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## Intransigent Behavior: Genocide and Oppression in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> Century

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# GENOCIDE AND OPPRESSION / TNP AUTUMN 2010

<i>Introduction</i> .....	3
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## GENOCIDE AND OPPRESSION

<i>The Genocide Phenomenon – Jiří Matoušek - Miloš Fňukal</i> .....	4
<i>Blaming the Scapegoat – Peter Zvagulis</i> .....	7
<i>Armenian Genocide as an International Phenomenon – Emil Souleimanov</i> .....	16
<i>The Holocaust, through Palestinian Eyes – Břetislav Turček</i> .....	25
<i>A Broken Promise: Living through war in the former Yugoslavia – Danijela Demarin</i> ....	32
<i>A Decade of Work: Roma and the EU – Jacy Meyer</i> .....	42
<i>America as the New “Great Satan” – Petr Pelikán</i> .....	53
<i>Targeting Terror – William A. Cohn</i> .....	59
<i>Fearing the Future: Islamophobia in Central Europe – Leora Moreno</i> .....	73
<i>The Baloch Insurgency – John Jack Rooney</i> .....	81

## CULTURE

<i>Berlin’s New Roma Sound – Robert Rigney</i> .....	88
<i>Artist Revolutionaries and Artist Clowns: A Critic’s Manifesto – Karolína Fabelová</i> .....	95

## ECONOMICS

<i>Good Intentions: Evaluating Austerity Measures in the CR – Lecia Bushak</i> .....	101
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## CZECH AFFAIRS

<i>Solar Power in the Spotlight – Nancy Ryerson</i> .....	109
<i>Getting What You Pay For: Tuition and Higher Education – Elizabeth Dana</i> .....	118

## **Introduction**

In the past century genocide has become one of the defining characteristics of humanity. This malady has plagued countries on every continent and, frighteningly, seems to unabatedly spread. Failing to purge this menace effectively, some societies continue to perpetuate acts of violence and oppression against people and cultures.

Jiří Matoušek and Miloš Fňukal open our autumn issue commenting that World War II changed everything. In many ways, this statement is true. However, despite the irrevocable reverberations events in the first half of the twentieth century sounded, they were not enough to prevent the horrors that took place in Rwanda or the former Yugoslavia in the 1990s, nor the numerous oppressions, persecutions and repressions that continue to haunt societies today. Hate speech and prejudice, violence and ethnic tensions still exist to a harrowing extent, reminding us that we have not yet rid society of this intransigent disorder.

In this issue, our writers have explored and examined different forms of genocide and oppression, all with the aim of bringing cognizance and insight to experiences suffered in the past and present. War World II memorials avow “Never again.” It seems that society continues to call this bluff. As we settle into the next decade, I am left to wonder if we are destined to continue our tryst with this, bearing witness to new forms of oppression, or if society will learn how to bring this madness to an end.

In 1946, the United Nations passed Resolution 96 (I), which contains the first official definition of the term genocide: “Genocide is a denial of the right of existence of entire human groups, just as homicide is the denial of the right to live of individual human beings; such denial of the right of existence shocks the conscience of mankind, results in great losses to humanity in the form of cultural and other contributions represented by these human groups, and is contrary to moral law and to the spirit and aims of the United Nations. Many instances of such crimes of genocide have occurred when racial, religious, political and other groups have been destroyed, entirely or in part. The punishment of the crime of genocide is a matter of international concern...Genocide is a crime under international law which the civilized world condemns, and for the commission of which principals and accomplices – whether private individuals, public officials or statesmen, and whether the crime is committed on religious, racial, political or any other grounds – are punishable.”

# The Genocide Phenomenon

*Jiří Matoušek - Miloš Fňukal\**

**Violence and oppression have always been a part of global society. Wars, repression of freedom, expulsion and the murder of civilian populations have plagued history across all continents. However, only in the 20<sup>th</sup> century did the human race reach technological advancements that permitted mass and systematic slaughter with relentless industrial effectiveness.**

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World War II forever changed our understanding of humans' ability to slaughter entire populations according to a premeditated plan. The annihilation of nations conducted by Nazi Germany around Europe surpassed all past experiences and required a new kind of terminology. During World War II, Winston Churchill described the elimination of Jews, Gypsies and other European groups as a "crime that has no name." In 1944, Raphael Lemkin, former advisor to the United States War Ministry and professor at Yale University, used the term genocide for the first time in his publication *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe*, to describe the situation in the occupied territories. Combining the Greek word *génos* (γένος) (kin, meaning nation, race or tribe) and the Latin *-cidium* (meaning murderer), Lemkin defined genocide as the annihilation of a nation or a specific ethnic group; not a one-time attack against ethnic group members, but a coordinated action plan, which aims to destroy basic life conditions of ethnically or racially defined groups and eventually lead to

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their complete extermination.<sup>1</sup> The plan includes the disintegration of political and social institutions, culture, language, national belonging, religion, economic existence, destruction of personal security, freedom, health, dignity and individual lives.

The term genocide only received a clear legal meaning after the end of World War II. After the war there was increased pressure to create contractual mechanisms that would eliminate the possibility of another holocaust. The Nuremberg Trials referred to the horrors carried out by Nazi Germany as a crime against humanity, but did not find the defendants guilty of genocide. Unsatisfied with the outcome of the Trials, India, Cuba and Panama submitted a proposal to define and condemn genocide as a crime at the first United Nations General Assembly in 1946.<sup>2</sup>

This proposal sparked a process that was completed with the drafting of the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide by the National Assembly of the United Nations on 9 December 1948. After the Convention ratification by 20 member states, the Convention came into force on 12 January 1951. Thereby the crime of genocide became a part of international criminal law, and genocide perpetrators could be sentenced in accordance with recognized, established rules.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lemkin, R. (1944): *Axis Rule in Occupied Europe: Laws of Occupation – Analysis of Government – Proposals for Redress*. Washington, D.C: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. p. 79

<sup>2</sup> Ternon, Y. (1997): Genocidy 20. století: zločinný stát. Praha: Themis, p. 25

<sup>3</sup> See Schabs, William (2008): Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. Audiovisual Library of International Law, United Nations [online]. Poslední revize 2008. [cit. 2010-10-16].

## **GENOCIDE AND OPPRESSION / TNP AUTUMN 2010**

Nevertheless, even after the ratification of the Convention, the possible punishment for committing genocide is largely related to political decisions and the willingness of states to cooperate with international standards. Genocide was tried for the first time in accordance with the Convention only 40 years after the ratification process, when it was used at the ad hoc international courts established after the massacres in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia. The absence of a permanent international authority that would be responsible for investigating and successfully punishing crimes of genocide is the most fundamental drawback of the Convention. This role was assumed – in a limited sense – only in 2002 by the International Criminal Court (ICC), which is responsible for prosecution of crimes of genocide and crimes against humanity. It should be noted, however, that the ICC is a court of last resort and primary responsibility to try perpetrators of genocide is still left to the individual states.

Experts in international law, political science, sociology and psychology have attempted to explain the phenomena of genocides in order to understand how to prevent such acts from occurring. Even though the international community has made strides to prevent such atrocious crimes, it has not succeeded. This can be seen in the nationalist-communist revolution of the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia, which led to the cessation of contact with the rest of the world and monstrous violence against the local population, in the last officially recognized genocide in Rwanda, which was largely conducted by the Hutus on the minority Tutsi population in the first half of the 1990s, and during the war in the former Yugoslavia. The international community did not react in time to prevent these provocations.

Let us hope that the world has learned from these mistakes, and with more understanding, more preventative actions will follow.

## Blaming the Scapegoat

Peter Zvagulis\*

**Hate speech and media manipulation plays a key role in inciting ethnic tensions and collective violence. Hate speech serves as a mobilizing “call to arms” against the perceived enemy, which in reality is only a scapegoat. Media manipulation allows mass dissemination of the hate message, intensifying the collective emotion and serving the power goals of extremist leadership. While not all hate speech leads to outbreaks of collective violence, all of it is potentially socially disruptive because it contributes to accumulation of ethnic tension and because through scapegoating it fixes public attention on false problems and illusory goals.**

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In April 1994 the commander of UNAMIR forces in Rwanda, Canadian General Romeo Dallaire, sent an urgent fax to United Nations (UN) headquarters in New York requesting permission for military intervention. He exposed the violent plans of the Hutu extremist elite and warned his superior Kofi Annan that, unless immediate action was taken, a massacre of horrifying dimensions would be unavoidable. Permission was denied. It was five days before the outset of the genocide, which in three months claimed close to one million lives, leading a Christian missionary who witnessed the events to say: “There are no devils left in hell. They are all in Rwanda!”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gibbs, N. “Why? The Killing Fields of Rwanda.” *Time*. 16 May 1994.

At the same time in Europe, another armed conflict was raging in the lands formerly known as Yugoslavia. The Bosnian war was a second large-scale protracted ethnic conflict after the Serbo-Croatian war, and it was then already entering its third year. Modern technology projected the images from the siege of Sarajevo on TV screens around the world. Yet the atrocities continued. The dreadful term *ethnic cleansing* had become part of the routine media parlance. The international community had failed to stop these instances of collective violence and there was yet another conflict - Kosovo - waiting to break out.

### **Is Collective Violence Spontaneous?**

Despite some appearances of spontaneity none of these violent conflicts happened without prior preparation and without mass indoctrination. All of them were preceded by organized campaigns of hate speech and by media manipulation. This is not a new phenomenon. In the course of recorded human history no collective violence has ever happened without hate speech preceding it. Similarly, there has never been hate speech that did not target a specific scapegoat, whether a group or an individual. These two correlations can help to demystify the claims of “spontaneous reactions provoked by events” or of “spontaneous outbreaks of ancient hatreds,” which sometimes appear in the press.

In the well-documented case studies of collective violence such as the Rwandan genocide, ethnic cleansing in former Yugoslavia and in Nazi Germany, there are some commonalities despite the differences in their cultural, historical and geopolitical contexts. Similar preconditions contributed to the accumulation of general frustration and confusion of loyalties in the society. The destabilizing factors of economic crisis and a history of ethnic resentment were further aggravated by institutional weakness in political structures and by power struggles among the elite.

Similar methods of manipulation were also used once the level of tension in society had reached high intensity and opportunistic extremist leaders had surfaced.

The manipulation of the public mind in such extreme cases happens both by persuasion and by coercion. Collective violence rests on three “wheels” – hate propaganda, authorization of hatred by power figures, and extremist violence. While

This image is in the public domain.



The movie *The Eternal Jew* (Der Ewige Jude), an anti-Semitic movie made in Nazi-Germany, dehumanizes Jewish characters and portrays them as greedy and evil. The film was shown in Germany and Austria to large audiences.

all three are needed for complete breakdown of the normal social order, the key element is hate speech; without indoctrination and emotional manipulation widespread collective violence would not happen.

Therefore, one of

the first steps of extremist leadership is to gradually gain control of the media. The aim of such a scheme is complete control of the flow of information, granting endless repetition of a message that dehumanizes the scapegoat (in Rwanda the Tutsi minority was likened to “cockroaches”) and suppresses all dissenting voices. However, manipulation schemes are easily adaptable to other situations and may even mimic the plurality of opinions. Serbian propaganda warfare during the Milosevic regime was waged by both traditional methods, such as editorial control and censorship, and by means of Internet and satellite transmissions.

Seeing images of ethnic conflicts on television, one is always tempted to think that this may not be relevant to one's own context. The typical reaction is: "These things are either part of the past or they happen in far away countries. Nothing like that can happen here." This was the reaction of many inhabitants of the Bosnian capital Sarajevo when they first heard about the atrocities of the Serbo-Croatian war. However, there is no place on this planet that is totally safe from the dangers of collective indoctrination nor from a mass phenomenon which ethologist Konrad Lorenz called *militant enthusiasm*<sup>2</sup> – because we all know how to scapegoat others.

### **The Scapegoat**

In its essence hate speech is scapegoating. It is present in any situation which involves ethnic resentment and group prejudice. We could look at ethnic or other forms of group prejudice in Northern Ireland, Latvia, Russia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Belgium or many other places in Europe and we would find the same pattern. The other group is always at fault.

Scapegoating is a well-known phenomenon in social psychology and many influential authors such as Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Elias Canetti, Gordon Allport, and René Girard have discussed various aspects of it. However, all of them have pointed to the fact that scapegoating is caused by a strong increase of collective frustration. When social tension becomes intolerable it threatens to make human relationships within a given society a "war of all against all," thus disrupting the social fabric of society. Because the coherence of collective identity is disrupted, the identity of every member of this society is endangered. If the legitimate political power is unable to restore allegiance to the old collective identity, a search for a new

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<sup>2</sup> *Militant enthusiasm*, as used by Lorenz, means a group instinctively bonding together and united by collective hostility toward those considered as outsiders and as a threat to the group. Hate speech abuses this mechanism by sounding a false alarm. Other scientists have used different terminology in describing the same phenomenon. Jung named it *mass psychosis*, Girard calls it *violent unanimity*.

one is triggered. In such a situation an opportunistic leader pointing to a scapegoat as the alleged “cause” of the frustration is welcomed as a “savior.” As soon as the common “enemy” is identified and the collective “defense” activities are taking place, the emotional unity of society is restored. To those involved it may appear as a miraculous cure and as confirmation of the inerrancy of the “savior.” To an outside observer it looks like an epidemic of collective madness. The Weimar Republic of the 1920s and 1930s, with the subsequent rise of Nazis to power, is a classic example of such a development.

One problem with such a pseudo-cure is that it sets the society on an ineffectual course. The real cause of frustration, such as corporate greed, social injustice, discrimination, corruption or bureaucratic inefficiency is not addressed. All collective efforts are mobilized against an imaginary enemy and toward illusory goals. After a while the unsolved problem returns in an aggravated form and a new scapegoat is needed. This is the other vice of the scapegoat process: it establishes baseless and violent patterns of social regulations in society. It may seem that all we would need to avoid such a scenario is our individual intellectual awareness of scapegoating. However, while individual awareness is indeed helpful, it is not sufficient as a preventive measure. Scapegoating is a collective phenomenon and is rooted in our unconscious, and as such, it can be manipulated.

### **The Manipulation**

Political manipulation is effective because it uses techniques that are similar to those of advertising. Both target people’s emotional motivation at the unconscious level. The main difference is that political manipulation has long-term goals, such as fundamental change of opinion, while advertising is mostly interested in relatively short-term goals, such as selling a new product. If the content of political manipulation revolves around a hate message, vilifying a scapegoat, it tends to produce polarization and strong reciprocal emotional reactions both in the main

group and the scapegoat group. This in turn increases the coercive pressure inside the groups.

Emotional contagion within groups has a strong impact on its members regardless of their educational level.<sup>3</sup> Even people who as individuals are intellectually opposed to the hate message may not dare to express their views publicly. People have family, friends, and colleagues and not many would want to be perceived as disloyal to their own group. In advanced conflict situations, as in the former Yugoslavia, this social pressure may turn from psychological discomfort into physical threat, leaving dissenters no other options than compliance with the abnormality of the general behavior or departure from the country.

Manipulation of collective emotions by extremist leaders may be conscious or unconscious. The latter presupposes the use of what René Girard calls *subversive knowledge*. It was, for example, the case in Rwanda in 1994, where advisers from Butare University used western manuals on social-psychology to recommend how extremists could adapt some of the subversive techniques to the local context. Later this document helped UN prosecutors to shed light on the manipulation process that preceded the genocide. In other situations manipulation may be intuitive and guided by trial and error. Such a manipulation tends to be sporadic and is likely to appear in countries where the collective frustration is low or moderate and the situation is not favorable to an organized and sustained hate campaign. However, it is important not to underestimate any instance of hate speech or scapegoating, because no matter how mild a particular expression may appear, in its deepest essence it represents an attitude based on genocidal logic, that the world would be a much better place without a specific person or group of people.

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<sup>3</sup> Robert Jay Lifton and Stanley Milgram, among others, have written extensively about this topic.

Religious identity can be abused with the same intensity and with the same results as ethnicity. It may become an additional trait of differentiation or a major cause for division even in the secular European countries. In the countries of the former Yugoslavia religion was an important additional element that defined belonging and otherness. The Troubles in Northern Ireland stretched over several decades and divided the society along the denominational lines of Protestantism and Catholicism. And yet, the conflict exhibited the same patterns of exclusion, scapegoating and manipulation as in other ethnic conflicts. For a very long time the violence in Northern Ireland could be contained only with the help of a huge Berlin-Wall-like fence called the “peace line,” which still stands. When I asked the local peacemakers about the need for this segregation, they answered that the “peace line” could be removed only when the people on both sides of the divide saw themselves again as one society. Today it is still too early for such a move as the wounds inflicted on both communities by hate and violence heal very slowly.

This example reminds us of another characteristic of scapegoating: it can be aimed at any group; it does not need to be necessarily ethnic tension. The conflicts in the former Yugoslavia exhibited the potential for the scapegoating process to be easily rechanneled against a new scapegoat group. The Serbian war politics under the Milošević regime were retargeted from Slovenes to Croats to Bosnians to Kosovo Albanians. Wartime Serbia was not the only country do so. The lesson we can learn from the above is that no hate speech should be tolerated, regardless of how inoffensive it may seem and regardless of how marginal may be the group against which it is directed. All hate speech is aimed at the unconscious and all of it has the same twisted and destructive logic behind it.

### **The Way Out**

Regardless of its collective emotion-provoking potential, susceptibility to media manipulation, and its ability for social coercion, hate speech is not all-powerful and

## **GENOCIDE AND OPPRESSION / TNP AUTUMN 2010**

can be successfully countered. The top-down causation should not be overstated because the chances for extremist leaders to manipulate the public mind appear only when the society is failing to maintain a healthy civic climate. Hate speech usually has already been present for an extended period of time and becomes accepted as a normal part of public discourse when the civic climate breaks down. Detecting it and publicly exposing the process of abuse and the motivation behind it removes a lot of its mystical emotional appeal.



The Belfast Peace Line is a nearly 8 meter high wall dividing Protestant and Catholic neighborhoods .

Photo courtesy of Peter Zvagulis

The dynamics related to hate speech, scapegoating and manipulation of collective emotions through media are more complex than it is possible to discuss in one article. However, there are three main criteria by which even implicit forms of hate speech and subtle forms of manipulation can be detected and exposed. They are dehumanization, demonization, and attempts to create a siege mentality. Hate speech

is always an affront to the human dignity of the scapegoat group because it is trying to dehumanize the image of its victim, portraying the members of the scapegoat group as less human or less civilized than the main group. Focusing on the negative characteristics of the scapegoat group, exaggerating them and portraying the victim as the cause of frustration, are the main symptoms of demonization. Allegations of “them” spoiling “our” good image abroad and having “accomplices” among the human rights defenders would usually signal attempts to manipulate public opinion and to create a siege mentality. This would also indicate a desire to resort to scapegoating instead of solving problems and engaging in dialogue.

It is important that the exposing of hate speech happens publicly because collective phenomena must be opposed collectively. The coercive power of the public opinion can work both ways and the fundamental weakness of scapegoating is that it is based on lie. Moral convictions, because they are anchored both in the conscious and unconscious, are the strongest defense against hate, intolerance and affronts to human dignity. However it takes a civic courage to expose hate speech and scapegoating, and to raise moral objections to it, because it means renouncing the comforting illusions and focusing on the real problems.

The success of the Northern Ireland peace process, where both sides have given up hate speech in their political discourse, shows us that by exposing the manipulation it is possible to reduce the hostile collective emotions even in the midst of violence. Yet it may be wise to counter hate speech before it has caused any trouble. As Edmund Burke more than two centuries ago brilliantly summarized it: “The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.”

# **Armenian Genocide as an International Political Phenomenon**

**Dr. Emil Souleimanov\***

**The dilemma of the so-called Armenian genocide<sup>1</sup> remains a key political topic, which separates Armenia and the Turkish Republic and causes tension in the entire region. Through their European diasporas (especially the Armenian diaspora), the issue also entered the European domain and became even more controversial as Turkey began its hotly contested European Union accession talks. Lately, the Armenian genocide issue has resulted in icy diplomatic relations between France (traditionally the most skeptical state when it comes to Turkish EU membership) and Turkey, as well as between Turkey and a number of other countries that have formally acknowledged the genocide.**

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In most of Western Europe, for various reasons, a formal Turkish acknowledgement of the Armenian genocide is considered an essential condition for European Union (EU) accession. However, in other regions of the world, this issue is not as clear cut. The recognition and definition of the events that took place during the Ottoman Empire in 1915-1916 as genocide is a key question in Anatolia and the Caucasus region, especially in regard to EU enlargement.

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<sup>1</sup> We use the terms “Armenian genocide” or “Armenian massacres” of 1915-1916 in this article. However, it is not the author’s intention to define and determine the above-mentioned events as genocide or not.

The Armenian genocide has been evaluated in depth from both a historical and moral perspective. However, it is now clear that Yerevan, Ankara and other European capitals perceive the acknowledgement of such events as a political issue with far-reaching implications. The aim of this article is to focus on the current perception of the Armenian genocide in the various countries involved, specifically in Armenia and Turkey. The key task is to analyze the possible impact within the EU of acknowledging or not acknowledging the massacres.



Armenian Genocide Museum-Institute  
in Yerevan, Armenia. Courtesy of  
Hanay/Wikicommons.

### **Historical Circumstances of the Armenian Genocide**

The tragic events that are sometimes referred to as the first genocide of the 20<sup>th</sup> century took place on Ottoman Empire territory in 1915-1916. The roots of the problem lay in economic disputes between the Armenian settlers<sup>2</sup> and nomadic Kurds. East Anatolian Armenian farmers, who were often attacked by Kurdish tribes and were required to pay a ‘protection’ tax<sup>3</sup> to Kurdish tribal leaders, organized a series of de-facto anti-Kurdish riots towards the

<sup>2</sup> Western Turkey, or rather Anatolian Armenia, up until 1915 was mainly inhabited by an Armenian population – approximately 1,200,000 people from the 1,800,000 of all Ottoman Armenians (other sources mention up to 2,100,000 people).

<sup>3</sup> As Christians the Armenians had no right to carry weapons, ride horses etc. in the Ottoman Empire. The same was not true for Muslim Kurds.

