HMC Heritage, Memory and Conflict

Heritage, Memory and Conflict Journal (HMC)
2 2022, 61–75
DOI 10.3897/hmc.2.70927

Entanglements of art and memory activism in Hungary's illiberal democracy

Reka Deim[1]

1 *University of Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands*

Corresponding author: Reka Deim (deimreka@gmail.com)

Published 12 January 2022

Abstract

This paper explores how art contributes to the articulation of memories that counter the official historical narrative of Hungary's self-proclaimed political and ideological system, illiberal democracy. Amid deepening polarization between Europe's post-colonialist and post-socialist countries, the Hungarian government promotes a Christian conservative national identity against the "liberal" values of Western Europe. Systematic appropriation of historical traumas is at the core of such efforts, which largely manifests in removing, erecting and reinstating memorials, as well as in the re-signification of trauma sites. Insufficient civic involvement in re-writing histories generates new ways of resistance, which I demonstrate through the case study of a protest-performance organized by the Living Memorial activist group as a response to the government's decision to displace the memorial of Imre Nagy in 2018. I seek to understand the dynamics between top-down memory politics, civil resistance and art within the conceptual apparatus of the "memory activism nexus" (Rigney 2018, 2020) and "multidirectional memories" (Rothberg 2009). I argue that artistic memory activism has limited potential to transform the dynamics of memory in a context where a national conservative political force has gradually taken control over historical narratives, triggering inevitably polarizing responses in the society. Although profoundly embedded in local histories, the case-study may offer new ways of negotiating traumatic heritages through the entanglement of art and memory activism.

Key Words

Hungary, illiberal democracy, illiberal memory politics, memory activism, multidirectional memory

Introduction

In the aftermath of oppressive regimes and armed conflicts, societies face an enormous task to seek justice, evaluate their histories and work toward a future where such painful episodes can be avoided. Pierre Nora describes this sort of post-totalitarian transformation as "ideological decolonization," a process of re-evaluating the past, "which has helped reunite these liberated peoples with traditional, long-term memories confiscated, destroyed or manipulated by those regimes: this is the case with Russia and many countries in Eastern Europe, the Balkans, Latin America and Africa" (Nora 2002: 5). Underlying the ideological decolonization of societies around the world the main driving force to rewrite fabricated histories that had served the interests of totalitarian establishments is "collective memory" (Halbwachs 1992 [1925]; Assmann 1995 and 2008) in the sense that it is "a matter of communication and social interaction" (Assmann 2008: 109). Commemoration of suppressed histories is critical to propagate agendas of accountability and transitional justice, therefore the duties of democratization and peace building are inextricably bound up with memorialization in such circumstances. Across numerous countries around the world, a growing number of museums and memorials are devoted to telling painful histories with the intention to build more cohesive and self-reflexive societies (Sodaro 2018; David 2020), which are often informed by the activities of various activist groups that struggle for a just re-evaluation of the past.

Memory activism – the propagation of alternative histories and counter-memories via political commemora-

PENSOFT

tions, demonstrations and other forms of civil initiatives – has predominantly been conceptualized in the frame of conflict studies, with regard to post-war and post-dictatorship societies that face daunting memories of war, genocide, repression, and conflicting interpretations of the past. Research in this respect has largely been focusing on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict (Gutman 2017), the Yugoslav wars (Fridman 2015) and the aftermath of Latin American military dictatorships (Allier-Montaño and Crenzel 2015; Andermann 2015; Jelin 2003; Villalón 2017), and besides traumatic events, the memory of nonviolent struggles has also been explored (Katriel and Reading 2015). In many Latin American countries that recently underwent post-dictatorship transformations, there is a strong sense of ethical obligation to propagate the imperative of "nunca más!" (never again!) through distinct forms of memorialization. Addressing the crimes of the military dictatorship of 1976–1983 in Argentina or the ongoing internal armed conflict of Colombia is based on a shared will among academics, museum professionals and civil society to promote discourses dominated by survivor testimonies, as well as produce evidence and identify perpetrators. Characteristically, art plays an important role in the expression and visualization of such traumatic heritages in public programs and in the creation of spaces of reflection, such as the Parque de la Memorial in Buenos Aires, a park to commemorate the victims of state terror through a memorial accompanied by statues of invited artists, including Claudia Fontes, Denis Oppenheim and William Tucker.

