives of two political organizations, the

Greek Communist Party (KKE) and the United Democratic Left (EDA).

The book's structure is organized around this categorization because these three forms of correspondence also constituted the principal forms of the construction of prison experience. They were addressed to diverse audiences, written for diverse purposes, and they emphasized differential experiences. Thus, they shed light on different aspects of prisoners' subjectivities.

Analyzing the letters of the executed, Lambropoulou reconstructs in an excellent way the process of the formation of collective subjectivity. In her analysis, writing emerges as a counter-strategy to the negation of political identity: to the humiliating positioning of political prisoners as the nation's enemies and traitors, political prisoners responded through the renewed demonstration of their political identity. Writing was a political practice that both derived from the political culture that produced the prisoners' collectivity, but also produced a political culture with some measure of autonomy.

Lambropoulou analyzes the uses of discourses that illustrate the deep anthropological, socio-cultural and psychological dimensions of death. She goes beyond viewing the testimonies as simply adopting a national discourse or reproducing stereotypes of national identity. Neither does she treat attachments to family or the nation as mere indications of regression to dominant discourses. Rather she handles notions such as sacrifice, pride before death, and the connection between moral and political stances as means through which the individual perceives his/her role in the historical process. Through the very act of writing prior to execution, political prisoners transformed death into a collective experience. The meaning that political prisoners gave to death was not only conveyed but also created through the written word. The messages of the executed created a living community through the memory of the dead. They constituted undeniable proof that death was an act with a political meaning that bound together those who

were sacrificed for the transformation of society. Death reminded the others of their duty to demand justification of their sacrifice, but it was through the very act of writing and of the messages' communicative function that the dead, the moribund and the alive were bound together not only around a common cause but a shared identity. The letters established continuity between the past and the present, those inside the prison and those outside, the dead and the living. The analysis of the letters of the executed illuminates the multiple dimensions and functions of the act of writing, its effects on those who perform it as well as on its recipients, and, thus, its crucial role in the creation of a community.

In the analysis of the second category of letters, correspondence is perceived above all as a discourse of absence. Writing is an act, a movement towards the other, the struggle to fill the distance with the outside world and to reconstitute the relationship with one's own past, to re-integrate the alienated and fragmented self. Correspondence was a means of re-establishing roles and relationships as well as networks of communication that had been destroyed as a result of the war. The excellent analysis of love letters inserts us deeply in the discourse and poetics of absence. Through the discursive analysis of these letters, Lambropoulou unfolds the gendered, cultural and class determinations of the subject of writing.

The organization of collective life in prison was a counter-strategy to repression and to conditions of political and physical elimination. Political prisoners' self-organization transformed the space of confinement/exclusion into a community. Through prisoners' correspondence Lambropoulou traces the imprint of power on the subject and the strategies to regain control over one's own body and self; the dialectical tensions between the individual and the collectivity within subjectivity; the relationship between everyday life and politics; and the forms of resistance and solidarity that emerged to counter-balance the repressive power of the regime and to survive.

Lambropoulou sheds light not only on the process of formation of a collective subject but also on the complex dynamic relationship between the individual and the collectivity, its ambivalences and ambiguities, the relationship between the inside and the outside, that is, between the detainees and the free community, between the public and private, one's relation with his/her own past. Political prisoners emerge neither as victims of the regime's repressive power nor as passive subjects of party authority. Beyond the dichotomies of resistance/submission, Lambropoulou leads us to getting the full measure not only of multiple subject positions in relation to power, but also of subjectivity as the arena in which different forces seek to colonize the subject.

Although prison leaders aimed at the formation of a unified identity through the organization of a community, Dimitra Lambropoulou shows the multiple and diverse attachments that grounded prisoners' subjectivity as well as the multiple constructions of what constituted the political as a result of prisoners' diverse cultural, educational and geographical backgrounds as well as the intersections of class and gender within the community. Ultimately, the community of prisoners emerges not so much as a collectivity within which absolute identifications exist, but rather as an organized multiplicity of identifications. "Political prisoners form a micro-society which is not characterized only by identifications and cohesion but also by internal diversities, hierarchical relationships, horizontal and vertical sections." (127-28).

