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The Theatre of Historical Sources. Some Methodological Problems in Analysing the Post World War II Extreme Rightwing Movements in Belgium and in Hungary

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A tanulmány a II. világháború utáni magyar népbirósági tárgyalások jegyzőkönyveinek és a belga szélsőjobboldalról rendelkezésre álló titkosszolgálati források elemzésével arra a kérdésre keresi a választ milyen módszertannal lehet ezeket a forrásokat történeti kutatás számára hasznosítani. A tanulmány középpontjában a forrásokhoz való hozzá nem férés, és a források értelmezésének politikatörténeti pozitívista episztemológiájának megkérdőjelezése áll.

Met “Het theater van de historische bron” wilden Andrea Peto en Klaartje Schrijvers een comparatief onderzoek verrichten naar de methodologische problemen die opduiken in onderzoek naar het extreem rechts verleden in Europa. Twee case studies werden onder de loep genomen: extreem rechtse netwerken in België met roots in het verzetsverleden in plaats van de collaboratie met Nazi Duitsland, en vrouwelijke militanten van de Hakenkruis Partij in Hongarije tijdens de oorlog. In beide gevallen gaat het om nieuw onderzoek, dat bovendien indruist tegen de traditionele historiografie in respectievelijk België en Hongarije. In deze eerste aanzet tot een vernieuwend comparatief onderzoek in de Europese geschiedenis werd vooral gefocust op de problematiek van de ontbrekende bron, de ontoegankelijke bron en de bronnen die nooit de intentie hadden om te worden ontdekt. In de verschillen binnen beide nationale geschiedenissen – een voormalig communistisch land (Hongarije) en een westers land, de facto anticommunistisch tijdens de Koude Oorlog (België) – werden ook gelijkenissen aangetroffen. De creatie van de bron en de weloverwogen politieke strategie achter deze creatie bleek alvast grensoverschrijdend te zijn. Maar vooral het positivistisch credo van de ‘truth claim’ vormde de rode draad. Welk verhaal kunnen we immers vertellen als een geschiedenis zich niet wil laten zien?

INTRODUCTION

In post-war Europe many countries have been confronted with the revival of extreme rightwing tendencies. These tendencies originated both in the extreme right with roots in the collaboration with Nazi Germany and in the extreme right that went into the resistance movement during the Second World War. Some of the latter continued their underground activities even during the Cold War, as they were called to serve in the numerous stay-behind networks in Europe, patronized by the CIA and by NATO.

Much has been written about the revival of the extreme right in Europe, but not all the cases have been studied yet. The participation of women in the Hungarian Nazi Party and their role and perception in transitional justice for instance has never been examined before. Research into the extreme rightwing networks in Belgium originating from the resistance movement is almost completely absent from Belgian historiography. These two cases are now being studied by Andrea Petö (for Hungary) and Klaartje Schrijvers (for Belgium) respectively.

In this chapter we give initial impetus to our research by comparing the two cases. At first sight our proposal might seem methodologically and theoretically far-fetched, but the chapter's initial aim is to underline what there is in common in doing historical research on such material in a former Communist country and in a western and *de facto* anti-communist country in the context of the Cold War.

The focus is on the methodological problems the researcher must deal with, the accessibility or inaccessibility of the sources, and the ways these sources should be interpreted, while questioning the positivist epistemological context of writing political history. By placing the Belgian and Hungarian cases side by side, the two researchers also try to explore a different kind of comparative research in European history. Besides the concrete facts as they appear in different European contexts, the methodological and political problems that the historian must deal with are especially emphasized.

On the fringe of this focus, both cases also deal with gender. Through its power to form identity, political and social discourse became homogenous and exclusive. Therefore a gender analysis is especially problematic. In the Hungarian case, gender is explicitly presented, since the focus is on the story of women in a tribunal predominantly run by men. The Belgian case deals more implicitly with gender because of the silent absence of women in a quasi exclusively male dominated professional elite; namely that of industrialists and bankers.

Professional identity, however, is clearly not the only factor that moved these people towards an extreme rightwing ideology. In both the Hungarian and the Belgian cases we notice how a social identity had been constructed in the broader political, economic, social and even gendered context of the Second World War. Social identity thus is not restricted to professional identity. In the comparison between two different countries and two different histories, it becomes clear how a social identity can be constructed on the ruins of a battle lost; namely the battle against democracy.

SEARCHING FOR THE RED INK

In an old joke from the defunct German Democratic Republic, a German worker gets a job in Siberia; aware that all mail will be read by censors, he tells his friends: “Let’s establish a code: if a letter you get from me is written in ordinary blue ink, it’s true; if it’s written in red ink, it’s false”. After a month, his friends get the first letter, written in blue ink: “Everything is wonderful here: the shops are full, food is abundant, apartments are large and properly heated, cinemas show films from the West, there are many beautiful girls ready for an affair – the only thing you can’t get is red ink”¹.

This often quoted anecdote sheds light on one of the problems this chapter wants to address: namely the secrecy of the sources or rather how to use sources that were aimed to remain secret forever. These sources were not written in order to keep a record as inventories or newspapers do, but they were consciously aimed to construct a meta-reality, a duplicity or even triplicity of realities. For historical research, where the dominant narrative of political history is still to write ‘what really happened’, this constitutes a problem.

In the case of Belgium, extreme rightwing networks actually did (and do) exist, but they were rarely seen or heard. In Communist Hungary the extreme rightwing networks did not exist as such (high profile extreme rightwing politicians left the Soviet Occupational Zone) but they were made visible and heard by the Communist secret police. In both countries the collaboration with Nazi Germany was very strong, but while Hungary was essentially interested in putting the collaborationist past into oblivion, the Belgian authorities organised a true witch-hunt for collaborators. The context of the Cold War alienated both policies even more. In Hungary the Communist Party occupied the discursive space and the rhetoric of democracy which was made equivalent to anti-fascism, while in Belgium the rhetoric of democracy was considered identical to anti-communism. In their hunt for everyone who was supposed to be Communist and on the other hand everyone who was suspected of collaboration, the Belgian authorities for a long time remained blind to the extreme rightwing tendencies originating from the resistance against Nazi Germany.

The red ink story illustrates how difficult it is to tell the truth, and how impossible it is to find out what is true if we do not possess the code to decode and transform the lie. In order to make an adequate analysis of the methodological problems we are dealing with, it is, however, necessary to have a deeper knowledge of the institutional background of both countries. Therefore, in the next section we compare the Belgian and Hungarian archives and institutions and analyse the differences and similarities in the production of documents later used by historians².

INSTITUTIONAL BACKGROUND: INSTITUTIONS PRODUCING DOCUMENTS. SIMILARITIES IN DOCUMENTING OCCUPATION AND RESISTANCE

Horthy’s Hungary was a reluctant ally of Nazi Germany. As it became more obvious that the Germans would not win the war, the regime was considering dropping out of

the conflict³. To halt the Hungarian political elite's flirtation with the Allies, the German forces occupied the country on 19 March 1944. The quickest deportation in the history of the Holocaust took place in Hungary after that⁴. On 15th October 1944 the Arrow Cross Party took over as the Hungarian Quisling government, led by Szálasi. Looting and killing started in the country. The total number of war losses consisted of around 600,000 Jews.

