



COMING TO TERMS WITH THE PAST

EDITORIAL

This edition of *Art&Thought/Fikrun wa Fann* takes as its theme the different ways people find of re-evaluating and coming to terms with the past. We firmly believe it is essential that every modern society should be able to do this – by which, of course, we mean a critical re-evaluation that does not shy away from addressing difficult issues and, where possible, taboos as well; an appraisal that does not try to repress the past, but fearlessly looks it in the eyes.

Very few societies have the good fortune to boast a truly unproblematic, non-violent past. Germans have acquired a reputation as both experts and model students in the discipline of coming to terms with the past. They have had to re-evaluate two very different histories under two different dictatorships. This edition of *Art&Thought/Fikrun wa Fann* aims to demonstrate how different societies are going about this, with reference to examples from all around the world. We need only take a look at the Arab world to see how relevant this subject is today. Yet as we do so it is also apparent that every society has to find its own way of dealing with the past. Formulae that have worked in Germany or South Africa may prove useless in Egypt or Syria. Nonetheless, societies currently in a state of upheaval can undoubtedly learn from others' efforts – and most especially from their failures.

We hope that the articles in this edition will help to encourage an open and fair re-examination of even the darkest corners of history in every part of the world where the past threatens to take the future hostage.

COMING TO TERMS WITH THE PAST THROUGH POLITICS AND THE LAW

'Vergangenheitsbewältigung' – coming to terms with, or (literally) 'overcoming' the past – is a word that is as popular as it is controversial. It is also imprecise. One is no longer in a position to come to terms with something that has already happened.

By Peter Reichel



Tourists posing at Peter Eisenman's Holocaust Memorial in Berlin.

Photo: Stefan Weidner © Goethe-Institut

What can – indeed, must – be come to terms with are the burdensome consequences for survivors of a political event that now lies in the past. In this sense the word is suggestive of a task that is both unpleasant and unavoidable. It sounds both weighty and ambiguous; it is considered to be one of those typically German words that are virtually untranslatable and certainly always necessitate explanation. Perhaps it also reveals what Bernhard Schlink described as a 'yearning for the impossible', a defiantly naïve, childish view, similar to the expectation of being able to 'make good'; to 'fix what happened, so that the memory of it is no longer a burden on the present'.

That which is not explicitly stated apparently goes without saying. Everyone who hears or uses the word immediately knows that it refers to the Nazi past, and this alone. For as long as the expression 'overcoming the past' dominated public analysis and discussion of the 'Third Reich', it was as if that period had rendered all other pasts insignificant, as if all the pre-history of our present had shrunk to this short peri-

od of the twelve years of the Hitler dictatorship. For many years it was as if the German national consciousness were being suffocated by its own inhibitions over its proximity to National Socialism and the crimes of the Nazis. Only gradually was it able to establish some distance between itself and this past that remained oppressively present, and to regain a sense of temporal depth. The social memory of the German people, generally rooted in their national history, was largely deprived of this foundation in 1945, and was therefore characterised by a certain uneasiness and insecurity. To this day, our 'unhappy national historical consciousness' vacillates between a historicisation of the Nazi past, and turning it into an absolute. It vacillates between the forced propensity to normalise German national history in the interpretation of it, and the no less pronounced tendency to focus historical retrospection on the narrow timeframe of those twelve short years that had such far-reaching consequences.

The Göttingen-based historian Hermann Heimpel pinpointed the problem as early as the late 1950s when he wrote

that 'the restlessness and unease with which we encounter history, or try to evade it, is therefore for the time being a German phenomenon, a German fate - it is the often-cited "past that has not been come to terms with". It befalls everyone, whether they know it or not - because the struggle with our past lies not behind us, but before us.' Heimpel had no way of knowing how soon and how emphatically he would be proved right in his assessment. The Eichmann and Auschwitz trials began not long afterwards, followed by the parliamentary debates on the statute of limitations and the political controversies about contemporary historical dramas by authors from Rolf Hochhuth to Peter Weiss. On the eve of the 1960s, which were to be extraordinarily eventful and conflictual from a historical-political point of view, Heimpel had good reason to worry about a certain 'weariness of and threat to historical sensibility'.

Whoever invented the term 'coming to terms with the past', it started to circulate just as the first post-war decade was coming to an end, the wartime destruction had for the most part been cleared away, and it seemed that Germany had overcome, or come to terms with, the consequences of the unjust Nazi regime. It had instigated integration into the West and rearmament; the Federal Republic had obtained its sovereignty with the signing of the Germany Treaty; and the West German 'reconstruction society' was leaving the past behind in the optimistic upswing of the 'economic miracle' - regardless of how much a far from insignificant minority stubbornly continued to talk about a 'past that had not been confronted' and demand that society should deal with this difficult legacy, reasoning that it had a political and moral duty to all generations to do so. After the Nuremberg trials, the end of denazification, the pardoning of 'war criminals' and reparations, the silent majority were crying out for a definitive conclusion - which generally always comes, sooner or later, after drastic changes to the political system.

The coining of a new word meaning 'to come to terms with the past' thus addresses a situation that is by no means new. The problem of how to deal in political and legal terms with the consequences of a system of government that has come to be regarded as illegitimate is one that repeatedly presents itself to successor states. The fundamental question is whether to make short work of the people who had authority under a dictatorship, or whether one is willing to embark on a lengthy analysis of and engagement with the ramifications of the dictatorship. There are some reasons to argue for a 'short and bloody' end to a tyrannical regime, because constitutional methods do not make it possible to 'come to terms with the material and physical inheritance of hatred, anger, outrage and contempt that tyranny leaves in its wake'. There were no 'St. Bartholomew's Day massacres' in Germany (E. Kogon), which many victims of Nazi persecution had expected would happen when the war came to an end.

However, the violent repudiation of and dissociation from the perpetrators, instigators and accessories of a violent crime in a 'night of the long knives' inevitably hurts the innocent as well as the guilty. On the other hand, constitutional court proceedings also soon prove inadequate when dealing with crimes planned and committed by the state: firstly because they can only investigate individual guilt, in the sense that an individual can be held personally responsible for unlawful actions, and secondly because criminal trials can scarcely cope with the large number of people involved in the commission of the crime - indeed, the form and extent of the crime effectively invalidate the relationship between guilt and punishment. As Hannah Arendt wrote to Karl Jaspers as early as 1946, it is impossible to deal either legally or politically with an innocence, in the victims, that is 'beyond virtue', and with a 'guilt that is beyond crime'. Hanging Göring was, she wrote, 'necessary, but entirely inadequate'.

Not a specifically German phenomenon

One can in fact differentiate between a variety of diverse strategies for coming to terms with the more or less inevitable analysis of an illegitimate past following war, revolution and political system change. The law, however, plays a central role as a medium for both remembering and forgetting. In the following article I will differentiate between seven ideal-typical forms of action, defined in a legal-political sense, which in reality generally prove more complex and more contradictory, and are often also combined or mixed together.

'Coming to terms with the past' is not a specifically German phenomenon, however much this may be implied both by the term itself and by the prolonged, for many years exclusive preoccupation with the consequences of the Hitler dictatorship. This limitation is now increasingly being overcome: there is interest, at least in academic circles, in comparative research into how different countries have come to terms with the past when transitioning from dictatorships to democratic political systems. The following overview takes this into account, but will focus nonetheless on the subject matter of this introduction.

1. In places where political change is instigated by leading representatives of the old system, *the past is, generally speaking, largely ignored*. This is what happened in Spain when the Franco dictatorship was superseded by a liberal-democratic monarchy, prior to which the *Caudillo* himself had designated Juan Carlos as his royal successor. A few high-ranking officers were pensioned off, but there was no examination of the system as it was under Franco, or with the Spanish Civil War that had brought the dictator to power in the 1930s. A similar thing happened in Russia in 1991. After the failed coup attempt, Gorbachov's successor Boris Yelt-

sin was restrained in his dealings with the coup leaders, who like himself and his government belonged to the old *nomenklatura*. They were only accused and sentenced because they had challenged the new political order. The state leadership never instigated any legal-political investigation into the KGB terror or the Gulag archipelago, either at the time or in the years that followed. Yeltsin's choice of a former KGB functionary to succeed him was an indication that, in this respect, nothing was going to change.

2. Dealing with an illegitimate past in a way that relies on personal continuity during a period of change, that does not even inquire into the guilt of those in positions of authority, thereby ignoring the past, contrasts with the *violent action of political cleansing*. This deploys fresh terror as a means of seeking retribution and revenge for injustices suffered, and in particular for the collaboration with an enemy occupying force. This is why there was a wave of bloody political cleansing in France in the autumn of 1944, in the south of the country and in places where Communist resistance groups temporarily assumed power, in which between ten and twenty thousand people are estimated to have died. There were also savage executions in northern Italy and in the Balkans. The revenge crimes perpetrated against Croats and ethnic Germans by Tito's Communist partisans quickly claimed around one hundred thousand lives. People spoke of a 'frenzy of revenge', in which the bloody civil war between Fascists and Communists turned into a class war against the big landowners and the property-owning bourgeoisie. As the Serbian-Croatian civil war subsequently showed, this bloodshed was still fresh in the memories of their descendents.

3. An attempt to *overcome the consequences of dictatorship by judicial means* offers a fundamentally different approach. This does not require a kind of collective scapegoat and the symbolic purifying power of a bloody act of cleansing. Rather, it relies on the legitimacy and rationality of more or less legally structured processes. However, their scope appears so broad that, in strictly constitutional terms, it is scarcely possible to reduce them to a single concept. Essentially, criminal-law liability, which investigates objective misconduct by the accused as well as their subjective guilt or criminal liability, offers two alternative routes. The first follows the principle of *nullum crimen, nulla poena sine lege*, i.e. that no crime can be committed, and that therefore there can be no punishment for it, unless a previously existing law is broken. The other route pursues the constitutionally dubious path, but one that in exceptional circumstances cannot be avoided, of special laws and special courts. This alternative is supported by the argument that crimes against civilisation or against humanity have long been 'proscribed by human conscience', and that accordingly the 1948 Genocide Convention did not create a new international law, but was merely a setting down of ancient rules and norms.

This was the route the Allies took when they defined crimes against humanity as punishable under international law in the London Charter of the International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg. This was later adopted in Law No. 10 of the Allied Control Council. The Federal Republic of Germany chose not to do the same. In rebuilding the constitutional state it placed greater importance on legal certainty, also in dealing with Nazi perpetrators. It therefore expressly adopted into the Constitution the principle of non-retroactivity (Article 103, 2 of the Basic Law), thereby taking into account the fact that many perpetrators would only be convicted of aiding and abetting a crime, and that some offences would go unpunished.

In many of the countries occupied by Germany under Hitler, people were not prepared to make such allowances, and different procedures were adopted. Special penal laws were enacted, death sentences were pronounced by special courts against 'Nazi collaborators' on charges of treason and high treason, as well as criminal sentences for manslaughter, murder and torture; or they sentenced people to atone through forced labour, imprisonment, or the revocation of their rights of citizenship. In addition, numerous trials of concentration camp guards were initiated by the Allies in their respective zones of occupation. Numerous too were the criminal proceedings before Polish courts against staff of the German extermination camps.

4. The circumstances in Italy and Germany made *bureaucratic measures of political cleansing* appear necessary. Nowhere else had so many people been involved in crimes, politically corrupted, and disqualified themselves from making a new beginning through their active enthusiasm for and adaptation to the totalitarian ruling system. But the process of separating those who were seriously compromised from those who were merely followers proved both laborious and, ultimately, unfeasible and counterproductive. The rigidly schematic nature and quantitative escalation of denazification not only damaged its reputation and impaired the restoration of public order and economic life: it also had a detrimental effect on the initially undisputed legitimacy of a political cleansing. Every German was liable to be tainted by it, and could see themselves as a potential victim of the occupying powers. This provoked them to defend themselves against an accusation of collective guilt, which the Allies never made against the population as a whole. In the end, with colossal bureaucratic effort, the denazification trials transformed the majority of those who were actively involved in the Nazi dictatorship into followers.

5. Shortcomings and injustices in the bureaucratic and judiciary methods of coming to terms with the past meant that sooner or later it became necessary to come to terms with the consequences of the failure to come to terms with the

past, especially because the political framework was altering rapidly in the second half of the 1940s. This was the period of *amnesties and pardons*. The latter played a part particularly in the emotionally heated debate about the so-called 'war criminals' held in Allied prisons. The political cost that such pardons entail is, however, not an inconsiderable one. Certainly they were advantageous as regards the politics of integration, and they attenuated constitutional reservations about the Allies. The price for this, however, was that by the end of the 1950s mass murderers condemned to death by the Americans had already been released back into society. The numerous amnesty laws, the so-called 131st Law and the conclusion of denazification all underline the significance almost all the political parties accorded to coming to terms with the coming-to-terms with the past. They made it substantially easier for the new political conditions to be accepted by society, and increased the integrating power of the two main political parties.

6. The South African 'Truth and Reconciliation Commission' under Archbishop Desmond Tutu created a kind of *compromise between quasi-judicial trials and the renunciation of political-judiciary sanctions* when it came to investigating and coming to terms with human rights abuses under the apartheid regime, i.e. integrating the various interests, injuries and fears of both victims and perpetrators. In the deeply ethnically-divided society it would have been impossible to achieve a transfer of power and overcome apartheid in favour of gradual internal reconciliation either by remaining silent about the victims of racist policies or by punishing the white population for their crimes. On the one hand, impunity was the prerequisite for obtaining confessions. On the other hand, establishing the truth about serious human rights abuses meant acknowledging that the black population, who had been persecuted and discriminated against, were the victims of crimes. The fact that they, like the white minority who voluntarily gave up their positions of power, received material compensation led some critics to denigrate the much-vaunted so-called South African miracle as a 'bought revolution'. Viewed realistically, payments like these appear as a crucial accompaniment to what was, all in all, a peaceful change of political regime. On the other hand, renouncing a violent conflict meant that the antithesis between black and white was not remedied, and the question of moral superiority relegated to the level of symbolism.

7. Last but not least, the material *compensation of the persecuted* is an element of coming to terms with the past, according to its political-legal definition. In the context we are dealing with here, this refers to the restitution of stolen property and the payment of reparations, in particular to the Jewish victims. For a long time now this has been referred to colloquially simply as 'reparations', and is the third key element in

the process of overcoming the past, alongside criminal prosecution and denazification. In the early days of the German Federal Republic it was one of the main controversial issues in domestic and foreign policy. It has long preoccupied West German society, and became topical once again with the controversial debate about the compensation of forced labourers.

Nulla poena sine lege

Underlying the legal-political forms of overcoming the consequences of a dictatorship as outlined above is an accusation of guilt that is based on an assumption of unlawful behaviour, the blame for which lies with the individual. According to the constitutional principle of *nulla poena sine lege*, unlawful behaviour is defined as the violation by the individual of legal norms that were valid at the time the violation occurred. This legally-defined concept of guilt cannot be reconciled with an assumption of collective guilt. In reality, however, this accusation has played and still continues to play a pre-eminent role in political dealings with the Nazi legacy: whether in that it was implicit in the attempt by the Allies to politically cleanse the entire active citizenry of Germany; or in that this accusation was only ascribed to the victors so that the vanquished could reject it all the more emphatically; or, finally, in that the Nazi atrocities have repeatedly provoked feelings of guilt or shame, kept alive a sense of responsibility and thoughts of atonement, and raised awareness within society of traditional obligations not only among those who lived through the Nazi period but also in subsequent generations. In these sentiments and stirrings of conscience the question of guilt is essentially not one of criminal law but one of humanity, morality, sensitivity, and communicative behaviour.

This is reminiscent of older, pre-modern societal and legal circumstances which survived in the Germanic legal tradition, according to which the tribe was not just a legal, economic and defensive association: it was also an association founded on joint liabilities. As long as there was no recognised public violence, the type and extent of liability and atonement was settled between the tribes of perpetrator and victim. Roman law, the Christian doctrine of atonement, the Enlightenment, and the transition from feudalism to modern society have increasingly transformed the individual into a legal entity, something he had previously only been by virtue of belonging to the association that protected him. But the legal-historical inheritance, the thought of a collective material liability and moral responsibility, still influence our everyday comprehension of individual guilt. Alongside the criminally relevant actions of individuals, in some cases the focus is also on the 'offending tribe', especially when dealing with an offence as exceptional as state-sponsored genocide, in the

commission of which it was certainly not every member of the 'offending tribe' who became perpetrators and collaborators, but an alarming number did.

For a precise and graphic characterisation of this extended concept of guilt, Schlink introduced the differentiation between a 'horizontal' and a 'vertical' dimension. The accusation of collective guilt is made primarily against those who were alive at the time. In the sense of moral misdemeanour, they are also guilty who watched and remained silent when the persecution and annihilation of the 'foreign peoples' and 'aliens to the community' took its course. It is certainly not the case that every German who lived through the years of Nazism can be accused of not having objected and not having resisted, but such an accusation does draw attention to the consequences of a failure to take action.

It is even less possible to speak of collective guilt in the literal sense with reference to the vertical dimension. The next generation cannot be accused of unlawful actions or failure to act. Their guilt consists in their failure to judge the perpetrators and collaborators and exclude them from the community of solidarity, and the extent to which they failed to do so. The debates about the laws of amnesty and the pardons as well as about the statute of limitation on prosecuting people for murder and genocide belong in this context. The con-

troversy about the dictum of 'secondary guilt' (R. Giordano) demonstrates the degree to which the principle of collective liability is still incorporated in the thinking.

As far as subsequent generations are concerned, the question of collective guilt primarily arises around communicative misbehaviour in relation to the descendants of the persecuted and their tormentors. Feelings of self-consciousness and embarrassment arise, for example, when German politicians' lack of sensitivity towards Holocaust survivors causes them to turn sheer chance into 'the blessing of being born late', and to do this so insistently that the platitude comes across as some sort of legal claim to reconciliation and normality.

The 'networks of guilt', extending both horizontally and vertically, have their own way of working and their own inescapability. Few of the Germans who could in a legal sense have been guilty of criminal actions prior to 1945 were still alive in the year 2000. The German-Jewish contractual obligation still legally requires that compensation be paid, but it is essentially no longer defined in terms of criminal law. Obligations, experiences and feelings relating to guilt have altered over the decades. But as long as we comprehend our collective identity as one that has evolved and faced up to its history, we will not escape having to deal with the question of guilt in the future, too.

This text is an extract from Peter Reichel's book *Vergangenheitsbewältigung in Deutschland* (*Overcoming the Past in Germany*), pp. 20–29. © C.H. Beck 2007.

PETER REICHEL is a professor of political science at the University of Hamburg and a renowned specialist in the history of National Socialism in Germany..

Translated by Charlotte Collins

Copyright: Goethe-Institut e. V., Fikrun wa Fann, November 2012

STUMBLING OVER MEMORY

THE MUSEUM OF THE HISTORY OF NATIONAL SOCIALISM IN COLOGNE

Since 1979 the German city of Cologne has been home to a unique memorial site and research institute that commemorates a specific element of the Nazi power apparatus: the bureaucratic and physical terror perpetrated by the state secret police.

By Simone Falk



'Stolpersteine' (stumbling stones) in memory of Cologne Jews deported and killed in the Third Reich.

Photo: Stefan Weidner © Goethe-Institut

'Greetings to you, my wife, from far away / your husband writes. / Far away on the other side of the Wall, with the Gestapo / He tortures himself by looking out of the window. / But freedom and his beloved little daughter are far from him now. / In vain he stains the walls / Writing letters to his beloved wife (...)'

A group of young schoolchildren walks past. They study this text, and others behind the glass door and on the information panels, and listen to the museum guide. A few boys and girls whisper together, laugh quietly, look sheepish, and glance surreptitiously at their mobile phones – clearly trying to distance themselves from what the guide is saying, and from the words in the more than 1,800 inscriptions and drawings here on the walls of the prison cells in the basement of the EL-DE-Haus in Cologne. These poems and letters, written in chalk, charcoal, lipstick or pencil, scratched with nails, screws, or fingernails, bear witness to the fears and hopes of those who were imprisoned here. In many cases, these are their final messages to the outside world. Often the prisoners are addressing us anonymously, because we know the names of very few of the thousands of inmates

who were held here by the Gestapo, some for days, some for months, right up until the end of the Nazi regime in 1945. Many were taken from here straight to deportation or – from 1944 on – to execution.

But let's begin at the beginning. 1933.

Terror in Cologne

Following the seizure of power by Hitler, the Gestapo – an abbreviation of 'Geheime Staatspolizei', or 'state secret police' – was extended to become one of the most feared and powerful instruments of the Nazi tyranny. Its remit included surveillance of individuals as well as combating and hunting down opponents of the Nazi regime. From 1935 onwards, this building in the centre of Cologne – known as the 'EL-DE-Haus', after the initials of its founder, Cologne wholesaler Leopold Dahmen – was the Gestapo's headquarters in the city. The basement was extended and turned into a prison consisting of 10 cells, one windowless cell, an air-raid bunker, a washroom, and various rooms for use by the guards. A door led into the inner courtyard of the complex. Executions were

carried out on a portable gallows. More than 400 people died here in the final stages of the war.

The Gestapo relied heavily on denunciation by ordinary citizens. Gestapo officers carried out interrogations, imprisoned people, tortured and deported them. Their targets were not only people directly suspected of involvement in resistance activities against the regime, but also other groups who were subjected to violent racist persecution during the Nazi period, including Jews and 'anti-social elements'. The Cologne Gestapo was responsible for the deportation of thousands of Jews and members of the resistance from the city. Throughout the 1930s the Nazi regime constructed hundreds of concentration and extermination camps. From 1941 on the first mass deportations from Cologne began, taking people eastwards.

The inscriptions on the walls of the cells, written in German, Polish, Russian, French, and other languages, are often prisoners' last messages to relatives – messages that were concealed for decades under a layer of paint. It was only in 1979 that they were finally exposed, painstakingly restored and deciphered.

Establishing a memorial site

By sheer chance, the EL-DE-Haus was one of the few buildings in Cologne city centre that survived the war undamaged. The rooms were soon rented out. Some were taken over by the local administration: the building housed a registry office as well as the office that processed people's pension payments. It was some time before people were ready to deal with Cologne's recent history, and that of the EL-DE-Haus.

