

THE MANY FACES OF 1918

*Downfall, new beginning, liberation, pause
in the European civil war*

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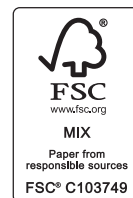
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GEMEINSAM UND VERANTWORTLICH MIT DER VIELGESICHTIGKEIT VON 1918 UMGEHEN

Germaine Goetzinger

Das Thema der vorliegenden Anthologie „Die vielen Gesichter des Jahres 1918“ verdeutlicht, dass, je nach der Verortung des eigenen Standpunktes, die transnationale Artikulation der Bedeutung des angesprochenen Problemjahres eine erstaunliche, aber auch erschreckende Pluralität von Narrativen offenlegt. Das Aneinanderkoppeln der unterschiedlichen Perspektiven eröffnet in der Tat ein Feld von hoher Komplexität, ein Patchwork von Meinungen und Standpunkten, das kaum von einer Fachhistoriografie, gleich welcher Provenienz, geglättet und vereinheitlicht werden kann.

Zustande gekommen ist ein origineller Sammelband, in dem sieben Autorinnen und zehn Autoren, deren Alter zwischen 27 und 68 Jahren schwankt, aus 17 verschiedenen Ländern nach der Bedeutung von 1918 befragt wurden. Sie antworten in knappen literarischen Texten zwischen Fiktion und Faktografie. Der Blick auf die Vergangenheit ist dabei keineswegs einheitlich, er beansprucht daher auch keinerlei historiografische Gültigkeit und führt dennoch zu einem überraschenden Ergebnis.

Fünf Beiträge sind aus der damaligen Situation heraus geschrieben. So setzt sich die irische Historikerin und Autorin Sinead McCool (*1968) mit der Durchsetzung des Frauenwahlrechts in ihrem Land auseinander. Drei Texte beschreiben aus einer osteuropäischen Perspektive die Lösung alter Bindungen an das hinfällig gewordene österreichische Kaiserreich und das Entstehen neuer Nationalstaaten im Fokusjahr 1918. So erzählt die tschechische Journalistin und Autorin Anna Šochová (*1959), wie ein böhmischer Schneider in Odessa von der Etablierung des tschechischen Nationalstaates erfährt. Die polnische Dichterin und Literaturhistorikerin Justyna Chłap-Nowakowa (*1965) beschreibt, wie ihr Land 1918

die nationale Unabhängigkeit erlangt, ein Ziel, von dem man das 19. Jahrhundert über geträumt hat. Einen ähnlichen Zugang findet der rumänische Schriftsteller und Diplomat Ioan T. Morar (*1956). Er schildert, wie der Eid auf den Kaiser in Wien hinfällig wird und an seine Stelle die Bindung an den rumänischen Nationalstaat tritt. Die drei Texte machen ebenfalls deutlich, dass die neuen Nationalstaaten sich 1918 im Kontext einer vom Kaiserreich überlieferten Multikulturalität bilden. Der Politologe Gökhan Çetinsaya (*1964) zeigt, wie das Jahr 1918 mit dem Waffenstillstandsabkommen von Moudros für die Türkei einen komplexen und schwierigen Übergang darstellt zwischen dem Zusammenbruch des osmanischen Reiches und der Entstehung einer modernen Republik unter Kemal Atatürk.

Sechs Texte wählen eine eher historisierende Perspektive. Sie vergegenwärtigen in einem mehr oder minder faktografisch fundierten, dennoch fiktionalen Erzählen vergangenes Geschehen. So beschreibt der serbische Romanschriftsteller, Übersetzer und Musikkritiker Aleksandar Gatalica (*1964) in einem Auszug aus seinem Roman „The Great War“ den Tod von vier Leutnants. Zum zentralen Symbol des Textes werden die Uhren, die genau zu jenem Zeitpunkt stehen bleiben, wo ihre Träger fallen. Der deutsche Beitrag von Hauke Kracht (*1964) verschiebt die Perspektive weg von einem der zentralen Akteure des Großen Krieges in den Luxemburger Windschatten, wo die französischen Bombardements der Eisenhütte von Düdelingen, der entsprechende Protest des belgischen Stahlherrn Gaston Barbansons und die Eigenwilligkeit der scheinbar allzu deutschfreundlichen Großherzogin Marie-Adelheid in den Mittelpunkt gerückt werden. Der flämische Autor Stefan Hertmans (*1951) stellt in dem belgischen

Beitrag das Jahr 1914, in dem ein idealistisches Ethos vorherrscht, dem Jahr 1918 gegenüber, in dem die behagliche Intimität des alten Europa einem Gefühl von Zorn, Ressentiment und Rachgier gewichen ist. Mit dem portugiesischen Erbe aus Angola und Mozambique beschäftigt sich der in Coimbra arbeitende Kolonialhistoriker Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo (*1973). Angesprochen wird der deutsch-portugiesische Konflikt in Afrika und seine sozialen und wirtschaftlichen Folgen. Trotz des offiziellen Gedenkens aber werden bis heute die afrikanischen Kämpfer im Dienste Portugals vergessen. Der US-amerikanische Schriftsteller und Herausgeber Christopher Merrill (*1957), der ein internationales Schreibprogramm an der Universität von Iowa leitet, stellt in den Mittelpunkt seines Beitrags den 1918 erschienenen Band mit kurzen Prosagedichten des Dichters und Kinderarztes William Carlos Williams (1883-1963). Die uramerikanische Variante der surrealistischen „écriture automatique“ erscheint zu einem Zeitpunkt, als den Leichenbestattern die Särge ausgehen und Woodrow Wilson sein Vierzehnpunkteprogramm veröffentlicht mit der Forderung nach einer Vereinigung von Nationen „affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike“¹. Wie jedes Jahr im Herbst die roten Mohnblumen am Revers, so erinnert auch der britische Beitrag von Ruth Dugdall (*1971), die von 2014-2016 in Luxemburg wohnte, an das Sterben in den flandrischen Schützengräben. Er schildert die letzten Stunden des bei der ersten Musterung als untauglich erklärten Ernest Seaman, der am 16. August 1918 bei Terhand, einem Weiler nahe Ypern, fällt.

Die sechs verbleibenden Texte beziehen sich deutlicher auf die Gegenwart. Claudio Cicotti (*1972), Italianist an der Universität Luxemburg, kontrastiert die Alltagserfahrung italienischer Kriegsteilnehmer, seien es Sizilianer, Venezianer, Emilianer oder Sardinier, die sich untereinander kaum verstehen, mit dem kriegsbegeisterten Aufruf Gabriele d'Annunzios und setzt von einem Gegenwartsstandpunkt aus den Blick von unten als Kontrapunkt gegen das selektive Erinnern und die kriegsverherrlichende Rhetorik der damaligen Presse. Die französische Romanschriftstellerin Frederika Amalia Finkelstein (*1991), die in ihrem Roman „L'oubli“ eine junge Frau in Bezug auf die Shoah das Recht auf Vergessen beanspruchen lässt, gestaltet, in der Hoffnung auf Erlösung durch Schreiben, die verworrenen Gefühle zwischen Wut und Gleichgültigkeit, zwischen dem Wunsch nach Vergessen und dem Anspruch des Erinnerns, die eine junge Frau heute beim Besuch der Schlachtfelder in Verdun überkommen. Im Zeichen von 1918 konfrontiert die österreichische Autorin Theodo-

ra Bauer (*1990) den Zusammenbruch des k. und k. Reiches mit dem sozialdemokratischen Traum eines Viktor Adler, das alte Österreich zu einer modernen Demokratie umformen zu können. Schließlich äußert sie die skeptische, aber letztlich zuversichtliche Hoffnung, dass doch ein Stück Weg zurückgelegt worden ist und es in der heutigen Republik Österreich besser sein könnte als damals. Der rumänisch-ungarische Schriftsteller und Politiker Géza Szócs (*1953) beschreibt, wie nach dem Zusammenbruch der russischen, deutschen, österreichisch-ungarischen und ottomanischen Reiche im Jahre 1918 aus einer desaströsen Katastrophe heraus neue Demokratien entstehen und wie das alte Europa seine Vorherrschaft verliert. Für ihn besteht die Herausforderung darin, Varietät und Diversität in Europa durch eine vitale europäische Kultur abzusichern. Der Luxemburger Journalist, Übersetzer und Schriftsteller André Link (*1949) beschwört, was von 1918 im kollektiven Gedächtnis der Luxemburger verhaftet geblieben ist: die Hungersnot und der von den Großmächten erzwungene und von den Anhängern der Republik herbei gewünschte Sturz der Großherzogin Marie-Adelheid. Der Genfer Schriftsteller Guillaume Rihs (*1984) schließlich gestaltet die Schwierigkeiten eines Schweizer Lehrers, im PowerPoint unterstützten Geschichtsunterricht seine Schüler mit dem Ersten Weltkrieg und den Opferzahlen in Europa zu konfrontieren.

Wenn auch 1918 in den Beiträgen als ein wichtiges Stichdatum erscheint, so steht es, aus der Distanz betrachtet, im Kontext des langen Abschieds vom 19. Jahrhundert. Der facettenreiche Übergang vom 19. zum 20. Jahrhundert kündigt sich nämlich lange vor 1918 an, etwa in der Entstehung der Psychoanalyse, in der darstellenden Kunst eines Douanier Rousseau oder in der Musik eines Richard Strauss. So kommt 1918 zwar eine hohe symbolische Bedeutung zu, aber es bedeutet nicht die entscheidende Wende. Die Weimarer Republik führt in Deutschland keineswegs zur definitiven Demokratisierung, Locarno nicht zur endgültigen europäischen Friedenssicherung, Emil Mayrischs deutsch-französische Wirtschaftskooperation nicht zum gemeinsamen europäischen Markt. Im Rückblick von heute erscheinen die Pfade der Geschichte verschlungen, und der Zickzackkurs dominiert über jegliche Form von Linearität. Die 1918 geschaffene oder zumindest mancherorts erhoffte Nachkriegsordnung steht auf derart wackeligen Füßen, dass im historischen Verlauf kaum eine der 1918 ange-dachten optimistischen Figuren zum Tragen kommt. Die Entwicklung folgt vielmehr einem Negativszenario, das heute vielfach mit dem historiografischen Konzept des Zweiten Dreißigjährigen Krieges bezeichnet wird.

Der Begriff hat, bevor er regelrecht Karriere in der internationalen Geschichtswissenschaft macht, eine bis ins 19. Jahrhundert zurückreichende Vorgeschichte. In einer Art prophetischen Voraussicht kündigt Friedrich Engels schon 1887 einen Weltkrieg an, den er mit dem Dreißigjährigen Krieg vergleicht.² Auch der in Luxemburg geborene US-amerikanische Historiker Arno J. Mayer³ gebraucht 1981, vorerst eher beiläufig, das Konzept eines Zweiten Dreißigjährigen Krieges. Er bezieht sich dabei auf Jean Jaurès und Theobald von Bethman Hollweg, die beide schon vor 1914 angesichts der internationalen Problemlage vor einem neuen Dreißigjährigen Krieg gewarnt haben. In den 1940er Jahren wird die Formel von Charles de Gaulle und Winston Churchill aufgegriffen. De Gaulle spricht im September 1941 in einer Londoner Radioansprache von „la nouvelle guerre de trente ans“⁵, während Churchill 1944 an Stalin von einem „dreißigjährigen Krieg von 1914 an“ schreibt. Etabliert wird der Begriff in Frankreich von Raymond Aron⁶, in der amerikanischen Historiografie von Arno J. Mayer⁷, und leicht verspätet greift auch Hans-Ulrich Wehler⁸ in Deutschland auf den Topos zurück.

In einem Interview bringt Arno J. Mayer im Jahre 2002 seinen historischen Blick auf die zwei Weltkriege und seine Empfänglichkeit für eine europäische Gesamtschau des historischen Geschehens mit seinen Luxemburger Ursprüngen in Verbindung und bezieht sich auf seine Luxemburger Kindheitserfahrung in der Zwischenkriegszeit. Wie viele Luxemburger hat Arno J. Mayer damals als Acht- oder Neunjähriger die Schlachtfelder in Verdun besucht.⁹

Der besondere Standort Luxemburg spielt auch bei dem vorliegenden Projekt eine Rolle. Die zugrunde gelegte Fragestellung geht nämlich von Luxemburg aus, und zwar von der hiesigen österreichischen Botschaft. Diesmal handelt es sich nicht um das Zusammenfassen von Zeiträumen, sondern um eine räumliche Zusammenschau, die auf ein sehr knappes Zeitfenster gerichtet ist: das Jahr 1918, das scheinbare Schwellenjahr, das die Katastrophe nicht verhindern wird. Der Blick ist demnach vielschichtig. Er ist weder statisch, noch gründet er im Konsens. Er verändert sich je nach Standpunkt. Der Verzicht auf eine Vereinheitlichung der Sichtweisen entbindet uns dennoch nicht von der Verpflichtung zum offenen Austausch, zur vorbehaltlosen Anerkennung der Geschichte des Anderen, zur Relativierung der nationalgeschichtlichen Verengung. Im Vordergrund steht dann nicht eine erstarrte Einheitserinnerung, sondern der permanent revidierte und revidierbare Zugriff auf eine polyfone Debatte.

- 1 *Wilson's Fourteen Points*, 8 January, 1918. Yale Law School, *The Avalon Project, Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy*. Web 14. Apr. 2018 <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/wilson14.asp>.
- 2 Engels, Friedrich. „Einleitung.“ *Zur Erinnerung für die deutschen Mordpatrioten 1806–1807*. Von Sigismund Borkheim. Zürich-Hottingen: Verlag der Volksbuchhandlung, 1888; auch in: Marx, Karl, und Friedrich Engels. *Werke*. 5. Ausgabe. Berlin/DDR: Karl Dietz Verlag, 1975, S. 346–351, S. 350f.
- 3 Mayer, Arno J. *The Persistence of the Old Regime: Europe to the Great War*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1981, dt. Mayer, Arno J. *Adelsmacht und Bürgertum: Die Krise der europäischen Gesellschaft 1848–1914*. München: Deutscher Taschenbuchverlag, 1988, S. 313f.
- 4 «*La guerre contre l'Allemagne a commencé en 1914. [...] Le monde fait la guerre de trente ans: pour ou contre la domination universelle du germanisme.*» de Gaulle, Charles. *Le père la Défaite: Discours à la radio de Londres, diffusé le 18 septembre 1941*. Web 14 Apr. 2018. <<http://fresques.ina.fr/de-gaulle/fiche-media/Gaulle00403/le-pere-la-defaite.html>>
- 5 Briefwechsel Stalins mit Churchill, Attlee, Roosevelt und Truman 1941–1945. Berlin/DDR: Rütten und Löning, 1961, S. 254.
- 6 Aron, Raymond. *Paix et guerre entre les nations*. Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1962.
- 7 Mayer, Arno J. *Why did the heavens not darken? The „Final Solution“ in history*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1988.
- 8 Wehler, Hans-Ulrich. „Der zweite Dreißigjährige Krieg. Der Erste Weltkrieg als Auftakt und Vorbild für den Zweiten Weltkrieg.“ *Spiegel special*. 1 (2004): 138–143.
- 9 Loez, André et Nicolas Offenstadt. „Un historien dissident? Entretien avec Arno J. Mayer.“ *Genèses* 49.4 (2002): 123–39.

DEALING RESPONSIBLY TOGETHER WITH THE MANY ASPECTS OF 1918

Germaine Goetzinger, translated by Jeff Thill

“The many aspects of the year 1918”, the topic of the present anthology shows clearly that – depending on your own perspective – the transnational expression of the importance of this problematic year reveals an amazing but also frightening plurality of narratives. In actual fact, the juxtaposition of these various perspectives opens up an area of high complexity, a patchwork of opinions and points of view that no specialized anthology, no matter from where it originates, can unify in any coherent way.

The result is an original collection. Seven female authors and ten male writers, aged between 27 and 68 from 17 different countries were asked about the significance of the year 1918. They answered in short literary texts, oscillating between fiction and factual writing. The look back on the past is certainly not coherent. It is therefore not meant to be historically accurate yet still leads to a surprising result.

Five contributions are anchored in the historical context of that year. The Irish historian and writer Sinead McCoolle (*1968) deals with the implementation of women’s suffrage in her country. Three texts describe the year 1918 from an Eastern European perspective, the dissolution of old ties to the newly obsolete Austrian Empire and the emergence of new nation states. The Czech journalist and author Anna Šochová (*1959) recounts how a Bohemian tailor living in Odessa finds out about the establishment of a Czech nation state. The Polish poet and literary historian

Justyna Chlap-Nowakowa (*1965) describes how her country achieved independence in 1918, an ambition which had been a long-cherished dream throughout the 19th century. The Romanian writer and diplomat Ioan T. Morar (*1956) deals with the subject in a similar fashion. He describes how the oath to the Emperor in Austria becomes irrelevant and how it is replaced by an allegiance to the state of Romania. Those three texts also demonstrate that the formation of the new nation states happens in the context of the old Empire’s multicultural past. The political scientist Gökhan Çetinsaya (*1964) shows how the cease fire agreement of Moudros presents a complex and difficult transition for Turkey, from the collapse of the Ottoman Empire to the emergence of a modern republic under Kemal Atatürk.

Six texts are written in a historic-fiction genre. The stories, more or less historically accurate, nevertheless recount events of the past in a fictional manner. In an extract from his novel, Aleksandar Gatalica (*1964), the Serb novelist, translator and music critic describes the death of four lieutenants. Their watches become the central symbol of the text as they all stop working at the moment of the lieutenants’ executions. The German contribution by Hauke Kracht (*1964) shifts the spotlight away from the main actors of the Great War to a particular, regional Luxembourg context. It focuses instead on the French bombardments of the steel factory in Dudelange, the consequent protests of the Belgian owner, Gaston Barbanson, and the wilfulness of the seemingly too German-friendly Grand Duchess

Marie-Adelheid. The Flemish author Stefan Hertmans (*1951) contrasts the old European idealism and the cosy intimacy of 1914 with the anger, resentment and spitefulness of 1918. The Coimbra-based, colonial historian Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo (*1973) deals with the Portuguese heritage in Angola and Mozambique. The author refers to the German-Portuguese conflict in Africa and its social and economic consequences. The Africans who fought for Portugal are still not mentioned in any official commemorations. In his contribution, the American writer and publisher Christopher Merrill (*1957), head of an international creative writing program at the University of Iowa, focuses on the short poems in prose by William Carlos Williams (1883-1963), which were published in 1918. The quintessentially American version of the surrealist 'écriture automatique' is published at a time when undertakers are running out of coffins and Woodrow Wilson is publishing his fourteen-point program with the demand of a Union of Nations "affording mutual guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity to great and small states alike".¹ Like the poppies which are worn on the lapels every autumn, Ruth Dugdall (*1971), who was based in Luxembourg from 2014-2016, intends her text to be a reminder of the dying in the trenches. It chronicles the last hours of Ernest Seaman who falls on 16th August 1918 close to Terhand, a hamlet near Ypres, an Ernest Seaman who was initially declared unfit for military service.

The six remaining texts are more closely linked to the present. Claudio Cicotti (*1972), Italian specialist at the University of Luxembourg, contrasts the daily experiences of Italian service men, Sicilians, Venetians, Italians from Emilia or Sardinia, who barely understand each other, with the war-fuelled appeals of Gabriele d'Annunzio. The text, written from a modern perspective, looks back at the conflict with the eyes from those at the bottom of society as a strong counterpoint to the selective memory and the war-glorifying rhetoric of the press in those days. In her novel 'L'oubli', Frederika Amalia Finkelstein (*1991), presents a young woman who claims the right to forget the tragedy of the Shoah. In the hope that writing can somehow be a release she expresses the confusing, entangled emotions of anger and indifference, she is torn between the wish to forget and the obligation to remember as she is walking over the battlefields in Verdun. The Austrian author Theodora Bauer (*1990) contrasts the collapse of the 'k and k' Empire with the social-democratic dream of a Viktor Adler of re-creating the old Austria into a modern democracy. In the end she formulates the rather

sceptical, yet eventually also quite confident hope that progress has been made and that the current Republic of Austria may be better than what Austrians had in the past. Géza Szócs (*1953), the Romanian-Hungarian author and politician, describes how after the collapse of the Russian, German, Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires in 1918, new democracies are born out of this catastrophe and how as a consequence the old Europe has lost its power. He sees the challenge in safe-guarding the vitality and diversity of Europe through an energetic European culture. The Luxembourgish journalist, translator and writer André Link (*1949) refers to what has remained in the collective memory of the Luxembourgish people: the famine and the abdication of Grand Duchess Marie Adelheid, an abdication which was imposed by the super powers and the supporters of the Republic alike. The Genevan writer Guillaume Rihs (*1984) finally reflects about the problems of a Swiss teacher to confront his students – albeit with power point supported lessons – with World War I and the count of its victims.

But if the year 1918 does appear as an important date in these contributions it must be seen from a distance as a long farewell from the 19th century. The multifaceted transition from the 19th century to the 20th century announces itself long before 1918, such as in the emergence of psycho-analysis, in the stylized art of a Douanier Rousseau or in the music of Richard Strauss. Hence, the year 1918 has a highly symbolical meaning but it is not the decisive turning point. The Weimar Republic in Germany does not lead to a definite establishment of democracy and Locarno does not lead to the securing of peace in Europe. Neither does Emil Mayrisc'h's Franco-German economic cooperation lead to a European customs union. In retrospect the course of history seems entangled and to be moving in a zigzag rather than a straight line. The post war order which is established in 1918, or at least longed for, is so fragile that hardly any of the planned scenarios comes to fruition in the process of history. Rather, the historical development follows a negative course that nowadays is often described with the new concept of the War of Thirty Years.

Before it became accepted in international historical science, the expression had already been in use as far back as the 19th century. With a kind of prophetic foresight Friedrich Engels already announces in 1887 a global war which he compares to the War of Thirty Years.² So does the Luxembourg-born U.S. historian Arno J. Mayer³ albeit at first in an off-hand manner.

He refers to Jean Jaurès and Theobald von Bethman Hollweg, who both already warned – considering the fraught state of international affairs – of a new War of Thirty Years. The term is taken up again in the 1940's by Charles de Gaulle and Winston Churchill. During a radio speech in London in the September of 1941 De Gaulle speaks of “la nouvelle guerre de trente ans”⁴ while Churchill, in a correspondence with Stalin, writes of a “War of Thirty Years from 1914 onwards.”⁵ The concept is established in France by Raymond Aron⁶, in the U.S. by Arno J. Mayer⁷ and with a slight delay by Hans-Ulrich Wehler⁸ in Germany.

In an interview in 2002 Arno J. Mayer explains his historical view on the two world wars and his sympathy for a European perception of these historical events with his Luxembourg origins. He mentions his Luxembourg childhood experiences in between the two conflicts. Like many Luxembourgers Arno J. Mayer visited the battlefields of Verdun as an eight or nine-year-old.⁹

Luxembourg's particular geographical position also plays an important part in this project. The formulation of the topic namely has its origins in Luxembourg, in actual fact, from its local Austrian embassy. In the present case the project is not meant to be a summary of time frames but a spatial focus on a contracted time segment: the year 2018, the so-called threshold year, the year that could not prevent the catastrophe. In that sense the view is multi-layered. It is neither static nor is it based on any consensus. It varies with the perspective. But renouncing any unified vision does not release us from the obligation to have an open exchange, to accept unquestioningly the opinion of the other's history and to have a more objective vision of our narrow, national vision. What matters then is not an inflexible, unified memory but a constantly revised and revisable access to a polyphonic debate.

- 1 Wilson's Fourteen Points, 8 January, 1918. Yale Law School, *The Avalon Project, Documents in Law, History and Diplomacy*. Web 14 Apr. 2018 <http://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/wilson14asp>
- 2 Engels Friedrich. “Einleitung” *Zur Erinnerung für die deutschen Mordspatrioten 1806-1807*. Von Sigismund Borkheim. Zürich-Höttingen: Verlag der Volksbuchhandlung, 1888; also in: Marx, Karl und Friedrich Engels. *Werke*. Fifth edition. Berlin/DDR: Karl Dietz Verlag, 1975, p 346-351, p 350f
- 3 Mayer, Arno J. *The Persistence of the Old Regime: Europe to the Great War*. New York, NY: Pantheon Books, 1981, dt. Mayer, Arno J *Adelsmacht und Bürgertum: Die Krise der europäischen Gesellschaft 1848-1914*. München: Deutscher Taschenbuchverlag, 1988, p 313f
- 4 « La guerre contre l'Allemagne a commencé en 1914 [...] Le monde fait la guerre de trente ans: pour ou contre la domination universelle du germanisme. » de Gaulle, Charles. *Le père la Défaite: Discours à la radio de Londres, diffusé le 18 septembre 1941*. Web 14 Apr. 2018 <<http://fresques.ina.fr/de-gaulle/fiche-media/Gaulle00403/le-pere-la-defaite.html>>
- 5 Briefwechsel Stalins mit Churchill, Attlee, Roosevelt and Truman 1941-1945. Berlin/DDR: Rütten und Löning, 1961, p 254
- 6 Aron, Raymond. *Paix et guerre entre les nations*. Paris: Calmann-Lévy, 1962
- 7 Mayer, Arno J. *Why did the heavens not darken? The “Final Solution” in history*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1988.
- 8 Wehler, Hans-Ulrich. „Der zweite Dreißigjährige Krieg. Der Erste Weltkrieg als Auftakt und Vorbild für den Zweiten Weltkrieg.“ *Spiegel special*. 1 (2004) pp 138-143
- 9 Loez, André et Nicolas Offenstadt. « Un historien dissident? Entretien avec Arno J. Mayer. » *Genèses* 49.4 (2002): 123-139



01.

Österreich
Austria

EIN ZUSAMMENBRUCH AUF RATEN DIE UNTERSCHIEDLICHEN FÄDEN DES UNTERGANGS UND ICH RUPFE SIE ALLE AUS.

Theodora Bauer

Österreich, 1918. Genauer gesagt: Wien, 1918. Ich stelle mir vor: wie es gewesen sein muss, damals. Ein Novembertag, ein grässlicher Kater; die Medizin, die verschrieben wurde, zeitigt Nebenwirkungen bis ins zehnte Glied. Ich stelle mir vor: vier Jahre zuvor, der Krieg, in den man mit fliegenden Fahnen gezogen ist; junge Männer mit kindlicher Freude in ihren Gesichtern, eine metallglänzende, maschinenunterstützte Frühlingsdämmerung unter kaiserlich-königlicher Führung, ein zukunftsverheißendes Glimmen über ganz Europa. Ich denke an die Frauen, weinend vielleicht, über die Söhne oder den Krieg oder beides; vielleicht freudig über die kesseln Offiziere, die heimkehren würden, über die starken, hübschen, jungen Offiziere, alle hochdekoriert, aus denen man wählen würde können, ein jeder einzelne ein Held.

Ich stelle mir vor: die erste Euphorie; der Kampfesgeist, wie er anbrudet, zerbricht – die Gedenkteller mit den bunten Offiziersröcken in heroischen Posen, ausgefüllt von, nun ja, schnurrbärtigen Köpfen; die Feldpost, die motivieren sollte; gestickte Sprüche, blau auf weiß, statt dem Herrgott wird die Entschlossenheit gelobt, die Ausdauer, der Willen. Derweilen im Schützengraben oder im Gas, in der Luft, die einen von innen zersetzt; die Tage, die einen von innen zersetzen; wieviel Ausdauer bringt ein Einzelner auf und wieviel eine Maschine...

Ich stelle mir vor: die Frauen, zuhause, vereinzelt Kriegsreporterinnen, die sich keinen guten Namen machten; Krankenschwestern, ja, fleißige, viele. Ich denke an diejenigen, die Helden erwarteten und von Mensch zu Mensch ein Häufchen Elend zurückbekamen, verstümmelt, zerschossen, vor allem aber noch

den Krieg im Hirn, unauslöschlich, eingätzt bis in die letzte Windung. Sie müssen sich vor einem Abgrund gesehen haben, aus dem sie den Liebsten nicht herausholen konnten; es muss noch schlimmer gewesen sein, als selbst hineinzufallen. Vor allem, wenn man den, dem man nicht zu helfen imstande war, auch nicht verlassen konnte. Wenn man sich selbst nicht retten konnte vor dem Loch in seinem Kopf, in dem tagein, tagaus die schwärzeste Nacht hockte und alles an ihm und um ihn herum zusammenzog in ein verkrampftes Bündel Angst.

Ich stelle mir vor: Victor Adler, der einen mutigen Kampf gefochten hatte, im Wesentlichen einen Kampf wider den Kampf, der starb, einen Tag, bevor sein Lebenswerk vollendet wurde, der sozusagen an der Schwelle der Republik als ihr erster vor Erschöpfung über ihre Geburt zusammengebrochener Toter lag. Die Ironie, die Tragik; und er, der Leib des Victor Adler als ihr erstes, schicksalsschwangeres Omen.

Ich stelle mir vor: was in den Köpfen des Volkes vorgegangen sein muss, das immer in großer Zahl vorkommt. In großer Zahl wird es sich gedacht haben, es wird schon nicht schlimmer kommen, es kann gar nicht schlimmer kommen, nicht nach den Jahren des Krieges, die schlimm genug gewesen sind, schlimm genug für alle. Das Volk wird sich zurückgewünscht haben in eine bessere Zeit; auch wenn die Zeit, an die es dabei dachte, im kühlen Licht ihrer Gegenwart ebenfalls eine schreckliche gewesen ist, vor allem für die einfachen Leute. Das Volk wird sich zurückgewünscht haben, anstatt dass es sich vorangewünscht hat, und das wird das Requiem der Republik gewesen sein, das in seinen ersten Tönen schon in ihrer Ge-

burtsstunde angeklungen ist. Das Volk wird sich gedacht haben, jetzt kommen sie wieder mit ihren Experimenten, bei denen am Ende wieder wir die sein werden, die draufzahlen müssen. Wo ist der Kaiser, denn wie es einen Kaiser gegeben hat – irgendeinen, Hauptsache Bart und wichtig – hat es auch keinen Krieg gegeben; seine letzten beiden Jahre waren ein bloßer Unfall, wir wollen ihn zurück. Man geht auf die Straße, betrachtet das Parlament. Was auch immer das sein soll, eine öffentliche Sache – *res publica* – ist es nicht. Das Volk wird sich gedacht haben, wir verneigen uns vor dieser neuen Öffentlichkeit und in derselben Bewegung wenden wir ihr buckelnd den Rücken zu, es wird niemals die unsere sein, was auch immer sie sagen, wir werden immer die Vielen sein, die in einzelnen Miseren vor sich hinleben. Wir werden diejenigen sein, die 1927 von den Straßen geschossen werden, die 1934 aus den Gemeindebauten gebombt werden, wir werden diejenigen sein, die bei Heimwehr und Schutzbund mitmarschieren, weil unser letzter Stolz in einer Uniform begraben liegt; wir werden diejenigen sein, die Kinder bekommen oder nicht bekommen, die an Abtreibungen auf Küchentischen sterben, die ein Wahlrecht bekommen haben, das nichts an unserer Situation ändern wird. Wir werden die sein, die unseren Glauben an die gemeinsame, öffentliche Sache schon längst aufgegeben haben werden, wenn endlich ein neuer Führer ins Land marschieren wird, der die öffentliche Sache zu einem abstoßenden Privatvergnügen für einige Wenige machen wird. Wir werden die sein, die sich denken, das ist doch egal, er hat uns ein Paradies versprochen, das nur uns zusteht, und das ist die Hauptsache. Wichtiger, als das wir das Paradies bekommen, ist, dass es die anderen nicht bekommen. Das ist, was zählt.

Ich stelle mir vor: die Jahre nach dem großen Krieg, eine triste Masse an toter Zeit. Wer ist wo und weshalb, in welchem Land befindet man sich und ist man hier auch zuhause? Das Burgenland wird zusammengestoppelt unter schießendem Widerstand ungarischer Freischärler; es wird nachverhandelt, hin- und hergezogen, und kaum, dass es als Landstrich endlich steht, fallen in Schattendorf die entscheidenden Schüsse. In ganz Europa werden dergestalt Frankenstein'sche Monster erzeugt, die irgendwann ein Eigenleben entwickeln und sich nicht mehr bändigen lassen; kopflos und ohne Sinnhaftigkeit wanken die Nationalstaaten noch heute durch die Landkarten wie anachronistische Zombies, und sind drauf und dran, jedes Projekt, das ihrem geordneten Abgang entgegenarbeitet, zu überrennen. Man könnte meinen, die Untoten hätten sich verschwo-

ren, wenn man nicht wüsste, dass sie nicht ohnehin bald von selbst auseinanderfallen werden; ihre Wiederbelebung ist ein beängstigendes, ein sinnloses und deshalb umso wütender betriebenes Unterfangen.

Ich stelle mir vor: ein kurzlebiges „Never Again!“, der Völkerbund, ein Bemühen um internationale Kooperation, um nationales Wüten zu verhindern. Bestes Wissen, bestes Gewissen waren immer noch nicht genug. Die Welt hat sich neu geordnet, einige fühlen sich überrannt und sinnieren auf Rache; ein wirtschaftliches Unbehagen wird zu einem rassistischen, denn wieviel einfacher ist es, in einer großangelegten Weltverschwörung seine Zuflucht zu finden als die globale Ungleichverteilung von Vermögen und damit von Ressourcen, von eigenen Möglichkeiten zu reflektieren? Man leert das Kind mit dem Bade aus, selbst, wo sich kein Kind im Bad befunden hat; man hofft, dadurch, dass man alles kurz und klein schlägt, erhebt sich irgendwie – auf miraculöse Weise – etwas Besseres. Alles ist korrupt, die da oben sind korrupt, und wir, die wir doch nur unschuldig zerschlagen wollten, bekommen in unsere ganze wollüstige Anarchie plötzlich einen strammen Führer hineingesetzt; wir marschieren in Reih und Glied und erkennen keinen Widerspruch.

Ich stelle mir vor: die Wirtschaftskrise, die USA, die es sich mit milder, aber angenehm erfreuter Überraschung in ihrer neuen Rolle als Weltmacht gemütlich machen. Man hat Krieg geführt, doch wurde nichts zerstört, nicht im eigenen Land; man schießt vor und schießt vor, nicht mehr aus Kanonen, sondern mit Geld, man finanziert und produziert, man spekuliert, und zwar mit Hingabe. Zunächst spekuliert man auf Florida, man verkauft halbzusammenbrechende Gartenhütten im Sumpf als erstklassige Strandanwesen. Eine kleine Blase, die platzt; ein Rülpsen, nicht mehr. Andere würden sagen, eine Warnung. Man ist eifrig bemüht, die Grenzen auszuloten, wie ein Kind, das keine Ruhe gibt, bis es nicht die flache Hand mit Entschiedenheit auf die Herdplatte gepresst hat, und erfindet Mitte der zwanziger Jahre das gesamte Inventar moderner Börsenspekulation, *leveraging, futures*; man geht in einem ekstatischen, fast schon philosophischen Experiment bis zum Äußersten. Dieses Äußerste tritt im Jahre 1929 ein. Zehn Jahre hat es gebraucht, und wir hatten Krieg. Die dreißiger Jahre in den USA: Hunger, massenhafte Migration armer Bauern an die Ränder, Ausbeutung, ein Umweltdesaster und schließlich Roosevelts Wirtschaftsprogramme, ein New Deal aus Verzweiflung; keine Faschisten. Die dreißiger Jahre in Europa: die Menschen sind müde von der Demokratie,

bevor sie überhaupt begonnen hat, wirtschaftliche Austeritätsprogramme, ein Minidiktator will den anderen überbieten und der, der am lautesten schreit, setzt sich schlussendlich durch; Faschisten überall. Zehn Jahre hat es gebraucht, und wir hatten Krieg. Ich stelle mir vor: 2008, die Lehman-Pleite, die Wirtschaftskrise, die Hexenjagd auf Griechenland, dem man nicht auf die Beine zu kommen erlaubt; Austeritätsprogramme, Waffenlieferungen, Flüchtlinge, Kriege, die keiner sieht und keiner versteht und dann diese Parteien im Parlament. Zehn Jahre hat es gebraucht...

Ich ende auf einer versöhnlichen Note. Ich stelle mir vor: dass es besser sein könnte. Dass es anders sein könnte. Hoffnungslos ist man nur dann, wenn man keinen Ausweg sieht. Hoffnung ist mitunter genau der Zustand, in dem der Ausweg sichtbar wird, man ihn aber noch nicht erreicht hat; in diesem Sinne bin ich hoffnungsvoll. Ich sage nicht, dass es so kommen muss, wie ich hoffe; und wie es tatsächlich kommt, weiß ich nicht. Ich spüre, dass es Menschen gibt, denen Demokratie etwas bedeutet; doch diese Menschen betrügen sich selbst mit ihren Argumenten, solange sie nicht Handlungen setzen, die die Demokratie auch für jene, die dagegen wüten, wertvoll macht. Diejenigen, die Trump gewählt haben; diejenigen, die für den rech-

ten Rand stimmen, hören seit Jahren von einer ach so wertvollen Demokratie, aber sie spüren nichts davon. Sie verlieren weiterhin ihre Jobs, und wenn sie sie noch nicht verloren haben, dann haben sie weiterhin das Gefühl, dass sie sie jede Sekunde, jede Minute verlieren könnten; dass in jedem Moment ihres Lebens alles für sie auf dem Spiel steht.

Ich verstehe das Bedürfnis, für extreme Parteien zu stimmen, wenn einen die Parteien der Mitte verlassen haben; das destruktive Moment, eine Apokalypse herbeiführen zu wollen, wo doch die Welt, wie sie ist, so wenig für einen selbst bereitzuhalten hat. Dieses Moment zu verstehen ist der erste Schritt, ihm durch Handlungen zu begegnen. Es gibt allerdings nach wie vor Menschen – und dies ist die versöhnliche Note –, die mit der Welt, wie sie ist, einiges zu verlieren haben: Gebildete, Künstler, Medienmenschen, die sogenannte informierte Öffentlichkeit, die vielbesungene Mitte. Wenn sie selbst ihr Leben weiterhin in solch verhältnismäßiger Ruhe und Unbelangtheit fortführen wollen, wie sie das bisher getan haben, so täten sie gut daran, Rahmenbedingungen zu schaffen, in denen auch diejenigen, die nun keinen Wert in ihr sehen, mit der Demokratie noch etwas zu verlieren haben.

A COLLAPSE, IN INSTALMENTS CONCERNING THE DOWNFALL, THE VARIOUS THREADS THEREOF, AND HOW I CUT THROUGH THEM ALL.

Theodora Bauer, translated by James Leader

Austria, 1918. Or to be more exact: Vienna, 1918. I picture to myself how it must have been. A November morning, a hideous hangover; the adverse reaction to the prescribed medicine which now extends even unto the tenth generation. I picture to myself, four years earlier, the war which people embarked upon, flags flying; young men with childish joy on their faces, a metal-shiny, machine-driven spring dawn watched over by the Emperor-King, a brilliant promising future for all of Europe. I think of the women, weeping perhaps, for their sons or for the war or for both; perhaps excited by the thought of the cocky young officers who would return home, so strong, so handsome, so highly decorated, each and every one of them a hero, ready to be chosen by their bride-to-be.

I picture to myself the first euphoria; the will-to-fight, how it catches and bursts into flame – the commemorative plates with officer uniforms in heroic poses topped off with the inevitable great-moustached heads; letters delivered by military mail meant to boost morale; embroidered sayings, blue on white, praising not God but Resolve, Endurance, Will. Meanwhile, in the trenches or in the gas, in the air which dissolves you from the inside; the days that dissolve you from the inside; how much Endurance can an individual muster and how much can a machine...

I picture to myself the women, at home, isolated war-correspondents, making no name for themselves; nurses, yes, hard-working nurses, many of them. I think of those who expected heroes but instead received back a small pile of human wretchedness, mutilated, riddled with bullets, but above all with the war stuck ineradicably in their brain, etched into every corner of their being.

They must have seen themselves in front of a giant pit, from which they could never extract their beloved; that must have been even worse than falling in it yourself. Above all when you could neither help nor leave him. When you couldn't save yourself from the hole in his head in which, day in and day out, squatted the blackest night, a hole pulling everything into it, turning the world around him rigid with dread.

I picture to myself Victor Adler, who had fought a brave war, essentially a war against the war, and who died one day before the completion of his life's work, on the threshold, as it were, of the Republic, the first casualty of its birth, collapsed from exhaustion. The irony, the tragedy; and it, the corpse of Victor Adler, as the Republic's inauspicious first omen, pregnant with doom.

I picture to myself what must have been going on in the minds of the people, which are always present in large numbers. They will have thought that it couldn't get any worse, not after the years of war, which already were bad enough, bad enough for everyone. The people will have wished themselves back in a better time; even if that time, which they were thinking of, seen in the cold light of the present, was actually just as terrible, above all for the ordinary people. The people will have wished themselves back, instead of wishing themselves forward, and that will have been the requiem for the Republic, the first notes of which sounded then in the hour of its birth. The people will have thought, 'so here they come again with their experiments, which we always end up paying the price for'. Where is the Emperor, because if there's an Emperor – any one will do, as long as he has a beard and looks impressive – then it means that the war never happened; his last couple of years, alright,

he went a bit off the rails, but we want him back. People take to the streets, keep their eyes on the Parliament. Whatever that's supposed to be, a public affair – a *res publica* – to them it isn't. The people will have thought, we bow down to this new state, and in the same motion we turn our backs on it, it will never be ours, whatever they say (as they always do), we will always be the many, just scraping along, so many wretched individuals. We will be those who in 1927 will be cleared off the streets by bullets, who in 1934 will be bombed out of their council flats, we will be those who march with the *Heimwehr* and the *Schutzbund** because the last vestiges of our pride lie buried in a uniform; we will be those who will have kids or won't have kids, who will die aborting on kitchen tables; we will be those who have won the right to vote in elections, but they won't change anything for us, in our situation. We will be those who have long since given up belief in the state, when at last a new Führer will march into the country and turn the state into a nauseating private pleasure park for the few. We will be those who think that it doesn't matter, he promised us a paradise, just for us, and that is the main thing. More important than us getting the paradise is the others not getting it. That is what counts.

I picture to myself the years after the Great War, a sad mass of dead time. Who is where and why, in which country are we, and do we still feel at home in it? Burgenland is assembled from pieces despite the Hungarian guerilla resistance; it's haggled over, pushed this way and that until (barely up on its own two feet as an autonomous region) the shells have their own way of making decisions and start falling on Schattendorf. And all over Europe, Frankenstein's monsters are begotten, start claiming their own life, will no longer be subdued by another master; headless, directionless, the nation states are staggering (still stagger today) across the maps like anachronistic zombies – they were supposed to have disappeared but here they are, running down every attempt to get rid of them. One might think that the undead had formed an alliance, if one didn't know that they will fall apart any minute; their resuscitation is a scary business, undertaken with such fury precisely because it doesn't make sense.