Although societies in East-Central Europe have also experienced oppressive regimes before the dissolution of the Soviet Union, their ideological decolonization and memorialization processes have been different from the Latin American examples in many regards. One of the major obstacles post-socialist countries are facing is that memories of multiple violent pasts – WWI, WWII, the Holocaust and crimes committed under the communist regime – had been suppressed or "absent" due to the lack of communicative frames (Van Vree 2013) for a long time, and their re-assessment has only been possible since the fall of the Berlin Wall. After four decades of totalitarian control, first-hand testimonies and memories are not easily accessible, and the fact that many victims, witnesses and perpetrators have meanwhile died further complicates seeking truth and justice. Like other East-Central European societies facing "too much memory, too many pasts" (Judt 1992: 99), Hungary has numerous untold and conflicted stories that re-emerge simultaneously in the aftermath of the communist era and remain contested and overlapping to this day.[1] Following the regime change of 1989, the memorialization of Trianon (the redrawing of Hungary's borders after WWI), the Holocaust and the 1956 Revolution has been dominating the Hungarian discourse on traumatic heritage, and since the illiberal turn of 2010 – when the Christian conservative FIDESZ-KDNP government took office – the history of deportations to forced labour camps in the Soviet Union has also been increasingly present on the level of public commemoration.[2] The main problem with the (indeed) urgent processing of these histories is that research is increasingly being carried out in line with the government's victimizing and anti-communist agenda, which overlooks Hungary's complicity in these turbulent histories by focusing on victims and portraying the country as a victim to external powers. Such a perspective reinforces what Tony Judt calls "comparative victimhood" (Judt 2005: 826–830), an unproductive contest for recognition between the victims of the Nazi and the Soviet occupations. The politics of recognition, according to Máté Zombory, reaffirms the emergence of "societies of trauma" – a product of ongoing transformation of politics across Europe and beyond since the seventies – where memory politics overtakes class-based political representation, and the political representatives of various victim "status groups" compete with each other in the name of victims, which tends to renew conflicts rather than bringing reconciliation (Zombory 2019). In post-totalitarian societies like Hungary, where the memory of the communist regime and Western Europe serve as the main reference points determining political identities to this day, the rising right-wing populism framed as "illiberalism" significantly reinforces the politics of recognition, disabling the resolution of conflicts between different victim status groups and political identities.

The memory politics of the illiberal state foregrounded the importance of memory activism both historically and in the present. There is a growing interest in the history of the democratic transformations in the late eighties, when nonviolent demonstrations comprised the backbone of civil opposition to the Soviet oppression across East-Central Europe (Pfaff and Guobin 2001; Palonen 2008). In the case of Hungary, the "politics of symbols" (K. Horváth 2008: 249), especially political commemorations, were the main means to oppose the Soviet dominance in the late eighties. The Hungarian democratic opposition,

1 For instance, the consequences of the Trianon Treaty, the persecution and extermination of Jewish and Roma people, the Nazi occupation and the violence of the Hungarian Arrow Cross Party, the siege of Budapest, sexual violence during the wars and the Soviet occupation, post-war forced displacement of the Hungarian-German population, deportations to the Gulag and retaliations after the anti-Soviet uprising of 1956.

2 The government established the Gulag Memorial Committee (Gulág Emlékbizottság) in 2015, responsible for creating publications, educational projects, conferences, films, oral history archives as well as for supporting commemorations, memorials and plaques throughout the country. A major memorial site was created at the Ferencváros Railway Station, including the Malenki Robot Memorial and a permanent exhibition inside a former bunker – as a side project of the Hungarian National Museum – entitled "The Circles of Hell. Malenki Robot – Forced Labor in the Soviet Union." In 2018, Viktor Orbán inaugurated a black granite obelisk, the Memorial of the Victims of the Soviet Occupation in Budapest.

which served as the basis of all the dominant democratic parties to emerge after 1989,[3] organized demonstrations on highly symbolic dates, including the anniversaries of the 1848 anti-Habsburg uprising (15th March 15) and the 1956 anti-Soviet uprising (23rd October), which generated considerable civil engagement. By means of expressing their disagreement with the falsification of history regarding the two major fights of independence, the protesters publicly opposed the Soviet political and ideological system in the frame of political commemorations. Above all, the most significant commemorative event was the public rehabilitation of the executed Prime Minister Imre Nagy and his fellow martyrs, which symbolically marked the Hungarian regime change (Benzinger 2000; Harms 2017; K. Horváth 2008; Rév 2005). The framing of these events and the evaluation of the traumatic heritage of the Nazi and Soviet occupations are at the center of the illiberal memory politics as well as recent memory activism.

Besides specific historical experiences and memorialization processes, art has also developed unique characteristics in post-socialist contexts, and it continues to support a novel kind of memory activism within the illiberal state. As far as the current Hungarian state of affairs is concerned, Andrea Pető's analysis on the emerging illiberal democratic system is revealing. According to Pető, the "illiberal polypore state" is a successful form of governance that benefits from globalized (neo)liberal democracy and, at the same time, contributes to its decay (Pető 2017b: 19). While the illiberal polypore state appropriates liberal democratic institutions and funding channels, it builds an ideology to present itself as an alternative to liberal democracy, which counters the power of the "liberal elites" by emphasizing national sovereignty, Christian culture and traditional values. Besides supporting pro-government NGOs instead of progressive NGOs framed as foreign and dangerous to sovereignty, "[t]he illiberal counter discourse to the liberal human rights paradigm is nationalist familialism, accentuating the rights and interests of families over those of minorities and individuals" (Pető 2017b: 20). The interpretation of history from such a perspective is crucial to framing the illiberal ideology, therefore the government has gradually taken control over historical narratives by means of funding cultural and research institutions, museums and memorials. As a consequence, the function of political art is undergoing considerable transformation to counter the measures and narratives of the government (András 2013; Nagy 2015; Human Platform 2020). Unlike the artistic interventions that contribute to narrating and nuancing the past in a number of memorial museums in post-conflict societies, such as ESMA Memory Site Museum (Buenos Aires) and Museo de Memoria de Colombia (online, planned in Bogotá), which combine professional approaches with human rights activism, in Hungary it is the memorial museums that are targeted by