Finally, in the 1970s, several factors combined to encourage this. These included the television broadcast of the American series *Holocaust*, and the trials of Kurt Lischka – an SS Obersturmbannführer (lieutenant-colonel) who was head of the Cologne Gestapo – and other Nazi perpetrators. There was increasing popular pressure to address the city's history under National Socialism, as well as calls to establish a memorial in the former Gestapo building. In 1979, the city council not only voted in favour of establishing the memorial, it also decided to set up a documentation centre and a Museum of the History of National Socialism in Cologne.

In 1981 the former Gestapo prison, now a small-scale memorial, was opened to the public. It took until 1987 for it to become a proper museum, but it soon became an important local memorial to the victims of Nazism.

Authentic site

Standing next to the bare walls with their exposed plaster, the stone floor, the ancient radiators and overhead lights, a visitor entering the EL-DE-Haus today is immediately plunged

into a very similar atmosphere to that of seventy years ago. Since 1997 the historic part of the building has been home to an extensive permanent exhibition entitled 'Cologne under National Socialism'. These rooms are intended to be viewed as part of the whole. They too reflect the history of the building, just as intensively as the numerous photos, information panels and media stations: the effect is vivid and above all immediate, tangible. But in these top two storeys, which were the centre of operations for the bureaucratic side of the Gestapo's terrorisation of the people, the authenticity of the site is not as overpowering, as inescapable, as it is in the basement and the prison cells. Here the visitor can really sense the physical dimension of that terror: it is palpable; it can be read on the walls.

So it's all too understandable that younger visitors in particular, many of whom have only recently been confronted for the first time with the subject of Nazism, will often seize on any welcome distraction, or the possibility to distance themselves from their surroundings by staring at their mobile phones or messing about with their classmates.

This is precisely the intention behind the concept of the exhibition: distance and reduction, if that is what you need; confrontation and proximity, if that is what you are looking for. It does not specifically try to stir up emotions; the museum wants to do more than educate its visitors simply by upsetting them. Nothing is forced upon them; information panels, texts and images remain in the background. Those seeking a sense of proximity to the historical events have at their disposal 31 media stations with more than 300 hours of audio and visual material, including numerous interviews with contemporary witnesses from different population groups.

In addition to the memorial and the museum, the EL-DE-Haus is now an important research and documentation centre. Six historians work here, alongside other employees, evaluating contemporary witness interviews and collections of photographs and documents, researching a wide variety of topics, and publishing items both for general public information and for the purposes of scientific documentation, including the museum's own series of papers, available from the Cologne publisher *Emons Verlag*. More than 100 events a year take place in the documentation centre, including readings, discussion groups, lectures, workshops and cultural events. The permanent exhibition 'Cologne Under National Socialism' is complemented by at least four special exhibitions every year, each examining a different aspect of the period in greater detail.

Place of education and learning

But the work of the documentation centre is not limited to focussing on the past. In addition to its role as a memorial site and research centre, it is important to the organisers that the centre should also be a place of education and

learning. It offers teacher-training courses to assist teachers in their efforts to communicate the complex and often problematic topic of National Socialism. The documentation centre has a separate office on site – the IBS – that provides information and education aimed at countering right-wing extremism. It organises free events and workshops in schools, youth clubs and workplaces which aim to inform people about right-wing extremism and violence and have a preventative effect.

If you are interested in doing so, you can prepare for your visit to the museum – and look up information afterwards – by visiting the documentation centre's website. Here you will find a wide selection of background information about the centre and its various projects and events. There are also databases that make it easy for schoolchildren, students, and interested parties to access source material, including the contents of the EL-DE-Haus library. Another 'book of remembrance' database contains the details of numerous Jews from Cologne who fell victim to the Gestapo.

The 'Experiencing History' project is a particularly special one. More than a hundred video interviews with contemporary witnesses from Cologne have been uploaded here. The witnesses tell their life stories, and describe their experiences during the war. This project, 'a kind of collective memory in the form of a video archive', is a valuable resource for both historians and those with an interest in history. It provides a vivid, emotional glimpse of the experiences of those who survived the Nazi period in Cologne.

The 'stumbling stones' project

Historical research and work at memorial sites always involves a combination of fact and supposition, of things we can put a name to and things we can't. Putting faces to the victims, finding out their names, naming and remembering, are among a memorial site's most important tasks. The project known as 'Stolpersteine' – stumbling stones – originated in Cologne. It is supported by the documentation centre, which has also contributed to the funding of it. Over the years the initiative has acquired international status, and is now one of the best-known projects in European memorial culture. It was initiated in the 1990s by the artist Gunter Demnig. The so-called 'stumbling stones' are concrete cubes,

10cm square. They are embedded in the pavement in front of buildings which were once home to people who were deported and murdered under the Nazi regime. Each cube is surmounted by a brass plaque engraved with the words 'Hier wohnte...' ('Here lived...'), followed by the name of the person and what is known of what became of them, such as the date they were deported, the date they died, sometimes where they were deported to. Some 34,000 stumbling stones have been laid all over Germany, but now the project is getting more and more international support and stones are being laid in other countries too.

This is a form of remembrance that takes place outside the walls of a museum or memorial site. It is a permanent part of the townscape in the city where the events actually happened. It is a kind of remembrance designed to make us stumble: over names, over a person's fate, over history itself.

Perhaps ...

The authors of many of the inscriptions on the cell walls in the basement of the former Gestapo prison remain nameless, and this leaves us with a degree of uncertainty, a sense of incompleteness. The schoolchildren visiting the EL-DE-Haus probably sensed this, too. What happened all those years ago still has relevance for them today; it is still right here beside them, even if seventy years separate them from the events. Perhaps the children have the rest of the day off after this visit to the museum. Or perhaps they have to go back to the classroom. Perhaps their next class is German language. Perhaps they're glad to be able to change the subject. Perhaps they will immerse themselves in the teacher's grammar lesson. And perhaps, at the end of this particular day, they will have learned two different truths – one written on the blackboard in the classroom, the other on the walls of the cells in the Gestapo prison:

Contrary to the irrefutable rules of German grammar, you will have learned today that there are some sentences which cannot simply be ended with a full stop. It might be an inscription on a cell wall, or it might be a sentence pronounced more than seventy years ago, one that led to this vast anonymity which makes the work of memorial sites and researchers and educators still so urgently necessary today, all across Europe, and especially in Germany.

SIMONE FALK is a freelance editor, translator and journalist living in Kiel. She holds a degree in History from the University of Bremen.

Translated by Charlotte Collins

Copyright: Goethe-Institut e. V., Fikrun wa Fann, November 2012

WHAT FORM SHOULD REMEMBRANCE TAKE? POLAND: A VICTIM STATE COMING TO TERMS WITH ITS PAST

'Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.' These words, a quote from the philosopher George Santayana, can be found on a plaque in the museum of the Auschwitz concentration camp. But what does 'remembering the past' actually mean when – as the written recollections of those who lived through it teach us – memory is a dynamic process?.

By Stanisław Strasburger



Former building of the Polish Central Bank destroyed during the Warsaw uprising in 1944. It is now a memorial site. Photo: Stefan Weidner © Goethe-Institut

One foggy morning in April 2010, a Polish government plane crashed on its descent towards the airport near the Russian city of Smolensk. The president of Poland and his wife were killed in the accident. The chief of staff of the Polish Armed Forces, the head of the National Bank of Poland, numerous members of parliament, clerics, and high-ranking civil servants perished along with them. The passengers on the aircraft were part of an official delegation visiting Russia on the occasion of the seventieth anniversary of what is known as the Katyn massacre.

There was no talk of an attack in the reports of the disaster in Smolensk. However, when one takes the reason for the trip, the place where the accident occurred, and the subsequent reaction to the crash into account, it is difficult to find a better starting point for a reflection on the way contemporary Poland is dealing with its past. This country, which was occupied by its powerful neighbours Russia and Germany for much of the twentieth century, can today serve as an exam-

ple. However, it can also serve as a warning to those in the process of developing a historical memory after a long period of political dependency.

In this context, I find it difficult to resist the idea that there are interesting analogies between the history of Poland and its neighbours and the history of the Middle East, especially of its regional players Syria, Lebanon, and Israel. Although a discussion of this theme goes beyond the scope of this article, I would encourage the astute reader to keep this in mind while reading.

Witnesses of history

The Katyn massacre, which took place in 1940, is one of the most traumatic episodes in Poland's recent history. The outbreak of the Second World War just under twelve months earlier had resulted in the occupation of the country by both Hitler's Germany and Soviet Russia. My grandmother's ex-

periences at the time are typical of those of her contemporaries. After being called up as a nurse, she retreated eastwards from the capital with a military unit. Just like the soldiers she marched with night and day, she believed that they would find fresh troops deep in the heart of the country in an area the German aggressors had not reached, and that they would take part in a counter-attack. Instead, they marched straight into a Red Army outpost. Famished and exhausted after their long trek, the Polish soldiers were told by a Russian officer, 'Poland has been divided! Your state no longer exists. The choice is yours: either you go back to the Germans or you stay on our side of the river. This is now the new border between Germany and the USSR. The officers among you are coming with us!'

Naturally, a counter-attack was out of the question. But that wasn't all. Soon afterwards, the news that the country's political and military leaders had fled abroad spread like wildfire. The defeat of the Polish army and the division of the country was a shock. The people had trusted their government and now felt cheated and let down by it. Some became hysterical; others were consumed by an apathy that made them indifferent to everything.

My grandmother decided to go back to the area occupied by Germany. She returned to the capital and spent the six years of the war and, during the Communist era, a further forty-four years under *de facto* Soviet occupation. Back then, in 1939, she was lucky that neither she nor her father were officers, as officers in the Polish army were incarcerated in Soviet prison camps like Katyn, where a total of about 22,000 people were murdered. Poland lost half its officers in the massacre. The policies of both the occupying forces were very similar: they wanted to wipe out the educated elite, thereby intellectually degrading the country.

Whispered wounds

To this day, the crime that was Katyn has been manipulated many times over in Poland's historical memory. It is an irony of history that it was the Nazis who discovered and reported the massacre during the war. They published the names of those who had been murdered, and also named the perpetrators of the crime. But the Soviets denied everything. In later years, in Communist Poland, people could be imprisoned for commemorating Katyn. Both in schoolbooks and on public occasions, either what happened was never mentioned or it was claimed that the Nazis had actually been the murderers. All my grandmother could do was whisper to me – a boy at the time – during walks in the park, when she was sure that no one was listening, what she had seen with her own eyes, and what my favourite teacher at school had dismissed as a lie.

Things changed in Eastern Europe in 1989. The Red Army withdrew from Polish territory. The USSR no longer propped

up the country's Communist government and no longer controlled it. Now, the truth about who was responsible for the Katyn massacre finally appeared in the history books. However, it quickly became clear that re-writing the history books could not make up for the decades of censorship and lies; above all, it could not redeem the suppressed feelings and the wounds that had not been allowed to heal. The moment the word was liberated, the battle over the culture of memory began.

Deadly irony

I learned about the tragedy of the plane crash near Smolensk the morning it happened. I had just returned to Lebanon after a brief holiday in Jordan. In the hours that followed, I received messages of condolence from Arab friends and also from people I didn't even know. People didn't hesitate to use grand expressions: 'This is a national tragedy for your country', 'The Polish people do not deserve a fate such as this', 'Our hearts go out to Poland and we share your pain'.

The next day, when I spoke in Beirut about the politicians who had lost their lives in the disaster, some of the Lebanese people I talked to made jokes: 'You know that I'm very sorry about what happened, but if a plane carrying Lebanese statesmen were to crash, we might at last see some movement in this country's politics.'

I have never made a secret of the fact that I was certainly not a supporter of the political camp to which the deceased president, Lech Kaczyński, belonged, despite the fact that plans for top-ranking statesmen from both Poland and Russia to mark the anniversary of the massacre, and the broadcasting of the film *Katyn* by director Andrzej Wajda on Russian television, signified a change in relations between the two countries.

The irony of this disaster is the fact that Kaczyński, who had previously been mayor of Warsaw, was one of the key people shaping Poland's culture of remembrance. The film *Katyn* was made in 2007 under his personal patronage. Yet to this day, Lech Kaczyński's attitude towards historical memory makes me feel uneasy. It pays homage to an anachronistic definition of the nation and of patriotism, a definition that does not shy away from making opportunistic compromises in areas that deserve an honest, social debate. All too often, I saw in it an almost mystical image of Poland as the wretched victim of major foreign powers and deceitful allies. After the Smolensk disaster, this view of things gained ground and to this day it often sets the tone.

Is honour the same as vanity?

The film *Katyn* illustrates this attitude well. Its importance does not lie solely in the fact that, under the patronage of the head of state, the Polish star director brought together

a group of outstanding actors on the set. What is more important is that the film has almost become an obligatory element of the school history syllabus. The Polish foreign ministry also encourages diplomatic missions all over the world to promote the film abroad. For this reason, *Katyn* is not just a feature film loosely based on actual events, it is an educational medium that is exporting Poland's historical memory beyond its borders. This should be borne in mind when judging Wajda's film.

The plot of the film focuses on a handful of officers who are captured by the Soviets and taken to Katyn, where they are brutally murdered. The film also focuses on the fate of their wives and mothers, who do not know for certain what has happened to their husbands and sons. Some of them wait for years in the hope that the men, who are in fact long dead, will one day return. The plot used by the director is a simple one: innocent people are murdered by horrendous, godless oppressors, and the relatives of the victims suffer the appalling pain of uncertainty.

Right at the start, the film's opening scene astonishes me. One of the officers, who has just been captured by the Soviets, has the chance to escape right before the convoy leaves. He even sees his wife and young daughter. They try to persuade him to seize the opportunity and stay with them. The protagonist refuses, citing honour as his reason for going back. After all, there can be no question of an officer of the Polish Armed Forces fleeing.

This gets me thinking about what his sacrifice actually achieves, apart from the death of yet another young person and the suffering of his family. This was a death without a struggle, with absolutely no chance of political or ideological success. Should we really be propagating an attitude like this and holding it up as an example?

It may well be that this scene in the film reflects the way people thought at the time. But why doesn't the director examine this way of thinking more closely? The opposite is the case: the message of the film – and, therefore, the type of remembrance culture – is in the form of an allegory. There is only one option; the interpretation of what is good and what is bad has been predetermined.

This is evident in one of the very first scenes in the film. On the square in front of the church, a wife sees a body covered with her husband's army coat. A priest is giving the last rites. Horrified, she tears away the coat, revealing not a human corpse but a sculpture of the crucified Christ. Is Wajda really trying to tell us that the death of Polish officers in Katyn is like the sacrifice of the Son of God?

One of the film's protagonists manages to survive Katyn and return to Communist Poland after the war. He cannot come to terms with the fact that the people around him treat him like a collaborator, and he commits suicide. But as far as they are concerned he returned to Poland with the Soviet army, the very same army that just a few years earlier had murdered his fellow officers. He managed to survive the tragedy, but his survival was not a source of joy. On the contrary, it led to another death: his own. His conscience was wracked by the reproaches of the families of his brothers-in-arms. In their thoughts, in their words, in what they did, they kept asking him the same question over and over again: 'Why is it that you survived and not my husband, my son ...?'

In view of the singular way in which the Polish people recovered from forty years of enforced silence and lies, perhaps this allegorical view of things is even understandable. But when, seventy years after the event, general education and promotion abroad is involved, the historical memory of this dreadfully traumatic event should be expressed in a far more nuanced way.

The offended potato

Lech Kaczyński himself was incredibly sensitive with regard to Poland's image around the world (and his own image as president). Sometimes, this sensitivity took strange forms. An outstanding example of this is the affair surrounding the nickname 'Poland's new potato', which was given to him by the left-wing German daily newspaper *taz* in the year 2006. The satirical article in question mercilessly lampooned the president's irredeemably anti-German, anti-Russian stance. The author describes Kaczyński's vision of the world as one in which 'ever since the Middle Ages the Germans have all been leaping onto their trusty steeds and galloping hell for leather eastwards'.

This article, published in what was, after all, a privately-owned newspaper, unleashed a storm of indignation from Kaczyński. He cancelled meetings with partners in Germany and demanded a judicial inquiry into the author of the satirical piece. Should a head of state who is so sensitive about his personal image be entrusted with shaping the historical memory of a nation?

When Obama errs ...

The problem of the so-called 'Polish death camps' is much more complex. This term, which refers to the concentration camps situated on the territory of occupied Poland during World War Two, is used from time to time by the media and by politicians around the world. The inappropriateness of the

term stems from the fact that it can be taken to mean that Poles had something to do with the establishment of these camps, although it is a known fact that the concentration camps were set up and run by the German Nazis.

This is still a topical issue to this day. In May 2012, President Obama used the phrase 'Polish death camps' in an address. Ironically, he was making this address on the occasion of the presentation of a posthumous honour to a member of the Polish resistance movement, who risked his life sneaking into both the Warsaw ghetto and a concentration camp, and was one of the first to provide the Allies with reports about the mass killing that was going on there. To many Poles, Obama's words are painful insofar as America is often perceived as Poland's number one ally, unlike the countries of Europe, which in the past have often failed to fulfil their treaty obligations towards Poland. But the problem runs much deeper than this.

Hitler in our minds

In 2011, I organised a Lebanese film festival in Warsaw and an educational project to familiarise the pupils and teachers at one particular secondary school with Lebanon. I invited three young Lebanese women to take part: a film actor, an activist and director of documentaries, and an education worker who is also an Arabist. Despite the fact that our programme was very full, my guests insisted that we set aside at least one day to make the three-hundred-kilometre journey south to the camp museum at Auschwitz-Birkenau. We got up at five a.m. and got back at midnight. Even our film star, who is not used to strenuous days like this and, upon her return, was completely wiped out and in a somewhat capricious mood, admitted without hesitation the next day that the trip had been worth it.

In Auschwitz, one encounters a whole new set of problems with historical memory. This time, however, these problems do not relate only to contemporary Poland, but to the entire Western world. I am not talking here about general questions with regard to mass tourism and communication with visitors - for example, the efforts to ensure that this historical place neither causes fatigue in visitors nor risks becoming a kind of Disneyland with multimedia, 'authentic' productions that allow people to get a real 'sense' of what went on here. On the contrary, I am talking about a confrontation with the past and encouraging visitors to help actively shape historical memory.

During our visit, one plaque listing the victims of the camp grabs our attention. We stop and read what it says. Jews: 1 million; Poles: approx. 75,000; Sinti and Roma: 21,000; Soviet

prisoners: 15,000; others: approx. 12,500. We decide to ask the English-speaking guide who exactly the museum's historians mean when they write 'Jews' or 'Poles'.

'That's easy,' says the museum guide. 'Jews are those who are of the Jewish faith.'

'Aha,' I say. 'In that case, who are the Poles mentioned on the list?'

'Well, erm ...' She becomes hesitant. 'Those are the citizens of Poland.'

'Citizens ...' I say, repeating what she has just said. 'So the Jews mentioned above, were they not citizens?'

By this time, the museum guide is clearly very uneasy, and says meekly, 'Well ... erm ... Yes, they were citizens too. Almost half were citizens of Hungary, and about 300,000 were citizens of Poland. The rest came from other European countries ...'

'So,' I ask, wanting to make sure I am in no doubt as to what she is saying, 'the Poles who are listed here are not just citizens of Poland, but citizens of the Catholic faith?'

'That's right,' she says.

'So why the confusion?', we wonder. 'Why doesn't the plaque read "Poles of this and that faith", "Hungarians of this and that faith", and so on?'

Can this really be possible? The museum is actually using Hitler's categories! The nationality of the prisoners in this camp, their faith, or who they considered themselves to be is not important. The only thing that counted was whether the Nazis considered them Poles, Jews, or gypsies. Today, we are well aware that the Nazis acted on the basis of invented, false criteria. They did not base their actions on any kind of scientific theory, nor on the actual nationality of their victims.

But the museum guide doesn't give up.

'You don't know what it's like here,' she says in irritation. 'Let's say a Polish tour group led by a Catholic priest comes to the camp. If the plaque were to read "Poles of the Mosaic faith", the priest would wring our necks. He would angrily tell us that a true Pole is a Catholic. Now, on the other hand, let's take as an example an Israeli tour group. We get a lot of them here. If the plaque read "Pole" and not "Jew", the Israelis would make mincemeat of us, regardless of what else was written on the plaque. "But they were our people - they were Jews, not Poles!" they would tell us.'

We leave the museum guide behind us. After all, the policy of remembrance pursued by the public museum and the state's control of this policy is not her responsibility. There can be no doubt that this policy is based on opportunistic compromises. For it to be successful, a campaign against the term 'Polish death camps' has to liberate itself from such compro-

mises. During the visit to Auschwitz, I was quite simply mortified in front of my Lebanese guests.

Memory as a sarcastic process

After the disaster in 2010, the Polish media – regardless of their political orientation – suddenly adopted an unusual tone. They called on people to come and bid farewell to the president on his final journey. Many political opponents were suddenly convinced that Lech Kaczyński had been an outstanding politician. The convoy carrying the president's mortal remains was reminiscent of a military convoy, as if the focus was on the role of the military in a time when we – and I do believe this to be the case – are nowhere near being at war.

This was another occasion on which the dynamic process of memory was evident. The most diverse conspiracy theories sprang up like mushrooms. Some blamed the Russians, the 'eternal enemy of Poland', who had raised their hand – and not for the first time, either – against the 'flower of the Polish nation'. Others pointed the finger at Polish politicians who had supposedly succumbed to the disgrace of collaboration. It was hinted that the best evidence of the treason of this latter group was the fact that they had not been on board the plane that crashed.

However, the black box recordings showed – although not unequivocally in every instance – that the cause of the disaster was much more straightforward. One aspect was an unfortunate chain of technical circumstances. Much of the evidence also points to the pilots having been put under pressure by the commander of the Air Force. No doubt they feared the dissatisfaction of the notoriously moody president. Despite the bad weather conditions and the advice from air traffic control to divert to another airport, the captain decided in favour of making a risky landing.