I picture to myself a short-lived 'Never Again!'; the League of Nations, a striving for international co-operation in order to prevent outbreaks of national madness. But the best intentions, the best convictions alone have never been enough. The world has changed, some people feel passed over and harbour thoughts of revenge; economically insecure, they turn racist, for how much sim-

pler is it to blame your problems on a global conspiracy than to look long and hard at the unequal distribution of wealth and resources, of possibilities, your very own possibilities? The baby is thrown out with the bathwater, even when there is no baby in the bath; and the hope is that if you smash everything to bits then somehow – in some miraculous way – something better will rise up in its place. Everything is rotten, the people at the top are all rotten and we, we who just wanted a little harmless fun smashing everything up, find ourselves interrupted in our anarchistic debaucheries by a stern Führer, who has us suddenly marching in formation – left right, left right – and none of us see the irony.

I picture to myself the economic crisis, the USA, mildly but pleasantly surprised, going along with its new role as a world power. War had been waged, but not in their country, and nothing had been destroyed; they no longer spray bullets but money, they finance and produce and speculate and do it with abandon. Speculating on Florida, they put derelict garden huts in swamps up for sale as top-end seafront real estate. A little bubble, which bursts; a belch, nothing more. Others might say a warning. It's fun to push the boundaries, like a kid who won't be content until they've deliberately put the flat of their hand on the hot-plate – and so they discover, in the middle of the Twenties, the whole repertoire of modern stock exchange speculation, leveraging, futures etc; people embark upon an ecstatic, almost philosophical experiment, and push it to the limits. The limits arrive, in 1929. It took ten years, and we had war. The Thirties in the USA: hunger, mass migration of poor farmers to the coasts, exploitation, an environmental disaster and, at last, Roosevelt's economic program, a New Deal born out of despair; no fascists. The Thirties in Europe: people fed up with democracy, even before it had really got going; economic austerity policies; one tin-pot dictator outbidding the others, and the one who shouts the loudest making it through; fascists everywhere. It took ten years, and we had war. I picture to myself the year 2008, the collapse of Lehman Brothers, the economic crisis, the witch hunt against Greece (which no one will allow to get up off the ground); austerity programs, weapons sales, refugees, and wars which no one sees and no one understands, and then these parties entering into Parliament. Ten years it took...

I will end on a conciliatory note. I picture to myself that it could be better. That it could be different. You are only without hope if you can see no way out. To have hope is to be in a situation, now and then, in which the way out becomes visible, even if we haven't got there

yet; in this sense, I am full of hope. I am not saying that things will necessarily turn out as I hope; and I have no idea how everything actually will turn out. I feel that there are people for whom democracy means something; but that these people are deceiving themselves with their arguments as long as they do not take action to make democracy valuable also for those who rage against it. Those who voted for Trump, and those who vote for the far right – they have been hearing for years about this precious democracy, but they do not feel it. They keep losing their jobs, and if they haven't lost them yet then they have the feeling that they might do so any second, any minute; they feel that for them, in every moment of their lives, everything is up in the air.

I understand the urge to vote for the extreme parties if the parties of the centre have abandoned you; the destructive moment, wanting to bring about the end of the world when the world as it is offers you so little. To

understand this moment is the first step to being able to face it with action. Certainly, yes there are still people – and this is the conciliatory note – who do have something to lose with the world as it is: educated people, artists, media types, those who belong to the so-called informed public, the much-lauded centre. If they wish to carry on with their lives in the relative peace and quiet they have enjoyed until now, then it might be a good idea for them to create a world in which those who currently see no value in democracy realize that they too have something to lose if democracy fails.

*Translator's note: *The Heimwehr was a right-wing paramilitary organization in Austria during the 1920s; the Schutzbund was its left-wing counterpart.*

02.

België
Belgique
Belgium

EEN MENTALE PUINHOOP

Stefan Hertmans

Er is iets in het verdwenen ethos van de ouderwetse soldaat dat voor ons, tijdgenoten van terroristische aanslagen en geweld games, nog amper denkbaar is. In de moraal van het geweld deed zich een stijlbreuk voor. De generatie Belgische soldaten die in de monsterlijke muil van de Duitse mitrailleurs werd gedreven tijdens het eerste oorlogsjaar, was nog opgegroeid met een hooggestemde negentiende-eeuwse moraal, met trots en eer en naïeve idealen. Hun krijgsmoraal bevatte als voornaamste deugden: moed, zelftucht, liefde voor de dagmars, respect voor natuur en medemens, eerlijkheid, eergevoel, bereidheid tot het vechten van man tegen man. Er werd uit meegenomen boekjes voorgelezen, ook literaire, vaak ging het zelfs om poëzie, hoe ronkend die ook was. Vroomheid, absolute afkeer van seksuele misbruiken, grote matigheid met, tot volledige onthouding van alcohol. Een militair moest een voorbeeld vormen voor de burgers die hij geacht werd te beschermen.

Al deze ouderwetse deugden sneuvelden in de hel van de loopgraven van de Eerste Wereldoorlog. Soldaten werden doelbewust dronken gevoerd voor ze de vuurlinie in werden gedreven (een van de grootste taboes bij patriottische geschiedschrijvers, maar de verhalen van mijn grootvader logen er niet om); er waren steeds meer, en naarmate het einde van de oorlog naderde bij wijze van spreken overal heimelijke ‘tingeltangels’ zoals mijn grootvader ze noemde, waar de soldaten werden aangemoedigd hun gefrustreerde seksuele verlangens op niet altijd even zachtzinnige wijze te stillen – een novum op zich, in deze georganiseerde vorm. De wreedheden en de massaslachtingen veranderden de moraal, de levensvisie, de mentaliteit en de zeden van deze generatie definitief. Van de naar vertrapte weidegrond geurende slagvelden, de als het ware nog in het uur van hun dood saluerende stervenden, de van heuvels en boompartijen vervulde achttiende-eeuwse landelijke

militaire schilderstaferelen, bleef een door mosterdgas verstikte mentale puinhoop achter, akkers vol uit elkaar gerukte ledematen, een ouderwetse mensensoort die letterlijk uit elkaar werd gereten.

De koningsgezinde Vlamingen keerden getraumatiseerd naar huis terug, en de intrede van Albert I in Brussel eind 1918 liet een militaire parade zien die er op het eerste gezicht triomfantelijk uitzag. Maar in hun hart voelden vele teruggekeerde soldaten vermoeidheid en ontgoocheling, naast de opluchting die de vrede het kapotgeschoten land had gebracht. Sommigen konden met moeite de schijn van vaderlandslievendheid ophouden die voor de gelegenheid werd gevraagd. In de lade van het oude tafeltje van mijn grootvader vond ik een kleine map terug met twaalf ansichten, foto's van de Brusselse fotograaf S. Polak. Op het eenvoudige kartonnen envelopje stond in sierlijke letters: *Cortège historique de la rentrée triomphale du roi Albert et des armées alliées à Bruxelles, le 22 novembre 1918* – maar het patriottisme had toen al een vreemde bijmaak gekregen. De identificatie met het hogere ideaal was aan flarden geschoten; de West-Vlaamse akker lag bezaaid met de restanten van al te naïeve gedachten en romances. Er was muziek ‘met het Amerikaansch departement’, een beeld van de ontvangst van de ‘Hoogwaardigheidsbekleeders’, een menigte in toga gestoken mannen die rond de koning op de trappen stonden; een foto van de parade van de Amerikaanse artillerie, de optocht van de Belgische jagers (*carabiniers*), het defilé met de vlag van de IJzer, een Schotse band, een Franse fanfare, de plechtige terugkeer van de heldhaftige burgemeester Adolphe Max in Brussel, de stoet met de koninklijke familie, en ten slotte een foto van een zich verdringende, opgewonden menigte. Maar ergens was een veer gesprongen, en dat wisten de zwijgend toekijkende soldaten die niet mee juichten: de intimiteit van de Europese sfeer was voorgoed geschonden. Wat naar binnen woei door

de infernale gaten die de oorlog in het humanisme had geschoten, was de hitte van een morele leegte, van een braakland dat zich amper nog met nieuwe idealen liet bezaaien, omdat het overduidelijk was geworden hoezeer men zich daardoor had laten misleiden. De nieuwe politiek die zou opflakkeren met een nog grotere vernietigingspotentie was die van wraak, ressentiment, rancune, afrekening; maar nooit zou nog de militair terugkeren die van zijn wandelpas een erezaak maakte, die had leren schermen als in een balletles, die idioot genoeg zowat boog voor een vijand alvorens hem neer te steken. In de drek van de loopgraven, in de wolken dodelijk mosterdgas en de sadistische wraakacties tegen de weerloze bevolking die de Duitsers overal op touw hadden gezet, ging een stuk ouderwetse humaniteit verloren, en toen een vreedzame Duitse schrijver tijdens de oorlogen op de Balkan aan het eind van diezelfde eeuw opmerkte dat de gewelddaden zo gruwelijk waren geworden omdat de krijgsmoraal geen eer meer kende,

omdat er geen humaan respect voor de vijand meer bestond, omdat het gevecht geen stijl- en vormbesef meer kende, liet hij daarmee maar een topje van het stijlbesef zien dat Europa had verloren. De pers maakte de schrijver af: men beweerde dat hij aan foute nostalgieën leed.

Die aandoenlijke ouderwetsheid had mijn grootvader nooit verlaten, ze was er te diep ingehamerd; maar zijn plots opduikende wantrouwen in later jaren, zijn achtervolgingswaan in de jaren vijftig, zijn buien van drift en woede tegen niemand in het bijzonder, zonder zichtbare aanleiding – misschien nog het meest tegen zijn eigen verloren argeloosheid gericht – het sprak stille, zwijgzame, bittere boekdelen voor ons die met hem leefden.

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DÉCOMBRES MENTALES

Stefan Hertmans, traduit par Isabelle Rosselin

Il y a dans l'éthos disparu du soldat à l'ancienne quelque chose qui, pour nous, contemporains d'attentats terroristes et de jeux vidéo violents, est encore à peine concevable. Dans l'éthique de la violence est intervenue une rupture de style. La génération de soldats belges qui fut conduite dans la gueule monstrueuse des mitrailleuses allemandes au cours de la première année de guerre avait encore grandi selon l'éthique exaltée du dix-neuvième siècle, avec un sentiment de fierté, un sens de l'honneur et des idéaux naïfs. Leur morale de guerre tenait pour vertus essentielles : le courage, la maîtrise de soi, l'amour des longues marches, le respect de la nature et de son prochain, l'honnêteté, le sens du devoir, la volonté de se battre, si nécessaire, d'homme à homme. Les soldats se lisaient entre eux des petits livres qu'ils avaient emportés, entre autres des œuvres littéraires, souvent même de la poésie, même si celle-ci pouvait être très ronflante. La pitié, une aversion radicale pour les abus sexuels, une grande mesure dans la consommation d'alcool, parfois même une abstinence totale. Un militaire devait constituer un exemple pour la population qu'il était tenu de protéger.

Toutes ces vertus d'une autre époque furent réduites en cendres dans l'enfer des tranchées de la Première Guerre mondiale. On enivrait sciemment les soldats avant de les amener jusqu'à la ligne de feu (un des plus grands tabous pour les historiens patriotiques, mais les récits de mon grand-père sont clairs à ce sujet) ; les bouis-bouis, comme les appelait mon grand-père, se multipliaient, et on en voyait pour ainsi dire partout à la fin de la guerre, de ces lieux où l'on encourageait les soldats à apaiser leurs frustrations sexuelles pas toujours en douceur – une nouveauté en soi, sous cette forme

organisée. Les cruautés et les massacres transformèrent définitivement l'éthique, la conception de la vie, les mentalités et les mœurs de cette génération. Des champs de bataille à l'odeur de prés piétinés, des mourants comme au garde-à-vous jusqu'à l'heure de leur mort, des scènes picturales militaires avec en toile de fond la campagne du dix-huitième siècle remplie de collines et de boqueteaux, il ne resta que des décombres mentaux asphyxiés par le gaz moutarde, des champs remplis de membres arrachés, une espèce humaine d'un autre âge qui fut littéralement déchiquetée.

Les Flamands royalistes retournèrent chez eux traumatisés et, lors de l'entrée d'Albert Ier à Bruxelles à la fin de 1918, le défilé militaire fut à première vue triomphal. Mais, dans leur cœur, les nombreux soldats de retour éprouvaient, en plus du soulagement de voir arriver la paix dans un pays dévasté par les bombes, un sentiment de lassitude et de désillusion. Certains eurent du mal à maintenir les apparences de patriotisme exigées pour l'occasion. Dans le tiroir de la petite table ancienne de mon grand-père, j'ai trouvé une pochette contenant douze cartes postales, des clichés du photographe bruxellois S. Polak. Sur une petite enveloppe simple en carton était inscrit en lettres élégantes : *Cortège historique de la rentrée triomphale du roi Albert et des armées alliées à Bruxelles, le 22 novembre 1918* – mais le patriotisme avait déjà à l'époque un arrière-goût étrange. L'identification à un noble idéal avait été mise en pièces; les champs de la Flandre occidentale étaient semés de restes de pensées et de romances par trop naïves. On voyait sur ces cartes la musique du « département américain », la réception des « hauts dignitaires », une foule d'hommes en robes de cérémonie debout sur les marches autour

du roi ; la parade de l'artillerie américaine, le cortège des carabiniers belges, le défilé avec le drapeau de l'Yser, un pipe band écossais, une fanfare française, le retour solennel du maire héroïque Adolphe Max à Bruxelles, le cortège avec la famille royale, et pour finir une foule animée se bousculant.

Mais quelque part un ressort avait sauté, et les soldats qui observaient le tout en silence et s'abstenaient de pousser des exclamations le savaient : l'intimité de la sphère européenne avait été à jamais brisée. À travers les brèches infernales que la guerre avait ouvertes dans l'humanisme, s'engouffrait le feu d'un vide moral, d'une terre en friche qu'il était à présent difficile d'ensemencer par de nouveaux idéaux, car il apparaissait très clairement désormais que les gens s'étaient laissé grossièrement abuser par des idées. La nouvelle politique qui allait émerger, avec un pouvoir de destruction encore plus grand, était celle de la revanche, du ressentiment, de la rancune, des règlements de comptes ; mais jamais ne reviendrait le militaire qui faisait des longues marches une affaire d'honneur, qui avait appris à faire de l'escrime comme dans un cours de danse classique, qui était suffisamment idiot pour s'incliner devant un ennemi avant de le transpercer. Dans la merde des tranchées, dans les nuages de gaz moutarde mortels et lors des représailles sadiques contre la population sans défense que les Allemands avaient organisées partout, une part d'humanité d'un autre temps

se perdit, et quand un écrivain allemand pacifique a fait remarquer, lors des guerres dans les Balkans qui se sont déroulées à la fin de ce même siècle, que les actes de violence étaient devenus particulièrement atroces parce que l'éthique de la guerre ne connaissait plus l'honneur, parce qu'il n'y avait plus de respect de l'ennemi par humanité, ni de notion de style ou de forme dans le combat, il ne laissait entrevoir que le sommet de cette notion de style que l'Europe avait perdue. La presse a éreinté l'écrivain : elle lui a reproché de se laisser aller à un sentiment de nostalgie déplacé.

Mon grand-père ne s'est jamais défait de cette désuétude touchante, trop profondément ancrée en lui ; mais la méfiance qu'il s'est mis soudain à manifester au cours des dernières années de sa vie, son délire de persécution pendant les années cinquante, ses emportements, ses accès de colère sans motif apparent, contre personne en particulier – mais peut-être, le plus souvent, contre cette candeur qu'il avait perdue –, tout cela en disait long, de manière silencieuse, discrète, amère, pour nous qui vivions avec lui.

Version française: édition Guerre et térébenthine, Gallimard coll., p. 321 « Il y a dans l'ethos disparu du soldat... » ► p. 324, « ... pour nous qui vivions avec lui. »

A MORAL CATASTROPHE

Stefan Hertmans, translated by David McKay

Something about the lost ethos of the old-time soldier is almost unthinkable to us today, in our world of terrorist attacks and virtual violence. The morality of violence has undergone a seismic shift. The generation of Belgian soldiers driven into the monstrous maw of the German machine guns in the first year of the war had been raised with exalted nineteenth-century values, with pride and honour and naive idealism. Their military ethics were based on the virtues of courage, self-discipline, honour, the love of the daily march, respect for nature and their fellow men, honesty and the willingness to fight man to man. They read aloud from books they had brought with them, sometimes even literature – often poetry, in fact, however bombastic it may have been. They adhered to Christian morals, had an utter horror of sexual deviance, and used alcohol in moderation, or abstained. Soldiers had to set an example for the civilians they were sworn to protect.

All those old-fashioned virtues bit the dust in the trenches of the First World War. Soldiers were deliberately plied with alcohol before being driven into the firing line (this is one of the greatest taboos among patriotic historians, but my grandfather's stories leave no room for doubt). Towards the end of the war, clandestine cafés – seedy outfits, which my grandfather called tingle-tangles – were popping up all over the place, and soldiers were encouraged to relieve their frustrated sexual urges there, not necessarily in the gentlest of ways. Cafés like these were a novelty, especially in this institutionalized form. The atrocities and massacres changed the morals, the worldview, the mentality and the manners of that generation for ever. The battlefields redolent of crushed grass, the soldiers who saluted even in their dying moments, the rural scenes of hills and glades in eighteenth-century military paintings gave way to a heap of psychological rubble choked with mustard gas, ravaged pastures filled with severed limbs,

the physical annihilation of an old-fashioned breed of human being.

The royalist Flemings returned home traumatized. Although the military parade that marked the entry of Albert I into Brussels seemed triumphant, many returning soldiers were bent with fatigue and disillusion, despite their relief that peace had finally come to their ravaged country. Some were scarcely able to keep up the appearance of patriotism required for the occasion. In the drawer of my grandfather's old dressing table, I found a small folder with twelve picture postcards by the Brussels photographer S. Polak. The decorative script on the plain cardboard envelope read, 'Historic procession for the triumphal entry of King Albert and the Allied Armies into Brussels, 22 November 1918' – but by that time, patriotism already left a strange taste in the mouth. How could a person identify with higher ideals after they had been blown to pieces? The fields of West Flanders were strewn with the remains of naive credulity and romantic notions. There was music presented in cooperation 'with the American delegation', a picture of a reception for 'Dignitaries', a crowd of men in togas gathered around the king on the steps, a photograph of the American artillery parade, a cavalcade of the Belgian carabinieri, a procession with the flag from the Yser, Scottish and French marching bands, the solemn return to Brussels of the heroic mayor, Adolphe Max, the procession of cars with the royal family, and finally, a photograph of an excited, jostling crowd.

But somewhere a gasket had blown. That much was clear to the soldiers who looked on mutely, without joining in the cheers: the cosy intimacy of Old Europe had been destroyed for ever. The war had shot humanism full of holes, and what came rushing in was the infernal heat of a barren moral wasteland that could hardly be sown with new ideals, since it was abundant-

ly clear how far astray the old ones had led us. The new politics that would now flare up was fuelled by wrath, resentment, rancour and vengefulness, and showed even greater potential for destruction. But the old soldiers would never return, the men for whom marching was a point of honour, who had learned to fence like ballet dancers, who made absurd half-bows before skewering their enemies. In the muck of the trenches, in the clouds of lethal mustard gas and the sadistic reprisals against defenceless civilians that were carried out by the Germans wherever they went, a spark of old-fashioned humanity died out. When a peace-loving German writer commented during the Balkan wars, towards the end of that same century, that the violence had become so horrific because the ethics of warfare no longer left room for honour, because there was no human respect for the enemy, because combat no longer aspired to style or grace, what he brought

to light was merely one small corner of the sense of style that Europe had lost. The press tore the author to shreds, accusing him of politically incorrect nostalgia.

My grandfather never abandoned his touching, old-fashioned view of life; it had been hammered too deeply into his psyche. But the suspicion that would seize hold of him in later years, his paranoia in the 1950s, his fits of temper and rage at no one in particular for no apparent reason – rage at his own lost innocence, perhaps – spoke silent, tight-lipped, bitter volumes to us, the people who lived with him.

English version, ed. Harvill Secker War and Turpentine, p. 232
“Something about the lost ethos of the old time soldier...”

► p. 235, “... the people who lived with him.”

03.

Suisse
Switzerland

MON POWERPOINT, MES ÉLÈVES ET MOI

Guillaume Rihs

Les trois premières diapositives ont pour objectif de faire réagir les élèves de la manière suivante :

Diapositive n°1. Ah ? Mais comment ça ?
Diapositive n°2. Ah ! Quand même !
Diapositive n°3. Ah... Mais... Oooh...

Je donne aujourd'hui mon cours sur les années 1920, qui tombe comme d'habitude début novembre, le 6 novembre aujourd'hui précisément, après que nous avons évoqué (brièvement) la vie dans les tranchées, puis (vite fait vite fait) l'intervention américaine, puis (au pas de course) la révolution russe, puis (dans les grandes lignes) Versailles. Je suis assez content de moi, car cette année j'ai pris le temps de peaufiner mon Powerpoint et avec lui la construction dramatique de mon cours. Avec davantage d'inspiration que d'habitude j'ai chevauché mon vélo ce matin sous la pluie glaciale.

Voici pour la structure :

Diapositive n°1. La phrase énigmatique.
Diapositive n°2. Les chiffres qui parlent d'eux-mêmes.
Diapositive n°3. L'image qui vaut mille mots.

J'ai privilégié des documents chocs pour susciter des réactions franches, sans quoi on patine dans ce désintérêt mou qui annonce *l'hiver*.

Voici pour le détail :

Diapositive n°1. Citation. « *Nous autres, civilisations, nous savons maintenant que nous sommes mortelles.* » (Paul Valéry, 1919)

– Eh oui, commenté-je. Alors, hein, hein ! Que dites-vous de cela ? Une « *civilisation mortelle* », alors ? Drôlement inattendu ! La civilisation qui est MORTELLE ! m'enflammé-je.

Les élèves prennent tranquillement note. Je m'apprête à poursuivre avec la Diapositive n°2 mais on ne me laisse pas courir ainsi.

– ‘tendez m'sieur ! On a pas fini d'noter.

Retour à la diapositive n°1.

Je contemple silencieusement les élèves silencieux qui copient en silence, pour l'instant sans trop la comprendre, mais nous y arrivons, nous y arrivons, la phrase de Valéry. Contre les vitres, la pluie ruissèle. Novembre, triste mois. Le 11, dans quelques jours. En dire deux mots à la fin du cours ; je me le note sur un coin de table.

Ainsi, à présent, et si c'est bon pour tout le monde, avançons.

Diapositive n°2. Pertes militaires par pays rapportées au nombre de mobilisés. Diagramme vert et rouge où chaque unité vaut 200 000 morts.

– Un million huit cent mille soldats russes, commenté-je. Deux millions d'Allemands ! Un million quatre cent mille Français. Vous vous, vous..., bégayé-je, nan mais vous, nan mais vous vous rendez compte ! En tout : dix millions ! Plus que la population suisse actuelle. PLUS QUE TOUTE LA SUISSE !

La tension monte dans les rangs.

- Putain, marmonne pour lui-même un élève.
 - Putain la Russie, mate, mate la Russie ! dit à un camarade une camarade.
 - C'est violent, répond cette dernière.
 - Y a des chiées d'Serbes, aussi ! commente un autre.
 - M'sieur m'sieur ! C'est quoi les chiffres pour la Suisse ?
 - Ouais c'est combien la Suisse ?
- Je suis emprunté.
- La Suisse ? hésité-je. Oh... Je ne sais pas exactement. Pas beaucoup, vu qu'on n'a pas été attaqués à cause de la neutr...
 - M'sieur faut noter tous les chiffres ?
 - Non, je vous distribuerai le document.

Continuons.

Diapositive n°3. Photographie d'un soldat, de dos, qui contemple le sol meurtri. Devant lui, des troncs d'arbres calcinés font comme des pals brûlés dans la boue, comme une nature de fin du monde.

Je ne dis rien. Les élèves ne disent rien.
Je les regarde. Ils observent l'image.
Ils m'observent.
L'apocalypse s'imisce dans la salle de classe.
Voilà, c'est réussi : l'image parle en effet d'elle-même.
Bien.

Cela étant posé, rapide retour sur :

Diapositive n°1. « *Nous autres, civilisations, nous savons maintenant que nous sommes mortelles.* » (Paul Valéry, 1919)

- Eh oui.

C'est une bonne séquence de cours, je trouve. Ça frappe ! Powerpoint impeccable. Et alors j'ajoute :

- Vous comprenez, n'est-ce pas ? Vous comprenez pourquoi on insiste tellement sur la Première Guerre mondiale, hein ? Nan mais vous voyez un peu la dimension de l'événement.

Oui ? me demandé-je. Vraiment ? La Première Guerre, la Première Guerre, la Première Guerre... Je n'en finis pas d'en parler, de la Première Guerre, avec mes élèves de troisième. Parce que la civilisation mortelle ? Parce que l'ampleur de l'événement ? Oui ? Oui ? Oui ? Pourquoi leur parler toujours, leur parler encore de la Première Guerre mondiale ? Mais pas le temps de tergiverser.

Aller de l'avant. Garder le rythme ! Diapositive n°4 !

Avant que ne vienne la diapositive n°4, j'annonce la couleur. Attention, la prochaine est assez choquante, nan mais je vous aurai prévenu.

La voici.

Diapositive n°4. Les « Gueules cassées ». Photographie officielle de la délégation à Versailles, 1919, qui montre six hommes aux nez en pomme de terre, mâchoires hypertrophiées, lèvres fendues et bouillies de mentons, visages sans visages revenus de l'horreur, figures supprimées par la guerre industrielle.

Réactions immédiates des élèves :

- Nan mais nan mais nan mais c'est QUOI ça ?!
- Ah mais m'sieur c'trop choquant !
- Je vous ai mis en garde..., dis-je.
- C'est juste trop trop TROP horrible, m'sieur.
- Ce qu'il faut bien comprendre, enseigné-je, c'est qu'après la guerre, la guerre, elle ne disparaît pas comme ça d'un coup comme par enchantement, la guerre ! Faut vous imaginer les rues, en 1919, 1920... Les éclopés, les manchots... les cul-de-jatte ! Et les gueules cassées. Nous, on ne connaît plus ça, les grands blessés. C'est tellement abstrait, pour nous, aujourd'hui, la guerre.
- M'sieur, vous pouvez changer la diapo ?
- Ouais m'sieur s'iou'plaît, c'vraiment trop insoutenable.

J'envoie la Diapositive n°5, qui me permet d'entamer le « Moment suisse » du cours, et avec lui un instant de répit dans les horreurs, les horreurs, les horreurs toujours recommencées.

Diapositive n°5. Photographie contemporaine d'un bâtiment cossu, saumon et vert-de-gris, à colonnades et chapiteaux, imposant, sévère, magnifique.

- M'sieur c'est au bord du lac, ça, m'sieur ! dit l'un.
- Mais ouais ! Trop ! Trop ! confirme un autre.

La Diapositive n°5 est un cliché du Palais Wilson à Genève, siège historique de la Société des Nations, née en 1919. En quelques mots, veuillez noter : Dix-sept Points Wilson. Paix durable. Prévenir les conflits. Non contraignant. Nations unies. J'y passe un bon quart d'heure.

Dans mon cours sur les années 1920, le « Moment suisse », c'est le moment patriote. Que de volonté com-

mune à Genève pour la paix mondiale ! Que d'espoirs ! Que de détermination ! (En avril, on abordera la Deuxième Guerre, et alors là, le « Moment suisse », n'est-ce pas ?, sera moins optimiste.)

Le cours se poursuit. Du contenu à présent ! Beaucoup de contenu ! Trop de contenu ? Les élèves me paraissent attentifs. Trois Diapositives pour trois pays pour trois éléments clés de l'immédiat après-guerre.

Diapositive n°6. Tableau comparatif des importations et exportations par pays 1913 / 1920. Nous regardons les États-Unis.

- Car les États-Unis, quant à eux, ont profité de la guerre pour doper leur production, ce qui leur permet de [...]

Diapositive n°7. Italie : Caricature de 1923 en trois tableaux, où une petite frappe en chemise noire fait avaler de l'huile de ricin à un communiste, qui fait dans son pantalon avant de revenir à la raison et, bras dessus bras dessous avec son ami le fasciste, finalement brandit les couleurs nationales.

- Car les vétérans, humiliés, de même que certains jeunes, jaloux de ne pas être allés au front, se regroupent en formations paramilitaires, qui [...]

Diapositive n°8. Allemagne : un billet de banque d'un milliard de Marks. *Hundert Milliarden*, est-il écrit en lettres capitales.

- Car les réparations demandées à Versailles causent une hyperinflation sans précédent, qui [...]

Je voudrais montrer le moment de bascule. Faire voir l'incertitude. Le voilà, le sens de ce cours. C'est pour ça qu'on en parle, de la Première Guerre. Tout est là en puissance, héritage de la guerre et de l'avant-guerre. Mais rien n'est là puisque tout a été détruit. Provisoirement ? Tout est à reconstruire. Comment ? Civilisations mortelles ! Mort, l'humanisme ? Morts, les Droits de l'Homme ? Mais renaissance possible ! De nouvelles voies dans un monde en crise. En crise ! À tous les niveaux, la crise ! « *Nous autres, civilisations, nous savons maintenant que nous sommes mortelles.* » Mortelles, vous comprenez ? Fragilité de ce que nous sommes. De tout ce que nous sommes, encore, encore et toujours et de ce

que nous bâtissons et de ce que nous croyons bâtir. Que de certitudes qui s'effondrent soudain ! Et une page qui se tourne ! Wilson ! L'union des Nations ! L'Amérique ! Mais le traumatisme et la crise ! La souffrance écrite dans les chairs ! Bientôt les fascismes ! La désillusion ! Hitler ! Et rien n'est stable ! Jamais ! Et tout qui change, toujours, tout, tout ! Et qui peut prédire de quoi demain sera fait ?

Je reprends mon souffle.

Les élèves se massent les poignets.

La pluie a cessé de tomber.

Peut-on tenter une synthèse ?

Le pendule qui bascule. Les espoirs et les désespoirs.

La page à écrire...

La cloche va sonner. Des questions ?

La cloche sonne.

Nous reprendrons tout ça la semaine prochaine.

Bonne semaine.

- Ben c'était pas rigolo, le cours, aujourd'hui, me dit une élève en rangeant ses affaires.
- Oui, vous avez raison.
- C't'époque, c'tait juste trop triste.
- Oui, c'est pas faux, enfin, la Société des Nations, quand même...
- Mais vous pensez qu'il pourrait y avoir de nouveau la guerre en Europe ?
- ... Ce que je voudrais montrer, c'est que la violence a tendance à générer encore de la violence, et la paix... heu... la paix...
- Moi je pense qu'il pourrait y avoir encore la guerre.
- Oui ?
- C'est sûr. On est pas à l'abri. Franchement on est pas du tout à l'abri.
- Sans doute. Et donc, justement, le cours d'histoire, peut-être, permet de...

La cloche retentit une nouvelle fois, annonçant le début de la prochaine leçon.

- Oups, j'dois partir, m'sieur ! Bonne journée !

J'accueille une nouvelle classe. Je vais me répéter. Tout redire une nouvelle fois. Le redire inlassablement. Avec comme soutien mon Powerpoint et mon désir de contribuer à quelque chose.

MY POWERPOINT, MY PUPILS AND ME

Guillaume Rihs, translated by James Leader

The first three slides are supposed to make the pupils react in the following way:

- Slide # 1. Whoah? Really?
- Slide # 2. Whoah! No way!
- Slide # 3. Whoah ... But ... Oh ...

Today I'm teaching my class on the 1920s and, as usual, it falls at the beginning of November, the 6th of November, to be precise, which is today, after we have (briefly) mentioned life in the trenches, then (moving on, moving on) the American involvement, and (trot-trot, keep up) the Russian revolution, then (very broadly) Versailles. I'm pretty pleased with myself, because this year I've taken the time to polish up my Powerpoint presentation, which should improve the dramatic structure of my lesson. This morning, I jumped on my bike in the icy rain with more zest than usual.

- Here goes, for the structure:
- Slide # 1. The mysterious sentence.
 - Slide # 2. The numbers which speak for themselves.
 - Slide # 3. The picture worth a thousand words.

I've selected hard-hitting stuff, to get a strong reaction out of them, so we don't just slide along in the usual winter daze.

So this is it, in detail:

Slide # 1. Quotation. *'We civilisations, we know now that we can die.'* (Paul Valéry, 1919)

"Exactly!" I comment. "So, what do you make of that? A 'civilisation which can die'? You didn't see that

coming, did you?" I'm pretty fired up now. "Civilisations which can DIE!"

The pupils are calmly taking notes. I get ready for Slide # 2 but they're not going to let me gallop on like that.

"Hang on, Sir! We aren't done with our notes."

Return to Slide # 1.

Silently I watch the silent pupils copying in silence, without understanding right now – but we'll get there, we'll get there – the sentence from Valéry. The rain is streaming down the windows. November, sad month. The 11th, in a few days. Mention it at the end of class: I jot down a note to remind myself.

So, if it's all right with everyone, let's move on.

Slide # 2. Military losses by country in proportion to the number of mobilized personnel. Green and red diagram in which each unit represents 200,000 dead.

"One million eight hundred thousand Russian soldiers", I comment. "Two million Germans! One million four hundred thousand French. Do you, d'you ... do you realise what that means? In total: ten million! More than the whole population of present-day Switzerland. MORE THAN THE WHOLE OF SWITZERLAND!"

There's some tension now in the rows.

"Fuck," one pupil mutters to himself.

"Fuck, look at Russia!" a girl says to a boy. "Look at Russia!"

“Nasty,” the kid answers.
“Shitloads of Serbs too!” another pupil says.
“Sir! Sir! What are the numbers like for Switzerland?”
“Yeah, how many Swiss?”
Awkward. I hesitate.
“Switzerland? Oh ... I don’t know exactly. Not many, given that we weren’t attacked, due to our neutr...”
“Sir, should we write down all the numbers?”
“No, I’ll give you a hard copy.”

Let’s go on.

Slide # 3. A photograph of a soldier, from behind, looking down at the wounded ground. In front of him, tree trunks, burnt, standing like stakes sticking up in the mud, like nature at the end of the world.

I say nothing. The pupils say nothing.
I watch them. They look at the picture.
They look at me.
The apocalypse has come into the classroom.
There, it’s worked: the picture speaks for itself.
Good.

Now that has been laid down, time for a quick return to:
Slide # 1. ‘*We civilisations, we know now that we can die.*’ (Paul Valéry, 1919)

“Yup.”

This is working well, a nice stretch of lesson, I think. It’s hitting them! Perfect Powerpoint presentation. And then I add:

“You get it, right? You get it now why we go on and on about the First World War? You see how big it is, right?”

Do they, I wonder? Really? The First War, the First War, the First War ... With my Year 10’s I never stop talking about it, about the First War. Because of civilisations being able to die? Because of how huge the thing is? Yes? Yes? Yes? Why talk to them all the time, why still talk to them about the First World War? But no time for doubts, no time to abandon my post. Keep on going. Keep up the pace! Slide # 4.

Before Slide # 4 appears, I give them a little heads-up. Careful, the next one is pretty disturbing, don’t say

I didn’t warn you.
Here it is.

Slide # 4. The ‘Disfigured’. Official photograph of the delegation to Versailles, 1919, showing six men with mashed noses, protruding jaw-bones, split lips and pulped chins, faces without faces returned from the horror, all features wiped out by industrial warfare.

Immediate reactions from the pupils:

“No, no way, no! What IS that?!”
“But, Sir, that’s gross!”
“I did warn you ...” I say.
“It’s just too too too TOO horrible, Sir.”
“What you have to understand”, I say, “is that after a war, the war doesn’t just disappear like that, like magic! You’ve got to imagine the streets in 1919, 1920 ... the cripples, the one-armed, the legless. And the disfigured. The seriously maimed, the war-wounded – we don’t know what that’s like any more. Warfare has become so abstract for us.”
“Sir, can you change the slide?”
“Yeah, Sir, please, it’s grossin’ us out, I can’t bear it.”

I put up Slide # 5, which allows me to get into the ‘Swiss Moment’ of the lesson, and that brings a little respite from the horrors, the horrors, the always repeated horrors.

Slide # 5. A photograph from nowadays of a swanky building – salmon and grey-green coloured – with columns and capitals. It’s imposing, austere, magnificent.

“Sir, Sir, that’s from by the lake!”
Someone else agrees. “Yeah, right! Cool!”

Slide # 5 is a snapshot of the Palais Wilson in Geneva, the historic seat of the League of Nations, born in 1919. Couple of quick notes: Wilson’s Fourteen Points. Lasting peace. Preventing conflicts. Non-binding. United Nations. I spend a good quarter of an hour on it.

In my class on the 1920s, the ‘Swiss Moment’, that’s the patriotic moment. Here, in Geneva, what great collective desire for world peace! What hopes! What determination! (In April, we’ll tackle World War Two, and then the ‘Swiss Moment’ won’t be quite so uplifting, will it?)

The lesson goes on. Here’s some content for you now! Lots of content! Too much content? The pupils seem focused. Three slides for three countries for three

key aspects of the immediate post-war period.

Slide # 6. A table comparing imports and exports, country by country, for 1913-1920. We look at the USA.

“Because the United States, for their part, took advantage of the war to boost their production, which allowed them to [...]”

Slide # 7. Italy. A cartoon from 1923 in three parts, where a little thug in a black shirt is forcing castor oil on a Communist, who shits himself, and then, arm in arm with his friend the fascist, finally sees sense and waves the national flag.

“Because ex-servicemen, who felt humiliated, just like some young men who wished they’d been to the front, join together in paramilitary groups, which [...]”

Slide # 8. Germany: a one-billion Deutschmark banknote. On it, in capital letters, are the words: *Hundert Milliarden*.

“Because the reparations demanded by Versailles cause unprecedented hyperinflation, which [...]”

I’d like to show the tipping point. Make them see the uncertainty. That’s it, the point of this lesson. That’s why we talk about the First War. Everything is there, in embryo, the product of the war and of the pre-war period. But nothing is there because everything has been destroyed. Provisionally? Everything has to be rebuilt. How? Civilisations that can die! Humanism, dead? Human rights, dead? But a possible rebirth! New directions in a world in crisis! In crisis! Crisis at all levels! *‘We civilisations, we know now that we can die.’* Can die, do you see? How fragile we are. How fragile it all is, still now, now and always, and everything we build and that we think we are building. How many certainties come suddenly crumbling down. Turn the page! Wilson! The union of Nations! America! But the

trauma, the crisis! The suffering written on the bodies. Soon to come, fascism! Disillusionment! Hitler! And nothing is stable! Ever! And everything changes, always, everything, everything! And who can tell what tomorrow will bring?

I take a breath.

The pupils rub their wrists.

The rain has stopped falling.

Can we try and make sense of it all, pull it all together?

The tipping point. The hope and the despair. The page to be written ...

The bell is going to ring. Any questions?

The bell rings.

We’ll pick this all up again next week.

Have a good week.

One of the girls, packing up her things, says to me, “Wow, not much of a laugh, today, eh, Sir?”

“Yeah, I guess.”

“That whole period, it was just too sad.”

“True. Still, there was the League of Nations ...”

“But do you think there could be another war in Europe?”

“... what I want to show is that violence tends to produce more violence, and that peace ... well, um ... peace ...”

“I think there could be another war.”

“Really?”

“Yeah, for sure. We’re not safe from it. To tell the truth, we’re not at all safe from it.”

“Right. And that’s exactly why History, why this class, perhaps, allows us to ...”

The bell rings again – the next lesson is starting.

“Oops, gotta go, Sir! Have a good day!”

I greet the new class coming in. I’m going to repeat myself. Say it all again. Say it again, tirelessly. With, for support, my Powerpoint and my desire to make a difference.

04.

Česká republika
Czech Republic

VELIKÁ VĚC

Anna Šochová

Den jako každý jiný. Šicí stroje, metry látek, střihání, špendlení dílů. Ljuska stehuje a Marja rozžehluje. Šatna je prázdná, dnes žádná dáma na zkoušku nepřijde, jen několik zákaznic posoudí nové modely. Co je to? Děvčata zvedají hlavy od strojů. Alois již také slyší rozruch v salónu. Ohlédl se, šicí stroje opět zrychlily. Mladý mistr zamířil k šatně. Za jejími dveřmi poznal kamarádův hlas.

„Pardón, milostivá, ale já mu to musím říct. Musím, víte?! Hej, Vídeňáku, pocem!“

Vašek Malina pokřikuje česky v ruském domě?!

„Copak to je?!“

Alois děvčata přísně napomenul, luskl a Ljuska hned přiskočila, podala sako, uhladila na ramenou. Tak to měl rád. Před zrcadlem pouze uhladil vlasy a vstoupil do světa vídeňské módy – který on sám pro Oděsu stvořil.

„Malino, co vyvádíš? Celá dílna je vzhůru nohama! Copak jsem ti neřikal, že mám důležitou zakázku?“

Statný mládenec se obloukem vyhnul rozčilené Sofii Michajlovně a stíkl kamaráda v objetí. „Je to tady, mis-tříčku! Lojziku zlatá, už povolili!“

Alois koutkem oka zahlédl, jak paní Sofie strnula. V křeslech za ní seděla madam Goldstacherová s dcerou. Velká honorace! Obě dámy sledovaly Malinu rozpačitě. Madam očividně váhala, má-li se tvářit pohoršeně nebo pobaveně. Kraján se nechoval pouze humpolácky, nýbrž přímo skandálně. Alois se rychle vymanil z jeho sevření.

„Jistě, jistě, kamaráde, promluvme si vzadu. Dámy tě jistě omluví,“ uklonil se směrem ke křeslům. Ukázal Malinovi na dveře do šatny. Ten se již také ukláněl s kloboukem, přitisklým na hrud. Dámy se usmály. Alois hbitě

pochválil slečniny tváře i oči, rozsvícené pobavením, paní matce se svěřil s novou zásobou hedvábného taftu.

„Nádherné barvy, velkomožná paní! Slečně bych si dovolil nabídnout modrou kolekci,“ luskl a již je tu Táňa se záplavou měkkého gabardénu. Alois je schopný obchodník, dámy zaujal a mohl přenechat Sofii Michajlovně.

Vaškova zpráva je převratná. Všechno rozbíjí, přitom slibuje a láká. Čím vlastně? Bál se a těšil zároveň. S Vaškem do salonu vtrhla špína a smrad zákopů, křik a umírání. Jen lehce s tím zavanuly naděje a sny, které sdíleli v zákopech a zajetí.

Aloise ani nenapadlo pokřikujícího Vaška vykázat, přestože Sofie Michajlovna během oné nepřístojnosti očividně trpěla. Ovšem, Alois proměnil zavedenou dílnu jejího muže na salon vysoké úrovně, okouzloval oděské paničky vídeňskými střihy, užíval si závětří. Jenže paměť neztratil, svých zásad se drží dál, kamarád Malina má dveře otevřené. Ještě stojí v dílně?! Nakrucuje si knír, plete ruštinu s češtinou. Děvčata se chichotají – a práce stojí!

„Slečny?!“

Alois tleskl, a hrrr, stroje se opět rozjely. „Tak pojd,“ strkal Vaška do své komory, posadil ke stolu, nalil vodku a ukrojil kousek chleba. V duchu děkoval Sofii Michajlovně. Než vstoupili, nechala sem poslat vodku i zákusky. „Povídej, všechno a popořádku.“

To bylo novinek! Od bitvy u Zborova se Češi jenjen třáslí, aby mohli jako dobrovolníci vstoupit do ruského vojska. Aby s Kerenským udolali dusnou rakouskou monarchii, pomohli české zemi svobodně dýchat. Pravda, krejčovský mistr Alois Josefovič měl trochu jiné postavení. Žil ve Vídni, ale přece jenom se narodil v Čechách, strávil tu dětství a později mezi Čechy ve Vídni chodíval.