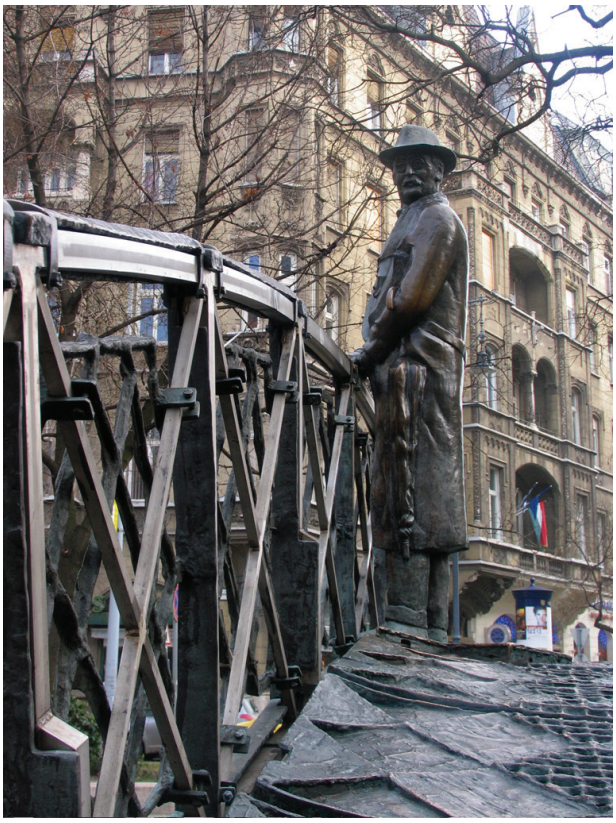

Figure 1. Imre Nagy Memorial in Martyrs' Square before its removal (Photo: Wikimedia.org/adirricor).

activists – both directly and indirectly – for showcasing a state-controlled, unidirectional historical narrative. For instance, Budapest's well-known "trauma site museum" (Violi 2012), the House of Terror Museum and the yet-to-be-opened House of Fates Holocaust museum represent the same problematic approach to history as the one that currently characterizes the government's memory politics. In this situation, the articulation of alternative memories by creative and artistic means takes place largely outside the state-sponsored institutions, and political art tends to serve as an aid of demonstrations to formulate and visualize counter-histories in opposition to the official narrative.

Insufficient civil involvement in the transformation of public spaces and memorials since 2010 has generated a specific type of activism evolving around memorials and museums, organized predominantly by the Living Memorial, a group of activists, artists and academics that has initiated demonstrations and discussions on a regular basis since 2014 to protest the government's memory politics. The context and objectives of these demonstrations are best understood through the conceptual apparatus of what Ann Rigney calls "memory-activism nexus":

"This means examining the interplay between memory activism (how actors struggle to produce cultural memory and to steer future remembrance, as described

3 The democratic opposition included: the Hungarian Democratic Forum (Magyar Demokrata Párt, MDF), the Alliance of Free Democrats (Szabad Demokraták Szövetséfe, SzDSz) and FIDESZ – Alliance of Young Democrats (FIDESZ – Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége).

in Gutman 2017), the memory of activism (how earlier struggles for a better world are culturally recollected, as described in Katriel and Reading 2015), and memory in activism (how the cultural memory of earlier struggles informs new movements in the present, as set out in Eyerman 2016)." (Rigney 2018: 372)

Building on these conceptual distinctions, I look into the creative methods applied by the Living Memorial to produce counter-narratives as a form of *memory activism* and, in order to explore *memory in activism,* I analyze the visual and cultural references the group's 2018 protest against the displacement of Imre Nagy's memorial applies to articulate their demands. The case-study also concerns the cultural memory of key historical events in Hungary: the anti-Soviet uprising of 1956 and the regime change of 1989. Besides shedding light on the ongoing contestation of the memory of these events in the current illiberal political system, the analysis raises further issues that challenge dominant Western European discourses on memory from an East-Central European angle. Although profoundly embedded in the local context, the case-study may offer new ways of negotiating the past through non-violent memory activism with the tools of visual arts.