At the same time, text messages in the following vein were being forwarded all over the country: 'On board the aircraft to Smolensk was a "small" man, a cantankerous, commonplace president who was also provincial and xenophobic and didn't know the words of the chorus of the national anthem. This president, who had notched up the lowest popularity ratings of any Polish president to date, was not only the butt of satirical jokes, he was the laughing-stock of the whole of Europe. But the coffin that returned from Smolensk contained the body of an "extraordinary statesman", "the father of the nation", a "kinglike figure". What I would like to know is this: who the hell switched the bodies? Where are Kaczyński's remains?'

The good, the bad, and the history

Recalling the jokes made by my Lebanese acquaintances, I prefer not to make any inappropriate comparisons. Lech Kaczyński was no Lebanese warlord. Nonetheless, his brother's political allies and many other conservative politicians of their ilk have a very particular view of historical memory. They honour the attitude of pre-war officers and contrast it with the 'collaborators' of the Communist era, while not forgetting their ancient enemies who lie in wait at the border, and the world, which is indifferent to the sacrifice of Poland, the Christ among peoples. Where does this simplifying, glorifying language of historical memory come from?

Part of the problem are the instances of opportunistic manipulation that always play a role in politics, both domestic and foreign. Nevertheless, the key element is the attitude, which was shaped in an era when Poland was indeed occupied or had to fear for the safety of its borders, an era when the truth had to be hidden. This was true both of the official historiography – which has always been susceptible to influence – and of human memories. The latter, even if they cannot in principle be assigned to any ideological formula, are subject to distortion as soon as they come into contact with the power of government. However, it is worth differentiating between times of high conflict and periods of peace, which facilitate honest, social debates.

When the broader view is taken, the language of historical memory under the Kaczyński brothers was a language of the juxtaposition of good and evil. That said, morality is not a historical category. It belongs more to the poetics of war – often with God as the great warrior in the background.

Rest in peace ...

I firmly believe that it is worth putting this formulaic view of history behind us. When I speak to my grandmother, and also as part of my work at the Museum of the History of National Socialism in Cologne, I hear contemporary witnesses and help to document their memories. I am convinced that the historical memory of a country cannot be composed solely of the memories of its heroes, and that those acts of which one should be ashamed are an equally important part of this memory.

Take, for example, the tragicomic story of two wounded Germans who ended up being nursed by my grandmother during the fight against the Polish resistance in 1944. One of the two trusted the nurse and allowed her to bandage his wounds; the other was afraid to do so, and urged the other to leave the insurgent hospital as soon as possible. They left

the building, and didn't even make it a hundred metres. They were shot by members of the Polish resistance before my grandmother's eyes.

In the view of Poland presented in Wajda's *Katyń*, there is no place for similarly ambivalent eyewitness accounts, either on a personal or a political level. The shock of defeat in 1939 and the tragic consequences of the bankruptcy of the pre-war Polish state and its outdated, badly-led army are presented as a heroic sacrifice. When I watch the film, it also conveys to me the impression that it is more patriotic to send your best sons to their deaths (and what a heroic death) than to make sure that they survive, as is so absolutely essential for society.

This is not a view of historical memory to which I can subscribe. In my view it lacks authenticity, the full ambivalence of human behaviour. Similarly, there is no well-founded anal-

ysis of the historical catastrophes and the role of the leaders who did not succeed in preventing these defeats and did not even have the courage to warn society that they were inevitable. This is the kind of content that should be included in the history books.

I wish that the human and historical tragedies of Katyn and Auschwitz – and, at a completely different level, the government plane crash in Smolensk – would cease to be part of the manipulation of the culture of remembrance. Poland today is surrounded by friends. One can draw on its intercultural and non-belligerent assets and enrich them with new aspects relating to the creation of a common Europe. It is high time to change the language of remembrance. The poetics of war are no longer necessary, and neither are the poetics of the film *Katyń*. They should rest in peace – perhaps even alongside the 'king-like' Lech Kaczyński in the crypt of Wawel Cathedral in Kraków..

STANISŁAW STRASBURGER is a Polish journalist and writer. Among other things, he organises cultural projects involving Poland, Germany, and Lebanon. His novel *Handlarz wspomień* (*The Story Seller*) was published in 2009. In Arabic he has written for a number of newspapers including the Lebanese daily *As-Safir*. He is currently working on the collective historical memory project 'Art and Archive' in Germany and Lebanon.

Translated by Aingeal Flanagan

Copyright: Goethe-Institut e. V., Fikrun wa Fann, November 2012

CONFRONTING THE ENEMY'S SORROW

ARAB RESPONSES TO THE HOLOCAUST

The Arab perspective on the murder and displacement of the European Jews in the Second World War can only be assessed in connection with the Jewish settlement of Palestine. Periods of Holocaust denial have alternated with the acknowledgement of Jewish history in Europe. Now, however, there is growing recognition of the fact that only a mutual acknowledgement of the history of each other's suffering will open up new perspectives for coexistence.

By Götz Nordbruch



Anna Boghiguian: Drawings exhibited at the dOCUMENTA (13).

Photo: Stefan Weidner © Goethe-Institut

In the 1940s, Emil Zaydan worked as the editor of the Lebanese journal *Al-Ansar*. In June 1944, he dedicated an article to the ongoing conflict in Palestine. At this time, news about massacres of Jews in Eastern Europe had reached the local Arab public. In brief articles and reports, local newspapers had noted the systematic extermination of the Jewish population under German occupation. Zaydan explicitly took up this information in his articles in which he defended the cause of the Arab national movements. In one commentary, Zaydan insisted that his warning of a Zionist threat looming over the Arab world was not meant as an offence against the Jews. He considered his warning as being 'in no contradiction to empathy for the Jews in Europe and to deeply mourning their sufferings from persecutions and deportations. We have to differentiate clearly between these two things, so that we can declare without any ambiguity: the Jewish problem is not the Zionist problem!'

Distinction between Jewish and Zionist

Very similar arguments were raised by observers from diverse political spectra. From this perspective, sympathy for the fate of the Jews in Europe stood in no contradiction to a vehement rejection of the Zionist project in the Eastern Mediterranean. For many Arab nationalists, for instance, demands for a Jewish settlement in Palestine that were based on the plight of Jewish refugees from Europe were illegitimate as they were seen as instrumentalising the suffering of European Jews for imperialist ends.

This perception of the Holocaust as a crime against European Jewry that was turned against the Arab population of Palestine has regained new currency in contemporary Arab debates about Nazi German history. From the 1950s until the late 1990s, the Holocaust had widely been neglected or de-

nied in Arab public discourses; in contrast, the last decade had been marked by a growing recognition of the Holocaust as an historical fact that has shaped collective Jewish memory. One striking example of this is the recent publication by Gilbert Achcar, a French-Lebanese political scientist who has published an outstanding book entitled »The Arabs and the Holocaust: The Arab-Israeli War of Narratives«. In this book, Achcar explicitly challenges persisting narratives in the Arab world according to which the Holocaust is nothing but a Zionist myth. What makes this book particularly interesting is the fact that Achcar clearly shows that his position is nothing new. Citing his father's Ph.D. dissertation from 1934, Achcar highlights the disgust expressed by many Arab observers about the developments in Germany at the time. Writing in his thesis, Joseph Achcar, the father of Gilbert, referred to the Nazi German regime's anti-Jewish policy in the following terms:

'It goes without saying that we condemn (...) the atavistic, savage conception that professes to purify the German nation by eliminating elements foreign to it. (...) The result (of this conception) was to drive away 'the undesirables', the Jews, who had to appeal to the hospitality of other countries.'

Arab responses to the Holocaust

In this sense, Arab responses to Nazism and the Holocaust have come full circle. Arab responses to the anti-Jewish persecutions in Nazi Germany were – and continue to be – immediately linked to the broader context of local, regional and international politics. The recent increase in interest in National Socialist history can be understood as a reflection of the developing intellectual pluralism that allows the questioning of established narratives. From this perspective, it is not surprising that the publication of books like those of Gilbert Achcar and others coincides with a revision of other narratives that have marked Arab public discourses for decades. Questions of national unity, of class, ethnic and religious minorities, and of gender have long remained taboo in most Arab societies that were controlled by authoritarian regimes and their constituencies, which were eager to limit intellectual debate and cultural diversity. Since the 1990s, these taboos have increasingly been challenged, a fact reflected in an increasing diversity and polarisation of public controversies and intellectual debates. This intellectual opening that is related to the changing balances of power in the region is also echoed in a growing interest in the Holocaust.

The case of Garaudy

One particular event represents a turning point in recent controversies surrounding the Holocaust in the Arab public sphere: the debate sparked by the French philosopher Rog-

er Garaudy and his work »The Founding Myths of Israeli Politics«. In this book, which was first published in 1995, Garaudy explicitly referred to the Holocaust as a myth that was invented by the Zionist movement to blackmail the world and to gain support for the creation of Israel. In the years following its release in France in December 1995, Garaudy's book was given extensive coverage in the Arab media. The first interviews with Garaudy and articles about his book appeared in Arab newspapers just weeks after it was released in France. Known for his earlier writings on Marxism and, especially, on Islam, Garaudy enjoyed a considerable popularity with the Arab public. The huge public interest in his theses finally made for a particularly warm welcome at a lecture he gave at the Cairo International Book Fair in February 1998.

Hundreds of articles were dedicated to Garaudy's book, and to the subsequent trial at which Garaudy was sentenced and fined for denying the Holocaust. Two narratives were central to these reactions: first, the claim that the Holocaust was a myth fabricated by Zionists to justify their drive for a national home in Palestine. Taking up Garaudy's claim that the numbers of Jewish victims were exaggerated and no proofs for a systematic extermination policy existed, the vast majority of Arab commentators used the case to challenge the centrality of the Holocaust in Israeli narratives.

From this perspective, the state of Israel had been created on a myth and thus lacked any moral and political legitimacy. This argument was further elaborated on by references to an assumed collusion of Zionist and National Socialist interests. The Zionists, it was argued, had in the 1930s and 1940s shared the interest of the Nazis in driving out the Jews from Europe and then forcing them to settle in Palestine. This claim of a historical alliance between Zionist leaders and the Nazi German regime was supported by references to Israeli politics towards the Palestinians. In this respect, it was asserted that the official Israeli narrative of Israel as a Jewish state echoed the racial worldview of the Nazis. Israeli politics towards the Palestinians, it was claimed, mirrored Nazi Germany's anti-Jewish policies.

The contradiction implied in this argument – that the Holocaust was a fake, and that Jews were now responsible for a second Holocaust against the Palestinians – was rarely noted in these articles. It was obvious that these arguments did not reflect an interest in the historical events as such, but were directly linked to the political struggles of the mid-1990s over the legitimacy of Israel and its policy in the region.

The peace process with the Palestinians and Jordan had brought to the fore the political battles over the future of the region, confronting the various Arab nationalist and Islamist currents on the one hand, and those calling for an intellectual opening and political reforms in the Arab world on the other.

Conspiratorial thought

The second narrative that was central to these responses to Garaudy echoed the idea of a Jewish-Zionist conspiracy that was controlling international politics, media and public opinion. Countless commentators argued that the Jews were using their power and influence to shape international politics, and were behind most of the destructive developments in the region. One of the most explicit examples for this argument was an article by Muhammad Salmawy, then the editor-in-chief of the weekly newspaper »al-Ahram Hebdo« and a personal aide of Naguib Mahfouz, the Nobel-Prize-winning Egyptian writer. Salmawy offered a lengthy discussion of the ongoing lawsuit against Garaudy in which he echoed views commonly held by the Arab public. In his article entitled 'Look for the Jews!', Salmawy addressed three issues of concern at the time of writing, in February 1998. In addition to the case of Garaudy, Salmawy referred to the fate of David Irving, the British Holocaust denier, and to the Monica Lewinsky affair in the US. Salmawy opened his article with the following observation:

'The American President Bill Clinton is currently in the spotlight due to his supposed extramarital relations [with Monica Lewinsky]. The French thinker Roger Garaudy is on trial in Paris. The British historian David Irving has been expelled from Austria, Italy, Germany, Canada and the countries of the Commonwealth. Three incidents which at first sight seem unconnected. Remembering the famous words of Napoleon: "Look for the woman!", we could also say, if we want to understand what is going on around us, "Look for the Jews!"'

This statement, whose basic premise was shared by several commentators, stood for the persistence of conspiratorial thought that was clearly based on the idea of an Arab collective of victims on the one hand, and a Jewish collective that was mastering history on the other.

These arguments that were formulated in response to the Garaudy affair did not originate at the margins of society; they were voiced by mainstream intellectuals with regional and international reputations.

Against the denial of history

The importance of these responses to Garaudy's writings lies in the fact that they were paralleled by a growing number of voices that explicitly challenged established narratives and mainstream intellectual approaches to the topic, including the Palestinians Edward Said and Azmi Bishara, the Lebanese Hazem Saghiyeh or the Egyptian Ali Salem. While the political and intellectual backgrounds of these voices were

often very diverse, they shared a drive to question long-standing interpretations of the state of Arab societies and of regional politics. To be sure, all of these authors were critical of Israeli politics, but they shared a conviction that the denial of history went against the immediate interests of the Arab public.

Edward Said for instance was one of the first to recognise the importance of the Holocaust in collective Jewish memory. While he vehemently rejected the notion that the Holocaust provided a justification for Israel's policies towards its neighbours, he considered it crucial to recognise the Holocaust as a key event in Jewish history in order to understand the reasoning of the Israeli public. Similar arguments were formulated by Azmi Bishara. In an outstanding article published in 1994, Bishara insisted that 'a historical compromise with the Israeli state has to be based on two collective memories. Any compromise in the Middle East has to reflect the past.'

These calls for a shift of perspective with regard to the Holocaust did not occur in an intellectual and political vacuum. The growing readiness to question established approaches to the German past – and thus to the historical origins of Israel – can be linked to similar revisions in other fields of Arab intellectual debate. For instance, the shifting perceptions of the Holocaust have to be seen in the context of the peace process and the political opening it provided for intellectual debates on both sides of the conflict. As with developments on the Israeli side, where the so-called new historians drew attention to the experiences of the Palestinians and their perspectives on the conflict, similar shifts were noticeable among the Arab public – and Palestinians in particular.

From Arab to Palestinian Nakba

Post-Zionist historiography was paralleled by similar debates about the place of the Nakba, or 'catastrophe', of 1948 in Palestinian collective memory. The Israeli historians Meir Litvak and Esther Webman have pointed to the fact that these years witnessed a gradual revision of the Nakba from an Arab catastrophe to a Palestinian catastrophe – which in itself marked a significant break with the Arab nationalist discourses of the 1950s and '60s. These revisions reflected a growing diversification of public memory, echoed in an increasing acceptance of multi-perspective approaches to history.

This changing perception of history also relates to emerging debates about ethnic and religious minorities such as the Copts in Egypt or the Kurds in Syria and Iraq, and about their status in mainstream national narratives of Arab unity. Similar debates had developed after the end of the civil war in Lebanon in the early 1990s. The end of the bloodshed made

it necessary to come to terms with different, and often conflicting, accounts of the events that had decimated the Lebanese population. In a very similar way, the Palestinian »intifada« that started in 1987 had encouraged self-reflection and self-critique among the Palestinian public. Questions of national unity, of gender relations and of the future state were reflected in an increasing plurality of narratives and intellectual visions.

This pluralisation of narratives and the multiplication of perspectives on historical events and society were paralleled by a re-inscription of Arab societies in global history. The call for an universalisation of the Holocaust as a potentially universal human experience reflects this development. In an article published by Hazem Saghyeh and Saleh Bashir in late 1997, the two authors stated:

‘Coexistence on the land of Palestine between the two peoples is unlikely as long as each side is living its own history, alongside the other or in isolation from the other. To have coexistence, each side will have to assimilate the history of the other, even to make it its own, based on what the Holocaust has entailed for both of them separately or together.’

This argument reflected a significant shift from past discourses, which had focused on claims of authenticity and cultural and intellectual purity. At the core of Arab nationalism – and, in a very similar way, of Islamism – lay the idea of an authentic community whose boundaries were clearly defined and whose essence was unaffected by outside influences. To demand a universalisation of the Holocaust, and thus of history, explicitly went against such claims of an undisputed Arab or Islamic nation. According to this reading, the history of Arab and Muslim identities had to be situated in the global context of the twentieth century and its often existential conflicts. History and memory were not things as such, but only emerged in negotiations and encounters with ‘Others’.

There is a second dimension to these developments that took shape in the mid-1990s, and gained momentum in the wake of the debates around Garaudy and his thesis. This relates to the popularity of the conspiracy theories that were used to explain the centrality of the Holocaust in international discourses on European history. Since the late 1990s, authors

such as Saghyeh and Said have become increasingly outspoken in their objection to conspiratorial thought in dealings with the past, but no less so in dealings with the present.

Growing interest in memory politics

This rejection of conspiratorial interpretations of history is paralleled by a growing interest in memory politics in general, reflecting a growing awareness of the impact of the past on contemporary politics. A recent edition of the journal »Alif«, a journal of comparative poetics published by the American University in Cairo, provides an illustration of this interest. In the introduction to the November edition of 2010, which was dedicated to the theme of trauma and memory, the editors stated:

‘This issue of Alif focuses on trauma and loss and their presence in collective and individual memory. The question of traumatic events has been recognised in psychology, psychoanalysis, and literature, but scholarly studies have mostly concentrated on traumas enacted in the West – World Wars and the Holocaust. This issue attempts to extend the field of trauma and memory studies to include other parts of the world: Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, India, Ireland, Lebanon, Palestine, Pakistan, multi-ethnic America and ethnic Greece.’

This recognition of traumatic historical experiences in contexts other than the purely ‘Arab’ or ‘Islamic’ marks a major break from previous narratives about history and society. This break provided an intellectual opening for an increasing interest in Jewish history in general, and in the history of the Holocaust in particular. It is important, however, to stress that such openness is actually not without historical precedents. In fact, the 1930s and 1940s in many ways resemble the current state of Arab intellectual and political life. As today, in the 1930s and 1940s domestic political culture in countries like Egypt, Syria or Iraq was at a crossroads, and this was echoed in heated debates over the future of society and political order. These periods are often described as periods of intellectual and political crisis. I suggest a more positive reading of these debates and conflicts.

At least with regard to questions of memory and memory politics, they provide an opening of political culture that clearly breaks with collective myths of the past.

GÖTZ NORDBRUCH is Assistant Professor at the Centre for Contemporary Middle East Studies at the University of Southern Denmark in Odense. He is co-editor of the book *Sympathie und Schrecken. Begegnungen mit Faschismus und Nationalsozialismus in Ägypten, 1922-1937 (Sympathy and Horror: Attitudes to Fascism and National Socialism in Egypt, 1922-1937)*, Berlin 2011.

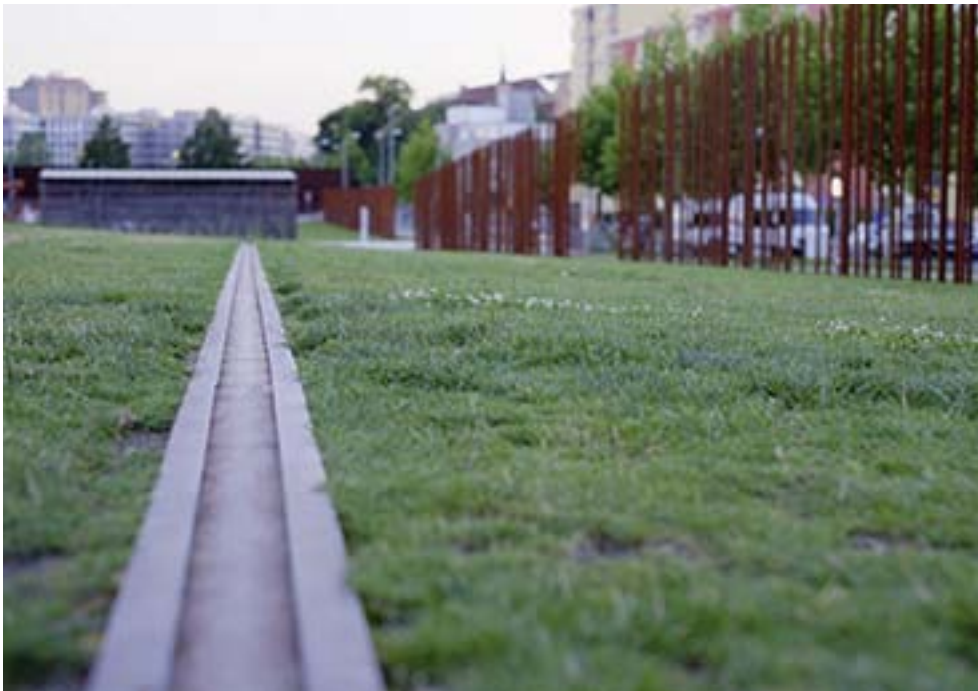
*Translated by Charlotte Collins
Goethe-Institut e. V., Fikrun wa Fann, November 2012*

DEMOCRACY IS A PREREQUISITE FOR COMING TO TERMS WITH THE PAST

COMING TO TERMS WITH THE PAST IS A PREREQUISITE FOR DEMOCRACY

As acting director of the agency overseeing the Stasi (state security) files of the former East German regime, Herbert Ziehm is very knowledgeable about coming to terms with a past under a dictatorship. In this interview he emphasises how closely democracy is linked to the careful re-examination of the past..

By Herbert Ziehm / Albrecht Metzger



Berlin Wall memorial site. Photo: Stefan Weidner © Goethe-Institut

Albrecht Metzger: *Mr Ziehm, what is more important when an authoritarian regime is toppled: hunting down and prosecuting the perpetrators in order to purge the system of the poison of dictatorship, or building up democratic institutions?*

Herbert Ziehm: I don't think one is possible without the other. Attempts to come to terms with the past won't work without democratic institutions. They alone can guarantee that this process is an objective one, that people don't take revenge for acts that were themselves bad enough. Unfortunately there is often a danger of history swinging like a pendulum from one extreme to the other, and I believe that this would ill become a democracy.

To put it another way: is democratisation possible without coming to terms with the past?