Nebyl jediný, kdo se ze zajateckého tábora rychle dostal a v Oděse si polepšil. Například truhlář Vašek měl také práce dost. Válka z Oděsy a okolí odvála do zákopů mnoho mužů. Kde zastal práci šikovný Čech nebo Slovák, tam by je nejradši zlatem vyvažovali.

„Prozatímní vláda to schválila, můžeme nastoupit! Chápeš tu příležitost? Svou vlastní zemi si vybojujeme, člověče! Má to smysl, má, vždyť i českou národní radu tady na Rusi máme! O Masarykovi jsi jistě slyšel, ten všechno vede!“

„Počkej, počkej, kde nabírají a jak? Vždyť jsme přísahali císařpánu. Vašku, to je vážná věc! U Zborova, sám jsi mi kolikrát vyprávěl, byli přece krajané z Varšavy, Volyně a širé Rusi, jak se tu říká. Těm veleli jenom Rusové, těm oni přísahali. Nevadí, že nejdřív carovi, který odstoupil, Prozatímní vláda je převzala, přísahu neporušili, ale pro nás je to jiné.“

Dolil Vaškovi do stakanu, do sebe obrátil druhý. Dobrá vodka, silná, kousek voňavého chleba zakousnutá. Potom okurčička, dobře naložená, kousek slaniny. Vodka a chléb byly tím prvním, čím ho tato velická země kdysi přivítala. Ať procházeli jakoukoliv bídou, vodka a chléb je provázely, vždy věstily lepší chvíle. Snad tomu bude i teď. Rozjařený Vašek se smál a plácal Aloise po rameni.

„Člověče drahá, copak to můžem' poměřit? Rakouský kolos má hliněné nohy, už se kácí, nohy se mu drolí, jen postrčit a buch! Revoluce, kamaráde, jen číhá na správný okamžik. My jí pomůžeme, co říkáš? Vlastní zemi budeme mít! Lojziku, snad by ses těch hliněných střepů nelekal?!“

„Nelekám se,“ zavrtěl Alois hlavou. „Vždy jsem dostal povinností a nic nešidil. Je tady živnost, zakázky, ještě musím...“

„Nic nemusíš, Lojziku, nic. Válka už skončí, starej mistr se vrátí, co potom? Chceš zůstat v téhle zemi nebo dělat něco doma, pro naši vlast?“

Malina měl všecičko jasné. Vodka i Aloisovi odlehčila od vážných myšlenek, přesto pozorně naslouchal novému líčení slavné bitvy u Zborova. Rozčílil se, když Vašek líčil, jak Maďaři na nějakém vršíku, Mogila se to jmenovalo, kosili našince jako obilí. Nebo to Mogilou nazvali, až byla ta zem rudá českou krví?! Češi bojovali na obou stranách? Nepřeběhli od Rakušáků, proti vlastním že šli bez lítosti a svědomí?! Jako by znovu zaslechl křik, střelbu, viděl tu hrůzu po ztečích, na kterou mezi róbami pozapomněl.

Dlouho seděli a povídali. Setmělo se, než Vaška vyprovodil, ale domů nespěchal. Domů? Oděsa je veliké město, bohaté jako Vídeň. Bulváry, přepychové paláce

i malé uličky, směsice mnoha národů. I Čechy tu Alois mohl potkávat, dávno usazené – snad nejslavnější z nich tady diriguje v Opeře! Mají tu moře, které si Alois okamžitě zamiloval. To třeba česká Praha nemá. Přesto se mu zaryla do paměti. Jedinkrát ji navštívil a nikdy nezapomněl.

Čechy, kdysi slavné království, národ, který zvedá hlavu. Veliká příležitost, veliká věc, která před Aloisem stojí. Na straně jedné hrdost, k níž se rád již ve Vídni připojoval, touha být co platným utlačené vlasti. Na straně druhé čest, dané slovo, přísaha. Vojenská čest čpí krví, zmrzačením a slepotou, jak to vídá u žebráků, co válka vyplivla do zázemí. Čím je však muž beze cti? Alois dané slovo nezruší, když se mu znelíbí. Proti snům o svobodě stojí závazky, které přijal právě zde. Někde tu hrají? Zasluchl valčík...

Tanec a smích se postavily proti strachu z kulek a bodáků. Zamrazilo ho, i když byl teplý večer. Bláhové předstírání! Před válkou se neschováš, zuří dál a všude. Zatím jen zázrakem krásnou Oděsu ušetřila. Kdykoliv vpadne, všechno nelitostně vyplení, zničí. Oděsa je přístav, vojáků, strategické místo!

Vrátil se do dílny, prohlížel denní práce šiček. Správně sesazené vzory, rovné stehy, začištěno, nenašel chybičku. Zákaznice budou spokojené.

„Tady jsi, holoubku,“ vzdychla za ním paní domu. Alois ukázal na pannu s našpendleným živůtkem:

„Tohle musí Ljuska sestehovat hned zítra na zkoušku. Nemělo by to nikde táhnout, ale kdoví, paní přednostová se týden od týdne mění.“

„Tloustne před očima, jako kdyby se čekala,“ upřesnila Sofie Michajlovna. Když Alois mlčel, zeptala se tiše: „Zlé zprávy?“

„Kdo ví,“ pokrčil rameny Alois. Co by jí měl povědět?

„Všechny dámy chtějí být elegantní, vídeňskou módu,“ začala Sofie Michajlovna zešíroka. „Bůh se nad námi všemi smiloval, že tě zavedl sem. Matce Boží zapalují svíčku o každé neděli.“

Co tou řečí sleduje?! Pootočil se, pozoroval, jak tu stojí, v prstech tiskne kapesníček. Mluvila tiše, důrazně, jako kdyby mu každé slovo chtěla vtláčit do uší a dál do hlavy.

„Třebaže do chrámu nechodíš, i tebe Bůh přijal, zahrnul mnoha dary, Aloisi Josefoviči. Jsi mladý, hezký, vybraného chování, s každým se domluvíš. Vynikající mistr řemesla, právě zde na tom pravém místě. Čeká tě bohatství, uznání, dobrý život.“

Jak je Oděsa velká, zprávy se šíří rychle, ona o tom povolení ví, došlo mu. Pozoroval svou domácí. Sofie Michajlovna se drobně třásla. Od buclatých rukou po ramena. Bledá byla celá, už i rty se jí třáslly.

„Říkají, že všichni vaši půjdou. Že všichni chtějí do války. Loučí se, chystají. Proč?!“

„Zrodí se naše vlast,“ odpověděl stejně tiše.

Mlčela, náhle se zprudka nadechla a dupla. „Vlast, jakápak?! Co ty máš s nimi společného? Ty jsi z Vídně, ze samého srdce Rakouska! Tam je tvoje otčina!“

Zavrtěl hlavou. Vídeň? Velký svět, ale ne jeho domov. Vyrůstal v městečku na jihu Čech, než ho vzal vídeňský otčím do učení.

„Jsem Čech, stejně jako Vašek a další. Moje matka...“

Sofii Michajlovnu neumlčel. Znovu dupla, založila ruce v bok. „Matka možná, ale otec?! Před svatbou tě porodila, k rodině odložila. Tady tě nikdo nesoudí, máš jméno, jsi pán!“

Alois se zamračil. I tady ho nemanželský původ pronásleduje? Dokud otčím neuznal jeho pracovitost a nadání, byl jenom trpěný a do Čech odložený. Ani se sestrami se nesblížil.

„Sofie Michajlovno,“ řekl odměřeně, „nejsem pančart, nýbrž levoboček. Rodina se postarala o mé vycho-

vání. Já sám o češtví rozhodl.“ Jeho matka sice dostala veliké odbytné dávno předtím, než se narodil, ale jednou ho do toho paláce, kde bývala panskou, zavedla. Kdo by si minulost neupravil, aby sám sebe lepšího neviděl? Bouchl se do hrudi. „Srdce rozhoduje a v něm jsem Čech!“

Rozplakala se, padla na kolena. Mezi vzlyky žadonila: „Jen vzpomeň, jak jsi křičival ze spaní, v jaké špíně ses v zákopech válel! Jako nitka jsi byl hubený, zavšivený! Pomysli, holoubku, co všechno zahazuješ! Vlastní dceru ti dám, dům, celý náš majetek. Kdyby se muž vrátil, bude zbídačený a přijme, co ti dám. Jenom zůstaň, zůstaň, prosím!“

Zavrtěl hlavou. Irině je pouhých třináct, jak mu ji může slibovat? Tolik je zoufalá? Díval se na ni jako na lesklého ptáčka, kterého by měl soucitně sebrat ze země a vrátit na bidýlko. Pomohl jí vstát. Už bylo rozhodnuto.

V Oděse má jméno jako mistr, znalec, ba i kavalír, ale co dál? Postavil se tu na vlastní nohy, vydobyl si uznání. Jenže tím spíše cítí, že dokáže mnohem víc. Je mu pouhých šestadvacet, nemůže, nesmí ustrnout! Obstojí v novém, velikém boji. Rodí se nový svět, volá ho, potřebuje. Možná i jeho krev – a má ji mít.

Tak se můj dědeček Alois Čeněk vydal znovu do války. Bránil s kamarády Transsibiřskou magistrálu a byl mezi těmi, kdo se ve Vladivostoku nalodili a vrátili přes Kanadu. Domů, do Prahy.

THE GREAT THING

Anna Šochová, translated by Julie Nováková

A day like any other. Sewing machines, swatches of fabric, cutting and pinning pieces. Ljuska stitches and Marja presses. The fitting room is empty. No lady is here today for a fitting, just a few customers coming to look at the new models. But – what is it? The girls look up from their tables. Alois also hears the commotion from the salon. He looks back, the hum of sewing machines increases again. The young foreman heads to the fitting room. Still behind the door, he recognizes a friend's voice.

“Excuse me, madam, but I've got to tell him. Got to, you know? *Hey, Vienna man, come 'ere!*”

Vašek Malina is shouting in Czech - in a Russian household?!

“What is it?!”

Alois scolds the girls, clicks his fingers and Ljuska hurries to him. She hands him a jacket and smoothes it over his shoulders, just as he likes it. He touches up his hair in front of the mirror and then enters the world of Viennese fashion – one he'd created for Odessa.

“Malina, what are you doing? The whole workshop is upside down! Haven't I told you I have an important commission?”

The heavily built young man avoids the sizzling gaze of Sofia Mikhailovna and embraces his friend. “It's here, friend. My dear Lojzík, they've given in!”

Out of the corner of his eye, Alois sees Madam Sofia freeze. In the chairs behind her sits Madam Goldstacher with her daughter. Such notable public figures! Both ladies watch Malina with embarrassment. Madam is apparently uncertain whether to be offended or amused.

The tailor's compatriot isn't behaving just rudely, he is behaving scandalously. Alois quickly releases himself from his bear hug.

“Of course, my friend, let us talk in the back. The ladies will surely excuse you.” He gives a bow, and then shows Malina the door to the workshop. He is also bowing, his hat pressed to his chest. The ladies smile. Alois praises the young lady's cheeks and her sparkling eyes. He confides in her mother that new batches of silk taffeta have just arrived.

“Wonderful colors, my lady! For the young miss, I would recommend the blue collection.” He clicks and Tanya is already there with an abundance of soft fabrics. Alois is a capable merchant. He's gained the ladies attention, and now he could leave them to Sofia Mikhailovna.

Vašek's news is an earthquake. It shatters everything. And yet it is full of lure and promise. Why exactly? He is afraid and excited at the same time. With Vašek, the filth and stink of the trenches, the cries and the dying burst into the salon. But there is also just the faintest whiff of hope; with the dreams they shared in the trenches and the captivity.

Alois won't even think of sending the shouting Vašek away, even though Sofia Mikhailovna is obviously suffering through the whole impropriety. However, it had been Alois who had transformed the established workshop of her husband into a high-end salon, and enthralled Odessa's ladies with Viennese fashion, enjoying the peace. But Alois himself didn't forget. He still clung to his principles, and his friend Malina could always count on the door being open for him. Is he still standing in the workshop? He's curling up his mustache, mixes Russian with Czech as he speaks. The girls giggle – and work has come to a standstill!

“Ladies?!” Alois claps and the purr of the sewing machines can be heard again.

“Come, come”, he pushes Vašek into his tiny office, sits and pours them vodka and cuts a slice of bread. Inwardly, he thanks Sofia Mikhailovna. She must have sent food and drink before they entered. “Speak, please. All of it, from the start.”

And so much news there was! Since the battle of Zborov, Czechs had become increasingly eager to join the Russian army as volunteers; to join Kerensky to vanquish the suffocating Austrian monarchy, and to help their Czech homeland to breathe more freely. True, master tailor Alois Josefovíc had been in a slightly different position. He’d lived in Vienna. But he had been born in Bohemia, had spent his childhood there, and later spent time with fellow Czechs in Vienna. He wasn’t the only one who’d escaped the prisoner camp and made a good living in Odessa. Vašek, a carpenter, also had more than enough work to do. The war had taken many men from Odessa and the vicinity to the trenches. Where a skilled Czech or Slovak could do the job, people would pay their weight in gold.

“The provisional government has agreed, we are permitted to enlist! Do you see the opportunity? We’ll fight for our own country, man! It makes sense, after all we have a branch of the Czechoslovak National Council here in Russia too! You must have heard about Masaryk – he’s in charge of everything!”

“Wait, wait, where can we enlist and how? We have sworn to the Emperor. Vašek, this is a serious matter! At Zborov, you’ve told me many times yourself, it was countrymen from Warsaw, Volyně and Russia. They were commanded by Russians and sworn to them. It doesn’t matter it was first to the Tzar, who then abdicated. The provisional government took them in and they have broken no oath, but it’s different for us.”

He pours Vašek another glass and drinks one himself. It is good vodka, strong, perfect with a bite of fresh-smelling bread. Then a well-pickled cucumber and a bit of bacon. Vodka and bread were his first greetings in this vast country a long time ago. Whatever suffering they were going through, vodka and bread accompanied them and promised better times. Hopefully, it would be the same now. Vašek laughs cheerfully and slaps Alois on the shoulder.

“My dear man, how could we compare that? The Austrian colossus has feet of clay, it’s already tumbling down, crumbling down, just nudge it and boom! The revolution, friend, is just waiting for the right moment. We’ll help it, what do you say? We’ll have our own country! Lojzík, you’re not afraid of the clay shards, are you?!”

“I’m not”, Alois shook his head. “But I’ve never shirked my duties. There’s work, commissions, I must...”

“You must nothing, Lojzík, nothing! The war’s gonna end, the old master will come home, and what then? You want to stay in this country or do something at home, for our land?”

For Malina, everything is crystal clear. The vodka helps Alois, too, lose his doubts. He listens intently to another account of the famous Zborov battle. He gets angry when Vašek recalls how the Hungarians had mowed Czechs down on the hill called Mogila. Or had they only called it Mogila after the earth had grown scarlet with Czech blood? Czechs fought on both sides? Haven’t they defected from the Austrians, gone against their own without mercy and conscience?! It was as if he’d once again heard the shouts, shooting, and seen the horror after the charges he’d almost managed to forget here, among his gowns and robes.

They sit and talk for a long time. It is dark before he walks Vašek to his apartment, but he isn’t in a hurry to get home. Home? Odessa was a big city, rich just like Vienna. Boulevards, luxurious palaces and narrow streets, and a mix of many nations. Alois could even meet Czechs who’d settled here long ago. One, most famously, was a conductor at the opera house! There was a sea, and Alois had immediately fallen in love with that. There was no sea near Prague. But that city had still left deep impressions in his memory. He’d visited it once, and never forgotten.

Bohemia, once a proud kingdom, the nation raising its head. The great opportunity, the great thing looming before Alois. On one hand, his national pride he’d liked to flaunt in Vienna, his desire to be valuable for his oppressed homeland. On the other hand, his honor, word, oath. Military honor stinks of blood, disfigurement and blindness, as he used to see in beggars whom the war had spat out. But what is a man without honor? Alois wouldn’t break his word when suddenly convenient. There were commitments here standing against the dreams of freedom.

Music is playing somewhere. He overhears the tones of a waltz... Dance and laughter opposing the fear of bullets and blades. He feels a chill go through his veins, even though the evening is warm. Such foolish pretense! You can’t hide from a war, it rages on everywhere. The beautiful Odessa has been spared so far by some miracle. Wherever war intrudes, it destroys all without mercy. Odessa is at the same time a haven, a warrior and a strategic centre!

He returns to the workshop, inspecting the daily work of the seamstresses. Well-matched patterns, straight stitches, all seams smoothly finished, not a single fault. The customers will be satisfied.

“Here you are, my little dove”, the mistress of the house sighs behind him.

Alois points to a mannequin with a pinned bodice: “Ljuska needs to stitch this tomorrow right away for the fitting. It shouldn’t be too tight anywhere, but who knows, Madam Stationmaster changes from week to week.”

“She’s growing before one’s eyes like she’s expecting”, Sofia Mikhailovna remarks. When Alois falls silent, she asks in a quiet voice: “Bad news?”

“Who knows”, Alois shrugs. What is he to tell her?

“All ladies want to be elegant, to have Viennese fashion”, Sofia Mikhailovna starts. “God was kind to us all that He brought you here. I light a candle for Our Lady every Sunday.”

What is she trying to achieve by this speech?! He half-turns, watching her stand there and press a handkerchief in her hands. She speaks quietly, with emphasis, as if she wants to carve each word into his mind.

“Although you don’t visit the temple, you too were embraced by God and gifted manifold, Alois Josefovic. You are young, handsome, of good manners, capable of reaching an understanding with anyone. A great master of your profession, right where you belong. Riches, respect and a good life await you.”

However big Odessa was, news could spread quickly. She knew about the permission, he realizes. He observes his landlady. Sofia Mikhailovna is shivering, from her plump hands to her shoulders. She grows pale, and her lower lip quivers.

“They’re saying that all of you are going to leave. That you all want to go to war. Bid goodbyes, settle matters. Why?!”

“Our fatherland is about to be born”, he answers just as quietly.

She is silent, but then she draws a sharp breath and stamps her foot. “What fatherland?! What do you have to do with them? You’re from Vienna, the heart of Austria! There is your fatherland!”

He shakes his head. Vienna? A big world, but not home. He’d grown up in a small town in southern Bohemia, until his Viennese stepfather took him in as an apprentice.

“I’m Czech, just like Vašek and the others. My mother...”

But that doesn’t silence Sofia Mikhailovna. She stamps again and puts her hands on her hips. “Mother, perhaps, but father?! She gave birth to you out of wedlock and then left you with her family. Here, no one is judging you, you have a name, you’re a gentleman!”

Alois frowns. So his illegitimacy catches up with him even now? Until his stepfather had grudgingly recognized his hard work and talent, he had been barely tolerated and had been kept apart in Bohemia. He hadn’t even been able to befriend his sisters.

“Sofia Mikhailovna”, he says coldly, “I’m not a bastard, I’m an illegitimate child. My family took care of my upbringing. I am decided about my Czech nationality.” His mother had received a large pay off long before he was born. But once she had taken him to the palace where she’d used to be a housekeeper. Who wouldn’t edit his own past to see himself in a better light? He taps on his chest. “The heart decides, and it tells me that I’m Czech!”

She starts crying and falls to her knees. Amongst her sobs, she pleads: “Just remember how you used to cry out in your sleep, what filth you’ve seen in the trenches! You were all skin and bones, and full of lice! Just think, little dove, what you’re losing! I will give you my own daughter, our house, all we have! If my husband comes back, he will accept it. Just stay, please!”

He shakes his head. Irina is only thirteen; how could she promise her to him? Is she that desperate? He watches her like a tiny bird he should pick up tenderly and return to its perch. He helps her up. It is decided.

In Odessa, he had a name as a master tailor, a man of wisdom, even a gentleman, but what then? He had managed to stand on his own two feet, gain respect. But all the same he felt he could do so much more. He was only twenty-six. He couldn’t, mustn’t stop! He’ll hold his own in a new great fight. A new world is being born, and it calls to him, needs him. Perhaps his blood as well – and he would gladly give it.

This is how my grandfather Alois Čeněk went to war again. With his friends, he defended the Trans-Siberian Railway and he was among those who boarded a ship in Vladivostok and returned home through Canada. Home, to Prague.

05.

Deutschland
Germany

IM WINDSCHATTEN DES GROSSEN KRIEGES

Hauke Kracht

*April 1918
Flugfeld der Alliierten
Malzéville bei Nancy*

Der französische Pilot René Boyau betrat mit seinem Bombenschützen *Léon Pinsard* das große Besprechungszelt, das am Rande des Flugfeldes aufgebaut war. Als alle Mitglieder der Staffel vollzählig waren, ergriff ihr Kommandant das Wort:

»Soldaten! Bei eurem heutigen Nachtangriff geht es Richtung Norden nach Luxemburg. Wie ihr alle wisst, wurde unser neutrales Nachbarland von den Deutschen besetzt, damit sie unser Vaterland von dort leichter angreifen und den Festungsgürtel zwischen Verdun und Belfort umgehen konnten. Zum Glück ist ihr hinterhältiger Plan nicht aufgegangen und wir konnten den Vormarsch der Boches im Sommer 1914 stoppen. Doch nun greifen sie erneut an und bedrohen Paris.

Die Hüttenwerke in Luxemburg produzieren Tag und Nacht den Stahl für die deutschen Geschütze und Granaten, die unseren Soldaten an der Front den Tod bringen.

Euer Kampfauftrag lautet deshalb: Werft eure Bomben auf die Stahlhütten ab. Die Glut der Hochöfen könnt ihr in der Nacht leicht ausfindig machen. *Vive la France!*«

Kurz darauf flogen René und Léon in ihrem Doppeldecker vom Typ *Breguet 14 B2* auf fünftausend Metern Höhe. Es war eine sternenhelle, wolkenlose Nacht. Die neun Maschinen nahmen eine V-Formation ein. Sie hielten ausreichend Sicherheitsabstand, damit sie in der Dunkelheit nicht zusammenstießen.

Wenig später sahen sie tief unter sich am Boden kleine Lichter in mehreren gezackten Linien. Das waren ihre französischen Kameraden und die deutschen Feinde in ihren Schützengräben, die sich am Feuer wärmten und ihr Essen zubereiteten. Ab sofort mussten sie mit feindlichen Jagdfliegern und mit Flak-Feuer rechnen.

Sie flogen ziemlich genau nach Norden und passierten die Stadt Metz im Westen. Nach einer halben Stunde leuchteten am Horizont die Hochöfen im Süden von Luxemburg.

René gab seinem Bombenschützen ein Zeichen und Léon beugte sich weit aus seiner offenen Kanzel heraus, um die Entfernung zum Ziel abzuschätzen. Als er den Zeitpunkt für richtig hielt, nahm er nacheinander zwanzig Bomben aus ihren Halterungen und wuchtete die jeweils 8 Kilogramm über die Bordwand. Dann beschrieb der ganze Verband eine große Linkskurve und die Prozedur wiederholte sich noch einmal. Mittlerweile waren die deutschen Verteidiger aufgewacht. Mehrere Lichtkegel der Zielscheinwerfer kreisten durch den Himmel. Ihr Flugzeug wurde von ihnen erfasst und die Flak feuerte ununterbrochen. Splitter piffen ihnen um die Ohren aber zum Glück blieben sie unverletzt.

Als die ganze Staffel wieder Richtung Nancy abdrehte, atmete René erleichtert auf. Erst jetzt fiel die Anspannung von ihm ab und er bemerkte, wie steifgefroren er vom kalten Wind war. Morgen würden sie ein anderes Ziel angreifen, bis sie den Heldentod fanden oder diese verdammten Deutschen endlich besiegt waren.

René konnte sich nicht erklären, wie es zu diesem Krieg kommen konnte. Er hatte selbst zwei Semester in Freiburg studiert und mit den meisten Deutschen war er ziemlich gut ausgekommen. Mit einigen fühlte er sich sogar seelenverwandt, und in eine Kommilitonin hatte er sich verliebt.

Wie konnten sich diese freundlichen Menschen in die gefühllosen Kampfmaschinen verwandeln, die seine Landsleute in den Schützengräben dort unten abschlachteten? Würden Franzosen und Deutsche jemals wieder als friedliche Nachbarn nebeneinanderleben können, ohne dass Deutschland ganz Europa beherrschte?

Es war so traurig. All diese jungen Männer in Europa, die eigentlich einen Beruf ergreifen und eine Familie gründen sollten, brachten sich gerade gegenseitig um. Die ganze Welt war verrückt geworden.

*Kurz darauf am Boden
Büro der ARBED-Stahlhütte
in Düdelingen*

Mit hochrotem Kopf und schnaubend vor Wut stürmte Gaston Barbanson in sein Büro. Sein Assistent schaute furchtsam von seinem Schreibtisch auf. So hatte er seinen Chef noch nie erlebt.

»Jetzt reicht es mir aber! Diese Idioten haben mit ihren Bomben drei unserer Arbeiter getötet und mehrere verletzt. Warum greifen die Alliierten immer *unsere* Hochöfen an? Wissen die nicht, dass unser Stahlwerk als Einziges nicht im Besitz der Preußen ist? Dass wir uns standhaft weigern, Kriegsmaterial nach Deutschland zu liefern?

Warum greifen die nicht lieber die deutschen Werke an? Die *Rothe Erde* und die *Adolf-Emil-Hütte* in Esch oder die Werke in Differdingen, Rümelingen und Steinfort!«

»Bitte mäßigen Sie sich, Herr Direktor. Sie haben ja recht, aber die Wände haben Ohren!«, sagte sein Assistent mit Furcht in der Stimme.

Doch Gaston Barbanson wollte sich nicht mäßigen. Er war stolz darauf, ein Belgier zu sein. Sein Land war von den Deutschen trotz international garantierter Neutralität brutal überfallen worden. Viele Belgier waren für ihren heldenhaften Widerstand von den Barbaren ermordet worden. Er würde sich an die belgische Exilregierung in der Normandie wenden. Sollten die Politiker dort endlich mal etwas zu tun bekommen.

*Anfang Juni 1918
Rue Aldringen, Luxemburg Stadt
ehemalige Primärschule*

Oberst *Richard von Tessmar* stand auf dem Balkon seines Arbeitszimmers im Deutschen Hauptquartier und ließ seinen Blick über die malerische Innenstadt von Luxemburg schweifen.

In den gut drei Jahren seines Aufenthaltes waren ihm die Luxemburger ans Herz gewachsen.

Leider war es unvermeidlich gewesen, ihr Land militärisch zu besetzen, das durch seine Mitgliedschaft im *Deutschen Zollverein* bereits eine wirtschaftliche Einheit mit dem Deutschen Reich bildete.

Die Einheimischen hatten seinen 5.000 Soldaten bisher keinen Widerstand entgegengebracht.

Wie denn auch bei 180 Gendarmen und 250 Soldaten. Selbst ihre fünf Kanonen hatte er sicherheitshalber in Verwahrung genommen.

Der einzige nennenswerte Protest war der Streik der Hüttenarbeiter im letzten Jahr gewesen, den er ohne Blutvergießen hatte beenden können.

In den letzten Tagen waren die deutschen Truppen in ihrer Frühjahrsoffensive bis auf hundert Kilometer vor Paris gekommen. Der langersehnte *Siegfrieden* war nun endlich in greifbare Nähe gerückt.

Bald würden die Deutschen ihr Versprechen wahr machen und dem treuen Luxemburg, als Ausgleich für die unvermeidliche Besetzung, die gleichnamige belgische Provinz zusprechen und das ganze Land zu einem Bundesstaat des Reiches machen.

Großherzogin Marie-Adelheid hätte dagegen bestimmt nichts einzuwenden. Sie war mit ihren fünf Schwestern im Schloss Hohenburg in Oberbayern aufgewachsen und pflegte engste Beziehungen zum deutschen Hochadel.

Die erst 23-jährige Herrscherin beeindruckte ihn. Er hätte es nicht für möglich gehalten, dass eine Frau solch ein wichtiges Amt ausfüllen könnte, noch dazu in so jungen Jahren.

Leider gab es unter den Luxemburgern eine große frankophile Gruppe, die der Großherzogin ihre Nähe zu Deutschland übel nahm. Diese Kritiker würden schon noch verstummen, sobald Frankreich geschlagen war und Luxemburg sein Staatsgebiet durch weise Zurückhaltung verdoppelt hatte.

Von Tessmar wurde aus seinen Gedanken gerissen, als er unten auf der Straße einen Uniformierten erblickte, der vom Hauptpostamt gegenüber auf sein Hauptquartier zugelaufen kam.

Kurz darauf schlug sein Adjutant vor ihm die Hacken zusammen und salutierte.

»Herr Kommandant, wir haben eine dringende Nachricht von der Obersten Heeresleitung erhalten. Hier bitte!«

Der Oberst faltete das Telegramm auf und las:

Aufklärung berichtet, dass belgischer Vorstand der ARBED-Stahlwerke in Düdelingen, Gaston Barbanson, Kontakt mit belgischer Exilregierung aufgenommen hat, um deutsche Stahlwerke als Angriffsziel zu empfehlen.

Das Subjekt ist festzunehmen und dem Feldgericht in Trier zu überstellen. Anklage: Kriegsverrat und Zusammenarbeit mit dem Feind.

*August 1918
Schloss Berg
Colmar-Berg, Luxemburg*

Wie immer, wenn sich Marie-Adelheid von den Staatsgeschäften erholen wollte, ging sie in den Garten des Schlosses, wo ihre beiden Lieblinge schon auf sie warteten. Ein Diener mit einer großen Kiste voller Obst und Gemüse folgte ihr. Der Bärenvater schloss den großen Käfig auf und zu dritt gingen sie hinein.

Sie setzte sich auf den Baumstamm, der in der Mitte der Anlage auf dem Boden lag. Sofort kamen Bruno und Clara von ihrem Kletterbaum herunter, tollten auf sie zu und sprangen übermütig an ihr hoch. Sie machte sich nichts daraus, dass ihr Kleid dabei schmutzig wurde. Im Alter von nur einem Jahr waren die beiden Braunbären schon fast zu groß, um noch gefahrlos mit ihnen spielen zu können.

Nacheinander nahm Marie-Adelheid Äpfel, Karotten und Gurken aus der Kiste und stopfte sie ihren Bären ins Maul, die alles mit Heißhunger verspeisten. Dann kraulte sie ihre Schützlinge ausgiebig und hing dabei ihren Gedanken nach.

Sie hatte nie Großherzogin von Luxemburg werden wollen. Es war ausgesprochenes Pech gewesen, dass die sechs Kinder ihrer Eltern allesamt Mädchen waren und Marie-Adelheid als Erstgeborene nach dem Tod ihres Vaters vor sechs Jahren seine Nachfolge antreten musste.

Warum hatten die Deutschen nur diesen Krieg gegen die Franzosen angefangen und ihr Heimatland besetzt? Viele ihrer Untertanen hatten ihr nicht verziehen, dass sie den Kaiser nach Kriegsbeginn in Luxemburg empfangen hatte. Was hätte sie denn tun sollen?

Sie war mit ihren Schwestern in Bayern aufgewachsen. Wäre das niederländische Königshaus nicht 1890 im Mannesstamme ausgestorben, wäre ihrem Hause Nassau das Großherzogtum Luxemburg nie zugefallen und sie wären ein rein deutsches Adelsgeschlecht geblieben.

Marie-Adelheid hatte sich alle Mühe gegeben, um die Herzen ihrer Luxemburger zu gewinnen. Sie hatte eine Rotkreuzgesellschaft gegründet und im Lazarett des Marschallamtes verletzte Soldaten aller Kriegsparteien gepflegt. Selbst das hatte nicht zu einem Umdenken bei ihren Landsleuten geführt.

Lieber heute als morgen würde sie die Bürde ihres Amtes gerne ihrer Schwester Charlotte übergeben und sich selbst in ein Kloster zurückziehen, aber vor dem Ende dieses schrecklichen Krieges wollte sie sich nicht aus der Verantwortung stehlen.

Da ertönte die sonore Stimme des Hofmarschalls.

»Hoheit, Euer Besucher ist eingetroffen.«

Die Großherzogin schob die Bärin Clara vorsichtig beiseite, stand auf und klopfte den Staub aus ihrem Kleid.

Oberst von Tessmar war noch nie auf Schloss Berg gewesen.

Als er die aparte Erscheinung der Großherzogin in dem Käfig sah, war er zunächst sprachlos.

»Danke, dass Ihr meiner Einladung gefolgt seid, Exzellenz.«

»Ich habe Euch zu danken, Königliche Hoheit. Ich bin betrübt, Euch hinter Gittern zu sehen.«

»Das bringt mich gleich zum Anlass dieses Treffens. Das Feldgericht in Trier hat einen geschätzten luxemburgischen Unternehmer zum Tode verurteilt. Darf ich darauf vertrauen, dass auch weiterhin keiner meiner Untertanen durch deutsche Hand zu Schaden kommt?«

»Ich bin zuversichtlich, dass Seine Majestät der Kaiser auch in diesem Falle Gnade vor Recht ergehen lassen wird, obwohl es sich hier, anders als in den bisherigen sechs Fällen, um einen belgischen Staatsbürger handelt. Auf jeden Fall werde ich meinen Vorgesetzten ein entsprechendes Votum übermitteln.«

Anmerkungen:

Nur drei Monate später, am 11.11.1918, unterzeichnete das Deutsche Reich im Wald von Compiègne den Waffenstillstandsvertrag mit den Alliierten.

Im Januar 1919 dankte die Großherzogin Marie-Adelheid zugunsten ihrer Schwester Charlotte ab und wurde Nonne in Italien. Sie starb 1924 im Alter von nur 30 Jahren an einer schweren Krankheit.

Im Verlauf des Ersten Weltkriegs gab es 136 Luftangriffe der Alliierten auf Luxemburg, bei denen 53 Zivilisten getötet wurden.

Das Schreiben von Gaston Barbanson an die belgische Exilregierung befindet sich in den Archives militaires de Vincennes. Seine Verhaftung und Verurteilung durch die Deutschen wurde hinzugefügt. Er wurde 1920 Präsident des Verwaltungsrates der ARBED.

SHADOWS OF THE GREAT WAR

Hauke Kracht

*April 1918
An Allied airfield
Malzéville near Nancy*

The French pilot René Boyau entered the large meeting tent set up at the edge of the airfield accompanied by his bombardier Léon Pinsard. When all the members of the squadron were present, the Commander rose to speak:

“Soldiers! Your attack tonight will take you northwards to Luxembourg. As you all know, our neutral neighbour was occupied by the Germans so that they could attack our fatherland more easily from there and circumvent the fortifications between Verdun and Belfort. Fortunately, their devious plan failed and we were able to halt the advance of the Boches in the summer of 1914. But now they are attacking again and are threatening Paris.

The smelting works in Luxembourg produce steel day and night for the German artillery pieces and grenades that bring death to our soldiers at the front.

Your combat mission is this: drop your bombs on the steelworks. It will be easy for you to make out the fire of the furnaces in the night. *Vive la France!*”

Shortly thereafter, René and Léon ascended to an altitude of five thousand metres in their *Breguet 14 B2* biplane. It was a starry and cloudless night. The nine aircraft went into a V-formation. They kept enough distance from each other so as to avoid colliding in the darkness.

A short while later, they saw specks of light forming a number of jagged lines far below them. That was their French comrades and the German enemies in their trenches, warming themselves by the fire and preparing their food. From now on, they had to reckon with enemy fighter pilots and anti-aircraft fire.

They flew almost precisely due north, passing the city of Metz in the west. After half an hour, they could see the furnaces in southern Luxembourg glowing on the horizon.

René gave his bombardier a signal and Léon leant far out of his open cockpit to estimate the distance from the target. When he judged the time to be right, he removed twenty bombs from their mounts one after another and heaved each one, weighing eight kilogrammes, overboard. Then the entire formation took a wide left turn and repeated the procedure. Meanwhile, the German defenders had woken up. Beams from searchlights crisscrossed the sky, lighting up their plane while the anti-aircraft guns kept on firing. Shell fragments whistled around their ears, but fortunately they remained unharmed.

As the whole squadron turned back towards Nancy, René breathed a sigh of relief. It was only now that he could relax, noticing how frozen he was from the cold wind. Tomorrow they would attack another target until they met a heroic death or until those damn Germans were finally defeated.

René couldn't explain how this war had come about. He himself had studied in Freiburg for two semesters and had gotten along quite well with most of the Germans. A number of them had even been his soulmates and he had fallen in love with a fellow student.

How could these friendly people turn into the callous fighting machines that were slaughtering his countrymen in the trenches down there? Would the French and Germans ever again be able to coexist as peaceful neighbours without Germany dominating the whole of Europe?

It was so sad. All of these young men in Europe who were actually supposed to find jobs and start families were killing each other right now. The whole world had gone mad.

*Shortly afterwards on the ground
Office of the ARBED steelworks
in Düdelingen*

Bright red in the face and snorting with rage, Gaston Barbanson stormed into his office. His assistant looked up fearfully from his desk. He had never seen his boss like this before.

“I’ve had enough of this! These halfwits have killed three of our workers and injured several others with their bombs. Why must the Allies always attack our furnaces? Don’t they know that our steel mill is the only one that’s not under Prussian control and that we steadfastly refuse to deliver war material to Germany?”

Why don’t they attack the German factories instead? The *Rothe Erde* and the *Adolf-Emil-Hütte* in Esch or the factories in Differdingen, Rümelingen and Steinfort!”

“Contain yourself, boss, I beg of you. You’re right, but walls have ears”, said his assistant, his voice quaking with fear.

But Gaston Barbanson had no intention of containing himself. He was proud to be a Belgian. Despite internationally guaranteed neutrality, his country had been brutally attacked by the Germans. Many Belgians had been murdered by the barbarians for their heroic resistance. He would turn to the Belgian government in exile in Normandy so that the politicians there would finally have something to do.

*Early June 1918
Rue Aldringen, Luxembourg City
a former primary school*

Colonel *Richard von Tessmar* stood on the balcony of his study at the German headquarters, casting his gaze over the picturesque Luxembourg city centre. During his three years in this country, he had grown fond of the locals.

The military occupation of Luxembourg, which had already formed a single economic entity along with the German Reich on account of its membership of the German Zollverein, had, unfortunately, been unavoidable.

The inhabitants of Luxembourg had not resisted his 5000 soldiers thus far. How were they supposed to anyway with only 180 police and 250 soldiers? He had even seized their five cannons as a security precaution.

The only noteworthy protest had been the strike by the iron and steel workers last year, which he had been able to end without bloodshed.

In the past few days, the German troops had advanced to within a hundred kilometres of Paris during their spring offensive. The long-awaited *Siegfrieden* – or peace through victory – was finally in reach.

Soon the Germans would make good on their promise and award the faithful Luxembourg, as compensation for its unavoidable occupation, the Belgian province of the same name and make the whole country a federal state of the Reich.

Grand Duchess Marie-Adélaïde would certainly have no objections to this. She had grown up with her five sisters at Schloss Hohenburg in Upper Bavaria and maintained very close links with the German aristocracy.

He was impressed by this ruler, who was only 23 years old. He would not have thought it possible for a woman to rise to the demands of such an important office, especially at such a young age.

Unfortunately, there was a large francophile group of Luxembourgers who resented the Grand Duchess’s closeness to Germany. These critics would soon be silenced as soon as France was beaten and Luxembourg had doubled the size of its territory through exercising wise restraint.

Von Tessmar was startled from his daydream when he saw a uniformed man running down the street from the main post office across the street to his headquarters.

A little while later, his aide-de-camp clicked his heels together and saluted him.

“Commander, we have received an urgent message from Supreme Army Command. Here you go!”

The Colonel opened the telegram and read the following:

Reconnaissance reports that the Belgian Chairman of the Board of the ARBED steel mill in Düdelingen, Gaston Barbanson, has contacted the Belgian government in exile to recommend German steelworks as military target.

The subject is to be arrested and transferred to the court martial in Trier. Charges: treason and collaboration with the enemy.

*August 1918
Berg Castle
Colmar-Berg, Luxembourg*

Whenever Marie-Adélaïde wanted a break from state affairs, she would go to the castle gardens, where her two darlings eagerly awaited her. Behind her walked a servant carrying a large crate filled with fruit and vegetables. The bear tamer opened the large cage and the three of them went inside.

Marie-Adélaïde sat down on the tree trunk lying on the ground in the middle of the cage. Bruno and Clara immediately came down from the tree they used for climbing, romped over to her and jumped up ecstatically at her. She didn't mind that her dress got dirty. At only one year of age, the two brown bears were already almost too large to play with safely.

Marie-Adélaïde took apples, carrots and cucumbers from the crate and fed them to her bears, who devoured the food ravenously. Then she stroked her pets for a long time and let her thoughts roam free.

She had never wanted to become Grand Duchess of Luxembourg. It was a great misfortune that all of her parents' six children were girls and that, as the eldest, Marie-Adélaïde had had to succeed her father following his death six years earlier.

Why on earth had the Germans started this war against the French and occupied her homeland? Many of her subjects had not forgiven her for receiving the German Kaiser in Luxembourg shortly after the outbreak of war. What was she supposed to have done?

She and her sisters had grown up in Bavaria. If the male line of the Dutch royal family had not come to an end in 1890, the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg would never have fallen to the House of Nassau and the Nassaus would have remained a purely German aristocratic family.

Marie-Adélaïde had done her utmost to win the hearts of the people of Luxembourg. She had founded a Red Cross society and tended injured soldiers from all of the warring nations in the makeshift hospital set up in the Marshal's office. Even that had not changed her compatriots' views about her.

She longed to hand over the burden of her office to her sister Charlotte as soon as possible and to retreat to

a convent, but she did not want to shirk responsibility before the end of this terrible war.

Suddenly, she heard the pleasant voice of the Marshal of the Court.

“Your Highness, your visitor has arrived.”

The Grand Duchess cautiously pushed Clara away, stood up and brushed the dust off her dress.

Colonel von Tessmar had never visited Berg Castle before.

He was speechless at first when he saw the striking vision of the Grand Duchess inside a cage.

“Your Excellency, thank you for accepting my invitation.”

“No, thank you, Your Royal Highness. It grieves me to see you behind bars.”

“That brings me to the reason for our meeting. The court martial in Trier has condemned a respected businessman from Luxembourg to death. May I trust that none of my subjects will come to harm from Germany, as has been the case in the past?”

“I am confident that His Majesty the Kaiser will also show clemency in this case, although unlike the previous six cases, it concerns a Belgian citizen. At any rate, I shall convey this message to my superiors.”

Notes:

Just three months later, on 11 November 1918, the German Empire signed the armistice with the Allies in Compiègne forest.

In January 1919, Grand Duchess Marie-Adélaïde abdicated in favour of her sister Charlotte and became a nun in Italy. She died in 1924 aged only 30, following a severe illness.

During the First World War, the Allies carried out 136 air raids against Luxembourg, killing 53 civilians.

The letter from Gaston Barbanson to the Belgian government in exile can be found in the *Archives militaires de Vincennes*. His arrest and conviction by the Germans were a case of dramatic licence. He became president of the board of directors of ARBED in 1920.

