



EUROPEAN STUDIES LECTURE SERIES

War and Memory in Europe after World War II



Dr Per A. Rudling (University of Greifswald): War and Memory: National(ist) Interpretations of World War II in Ukraine

Dr Edward Arnold (Trinity College Dublin): Myth, Memory and Collective Amnesia in in Post-war France

European Union House, 18 Dawson St, Dublin 2

Wednesday, 7 December 2011, 6:00 PM

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Dr Per A. Rudling (University of Greifswald): War and Memory: National(ist) Interpretations of World War II in Ukraine

The failure of the Ukrainian national movement to achieve a state in 1918 led to the division of the ethnic Ukrainian lands between Poland, the Soviet Union, Romania, and Czechoslovakia. While Ukrainian nationalism, like other east European nationalists movements was liberal or left-leaning, it was radicalized in the interwar period. Soviet communism exercised some influence in the 1920s, but following Stalin's ascent to power, this tradition lost most of its attraction power. Instead, in the 1930s, the rise of Hitler came to serve as a catalyst for the Ukrainian nationalists. Nazi Germany catered to the Ukrainian nationalists as a counterweight to Polish and other Slavic nationalisms. Subsequently the relations deteriorated over the war. The nationalists' relations to the Nazis left a controversial legacy and rivaling historical myths. While historians are beginning to get a fairly clear picture of the nature of the collaboration, the ideology of the nationalists, their participation in the Holocaust, their campaign of ethnic cleansing of Poles and Jews, these issues remains sharply contested in Ukrainian and diaspora politics and popular culture. President Yushchenko posthumously turned some leading nationalists into national heroes, a decision condemned by the European Parliament.

The lecture focuses on polarizing historical myths, particularly in regards to the Holocaust, the Polish-Ukrainian conflict in 1943-44, and the ideology of the nationalists. The legacy of a divisive historical legacy is discussed from the perspective of Ukrainian integration with the European Union.

Dr Per A. Rudling:

Educated in Uppsala, Sweden (MA, Slavic studies, 1998), San Diego, California (MA, History, 2003), and Alberta, Canada (Ph.D. History, 2009), Per Rudling is a post-doctoral fellow at the Ernst-Moritz-Arndt-Universität, Greifswald, Germany. His research interests include nationalism, identity, and ethnic conflict in Ukraine and Belarus.



Dr Edward Arnold (Trinity College Dublin): Myth, Memory and Collective Amnesia in Post-war France

In the immediate post-war period there was a clear instrumentalisation of collective memory and history for political motives on both sides of the political spectrum on the left (PCF) and the right (Gaullism). This created a form of state-sponsored *collective amnesia* on the real extent of state, collective and individual forms of collaboration, and on participation in the Shoah. Political parameters for a generation had been set up around Collaboration/Resistance or support or rejection of Vichy/collaborationism/resistance, and the dominant ideology was resistancialism on left and right, instrumentalised by the gaullist myth of resistance to Nazi oppression. Official commemoration of the Shoah was absent until the mid to late 1990. Chirac's speech of 16 July 1995 ended the real ambiguity of French Presidents during the 1970s and 80s (Pompidou, Giscard and Mitterrand) towards the deportation of the Jews when he officially acknowledged that the French State and a number of French citizens had "seconded the criminal madness of the Occupant".

In addition, the real nature, complexity and extent of the Algerian war was also suppressed, as was the fragmented collective memory of this conflict up until the turn of the last century (1999). 40 years after the events, high-ranking veterans, notably General Paul Aussaresses, admitted in their memoirs on the War that torture and, in some cases summary execution, was frequently used by even drafted soldiers. These admissions were confirmed by the writings of rank-and-file soldiers. Not only had the State denied the existence of extreme acts of violence against the Algerians, but also refused to punish proven cases of it. The expression "Algerian War", or indeed "War for Algerian Independence (as opposed to "peacekeeping operations") was not used in official declarations until the late 1990s.

Up to a million Algerians may have been killed, 25,600 French soldiers perished, and 65,000 were wounded. The gaullist myth, built on sacrifice and resistance to oppression and barbarity was in stark contrast to the savage repression of the Algerians by the French Army. Yet history was very selective in what it recorded for the period of the Algerian War, and as with the case of the Occupation, this past of torture, violence and barbarism would not be confronted until long afterwards (1999).

Dr Edward Arnold is the Director of the Centre for European Studies at Trinity College Dublin, and he is an Assistant Professor in the Department of French.