The Imre Nagy Memorial and the contested legacy of the 1956 revolution

The Hungarian government's decision in 2018 to remove the Imre Nagy Memorial (Fig. 1) from the Martyrs' Square located next to the Parliament building in the center of Budapest instantly sparked a wave of social resistance. Critics and protesters not only resented the authoritative decision that excluded professional and civic participation from the decision-making process related to the historically charged public space and trauma site, but also objected to the historical perspective the removal represents. Imre Nagy, the Prime Minister of the 1956 Revolution, occupies a central role in Hungarian collective memory as a symbol of the short-lived national unity both in the 1956 uprising and in 1989. The nationwide uprising was the first major disruption in the region to oppose Soviet-imposed policies after the communist takeover of the late forties, which shocked the public across the world and prompted many thinkers from Hannah Arendt and Jean-Paul Sartre, to Gabriel García Márquez, to rethink their views on the Soviet model of socialism (Arendt 1958; Sartre 1968; García Márquez 2003a; 2003b; 1983).[4] The 1956 uprising, however, remains one of the most contested events of the country's history due to the long suppression of its memory, its interconnectedness with the regime change, and because it has been subject of appropriation by various political parties, which transformed 1956 into "a source of extreme political polarization that fractured Hungarians' understanding of the 1989 transition" (Seleny 2014: 37). The recent, unexpected removal of the Imre Nagy Memorial indicates yet another radical shift in the memory of both historical events.

The systematic suppression of the memory of 1956 during the Kádár era (1956–1988) has largely contributed to its contestation (György 2000; Harms 2017, Pető 2017a). The uprising began as a workers' and student protest – inspired by the June uprising of Polish workers in Poznan – and after toppling the Stalin Monument and occupying the Hungarian Radio building to broadcast their demands, the protesters gathered in front of the Parliament on the morning of 25th October 1956 to call for a new, democratically elected government. This day went down in history as "bloody Thursday" because the State Security Police (Államvédelmi Hatóság, ÁVH) shot into the peaceful crowd, killing dozens of people. The insurgences sparked disorder and violence, and self-organized militias began fighting in the capital's streets against Soviet troops and the ÁVH. The government collapsed and a new interim government of Imre Nagy was formed that pledged to re-establish multi-party system, free elections and to withdraw from the Warsaw Pact, a military treaty set up against the NATO between the Soviet Union and seven of its satellite states. The uprising was quickly crushed due to the Soviet military intervention on 4th November, and a new government formed. Imre Nagy was found guilty of treason in a secret trial to be executed in 1958 and he was buried in an unmarked grave alongside other fellow victims. In the aftermath of the short-lived revolution, the new Soviet-backed government of János

4 Hannah Arendt added the chapter "Epilogue: Reflections on the Hungarian Revolution" to the second edition of Origins of Totalitarianism. Subsequent editions did not include this chapter but it was published separately in The Journal of Politics (Arendt 1958). Jean-Paul Sartre's view of the Soviet Union considerably changed after the Hungarian Revolution of 1956. Although he wrote in positive tone about the Soviet Union following his 1954 visit, he condemned the Soviet invasion of Hungary in 1956 and, consequently, broke with the French Communist Party. When Gabriel García Márquez visited the Soviet bloc as a young journalist in 1957 in search of the everyday reality of the socialist utopia, the situation in Hungary left the most sinister impression on him. He recounted his journey in a series of eleven articles, which appeared as "90 Days Behind the Iron Curtain (De viaje por los países socialistas)" in 1959. The journey through East Germany, Czechoslovakia, Ukraine, Poland, Russia and Hungary affected García Márquez' political ideas "quite decisively," (García Márquez 1983) as he grew critical about the Soviet model of Socialism. He depicts a depressing image of the Hungarian capital, which he finds heavily damaged due to the WWII bombings and the anti-Soviet revolution of 1956, and observes that a system of surveillance keeps everybody in fear. Recalling the strict itinerary and the continuous presence of "interpreters" who actually spoke only in Hungarian, he concludes about his hosts that "they did all they could to stop us forming any concrete impression of the situation." (García Márquez 2003a) According to García Márquez, his was the first delegation of foreigners that was allowed in the country following the crushing of the 1956 uprising and János Kádár's takeover only ten months prior to their visit. Although García Márquez clearly sympathized with Kádár and excused him by claiming that "circumstances are pushing him backwards," he condemned the execution of Imre Nagy as a politically motivated murder in 1958 (García Márquez 2003b).

Kádár did everything to suppress the memory of the uprising, banned any sort of public commemoration and framed the event as a disgraceful "counterrevolution." In Andrea Pető's words, "Forgetting, omission, and amnesia were successful tools for depoliticizing Hungarian society after 1956." (Pető 2017a: 44) Thus, the working through of the trauma of 1956 was rendered impossible for decades.

The 1956 Revolution not only became the foundational narrative of the new, post-Soviet democracy as the flagship historical event to counter the Communist Party's historical narrative but it also provided the revolutionary moment of the regime change through the public rehabilitation of its victims. The Hungarian regime change was not a revolution *per se* – like, for instance, the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia was more so – but a process of negotiations between the Communist Party and the democratic opposition. Furthermore, a number of scholars consider the regime changes of the former Eastern Bloc as an "unfinished revolution" (Mark 2010) due to its grave compromises, including support of "unwanted forms of western political and economic colonization" (Mark et al. 2015: 463) and the failure to execute transitional justice, especially in Hungary (Kiss 2006; Stan 2009; Stan and Nedelsky 2015; Ungváry 2017). Accordingly, the Hungarian negotiations – also known as Round Table Talks – carried out in meeting rooms far from the public eye did not provide a remarkable event that could be singled out in collective memory. In sync with the smooth political transformation, the re-signification of public spaces and memorials was also negotiated, and it did not crystallize into a singular event. The renaming of public spaces and the removal of communist era monuments were peacefully carried out in the early nineties – many of the monuments were transferred to the Statue Park Museum at the outskirts of Budapest – and symbols of the new democratic system gradually took their places (Boros 1997; Pótó 2003; Kovács 2005/2006; Palonen 2008). Once commemoration of the 1956 uprising was possible, numerous memorials popped up across the country, and Imre Nagy came to be honored as a national martyr. Nagy's main memorial inaugurated on the occasion of the Revolution's 40th anniversary on a distinguished location in front of the Parliament was not merely a compensation for decades of forced amnesia but predominantly a symbol of democracy and freedom affirmed by his public funeral in 1989. For the act of the reburial ceremony legitimized a completely new reading of the 1956 Revolution and, more generally, of the whole Kádár era, and it made the regime change into a visible and experienceable iconic event that stuck in the public imagination as a turning point in history.