06.

France

France

« L'HISTOIRE EST UN CAUCHEMAR DONT J'ESSAYE DE M'ÉVEILLER. »

James Joyce

Frederika Amalia Finkelstein

Un matin humide du mois de janvier, sous une brume lourde et un ciel d'argile, tandis que j'arpentais les sentiers déserts de la forêt domaniale de Verdun, découvrant un paysage proprement défiguré, vaste lieu d'un événement parmi les plus effroyables de l'Histoire, je me suis dit : voilà la tâche impossible à laquelle je me trouve confrontée, ici, en 2018, cent ans après la Première Guerre mondiale, retourner au cœur du pire sans succomber à une mélancolie profonde, rendre hommage aux morts, à ces morts inconnus et pourtant si précieux, car sacrifiés pour un pays, le mien, leur rendre hommage en toute quiétude, oui, voilà la tâche impossible. J'étais en effet incapable d'une telle sérénité dans l'épreuve de mon pèlerinage. C'était bien plutôt une colère qui enflait en moi, mêlée à un sentiment lointain d'indifférence, deux émotions naturellement opposées, que je ressentais pourtant conjointement, comme si l'une s'appuyait sur l'autre, et pourquoi, pensais-je, pourquoi un tel malaise, une telle nausée, moi qui n'avais reçu des échos de la bataille de Verdun qu'un savoir scolaire médiocre, nimbé de mythification (*l'Enfer de Verdun ; la bataille la plus sanglante de la Première Guerre mondiale et autres expressions pompeuses et impersonnelles me revenaient*), pour ainsi dire, un savoir éteint, constitué essentiellement de chiffres — je savais en tout et pour tout que la bataille avait duré dix mois ; que deux millions trois cent mille êtres humains avaient combattu, qu'il y avait eu trois cent mille morts, sept cent mille victimes et environ soixante millions d'obus projetés.

À l'origine, dans cette partie du domaine de Verdun, il n'y avait pas de forêt mais uniquement des champs. Les arbres furent plantés plusieurs années après la fin de la guerre, pour recouvrir l'apocalypse : donner l'apparence, en somme, d'une certaine reprise du cours ordinaire de la vie par la végétation, au-delà de l'hécatombe vécue. Ce fut une réussite : les arbres, en ce nouveau siècle, tiennent admirablement debout et continuent de grandir. Mais le sol retient l'insoutenable du passé : au pied des résineux et des feuillus, j'avançais timidement, car en creusant, m'avait-on avertie, se retrouvent chaque année entre dix et douze tonnes d'explosifs. Un paysage inouï, donc, se déployait devant mes yeux, criblé de bosses : de petits monticules, recouverts d'une herbe verte et jaune, se succédant, contradictoires, illogiques, tel un paysage lunaire évoluant en pleine campagne européenne. Une vision violente, que j'aurais pu, en d'autres lieux, qualifier de propice à une certaine beauté, mais qui s'évertuait ici à s'asseoir devant mes yeux comme une chose monstrueuse, signe d'une véritable dégénérescence de la volonté humaine. De cela sont capables les hommes, me disais-je, capables de déformer la géographie d'un lieu pour un seul mot : gagner.

Mais cette folie belliqueuse qui les animait au siècle dernier, et qui, régulièrement, continue d'inonder le monde, serait-elle un jour circonscrite, enrayée ? J'aurais souhaité ne pas faire place à la pensée qui vint dès lors me secouer le cœur, mais rien n'y fit. *Nous sommes condam-*

nés à détruire ai-je murmuré dans le silence de la forêt de Verdun, à peine émue par la brutalité de mes mots, car j'avais devant moi la preuve physique de cette capacité au ravage : ce n'était plus une vieille photographie dans un livre d'Histoire ; ce n'était plus un récit ; ce n'était plus une dépêche lue parmi tant d'autres — c'était la trace réelle, irréductible, du versant sombre et alarmant de l'humanité. Je me demandais combien de combattants avaient perdu la vie précisément là où j'enfonçais mes pas, et à travers eux, combien d'amours brisées, combien de chagrins maternels, paternels, fraternels incurables ; combien de familles endeuillées, décimées, et de générations blessées par le souvenir d'une existence achevée trop tôt ? Cette guerre, cette *Grande Guerre* ahurissante : je revois les tranchées, les boyaux, qui autrefois entaillaient cet espace, grouillant d'hommes éclaboussés par la noirceur affreuse de la boue, rêvant à la chaleur de leur foyer perdu. À quoi pensaient-ils ? Conservaient-ils une petite foi en le lendemain, ou avaient-ils déjà refusé toute issue heureuse à leur destin de soldat, s'épargnant ainsi de graves déceptions ?

Revenir sur ce lieu de mémoire : je l'avais fait, maintenant. Je m'étais promis de voyager jusqu'à Verdun, en tant que française, en tant qu'européenne, et plus largement en tant qu'être humain (en tant que « citoyenne du monde », comme certains le disent, peut-être un peu bêtement), je me l'étais promis car j'avais fait le vœu, depuis ma découverte de la terreur de la Seconde Guerre mondiale et des camps de concentration et d'extermination, de ne jamais oublier le point d'où mon pays et d'où mon continent se relevaient : ce qu'ils avaient à la fois traversé et engendré comme violence, mais aussi ce à quoi ils avaient finalement survécu : j'étais, moi-même parmi des millions d'autres, la simple preuve de cette survivance.

Revenir mais aussi dépasser. Trouver une nouvelle voie vers la mémoire, où l'empathie et la compréhension ne seraient pas mangées par un inutile sentiment de culpabilité, telle est la pensée qui affleurerait tandis que je levais les yeux vers les hauteurs, comme pour tenter de renouveler l'air dans mes poumons, et par là-même me soustraire momentanément à l'Histoire, et à la trace de ces douleurs amoncelées, ravalées par la nature et gisant profondément sous le poids de mon corps, suspendue entre la force du futur qui m'attendait, et le désespoir d'un lieu que cent ans (plus de trente-six mille jours ! À la fois rien et beaucoup trop) n'étaient pas tout à fait parvenus à guérir.

En quittant la forêt, ce matin-là, après avoir erré ivre de sensations mauvaises, que je peinais à identifier (elles

m'étaient en vérité nouvelles, inconnues) et devant les infaillibles stigmates de l'horreur guerrière, je me suis dit que le passé était une dimension du temps active à l'extrême, que le passé hurlait et qu'il était vivant. *Mais il est aussi fragile*, ai-je songé, en cela qu'il a constamment besoin de nous pour survivre au passage du temps.

Monuments, commémorations, témoignages, souvenirs, le passé hante une existence intime autant qu'une société : la mémoire d'un homme, les liens d'une famille, une salle de classe, un discours politique. Comment vivre après le pire ? Comment apprendre de notre passé ; de la violence des hommes ? Comment ne plus jamais reproduire le mal que nous avons enduré et subi lors de terribles guerres ? Autrement dit : comment tirer une conclusion positive des événements traumatiques ? Comment contempler le futur sans omettre le passé, et éviter ainsi de tomber dans la mélancolie et la culpabilité, et s'approcher du mieux que nous pouvons de la paix ? Ces questions, parmi les plus cruciales du XXe siècle, semblent ne pouvoir encore aujourd'hui trouver de réponses définitives, au moins satisfaisantes. Et reprenant le train vers ma ville, en contemplant les paysages verdoyants des collines de l'Est que la vitesse fouettait, j'ai pensé que seule l'écriture pourrait parvenir à sublimer le moment que je venais de vivre, elle seule pourrait m'éviter de tomber dans l'écueil de l'aigreur et du pourquoi infini. User des émotions et des labyrinthes de son esprit : c'était là, peut-être, pour moi, la voie vers une paix réelle, malgré son instabilité. Et la forêt de Verdun, me disais-je, finirait bien un jour par recouvrer sa forme naturelle. Car la nature gagne toujours : à côté d'elle, nous ne sommes que tourments passagers, impuissants à demeurer immortels. Le calme de la forêt triomphera de la violence ; la quiétude triomphera des cris ; la faune et la flore reprendront leurs habitudes, peu à peu, décennie après décennie. Ces mois de l'année 1916 ne seront d'abord plus qu'un mauvais souvenir ; puis, un jour, ils ne seront plus. C'est comme cela que fonctionne le temps. Ce n'est ni une chose mauvaise, ni une chose salutaire. Ainsi va le monde, *ce n'est pas ma faute*, ai-je pensé, me remémorant une des phrases les plus célèbres d'un vieux roman des Lumières.

Il n'y a pas à craindre l'oubli ; pas plus qu'il n'y a à craindre la mémoire. Ce qu'il y a à craindre, c'est la crainte elle-même : avoir peur de ce qui nous précède et dévisager le passé comme un ennemi, un insurmontable problème (oublier ou se souvenir ? Revenir ou dépasser ?), non, c'est la nature qui décide, c'est le temps immémorial qui accomplit ses choix. Nous ne sommes face à lui qu'un moment de l'Histoire.

“HISTORY IS A NIGHTMARE FROM WHICH I AM TRYING TO AWAKE.”

James Joyce

Frederika Amalia Finkelstein, translated by Susan Pickford

One damp January morning, the mist heavy and the sky the colour of clay, I strode the lonely paths of the Verdun state forest, seeing for the first time its literally disfigured landscape, the vast site of one of the most appalling events in History, and I said to myself, this is the impossible task I find myself facing, here, in 2018, a hundred years on from the First World War, returning to the heart of the worst atrocity without falling prey to deep melancholy, paying homage to the dead, the unknown and yet so precious dead who gave their lives for a country, my country, paying homage to them in perfect tranquility: yes, this was my impossible task. I was unequal to any such serenity on this testing pilgrimage. Rather, I felt anger swelling within me, blended with a distant feeling of indifference, two naturally disparate emotions that, curiously, I felt conjointly, as if one were rooted in the other, and why, I thought, why such malaise, why such nausea since all I know of the battle of Verdun is mediocre schoolbook knowledge enshrouded in myth (the Hell of Verdun, the bloodiest battle of the First World War, and other pompous, impersonal expressions came to me), as it were, lifeless knowledge consisting mainly of numbers – my sum of knowledge was that the battle lasted ten months, two million three hundred thousand humans fought here, three hundred thousand dead, seven hundred thousand killed, wounded, or missing, some sixty million shells fired.

Originally in this part of the Verdun domain, there was no forest, only fields. The trees were planted some years after the war to mask the apocalypse, using plant

cover to create the semblance that life was returning to normal after the mass slaughter. It proved a success: in this new century, the trees stand admirably tall and still flourish. But the ground holds the unbearable truth of its past. I stepped carefully over the feet of the evergreens and the deciduous trees, as I had been warned that ten to twelve tons of explosives were dug up every year. An indescribable landscape lay before my eyes, strewn with mounds: small hillocks covered in green and yellow grass in contradictory, illogical rows, like a moon landscape in the heart of the countryside somewhere in Europe. A vision of violence that I might elsewhere have thought liable to generate a certain beauty, but that here strove to assert its own monstrosity in my eyes, signifying the total degeneracy of the human will. This is what men are capable of, I said to myself, capable of deforming geography for the sake of a single word: victory. But will the madness of war that drove men a century ago and that still regularly washes over the world ever be hemmed in and thwarted? I wish there was no room in me for the thought that then came and shook my heart, but there was nothing for it. We are doomed to destroy, I murmured into the silence of the Verdun forest, barely moved by the brutality of my own words, as before me lay the tangible evidence of our capacity for destruction: no longer an old photograph in a history book; no longer a mere narrative; no longer one dispatch among so many others – the genuine, intransigent trace of humanity's dark, terrifying underside. I wondered how many soldiers had lost their lives right under my feet and with them, how many bro-

ken hearts, how many inconsolable mothers, fathers, brothers, in mourning. How many families grieving, decimated. How many generations damaged by the memory of a life cut short. This war, this harrowing war: I could make out the trenches, the zigzag ditches, that once carved through this space, crawling with men bespattered with the foul black mud, dreaming of warm homes now lost. What did they think about? Did they still hold out a little faith in a brighter tomorrow, or had they already abandoned all thoughts of a happy ending for their soldierly fate, thus sparing themselves great disappointment?

A visit to this memorial site: now I had done it. I had made an unspoken promise to push on to Verdun, as a French woman, a European, and even as a human being (as a “global citizen”, as some people perhaps rather naively say), an unspoken promise as I had sworn to myself, ever since I first found out about the horrors of the Second World War, the concentration camps, the death camps, never to forget the depths my country and my continent were recovering from, what violence they had both suffered and instigated, and what they had, in the end, survived: I, along with millions of others, was the plain proof of this afterlife. A comeback, then, that strove for greater things. Seek new paths towards memory, where empathy and understanding are not engulfed by a pointless sense of guilt: such were the thoughts that broke the surface of my mind as I lifted my gaze to the heights, as if trying to breathe new, clean air into my lungs and thereby momentarily step aside from History and the traces of such pain, piled high and swallowed up by the forces of nature, buried deep beneath the weight of my own body, caught between the force of the future that awaited me and the despair of a place that one hundred years (over thirty-six thousand days! Both nothing and far, far too many) had not quite managed to heal.

Leaving the forest that morning after wandering around befuddled by uncomfortable feelings that I struggled to pin down (in truth because they were new and unfamiliar), faced with the unmistakable stigmata of the horrors of war, I said to myself that the past was a temporal dimension that was still extremely active,

that the past screamed, was alive. But it is also fragile, I thought, in that it constantly needs us to survive the passage of time. Monuments, commemorations, accounts, memories: the past haunts both private lives and society as a whole: one man’s memory, family bonds, a classroom, a political speech. How can we live on after the worst has happened? How can we learn from our past, from man’s violence to man? How can we never again reproduce the evil endured and undergone in dreadful wars? In other words, how can we draw positive conclusions from traumatic events? How can we contemplate the future without omitting the past, thereby avoiding the pitfalls of melancholy and guilt, and come the closest we can to peace? These questions, some of the most crucial of the twentieth century, seem to this day not to have definitive answers, at least not satisfactory ones. As I took the train back to my town, I watched the verdant hills of Eastern France whip past my window and thought that only writing could try to expand on the moment I had just experienced, only writing could help me avoid the pitfall of bitterness and endlessly asking why. Drawing on emotions and the maze of my mind: that was perhaps my own path to genuine peace, however unstable. And Verdun forest, I consoled myself, would eventually one day end up finding its own natural form. For nature always wins in the end: next to nature, we are but fleeting torments, powerless to achieve immortality. The forest hush will triumph over violence; tranquility will triumph over cries; plants and animals will return to their old ways, gradually, decade after decade. Those months of 1916 will first be no more than a bad memory; then one day, they will no longer exist. That is how time works. It is not inherently bad, nor inherently salutary. It is the way of the world, it is not my fault, I thought, recalling one of the most famous quotes from an old novel from the days of the Enlightenment.

Oblivion is not to be feared, no more than is memory. What is to be feared is fear itself; fear of what came before us and staring into the past like an enemy’s face, an insurmountable problem (forget or remember? Return or reach past ?), no, nature decides for us, time immemorial makes its own choices. All we are in the face of time is an instant in History.

07.

Magyarország
Hungary

EURÓPA ÚJJÁSZÜLETIK 1918: ÖRÖKSÉG ÉS PERSPEKTÍVÁK

Szőcs Géza

A háború utolsó éve jelentős változásokat hozott világszerte. 1917-ben összeomlott a birodalmi Oroszország, és II. Miklós cár lemondott trónjáról. Ugyanannak az évnek októberében Petrográdban (az egykori Szentpéterváron) Lenin vezetésével a bolsevikok magukhoz ragadták a hatalmat. Az egyre romló gazdasági körülmények és a katonai erő meggyöngyülése következtében 1918 elején Oroszország megadta magát Németországnak és kilépett a háborúból.

A háború vége teljesen átrajzolta Európa politikai térképét. Az Orosz Birodalom bukása után a német, osztrák és az ottomán birodalmak is térdre estek. Az egykori Oroszország, Ausztria és Németország birodalmi területein független nemzetállamok alakultak. Oroszország kivételével ezekben az országokban mindenütt parlamenti demokrácia volt a hivatalos államforma.

Dolgozatomban néhány megjegyzést szeretnék tenni az 1918-as év körül az Európa és Magyarország számára adódott perspektívákról. Az első, hosszabb részben a Nagy Háború katasztrófális eseményeiből kikelő „európai gondolat” kapcsán szeretnék néhány észrevételt tenni. A második részben az első világháborút illető, a magyarok számára legfontosabb tapasztalatról szeretnék szólni, a „Történelmi Magyarország” megszűnésének traumatikus tapasztalatáról.

Az európai egység gondolata egyfajta összhangot feltételez a földrész történelme és földrajza között. Egészében véve, Európának nincs közös, egységes történelme. Amikor Európát történelmi szempontból nézzük, egységének bizonyosságául a hosszú és vesződséggel teli történelme során kialakult civilizációjára szoktunk hivatkozni.

Egy 1922-ben írt esszéjében Paul Valéry közvetlenül elismeri, hogy Európa fölénye már messze nem oly megingathatatlan, mint egykor. Egy másik – 1935-ben keletkezett – írásában még ennél is pesszimistább mérleget von: „Az Európa népei közötti érintkezések által alakított európai szellem talán a zűrzavarnek olyan előestéjén találja magát, ami a világpolitikában és világgazdaságban tapasztalható zűrzavarhoz fogható. Amit egyszer megpróbáltunk egyesíteni, ami a körülmények hatása folytán úgy tűnt, hajlamos az egyesülésre, most kezd szétesni, és ha ez így folytatódik, könnyen lehet, hogy e földrészen lakó emberek egyre kevésbé fogják tudni megérteni egymást.”

Alighanem érthető, hogy egy olyan régi vágású európai, mint a 19. századi svájci történettudós, Jacob Burckhardt, miért megy szembe nyíltan a korszellemmel, amikor kifejezésre jutattatja megvetését a sajtóval és a kötelező iskolai oktatással szemben. A régi *res publica* litteráriát még mindig a klasszikusokon alapuló nevelés és oktatás tartotta egyben. Burckhardt szerint a populáris írásbeliség és az államosított, demokratizált oktatás a 19. századi, kora 20. századi nacionalizmus melegágya volt, és aláásta a régi európai kozmopolitizmust – Burckhardt szavajárásával „a régi Európa kultúráját”.

Az első európai, aki egy valódi, mérsékelten sikeresnek mondható, konkrét javaslatokat is tartalmazó mozgalmat teremtett az Európai Föderáció gondolata köré, és aki képes volt megszólítani ezzel a műveltebb felső rétegeket, Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi volt. Figyelemre méltó, hogy már a 20-as években felmerül nála a két kolosszustól fenyegetett Európa képe: keletről a Szovjetunió, nyugatról az Egyesült Államok szorításában. A mai

Európai Unió alapító atyáinak némelyike szintén a két szuperhatalom befolyása közé szorult Európa gondolata felől indult el, amikor mindkét szuperhatalmat „materialista” és „történelemnélküli” modern tömegtársadalomként írják le Burckhardt-tal egyetértésben és tőle nem függetlenül, amelyeknek nincs organikus kapcsolatuk az európai kulturális hagyománnyal, és nem áll érdekében a kontinuitás megőrzése a középkorral s azon keresztül az antikvitással. Mindezen túl, Coudenhove körvonalazza a lehetséges szövetségi kapcsolat kialakulását Németország és Oroszország között, amely „Európa” frontvonalát a Rajnáig tolná ki, és a hatalmas „keleti” kolosszussal konfrontálná Európát.

Coudenhove erőfeszítései világossá teszik, hogy a páneurópai mozgalom nem pusztán a kultúráról szól, hanem Európa felkészítéséről az új világpolitikai hatalmi küzdelemben való részvételre. Egy szövetségi Európa létrehozására, ahogyan Coudenhove megálmodta, az Amerikával, Ázsiával, a brit birodalommal és a Szovjetunióval szemben megfogalmazódó geopolitikai érdekek teremtenek alapot. Páneurópa megteremtése sokban a Bismarck kancellár által egyesített Németországra emlékeztet.

Mi akkor az az „európai szellem”, az a különálló kultúra, amelyet az új Európai Unió feladata megvédelmezni és továbbfejleszteni? Valamilyen formában, mint kultúrához és hagyományhoz, a kereszténységhez van köze. Köze van a klasszikus hagyományokhoz is – a görög esztétikai és politikai ideálokhoz, a római jogi és államigazgatási gondolkodáshoz. Ugyancsak köze van a tudományos megismerés hagyományaihoz, valamint az individuum jogába vetett hitünkhöz. Mindezen értékrendszereket mi teszi mégis európaivá, az Amerika, Ausztrália és a világ más részeinek „nyugati kultúrájától” jellegzetesen elkülönülő „európaivá”?

A kulcsot Burckhardtnál találjuk meg: „A művészet és a tudomány abban a nehéz helyzetben vannak, hogy aligha képesek megóvni önmagukat attól, hogy a városi pénzcsinálás ágazatává süllyedjenek, és hogy magával ragadja őket az általános sürgés-forgás árama. Csak a legnagyobb erőfeszítés és önmegtartóztatás árán lehet remélni, hogy megőrzik az alkotáshoz szükséges függetlenségüket. A társadalom mely rétegei és osztályai válnak a kultúra valódi képviselőivé? Mely rétegek adnak tudósokat, művészeket, költőket és teremtő egyéniségeket? Vagy minden nagy üzletté válik majd, miként Amerikában?” Amitől Burckhardt a leginkább tartott, az az „amerikai kultúrember”, aki szerinte „elveti a történelmi kontinuitást és a szellemi kontinuitás nagy részét is, de meg szeretné őrizni a művészetet és a költészetet mint luxuscikket.”

Az elmúlt száz év során a magyar nemzeti karakterisztikum keresése és meghatározása ahhoz a gondolat-hoz vezetett el, hogy az eltorzult magyar alkat felelős a századokon átívelő történelmi kudarcokért és a politikai fejlődés egyenetlenségeiért. Ezen az úton haladva szükségképpen oda jutunk, hogy minden bajok forrása, ami a magyar nemzetet érte és éri, e magyarság számára idegen vonásokban és hatásokban keresendő. Ennek három alfaja van: idegen uralom, idegen asszimiláció, idegen befolyás. Az „idegen uralom” mint érv alól azonban kicsúszott a talaj azóta, hogy Magyarország idegen hatalom alá tartozása 1918-ban megszűnt. Valójában a magyar társadalom romlása már a 19. század közepén elindult, és végzetes formát éppen 1918-ra öltött. Ily módon meg lehetőséget nyújt a nemzeti karakterológiával magyarázni a nemzeti történelmet.

Anélkül, hogy bárkit is vádolnánk, a magyarok számára saját maguk elvesztése mögötti legfőbb kollektív élményük a történelmi Magyarország 1918-ban bekövetkezett megszűnésének traumatikus élménye. Magyarország ekkor elveszítette területének több mint kétharmadát, lakosságának több mint a felét. A többnyire önkényesen megvont új határokkal nemcsak idegen ajkú, hanem nagy kiterjedésű, zömmel magyarlakta területek is elkerültek az országtól. Nem Magyarország volt az egyetlen ország, amelyikre a győztes hatalmak megalázó és elfogadhatatlan békediktátumot kényszerítettek rá. A Németországra erőltetett Versailles-i béke megalázó feltételeivel szintúgy visszavetette a demokratikus fejlődést. A fentiek fényében érthető, hogy a magyar kül – és belpolitika 1918 után szükségképpen a revizionizmus pályájára került.

Vajon az Egyesült Európa esetleges megteremtése védelmet jelent-e az európai kultúra számára? Vajon képes lesz-e a „sokféleségben az egység” gondolatának megőrzésére? Nem tudjuk. Elképzelhető, hogy az Európai Unióban tovább csökken a történelmi és kulturális hagyományok jelentősége, és pusztá dekorációvá, egyfajta nemzeti skanzenné redukálódik.

Vagy lehetséges, hogy – amennyiben a sokféleség védelme érdekében hathatós intézkedések lépnek érvénybe – ezek akadályozni fogják egy új európai kultúra létrejöttét, és Európa adminisztratív apparátussá válik, amelynek feladata a kereskedelem és szolgáltatások, honvédelem, alapvető emberi jogok stb. felügyelete.

EUROPE IN THE REMAKING 1918: LEGACY AND PERSPECTIVES

Géza Szócs

The final year of war had brought significant changes worldwide. In 1917, Imperial Russia collapsed and the emperor, Nicholas II, abdicated his throne. In October the same year, Lenin and the Bolsheviks seized power in Petrograd (formerly St. Petersburg), and declared a Communist regime. Deteriorating economic conditions and military capability forced Russia to surrender to Germany in early 1918.

The end of the war completely re-designed the political geography of Europe. After the fall of the Russian Empire, the German, Austrian, and Ottoman empires also followed suit. The former imperial territories in Europe held by Russia, Austria, and Germany all became independent nation states. Except for Russia, parliamentary democracy was introduced everywhere in these countries, and in 1920 almost every European state was, at least in formal terms, democratic.

In this paper I aim to comment on some of the new perspectives created for Europe and for Hungary in and around 1918. In the first, larger part of this paper, I put forward my reflections on ‘the idea of Europe’ as it re-emerged from the disastrous series of events known as The Great War. In the second part I shall reflect on the Hungarian experience related to World War I, specifically on the trauma of the dissolution of ‘Historical Hungary’.

The idea of European unity supposes a harmony between the history and the geography of the continent. Considered as a whole, Europe does not have a common history. When Europe is presented from a historical point of view, as evidence of its unity stands the civilization it supposedly elaborated in its long and troubled history.

In one of his essays, written in 1922, Paul Valéry implicitly acknowledged that European supremacy was no longer quite as certain, neither as unchallenged as it once had been. In another essay, written in 1935, he is more pessimistic: ‘The European spirit, formed by the many exchanges between the peoples of Europe, is perhaps on the eve of a disturbance comparable to that in the world of politics and economics. What we once tried to unite, what seemed to be tending to unification by force of circumstance, seems today to be splitting up, and if this movement becomes more pronounced it may well make

the men of this continent less and less intelligible to each other.’

One can understand why an old-fashioned European such as the nineteenth-century Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt, could go completely against the grain of his time by professing disdain for both the press and compulsory school-attendance. The old *respublica litteraria* had still been united by a common classical education and knowledge of Latin, if not Greek, even after everybody had begun to write in the vernacular languages. According to Burckhardt, it was popular literacy and the nationalization and democratization of schooling, that had fomented nineteenth and early twentieth century nationalism and undermined the old European cosmopolitanism: ‘the culture of old Europe’ as Burckhardt liked to say.

Richard Coudenhove-Kalergi seems to have been the first person to create a genuine, moderately successful political movement around concrete proposals for a European Federation and to have appealed with some success to a sense of being ‘European’ at least among the more educated upper classes. It is interesting to find the idea of a Europe threatened by two colossal new powers in the East and the West clearly articulated at this stage. For at least some of the founding fathers of today’s European Union also started from the notion that the unification of Europe should serve as a means of countering the influence of the United States on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other, both of them viewed as modern mass societies, both considered in one degree or another materialist and ‘un-historical’ as Burckhardt once said of the Americans; in other words, societies disconnected from the cultural traditions of Europe and having no stake in the preservation of continuity with a past reaching back into the Middle Ages and Antiquity. In addition, Coudenhove already expressed fear of a potential alliance between Germany and Russia, which would move the frontier of ‘Europe’ to the Rhine and confront it with a huge ‘Eastern’ colossus. Coudenhove seems to be the first to create a history of the idea of Europe, to provide his project for a Pan-European Union with a pedigree.

Coudenhove’s efforts make it clear that Pan Europe is about power and not just about culture, that it is about preparing Europe to compete in a new world power

struggle. The creation of a federal Europe, as envisioned by Coudenhove, is justified in terms of the geo-political interests of Europe as opposed to those of America, Asia, the British Empire, and the Soviet Union. The creation of Pan-Europe thus seems to correspond quite closely to Bismarck's creation of a united Germany, which enhanced Germany's position vis-a-vis the other European states, without necessarily providing a more solid basis for peace among them.

Now what is the 'spirit' of Europe, the specific culture that the new European Union is intended to embody, protect, and promote? It seems to have something to do with Christianity as a form of culture and tradition. It seems also to have something to do with the classical tradition, with Greek esthetic and political ideas and with Roman ideas of law and administration. The scientific tradition – as a search for truth using reason and agreed on rules of evidence – is also often closely associated with the European spirit, as is the concept of the free exchange of goods and of ideas. The value of individuality and the rights of the individual are similarly widely cited as achievements of European civilization. Europe must presumably defend and promote all those things. But in what respects is this complex of values and practices different from the 'Western culture' that Europe shares with America, Australia, and other parts of the world?

Burckhardt gives us the clue: 'Art and science have the greatest difficulty in preventing themselves from sinking into a mere branch of urban money-making and from being carried away on the stream of general restlessness. The utmost effort and self-denial will be necessary if they are to remain creatively independent in view of the relation in which they stand to the daily press, to international commerce, to world exhibitions. What classes and strata of society will now become the real representatives of culture, will give us our scholars, artists, and poets, or creative personalities? Or is everything to turn into big business, as in America?' What Burckhardt feared most was what he called 'the American man of culture', by which he meant someone who 'has rejected historical continuity and a large part of spiritual continuity but would like to keep art and poetry as a luxury item'.

Over the past century, efforts to find and determine the Hungarian characteristics have developed a notion suggesting that it is the warped Hungarian self which is responsible for the centuries-long history of disaster and the unevenness of Hungarian political development. Moving along this track, the source of all troubles is necessarily to be sought in the Hungarians having taken a road of development and embraced influences that are in disagreement with their inner characteristics. This 'un-Hungarianness' was said to involve these three, foreign, ways: foreign rule, foreign assimilation, and foreign

influence. However, the "foreign-rule argument" had already lost most of its grounds when Hungary ceased to be under foreign rule in 1918. In fact, the corruption of Hungarian community began to flourish in the middle of the nineteenth century and became fatal after 1918. Thus the question of national characterology, necessarily leading to the issues of foreign assimilation and influence, should be handled with utmost care.

Without laying all blame on the 'Trianon trauma' (and without seeking 'blame' anywhere in general), in the terms of the legacy and perspectives offered by 1918 the experience that the self-loss of the Hungarian national community mostly draws upon is the dissolution of Historical Hungary. This was an experience when Hungary was deprived of two-thirds of its area and over sixty percent of its population. The territory of Hungary shrank from 282,000 square kilometers to 93,000 square kilometers and its population from 18.2 million to 7.6 million. Decision-makers drew the border lines incongruously and often in arbitrary ways, subjecting the principle of self-determination to the fleeting needs of power politics. Hungary was thus to accept a treaty that cut off not only non-Hungarian majority areas but also areas with mixed populations and large Hungarian majority areas. Hungary was not the only country forced by the victorious powers an unjust and unacceptable peace treaty which was to obstruct the growth and consolidation of democracy. The Treaty of Versailles, imposed on Germany, thwarted the consolidation of the Weimar Republic because of its humiliating and unacceptable conditions. Hungarian foreign and internal policies were forced onto a course of revisionism, which in turn hindered democracy.

Whether the creation of a United Europe will protect the supposedly characteristic features of European culture, whether it will be able to preserve the thought of 'unity in diversity' to be a quintessential aspect of Europe is not certain, of course. It is possible that the European Union will in fact further diminish the significance of particular historical and cultural traditions, until they become picturesque items of decoration, a kind of national kitsch.

Alternatively, insofar as measures are taken to preserve that variety and diversity, it is possible that these will inhibit the emergence of a vital new European culture and that Europe will simply become an administrative apparatus that regulates trade, transport, defense, basic civil rights, and so on.

08.

Éire
Ireland

THE WOMEN'S SUFFRAGETTE MOVEMENT IN IRELAND

Sinéad McCool

In 1918 Ireland was part of the legislative union of Great Britain, part of the British Empire (which was then one quarter of the globe) and ruled from the Houses of Parliament at Westminster.

1918 was a landmark year for women in Ireland and Britain. The Representation of the People Act passed by the Westminster Parliament gave the vote to women, aged over 30, who were university graduates or met a property qualification. It also gave all men over the age of 21 the right to vote for the first time. Later that year the Parliament (Qualification of Women) Act allowed women to stand for election on an equal footing with men.

These legislative changes resulted from the culmination of years of agitation by the suffrage movement and the significant social change across Britain and Ireland during the years of the Great War 1914-1918.

In Ireland, women had been working for the franchise from the mid-nineteenth century when Anna Haslam (née Fisher), from County Cork, was one of those listed on the First Women's Suffrage petition presented to the British House of Commons. She and her husband Thomas set up the non-militant Dublin Women's Suffrage Association in the 1876. Over the next three decades it was known by many different names including the Irishwomen's Suffrage and Local Government Association. Anna Haslam remained as the Secretary until 1913. It focused on holding meetings, circulating petitions and writing letters to the newspapers. It numbered among its members, men and women, nationalists and unionists (those who wanted to maintain the union with Britain).

Isabella Tod formed the first Irish suffrage society, the North of Ireland Women's Suffrage Society, and encouraged others to set up groups. Over time groups such

as the Conservative and Unionist Franchise League were formed. Novelists Edith Somerville and Violet Florence Martin (who wrote under the pseudonym Martin Ross) set up the Munster Women's Franchise League. The Irish Women's Franchise League established in 1908 by Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington and Margaret Cousins along with their husbands who became associate members. Their newspaper *The Irish Citizen* reported on a range of issues. They felt that the other suffrage groups were 'too genteel', so they embarked on militant action.

In Britain there were also Irish members of the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU). These women became known as suffragettes (the name given by the Press to militant suffragists who used violent methods to highlight their case). They also began to hunger-strike from 1909, when Marion Wallace Dunlop (imprisoned for painting a slogan) was refused recognition as a political prisoner. After three and a half days she was released, but from then on other suffragettes who were imprisoned followed her lead.

Rosalind and Leila Cadiz (calling themselves the Murphy sisters) were the first Irish women (they were born in India but living in Dublin) to go on hunger-strike in Holloway Jail, England. They were arrested for breaking windows in London. They were on hunger-strike from April to May 1912.

In Ireland the first hunger-strikers were English suffragettes Gladys Evans, Mrs Mary Leigh, Mrs Jennie Baines (using the name Mrs Baker). They had come to attack the Prime Minister HH Asquith when he was in Ireland on a visit in July 1912.

In Mountjoy Jail, Dublin, Irish suffragettes Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington, Marguerite Palmer and the Cadiz sisters went on a sympathetic hunger-strike. They had the lesser crimes of breaking windows of government

buildings but refusing to pay their fines were imprisoned. The authorities could not justify different treatment for the Irish and English prisoners, so delayed force feeding the English women until the Irish women were released.

Other strikes followed in Irish jails. In Tullamore on 2 February 1913 one of the Irish suffragettes who went on Hunger Strike was Mabel Purser, grand-daughter of the famous Irish Nationalist William Smith O'Brien. On 5 February the Tullamore Urban District Council unanimously passed a resolution demanding full political prisoners' treatment for the prisoners.

In 1913 the authorities used an alternative approach, Prisoner's Temporary Discharge of Ill Health Act (commonly known as the Cat and Mouse Act), where prisoners could be freed for a period if they had ill health. They were meant to return when they were recovered. After a concerted protest campaign by the Irish suffragettes the Irish prison authorities did not insist on the suffragettes' return to prison.

Despite the intense and often violent campaign (in which one of the members of the Women's Social and Political Union died and many others suffered a premature death due to their hunger-strikes) none of the members of the WSPU were returned in the General Election of 1918.

The Houses of Parliament records show that 16 female candidates stood for election, including Christabel Pankhurst daughter of the founder of the Women's Social and Political Union who did not get sufficient votes to take a seat.

Two women contested the 1918 General Election in Irish constituencies – Countess Constance de Markievicz and Winifred Carney. Carney stood unsuccessfully in 1918, as someone who was a Socialist Republican she had little hope of an election in an area, Central and East Belfast Victoria Division, in which the majority of those eligible to vote supported Unionist candidates.

Constance de Markievicz, (then Constance Gore Booth), had set up a branch of Irishwomen's Suffrage and Local Government Association along with her sister Eva in her homeplace of County Sligo in Ireland. An open suffrage meeting held by the sisters in 1896 was reported in the local paper the Sligo Champion as 'amusing proceedings'. The packed audience was made up mainly of hostile males. The then twenty-eight-year-old Constance gave her first political speech. She is reported as saying: ... *You all know that the first step*

is to form societies to agitate and force the government to realise a very large class have a grievance and will never stop making themselves disagreeable till it is righted ... Silence is the evil that might easily be remedied and the sooner we begin the row, the better.

She was later made President of the North Sligo Women's Suffrage Association. In June 1908 along with Eva, who was by then working for the suffrage movement in Manchester, she addressed a crowd of working women in Trafalgar Square, London on 'the industrial aspect of suffrage', The London correspondent of the Irish Times reported: 'as in most other political agitations, the voice of Ireland was not silent.'

That year Constance de Markievicz (now wife of a Polish Count) joined in Dublin a socio-political group just for women, Inghinidhe na hÉireann (Daughters of Ireland) and contributed to the organisation's paper *Bean na hÉireann*. She co-founded a youth organisation for boys, the Fianna in 1909, a scouting movement for Irish boys many of whom would go on to fight for Irish independence.

It was an era of industrial turmoil and Constance became committed to the cause of labour. During one of the bitterest disputes, known as 'the Lockout' of 1913, in which the workers who supported the union were shut out of their places of employment, Constance assisted in the soup kitchens and joined the Irish Citizen Army which had been formed to protect the workers.

She served with this force during the 1916 Rising, a conflict which saw disparate nationalist groups such as the Irish Volunteers, Cumann na mBan, the Hibernian Rifles, the Fianna and Clan na Gael girl scouts coming together to fight for Irish self-determination. The rights of small nations and the aspiration of a place at the negotiation table were justifications for this conflict, which took place at Easter 1916. A military council of seven declared an Irish Republic, supported by a small force which had over three hundred women involved in first aid, scouting, carrying despatches. Some of the women were involved in combat. Constance, was appointed during the fight, as Second-in-Command at the Saint Stephen's Green Garrison, (until this post was abandoned and the garrison moved to the nearby Royal College of Surgeons).

Arrested, she was court martialled and sentenced to death for her part in the Rising, but her sentence was commuted to life in prison as she was a woman. She was sent to prison in England but released as part of a general amnesty in June 1917.

She was rearrested for her political activities for Irish independence. While in Holloway Jail she was nominated as one of the candidates for Sinn Féin who were contesting the 1918 election and was successfully elected. Sinn Féin elected members did not take their seats in the UK parliament in Westminster but instead established their own parliament, Dáil Éireann, in Dublin where she was appointed Minister for labour on 2 April, 1919. From her cell Constance wrote at the time 'my present address alone will make an excellent electoral address'. In her actual election address she wrote: *'There are many roads to freedom. Today we may hope that our road to freedom will be a peaceful and bloodless one.'*

That was not to be the case, an unofficial war commenced in 1919, and two years of guerrilla warfare

ended with a Truce in July 1921. Acceptance of the Anglo-Irish Treaty resulted in a Civil War. Countess de Markievicz opposed the Irish Free State formed because of this Treaty.

Constance de Markievicz was elected to Dáil Éireann, but she did not take her seat in the parliament in protest. Within a decade, she would be dead; her periods of imprisonment included a period on hunger-strike which undermined her health and brought early death at the age of 59.

In 1922 the Irish Free State Government granted full suffrage to women over the age of 21. It would be 1928 before it was granted in Britain.

GLUAISEACHT SUFRAIGÉIDÍ MNÁ NA HÉIREANN

Sinéad McCool

I 1918, ba chuid den Ríocht Aontaithe í, Éire, fós cuid d'Impireacht na Breataine í (faoina raibh 25% den domhan) faoi smacht agus a bhí faoi smacht ag feisirí Westminster.

Ach bliain na cinniúna do mhná na hÉireann – agus mná Shasana – ab ea 1918. Sa bhliain sin, ritheadh Act Ionadaíochta na nDaoine ag Westminster a bhronn vótaí ar na mná a bhí 30 bliain d'aois agus a bhí ina gcéimithe Olscoile nó ag a raibh maoin áirithe. Thug an tAct seo an vóta dos na fir a bhí 21 bhliain d'aois – don chéad uair. Níos déanaí i 1918, thug Parlaimint Shasana cead dos na mná a bheith mar iarrthóirí Parlaiminte sna toghcháin.

Tháinig na hathruithe seo tar éis na blianta fada racáin agus aighnis ag na mná. Deineadh na hathruithe seo i rith Chogadh Domhanda 1914-1918 agus ba chuid iad de leasúcháin shóisialta na tréimhse sin.

In Éirinn bhí na mná ag tarraingt racáin le fada le vótaí a fháil – ó lár an 19ú haois ar aghaidh. I measc na mban úd bhí Anna Haslam (née Fisher) ó chontae Chorcaí; bhunaigh sí féin agus a fear chéile, Tomás, an ghluaiseacht 'Dublin Women's Suffrage Association' sa bhliain 1876. Lean an ghluaiseacht sin ar feadh 30 bliain faoi ainmneacha éagsúla agus bhí Anna Haslam mar rúnaí na gluaiseachta go dtí 1913. Scríobhadar litreacha chuig na nuachtáin, d'agraigh siad cruinnithe poiblí agus mar sin de. I measc na mball, bhí náisiúntóirí agus aontachtóirí (is é sin daoine gur mhaith leo an ceangal le Sasana a choimeád).

Ba í Isabelle Todd a bhunaigh an chéad ghluaiseacht do vótaí dos na mná (*first Irish Women's Suffrage Society*) – eagraíocht a bhrúigh aithmeanna eile ar aghaidh. Bhí grúpa eile ann mar chomhcheangal leis na haontachtóirí (*Conservative and Unionist League*). In a measc, bhí na scríbhneoirí Edith Somerville agus Violet Florence Martin (a scríobh faoin ainm cleite Martin Ross). Bhunaigh

an bheirt sin an *Munster Women's Franchise League*. Sa bhliain 1908, bhunaigh Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington agus Margaret Cousins – mar aon lena bhfear céile – an *Irish Women's Franchise League*. Bhí nuachtán *The Irish Citizen* acu agus a thug poiblíocht do cheisteanna éagsúla. Mheasadar seo go raibh na gluaiseachtaí eile ró-ghálanta agus bhrúigh siad ar aghaidh gluaiseachtaí a bhí míleata.

Sa Bhreatain, bhí baill Éireannacha san Women's Social and Political Union (*WSPU*). Tugadh an t-ainm *suffragettes* (*sufraigéidí*) ins na nuachtáin dos na mná a bhí ag baint úsáid as lámh láidir chun aird a tharraingt ar a gcás. Ba iad seo a chuaigh ar stailc ocrais ó 1909 nuair a diúltaíodh seasamh mar phríosúnach polaitiúil a thabhairt do Marion Wallace Dunlop. Tar éis trí lá go leith, scaoileadh saor í ach ón -am sin ar aghaidh, chuaigh mná eile a bhí i bpríosún ar stailc ocrais.