Ultimately, I think not. In many countries people will say we have to leave the past behind us now and establish new structures, we have to look to the future, great challenges lie ahead. All this is true: it is important to establish political parties, as we are seeing in Egypt at the moment. But if you don't work through the past, sooner or later the old poison will return.

Culture of suspicion

People will sow suspicion; they will tarnish their political opponents with accusations that they co-operated with the former regime or were even secretly working for it, and so on. I think it's so important what Joachim Gauck said: it's only in the files that we can check whether what the former rulers say is true, or whether it's just information that's

been disseminated for a particular purpose. And that's why I think it's very important to preserve the files. With the GDR we had, thank God, a second state that, with its democratic institutions, was able to take over these files. That was a unique situation.

What was it like trying to come to terms with the past in the GDR in 1989? What were the first steps to be taken?

It was a very particular situation in the GDR, because people knew about the institution of the Stasi, but ultimately they didn't know what it actually did. The only ones who knew that were the ruling Socialist Unity Party (SED), which controlled the Stasi. That was why the main thing at the demonstrations was always that we wanted to know what they did; and secondly, we also wanted to see the files, so that we could see what was in there. And over the past twenty years we have seen that many things have been portrayed differently to the way they were written down in the files.

Human rights abuses in the GDR

For example, Markus Wolf, a high-profile Stasi official, always maintained that his department, General Intelligence Administration, only conducted spying activities in the same way as other secret services and that he had not been involved any human rights abuses. We now know that he most certainly was. He had people forcibly returned to the GDR from abroad, he spied on people living abroad and put them under pressure – his people most certainly were involved in the abuse of human rights.

Is it also part of the purpose of reassessing history to bring former perpetrators to justice?

It's also about rehabilitating the victims. The Stasi always said that the persecution of certain people was not politically motivated, that these people were criminals. Thousands of people were criminalised by the Stasi in this way. Where there are victims there are of course also perpetrators who have to be brought to justice. It's certainly the case that in Germany I often hear from the organisations representing the victims that they are unsatisfied with the way the legal system has dealt with it. They feel that the perpetrators have often got off far too lightly, that not enough have been sentenced. That may be true, but I think it's very important that the perpetrators have been brought before an open court and made to answer for what they did. For me, the sentence they get as a result is usually only of secondary importance.

Do you believe that there are still too many perpetrators at large who have never been made to answer for what they did?

Here in Germany we see that penal law is tailored to crimes committed by individuals, not those organised by a state. So it's always difficult to prove that an individual was responsible for what happened and not say: well, he was under pressure himself, he couldn't have done anything else. It's a dilemma, and from time to time someone may have got off very lightly as a result. If we're looking purely at actual sentences, very little has happened. But, okay – this is a democracy. Otherwise what we'd have here would be dictatorship by another name.

It's not about revenge, because that would be a new kind of poison.

Yes, that would divide society in another way. Revenge engenders revenge; the biblical principle of an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth doesn't get us any further.

The situation in Egypt

You went to Egypt twice in 2011 and talked to a lot of people there. Did you have the feeling that people wanted revenge for the injustices they had suffered?

There was a strong desire to put the regime on trial, with Mubarak as the main focus. But I don't know whether I can already speak of democracy in Egypt; in my eyes it is (or was, before the presidential elections, at least) still a kind of military dictatorship. They've sacrificed the figurehead, but in my view this was just a token sacrifice. It's what Egon Krenz, the man who briefly succeeded Erich Honecker [as leader of the GDR], tried to do here in 1989, along the lines of: we'll swap a few of the people and that will enable us to save the regime. I don't think it'll be that easy in Egypt. The power struggle between the current president and the military council is far from over, and we'll have to wait and see who comes to power.

Is it at all possible to attempt to come to terms with the past when the old regime is still so present, in the form of the military?

I don't think it's possible at all. Only a freely elected parliament can do this. We will now have to wait and see whether the Muslim Brotherhood has any interest at all in re-evaluating the past. At the moment I have the feeling they're worried that they could be accused of taking revenge, and perhaps they don't want that at all. They want to say: 'We're far

more tolerant that you've always said we were.' But at some point there will be a need to re-evaluate the past.

Creating democratic structures

You were first there in March 2011, then again in July 2011. Were you more optimistic then than you are today?

I was actually already far more sceptical on my second visit. I didn't sense over there the euphoria you found in German newspapers that the revolution had prevailed. During the revolution what people noticed were the young people who were orientated towards the West. But I think Egyptian society is structured rather differently, and that's what then became apparent in the elections. The conservative forces were victorious, and they aren't anything like as orientated towards the West. People overestimated the strength of the younger lobby. These are not the forces that are going to determine the fate of Egypt in the long term. We're still very far from overcoming the dictatorship. First of all democratic structures have to be created. They still have the same old institutions. No one talks any more about dismantling the state security system; it's absolutely not something people are saying, that we have to restructure the security forces and subject them to democratic controls. In March 2011 everyone was still saying they wanted to break up the (Egyptian) Stasi. Nowadays no one knows what it's really doing.

What's your assessment of the fact that the Egyptian Stasi was renamed, but not abolished?

There are many things that are reminiscent of the end of the GDR. Then too the Stasi was given a new name. I don't think anyone in Egypt is questioning the activities of the police any more. The Stasi will carry on doing its work, I think; it will be firmly under the control of the military council, and will work for it.

You sound very sceptical.

I think anything is still possible. The course they're taking is one that makes you think there's going to be another dictatorship within the next ten years, so in that sense I am optimistic that they will be able to build up democratic structures there. But I don't share the euphoria of the German press, which believed that removing Mubarak meant democracy was already a given.

Why have intelligence agencies at all?

The German Stasi was dissolved, but Germany still has intelligence agencies. There are Egyptians who want to abolish their secret service entirely. Is that wise?

We had this discussion in Cairo in March with one Islamic cleric who came from Germany. He said that we as Germans had no reason to act superior, that we had intelligence services too. Of course there are still intelligence services, and we need to have them, because more and more political extremists are working conspiratorially. They don't put their political opinions out there and justify them, they work underground, so in that respect the state sometimes has to work in the same way. But I think it's essential that these things be subject to democratic controls. And in this respect mistakes are sometimes made. We're seeing that at the moment in Germany, where the intelligence service is experiencing one disaster after another. But that doesn't mean it's the wrong way. Some things didn't work as they should have done, but then there are other democratic institutions - and I would also include the press in this - that expose things like this and raise these painful subjects. And politicians who are prepared to take the consequences.

Given that the conditions there are quite different, is there actually anything Egypt can learn from Germany about coming to terms with its past?

I think it's possible to learn that it's a matter of absolute necessity to re-evaluate what has happened under a dictatorship, rehabilitate the political victims of this dictatorship and compensate them. It is possible to give the victims back their dignity. And it's necessary to show that crimes committed in the name of the state will not be tolerated. The International Criminal Court shows that we can't act arbitrarily, we can't write our own laws to suit ourselves. I think that the process of re-evaluating the past is also a signal directed at the future.

So can Germany be of assistance in Egypt? Can it serve as a model?

I think we can offer them legal assistance. We can show that you can also do things democratically. The Eastern European states, for example, were afraid that if the Stasi were abolished it would mobilise underground. All this can be democratically controlled: you don't want to exclude them. But whether that will actually happen in Egypt is something the society there has to decide for itself. Pressure from abroad is not good; it results in a corral mentality, where people get the impression that the know-it-alls want to show us how things should be done. I don't think we'll get very far with that. The desire has to come from the heart of the nation. I always think it's interesting to compare the situation in Germany in 1945 and in 1989. After 1945 there was denazification, which was organised by the Americans. That didn't

really work in Germany; that was imposed on us from outside. In 1989 it was different: it came from the heart of society.

Have there been enquiries from Egypt as to whether you can help it re-evaluate its history?

People often get in touch, but at the moment it's very quiet. But I think Egyptian society itself must itself first decide to do this, then contacts like this will come about of their own accord.

If the Egyptians were to ask you whether you could help them again, would you do it?

I would do it insofar as I am able to – yes, I think so. The op-

timism people exuded at the time – ‘We can do this’ – I was infected by that. I hope that optimism is still there.

You give the impression of having no prejudices against the Egyptians. You never talk about them as ‘Muslims’ or ‘Arabs’, whose culture might make it impossible for them to establish a democracy. You talk to them on level.

I believe that the preconditions in Egypt are good, because it has already existed as a state for so long. The state of Egypt has a certain stability on account of its long history, and the people identify with the country, too. In Iraq, for example, ethnicity plays an important role, but you don't have that in Egypt. People there stand by their country and their state, and ultimately that makes me optimistic.

HERBERT ZIEHM was for many years Deputy Head of the Information/Disclosure Division of the Stasi Archives in Berlin. He has now retired.

ALBRECHT METZGER is a Hamburg-based freelance journalist who specialises in Middle East affairs.

Translated by Charlotte Collins

Copyright: Goethe-Institut e. V., Fikrun wa Fann, November 2012

LOOKING BACK TO THE FUTURE

MOROCCO STRUGGLES TO CLARIFY ITS POST-COLONIAL SELF-IMAGE

History does not have to be rewritten, but it is one of the most important bases for the restructuring of state and society after the Arab revolutions – as is the case in Morocco, where the so-called Truth and Reconciliation Commission has initiated the process of coming to terms with the past from the top down.

By Sonja Hegasy



Workers colouring leather in the Old Town in Fes, Morocco. Photo: Stefan Weidner © Goethe-Institut

The debate about memory and history, which now also involves elements of civil society, is determining the future of Morocco and is unique in the Arab world. There is as yet no museum for the recent history of Morocco, but in October 2012 the country's leading historians met under the leadership of Professor Mohammed Kenbib to work on a concept. The future Musée National d'Histoire du Maroc sees itself as one in a series of follow-on projects by the Moroccan Truth Commission, which is tasked not only with resolving injustices and deciding on compensation, but also with acquainting the Moroccans with their own history.

Methods of coming to terms with the dictatorship

In 2004, after being pressurised for many years by the victims of despotism and injustice, Mohammed VI appointed the Justice and Reconciliation Commission (Instance Équité et Réconciliation – IER – or *hay'at al-insaf wa-l-musalaha*) to investigate human rights abuses that took place between 1956 and 1999. In the 1970s and 1980s in particular, his

father, Hassan II, systematically persecuted any opposition, both from Marxist underground groups and within the military. After two attempted coups by army factions in 1971 and 1972, officers and political activists vanished into prisons and secret camps, some for more than twenty years. The majority of applications for compensation submitted to the IER also relate to this period. The IER's mandate covered the resolution of serious human rights abuses, and establishing the level of damages or compensation claimed by victims and their families, as well as preparing suggestions for reform in order to prevent such abuses occurring in the future. The late human rights activist Driss Benzekri was president of the IER. Benzekri was himself arrested in 1974 at the age of twenty-four for being a member of the underground group *Ilal Amam* ['Forward'], and was only freed in 1991 as the political system started to open up.

Right from the beginning historians were involved in the work of the IER, or actively accompanied the IER in various work groups and publications. Ibrahim Boutaleb, emer-

itus professor of contemporary history, was one of the sixteen members of the commission. In the IER's concluding report he explicitly details the need for a reform in the academic approach to Moroccan contemporary history. One important aim of the Truth Commission was for the so-called 'leaden years' to be included in the educational canon. In addition, many young academics became involved in the documentation and archiving of the hearings. Today, historians are playing a central role in implementing the IER's recommendations, as evaluating the country's post-colonial history is more political than ever and thus encounters resistance from various quarters. Dealing with the past in Morocco is also made more difficult by the fact that there has been no regime change. In every dictatorship, issues of access to and dealing with source material touch upon the internal mechanics of the exercise of power. Archives are seldom kept, and records are often kept badly. While making a film and a book about the Hay Mohammadi area of Casablanca, Fatna el-Bouih had to obtain authorisation from seventeen communal facilities, including the hygiene service and the Saada Cinema, in order to gain access to source material.

Memorial culture

In 2010 the journalists Youssef Chimrou and Souleiman Bencheikh founded the first and so far only popular academic magazine on the history of Morocco. Bencheikh is one of the most important investigative journalists in the country, and over the past ten years has been involved in various independent media start-ups. He also writes a widely-read blog, <http://sbencheikh.blogspot.de>.

The first edition of *Zamane - L'Histoire du Maroc* was published in November 2010. With a print run of 15,000 per month the journal has since built up a solid francophone readership. *Zamane* addresses a wide variety of important socio-political topics, such as the history of the occupation of the Western Sahara, the genesis of religiosity in the country, editions of draft constitutions from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, etc. The first edition looked at, among other things, the 'Unknown Story of the Moroccan "Fascists"', and 'Why and How Morocco Lost Its Jews', as well as 'A History of Regicide'. It conveys the way in which looking back always also means looking to the future. *Zamane* is part of a wider Moroccan 'culture of remembrance from the bottom up'. Along with commemorative events and visits to various places of significance under the dictatorship (prisons, prison camps, police stations, mass graves), there are numerous examples of individual literary and artistic works dealing with the events of that time. In autobiographies, films, comics, poems and novels former political prisoners bear witness to their time in captivity. Some of them were in fact planning to overthrow the monarchy; some were just distributing

leaflets at the wrong time in the wrong place; others were arrested and deported with their entire family - including young children.

Two of the best-known of the authors to be imprisoned were Abraham Serfaty, the head of the Marxist-Leninist group Ilal Amam, who was in jail from 1974 until 1991, and Malika Oufkir, the daughter of the former minister of the interior, Mohamed Oufkir. Oufkir was shot in 1972 after the second assassination attempt on Hassan II by members of the military; his wife and six children were held captive for twenty years. Malika Oufkir's memoir, *The Prisoner: A Life in Morocco*, is a gripping record of a jeunesse dorée in the palace entourage in the 1960s and her subsequent odyssey through a series of prisons from 1972 to 1991.

Material compensation and immunity from prosecution

Around 22,000 victims and their families lodged claims with the IER in 2004. Almost 10,000 of these were eventually approved. The claimants received various different forms of compensation, including medical assistance and financial damages. A total of 85 million US dollars was paid out. 742 cases of disappeared people were solved. The IER's 700-page final report was published in Arabic, French, English and Spanish. Independent human rights organisations still criticise the fact that the commission's mandate excluded the possibility of prosecution. The perpetrators' names could not be used in the public hearings, even when, as happened on occasion, they were spotted as guards in the courtroom. To this day they still enjoy immunity from prosecution.

Entitled 'Truth, Justice and Reconciliation', the final report calls for a large number of reforms. Alongside safeguarding human rights in constitutional law, these were: the ratification and enforcement of international conventions, the independence of the judiciary, a reform of penal law, human rights education in schools, and collective reparations. The implementation of the recommendations is now known as IER 2 and has just begun. The chapter on 'Research' calls for the reworking of curricula for the teaching of history and the foundation of an academic institute, as well as for the national archive to be safeguarded and made accessible. However, as with the majority of the IER's recommendations, this Institute for Contemporary History [*tarih ar-rahin*] has still not yet been founded. In 2010 a master's degree programme in Contemporary History was set up at the Mohammed V. University in Rabat under Professor Mohammed Kenbib. The initial plan was to train a sufficient number of potential academic employees. Then in June 2012 the president of the National Council for Human Rights, Driss El Yazami, announced that the *Institut marocain du temps présent* would be set up that same year.

At times there were up to 350 people working on the collation, examination and archiving of the files. The IER applications and hearings resulted in the creation of a valuable archive of contemporary Moroccan history, but to date it is still not accessible to interested members of the public. Both Moroccan and international scholars are champing at the bit, waiting to analyse the documents in the IER archive. In 2008 the renowned historian Jamaâ Baida opened a conference in Hamburg with a lecture on 'Morocco's Truth Commission (2004-2005) from a Historian's Point of View: New Perspectives in Writing Contemporary History'. Only now, Baida said, could Moroccan historiography address the period following the end of the French colonial rule. He describes the activities of the IER as an 'autopsy on the reign of Hassan II'. Baida is now the head of the National Archive, which opened in 2011 and which also sees itself as having an institutional role to play in public efforts to come to terms with the past.

Remembrance and compensation

The Truth Commission strongly advocated the principle of collective reparations. One of the most important conclusions reached by the Commission was that communal and collective compensation should be made to neglected city districts, deliberately underdeveloped regions, and the forgotten places that were the prison camps. So far, eleven towns and regions should have benefited from projects from the programme of collective reparations started in 2008. According to the ethnologist Susan Slymovics, this kind of compensation, in the form of infrastructure and development projects, underlines the significance of the victims' narratives for the transformation of the society. Memories should be kept alive not only through witness statements, museums and archives, but also through town planning, geographical restructuring and the development of poor and rural areas. In this way subjective memories acquire more than just individual significance but also a societal, economic, cultural and possibly also an ecological dimension.

Opinion on the work of the IER is very divided. Because the perpetrators were not brought to justice and there has been no explicit apology from the monarchy, many consider the IER to have been a farce. In their view, the IER has reduced the issue of their suffering to one of material compensation. For others, despite official statements to the contrary, in setting up the commission the monarchy has implicitly acknowledged its actions, and – far more importantly – has rehabilitated the victims within society. For the first time a state body – the IER – is looking into the torture centres in the country, the attacks by the security forces, the blatant perversion of justice, and the disappeared, all of which were repeatedly denied under Hassan II. There is a famous interview

with Hassan II conducted by Anne Sinclair in 1993 in which she asks him about the prison camps of Tazmamart and Kalaât M'Gouna, which had been documented by the United Nations. Unmoved, the monarch replies: 'Kalaât M'Gouna, c'est la capitale des roses. Vous connaissez mal la géographie du Maroc.' ['Kalaât M'Gouna is the capital of roses. Your knowledge of the geography of Morocco is poor.'] Smiling broadly, Hassan II denies the existence of prison camps in the region. Against this background, the IER was a milestone for the political culture of the country.

Nearly ten years after this interview with Hassan II, Fatna el Bouih published her prison diaries under the title *Une femme nommée Rachid* (Arabic title: *hadith al-atama*), as in the former police station *Derb Moulay Cherif* in Casablanca she was given the man's name 'Rachid No. 45'. While still at school she was already active in the national student body (*Syndicat National des Elèves*), and was arrested for the first time in 1974 for leading a strike by school pupils. In 1980, as a politically-active 22-year-old student, she was sentenced to five years in jail. Today she lives in Casablanca and works on projects in various different districts with the aim of keeping memory alive. In 2006 she and her husband Youssef Madad founded the *Centre relais d'aide à la réinsertion des détenus (CRARD)*, to help former prisoners reintegrate into society. Fatna el Bouih is campaigning for *Derb Moulay Cherif* to be turned into a museum and made accessible to the public. However, families of the policemen are still living in the complex.

Mistrust towards the official reappraisal of the past

The individuals working on the official committees today are considered to be people of high integrity. However, some of the political opposition regards the various bodies and committees founded in the last twenty years as nothing more than an image campaign for the benefit of the international community. One anonymous blogger, speaking for many, wrote at the beginning of 2011: 'The Justice and Reconciliation Committee (IER) which reconciles nothing. Created under the high patronage of HM Mohammed VI in 2004, this commission was supposed to reopen a painful chapter in the history of Morocco. Ultimately, it has had almost zero effect. The only effect it has had, if we are to believe the numerous witness statements and reports, is to have reopened the chapter, twisted the knife in the wound of the families and victims of the leaden years without responding to their questions, let alone their expectations. [...] The victims file past, and their feelings with them. All of them are obliged to bare their souls, to relive what they experienced, after having to prove that they did go through this ordeal. All of them had to repeat their ordeal. And for what?'

Leila Kilani, on the other hand, made a powerful documentary in 2009 about the work of the IER, called *Nos lieux interdits* [*Our Forbidden Places*]. The film focuses on the families of four victims and their controversial attempts to examine the question: how necessary, important, and helpful are memory and certainty? The director accompanies representatives of the IER on visits to the victims and their relatives. She shows the families receiving advice at the Commission headquarters, as well as scenes from the public hearings. Whereas some of the older generation, the parents and partners of the disappeared, are not seeking to know with absolute certainty what happened to their loved ones, the children and grandchildren – now in their twenties and thirties – of those who disappeared or were murdered are demanding detailed clarification of the fate of their (grand)mothers and fathers.

In all the families this was a blank that needed to be filled in. For some, it was only through the work of the IER that they found out what happened to their relatives. In the 'lead-in' years of the 1970s and 1980s the relatives of the disappeared changed their names and family histories in order to protect themselves. The children grew up in the belief that their father had left them, or that he was a deserter. One woman in the film vehemently accuses her grandmother of failing to ask enough questions about what had happened to her husband, and thus contributing to his being forgotten until the IER came along. The film sheds light on the situation of survivors of prison and torture who find themselves confronted with the accusation that they ruined the lives of their family members for the sake of a mistaken ideology. Some are only able to talk about it with one another. Many have got involved in the work of the IER.

One scene in the film highlights the difference in how the different generations deal with the lack of certainty. A woman whose husband, a young military cadet, disappeared soon after their wedding is discussing with her son the possibility of going to visit the prison camp Tazmamart. Both have clearly been marked by the loss of their husband, or father. The mother doesn't want to join in the journey of remembrance: 'Today they tell us, "Come and see where they disappeared." What for? To see what?' Her adult son contradicts her, his voice barely audible. 'I want to see with my own eyes - even just bones... I want to see the secret centre, to see the cells. To see the grave. I am picturing this in my mind, but my imagination cannot follow with it. I tried and tried to widen my imagination. I believe it will never grasp the reality of Tazmamart.'

For the mother, the journey to Tazmamart means finally having to acknowledge that her husband is dead. Perhaps, too, she is afraid that if she goes there her subjective memory of him will fade: 'For us, they are not dead. They are still alive in our hearts. In our minds and conscience. You really feel someone is dead when you see ... his grave.' For the son, on the other hand, the journey is a step forward in his quest for rehabilitation. 'I have always felt defeated. Since always I have these looks sticking to my skin: "Son of a traitor".' [Excerpt from *Nos lieux interdits* by Leila Kilani, 2009]

2011: a historical caesura in the Arab world

Achieving a common understanding of one's own history is frequently the subject of bitter controversy in countries across the world. In Germany too there were many years of debate before it became possible to found the Deutsche Historische Museum (DHM) in Berlin in 1987. Critics saw no point in the federal government setting up a national museum of the history of Germany. After the fall of the Wall, the DHM was erected on a site in former East Berlin and became responsible for, among other things, mediating the history of the two German states.