People's tribunals were instituted in Hungary in 1945 in order to provide justice after World War II⁵. However, the Law of 1946 VII on "Protecting the Republic Protecting the State Order and the Republic" changed the character of the jurisdiction in the sense that the People's tribunals also became a tool of the class struggle. As to the documentation resulting from the trials, we know that approximately 30% of the records produced by the Budapest People's Court and People's Tribunal were transferred from the Budapest Court to the Budapest Municipal Archives. From 1975 until 1989 the Ministry of Interior transferred files to this archive as well. When the Budapest People's Tribunal ceased to exist the files were given to the state protection authority (ÁVH). The files have been organised and inventoried there. After 1989 the Historical Authority was formed in order to handle the documents of the former secret services. During this process files from the People's tribunals were also transferred to them. However the list of the documents transferred is not known even today, unlike the case of the documents kept in the Municipal Archive of Budapest, where out of 70,000 perpetrators 6,300 female perpetrators and war criminals are listed.

During the trials in the People's tribunals, influenced by the Hungarian Communist Party, it was a vital interest to undermine publicly the previous regime⁶. In the case of Hungary the label: *nyilas* (a member of the Hungarian Arrow Cross Party) was used more freely both in public discourse and in the trials. Arrow Cross Party cards were only rarely found during house searches, so in most cases if someone was seen with an Arrow Cross armband that was already enough for them to be labelled a "member of the Arrow Cross Party" by the People's tribunals⁷. Furthermore almost anybody could get access to an Arrow Cross armband, so neither formal membership nor admission procedures were needed, or even possible, since the Red Army was quickly approaching. So *nyilas* became a political label rather than a category of actual party membership.

Belgium was founded in 1830 under the severe restriction that it must preserve absolute neutrality. The First World War, however, obliged the Belgian government to abolish its rigorous neutral status because of German invasion. In the interwar period many people pursued a revision of the neutrality policy. On the eve of the Second World War, both the government and King Leopold III considered neutrality the best solution for keeping Belgium out of the war. The expansionistic politics of Germany, however, forced them to change their point of view⁸. On the other hand, danger also emerged from within their own society. 'Activism', originating in the First World War, and pursuing the annexation of Flanders with the Netherlands, developed during the interwar period into an extreme pro-Nazi German movement, namely the *Vlaams Nationaal Verbond* [Flemish National League] (VNV)⁹. In Wallonia there was also a strong ex-

treme rightwing movement, REX, that sympathized with Nazi Germany and pursued an annexation of the entire country by Germany¹⁰. In these political movements one could hardly speak of neutrality. On the contrary, they formed an intrinsic danger for the neutral status that the Belgian government was trying to maintain.

In May 1940 the German army invaded Belgium and both the government and the king were forced to choose sides. The government left for London and joined the Allies. The king, however, remained in Belgium as a *de facto* prisoner of war in his own country. Here the seed was sown for the later Royal Question since the government blamed the king for those actions¹¹. Furthermore, various military circles also regretted the king's quick capitulation, although they were very much aware of that they had little chance of defeating the German army. A couple of months later, underground resistance armies were created with the knowledge of Leopold III. In close contact with the British secret intelligence services, diverse Belgian intelligence and action services operated behind the scenes of occupied Belgium. But the underground resistance movement had to deal with many difficulties. Due to the presence of the king, Belgium was given only a military government under Nazi control and not a civil government, as was the case in the Netherlands¹². Consequently, military control was very intense, and diverse collaborating Belgian organisations were allocated both military and police tasks. Their purpose was to infiltrate the resistance movement and finally to defeat them. In September 1944 the Allies finally succeeded in liberating Belgium. From that moment on the government started hunting down the thousands of people who had collaborated with the Germans. For Belgium, the history of the Second World War was determined by the shadow of this collaboration¹³.

Consequently, most research has focused on these black pages in Belgian history. Only at a latter stage was the resistance movement dealt with (especially the communist *Onafhankelijkheidsfront (Front de l'Indépendance)* [The Independent Front] because it was the largest resistance group during the war)¹⁴. Economic collaboration and the (extreme) rightwing resistance movements both during and after the war received less attention. The topic of collaboration is noticeably overrepresented not only as regards research but also because of the large quantity of written sources useful for research on this topic available to historians.

The documentation of the military tribunal of Belgium for instance contains a treasure trove of information about both the German occupation and the post-war repression. After the liberation several military tribunals in Belgium were responsible for the persecution of persons suspected of collaboration with the Germans. In total 235,413 acts of accusation were drawn up and eventually 57,000 people were convicted. Now, more than fifty years later, the archives are gradually being opened for consultation¹⁵.

The Centre of Study and Documentation on War and Contemporary Society (CEGESOMA) is well documented for matters concerning the Second World War, but mainly focuses on collaboration. This institution obtained the general documentation and persuasive letters of the Central Documentation Office, which from September 1944 on gathered a great number of files concerning the Germans and collaborating organisations. To a lesser

degree the leftwing (communist) resistance also has been dealt with. CEGESOMA contains the complete archive of the communist resistance movement *Front de l'Indépendance* (FI)¹⁶. Recently two CEGESOMA researchers managed to map the widespread sources of the resistance movement in Flanders, but unfortunately the Walloon sources are not included and the extreme rightwing resistance movement is underrepresented¹⁷. The Centre for Historical Documentation of the Armed Forces (CHD) contains several microfilms of foreign files about Belgian military politics. The records of the military intelligence service however cannot be consulted. The Belgian Museum of the Army contains files about the demobilized army, OTAD, and archives of reserve officers.

Finally, several other institutions, such as the General National Archives, the Ministry of Defence, the Ministry of Interior and the Archive of the Royal Palace, also possess valuable records. But even in these institutions the focus is on collaboration and leftwing resistance. The common thread in the interest in the communist resistance was the alleged communist threat before, during and after the war. The government tried to intercept a possible assumption of power through espionage and the creation of a vast number of files.

In spite of the focus on the subject, research into collaboration was hindered for a long period of time. The archive law in Belgium allows access to the sources only after fifty years, or in some delicate cases even after 100 years. Moreover, many archives located in Germany were transferred to Moscow after the invasion by the Red Army. Only ten years ago were these archives returned to Belgium where they are now accessible for researchers¹⁸. Furthermore, many archives of the Belgian Court of Justice disappeared in the decades following the war, because of an inadequate policy¹⁹. Recently there has been a breakthrough concerning these sources, but research is still in its preliminary stage. Research on the resistance movement is much more difficult, as naturally it left fewer sources behind. From the beginning, also, studies were affected by stereotyped ideas about the Belgian resistance movement.

In the case of the Hungarian sources the right to gain access to sources relating to 20th-century history was not an issue until 1989. Before the collapse of the communist system, the right to do research in the archives was an issue of political confidence and reliability rather than of academic competence. However after 1989 the situation changed and the newly founded archive based on secret service files (first named *Történelmi Hivatal* [Historical Office], and later *Állambiztonsági Szolgálatok Történelmi Irattára* [Historical Archive of the State Security Services]), still lacks a register of the material preserved there²⁰. Even if the question of access to information is periodically discussed in public, the issues considered are largely limited to asking who gave reports to the state security services and not who ordered and used those reports. Mirroring the Cold War division, the archive of the former Radio Free Europe moved to Budapest as Open Society Archives²¹. The OSA also contains the files of those who did receive their own files from the Archive of the State Security Service and they donated it to the OSA. The protection of the privacy of those who reported was given priority during the Hungarian transition²².

POLITICS OF THE SOURCES

To date the dominant myth influencing historical research on Belgium during the Second World War is an imagined dichotomy of a Flemish and Catholic collaboration versus a Walloon and leftwing (meaning communist) resistance movement. The story of a Belgian rightwing resistance consequently is missing.