Ba iad Rosalind agus Leila Cadiz (a thug an t-ainm na deirfiúracha Murphy orthu féin) na chéad mhná Éireannacha a bhí ar stailc ocrais. Rugadh an bheirt sin san Ind ach bhí cónaí orthu i mBaile Átha Cliath. Is i bpríosún Holloway, Sasana, a bhíodar i ngéibheann. Gabhadh iad toisc gur bhriseadar fuinneoga i Londain. Bhíodar ar stailc ocrais ó Aibreán go Bealtaine 1912.

Is mná Sasanacha a bhí chun tosaigh le dul ar stailc ocrais in Éirinn; ba iad Gladys Evans, Mary Bean Leigh, Jennie Bean Baines (a ghlac an t-ainm Bean Baker). Tháingadar go hÉirinn le fogha a thabhairt faoin bPríomh Aire HH Asquith nuair a bhí sé ar cuairt ar Éirinn i mí Iúil 1912.

I bpríosún Mountjoy, BÁC, chuaigh Hanna Sheehy-Skeffington, Marguerite Palmer agus na deirfiúracha Cadiz ar stailc ocrais le léiriú go raibh siad ar aon intinn leo. Bhí mionchoir déanta acu – tar éis fuinneoga oifigi an Rialtas a bhriseadh. Ní bheadh na Sasanaigh ábalta caitheamh leis na mná Éireannacha agus

Sasanacha ar shlite éagsúla. Mar sin, chuireadar moill ar na mná Sasanacha a chothú le héigean go dtí gur scaoileadh saor na mná Éireannacha.

Bhí stailceanna ocrais eile i bpríosúin eile in Éirinn. San Tulach Mhór ar an 2ú Feabhra 1913, i measc na sufraigéidí Éireannacha bhí Mabel Purser, gariníon le William Smith O'Brien, tírghráthóir mór le rá. Ar an 5ú Feabhra, rith Comhairle Baile Thulach Mhór rún, d'aon ghuth, ag seasamh go tréan go dtabharfaí stádas mar phríosúnaigh pholaitiúla dos na príosúnaigh seo.

Ó 1913 ar aghaidh, chinn na húdaráis ar scéim nua a leanúint. Is é sin, na príosúnaigh a bhí ar stailc ocrais a scaoileadh saor faoin Act nua (Prisoner's Temporary Discharge of Ill Health Act) ar a nglaoití an Cat and Mouse Act. D'fhéadfaí príosúnaigh a scaoileadh saor ar feadh tréimhse dá mbeadh an tsláinte go dona acu ach nuair a bheadh biseach orthu bheadh sé i gceist go bhfillfís ar an bpríosún. Ach níor éirigh go rómhaith leis sin toisc an rúille búille a chuir na sufraigéidí ar bun. Níor thóg na húdaráis príosúnach ar bith ar ais.

Fuair bean amháin den *Women's Social and Political Union* bás toisc í a bheith ar stailc ocrais. Ach ina ainneoin sin, níor bhuaigh iarrathóir ar bith den WSPU suíochán ar bith sa toghchán i 1918.

Bhí 16 n-iarrthóir ban ón WSPU san toghchán agus Christine Pankhurst (bunaitheoir an pháirtí WSPU in a measc sa toghchán sin).

I 1918, ghlac beirt bhan páirt san toghchán in Éirinn an Chuntaois Markievicz agus Winifred Carney. Ní raibh seans rómhór ag Carney mar rith sí don pháirtí Sóisialach Poblachtánach. Ina theannta sin, bhí sí ag seasamh i Lár agus in Oirthear Bhéal Feirste, áit in a raibh tromlach an-mhór ag na hAontachtóirí.

Constance Gore Booth ab ainm den Chuntaois Markievicz ag an am agus bhí craobh den ISLGA bunaithe aici agus ag a deirfiúr Eva i gContae Shligigh a áit dúchais. D'éagraigh sí féin agus a deirfiúr cruinniú i 1896 agus bhí cur síos air sin sa Sligo Champion Bhí scata fear ann a bhí magúil. Bhí Constance 28 mbliana d'aois ag an am agus thug sí a céad ráiteas polaitiúil ansin. Tá sé scríofa go ndúirt sí: "Tá a fhios agaibh go léir gurb é a chéad chéim atá le déanamh ná cumainn a bhunú le brú a chur ar an Rialtas ionas go dtuigfidh siad go bhfuil fórsa láidir aontaithe ann agus go bhfuil gearán acu, agus nach stopfaidh siad den chomhghríosú go dtí go mbeidh sé ceartaithe acu... is drochrud é an ciúnas agus a luaithe a thosóimid leis an aighneas is ea is fearr".

Rinneadh Uachtarán ina dhiaidh sin di ar Chumann Shligigh Thuaidh de Chumann na mBan um Chearta

Vótála. I Meitheamh na bliana 1908 i dteannta Eva, a bhí ag obair i Manchain ar son na gluaiseachta um chearta vótála na mban, labhair sí i gCearnóg Trafalgar, Londain, le slua ban den lucht oibre maidir leis na gnéithe tionsclaíocha den cheart vótála. Dúirt comhfhreagraí ón Irish Times a méid seo a leanas: "amhail an chuid is mó den agóidíocht pholaitiúil eile níor fhan guth na hÉireann ina thost".

An bhliain sin ghlac an Chuntaois Markievicz (a bhí pósta an tráth sin le Cunta Polannach) páirt i ngrúpa polaitiúil do mhná dar teideal Inghinidhe na hÉireann (Daughters of Ireland). Bhí sí ina comhbhunaitheoir ar eagraíocht do bhuachailí dar teideal na Fianna i 1909. Gluaiseacht do ghasóga ab ea é sin le haghaidh bhuachaillí na hÉireann. Níos faide anonn ghlacfaidh dream nach beag de na buachaillí páirt sa troid ar son neamhspleáchas na hÉireann.

Ré ab ea é ina raibh cúrsaí tionsclaíocha suaite go maith, agus ghlac sí cás an lucht oibre chuici féin go fonnmar. Nuair a bhí "Frithdhúnadh 1913" i mbarra a réime, díospóid thar a bheith binbeach inar coimeádadh na hoibrithe a bhí ag tacú leis an gCearchumann amach ón ionad oibre, thug Constance cúnaimh sna cistiní anraith agus chuaigh sí isteach in Arm Cathartha na nÉireann. Bunaíodh é sin chun na hoibrithe a chosaint.

Bhí sí páirteach san fhórsa sin le linn Éirí Amach 1916. Sa choinbhleacht sin, tháinig lear mór grúpaí náisiúnacha le chéile, mar atá, Óglaigh na hÉireann, Cumann na mBan, na Radhfailí Ibeirneacha, na Fianna, Banógligh Chlann na nGael chun troid ar son féinchinntiúcháin. I measc na nithe eile a spreag an coimbhleacht, a tharla le linn na Cásca i 1916, bhí cearta na náisiún beag agus an mhian chun a bheith suite ag bord na caibidlíochta. D'fhógair comhairle mhíleata de sheachtar Poblacht na hÉireann. Ag tacú leis an gcomhairle sin bhí dream de bhreis is trí chéad bean. Bhí an dream sin páirteach, sa gharchabhair, i scabhtáil agus i dteachtaireachtaí a sheachadadh. Ceapadh Constance ina Leascheannaire ag Garastún Fhaiche Stiafna (go dtí gur tréigeadh an t-ionad sin agus gur bogadh an garstún go dtí Coláiste Ríoga na Máinlianna).

Gabhadh í agus chuaigh sí faoi chúirt mhíleata; daoradh chun báis í toisc an pháirt a ghlac sí san Eirí Amach. Ach malartaíodh é sin go dtí seal i bpríosún toisc gur bhean í. Chaith sí seal sa phríosún i Sasana, ach scaoileadh í faoi phardún ginearalta i Meitheamh 1917.

Gabhadh arís í toisc go raibh sí gníomhach go polaitiúil ar son shaoirse na hÉireann. An fhaid a bhí sí i bpríosún Holloway ainmníodh í mar iarrthóir do Pháirtí Shinn Féin do thoghchán 1918 agus toghadh í. Níor ghlac teachtaí Dála Shinn Féin le suíochán ag Par-

laimint Westminster; chuireadar a bparlaimint féin ar bun in Áth Cliath. Fuair sí post ansin mar Aire Saothair ar an 2ú Aibreán 1919. Nuair a bhí sí sa phríosún, scríobh sí go ndéanfadh an seoladh sin gnó go maith mar fhógra uaithí don toghchán. San fhógra toghcháin, scríobh sí: 'Tá a lán bóithre don tSaoirse. Inniu, bíodh súil againn gur bealach síochánta agus gan fuil a shileadh a bheidh ann.'

Ní hamhlaidh a bhí; thosaigh cogadh neamhoifigiúil i 1919 agus bhí cogadh cathartha a lean go dtí go raibh sos cogaidh sínithe i mí Iúil 1921. Glacadh le Conradh leis na

Sasanaigh. Ina dhiaidh sin bhí cogadh na mbrathrar. Bhí Markievicz i gcoinne Shaorstát Éireann mar theastaigh Poblacht uaithí.

Bhí toghchán eile ann agus toghadh í arís. Níor ghlac sí leis an suíochán sa Dáil mar chomhartha míshásachta. Fuair sí bás go hóg – ag 59 mbliana d'aois. Bhí na tréimhsí sa phríosún agus an stailc ocrais tar éis a sláinte a lagú.

I 1922, thug an Saorstát Cearta Vótála iomlán do mhná a raibh 21 bhliain d'aois acu. Níor deineadh an rud céanna do mhná Briotanach go dtí 1928.

09.

Lëtzebuerg
Luxembourg

HUNGERSNOT UND FÜRSTENSTURZ

LUXEMBURG IM ERSTEN WELTKRIEG

André Link

Viele sehen im Ersten Weltkrieg in erster Linie ein unheilvolles Vorspiel zu einem noch viel verheerenderen Konflikt, dem Zweiten Weltkrieg. In Luxemburg verwittern allmählich die Kreuze und Monumente, die an die „Grande Guerre“ erinnern, ihre Schrecken wurden von den Opfern des Zweiten Weltkriegs weitgehend in den Hintergrund gedrängt.

Trotzdem war das zwischen 1914 und 1918 wütende Völkerringen eine „Urkatastrophe“, die Luxemburg völlig unvorbereitet traf. Am Abend des 1. August 1914 – zwei Tage, bevor das Deutsche Reich Frankreich den Krieg erklärte – besetzte ein deutsches Infanterieregiment den kleinen Bahnhof von Ulflingen (Troisvierges), einem wichtigen Umschlagplatz und Verkehrsknotenpunkt im Norden des Landes. Die Musiker, die im benachbarten Clervaux ein Fest mit Böllerschüssen feierten, waren nicht wenig erstaunt, als ein deutscher Offizier sie anwies, ihren „Beschuss des kaiserlich-deutschen Heeres“ einzustellen.

Am nächsten Tag überschritten deutsche Kontingente die Grenze bei Wasserbillig und besetzten den Rest des Landes. Auf der hauptstädtischen „Place d’Armes“ tauchten Landser auf und fragten die verdutzten Passanten: „Wo sind die Franzosen?“ Von Luxemburg aus marschierten 13.535 deutsche Soldaten in Belgien ein. In der Tat sah der „Schlieffenplan“ einen Vorstoß nach Paris nicht durch Frankreich selbst, sondern durch Luxemburg und Belgien vor. Die Neutralität beider Länder – „ein Fetzen Papier“ laut Reichskanzler Theobald von Bethmann Hollweg.

Natürlich legten in Luxemburg Großherzogin Marie Adelheid, Regierung und Parlament Protest gegen die Verletzung der nationalen Souveränität ein. Von Bethmann Hollweg versicherte, dies seien bloße Schutzmaßnahmen, um einem Überfall Frankreichs vorzubeugen. Der Aufenthalt deutscher Truppen auf luxemburgischem Boden sei lediglich ein Provisorium.

Das Provisorium sollte vier Jahre dauern. Allerdings war die Besetzung – anders als im Zweiten Weltkrieg – eine rein militärische. Wichtig für den Okkupanten war der Zugriff auf das gut ausgebaute luxemburgische Schienennetz und die prosperierende luxemburgische Stahlindustrie, ansonsten mischte man sich nicht in innerluxemburgische Angelegenheiten ein. Die Luxemburger durften ihre Regierung und ihre Verwaltungen behalten. Scharf reagierten die Deutschen nur, wenn sie ihre eigene Sicherheit bedroht sahen. Das bekam etwa der virulente antideutsche Literat Marcel Noppeney zu spüren, der eine Organisation zur Unterstützung belgischer und französischer Kriegsoffer ins Leben gerufen hatte. Der Schriftsteller wurde wegen „Kriegsverrats“ dreimal zum Tod verurteilt. Nachdem Großherzogin Marie Adelheid beim deutschen Kaiser interveniert hatte, wurde die Strafe in lebenslange Haft umgewandelt, die Noppeney bis Kriegsende in Dietz an der Lahn absaß.

Militärische Kämpfe hat es im Großherzogtum nicht gegeben. Alliierte Luftangriffe hatten kriegswichtige Eisenbahn- und Industrieanlagen zum Ziel, nur vereinzelt und versehentlich trafen sie den zivilen Bereich.

Die Gräueltaten, die deutsche Soldaten an der belgischen Zivilbevölkerung anrichteten („the Rape of Belgium“), blieben den Luxemburgern jedenfalls erspart. Dennoch brachte ihnen die Einnahme von Longwy Ende Oktober 1914 zu Bewusstsein, wie nahe der Kriegsschauplatz war. Ein Schock muss für sie das Massaker im ehemals luxemburgischen Arlon gewesen sein, wo am 26. August 1914 126 Zivilisten auf Befehl von Generalmajor Richard von Tessmar unter dem Verdacht, „francs-tireurs“ (Freischärler) zu sein, erschossen wurden.

All dies mochte Staatsminister Eyschen darin bestärken, an seiner Politik der Kulanz festzuhalten. Das Großherzogtum, das seit 1842 dem deutschen Zollverein angehörte, war wirtschaftlich abhängig vom östlichen Nachbarn, und allgemein wurde angenommen, dass, wenn das Reich den Krieg gewinnen würde, Luxemburg ein deutsches Bundesland werden würde.

Als die deutsche Armee zu Kriegsbeginn ihr Hauptquartier in Luxemburg etablierte, stimmte die junge, unerfahrene Landesfürstin (anscheinend auf Anraten ihres Staatsministers) zu, Wilhelm II. zu empfangen. Mit dieser Geste – die bei den alliierten Mächten scharfe Missbilligung fand – verletzte Regierung und Großherzogin selbst die Neutralität, zu der sie durch den Londoner Vertrag von 1867 verpflichtet waren. So sehr sich Staatsminister Eyschen im weiteren Verlauf des Krieges auch bemühte, zwischen den kriegführenden Parteien zu lavieren, indem er nach Bern und Den Haag reiste, im Versuch, die argwöhnischen Alliierten zu beschwichtigen, seine Schlichtungspolitik stellte sich als Fehlschlag heraus. Paul Eyschen starb am 12. Oktober 1915. Offizielle Todesursache war ein Herzschlag, es gingen aber Gerüchte über einen Suizid um, den man seinem politischen Scheitern zuschrieb.

Nach Eyschens Tod lösten sich bis Kriegsende nicht weniger als acht Regierungen ab. Die Großherzogin erleichterte ihnen die Aufgabe nicht, indem sie ausschließlich die Rechtspartei zum Nachteil anderer Gruppierungen begünstigte. Als der Linksblock im Parlament regierungsfähig zu werden drohte, löste sie die Kammer auf und schrieb Neuwahlen aus – was von der Linken als Staatsstreich ausgelegt wurde.

Ein Hauptproblem der verschiedenen Regierungen war die Lebensmittelknappheit. Fakt ist, dass die Luxemburger im Ersten Weltkrieg Hunger litten. Zwar hatte das traditionelle Agrarland genug Ressourcen, um seine Bürger zu ernähren, aber es hatte ja auch den Besatzer zu versorgen. Ein- und Ausfuhr von Esswaren war verboten, die „Landsturm“-Soldaten schmuggelten aber fleißig über die Grenzen hinweg. Währenddessen standen die Luxemburger Schlange für eine Handvoll Eier oder

Kartoffeln. Die Grundnahrungsmittel waren rationiert: Ein Erwachsener hatte Anrecht auf 250 Gramm Brot und 200 Gramm Mehl pro Tag. Was Erbsen, Bohnen und Linsen betraf, so war ihr Preis innerhalb eines Jahres um das Dreifache gestiegen.

Die Einwohner suchten sich zu behelfen, indem sie in Scharen zu Hamsterkäufen vornehmlich in den Norden des Landes aufbrachen. Mein Vater (1908 geboren) erzählte mir immer wieder, wie schlimm diese Hungerjahre für einen Heranwachsenden gewesen waren.

Infolge der mangelhaften Versorgung mit Gütern des täglichen Bedarfs brach am 5. Juni 1917 im Süden des Landes ein Streik der Berg- und Hüttenarbeiter aus, der vom Besatzer unerbittlich niedergeschlagen wurde. Hart traf die geschwächte Bevölkerung im Oktober 1918 der Ausbruch der Spanischen Grippe, der weltweit ca. 50 Millionen Menschen zum Opfer fallen sollten.

Während die Bevölkerung darbt, stand Großherzogin Marie Adelheid immer mehr im Fadenkreuz konträrer Meinungen. Unmittelbar bei Kriegsausbruch hatte sie in ihren Schlössern Lazarette eingerichtet, in denen sie selbst verwundete Soldaten pflegte. Auch rief sie zur Gründung einer einheimischen Sektion des Roten Kreuzes auf. Marie Adelheids antiquierte Auffassung der Rolle eines Staatsoberhauptes in einer konstitutionellen Monarchie war möglicherweise auf den Einfluss ihrer portugiesischen Mutter Maria Anna von Braganza (Tochter des absolutistisch regierenden und deswegen abgesetzten Königs Miguel) zurückzuführen, was die Herrscherin darin bestärkt haben könnte, über ihre verfassungsmäßigen Prärogativen hinweg sich in die Politik einzumischen, unter starker Begünstigung alles Deutschen. Die Luxemburger, mehr noch aber die Alliierten, kritisierten, dass der Hof deutsch geblieben war, dass die Schwestern der Großherzogin sich mit deutschen Fürstentöchtern verlobten, so Prinzessin Antonia mit Prinz Rupprecht von Bayern, den die Mächte der Entente als „Schlächter von Flandern“ vor ein Kriegsgericht stellen wollten. Immerhin wartete Prinzessin Charlotte bis zum Friedensschluss, bevor sie eine Ehe mit ihrem Cousin Felix einging, der zwar ein Bourbone war, als Schwager von Kaiser Karl von Österreich aber auf deutscher Seite kämpfte.

Zwar war Marie Adelheid gewillt, die Verfassung und die nationale Souveränität zu verteidigen, worauf sie bei ihrem Herrschaftsantritt einen Eid geleistet hatte. Spätestens aber als zum Jahresende 1918 ein Bauern- und Soldatenrat nach der Republik rief, das Freiwilligenkorps (Luxemburgs einzige Militäreinheit) meuterte und sich die Schmährufe gegen die Landesmutter häuften, war unübersehbar, dass die Zukunft der Monarchie auf der Kippe stand.

Dennoch die Dynastie zu retten – ein mehr emotionales als politisches Unterfangen –, dies versuchte in letzter Minute die Regierung, die sich kurz vor dem Waffenstillstand gebildet hatte. Mit seinen Ministerkollegen Nikolaus Welter und August Liesch (übrigens zwei angesehenen Autoren) begab sich Staatsminister Emil Reuter unter abenteuerlichen Umständen Ende Dezember 1918 nach Paris, wo sie nur inoffiziell von Vertretern der französischen Regierung empfangen wurden. Als Staatsoberhaupt war Marie Adelheid für die Alliierten untragbar geworden, sie stimmten aber nach zähem Ringen zu, dass ihre Schwester Charlotte ihr auf den Thron folgen sollte. Worauf Marie Adelheid ins Exil ging, in dem sie 1924 im Alter von 29 Jahren starb.

Eine Volksbefragung im Jahr 1919 bekräftigte den Fortbestand der Dynastie. Allerdings wusste sie sich anzupassen, wurde aus einem deutschen ein frankophiles

Fürstenhaus und enthält sich seitdem jeglicher Einmischung in die Politik.

Wie auch immer, das Land, das noch im gesamten 19. Jahrhundert „Luxemburger Deutsch“ sprach, rückte ökonomisch und kulturell vom östlichen Nachbarn ab, schloss sich wirtschaftlich Frankreich sowie Belgien und den Niederlanden an und nahm aktiv am Aufbau eines neuen Europas teil.

Große Feiern zur Rückbesinnung auf den Ersten Weltkrieg hat es nicht gegeben (eine 2014 vorgesehene Ausstellung kam erst drei Jahre später zustande), aber epochale Ereignisse wie die Hungersnot und die Abdankung einer Großherzogin haben sich in das kollektive Gedächtnis der Nation gegraben.

FAMINE AND THE FALL OF A DUCHESS

LUXEMBOURG IN WORLD WAR I

André Link, translated by Jeff Thill

There are many who see in World War I above all a calamitous prologue to a much more devastating conflict: World War II. In Luxembourg crosses and monuments, reminders of the “Grande Guerre”, are slowly withering away, its horrors largely forced into the background by the sacrifices of World War II.

Still, this conflict between warring nations, which raged between 1914 and 1918, was a primeval catastrophe which caught Luxembourg completely unawares. On the evening of 1st August 1914 – two days before the German Empire declared war on France – a German infantry regiment seized the small station of Ulflingen, an important trading point and traffic hub in the north of the country. Musicians, who were firing off artillery salvos during festivities in neighbouring Clervaux, were not a little surprised when a German officer ordered them to cease the “bombardment of the Imperial German army”.

The next day German contingents crossed the border at Wasserbillig and occupied the rest of the country. German infantry soldiers appeared in the capital’s main square, the “Place d’Armes”, and asked baffled passers-by: “Where are the Frenchmen?” Coming from Luxembourg, 13,535 German soldiers marched into Belgium. In actual fact, the “Schlieffenplan” outlined an advance on Paris, not through France itself, but through Luxembourg and Belgium. The neutrality of both countries – “a scrap of paper” according to Reich’s Chancellor Theobald von Bethman Hollweg.

Naturally in Luxembourg, Grand Duchess Marie Adelheid (Marie-Adélaïde), the government and parliament protested against the violation of the country’s sovereignty. Von Bethmann Hollweg gave the assurance that this was simply a protective measure to pre-empt a French raid. The stationing of German troops on Luxembourgish soil would be merely provisional.

This provisional state of affairs was to last for four years. However, the occupation – in contrast to World War II – was a purely military one. What mattered to the occupying forces was access to the well-developed Luxembourg railway infrastructure and the prospering steel industry, apart from this, they did not interfere in internal Luxembourgish affairs. The Luxembourgers were allowed to keep their government and their administration. The Germans only reacted fiercely when they considered their own safety threatened. The literary figure Marcel Noppeney was given a taste of this. Virulently anti-German, he had founded an organisation to support Belgian and French war victims and was hence, on the grounds of treason, sentenced to death three times. After Marie Adelheid had intervened with the German Kaiser, the sentence was commuted to life imprisonment, a sentence which Noppeney served in Dietz an der Lahn until the end of the war.

There were no military conflicts in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg. Allied air raids targeted strate-

gically important railway infrastructure and industrial complexes, only on isolated occasions did they inadvertently hit civilian areas.

Luxembourgers were spared the atrocities which German soldiers inflicted on Belgian civilians (“the rape of Belgium”). However, the taking of Longwy, towards the end of October 1914, made Luxembourgers realize how close the theatre of war actually was. A shock to them must have been the massacre in the formerly Luxembourgish town of Arlon where, on 26th August 1914, 126 civilians, by orders of Major-General Richard von Tessmar, were shot under the suspicion of being partisans.

All of this may have strengthened Prime Minister Eyschen’s resolve to continue with his policy of goodwill. The Grand Duchy, which since 1842 had belonged to the German customs union (“Zollverein”), was economically dependent on its Eastern neighbour, and it was generally assumed that if the Reich was to win the war, Luxembourg would become a German federal state.

When at the beginning of the war the German army set up headquarters in Luxembourg, the young, inexperienced sovereign (apparently acting on the Prime Minister’s advice) agreed to welcome Wilhelm II. With this gesture – heavily criticized by the Allied Forces – the government and the Grand Duchess violated the country’s status of neutrality, to which they were bound by the Treaty of London of 1867. However hard Prime Minister Eyschen tried to navigate between the warring parties during the conflict, travelling to Bern and The Hague in his attempt to mollify the suspicious Allies, his policy of conciliation turned out to be a failure. Paul Eyschen died on 12th October 1915. A heart attack was the official explanation for his death, yet there were rumours that he committed suicide because of his political failure.

After Eyschen’s death no less than eight governments succeeded each other. The Grand Duchess did not make the task any easier by exclusively favouring the Right Wing Party to the detriment of other factions. When a coalition of the Left threatened to get a majority in Parliament, she dissolved the Chamber and called for new elections – which was seen by the Left as a coup d’état.

A major problem for the different governments was the scarcity of food. In actual fact, Luxembourgers were suffering from hunger in World War I. While it is true that the traditionally agricultural country had sufficient resources to feed its citizens, it still also had to provide for the occupiers. The import and export

of food was prohibited, the German infantry soldiers, however, were busy smuggling across borders. Meanwhile Luxembourgers were queuing for a few eggs and potatoes. Basic staple food was rationed: One adult was entitled to 250 grams of bread and 200 grams of flour. The price of peas, beans and lentils had increased three-fold within a year.

Inhabitants tried to help themselves by setting off in droves mainly to the North of the country to buy stockpiles of food. My father (born 1908) kept telling me how hard these hunger years had been for an adolescent.

Due to the insufficient supply of the bare, daily necessities, on 5th June 1917 a miners’ strike erupted in the South of the country, which was mercilessly beaten down by the occupier. The weakened population was hit hard by the outbreak of the Spanish flu, which worldwide killed approximately 50 million people.

While the people were labouring under the hardships, the Grand Duchess increasingly became the target of opposing factions. Once war had broken out she had set up military hospitals in her palaces where she herself tended to wounded soldiers. She also called for the establishment of a local section of the Red Cross. Marie Adelheid’s antiquated conception of her role as a sovereign in a constitutional monarchy was possibly due to the influence of her Portuguese mother, Maria Anna of Braganza, (daughter of King Miguel who reigned as an absolutist monarch and who was therefore deposed), which might have invoked her to interfere in political matters beyond her constitutionally accepted prerogatives, while favouring anything German. Luxembourgers, but even more the Allies, criticized the fact that the court had remained German, that the sisters of the Grand Duchess were engaged to German noblemen, such as Princess Antonia’s engagement to Prince Rupprecht of Bavaria, whom the powers of the Entente wanted to put before a war tribunal as the “butcher of Flanders”. Princess Charlotte at least waited until the end of the war before she married her cousin Felix, who was a Bourbon, but, as the brother-in-law of Kaiser Karl of Austria, was fighting for the German side.

Admittedly, Marie Adelheid was willing to uphold the constitution and defend the nation’s sovereignty, something she had sworn to do when she started her reign. Yet at the latest towards the end of 1918 when a peasants’ and soldiers’ council called for a Republic, when the voluntary corps (Luxembourg’s only military unit) started a mutiny and the vilifications against the sovereign became more frequent, it was plain to see that the future of the monarchy was in the balance.

Saving the monarchy – an emotional project rather than a political one – that the government attempted to do at the last minute, a government which had been formed just before the armistice. At the end of December 1918, together with his ministerial colleagues Nikolaus Welter and August Liesch (two respected authors, incidentally) Prime Minister Emile Reuter travelled, in rather adventurous circumstances, to Paris, where they were only unofficially received by representatives of the French government. As a sovereign, Marie Adelheid had become untenable for the Allies, they agreed, however, after tenacious discussions that her sister Charlotte should follow her onto the throne. Thereupon Marie Adelheid went into exile, where she died in 1924 at the age of 29.

A referendum in 1919 ensured the continuation of the dynasty. Yet it knew how to adapt, thus a German

dynasty became a Francophile one and since then it has refrained from any interference in politics.

However this may be, the country that through all of the 19th century had spoken Luxembourg German moved away economically and culturally from its eastern neighbour, attached itself economically to France, Belgium and the Netherlands and took an active part in the construction of a new Europe.

There have not been any major festivities to commemorate World War I (an exhibition which was planned for 2014 was only realized three years later), but epochal events like the famine and the abdication of a duchess have branded themselves deeply in the collective memory of the nation.

10.

Italia
Italy

DATEMI GLI OCCHI

Claudio Cicotti

Datemi gli occhi di un fante, vecchi di cent'anni, per vedere quel che non ho veduto. Datemi gli orecchi per udire ciò che non ho udito. Perché in me c'è solo il vuoto di una memoria che non ha il suono, non la parola, non il volto di chi racconta un vissuto. Datemi la mano di quel fante per colorare le immagini che una pellicola ha strappato ad una guerra che nessuno vide in bianco e nero, se non chi non la visse. E fate che la stessa mano plachi i movimenti accelerati e burattineschi di quei soldati che oggi in quei filmati ci sembran quasi finti.

Eppure nulla fu più familiare e più vero di quella guerra che aprì un solco tra il prima e il dopo nella storia di un'Europa ancora tutta da immaginare. Per quanto piccolo e sperduto, in Italia non trovo paese in cui non compaia una targa, una lapide o un monumento dedicato ai Caduti della Prima Guerra Mondiale. Son monumenti ai combattenti del 1915-1918, ma non solo. Essi sono il monumento di una storia condivisa, di un legame familiare che ci accomuna tutti, discendenti oggi di quei milioni di uomini e ragazzi in grigioverde.

Perché ognuno di noi ha avuto almeno un familiare partito, forse caduto in quella guerra... che, come quasi tutte le guerre, doveva essere una guerra lampo. "Per Natale son di nuovo a casa, stai pur tranquilla!", prometteva qualcuno. "In autunno la guerra l'è bell'e finita!", annunciava un altro. E come dargli torto se anche tanti tra i più neutralisti si erano infine convertiti alla convenienza dell'interventismo dopo quasi un anno di sì, no, sì, no, sì, no... ma forse sì!?

I giornali la facevano facile: pontificavano le mirabolanti imprese di un esercito che di lì a pochi anni avrebbe promesso di "spezzare le reni" al nemico. Il Vate d'Italia, Gabriele D'Annunzio, monumento di sé stesso, arringava le coscienze del suo popolo con l'estetica incandescente delle parole: *Beati i giovani che sono affamati e assetati di gloria, perché saranno saziati. Beati i misericordiosi, perché avranno da detergere un sangue splendente, da bendare un raggianti dolore. Beati i puri di cuore, beati i ritornanti con le vittorie, perché vedranno*

il viso novello di Roma, la fronte ricoronata di Dante, la bellezza trionfale d'Italia.

Era l'estate del 1915 e tutto sembrava così facile, quasi ci si dovesse solo piegare per raccogliere una vittoria già decisa... Poi qualcosa cambiò, la grancassa stonò, i morti cominciarono ad arrivare dal fronte, e sempre dal fronte giunsero anche i primi mutilati, i feriti, coloro che non testimoniavano solo il loro "sangue splendente" ma anche le loro storie.

Ed eran storie diverse da quelle della prosopopea dei giornali, eran voci cariche di dolore, per nulla "raggiante", di paura e di freddo. Sapete cos'è il freddo? Non è solo una sensazione, è una paura, la paura di attraversare un'esperienza che ti distrugge il corpo e ti devasta i nervi. Perché non c'è solo il dolore del freddo, ma anche la paura di quel dolore. Ed era un freddo che aveva sorpreso tutti, poiché il Natale era arrivato, ma il fronte era ancora lì, ed i soldati non avevan neanche ricevuto la divisa invernale perché la guerra era un lampo e per Natale è già finita. E invece no! E assieme alle divise pesanti i soldati aspettavano anche le provvigioni: tutti insieme intirizziti ad aspettare la sera una pagnotta di due chili da dividere in dieci persone... e d'egli addosso a chi ha il coltello in mano e deve fare le fette, ché forse si sbaglierà a tagliarle in modo equo e a te toccherà di meno e a quell'altro di più e allora poi baruffe sedate dal sergente di turno, boia!

E pensare che tanti ci erano venuti volontari, quelli che ci credevano alla guerra, quelli che avevan litigato coi propri genitori o famigliari per partire, perché la patria va difesa ed il nemico era sempre l'austriaco! E per loro le parole del D'Annunzio erano una fiamma accanto alla benzina: "Venisse il Vate prima di ogni assalto", diceva il generale Luigi Cadorna, "metà della vittoria sarebbe già in mano nostra!". Chissà se ci credeva davvero, il Generale, alla vittoria, quando il suo esercito non riusciva a vincere nemmeno la fame per gli scarsi rifornimenti. "Mamma, preparati a lavorar di culinaria!", scriveva un soldato di Catanzaro da Nervi, in Liguria, sognando la

licenza, e le aggiungeva la ricetta del pesto alla genovese. In verità non tanto per insegnarla alla madre quanto per riuscire a saziarsene con le parole e con la memoria: parole e memoria, due generi di conforto in tempo di guerra! Ma erano parole tutte diverse, che in un'Italia in cui regnava il 40% di analfabetismo, con punte del 70% nelle regioni del sud, facevan fatica a farsi comprendere tra siciliani, veneti, emiliani e sardi. Pure, era la prima volta che italiani di provenienza geografica così distante s'incontravano, si guardavano, sopravvivevano insieme, e sempre insieme bestemmiavano per la stessa schifosa vita al fronte e per la nostalgia della famiglia lontana. E non sapevano che contribuivano a creare la coscienza di una lingua oltre che la coscienza nazionale, una coscienza che altre nazioni avevano da secoli: non noi che italiani divenimmo dall'alto e non dal basso, una cinquantina d'anni prima della Grande Guerra. Perché una lingua è fatta di carne e in guerra la carne umana tribola, deperisce, si ferisce, guarisce, si ricostruisce e muore proprio come la sua lingua. Fu così che una canzone napoletana, *'O surdato 'nnammurato* di Aniello Califano e Enrico Cannio, divenne una canzone di tutti i soldati e di tutta una nazione, forse perché non parlava di grandi ideali patriottici ma di un semplice soldato che scrive alla sua amata: *Staje luntana da stu core, / a te volo cu 'ò penziero: / niente voglio e niente spero / ca tenerte sempe a fianco a me!...* per poi esplodere in un inno accorato alla vita nei versi: *Oje vita, oje vita mia / oje core 'è chistu core / si' stata 'ò primmo ammoro / e 'ò primmo e ll'urdemo sarraje pe' me!*

Sono versi fatti per essere adottati da quanti ci si riconoscono e ci vogliono cascare dentro, perché ricordano che il soldato è prima di tutto un uomo. E quella guerra fu l'ultima a combattersi prevalentemente corpo a corpo, ovvero uomo contro uomo, ovvero uomo che guarda un altro uomo. Si guardavano, quegli uomini, si ascoltavano, si studiavano da trincee tanto vicine da arrivare a conoscersi e a riconoscersi! Sull'Altopiano di Asiago e del Zebio, dove ebbe luogo la battaglia dell'Ortigara, le trincee erano distanti otto metri e su quattro metri di neve italiani e austriaci si davano la mano e per Natale si scambiavano gli auguri e si regalavano pane e sigarette, poiché prima che nemici erano uomini. E allora scopri che lo "spirito di corpo" può a tratti contagiare anche milizie opposte e coi moschetti puntati l'una contro l'altra.

Ma allora cosa fu quel rovescio che prese il nome di Caporetto (oggi Kobarid), dal luogo nell'attuale Slovenia in cui avvenne? Cosa furono quegli attacchi da più fronti con l'esercito austro tedesco che si era infiltrato nelle retrovie? Cosa volle dire morire senza sapere di morire, come avvenne per le prime armi chimiche al fosgene che fecero 10.000 morti italiani il solo 24 ottobre 1917, in quella valle? Non era bastata la febbre spagnola a decimare soldati e civili in quegli anni, che aveva mostrato una morte silenziosa e volatile e più efficace del moschet-

to e del cannone? Cosa furono quegli uomini costretti ad una ritirata sbandata, disorientata, quasi surreale al quarto giorno di combattimento? Quella di Caporetto doveva esser la fine dell'esercito italiano e invece fu l'inizio della sua riscossa. L'opinione pubblica era ormai disincantata e certa che non una battaglia ma l'intera guerra fosse perduta: così lontane erano le alte glorie promesse e sognate! Ma quei soldati, dopo aver ripiegato perdendo il Friuli, resistettero sul Piave con la forza dei cannoni per poi contrattaccare e riprendersi tutto il territorio perduto ed altro ancora, fino alla vittoria di Vittorio Veneto, nel 1918, quando l'Imperatore d'Austria Carlo I si arrese al generale Armando Diaz temendo addirittura la perdita di ulteriori territori.

La vittoria fu schiacciante, da tutti riconosciuta come straordinaria e fece scrivere ad Ernest Hemingway quali meravigliosi combattenti fossero gl'italiani.

Si è detto: prima che soldati furono uomini e, in quell'occasione, prima che uomini furono ragazzini. Quelli della classe 1899 avevano diciassette anni quando partirono per il fronte. Vennero arruolati per disperazione, ma con la forza, l'imperizia, e forse l'incoscienza ragazzina, quei soldati adolescenti furono decisivi per la vittoria italiana. E come allora essi furono i più giovani a partecipare a quella guerra, quasi un secolo dopo essi furono i più vecchi a raccontarla da protagonisti. Cento anni fa valicarono i monti con un equipaggiamento inadeguato, poi valicarono i secoli dal XIX al XXI per regalarci il volto vero di una guerra che altrimenti la nostra generazione non conoscerebbe che per i polverosi documentari in bianco e nero e per le tante storie scritte e trascritte negli ultimi decenni.

Ne dovettero trangugiare di misture alcooliche, quei ragazzi, per inventarsi il coraggio prima di un assalto, per non pietrificarsi all'orrore che si apriva davanti ai loro occhi! Mai più sorrideremo udendo l'espressione "scemo di guerra", poiché essa racconta tutto l'abisso finito negli occhi di quei soldati, spettatori inermi dei corpi dei loro compagni fatti a pezzi dal nemico. Da quell'abisso in tanti non tornarono più, incapaci com'erano di rivolgere lo sguardo a qualcosa che riavesse il minimo sapore di vita: persero l'uso della parola, l'uso delle gambe (nel senso che dimenticarono come si cammina!) e ogni forma di reattività. Oggi si chiama "nevrosi da guerra" e si cerca di curarla, un tempo quei soldati venivano considerati simulatori o matti e si era incerti se fucilarli o dimenticarli in manicomio.

Datemi allora gli occhi di quei soldati ragazzini per un solo istante, e fate ch'io non mi perda per sempre in quell'abisso, così ch'io possa fino in fondo godere ed ogni giorno più consapevolmente ringraziare per quella vita e per quella pace che mi vennero date in dono!

GIVE ME THE EYES

Claudio Cicotti, translated by Angela Arnone

Give me the eyes of an infantryman, one hundred years old, to see what I have not seen. Give me his ears, to hear what I have not heard. Because in me there is only the void of a soundless and wordless memory, without the face of someone who describes an experience. Give me the hand of that soldier to colour the images that a roll of film snatched from a war seen in black and white only by those who were not there. Let the same hand slow the fast-twitching puppet soldiers of those films: soldiers who seem almost unreal to our eyes.

Yet I realize that nothing is more familiar and more real than that war, which made a gap between before and after in the history of a Europe that was still only a dot on the horizon. Every town in Italy, no matter how small or remote, has a plaque, a cenotaph, a monument dedicated to the fallen of the First World War. They commemorate the dead heroes of 1915-18, but not only. These are monuments to a shared history, a family bond that unites us all, today's descendants of those millions of men and boys in their grey-green uniforms.

Because every one of us had at least one relative in that war, perhaps someone who died in that war, which, like most wars was to have been a lightning affair: "I'll be home for Christmas, don't you worry!" some promised; "The war'll be over and done by autumn!" others declared. So, it is understandable that even many of the most neutral finally converted to the expediency of involvement after almost a year of yes, no, yes, no, yes, no ... but, maybe yes!

The papers made it sound easy, glorifying the amazing exploits of an army that only a few years on promised a "kidney punch" to floor the enemy. Italy's prophet-poet, "Vate" Gabriele D'Annunzio, elevating himself to monument of himself, harangued the collective conscience of his fellow Italians with the incandescent flourish of words like "Blessed are the young who hunger and thirst for glory, for they will be sated. Blessed are the merciful, for they shall cleanse shining blood, swathe radiant grief. Blessed are the pure in heart, blessed the returning victors, for they shall see the new face of Rome, a crown encircling the head of Dante, the triumphal beauty of Italy."

It was the summer of 1915 and everything seemed so easy, as if all that needed to be done was to gather up a victory already won. Then something changed, the marching drum faltered, the dead were brought home from the front, and with them the first of the amputees, the wounded, those who did not testify only with "shining blood" but also with their stories.

Stories quite different from journalistic bombast. Voices laden with grief, not "radiant" at all. Terrified and frozen with cold. Do you know what the cold really does to you? It is not just a feeling, it is a fear, the fear of going through an experience that destroys your body and shatters your spirit. Because there is not just the pain of cold, but also the fear of that pain. The cold at that time took everyone by surprise, since Christmas had arrived, but the front was still there, the men without a winter uniform, because the war was a lightning war so by Christmas it should all be done and dusted. It wasn't. The men awaited not only winter uniforms but also rations: huddled in a shivering mass, waiting at nightfall for a two-kilogram loaf to share among ten hungry mouths ... and hell-to-pay if you were the one with the knife in his hand, cutting slices that had to be fair, so no one got less, and no one got more, and arguments were settled by the brutal duty sergeant.

Thinking that so many had come as volunteers, believing in the war, quarrelling with dissenting parents or relatives: the country needed to be defended and the Austrians were still the enemy. For them, D'Annunzio's words added fuel to the fire: "If only Il Vate could be here before every attack", said General Luigi Cadorna, "then we'd be halfway to victory!" Who knows if the General really believed in victory when his army could not even keep hunger in check as they had no rations. "Mother, get ready to start some serious cooking!" wrote a Catanzaro soldier from Nervi, in Liguria, dreaming of leave and adding a recipe for Genovese pesto. Not so much to teach his mother a new dish but to be able to sate himself with words and memories: words and memories, two comfort foods during wartime. But words were all quite different in an Italy where an average forty percent of the population was illiterate, with peaks of seventy percent in the southern regions. Sicilians, Venetians, Emilians, and Sardinians

struggled to understand one another, yet, it was the first time that Italians of such distant geographic origins had met, looked each other in the eye, survived together, and together cursed the same ghastly life at the front and the homesickness for families so far away. Nor did they know that they were helping to grow the awareness of a language as well as a national awareness. An awareness that other nations had had for centuries while Italians had only been decreed such fifty years before the Great War, and from above, not from shared roots. Because a language is made of flesh and blood, and in wartime human flesh is tormented, wasting away, hurting and then healing, rebuilding itself and dying just like its language. So it was that a Neapolitan song, *O surdato 'nnammurato* by Aniello Califano and Enrico Cannio, became the anthem for an entire army and an entire nation, perhaps because it did not speak of great patriotic ideals but of a simple soldier writing to his beloved: “you’re so far from this heart of mine, / my thoughts fly out to you: / the only thing I want and the only thing I hope / is to have you always by my side!” Then exploding in a heartfelt hymn to life in the refrain: “Oh life, oh life of mine / oh heart of this heart/ you were my first love/ and the first and last you’ll always be for me!”