Many authors are critical of the 'memory boom' or 'memory industry' that has developed in recent years in response to the violent twentieth century. History is a 'resource, to which an increasing number of stakeholders with various different aims and interests in a growing diversity of forms are competing for access', as the historian Hans Günther Hockerts puts it. Recent history, he says, attracts particular interest, as contemporary witnesses are still alive, and the resonance of 'coming to terms with the past' as a medium of political reassessment continues to grow. In Morocco, academic historical analysis of the second half of the twentieth century is de facto a reassessment, and thus also an evaluation of the period of Hassan II's rule from 1962 until his death in 1999. Professors and students of history must decide how they will classify the attempted coups, the occupation of the Western Sahara in 1975, the uprisings and revolts of the past forty years, the social development of the country after independence, the human rights abuses, and the hobbling of the opposition.

The protests and upheavals in the Arab world since 2011 clearly signify the end of the post-colonial order. History does not have to be rewritten, but it is one of the most important resources for the models of state and society in the near future. Historians, even more than politicians, should

provide an answer as to how, in view of what has happened in the last fifty years, the next twenty years should be shaped. The historical is what was possible – with the future, new possibilities appear.

The key question for Morocco – currently the subject of a highly controversial debate – is whether and in what way it is possible to reform the monarchy in order to turn it into a parliamentary monarchy, or whether the announcements made and steps taken to date in the direction of reform are simply a continuation of the extremely skilful political balancing act that has kept the Alawite dynasty in power since 1664.

So far the IER has not resulted in the prevention of fresh human rights abuses and tyranny in Morocco. Whether or not it has reconciled the Moroccans with their history is an open question. The idea that ‘telling the story’ can defuse political conflicts and reconcile societies – an idea strongly influenced by Sigmund Freud and concepts of the early twentieth century – should at least be subjected to critical scrutiny in the current transitional justice boom.

Eight years on, implementation of the IER’s recommendations has still barely begun. Nonetheless, the IER is not worthless, nor does it simply serve a construction of history dictated from above. It may be that the IER is intended to create an image of Morocco on the international stage as a model Arab country. But at the same time the interaction of a governmental agency, non-governmental organisations, independent forums against forgetting, and the media opens up a public discussion that entails debate about the country’s ‘political memory’. Here, according to the Aachen-based political scientist Helmut König, ‘the foundations of the political order assume tangible form. Which historical events fill us with horror, and which events do we recognise as having been central ones, and for what reasons is this the case?’

Helmut König highlights two aspects of political memory: it requires material support (i.e. monuments, museums, rituals etc.), and it is intentional, i.e. all those involved are involved in the politics of memory. But this interest does not devalue the process of coming to terms with the past. On the contrary: the debate about remembrance and history, with all parties involved, will determine Morocco’s future.

SONJA HEGASY is the Vice Director of the Zentrum Moderner Orient in Berlin.

Translated by Tim Charlotte Collins

Copyright: Goethe-Institut e. V., Fikrun wa Fann, November 2012

THE COMPOSITE PAST OF THE FUTURE

AN INTERVIEW

Fifty years ago, on 5th July 1962, Algeria officially became an independent state. The war of independence from 1954 to 1962 and the civil war in the 1990s were extreme collective experiences of violence, which so far Algerian society has scarcely been able to process.

By Dalila Dalléas Bouzar / Martina Sabra



Dalila Dalléas Bouzar: 'Soldier, October 1988'. Pencil and crayon on paper. From the artist's catalogue: Algérie année 0 ou quand commence la mémoire, Éditions Barzakh, Algiers 2012. © Goethe-Institut

Since 2011 the Berlin-based Franco-Algerian artist Dalila Dalléas Bouzar has been exhibiting, among other things, a project entitled *The Composite Past of the Future*. In the summer of 2012 a bilingual book of essays about the exhibition was published in Algeria under the title *Algérie, Année 0*. Martina Sabra spoke to Dalila Dalléas Bouzar in Berlin.

Martina Sabra: *You were born in Oran, Algeria in 1974. In 1976 you moved to France with your parents. You're a French citizen. When did you start to take an interest in your Algerian family history, and what part did the civil war of the 1990s play in this?*

Dalila Dalléas Bouzar: In our family no questions were asked. Politics was not a subject we discussed. You won't believe it, but I started to take an interest in Algerian history for the first time long after the civil war had finished. The trigger was a 2004 documentary, *Algérie(s)*, by Patrice Barat, Malek Bensmail and Thierry Leclerc. The film describes

the events of the civil war in the 1990s. The film affected me like an electric shock. Like most ordinary people I'd followed the news in the media in the 1990s. But I hadn't consciously understood that this terror, these massacres were affecting thousands upon thousands of people.

That's hard to imagine...

Yes. I was aghast at myself. I asked myself: how can it be that I didn't consciously witness this, even though I was already eighteen when the civil war started? The only answer was that I had censored myself. I don't think I was the only one. You know there's a secret, and you don't want to deal with it, because it would call all the beliefs you've held up till now into question. I wanted to get to the bottom of it. In doing so I suddenly realised that when Algeria became independent in 1962 my father was twenty years old. For the first time I asked myself: what did he do during the war? Why did we go to France back then?

*You interviewed your father for your art project *Algeria, Year Zero*. What did he tell you?*

In the early 1960s, just as the war of independence was coming to an end, my father was forcibly conscripted by the French army. What I wanted to find out from him was: you were officially a soldier of the French army. Whose side were you on? Did you see yourself as being on the French side, or the Algerian? Did you ever think about the fact that you were fighting against your own country, against your own people? What's difference between you and a *harki*? This was a sensitive point for my father. No, he said, he wasn't a harki, and he wasn't a traitor. He was forced to join the army. I asked him, 'Did you kill Algerians?' He said no, and explained that he had guarded the border between Tunisia and Algeria, but had never pointed a gun at an Algerian. At some point he said, 'That's enough now, why are you asking me all this?' He just didn't want to answer.

What conclusions did you come to as a result?

I understood that things weren't as simple as I'd thought. When the official side claims nowadays that the entire Algerian people were behind the Liberation Front, the FLN, it's not the truth. In fact it was far from everyone who was in the Maquis. I wanted to understand this complexity better, but I soon realised that my father didn't want to answer my questions. And I didn't get any answers from other interview partners in Algeria, either. The whole subject is still a big taboo in Algeria. People don't like to admit that a lot of people acted opportunistically and turned their coats depending on the way the wind was blowing, and that the whole thing wasn't as black and white as people like to portray it.

Inability to grieve

What connection do you see between the war of independence and the terror of the 1990s?

I see the civil war of the 1990s as a direct consequence of the way people dealt with the violence that took place during the war of independence. The fact that you couldn't speak openly about inter-Algerian violence means that many people were unable to grieve. This meant there was a latent potential for violence simmering within Algerian society.

*How did the exhibition and the book *Algeria, Year Zero* come about? How did you go about doing your research?*

It all began with this documentary, *Algérie(s)*. The film made clear to me that hardly any images of the Algerian civil war existed abroad. People knew that a massacre had taken place in Algeria, people knew that there was this horror, this terror, but they couldn't see it. I found that shocking and difficult to comprehend. We live in a society that is permanently flooded with images, but here the most appalling crimes were taking place and yet there are no images of it. So first

of all I looked for images of the war, in the media to which I had access. For me it was also a question of reconstructing part of my own personal history. There was just this enormous gap.

What criteria did you use when looking for images?

I didn't select the photos according to historical criteria, but according to aesthetic and emotional ones. The pictures that interested me from an artistic point of view I copied parts of by drawing them on paper and altering them with colours, contours and different painting techniques. Mostly I didn't use the whole image, just a section that particularly interested me. At the same time I was writing. That was very exciting for me, this going back and forth between drawing, painting and writing. It happened quite instinctively, and yet it was methodical. Then I asked other authors to write something as well, because I wanted to talk about memory, but by exchanging thoughts with other people. There were six of us altogether writing the book.

Many of your pictures give an impression of something flowing, translucent, transparent, fragmented - a stark contrast to the heroic style in which the story of Algerian independence is often presented. How have Algerian visitors reacted to your exhibition? Were they open to what it was saying?

I was afraid people would say I had no right to tackle the subject because I'm an Algerian who doesn't live in Algeria, and because I didn't personally experience any of this. In fact, I was positively surprised. Most people thought it was a good thing that someone was addressing the subject through the medium of art. This is still very rare. And people also appreciated the fact that I've tried to remain politically neutral. I don't judge anyone, I don't denounce anyone. No one is attacked or has to defend themselves. I also wanted to honour all those who died in total anonymity, who've been forgotten, and who their relatives cannot mourn because they weren't able to bury them.

Unveiling memory

In your book you talk about unveiling memory. Is there a single reality behind the veil? Are you seeking the truth, or is this more of a process for you?

Yes, there is a veil I would like to lift. Because one thing is clear: in the formal sense, Algeria is a democracy, but in reality it is an authoritarian state that conceals many things and keeps many things secret. Above all it is concealing their own history from the Algerian people. You just have to take a look at the schoolbooks to realise this. But as I say, for me it isn't about denouncing anyone or even judging anyone. I just wanted to point out that there is another truth. This truth is not subjective, it is based on facts, on events that can be proven to have happened in a particular place at a particular time. We all know that many mistakes are made

in war, that sometimes you have to throw your own values overboard in order to survive. But you have to face your own past.

You've lived in Berlin since 2010 – a city marked by history and collective traumas. To what extent has the interaction with this city and its inhabitants affected your life and your work as an artist?

Very, very much. I came to Berlin for the first time in 1995. I'd been invited to a workshop for art students, in the House of the Wannsee Conference memorial site, that is to say, the place where the so-called 'Final Solution' was decided upon, the extermination of the European Jews. Back then I was still studying Biology in Paris; it was more of a coincidence that I was taking part in the workshop. But it was in those few

days staying in the villa that I decided to study art. And I already knew then that at some point I wanted to come and live in Berlin. The city had an incredible power; I was fascinated by it. I've been back here since 2009, and I don't think the Algeria project would have come about if it hadn't been for Berlin. The way the Germans have of dealing with their history made a deep impression on me. I very deliberately went to see the exhibition *Topography of Terror*. I also thought the 'stumbling stones' were really good, and I started to get to know German artists like Jochen Gerz, who also works with art and memory. I hope that in future we will also develop such creative ways of dealing with the past in Algeria. At the moment the political context doesn't allow for that. But I think that just thinking about it is already a step forwards..

MARTINA SABRA is a journalist specialising in topics relating to the Middle East and North Africa.

Translated by Charlotte Collins

Copyright: Goethe-Institut e. V., Fikrun wa Fann, November 2012

THE BATTLE OVER HISTORICAL MEMORY IN EGYPT

Egypt is no different from other countries where historical narratives mirror conflict and its resolution. The Mubarak regime, like those preceding it, effectively manipulated historical memory to serve its own purposes.

By Judy Barsalou



Supporters of the dictator display their allegiance: a woman holding a photo of Hosni Mubarak before the court where judgement was passed on 2nd June 2012. The judge sentenced the former president to life imprisonment. Photo: Philipp Spalek. © Goethe-Institut

With Mubarak's removal in February 2011, the fight over historical narratives has become more overt. It is most intense with respect to events taking place in the past twenty months, since the onset of the January 25th Revolution, but it also involves efforts to rewrite Egyptian history over the past sixty years.

This article addresses the following question: how have key actors in Egypt's transition used historical narratives and memorialisation to promote their diverse agendas since the fall of Mubarak? It argues that evidence of the unfinished nature of Egypt's transition is found in continuing state efforts to control access to information as well as historical materials, and in controversies about interpreting Egypt's contemporary history. The article also provides examples of four different processes through which memory is created, manipulated and conveyed by ordinary people: the collection and storage of materials using digital technologies; demonstrations, marches, and memorial services; renaming of civic spaces; and artistic activism.

Memory and conflict: a double-edged sword

Nearly a century ago, French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs argued that memory is socially constructed. His distinction between history (reaching for an objective, truthful account of events based on professional scholarship) versus collective memory (selectively constructed perceptions of the past formed through interactions among individuals, social groups, and their surrounding environment) has influenced generations of historians, philosophers, and social scientists. Many now agree that human understanding is influenced both by written history and by collective memory, and that societies reconstruct their histories rather than merely record them.

Nonetheless, the precise definition of collective memory, and how it influences personal memories, remains elusive and contentious. This is especially true of acts of commemoration or memorialisation that highlight traumatic acts of violence or honour victims of conflict.

Various initiatives contribute to collective memory about conflict and its victims. The forms they take include constructed sites (museums, commemorative libraries, archives, monuments, and virtual memorials); found sites (graves, killing and torture centres, and prisons); and specific processes (anniversaries and celebrations of key events, exhibits, place renaming, parades, demonstrations, vigils, performances, and public apologies).

A wide variety of actors initiate memory projects. Those from civil society include individual victims and survivors, as well as activists, scholars, and artists. Government authorities also play a large role in conceiving and promoting memory sites and projects.

Memorialisation cuts two ways. It can help victims and survivors obtain acknowledgement that they were wronged and can promote social recovery (what some call 'reconciliation' or 'healing'). But it can also crystallise a sense of injustice and strengthen the desire for revenge. Used before, during, and after conflict ends, the documentation of historical events is a highly politicised process that reflects power dynamics within society.

Access to information

Proof that Egypt's transition to democracy is incomplete is evident in state policy and practices regarding access to historical documents. Nothing has changed since the January 25th Revolution: one still needs a security clearance to use materials stored in Egypt's National Archives (NA). In fact, Law 356 of 1954, which governs the NA, mandated merely that a committee be established to develop procedures for handling its holdings. But since the 1980s the NA's board of directors has protected itself from accusations of mismanagement by inviting state security officials to review requests for NA access.

The question of access is one factor stalling a promising initiative. In February 2011, the government empowered an American University in Cairo history professor, Khaled Fahmy, to form a group to collect material documenting the January 25th Revolution to be deposited in the NA. Fahmy agreed on the condition that all materials would be digitised and made freely accessible on the World Wide Web, without security restrictions. But the project's progress has been slowed by complications that reflect larger battles in Egypt. Security officials have refused to lift the security clearance requirement and prevented Egyptians invited to give oral testimonies and deposit materials from entering the building. Moreover, as violence against protestors has continued, it is also clear that Egyptians will not participate unless legal protections ensure that materials they entrust to the NA will not be used to incriminate them.

Two other issues have also received attention during the transition. The first, ensuring the public's broader right to information, is a standing concern of Egyptian activists. In 2009, they called for the formation of a coalition promoting that right. In September 2011, the United Group issued a draft constitutional article. Parliament was considering two different draft information laws when it was dissolved in June 2012. The government's version treated access to information as a privilege, while the civil society version incorporated access to information as a right. Right to information about military budgeting and expenditures was an especially contentious issue at the heart of the debate about these bills.

The second issue stems from concern about the government's gradual shutdown of different elements of the country's Internet and phone systems between 25th January and 6th February 2011, in a vain attempt to quell the uprising. That had the unintended effect of launching hundreds of thousands of people into the street, outraged by the government's action and searching for information. To date, no definitive progress has been made on revising law 356, concerning the broader right of access to information and the government's ability to switch off the Internet and mobile phone systems at will.

Meanwhile, the battle over access to information has taken other forms. During the initial eighteen days of the uprising, protestors attacked and in some cases destroyed more than ninety neighbourhood police stations. Some were seeking revenge against hated officials. Others were stirred to action when police (claiming self-defence) fired upon residents. Many, however, were looking for documentary evidence of detention and torture of themselves or their family members.

On 5th-6th March 2011, protestors stormed the Ministry of Interior and other offices, including the central office of the State Security Police in Nasr City. They were responding to allegations that documents were being shredded to destroy evidence that could incriminate officials. Some protestors turned seized materials over to government authorities, while some materials were posted on 25Leaks.com. Some sought assistance from German experts experienced in handling the East German Stasi secret police files to help them reconstruct shredded documents. Meanwhile, the Supreme Council of the Armed Forces (SCAF) sent millions of text messages via mobile phones, threatening punishment of anyone who made captured documents public.

Official historical revisionism

As the government has turned its attention to history education, the importance to those in power of 'rectifying' the official historical record has been revealed. In April 2011, the

Ministry of Education announced the formation of a committee to scrub elementary and junior high school history texts of fulsome accounts of the Mubarak regime, and to develop new chapters on the January 25th Revolution. The committee also indicated that it would correct other falsifications in the texts – such as the erasure of Mohamed Naguib as Egypt's first president, after Gamal Abdel Nasser put him under house arrest for eighteen years. The new curricula are to be readied for the start of the 2012 school year.

Meanwhile, internal elections in the now-suspended People's Assembly for positions on parliamentary committees point to likely controversy about textbook content in the future. A member of the conservative al Nour party was elected chair of the Education and Scientific Research Committee, and that party can be expected to seek the same post in the new parliament. In any case, the Muslim Brotherhood, whose members include public school teachers, has already generated and used unofficial curricula about the group's role in the January 25th Revolution, causing outrage among some activist groups.

Sensitivity about the historical record of the Mubarak era was revealed in June 2011 when journalist Mohamed Hassanein Heikal asserted that Mubarak played a minor role in air strikes conducted by the Egyptian Air Force in the 1973 war. Dozens of angry officers petitioned the General Prosecutor's Office to charge Heikal with defaming the Air Force. Curiously, Heikal's interest in restating the historical record to undermine Mubarak was undercut by his assertion: 'I don't think you should be putting the future on hold while you are getting a balance sheet of how the past was conducted.' A former editor-in-chief of a leading government newspaper under Presidents Nasser and Sadat, Heikal was clearly reluctant to encourage a thorough re-airing of the past.

Four months later, the annual October 6th celebrations marking the 1973 war provided the regime with another opportunity to massage the historical record. Field Marshall Tantawi, the head of SCAF and de facto ruler of Egypt's transitional period, delivered a speech emphasising the leadership role played by Anwar Sadat and downplaying Hosni Mubarak, who had taken outsized credit for the war after he assumed the presidency. State media also used the anniversary celebrations to praise the armed forces as the protector of the state.

Civil society initiatives

Four processes have been at work over the past months to construct and convey alternative versions of the recent Egyptian past. Largely initiated by civil society actors inside and outside Egypt, they include efforts to collect, preserve

and organise historical materials related to the revolution; to recapture public space through place renaming; to remember and honour victims of the conflict through memorial marches and demonstrations; and to promote activism through artistic expression.

Preserving Historical Materials

Controversy has been greatest over the historical record of events occurring just prior to and during the January 25th Revolution. Versions of events fostered by SCAF, and conveyed through state media, have been countered by initiatives documenting recent developments from alternative perspectives. Scholars have made some efforts to collect and preserve materials relating to the recent past. But most initiatives have been mounted by activists and used as spurs to political action. A successful example of the latter type is a virtual memorial on Facebook, We Are All Khalid Said, which became a rallying point for youth activists after it featured photos of Said's mutilated corpse following his beating by Alexandria police. The site built momentum for the massive demonstrations that followed seven months later. Other websites have emerged to memorialise the dead. One of them, Lan-Nansahom (We Won't Forget Them) provides biographical information about those killed and injured since protests began.

A civil society initiative has created a virtual platform, Tahrir Documents, to collect and scan materials used by demonstrators. The American University in Cairo is documenting events through its University on the Square project. Bibliotheca Alexandrina (BA), a government institution, established a project called Memory of Modern Egypt several years before the January 25th Revolution. Since then, it has added new materials during a period in which BA's close ties to the Mubarak family brought it and its director, Ismail Serrageldin, under fire. R-Shief, a non-profit data-mining project is preserving and analysing 'Arab Spring' tweets and web-based materials. As of November 2011, it had collected some 128 million tweets. A variety of other sites provide materials and analysis, including The Martyrs of the Freedom - Egyptian Revolution Heroes Project; Jadaliyya; Egypt Remembers; and The Archival Platform.

SCAF has fought back. In past months, SCAF leaders and their supporters have shifted blame for violent acts from the baltagiya (thugs) to mysterious 'third parties' and 'foreign forces'. SCAF's narrative folds into a larger critique targeting its biggest critics: the Egyptian human rights and activist organisations documenting military and government abuses. In response, an activist campaign fostered by the Revolutionary Forces Alliance (a group of twenty parties and movements) emerged in November 2011. Askar Kazeboon (Lying

Military) and SCAF Crimes are two recent online activist initiatives that collected video images of assaults on civilians. Since Kazeboon was launched, activists have aired them in neighbourhoods across the country. Their success in reaching the broader offline public prompted SCAF to establish 'The National Military Media Committee' in January 2012 to counter activists' depictions of past events.

Memorial Demonstrations and Marches

Numerous events and activities largely initiated by civil society have honoured victims of violence. Tahrir Square demonstrators were perhaps the first to build a physical memorial to remember those who lost their lives during the eighteen-day uprising. It was dismantled soon afterwards by the authorities but replaced by other memorials, also subsequently removed.

On 11th November 2011, Coptic Christians organised a march that included the carrying of a symbolic coffin and large pictures of twenty-seven Copts killed as they demonstrated in Cairo's Maspero neighborhood in October 2011. Another memorial demonstration was organised on 2nd December 2011 in honour of forty-two persons killed primarily on Cairo's Mohamed Mahmoud Street in November. Condolences were accepted at a memorial tent erected in Tahrir Square, followed by a march with symbolic coffins and then by a memorial service. A number of participants wore symbolic eye patches in honour of those blinded by snipers.

Activists called upon the government to declare an annual day of mourning, to be known as Friday of the Martyr's Dreams, on January 20th. Large marches and demonstrations also took place throughout Egypt on 25th January 2012 in honour of the day the mass uprising began a year before - on National Police Day, now renamed 'Revolution Day'. In a demonstration in Tahrir Square, activists evoked an ancient Egyptian symbol when they displayed a huge Pharaonic-style wooden obelisk inscribed with the names of all the Egyptians 'martyrs' killed during the previous year.