## **GENOCIDE AND OPPRESSION / TNP AUTUMN 2010**

end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. They appealed to the Ottoman Emperor to relieve the Christians of their Kurdish ‘protection’ and assume direct rule in the East Anatolian region. However, their pleas fell on deaf ears. Istanbul feared a repetition of events in the Balkans, where the other European powers intervened in interior Ottoman state issues to protect local Christians, and therefore decided to punish the Armenians instead by initiating the massacres. Semi-military Kurdish units, who received minimal supervision from the central power, along with the Ottoman Army were said to have carried out the killings. 250,000 Armenians<sup>4</sup> lost their lives during these riots, which took place in 1894-1896.

As a result of these events, Armenian demands became politicized and the conflict began to take on an ethnic and partially religious facet. In some circles – especially in the diasporas – people even appealed for the annexation of the West Armenian territories by the Russian Empire. Radical Armenian intelligence gradually turned into a separatist (or rather irredentist) organization. Soon the stereotypical image of a ‘Kurdish robber and hijacker’ (which was wide-spread among Armenian farmers in Eastern Turkey) morphed into a highly politicized picture of a ‘Turkish murderer.’ Thus the ‘Armenian question’ as a phenomenon of the European political scene at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century was born. Muslim-Armenian antagonism peaked during World War I, when the governing Turkish party ordered organized deportations and massacres of the Armenian population, guised as protection of the Eastern borders. According to estimates, between 800,000 to 1.5 million Armenians died as a result.

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<sup>4</sup> Further reading on Armenian – Kurdish relations in Suny, R. G.: *Looking Toward Ararat: Armenia in Modern History*, Indiana University Press 1993, pg. 100-106.

The Armenian genocide decisively ended the existence of an ancient West Armenian culture in Eastern Anatolia and influential Armenian diasporas in various Ottoman cities. It provoked a mass exodus of those who survived the deportations, mainly to Western Europe, Russia and the Americas. The Ottoman Empire refugees formed a new diaspora (in contrast with the classic old diasporas dating back to the Middle Ages) and their lobbies still represent a significant political force on the international scene, especially in Russia, France and the USA.

The Armenian diaspora and the government in Yerevan have demanded that the current Turkish government acknowledge the Armenian genocide. The historic massacre as well as the violent conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh<sup>5</sup> deepened the Armenian mistrust of the Turkish (perhaps also of the Azerbaijanis, who are often compared with the Turkish in Armenian national consciousness due to their ethnic and linguistic similarities). As a result, Turkey is practically unacceptable as a partner in dialogue. Diplomatic relations have become more than icy and attempts to conduct academic analysis of the genocide are also failing.

### **Genocide Acknowledgment: The Armenian View**

Aside from the moral and ethical arguments, specific internal and external political factors can help explain the behavior of the current Armenian government. The revival of the Armenian genocide issue can fortify societal unity, which has been shaken up by the victory in Nagorno-Karabakh. The constant maintenance of anti-Turkish (as well as anti-Azerbaijani) sentiment engenders the high levels of social

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<sup>5</sup> Nagorno-Karabakh is a region in the South Caucasus. While it is internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan, its status as part of Azerbaijan, Armenia, or an independent state has been contested. Reports show that during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Azerbaijan received substantial military aid from Turkey.

## **GENOCIDE AND OPPRESSION / TNP AUTUMN 2010**

cohesion necessary in the case of further armed conflicts. The internal image of the enemy should consolidate Armenians in the republic as well as in the diasporas, since there are twice as many Armenians living abroad than in Armenia itself. It is also believed that the genocide trauma and effort to rectify the historical wrongs as central points of Armenian nationalism will slow the assimilation of young generations living in the diasporas and strengthen their sense of solidarity and belonging to their homeland.

This policy has resulted in growing financial support for the Armenian Republic from Armenian communities that have been established abroad. The influence of powerful Armenian lobby groups focused mainly on the acknowledgement of the genocide increased the significance of the Armenian diasporas in Armenian foreign policy-making.<sup>6</sup> Overseas communities backing the current governmental position on the genocide question and the Karabakh conflict may also to a certain extent legitimize the governmental elites surrounding President Serzh Sargsyan (many of whom have been involved in nefarious affairs, but still continue in their positions) in the eyes of the public and suppress any possible opposition.

Armenian demands for international acknowledgement of the massacres from 1915 as genocide also include a significant international political subtext. The return of historical Armenian lands (the so-called West Armenia), which belong to East Turkey, has been discussed more and more frequently in recent years. The reason for speculation could be the possible break-up of the Turkish Republic, which has

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<sup>6</sup> Precisely due to the strong lobbying of Armenian diasporas the following countries have acknowledged the genocide since 1998: Belgium (1998), France (1998), Sweden (2000), Lebanon (2000), Italy (2000), Canada (2002), Argentina (2003), Switzerland (2003), Uruguay (2004), Slovakia (2004), Netherlands (2004) and others. Further information can be acquired on the Armenian Foreign Affairs Ministry website: [http://www.armeniaforeignministry.am/fr/genocide/current\\_status.html](http://www.armeniaforeignministry.am/fr/genocide/current_status.html).

been touched upon by a number of political commentators. This is based on the ever-increasing antagonism between the Turks and the Kurds, which could escalate if the number of ethnic Turks and the demographically strong Kurdish population become equal. Given current population growth statistics, this could happen within approximately two generations. Kurdish nationalism and even separatism in Turkey are growing in response to the creation of a semi-independent Kurdish unit in Northern Iraq and the pressure from the European Union for Ankara to acknowledge Kurdish ethnic and linguistic rights. We can conclude from this that under certain circumstances the break-up of Turkey might not be so farfetched.<sup>7</sup>

### **Genocide Acknowledgment: The Turkish View**

As mentioned, the hotly debated Turkish EU membership has again made the Armenian genocide acknowledgement a prominent issue. Some countries have officially acknowledged the Armenian massacres; others still hesitate or even refuse to do so. The unresolved ‘Ottoman past’ related to the fate of the Armenian population stands in the way of Turkish EU membership. A public reference to the Armenian genocide in Turkey is considered ‘an attempt to denigrate Turkish national identity’ and is punishable by imprisonment, in accordance with the well-known article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code.

Current pressure to acknowledge the Armenian genocide, especially from some EU states, is perceived rather negatively in Turkey and considered to be just another artificially created obstruction to EU accession plans from the enemies of Turkey. Lack of information, both from self-censorship and a general reluctance to present

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<sup>7</sup> For more details see: Souleimanov, E.: *The Politics of France’s Genocide Denial*, Central Asia and the Caucasus Analyst, October 18, 2006.

or acknowledge events that are not officially supported,<sup>8</sup> fundamentally influence the view of the Turkish public about the Armenian massacres that occurred at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Another important factor is the position of the high-ranking officials in the Turkish Army, who cannot stand insults to the Army, the guardian of the secular form of Turkish statehood. In the last years the country has experienced a staggering growth of Turkish nationalism. The rejection of ‘Armenian lies,’ as the Armenian genocide is called among local right-wing groups, is slowly becoming a part of modern Turkish identity.

Indeed, the rejection of the desired membership in the European Union would most probably be interpreted as a failure of the pro-Western legacy of the founder of Turkey’s modern republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Turkey has been formally leaning towards the West since the 1920s, and filed an EU application in 1987. However, it was accepted as a candidate state only in 1999; accession talks began



Flags of the European Union and Turkey. Courtesy of Lokum/Wikicommons.

<sup>8</sup> For more information, see: Maksudyan, N. “Walls of Silence: Translating the Armenian Genocide into Turkish and Self-Censorship.” *Critique*. Routledge: Vol. 37, Issue 4, December 2009, pp. 635 – 649.

six years later. The Turkish population would most probably blame the possible EU rejection on the current government. The failure of the ‘European project’ in Turkey could, from a long-term perspective, depreciate the reputation of *kemalism* as a state-making doctrine. As a result, extreme right-wing and Islamic groups could become more popular, which could result in a change of regime.<sup>9</sup>

The current Turkish government does not have a unified standpoint on the Armenian issue which has moved to the center of social discourse under pressure from the EU public. However, the Turkish viewpoint remains unchanged: the events of World War I must be perceived as a mere deportation of the Armenian population, which collaborated with the Russians during the invasion of the Anatolian territory. The deportations were solely an interior issue of the Ottoman Empire and furthermore a necessary military measure. The Turkish side does admit that tens of thousands of Armenians perished (reports state up to 300,000 people); however, it categorically refuses to acknowledge that the events were a part of some sort of wider plan to exterminate an entire ethnic minority, which defines the term genocide. They claim that during the civil war, famine and epidemics in 1914-1918, hundreds of thousands of Muslims also lost their lives.<sup>10</sup> The work of a number of Turkish intellectuals, mainly historians living in Western Europe, who speak of the need to formally and legislatively acknowledge the genocide, is currently very important in Turkish social discourse.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> For more details, see: Souleimanov, E.: *The Security Aspects of Turkey's Perspective EU Membership*, in: Central European Political Studies, No 2-3, vol VIII, spring-summer 2006.

<sup>10</sup> For an analysis of the Turkish popular standpoint, see the *Sözde Ermeni Soykırımı* (*The alleged Armenian genocide*) website. The website has de facto been initiated by the government. The website contains links and references to a number of sources, which claim that the genocide never really happened: <http://www.ermenisorunu.gen.tr/english/intro/index.html>.

<sup>11</sup> To mention but a few: Orhan Pamuk, Taner Akçam or Fikret Adanır. Incidentally, Orhan Pamuk, Nobel Prize for Literature laureate (2006), was in 2005 accused of treason by a number of lawyers

### Conclusion

Despite recent attempts, it has not been possible to improve Turkish-Armenian relations. The opening of borders and establishment of diplomatic relations between Yerevan and Ankara, which was anticipated as a result of the Turkish-Armenian Protocol signing last autumn, did not happen due to hesitation on both sides and pressure on Turkey from Baku. Acknowledgement of the genocide from the Turkish government is still unrealistic and has a number of potential risks. After such a long and insistent denial, some question whether it is even viable for the Turkish government to acknowledge the genocide. Such admittance could be seen as yielding to anti-Turkish interest. In this respect, a reversal of policy may be impossible. Any movement forward will therefore depend on the interior political development in Turkey, the pressure from the EU member states and the general development of Armenian-Turkish relations. In the end, Turkey may have to choose between gains in the international arena through EU accession, or maintaining its domestic power through a refusal to acknowledge the genocide.

#### Suggested Further Reading:

Aghajanian, Denise. *Armenian Diaspora: Cohesion and Fracture*. University Press of America, 2007.

Arikan, Harun. *Turkey and the EU: An Awkward Candidate for EU Membership?* Ashgate Publishing, 2006.

Dadrian, Vahakn N. *The History of the Armenian Genocide: Ethnic Conflict from the Balkans to Anatolia to the Caucuses*. Berghahn Books, 1995. (Reprinted 2004).

Lewy, Guenter. *The Armenian Massacres in Ottoman Turkey*. University of Utah Press, 2005.

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lobbying for the military's interest, because of his writing acknowledging the ethnic cleaning of Armenians during the First World War. Recently, the Turkish justice cleared him of the accusations.

## The Holocaust, through Palestinian Eyes

Břetislav Tureček, Jerusalem\*

This work is an excerpt from the author's upcoming book *The Unholy War for the Holy Land* (Knižní klub, October 2011).

**I met a young Palestinian man called Yahya at the Ayn al-Hilweh refugee camp in South Lebanon. For Israel and the Lebanese authorities, this camp is a place of hiding for dozens of criminals and guerillas with blood on their hands. For the Palestinian refugees living here, the camp, which lacks infrastructure and offers no work opportunities, is one of the worst places to live. During our conversation, I spoke to Yahya about many things, the Holocaust. As with Israeli and Palestinian perceptions of the camp, ideas about the Holocaust differ greatly.**

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“I know that today the Jews live in our village,” the university-educated Palestinian man told me. He was referring to a village in contemporary Israel, which his grandfather and grandmother had to leave in 1948. “The Jews have chased us out; however, at the same time they have invited about one million immigrants from the Soviet Union,” Yahya said angrily, waving his cigarette in the air. I had asked him whether he imagined Palestinian families returning to their old homes under the Jewish state. I asked him what sort of solution he would offer for the Israeli Jews currently working and living on the land that previously belonged to his

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\* Břetislav Tureček is the Middle East correspondent for Czech Radio.

grandparents? “*The same as Hitler. I would gas them!*” he laughed with a sinister grin. His companions sitting around the table nodded in agreement. It is not uncommon in Palestinian society to doubt the Holocaust or even celebrate its occurrence in some ways. The event is perceived differently in the Muslim world than in Europe. Despite this – or perhaps because of it – the Holocaust plays a significant role in the conflict in the Middle East.

### **Blaming Europe**

The most common belief I have found here is that the Holocaust did take place, to some degree or other, and that Europeans were entirely responsible for it. In order for Europeans to absolve themselves of guilt, they backed the creation of the state of Israel – at the expense of the Palestinian population. “The Jews have been persecuted in Europe in the past and are therefore currently given preferential treatment. Europe feels guilty because it [did] nothing about the Holocaust,” claimed Mohamed Sid Ahmed, an influential political analyst writing for the Egyptian pro-governmental daily newspaper *Al-Ahram*.<sup>1</sup> “Now the Palestinians are the victims of oppression.”

After World War II, when discussing the fate of the Jewish people who survived the Holocaust, many Western diplomats and politicians voiced concern that the solution should not happen at the expense of the existing Arab population from the Palestinian region. “Three main options were considered,” summarized Victor Kattan, a British researcher.<sup>2</sup> “Either help the Jews who have survived the Nazi extermination by helping them settle in Western states, for example the USA. Or

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<sup>1</sup> Interview with the author, Prague, July 1998

<sup>2</sup> A public lecture, V. Kattana, Jerusalem, 28 September 2010

## **GENOCIDE AND OPPRESSION / TNP AUTUMN 2010**

help them reintegrate in their native land. Or create Israel and help them move to the Palestinian territory. In the end the last option was chosen.”

Jews themselves also speak of the Holocaust in connection with the creation of Israel, but from a different perspective. “The answer to the Holocaust was the immediate foundation of the Jewish state,” said Israeli President Shimon Peres.<sup>3</sup> “Without this the survivors would have been without a home and their lives would have been in danger again. The state of Israel is not only a protective shield for the Jews, but also a historically significant ideal: a state with a moral message...”

Courtesy of Samuel Spiegelman – Creative Commons



The Old City in Jerusalem with Mount Scopus and the Mount of Olives.

Similar speeches only offer more support for the Palestinian belief that the search for European vindication was found at their expense. Zionists declared the independence of Israel three years after World War II. At that point in time, tens

of thousands of Jewish immigrants poured in from post-war Europe. This was accompanied by the simultaneous expulsion and removal of thousands of Palestinian Arabs from their towns and villages. Palestinians and their leaders often use this time frame as an argument for their above-mentioned thesis. “The conflict began in 1948 when the state of Israel was established in our land. When the Jews of the world came and said, this is our land,” said the former leader of Hamas, Abdel Aziz al-Rantissi, half a year before he was killed by an Israeli missile attack.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Shimon Peres’ speech on International Holocaust Remembrance Day (Yom HaShoah), Jerusalem, April 2009

<sup>4</sup> Telephone conversation with the author of the Prague-Gaza, 20 August 2003

### **Holocaust Denial – The path to an occupied Palestine**

Abdel Aziz al-Rantissi was a children's doctor by profession, but later became a fervent supporter of terrorist acts against Israeli civilians. He said: "The Israelis have massacred tens of thousands of Palestinians and expelled hundreds of thousands from their homes and villages. They destroyed our lives. What we want is the end of the Palestinian tragedy. If a thief would come to your house and throw you out on the street, the end of your tragedy would be when you returned back home. Israel has a right to exist but not at the expense of our country. Would you accept it, if the Palestinians would come to the Czech Republic now and establish a Palestinian state?" Some Palestinians (like some people in the West) completely deny the Holocaust or question the official number of victims.

"Belittling, denying and abusing the Holocaust – these are all factors included in the ideology of the Palestinian leadership," claims Palestinian Media Watch (PMW), an Israeli organization that studies Palestinian society by monitoring Palestinian media.<sup>5</sup> Such an accusation is, however, exaggerated – the Palestinian leadership deals with fundamental issues other than ideological standpoints to European history and World War II. Even so, the Palestinian media provides dozens of often shocking examples of Holocaust denial or its abuse for the purposes of Palestinian propaganda. PMW publishes these reports on their website.

"The Jews exaggerate any action against any Jew anywhere in the world," PMW cites Abd ar-Rahman, a member of the Palestine National Council speaking for a Palestinian government TV station. "The entire world is concerned with the Holocaust. There is a Holocaust memorial in Israel, which mentions six million Jews. It is however a known fact, that there weren't even six million Jews in the whole of Europe at the time," says a Palestinian official. Sometimes Palestinians

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<sup>5</sup> See [Palestinian Media Watch](#).

even claim that the Zionists themselves initiated the Holocaust, in order to convince the Jews to move to Palestine. Another report states that the Holocaust was fictionalized or exaggerated so that the Zionists had an excuse to take over Palestine. And it is not only Palestinians that speak this way. Other Arabs, including the Iranian president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, have adopted similar rhetoric.

### **Holocaust Education is against our culture**

In spite of this, most Palestinians do not perceive the Holocaust to be an issue. It is an imaginary event from a time long ago from a world far away, which does not concern them, aside from the above-mentioned historical circumstances. They are not responsible for it, as they emphasize. Additionally, since 1948 they have been experiencing their own misfortune, which is often disparaged and denied by the Israelis, many Palestinians say.

The Jerusalem-based Holocaust memorial museum Yad Vashem is one of the best-organized museums I have ever visited. After seeing the main exhibition, multimedia programs and several other displays (for instance the memorial exhibition of Jewish child victims exterminated by the Nazis) I was utterly shaken. The precise depiction of the Holocaust atrocities has that sort of effect on anyone. In the last years more and more Arab students have visited the Yad Vashem. Israeli journalists report on the school trips, all noting that the Palestinian children are shocked. They have not seen or heard about what happened to Jewish children of a similar age in Europe during World War II.

We cannot be too surprised about it – according to PMW Palestinian schoolbooks barely mention this era of history. History books for high school students published by the Palestinian Ministry of Education mention Nazism and oppression of ‘inferior’ races; however, the Holocaust is never mentioned and Nazis are not

## **GENOCIDE AND OPPRESSION / TNP AUTUMN 2010**

equated to anti-Semitism.<sup>6</sup> Before the 2009 school year, the Islamic Hamas, which controls the Gaza strip, came into a serious disagreement with the United Nations, namely the UNRWA agency, which cares for Palestinian refugees. The UNRWA runs its own primary and secondary schools in Palestinian territories. Radical Islamists were horrified to discover that the agency is planning to include the Jewish extermination by the Nazis into its human rights education. “The acknowledgement of the Holocaust and extermination of the Jews is in contradiction with our culture, fundamentals, values, legacy and religion,” proclaimed Jamila Shanti, a Hamas member of parliament.<sup>7</sup> Other members of Hamas have declared their support for Shanti’s view (as it happens, she is the widow of the deceased Hamas leader Abdel Aziz al-Rantissi). According to them, the Holocaust is a “big lie” and teaching it would only weaken the Palestinian struggle against Israel.

A few local UNRWA representatives immediately released a statement that emphasized that the UN schoolbooks do not mention the Holocaust in any way and that the rumors were entirely false. The Commissioner-General Karen Koning AbuZayd confirmed it herself, noting that the curriculum related to human rights education was still in its initial phase. AbuZayd consequently received strong criticism from some Jewish organizations for not standing up to Hamas and not teaching Palestinian children about the Holocaust. The Simon Wiesenthal Center (SWC), an international Jewish Human Rights organization, even called for her resignation. The SWC quoted the commissioner: “We deal with human rights in our curriculum. The extermination of six million Jews and five million other unwanted individuals is not a question of human rights.”<sup>8</sup> UNRWA immediately denied the

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<sup>6</sup> “The textbook *History of the Arabs and the World in the 20th Century* teaches the military and the political events of World War II in significant detail, including sections on Nazi racist ideology, yet neither persecution of Jews nor the Holocaust is mentioned.” As reported in PMW report, available at <http://www.palwatch.org/main.aspx?fi=122>

<sup>7</sup> *The Washington Post*, 2 September 2009

<sup>8</sup> *Jewish Telegraphic Agency*, 8 September 2009

## **GENOCIDE AND OPPRESSION / TNP AUTUMN 2010**

allegations, saying that the chief of the humanitarian agency never said these words.<sup>9</sup> The Jewish Telegraphic Agency (JTA) searched for the origin of this quote, which has been widely publicized by the SWC, however, the center refused to release this information. The only mention of the UNRWA on the SWC website is related to a couple of press releases about an agency helping Palestinian refugees. The supposed document with the Karen Koning AbuZayd quote is missing.

The Yad Vashem institute tries to avoid propaganda and political discussions. Its representatives believe that supplementing knowledge gaps about the Holocaust among the Arab population should be done through high quality information. This can be seen in the Arab and Persian language Internet pages of the memorial, which have been visited by hundreds of thousands of people. “We get emails from people living in Iran. We are very pleasantly surprised at the positive reactions we receive,” says the head of the Yad Vashem internet department Dana Poracová.<sup>10</sup>

It is clear that perceptions of the Holocaust vary between Israelis and Palestinians, and both can use the past to further push their own agendas in the Middle East. Providing quality education and information, without agenda pushing, seems to be the only way forward. Understanding where each side comes from, what their beliefs are and how they are shaped, is crucial if a resolution is ever to be found.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> WAFA Palestinian Agency, 5 September 2009

<sup>10</sup> Interview with the author, Jerusalem, 19 March 2009

<sup>11</sup> This last paragraph is an addendum to the excerpt of this book, added solely for the publication in *The New Presence*.