These verses are perfect for anyone who recognizes themselves in the words and want to tumble into them, because they are a reminder that a soldier is first of all a human being. The First World War was the last in which hand-to-hand, man-to-man, face-to-face fighting prevailed. Those men looked at one another, listened, observed from the trenches that were so close they got to know and recognize each other! On the Asiago and Zebio tablelands, theatre of the battle of Ortigara, the trenches were eight metres away and the Italians and Austrians shook hands across four metres of snow, exchanged greetings at Christmas, sharing bread and cigarettes. They were enemies but more than that, they were human beings. Then we discover that esprit de corps at times can also infect opposing militias, despite pointed weapons.

So what of the turn of fortunes that Italians call a “Caporetto” (after the town where it occurred, now in Slovenia and now called Kobarid)? What of those attacks on several fronts by the Austro-German army infiltrating the rear? What does it mean to die without realizing it, succumbing to the first phosgene chemical weapons that killed 10,000 Italians in that valley on the 24 October 1917 alone? Hadn’t Spanish flu been enough, decimating soldiers and civilians during those years in a silent, random death, more mortally efficient than musket or cannon? What of those men forced to a frantic, disoriented, almost surreal retreat on the fourth day of combat? The battle of Caporetto should have

been the end of the Italian army and instead it was the beginning of its resurgence. By now public opinion was soured and certain that not just a battle, but an entire war was lost: so much for dreams of supreme glories that had been assured. But those soldiers, after retreating and losing Friuli, resisted on the River Piave with the might of cannons, then counterattacked and recovered every metre and more of lost terrain, victorious at Vittorio Veneto, in 1918, when Emperor Charles I of Austria surrendered to General Armando Diaz fearing the loss of further ground.

The victory was overwhelming, recognized by all as extraordinary, and inspiring Ernest Hemingway to write that Italians were admirable soldiers.

As already said: before they were soldiers, they were men, and on that occasion, they were boys before they were men. Those born in 1899 were seventeen years old when they left for the front. They were drafted in sheer desperation, but with sheer muscle, ingenuousness, and perhaps the recklessness of youth, those teenage soldiers were decisive for the Italian victory. And since they were the youngest to take part in that war, almost a century later they were the oldest to speak of it as protagonists. Almost a century before, they had crossed the mountains with inadequate kit. Later they crossed the centuries: from the nineteenth to the twentieth, then the twenty-first, to show us the true face of a war our generation would not otherwise know except for dusty black-and-white documentaries, and the many stories written and transcribed in recent decades.

Those boys must have gulped down so much Dutch courage at the time to drum up the pluck for an attack, so as not to be petrified by the horror opening before their eyes! We will never again even hint at a smile when hearing the expression “shell-shocked”, because it tells of the brink of the abyss that filled the eyes of those soldiers, powerless spectators of comrades torn to pieces by the enemy. Many of them never returned from that abyss, were never again able to find even the merest taste of life in anything. They lost their power of speech, use of their legs since they forgot how to walk, bereft of any form of reaction. Today we call it post-traumatic stress disorder and we try to treat it, but in the past those soldiers were considered frauds or lunatics, and no one could decide whether they should be shot or left to rot in an asylum.

So, please give me the eyes of those boy-soldiers for a single moment and let me not be swallowed up by that abyss. Let me rejoice to the full and give more knowing thanks each day for the life and the peace gifted to me.

11.

Polska
Poland

LEKCJA POLSKIEGO

Justyna Chłap-Nowakowa

Polski „długi wiek XIX” zaczął się w roku 1795. Od katastrofy. Po mniej więcej ośmiu i pół wieku budowania wspólnoty politycznej, a wokół niej także bogatej i zróżnicowanej kultury, Polska przestała istnieć jako Rzeczpospolita. Wymazały ją z mapy trzy sąsiednie mocarstwa: Imperium Rosyjskie, Prusy oraz imperium Habsburgów. Walka o niepodległość ruszyła już w roku 1796. Przy poparciu młodego generała Napoleona Bonaparte utworzyły się we Włoszech legiony polskich ochotników, którzy u boku armii francuskiej chcieli dotrzeć – po pokonaniu Prus i Austrii – do ziemi polskiej. Ich hymnem stały się słowa piosenki żołnierskiej: *Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła...* Nie tylko zbrojny czyn, ale też słowo, a szerzej – kultura – to dwa podstawowe sposoby, jakimi w wieku bez własnego państwa przejawiało się polskie dążenie do wolności.

Napoleon nie spełnił pokładanych w nim nadziei. Polaków nie zadowoliła również namiastka państwowości, zbudowana pod rosyjską kontrolą w roku 1815 na terenie jednej szóstej dawnej Rzeczpospolitej. Organizowały się więc patriotyczne konspiracje młodzieży, wybuchały kolejne wielkie i małe powstania: w 1830-1831, 1846, 1848, 1863-1864, z udziałem łącznie setek tysięcy ochotników. Zaborcy byli silniejsi i pozostawali zjednoczeni. To skazywało powstania na niepowodzenie. I to także powodowało kolejne, wielkie fale prześladowań Polaków pod zaborami: tysiące straconych, dziesiątki tysięcy deportowanych na Syberię, odsiadujących wieloletnie wyroki w politycznych więzieniach Rosji, Austrii i Prus. Ceną powstań były, też w dziesiątki tysięcy idące, konfiskaty majątków, likwidacja polskich instytucji kulturalnych i społecznych, uniwersytetów, banków, szkół średnich, towarzystw naukowych. W końcu – prześladowanie samego języka polskiego, zakazane w urzędach, szkole, w przestrzeni publicznej.

A przecież polskość uparcie trwała. W 1849 roku wystawiono w Salonie paryskim obraz namalowany przez Jana Ostoję Mioduszelewskiego, zatytułowany *Varsovie. Épisode de 1831*, znany też jako *Umierający żołnierz wolności*. Przedstawia on konającego żołnierza powstania listopadowego, który własną krwią pisze na murze „Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła”. Był to swoisty testament dla współbraci i następców, a zarazem przesłanie do wrogów, że ducha walki nie zwyciężą. Ten symboliczny gest wszedł na stałe nie tylko do repertuaru sztuki patriotycznej, ale wrósł w świadomość narodu. Poczucie to było wciąż obecne również w poezji romantycznej: że kolejne pokolenia, jak wcześniej ich ojcowie i dziadowie, muszą tę daninę złożyć brnąc „we wrzącej rzece krwi [...] do kolan, po pas, po szyję” (Felicjan Faleński, *Zapłata po pracy*).

Ten sam upór i patos polskiej walki o wolność, która przynosiła takie ofiary, ożywił zarazem polską kulturę wieku XIX, jej największe dzieła: poezje Adama Mickiewicza i Juliusza Słowackiego, muzykę Fryderyka Chopina, porywającą opowieść o polskiej historii Henryka Sienkiewicza. To była walka o pamięć, o język, o Ducha narodu. W dużym stopniu dzięki tej kulturze, popularizowanej w nielegalnych wydaniach, uwolnieni od pańszczyzny chłopcy zaczęli pod koniec XIX wieku czuć się Polakami. Pod jej wpływem polonizowali się także liczni przedstawiciele nie-polskich etnosów, zamieszkujących ziemie dawnej Rzeczpospolitej pod zaborami: wśród nich Żydzi, Niemcy, Rosjanie.

Siła asymilacyjna polskiego języka, obyczaju, tożsamości i przywiązania do ojczyzny dawała się poznać już od kilku wieków. Potomkowie przybyszy stawali się zazwyczaj Polakami. Zmieniali nazwiska na bardziej polsko brzmiące, spolszczali imiona: już nie Karl, lecz Karol, nie

Gottlieb, a Bogumił, jak to uczynił na przykład Samuel Bogumił Linde (1771-1847), znakomity językoznawca i autor pierwszego wielkiego, nowoczesnego słownika języka polskiego. Zrodzony z rodziców nie-Polaków – imigranta ze Szwecji oraz Niemki – pozostając wierny wyznaniu ewangelickiemu, trwale związał się z polskością. Inni zachowywali swoje „obcobrzmiące nazwiska” (jak pisał Kazimierz Przerwa Tetmajer w wierszu *Memu synkowi*), nosząc je z poczuciem, że muszą swojej wybranej ojczyźnie służyć z największym oddaniem, że są jej to winni. Aby swą polskość „zatwierdzić”, gotowi byli każdą kroplę swojej „niemieckiej krwi” (to z kolei słowa innego spolonizowanego poety, Artura Oppmana) oddać w walce dla wolności Polski.

Ale były też inne, nie tylko orężne zrywy w obronie polskości, bezcenne dla podtrzymania tożsamości i poczucia więzi narodowej. Jednym z najważniejszych był strajk dzieci szkolnych, który rozpoczął się we Wrześni, w r. 1901. Protestowały przeciw germanizacji szkół, głównie przeciwko modlitwie i nauce religii w języku niemieckim. Swoje uczucia zapisały w przejmującym anonimowym wierszu:

My z Tobą Boże rozmawiać chcemy,
lecz „Vater unser” nie rozumiemy
i nikt nie zmusi nas Ciebie tak zwać,
boś Ty nie Vater, lecz Ojciec nasz.

„Znów doszło do tego, że polska buta chce ubliżyć Niemczyźnie”... mówił cesarz Wilhelm II w r. 1902, w Malborku. I choć ten strajk brutalnie stłumiono, represje wywołały skutek odwrotny: lawinę protestów w innych szkołach zaboru pruskiego, wreszcie w 1906 r. doszło do powszechnego strajku, który objął około 75 tysięcy dzieci w blisko 800 szkołach zaboru pruskiego (na łączną liczbę 1100 szkół).

Polski polityczny i kulturowy tygiel, przykryty rządami trzech imperiów, kipiał coraz mocniej. Wybuchł wraz z I wojną światową. Blisko trzy miliony Polaków powołano do armii zaborców. Tym razem armie te stanęły przeciw sobie. Po jednej stronie Rosja, po drugiej Austria i Prusy. Niemal pół miliona Polaków zginęło w tej wojnie. Wcieleni do trzech armii zaborczych, często zmuszeni byli strzelać do siebie nawzajem: za cara Mikołaja, za Kaisera Wilhelma, za cesarza Franciszka Józefa. Obraz rozdzielonych przez „zły los” braci-rodaków, stojących na wprost siebie „w dwóch wrogich sobie szanach”, pojawia się w wierszu *Ta, co nie zginęła* Edwarda Słońskiego. Jego wersy, pisane we wrześniu 1914 r., były na ustach wszystkich. Najtrafniej i najwięcej wyrażały powszechne doświadczenia i odczucia Polaków. Także to, że za wolność, nawet jeśli sami jej nie zaznają, gotowi są płacić cenę najwyższą:

A gdy mnie z dała ujrzyć,
od razu bierz na cel
i do polskiego serca
moskiewską kulą strzel.

Bo wciąż na jawie widzę
i co noc mi się śni,
że TA, CO NIE ZGINĘŁA,
wyrośnie z naszej krwi.

Nadzieja zaczęła wreszcie świtać. Znów powstały walczące o niepodległość, o polską sprawę legiony ochotników: największa formacja u boku Austrii, pod wodzą Józefa Piłsudskiego; inne będą tworzyć się u boku Rosji, potem jeszcze Francji. Ich walka kończy się w roku 1918 odzyskaniem niepodległości przez Polskę.

W połowie Wielkiej Wojny wydrukowany został niewielki tekst, *Legenda o Żołnierzu Polskim*, który jak w pigułce oddaje całe, szczególne położenie sprawy polskiej w tej wojnie, cały dramat polskiego „długiego wieku XIX” i zarazem wyjątkową rolę polskiej kultury, polskiego języka w odtworzeniu polskiej, ponadetnicznej wspólnoty wolności.

Wyczarował tę *Legendę* Bolesław Leśmian (1877-1937; właściwie Lesman), niewątpliwie największa indywidualność pisarska pośród twórców literatury polskiej XX w. Urodził się w Warszawie, w zasymilowanej rodzinie żydowskiej, dorastał zaś w Kijowie, tam kończył gimnazjum i carski uniwersytet. Jako poeta, równie biegle jak po polsku, potrafił tworzyć po rosyjsku – w młodości ogłaszał wiersze w czasopismach rosyjskich symbolistów. Jego pisarstwo było prawie całkowicie wolne od wątków współczesnych i doraźnych „zaangażowań”. A przecież swoją polskość i przywiązanie do niej manifestował – po zorganizowaniu w Kijowie obchodów 100. rocznicy urodzin Adama Mickiewicza, w 1898 r. trafił na kilka miesięcy do więzienia. Drogę do polskości, poprzez jej wybór, do polskiego patriotyzmu, ukazuje w bardzo nietypowym dla jego twórczości wierszu *Spowiedź* (1915). On także przypomina więź polskiej kultury z wolnością, ale i z czynem, z ofiarą.

To właśnie Leśmian, choć na ogół stroniący od tematyki patriotycznej, mistrzostwem słowa i miłością do polszczyzny równy był dwóm najważniejszym naszym poetom: Janowi Kochanowskiemu i Adamowi Mickiewiczowi. Otwarł dla języka polskiego nowe „galaktyki słowne”, pozostając zarazem twórcą najbardziej nieprzetłumaczalnym. To, co najpiękniejsze, gubi się w przekładzie, najważniejsze pozostaje ukryte. Tak jak w *Spowiedzi*, w której prócz tej ziemi, „co oczom widoma,/ A w zbyt niepewne ujęta granice”, jest też, w niej „zatajona”,

jej „powiększona snami podobizna,/ Olbrzymiejąca w kochaniu Ojczyzna”. Zapewne jednak nie każdy umie, może lub chce dostrzec to ukryte piękno. Widać je dobrze tylko przez pryzmat miłości.

Równie poruszająca, siłą obrazu i słowa, jest pisana prozą *Legenda o Żołnierzu Polskim*, drugi niezwykły i tak wyraźnie patriotyczny utwór Leśmiana. Oto umierający polski żołnierz-tułacz, ginący, jak w wierszu Słońskiego, w szeregach obcej, zaborczej armii, idzie w ostatnią już drogę – do Boga. Napotkanemu w tej wędrówce św. Jerzemu opowiada swoją dolę. Ojczyzny własnej bronić mu nie kazano, bo jej nie miał, rozkazano mu natomiast spalić chatę własną, jako że wrogom przeszkadzała, a potem wypędzić własną żonę i dzieci „na głód i śmierć”, zaś braci własnych „niszczyć kulą i bagnietem”. Wszystko to uczynił, przelewając krew za wrogów. „Wedle rozkazu”... Scenę tego spotkania zamknął Leśmian poruszającym obrazem, nawiązującym do romantycznego polskiego mesjanizmu: św. Jerzy, zebrawszy do kielicha krew żołnierza, myli ją z niesioną w bliźniaczym kielichu krwią Chrystusa – tak samo niewinną, za wrogów przelaną.

Gdy żołnierz, dotarłszy wreszcie przed oblicze Jezusa, w nagrodę za swe cierpienia będzie mógł wypowiedzieć jedno, ostatnie ziemskie życzenie, poprosi, by

na Sądzie Ostatecznym „po polsku tylko przemawiano”, by usłyszał mowę polską brzmiącą „niewzbronnie i rozgłośnie”.

Marzenie o wolności dla polskiego słowa, o odzyskaniu domu spełniło się w roku 1918.

Czy jednak da się w ogóle opowiedzieć innym narodom o swoich doświadczeniach? O tym, jak kształtowały one nasze zbiorowe marzenia? Czy Niemiec zrozumie Serba, Francuz – Anglika, Belg – Polaka? Jak szukać pogodzonej prawdy w pamięci poszczególnych narodów, mieszkańców krajów, państw i ziem, w pamięci wspólnej historii, dzielonej z narodami sąsiednimi albo – dzielącej je między sobą? Kiedy każdy będzie mógł przemawiać własną mową – „niewzbronnie i rozgłośnie”, kiedy nikt nie będzie narzucał, co wolno mówić, a czego myśleć nie wolno – może wtedy, w końcu, porozumienie będzie możliwe? Może o to właśnie chodziło w polskiej walce o wolność i taka jest jej najważniejsza lekcja?

THE POLISH LESSON

Justyna Chłap-Nowakowa, translated by Marta Bielińska-Putz

Poland's "long 19th century" began in 1795, with a catastrophe. After about eight and a half centuries of building a political community, nested in a rich and varied culture, Poland ceased to exist as a Commonwealth. Three of its neighboring powers – the Russian Empire, Prussia and the Habsburg Empire – erased Poland from the map. The struggle for independence started in 1796. With the support of young general Napoleon Bonaparte the Polish Legions in Italy were formed, which attached themselves to the French army, with the intention of returning to Poland again after defeating Prussia and Austria. The lyrics to the soldier's song *Poland has not perished yet ...* became their hymn. Not only military action, but also the word, and broadly speaking – culture – were two basic ways in which the Polish aspirations for freedom manifested themselves in this era of statelessness.

Napoleon did not live up to the expectations that Poland had placed on him. Poles were not satisfied with the rump state, which was built under Russian control in 1815 on one sixth of the territory of the former Commonwealth. And so patriotic conspiracies were carried out by youngsters; big and small uprisings flared up in 1830-1831, 1846, 1848, 1863-1864, involving volunteers numbering in the hundreds of thousands. The partitioning powers were stronger and remained united. This doomed the insurrections to failure. It also caused another great wave of persecutions of Poles under the rule of the partitioning powers in the former Commonwealth: thousands were executed, and tens of thousands deported to Siberia, or sentenced to confinement in the political prisons of Russia, Austria and Prussia. The price of the uprisings was also the confiscations of property, the liquidation of Polish cultural and social institutions,

universities, banks, secondary schools, scientific societies – numbering in the tens of thousands. In the end there was the persecution of the Polish language itself, forbidden in offices, schools, and public spaces.

But Polishness stubbornly persisted. In 1849, a painting by Jan Ostoja Mioduszewski entitled *Varsovie. Épisode de 1831*, also known as the *Expiring soldier of liberty* was exhibited at the Paris Salon. It depicts a dying soldier of the November Uprising writing "Poland has not perished yet" on a wall with his own blood. It was a special testament to his current and future brothers in arms, and at the same time a message to the enemies that the Polish fighting spirit could not be broken. This symbolic gesture entered for good not only the repertoire of patriotic art, but also the consciousness of the nation. This feeling was still omnipresent in romantic poetry. Future generations, like their fathers and grandfathers, must pay their tribute, wading through "boiling rivers of blood [...] to the knees, to the waist, to the neck" (Felicjan Faleński, *Payment after work*).

The same stubbornness and pathos of the Polish struggle for freedom, which brought about such sacrifices, also enriched Polish culture in the nineteenth century and inspired some of its greatest works: the poems of Adam Mickiewicz and Juliusz Słowacki, the music of Fryderyk Chopin, and Henryk Sienkiewicz's rousing account of Polish history.

It was a fight for remembrance, for language, for the spirit of the nation. It was to a great extent thanks to this cultural output, popularized in illegal editions, that the peasants freed from serfdom began to feel Polish in the late nineteenth century. Under its influence numerous representatives of non-Polish ethnici-

ties, who inhabited the lands of the former Commonwealth under the occupation, Polonized themselves, amongst them Jews, Germans and Russians.

The assimilative power of the Polish language, custom, identity and attachment to the homeland has been known for several centuries. The descendants of immigrants have usually become Poles. They have changed their surnames to more Polish-sounding ones, and they have made their first names Polish: not anymore Karl, but Karol, not Gottlieb, but Bogumił, e.g., Samuel Bogumił Linde (1771-1847), an excellent linguist and author of the first great modern Polish dictionary. Born of immigrant parents – a Swedish father and a German mother – he remained faithful to the Protestant religion, yet was permanently entangled with Polishness. Others kept their “foreign-sounding surnames” (as Kazimierz Przerwa Tetmajer wrote in the poem *For my little son*), wearing them in the belief that they must serve their chosen homeland with the utmost devotion, that they owed this to their chosen homeland. In order to “confirm” their Polishness, they were ready to spill every last drop of their “German blood” in the fight for Poland’s freedom (in the words of another Polonized poet, Artur Oppman).

But there were other, non-armed, insurrections in defense of Polishness, invaluable for maintaining the identity and a sense of national bonding. One of the most important ones was a strike of schoolchildren, which began in Września in 1901. They protested against the Germanization of schools, mainly against praying and teaching religion in the German language. They recorded their feelings in a moving anonymous poem:

We want to talk to you God,
but “Vater unser” we do not understand
and no one will force us to call you so,
You are not *Vater*, but *Ojciec nasz* (our Father).

“And now it has again come to this pass. Polish arrogance will encroach on German influence”... – Kaiser Wilhelm II said in 1902, in Malbork (Marienburg – the former castle of the Teutonic order). Although this strike was brutally suppressed, the repressions had the opposite effect: an avalanche of protests in other schools on the Prussian partition territory. Finally, in 1906 there was a general strike that involved around 75,000 children in nearly 800 schools on the Prussian partition territory (for a total number of 1100 schools).

The political and cultural melting pot that the three ruling empires had been trying to keep a lid on boiled over more and more. It exploded with World War I. Nearly three million Poles were called into the army of

the partitioners. This time the armies were pitted against each other. On one side Russia, on the other Austria and Prussia. Almost half a million Poles died in this war. Conscripted into the three partitioners’ armies, they often had to shoot at one another: for Tsar Nicholas, for Kaiser Wilhelm, for Emperor Franz Josef. The image of the brothers and countrymen separated by ill-fate facing off against one another “in two hostile earthworks”, appears in the poem *She who did not perish* by Edward Słoiński. His verses, written in September 1914, were on the lips of all. They expressed the common experiences and feelings of Poles in a most accurate and succinct way. For freedom – even if they will not experience it themselves – they are ready to pay the highest price:

And when you see me from afar,
anon your weapon draw
and pierce my Polish heart
with Moscow’s bullet through

Because still awake I see
and every night I dream,
that SHE, WHO DID NOT PERISH,
will rise from our blood.

Hope finally began to dawn. Once again, legions of volunteers fighting for independence and for the Polish cause assembled: the largest regiment on the Austrian side under the leadership of Józef Piłsudski; others would be formed on the Russian side, then on the French side. Their struggle ended in 1918 with the restoration of Poland’s independence.

In the midst of the Great War a small text, *The Legend of the Polish Soldier*, was printed, which in a nutshell captures the whole special situation of the Polish question in this war, the entire drama of the Polish “long 19th century” and at the same time the unique role of Polish culture, Polish language in the reconstruction of a Polish supra-ethnic land of the free.

This *Legend* was conjured up by Bolesław Leśmian (1877-1937: born Lesman). Undoubtedly the greatest Polish literary figure of the 20th century, he was born in Warsaw, in an assimilated Jewish family, and he grew up in Kiev, where he graduated from grammar school and Tsarist university. As a poet, he was able to create effortlessly in both the Polish and Russian language. In his youth he published poems in Russian symbolist periodicals. His writing was almost entirely free of contemporary issues and ad hoc “engagements”. And yet, he manifested his Polishness and attachment to it – after organizing the celebration of the 100th anniversary of the birth of Adam Mickiewicz in Kiev, he ended up in

prison for a few months. In his poem *Confession* (1915) he shows, in a very atypical way for his body of work, the way to Polishness, to Polish patriotism, through deliberate choice. He reaffirms the bond of Polish culture with freedom, but also with the deed, and with sacrifice.

It was Leśmian who, although usually avoiding patriotic subject matters, with his mastery of the word and his love for the Polish language was equal to two of our most important poets: Jan Kochanowski and Adam Mickiewicz. He opened the door for the Polish language to new “verbal galaxies”, thus remaining the most untranslatable author. That which is most beautiful, is lost in translation; the most important remains hidden. As in *Confession*, where besides this land, “which is visible to the eye, / And in precarious borders”, there is also its “hidden effigy enlarged by dreams, magnified by love”. However, probably not everyone can, or wants to see this hidden beauty. It can only be seen through the prism of love.

Equally moving, because of the strength of the image and word, is the prose text *The Legend of the Polish Soldier*, the second extraordinary and clearly patriotic work of Leśmian. Behold the dying Polish soldier-wanderer killed, as in the Słoński poem, in the ranks of a foreign army, the invading army, on his final journey – to God. He recounts his fate to St. George whom he encounters in his wanderings. He was not ordered to defend his homeland because he did not have one, but he was commanded to burn his own hovel as it disturbed the enemies, and then to abandon his wife and children “to hunger and death”, and to kill his own brothers “by the

bullet and bayonet”. All this he did, spilling blood for the enemies, “carrying out an order”. The scene of this meeting is closed by Leśmian with a moving image, referring to the Polish romantic messianic doctrine of the Christ of Europe: St. George, having collected the blood of the soldier in the chalice, confuses it with the blood of Christ – equally innocent and spilled for the enemies.

When the soldier, having finally come before the face of Jesus, is able to express his last and only earthly wish, as a reward for his suffering he will ask for the Last Judgment “in Polish only”, to hear the Polish language sounding “free and loud”.

The dream of freedom for the Polish word, the recovery of the home, was fulfilled in 1918.

However, can we tell other nations about our experiences? About how they have shaped our collective dreams? Will the German understand the Serb, the Frenchman – the Englishman, the Belgian – the Pole? How to look for a reconciled truth in the memory of the individual nations, in the memory of the inhabitants of countries, states and lands, in the memory of a common history, shared with neighboring nations, or – divided by it? When everyone will be able to speak their own language – “free and loud”, when no one will impose, what is allowed to be said and what is not allowed to be thought – maybe then, eventually, an understanding will be possible? Maybe this is what the Polish fight for freedom was all about, as well as its most important lesson.

12.

Portugal
Portugal

ENTRE ÁFRICA E A EUROPA

Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo

Portugal e a Primeira Guerra Mundial: Contextos, protagonistas e dinâmicas

A entrada de Portugal na Primeira Guerra Mundial foi uma matéria muito disputada. A preservação do seu império colonial e a legitimação, nacional e internacional, do regime republicano, recentemente instalado (1910) e pró-beligerância, foram duas razões centrais que a justificaram. Após meses de impasse, as autoridades portuguesas apreenderam a frota alemã estacionada nos portos portugueses a 23 de Fevereiro de 1916. A 9 de Março de 1916, o governo foi confrontado com a declaração de guerra por parte da Alemanha. Não obstante as notórias insuficiências no que diz respeito aos recursos humanos disponíveis, sobretudo a parca preparação dos cerca de 20.000 homens mobilizados inicialmente, e a clara escassez de meios materiais militares, o Corpo Expedicionário Português (CEP) começou a embarcar para França em Janeiro de 1917. Durante a guerra, foram mobilizados 105.542 militares. Um total de 38.012 baixas (entre mortos, feridos, “incapazes”, prisioneiros e desaparecidos) marcou a participação portuguesa na guerra.

Quando a troca formal de declarações de guerra entre Alemanha e Portugal ocorreu, ambos os países já se tinham defrontado no campo de batalha. Não na Europa, mas nas suas possessões africanas. Com a flagelação do conflito na Europa, as autoridades portuguesas temeram pela segurança das colónias africanas,

nomeadamente Angola e Moçambique. Ambas tinham fronteiras com territórios coloniais alemães: Sudoeste Africano Alemão e a África Oriental Alemã. A 18 de Agosto de 1914 foi decretada a mobilização de militares para África, destinados a reforçar as escassas e impreparadas forças locais. A 11 de Setembro de 1914, as primeiras expedições partiram. Em Angola, uma expedição de cerca de 3.000 militares, que incluía cerca de 1.000 soldados “nativos”, deslocou-se para a fronteira a sul. Em Dezembro, portugueses e alemães defrontaram-se em Naulila. Em 1914 e 1915 foram mobilizados 9.209 militares. Em 1916, já com Portugal oficialmente na guerra, o centro das operações militares relacionadas com os alemães deslocou-se para o norte de Moçambique. As tropas portuguesas, compostas por cerca de 1.500 militares e apoiadas por milhares de soldados e carregadores nativos “recrutados”, enfrentaram acima de tudo o impacto das doenças tropicais. Questões higiénicas e alimentares, mais do que tudo, contribuíram para o número de baixas. Entre 1914 e 1918, foram mobilizados 17.259 militares para Moçambique. Os objectivos militares, entre os quais a conquista territorial no sul da África Oriental Alemã, foram atingidos, mas por breves instantes. Fruto da complexa dinâmica do conflito no norte e no oeste da colónia alemã, com a pressão de tropas inglesas e belgas, as tropas alemãs lideradas pelo general Von Lettow Vorbeck invadiram o norte de Moçambique em finais de 1917. Só se renderiam a 12 de Novembro de 1918, depois de confirmada a assinatura do armistício na Europa.

A guerra que não acabou com todas as guerras

O término da primeira fase daquilo que alguns historiadores chamam de Guerra Civil Europeia mostrou o quão ilusória fora a crença de que o conflito seria rapidamente resolvido. Ninguém “passou o natal em casa”. Os custos humanos e materiais excederam, em muito, as mais pessimistas previsões. *A guerra que devia acabar com todas as guerras* conferiu novos sentidos às ideias de “crimes de guerra”, “atrocidade”, ou “crise humanitária”. Face a estas realidades, o Armistício de 1918 parecia inaugurar *necessariamente* um novo período de paz e ordem. Tal não aconteceu. Os seus termos, assinados no vagão ferroviário onde o marechal Ferdinand Foch e os plenipotenciários alemães confirmaram a sua rendição, e o rol de obrigações impostas aos alemães com o Tratado de Versalhes (1919) são apenas dois exemplos de factos que funcionaram como uma bomba-relógio que a Sociedade das Nações e o internacionalismo do pós-guerra não foram capazes de desactivar. Formalmente, a guerra findara. Havia motivos para júbilo e comemorações. Mas os seus efeitos não cessaram, em muitos níveis. Em certo sentido, até ganharam mais visibilidade. Por não ter sido um cenário de guerra, em Portugal este processo foi muito evidente: a guerra tornou-se mais visível e compreensível quando terminou.

As forças expedicionárias que combateram nos campos europeus ou africanos começaram a regressar aos seus países. Os soldados presos deixaram os centros de detenção e engrossaram o número de repatriados. A Alemanha devolveu 6.767 prisioneiros portugueses, a larga maioria (6585) em resultado da violenta batalha de La Lys (7–29 Abril 1918). 233 morreram em cativeiro. Para trás ficaram as sepulturas dos milhares de soldados mortos, por exemplo no cemitério militar português de Richebourg, em França. Com cerca de 16.607 feridos de guerra e 13.645 prisioneiros e desaparecidos, no conflito morreram cerca de 7.760 homens. No caso português, devido às divergências suscitadas pela decisão de participação no conflito, o regresso dos combatentes não despertou o regozijo verificado noutros países. À chegada a Lisboa foram dispersos por vários recantos do país. A possibilidade do seu envolvimento em acções de desestabilização política e social tinha de ser minimizada.

Para casa seguiram milhares de feridos e mutilados. Nos países de origem, as famílias recebiam os que regressavam ou faziam o luto por aqueles que tinham perdido. Os novos métodos de combate por parte dos Estados beligerantes – por exemplo, o uso generalizado e propositado de meios químicos – implicaram um grande número de mortos, feridos e prisioneiros. Em Portugal como noutras geografias, a mobilização colectiva para

o esforço de guerra e para lidar com as suas nefastas consequências foi muito significativa. Beneficiando do dinamismo associativo e da enérgica dedicação de vários sectores da sociedade – que promoveram vendas de beneficência, concertos e touradas com fins caridosos, por exemplo –, o país preparou-se para lidar com as vítimas do conflito. Neste processo, o papel das mulheres durante e depois da guerra foi decisivo, tanto na frente de guerra como na sua rearguarda.

Estas iniciativas também foram muito importantes porque ocorreram num país que, depois da guerra, viu acentuar a crise em que já estava mergulhado. A instabilidade política, económica e social amplificou-se, em parte como consequência do esforço de guerra, mas também em função de bloqueios estruturais antigos. Num país essencialmente rural, os maus anos agrícolas durante a guerra deixaram marcas visíveis. O comércio externo cresceu ligeiramente, apesar da queda acentuada do comércio marítimo nacional. Mas a inflação também. O custo de vida cresceu significativamente. As indústrias ligadas ao esforço de guerra desenvolveram-se. Mas as que dependiam do mercado externo, como a metalurgia ou os têxteis, sofreram com o conflito. A escassez de combustíveis, maquinaria e matérias primas implicou o aumento da dívida pública, interna e externa. Os bancos e os seguros beneficiaram das circunstâncias. O frenesim de legislação tendente a responder aos efeitos da crise não teve as repercussões desejadas. A população, na sua maioria, sofreu muito. A agitação social e as reivindicações laborais aumentaram. As condições difíceis e as tendências depressivas mantiveram-se, agravando-se, depois de 1918. Por exemplo, o escudo desvalorizou galopantemente. O crédito disponível para a muito necessária modernização da economia era diminuto. Também por isso, as grandes preocupações de Portugal na Conferência de Paz de 1919 eram de natureza financeira. A preservação do império e a obtenção de um módico de reparações financeiras guiaram a posição diplomática em Paris. O país pagou um alto preço económico e financeiro com a participação no conflito. Esta última não conseguiu, de modo significativo, melhorar o prestígio internacional do regime. Também não viu a tradicional instabilidade política cessar. O constitucionalismo liberal viria a soçobrar em 1926.

Ecos intermináveis

A Grande Guerra foi um conflito brutal, com milhões de mortos. A destruição foi global, a palavra “desumanidade” ganhou um significado mais amplo. O impacto do esforço de guerra foi devastador. O mesmo sucedeu com os inúmeros efeitos físicos e traumas psicológicos

causados pela violência do conflito e pelas inúmeras perdas humanas. Estas realidades promoveram o aparecimento de diferentes formas de recordação, na arte e na literatura, e em muitos outros domínios sociais, na esfera privada e em público. Estas formas foram inscritas no espaço público. Em 1923, ano em que foi lançada a primeira pedra do Monumento aos Mortos da Grande Guerra, em Lisboa, era criada a Liga dos Combatentes da Grande Guerra, uma associação não-governamental que tinha por objectivo reunir os antigos soldados que tinham estado no conflito. Por todo o país filiais da Liga promoviam encontros de convívio, formas de solidariedade e momentos de homenagem e memória aos companheiros mortos em combate, incluindo nas campanhas militares em África. Algumas associações tinham propósitos de assistência social a antigos militares e seus fami-

liares, em resposta à incapacidade do Estado em fazê-lo. Nas duas décadas seguintes a 1918 foram inaugurados monumentos de memória e homenagem aos mortos da Grande Guerra, em cerimónias públicas de congregação nacional, que também procuravam superar as divergências políticas internas existentes no regime republicano. No Mosteiro da Batalha, o Túmulo do Soldado Desconhecido recebeu os restos mortais de dois militares – um vindo da Flandres e outro de África. O mesmo não sucedeu com os soldados africanos (cerca de 20.000) e com os carregadores “indígenas” (várias centenas de milhar) que foram compulsoriamente mobilizados no esforço de guerra português em Angola e em Moçambique. As suas “faces” são as mais desconhecidas, hoje como em 1918.

BETWEEN AFRICA AND EUROPE

Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo

Portugal and the First World War: Contexts, protagonists and dynamics

The entry of Portugal in the First World War was an extremely disputed subject. The preservation of the existing colonial empire and the international and national legitimization of the Republican regime, recently invested (1910) and favourable to the idea, were two key reasons behind the decision. After months of stalemate, the Portuguese authorities seized the German fleet stationed in Portuguese ports on 23 February 1916. On 9 March 1916, Germany declared war to the Portuguese. Notwithstanding the patent insufficiencies regarding human resources, especially the manifest ill-preparedness of the around 20.000 men initially rallied, and the clear shortage of available military means, the Portuguese Expeditionary Force (CEP) started to be shipped to France in January 1917. During the war, 105.542 military were mobilized. A total of 38.012 casualties (dead, wounded, “incapacitated”, prisoners and missing soldiers) marked Portuguese participation in the war.

When the formal declaration of war between Portugal and Germany occurred, both countries had already faced each other in the battlefield. Not in Europe, but in their African possessions. As the war started in Europe, the Portuguese authorities feared for the security of their African colonies, especially Angola and Mozambique. Both had frontiers with German colonial territories: German South West Africa and German East Africa. On 18 August 1914, the mobilization of troops to Africa was determined, in order to strengthen

the scarce and untrained local forces. On 11 September 1914, the first expeditions departed. In Angola, an expedition of around 3.000 soldiers, including around 1.000 “native” combatants, moved towards the southern frontier. In December, Portuguese and German forces clashed in Naulila. Between 1914 and 1915, 9.209 soldiers were rallied. In 1916, with Portugal already formally at war, the focus of the military operations against the Germans moved to the north of Mozambique. Formed by around 1.500 soldiers and backed by thousands of “recruited” indigenous soldiers and porters (*carregadores*), Portuguese troops were essentially challenged by tropical diseases. More than everything else, problems regarding hygiene and nutrition explained the existing casualties. The military purposes, namely the takeover of the southern parts of German East Africa, were reached, but only temporarily. As a consequence of the complex dynamic of the conflict in the northern and western parts of the German colony and given the pressure of British and Belgian troops, the German troops led by Von Lettow Vorbeck invaded northern Mozambique in the end of 1917. They would only surrender in 12 November 1918, after the Armistice was signed and confirmed.

The war that did not end all wars

The end of what some historians call a European Civil War revealed how illusory was the belief that the conflict would be swiftly solved. Nobody “spent Christ-

mas at home". The human and material costs greatly exceeded the most pessimistic forecasts. *The war that should end all wars* gave new meanings to ideas such as "war crimes", "atrocities", or "humanitarian crisis". Given this, the 1918 Armistice seemed to *necessarily* entail a new period of peace and order. That did not happen. The terms of the Armistice, signed in the railway wagon where marshal Ferdinand Foch and the German plenipotentiaries confirmed their surrender, and the list of obligations imposed upon the Germans by the Versailles Treaty (1919) are just two examples of facts that ended up working as a time bomb, which the League of Nations and the interwar internationalism were not able to deactivate. Formally, the war had ended. There were reasons to rejoice and commemorate. But its effects did not end, at many levels. In a sense, they were even more visible. Because it was not a battleground, this process was particularly clear in Portugal: the war became more visible and understandable when it ended.

The expeditionary forces that fought in European and African battlegrounds returned to their homelands. The imprisoned soldiers left the detention centers and added to the number of those repatriated. Germany returned 6.767 Portuguese prisoners, the majority of them (6585) made during the violent battle of La Lys (7-29 April 1918). 233 died in captivity. The graves of thousands of dead soldiers were left behind, for instance in the military cemetery of Richebourg, in France. Added to around 16.607 wounded and 13.645 imprisoned and missing soldiers, 7.760 Portuguese men were killed in the conflict. In the Portuguese case, given the disagreements regarding the participation in the conflict, the return of the combatants did not cause the jubilation verified in other countries. When they arrived in Lisbon they were dispersed across the country. The possibility of their involvement in actions of political and social destabilization had to be minimized.

Thousands of wounded and mutilated went home. In their homelands, families welcomed those who returned alive and mourned those they had lost. The new methods of combat by the belligerent parties – for instance the widespread and intentional use of chemicals – entailed a great number of deaths, wounded and prisoners. In Portugal as in other geographies, the collective mobilization to the war effort and to deal with its nefarious consequences was highly significant. Benefiting from associative dynamism and from the energetic dedication of multiple groups in society – which promoted sales, concerts and bullfights for charitable purposes, for instance –, the country prepared itself to deal with the victims of the conflict. In this process, the role of women during and after the war was decisive, at the war front and at home.

These initiatives were also of great importance because they occurred in a country facing a crisis that worsened after the war. The political, economic and social instability increased, partly as a consequence of the war effort, but also in result of longstanding structural problems. A country markedly rural, the bad years in agriculture during the war left visible marks. Foreign trade grew slightly, despite the downfall of maritime trade. But so did the inflation. The cost of living increased significantly. The industries connected to the war effort developed. But those that relied on foreign markets, such as metallurgy and the textiles industry, suffered from the conflict. The shortage of fuels, machinery and raw materials caused the growth of public debt, internally and externally. The banks and the insurance companies thrived. The legislative frenzy designed to react to the consequences of the crisis reached no significant effect. The majority of the population endured a lot. Social unrest and labour claims deepened. The hard conditions and depressive trends continued, and intensified, after 1918. For instance, the national currency, the escudo, devaluated precipitously. The money available for the much-needed modernization of the economy was scarce. Also for this reason, the biggest concerns of Portugal at the 1919 Peace Conference were of a financial nature. The preservation of the empire and the granting of a modicum of financial reparations guided the diplomatic strategy in Paris. The country paid a high economic and financial price for its involvement in the war. The latter did not improve the regime's international prestige significantly. Also, the traditional political instability did not end. Liberal constitutionalism collapsed in 1926.

Endless echoes

The Great War was a brutal conflict, with millions of deaths. Destruction was global, the word "inhumanity" gained a more ample meaning. The impact of the war effort was devastating. So were the numerous physical effects and psychological traumas caused by the violence of the conflict and by the countless human losses. These realities promoted the emergence of different forms of remembrance, in art and literature, and in many other social domains, in the private and in the public sphere. These were inscribed in the public space. In 1923, the year in which the cornerstone of the Monument to the Great War Dead was laid, the League of the Combatants of the Great War, a non-governmental association with the purpose of gathering the soldiers involved in the conflict, was created. Throughout the country, the League's branches promoted convivial meetings, forms of solidarity and moments of tribute

to and memory of fellow soldiers killed in combat, including in the military campaigns in Africa. Some associations had the aim of providing social assistance to former soldiers and their families, responding to the state's inability to do so. In the two decades after 1918, several monuments of homage to and remembrance of the deceased of the Great War were inaugurated, in public ceremonies of national unification, which also aimed to overcome the domestic political divergences

es that characterized the Republican regime. In the Batalha Monastery, a Tomb of the Unknown Soldier contained the remains of two soldiers, one coming from Flanders, the other from Africa. The same did not happen with the African soldiers (around 20.000) and the "native" porters (several hundreds of thousands) that were forcefully rallied in the Portuguese war effort in Angola and Mozambique. Their "faces" are the most unknown, today as in 1918.

13.

România
Romania

O DIMINEAȚĂ LA VIENA

Ioan T. Morar

- Aicea zici că-i spital, nu gară, părinte - a observat Mitruț după ce au coborât la Viena, făcându-și loc prin mulțime, spre ieșire.

Mergea cu o jumătate de pas în față, împingându-i, la nevoie, pe cei care le stăteau în cale. "La o parte, la o parte" zicea el în românește, ca și când toată lumea l-ar fi înțeles. Dar efectul era că se dădeau toți la o parte, statura impresionantă spunea mai mult decât cuvintele neînțelese, rostite într-una din multele limbi ale Imperiului.