Place Renaming

There are many recent examples of efforts to reclaim civic spaces through renaming. The day after Mubarak was deposed, a Facebook campaign called upon the government to rename the Mubarak metro stop in Cairo after Khalid Said. Nine days later, Prime Minister Ahmed Shafiq ordered streets to be renamed after 'martyrs'. On 21st April 2011, an Egyptian court issued a verdict requiring the removal of Hosni and Suzanne Mubarak's names from all public places. The Minister of Transport swiftly indicated this would include the Mubarak metro stop, which was renamed 'al Shuhadaa' ('The Martyrs'). At the same time, the Ministry of Education promised to rename some 549 schools around the country named

after one member of the Mubarak family or another. This verdict was challenged and suspended by another court on 5th June. Meanwhile, mounting pro-Mubarak sentiment was expressed on the Facebook page Ana Asif Ya Rayas (I'm Sorry, Mr. President). By mid-September 2011, it was one of the largest, most visible pro-Mubarak Facebook groups. Its members took credit for using graffiti to restore Mubarak's name on the metro stop in August after it was renamed Martyrs in April.

Artistic Activism

Independent cultural producers - artists, musicians, actors, and others - have played a key role in promoting alternative historical narratives. One innovative example uses 'crowd sourcing' to combine material from multiple contributors into a single film, called 18 Days in Egypt. The group's website invites visitors to upload their materials for inclusion. A filmmakers' collective, Mosireen (Insisting), also seeks web submission of documentary materials countering state media coverage of events. In July 2011, this group organised a public film festival, Tahrir Cinema, during which it screened documentaries and other materials ridiculing mainstream narratives.

Some groups have tested the weakness of the regime by using civic spaces that were off-limits under the Mubarak government. One example was the holding of an open-air arts festival, 'al Fann Midan' ('Art Is a Square'), in Cairo's Abdeen Square in April 2011, organised by the Independent Artists Coalition. The coalition itself was initiated by Culture Resource, an Egyptian non-governmental organisation with regional reach that built the first stage and provided sound equipment during the original demonstrations in Tahrir. Since April 2011, the coalition has organised monthly arts festivals in cities throughout Egypt. Protest songs, accompanied by music videos, have also proliferated. Some have become hugely popular and are downloadable from the web.

Artists have captured civic space in other ways. Egyptian communities are now awash with graffiti and wall art that changes on a daily basis, featuring portraits and names of victims of violence. Striking examples include larger-than-life portraits of demonstrators blinded or killed by snipers in November 2011. The deaths of seventy-five football fans in Port Said on 1st February 2012 launched another wave of memorial wall art.

The larger political conflict is mirrored in struggles over graffiti and wall art. Perhaps the best-known image, produced by Egyptian artist Mohamed Ganzeer, featured a black and white tank facing off against a bicyclist balancing a tray of bread on his head. Following the death of more demonstrators, it was updated in January 2012 by other artists to depict red blood squirting out from under the tank's tracks and

a row of demonstrators facing the tank with their hands up in the air. Within days, members of Badr Team 1, a pro-SCAF civilian group, painted over elements offensive to the military. Around the same time, to mark the first anniversary of the January 25th Revolution, Ganzeer and other artists declared the week leading up to the anniversary to be 'Mad Graffiti Week'.

Graffiti artists also left their imprint on parliamentary election signage. SCAF waited until too late – just days before the onset of parliamentary elections – to issue a decree prohibiting leaders of the former ruling National Democratic Party (NDP) from running for seats. So activists took matters into their own hands, splashing the word *feloul* (remnant) across campaign posters and banners throughout Egypt. The Facebook group *Emsek Feloul* (Catch a Remnant) was created to 'out' former NDP members by listing their names and documenting where they were running for office. Before long, a counter-revolutionary Facebook group, *Feloul and Proud*, emerged.

Conclusion

Egypt is in the midst of an unfinished transition. The political struggle is reflected in a running contest over place names, graffiti and memorials through which protagonists in the struggle proclaim their positions and keep score. This is reminiscent of timeworn practices in Egypt, where pharaohs removed or appropriated monuments constructed by their predecessors, and where ancient Christians and Muslims chiselled away or deconstructed statues and friezes honouring disputed gods. In a contemporary re-enactment of that practice, members of Al Nour Party covered a prominent statute in Alexandria of the mythical god Zeus during a March 2011 rally because it included nude mermaids.

What is largely missing in discussions about the formation and representation of historical memory is the pedagogic

value of featuring dark elements of Egypt's past. One example is revealing: laying down guidelines to revise history textbooks, the Ministry of Education decided to remove all references to the dominant role of the ruling National Democratic Party during the Mubarak regime. According to one education consultant involved in the rewrites, some drafts were rejected because they did not follow this guideline, suggesting that eradication, not reinterpretation, of historical memory continues to serve as a tool of political ascendancy.

Egyptians have plenty of opportunities to preserve and reinterpret memory of the Mubarak regime by keeping physical reminders of the old regime in place. In downtown Cairo, the iconic National Democracy Party headquarters was destroyed in the early days of the uprising. It and other ruined state buildings could be converted into historic site museums to help future generations to remember and grapple with the Mubarak regime's abuse of power. There has been limited discussion about this. But in the present political climate the utility of preserving and interpreting the memory of unsavoury chapters in Egyptian contemporary history, rather than largely erasing them from the official historical record, remains highly controversial.

What has fundamentally changed is who narrates history. Some have called the uprising in Egypt the 'Facebook Revolution'. While it is easy to exaggerate the role of digital technologies and platforms in fostering the Arab Spring, these tools have democratised the formation and projection of alternative historical narratives. Memory can fade quickly, but ordinary people are keeping memory alive by using digital technologies to generate, preserve and convey their personal stories, often at odds with official narratives projected by officials and state media. In the absence of any state-sponsored efforts to commemorate victims of the uprising, civil society initiatives have become the primary mechanisms through which Egyptians are honouring victims and pushing a change agenda.

JUDY BARSALOU is a visiting scholar at the American University in Cairo, where she is conducting research on Egyptian views about justice and accountability in post-Mubarak Egypt. She holds a Ph.D. in Comparative Politics from Columbia University

Translated by Charlotte Collins

Copyright: Goethe-Institut e. V., Fikrun wa Fann, November 2012

IRANIAN LITERATURE – COMING TO TERMS WITH THE PAST SINCE THE IRANIAN REVOLUTION

Given the absence of press freedom in Iran, both in the country itself and among Iranian exiles it is literature that is acting as a vehicle for discussion: about the path towards modernisation, about national identity, about the legacy that should be preserved on the one hand and the burdens to be got rid of on the other.

By Kurt Scharf



Demonstrators listening to a speech in Tahrir Square, 8th April 2011. Photo: Mosa'ab Elshami.
From the exhibition Cairo: Open City at the museum für photographie in braunschweig
(until 23rd december 2012). www.cairo-open-city.com © Goethe-Institut

Literature has dared to tackle recent Iranian history. In doing so it has repeatedly posed the questions 'Who are we?', and 'Where do we come from?', the prerequisites for 'Where are we going?'. Insofar as it can be said that people are attempting to come to terms with the past in Iran, it is through literature that they are doing it.

Because of its significance for the development of modern Persian literature, we should start by mentioning the work of two authors that was published prior to the era on which this article focuses. Up until then, almost all Iranian writers were orientating their countrymen towards the West. The turning point came in 1962 with a samizdat publication of an essay entitled 'Ġarbzadegi' ('Euromania'). The author, Ġalāl āl-e Aḥmad (1923-1969) was born into a family of clerics, but he later broke with them and joined the Communist Party, only to leave it again four years later. In the aforementioned essay he expounded his theory that adherents of a Western model of society had infested the country like pests, eroding

it from the inside and leaving nothing but a husk. Islam, he said, was the only authentic characteristic of Iranian culture, and the clerics the most important representatives of national identity. On the eve of the Islamic Revolution in 1979 the overwhelming majority of intellectuals would have agreed with āl-e Aḥmad's analysis.

āl-e Aḥmad was also a teller of stories, in that he wrote – sometimes ironically, sometimes with great sympathy – about resistance among the religiously-socialised element of the population to the modernisation imposed on the people by Reżā Shah. One example is the story 'Ġašn-e farḥonde' ('The Time of Celebration'), published in the magazine *āraš* in 1961. In this he describes from a child's point of view how oppressive Reżā Shah's dress regulations of 1936 were for the people: women, forbidden to wear the veil, are so ashamed that they scarcely dare to go out into the street any more; a boy is torn between the official requirement to wear short trousers in school and the contempt in which

these are held within society. His uncle is forced to endure having his traditional clothing torn to shreds in public by the police. Children play at being policemen by grabbing banned felt caps off workers' heads. This kind of literature enables us to understand a situation in which modernisation is experienced not as liberation but as repression, and why, in 1979, a majority of Iranians voted in favour of an Islamic Republic.

The drama of mourning

In 1969, the year of Ğalāl āl-e Aĥmad's death, his wife, Simin Dānešvar (1921–2012) published her most famous work: *Savušun* (*Savushun: The Drama of Mourning*), a novel that has run to sixteen editions in Iran and sold more than half a million copies. It constitutes a milestone in Iranian literary fiction. Not only is it the first Persian novel written by a woman, the main character is also a woman. She loses her husband during the Second World War at the time of the rebellion by the Qašqā'i nomads against the central government and the British occupiers, and the pressure of events prompts her to transcend the barriers of her traditional role. Dānešvar describes how the governor exploits the people, and the widespread hunger that comes about because the big landowners would rather sell their corn to the English troops – who pay well – than to their own poorer countrymen. She tells of collaboration between the local elite and the occupiers, but also of solidarity and resistance. She examines not only the contrasts between the local population and the semi-colonial power but also between town and country, settled citizens and nomads, modernisers and traditionalists. In doing so the author portrays the birth pangs of the modern era as societal upheaval. Not only is she a very keen observer whose presentation of events is not ideologically blinkered, she also criticises opportunism, cowardice and stupidity, regardless of national or religious allegiance or social position. At the same time she also makes a decisive contribution towards strengthening the self-awareness and emancipation of women, who, despite all legal obstacles, have fought for and succeeded in attaining a status in the Islamic Republic that is little short of astonishing.

More and more women authors had already started to come onto the scene towards the end of the rule of the Shah, but paradoxically this tendency has actually increased in the Islamic Republic of Iran. In fact, the islamification of further education colleges and universities has contributed to the fact that many women now number among the educated elite. Previously, conservative religious families often refused to send their daughters to state educational facilities because they feared that these would have a bad influence on their morals. Since this has ceased to be a concern, huge numbers of young women have been applying to go to university. The natural consequence is that in recent years the voices of many female writers have started to be heard. They look at different aspects of life as a woman in Iran, and write not just about oppression by men in a patriarchal so-

ciety, but also about the contribution of women themselves.

In a story in the anthology *Kanizu* (*Kanizu*) by Moniru Ravānīpur (b. 1954), published in 1989, the author paints a portrait of a young woman who, after completing her studies in medicine, returns to her village to help her fellow women but is brutally rejected by them because she broke the village's code of honour by leaving to go to the city.

A look at history

The novel *Tubā va ma'nā-ye šab* (*Tuba*) by šahrnuš Pārsipur (b. 1946), published in the same year, looks at history from a different point of view. It was written in 1983 in a prison in the Islamic Republic. However, the author, a woman, is less interested in political history than she is in the cultural changes that have taken place in Iran since the beginning of the twentieth century. She therefore describes this period from the point of view of a woman from a religious background whose desire is to go on a mystical quest for God, but who then bows to convention and marries a prince from the Qajar dynasty. The main character pays particular attention to changes in customs and moral values. She sees the decline of the traditional monarchy as a period not only of economic impoverishment but above all of moral decadence, and the Režā Shah years as an era of modernisation, during which the creation of asphalted roads and the suppression of highway robbery make it easier for her to go on pilgrimages, but her son-in-law goes in prison because his thirst for education leads him to study forbidden texts, arousing suspicion that he is a Bolshevik. Following the abdication of Režā Shah and the occupation of Tehran in World War Two, the streets are filled with American, English and Soviet troops. Everywhere is in upheaval and her daughter, who, like her, is drawn to Sufism, suddenly feels like a foreigner in her own country. Yet some women have now started to wear the chador again. Thus the reader is able to follow the development of Tehran into a modern metropolis through the eyes of the central character. Although the author was an opponent of the Shah's regime, and the book is anything but anti-Islamic, she nonetheless felt compelled to go into exile and now lives in the United States.

Modern narrative technique, classical themes

The novel *Samfoni-ye mordegān* (*Symphony of the Dead*) by 'Abbās Ma'rufi (b. 1957) was also published in 1989. The book is impressive as much for its modern narrative technique as for the successful integration of both Iran's traditional culture and its more recent history. The author takes the Koranic version of the story of Cain and Abel as a prologue, introducing his story of two brothers who are enemies. The story is told alternately from the perspectives of 'Cain' and 'Abel'. The historical background is the Soviet occupation of northern Iran during the Second World War. Ma'rufi gives an impressive portrayal of the invasion of Ardabil by Russian par-

achutists, as experienced by the population; and he takes as his subject matter, among other things, the relationship between Christian Armenians and the Muslim inhabitants of Iranian Azerbaijan. This author too now lives in exile, in Berlin.

1991 saw the publication in New York of the novel *King of the Benighted* by Manucehr Irani. This is the English translation of the Persian novel *šāh-e Siyāhpūšān* (*The King of the Black-Clad People*). The author behind the pseudonym was Hušang Golširi (1938–2000), who achieved international fame with his novella *šāhzde Ehtejāb* (*Prince Ehtejab*) about the fall of the Qajar dynasty, which was filmed in 1969, and whose collections of stories, such as *Meš-e hamīše* (*As Always*), published in 1968, and *Nime-ye tārik-e māh* (*The Dark Side of the Moon*) in 1972 repeatedly resulted in his imprisonment, because the SAVAK, the Shah's secret police, considered them to be too critical. In his novel, Golširi writes about an Iranian author who is arrested and tortured in 1982, during the Iran-Iraq War. While he is in jail he recites poems to his fellow prisoners, both his own and others from classical Persian literature. The character quotes from *Haft peykar* (*The Seven Pictures*), an epic work by Nežāmi that plays an important part in the story. The author takes up this motif of the story within a story and deploys it in his own way, artistically interweaving the fate of the imprisoned writer – who didn't have a black suit to wear to a funeral although at that time, during the war, there were, God knows, plenty of occasions for wearing mourning – with the fate of the king from the story of the Indian princess in the Black Pavilion. The king returns to the 'City of the Benighted' from a journey to China, clad entirely in black. This is an allusion both to the mystical topos of the journey into oneself, and to the cult surrounding the colour black, which is especially favoured in the Islamic Republic. This novel can therefore, like the poetry of the Sufis, be read at several different levels. Yet the story is not an esoteric one; it is a reckoning with the Iranian monarchy, the (Communist) Tude Party, and the Islamic Republic. Despite the depressing theme it is not without irony or humorous characteristics, and can be regarded as an outstanding example of a reappraisal of the recent Iranian past.

Iranian authors in other languages

Reading Lolita in Tehran by āzar Nafisi (b. 1947?) can be seen as a form of coming to terms with the Iranian present. Nafisi is a professor of Persian Literature at Johns Hopkins University in the United States. In this non-fiction account, the author writes about her experience of the University of Tehran after its islamification, and the literature course she subsequently organised privately at home with female Iranian students. Her book gives the reader an insight into the intellectual climate in Iran around 1995.

In 2005 the novel *Het huis van de moskee* (*The House by the Mosque*) was published in Amsterdam, in Dutch, under the

pseudonym Kader Abdolah (b. 1957). The political situation in the Iranian author's motherland not only resulted in his going into exile, it also prompted him to adopt a different language. This was the only way he felt able to write about the suffering of his country. He focuses on the years under Moḡammad Režā Shah Pahlavi, as well as the initial years of the Islamic Republic of Iran, and writes about the fate of the inhabitants of a house adjacent to a mosque in a fictional town. The author takes a number of creative liberties, but his extremely critical portrayal is inspired by historical facts. He convincingly describes how SAVAK lays a trap for a cleric in order to coerce him into collaborating. Later he even has Khomeini appear, as well as the 'Hanging Judge' Khalkhali, whose name he changes only slightly. He also addresses the terrorist activities of the Mujahedin-e Khalq and leftist underground organisations; but he involves them in events that did not specifically take place as described. For example, he has them, in Kabul, kill the man who (in the novel) styles himself 'God's judge', whereas his historical model in fact succumbed to cancer. The criticism of this author is especially interesting as he frequently cites the Koran in making it.

Coming to terms with the Iran-Iraq War

The war between Iraq and Iran has of course also left its mark on Persian literature. Two novels that present a stark contrast to the official patriotic line are especially worthy of mention. In 2007 Hoseyn Mortežā'iyān ābkenār (b. 1966) published his book *Aqrab. Ru-ye pelle-hā-ye rāh āhan-e Andimešk yā az in qaṭār hun mi- čeke qorbān* (*The Scorpion – a German translation is due to be published in 2013*). In this novel he shows us the suffering of Iranian soldiers – not so much from enemy violence, but primarily from the inhumanity of their own military police.

The other example, published in 2008, is the epistolary novel *Digar esmat rā awaž na-kon* (*Don't Change Your Name Any More*) by Mağid Qeyšari (b. 1966), another author who refrains from polemicising against the foreign enemy. Instead he has an Iraqi officer – whose mother is Iranian, and who can therefore speak Persian, albeit imperfectly – correspond with an Iranian soldier via a dead letter box.

Dealing with censorship

The novel *Censoring an Iranian Love Story* by šahriyār Mandanipur (b. 1957) is a real find. Published in English in 2009, it was translated in collaboration with the author and is actually more of a new version than a translation. The author pulls off the feat of turning his description of the oppressive present-day atmosphere of his homeland into an enjoyable read by lacing it with subtle humour. The novel is printed in three different text formats. The love story is printed in bold. The crossed-out sections constitute the second level of text, which the reader is able to read but which the author has deleted in his over-zealous self-censorship. He is afraid

of Porfiry Petrovich, the investigating magistrate in Dostoyevsky's famous novel *Crime and Punishment* who solves the murders committed by the main character, Raskolnikov. This is the name Mandanipur gives to the Iranian censors, who will, after all, have to develop similarly impressive powers of intuition if they are to protect the youth from immoral writings. In normal type – the third text format – the author defends his story in conversations with the censor, and in doing so tells amusing tales about Iranian culture. He also invites the reader to look over his shoulder and observe his creative process. Mandanipur is another author who lives in exile, in the United States.

The same year saw the publication in German of the novel *Zavā-e Kolonel (The Colonel)* by Mahmud Doulatābādi (b. 1940), which caused a sensation. The novel cannot currently be published in Iran. It was written about twenty-five years ago, in the mid-1980s, when enthusiasm for the Islamic Revolution had given way to general disappointment, anger or resignation. It tells the story of an officer and his five children under the Shah. This officer, his three sons and two daughters represent the various different political positions in twentieth-century Iran: the father stands for the secular model imposed on society by Reżā Shah, the children for various feuding opposition groups. The action of the novel is limited to a twenty-four-hour period during the Iran-Iraq war. The author jumps between third-person narrative, internal monologues in the first person, and direct speech. This calls for attentive reading, but allows the reader to participate intensively in the protagonists' feelings, as well as in their failure. The book's particular appeal lies in the tension between the individually constructed, psychologically accurate personal portraits and the historical, social panorama. This is another work that can be seen as a model literary reappraisal of twentieth-century Iranian history.

Critical examination of admiration of Mossadegh

The novella *Doktor Nun zaneš-rā bištar az Mošaddeq dust dārad (Dr. N. Loves His Wife More than Mossadegh)* by šahrām Raḥimiyān (b. 1959 – the author now lives in Hamburg), published in German translation in 2011, is a heart-rending, devastating, but also macabre love story set in the period after the *coup d'état* that toppled Iran's only democratically-elected prime minister. It is a story about how a man is crushed by the fate of his country, by his own betrayal under torture, and ultimately by his love. After his arrest, SAVAK tricked him into believing that his wife was being raped and tortured. He thought he could hear her screams, and her

begging him to give in to the insurgents and denounce Mossadegh in a radio interview as a traitor to his fatherland in order to buy her freedom. He later discovers the deception and cannot forgive himself for his failure. The self-hatred he feels in consequence drives him insane. The novel is structured as a complex, eventful, moving, confusing mosaic of fragments of memory.

Between 2009 and 2012 a trilogy of novels dedicated to the Iranian capital Tehran by Amir Ḥasan čeheltan (b. 1956) was published in German. This trilogy is also an intensive examination of recent Iranian history. Two of the novels, namely *Aḥlāq-e mardom-e ḥiābān-e enqelāb (Tehran, Revolution Street)* and *āmrikā'i košti dar Tehrān (American Killing in Tehran)* were first published in German. The third, *Tehrān, šahr-e bi-āsmān (Tehran, Skyless City)* had already been published in Iran in 2002, but in a version greatly abbreviated on account of the censorship.

The trilogy is interesting not least for its diversity. The individual books differ greatly from one another. In the first novel to be published in German, *Tehran, Revolution Street*, the author delivers a vivid, exciting and many-faceted portrait of Tehran after the revolution. In the second novel he portrays excerpts from the history of twentieth-century Tehran and the relationship with the 'Great Satan', the United States, in 'six episodes about hatred'. Here, he places his fictional characters alongside actual historical figures at the scene of events that he has obviously painstakingly researched. In the third novel, the protagonist is again a supporter of the Revolution. Kerāmat flees a remote village as a child and manages to make his way to Tehran. Once there he experiences a period of misery and humiliation before he is introduced to a 'reform school' in the Tehran underworld. The novel tells the story of the last twenty-four hours in this man's life. He has gone from being an active supporter of the last Shah to one of the leading officials in the notorious Evin prison, in which political opponents of Iran's Islamic Revolution are imprisoned, tortured and murdered. The author tells the story on three levels. The first takes place in the present and relates the current events in Kerāmat's life, the second presents his inner life in the form of a stream of consciousness, and the third is the historical background seen from the author's own point of view.