# **A Broken Promise: Living through War in the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia**

Danijela Demarin\*

**It was early morning on October 1, 1991 when we heard the storm – or at least a noise that we hoped was just a storm. It was early morning, and my father decided to not go to work. “They said they wouldn’t, they said they would spare us,” he said.**

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The night before, our close friends Đuro and Zdenka had invited my family to dinner. It was a usual custom, but this time there was nothing usual about it. Jokes and laughter were replaced with solemn faces and worried forecasts regarding the fate we might share with Vukovar, a city in Northern Croatia attacked weeks before. The gathering was filled with tension, with fear for what we knew was supposed to happen, but what we refused to believe was happening - we clung to what we heard on the radio: that war was not happening.

Several days before our dinner, Dubrovnik’s mayor Petar Poljanić had visited the neighboring city of Trebinje, located in Herzegovina, to assure the people of Dubrovnik that they were safe. While commenting on the situation in the north, the mayor of Trebinje and the president of the Serbian Autonomous Region in Herzegovina, Božidar Vučurević, echoed this sentiment saying with certainty that

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\* Danijela Demarin studies at the University of New York in Prague. She comes from Croatia, a country strongly affected by the Yugoslav War in the early 90s. This article is a retrospective of her personal experience and memories.

Dubrovnik was in no danger, unless it was somehow warranted. This is what we heard on the radio.

It was early morning on October 1, 1991 when we realized that the radio was wrong. The storm broke in irregular intervals. Our landlords Nikša and Vesna came down from their apartment, holding children in their arms and trying to protect their ears from the raging sounds of falling grenades. We sat in our rented apartment in the settlement Mokošica, only 10 kilometres from Dubrovnik. We sat in silence and fear, listening to grenades and praying to be spared. When the gunshots subsided, Nikša left the house for a moment to see what had happened outside. Large black smoke had replaced the gas station. While outside assessing the situation, my father, Nikša and another neighbor saw three warplanes. They watched them shoot the television tower on the hill, Srđ, above Dubrovnik. The electricity went out.

It was early morning on October 1, 1991, when we realized the war had arrived.



Archive photo of ruins in Vukovar after the JNA invasion in 1991. Photo courtesy of Seiya123/Wikicommons.

### **A Political Perspective**

Since its founding in 1945, the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRJ) consisted of six republics and two autonomous provinces with near equal rights. After Josip Broz Tito died in 1980, a rotating presidency was established, which facilitated one

representative from each republic to take turns as president of the SFRJ. This system was created to maintain equality among the republics. After Tito's death there was reluctance to grant so much power to the president. The position therefore had far

less authority, but the Yugoslav National Army, 70 percent of which consisted of Serbs, remained under his command.

After the fall of the Berlin wall, the West began to strongly influence Eastern Europe and democratize it. Since President Tito's main goal was to oppose nationalism, the weakening of communism in Yugoslavia raised the national intolerance within the nationally mixed country. This resulted in conflicts between Serbs and Slovenians, Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo and also Serbs and Croats. The main source of disagreement and conflict was the difference in opinion of the future of SFRJ. Serbia and Montenegro proposed the strengthening of socialism and guidance of the Alliance of Yugoslavian Communists to create the Great Serbian nation (a country that would include the territories of Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo and Croatia). Slovenia and Croatia, meanwhile, aimed to create a co-federal community in which each country would have the power to choose whether they wanted to remain a part of or secede from Yugoslavia. Slovenian representatives asked for reorganization at the Congress at the beginning of 1990. Serbian representatives, led by Slobodan Milošević, strongly disagreed with the proposition. The meeting ended with the Slovenian and Croatian delegations leaving in protest, and as a result nothing was resolved. It was then clear that Yugoslavia was disintegrating and that the splintering of nations would not be peaceful.

While Milošević advocated against the secession of Croatia and Slovenia, Franjo Tuđman and the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ) came to power in Croatia, called for independence and enacted anti-Yugoslavian policy. This change of political orientation partly reopened the door for supporters of the Independent State of Croatia. In response, Serbs established their own Serbian Nationalist Movement. Outraged and hurt, Serbs gathered and listened to Milošević assert that Croats were planning a conspiracy against them, a secret Ustasha movement that was dangerous

for other nations. Milošević had no evidence to substantiate his claims, yet he promoted the idea of a ‘war for peace’ that was necessary to defend Serbian lives. The Yugoslavian National Army openly supported the Serbs, leaving poorly armed Croats to fight against a much larger power for their freedom.

In June 1991, Slovenian and Croatian parliaments announced their independence. Slovenian separation was strategically well executed, as they managed to forestall actions of the Yugoslavian National Army. They proclaimed their independence one day earlier than it was announced, which gave them advantage in organizing defense. Conflicts in the country lasted for ten days after which the army moved to Croatia. Croatian optimists hoped the country could gain its separation as easily as Slovenia, but this was not the case.

Conflicts between Serbs and Croats intensified in 1991. Serbs still inhabited northern parts of the new independent state, and opposed the separation because they would then become a minority. As a protest, Serbs gathered and blocked northern parts around the city of Vukovar separating it from the rest of the country. This is known as the Balvan Revolution. Croats were aware of the chaotic situation, but did not foresee what would occur next.

Several weeks later, Dubrovnik was attacked by the Yugoslavian National Army (JNA) and Montenegrin forces with questionable attack goals.

### **Life Under Occupation**

The sounds of gunfire continued throughout the day. With three babies in a room, we needed some food to get by. We had not expected to be trapped inside for an extended period of time, so we were unprepared. Someone had to take a risk to get some groceries. The men went to the nearest shop, hoping it would be open. Instead,

all they found were several cans of food to feed nine people. As the sun set, the grenades slowed. We hoped diplomacy was taking action and saving us.

We spent the night in the bathroom since it was the safest place in the house.

The morning of October 2<sup>nd</sup> brought no change. Gunshots and bombing resumed early. Seeing that the army occupied the surrounding countryside, we sought salvation in one of the community shelters near our apartment. It was a poorly equipped room with nothing but metal beds and chairs. After many people arrived, men organized groups to keep the electric generator running. However, sitting in the corner of an overcrowded room holding a small child was impossible to sustain so eventually we went back to our apartment. The fees for our new flat in the city were due today – and it didn't matter. This is the moment that I realized that our future was uncertain. Hopeless, fear, loneliness and desperation took hold.

October 3<sup>rd</sup> was a beautiful, sunny day. It was spent fighting a fire caused by a grenade. Men tried to protect their houses and most women prepared for the escape. Most of our neighbors fled to the city of Dubrovnik as it was clear that places surrounding it, like Mokošica, were no longer safe. My family did not have anywhere to go in Dubrovnik so we stayed. Without food to eat or water to wash, hopeless and disappointed, I went to sleep, dreaming about a new sunny day without grenades and gunshots.

It was October 7<sup>th</sup> when a peaceful, quiet sky allowed us to leave our house and enjoy the day. After several minutes of fresh air we were drunk with the hope and excitement of a day without gunfire. And then a grenade fell several meters away from us, quickly sobering us to the situation at hand. The grenade hit the central community shelter. My father took me in his arms and we ran back into the apartment. In the state of shock, I couldn't speak for several minutes. My mother held me so tightly; I could hear her heartbeat and feel the fear in her shaking arms.

## **GENOCIDE AND OPPRESSION / TNP AUTUMN 2010**

After some time we were told that the grenade killed eight people - eight civilians standing in front of the shelter, similarly enticed by the sunny day. Their death spoke to the seriousness of the situation. It really was a war, a time when people lost their lives for no reason at all.

On October 8<sup>th</sup> we decided to leave Mokošica and go to the city anyway. Any option was better than staying and waiting to die. We were told that the bridge on the Ombla River might be safe to cross if we drove very fast and were lucky enough to escape the shots of snipers. We quickly packed, covered our car windows with blankets and drove as fast as we could, hoping to avoid bullets. We managed to get to Duro's one-room apartment on the ground floor. That night there were seven people in a 32-squared meter room, sleeping on one mattress and hoping tomorrow would arrive.

We awoke on October 10<sup>th</sup> to a quiet morning, so we went to the beach to take a bath. It was day 10 of imprisonment.

Six days later news came from our small battery operated transistor that women and children would be allowed to leave the city. Up to this point, almost every settlement around the city was blocked so it was impossible to leave Dubrovnik County. On October 18<sup>th</sup>, my mother and I took a boat to Split. We purchased only a one-way ticket, leaving my father and our past behind. We did not know if we would ever see him again. The goodbye was incredibly difficult; thousands of people were crying and praying to see their family members again.

We stayed with my grandmother in Gradac, a small town outside the city of Split. My father was left in occupied Dubrovnik, struggling for his life and the salvation of the city. From November 11<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> the bombing intensified and reports said Dubrovnik was hit from all sides from 7:00 until 18:00 every day. The news said the Herzegovinian army and soldier-volunteers from Trebinje were approaching

Dubrovnik with the intention to destroy it if citizens were not willing to surrender. It had only been two months before that they had promised they would not.

December 6<sup>th</sup> marked an open attack on the city and Fort Imperial on Srd hill. JNA aggressively bombed streets and monuments of Dubrovnik, destroying history and the lives of innocent civilians.

Aid convoys eventually arrived to occupied areas of the city. It was not much help, but rice and water means a lot when you don't have anything else. The city was on fire. Streets were in ruins, punctured by holes from grenades. The most beautiful street in Dubrovnik, Stradun, was destroyed.

After two months freezing in my grandmother's summerhouse in Gradac, my mother and I went to Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina in search of a safer place to stay. When the political condition became too dangerous even in Bosnia, we moved back to occupied Dubrovnik and were reunited with my father. It was a hard decision to make since people worried that the war would spread to Bosnia, but the situation in Dubrovnik was getting better and we hoped to be safer there.

The Yugoslavian National Army left Dubrovnik on 26 October 1992. The bombing in Trebinje (Herzegovina) continued until 1995. The war in Sarajevo began soon after we left.

### **A Search for Explanations**

Reasons to attack a cultural center, a city with no army or weapons, are not easily understood, especially when a clear mission for such a takeover has never been given.

Slobodan Milošević wanted to save the Serbian nation from being discriminated against once Franjo Tuđman gave Serbs minority status within Croatia. To correct this situation, he insisted on creating a Great Serbia, a country that would unite Serbs in and outside Yugoslavia. The presentation of this idea, despite its hidden meaning, was greatly supported by the public and also by the Montenegrin leadership. Holding public speeches, Milošević united with Montenegrin leaders and urged Serbs to do everything they could to keep their national identity and create a country of their own. This is what started the fight for territory.

There was a rumor that claimed 30,000 people in Dubrovnik had organized the Ustasha movement to attack the cities of Trebinje and Montenegro to take the area for Croatia. This false information motivated soldier-volunteers from Montenegro and Herzegovina to quickly mobilize and “counter-attack” Dubrovnik. This “threat” was also used by Serbs in Serbia, Montenegro and Herzegovina to rationalize the need to create a new country (the desired borders of which were Virovitica – Karlovac – Karlobag).

After the first day of attack, it was obvious that the citizens of Dubrovnik had no weapons, but the war continued regardless. Božidar Vučurević ordered his army to destroy the city that he would later make much “prettier and older.” This claim is famous for its absurdity and irony, which Vučurević used when talking about Dubrovnik and the ease with which he could take it over. It is unclear why he ordered the attack after ensuring he would not, but it is commonly believed that he considered Dubrovnik a threat to Trebinje. The army robbed and destroyed villages around the city, drove people from their homes, harassed and killed many and led those who showed resistance to camps Bileća (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and Morinje (Montenegro), run by the JNA to keep Croatian nationals away from the battlefield thus weakening city defense.

## GENOCIDE AND OPPRESSION / TNP AUTUMN 2010



Croatian War of Independence Memorial in Zagreb. Courtesy of Modzzak/Wikicommons.

The war officially ended with the military action “Storm” initiated by Franjo Tuđman, which resulted in taking back occupied cities in the north. Unfortunately, this did not mean a

return for refugees. Many people who lost their homes during the war are still trying to find a way back.

### Responsibility

It is difficult to assign blame for crimes during the war (1991-1995). Guilt can be placed on numerous people, who each had different goals and used the war to their advantage. Those who headed main operations were never punished. Milošević was accused of war crimes and sent to The Hague in 2001. He died in his cell in 2006 before his trial ended. Tuđman, the first Croatian president, was rumored to be involved in questionable activities but he was never charged. He died in 1999. In 2003, Vučurević, the mayor of Trebinje, was accused of destroying historical heritage in Croatia and Bosnia, expelling several thousand people and propagating ethnic cleansing in Trebinje. He is now free, living in Sarajevo and actively participating in political life.

During the war in Croatia, Montenegrin and Serbian media reported they had reason to attack due to provocations from the Croatian side. Some assumptions were simply absurd, such as the claimed appearance of Korean Kamikaze in Dubrovnik, waiting

to attack. Although now it is clear this was not the case, at the time people believed what they were told. In 2000, twelve generals who participated in the war signed a statement of apology for the false media representation of the Yugoslav war.

No matter how hard we try to find perpetrators or assign blame, we will never fully understand how such a thing could have happened. According to data from April 1997, over 12,000 people were killed during the war, over 3,000 people were forcibly removed, detained or disappeared, over 38,000 people were injured and over 20,000 were disabled. Almost 5,000 children were left without parents. Emotional scars are immeasurable. Children in schools across the territory of the former Yugoslavia are taught different histories. Society in former Yugoslavian republics is still divided by nationality and the ethnic hatred still exists; discrimination among different nationalities leaves little hope for a brighter future.

The series of wars in the former Yugoslavia brought nothing but sorrow, regret and injustice. Evaluating this tragedy and its consequences today leads me to one question: Was it worth it?

### **Suggested Further Reading:**

For more information on the Yugoslav War, visit the web page [www.domovinskirat.hr](http://www.domovinskirat.hr). It is multilingual and consists of video and audio materials, articles and stories of people who went through the horror of war. There are also many books written on this particular subject. I would recommend *The Demise of Yugoslavia*, by the former Croatian president Stjepan Mesić. This topic has also been explored and documented in numerous films. My personal recommendation is *War for Peace* by Koca Pavlović. The movie is made using real footage of the war. It evaluates Montenegrin involvement in the attack on Dubrovnik.

## **A Decade of Work: Roma in the EU**

Jacy Meyer\*

**The Roma are Europe's largest minority, with a population of an estimated 10-12 million. With concerns about integrating immigrants and the “failure” of multiculturalism making more recent news, the plight of the Roma, who are European Union (EU) citizens, seems to be an ongoing, but not acknowledged story.**

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Disturbing headlines often appear, but only when something truly extraordinary occurs. In July, France made worldwide news with its decision to send thousands of Roma back to Romania and Bulgaria because they didn't have residence permits. Despite an outcry from the European Union, the United Nations and others, the EU ended up suspending its case against France, saying the French government had made sufficient commitments to amend their immigration laws. The decision was met with dismay from many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) who believed the EU was too slow to react in the first place and have simply let France off the hook with their promise to change. France isn't the only country that has struggled to integrate Roma. This past July in Denmark, authorities expelled a group of people labeled “criminal Roma” by Copenhagen's lord mayor; in May 2008, Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi issued an emergency decree declaring the presence of “third country citizens and nomads” a crisis, and authorities began evicting Roma from their camps. The EU has been silent on both issues.

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Social exclusion, discriminatory attitudes, human rights violations and the continued economic crisis have put Roma in an increasingly disadvantaged position across Europe. But is anything being done about it? In fact, yes. But the EU, national and local governments and NGOs often struggle to get the assistance down to the local level where it is needed most.

“After the events in Italy and France, the European Union is paying attention to the Roma issue and is trying to find the best way to stimulate Member States,” said Tunde Buzetzky, facilitator of the Decade of Roma Inclusion Secretariat Foundation. Currently in its fifth year, the Decade of Roma Inclusion seeks to coordinate governments, NGOs and Romani civil society to work together to improve the welfare of Roma and review and track such progress in a quantifiable way.

The idea of such a “Decade” arose from a 2003 regional conference initiated by the Open Society Foundation and the World Bank, two institutions active in Central and Eastern Europe who could speak authoritatively on both the Roma's social and economic situation. Held in Hungary, “Roma in an Expanding Europe: Challenges for the Future” led the eight countries participating in the conference to sign a Declaration of the Decade of Roma Inclusion in 2005. Now, Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Macedonia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia and Spain – all countries with large Roma populations – are taking part. Each country prepared a Decade National Action Plan when they joined the initiative. Buzetzky says this serves as a “roadmap” for the implantation of programs as well as the development of policies. The Decade’s presidency rotates each year and the coordinator country also prepares a list of priorities. The Czech Republic currently holds the presidency through June 2011. Gabriela Hrabaňová is the director of the Office of the Government Council for

Roma Minority Affairs in the Czech Republic. She believes their proposed priorities will be a step forward for Roma communities.

“By collaborating with other European initiatives, we prompt fresh discourse re-emphasizing that the Roma belong to Europe and are fully accepted by European society,” she said. One of the Czech presidency’s priorities is the implementation of integration policies at the local level. Through this priority, the Decade hopes to motivate regional and municipal government bodies to find appropriate forms of cooperation between central and local



government and encourage the use of EU programs and funding that can result in actual improvements for their country’s own Roma populations.

Photo by Katarina Gajic as part of an online photography contest entitled *Chachipe Youth* (*Chachipe* means “truth” or “reality” in Romanes). Organized by the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015, the aims of Chachipe were to help combat visual stereotypes associated with Roma and to present Roma people and Roma culture sensitively and artistically.

One example she, and others, consider important is the European Commission proposal from this past May that allows Member States to now use European Regional Development Funds to help vulnerable groups such as Roma in the field of housing. Bernard Rorke is the Director of Research and International Advocacy for Roma Initiatives at the Open Society Foundation, which works to improve the lives of vulnerable people and promote human rights. Roma Initiatives is a specific

coordinating program that was created to collaborate with the Decade and empower and stimulate wider civic participation amongst Roma. He calls this initiative a “welcome step.”

“The EU endorsement of ‘explicit but not exclusive targeting for Roma’ made it possible for development funds to cover housing interventions in favor of marginalized communities, especially Roma,” he said. “The guiding principle of ‘explicit but not exclusive targeting’ needs to be extended to policy and funding interventions in education, health and employment to ensure that such measures actually make a difference in the slums and settlements for millions of Roma.”

The inclusion of NGOs like the Open Society in the Decade is crucial. They are often the ones on the ground, working directly with the Roma, and who see the progress, or lack of it, on a daily basis. However, the frustration of getting the help where it needs to go has been an ongoing problem that all groups involved have struggled to solve.

The Decade is focused on helping individual governments improve the Roma situation in their own countries. When the Czech Republic held the EU presidency in 2009, they proposed an “Integrated Platform for Roma Inclusion” based on results from the first EU Roma Summit in 2008. Among other things, it called on Member States to design concrete actions for ensuring Roma access to education, housing, health, justice and employment and make better use of EU funds set aside for Roma inclusion. EU funding is available for many programs that would assist Roma, but NGOs and at times even governments do not have the technical assistance and support to leverage the money in a sustainable way. Money is sometimes not used effectively, which can lead to an increased stigma – we try and help them, but the situation remains the same.

## **GENOCIDE AND OPPRESSION / TNP AUTUMN 2010**

The Platform also called on the European Commission (EC) to provide analytical support and promote cooperation between all parties concerned with Roma issues in the context of a European platform. Buzetzky says there is a strong advocacy in the EC and European Parliament that is supported by many groups, like the Decade, to start serious work on a European Roma Policy.

“It’s an ongoing process and far from the end,” Buzetzky continued. “In my opinion, the Roma issue is still very scattered among the different DGs (Directorate-General) of the EC. This should be centralized and better coordinated.”

Viviane Reding is Vice-President of the European Commission and Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship. She believes the EU and Member States have a joint responsibility for Roma inclusion.

“Within the European Commission we are committed to using all the tools we have to work with the national, regional and local levels – and of course Roma communities themselves – to improve Roma inclusion,” she said. “In April, we set out an ambitious policy program to help make policies for Roma inclusion more effective – in particular by making full use of EU funding available – and in September we established a Roma Taskforce including senior officials from all relevant Commission departments to analyze how EU countries are using EU funding and identify ways to improve the funds’ effectiveness.”

Rorke listed these actions as positive and reiterated the Open Society’s call for a pan-European Roma strategy to be endorsed at the EU level. “The Commission’s Communication in the wake of the 2nd EU Roma Summit in April 2010 marked the clearest declaration of intent to date,” he said. “It openly recognized the need for a coordinated and coherent policy response that is proportionate to the scale of the problem.” He added that even though the Open Society calls for a comprehensive

EU policy, they insist that the primary responsibility for the rights, security and well-being of Roma citizens lies with national governments.

### **Progress so far**

There appears to be progress at higher levels. However, information on whether or not such policies are being implemented and the measurement of the results of such policies is harder to come by. Buzetzy believes this is a gap that needs to be

#### Priorities of the Czech Republic's Presidency of the Decade of Roma Inclusion

1. Inclusive Education: Based on the policies of past Decade presidencies (Republic of Serbia -fight against discrimination in education; Slovakia- an integrated school system and multicultural education), the Czech Republic chose to focus on inclusive education, especially on evaluating methods for the collection of separate ethnic data to identify the academic results of Roma children.
2. Well-being and Rights of Children: Based on concerns about the living situations and the rights of children that should be reflected in all priority areas, this priority stresses the need to focus on the living situations in which Roma children in Europe find themselves. The Czech Presidency wants to stress the need for a safe environment in which children can receive the care necessary for their personal development and education. The Czech presidency realizes that Roma children face different challenges in different countries and they want to focus on the possibilities of increasing Roma children's educational opportunities and the opportunities for individual development in the current environment.
3. Roma Women: This priority focuses on a discourse on the emancipation of Roma women and on women as an important link in the shaping of integration concepts.
4. Implementation of Integration Policies at Local Level: Focusing on local and regional governments.
5. Media and the Image of the Roma: Media sensationalism and the sensitivity of issues presented by the media in connection with the Roma often form a generally negative media image of the Roma, which is then presented to general society. For the successful implementation of integration measures locally, it is necessary to promote a positive perception of these measures to society. For this reason, the Czech presidency aims to highlight ways of presenting Roma in the media and point out the pitfalls faced by Roma in the media.

addressed in the Decade's second half.