Finally, Lambropoulou explores the construction of the public image of political prisoners through letters to the press. These letters function as a public enactment of political prisoners' subjectivity and aim at the demonstration of a collective identity of political prisoners, which had otherwise been negated by the regime. Resisting their positioning as enemies of the nation, they put forward a counter-discourse (whose constituents were the epic story of the resistance, sacrifice

and martyrdom, and the repression of the civil war) that re-asserted their belonging in the nation and claimed their place in the canon of national history. The letters become the site of construction of collective memory through the production of narratives about the past and the handling of the experience of the present. The complex relationship between memory, oblivion, and silence in these narratives, and their impact on our present sense of history, remain to be explored.

By rendering aspects of the civil war open to acknowledgement, interpretation and theoretical discourse, and by drawing new connections between traces of the past, Lambropoulou's book, together with the recent production of historical work on the Greek civil war, show that the latter has become a field of research whose potential impact extends well beyond its own confines, as well as the confines of historiography, unsettling memory and enabling a confrontation with trauma.

***The Center for History  
and New Media (CHNM)  
(<http://chnm.gmu.edu/>)***

**by Despoina Valatsou**

The impact of new media technologies on academia is profound and calls for theoretical and practical reconsiderations of the organization and function of the mechanisms and processes of knowledge production. The introduction of new media technologies in the humanities and social sciences has generated lively debates that concern the object, methods, and goals of social research, teaching, and scholarship. In such an era of change, the discipline of history can not remain unaffected.

The Center for History and New Media (CHNM) at George Mason University (GMU) and its website constitute a valuable example for the study of such transformations in contemporary scholarly practices. CHNM was established in 1994 as a collaboration between GMU and the American Social History Project (ASHP) at the Center for Media and Learning (CML) of the City University of New York (CUNY). CHNM promotes the exploration of ways in which new media forms can be used in the production of historical works. Secondly, it proceeds in testing the effectiveness and quality of multimedia historical works in practice. Finally, it organizes forums, seminars and maintains a website to promote discussion of the possibilities of new media applications in the discipline of history. Examining the CHNM website, what is important is not only the information that it offers, but the way in which it functions in the overall context of historical scholarship and teaching.

#### **a. On-line Forum**

Aspiring to examine the possible interrelation between history and new media technologies, CHNM uses the Internet as a space where scholars and others engage in debates about the ways in which digital environments promote new modes of historical narrative, inquiry, and argumentation. In this sense, the website functions as a forum that invites and hosts ideas about the blurring of the boundaries between the recent discipline of new media studies and the “old” one of history. The aim is to create a space for expressing disciplinary and interdisciplinary methodologies.

The section entitled “Scholarship” is dedicated to a series of essays. By using the Internet as a digital environment to create a discussion forum, CHNM acknowledges that medium as a novel public space and as a new mode of public discourse. As such, it does not seek to drive to obsolescence or replace the “old,” or should we say traditional, mediums of public discourse, i.e. books, offline forums and journals. Rather, the discussion forum acknowledges the importance

of traditional mediums and takes advantage of them by combining them with digital and online modes of expression.

#### **b. Database**

CHNM’s director, Roy Rosenzweig, and staff believe that the Internet is not a radically new paradigm for historians; rather it has a plethora of resources and information to offer them (Rosenzweig and O’Malley, 1997). The website offers a directory and annotated guide to a selection of the “best” historical websites and to a number of affiliated websites that are sponsored by CHNM. It also maintains searchable databases of history websites, CD-ROMs, and history departments around the world. The abundance of online resources proves that the website is not self-enclosed. Rather, it is open and serves as a starting point where one interested in history and new media can begin exploring the field by progressively moving on to new points and relevant connections. It appears that CHNM places a value on interactivity but confines it – quite awkwardly – only to linking. CHNM understands the Internet as a global hypertext and consequently treats its website as such.

#### **c. Online Journal**

CHNM does not yet have its own e-journal, but it hosts another one: *English Matters*, a quarterly electronic magazine addressing teachers and students of English and posing questions about electronic textuality, literacy, and pedagogy. The presence of this e-magazine on its own page at CHNM’s website and not as a link raises questions, as it does not appear to have any sort of internal connection to CHNM. Apart from the thematic focus – which again does not directly concern directly history and new media but English and literature online – there is no obvious relation between *English Matters* and CHNM.