The dichotomy originates in an artificial distinction created in Belgium after the war, and still maintained by several researchers. The conviction that Catholic Flanders especially collaborated and that left wing Walloon entered into the resistance still exists²³. Reality was much more complicated, but is seldom elucidated. In this dichotomy we can recognise the typical 'community' question in Belgium, namely the Flemish-Walloon opposition that in the 1970s resulted in the constitution of a Flemish and Walloon community and transformed Belgium into a federal state.

It is because of the focus on this dichotomy that economic collaboration has to date been largely ignored. Economic collaboration was primarily a Walloon matter, as heavy industry (i.e. steel, coal and the weapons industry) was located in the southern part of the country. This economic collaboration, however, was not mentioned after the Second World War, because it was held responsible for the so-called 'Belgian Miracle': that is, because of the fact that the Belgian economy was one of the few in Europe that came through the war almost intact²⁴.

Neither did the phenomenon of a rightwing and/or even extreme rightwing resistance fit into the dichotomy as it was conceived in the post-war period. Not only was the extreme right a synonym for collaboration, the extreme right resistance was above all a Belgian case and not restricted to one of the two parts of the country. To put it briefly, this is a Belgian story that goes beyond the Flemish-Walloon dichotomy, and herein probably lies the reason for which it has been neglected until today.

In the case of Hungary, where there was minuscule resistance but massive collaboration with Nazi Germany, the situation is different²⁵. In the post 1945 period, all political forces were interested in picturing the Arrow Cross Party as a party of nonentities and marginal social elements and to consider them the only ones responsible for the losses in the Second World War. The common aim of the Communist Party together with the former elite was to shift the responsibility for collaboration to the Arrow Cross. The Arrow Cross was portrayed by both of them as a marginal criminalised minority. Both groups also agreed to shift the responsibility to the Germans, who were labelled as exclusively responsible for what happened during the war²⁶.

WHO ARE WE DEALING WITH: A PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY?

A cursory prosopographic investigation into the Belgian extreme rightwing network revealed a remarkable continuity in the professional careers of the protagonists²⁷. Firstly, a very large group had a military career, often reaching the rank of colonel or general.

The number of reserve officers in this network was very large. Most had already made a career for themselves before the Second World War, for example in the National Legion, known as pro-New Order and pro-Mussolini. Secondly, most of the protagonists obtained Masters' degrees at university. A relatively high number even became professors. Those who had graduated in law studies were the most numerous. Furthermore Masters' or Doctors in Economics and Masters' in History were very common. The latter especially often developed careers in journalism, as directors or chief editors of diverse extreme right wing journals. Only a small percentage, but no less important, made careers in the church. Thirdly, and this is the most striking continuity, almost all of the protagonists involved in the extreme rightwing network had one or more positions on the board of an industrial or holding company or a bank. Moreover, most of these companies belonged to the four large financial/industrial families in Belgium; namely the Boël/Solvay/Janssen group, the Société Générale de Belgique group, the Lambert group and the de Launoit group. Furthermore these four groups were mutually connected through marriage and stock ownership. They cover the whole network examined here. Finally, some of the protagonists sooner or later accepted a political mandate, but always in the Conservative Catholic Party (PSC/CVP). This extreme rightwing network never engaged itself as a whole in an extreme rightwing party, a fact which fundamentally distinguishes them from the extreme right with roots in the collaboration with Nazi Germany. It is especially their professional identity that makes this network peculiar, because as a powerful economic elite the protagonists were never indicated as guilty of suspicious political leanings, nor were they identified as a danger to democracy.

As far as the professional identity of women in the Arrow Cross Party is concerned, it is worth underlining that this party was founded as a part of the misogynist tendencies of interwar Hungarian political life in which 'women' (especially the 'new woman' – the employed, non-married woman) were represented as unpredictable and dangerous for male hegemony in economic, political and cultural life. Hence there was a tendency to cut back women's participation in public life, and especially their access to education after the Second World War²⁸. The women who adhered to the Party constitute a heterogeneous group consisting of four different types of women with different professional identities.

The first female members of the Hungarian Arrow Cross Party were those who joined the first rightwing extremist parties. They were the disappointed professionals, who, as the first generation of employed women (typist, accountants) were mostly ethnic Hungarians who had migrated to Hungary from those parts of Hungary which were detached in 1919. These women did not have any other supporting social network but the newly formed political movement of the Arrow Cross. They were mostly single and as employed women they had found that their professional and social mobility were hindered by the political system.

The next group consisted of criminal redistributors of lower and lower middle class origin. These women represented the majority of the People's tribunal cases due to con-

crete reasons (financial or love); they wanted to take revenge using the Holocaust as a social policy to change the distribution of goods. Among these women there were some who were mentally ill or had obvious psychological problems.

However the third group consisted of rebellious revolutionary women of middle and upper classes origin. They had good schooling, wore men's uniforms and rode horses like men²⁹. This anti-modernist politics in modernist gesture of trans-dressing creates a space for activity in the public sphere previously closed to women. Their professional identities were based on rebellion.

The best known in public discourse and the most visible group is the fourth one, those who were family members of the leaders of the Arrow Cross Party, of middle and lower middle class origin. These women were without professional aspirations. Married or related to men (husbands, brothers, fathers) who had joined the Arrow Cross Party, they were driven because of these bonds to party membership. Their professional identity was that of 'wife', or supporter of their husbands or relatives in the public space.

In post 1945 public discourse, however, the criminal redistributors and the relatives of male party leaders were present because they fit into the public discourse shaped by a tendency to reconstruct the patriarchal gender contract challenged by the war.

METHODOLOGICAL PROBLEMS

Secret sources – secrecy of sources

In both the Belgian and in the Hungarian cases, we can note that the protagonists tried or even still try to keep their secret. Keeping their secret was and still is their main strategy. This fact produces great difficulties for research into extreme rightwing networks. The similarities with the difficulties of researching secret societies, such as free masonry, are striking.

Masonic organizations are not very open to historical research but in many countries research has been done with success. The real essence of being a mason has never been completely elucidated, but many questions about for instance the internal structure and the main activities of masonic secret societies have been answered. The methods utilized can be applied to research into extreme rightwing networks: such as infiltrating the secret society, interviewing those involved but with the condition of guaranteed anonymity, comparing one society of which there is a lot known with another that is less known and filling in the gaps with reasonable conjecture. However, it still remains a delicate task and the pitfalls are innumerable. The difficulties begin in deciding what questions should be asked, and above all what hypotheses can be made. When a researcher for instance postulates that free masonry has an important influence on political decision making, he will be confronted with a wall of complete silence. Such a presumed influence is actually a contradiction in terms with the oath that masons take at the moment of initiation. Nevertheless even a non-mason notices that many highly placed political persons are connected to masonic lodges. The question should automatically be asked, where can we

draw the line. Yet these incongruities keep on astonishing many researchers, and there is a high risk of ending up with a conspiracy myth. The lodge, however, cloaks itself in silence and is not obliged to give any justification. Silence constructs knowledge. Consequently, the researcher is left with many questions, and many speculations. Research into extreme rightwing networks deals with similar problems. Conspiracy theories especially should be avoided. The researcher who wants to penetrate to the core of these networks must maintain some distance, must avoid any commitment, and above all any prejudice if possible at all. The main problem is the interpretation of the sources. Any research into secret societies and underground networks forces us to turn to such interpretations, because of a lack of written facts for historical research.