"Decade processes don't always reach regional and local structures, administrations and service providers; policy measures are often stuck on a local level," she said. "Also, governments mostly refer to the Decade when they communicate their initiatives but are less focused on results and real outcomes."

During the 2009 Macedonia presidency, Decade organizers visited each participating country, interviewed governments and NGOs involved and prepared a survey based on the information gathered. The study found that while all the partners are positive about the impact of the Decade, there was concern that progress was slow, the availability of data was not sufficient and there was no appropriate monitoring and evaluation system set up by the governments. Rorke believes there are a host of reasons for the disconnect between Brussels and the regions.

"Up until now the lack of coordination, the lack of political will, and a combination of inertia, indifference, and in some cases, plain ol' prejudice at local and national level account for the stalled progress on Roma inclusion," he said. "This translates into the failure of any substantive 'trickle down' of EU funding to promote social cohesion and combat poverty in a systemic fashion for Roma communities."

The Czech presidency priorities include implementing integration policies at the local level, focusing on local and regional government.

"The objective of the priority is to motivate regional and municipal government bodies to implement integration policies, to find appropriate forms of cooperation between central and local government and to obtain feedback," said Hrabaňová. Their plan is to address legislation affecting integration on a local level as well as focus on housing, education and social work.

## **GENOCIDE AND OPPRESSION / TNP AUTUMN 2010**

Rorke bemoans the lack of quantifiable data on Roma and governments' seeming inability or unwillingness to collect it. "If governments lack basic data they cannot devise effective targeted policies," he said. "A recent Open Society Foundation report, "No Data – No Progress," confirms our long-held assertion that the lack of disaggregated data is a major barrier to progress and weakens the impact of policies to promote equality and nondiscrimination."

Both Hrabaňová and Buzetzky point out that most of the Decade's successes have happened at an EU or national government level.

"The Decade is a reference point and a moving power behind government efforts," said Buzetzky. "Roma activists are involved in advisory and consultative bodies to the governments and DecadeWatch reports – joint surveys of Roma civil society organizations, published three times already – measure critical inputs of governments."

Reding said EU institutions have made available funding to support and complement Member States' actions on Roma integration and currently 12 of the 27 Member States have support programs in place for the Roma. She shared an example of a successful program in Spain called ACCEDER that through grassroots efforts helps Roma find jobs. In the program's ten-year history, more than 23,000 Roma have found work throughout the country. She believes improvement has been made, but more work is left to do.

The Open Society has created a program to do just that. Called "Making the Most of EU Funds for Roma," it strives to strengthen Roma inclusion on the local and European political level as well as use their expertise and involvement in different phases of project development and implementation. This involves a combination of technical assistance, monitoring project development, mentoring for Roma representatives involved in such initiatives and supporting access to EU funding for

NGOs and smaller municipalities involved in Roma projects. To date, the program has leveraged some six million euro in funding for more than 70 projects aimed at boosting Roma inclusion in Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania and Slovakia; an additional 11 million euro of projects are currently under evaluation by national authorities. Hundreds of Roma have been involved in the design and preparation of these projects, which targeted about 23,000 people. This is the kind of program that Commissioner Reding is particularly interested in – making sure all EU funding available to support Roma inclusion is used in the most effective way possible.

### **Moving forward**

Getting and keeping the Roma involved in projects aimed at improving their lives is a problem with which all the groups struggle. The Decade is adamant about a high level of Romani participation. Each Decade meeting contains one or two Roma activists from each country and Buzetzky says many of the government representatives are also Roma.

“Overall we can say that there is a good mixture of Roma and non-Roma in the Decade working for the same goal,” she said. “However, on a national level, the governments set up advisory bodies consisting of Roma civil society representatives. In some countries these bodies work well, in others the title is there only and the body is not functional.”

Rorke says that even though, thanks to funding in Roma NGOs, the number of Roma activists has greatly increased, it is still very small compared to the Roma population. He adds that the majority of Roma never even come into contact with other Roma in these positions and what’s needed is some grassroots work to bolster the civil society and educate Roma citizens on their right to vote.

## **GENOCIDE AND OPPRESSION / TNP AUTUMN 2010**

“Until Roma communities have the political weight commensurate with their numbers, governments and political parties will continue in their neglect and refuse to address the issue with any sense of seriousness, and wider public contempt for Roma will remain undiminished,” he said. He shares an example of a voter registration campaign recently held in Serbia. Open Society, Roma NGOs and 120 grassroots activists held public meetings and went door-to-door to promote voting and active citizenship. The result was that 44,000 Roma registered to vote in the June 2010 elections for the Roma National Council.

Buzetzy believes a very difficult aspect of the problem is that Roma themselves have to “break the wall.”

“People who are hungry and have no access to basic utilities can concentrate on survival only,” she said. “Communities on a local level should be strengthened to be able to stand up and fight for their own rights and place in the society.” She adds that the Open Society is a great help in this area, but more remains to be done.

Ms. Reding concurs, stating that the Roma have a joint responsibility to work together to improve the situation. “National, regional and local government have the main role in actually spending EU funds on specific projects and making sure they are successfully used on the ground,” she said. “On the other hand, the EU has an important role in coordinating these efforts and in helping share good practices so that different cities, regions and countries can learn from one another's experiences.”

Buzetzy believes a shift in attitude would do a lot for forward movement.

“A changing of attitude is the most critical issue in terms of real change,” she said. “Governments should recognize that to pretend to do something, run some programs, is not enough. Complex and highly professional work is necessary to tackle the existing issues [as well as] a long term commitment that is not limited to election periods.”

## **GENOCIDE AND OPPRESSION / TNP AUTUMN 2010**

It's a big task, but the work that the Decade has begun is a starting point for a full European Roma policy. The groundwork has been laid, what is and is not working has been explored and the importance of coordination and cooperation between NGOs and the EU has been established. Long term initiatives with a goal of sustaining social dialogue, concerned involvement of all parties and direct investment to strengthen the civil sector will ensure these measures direct permanent change.



Photo by Kummer János. In November 2008, the Open Society Institute and OSA Archivum announced an online photography contest entitled *Chachipe Youth*. Held under the Decade of Roma Inclusion 2005–2015, the contest was open to young people between the ages of 12 and 25 who had taken photos about Roma life since the beginning of 2005 in countries participating in the Decade. More than 1,400 photos were submitted for judging, and the international jury selected winners in eight categories and awarded special prizes to two younger photographers. In addition to the winning photos, the exhibition features a selection of 88 photographs entered in the contest. More photos can be found at the [Chachipe website](#).

## America as the New “Great Satan”

Petr Pelikán\*

“Without exception, all Arab nationalists, irrespective of class, realized that the path to their holy and highly righteous aim is obscured by one powerful enemy, which may take any shape or form. This horrid enemy, which is responsible for the blood of thousands of men; which ordered entire Arab territories, blossoming towns and villages to be plundered, burned and destroyed; which dragged tens of thousands of Arab nationalists into concentration camps on remote islands. This horrid enemy hates anything Arab and turned some parts of Palestine, Syria, Jordan, Iraq and other Arab lands into desolate graveyards of nameless Arab freedom fighters. This enemy was and is merciless, egoistic, bloody capitalism. Whether it was represented by the colorful English flag, French *tricolore*, or the Jewish Star of David, it was always the same, with the same malignant accompanying factors. All Arab nationalists knew that the sun of their freedom and independence is obscured only by Great Britain, France and their real masters – the Jews of the world, who wish to make history and who have made it until recently”<sup>1</sup> (March 1943, the Czech inter-war Muslim Council, Hadji Mohamed Abdullah Brikcius).

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It may seem that Brikcius’ views during the war were merely the words of a nationalist. However, when defining the enemies of Islam, he does not differ much from the views dominating the fundamentalist Islamic world at that time. Aside from traditional colonial powers, France and Great Britain, fundamentalist Islam also considered imperial Russia (or its godless successor – the Soviet Union)

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<sup>1</sup> M. A. Brikcius, *Iraq – The Land of Revenge*, Prague 1943.

expanding into Central Asia as one of its major enemies. Though Jews have lived in Islamic states as an integrated minority for hundreds of years, they took first place on the list of adversaries only because of Zionist activities in Palestine. On the other hand, there are practically no negative comments about the United States in Muslim sources from before World War II. For a long time the Islamic world considered the United States its natural ally; a religiously tolerant counterbalance to the European Crusaders, which was not involved in Islamic territory in any way and was never expected to be in the future. This view changed drastically only after World War II. How is it possible that the United States so quickly became a symbol of everything anti-Islamic? How is it possible that the hatred towards the USA in the world of Muslim extremists completely overshadowed the centuries-old antagonisms towards Christian Europe and modern European colonial powers? How is it possible that, symbolically, the United States has monopolized the role of the Great Satan?

The simplest explanation is the disintegration of the colonial order. As Islamic states gradually achieved independence, relations with Europe improved and today some Muslims from the former colonies even feel a certain sense of nostalgia towards Britain or France. Since the traditional enemies disappeared, the jihadists had to look for a new adversary. For many, the logical choice was the only leftover Western superpower. When the USA succeeded in eliminating the Soviet Union as a power alternative in the developing world, it had to assume “all its sins,” as perceived by Muslim extremists, and accept the role of the only “Great Satan.”

Another obvious factor is the close relationship between the USA and the Zionists and the state of Israel. Israel could hardly have been established without intensive American support and it could certainly not have survived and prospered without it. Jihadists despise the United States for this, because the existence of Israel is an indelible disgrace and injustice in their eyes. However, there are other less obvious

but highly significant factors why the United States has become the major enemy of religion in the eyes of Muslim extremists.

One of those factors is the incompatibility of the social consciousness in the Islamic world and America, especially in the last few decades. Fundamentalist Muslim society is in its essence static, though it is a matter of subjective evaluation whether we consider this stagnation as a positive sign of stability or a negative sign of conservatism impeding progress.

The values on which Islam is built are considered eternal. The concept of cultural development in fundamentalist Islam stems from the belief that the pinnacle of human development, the “golden age,” was during the time of the prophet Muhammad. The perfection of the golden age cannot be repeated again, because Muhammad was the last man to have an immediate connection with God and he transferred this “holy imprint” on the society as a whole. Though it is not possible to equal this ideal, society should strive to come as close to it as possible. Each individual, as well as the whole of society, is expected to meticulously adhere to the values set during the prophet years. This is expressed repeatedly in various forms in the binding Muslim texts – the Koran and the Sunnah. For example, one of Muhammad’s statements gives this instruction: “Those of you, who will live, will see much diversity. You must keep my traditions and the traditions of my successors, who will be taking the right path and leading righteously. Stick resolutely to the traditions and do not try innovations. Every innovation will only lead you astray.”<sup>2</sup> In another tradition Prophet Muhammad says: “The best tale is Allah’s Word and the best guidance is Muhammad’s guidance. Let Allah bless him

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<sup>2</sup> Gardens of the Righteous, Prague 2008

and grace him with peace. The worst is to introduce novelties, because every novelty will only lead you astray.”<sup>3</sup>

This emphasis on conservatism is necessarily at odds with the almost manic dynamism of American culture. Even Europeans often perceive the changes of American values as too abrupt and do not appreciate their on-line transmission to the Old World. In less than a generation, American attitudes have changed towards many socially sensitive topics such as homosexuality, alcoholism and racism. It is very hard to predict the next developmental step. When it comes to fundamentalist Islam, the collision of such diametrically different dynamics of social consciousness must obviously lead to much larger and principally unsolvable clashes than the clashes that sometimes occurred with the relatively consistent European colonizers. Before the Muslim social inertia even begins to realize in which direction it is being pushed by today’s only cultural superpower, the conditions are changing again. It is impossible to reach a *modus vivendi* acceptable to both sides.

During the first Gulf War, I was at first surprised that the Saudi officers treated their American counterparts with grudging respect by comparison with the uncompromising way they treated us. The Wahhabi monarchy still considered Czechoslovakia a part of the Soviet Bloc and did not even allow for a standard telephone connection with the rest of Eastern Europe for fear of moral infection. However, our tiny contingent tried very hard not to clash with local customs and the Saudis eventually did not see us as a threat. On the other hand, many of the hundreds of thousands of Americans all across the country disregarded local sacred rules with subconscious insolence. Within a few months the Saudi gratitude for protection against the impeding aggression changed to humiliation. Suddenly the Saudis had to

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<sup>3</sup> Gardens of the Righteous, Prague 2008

## **GENOCIDE AND OPPRESSION / TNP AUTUMN 2010**

come to terms with uncovered women driving cars, and the consumption of alcohol and pork. Even one of the most fundamental taboos, punishable by death in the land of the two holy cities, Mecca and Medina, was broken when Americans held a church service in a religion other than Islam.

I believe it is not coincidental than ten years after the massive presence of Americans in Saudi Arabia, the vast majority of people conducting Islamist terrorist acts against the USA are Saudi citizens.

Even though the United States is the embodiment of evil for Muslim extremists, the number of Muslims living in the USA, as well as in Europe, is on the rise. In Europe the numbers of converts are, in comparison with Muslim immigrants and their offspring, marginal and new European Muslims also generally adopt Arab culture together with Islam. This is a noteworthy difference in this respect in the USA. The majority of converts to Islam in the United States are African-Americans who have adopted the religion as an expression of Black Nationalism. This branch of Islam is often more strongly associated with the Maoist Black Panther movement of the 1960s than with the more traditional religion practiced elsewhere in the world. African-Americans converting to Islam are usually members of the lower class and often project their way of life and sub-culture into the religion. According to some sources, the most common place for conversion to Islam in the USA is a penal institution.

The Nation of Islam has become almost fashionable and seems to have been used by some African-Americans as a marketing tool for succeeding in show business. Cassius Clay, Michael Jackson and Mike Tyson all converted to Islam at some point without having any spiritual direction, let alone changing their way of life. Their overseas Muslim co-believers view this branch of Islam with confusion. Even

though they cannot, for tactical reasons, refer to it as heresy, they cannot ask it for assistance or support either. The support of Libyan leader al-Kaddafi for the Nation of Islam representative Louis Farrakhan was perhaps the most prominent instance of cooperation, however it resulted in nothing worth writing about.

The larger group of Muslims in America, as well as in Europe, consists of immigrants. The United States takes pride in being able to absorb any culture in its legendary melting pot and transform it into an organic part of the freest society in the world. Officially, they perceive their Muslim minority in the same way. While in Europe governments try to rectify the escalating tensions through careful attempts to prohibit the covering of women or referenda about the construction of minarets, no similar attempts have been made in the USA. On the other hand, protests against the proposed construction of an Islamic center close to the destroyed World Trade Center, a Christian pastor planning to publicly burn the Koran, or an army psychologist from a second generation Muslim immigrant family massacring soldiers on an army base, indicate that the relations with the Muslim community are not so idyllic in the United States.

Americans need time to learn from their own mistakes. The attempt to abruptly change the values of about one billion people is extremely dangerous. It is hypocritical to pretend to have respect for Islamic values and claim that they have equal rights in a non-Muslim society. It is not so and it cannot be so. The values are simply too different. Similarly, it is also risky to entertain false hopes that fundamentalist Muslims, who have been creating their identity for almost one and a half thousand years, will abandon it.

## **Targeting Terror**

**William A. Cohn\***

**If, as FDR said, “the only thing we have to fear is fear itself,” why are we constantly being told there’s so much to fear? What is the aim and impact of anti-terrorism policy? Events since 9/11 have raised questions about law, culture, religion, politics and militarism. Do we best combat terrorism by military might? law enforcement? intelligence? diplomacy? shared prosperity? a combination of these? Why have the U.S. and NATO focused so heavily on a military response? Is the purported clash of civilizations real? pretextual? manufactured?**

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Twenty-three percent of the world population, more than 1.5 billion people, is Muslim, with Islam being the primary religion in North Africa, the Middle East, and large swaths of Asia.<sup>1</sup> The areas where Islam predominates also happen to be home to many of the world’s poorest people, and to natural resources valued by industrial countries. The post-9/11 escalation of war and militarism has taken a heavy toll on humanity. More than a million lives have been lost fighting wars in Iraq and Afghanistan since October 2001, the vast majority of which have been Muslims living in those countries. Recent reports suggest that the sectarian bloodbath in Iraq has been part of covert U.S. policy.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See the October 2009 study by the Pew Research Center “Mapping the Global Muslim Population,” available at <http://pewforum.org/Mapping-the-Global-Muslim-Population.aspx>

<sup>2</sup>See: Gareth Porter, “Torture orders were part of U.S. sectarian war strategy,” November 1, 2010, Inter Press Service, available at <http://www.commondreams.org/headline/2010/11/01-6>; Martin

### **War mentality**

The post-9/11 U.S.-led global war on terror (GWOT) has been reframed by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) as a worldwide armed conflict with al-Qaeda, the Taliban and associated forces. Still, the campaign prioritizes military action; thus GWOT remains an apt description of policy – even if the British government has disavowed this name and the Obama administration has rebranded it as “Overseas Contingency Operations.”

In GWOT the criminal justice response to acts of terrorism has given way to a military approach. The Bush administration’s decision to cast 9/11 as an act of war rather than a criminal act has had dire consequences. It provided the rationale for the many measures which have weakened individual rights and strengthened the powers of the national security state. Corruption, mayhem, fear and carnage have ensued as transparency and accountability have been eroded.

The past nine years have seen a major expansion of the concept of armed conflict, stretching it to cover violent criminal acts such as terrorism. The transitory U.S. military rules of engagement are far more permissive of killing than human rights law or a state’s domestic law, providing the basis to justify assassinations of alleged terrorists and the killing of civilians in combat zones, and prompting the Director-General of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) to ask whether international humanitarian law – regulating the conduct of hostilities and the protection of persons during armed conflict – was still relevant. The Bush administration’s GWOT approach was premised on the notion that the U.S. is at war with al-Qaeda and international terrorism in general, rather than targeting the people who commit acts of horrifying political violence as criminals to be captured and

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Chulov, “Iraq War Logs: ‘The U.S. was part of the Wolf Brigades operation against us,’ *The Guardian*, October 28, 2010, available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/oct/28/iraq-war-logs-iraq>

## **GENOCIDE AND OPPRESSION / TNP AUTUMN 2010**

prosecuted. Secret prisons in Romania, outsourcing torture to Syria, drone strikes in Yemen, illegal wiretapping, and the indefinite detention of prisoners at Guantánamo all rest upon a war paradigm. The Obama administration has reformed but not rejected this construct.<sup>3</sup> President Obama stated in early 2010 “Our nation is at war.” The success the legal system has had in dealing with criminal acts of terror has been disregarded.<sup>4</sup> Established principles of the legitimate basis for and conduct of war have also been discarded.<sup>5</sup>

The construct of a war without end against a nebulous enemy has grave historical implications. Emergency war powers end when the war ends. When do emergency powers end in GWOT? Because terrorism is not aligned with particular states or governments, against which war may be declared, or which could be defeated and have its representatives sign peace accords, such a “war” can never be won, and therefore carries the very-real prospect of perpetual war. In the words of James Madison, “Of all the enemies to public liberty war is, perhaps, the most to be dreaded, because it comprises and develops the germs of every other... In war too, the discretionary power of the executive is extended... and all the means of seducing

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<sup>3</sup> The Center for Constitutional Rights conducted an April 1, 2010 assessment of Obama’s record on GWOT issues (<http://ccrjustice.org/obamas-record>) taking issue with ongoing: abuse of executive authority; ghost detentions; material support convictions; indefinite detention of suspects at Guantánamo and elsewhere; habeas corpus denial; renditions; violation of individual civil liberties; lack of accountability for past crimes; abuse of the state secrets privilege; and human rights abuse by military contractors.

<sup>4</sup> See *In Pursuit of Justice: Prosecuting Terrorism Cases in the Federal Courts*, A White Paper prepared by a team of experienced law enforcement lawyers headed by two former U.S. Attorneys on behalf of Human Rights First in 2008. They conclude that “the existing criminal justice system is an established institution that has generally done a good job in handling international terrorism cases. . . it has proved to be adaptable and has successfully handled a large number of important and challenging terrorism prosecutions over the past 15 years without sacrificing national security interests or rigorous standards of fairness and due process.” Page 129 of the Report, available in its entirety at <http://www.humanrightsfirst.org/pdf/080521-USLS-pursuit-justice.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> As discussed herein, e.g.: “The Bush Doctrine,” indefinite incommunicado detention, torture, kidnapping, denial of Geneva and Hague Convention status review protocols.

the minds, are added to those of subduing the force, of the people. No nation could preserve its freedom in the midst of continual war.”<sup>6</sup>

### Lawless and brutal

The international legal community has condemned state-sanctioned indefinite—and sometimes incommunicado—detention of terror suspects, extrajudicial abductions, secret prisons and torture. The Bush administration violated law governing the initiation<sup>7</sup> and conduct of war, maintaining that GWOT could not be restrained by

An Iraqi man is consoled by friends at the scene of a car bomb attack in front of a Syrian Catholic Church, in Baghdad, Iraq, Monday, Nov. 1, 2010. (AP Photo/Hadi Mizban) Courtesy of ČTK Fotobanka



<sup>6</sup> Quoted in “What America Lost,” by Fareed Zakaria, *Newsweek*, September 13, 2010, p.8. On ‘seducing the minds’ see David Barstow’s Pulitzer Prize report “Behind TV Analysts, Pentagon’s Hidden Hand,” *NYT*, April 20, 2008. On the implications of the endless war paradigm see the writings of Andrew Bacevich, including his most recent book (*Washington Rules: America’s Path to Permanent War*, Macmillan, 2010).

<sup>7</sup> The Bush Doctrine, used in Iraq, of ‘taking the battle to the enemy’ violates the UN Charter which prohibits the use of international force unless in self-defense or via Security Council authorization. It would enable China to invade Taiwan and India to invade Kashmir. See: Scott Horton, “Kriegsraison or Military Necessity? The Bush Administration’s Wilhelmine Attitude Towards the Conduct of War,” 30 *Fordham Int’l L.J.* 576 (2006-2007); Marcel Kaba, “Targeting the World: Assessing the lawfulness of the Bush Doctrine” *The New Presence*, Spring 2009.