Uriașul avea dreptate, Gara Viena părea un spital militar deschis și civililor grăbiți spre sau dinspre trenuri, cei mai mulți privind în gol, ferindu-se de grozăviile din jur. Prea mult sânge, prea multă cenușă. Războiul epuizase toate dozele de compătimire, nu mai era loc pentru durerile altora.

- Părinte, io atîția oameni cu picioarele tăiate n-am mai văzut. Și am fost pe front, nu am stat numa-n Arad. Parcă pe toți i-a scos de sub tren și i-o lăsat în gară.

Părintele Partenie Nicoară zîmbi trist la remarca însoțitorului său masiv. Îl descoperea dintr-o dată vorbăreț, tot drumul n-au schimbat mai mult de două-trei cuvinte. La început nu a vrut să-l ia ca însoțitor.

- Asta-mi mai trebuie, o grijă în plus.

- "E prea importantă treaba asta ca să o ratezi din cauza unor golani sau dezertori. Ia-l cu tine pe Mitruț, să n-ai nici o grijă!" i-a spus domnul Goldiș, pe un ton care nu accepta refuzul.

Mitruț era omul bun la toate în casa familiei Goldiș, un uriaș blînd căruia trupul i-a crescut repede, dar creierul nu a ținut pasul, a rămas undeva în copilărie. Când l-au luat la armată, nu au avut uniformă care să-l încapă, a

rămas două săptămîni în cojocul făcut pe măsură la Pîncota, pînă cînd i-au încropit o uniformă. Nici în tranșee nu reușea să se ascundă de tot, așa că, în prima lună de front, a fost rănit la cap. "Creierul nu i-a fost atins... a zis doctorul Julcuț, după ce l-a consultat la spitalul militar din Timișoara. Îi destul de bine ascuns."

Se împlinea o săptămîină de cînd unchiul Vasile (așa îi zicea cînd erau doar ei doi) l-a chemat la birou și i-a spus să se pregătească de o călătorie "foarte importantă" la Viena.

- Pentru mine, Partenie, ești un om de mare încredere. Și nu numai pentru că sîntem neamuri. Poți lipsi din parohie o săptămîină, două... Cred că ți-ai dat seama că pregătim ceva. M-am consultat și cu Ștefan Cicio-Pop, și cu Ioan Suciu... Trebuie să facem ceva cu armata de la Viena, sînt multe mii de soldați români, nu putem să ne întregim țara noastră fără armată... Am tot întors-o pe toate fețele... Ca să nu se simtă dezertori sau trădători, militarii noștri trebuie dezlegați de jurămîntul pentru Împărat... Apoi să jure pentru națiunea română... Te duci cu mesajul ăsta la Generalul Boieru... El e cam la curent, așteaptă un semn de la noi. Am vorbit și cu Prea Sfințitul, să faceți cele de cuviință, treci pe la Episcopie, te așteaptă să-ți dea dezlegarea să dezlegi de jurămînt. Tu îi dezlegi pe preoți, apoi ei fac același lucru cu soldații. În plicul ăsta ai textul noului jurămînt, l-am dezbătut în comitet restrîns... Tu te ocupi de ortodocși... Uniții au și ei atenția în direcția asta, se ocupă Iuliu Maniu. Dar e bine să avem și noi partea noastră de atenție. Maniu uneori e prea înflăcărat. În plus, el e unit... Ia sama la asta! Știi cum e, sîntem frați, dar vitregi, tata lor e la Roma...

La Arad, la Gară, pe lîngă traista lui cu cele de trebuință, Mitruț a adus și un pachet legat în pînză. Părintele Partenie l-a luat în mînă ca și cum l-ar fi cîntărit... Apoi a zîmbit.

- Țsta nu se deschide decît la Viena, așa îi ordinu' de la domnul Goldiș - a spus Mitruț, iar părintele l-a asigurat că nu vrea să-l deschidă nici acum, nici pe drum.

L-au deschis doar cînd au ajuns la cazarma Franz Ferdinand, în biroul generalului Ioan Boieru, comandantul trupelor de români din armata imperială, singurii care au rămas disciplinați în vremurile acelea tulburi. Generalul i-a primit imediat, le-a spus că îi aștepta, i-a servit cu o cafea. Apoi l-a chemat în birou și pe căpitanul Popa, adjunctul lui, cel care-i ținuse locul pe cînd generalul, rînit în luptă, era în spital.

- Domnule general, aveți aici plicul sigilat de la domnul Vasile Goldiș și pachetul ăsta.

Mitruț, care încremenise în poziție de drepti, cu pachetul sub braț, aproape că nu ar fi vrut să-l dea altcuiva. Pînă la urmă a scos briceagul, a tăiat legăturile și i-a înmînat lui Partenie conținutul: un drapel tricolor românesc: roșu, galben și albastru.

- V-ați gîndit și la asta, zise, zîmbind, generalul... Avem și noi un drapel făcut de doamna Popa. Nu-i nimic, două bătăi strică, două steaguri sînt binevenite. Numai bine, trimitem unul și la regimentul de la Praga... Îl dăm chiar în seara asta locotenentului Apostol care merge să-i sincronizeze și pe ei.

Generalul, care se ridicase de la birou ca să preia drapelul, s-a întors cu plicul, s-a așezat pe scaun și, cu un cuțitaș de argint, a tăiat sigiliul. Și-a așezat ochelarii pe nas, a scos foile și le-a citit... Partenie aștepta momentul ăsta și, chiar dacă nu ar fi putut jura, i se păru că fața generalului se luminase citind.

- Da, e așa cum credeam... E foarte bine. Atît a spus generalul, apoi sună dintr-un clopoțel. Un soldat tînăr se prezentă imediat.

- Caută-l pe preotul Iosif... Pînă atunci, rămîn numai cu părintele Partenie.

Căpitanul Popa ieșise deja, așa că vorbele generalului i s-au adresat doar lui Mitruț. Care a bătut din călcîie și a făcut un stînga-mprejur ca la carte.

- Părinte, primul care trebuie dezlegat de jurămint sînt eu. Te rog să o faci acum, ca să putem mîine să spunem jurămintul cel nou, primit de acasă.

După ce preotul Partenie Nicoară, trimisul special al Episcopiei Aradului, l-a dezlegat pe generalul Boieru, a urmat discuția cu fratele Iosif Serafim, șeful preoților militari. I-a transmis decizia primită "din țară", spunîndu-i și cum s-a ajuns la această soluție. "Îți mulțumesc,

Doamne!" a spus, în loc de concluzie, cu mîinile unite ca pentru rugăciune și cu privirea îndreptată spre tavan, preotul militar.

Terminîndu-și misiunea la cazarmă, părintele Partenie (cu Mitruț ca o umbră mai mare a sa), a plecat agale prin Viena, urmînd să se vadă, seara, cu căpitanul Popa, care i-a invitat la cină la restaurantul Weigel din Dreher-Park.

- Părinte, știi, io pînă azi nu am văzut în fața mea un general. Pe mine m-au comandat plutonieri și căprari... Iar azi, cînd a trebuit să ies din birou, mi-a dat ordin generalu'... Mi-s bucuros, mare onoare să-mi zică el să ies afară.

- Mă bucur și eu, Mitruț, de bucuria ta... E un mare om generalul Boieru, l-a făcut împăratul baron... Om viteaz... Îl pierde împăratul, dar îl cîștigăm noi...

- Generalul Boieru e un erou - le confirmă, la cină, căpitanul Popa...

Apoi le spuse că a ales restaurantul Weigel pentru că "aici, vedeți, la masa aia lungă din colț, acum cîteva zile, s-a format Senatul Militar Român Central... Ne-am organizat... Știm ce avem de făcut..."

Căpitanul Popa, care în viața civilă fusese învățător, folosea cuvinte bine alese, ușor patetice, de parcă ar fi avut mereu un discurs de ținut: "Vedeți, Viena a fost în haos, un haos al sfîrșitului de război, Viena a fost învinsă, măreția ei a căzut în cenușă, au năvălit bolșevicii, care au vrut să pună stăpînire pe oraș... Au fost greve, lupte de stradă... Dar noi, stimați meseni - se înflăcăra căpitanul, noi românii, comandați de generalul Ioan Boieru, am salvat Viena în cînzeci și cinci de zile, am pacificat-o. Ca răsplată pentru asta, putem să plecăm la noi acasă. Măine, cum știți, stimați meseni, se va depune noul jurămint".

Partenie era ușor amuzat de tonul înflăcărat al căpitanului, iar pe Mitruț îl bucura faptul că un căpitan i se adresează și lui cu formula "stimați meseni". Cît despre depunerea jurămintului, nimeni nu era mai la curent decît trimisul Episcopiei.

- Astăzi, 17 noiembrie, aici, în această dimineață, în curtea cazarmii Franz Ferdinand, ne-am dat întîlnire cu istoria - rosti căpitanul Popa în portavocea de alamă, și miile de soldați au încetat discuțiile, liniștea s-a instalat încet, dar sigur.

- Regiment, drepti!

Au cuvîntat un deputat, apoi Iuliu Maniu, după care generalul Boieru a spus esențialul: "De astăzi, începînd

cu mine și pînă la cel de pe urmă soldat al nostru, vom depune un nou jurămînt de credință. Ați fost dezlegați de cel vechi, preoții noștri militari v-au absolvit de toate datoriile către împărat. De azi, vom fi o nouă armată: Armata Națiunii Române. Și ne vom întoarce acasă, curînd, să ne apărăm vatra și neamul.”

- Părinte, părinte, pot jura și eu? - întrebă Mitruț.

- Poți, de ce să nu poți?! Doar să vrei.

- Vreau, da' n-am uniformă.

- N-ai, da' poți jura și-n cojoc. Doar așa ai început armata.

- Știți asta? Doamne, ce înseamnă să ai carte. Știi tot...

Mitruț s-a apropiat de soldați, era cu un cap peste ei, un plugar fără uniformă lîngă mii de plugari în uniformă. “Firi blajine și timide aruncate din cătunele lor liniștite în vîltoarea marelui oraș”, cum îi caracterizase, cu o seară înainte, căpitanul Popa.

După generalul Boieru, urmă părintele Iosif Serafim, cu o voce puternică, să se audă în curtea devenită un fel de catedrală cu norii cenușii, parcă desenați deasupra regimentului.

- Soldați, jurați după mine, în fața acestui steag tri-color care a fost sfințit pentru noi:

“Jur credință națiunii române și supunere în toate Consiliului Național Român Central. Nu voi sta decât în serviciul neamului românesc, pe care nu-l voi părăsi la nici un caz și sub nici o împrejurare.”

La capătul jurămîntului, fără să fie vorbiți între ei, soldații au strigat un Ura ! din toți rărunchii, de mai multe ori. Strigătul acela a fost atît de puternic, încît ecoul lui s-a auzit, ani de zile, repetat în poveștile spuse prin satele din Ardeal, de cei care au jurat românește, în acea dimineață, în curtea cazărmii dintr-un imperiu destrămat.

A MORNING IN VIENNA

Ioan T. Morar, translated by David Morar

“This feels like a hospital, not a train station, Father”, Mitruț opined, as they made their way towards the exit, after getting off in Vienna.

He was walking half a step ahead, pushing away the crowds. “Out of the way, out of the way”, he loudly exclaimed in Romanian, as if they could understand him. And out of the way they moved, as his imposing stature told them more than the words they couldn’t comprehend, words spoken in one of the many languages of the Empire. The giant was right, Vienna’s train station looked like a military hospital that was also open to civilians, rushing to or from the trains, most of whom were staring blankly into space, averting their eyes from the surrounding carnage. Too much blood, too much ash. The war had thoroughly exhausted any remaining semblance of compassion. There was no more room for other people’s pain.

“Father, I’ve never seen so many people with their legs cut off. And I’ve actually spent time in the trenches, it’s not like I’ve only been in Arad. Looks like, they pulled them out from under the trains and just left ’em in the train station.”

Father Partenie Nicoară’s reaction to his large companion was a small sad smile. He was suddenly discovering a talkative soul, one that had barely spoken on the way over. At first, he didn’t want to have him as a companion.

“This is exactly what I need, something else to worry about.”

“Well, this job is too important to fail on account of some thugs or deserters. Take Mitruț with you and you won’t have any worries”, Mr. Goldiș said in a tone that would not tolerate refusal.

Mitruț was the handyman of the Goldiș household, a gentle giant whose brain was stuck in perpetual childhood, outpaced by the speed of his body’s growth. When he was drafted in the army they didn’t have a uniform big enough for him, so he used his own sheepskin that had been made-to-order in Pîncota until they could cobble up a uniform for him. He was so large he couldn’t hide in the trenches, so his first month on the frontlines his head was wounded. “His brain wasn’t hurt”, decreed doctor Julcuț, after he examined him at the military hospital in Timișoara. “It was pretty well hidden”.

It had been a week since Uncle Vasile (that was what he would call him when it was only the two of them) invited him into the office and told him to prepare for a “very important” trip to Vienna.

“For me, Partenie, you’re very trustworthy and not just because we’re related. You can be away from the parish for a week or two... I think you’ve realized we’re preparing for something. I’ve spoken to Ștefan Cicio-Pop, and with Ioan Suciu. We have to do something about the army in Vienna. There are thousands of Romanian soldiers... We can’t build our country without a military. We’ve given it a lot of thought... in order for them to not feel like they’re traitors or deserters. Our soldiers have to be absolved of their oath to the Emperor and then pledge their loyalty to the Romanian

nation. You'll deliver this message to General Boieru. He's kind of aware... he's waiting for a note from us. I've spoken with His Holiness for everything to be done properly, stop by the Diocese, he's waiting to give you the absolution. You absolve the priests, in turn, they'll do the same with the soldiers. In this envelope, you have the text of the new oath, we've debated in a small committee. You'll take care of the Orthodox. The Uniates are also working towards it. Iuliu Maniu is working on it. But it's good for us to have our share of attention. Maniu is a bit too hot-headed. Plus, he's a Uniate, be careful... You know how it is, we may be brothers but only half, their father is in Rome.

In Arad, at the train station, besides his satchel packed with things he needed, Mitruț also brought a canvas-wrapped package. Father Partenie weighed it in his hands, and then smiled.

"We don't open this until Vienna, that's our orders from Mr. Goldiș," said Mitruț, and the Father assured him he had no desire to open it neither now nor on the way. They only opened it when they reached Franz Ferdinand barracks, in the office of General Ioan Boieru, the commander of the Romanian troops in the Imperial Army, the only ones that showed discipline in those turbulent times. The general saw them immediately, told them he had been expecting them and gave them coffee. Then he asked for Captain Popa to join them in his office. Popa, his deputy, was the one that took over for him while the general, wounded in battle, was recovering in the hospital.

"General, here is the sealed envelope from Mr. Vasile Goldiș, and this package."

Mitruț, who stood frozen at attention, with the package under his arms, almost didn't want to give it away to anybody else. He finally pulled out his pocket knife, cut the straps and handed Partenie the contents: a flag with the Romanian tricolor scheme: red, yellow, and blue.

"You even thought of this," said the general, smiling... "We also have a flag here, crafted by Mrs. Popa. It's ok, two spankings are one too many, but two flags are always useful. This way we can send one to the Prague regiment. We'll give it to lieutenant Apostol tonight, he's going to synchronize them as well..."

The general, who had gotten up from his desk to receive the flag, sat back down in his chair with the envelope, and with a small silver knife broke the seal. He placed his glasses firmly on his nose, took out the papers and read them. Partenie had been waiting for this moment, and even if he couldn't swear to it, he thought the general's face lit up as he was reading.

"Yes, it's exactly like I thought. It's very good..." That's all the general said before ringing a bell. A young soldier appeared almost immediately.

"Go look for Priest Iosif. Until then, leave me alone with Father Partenie..."

Captain Popa had already left, so the general's words were only directed at Mitruț, who tapped his heels and executed a textbook turn-around.

"Father, the first who needs to be absolved of his oath is me. Please do it now, so we can lead them tomorrow in the new oath, the one we got from home.

After Priest Partenie Nicoară, special envoy of the Diocese of Arad, absolved General Boieru, he spoke with Brother Iosif Serafim, the head of the military chaplains. He explained the decision from "back home", also telling him how this solution had been reached. "Thank you, Lord", the chaplain replied, looking up towards the ceiling and bringing his hands together as if in prayer.

Finishing his mission at the barracks, Father Partenie (with Mitruț as his shadow, looming large) wandered around Vienna, as they had plans that evening, to meet up with Captain Popa, who had invited them for dinner at the Weigel restaurant in Dreher-Park.

"Father, you know, I'd never seen no general in real life. My commanding officers were master-sergeants or corporals, but today when I had to leave the office, the general gave me the order. I'm happy, me, that was a big honor for me that he told me to leave."

"I'm also happy, Mitruț, because you're happy... General Boieru is a great man, the Emperor made him a Baron. Brave man... The Emperor's loss is our gain."

"General Boieru is a hero", Captain Popa confirmed, at dinner, and then told them he chose the Weigel restaurant because "right there at that long table in the corner, a few days ago, the Romanian Central Military Senate was formed. We're organized. We know what we have to do..."

Captain Popa, who, as a civilian, had been a teacher, was using well-chosen words with a slight pathetic bend, as if he always had to make a speech:

"You see, Vienna was engulfed in chaos, the chaos of the end of the war. Vienna was defeated, its greatness tumbled into dust, the Bolsheviks stormed it, wanting to take control of the city. There were strikes, brawls, but we, dear diners", the captain's enthusiasm grew, "we, the Romanians commanded by General Ioan Boieru, we

saved Vienna in fifty five days. We pacified it. As a reward, we get to go back home. Tomorrow, as you know, dear diners, we will swear a new oath.”

Partenie was slightly amused by the Captain’s exalted tone, and Mitruț was glad that a Captain was addressing him as “dear diner”. As for the oath, no one was more aware of it than the envoy of the Diocese.

“Today, November 17th, here, this morning, in the yard of the Franz Ferdinand barracks we have a rendez-vous with history”, uttered Captain Popa through the brass bullhorn making the thousands of soldiers hush their discussions as silence slowly but surely took over.

“Regiment, stand to attention!”

A member of Parliament spoke, then Iuliu Maniu, after which General Boieru got to the point: “Today onwards, starting with me all the way to our last soldier we will swear a new oath. You have been absolved of your old oaths, our chaplains have absolved you of all duties towards the Emperor. From now on, we will be a new Army, the Army of the Romanian Nation. And we will soon return home, to protect our country and our nation.”

“Father, can I also take the oath?” asked Mitruț.

“Of course, why not? You just have to want it.”

“I want to, but I don’t have a uniform.”

“No, you don’t, but you can take the oath in your sheepskin. That’s the way you started in the military, anyway.”

“You knew that? Golly, what it means to be a learned man. You know everything..”

Mitruț moved closer to the soldiers, much taller than them, a ploughman without a uniform, next to thousands of ploughmen in uniform. “Gentle and timid souls, plucked from their little villages and thrown into the whirl of the big city”, as captain Popa had described them the night before.

After General Boieru came Father Iosif Serafim with a booming voice, meant to echo in the yard that had become a makeshift cathedral, as the gray clouds felt painted above the regiment.

“Soldiers, repeat this oath after me, in front of this tricolor flag which was sanctified for us”:

“I pledge allegiance to the Romanian Nation and obedience in all to the Romanian National Central Council. I will only be in service of the Romanian people, which I will never leave, in no way and under no circumstance.”

At the end of the oath, without having planned it, the soldiers repeatedly shouted a hearty “Hurrah!”. That yelling was so strong it echoed for years in all the stories told around the villages of Ardeal, by those that swore an oath in Romanian, that morning, in the yard of the barracks of a broken empire.

14.

Србија
Serbia

1918: ГОДИНА У КОЈОЈ СУ И САТОВИ УБИЈАЛИ

Александар Гаталица

Мајор Радојица Татић је ујутру 13. септембра 1918. морао натраг на фронт и никад више није видео своју љубав за једну ноћ: шкотску болничарку Анабел Валден. А можда није ни морао, јер су се њена кратка плава коса, округло лице Острвљанке и два крупна плава ока населили у најјстиднији део његовог сећања да одатле никада не изађу и ником се не одају.

Већ увече истог дана поново је био војник. Придружио се својој јединици на обронцима планине Флока. Јео је мало; много пушио, стављајући лоше цигаре у муштиклу као Грк. Ноћ није била за спавање, дан није доносио мир. Нека злослутна тишина увукла се војницима под шлемове и у униформу, и већ су неки почели да говоре како је цела војска на Солунском фронту уклетга. Али онда се тишина проломилга у урлик из свих артиљеријских оруђа. У пет часова ујутру, 14. септембра 1918, српски регент Александар Карађорђевић, главнокомандујући српских снага, изашао је из своје брвнаре на Јелаку. Свуда око њега полегла је магла, али како је дан одмицао у рејону Доброг Села магла се разилазила. У осам ујутру дато је наређење да се са српских положаја запуца из две хиљаде топова. Два дана трајало је јаукање танади, плакање топова и цик птица селица, а онда је устала пешадија.

У пробој Солунског фронта крај Ветерника кренуо је и Други Батаљон Комбиноване Дринске дивизије првог позива којим је командовао Радојица Татић. Хиљаду војника имао је под својом командом мајор Татић и четири млада поручника. Хиљаду војника једва да је било писмено и на себе је гледало као на децу смрти за коју нико не мари и коју нико

неће славити кад погину. Ослањали су се на бајалице, клетве, амајлије и народно мерење времена. Само четворица поручника Другог Батаљона и њихов командант имали су џепне часовнике. Били су млади ти поручници, школовани; било им је суђено да живе до 1964. године, па и дуже, или није...

Нико од њих четворице у почетку није помишљао да треба да чува џепни сат. Када је наредба за напад дата, измешали су се српски и француски војници. Растурене десетине почеле су да се пењу по камењару. Људи подеране обуће, искрварени, освајали су метар по метар. Чули су се најпре рафали, па кратка пушчана паљба, да би на крају све умукло и бајонети почели да маме узалудне крике. Ко би у том метежу мислио на часовник?

А баш првог дана по пробоју Солунског фронта покварио се џепни сат мајоровом поручнику Ивану Филиповићу из Уба. Механизам је стао. Сат није био ударен, стакло му није било ни огребано. Казаљке су се умирале ујутру 16. септембра у радосном распореду: десет и десет, а поручник у томе није видео никакав лош знак. Није сат пола дана ни погледао, а кад је видео да је стао, није стигао да га макне из џепа. Викао је тог дана поручник Филиповић на своје војнике: „Напред, војско, рат није свадба!“ и грабио напред. Два пута се ухватио за гушу са Бугарима и два пута је на себи видео своју и туђу крв коју није стигао ни да обрише. Чинило се да је дете среће, да га смрт неће, али увече, кад се све умирило, а војска залегла по камењару Сивог брда и препустила се бројању звезда и убијању змија, Ивана Филиповића пронашли су мртвог. Нико није чуо пуцањ, ни

најближи нису начули да је јекнуо, на кожи није имао трагове змијског уједа, те је нешто натприродно морало да се оптужи за поручникову смрт. Кривац је тако постао један обичан цепни часовник који је стао, заустављајући казаљке у оптимистичном распореду: десет и десет.

За смрт свог поручника, мајор Татић сазнао је одмах. Скочио је. Дотрчао. Узео тог момка, готово дечака, за крагну капута и почео да га дрмуса.

– Устај, синко – чули су га војници како виче – устај, јер не смеш умрети. Немаш ниједну рану која би те уморила!

– Сахат, мајоре – довикну неко.

– Какав, сахат, бога ти – продера се мајор Татић.

– Сахат га је, господине мајоре, убио... Стао је. Није куцао. Ми мислимо да је с њиме стао и живот нашег поручника Филиповића. До увече још је живео и двојицу Бугара задавио, а онда је, као и тај сахат, једноставно стао. Видите умро је тачно у десет и десет увече.

– Ма то је... то је, само тлапња. Милија, Милија, овамо – позвао је мајор свог другог поручника. – Са’раните овог нашег јунака, макар целу ноћ копали гроб у овом камењару, а ти, Милија, сине, узми сахат поручника Филиповића и дај ми га на чување.

– Господине мајоре – казао је поручник – допустите да га ја узем. Имам свој ваљан и Иванов кван. Имам и два џепа за оба сата. Нек ми буде за успомену. Дозволите ми да га носим.

– На, носи га, ђаво га однео, али свој пази.

– Пазићу га, господине мајоре.

И пазио је свој цепни часовник други поручник Милија Јововић са Опленца. Викао је на војску час као на људе, час као на марву, а војници су и даље чували своје амајлије, време мерили према сунцу и звездама и причали о томе како се смрт артиљерца бележи у анале пука, смрт коњаника одмах је за споменик, а смрт пешадинца довољна само за плитак гроб. Други батаљон Комбиноване Дринске дивизије кренуо је победоносно да гони непријатеља. Француски авиони Бугаре су час засипали бомбама, час лецима у којима су их позивали да се предају. Бугари су бежали, али Аустријанци и Немци су се прегруписавали. Код Прешева су војници мајора Татића наишли на аустроугарску војску. Прешево је пало после тродневних борби, а трећег дана, баш

пред улазак у град, погинуо је поручник Милија Јововић. И поново је, чини се, узрок и овој смрти био часовник. Милији се разбило окно часовника, те је сат стао 29. септембра у шест и пет ујутру, а предвече је био мртав. Супротно првом, други поручник одмах је опазио да му је сат стао, али ником није хтео да каже, да то војска не прими као кукавичлук. Јурио је пре других, срљао у смрт, и кад су непријатељи почели да се предају, већ је мислио да је извукао живу главу. Увече, тачно у шест и пет по подне, био је мртав. Сада је било јасно да је другог Татићевог младог поручника обориле залутали куршум, али метак је био испален у очајању, у часу када је договор о примирју у рејону Прешева већ био постигнут. Поручник Јововић је издавао последње наредбе, кад је погођен. Застао је у пола покрета, окренуо се на једној нози као да игра плес са смрћу, цикнуо као девојчица и срушио се. На мундиру се нису видели трагови крви, као да га је погодила игла, а не метак...

Поново је мајор Татић дотрчао као да му је рођени син, кога никад није имао, пао на прилазима Прешева.

– Милија, сине – викао је огрубелим гласом, као да говори у име војске – говорио сам ти, али ниси ме слушао: чувај сахат као очи у глави, сине мој. Опомену сам те, Милија, а ти ниси пазио.

– Господине мајоре – понудио се трећи поручник. Дозволите да узем два покварена сата. Два неисправна, то вам је као један исправан. Свој ћу чувати као девојачке очи, а ова два ставићу дубоко у унутрашњи десни цеп.

И Милентије Ђорић из Лознице ставио је сатове дубоко у цеп. Његов је пазио као зенице своје драге, али се, авај, и овом часовнику разлупало стакло, што је неминовно означило крај ратовања за трећег поручника. Дванаестог октобра српска војска зауставила се код Ниша, али Ниш никад није видео трећи поручник. Мајор је наредио да поручника Милентија Ђорића сахране на нишком гробљу уз све почасте које заслужује херој и сва три часовника-убице узео. Четвртог поручнику хтео је да одузме и онај исправни, али се предомислио. Кајао се што са својих мртвих поручника није својим рукама одмах скидао покварене сатове, као што се покајао што свом последњем четовођи није одузео и исправан часовник. Поручник Ранко Бојовић из Смедерева толико је пазио на свој сат. Чистио га је, чувао, и навијао. Десио се да се толико бојао да ће стати да га је у завршним борбама за Београд превише навио и сломио му опругу... Часовник је стао, сам одбио задњи поклопац и пред запрепашћеним

поручником просуо зупчанике, вретена и точкиће као своју утробу. Поручник Ранко Бојовић због тога није успео да види престоницу... Војници кажу да су чули његове последње речи: „Е, Гавро, Гавро Принципу, метак што испали у надвојводу на крају је погодио и мене...“

Мајор Радојица Татић умарширао је у Београд као победник. У левом џепу имао је свој часовник који га никад није издао, а у десној руци држао четири покварена. Један који је стао у десет и десет и изгледао као да је исправан; други, разбијеног стакла, који се укочио у шест и пет; трећи потпуно полупан с казаљкама које су показивале тачно три; и четврти истргнуте утробе, који је застао у минут до дванаест.

Велики рат за мајора Радојицу Татића завршио се првог новембра 1918. када је на Славији, необично за друге, подигао у вис четири џепна часовника о ланцима, и кад је, као да се обраћа сатовима, казао: „Поручници моји, и ви сте са мном ослободили Београд...“

На почетку Великог рата Србија је мобилисала 400.000 војника и још 107.000 времешних мушкараца ставила у резерву. Велики рат је преживело 137.000 мушких глава. Три стотине седамдесет хиљада је погинуло: међу њима и Иван Филиповић из Уба, Милија Јововић са Опленца, Милентије Ђорић из Лознице и Ранко Бојовић из Смедерева.

(Одломак из романа *Велики рат*)

1918: THE YEAR IN WHICH EVEN WATCHES SHED BLOOD

Aleksandar Gatalica, translated by Will Firth

The morning of 13 September 1918 came; the Major Radoyica Tatich had to return to the Front and he never saw his lover for one night, Scottish nurse An-nabel Walden, again. But perhaps he didn't need to because her short fair hair, round English face and big blue eyes settled deep into the most intimate part of his memory, never to re-emerge and never to reveal themselves to anyone.

In the evening of that day he was a soldier again. He joined his unit on the slopes of Mount Floka. He ate little and smoked a lot, fitting cheap cigarettes into his cigarette holder like a Greek. The night was no good for sleeping, nor did the day bring peace. An ominous silence crept under the soldiers' helmets and into their uniforms, and some were already starting to say that the whole army on the Salonika Front was cursed. But then the silence broke into a roar from an armada of artillery pieces. At five o'clock on the morning of 14 September, Regent Alexander came out of his log cabin on Mount Yelak. Thick fog lay all around, but as the day progressed the fog lifted in the Dobro Selo area. At eight in the morning, the order was given to the Serbian artillery, and two thousand heavy guns opened fire at the Bulgarian positions opposite. The wailing of missiles, crying of guns and the shrieks of migratory birds went on for two whole days, and then the infantry went over the top.

One of the Serbian units which brought about the breakthrough on the Salonika Front near Veternik was the 2nd Battalion of the Combined Drina Reserve Division led by Major Radoyica Tatich. He had a thousand soldiers and four young lieutenants under his command. The thousand soldiers were barely literate and saw themselves as blades of grass for the grim reaper; no

one cared about them and no one would raise a monument to them when they died. They relied on spells and charms, oaths and curses, amulets and a rustic keeping of time. Only the four lieutenants of the 2nd Battalion and their commander had pocket watches. Those lieutenants were young and educated; it was their destiny to live until 1964 or even longer. Or was it?

To begin with, none of the four thought they needed to keep the time. When the order to attack was given, the allied Serbian and French soldiers soon intermingled; split into groups of ten or twelve, they started to scale the rocky slope. Their uniforms were soon ragged, and almost every man was losing blood from cuts and wounds. In this way, they took metre after metre of ground. The air was full of machine-gun fire at first; then there were short bursts of rifle fire; in the end, everything died down and bayonets began to do their work, punctuating the silence with futile screams. Who would think of his watch amidst such confusion?

One of the major's lieutenants was Ivan Filipovich from Ub. His watch stopped on the very first day of the breakthrough on the Salonika Front. The mechanism simply failed. There had been no blow to the watch and there was not even a scratch on the glass. The hands came to rest on the morning of 16 September in cheery alignment at ten-past-ten, but the lieutenant didn't consider it a bad omen. He hadn't looked at his watch for half a day, and when he saw it had stopped he didn't have time to take it off its chain. 'Forward boys, war isn't a picnic!' he called out to his men that day and plunged ahead. Twice Lieutenant Filipovich was in a strangling, stabbing melee with the Bulgarians and twice he saw his own and others' blood on him and didn't have time to wipe it off. It seemed he was a darling of fortune whom

death couldn't touch, like the major when he had had the magic little mirror with him. But in the evening, when the fighting ebbed away and the men settled down on the rocky slopes of Sivo Brdo Hill and gave themselves up to counting stars and killing snakes, Ivan Filipovich was found dead. No one heard a shot, not even those close at hand heard him moan, and there was no sign of a snake bite on his skin, so something supernatural had to be blamed for the lieutenant's death. Then they found the 'culprit' — an ordinary pocket watch, with its hands halted in that optimistic symmetry of ten-past-ten.

Major Tatich was told about the death of his lieutenant straight away. He sprang to his feet and ran to the lad, who was scarcely more than a boy. He grabbed him by the collar of his coat and started to shake him.

'On your feet, lad,' the soldiers heard him yell. 'Get up. You mustn't die. You don't have a single wound that could have killed you!'

'The dickory, major,' one man called to him.

'What "dickory", damn it?' Major Tatich screamed.

'It was the dickory that killed 'im, major sir. It stopped and didn't tick. We think the lieutenant's life stopped with it. 'E was still alive until this evening and throttled them two Bulgarians, and then he simply stopped, like this 'ere dickory. See, he died at ten-past-ten in the evening.'

'But that's... that's just fantasy. Miliya, come over here,' the major called out to his second lieutenant. 'Men, you're to bury our hero even if it takes all night in this rocky ground. And you, Miliya my lad, take the watch of Lieutenant Filipovich and give it to me for safe keeping.'

'Let me take it, major sir,' the lieutenant said. 'I've got my good one and Ivan's dud one. I have two pockets, each for one watch. Please let me have it as a keepsake to remember him by.'

'You wear it then, blast it. But look after your own.'

'I will, major sir.'

So the second lieutenant, Miliya Yovovich from Oplenac, looked after the watch. He yelled at his soldiers at times like men, at times like livestock, and the men still had their amulets and kept time by the sun and the stars. They said the death of an artilleryman went down in the annals of a regiment, and the death of a horseman was reason enough for a monument, but the death of a footslogger only sufficed for a shallow grave.

The 2nd Battalion of the Combined Drina Reserve Division set off in victorious pursuit of the enemy. French planes showered the Bulgarians now with bombs, now with leaflets calling on them to surrender. The Bulgarians fled, but their Austrian and German allies regrouped. Major Tatich's men ran into the Austro-Hungarian army near Preshevo. The city fell after three days of fighting, and on the third day, just before the city was taken, Lieutenant Yovovich was killed. Again, a watch seemed to be the cause of death. The glass of Miliya's watch was smashed; the watch stopped on 29 September at five-past-six in the morning, and early in the evening he was dead. Unlike the first lieutenant, the second one noticed immediately that his watch had stopped, but he didn't want to tell anyone so his men wouldn't take it as cowardice. He charged out in front the others, rushing into mortal combat, and when the enemy started to surrender he thought he had come through it alive. He died at exactly five-past-six in the evening. It was clear that Tatich's second young lieutenant had been cut down by a stray bullet; the shot was fired in desperation just at the moment when a ceasefire agreement for the Preshevo area was reached. Lieutenant Yovovich was giving some last orders when he was hit. He stopped in mid-movement, turned on one leg as if dancing with death, shrieked like a girl, and crashed to the ground. There were no traces of blood on his coat, as if he had been hit by a needle rather than a bullet.

Again, Major Tatich came running as if his very own son — the son he never had — had fallen there on the outskirts of Preshevo.

'Miliya, lad,' he yelled with a rough voice, as if he was speaking in the name of the whole army, 'I told you, but you didn't listen: guard that watch like the apple of your eye. I warned you, Miliya, but you didn't look after it.'

'Major sir,' the third lieutenant offered. Please let me take the two broken watches. Two bad ones is like one good one. I'll guard my own like the eyes of my fiancée, and I'll put these two in the left inside pocket of my coat.'

And so Milentiye Djorich from Loznica put the watches deep inside his pocket, right at the bottom. He cherished his own watch like the eyes of his beloved, but alas, the glass of this watch also broke, and that inevitably meant the end of the war for this third lieutenant. On 12 October, the Serbian forces halted near Nish, but the third lieutenant never saw that city. The major ordered that Lieutenant Djorich be buried at the Nish cemetery with full military honours, as befitted a hero, and took all three killer-watches. He wanted to take the good one off his fourth lieutenant, he insisted, but

then he relented. As much as he regretted not having taken the broken watches off his three dead lieutenants straight away, and as much as he would regret not taking the good watch off his last lieutenant, it had to be said that Lieutenant Ranko Boyovich from Smederevo looked after his watch as diligently as humanly possible. He cleaned it, guarded it and wound it. In fact, he was so frightened it could stop that he overwound it during the final battle for Belgrade and broke the spring. The watch stopped, the back lid burst open, and cogs, spindles and tiny wheels spilt out like entrails in front of the petrified lieutenant. Lieutenant Boyovich therefore did not live to see the capital. His soldiers told that they heard his last words: 'O Gavro, Gavrilo Princip, the bullet you fired at the Archduke got' me too in the end...'

Major Radoyica Tatich marched into Belgrade as a victor. His watch, which never failed him, was in the left-hand outer pocket of his uniform, and in his right-hand pocket there lay four broken ones: one which had stopped at ten-past-ten and looked as if it was still good; a second, with a broken glass, which had frozen at five-

past-six; a third, completely smashed, with hands showing exactly three o'clock; and a fourth, with its entrails protruding, which had stopped at one minute to twelve.

The Great War ended for Major Radoyica Tatich on 1 November 1918 on Slaviya Square; to the surprise of onlookers, he took out the four watches on their chains and said, as if addressing those timepieces: 'My lieutenants, we liberated Belgrade together...'

At the beginning of the Great War, Serbia mobilized 400,000 soldiers and put another 107,000 old men in reserve. 137,000 of these men survived the Great War. Three hundred and seventy thousand were killed, among them Ivan Filipovich from Ub, Miliya Yovovich from Oplenac, Milentiye Djorich from Loznica and Ranko Boyovich from Smederevo.

(From the novel *The Great War*)

15.

Türkiye
Turkey

1918'DE OSMANLI İMPARATORLUĞU: NİHAİ ZAFERDEN TAM TESLİMİYETE

Prof. Dr. Gökhan Çetinsaya

Türk halkı tarafından “Seferberlik” olarak bilinen 1. Dünya Savaşı, Osmanlı İmparatorluğu tarihindeki ilk ve son “topyekûn savaş”tı. Ve her topyekûn savaşta olduğu gibi, cephe gerisinde, “sivil cephede” de derin izler bıraktı.

Osmanlılar, sanayileşmiş Avrupa Devletlerine kıyasla, savaşta dezavantajlı olan taraftı. Savaş uzayıp, on dört birincil ve ikincil cepheye yayıldıkça, savaşın ekonomik ve sosyal maliyeti de giderek artıyordu. Her bölge savaşın maliyetini farklı şekilde hissetse de, tüm ülkeye hakim olan temel sorun, iase sorunuydu.

İmparatorluğun tarıma dayalı ekonomisinin üretici gücünü oluşturan yetişkin erkekler silah altına alınarak cepheye gönderilmiş, ekonomiyi ayakta tutmak için geride sadece kadınlar, çocuklar, yaşlılar ya da sakatlar kalmıştı. İmparatorluk genelinde üretim, savaş öncesi üretim seviyesinin yarısına düşmüş; devlet, ekim için bir kenara ayrılmış olan tohumlar da dahil, fazla olan ne varsa el koymuştu. Blokaj sonucu limanların dışarıyla bağlantısı kesilmiş ve ithalattaki sert düşüş, gıda maddeleri sıkıntısını daha da vahim hale getirmişti.

Temel ihtiyaç maddelerinin azlığı, enflasyon artışı, karaborsa ve yolsuzluk eşi benzeri görülmemiş bir seviyeye ulaşmış; spekülasyonlar sonucu başta şeker ve bulgur olmak üzere, temel ihtiyaç maddelerinin fiyatları aşırı yükselmişti. 1914-1918 yılları arasında, şekerin fiyatı neredeyse yüz kat, genel enflasyon ise kabaca yirmi kat artmıştı. Osmanlı parası, satın alma gücünün yüzde seksenini kaybetmişti.

Savaş, toplumsal düzeni ve servet dağılımını alt üst etmişti. 1918 sonbaharında yayınlanan karikatür albümlerinin başlıklarında (les néo-riches ve les néo-pauvres) betimlendiği gibi, yeni zenginler ve yeni fakirler ortaya çıkmıştı. Sosyal ilişkiler ve sosyal yapılar

da tepetaklak olmuştu. Sivil cephenin en önemli aktörleri olarak ortaya çıkan kadınlar, her bakımdan özgürleşmek ve daha fazla haklara sahip olmak için çağrıda bulunmaya başlamışlardı. Edebi ve mizahi yayınlarda daha önce rastlanmayan -harp zenginleri, öksüz ve yetimler, sokak çocukları ve “düşmüş kadınlar”- gibi yeni karakterler ortaya çıkmıştı.

Bu dönemde İstanbul’un yaşam şartları, ünlü Türk Şair Nâzım Hikmet’in *Kuvâyi Milliye Destanı* adlı şiirinde ölümsüzleştirilmiştir:

*Biz ki İstanbul şehriyiz,
Seferberliği görmüşüz:
Kafkas, Galicya, Çanakkale, Filistin,
vağon ticareti, tifüs ve İspanyol nezlesi
bir de İttihatçılar,
bir de uzun konçlu Alman çizmesi
914'ten 18'e kadar
yedi bitirdi bizi.
Mücevher gibi uzak ve erişilmezdi şeker
erimiş altın pahasında gaz yağı
ve namuslu, çalışkan, fakir İstanbullular
sidiklerini yaktılar 5 numara lambalarında.
Yedikleri mısır koçanydı ve arpa
ve süpürge tohumu
ve çöp gibi kaldı çocukların boynu.
Ve lakin Tarabya'da, Pötışan'da ve
Ada'da Kulüp'te
aktı Ren şarapları su gibi*

1918 yılının başlarında, harp zenginleri ile Batı cephesinde hâlâ Almanların zafer kazanacağını uman bir kaç politikacı ve asker hariç, toplumun her kesiminde savaş yorgunluğu yaygındı. Bu az sayıdaki insan dışında herkes barışa susamıştı.

Yurt içinde yapılan propaganda ve basına uygulanan sansür, savaşın gerçek yüzünün ortaya çıkmasını

engellemekteydi. Kamuoyu hâlâ bir şekilde zafer kazanılacağına inanmaktaydı. Çanakkale zaferinin üçüncü yıldönümü propaganda aracı olarak kullanılmış, Filistin muharebeleri ikinci Çanakkale olarak betimlenmişti. İlahi bir lütuf olarak görülen Bolşevik Devriminden sonra Osmanlı ordusunun Kafkas cephesinde kazandığı zaferler Türk milli ruhunu canlandırmıştı. Yeniden alevlenen nihai zafere ulaşma umudu, savaşın giderek artan ağırlığını hafifletmiş, Hükümet Nisan 1918’de başarılı bir iç istikraz kampanyası başlatmıştı. Bu kampanya için yazılmış olan şiirdeki ifadeyle, “Biz verirse bu millet yenilmez”di.

Fakat, Batı cephesinde zafer umudu bir türlü gerçekleşmedi; 1918 Eylül ortalarına gelindiğinde, Suriye ve Balkan cephelerinde durum daha da kötüleşmeye başladı. Bulgaristan’ın savaştan çekilmesi, İttihatçıların (ya da İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti’nin) kontrolü altındaki Osmanlı hükümetini ateşkes arayışlarına itti. “Nihai Zafer” hedefi yerini “Onurlu Barış” beklentisine bıraktı.