Research into extreme right wing networks in Belgium after the Second World War needs to face even more specific problems. Firstly, this extreme right was not seen as such, by itself or even by the public, because it never belonged to an extreme rightwing political party. Secondly, this extreme right went into the resistance movement during the Second World War, so it escaped from the stigma that collaborationists had to deal with. Finally, this network developed from the industrial and financial elite, whose economic interests predominated over their political interests. Economic business was and is fully embedded in the global capitalist world. Consequently the Belgian network does not restrict itself geographically. In contrary, it is fully embedded in a European and Atlantic network.

Nevertheless the extreme rightwing networks left behind some traces. In the post-war period the extreme right attracted the attention of both the State Security Police and the Criminal Police for several reasons. After liberation the extreme right resistance refused to surrender their arms and therefore formed a threat to the laborious reconstruction of public order. Subsequently the extreme rightwing resistance went underground, where it continued its activities. Especially as regards the Royal Question, it took a leading position in stirring up public opinion³⁰. In the middle of the Royal Question, the State Security Police and the Criminal Police gradually made the underground activities of the extreme rightwing resistance their major target. In the beginning sporadically, but later on systematically, the activities of this 'sub society' were mapped.

The archive of the Counsel for the Prosecutor of Brussels, deposited at the General National Archives of Anderlecht, contains valuable information for this research. Important protagonists and several suspicious organisations were investigated. The archives of the Counsel for the Prosecutor of Ghent and Antwerp, deposited at the General National Archives of Beveren Waas, also contain interesting records. The archive of the Counsel for the Prosecutor of Liège unfortunately is not accessible, because most of the files were destroyed³¹. The State Security Police contains much information but unfortunately its doors are closed to researchers. In contrast to other countries (for instance in the Netherlands, Germany, the Scandinavian countries and France) the Belgian State Security Police refuses any access. No transparency has been achieved so far. At the end of 2005 the Belgian State Security Police opened an exhibition detailing 175 years of the State Security Police in Belgium, but nothing important was revealed.

Another possibility resource for researchers on extreme rightwing networks in Belgium originating from the rightwing resistance are foreign archives. The archives of the OSS and the CIA in the National Archives in Washington contain several records dealing with the post-war activities of this network, and especially in relation to the 'stay-behind' networks that were installed and 'left-behind' in Europe by both NATO and the CIA after the war. These networks especially recruited within the extreme rightwing networks, since it was evident that neither collaborators nor leftwing resistance members could be trusted. Above all, these networks had the purpose of parrying a possible invasion by the Russians.

The study by a Swiss investigator, Daniël Ganser in *Gladio. NATO's Secret Armies*³² shows us, however, that the CIA also refused access to their archive when there was any danger that the involvement of the CIA itself or of other institutions in forming the stay-behind networks might be revealed³³. When in 1990, first in Italy and subsequently in other European countries, the Gladio network was dismantled, both the CIA and NATO refused any cooperation. All parliamentary committees of inquiry were confronted with a stubborn silence. The ministers of Interior and Foreign Affairs, Defence and Justice who had been involved in Gladio suffered from collective amnesia. Gladio was founded in 1947 initially to parry a possible Soviet invasion, but derailed during the following decades into a rightwing terrorist organisation that blamed the extreme leftwing for all the assaults that it actually committed itself. By doing so the extreme right tried to shift national politics towards more repressive policies.

This is a Cold War issue *par excellence*, but from another perspective. The extreme rightwing resistance without doubt formed the major recruitment basis for the Gladio network. Unfortunately, the lack of 'hard' facts and their inaccessibility makes it difficult to prove exactly what happened.

MISSING SOURCES

"L'histoire se fait avec des documents. Pas de documents, pas d'histoire!"³⁴ [History is made by sources. No sources, no history!]

This positivistic credo of Langlois and Seignobos from 1898 was pronounced a long time ago, but in fact it still pursues the historian today. How to do research when no documents are available, or when the supposed 'hard' facts do not exist? What to do with an investigation where the sources are not accessible, or when the sources try to lie? What to do with research on opinions, ideas, rumours, so-called 'soft' facts, at least according to the positivistic credo?

Should we look at the Encyclopaedia of Hungarian State Security we will find that even the State Security Authority is imprisoned in the positivist paradigm defining data: "...news or information [presented] in an analysable and recordable way. Fact or detail, helps to get to know something or somebody. Data can be used if only the source of the data is not in danger. One of the most important tasks of the state security authority

is to obtain quickly reliable data about the enemy (collection of information). Active (operational) work can be done only based on checked data”³⁵.

Nevertheless, opinions and ideas crystallize around ‘real facts’. We find them expressed in chronicles, newspapers, memoirs, in private letters and in oral traditions. In many cases these opinions and ideas, however, are inconsistent with reality. Yet that is why they form a valuable object for research. After all, unintentional or intentionally formed representations of ‘facts’ or ‘data’ characterize the study of the mentality of people in specific periods of time. Moreover, this meta-knowledge or the conscious giving of false information has often been more important for the development of history than the real facts. These so-called ‘non-events’ sometimes have much more impact on public opinion than the real events themselves. Constructing events sometimes takes the attention away from real events.

The question of how to handle the ‘truth claim’ in historical research, actually shapes the way of our common understanding of the theoretical and methodological problems we face in analysing secret service documents and People’s tribunal trials³⁶. In both types of sources, the ‘truth’ is even more important than in historical criticism. In the case of the court, crime should be punished and in the case of the secret service documents, political and sometimes military strategy are based on the information. The question is what kind of analytical method can we use to get beyond the truth claim?

ORAL HISTORIES

Analysing court testimonies is complicated, because the testimonies are shaped and expressed according to imagined expectations and strategies. No person with any common sense would give testimony which would weaken his or her position in court. If the defendant testifies in court, he/she uses a cultural repertoire to choose from in order to express in the best way the content he/she wants to tell us. So in this section of our chapter we analyse which factors determine the choices made because we need to clarify the process of how individuals form statements about themselves, creating self-presentations based on their interpretation of their past decisions and activities in exceptional circumstances.

At first sight oral history seems to be an obvious choice for analysis. Oral history constitutes both a critical method and a genre of inquiry; therefore it offers a methodology for analysing changing forms of female subjectivity as expressed and constructed during the trials in Hungary. The process of remembering is always painful and difficult, influenced by changing power systems. During times when cultural codes are uncertain, such as those during transitions or in transitional justice, the process of remembering is even more problematic. This was the case during the times immediately after World War II. The shared political frameworks disappeared, previous reference systems turned out to be meaningless. In this political vacuum personal stories served as the only place of remembering and a possible place for constructing and redefining a new political framework. Nonetheless there are several methodological and theoretical considerations that need to be acknowledged before we can consider court testimonies to be oral histories.

The genre and the methods of oral history were developed in the 1960s; oral historians rejected the framework of an elitist history. They tried to develop an alternative to a top-down approach of history. Nobody had shown any interest towards the memories of ordinary men and women before; now their voices could be heard. This political agenda is problematic in the case of female perpetrators. Do they too have the right to be heard? Another problem arises when the paternalistic image of the researcher who 'gives voice' to the socially and culturally oppressed is questioned. Agency which at the first phase of developing oral history writing was considered as a 'given' exercised by the storyteller, turned out to be a product of the collaboration between the interviewer and the interviewee. The stories themselves – oral history specialists argued – are the result of constructing subjectivity by both the interviewer and the interviewee and a space for remembering.