## **GENOCIDE AND OPPRESSION / TNP AUTUMN 2010**

international law, and portraying the Geneva Conventions as irrelevant and international organizations as appeasers of evil. It also violated the Nuremberg Principles, which state that war crimes, “punishable as crimes under international law” encompass “violations of the laws or customs of war which include . . . murder or ill-treatment of prisoners of war.” U.S. violations of prisoners’ rights have been documented at Abu Ghraib, Bagram, Guantánamo and elsewhere.

Bush held that “unlawful enemy combatants” are not entitled to the protections of international humanitarian law because they allegedly pose an unconventional threat in an ongoing war – a contention firmly rejected by the United Nations, European Union, jurists and legal scholars. As then-U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan told the BBC in 2006, by U.S. logic prisoners at Guantánamo could be held in perpetuity without charge. The same “logic” applies to “the battlefield,” which in GWOT may be anywhere in the world.<sup>8</sup>

On September 16, 2001, Vice-President Cheney said of the U.S.: “We have to work the dark side, if you will. Spend time in the shadows of the intelligence world.” In 2004, the International Committee of the Red Cross report found that some 90 percent of Iraqi detainees were mistakenly arrested and that inmates were routinely mistreated by being kept naked in totally dark, empty cells, subjected to brutality, humiliation, threats of imminent execution and other abuses “tantamount to torture [and] used by the military intelligence in a systematic way to gain confessions.”<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> The May 31, 2010 *New York Times* editorial (Backwards at Bagram) addresses the evisceration of the right of habeas corpus [Habeas Corpus (Latin for “you have the body”) affords a prisoner the right to appear before a judge or magistrate to determine whether the government has the right to continue to detain him] as courts have deferred to executive branches creation of law-free zones. The editorial condemns a federal appeals court ruling that a detainee captured outside of Afghanistan, far from any battlefield, and then shipped to Bagram to be held indefinitely, has no right of habeas corpus. The court reasoned that such right would “hamper the war effort.”

<sup>9</sup> ICRC report available at <http://cryptome.org/icrc-report.htm> ; See also “Most Arrested by Mistake,” May 11, 2004 *Los Angeles Times*, available at <http://www.commondreams.org/headlines04/0511-04.htm> In 2005, Human Rights Watch reported that the U.S. has raised the use of torture to a “serious policy option” as abuse of detainees has become a “deliberate, central part of the Bush

## **GENOCIDE AND OPPRESSION / TNP AUTUMN 2010**

Following 9/11, some U.S. officials cast law as a weapon of the enemy.<sup>10</sup> The U.S. turned the rule of law on its head - linking judicial processes with terrorism, and ignoring the role it played in shaping the norms and institutions it now denigrated. Why?

### **Visions of Empire**

GWOT enabled government secrecy and muzzling of dissent. Casting 9/11 as an act of war served the ensuing bunker mentality – marked by a rapid series of executive orders, and steamrolling legislation through a pliant Congress. On the streets, GWOT entailed police harassment and unlawful detention of scores of citizens based merely on their name, national origin and appearance – thus constituting unlawful Muslim profiling.<sup>11</sup>

GWOT tactics transcend administrations. Bush-Cheney's policy of kidnapping suspected terrorists was enabled by executive orders from the Clinton presidency. Today, Obama's crackdown on whistleblowers and condemnation of Wikileaks abets executive secrecy. Despite his lofty prose in Cairo, the targeting of Muslims

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Administration's strategy for interrogating terrorist suspects." HRW report available at [www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org) and at <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/articles/A33349-2005Jan24.html>

<sup>10</sup> Former U.S. Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff accused IGO's of using international law (IL) "as a rhetorical weapon against us." The Pentagon's 2005 National Defense Strategy also views IL as a threat to the US: "Our strength as a nation will continue to be challenged by those who employ a *strategy of the weak using international fora, judicial processes and terrorism.*"

<sup>11</sup> See the Human Rights Watch and ACLU report *Witness to Abuse: Human Rights Abuses Under the Material Witness Law Since September 11, 2001*, available at <http://www.aclu.org/national-security/us-scores-muslim-men-jailed-without-charge> On October 18, 2010 the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear former attorney general John Ashcroft's appeal of a Ninth Circuit ruling that Abdullah al-Kidd may proceed with his lawsuit against Mr. Ashcroft. Al-Kidd alleged that he was a victim of the abusive use of the material witness law which Mr. Ashcroft used as a means of unlawful preventive detention. See: "Justices to hear appeal over liability for detention," by Adam Liptak, available at [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/19/us/19scotus.html?\\_r=1&scp=2&sq=Ashcroft&st=cse](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/19/us/19scotus.html?_r=1&scp=2&sq=Ashcroft&st=cse); and, the Times' October 24 editorial discussing the case, "An Indefensible Defense," available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/25/opinion/25mon1.html>

continues under Obama, including the expanded use of assassinations of suspected terrorists via drone missile strikes. Bob Woodward's new book *Obama's Wars* strikingly reveals the degree to which the President has had to battle his own generals over U.S. policy in Afghanistan. Although the Constitution calls for civilian control over the military, the Pentagon holds power over the President.

Scholars Chalmers Johnson and Andrew Bacevich argue that U.S. militarism aims to build an American empire.<sup>12</sup> History teaches that with empire comes carnage. Bacevich notes that during the Cold War era, from 1945 to 1988, there were only six large-scale U.S. military actions, but that since the fall of the Berlin Wall they have become almost annual events. Bacevich urges Europe to take control of NATO to stop America's attempted conversion of it from a defense alliance into an instrument of power projection.<sup>13</sup>

Though the reported number of US military bases in the world varies from the Pentagon's official count of 865, to more than 1,350 according to other sources, there is no doubt that this represents by far the largest collection of bases in world history. The US Pentagon budget has increased each year of the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, an unprecedented run in the country's history. Is this a permanent war budget? Is the U.S. department of defense more aptly, as it was called until 1947, the department of war?

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<sup>12</sup> Chalmers Johnson is a UC professor emeritus and Korean War veteran. Andrew Bacevich is professor of international relations at Brown University and a retired career U.S. Army officer. See Chalmers Johnson, Trilogy: *Blowback* (2000); *The Sorrows of Empire* (2004); *Nemesis* New York: Henry Holt: (2006). See Andrew Bacevich: *The New American Militarism: How Americans are Seduced by War*. Oxford Univ. Press (2005); *The Limits of Power: The End of American Exceptionalism*, New York: Metropolitan Books (2009)

<sup>13</sup> See *Foreign Policy* (March/April 2010) "Let Europe Be Europe," by Andrew Bacevich, who notes that the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe is today and has always been a U.S. general. Bacevich contends that Europe underwrites America's global ambitions without having a real say on policy. Chalmers Johnson dates back to 1949 what he calls the US "military Keynesianism – the determination to maintain a permanent war economy and to treat military output as an ordinary economic product, even though it makes no contribution to either production or consumption."

### Secret government

In his 1961 farewell address, President Eisenhower warned of the growing influence of the “military-industrial complex” – an alliance of military, economic and political interests with “unwarranted influence” on American government.<sup>14</sup> GWOT has enabled a military-security contractor complex. The rise of private contractors and their influence on public officials has created a government within the government – one shrouded in secrecy, which is beginning to come to light.

In July 2010 *The Washington Post* published articles detailing the size and character of the vastly expanded and transformed American national security operations post-9/11.<sup>15</sup> According to *The Post*, “The top-secret world the government created in response to the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, has become so large, so unwieldy and so secretive that no one knows how much money it costs, how many people it employs, how many programs exist within it or exactly how many agencies do the same work.”

Lawyer columnist Glenn Greenwald writes, “Most of what the U.S. government does of any significance – literally – occurs behind a vast wall of secrecy, completely unknown to the citizenry. . . . we have become a militarized nation living under an omnipotent, self-perpetuating, bankrupting National Security State.”

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<sup>14</sup> Eisenhower warned the American people, “We have been compelled to create a permanent armaments industry of vast proportions.... The potential for the disastrous rise of misplaced power exists and will persist.” Recent history suggests Eisenhower’s prescience. Consider, for example, the role of the aerospace industry in the massive public spending on missile defense, or the role of defense contractors and the influence of the Project for a New American Century (PNAC), the think-tank whose Rebuilding America’s Defenses white paper became a blueprint for defense spending in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

<sup>15</sup> *The Post’s* Top Secret America reporting documents the existence of more than 1,250 government agencies and 1,930 private companies working on security-oriented programs at some 10,000 sites throughout the U.S. An estimated 854,000 people have top-secret security clearance, 265,000 of whom are employees not of the government but of private, profit-making businesses. <http://projects.washingtonpost.com/top-secret-america/>

Greenwald notes that close to 50 percent of all U.S. tax revenue now goes to military and intelligence spending.<sup>16</sup>

Private contractors now comprise 69 percent of the Pentagon's workforce in Afghanistan, the highest ratio of contractors to military personnel in US history.<sup>17</sup> Secretary of Defense Gates confessed, "I can't even get a number on how many contractors work for the Office of the Secretary of Defense."<sup>18</sup> The line between legitimate and illegitimate use of force in war zones has been made murky.<sup>19</sup> As noted in the October 9 *New York Times* editorial ("Lethal Force Under Law"), "The Obama administration has sharply expanded the shadow war against [alleged] terrorists, using both the military and the C.I.A. to track down and kill hundreds of them, in a dozen countries, on and off the battlefield." Secrecy abets the lawless use of force.

### **Evidence of Failure of the GWOT**

Have kidnapping, torture, secrecy, war and other measures purportedly aimed at fighting terrorism made us safer? Kishore Mahbubani argues that GWOT's unethical

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<sup>16</sup> [http://www.salon.com/news/opinion/glenn\\_greenwald/2010/07/19/secrecy](http://www.salon.com/news/opinion/glenn_greenwald/2010/07/19/secrecy)

<sup>17</sup> <http://www.alternet.org/story/144694/> The private contractor Blackwater spearheaded a secret C.I.A. assassination program, partook in frequent C.I.A. bombings in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and was privy to information deemed too sensitive for Congress. A U.N. official said that the American drone attacks in Pakistan and Afghanistan may constitute indiscriminate killing in violation of international law. U.N. investigator Philip Alston said "the Central Intelligence Agency is running a program that is killing significant numbers of people and there is absolutely no accountability in terms of the relevant international law." Quoted in *U.S. Use of Drones Queried by U.N.*, *NYT*, Oct. 28, 2009, at A17, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/10/28/world/28nations.html>.

<sup>18</sup> See [Washington Post](#) article, "Top Secret America" and James Glancy, "[Use of contractors added to war's chaos in Iraq](#)," *The New York Times*, October 23, 2010.

<sup>19</sup> Alison Stanger, *One Nation Under Contract: The Outsourcing of American Power and the Future of Foreign Policy* (Yale University Press, 2009). The U.S. rationale for declaring enemy fighters in Afghanistan "unlawful enemy combatants" was that they did not wear uniforms, carry their arms openly or follow a recognized chain of command. But of course the same is true for the contractors who comprise an ever-larger portion of the U.S. fighting force throughout the world.

## **GENOCIDE AND OPPRESSION / TNP AUTUMN 2010**

and unlawful practices serve as a powerful recruiting tool for terrorists.<sup>20</sup> Similar findings were made by scholars at the Rand Corporation, a nonpartisan policy research institute, who conducted a comprehensive study on the topic.<sup>21</sup>

As for the avowed goal of GWOT (to weaken militant jihadists), the military approach is in disarray. September 2010 became the deadliest year for NATO forces in the Afghan war which began in 2001. The wars have failed in their stated aim to establish stable governance with the Iraqi and Afghan governments in fracture. After more than 9 years of GWOT, the trend is further deterioration: “Even as more U.S. troops flow into Afghanistan, the country is more dangerous than it has ever been during the war... The number of insurgent attacks has increased significantly.”<sup>22</sup>

Officials report an ever-increasing terrorist threat since 2001, with the key U.S. intelligence agencies finding that the presence of U.S. armed forces in foreign land is a magnet for insurgents.<sup>23</sup> The Rand Corporation reached similar conclusions in

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<sup>20</sup> Mahbubani, dean of the school of public policy at the National University of Singapore, writes of Asia’s loss of respect for Western practices: “Few in the West understand how much shock Guantánamo has caused in non-Western minds. Hence, many are puzzled that Western intellectuals continue to assume that they can portray themselves and their countries as models to follow when they speak to the rest of the world on human rights.” End of Whose History? IHT, November 12, 2009.

<sup>21</sup> *How Terrorists Groups End: Lessons for countering al Qaida* (2008) by Seth Jones and Martin Libicki, drew its conclusion that GWOT was failing by means of an examination of 648 terror groups that existed between 1968 and 2006. In conclusion at p.139 the authors note that “making a world of enemies is never a winning strategy.”

<sup>22</sup> “Afghanistan growing more dangerous” *International Herald Tribune*, September 13, 2010, page 1, continues: “In August 2009, insurgents carried out 630 attacks. This August, they initiated at least 1,353... ‘The humanitarian space is shrinking day by day’ said Abdul Kebar, a CARE Afghanistan official... [there is] increased activity of the Taliban in areas where they were seldom seen before... the Taliban and their insurgent allies have degraded security in almost every part of the country... Four years ago, the insurgents were active in only four provinces. Now they are active in 33 or 34.”

<sup>23</sup> The 2006 National Intelligence Estimate (NIE), the cumulative assessment of all U.S. intelligence agencies, concluded that rather than improving its national security, the tactics used in GWOT have created a recruitment vehicle for violent Islamic extremists and motivated a new generation of potential terrorists. The Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) reached the same conclusion: According to U.S. officials quoted in *The New York Times*, in May 2005, the CIA reported that “Iraq has become a magnet for Islamic militants similar to Soviet-occupied Afghanistan two decades ago and Bosnia in the 1990s.” The CIA concluded that “Iraq may prove to be an even more effective training ground for Islamic extremists than Afghanistan was in al Qaeda’s early days.” See Rami Khouri, *A Bad Decade*,

## **GENOCIDE AND OPPRESSION / TNP AUTUMN 2010**

2008. Obama administration officials testified to Congress on September 22, 2010 that the threat of terrorism is spreading, with Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano reporting that the U.S. was confronting “more diverse activity” as al-Qaeda had inspired an array of terror groups.<sup>24</sup> A 2005 Chatham House study concluded “there is ‘no doubt’ that the invasion of Iraq has ‘given a boost to the al Qaeda network’ in propaganda, recruitment and fundraising,’ while providing an ideal training area for terrorists.” As the Rand study concludes, “making a world of enemies is never a winning strategy.”

University of Chicago political scientist Robert Pape finds that al-Qaeda style terror is “less a product of Islamic fundamentalism than of a simple strategic goal: to compel the U.S. and its Western allies to withdraw combat forces from the Arabian Peninsula and other Muslim countries.”<sup>25</sup> Osama bin Laden turned against the U.S. in 1991 because he saw it as occupying the holiest Arab land in Saudi Arabia. Former-CIA anti-terror expert Michael Scheuer, writes, “U.S. forces and policies are completing the radicalization of the Islamic world...it is fair to conclude that the United States of America remains bin Laden’s only indispensable ally.” Noam Chomsky argues that if we apply the approach used in law – of relying on predictable outcomes as evidence of intent – then we may conclude that the declared goals of GWOT are not the real ones.<sup>26</sup>

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NYT, 12-30-09 on the negative impacts of the past decade on the Middle East, and the rising clout of Iran, and his 6-30-10 NYT op-ed.

<sup>24</sup> National Counterterrorism Center (NCC) Director Michael Leiter, and FBI Director Robert Mueller told the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee that the threat of al-Qaeda using Americans and other Western nationals to attack the US has grown, noting that at least 63 US citizens have been charged or convicted of terrorist acts or related crimes since 2009. Home grown plots have reached their highest level since 9/11 according to NCC. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-11392083>

<sup>25</sup> <http://www.nytimes.com/2005/07/09/opinion/09page.html>

<sup>26</sup> Available: [http://www.erich-fromm.de/biophil/joomla/images/stories/pdf-Dateien/Preis\\_2010\\_031.pdf](http://www.erich-fromm.de/biophil/joomla/images/stories/pdf-Dateien/Preis_2010_031.pdf)

## GENOCIDE AND OPPRESSION / TNP AUTUMN 2010

War is costly – in many ways. The secret war documents published in 2010 by WikiLeaks provide first-hand accounts painting a grim portrait of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.<sup>27</sup> These documents inject a dose of reality, countering the sanitized narrative used by officials and parroted by the media. They cut through euphemisms like “collateral damage,” revealing the carnage of these wars. The October 24, 2010 UK *Sunday Observer* editorial (A Moral Catastrophe: The Final Reasons for Going to War are Being Swept Away) says the WikiLeaks files “reveal how allied forces turned a blind eye to torture and murder of prisoners held by the Iraqi army. Reports of appalling treatment of detainees were verified by the US army and deemed unworthy of further investigation... build[ing] a portrait of a military occupation deeply implicated in practices that were illegal under international law and unconscionable in the eyes of any reasonable observer.”

Great portions of the Middle East and Asia have been thrown into further chaos and suffering. The wars have helped sink the American economy into its worst recession since the 1930s. President Bush inherited a \$281 billion federal budget surplus, the largest surplus in American history, when he took power in 2001. Today, the US has record account and trade deficits. Liberty has been eroded as privacy has given way to surveillance. And hope and prosperity have given way to fear and poverty.<sup>28</sup>

Civilians have borne the brunt of GWOT. According to a 2001 study by the International Committee of the Red Cross, one civilian was killed for every nine soldiers killed in World War I, whereas 10 civilians have been killed for every one

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<sup>27</sup> The trove of secret war documents published by WikiLeaks and known as the War Logs are available at <http://warlogs.wikileaks.org/>, and reporting on them is available in *The New York Times* of October 23-25, 2010. On the attacks against WikiLeaks, see: William A. Cohn, “[Shooting the Messenger](#),” *The Prague Post*, November 3, 2010.

<sup>28</sup> One in seven Americans is now in poverty as the U.S. poverty rate has reached a 15-year high and appears to be getting worse, according to the September 17, 2010 *New York Times* [http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/17/us/17poverty.html?\\_r=1&scp=1&sq=Poverty%20Census&st=cse](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/09/17/us/17poverty.html?_r=1&scp=1&sq=Poverty%20Census&st=cse); The U.S. working-age poor is at its highest levels since the 1960s according to the *International Herald Tribune* (Sept. 17, 2010, p. 4).

soldier killed in wars fought since the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>29</sup> Clearly, modern warfare kills indiscriminately and GWOT has targeted Muslim populations. In whose interest, other than military and security contractors and the politicians they back, have these actions been taken?

### **Targeting Poverty & Building Peace**

A level-headed analysis of the challenge of defeating terror makes clear what works and what doesn't. Ideology has trumped common sense. The U.S. government must stop acting in ways that – predictably – enhance the threat of terrorism. It was foreseeable that occupying Iraq would incite terror attacks. The Rand study criticizes the U.S. for making military force its primary policy instrument: "Military force has rarely been the primary reason for the end of terrorist groups... [This] suggests fundamentally rethinking post-September 11 U.S. counterterrorism strategy."<sup>30</sup> Perhaps the spread of terrorism is exactly the aim of those who drive and prosper from GWOT. Perhaps, as former-CIA officer John Stockwell argues in his book *In Search of Enemies*, U.S. government policy thrives on creating and fighting against external enemies - anarchists, communists and terrorists to name but a few.

If the aim is truly to combat terror, the pledges to the UN Millennium Development Goals should be honored. Suicide bombers are born mainly out of desperation, and improving the quality of the lives of young people in poor countries will reduce terror. This implies that the U.S. government should no longer support oppressive regimes in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and elsewhere, and should use development aid to

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<sup>29</sup> ICRC report cited at page 7 of the October 23-24, 2010 *International Herald Tribune*

<sup>30</sup> Rand report cited above at p.xiii. "Our analysis suggests that there is no battlefield solution to terrorism. Military force usually has the opposite effect from what is intended: It is often overused, alienates the local population by its heavy-handed nature, and provides a window of opportunity for terrorist-group recruitment." Id. At xvii, pp. 121-127.

reduce poverty and economic inequalities, not to bolster corrupt regimes which use their countries' oil wealth to further their own privileged position in society. This further implies that U.S. military spending and arms trafficking should be redirected towards economic and social development.

Deterrence of terrorist attacks should be the goal of an integrated anti-terrorism policy. An ounce of prevention is indeed worth a pound of cure. *The Economist* reports: "Does it matter to the United States that Somalia is becoming a hotbed of global jihad? The answer most often heard in Washington is impenetrable. 'Somalia is not important until it launches a terrorist attack which makes it important,' explains a Pentagon official."<sup>31</sup> This is like a doctor telling a healthy patient, "I'll give you an examination when you're in the ICU." The U.S. Constitution establishes civilian command of the military, yet policy often reflects the Pentagon's priorities. This must change if we are to de-escalate GWOT and reduce terror.

Muslims unjustly targeted by GWOT have cause to question who is really spreading terror in the world. Treating the globe as a battlefield is certainly not the way to reduce terror or terrorism. A level-headed look at anti-terrorism policy requires skepticism of political, business and media leaders. Stopping the war-machine will not be easy - many powerful industries and policymakers are profiting from the business of spreading fear and war. Building peace requires greater strength than waging war. It will require an actively engaged civil society to counter the fear-mongering and ravages of the many killing fields which GWOT hath wrought.

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<sup>31</sup> "What's to be done?" (*The Economist*, Sept. 18, 2010, p. 47).

# **Fearing the Future: Islamophobia in Central Europe**

**Leora Moreno\***

**While on a business trip to Poland two years ago, Wesam Eleyan passed by a Polish police officer, who pointed his hand at him like a gun and mimicked firing a shot. He has had similar experiences with authorities in Slovakia and Ukraine. Eleyan moved to Prague ten years ago to study political science at VŠE, Prague's University of Economics, and Charles University. He has since been working in international marketing and teaching Arabic. Eleyan makes a point of saying that he does not feel discriminated against in Prague. But physically he looks Middle-Eastern, and “When you look different from Czechs,” he says, “it’s a problem for them. They are confused. They don’t know how to speak to you.”**

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Islamophobia is known to be a pervasive problem in the West. But Central Europe, which does not have the same sized Muslim populations or rates of Muslim immigration as Western Europe, is rarely included in public discourse on anti-Islamism. Nonetheless, many Central Europeans have suspicious, and often derogatory, attitudes towards Muslims. Before anti-Islamic sentiment becomes as deeply entrenched in public and governmental opinion as it has in Western Europe, there is an opportunity for Central European countries to lead the way in minority policy and integration. However, it seems that they are instead following Western Europe’s example, as many Central Europeans would rather avoid their societies becoming more ethnically heterogeneous than embrace a multi-cultural future.