Another interesting section of the website is the page on hypertext and American studies. Motivated by the belief that theories about hypertext and scholarship should be tested in practice, CHNM undertook in 1999 a joint experimental

project with ASCP and *American Quarterly* entitled "Hypertext Scholarship in American Studies." The aim of the project was to combine "old" and new modes of writing. CHNM and *AQ* looked not for more theoretical essays about how hypertext and new media affect the communication and publication of scholarly arguments, but searched for actual online hypertext essays. "We wanted articles that did something new or innovative, that used the electronic medium to advantage. But we also wanted them to meet the conventional criteria for publication in *American Quarterly* – solid research, crisp analysis, interdisciplinarity, and clear prose." (Rosenzweig, 1999, 239)

Equally important is the collaboration between CHNM and *AQ*. In addition to being published online, the essays were also reviewed in *AQ*.<sup>1</sup> Rosenzweig presents the whole project; the authors comment on their work and several scholars review the articles more systematically. This combination of traditional and modern ways of publishing could be understood as a tentative effort of people who are more familiar with the former than the latter. In this case, the setup of this project raises questions, considering the fact that CHNM could have proceeded with the project, if not entirely on its own, then definitely relying on its website's space and quality for the e-publishing of the hypertext articles and the relevant commentaries. Rather, it seems that CHNM prefers to label this project experimental – a hybrid – and seeks to legitimize it through the collaboration with a traditional academic and already-established publishing medium. This choice raises a question: what is the relation between electronic projects and the non-electronic academic establishment of historical studies? It might be that the digitization of historical scholarship constitutes a shift in contemporary research agendas, still questioned and contested within the context of academic politics.

#### **d. CD-ROMS and Web-based Projects**

The *Who Built America* (WBA) digital series is the best-known CHNM CD-ROM production. The

first volume, *Who Built America? From the Centennial Celebration of 1876 to the Great War of 1914*, was the CD-ROM that initiated the formation of CHNM itself. It contains 5,000 pages, 700 pictures, sixty graphs, charts and maps, four hours of audio and forty-five minutes of film. The second one, *Who Built America? From the Great War of 1914 to the Dawn of the Atomic Age* covers the years 1914-1946 and maintains both the breadth of content and form of the first CD-ROM. These products are evidently important as they store huge amounts of data in a single digital item; they are easy and flexible to navigate precisely because of their digital form; the audio and filmic material add to the text and the images, and produce an enriched version of each period's history. They offer the opportunity to learn history not by passively receiving knowledge about the past but by actively searching and inquiring about it. However, the WBA CD-ROMs are still traditional history books transcribed in an electronic form, and that certainly raises questions about novelty and innovation. Does the convergence of history and new media simply lead to a massive digitization of historical information or could it result in alternative, multimedia ways of "doing" history?

The CHNM website also hosts several web-based projects. Some of these are a combination of offline and online digital products, like the "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution" project, which consists of a book, a CD-ROM and a website. Some others – e.g. "ECHO: Exploring & Collecting History Online" – experiment with multiple production sources, as they rely both on the exploration of existing online resources by CHNM contributors and on the contribution of the public in offering first-hand accounts of recent historical events.

#### **e. Teaching**

CHNM shows active interest in the promotion of new methods of teaching history. The website is organized in such a way that it attracts and facilitates teachers and students of history alike. Its functionality – as a forum – and its structure – as

a “deck” launching its visitors to other web resources —, along with the fact that it hosts various web-based projects, benefit those engaged either in communicating and teaching history or in learning it.

Also worth mentioning is “History Matters,” a very interesting web-based project, to which one can link directly through CHNM’s first page. Again, it is a collaboration between CHNM and ASHP/CML of CUNY. It is designed for and addresses U.S.-based high school teachers and college professors of history. The website offers information about web resources of history, teaching materials and digitized primary materials. Teachers are invited to participate in online threaded discussions on teaching U.S. history, and in improving the website’s content and functionality through their personal experience and comments.

CHNM also organizes seminars in order to train teachers how to effectively use new media technologies in their classrooms. It participates in ASHP’s program on the “New Media Classroom: Narrative, Inquiry, and Technology in the U.S. History Survey.” This program has both a theoretical and a practical strand. On the one hand, it aims to motivate high school teachers and college professors to rethink the content of their courses, the method of their teaching practice, and the pedagogy they follow. On the other hand, the program trains them in using new technologies as an active part of their teaching method and strategy. The program also examines issues of narrative and inquiry, and envisages the generation of an active community of humanities educators sharing ideas, experiences, and resources.

The example of the electronic presence and activities of CHNM opens up questions about the way in which new media technologies are introduced and applied in the discipline of history.