Given Imre Nagy's outstanding symbolic role, the removal plan of his memorial came as a surprise, even though the physical and ideological reconstruction of the site around the Parliament started already in 2011, in the frame of the Imre Steindl Program. The memory of 1956 has been playing an important role in FIDESZ's memory politics since the party's foundation in the late 1980's, for instance, many of the demonstrations organized by the democratic opposition – including the young FIDESZ – aiming to bring down the communist regime revolved around the commemoration of 1956. At the public rehabilitation of Imre Nagy the young Viktor Orbán famously demanded that Soviet troops leave the country and honored the late Prime Minister of the uprising for standing up against the dictatorship. The speech also underlined the connection between the regime change and the memory of the lost revolution by claiming that 1989 eventually fulfilled the objectives of 1956. Although Orbán's 16th June speech was preceded by the public proclamation of the democratic opposition's 12 points containing the same imperatives on 15th March in Liberty Square, another crucial demonstration in the transformation process, the reburial ceremony performed in the Heroes' Square in front of over 100.000–200.000 people and broadcasted nationwide has become a far more influential event in collective memory. Thus, the speech has become a key reference point in the legacy of 1989, and it returns in the 2018 demonstration, as well. For reasons just indicated, the Imre Nagy Memorial in the Martyrs' Square facing the Parliament represented complex histories in its original spacial context, recalling the momentous national unity through the memories of 1956 and 1989. The removal of Nagy's most important memorial, therefore, raises a number of questions regarding the appropriation of historical narratives and the memorial's site-specificity.

Art and memory in activism

When the decision about the memorial's displacement and transfer to the Jászai Mari Square was made public, signs appeared on it instantly with inscriptions, such as "Fascism is being built here" and "Did you know? Imre Nagy is a hero" reflecting the format that referenced the anti-immigration and anti-Brussels "Did you know" campaign of FIDESZ. Alongside the first emotionally and politically charged reactions, activists formed a group called Imre Nagy Stays! (Nagy Imre marad!) and issued a petition against the memorial's removal and the appropriation of history.[5] The signatories condemned the memory politics of FIDESZ, which manifests – among other forms – in the Imre Steindl Program that aims at reinstating the pre-WWII image of the area around the Parliament to eliminate remnants of the communist past. The petition highlights that despite the controversial position of Imre Nagy as a member of the Communist Party who sided with the anti-Soviet revolution, he gave his life for his country and deserves national recognition in the

5 "Tiltakozunk a Nagy Imre-szobor eltávolítása és a magyar történelem kisajátítása ellen!" 28 August 1918. https://www.facebook.com/szabadahang/posts/256644234984839

Figure 2. The rehabilitation of Imre Nagy and other martyrs in Heroes' Square, 16th June 1989 (Photo: Fortepan/tm).

site where Hungary's most important historical figures are memorialized. Additionally, the new location of the statue next to the former building of the ÁVH – which was complicit in crushing the uprising – insults the communist revolutionaries and abuses the memory of 1956, according to the petition.[6]

In line with the petition's arguments, the Living Memorial's demonstration on 23rd September 2018 addressed Imre Nagy's symbolic role in collective memory, in a format that combined the elements of protests, a public discussion on site and an artistic performance – a protest-performance or political performance, as one of the organizers, András Rényi defined it (Csillag 2018). In the first part of the event, invited guests[7] discussed Imre Nagy's legacy in the light of the regime change, and the transformation of FIDESZ from an underground liberal democratic student activist movement to a national conservative party (Fig. 3).[8] The second part included a performance, in which men dressed in black painted the water underneath Nagy's bronze figure black, and placed a coffin over the water (Fig. 4). Then the men spread out a banner behind the memorial to invoke the staged setting of the reburial ceremony of 1989 (Fig. 2), while the young Viktor Orbán's above mentioned speech was played backwards, evoking an uncanny atmosphere (Fig. 5). After the performance, three discussants representing three different generations – a young politician, a former member and co-founder of FIDESZ, and a participant in the 1956 uprising – expressed their strong opposition against the government's authoritative memory politics and politically motivated falsification of history. The event ended with the national anthem, which was also played backwards.