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\* Leora Moreno studied psychology at Wesleyan University, USA. She currently lives in Prague and is interested in social justice and minority rights.

Between 15 and 17 million Muslims now live in Western Europe, with net migration into the European Union at about 1.7 million new arrivals per year. The immigration of Muslims to Western Europe has been on the rise since after World War II, when there was a high demand for workers to help recover the post-war economies. The Muslim minority in Central Europe is much smaller, and was established mostly by students rather than laborers. In recent decades, and especially since the attacks on September 11<sup>th</sup>, anti-Muslim sentiment across Europe has become stronger. Because the increase in Muslim immigration to Europe has been concurrent with the growth of political Islam, the lines between Islam and radicalism have become blurred in Europeans' eyes.

Alongside a fear of extremism is the perceived threat that Islam presents to modern European society. European secularism, according to Christopher Caldwell, author of the recent book *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe: Immigration, Islam, and the West*, is a meeting of Christian values and Enlightenment-era skepticism to which Islam is seen as being in opposition. Caldwell validates the anti-Islam perspective by saying that Muslims' cultural differences “[have] broken—or required adjustments to or rearguard defenses of—a good many of the European customs, received ideas, and state structures with which it has come in contact.” Statements like these, which emphasize an incompatibility between Islam and European society, lead Western Europeans to fear that their continent is being “Islamized”, and Central Europeans to fear that their countries are next in line.

A reflection of this fear is found in the term “Eurabia”. Eurabia refers to the prospect that, due to increasing immigration from Muslim countries and decreasing birthrates among Europeans, the Muslim population in Europe will become the majority within a few generations. Many right-wing political parties use the idea of Eurabia as a fear tactic to gain public support. Caldwell is one of many commentators to promote the concept of Eurabia by claiming that the European Muslim population

has the potential to become a united front that could eventually supplant European culture. Others, like journalist Niall Ferguson, reject the idea of Eurabia, saying it is a myth based on hypothetical and often exaggerated data. In his *Newsweek* article, “Why Fears of a Muslim Takeover are All Wrong,” Ferguson dispels the idea of a united Islam in Europe due to how varied and diverse the European Muslim population really is. But as problematic as the idea of a future Eurabia may be, the fear behind it is still deeply rooted.

### **Islamophobia and EU Membership**

Zora Hesová, a Czech journalist who has written extensively on Islam and modernity in Germany, describes the underlying cause of Islamophobia as a “tendency to view Muslims as if they had a common ethnicity or a set of cultural characteristics because of their religion—to make a group out of them.” In other words, the core of Islamophobia lies in equating Muslims, Islam, and extremism. And this tendency to homogenize ethnic and religious groups exists in Central Europe as well as in Western Europe.

Central Europe has been on a path of Westernization since the fall of communism. Since 1989, the Czech Republic and its post-Soviet neighbors have undergone democratization and privatization, developed market economies, and become members of the European Union. As EU member states, Central European countries have had to align their minority policies with the EU’s. According to Peter Vermeersch, a professor at the University of Leuven who researches ethnic mobilization and minority politics in Central Europe, the EU was especially concerned with maintaining minority protection standards in the 2004 enlargement countries. But Vermeersch also says, “the EU’s demands have not always been equally strict and sometimes even conflicting,” which leaves a certain amount of

room for discrepancies to arise between member states' policies. Many Western European countries have individually implemented controversial laws directed towards their Muslim populations. In 2009 Switzerland passed a constitutional amendment banning the construction of new minarets. In 2010 France instituted a law banning women from wearing burqas or veils that cover their face. In many places, Muslims have been pushed to settle on the outskirts of cities. The Danish People's Party has become infamous for its anti-Islam slogans.

Few policies aimed at the Muslim minority exist in Central European states. However, Luboš Kropáček, a professor at Charles University and an expert on Islamic philosophy and modern Islam, says that he has seen attitudes towards Muslims in the Czech Republic become more negative since the fall of communism. He believes the anti-Muslim views often propagated by Czech media and politicians are the result of a need for a new enemy—and that in their eyes, the threat of Muslims has replaced the threat of communism. Whether or not that is the case, far-right movements in the Czech Republic, as well as in Hungary and Poland, are now beginning to ally with those in countries like Denmark, Belgium and Switzerland with notoriously anti-Islam platforms. The Czech National Party, Národní Strana, recently offered to screen the anti-Islam film, *Fitna*, produced by the right-wing Dutch lawmaker, Geert Wilders, after the film was banned in the Netherlands.

Bronislav Ostřanský, who works for the Oriental Institute of the Academy of Sciences in Prague, a research institution which focuses on Oriental and African studies, sees the same trends as Kropáček. Ostřanský believes that Czech and other Central European politicians use the issue of Islam to discuss greater ideological issues, even when their understanding of Islam is minimal. "I'm sure that if they had to pass an Introduction to Islam exam, they would fail," he says. He explains that

what politicians fear is a future Eurabia, and therefore want to take preventative measures to keep the Muslim population in their own countries from growing.

### **The “Struggle for the Mosques”**

Anti-Islam sentiment in Europe often revolves around the issue of mosques, as many Europeans have come to view the construction of mosques as a failure to integrate with liberal democratic society. To the secular European, a mosque is a physical representation of the religious faith of which they are so skeptical. The Czech Republic is home to only two mosques—one in Brno, the other in Prague. All other attempts to build mosques have been met with resistance and have thus been stalled. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of October, an anti-mosque protest was held in Hradec Králové, a



Photo courtesy of [www.islamophobia-watch.com](http://www.islamophobia-watch.com)

A Polish group calling itself "Europe for the Future" refashioned a Swiss poster against minarets to demand a halt in the construction of a new mosque in the capital of mainly Catholic Poland.

## **GENOCIDE AND OPPRESSION / TNP AUTUMN 2010**

Bohemian town in the Czech Republic. Though the Muslim population there is only in the dozens, the Czech community does not want to allow them an official place of worship. Slovakia is the only EU member with no mosques. The Slovakia-based Muslim community has made multiple efforts to establish an Islamic Centre in Bratislava, but the local mayor has repeatedly rejected the project. In March of this year, demonstrators gathered in Warsaw to protest plans to build a mosque there. With ethnic minorities becoming a greater presence in Poland, Polish nationalists are afraid of the Muslim influence growing. Jan Cienski, a journalist who covered the demonstration for the online international news agency, *Global Post*, writes, “the friction around Poland’s still tiny Muslim minority is a sign of the country’s growing normalization and integration into the European Union.”

Is it true that anti-Muslim sentiment is a side effect of EU membership? Ideas about Islamists “often reach Eastern Europe from the West, which is still its model...in terms of secular democracy,” says Gyorgy Lederer, a scholar on Islam in Central and Eastern Europe. With Western Europe setting examples for most other societal sectors, Central and Eastern European countries are accustomed to seeing the western way as the right way. With Czechs and Central Europeans gaining most of their views about Muslims from the West, it makes sense that the Czech Republic and its Central European neighbors would be wary of facing the same Muslim immigration issues that Western Europe is struggling with now. Islam is seen as anti-democratic and anti-Western. Central Europe is made up of young democracies in the process of becoming Westernized, and so Islam would be a threat to their successful development.

### **Demographics and Future Directions**

The Muslim population in the Czech Republic is estimated to have somewhere

between 10,000 and 20,000 members. The Czech government requires a petition of 10,000 signatures to register a religious association. Jiří Schneider, First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, touches on this issue in his article, *Muslim Minorities in Czech Society*, which he wrote as an International Policy Fellow for the Open Society Foundation, an NGO that promotes tolerant democracies. “The practical implementation of the rules has been highly discriminatory, since...the Czech Muslim community was unable to complete a petition list and remained a mere citizens’ association until it was finally registered in October 2004,” says Schneider. Slovakia still does not officially recognize its Muslim population of 5,000 because it requires 20,000 signatures to register a religious association – a policy that Professor Kropáček, like Schneider, believes to be unrealistic and unfair.

The average Czech, like the average Slovak or Pole or Hungarian, is rarely exposed to Islamic culture, so their attitudes are formed more by mass media and world opinion. According to Professor Kropáček, Samuel P. Huntington’s *The Clash of Civilizations* – which theorizes that cultural and religious differences would cause massive conflicts in the post-Cold war world – raised a great deal of attention in the Czech media. Coverage of “warnings” such as this one imbues Central Europeans with the idea that Muslims are a threat to a stable society. As Ostřanský explains it, Central European Islamophobia is really “a result of fear of the unknown.” With Czechs and other Central Europeans so sheltered from Islam within their own countries, they imagine the influence that Islam has on European culture in the way that these “warnings” present them – as a threat to their nascent democracies.

In May 2010, the Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly published a document entitled *Islam, Islamism, and Islamophobia in Europe*. The report is a set of guidelines for policies and structural changes to combat anti-Islamism in Europe, and states that, “the social and political inclusion of migrants and foreigners, who are often Muslims, will be essential for democratic cohesion and stability.”

Vermeersch says that the EU is influenced by the minority protection standards set by the Council of Europe and other independent international groups like it. But even with watchdog organizations providing criticism and analysis of Europe's Islamophobia, their suggestions for combating it don't seem to be changing its anti-Islamic political climate. After all, German Chancellor Merkel recently made a public statement that multi-cultural integration in Germany has "absolutely failed," placing blame on Germany's Turkish population for failing to integrate properly into German society.

With so much attention being paid to xenophobia and immigration issues in the EU, now is the time to start implementing social and educational policies to combat Islamophobia farther east. It is crucial for there to be increased public discussion and education on the topics of Islam and multi-culturalism in Central Europe. Ignoring anti-Islam sentiment is dangerous: Lukas Lhotan, a spokesman for the Czech Muslim organisation, Libertas Independent Agency, has said that open debate would be the best way to approach anti-Islamic feelings. As quoted in Radio Netherlands Worldwide, Lhotan said, "We've seen what happens if prejudices are ignored, like in the twentieth century when anti-Semitism was largely ignored."

Some avenues for intercultural exchange already exist in Central European societies. For example, the Czech NGO, Forum 2000, has a program devoted to interfaith dialogue and religious tolerance. But generally, there is not enough pressure on Central Europe to fight anti-Islamic attitudes, as public criticism of Islamophobia is Western focused. As Hesová notes, being part of the European Union requires Central Europe to grapple with multi-culturalism. But currently, many Czechs and Central Europeans remain ill-informed about Islam and swayed by the discrimination in the West. Seeing the clash between Western European society and its Muslim minority, Central Europe is set to avoid greater diversity in order to prevent the same ethnic tensions from developing within its region.

# **The Baloch Insurgency and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Asian Energy Security**

**John Jack Rooney\***

**Without a doubt, the story of the 21<sup>st</sup> century thus far has been the rapid economic growth of Asia's two rising superpowers, China and India. If China and India are the stories of the century, then “energy security” must be the buzzword of the century.**

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Without a doubt, the story of the 21<sup>st</sup> century thus far has been the rapid economic growth of Asia's two rising superpowers, China and India. Together, they account for nearly 40 percent of the world's population, and with their annual gross domestic product (GDP) rates accelerating to upwards of 8, 9 even 10 percent, both countries continue to lift millions of their citizens out of poverty each year. The numbers, quite frankly, are staggering, but with such rapid expansion comes new pressing challenges, particularly in terms of securing the necessary energy resources to fuel continued progress.

Yes, if China and India are the stories of the century, then “energy security” must be the buzzword of the century. While visions of wind, solar and biofuel technology dazzle the imaginations of most hopeful young minds, the cold hard reality is that carbon is still the bottom line, and if China and India plan to continue their high

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\* John Jack Rooney is an American freelance writer.

levels of growth, they will need to be nimble in snatching up reserves, signing pipeline deals, and developing strategic partnerships with their energy-rich neighbors.

With Iran's South Pars and Turkmenistan's Dowlatabad natural gas fields just down the block, opportunities are abundant. To reach these resources, however, any pipeline project must traverse the sprawling desert and rugged coastline of Pakistan's southern province of Balochistan, a harsh terrain well endowed with its own natural gas reserves of some 19 trillion cubic feet. Situated at the nexus of a North-South transport corridor connecting India to Dowlatabad and an East-West route connecting China to its sizeable Gulf oil investments, the development of energy infrastructure in Balochistan may be the single most important objective in both these countries' quest for energy security.

Just one problem though – Balochistan is fraught with a resurgent separatist rebellion pitting a harsh and uncompromising Pakistani military against scores of desperate Baloch tribal chiefs with a penchant for bombing pipelines and refineries. How the Pakistani government, their Chinese sponsors, and the Indian government handles or mishandles this issue will be of tremendous consequence to the way these crucial energy reserves are transported across 21<sup>st</sup> century Asia.

Like many other unresolved international crises in the Middle East and South Asia, the conflict in Balochistan can be traced back to reckless and ill-fated mandates made by British colonial governance. Originally a sovereign kingdom composed of four princely states, Balochistan was declared a British protectorate in order to be used as a base of operations for British troops during the Anglo-Afghan wars of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. Baloch tribal chieftans, or *sardars* were granted full autonomy in the management of their internal affairs, and when the British partitioned India in 1947, the current ruler, Khan Mir Ahmad Yar Khan was able to negotiate independence for Balochistan.

However, just 225 days later, the Pakistani military invaded Balochistan and surrounded the capital at Kalat Palace, forcing the Khan to sign an accession agreement. Since then, five separate insurgencies have erupted with Pakistan using its military might to forcibly impose national rule on a fiercely independent Balochistan, striking back to preserve the rights granted to them by the British.

The first insurgencies in the 40s and 50s were relatively small and revolved around disputes regarding representation in national government as local tribal leaders saw their power wane with the rise of a centralized power. However, when the Pakistani government began building numerous military cantonments throughout the province, the local Baloch population started organizing in response. Slowly but surely tensions increased as Baloch tribes started constructing their own outposts, and when Pakistani President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto abolished the local provincial governments in 1973, a major confrontation was all but guaranteed. For four years, some 55,000 Baloch nationalists fought a gruesome war against a Pakistani force of more than 80,000, well equipped with helicopter gunships and F-16 fighter jets.

From this point, a number of serious blunders were made by Pakistan's armed forces as they ruthlessly cracked down on the Baloch rebels. In one counterinsurgency operation, Pakistani troops, frustrated by their inability to root out Baloch guerrillas in the mountains, decided to bomb, strafe, and burn the homes of some 15,000 local Baloch residents. When the insurgents rushed out from their hideouts to defend their women and children, a bloodbath ensued with over 5,000 Baloch rebels killed.

Most recently in 2004, a Pakistani military officer raped a Baloch doctor who was working at the local gas fields, and when the army refused to question suspects or pursue any formal charges, protests erupted led by a new nationalist emotive figurehead Nawab Akbar Khan Bugti. The ageing 78 year old white-bearded Bugti had originally worked with Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's government as a partner during the

Gwadar Port in Balochistan, located on the southwestern coast of Pakistan.



Original image from English Wikipedia, uploaded by en:user:Pandra, Licensing GFDL-self-with-disclaimers.

1970s to oust more hard line Baloch factions, however, these continual human rights abuses pushed him firmly in opposition of the government.

Once again the Pakistani military relied too heavily on military power rather than a diplomatic solution. On the morning of August 26, Pakistani troops had Bugti held up in a cave, and when they shelled the location where he was hiding, the space collapsed, killing a frail old man and giving birth to a far more powerful martyr.

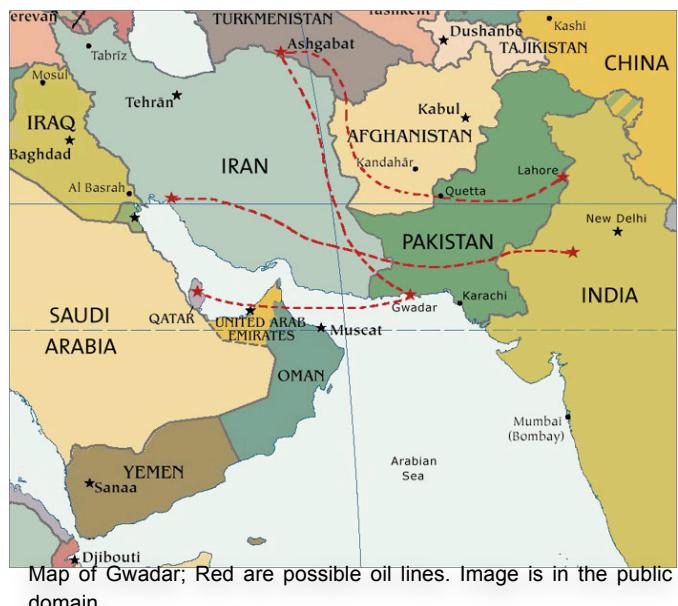
Upon hearing what had happened to their beloved leader, Bugti's relatively small insurgency of 5,000 suddenly erupted into a much wider rebellion, uniting the moderate and more assertive Baloch elements all across the province. Businesses shut down, shopkeepers went on strike, and rioters burst onto the streets, burning cars and smashing windows. Paramilitary forces had to be deployed, wide-spread arrests were made, but it was too late as a new younger generation rallied in opposition to this harsh military rule.

## GENOCIDE AND OPPRESSION / TNP AUTUMN 2010

These younger protesters, however, are a new more educated generation, influenced by Marxist ideology, and keenly aware of the enormous resources of natural gas, copper, zinc, and gold being exploited by the central government with little being invested in their homeland in return. Government policy calls for the distribution of resource revenues based on population, but because Balochistan only accounts for 5 percent of the total population, they receive meager investment and lack even the most basic infrastructure. While Balochistan accounts for some 68 percent of Pakistan's natural gas production, most Balochs are gut-wrenchingly poor, living in sparse shantytowns without access to clean water or paved roads.

Unfortunately, the rebellion has soured with bitter resentment giving way to ethnic genocide. With the central Pakistani state mostly dominated by ethnic Punjabis, Baloch rebels have lashed out against unarmed Punjabi citizens with some 500 deaths resulting from targeted ethnic violence over the course of the insurgency. As they see it, the pan-Islamic ideology of the state is simply a cover for discrimination against ethnic Balochs, and as a result, their insurgency takes on a distinctly secular tone further marginalizing them from the Pakistani state.

However, going straight to the root of this discrimination, Baloch insurgents soon targeted the dense networks of pipelines and refineries, bombing them in protest of these unbalanced revenue sharing policies. With these pipelines sprawling over 27,000 kilometers throughout



Balochistan, Pakistan's military is simply unable to guard against these attacks.

According to a 2006 report conducted by the Washington-based Jamestown Foundation, Baloch insurgents have conducted a total of 843 attacks and incidents of violence reported in different parts of Balochistan, with their favorite targets being the energy production sites such as the Sui gas fields in Dera Bugti. In fact, in May of 2006, two main gas pipelines to Punjab were blown up, cutting off gas supplies to the entire province.

But now in this new world of interconnectivity, the Baloch insurgents are no longer just a problem for the Pakistani government. China, Pakistan's long-standing ally and economic patron has invested heavily in developing an enormous deep water port in the western coastal town of Gwadar on the Arabian Sea to give it access to Gulf oil supplies. Slated to become the next Dubai and focal point of Chinese strategic interests in southwest Asia, Gwadar lies on major maritime shipping lanes and has been dubbed a special economic zone by the Pakistani government, giving it tax free status.

Unfortunately for the Baloch people residing in Gwadar, this Chinese development does not signal prosperity for them, but rather an increased likelihood that they will lose their property and be pushed off the land. In fact, reports have surfaced that Pakistani government officials have been forging land ownership documents in order to expedite the process. Furthermore, local Balochs have largely been excluded from the valuable construction and maintenance jobs and instead have been offered only low-end jobs as day laborers. Once again, however, the Baloch refuse to be bullied, now directing their attacks against Chinese workers, and in recent years five violent attacks have occurred with two resulting in fatalities.

China's development in Gwadar has far reaching implications beyond Balochistan, and as India looks to gather energy resources for its own rapidly growing economy,

the government in New Delhi is weary of this quickly developing trade corridor between the Gulf, Pakistan, and China.

Currently in the process of developing its own energy routes, the Indian government has made large investments in developing both an East-West pipeline from Iran's South Pars gas fields as well as North-South pipeline from Turkmenistan's Dowlatabad gas fields, both of which must traverse through Balochistan. India is currently one of the most dependent countries on foreign energy sources and imports some 70 percent. In the next 30 years that number is expected to increase to 85 percent, and if New Delhi hopes to keep pace with China's economic growth, it will need to take measures to ensure investors feel secure in establishing these pipelines.

Balochistan's insurgency has intensified significantly over the past few years, and if China and India are to be successful in developing the region's energy infrastructure, they must find a way to do so without further inflaming the anti-imperialist sentiments of the local population. Any analysis of the current conflict there must bear in mind that the greatest threat to these two emerging powers is not an insurgent victory, but rather a protracted conflict. These unforgiving deserts along the Arabian coastline are the same deserts that annihilated the armies of Alexander the Great on his retreat from the Indian subcontinent, and they are the same deserts that ruined the Russians' quest for a warm water port.

If India and China wish to secure their energy future for the 21<sup>st</sup> century they will need to make a concerted effort to reach out to the Pakistani government and encourage an incorporation of the Baloch people into these energy transport projects through greater employment opportunities and shared economic benefit. If the Baloch have a shared interest in ensuring this infrastructure is constructed and firmly secure, then as these two giants rise, the long shadows cast over their neighbors can be a blessing rather than a curse.