Who can engage in theorizing as well as practicing ways of combining history with new media technologies? The possibilities that the Internet offers both to individuals and groups of

people have often been acknowledged. The Internet is now attracting not just a few computer experts and fans but nearly a majority of the industrialized world’s population. Nevertheless, experimenting with Internet applications on an individual basis does not have a broad effect, except for the experience and satisfaction one may gain. The course of surviving on the Internet and successfully making a difference in a field of intellectual activities passes through bigger, well-organized and powerfully settled formations. CHNM is proof of that, as an organization based at a traditional educational institution, a public research university, and financially supported by traditional educational funding — e.g. the Rockefeller Foundation and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

The second question concerns more directly the discipline of history. Does the introduction of new media technologies just alter the means used by historians, or does it transform the content of historical inquiry and the definition of the historical object itself, and therefore the nature of historiography and historical production and dissemination? In other words, is there a question of form or content? One could argue that it is both.

At the level of research, historians all the more frequently deal with digitized archives and electronic collections of primary cultural and historical materials. The conversion of archives to electronic form changes the organization of historical knowledge and the way it is shared around the world. Historians acknowledge that digital mediums have the potential to turn primary materials into easily and globally accessible public documents.

New media technologies also affect the process of writing history, both at the level of narration and representation. Along with the traditional and very popular medium of the book, hypertext transforms the way history is written. It seems no longer enough for historians to do the research, gather the primary material and evidence of their case study, and write about it. Within the context of digitization, new, electronic

forms of mediation link historians to their object of writing in novel ways; consequently, historians need to have more diverse skills than the ones they traditionally acquire through the humanities curricula.

The case of CHNM is also an excellent example of the shift that new media cause in the educational and disciplinary practices of history. The Internet hosts and promises to history students and scholars a great quantity of valuable historical resources. Through researching and qualitatively filtering those resources, students acquire "an instant education on the uses of the past in the present." (Rosenzweig and O'Malley, 1997) Websites and CD-ROMs enable a multidimensional representation and a form of "visualization" of the past. Consequently, the "distant" and sometimes "abstract" and "vague" historical object becomes clearer and more immediate to students. The nature of hypertext also provides students with the ability to interact with, reorganize, and even reproduce the content of the historical text.

My final question concerns the reasons why history should converge with new media technologies. Which needs would this convergence fulfill that non-electronic academic practices do not? The most obvious characteristic and advantage of electronic mediums is interactivity. The term refers to the fall of the boundaries between a source and a receiver. New media technologies support multidirectional communication between any number of sources and receivers. Within that framework, the past is not just an inert and "dead" form of knowledge, but an integral part of the present. As such it is constantly reapproached, redefined, reconceptualized and reproduced in multiple and immediate ways by historians. Digital media improve on well-established methods of turning historical facts into narratives, precisely because they promote the possibility of interactivity.

Equally important is the dimension of access and proximity. With the growth of the size of the Internet and the capacity of the electronic

telecommunications network, there has been an important change in the process of appropriating and distributing forms of historical knowledge. Historians and others can easily and quickly access online archives, libraries, museums and journals as well as universities' and other organizations' websites. In that sense, the Internet minimizes or even neutralizes the element of distance and constitutes the object of historical study more imminent and easily accessible from many, if not most academic centers globally.

In the domain of publishing, digital media open up for historians a broader and less controlled space for publishing historical works in novel forms. The Internet also offers freer and cheaper access to readership than that offered by traditional academic publishers. Therefore, it appears to be more possible for alternative historiographical projects to materialize and for radical histories to be voiced and find a public. One possible effect of this process would be the democratization of the methods of writing, representing and claiming history in the present.

In conclusion, CHNM is constantly improving and expanding both its electronic presence and its activities. It most certainly opens up ways for further research in this field. It also initiates academic discussions concerning the ways in which the encounter between the humanities and new media technologies could lead to the transformation of the content of scholarship as well as the political economy of academia itself.

<sup>1</sup> Except for the print edition, *AQ* hosts the relevant reviews and commentaries on its web site ([http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american\\_quarterly](http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/american_quarterly)).

Rosenzweig, Roy and O'Malley, Michael, "Brave New World or Blind Alley? American History on the World Wide Web," *Journal of American History* (June 1997). (<http://chnm.gmu.edu/chnm/jah.html>) (5 Oct. 2001).

Rosenzweig, Roy, "AQ as Web-Zine: Responses to AQ's Experimental Online Issue <http://chnm.gmu.edu/aq> Cracking the System?: Hypertext and Scholarship on American Culture," *American Quarterly*, 51:2 (1999), pp. 237-246.