Besides expressing their disagreement with the oversimplifying and exclusory victim narrative propagated by the government, the Living Memorial's event enabled the articulation of silenced memories of 1956 and 1989 by making the memorial's embeddedness in the country's revolutionary heritage visible. While memorials are evident and efficient media to visually represent and "remediate" (Erll and Rigney 2009) complex histories, such potential of demonstrations is often overlooked. Ann Rigney underlines the power of protests as a form of cultural remediation that make the past re-imaginable, observing that protests are remembered largely due to their potential to generate a simplistic narrative about the "good struggle" versus suffering or the perpetration of violence by the police, like in the case of the Black Lives Matter movement (Rigney 2020). Characteristically, continues Rigney, a moment or a figure is singled out by the protesters, through which a moral imperative is formulated, and the event is fitted into a scheme that enables cultural remediation in the form of a meaningful and recognizable story, often by directly referencing previous demonstrations with different goals. In sync with the general dynamics of demonstrations, the 1989 rehabilitation of Imre Nagy not only legitimized the new political system but also enabled the remediation of the "story" of the regime change in the form of an emotionally and visually remarkable event, as I have demonstrated above. Similarly, the 2018 protest-performance aimed at remediating the "story" and imagery of the reburial ceremony and, in so doing, it visualized a counter-narrative to protest the illiberal memory politics. While several elements of both nonviolent protests of 1989 and 2018 fit into Rigney's conceptualisation, it is nonetheless difficult to embed them into a global or at least European revolutionary heritage centred on the French Revolution and the protests of 1968 in many regards. This is partly due to the considerable differences between the Eastern and

6 The ÁVH brutally carried out purges after the communist takeover of 1948 until Stalin's death and Imre Nagy's first appointment as Prime Minister in 1953, and is complicit in the crushing of the uprising. The building served as the headquarters of the Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party between 1956 and 1989. Between 1971 and 1991, a statue of Marx and Engels stood in front of the former ÁVH building, which is now on display in Budapest's Statue Park.

7 Discussants included Katalin Jánosi, artist and Imre Nagy's granddaughter; Anna Donáth, politician, MEP and granddaughter of politician Ferenc Donáth, who was sub-prime accused in the Imre Nagy trial; László Eörsi, historian at the 1956 Institute, János Rainer M., historian and head of the 1956 Institute; István Hegedűs, sociologist and former member and founding member of FIDESZ, member of Hungarian Europe Society; Rudolf Ungváry, participant in the 1956 uprising and founding member of the Historical Justice Committee (Történelmi Igazságtétel Bizottság).

8 FIDESZ (Fiatal Demokraták Szövetsége, meaning Alliance of Young Democrats) was initially a party of young liberal democrats founded in 1988 to oppose the ruling communist regime. It got into the National Assembly in 1990 and its ideology gradually shifted from liberal centrist to a more conservative civic centrist position by 1993, when Viktor Orbán was elected as chairman of the party. In 1995 FIDESZ changed its name to FIDESZ – Hungarian Civic Party, while still in opposition. During their first governmental term (1998–2002), FIDESZ joined the European People's Party, terminating its membership with the Liberal International. In the following years spent in opposition, their position strengthened both in the national arena and in the European Parliament, and FIDESZ won an outright majority at the 2010 elections with a national conservative agenda.

Figure 3. Still from the video documentation of the protest-performance, 2018 (Video: Ádám Csillag).

Western European historical experiences, and the lack of framing of post-socialist histories within the dominant (Western) European memory discourse. Regarding the 2018 protest, its fixed format and mixed genre (organized discussion, artistic performance, speeches) contribute to its complexity making it a unique example of memory activism, not to mention the fact that the performance mobilizes a very specific (and artistic) set of references that might not be easily decoded by the general, let alone the international public.

The choice of the performance's designers provides a meaningful starting point for those who are familiar with the history of Hungary, as it underlines not only the mnemonic but also the visual and conceptual continuity of the 1989 funeral within the performance. One of the designers was the architect László Rajk, previously an active member of the democratic opposition and responsible for the concept of the reburial ceremony in 1989. It is also important to note that Rajk has suffered the consequences of the communist regime's misdeeds because his father, Minister of Interior and Minister of Foreign Affairs between 1946 and 1949, was executed by the Stalinist Rákosi government in 1949 following a show trial based on fabricated charges, and his public reburial was an important demonstration against the injustices of the regime on 6th October 1956, shortly before the outbreak of the uprising. The other designer was the sculptor György Jovánovics, who also played a key role in the memorialization of the regime change as the designer of the Memorial to the Victims of the 1956 Revolution (1992), located in the cemetery where Imre Nagy and other victims were buried. The abstract design of Jovánovics's "counter-monument" (Young 1992) embodies complex meanings, including a direct visual reference to the reburial ceremony. The sculptor explained in an interview that the white sarcophagus on top of his structure represents the staged funeral in Heroes' Square in order to preserve the memory of the ephemeral "stage-like artpiece" in stone (Mihancsik 1994a). Beyond the participation of these two persons – the third participant, Dávid Adamkó, artist and sound designer, represents a younger generation – that situates the protest-performance within the revolutionary heritage of 1956 and 1989, the visual elements, specifically, the coffin and the stage design of the public funeral play a crucial role in the remediation of memories. These powerful symbols have the potential to compress complex meanings and references since they are inscribed in collective memory as images directly associated with the regime change – often as "prosthetic memory" (Landsberg 2004) for those who did not have the chance to directly experience the event.[9]