Although political conditions in Iran mean that, at present, there cannot be an official re-evaluation of the past, Iranian literature is already engaged in the process and is guiding Iranian society towards the future.

KURT SCHARF works for the Goethe-Institut. Before the revolution he was, among other things, head of the Goethe-Institut in Tehran. He now works as a literary critic and translator.

Translated by Charlotte Collins

Copyright: Goethe-Institut e. V., Fikrun wa Fann, November 2012

CHALLENGES OF TRANSITION AND THE DANGERS OF A SLIDE INTO CIVIL WAR

THE LEGACY OF THE BA'ATH AND THE ASSAD REGIME

'As a sect, the Alawites should be exterminated.' This outlandish statement was recently posted on the Facebook pages of fanatical Syrian activists. This is not the first time such statements have appeared since the beginning of the protests against the regime in March of 2011.

By Ahmad Hissou



The coffins of soldiers killed in Syria are handed over to their relatives.
Photo: Kai Wiedenhöfer © Goethe-Institut

Such statements are usually made in the aftermath of atrocities perpetrated in some city or town that has challenged the regime. The latest one differed from others in its tone of absolute intransigence and in its wide proliferation across the social network, and it came on the heels of yet another massacre in Kafr Aweid, in Idlib Province, in the middle of September. For the second time in the eighteen months of protests now termed the Syrian Revolution, Kafr Aweid was, according to opposition groups and human rights organisations, in particular the Syrian Network for Human Rights, the scene of a slaughter by forces loyal to the regime. A YouTube video of the atrocities went viral, showing the ghastly sight of a little girl's decapitated body.

According to the aforementioned human rights organisation, the inhabitants of Kafr Aweid were surprised by an intense helicopter overflight of the town at around three p.m. on Sunday, 16th September 2012. After massing quickly and suddenly, the helicopters dropped explosive barrels containing TNT. Opposition sources claimed that these barrels have been widely used recently because they are inexpensive and

highly destructive. It appears that such barrels landed on the building that housed the town's family bakery, killing ten civilians on the spot, including four women, and decapitating the little girl whose picture went viral. All the victims were from the Mighlaj family. Another 120 people were injured within a twenty-metre radius of the explosion.

Christians in the dock

But why the call for the extermination of the Alawites following the aerial bombing of Kafr Aweid? Before answering that question, we should examine another instance of an atrocity that occurred in the area outside the capital known as Reef Dimashq (literally: 'the countryside of Damascus'). Opposition sources claim that on 26th August, in the town of Deraya, regime thugs known as »Shabbeeha« slaughtered more than 300 people. Some opposition sources put the figure as high as 500.

In the wake of this event, Syrian activists on Facebook directed their anger at Syria's Christian minority, calling for

acts of revenge targeting Christians, who bore no responsibility whatsoever for the Deraya massacre, although these calls fell short of calls for extermination as had been the case with Alawites. This was ascribed to a highly controversial report about the massacre by the privately-owned al-Dunia TV channel, whose owner, Mohammad Hamsho, is closely associated with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad. Micheline Azar, the network's correspondent sent to Deraya to cover the story, is a Christian – as her name indicates – and she filed an incendiary report that was widely considered to be a desecration of the journalistic mission, and an affront to the dignity and anguish of the victims.

Hence, it was this reporter's disgraceful conduct that dominated coverage of the story, obfuscating the real question of how Syrian society had descended into the vortex of violence. Activists on Facebook seemingly forgot that the security services and Shabeeha were the perpetrators, and reserved all their venom for Syria's Christians, who had nothing to do with the massacre, just because Micheline Azar is a Christian. And thus, instead of a rational discussion of the Syrian regime's objectives and motivations in resorting to such tactics, irrationalism and superficial commentary won the day!

To be fair, neither the finger-pointing directed at the Christians nor the call for 'Alawite extermination' following the Deraya and Kafr Aweid massacres occurred in a vacuum – even though neither community was involved in the incidents as sectarian or religious establishments »per se«. The truth about the Syrian Revolution is that following seven months of peaceful protests, which yielded absolutely no traction politically, the regime was able to lure the opposition into taking up arms. And as the Syrian regime ratcheted up its operations, resorting to excessive violence and widespread killing, peaceful protests diminished, army soldiers refused to shoot their civilian compatriots and deserted, and opposition activists increasingly called for armed resistance and the formation of military units under the umbrella of an armed movement named the Free Syrian Army.

The decapitated girl and 'exterminating' the Alawites

The 'decapitated girl' from Kafr Aweid was neither the first nor the last child victim of the turmoil that has engulfed Syria, which had already made it onto the UN's list of countries and entities targeting children. But the circulation of this horrific picture marked a watershed, for now the future coexistence of Syria's component communities was in jeopardy. Fingers had already been pointed at the Christian community for siding with the regime, especially because of the perceived reluctance of Syrian Christians to join the ranks of the opposition or take part in protests, but it was not until the aforementioned TV coverage of the Deraya massacre that di-

rect accusations were made. For Alawites, the situation is far more dangerous. If the conversation continues about Syria's minorities, be they religious, sectarian or ethnic, the situation of the Alawites will »ipso facto« be headed towards genocide. The problem is that Alawites are being held collectively responsible for the actions of the security forces and the »Shabeeha«. Various elements of Syrian society have made clear that they do not differentiate between anti-regime Alawites and those working for the regime, both those in the regular services and the thugs. All Alawites are being lumped together as one homogeneous political and military bloc and are no longer being regarded as a collection of individuals with different propensities and outlooks. Although it constitutes only 10% of the Syrian population, the Alawite community has produced some of the fiercest opposition figures in the regime's history, whether under Assad the father or Assad the son.

However, when the regime began to bomb targets from the air after suffering setbacks on the ground, rumours began to circulate that only the Alawites in the airforce were carrying out the aerial bombardments. The rumour was accelerated following the capture of a pilot whose MiG-23 crashed near the town of Muhassan in Deir-ez-Zor district on August 13th. In a YouTube video published by his captors, Col. Mufeed Muhammad Salman introduced himself as an Alawite and described his mission as having been to 'kill civilians' in the Sunni town. This incident and the overt vilification of the regime's Alawite character, especially by armed opposition Islamists whose units sport clearly Sunni names, have now placed the entire Alawite community in the dock. As mentioned above, earlier statements were not as venomous as that issued following the bombardment of Deraya in which the girl was decapitated. By and large, their language was an appeal to independent Alawites to distance themselves from the regime and to join the opposition.

The Syrian regime has, to a large extent, backed itself into a corner. It has ruled with an iron grip, involving itself in the minutiae of the country's life thanks to a security apparatus that was under complete Alawite domination, save for the defence minister who is a Sunni from the region of Hama. The regime's own discourse fed the islamisation of the revolution and it has manipulated the situation to sow sectarian strife within the mosaic that is Syrian society. Like a self-fulfilling prophecy, it was the Islamist wing of the opposition that rose to the fore, chief amongst them the Salafists, thereby exacerbating the regime's sectarianisation of the conflict. And instead of the revolution being a popular uprising against a brutal dictatorship, it is now a sectarian conflict between Sunnis and Alawites, and between Sunnis and Shiites, since there is also a small Shiite community in Syria, with Iran and Lebanon's Hezbollah bolstering the regime's stance. This has been further exacerbated by the pronounce-

ments of various politicians and strongmen, notably Jordan's King Abdullah II who has warned against the formation of what has been termed the 'Shiite crescent' – an arc stretching from Iran to Lebanon and including Iraq and Syria.

Sectarian civil war and the post-Assad phase

Whether activists and the political opposition or the regime and its supporters, Syrians by and large refuse to describe what has been going on in their country for eighteen months as a civil war – unlike the Western media which has been calling it that for quite a while because of recurring reports of ethnic-cleansing-type operations, especially in areas around Homs province. While there is broad consensus that it is the regime that has been responsible for such operations, the armed opposition has not escaped criticism either, even though to date there has been no evidence of their responsibility for such operations. Despite allegations by the UN Human Rights Council and other international human rights organisations that the opposition has also committed atrocities, it appears that its fighters, especially the ones with Islamist (Sunni) credentials, have not resorted to 'sectarian cleansing'. Assuming that this proposition is correct, how much longer will they go on showing restraint? The longer the conflict continues, the more radicalised the Islamist units become, and the greater the gravitational pull of sectarianism for ordinary Syrians. It seems to me as if we are moving towards a devastating civil war, not as it is understood in the West, but in the abominable strictly sectarian sense. If the situation remains unchanged, that is to say if armed action continues unabated, and if there is not the slightest prospect for a political opening, then the danger grows that Syria will become a failing state along the Somali model. An additional danger is that in the absence of a unified military command that takes its orders from a unified political command, the leaders of the opposition's armed units may well turn into warlords along the Afghan model, and that would surely lead to an open-ended and protracted conflict.

Transitional justice and the Day After Project

Despite this grim assessment, there is no reason why opposition activists and their international supporters should not look towards forming some kind of political alternative to the Assads' rule, especially since they consider the fall of the regime inevitable. And in order to avoid repeating experiences from the recent past – such as the sectarianisation of Iraq, feuding by warlords in Afghanistan, or the failed state of Somalia – they should already begin to work on the tools for a transitional constitutional and political phase. Given that the Syrian regime has been totalitarian since the 1963 coup, with a huge authoritarian infrastructure, including dozens of security services, a large army that answers directly to the head

of the regime, in addition to the so-called Popular Committees of the Ba'ath »(Shabeeha)«, it seems unlikely that transition would be smooth. The longer the conflict rages the harder the transition will be, especially in light of the increasing trend towards narrow identifications, whether ethnic, sectarian or even nationalistic, all of which are being stoked by the regime to prolong its rule and fragment the opposition.

Part of Syria's uniqueness derives from the fact that it is a true showcase for pluralism, with its plethora of religious, ethnic and cultural communities. Its other distinguishing feature derives from the fact that the regime, established by the late president Hafez al-Assad and bequeathed to his son, is a mix of populist, nationalist ideology enshrined in the pan-Arabism of the Ba'ath Party combined with a police state whose use of repression not only weakened but eventually destroyed civil society while accruing ever more power to its leader (and his son). Against this backdrop, the transitional phase and the task of a future government are enormously complicated.

The most notable initiative being considered for Syria after five decades of dictatorships under the Assads is the Day After Project, which has been funded and supported by the US Department of State, the Swiss Foreign Ministry and one Dutch and one Norwegian NGO. The project has been facilitated by the U.S. Institute of Peace (USIP) in partnership with the German Institute for International and Security Affairs (Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, SWP). Western powers are quite worried about the future of minorities in post-Assad Syria, in light of the factors outlined above and of Iraq's bitter experience. Western concern for Syria's minorities, especially the Christians, is partly fuelled by the West's fear that Islamists will come to power, as they have elsewhere in countries swept up in the Arab Spring – notably Egypt and Tunisia but also, to a lesser extent, Libya, where, at the time of writing, the situation seems improved, despite – or perhaps because of – the violence of the uprising which eventually turned into a full-blown armed conflict.

This project brought together forty-five Syrians representing a broad spectrum of the Syrian opposition, who met over a six-month period in Berlin to start planning for the transition to democracy. The working groups included members of the Syrian National Council (SNC), the Local Coordination Committees in Syria, and other opposition figures, including activists and representatives of ethnic and religious groups in Syria. Their work was facilitated by former economic and military advisors, as well as academics and organisers considered to be experts in transition planning. Months of meetings resulted in the publication of a final document which is considered a road map for a smooth and democratically-informed transition that would usher in a new era after the fall

of the current regime. The document articulates some of the basic constitutional principles that would govern the transition and its aftermath, most notably the rule of law and equal citizenship irrespective of religion, ethnicity or gender. (For the full report in English, go to: http://www.scribd.com/document_downloads/104151937?extension=pdf&from=embed.)

While the Day After Project is probably the most significant initiative focusing on the post-Assad transition, there have been others, including meetings and conferences held in other international capitals. Discussions of what is termed Transitional Justice have been high on the agenda and much has been made of transition experiences in other areas of the world, including Iraq, South Africa, East Germany and even

Morocco. The Assad regime and the Ba'ath have left a legacy of hundreds of thousands of people who have been killed, maimed, disappeared or detained, and Transitional Justice is deemed to be crucially important to the rule of law, i.e. the treatment of criminals and perpetrators in such a way as to avoid a descent into a frenzied bloodbath or the carving up of Syria into micro-states. This is no easy task in light of the alarming militarisation of the Syrian Revolution.

Will the Syrian people be able to avoid the consequences of decades of brutal repression under the Assadist Ba'ath, embrace democracy and commit to a pluralistic, secular state in accordance with the demands of the majority of opposition groups? The future alone will provide an answer to that question.

AHMAD HISSOU is a journalist and Syrian opposition activist living in Cologne, Germany. He is a member of the *Fikrun wa Fann / Art&Thought* editorial board..

Translated by Maia Thabet

Copyright: Goethe-Institut e. V., Fikrun wa Fann, November 2012

The Day After Project en Final

http://www.scribd.com/document_downloads/104151937?extension=pdf&from=embed
en, de, ar, fa

BETWEEN ART AND POLITICS

ARAB POSITIONS AT THE DOCUMENTA (13)

Many of the artworks of Arab origin at the thirteenth Documenta in Kassel are socio-critical and political, and explore the interaction with the media.

The Arab revolutions also constitute a 'nerve' in the Documenta's central exhibition hall, the 'brain', thereby emphasising the global significance of the Arab Spring.

By Lotte Fasshauer



Installation by Walid Raad at the dOCUMENTA (13) in Kassel.

Photo: Anders Sune Berg / dOCUMENTA (13). © Goethe-Institut

'The Syrian protestors are recording their own death.' So begins 'The Pixelated Revolution', a 'lecture-performance' by the Lebanese artist Rabih Mroué. It premiered at the PS122 COIL Festival in New York in January 2012, and is presented again at the dOCUMENTA (13). In Kassel a video of the work is being shown, augmented by an installation in several sections in the southern wing of the old central station. In *The Pixelated Revolution* Mroué focuses on videos made by Syrian demonstrators on their mobile phones which they then uploaded to YouTube.

The main focus of the work is an 83-second YouTube video that Mroué calls 'Double Shooting'. A man with a mobile phone camera films those who are about to shoot and kill him. Rabih Mroué's work has been widely praised, as it has been in the German press. The online edition of the *Süd-deutsche Zeitung* describes Mroué's work as 'one of the cleverest and most powerful pieces' in the d13. In Beirut the performance prompted a heated debate about the role of the artist and how artists should tackle the Arab revolutions, a question that has been complicated by the increased interest

shown by international art institutions in artistic responses to the subject. The Berlin-based journalist and art critic Kaelen Wilson-Goldie also examines the role of the artist in her article about Rabih Mroué's *The Pixelated Revolution*, which also quotes the artist himself:

Should they [artists living in the region] be making art in their studios or joining protesters on the streets? Should they be agitating as artists, activists or day-to-day citizens? If artists have already been dealing with subjects such as corruption, injustice or social inequity for years, then how can they avoid having their work co-opted by the new fervour for revolutionary fare? And if they decide to take on and work through the uprisings in their art, then how can they do so without coming across as naïve, belated, opportunistic, callous or crass?

For me these are very intriguing questions, says Mroué, and they're also a kind of trap. One of the things we always say is that art needs distance, and

that art needs a kind of peace. But at the same time, with the revolution in Tunisia, or the revolution in Egypt, or the violence in Syria, when are we allowed to talk about it? How long do we have to wait before we can make a work? I think there are no limits, no defined times.

Translating back to analogue

What does Rabih Mroué's multi-piece installation at the d13 actually show? It includes a wall text with practical instructions for the use of mobile phones at demonstrations, relating them to rules set down in the cinematic manifesto of the Dogme 95 Danish film collective. Rabih Mroué cites two points of comparison: use of a tripod, and the depiction of violence.

In Dogme 95, there is this instruction that you should not use a tripod. And for the Syrians, it's not a choice – it's still very, very, difficult to use a tripod to record their reality. And there is another issue in Dogme 95, where it stipulates that you should not record violent scenes, or weapons, because they don't want to fake these things. So it's not necessary to use them. For the Syrians, they add to this dictate insofar as the violent scenes being recorded are actually for real and the stipulation is also correct – do not record violence – insofar as the weapon could kill them and the scene of killing is thereafter real. There is no attempt to fake death here – it is all too real.

On the wall alongside are seven portraits of the murderers, printed out on photographic paper, enlarged and pixelated. A figure holding a mobile phone and silhouetted against red light is projected onto the opposite wall. The figure falls to the ground under fire and is brought back to life like a cartoon character as the projection rewinds. In the same room seven flipbooks are lying on a long table. Hanging above them are seven loudspeakers for seven videos, each between eighteen seconds and two minutes long. We are also given the YouTube URL. Each of the flipbooks contains the printed images of the relevant video. In small print we read the instruction: 'To watch the video, press the button and flick through the flipbook. Match the pace of the images to the audio.' The flipbooks are stuck to inkpads, so that by flicking through the flipbook the observer leaves behind a blue fingerprint suggestive of criminological evidence. There is something haptic about the flipbooks, which demand the interaction of the observer, who becomes involved in that he leaves traces of himself behind. The final element of the multi-piece installation is an 8mm film that has to be played by hand. Rabih Mroué zooms in on the eye contact between demonstrator and shooter by capturing it in a never-ending loop. What all the parts of the installation have in common is that they all translate the original digital material back into analogue form.

Self-criticism in dealing with the video material

The mobile phone as non-violent technology is helping the demonstrators to create publicity. YouTube has turned the video format into a key medium. Instead of producing fresh images artists take them from what is available online, using the internet as a source of inspiration. In doing so they employ different strategies of digital appropriation, as for example when they take contemporary iconic images and deconstruct or desacralise them. However, what frequently sets digital appropriation practices apart from analogue ones, and what in an exhibition can give rise both to a moment of confusion and to a sense of ethical unease, is the sometimes instant artistic reworking of material, which in these exhibits has as if it were been ripped straight off the press.

Rabih Mroué, however, is able to dispel the moment of confusion and the ethical unease as we enter the exhibition hall. He himself has this to say about his work:

My work is trying not to produce new images but to find and take these images and deconstruct them through reflection and by re-reading them in a human, personalised manner.

Rabih Mroué's work provokes the observer to engage in a critical discourse made possible because, with all its flood of images, his installation ultimately places the emphasis on what is human, and particularly on death, in that he zooms in on the decisive moment and allows it to circulate on a loop to infinity, and decelerates it by retranslating it into analogue form.

Rabih Mroué's multi-piece installation deals with the relationship between image and death. What does a humane image of death look like? It should not satisfy a desire for sensationalism; it should not make a separation between the recipient and the dying, as if, unlike the dying, the recipient were invulnerable; it should not gloss anything over; it should create for the observer a sense of proximity to the moment of death, and thus to the question of the meaning of life. It can do this from a subjective perspective, omitting the actual moment of death. Death is beyond time, but at the same time it is always present. The paradox of death manifests as the moment that can never be experienced as temporally tangible, and yet is eternally present. Death is the eternal moment.

Arab positions at the d13

Documenta 13 presents an exceptionally varied picture in its contributions from the Arab world. As can be seen from the list of artists, the curators have not orientated themselves according to the nationalities of the participants. The Arab revolutions play a central role in the d13, but not, generally speaking, in the works of the participating Arab artists.

The d13 is taking place in Kassel from 9th June to 16th September 2012 in the usual main locations, such as the Fridericianum, the Documenta Hall, the Karlsaue, the Neue Galerie, the former central station, and in a mosque that was never completed at Untere Karlsstraße 14. There are also three secondary locations. Alongside Kabul and Banff, one of the three is Alexandria in Egypt. For Alexandria, the artistic director of the d13, Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, together with Sarah Rifky, the director of CIRCA (Cairo International Resource Center for Art) conceived the 'Cairo Seminar'. It consisted of a series of events in two parts and an exchange between Kassel and Alexandria.

Alongside the Egyptian authors and artists like Sarah Rifky, Wael Shawky and Hassan Khan, the Ethiopian-American artist Julie Mehretu also took part in the Cairo Seminar. In her work, which is being shown in the Documenta Hall in Kassel, she too addresses the Arab Spring, demonstrating that this highly topical subject matter is to be found in works at the d13 irrespective of the artist's nationality. Mehretu speaks of the infectious influence of the Arab Spring on the Occupy movement in New York. Mehretu's series of large-format paintings entitled *Mogamma (A Painting in Four Parts)*, created for the d13 and exhibited in the Documenta Hall, refers to squares where revolutions have taken place. In these paintings Mehretu is dealing with architecture as a medium of social history. Her series recalls locations of collective memory: Red Square in Moscow, the Plaza de la Revolución in Cuba, Tahrir Square in Cairo, or Zuccotti Park in New York – places where people have demonstrated against existing regimes, or against the power of the banks in the United States.

'Collapse and Recovery'

'Collapse and Recovery' is the *leitmotif* of the d13. Its artistic director, Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, explains it is a theme that is topical everywhere today and which connects the present with the whole of the last century. Furthermore, she says, it links to the history of the first Documenta in 1955, when large parts of Kassel which had been bombed during the war still lay in ruins. The curator also emphasises that the Documenta did not develop out of the trade fairs or world exhibitions of the colonial nineteenth century, but from the experiences of the Second World War.

The artist and teacher Arnold Bode, who was barred from working under the Nazis, brought back to Germany art which the Nazis had branded 'degenerate' and banned. Emerging from total collapse, the first Documenta was characterised by the hope of a better future and the international reintegration of West German artistic discourse. This emphasis on internationalism also distinguishes the Documenta from the Venice Biennale (which first took place in 1895 – the first Belgian national pavilion was designed in 1907) with its division into national pavilions.

The centre of the d13 is 'The Brain', also described as an 'associative space of research'. Here, instead of a d13 concept, a series of objects, artworks and documents from different times and places have been collected in this 'miniature puzzle of an exhibition'.