30 Ekim 1918’de Mondros Mütarekesi’nin imzalanması ile ülkenin her köşesi rahat bir nefes aldı. Sonunda barış sağlanmıştı. Ancak, bu iyimser hava uzun sürmedi. Osmanlı halkı, Antlaşmanın ağır koşulları, İttihatçı liderlerin yurt dışına kaçışı ve İmparatorluğun başkenti İstanbul da dahil, ülkenin çeşitli bölgelerinin Müttefik güçlerce işgali karşısında yaşadıkları şok ile sarsıldı.

Savaş ülkeye yalnızca mali değil, her anlamda pahalıya mal olmuştu. Osmanlı İmparatorluğu savaş boyunca neredeyse üç milyon insanı silah altına almış ve bunun üçte ikisinden fazlasını savaş zayıyatı olarak kaybetmişti. 700.000 kadar asker savaş veya hastalık nedeniyle hayatını kaybetmişti. Ayrıca, 750.000 kişi yaralanmış, yaklaşık 230.000 kişi esir düşmüş, 500.000 kişi de firar etmişti. Siviller de kötü durumdaydı. Her etnik ve dini gruptan yüzbinlerce sivil, zorunlu veya gönüllü göç ve zor savaş koşulları nedeniyle hayatlarını kaybetmişti.

Anadolu’nun ve İstanbul’un sosyo-ekonomik durumu ateşkes sonrasında daha da kötüye gitmekteydi. Savaş gazileri, dulları, öksüz ve yetimleri sokakları doldurmuştu. Her ırk ve dinden mültecilerin kendilerine İstanbul’da sığınacak yer aramaları şehrin sorunlarını daha da artırmıştı. İstanbul’un kozmopolit yapısı yabancılarla, özellikle de 1917 Ekim Devriminden kaçarak, İstanbul’a akın etmeye başlayan Rus elitlerle birlikte çeşitlenmişti. Onlarla birlikte şehrin gece hayatı da hareketlenmiş, fuhuş, kumar, alkol ve uyuşturucu gibi sorunlar daha da büyümüş, şehirdeki sefalet ile sefalet arasındaki uçurum daha da açılmıştı. Ünlü Türk Yazar Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu’nun ifade-

siyle, Mütareke ve işgal İstanbul’u Sodom ve Gomore haline gelmişti.

Mütarekeden sonraki süreçte, İttihatçılar ile siyasi muhalefet ve Gayrimüslim elitler ile Türk elitleri arasındaki gerginlik giderek tırmanmaya başladı. Sansürün sona ermesi ve siyasi af ilanı ile birlikte, son beş yıldır bastırılmış bütün muhalif sesler ve İttihatçılar ile anti-İttihatçılar arasındaki düşmanlık tekrar ortaya çıktı. Muhalif siyasiler ve aydınlar yurt dışındaki ya da yurt içindeki sürgün yerlerinden İstanbul’a geri dönerek, sınırsız, acımasız ve şiddetli bir eleştiri ve hesaplama dönemi yaşattı.

1918’in son üç ayı, Müslümanlar ve Gayrimüslimler arasında olduğu kadar, ülkede yaşayan yabancılar arasında da yeni bir yayın faaliyetine tanıklık etti. Yeni gazeteler ve dergiler çıkmaya başladı. Her etnik kökenden ve (Sosyalizmin bütün renkleri dahil) her siyasi inançtan insanlar yeni partiler ve dernekler kurmaya başladı. Dünyadaki hemen hemen her ideoloji ve entelektüel hareket ve özellikle savaş sonrası dünyaya hakim olacağına inanılan milliyetçilik tartışılmaya başlandı.

Filizlenmeye başlayan bu özgür siyasi ifade ortamında, savaş süresince mağduriyet yaşayan etnik ve dini gruplar, savaş boyunca izledikleri politikalar nedeniyle İttihatçılara yönelik şikayetlerini ve suçlamalarını dile getiriyordu. Müttefik güçlerin müdahalesiyle hiç bir şeyin eskisi gibi olmayacağına inanan azınlık grupları, sadece son dört yılın değil, son dört yüz yılın hesabını “Türkler”den sormaya başlamıştı. Osmanlı Yahudi toplumu gibi birkaç istisna dışında, ayrılıkçılık ve ademi merkezizetçilik rüzgarları bir kez daha esiyordu.

Müttefik donanmasının gelişi ve yabancı askerlerin İstanbul’a ayak basması, şehirdeki gerginliği daha da tırmandırdı. İşgalin başladığı gün, Gayrimüslimlerin ve yabancıların kutlama yaptıkları, müttefik devletlerin bayraklarıyla süslenmiş Pera sokakları bayram havasında; eski İstanbul mahallelerinin endişe içinde bundan sonra ne olacağını bekleyen sakinleri ise mahzun ve kederliydi.

Şehrin bu iki kesiminin ve ülkede bulunan bütün grupların tek ortak noktası, Amerikan Başkanı Woodrow Wilson’un ortaya attığı on dört ilkeye bağladıkları umuttu. Çokuluslu Osmanlı İmparatorluğundaki her “ulus” Wilson ilkelerini kendi davalarını destekleyecek biçimde yorumlamakta ve bu ilkeleri kendi amaçlarını gerçekleştirmek üzere yürüttükleri lobi faaliyetlerinde kullanmaktaydılar. Hatta bir grup Türk aydını, “dünya devrimi” olarak gördükleri bu on dört ilke için, Wilson Prensipleri Cemiyeti’ni kurmuştu.

Ancak, Mütareke hükümleri her geçen gün daha fazla ihlal edildikçe, kamuoyunun morali her geçen gün daha da azalmaktaydı. 1918 yılının Aralık ayında Meclis lağvedilip, basına tekrar sansür uygulanmaya başlandığında, artakalan son iyimserlik de yok oldu. Derin bir travma yaşayan Anadolu halkıyla, çökmüş bir ekonomiyle ve giderek tırmanan etnik gerginlikle karşı karşıya kalan Türk elitleri, bundan sonra atılacak adımlar konusunda ikiye bölünmüştü: Bir yanda, Müttefik güçlerin ezici kuvveti karşısında ancak taviz vererek, işbirliği yaparak uygun bir barış antlaşması kotarabileceklerini düşünenler; diğer yanda, tam bağımsız ve egemen yeni bir Türk devleti için, bedeli ne olursa olsun, silahlı direniş hareketini göze alanlar vardı.

Bu ikinci grubun temsilcisi Mustafa Kemal Paşa'nın (Atatürk, 1881-1938) Suriye cephesinden İstanbul'a döndüğü gün; tam da, Müttefik donanmasının İstanbul açıklarına demir attığı gündü (13 Kasım

1918). Haydarpaşa Garında trenden inen Mustafa Kemal'in, Boğazdaki yabancı gemilere bakarak, "geldikleri gibi giderler" dediği nakledilir. Goeben (Yavuz) ve Breslau (Midilli) adlı iki Alman kruvazörünün 1914'te bir emrivakiyle İstanbul'a gelişi, Osmanlı'nın 1. Dünya Savaşına girmesine yol açan süreci başlatmıştı. Şimdi 1918'de, Müttefik donanmasının İstanbul'a gelişi ise, Türk ulusunun tarihinde yeni bir dönemi başlatacaktı.

Mustafa Kemal, İstanbul'da bir takım temaslarda bulunduktan ve bazı ön hazırlıklar yaptıktan sonra, Kurtuluş Savaşı (1919-1922) başlatmak üzere Anadolu'ya doğru yola çıktı. Kurtuluş Savaşı'nın zaferle sonuçlanması, 600 yıllık Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nu sona erdirirken, hukukun üstünlüğüne dayalı, demokratik, laik ve sosyal bir devlet olan modern Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin kuruluşunun (1923-...) yolunu açacaktı.

THE OTTOMAN EMPIRE IN 1918: FROM “ULTIMATE VICTORY” TO “TOTAL SURRENDER”

Prof. Dr. Gökhan Çetinsaya

World War I, popularly known among Turkish people as “the Mobilization”, was the first “total war” in the history of the Ottoman Empire. It was also the last. And, as with every total war, it left a deep impact on the home front.

The Ottomans waged the war at a disadvantage vis-à-vis the industrialized nations of Europe. As the war dragged on and expanded to fourteen primary and secondary fronts, the economic and social costs of the war effort grew increasingly steep. Though each region experienced the costs of the war in a different way, one major issue felt across the land was the lack of food.

The adult men who constituted the productive basis of the empire’s agrarian economy were conscripted and sent to the front, leaving only women, children, and elderly or disabled people to maintain the economy. Production in the empire fell to half of its pre-war level, and the state seized whatever surplus there was, even the seed stocks set aside for planting. Blockades cut off the ports, and the sharp decline in imports further exacerbated food shortages.

The scarcity of basic supplies and the rise of inflation, black marketeering and corruption reached unprecedented levels. Speculation drove up the price of basic goods, especially sugar and bulgur wheat. The price of sugar rose nearly a hundredfold between 1914 and 1918, with overall inflation increasing roughly twenty times over. The Ottoman currency lost 80 percent of its purchasing power.

The war also upended the distribution of wealth and status in society. New classes of rich and poor emerged, described in the titles of caricature albums published in

the fall of 1918 as les néo-riches and les néo-pauvres. Social relations and societal structures were turned upside down as well. Women, who had arisen as the principal actors on the home front, began to call for emancipation and greater rights. Literary and satirical publications had a completely new cast of characters: war profiteers, orphans and poor street children, and “fallen women”.

Life in Istanbul during the period was immortalized by the famous Turkish poet Nazim Hikmet in his *Epic of the War of Independence*:

*We, the city of Istanbul,
We have seen the mobilization, and we endured;
But the Caucasus, Galicia, Gallipoli, Palestine,
the profiteers, typhus, and the Spanish flu,
the Unionists,
and the German jackboots, too-
from '914 to '18-
consumed us through and through.
Lumps of sugar, like gems, far out of reach;
kerosene, at the price of molten gold;
and the people of Istanbul-
honorable, hardworking, and poor-
fueled their 5-gauge lamps with their own urine.
They feasted on corncobs and barley,
and seeds of broom-grass,
and did the necks of children remain like matchsticks,
But in Tarabya, Pera, and the Club
at the Princes Island,
did Rheine wines flow like water.*

By early 1918, a pervasive sense of war weariness had spread across all sections of society- all that is, except for those who had grown rich from the war and for the few

politicians and soldiers who still expected a German victory on the western front. Aside from these few, everyone longed for peace.

Domestic propaganda and press censorship hid the true nature of the war, and the public still believed that the empire would somehow emerge victorious. The third anniversary of the victory at Gallipoli was commemorated as a vehicle of propaganda, and the battles of Palestine were portrayed as a second Gallipoli. Ottoman victories on the Caucasus front after the Bolshevik Revolution, which seemed a stroke of divine grace, spurred the Turkish national spirit. Rekindled hope of ultimate victory lightened the ever-increasing weight of the war, and the government launched a successful public fundraising campaign in April 1918. In the words of a poem written for the campaign, “If we give, this nation will never be defeated!”

But the hoped-for victory on the western front never materialized, and by mid-September 1918, the deteriorating situation on the Syrian and Balkan fronts had become clear. Bulgaria’s exit from the war forced the Ottoman government, under the control of the Unionists, or the “Committee of Union and Progress”, to seek terms for a ceasefire. The quest for “ultimate victory” had given way to a search for an “honorable peace”.

When the Armistice of Mudros was signed on 30 October 1918, all corners of the country breathed a sigh of relief. Peace had arrived at last. But the atmosphere of optimism did not last long. The Ottoman society was rocked by the shock of the harsh terms of the armistice, the flight abroad of the Unionists who had led the country through the war, and the commencement of the Allied occupation of various parts of the empire, including Istanbul, the capital.

The war itself had cost the country dearly, and not only financially. The Ottoman Empire had mobilized nearly three million people during the war, and it had lost over two-thirds of that total as war casualties. Some 700,000 had died in battle or because of disease. Another 750,000 had been wounded. Around 230,000 had been taken prisoner. And another 500,000 had deserted. Outside of the military, people had fared little better. Hundreds of thousands of civilians – from all ethnic and religious groups – had lost their lives as a result of voluntary and involuntary displacement and hardships during the war.

To make matters worse, the socio-economic circumstances of Istanbul and Anatolia grew only bleaker after the armistice. Disabled veterans, war widows, and orphans crowded the streets. As refugees of every race and religion sought refuge in Istanbul, the city’s problems

only increased. But so too did its cosmopolitan social life, as foreigners, especially Russian elites fleeing the October Revolution, flocked to the city. With these new arrivals, the city’s nightlife blossomed, and its hallmarks – prostitution, gambling, alcohol, and narcotics – served to draw a stark line between the city’s profligate and its poor. In the words of the famous Turkish author Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, occupied Istanbul became a veritable Sodom and Gomorrah.

In the aftermath of the armistice, tensions began to mount between the Unionists and the political opposition and between non-Muslim and Turkish elites. The end of censorship and the proclamation of a political amnesty led to the return of opposition voices that had been effectively stifled during the preceding five years. Opposition politicians and dissident intellectuals returned to Istanbul from exile abroad or in other parts of the country. Antagonisms between the Unionists and anti-Unionist groups resurfaced. A new era of fierce and unbridled vituperation began.

The last three months of 1918 witnessed a surge of new publishing activity among Muslims and non-Muslims alike, as well as among the foreigners resident in the country. There was also a wave of new parties and associations catering to people of every ethnic background and political persuasion, including socialist groups of every stripe. Debates sprang up around virtually every ideology and intellectual movement in the world, especially nationalism, which many believed would come to dominate the post-war world.

As part of this burgeoning world of free political expression, ethnic and religious groups who had suffered during the war began to voice their grievances against the Unionists over their wartime policies. Minority groups, believing that the intervention of the Allied powers meant that everything was about to change, began to call the “Turks” to account not just for the past four years, but for the past four hundred. Though there were a few exceptions, including the Ottoman Jewish community, the winds of separatism and decentralism had once again begun to blow.

The arrival of the Allied navy and the entry of foreign soldiers into Istanbul stoked tensions in the city to a new height. The day the occupation commenced, the streets of Pera were awash in a festive sea of Allied flags as non-Muslim and foreign residents celebrated the occasion; the streets of the neighborhoods of the old city, in contrast, were silent and forlorn as other residents anxiously awaited what was to come.

The one thing that both sides of the city and all the various groups in the country had in common was their

hope in American president Woodrow Wilson's fourteen points. Each "nation" in the multinational Ottoman Empire interpreted Wilson's principles in a way that supported its own cause, and all used those principles in their lobbying efforts to see their cause realized. A group of Turkish intellectuals even went so far as to found a Wilsonian League based on Wilson's fourteen points, which they viewed as nothing short of a "world revolution".

But the terms of the armistice were violated further with each passing day, and morale in the country fell to an all-time low. When parliament was disbanded and censorship of the press was reintroduced in the last month of 1918, the last vestiges of optimism vanished with them. Faced with a deeply traumatized Anatolian society, devastated economic infrastructure, mounting ethnic tensions, members of the Turkish elite were divided on what course of action to take: In one camp were those who sought appeasement with the Allied powers and their seemingly overwhelming might and a compromise peace through cooperation. In the other were those who were determined to secure a new, independent, and sovereign Turkish state through force of arms, regardless of the cost.

In this second camp was Mustafa Kemal Pasha (Atatürk, 1881-1938). The day the Allied navy laid anchor in Istanbul's waters was the day he returned to the city from the Syrian front (13 November 1918). Stepping off the train at Haydarpaşa station, Mustafa Kemal reportedly looked out at the foreign ships in the Bosphorus and said, "Just as they have come, so too they will go." The fait accompli of the arrival of two German battlecruisers (Goeben/Yavuz and Breslau/Midilli) in Istanbul in 1914 had marked the beginning of the Ottoman entry into the world war; now, in 1918, the arrival of the Allied navy in İstanbul marked the beginning of a new chapter in the history of the Turkish nation.

After making contact with different circles in Istanbul and engaging in some initial planning, Mustafa Kemal set off for Anatolia to launch the Turkish War of Independence (1919-1922). The conclusion with victory of the War of Independence, while ending the 600 years old Ottoman Empire, paved the way for the creation of the modern Republic of Turkey (1923-...), a democratic, secular and social state governed by rule of law.

16.

United States
of America

1918

Christopher Merrill

By April 1917, when President Woodrow Wilson asked Congress to declare war on Germany, “a war to end all wars”, William Carlos Williams had embarked on a radical literary experiment that would reshape the world of letters, in much the same way that his newly empowered country was taking its place on the world stage. *Kora in Hell: Improvisations*, described by the Mexican poet Octavio Paz as a “magnetic” book, is the daily record of a doctor-poet opening himself to the subterranean currents of the English language coursing through his imagination: a way of making what his arch rival T. S. Eliot would define at the start of World War II as “a new beginning, a raid on the inarticulate”. What Williams heard in the speech of his neighbors in Rutherford, New Jersey and articulated in *Kora in Hell* marked a new beginning for American poetry, which in the next century would exert a decisive influence on world poetry. It is difficult to imagine Williams writing masterpieces like *Spring and All* and *Paterson* absent the discoveries he made in *Kora in Hell*, which he completed in September 1918. And surely the last century would not have been known as the American Century if not for Wilson’s decision to enter the war, which mercifully ended when the armistice went into effect at 11 a.m. on the 11th day of November 1918. Think of these twin developments as two sides of what became the coin of the realm. The provincial looking outward — this is one metaphor for the position the United States found itself in when the guns fell silent. Here is another: “The poet should be forever at the ship’s prow”, Williams argued in the prologue to *Kora in Hell*, defining his and his country’s emerging view of the world.

“I decided that I would write something every day, without missing one day, for a year”, Williams recounted in his *Autobiography* (1957). “I’d write nothing planned but take up a pencil, put the paper before me, and write anything that came into my head.” After making house calls, or between seeing patients in his office, he would adopt a stance of receptivity and follow on the page any

impulse arising from the depths of his unconscious, careening word by word in every direction, searching for — what? The poetry of the quotidian. Proof that in the imagination, as he declared, “all things and ages meet in fellowship”. The marvelous possibilities of what the French Surrealists would later ritualize in the practice of automatic writing Williams discovered on his own, and for the rest of his life he regarded *Kora in Hell* as one of his favorite books.

“It reveals itself to me”, he said, “and perhaps that is why I have kept it to myself.”

These *Improvisations* also reveal the world in all its splendor and carnage, which in early 1918 acquired an even darker dimension in the form of the influenza pandemic that killed between fifty and one hundred million people worldwide. Williams treated up to sixty cases a day, including a dozen at one time in his own family, and though at one point he thought he was about to die he kept working — and writing. He lamented the medical profession’s inability to check “that potent poison that was sweeping the world”, and yet for all the dark matter he documented the exuberance of his writing suggests that he kept finding reserves of energy, which propelled him ever onward.

Here, for example, is how he begins an improvisation on a murder victim he examines: “Beautiful white corpse of night actually! So the north-west winds of death are mountain sweet after all! All the troubled stars are put to bed now: three bullets from wife’s hand none kindlier: in its crown, in the nape and one lower: three starlike holes among a million pocky pores and the moon of your mouth.” The poet’s journey from the morgue to the moon reminds us, as he explained in a note about this entry, that “Imagination though it cannot wipe out the sting of remorse can instruct the mind in its proper uses”, Williams was writing at a moment in American history when there was so much death

that undertakers hired armed guards to protect their caskets, which were regularly stolen, and 30,000 people wearing masks marched in San Francisco on Armistice Day to celebrate the peace. His was a fearful country assuming the mantle of global leadership, and he knew, as he announced in the memorable opening sentence of his book, that “Fools have big wombs”, What they would bring into the world over the next century was anybody’s guess.

Williams declared his poetic independence in the most extravagant language imaginable — the local vernacular — and then traveled widely on his home ground; unlike Eliot and Ezra Pound, Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald, he did not heed the call to relocate to Europe, confident that he could translate modernist ideas into his own idiom, far from London or Paris. For in 1913 he had attended the Armory Show in New York, where he was introduced to experimental works like Marcel Duchamp’s *Nude Descending a Staircase*, which inspired him to construct his own peculiarly American mode of representation. *Kora in Hell* was his first, and boldest, attempt to use this fresh language, registering, as he would later explain, what passed before his eyes “without forethought or afterthought but with great intensity of perception”. He suspected that if he looked hard at his surroundings he might express more vital insights about our walk in the sun than what his European-bound friends devised. So he stayed put

in Rutherford, which over the course of the century became, ironically, a suburb of the world’s new cultural capital: New York City.

The same tension between provincial and international interests informed the American body politic, which would respond to the world at large in sometimes radically different ways, now welcoming the mantle of leadership of the West, now retreating into isolationism. Wilson’s Fourteen Points, a statement of principles for peace outlined in a speech he delivered in January 1918, would shape not only the negotiations to end the Great War but also the dreams of people the world over who yearned to determine their own futures. The demise of the Austro-Hungarian, German, Ottoman, and Russian Empires signaled the beginning of the end of the colonial order, the manifestations of which — wars, revolutions, partitions, migrations — would alternately engage and repel American political leaders, with realpolitik considerations often overriding humanitarian concerns. The old argument between internationalism and provincialism acquired new heft and meaning, as American economic and military power came to the fore. William Carlos Williams glimpsed this on his rounds and memorialized it in *Kora in Hell*: “The brutal Lord of All will rip us from each other — leave the one to suffer here alone.” How right he was.

17.

United
Kingdom

UNFIT FOR ACTIVE SERVICE TERHAND, BELGIUM. 29TH SEPTEMBER 1918

Ruth Dugdall

From where he'd fallen, Ernie lifted his head to breathe.

The mud beneath him was wet and had seeped into his nostrils and mouth when he landed, drowning his senses with Belgian dirt. Suffolk soil had the sweet tang of pigs, the bitterness of farmers' sweat, but here the earth was dark with blood. It stank of cordite and shit.

A bullet hadn't laid him low, he'd tripped on a bundle of dirty uniform, piled in the shape of a man. He looked down. The other lifeless shape beneath him was John Cobb, a boy from home who he'd clinked glasses with in The White Horse. John's chubby face was just the same, his grinning mouth still looked as if he was about to tell a joke, but his head was split like a ripe fruit, a black stain oozed from his crown to his forehead. John had gone, to wherever the dead boys go. *Wherever it is*, thought Ernie, *it's crammed. God must've had to build another room for all the new lads banging on the door since they pressed forward to Ypres.*

Ypres was ten miles away. An impossible distance, when advancing just fifty yards cost so many lives. Ten miles should be nothing after the distance he'd come, across the water and through France and Belgium. The war was almost at its end, so the rumours said, Ypres was the final push. A rat scampered just inches from his face, paused to look at him with beady eyes, then scampered on. Full of life in this place of death. He too was still breathing; the world may be violent and wretched but he was still part of it.

They had been ordered to take the Germans' first trench, and Ernie was just twenty feet shy when he had tripped on the fallen soldier. The light was fading now, the day almost done and the sun was turning blood orange above the littered field. There wouldn't be many more advances today, soon weapons would be silenced

and rations would be passed out. The dead around him would be collected.

His ears popped, one after the other, and he could hear German conversation close by, words he couldn't translate though he knew the language of war, he recognised their unease that the enemy had come so close. He hunched lower, just another clod of earth, as they poked amongst his friends, seeking life simply to extinguish it. He slid deeper into the mud, burrowing into it so John's body flopped over him.

He wriggled his feet, to check they were okay. Flat feet, which hurt him when they marched and made running an action of his back and hips rather than his knees. He'd tried to hide his weakness when he enlisted, but the Doctor wasn't fooled. "Not fit for active service", he said, signing Ernie off from any active duty, forcing him to fall back on skills he'd learned at The Grand Hotel, one of the finest hotels in Felixstowe.

The Grand stood dominant on Bent Hill, facing the sea. Thinking back to its sweeping staircase, its iron balcony looking out to sea, made his heart pang. "You're lucky", the butler had told him on his first day, "For a lad like you, this is a gift. Watch and learn, if you're lucky you could have my job one day!"

He'd started carrying the bulky cases of the wealthy up those wide stairs, then graduated to serving shallow glasses of champagne in the Seaview Lounge. Finally, he'd been trusted to assist the Head Chef in the kitchens.

Then war was declared, and all his hopes for the future became fixed on fighting for his country. Hopes that were dashed when the Doctor labelled him unfit. What he'd learned at The Grand Hotel got him sent to the base bakery at Etaples, he was there for a whole year baking bread and biscuits before he had the chance to

join the real war. Pushing aside the certain knowledge that it was the many losses that meant he was now needed, he took up his Lewis gun gladly. Now he was the only soldier in his squadron unharmed and within reach of Jerry's trench. The man who was unfit for service, who was never supposed to be holding a rifle, the last one standing.

As his mum was fond of saying, *be careful what you wish for.*

He remembers her, patting her rag-rolled hair, leaning on the side wall of their end-of-terrace, sucking on a Woodbine. In his memories she's always fretting, never getting further than that outside wall with a house full of noisy children and never enough time or money to spin until his step-father's pay day. Harry and William were boisterous and the younger boys – Reggie and Edward – demanding. Ernie, a middle child of many, didn't make a fuss. Mother called Ernie her 'little gentleman', though it was shyness that made him reserved as much as politeness. Polly was born when he was fourteen, and Ernie looked after the baby gladly while Mother gained her strength. He heard her tell neighbours, "He may not push himself forward but my Ernie's got a heart of gold."

She cried with relief when the doctor said he wasn't fit, and he'd been mad at her for it. But now he understood. It was hard to think of his mother, he tried not to, but the dying men who could still muster words were calling for theirs. He'd heard the word Mother in every British accent, in French and Belgian and Italian. In German too. In the end, everyone wants their Mum.

He wanted to see her again, to buy her something frivolous and pretty, and make her smile with relief that her little gentleman was home. There was only one way for that to happen. He had to do what he never had at home, what the doctor doubted he was capable of, and push forward.

The sun was sinking now, a night mist rising with its sickening yellow stench. The Germans had retreated back to their trench, he could hear their rumbling conversations, see the plumes of smoke as they enjoyed a ciggie. And then he heard, from behind him, a whistle. The British were making one final attempt before night set in.

The baker turned infantryman began to move his hand, crawling fingers finding the cool barrel of his Lewis gun, his only friend.

He crawled out from John's body, legs slipping as he used his elbows to pull forward to where there was a

tree stump, a vantage point. He could see the German soldiers down in their trench, deeper and better constructed than the one he had left. In the light of their lamps he could see them eating, smoking, cleaning their guns, thinking it was all over for another day. One soldier was sat slightly apart, bent over a piece of paper, a stub of pencil in his hand. Hadn't Ernie done it himself, many times? Dear Mother. The soldier reminded him of Reggie, his youngest brother, his skin was red with spots and his jaw was clean of stubble. He felt his heart thump against his ribs as he knew what he must do. He counted the soldiers: fifteen of them. Fifteen to one, and his only advantage was surprise.

He identified their officer, in a long coat that would be grey under the dirt. He was pointing things out on a map, two other soldiers, presumably ranked, were listening. Orders for tomorrow. Using the tree stump as cover Ernie slid his Lewis gun into position, and aimed the barrel directly at the officer, just as he lifted his face to the hump as if a second sense told him where the danger lay.

The bullet moved invisibly through the air, linking Ernie to the German officer when it drilled through his eye to his brain. The two soldiers froze momentarily, watching their commander slump to the side in a bloody mess, then reached for their guns and turned in the direction from where the bullet had come.

Ernie didn't hesitate, he released and pulled as one then two bullets obeyed, the two soldiers joining their officer, one slumped against him. They looked like friends sleeping off too much beer, young men in a drunken slumber. But there would be no waking.

Three down, twelve soldiers alerted. They flurried in the trench for cover, reaching for guns while a few moved to their officer, trying to revive the dead man so he could tell them what to do. The youngest soldier alone, the one who'd been writing a letter, hadn't moved. Whether through shock or exhaustion he simply held his letter to his chest and gazed blindly towards the mound, as if preparing for the worst. He was in Ernie's sights, he just had to pull the trigger, but Ernie couldn't stop thinking about how the letter would never be sent, how this boy's mother would receive a telegram instead.

Ernie glanced behind him, and saw his comrades were close enough, their rifles held ready. His heart hammered like the distant gunfire as he shouted into the trench, "Surrender, or I'll shoot."

The Germans grouped together, speaking rapidly, the one bent over the officer shook his head mournfully. Then the call came, "We surrender, Tommy"

They threw their guns into the mud like burdens willingly laid down. Twelve young faces looked towards the mound expectantly as Ernie stood, beckoning his colleagues to approach. The prisoners waited where they had surrendered, their war was over.

The trench now taken over by British soldiers, Ernie finally breathed easy.

The machine-gun fire surprised him, coming so late. From the top of the trench he looked further down the line, from where the sound came, and saw a group of British soldiers hopelessly floundering in the mud as the guns rained down bullets into their flesh. Ernie knew that being in the German trench gave him an advantage, he was able to move closer until he saw the two machine guns, burrowed amid the hedgerows, just a few feet away.

The soldiers manning the guns weren't expecting anyone to come at them from the side, so when they turned and saw Ernie their faces went rigid with shock. He pointed his Lewis gun at their pale, scared faces. One held up his hand, and Ernie saw a wedding band, glinting in the dark with a dull glimmer. "Please, Tommy, we surrender."

The machine guns now inactive, Ernie scanned his gaze across at the field and saw that no ground had been won by the bloody advance. He wanted so much for his actions to matter, but the field was littered with the bod-

ies of dead boys, their uniforms too dirty to distinguish them as friend or foe, and the soldiers still alive were retreating to their trenches for yet another night. He looked again at his two prisoners, and saw in their dull eyes the same weariness, the price they had all paid. It was a moment of complete understanding; these German soldiers knew what he did about war, his kin back home could never comprehend the fatigue and despair and sheer hopelessness that he saw reflected in his enemy's eyes. They wore a different uniform, but underneath they felt the same. He lowered his gun.

In that moment, the sniper's bullet found him, lodging in his heart as he took staggered breaths and fell back into the mud. In his fading moments he smelled only Suffolk soil and called for his mother, taking his last breath when her beloved face came to his mind, finally taking him home.

ERNEST SEAMAN (16/8/1893-29/9/1918) was initially declared 'unfit for service' and went on to win both the Victoria Cross and Military Medal for his actions in Tehrand, Belgium on 29th September 1918. After single-handedly taking twelve German soldiers prisoner, then seizing two machine guns, he was shot, dying just five weeks before the war ended.

His name is on the War Memorial in Felixstowe, Suffolk.

AUTHORS

Authors



**MIGUEL BANDEIRA
JERÓNIMO**

Miguel Bandeira Jerónimo, *1973 in Lisbon, (PhD King's College London, History) is a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Social Studies-University of Coimbra, Portugal. He is a Professor at the PhD Program Heritages of Portuguese Influence, and its co-coordinator. His research interests focus on the history of European imperialism and colonialism (XIX-XX centuries). In 2015, he authored *The "Civilizing Mission" of Portuguese Colonialism (c.1870-1930)* and edited *Portugal and the Great War (in Portuguese)*, curating an exhibition on the topic for the Camões Institute. In 2017, he co-edited *Internationalism, imperialism and the formation of the contemporary world*. He is also co-editor of the book series "The Portuguese Speaking World: Its History, Politics and Culture" at Sussex Academic Press.



**THEODORA
BAUER**

Theodora Bauer, *1990 in Vienna, completed her bachelor's degree in Journalism and Communication Studies in 2013 and in Philosophy in 2015, both at the University of Vienna. Both of her novels "Das Fell der Tante Meri" (2014) and "Chikago" (2017) were published by Picus Verlag. In 2016 the essay "Così fanno i filosofi" was published by Limbus Verlag and the short text "Die Törichtchen" by edition taschenspiel. With her manuscript "Chikago", Theodora Bauer participated in the 20th Klagenfurt Literary Workshop in the framework of the Ingeborg Bachmann Prize (2016). The theatre play "papier.waren.pospischil" was bought by Schultz & Schirm in 2016 and won the first prize at the "The Freedom of Laughter" festival, a new comedy festival, organised by the Salzburg State Theatre.



**PROF. DR. GÖKHAN
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Gökhan Çetinsaya, *1964, is a political historian. He graduated from the Faculty of Political Science at Ankara University (1985), and received his PhD from the Department of Middle Eastern Studies at University of Manchester (1994). His PhD dissertation, *Ottoman Administration of Iraq (1890-1908)*, was rewarded by the Middle East Studies Association of North America (MESA) and the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES). He worked at Hacettepe, Istanbul Technical and Istanbul Şehir Universities. He has been a visiting scholar at the University of London, School of Oriental and African Studies (2001); the Free University of Berlin, Institute for Turcology (2004); and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars (Washington DC, 2007-2008). He currently teaches at Istanbul Şehir University.





**JUSTYNA
CHŁAP-NOWAKOWA**

Justyna Chłap-Nowakowa, *1965 in Kraków; historian of Polish modern literature and culture, poet and editor. She studied at the Jagiellonian University, and obtained her PhD in Polish studies (Polonistics) there in 2002. She is currently professor at the Ignatianum Academy in Kraków. She published a monograph on Polish poets during World War II (*Sybir, Bliski Wschód, Monte Cassino. Środowisko poetyckie 2. Korpusu...* – 2004) and co-authored a monograph on the traditions of the Polish manor (*Dwór polski* – 2007). She has also published numerous anthologies of Polish poetry, among them „*Jeszcze Polska*”... *Klasyka polskiej poezji patriotycznej* (2015 – which received the Phoenix Award of the Catholic Publishers’ Association). She is also the author of two volumes of poetry.



**CLAUDIO
CICOTTI**

Claudio Cicotti, *1972 in Maglie (Lecce), is professor of Italian Literature, Theater and Cinema, Theory and Practice of Autobiographical Writing at the University of Luxembourg, where he coordinates the Department of Italian Letters. He is the president of the “International Center of Studies between Luxembourg and Italy” (CIELI). His work focuses on the language and literature of the 17th, 18th and 20th centuries, on philology, lexicography, Italian cinema and on autobiographical writings. He directed the research projects “The Presence, History, Memories of the Italians in Luxembourg and in the Great Region”, “Textuality of Italians in the Great Region and Integration” (TIGRI 1 and 2) and “Autobiographical Genre, Migration and Identity’s (re)construction in Luxembourg” (AMIL).



**RUTH
DUGDALL**

Ruth Dugdall, *1971, is an award winning British author, whose crime novels have been published internationally. For two years (2014-2016) she lived in Luxembourg and wrote “Nowhere Girl”, inspired by the human trafficking stories she encountered in the area and informed by the knowledge of local professionals. All her novels are inspired by real events. What interests her is the human heart of the story: the psychology behind it. Ruth has a special interest in military history and whilst in Luxembourg visited every world war site within a two hour radius. “Unfit for Service” is inspired by the real story of a young man from her home town of Felixstowe in Suffolk.



Authors



FREDERIKA AMALIA
FINKELSTEIN

Frederika Amalia Finkelstein, *1991 in Paris and completed a master degree in contemporary philosophy at the University Paris I Sorbonne. She has published two novels at Gallimard: the first one, “L’oubli”, in 2014, nominated in the selections for the Renaudot and Décembre Prizes and well received by the critics, has been supported by the Nobel Prize copie/writer J.M.G. Le Clézio. The second novel, “Survivre”, deals with the 13 November 2015 terrorist attacks in Paris. Nominated for the Décembre Prize, this text will be published in German by Suhrkamp Verlag in 2018, and translated in many other languages. As an author she likes to observe the uses of social networks and the impact of the technologies on human beings. Simultaneously, she is developing a very personal reflexion about memory.



ALEKSANDAR
GATALICA

Aleksandar Gatalica, *1964 in Belgrade, graduated from the Department of General Literature with Classic Sciences in 1989. Novels: *The Lines of Life (Linije života)* in 1993 (“Miloš Crnjanski” Award and “Giorgio la Pira”, Italy), *Downsides (Naličja)* in 1995, *The End (Kraj)* in 2000, *Death of Euripides (Euripidova smrt)* in 2003, *The Invisible (Nevidljivi)* in 2008 (winner of “Stevan Sremac” Award). *The Great War* (2012, NIN award – Serbian Booker). Short story cycles: *Mimicries (Mimikrije)* in 1996, *Century (Vek)* in 1999 (“Ivo Andrić” Award), *Belgrade for Foreigners (Beograd za strance)* in 2004, 2008, *Dialogue with Phantasms (Dijalog sa opsenama)* in 2006 and *Diary of Vanquished Masons (Dnevnik poraženih neimara)* in 2007. He is a translator from ancient Greek and a music critic.



GERMAINE
GOETZINGER

Germaine Goetzinger, *1947, studied German and History at the University of Tübingen. She started her professional career as a secondary schoolteacher. Afterwards she taught at the Centre universitaire de Luxembourg and became a member of the managerial board. In 1995 she was appointed as head of the Centre national de littérature/Lëtzebuerger Literaturarchiv in Mersch. There she set up a lot of exhibitions and regularly published on the cultural history of Luxembourg. Germaine Goetzinger retired in 2012. Some of her main research topics are the German literature of the Vormärz period, the literature of Luxembourg, female writing, Jewish emigration to Luxembourg. In 2015 she published *La grande guerre au Luxembourg*, Michel Welter’s diary which covers the period of World War I in Luxembourg.





**STEFAN
HERTMANS**

Stefan Hertmans, *1951 in Ghent, is the prizewinning author of many literary works, incl. poetry, novels, essays, plays, short stories and a handbook on the history of art. He is one of the most outstanding Dutch language writers. He has won or been nominated for prestigious literary awards. His bestselling novel ‘War and Turpentine’ is translated into more than 20 languages and won the AKO prize, the prize of the Flemish Community, the Gouden Uil audience prize, and it was nominated for the international Premio Strega and Booker Prize. He has taken part in important international festivals and has taught at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts in Ghent, at the Sorbonne, the Universities of Vienna, Berlin and Mexico City, at The Library of Congress in Washington, and University College London.



**HAUKE
KRACHT**

Hauke Kracht, *1964 in Husum, grew up in the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg. Like many other citizens of Hamburg, Hauke Kracht set off to explore the world. He worked for the Federal Foreign Office with diplomatic postings in Israel, Japan, Myanmar and Australia. In his leisure time Hauke Kracht enjoys to write historical novels and crime thrillers. His first novel “Von Piraten und Pfeffersäcken”, which was published under the pseudonym “Heiko Kraft”, tells the history of Hamburg and Northern Germany in the late Middle Ages. For “Shadows of the Great War” Hauke Kracht did an extensive research in German and Luxembourg archives. He is looking forward to explore the history of the German-Japanese relations through literature during his next posting in Japan starting summer 2018.



**ANDRÉ
LINK**

André Link, *1949, has published a number of books in Luxembourg and Germany, focussing mainly on historical novels. One of them, “Auf Winters Schneide”, epitomizes the end of World War I in Luxembourg, when government members were desperately seeking to preserve the nation’s independence and the throne of the then reigning Grand Duchess Marie Adelaide (Marie Adelheid). The fate of the small country sandwiched between fiercely contending neighbours is also reflected in “Hungersnot und Fürstensturz”. All along the war, Luxembourg had been struggling to comply with the demands of the German occupant, a highly controversial policy that was to lead to the fall of Marie Adelaide. But although the Duchess could not be saved, Luxembourg’s future as an independent nation was secured.



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Authors



**SINÉAD
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Sinéad McCooole, *1968 in New York, is a well-known Irish historian. She has written extensively in the area of modern Irish History, with a focus on the role of women. Her books include *Guns and Chiffon*, *No Ordinary Women* and *Easter Widows*. She was Curatorial and Historical Advisor on the 2016 Project Team that coordinated the National Commemoration. She has contributed to wider deliberations on commemoration as a member of Government's Expert Advisory Group on the Decade of Centenaries 2012-2023.



**CHRISTOPHER
MERRILL**

Christopher Merrill, *1957, has published six collections of poetry, incl. *Watch Fire* (Lavan Younger Poets Award from the Academy of American Poets); many edited volumes and translations; and six nonfiction books, incl. *Only the Nails Remain: Scenes from the Balkan Wars*, *Things of the Hidden God: Journey to the Holy Mountain*, *The Tree of the Doves: Ceremony, Expedition, War, and Self-Portrait with Dogwood*. His work has been translated into nearly 40 languages; his journalism appears widely; his honors include a Chevalier from the French government in the Order of Arts and Letters. As director of the International Writing Program (University of Iowa), he has conducted cultural diplomacy missions to more than 50 countries. He serves on the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO and the National Council on the Humanities.



**IOAN
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Ioan T. Morar, *1956, is a writer, journalist, civil society activist and former diplomat from Romania. Morar has authored several works of poetry, and fiction and nonfiction prose, earning him numerous prestigious awards and fellowships. His novels have gotten substantial critical acclaim, *Lindenfeld* (National Prose Award 2005), *Negru și Roșu* (Short-listed for Book of the Year 2013) and *Sărbătoarea Corturilor* (Romanian Writers' Union Prose Award, Short-listed for Book of the Year 2016). His work has been translated into English, Spanish and French. Morar has had a long, diverse and distinguished career as a public intellectual, cultural and political commentator and host on TV and in print, as well as a pundit before becoming Consul General of Romania in Marseille.



**GUILLAUME
RIHS**

Guillaume Rihs, *1984 in Geneva, teaches History and English in high school. His first novel *Aujourd'hui dans le désordre* received the “Prix des écrivains Genevois” and was published by Kero, Paris, in 2015. His second novel *Un exemple à suivre* came out in 2017. Both books may be described as comedies of manners and deal with contemporary topics such as globalization, consumerism or the green movement. They pay particular attention to language, offering playful dialogues and inventive narrative devices. Guillaume Rihs is currently preparing a collection of short texts based on conversations captured live in Geneva.

**ANNA
ŠOCHOVÁ**

Anna Šochová (the pen name of Hana Mudrová), *1959 in the Bohemian Sudetenland. Her early publications drew on her varied career in health and social care, dealing with subjects such as senior care and domestic violence, child abuse and care in the home. She is now a prolific and well-regarded writer in number of genres: non-fiction (‘Loosen your Tresses’); historical (‘Carmine Stone’) and fantasy (‘Godfather of the Tribe’; ‘Swale Rulers’). Her novels ‘Back Jumping’, ‘Alternation’ and ‘Zeola’ were commended in the Czech national Karel Capek competition. She is a regular commentator on current affairs, with an internet diary (‘i-senior’), a website (‘Whisk’) and a blog in the ‘Respekt’ Review. Her writing, inspired by her native region and its complicated history, has been published widely.

**GÉZA
SZŐCS**

Géza Szőcs, *1953, Targu Mures. The Hungarian ethnic minority writer, poet, essayist and playwright took part in the political opposition movements against the communist regime in Romania. He has been arrested and later forced to leave the country. Following the years of emigration, he returned to Romania in 1990, becoming Secretary General of the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians and senator in the national legislation in Bucharest. From 2010, he has been actively taking part in Hungarian cultural policy first as a state secretary, later as a first advisor to the Prime Minister. Since 2011 he is President of the Hungarian PEN Club. His literature works have been translated to multiple languages.



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