## Berlin's New Roma Sound

Robert Rigney\*

**They are becoming familiar sights in the subways, squares, cafes and street corners. In many ways they have replaced the traditional Berlin hurdy-gurdy man of yore. Some have gone from street musicians to club sensations.**

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With Romania's accession into the European Union (EU), Romanian Roma musicians are flocking to Berlin, and in doing so they are changing the musical landscape of the city.

Several times each summer a bus leaves from Romania for Berlin, carrying Romanian Roma who hope to earn a living playing the streets of the German capital. In order to be taken, each Roma has to prove that he knows at least one song and pay a fee. Once in Berlin, they gravitate towards other Gypsies from Romania in the poorer quarters of town, like Wedding or Neukölln, where Romanians rent out rooms to them for five euro a night. Often they live four or five to a room. During the day, the women go out begging. The men play music. On the streets they meet discrimination, police harassment, and threats of deportation. Some only stay for a season and then go back to Romania when winter sets in. Some, however, establish themselves in Berlin for good.

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\* Robert Rigney is an American writer living in Berlin. He lived in the Czech Republic for five years and has traveled widely in the Balkans.

Nica Cristea, otherwise known as Cristian, is an elderly Roma man from suburban Bucharest who has been playing his self-made cembalo (harpsichord) on the streets of Berlin for several years now. He has no plans to go back to Romania. Always dapperly dressed in a suit, colorful tie and black trilby hat, he is a regular fixture on Hermannplaz, not far from where he lives in Neukölln. He speaks neither English nor German, but he will show anyone who is interested a piece of paper certifying himself as a musician for the Romanian state television orchestra.

“I have an imposing past,” says Cristian proudly. “My father, my grandfather, they were all respected musicians. When I play in a restaurant people just burn. They call me maestro. It bothers me that I have to play here on the streets and that people don’t really appreciate my high value as a musician. If you know anyone who can get me a gig please let me know.”

For an elderly man, Cristian is incredibly strong and vital. And he has to be. Pounding the strings of his cembalo takes strength and lugging his instrument around the streets of Berlin is a heavy burden. Asked where he plays, he lists off: Ku’damm, Hermannplaz, Bergmannstrasse. He is not too familiar with street names and has mainly a visual orientation. It’s a tough life, but it is much better than the life he left in Romania.

“It’s much cheaper here,” he says. “Food is cheaper. I have a pension of one hundred euro a month, but this isn’t enough to live on in Romania.”

The fact is that for the past hundred years – and this has only been accelerated by capitalism and Romania’s accession into the EU – the traditional jobs for Romanian Roma have been progressively dismantled. Roma were always especially talented in handicrafts. They were tinkerers, roof builders, horse traders, broom makers. But

## CULTURE / TNP AUTUMN 2010

what use do Romanians have for these jobs today? While many of the traditional jobs that employed Roma have vanished, there still remains a demand for Roma musicians. In this way, music is the last refuge for many Roma. For many who lack solid networks in Romania, there is no other choice but to go West, to Paris, Brussels – or Berlin, where they can earn at least five times as much as they could in Romania.

Everybody knows the Romanian Roma street musicians in Berlin. They have become part of the Berlin landscape. Often they are met with irritation: Germans commonly complain of “noisy Gypsy buskers” and there are occasional heated exchanges on Berlin subway cars between passengers and Roma musicians. Sometimes, however, they are met with sympathy, and other times they are welcomed with open arms, invited to parties and weddings. One group of Roma street musicians which has become particularly successful in Berlin is a group of eight brass musicians who go by the name of Fanfare Kalashnikov.



Fanfare Kalashnikov. Photo courtesy of Fanfare Kalashnikov/Robert Rigney.

The musicians are between 23 and 32 years old and all come from the same town of Iasi in western Romania. “We play just like a Kalashnikov,” says band member Sergiu, “very fast and very precise.”

The first three members of Kalashnikov arrived in 2006. At first they had only tourist visas and had to go back to Romania every three months, but since Romania's EU accession at the start of 2007 they have been able to stay on a continual basis. They have played in various cities in Germany, but find Berlin to be the most tolerant towards street musicians and so decided to stay there.

"The police know us too," says Sergiu. "They pass us by and they say: 'This is Kalashnikov. Let them be.'"

Kalashnikov combines Latino music with jazz and the Balkan music of Boban Markovic and Goran Bregovic. Some years ago they were discovered at Alexanderplatz by a German music producer and anthropologist, who offered to become their manager.

"We started from scratch and we started to do gigs for half an hour for one hundred euros," says Sergiu. "And today we can get up to two thousand euros for a show. We get requests from France, from Spain, from Switzerland, from all over Europe."

"There are very few bands like us," says manager Clemens Grün. "I sometimes say this is punk music without guitars. Boom, boom, boom. The people like it. Because it is nice for the ears. You can still listen to it. There are melodies and harmonies – but it's fast, like punk."

Berlin has established itself as an important market place for East European, Balkan and Romanian Roma music. There are countless Balkan parties in Berlin nightclubs, some well-known Balkan DJs and three important music labels that specialize in the music of the Balkans and Balkan Roma.

Asphalt Tango is one such label that specializes in the music of Romanian Roma. Asphalt Tango was founded by Henry Ernst and Helmut Neumann, two Romanian aficionados from Leipzig. They launched the label when they discovered and then went on to produce and manage the Romanian Roma brass superstars, Fanfare Ciocarlia.

“It’s a success story,” says Ernst. “Balkan music and Romanian music in particular has had world-wide success. For the time being it’s nothing new. It’s an accepted style of music. The bands are in the position to fill up symphony halls and stadiums. And I think it has become something like a standard *Kulturgut* in Germany.”

It makes sense, says Ernst, that Berlin and Germany should become important jumping off points for Romanian Roma music. “Germany lies, from a geographical standpoint in the middle,” says Ernst, “and if you are in the middle there is a view to the West and there’s a view to the East. And when you consider Berlin, then Berlin lies further to the East, whether that be in reference to its culture or its familiarity with foreign cultures. Even though the opposite is often suggested in the media, still there is a mutual coexistence.”

Roma music from the Balkans has been especially successful in Germany. A popular Balkan pop star with Romanian roots, named Shantel, popularized the Balkan Gypsy style around the country. Switzerland and Austria have also shown themselves receptive to the genre, and France has spawned a number of Balkan acts.

Despite embracing their music, Germany still has a difficult relationship with Roma people from the Balkans. Last summer, when some 50 Romanian Roma encamped in a park in Berlin, police were quick to disperse them; they were subsequently

## CULTURE / TNP AUTUMN 2010

followed from site to site until finally the families were deported back to Romania. Often, the media in Berlin, be it BZ or Bild, also focuses on the Gypsy squeegee gangs and petty Gypsy criminality, presenting a stereotypical and overwhelmingly negative picture of Berlin's Balkan Roma.

Many of the 130,000 Roma who fled Kosovo in 1999, in the wake of massive persecution, arson attacks on Roma homes, and expulsions, settled in Germany. Ten years later, Germany is now trying to deport the 10,000 Roma living there back to Kosovo. Most don't want to go. 4,000 have already been deported.

Having said this, most Roma street musicians from Romania disclaim any racism or harassment on the streets of Berlin. "German people are nice guys," says Cristian. Otherwise he wouldn't stay here. "I would have gone back to our country."

It's a Wednesday night in Shangl Hangl, a music café in Neukölln, popular with Roma musicians. One of the musicians from Fanfare Kalashnikov is celebrating his birthday. The men wear crisp, white shirts, have flashy belt-buckles and spiky, gelled hair. The women wear slinky black dresses and a lot of jewelry. A band plays Romanian songs. The Roma dance, lifting their hands in the air and yelling, while Germans and other *gadjos* (non-Gypsies) look on in wonder and amusement.

Cristian is also here. He is complaining. The previous night he slept at a Romanian musician friend's flat and their kids stole his watch while he was sleeping. Sergiu interrupts and offers a glass of whisky. He asks Cristian if he is happy to be in Berlin. Cristian smiles, saying "Our music is more successful here and more commercially viable here than in Romania and that is the reason why we have chosen not to stay in Romania. Berlin is our city. They love us here."

## CULTURE / TNP AUTUMN 2010

The party continues until two in the morning. It is one of the liveliest festivals of the year, and it, together with all of the new Romanian, Bulgarian and Balkan music cafes and clubs springing up in Neukölln and Kreuzberg, is an indication that Balkan Roma are gaining a foothold in this city. The more curious *gadjos* who wander into places like this, the more Roma Balkan music will spread into Berlin's musical mainstream. The city is already full of lively Balkan parties, and Balkan live acts attract large crowds in German venues. "Germans have a familiarity with Balkan immigrants and their music," says Ernst from Ashalt Tango. "There is the feeling that these are *our* immigrants."

Berlin hears the sound of the Balkan Roma and it likes what it hears.



Fanfare Kalashnikov. Photo courtesy of Fanfare Kalashnikov/Robert Rigney.

## Artist-revolutionaries and Artist-clowns: A Critic's Manifesto

Karolína Fabelová\*

**"I am not a child wishing to be entertained by clowns in a circus, but an art admirer expecting more out of art than just shock and entertainment." In this pointed commentary art critic Karolína Fabelová asks, what is the purpose of art? Her answer demands a re-evaluation of contemporary works today.**

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Artists stopped being complementary to society during the 19<sup>th</sup> century and instead, they began to criticize it. Some artists considered themselves revolutionaries; they wanted to change the world and they were willing to make large sacrifices for their art and philosophies. Their goal was not to illustrate history or religion or to reproduce reality; they wanted to actively influence the development of the world around them. This desire is still present today, but is it being fulfilled?

In 2009 a Polish artist named Peter Fusse organized an exhibition called *Achtung!* at the Prague NoD Gallery. The author presented one billboard and eight large-scale photographs from Steven Spielberg's film *Schindler's List* and Roman Polanski's *Pianist*. Fusse edited the images so that the Nazis killing the Jews wore sleeve bands with the Jewish Star of David instead of Swastikas. The gallery was closed by the Prague Jewish Council half an hour after its opening. The exhibition and the events surrounding it illustrate a number of serious problems in contemporary art.

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\* Dr. Karolína Fabelová studied art history at the Charles University in Prague and at the Sorbonne in Paris. She is the program director of the Soros Centre for Contemporary Arts in Prague.

Peter Fusse wanted to exemplify the violence carried out by Israelis on Palestinians in the Gaza strip. He organized the exhibition in the Old Town, a few steps away from the former Jewish ghetto, in a house belonging to the Prague Jewish Council. He chose to open the exhibition on Holocaust Remembrance Day. In a subsequent interview,<sup>1</sup> he claimed that these circumstances were coincidental.

I am not a child wishing to be entertained by clowns in a circus, but an art admirer expecting more out of art than just shock and entertainment. I can only assume that the location and the timing of the exhibition were not coincidental especially when the subject matter is so politically potent. If Peter Fusse was not aware of these circumstances, I am left to doubt his ability to be informed about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. Fusse believes he is a committed artist; however, that image is hard to believe when he uses a pseudonym. He is hiding behind his false identity and rejecting responsibility for his actions. He did not come to his own exhibition and he only communicates with the public and critics via email.

Peter Fusse's identity is unstable and so is his art. It lacks deeper thought. Fusse claims that he is not concerned about which country he exhibits his work in, and he adds: "I could have introduced my project in Warsaw, New York or Berlin." As Luk Tuymans – an artist who (in my opinion, genuinely) deals with the topic of the Holocaust – correctly states: "The Holocaust can be depicted only through precise and detailed work. Not only is it imperative to understand the history as a whole in order to portray it, but it is also essential to see the details."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Polish artist: The exhibition in Prague has been ended because of the Nazi methods, *Aktuálně.cz*, [http://aktualne.centrum.cz/kultura/umeni/clanek.phpml?id=635741&tro6304\\_1\\_0](http://aktualne.centrum.cz/kultura/umeni/clanek.phpml?id=635741&tro6304_1_0)

<sup>2</sup> Wie darf Kunst den Holocaust zeigen? Frankfurter Allgemeine Faz.Net.

Fusse works with powerful parallels – he equates today's Israelis to the Nazis and the closing down of his exhibition to the censorship of modern art, similar to what transpired after Hitler's seizure of power. The artist is happy to borrow other authors' work, without creating something himself. Had he not decided to use the photographs, but paint the pictures himself, he would have had to immerse himself with the topic much more extensively. In doing so, he would have perhaps realized that the replacement of the sleeve band symbols does not illustrate the Palestinian-Israeli conflict in all its complexity; in fact, it does not illustrate it at all. Visitors could only understand what the artist wanted to portray from the author's commentaries.

The fact that the Nazis hunted down modern art pieces does not mean that modern and contemporary art should not be criticized or that we are obliged to humbly accept everything artists create. I believe that an artist such as Fusse, who is not shy of scandals, counted on the exhibition closing down and the censorship from the start. To a certain extent it was a part of his project, which would otherwise have not drawn that much attention.

I do not agree with the Israeli violence towards Palestinians in the Gaza strip. However I also think it is dangerous to accept Fusse's interpretation of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The chairman of the Prague Jewish Council, František Bányai, asks whether this really is art. It is practically impossible to define art today. The *Achtung!* exhibition is an example of bad art, which does not enrich the audience, visually or contextually.

Contemporary art should aim to do more than simply alter or attack existing symbols. A society that only produces art that creates clichés from existing symbols

rather than building new ones, finds itself in a strange phase of decay. Anyone can belittle an existing symbol; it is so much more difficult to create a piece of art so charged with emotion that it becomes a new one. If David Černý hangs Josef Václav Myslbek's St. Wenceslas statue upside down for the occasion of the tenth Velvet Revolution anniversary, it may be a good practical joke, but nothing more. Myslbek, the founder of Czech modern sculpture, worked for more than thirty years on the St. Wenceslas statue. Perhaps that is why his statue became a symbol, which united Czech society against Communism. Černý spent perhaps a few months on his pathetic laminate horse and silly St. Wenceslas. Let's see which one people will look to when times are tough.

Only a small memorial with outstretched demonstrators' hands depicts the memory of the police crackdown on Národní třída on 17 November 1989. Even so, this relatively poor visual memorial has become a symbol in its own right and has a place in the hearts and minds of the people of Prague. In 2009 it became the source of irony for another artist, hiding behind the pseudonym of Roman Týc. He amended the memorial for the occasion of the twentieth Velvet

Revolution anniversary and the seventieth

anniversary of the student uprising against the Nazis. Above the engraving of the year 1939 the hands form a 'Heil Hitler' sign, above the year 1989 they show the victorious 'V' and above 2009 they show hands giving the middle finger. Similarly to Fusse, he ruthlessly simplifies the history behind this memorial. For the purpose



Courtesy of Remi Diligent

of amusement, whether self-amusement or public-amusement, he offended those who fought against the Nazis as well as those who struggled against the Communist regime. It is interesting to point out that people did not seem to notice the change. They still lit candles at the memorial, as if nothing changed. The provocation did not surprise them, because the Czech audience has been so numbed to images like this that they no longer seem to be shocked by them.

An example of quality art portraying the events of the Velvet Revolution and post-November development is Jiří David's 'Key statue.' In contrast with Roman Týc, David worked sensitively with existing symbols. The statue is made out of keys, which were jingled by demonstrators in 1989. The keys form the word '*revolution*'. The upper letters crush the letters beneath so the revolution is quite literally crumbling under its own weight. The shape of the letters is not coincidental; it has been inspired by period typography. For example the first letter 'R' is taken from the former Communist daily paper *Rudé právo*. If the letter 'R' falls, the word 'Evolution' is formed, which references the development that allowed for the revolution. The number of keys forming the statue gives it an unexpected visual and acoustic effect. The statute is legible – it is not shrouded in obscurity, which artists often do to hide the emptiness behind their work. Every detail of the 'Key statue' has a purpose. The author has created a piece, which does not only portray the unfulfilled illusions from 1989, but also the hope for future development.

Critics dislike David's statue for its commercialism. They are bothered that it is owned by Vodafone, which collected the keys for the artist and which uses the statue for its own advertising. However, there are only a few artists today who cannot be rebuked for this very reason. The interconnectedness of art with commerce is undeniable. To believe that art is and can be independent of commerce

is plainly naive. In fact some may argue that there is little difference between advertising and art, other than intent.

Some contemporary art acts as an index finger jabbing at any sensitive topic, whether it is sex, religion or dark periods from the past. The constant nagger, who thrives on scandals but refuses his own share of responsibility, who continuously sneers and attacks taboos which are taboos no longer, is tiresome. Artists-revolutionaries have turned into artists-clowns, who mock the world around them without exerting any influence on it. The world therefore cannot take them seriously. Admirers come to see their work, just as children go to a circus. The owners of circuses sometimes throw the clowns on the street where they do a couple of tricks, but the world remains unchanged. The purpose of art critics should be to discern artists from clowns and quality art from mockery. If critics do not fulfill this role, art will fail to flourish.



David Černý's St. Wenceslas on a dead horse (left) and Jiří David's Key Statue (above). Photos courtesy of Michael Noske.

# Good Intentions: Evaluating Austerity Measures on the Czech Economy

Lecia Bushak\*

**On September 21st, more than 30,000 public service workers took to the streets to protest against government austerity plans to reform the Labor Code and cut public service salaries by 10 percent. The center-right coalition plans budget cuts to reduce the current 4.6 percent public deficit to 3.0 percent by 2013. Teachers, firemen and policemen joined the demonstration, some angry enough to claim that the right-wing government's measures were the biggest infringement on employees' and human rights since the fall of communism in 1989.**

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The worldwide crisis and gaping deficits have prompted sweeping austerity measures – and labor protests – across Europe. In the Czech Republic, the austerity measures affect society both domestically and abroad, causing public discontent over unwelcome changes to their daily lives. While Czech labor unions struggle to strengthen their role in a modern economy and influence this center right wing policy, Czech workers threaten to strike or even leave the country if their salaries are reduced. Despite good intentions to cut back spending, austerity measures have negative side effects that may outweigh the good – and other solutions to balance the budget may exist.

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## **Deficit all over Europe**

Other European countries facing similar deficits include Greece, France, Slovakia, and Spain, whose governments are cracking down with even tougher austerity bills. In Spain, for example, public sector wages were cut by 15 percent, and those earning higher than 175,000 euros per year will receive a 2 percent tax rate increase. Similarly in Greece, public sector wages were cut by 15 percent and the retirement age raised to 65; pensions in both the private and public sector were cut by 10 percent.

Czech Prime Minister Petr Nečas' so-called "government of budget responsibility" plans to decrease the country's deficit by more than just salary cuts. The austerity measures will foster cuts in military and welfare spending, tax exemptions, as well as the closing of several Czech consulates around the globe. Nečas argued that the budget cuts are necessary if the Czech Republic is going to avoid becoming one of the "countries known for not being able to solve their own problems and threatened with painful correction measures not fully under their control."

## **Negative Side Effects on Ordinary Lives**

The two most important and media-publicized measures are the 10 percent salary cuts of public workers and the zonal remuneration system. If the measures are passed, public sector workers, ranging from bureaucrats, police, nurses, firefighters, teachers, museum workers to orchestra members, would receive a 10 percent salary decrease in the next year. The zonal remuneration system would allow those managing individual public institutions to increase wages based on merit rather than seniority. In other words, instead of automatically increasing the salary of older workers, management would have the freedom to indiscriminately raise wages, based on subjective judgment alone. This functions as a cost saving since all

## ECONOMICS / TNP AUTUMN 2010

experience groups receive salary cuts, but also does not require senior workers to be paid more. In theory, management would not be legally obligated to increase anyone's wages.

Those with experience who have spent many years working for the same institution will no longer have the security they may have expected at retirement age, since in addition to general cuts, zonal remuneration also implies future layoffs. "The solution of how to reach the cut of 10 percent is up to the different institutions, whether they decide to take the path of salary cuts or employee dismissals," government spokesman Martin Kupka told *The Prague Post*. "In most cases, it is going to be a mixture of both."

"What is stupid about these cuts is it's a one-size fits all; they take the same amount



People took to the streets to protest against proposed austerity measures. Protesters carried signs saying, "For friends you give millions, to the people you give shit," and "Kalousek, give back what you stole." Photo courtesy of Lecia Bushak.

## ECONOMICS / TNP AUTUMN 2010

from everyone,” said Jan Macháček, an economics reporter for Respekt magazine. “And these people, although in qualified jobs, were already paid poorly.”

Trade Union of Health and Social Care Workers (OSZSP) Dagmar Žitníková believes that in particular, “social workers are those with the worst salary conditions” and that if the proposed measures are passed, the salary of these people would reach minimum wage.

Overall, the average salary of public sector workers is a little more than 20,000 CZK a month. Teachers get paid less, around 15,000 CZK a month, and physicians are generally paid around 35,000 CZK a month. The average salary of public sector workers is about the same as the median salary in the Czech Republic, which is about 21,000 CZK a month, but will soon drop if the cuts are passed.

One of the most affected public sector areas is healthcare, and many predict that Czech doctors will flee the Czech system en masse next year. According to *Reuters*, a Czech head physician is already paid only about 250 to 300 CZK an hour, which is equivalent to about \$10-\$12. Some 3,500 Czech doctors have threatened to leave the country to find higher wages in Germany or other Western European countries, which pay nearly four or five times as much.

While the September 21 protest and continuous public complaints brought attention mostly to these 10 percent salary cuts and zonal remuneration, the effects of the proposed austerity measures are even more widespread. On the domestic front, retired soldiers and policemen would no longer have the perks of tax exemptions. Selected welfare benefits, subsidies for disabled people to hire assistants, and subsidies given to political parties and movements for their activities would all be reduced or completely cut.

They would also affect the Czech Republic’s influence abroad by closing several foreign bureaus, including those in the Congo, Venezuela, Kenya, Yemen, and Costa

## ECONOMICS / TNP AUTUMN 2010

Rica by January 2011. Czech general consulates in Bombay, India and Sydney, Australia will also be closed. Military spending is to be reduced while the ministry of foreign affairs is firing 10 percent of its staff – leaving even ambassadors to question their job security. Some have complained that the country would lose “diplomatic muscle” because of these cuts and the closing of embassies around the globe.