On one table sits a laptop displaying a clip from a video of the uprisings in Tahrir Square, filmed by the Egyptian artist Ahmed Basiony on 26th January 2011. The artist, born in Cairo in 1978, died two days later of his wounds after being shot by Egyptian police snipers. Basiony taught at the Art Education College at Helwan University in Cairo and participated in exhibitions such as *Occidentalism* (2007), *The Body Invisible Presents* (2009), *Live100* (2009–2010), and *Why Not?* (2010). In 2011 he posthumously represented Egypt at the Venice Biennale with the video installation *30 Days of Running in the Space*. Basiony was reported to have said to his friend Shady El Noshokaty: 'I'm running on the spot and wasting my energy.' El Noshokaty remembers:

When I started to think about this project, it occurred to me that Ahmed Basiony was born in 1978. [...] Just two years before the Mubarak regime seized power. And when we look back on these thirty years, at the country, the dictatorship, and compare that with Ahmed's original impression of running on the spot, of wasting his energy in a space without making any progress – that was precisely the situation Egypt was in. Ahmed Basiony's life represents the life of this country over the past thirty years. It began with this regime, and it was ended by this regime.

So Ahmed Basiony's video-document appearing in such a central position at the d13 is an indication of the connection that exists, via the Arab Spring, between this document and the *leitmotif* of 'Collapse and Recovery'. However, a contrast also becomes clearly apparent: between the incompleteness of the Arab revolutions on the one hand and, on the other, the collapses and the past that have already been overcome.

This contrast is reinforced by the juxtaposition of the objects, artworks and documents in the exhibition, where Bactrian princess figurines preserved for thousands of years can be seen alongside damaged artefacts (made of metal, ivory, glass and terracotta) from the National Museum in Beirut, which have melted together in a lump as a result of bombing during the Lebanese civil war (1975–1990) and the museum's location directly on the demarcation line between West and East Beirut. Here we can also see Arte Povera and Surrealist works as well as documentary photos and objects taken from Adolf Hitler's apartment in 1945 by the American photographer Lee Miller. The juxtaposition of these objects, artworks and documents opens up new levels of reflection, for example in that the Arab revolutions are put into a historical context.

'Traumatised artworks'

In her notebook 'On the Destruction of Art – or Conflict and Art, or Trauma and the Art of Healing', Bakargiev writes:

This notebook is a collage of fragments precariously held together by a sense that bodies of culture, just like bodies of people and other animate and inanimate elements in the world, survive the knots and circumstances of history sometimes intentionally and sometimes only by chance.

She also speaks of 'traumatised artworks', which she defines as speechless, dazed witnesses of conflicts, traumatised subjects incapable of telling their story. They are in stand-by mode; they are dumb, withdrawn from visibility and from the discourse.

As an example she refers to a piece of work by Walid Raad, exhibited at the d13: *Part I_Chapter 1_Section 139: The Atlas Group [1989-2004]*. This presents earlier works, including their exhibition spaces, in miniature form. As Jalal Toufic expressed it in his book *The Withdrawal of Tradition Past a Surpassing Disaster* (2009), they have detached themselves from some immeasurable disaster. Walid Raad's work is part of an ongoing research project in many parts, *Scratching on Things I Could Disavow* (2008 – present) which he presents at the d13 in performative guided tours.

Cabaret Crusades – Blind Ambition – The Knot

The work of the Egyptian artist Wael Shawky also addresses a traumatic past. He has taken as his theme the remote history of the first Crusades. His puppet animation films from the series *Cabaret Crusades* (2010 – present) tell the story of the Crusades from the Arab point of view. The work takes as its inspiration the book *The Barbarians' Holy War: The Crusades from the Arab Point of View* by the Lebanese author Amin Maalouf, published in 1983. The two-hundred-year-old marionettes are among those belonging to the family of Daniele Lupi from Turin, with whom Shawky collaborated. Al-

though it deals with the past, Shawky's work nonetheless comes across as highly topical, because it questions our image of history and contrasts the eurocentric historical view with another viewpoint.

Political changes do not necessarily cause artists to change their way of working. However, many works deal with the social significance of such changes. This can be seen in the contribution that Hassan Khan, born in London in 1975 and now living in Cairo, created for the d13. Above his 45-minute video *Blind Ambition* (2012), at the entrance to the exhibition space, is the following information: 'A lip-synched film shot on a Samsung Galaxy SII cell phone'. The video has no sound. At high speed we follow various people using different kinds of public transport to travel the noisy, traffic-jammed, crowded streets of Cairo. From time to time we linger alongside certain individuals or groups of people. The conversations that have been dubbed over the top appear spontaneous but are in fact staged. What connects them is their emotionally-charged atmosphere. The post-synchronisation creates a distance between voice and body. Hassan Khan has this to say about his work:

I am at a portrait of selves held together by a fragile intent (that soars and falls), and embraced by the collective fantasy they have all produced.

In the same room Khan is exhibiting his sculpture 'The Knot' (2012), a 70 x 3 x 6.5 cm knot of glass in the form of an 8. At first glance the connection between the video and the glass knot is not immediately apparent, but the quotation ('fragile intent') provides a clue. What is particularly striking is the different materialities. We have the concrete, material world of the video on the one hand, and on the other the formality of the glass knot. The fact that the video was recorded on a mobile phone is reminiscent of the use of mobile phones in the Arab Spring. The collective power of the demonstrators was created by a fleeting, fragile cohesion (knot), itself born of individual communication. The video is not therefore limited to its emphasis on the many individual perspectives, but is abstracted by the allegorical element of the glass knot.

LOTTE FASSHAUER is a Ph.D. student at the Friedrich Schlegel Graduate School at the FU Berlin. Her Ph.D. examines the work of the Lebanese film auteur Ghassan Salhab in the context of contemporary artistic practice in Lebanon.

Translated by Charlotte Collins

Copyright: Goethe-Institut e. V., Fikrun wa Fann, November 2012

ART IN A WAR ZONE

WHY THE KABUL DOCUMENTA WAS NOT WHAT IT WANTED TO BE

The dOCUMENTA in the German city of Kassel is said to be the world's biggest exhibition of contemporary art. The 13th dOCUMENTA was held this year, and for the first time Afghanistan was a focus of the exhibition programme.

By Martin Gerner



Graffiti-pictures by Afghan female artist Shamsia at the documenta (13) in Kabul.

Photo: Martin Gerner © Goethe-Institut

Works by Afghan artists, both from within the country and from the diaspora, as well as by internationally renowned artists who had spent time in residence in Kabul were shown not only in Kassel but also in Kabul itself, where a complementary exhibition was displayed in the former royal Babur Gardens from June 20th to July 19th. Prior to this, the organisers held a series of seminars in Kabul and Bamyan.

'War creates facts. But art, too, can create facts of a highly different order,' writes Carolyn Christov-Bakargiev, the director of the thirteenth Documenta, in an essay about why, in Kabul and Cairo, she chose two places dealing with war and conflict as complementary venues for this year's exhibition. Christov-Bakargiev, an American with Italian and Bulgarian roots, admits that these choices may be 'possibly pretentious and naïve', but she also likes to see them as an encouragement to all those involved. She is convinced that 'art has a major role to play in the social processes of reconstruction', with 'imagination as a crucial force in that process', in ways

'that do not isolate people even further, but provide opportunities for the opposite'.

In this spirit, a delegation from the Documenta's core team first visited Kabul in late summer 2010. A series of lectures and more than seven seminars followed, one in Bamyan and the majority in Kabul, most of which took place in early 2012. Some of these culminated in a series of artworks produced by international and Afghan artists both from within the country and from the diaspora. Other works were commissioned separately by and for the Documenta. Some of these artworks were exhibited in Kassel for the traditional period of 100 days, while others could only be seen in Kabul. But while the two parts were supposed to complement each other like an artistic equation, in the absence of any picture or film footage from the 'other city at war' there was in fact no opportunity for the visitors in either Kassel or Kabul to form a concrete impression of the 'twin' exhibition in the counterpart location. (Kabul is still at war, and Kassel's history as an

important city for the German arms industry before and during World War II, as well as its subsequent destruction, have been highlighted by the exhibition's curators.)

Ultimately, probably only a few dozen people had the privilege of appreciating the Afghan focus of the Documenta in its entirety in both Kassel and Kabul. Apart from the geographical limitations imposed on artistic discourse in a war zone, the organisers were also confronted by the challenges of the social, political and psychological context of Afghanistan. While the core team and artists associated with the Kabul programme stressed that teaching and exhibiting in Kabul was to be an exchange without prejudice and not a 'colonialist approach', some of their recent reactions and accounts suggest that some of them only realised the full implications of the project 'on the job'.

'Embedded' as an outsider

The Polish artist Goshka Macuga produced two large tapestries for the Documenta 13. One was exhibited in the Fridericianum, the Documenta's main venue in Kassel, the other in the Queen's Palace in the Afghan capital. She says she experienced Kabul 'very much as an outsider, conditioned and limited by never-ending security measures equal to those [in place for] elite groups, the NGOs and the international contractors based there. I was embedded in the activities of the Documenta programme, and mainly met people involved with it. The threatening presence of the military, the segregation of international elites from the ordinary citizens of Kabul, made me wonder who I was making the work for.'

While it is probably true that experience can only be gathered on site, Christoph Menke, a German philosopher who held one of the seminars in Kabul, recalls a 'fascinating element of protest' among the mostly young Afghan participants. 'In the beginning they treated us like authorities who had been flown in. We were somehow supposed to answer all of their questions, including fundamental ones such as "What is good or bad art?" or "Should one make art in the first place?"' However, Menke adds, 'the situation changed and participants started to express their own concerns and positions'.

Aman Mojaddedi, an Afghan artist who has worked in Kabul from 2002 onwards and has influenced the Afghan capital's art scene in different ways, was one of two curators for the Kabul Documenta. He is well aware of the mutual cultural learning process such encounters regularly include. But he also sees the obvious risk that such an exhibition could be instrumentalised by foreign interests and donor countries.

The risk of donor logic

'In the last three years there has been a major international push in Afghanistan on supporting and funding art and cul-

tural activities, as part of their propaganda and information campaigns. This goes for the United States, Britain, France and others, investing a lot of money in these activities as a way to create a sense of Afghanistan being in a supposedly much better state than it was before, leading up to what is potentially going to be the extraction of the countries militarily,' says Mojaddedi. This conceptual problem led to a number of discussions behind the scenes of the Documenta, but surprisingly it was not what interested any of the 2,000 or more journalists present at the opening press conference in Kassel.

Although Mojaddedi, who grew up in Jacksonville, Florida, does not categorise the Kabul part of the Documenta as a donor-orientated aid programme, he agrees that, more generally, a constant dependence on foreign funds impedes the motivation of Afghan artists. 'Often people are waiting for the money to come in before they actually start doing something. For me, sustainability is an obscure word. It suggests that solutions always come from outside. Which would be a false concept. Probably forming collectives of artists, coming from the Afghan artists themselves, with exhibitions on their own initiative, would be a way to have an more sustainable approach.'

The Kabul art scene

Some collectives of artists have in fact emerged in Kabul in recent years. One of these is 'Roshd', a group of young male and female artists who currently face an interesting internal debate on whether or not to apply for registration with the Ministry of Culture and Information. Creating the legal framework for being a cultural NGO is tempting for some in the collective, as long as funds are available.

For others in the group, this is a no-go area. The 'Jump Cut Group', a collective of male filmmakers and cameramen, has opted to work on a two-way strategy, depending partly on funded projects with hardly any artistic value while dedicating the majority of their time to independent artistic productions. 'This is a training for ourselves,' says Jalal Husseini, one of its members. 'Those filmmakers who solely work and rely on funded films right now will face a more difficult transition later on.' Other, more recent Kabul-based art collectives, like the 'Bad Artists', who have split from other groups and are still in search of their own identity and freedom, are fed up with what they call a tendency towards 'tanzim thinking' and ethnic division, even among young artists. They take the position that this does not allow for free artistic thinking in the Afghan context.

Zainba Haidary, a young female artist with the Roshd group, comments on something one hears repeatedly about the Kabul artistic environment: 'At university, in my faculty, I cannot paint in the same abstract style I'm exhibiting here in Kassel.' Zainab received most of her education at a pri-

vate Kabul art school, and from Afghan teachers who had emigrated to Iran. 'My professors at university would declare my work insane and stupid. Not so much because they haven't seen this kind of art before, but because the academic structures don't allow for a new thinking.'

Haidary says that in this respect she found the Documenta seminars in Kabul very encouraging. They helped her 'to believe in and respect my own thinking'. Haidary's work and that of half a dozen other Afghan artists is exhibited off the main stage in Kassel in what were until recently the rooms of a Chinese restaurant, refurbished for the occasion and located in the shadow of the big Fridericianum. In these small, individually decorated rooms a number of Afghan artists had the opportunity to meet only with German and international media and gallery owners, as they had to go back to Afghanistan to finish their artworks in Kabul the day the Kassel exhibition opened to the public. As a result, the Documenta organisers missed the opportunity to engage them in a wider exchange of views with the public in Kassel.

The Babur Gardens Bubble

Visiting Kabul two weeks after the Kassel opening, and following the Kabul Documenta up until the end, the figures sounded very positive indeed: around 15,000 visitors in four weeks, with a peak of 2,000 in the Princess's Palace, located in the Babur Gardens, on each of the four Fridays after the opening on 20th June. The number of visitors the Documenta attracted seems, at first glance, to indicate that it was a success. Families from different walks of life, workers as well as intellectuals, mixed with foreign diplomats and NGO workers. All wandered through the pompously renovated and refurbished building, where Kabul's five-star Serena Hotel restaurant also opened a branch a few months ago.

Some of the visitors to the exhibition took the time to stand in front of the art works for a short period of reflection, and later signed a guest book laid out at the entrance. This records statements of support or enthusiasm rather than of rejection, as might have been expected for the rather avant-garde art on display. Some of the comments refer to 'the beautiful rooms' of the palace, which at times seemed to overshadow the artworks themselves.

Other visitors, who had not come to see the exhibition but were simply picnicking with their families on the lower lawn of the Babur Gardens, were attracted by people queuing at the entrance to the palace in the upper section and became curious about what was going on. Later, one saw some of these random visitors, somewhat disorientated, rushing through the aisles of the palace and saying, on leaving, that 'there was nothing there' »('chis na bud')«. To be fair, in a modern art context such rejection by parts of the audience

is nothing out of the ordinary, and is encountered even in the biggest Western art capitals. The exhibition venue in Kabul's Babur Gardens effectively became an ambiguous place where cultural perceptions clashed.

However, there were also other respects in which the good intentions expressed by the Documenta's core team at the start of the exhibition were not translated into actions. Although they insisted that they had shown cultural sensitivity over the two-year period of designing the Kabul programme and the preceding seminars, no space was created for the Afghan curator to make a statement at the opening of the Kabul exhibition. The Afghan Minister for Information and Culture, Sayed Makhdum Rahin, pronounced some solemn words on the occasion, but this hardly made up for the omission.

Art and 'nation building'

A number of reviews in German newspapers in the days after the opening welcomed the curator's courageousness in staging the event in Kabul. The reviewer in the »TAZ«, for example, saw a 'transfer (of ideas) that works surprisingly well', and 'the rare case of an intervention that will go down in the history books, really awakening the forces of [Afghan] civil society, which are to carry the country's future in the period ahead'. The Swiss »Neue Züricher Zeitung« takes a more nuanced approach, welcoming the exhibition as 'art therapy' for Afghan society, while referring to Western governmental policies having tried in recent years to make use of modern art events in conflict zones as a tool to propagate a rhetoric of democratisation. 'In Afghanistan, too,' the author writes, 'funding for the art scene is part of democratic nation building and the establishment of a civil society.' However, in my experience of the Kabul art scene over the past ten years, I doubt whether - with the exception of a number of more general statements on the relationship between the arts and conflict, and reshaping state structures in conflict environments - one could identify anything that could be described as an international strategy to help the Afghan culture and art scene build its own identity, and to do this with care and reserve rather than with a offensive approach.

In fact, some of the Documenta's statistics also reflect this Western-centric approach. Only three of the twenty-seven artists exhibited in the Babur Gardens and in Kassel grew up in Kabul, or are currently and permanently living there. The rest were international artists, or Afghans who grew up abroad and/or have largely mixed identities, people with a sound understanding of how the mechanisms of the Western art scene function. Not surprisingly, in both Kabul and Kassel the interaction between the foreign artists and the group of Afghans artists from the diaspora was more intense than with the Afghan artists from the country itself.

'For us as Kabuli artists, the works presented in the Kassel and Kabul exhibitions and the artistic discourse of the Documenta was something totally new, often too far away from our realities,' one of the three Kabuli artists told me.

Of the few in-depth reviews of the Kabul Documenta that I encountered, the one by Robert Kluijver, who has been familiar with the Afghan art scene for a long time now, stands out. He points out that some of the limitations of the Documenta 'are caused by the fact that [its organisers] ended up relying heavily on the US-Afghan connection. This of course doesn't detract from their quality as artists. But how tuned-in are they to contemporary developments in Afghanistan? Their relationship with this country is coloured by their dreams of a homeland that would conform to their expectations, which are in turn shaped by the nostalgia of their exiled parents. Their art reflects this and, in my experience, doesn't resonate much with Afghans that didn't grow up abroad.'

Which Afghan cultural identity?

The Kabul Documenta has certainly enriched the local art scene and provided fresh inspiration to its – mostly young – artists. It has also made an international audience – both donors and buyers – aware of Afghan art; they will now know who to contact when looking for something original in terms of art from a war zone.

But herein lies the problem. It can hardly be argued that, in terms of quality, the exhibition in the Babur Gardens has introduced new standards to Afghan art and cultural identity. On the contrary: with the end of the month-long exhibition the reality looks less bright. The Kabul art scene is scattered and is limited to a few individuals in each field, contrary to what the regular headlines from a supposedly lively artistic environment suggest. And at times some of the activities of these dynamic youngsters seem to have been encouraged or even initiated by foreigners – their presence, contacts and money – rather than emerging from an independent creative reflex. In fact, the international headlines about the 'first Afghan punk rock group', the 'first graffiti artists' or 'first female rapper' simply show how much Western media copy from one another while being unable substantially to judge and spend time in the Kabul art scene.

That said, the more traditional branch of Afghan art, involving demonstrations of poetry and literature, also exists, but was not considered for this exhibition. This is in part obviously to do with limitations of time and space, as well as an apparent lack of desire to open up to broader sections of the Afghan population and its customs. Other reasons may lie with an approach that seems to concentrate solely on a con-

text of modernity for which the Afghan capital stands; or, as a graffiti artist has sprayed in blue on one of the walls of a narrow street in Taimani: 'Kabul is a bubble'.

The Kabul art scene still has to struggle with reflexes of censorship and self-censorship. On the opening day, two art works by young Kabuli artists were confiscated by the Afghan state authorities, i.e. the Ministry for Information and Culture. One of the artists claims that he was slapped and held in custody for an hour. The Afghan authorities say there was misuse of writings and the significance of the Koran, whereas the young artists say they simply hinted at a social reality: that lots of Afghans 'read' the Koran on a daily basis without knowing its exact meaning, a fact generally known throughout the country.

The self-censoring aspect of incidents like these is clearly apparent. Artists or journalists in the Afghan media are unable to obtain a clear definition of terms such as 'blasphemy' if they are accused of wrongdoing and need to defend themselves before the law.

The final question

So after a month-long exhibition in Kabul and two years of preparation and seminars in Afghanistan, what influence has the Documenta had on the international artists who taught and performed in Kabul? This question is comparatively easy to answer. The experience of being in situ seems to have resulted in approaches that are more humble. Goshka Macuga expresses hers in the following question: 'Do we, let alone Documenta, have the capacity to accept that other cultures have different aspirations and definitions of how humans thrive and flourish, which are equally valid and valuable?' And she concludes that 'the exploration and appreciation of other cultures cannot materialise through imposing the heritage or system of Western traditions'.

The question of whether the Documenta is in any way important for Afghanistan, and whether ordinary Afghans have any benefit from it, requires a more critical answer. 'Probably not,' answers the philosopher Christoph Menke. He realises that even the best intentions cannot easily change the course of a country and a population whose abilities to consume art and to reflect on it are hampered by the daily struggle for their livelihood and the implications of the military conflict. And while Afghanistan incorporates a large number of cultural identities, the Documenta has basically reached out to Kabul alone. With the exception of Bamiyan, where the US artist Michael Rakowitz held a one-week seminar on stone carving with the aim of reviving this traditional skill intrinsic to the Hazara region, the approach was a unilateral one. As for the wider cultural and artistic context and

the impulses exchanged: as one participant put it, maybe the Documenta needed Kabul more than Afghanistan actually needed the Documenta.

And as for the future of the independent Afghan art scene, any answer will need to consider the fragility or even absence of structures for supporting Afghan art – the lack of

galleries, art museums, in-depth art education, art publications and media devoted to the issue, etc. It is also far from clear what of the existing art landscape, with its often-foreign impulses, will survive beyond 2014, and in what form. However, looked at positively, the approach of the Kabul Documenta has highlighted the fragility of the Afghan art scene and its ambiguities in the current international context.

MARTIN GERNER is a German journalist and filmmaker. Afghanistan is a focus of his work.

Translated by Aingeal Flanagan

Copyright: Goethe-Institut e. V., Fikrun wa Fann, November 2012

IMPRINT

ART&THOUGHT / FIKRUN WA FANN
51. (11.) year,
no. 98 (Nr. 23),
December 2012 – June 2013

Publisher:
Goethe-Institut e.V.

Editor-in-Chief:
Stefan Weidner

Publisher's Address:
Goethe-Institut e.V.
Dachauer Str. 122
D-80637 München
Deutschland

Editor's Office:
Stefan Weidner
Art&Thought/Fikrun wa Fann
Pralat-Otto-Müller-Platz 6
50670 Köln
Deutschland

Art&Thought is a cultural magazine published twice a year by the German Cultural Centre Goethe-Institut e.V. in English, Arabic (*Fikrun wa Fann*), and Farsi (*Andishe va Honar*).

Design & Layout:
Graphicteam Köln Bonn
Michael Krupp AGD

ISSN 0015-0932

You can order the printed edition of our journal
Art&Thought/Fikrun wa Fann at the Goethe-Webshop:

<http://shop.goethe.de>

fikrun@goethe.de

<http://www.goethe.de/fikrun>