The coffin, a common element of demonstrations worldwide, may be seen as a gesture towards a more general protest-culture but it has specific connotations in this context. It recalls the six coffins displayed in front of the Kunsthalle Budapest in 1989, containing the remains of

9 Although Alison Landsberg's concept was developed in the context of the United States' history, the potential of the media to make a historical event experiencable for those who did not live it through is also notable in this regard. The frequent circulation of the images of Imre Nagy's public funeral has largely contributed to them marking the regime change for those who had not been present as well as for younger generations.

Figure 4. Still from the video documentation of the protest-performance, 2018 (Video: Ádám Csillag).

Figure 5. Still from the video documentation of the protest-performance, 2018 (Video: Ádám Csillag).

five martyrs, and an empty coffin placed over the others for the unnamed martyrs of 1956. This element summons the personal traumas of 1956 that engendered collective grief over the loss of lives and the retaliations, which were publicly relieved for the first time in 1989. The coffin carries the core message of the protest-performance, according to which it is the three decades of democracy to be mourned this time, as the inscription on the coffin suggests: "Third Republic, lived 29 years." The statement proposes that the removal of the memorial marks such a radical shift as the regime change did when it turned the communist one-party system into the democratic Third Republic of Hungary. The action thus indicates the end of a social and political reality interrupted by the government's illiberal ideology and politics, and it reflects the worries of the political opposition about FIDESZ's authoritative tendencies. The re-enactment of the reburial ceremony in combination with the uncanny recording of Orbán's 1989 speech implicates his dissonant role in the legacy of the regime change, especially due to the memorial's removal from the Parliament area, which disrupts the legacy of the 1956 Revolution by erasing its meanings gained in 1989.

The banner depicting the stage design of the reburial ceremony set as the memorial's background as part of the performance signifies the momentous consensus and national unity the funeral represented regardless of the political pluralism of the times. The architects László Rajk and Gábor Bachmann entrusted to design and conceptualize the ceremony by the Historical Justice Committee (Történelmi Igazságtétel Bizottság) understood that they had to reflect on both the funerary and the revolutionary character of the event. For practical ends, they had to take into account the role of the media as the event would be broadcasted live, for the first time in case of an anti-communist demonstration. They chose the Heroes' Square, in front of the Millenary Monument and the Kunsthalle as location because the square could fit a large crowd, and they decided to cover the whole length of the Kunsthalle's façade in white, which served as a reflective board for the cameras (Mihancsik 1994b). The tympanum and columns were covered in black, the color of mourning, and the stage was set as a rusty iron structure with a fire on the left side, a pulpit on the right, and the coffins in between. Over the pulpit a white flag was stretched with a hole in it, referring to the symbol of the 1956 Revolution: the flag with a hole in the place of the communist coat of arms. The unusual post-modern structure invited free associations according to the designers' intentions, and beyond the commemoration of martyrs, its visual language served to express both closure and hope. According to Rigney, hope, a "structure of feeling" (Williams 1970: 128–135; quoted in Rigney 2018: 370) is essential in activism, because it not only "informs civic action and motivates the struggle for a better life" but also "helps to *reframe* historical violence as a *struggle for a cause* rather than as a matter of victimisation; as a matter of civic engagement rather than of paranoia" (Rigney 2018: 370–371). Since the commemoration of the martyrs in 1989 provided a firm framework of victimization, the emphasis on the element of hope was crucial at the dawn of the new, democratic era.

The hope and optimism regarding a pluralist, democratic dialogue based on civic engagement rather than paranoia amid the construction of the multi-party system echoes on a bitter tone in the protest-performance, and it becomes completely eradicated by the memorial that replaces Imre Nagy's statue. As far as visual symbolism is concerned, the funeral's creative stage design invoked the classic avant-garde art implying that the leftist political tradition (from which avant-garde art emerged) does not equal with the false ideology of the communist era but remains an important point of identification for many Hungarian citizens. Such emphasis on pluralism *and* national unity stands in sharp contrast with the current government's reading of history that divides society based on the empty signifiers of "right" and "left" by means of anti-communist, anti-liberal and anti-Brussels propaganda. The removal of the Imre Nagy Memorial clearly indicates a shift in the official narrative in line with such efforts towards the anti-communist interpretation of 1956 and 1989, where the significance of the political left is gradually undermined, and the memory of the reform communist Prime Minister becomes incompatible. This shift is further enhanced by the reinstation of a highly debated memorial in the place of the Imre Nagy Memorial. Shortly after the statue's removal, the National Martyrs' Memorial (aka. Red Terror Memorial) was reconstructed in its place, based on a Horthy era structure that had stood there between 1934 and 1945, depicting the allegorical female figure of Hungary and a male figure defeating the monster of communism referring to the Hungarian Soviet Republic of 1918–1919 (Fig. 6). The reinstated memorial attests to two problematic implications of FIDESZ's memory politics. First, it reaffirms nostalgia for the controversial Horthy administration (1920–1944), a Christian conservative regime complicit in anti-Jewish legislation, as well as in the persecution of the Jewish population under the Nazi occupation. Second, it reinforces anti-communism by commemorating the victims of the Soviet Republic of 1918–1919, contributing to the populist narrative that depicts Hungarian history as an imagined fight between "good" (Christian, national conservativism) and "evil" (external domination by communists or liberals), successfully used in Orbán's populist rhetoric. The re-signification of the Martyrs' Square confirms that the revolutionary tradition of 1956 and 1989 is overwritten by a distilled version of history, where the oversimplified notion of anti-communism suppresses the actual pluralism of memories and (political) identities.