### The Role of Czech Labor Unions

Amidst the turmoil over the austerity measures, Czech labor unions are experiencing their own growing pains, and must re-evaluate their roles in both government and the economy in order to properly function in a free market economy as influential institutions. “Right now the Czech Republic is unsure of what society it will form or who to model after,” Macháček said. “Should we model after Austria, where the position of unions is stronger, or do we want to be able to fight unions and overrule them? Do we want to be like Germany, or perhaps Scandinavia where unions have a lot of power?”

Prime Minister Nečas has remained firm in his stance to carry out the austerity plans, but the unions have, through media and publicity, managed to deter the government from at least a few measures. Afterall, Czech labor unions are not there just for show. In recent months they have exhibited power in mobilizing the media, which can indirectly affect policy.

However, protests by Czech labor unions do not have as much influence over government policy as do the well-oiled, familiar strike scenes in France or Spain. This may be caused by the fact that the Czech public simply does not take part in labor protests or strikes to the same extent as they do in a country like France. At a deeper level, one can analyze the way Czech labor unions were accustomed to work

## ECONOMICS / TNP AUTUMN 2010

under communism to better understand the current role of labor unions in the modern economy.

Zora Butorová, a Slovak sociologist and public opinion researcher, says that what differentiates the labor union scene in the Czech Republic and Slovakia from that in Western European countries is that “under communism, we didn’t get a chance to protest against the government or learn how to do things collectively.”

Project Syndicate, an international NGO that distributes original commentary by prominent leaders and opinion makers, writes, “...Old socialist functions have so distorted the notion of what a trade union is that many reformers fail to understand their role in a modern economy.”

In the West, unions are channels for information and power, which bridge the gap between workers and the government. Under communism, on the other hand, there was not much of a bridge between workers and employers; “Communist era unions had a greater resemblance to human resource departments of companies than true worker collectives and, as such, were controlled by management,” Project Syndicate states.

Deciding the role of labor unions in the Czech Republic, as institutions that can directly affect the economy, will be a major factor in Czech economic reform. The unions plan to hold a strike on 8 December 2010.

### Negative Side Effects on a Broader Scale

While ordinary people will personally feel the immediate effects of the budget cuts, studies show that austerity measures can have negative long-term effects that can stall the economy even more than it can help accelerate it.

## ECONOMICS / TNP AUTUMN 2010

Raiffeisenbank analysts calculate that austerity measures will slow the Czech economy's growth by 0.8 percentage points. The small open economy's growth, which is expected to increase by only 1.3 percent next year, will be largely driven by exports, VAT (value added tax) rate, and construction of solar power plants. This shows that the Czech Republic is more on par with its Western neighbors than it is with Slovakia or Poland, whose economies are expected to grow at higher rates. Unemployment is also expected to increase, according to Labor and Social Affairs Minister Jaromír Drábek.

"The examples of Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia, Portugal, Greece and Spain all show one thing: saving can be quite costly," wrote journalist Petr Holub. According to Eurostat, a detailed statistics database on the EU, these countries' budget revenues were greatly reduced, but the expenses stayed the same or even increased in some cases, in order to ease the effects of the global crisis. In *The Financial Times*, U.S. economist Joseph Stiglitz wrote, "A household that owes more money than it can easily repay needs to cut back on spending. But when a government does that, output and incomes decline, unemployment increases, and the ability to repay may actually decrease." According to a recent poll in the Czech Republic, 58 percent of Czechs believe the austerity measures will lead to slower economic recovery.

### Middle of the Road Solution

Those battling the center-right government over the cuts include Social Democrat and Parliament Member Jan Hamáček, who considers the austerity debate one of the most controversial issues in Parliament at the moment. "Although the Social Democrats will probably lose this battle, we want to take a look at other solutions to the budget deficit," he said. These solutions include increasing corporate, income and sales tax in a way that would cause the rich to be taxed more than the poor, he

## ECONOMICS / TNP AUTUMN 2010

said during a meeting at Parliament. This, along with not-so-drastic budget cuts, would provide a more balanced solution.

“The current coalition government pledged during their campaign not to tax the rich, so they feel they cannot fall through on this promise,” Hamáček said. “They are also more conservative, so they believe that big companies actually need to be taxed less in order to flourish, especially in this economy. But we need to focus on something that doesn’t put so much pressure on middle class people.”

Those who oppose the center-right government’s austerity measures completely, such as the labor unions, are more in favor of taxing the rich—but Macháček says this may not be any more effective. “It’s a political symbol to tax the rich, but you can’t get much out of these taxes,” he said. “You have to have a balance of cuts and tax increase. Here the coalition government says just cuts—and labor unions are saying no cuts, only tax increases. But the best is when you have non-ideological experts, who offer a middle-of-the-road solution.”



According to a recent poll, 58 percent of Czechs believe the austerity measures will lead to a slower economic recovery. Photo courtesy of Lecia Bushak.

# Solar Power in the Spotlight: Economic and Environmental Sustainability in the Czech Republic

Nancy Ryerson\*

In recent months, solar power has shone a poor light on renewable energy in the Czech Republic. With media reports blaming higher energy bills on solar power, it is not surprising that the Energy Regulatory Office (ERO) wants to cut subsidies and add a tax on solar energy that would affect solar power companies and investors alike. But green energy experts worry that discouraging investment in solar energy in this way could spell bad news for renewable energy—an industry that many believe has undeveloped economic potential for the Czech Republic.

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Today, more and more experts are saying that alternative energy sources such as solar, biomass, and wind can offer a chance for economic security and energy independence, resulting in positive change for both energy consumers and the environment.

But economists and solar power experts worry that this green potential, especially in terms of solar energy, is at risk of losing both funding and interest. On 2 November *The Prague Monitor* reported that according to the Czech Photovoltaic Industry Association and Frantisek Smolka, president of a group of solar investors, the proposed 26 percent tax on solar energy would damage 1,450 companies and

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endanger 5,000 jobs in the solar power industry. Almost all solar power plants are funded by bank loans, and Smolka predicts that plants will not be able to make payments on time because of the higher tax.

“The fastest way to kill a renewable energy industry is to turn subsidies on and off,” said Eric Zencey, environmental economist and professor at Empire State College in the U.S. and in Prague. “An individual won’t invest if there’s uncertainty.” In addition to potentially damaging the solar energy industry as it stands now, Zencey suggests that this controversy could also discourage future investors from becoming involved in solar energy. Energy experts such as Zencey believe that what might “kill” the renewable energy industry are these kinds of financial missteps that discourage investment and place the industry in a poor light.

In the past year, energy from solar power in the Czech Republic increased by one-half due to generous subsidies introduced by the Energy Regulatory Office. Though solar energy still only accounts for about 1 percent of total energy in the Czech Republic, this was a step forward for a country known more for its coal use than for green energy. The subsidies were introduced to cover the high costs of building a solar energy plant.

Financial trouble began when the price of producing solar energy dropped due to cheaper solar plant infrastructure from China. When solar power plant material costs went down and it became much cheaper to install solar panels and build solar power plants, these subsidies were not adjusted accordingly. Investors jumped at the opportunity to receive a very fast payback on their money because of the favorable subsidies. The market then became flooded with energy that had to be purchased at a certain cost, regardless of the actual cost of producing that energy.

Starting in January and February, the Energy Regulatory Office began taking action against predicted price hikes because of the flooded market, though predictions varied as to the exact amount prices would rise. Forecasts ranged from 8 percent, according to solar energy companies, to 22 percent according to the Czech energy company ČEZ. The numbers may vary based on the predictors' stakes in the solar power issue. The lower numbers came from solar energy companies. ČEZ may have provided higher numbers because of the company's share in the coal mining industry, an industry that would be threatened by renewable energy. Despite these discrepancies, the ERO did not allow any new solar plants or panels to be attached to the energy grid in response to these predictions. Together, these reactions suggest a negative view towards the economic value of green energy that could be one factor keeping the country from taking advantage of green energy opportunities.

### **The Current Energy Situation in the Czech Republic**

According to the state energy policy adopted in 2004, the top energy priorities of the Czech Republic include gaining energy independence; maximizing the safety of energy sources, including nuclear; and promoting sustainable energy development. The country must also follow standards set by the Kyoto Protocol to lower its emissions by 8 percent below 1990 levels. While the country has met and exceeded this goal—it has reduced its emissions by 22 percent—its reduction is still below the average EU level. This could be because the Czech Republic still receives about 60 percent of its energy from high-polluting brown coal. Approximately 30 percent of its energy comes from nuclear power. A small percentage of energy also comes from natural gas. According to Eurostat, eight percent comes from renewable energy sources, most of which is biofuel and water energy. The average percentage of renewable energy use in the EU is 21 percent.

As the largest energy company in the Czech Republic, ČEZ plays a large role in energy politics and concerns in the country. Additionally, the Czech government has a 69 percent stake in the company. The company owns 10 coal-fired power plants and 2 nuclear power plants. Though ČEZ currently owns 2 solar power plants, the company supports cutting back subsidies and imposing taxes on renewable energy. This may be because the economics of solar energy, as an example, are not always favorable to the energy company.



Courtesy of Jiří Sedláček

Solar panels near Dukovany Nuclear Power Station.

“Part of the cost of energy is based on trades made by ČEZ on the energy market,” said Martin Mikeska of Friends of the Earth, an environmental NGO in the Czech Republic. “In the end, it will make it more difficult to keep raising electricity prices if prices are already high related to the market, which is the case with solar.”

In other words, ČEZ and other energy companies would be less likely to profit financially if the price of solar remains steady. There is also less room to raise prices

if prices are already stabilized at a certain level because of the inherent cost of solar energy. This suggests that ČEZ could be another factor holding the country back from increased renewable energy usage.

### The Problem with Coal and Nuclear Energy

The importance of and focus on coal could be another component of the Czech energy picture that keeps money and interest away from renewable energy in the country. Coal is a domestic energy source that provides a large number of jobs in the country. However, recent statistics suggest that coal may be on the decline in the Czech Republic. For example, in order to meet EU market standards and reach emission reduction goals set down in the Kyoto Protocol, the country reduced its coal use by about 22 percent from 1993 to 2001, according to a study conducted by the NGO Methane to Markets. According to the Ministry of Industry and Trade, in the first half of 2010 Czech coal mining declined by 6.3 percent for brown coal, the most used coal. Black coal mining decreased by 0.5 percent.

“Compared to the 1990s, there are 70 percent fewer jobs in the coal industry in the Czech Republic,” said Mikeska. “Coal is so 19th century. We need to move into the 21st.”

Earlier in the year, the Czech Republic considered lifting established coal mining bans in the country but this measure was voted down. Coal companies wanted the ban to be lifted so that the Czech Republic would have a supply of brown coal beyond 2030, when supplies are expected to run out. If the bans had been lifted, several villages in northern Bohemia would have been destroyed. This controversy suggests that the Czech Republic’s dependency on coal cannot be physically sustained—there is only so much coal to be mined. In this way, coal may not be an

economically or environmentally sustainable source of energy for future generations.

The other main source of power in the Czech Republic is nuclear energy. Nuclear is favored in the country because it is a domestic energy source sometimes viewed as more “sustainable” than coal, as it does not release greenhouse gases. However, experts and statistics suggest that nuclear may not be the most sustainable energy source ecologically or economically. While nuclear appears to be a domestic resource, Russia continues to be a major supplier of nuclear fuel used in the country’s reactors because the plants are of Russian origin. Furthermore, nuclear waste can be expensive and difficult to dispose of in a safe way.

“Outside of economics, if we use nuclear power we need a strong government that would be stable for 40,000 years, because that’s how long we’ll have to take care of the waste,” said Zencey. Nuclear waste is highly toxic and remains radioactive for thousands of years. Some storage solutions include burying it deep underground or placing it in strong storage containers, but overall, the storage question for radioactive waste has not been answered. This suggests that while nuclear energy may appear to be an improvement over coal energy, it still relies on imports from Russia and may not be ecologically sustainable because of its toxic waste.

### **The Economic Benefits of Green Energy for the Czech Republic**

Though recent media reports regarding solar energy suggest that renewable energy is expensive and detrimental to the economy, many environmental and economic experts agree that the best way for the Czech Republic to meet all of its proposed energy goals is in fact through green energy.

“The Czech Republic has to cut emissions, and it will be very costly if we don’t act. It’s just about how we do it, if we push the green economy,” said Mikeska. “We have to decide if we’ll be a loser state with restrictions, or if we will win and gain jobs.”

Pushing the green economy can involve a wide range of energy sources. Using solar as an example, there are 4,000 potential jobs in the solar industry, according to a study conducted by Bronislav Bechník of the Brno Institute of Technology in January of this year. Comparatively, 300,000 people are employed in green energy in Germany, said former Czech Green Party leader Martin Bursik at a panel on green energy jobs during the Forum 2000 conference. Germany is one country that has invested heavily in green energy.

Studies suggest that green energy can help the Czech Republic move towards its goal of attaining energy independence. According to the Independent Experts Energy Commission, a group created by the Czech government to assess the country’s long-term energy needs, the country has the potential to be completely energy independent using mostly green energy sources, especially biomass (energy derived from plant waste) by 2050. Coal use is projected to fall from 60 percent of total energy use to 12 percent. Though this projected plan includes nuclear energy as a source of green energy, the Czech Republic could instead employ several other green options, including biomass, solar, hydropower and wind energy. Biomass and solar especially have the added benefit of offering individuals the chance to create energy from the home through solar panels or biomass incinerators. These investments would be particularly feasible with the help of government incentives and subsidies.

“Any nation that is not energy self-sufficient will find itself not fully autonomous,” said Zencey. “Should every household be energy independent? Saying that might be severe, but there could certainly be independent villages.” This suggests that green energy could be the simplest way for the Czech Republic to attain energy independence, as both individuals and the country as a whole can invest in it with relative ease, especially with government help for independent households.

### The Way Forward

In terms of the renewable energy source most in the spotlight, solar energy, experts feel that while solar power subsidies have flown out of control in the Czech Republic, the situation should be managed so as not to destroy the industry or punish those who invested money before the solar boom.

“The solution is to not tax everyone on the same level. Four years ago, the payback was normal,” said Evžen Kočenda, economics professor at New York University in Prague. “Just tax those who put panels into operation this year, and set the taxes in a way so that the investment is the same for everyone.” This is one example of a solution to the current problem and to any future issues with subsidies. Similar difficulties arose in both Spain and Germany when their solar industries boomed. In Germany, subsidies were adjusted accordingly, while in Spain the solar market was allowed to temporarily collapse. Kočenda suggests that miscalculated subsidies do not have to mean the end for solar energy in the Czech Republic—as shown in the example of Germany, the solar program can potentially end in success.

Subsidies are necessary for starting renewable energy programs, said Kočenda, but they must be handled appropriately. As mentioned, Zencey suggested that an individual would not invest if he or she were unaware of where the market will go, so the best way for the Czech Republic to encourage investment could be to smartly

Photo courtesy of Martin Strachň / Wikimedia Commons



Solar panels on a family house in Slavkov u Brna.

regulate subsidies and other incentives so that potential investors can more easily predict the market. Successful incentives in other countries include an offer from the French government of a discount on an

individual's income tax if that person purchased a biomass incinerator. Germany successfully implemented a graduated subsidy plan for solar energy. In many countries, individuals with installed solar panels have the opportunity to sell energy gained from solar panels back to the energy company, sometimes at a small profit. One can easily conclude that there are many options for the Czech Republic and individuals to invest in a green economy.

In this way, it seems that the removal of coal, nuclear and natural gas from the energy picture of the Czech Republic would not create an economic downfall for the country. Instead, economic and environmental experts suggest that if the Czech Republic takes advantage of its renewable resources on a national level, the country can move one step closer to being both energy independent and environmentally sustainable.

# Getting What You Pay For: Tuition and Higher Education

Elizabeth Dana\*

Like many students in the Czech Republic, Ivana Hruzová spent five years earning her bachelor's and master's degrees at a public university without paying a single Czech Crown in tuition. After she graduated, she decided to continue her studies at Charles University, another public institution, in a post-graduate program that required a small tuition fee.

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Hruzová noticed the difference. In the tuition-based program, the classes were smaller. They were taught by professionals in her desired field of study, not graduate students.

The way she saw it, “because we were paying for the program, we got the better teachers and professors.” Instead of accepting a lower quality because the student pays nothing out of pocket, tuition helps “people expect more for their money.”

Since ending Communist rule in 1989 and joining the European Union (EU) in 2004, the Czech Republic has made large strides towards catching up with its Western neighbors in education, including an increasing number of students attending university. Graduation rates at Czech universities nearly tripled between 1995 and 2008. But this influx of students, along with government budget deficits and a global recession, has left public universities short on cash, staff and resources. This has raised questions about how to fund university education and whether or not

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changing from the traditionally free European model will affect the way students think about their education.

Founded in 1347 by Emperor Charles IV, Charles University in Prague was the first university in Central Europe and is one of the oldest universities still in operation. By decree in 1348, Charles guaranteed financial security for students and teachers, financed with a special tax on the clergy. For over 650 years, this tradition has continued in the Czech Republic, as in many other European nations. Higher education, held as one of the most important aspects of a free society, is publicly funded.

However, modern strains on public budgets have led governments to question the validity of this tradition. The Czech Republic has struggled to offer students a high quality education while making ends meet. According to Organization for Economic Coordination and Development (OECD) statistics, the Czech Republic ranks 23<sup>rd</sup> among 31 OECD nations in annual expenditure per student on higher education.

“Public university education in the Czech Republic is massively underfunded,” said Laura Perry, a professor of education who has taught at the university level in the Czech Republic.

The idea of a tuition fee has been introduced as a way to improve facilities and libraries, as well as to attract talented academics who sometimes choose to work in private business due to low salaries for professors. As of 2006, professors in the Czech Republic earned less than half of what professors in the United Kingdom and France make, and less than a third of what professors in Belgium and Ireland earn, after adjustments for currency and cost of living. In all these countries, at least a small tuition or registration fee is charged at public universities. Though earning more than in other former Eastern Bloc nations, Czech professors’ salaries are nowhere near the earnings of most of their Western counterparts.

Taking this situation into account, the center-right governing coalition has announced that tuition fees will most likely be introduced as a way to close the budget gap and increase the competitiveness of Czech universities.

"We are outlining a model of postponed, socially sensitive tuition fees together with loans for students," Josef Dobes of the Public Affairs party told Czech news agency CTK in June. Policy experts expect the plan to be implemented in full by 2013.

This situation is not unique to the Czech Republic, as universities and governments throughout Europe search for new ways to fund education.

Great Britain caps tuition charges for university students at £3,290, or 91,810 CZK, but an inquiry into the funding of higher education published in October of this year caused controversy by suggesting that tuition caps be exchanged for a free-market approach where students are responsible for the cost. A government loan for the cost of university education would be paid back after graduation, but only once the graduate is making more than £21,000 a year.

"The world has moved on," Ellen Hazelkorn, head of the Higher Education Policy Unit at the Dublin Institute of Technology told the *New York Times* in response to the report. "Universities here think they're going to keep getting the same level of support from the state. There's not a hope of that."

These proposed changes to university funding have not gone over well with British students. Earlier this month, tens of thousands of students in London protested the proposed new fees and cuts in funding. Some demonstrators even stormed a building in Westminster housing the Conservative Party headquarters and the peaceful demonstration turned violent, injuring 14 people.

Students in the Czech Republic have had mixed reactions to the proposed tuition fees. Some, like Hruzová, are not necessarily opposed to the idea of tuition, hoping

that it will increase the quality of their education. The Ministry of Education released a poll in November of last year finding that one third of Czech university students would support a small tuition fee, especially if payment were deferred until after graduation. Accordingly, the tuition model proposed by the government in the Czech Republic would not exceed CZK 10,000 per semester and would be payable after graduation.

Though many university students may be thrilled at the idea of bigger libraries, better paid professors and new laser printers, some believe that changing the funding of university education could cause more problems than it would solve.

"It's attractive to hold out this idea that if you have more money coming in it will solve all your problems," said Chris Montoni, a lecturer at the private Anglo-American University in Prague. "It is at times like these when everyone is cutting back that you wonder if it is better for education or better for accounting."

Montoni, an American, holds the American higher education system as the extreme situation on the scale of educational marketization. Many Americans, he said, have the attitude that "I deserve an A because I paid \$60,000 for it."

Students who oppose the proposed tuition charges worry that a government tuition program will not achieve the desired results, and they will simply be paying more for the same education.

"Paying for education is by no means a guarantee of higher quality," wrote the organization Education is Not a Commodity in a press release for their June 2010 protest in Prague against the proposed fees. "Arguments for tuition are simplistic, sometimes emotional and do not reflect the negative experience of foreign higher education experience."



Masaryk University Computer Center for students. Courtesy of Petr Dimitrov. This photo is used with permission and license specified by the author.

Education is Not a Commodity also worries that adding money to the mix will change the well-established relationship between student and university, a relationship that has existed since the educational subsidy program of Charles IV.

“The current emerging coalition government tries to deny the concept of the university and changes the status of ‘student’ to ‘client,’” reads the press release. “The payment of a service in university education moves to the level of purely personal gain.”

For Ivo Šlosarčík, a professor at Charles University, the “spirit of the university” can be preserved if tuition is implemented, but only if it is emphasized as a practical solution to the lack of funding, not a fundamental change in education.

“The message from the tuition system must be that you are contributing to the cost of teaching, but you are not buying a diploma,” he said.

Though tuition is a highly probable solution to the university system’s monetary woes, Šlosarčík echoed other experts when he stressed that it will not solve everything. “It is not a panacea,” he said. “It must be well-communicated, well administered, transparent and have clear rules. They must make it an efficient governmental project, not an administrative disaster for teachers and students.”

While the Czech Republic has had a mixed track record when it comes to administrative disasters, many academics are hopeful that a correctly implemented

tuition system could solve some of the biggest issues without creating too many new problems.

Professor Perry, who corresponded by email from her office at Murdoch University in Australia, believes that tuition will have to be introduced to improve quality and access in the Czech higher education system, but that tuition must be implemented with the right philosophy in mind.

“The main thing is to make sure it accomplishes the right goals,” she said. “Improving working conditions for academics, improving teaching and learning, increasing access and participation. It shouldn’t just be a revenue generating exercise that lessens the government’s responsibility to adequately fund higher education.”



Charles University, Faculty of Arts. Courtesy of Mirekk.

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