The original revolutionary goal of oral history was to change the world by telling (true) stories. But if we are looking back through the continuous existence of Holocaust denial and revival of extreme right wing parties in Europe, it is clear that these aims were not achieved. Oral history literature is often characterized by the myth that from oral testimonies we get to know the hidden 'truth'. The interviewer is considered to be in a powerless social position. But during transition trials competing interpretations of the very same events came up, and they depended on power relations³⁷. Transitional justice produces transitional truths. The question of memory studies and oral history is to see how readings of present events can be translated in the future³⁸. This way we are dealing with issues of power and identity but not with the 'truth'. The memory work emerged as the most powerful element of transition, constructing a space for narrating new forms of subjectivity. In that sense the People's tribunals constructed a place where stories about atrocities were exclusively narrated. Silence is also a product of the 'conspiracy of silence' such as in the case of rape committed by Soviet Army soldiers in Hungary³⁹. It is well-known that women rarely write *memoires* because of the lack of available cultural repertoire and lack of welcoming audiences⁴⁰.

Oral history also helps to redefine the relationship between the self and the other in a way that emerges through constant communication. The court situation is similar to this. In the case of testimony, memory is created in the form of discussion: between the judge, lawyer, attorney and defendant, an inter-subjectivity is constructed. In the case of oral history the interviewee and the interviewer are envisaging different future audiences for the interview. Each of them has a different audience in mind. Answers to questions are given keeping that audience in mind. But the People's court was different. The audience was present and very much in power in the room. The judge, on whose decision one's life depended, the audience and the journalists all had different agendas, and interpreted the very same performance differently as they witnessed it at the public trial.

In the post World War II period which created power relations till extremes, stories of holocaust survivors were not listened to⁴¹. The unwelcoming audience silenced the narratives.

Experience is accessible through a linguistic act, because language provides the repertoire which enables the narrator to narrate a story⁴². Totalitarian states emphasised

control and dominating the linguistic space that was at that time the space for expressing thoughts. Meanwhile different groups created specific meanings in order to construct an identity via epistemological space. If we do not speak about the immediate past but the 'immediated' past, then we get closer to being able to solve the puzzle of how to look at these sources. And the site of this mediation was the family where law has neither access nor direct regulative power. The construction of identity was taking place in the family, as lines were drawn between 'us' and 'them', and between pro-Soviet Hungarians and the anti-Soviets⁴³. Those who identified themselves as 'non-communist' – and that was the cornerstone of any identification that referred to crimes or non-legal acts committed in the name of the Soviet law in Hungary etc. – consisted of those who defined themselves as victims of communism and created a victimized language, a counter-discourse that made their stories 'improvisable' in a communist dominated political discourse. After 1945 the language of 'communist crimes' became a minority discourse developed against the oppression by the majority and which offered points of identification⁴⁴. So those defendants in the trials whose 'cultural repertoires', to use the term by Lamont, were following the expected patterns of remembering, were not severely condemned. The 'master frame' of being a victim constructs the possibility for any improvisation. The definition of autobiographical remembering as "an improvisational activity that forms emergent selves which gives us a sense of needed comfort and a culturally valued sense of personal coherence over time" was challenged by traumatic events of the 20th century, especially the Shoah, which, as Barclays pointed out, made "metaphoric mappings" impossible⁴⁵.

Remembering takes the mythical route producing a more or less similar, but coherent, self-presentation. If, according to Barthes, the text is a self-contained security system, it gives an illusionary or imagined control to the narrator over the production of a life story, over her life⁴⁶. This is the control the defendants believed at least that they had. In the court they would try to construct a coherent self representation keeping in mind that if they make a mistake in this they would be sent to years of imprisonment. So a proper performance in court was a question of life and death.

ANONYMOUS TESTIMONY: SOURCES IN THE PRESS

Oral testimony as took place in Hungarian courts, however, forms just one kind of testimony. In fact, there exist different kinds of testimonies, all of which imply specific methodological problems. Two of them are of great importance for researching extreme rightwing tendencies.

First there is anonymous testimony as used by journalists, police officers and intelligence agents in their investigations. Here, the 'secrecy of the sources' gets an additional and more specific meaning. Journalists for instance are not obliged to reveal their sources in order to write a convincing article. Neither does the State Security Police have to reveal its sources in order to convince the government to proceed to action. In other words, at the same time as these testimonies (as oral sources) were given, a new kind of source was

created: namely an oral anonymous testimony that can seldom be double-checked. For the historian this is a minefield of delicate issues, but it cannot be neglected. Second, there is written anonymous testimony given in the press (in this case the extreme right-wing press). The word testimony is of uncertain application here, as these texts are more opinion papers than revelations of secrets. Nevertheless, these types of sources form the core object of discourse analyses, through which many thoughts and objectives can be discovered. Many of the extreme rightwing people in the Belgian network for instance wrote their opinion papers under a pseudonym, in order not to be discovered. Identifying the real author behind the diverse pseudonyms is thus another goal for the researcher. Anonymously written testimonies not only help a great deal in reconstructing the network, they also contribute to reconstructing how this history thought of itself. Both kinds of testimonies place the historian in a difficult situation, because both oral and anonymously written testimony must be taken for granted. They only gain their importance thanks to their context, and the 'correct' interpretation of that context. Again, in both cases the meaning has to be searched for between the lines, looking for that what is not mentioned, not written, because it was not meant to be revealed.

'INDIRECT ANALYSES'

In all the previous mentioned sources with their typical methodological problems, we notice a common thread: they all oblige the researcher to adopt a method of indirect analysis. In *Myths, Emblems, Clues* Carlo Ginzburg points out the importance of the *indicia*-paradigm as a method for dissolving the ideological clouds which increasingly obscure such a complex social structure as fully developed capitalism⁴⁷.

The urge for systematic knowledge does not imply that we must abandon the idea of a totality. "On the contrary, the existence of a deeply rooted relationship that explains superficial phenomena is confirmed the very moment it is stated that direct knowledge of such a connection is not possible. Though reality may seem to be opaque, there are privileged zones – signs, clues – which allow us to penetrate it"⁴⁸.

In researching the Belgian extreme rightwing networks we find these *indicia* in the *histoire longue durée* [long-term history]⁴⁹, in the repetition of events and in the repetition of phenomena. The repeated appearance of protagonists in places where they should not appear (in their capacity as industrialists or bankers) forms an 'indiciu' (or clue) here, as do the politically loaded manoeuvres of the protagonists carried out when they appear as non-political actors in society, for instance when they finance extreme rightwing newspapers.

However, this story contains many blind spots like the inaccessibility of the State Security Police and the CIA (concerning the stay-behind networks), or the absence of witnesses and testimony. Moreover many documents from the National Archives are often censored with the well known black ink that makes sensitive passages unreadable. Last but not least we often deal with the fact that it is impossible for the protagonists to give testimony.

In *Welcome to the Desert of the Real*, Slavoj Žižek paraphrases a revealing passage by Giorgio Agamben, which links perfectly to the indicia-paradigm of Ginzburg. In *Quel che resta di Auschwitz* Agamben stipulates a kind of ontological proof against the revisionists who deny the holocaust. “Let us indeed, posit Auschwitz, that to which it is not possible to bear witness, and let us also posit the *Muselmann* as the absolute impossibility of bearing witness. If the witness bears witness for the *Muselmann*, if he succeeds in bringing to speech an impossibility of speech – if the *Muselmann* is thus constituted as the whole witness – then the denial of Auschwitz is refuted in its very foundation. In the *Muselmann*, the impossibility of bearing witness is no longer a mere privation. Instead, it has become real; it exists as such. If the survivor bears witness not to the gas chambers or to Auschwitz but to the *Muselmann*, if he speaks only on the basis of an impossibility of speaking, then his testimony cannot be denied. Auschwitz – that to which it is not possible to bear witness – is absolutely and irrefutably proven”⁵⁰. In other words: far from hindering any proof that Auschwitz really existed, the very fact that it is impossible directly to bear witness to Auschwitz demonstrates its existence.

When we apply this theory to the research on extreme right wing networks in Belgium, we can stipulate the following points: that it is impossible to witness for example the Belgian engagement in the stay-behind networks after the Second World War; that it is impossible to witness the infiltration of the CIA in the Belgian State Security Police and to prove the Belgian support in the development of nuclear weapons, actually demonstrates the existence of it.

The difficulties with this kind of research are well known, however; some researchers have attempted reconstructing these events by using Ginzburg’s method of ‘indirect analysis’. Despite the inaccessibility of the CIA and NATO archives, Daniël Ganser managed to reconstruct a top secret network in his book on Gladio. Due to of the impossibility of having access to direct testimony, he was obliged to search for information in ‘secondary’ sources, such as parliamentary reports, censured testimonies of individuals involved, reports of the international press, etc. In spite of these restrictions he succeeded, through his analysis, in giving an impressive picture of an underground European network. And it was this analysis, more or less based on Agamben’s arguments, that made it possible to clarify some omissions.

The skilfully achieved ‘non-existence’ of hard facts, or the skilful way sources were made inaccessible, and the carefully erased traces actually prove the existence of the processes hypothesized. Moreover, the millions of euros given to the various parliamentary committees of inquiry, charged with inquiring into the rights and wrongs of the Gladio case, show that Gladio existed. The refusal of any cooperation from the CIA and NATO proves it even more.

FICTIONALISM

However, the story with the red and blue ink shows us that the problem is much more complicated than the distinction between legends and ‘real’ events. The problem of the

missing red ink illustrates the impossibility of representation to tell the truth, the impossibility to put the truth into words. In essence we are dealing here with the distinction between reality and fiction. Which 'reality' do we actually see, and which reality is invisible? Which fiction do we experience as real and which real as fiction? And last but not least: to what extent did some fiction become real and did some real become fiction?

Let us take the Belgian case as an example and put it in the same story frame as our tale of the red ink. The German workman going to Siberia now is an administrative general director of the Belgian State Security Police. His friends, to whom he might write, in this case is a privileged journalist. The man from the State Security Police promises the journalist to pass him some top secret information when possible. This is of course a tricky adventure, because of the delicate task of the State Security Police with its secrecy of sources, its censorship and so on. One day the man of the State Security Police surprises the journalist by delivering him information that will give him the scoop of his career. A large and violent demonstration of the extreme left is announced. The whole action is meticulous prepared, and the consequences will be incalculable. The State Security Police succeeds in infiltrating the message, but is not allowed to take any action against it. The rule is to act only after the facts already occur. The unsuspecting journalist publishes, not without pride, the secret report given to him. The scoop is all his, the state police is alerted, and the extreme leftwing organisations withdraw. What happened in this case is that a reality that could have taken place became an eternal fiction, in a really existing article in the newspaper and a really existing file of the State Security Police. The man from the State Security Police and the journalist, without realising it, were responsible for a piece of history which never took place. Yet, this too is history.

'Rumour'⁵¹ plays one of the key roles in creating of public opinion. Even when it is a 'false rumour', it still creates the basis of innumerable actions and reactions. The problem for the researcher, however, is that he can often examine the outcome of the rumour but seldom the origin of it, nor the intention of the 'non-event'. A particular research area for these 'non-events' is the changing effectiveness of rumours. To what extent do the effects vary based on affiliation with existing prejudices within a certain social and cultural context (such as the context of the Cold War), or do the effects vary because of a lack of information caused by censure or discretion (again the context of the Cold War can constitute an example).

When rumours accumulate around a coherent entity and become the collective patrimony of a group or nation, then we speak of legends. But to avoid misunderstandings, the Gladio network for instance was more than a rumour, it actually existed. Nor did the extreme right wing networks in Belgium, nor the Arrow Cross Party members at the Hungarian court testimonies, have anything to do with 'legends'. But visibility and their existence were stipulated by imagined and reasserted political interests determined by the Cold War.

SOURCES THAT GENDERED, AND NON-ACKNOWLEDGED AGENTS

Especially problematic is the gendered analyses of political and social discourse which through its power to form identity became homogenous and exclusive. In the case of wars women are portrayed as loyal mothers and citizens sending their sons to war or as subversive collaborationists who are dangerous for the morality of the soldiers. The question is where we find subjectivity in personal narratives. In sources related to criminal cases that are even more problematic since the 'legend', to use the term by Paul Thomson, is fixed and it follows rituals. The court creates a uni-linear hegemonic narrative and the defendant needs to place herself in that narrative. In the case of women they face double discrimination.

Feminist theorists are sensitive to the formation of different power relations and understanding its consequences. In the case of the court minutes power relations are very different. Not only because of the hierarchy and politics of legal systems but also because the defendant represents a different social status, class or gender and they have different degrees of access to social networks. The more access they had the more easily they managed to manipulate the court and then to abandon the court after acquittal.

The story, the confession, is born following questions. The questions were raised by men because at that time no women were employed there: lawyers, judges and attorneys were all men. The gender politics of the court is obvious as far as the numbers are concerned. Those female defendants received milder sentence who framed their stories as powerless victims who followed the suggestions and initiatives of men. The stories of female defendants are mute, because by using the generalised 'legends' it is possible to avoid the need to search for individual expressions, meanings and thoughts. The variability of legends and their usage opened a window of opportunity to get a milder sentence while individualized stories do not fit into the cognitive patterns of the court.

Concerning the Belgian extreme right wing network, masculinity is both absent and taken for granted. The extreme right wing elite, with roots in the resistance during the Second World War formed a perfect example for gender blindness. The absence of women in this history has never been questioned as the space of women is defined at home. 'Matriarchy born in need' was over. The resistance blurred the gender hierarchies and the post 1945 politics restored the male dominated public sphere⁵².

When going underground, the post-war extreme right wing network, originating from the resistance, went into a battle for hegemony towards other men. In this internal hegemonic masculinity two main protagonists fought to obtain power: the extreme right wing network existing out of an industrial/financial elite and a segment of the nobility versus the political elite (at that time almost exclusively male). Not the question why women are absent here is relevant, but the question about the impact of this masculine predominance on the outcome of this history. Both the secrecy of the network and the final goal to move society into a more authoritarian (masculine) regime, were determined for the way these men operated behind the scenes and also for their actual influence. The other way round, the exclusive appearance of men (and consequently

the absence of women) in this network made these goals even more convincing. The gendered question has never been asked neither by themselves, nor by the politicians to whom they were fighting at that time. The gender blindness they imposed to themselves was inherent to their choice for an underground network. This 'nobility' was not interested in any emancipation of women, or in the emancipation of the commoners as a whole. Consequently no dialogue was pursued.

CONCLUSIONS

By placing the Belgian and the Hungarian cases next to one another we have tried to achieve a first comparison of research into extreme rightwing history in Europe. From the very beginning the differences were very evident. In Hungary, a communist country after the war, the extreme right was seen as an internal enemy that had to be prosecuted. In Belgium it was actually the Communists who were regarded as the internal enemy. The extreme right originating from the resistance movement was not even seen as such. Simultaneously, along with these differences a similarity between post-war Belgian and Hungarian historiography became apparent: namely the explicit focus on the collaboration with Nazi Germany during the war. In both countries the history of their own collaboration was very often studied and at the same time this history left most of the sources. However, some cases are lacking, such as the history of the Hungarian women who collaborated, and the history of the extreme rightwing resistance groups in Belgium who tried to achieve a large impact on post-war society behind the scenes of official politics.

The reason for this omission, we surmise, lies in a stubborn blindness concerning some specific histories and a stubborn prejudice concerning some deeply rooted national historiographical traditions. Women during the war are often regarded as the silent heroes who supported their husband and sons who were fighting for their country. The fact that a large group of them were actively collaborating with Nazi Germany disturbs this cliché. The same factor accounts for the attitude towards Belgian extreme rightwing resistance. To this day the resistance is mostly seen as a merely communist (or at least leftwing) affaire. The extreme right is almost always considered the domain of those who collaborated. The existence of an extreme rightwing resistance often is seen as a contradiction in terms.

These prejudices have many methodological consequences for the researcher. Not only must we deal with missing sources, as most historians must do sooner or later; we must also deal with the secrecy of the sources, which is especially crucial in this case. Whether we deal with oral sources, anonymous or written sources, we are obliged to use indirect analysis to find the key for decoding them. The fact that for many decades these histories were neglected makes this decoding even more difficult.

On the other hand we notice another striking similarity in the Belgian and Hungarian case. The political context in which the sources were created plays a predominant role in the way the sources appear to the researcher and how they must be interpreted. The paper-thin line between fiction and reality forms a common thread in this case.

Both the Hungarian and the Belgian cases form an example *par excellence* of what we call “the theatre of historical information”. It is the ‘non-event’ that, more often than the real event, determines the actions and reactions that occur in history and it has a deep influence on public opinion. For researchers on this ‘non-event’ it is a matter of finding out what was fictional and what was ‘real’. Therefore we must follow our intuition, that is an extremely rapid recapitulation of our rational processes.

The ‘hard’ facts or the hard evidence, as postulated by the positivists, must enter a dialogue with intuition. “Evidence is not a transparent medium... an open window that gives us direct access to reality. But neither is evidence a wall, which by definition precludes any access to reality”⁵³.

History can be compared with music. As in music where the *basso continuo* sets the pace, discrete in the background, barely audible, but fundamentally carrying everything, so the history of extreme right for its part determined the rhythm of official politics in the 20th century.

In comparing the Belgian case of extreme rightwing resistance with the Hungarian case of women in the Nazi Party, we hope to give an impetus to a possible future research agenda for historians in Europe. Instead of focussing on narrow-minded national historiographies and putting the facts beside each other, we have tried to achieve a kind of cross pollination by analysing the methodological similarities and differences that the Belgian and Hungarian historians are dealing with. We experienced this enterprise as an intellectual challenge, as an attempt to go beyond geographical borders in history and in the present, and to find a deeper connection in our mutual scientific goals. In our aim for achieving a true and nuanced reconstruction of the past, the confrontation with ‘the other’ is indispensable, and particularly very enriching.

Comparing two specific cases from two different countries not only opens new perspectives in (re)writing European history. Above all it opens a window for rethinking the way history has been thought of by itself.

NOTES

- ¹ S. Zizek, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real*, New York 2002, p. 1.
- ² See P. Carucci, *I servizi di sicurezza civili prima della legge del 1977*, “Studi Storici”, 4, 1998, No. 4, pp. 1031-1042, and G. Salvi, *Occulto e illegalità. Le gestione degli archivi e il controllo di legalità*, “Studi Storici”, 4, 1998, pp. 1043-1057. Thanks to Carla Salvaterra for this reference. And K. Molin, *Between scholarship and politics: experiences from the Commission on the Swedish Security Services*. Manuscript. Thanks to Gro Hagemann.
- ³ See more on this L. Kontler, *Millennium in Central Europe. History of Hungary*, Budapest 1999 and New York 2002.
- ⁴ R. Braham, *The Politics of Genocide. The Holocaust in Hungary*, Columbia 1994.
- ⁵ L. Karsai, *The People’s Court and Revolutionary Justice in Hungary, 1945-1946*, in I. Deak - J.T. Gross - T. Judt (eds.), *The Politics of Retribution in Europe. World War II and its Aftermath*, Princeton 2000, pp. 233-252.
- ⁶ See more on this A. Petö - P. Chiantera-Stutte, *Populist Use of Memory and Constitutionalism: Two Comments*, “German Law Journal”, *Confronting Memories: European “Bitter Experiences” and the Constitutionalisation Process*, Special Edition 2005 (2), pp. 165-175. <http://www.germanlawjournal.com/article.php?id=564>.

- ⁷ L. Karsai, *The People's Court and Revolutionary Justice in Hungary, 1945-1946*, in I. Deak - J.T. Gross - T. Judt (eds.), *The Politics of Retribution in Europe. World War II and its Aftermath*, Princeton 2000, pp. 233-252.
- ⁸ R. Coolsaet, *België en zijn buitenlandse politiek 1830-1990* [Belgium and its foreign policy, 1830-1990] Leuven 1998, pp. 191-200, pp. 281-304.
- ⁹ See more on this B. De Wever, *Greep naar de macht. Vlaams-Nationalisme en Nieuwe Orde: het VNV* [*Grip towards the power. Flemish Nationalism and the New Order: the VNV*], Tiel 1994, p. 701.
- ¹⁰ See more on this M. Conway, *Collaboration in Belgium: Léon Degrelle and the Rexist movement 1940-1944*, New Haven 1993, p. 364.
- ¹¹ See more on this M. Van Den Wijngaert (ed.), *'België tijdens de Tweede Wereldoorlog'* [Belgium during the Second World War], Antwerp 2004, pp. 45-62. [For more detailed information on the Royal Question see footnote 30].
- ¹² A. De Jonghe, *Hitler en het politieke lot van België (1940-1944): de vestiging van een Zilverwalting in België en Noord-Frankrijk* [Hitler and the political destiny of Belgium (1940-1944): the establishment of a Zilverwalting in Belgium and North France], Antwerp 1972, pp. 18-39.
- ¹³ See more on this L. Huysse - S. Dhondt (eds.), *Onverwerkt verleden. Collaboratie en repressie in België 1942-1952* [An unaccepted past. Collaboration and Repression in Belgium], Leuven 1994, p. 312.
- ¹⁴ J. Gotovitch, *Du rouge au tricolore. Les communistes belges de 1939 à 1944. Un aspect de l'histoire de la Résistance en Belgique* [From red to tricolour. The Belgian communists from 1939 to 1944. An aspect of the resistance in Belgium], Brussels 1992, p. 610.
- ¹⁵ P. Van den Eeckhout - G. Vanthemsche (eds.), *Bronnen voor de studie van het hedendaagse België, 19de-20ste eeuw* [Sources for the study of contemporary history in Belgium], Brussels 1999, p. 555.
- ¹⁶ Van den Eeckhout - Vanthemsche, *Bronnen voor de studie van het hedendaagse België* cit., pp. 543-547. See also www.cegesoma.be.
- ¹⁷ The two researchers are Karolien Steen en Jan Laplasse, both associated to CEGESOMA. Their findings are consultable on the website of the institute, and reveal a very disparate archiving of the sources relating to the resistance.
- ¹⁸ The Moscow Archives are spread around in different scientific institutions and archives like Military Museum, CEGESOMA, AMSAB, ... A consistent survey on the material of these archives is still lacking.
- ¹⁹ Many of these files were moved several times to another institute. During these removals many of the records were lost.
- ²⁰ See www.th.hu
- ²¹ See www.ceu.osa.hu
- ²² R. Béla, *Az állambiztonságtól a nemzetvédelemig* [From state security till protection of the nation], Szeged 2003, www.mek.oszk.hu
- ²³ See more on this R. Van Doorslaer, *Gebruikt verleden. De politieke nalatenschap van de Tweede Wereldoorlog in België, 1945-2000* [A (mis)used past. The political inheritance of the Second World War in Belgium, 1945-2000] in G. Deneckere - B. De Wever (eds.), *Geschiedenis maken. Liber Amicorum Herman Balthazar*, Gent 2002, pp. 227-249.
- ²⁴ Coolsaet, *België en zijn buitenlandse politiek 1830-1990* cit., pp. 342-247.
- ²⁵ I. Deak, *A Fatal Compromise? The Debate over Collaboration and Resistance in Hungary*, in I. Deak - J.T. Gross - T. Judt (eds.), *The Politics of Retribution in Europe. World War II and its Aftermath*, Princeton 2000, pp. 39-74.
- ²⁶ Very similar to 'Austria as the first victim' myth.
- ²⁷ See more on this in K. Schrijvers, *Underground. The roots and activities of extreme right wing networks in Belgium. 1917-1989*, unpublished working paper at the University of Gent, status quo of the doctoral research of Klaartje Schrijvers, 2005.
- ²⁸ More on this see A. Peto - J. Szapor, *Women and the 'alternative public sphere', towards a new definition of women's*

- activism and the separate spheres in East-Central Europe*, "NORA The Nordic Journal of Women's Studies", 4, 2004, pp. 172-182.
- ²⁹ Békefi Gabriela interview in 1956 Institute, Oral History Archive. Thanks to Tóth Eszter Zsófia for this reference.
- ³⁰ The Royal Question concerns the contested comeback of Leopold III, who initially was captured by Hitler (in 1944) but was accused of collaboration with the Germans by his own government. They blamed the king for clinging on to neutrality politics before and during the war, even in 1940 when Belgium was overpowered by the Germans. In 1950 Leopold finally resigned, and avoided by this the breaking out of a Belgian civil war. The Belgian right wing resistance had always been extreme royalist and after the war it clustered itself in Leopoldistic organisations. Important here to notice is that the rightwing resistance, faithful to their king as they were, hesitated a long time before developing an effective resistance during the war. Here another artificial dichotomy is elucidated: the differences between the rightwing resistance and the collaboration movement were often very small. Both were in favour of the New Order, were anti-democratic and anti-communistic. Both flirted with fascistic regimes like those of Mussolini and Franco. The only real difference was being pro or contra Nazi Germany.
- ³¹ A common procedure in Belgium, characterizing a complete lack of historical consciousness, is the destruction of important material by the institution itself because of a lack of space. This was unfortunately also the case in Luik.
- ³² D. Ganser, *Gladio. Nato's secret armies. Operation Gladio and Terrorism in Western Europe*, London-New York 2005, p. 315.
- ³³ Ganser, *Gladio. Nato's Secret Armies* cit., pp. 14-15.
- ³⁴ Quoted in W. Prevenier, *Uit goede bron. Introductie tot de historische kritiek* [Out of a reliable source], Leuven-Apeldoorn 1998, p. 117.
- ³⁵ Open Society Archives, Budapest, HU OSA 357, www.osa.ceu.hu
- ³⁶ On tribunals and use of hypnosis during the Cold War by both sides see Istvan Rév, *The Suggestion*, "Representations", 8, 2002, pp. 62-98.
- ³⁷ See A. Pető, *Writing Women's History in Eastern Europe. Toward a Terra Cognita?*, "Journal of Women's History", 3, 2004, pp. 173-183.
- ³⁸ A. Pető, *Perehodnij period pamjaiti ili pamjaty o prehodom priode* [Memories of Transition or Memories about Transition], in S. Shakirova (ed.), *Women's Oral History* Csaszty 2. ed., The Soros Foundation/ Kyrgyzstan, OSI Network Women's Program Bishkek, 2005. pp. 3-8.
- ³⁹ A. Pető, *Memory and the Narrative of Rape in Budapest and Vienna*, in Dirk Schumann, Richard Bessel (eds.), *Life after Death. Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe*, Cambridge 2003, pp. 129-149.
- ⁴⁰ A. Pető, *A Missing Piece? How Women in the Communist Nomenclature are not Remembering*, "East European Politics and Society", 3, 2003, pp. 948-958.
- ⁴¹ L. Passerini (ed.), *International Yearbook of Oral History and Life Stories*, Oxford 1992, Vol. I, pp. 145-165.
- ⁴² J. Scott, *Experience*, in J. Scott - J. Butler (eds.), *Feminists Theorize the Political*, New York-London 1992, pp. 22-40.
- ⁴³ About youth counter culture as a site of formation of resistance to communism seen and manipulated by the Hungarian secret services see G. Markó, *A Kalef - A Moszkva téri galeri 1964-65* [The Gang of the Moscow Square], Budapest 2005.
- ⁴⁴ G. Seidel, *Right-Wing Discourse and Power: Exclusion and Resistance*, in G. Seidel (ed.), *The Nature of the Right. A Feminist Analysis of Order Patterns*, Amsterdam 1988, pp. 7-17.
- ⁴⁵ C.R. Barclay, *Autobiographical Remembering: Narrative Constrains on Objectified Selves*, in D.C. Rubin (ed.), *Remembering Our Past: Studies in Autobiographical Memory*, Cambridge 1996, p. 95.
- ⁴⁶ Quoted in K.N. Denzin, *Harold and Agnes: A Feminist Narrative Undoing*, "Sociological Theory", 2, 1990, p. 213.
- ⁴⁷ C. Ginzburg, *Myths, Emblems, Clues*, London 1990, p. 231.

- ⁴⁸ Ginzburg, *Myths, Emblems, Clues* cit., p. 123.
- ⁴⁹ In this extreme rightwing tendency we notice continuity over a much longer period than only the decades after the Second World War. My research on extreme rightwing networks in Belgium therefore deals with the whole communist or anti-communist period, starting from 1917 until 1989. It is specifically in this *histoire longue durée* that a deeper coherence is revealed.
- ⁵⁰ S. Žizek, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real*, New York 2002, pp. 139-140.
- ⁵¹ Rumour as a political tool was used by all political forces in Hungary. Before 1945 the rumour that the occupying Red Army would rape women turned out to be a reality. The Communist Party systematically used female members of the party to spread rumours that the Hungarian prisoners of war would not be released if the Communist Party did not win the upcoming elections of 1947. See on this A. Pető, *Hungarian Women in Politics 1945-1951*, Columbia 2003, pp. 44-50.
- ⁵² See on this. C. Duchens - I. Bandhauer Schöffmann (eds.), *When the War was Over. Women, War and Peace in Europe, 1940-1956*, Leicester 2000.
- ⁵³ Arnold I. Davidson, *The Epistemology of Distorted Evidence*, in A.I. Davidson, *The Emergence of Sexuality*, Cambridge 2001, p. 149.

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