Due to the removal of the Imre Nagy Memorial, the reorganized Parliament area (Kossuth Square and Martyrs' Square) represents exclusively the traumas regarding the memory of 1956, therefore, the uprising's interconnectedness with the regime change's optimistic message is completely ignored within this symbolic space and trauma site. Memorials in this location have special significance not only because it is the "main square of the nation" but

Figure 6. Memorial of the National Martyrs 1918–1919 in Martyrs' Square, 2019 (Photos: author).

also because it is the site of the "bloody Thursday massacre," perhaps the most tragic event of the 1956 Revolution. Kossuth Square does not accommodate any visual evidence to the traumatic event other than the buildings that have since been renovated but the link between the past is visualized by the memorials commemorating the massacre. The subtle memorial dedicated to the victims of the "bloody Thursday" on 25th October 1956 represents symbolic bullets in bronze on the wall of the former Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development on the corner of Martyrs' Square, designed in 2001 by sculptor József Kampfl and architect Ferenc Callmeyer, who himself was one of the survivors of the massacre. Since 2010, two more spectacular memorials were added to the square: a memorial pond with the inscription "Persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed (2 Cor 4:9) In Memoriam October 25, 1956" („Üldöztetünk, de el nem hagyatunk; tiportatunk, de el nem veszünk; 2 Kor 4:9 In Memoriam 1956. október 25.") and an underground memorial center, including a memorial and a permanent exhibition showcasing over sixty massacres across the country.[10] While the memorials to the massacre are legitimate due to the site's past, the removal of the Imre Nagy Memorial signifies the withdrawal of the narrative about the fulfilment of the Revolution's objectives in 1989 – an aspect emphasized by the young Viktor Orbán in 1989, paradoxically. The Living Memorial articulated this absence with the re-signification of the site in the form of a requiem for the diversity of memories and identities, and it reminded its audience of the indissoluble entanglement of 1956 and 1989. At this point, the question might be raised whether such a creative form of memory activism that propagates memory pluralism is able to bring more understanding and solidarity within a deeply polarized society.

Memory Activism and Multidirectional Memories

In his influential book *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (2009) and subsequent article "From Gaza to Warsaw: Mapping Multidirectional Memory" (2011), Michael Rothberg offers a conceptual frame to understand the simultaneous upsurge of various memory traditions beyond the logic of the zero-sum game of competing victimhood as a productive process because "the result of memory conflict is not less memory, but more" (Rothberg 2011: 523). Rothberg argues that "public memory is *structurally multidirectional* – that is, always marked by transcultural borrowing, exchange, and adaptation," and, accordingly, "collective memories of seemingly distinct histories – such as

10 In memoriam 25th October 1956. Memorial and exhibition. See: http://inmemoriam1956.hu/

Figure 7. The German Occupation Memorial and objects placed in the frame of the Living Memorial, 2019 (Photo: author).

those of slavery, the Holocaust, and colonialism – are not so easily separable from one another" (Rothberg 2011: 524). Post-socialist societies have been experiencing a vast wave of competing victimhood since 1989, which did not only concern local memory discourses but also challenged the dominant (Western) European paradigm. The different experiences of WWII and its aftermath between countries of the former Eastern Bloc and Western Europe accumulated in heated debates in the European Union, such as the one around the Prague Declaration (2008) and the subsequent EU resolution (2009) that equally recognized the victims of Communism, Nazism and fascism as victims of human rights violations committed by totalitarian regimes, which led to ongoing conflicts between the memory of the Holocaust (especially regarding its singularity) and other traumatic heritages within Europe. The notion of "multidirectional memory" aspires to overcome such competition to enable difficult but necessary discussions in this regard; however, the post-socialist region remains underrepresented in Rothberg's investigation. Looking at the Hungarian discourse through the lens of Rothberg's concept, which assumes that more memory generates more understanding and facilitates solidarity between victim groups may add intriguing insights into the dynamics of memory from an Eastern European perspective.

Discord between various interpretations of the past has been exacerbated by FIDESZ's memory politics since 2010 but conflicts of that sort are more deeply rooted in the Hungarian society. Prior to the illiberal turn, the case of the House of Terror Museum (2002) provided an early example of conflicting historical narratives with regard to the representation of the Nazi and the communist regimes. The conflict has never been resolved but while the museum's widely criticized victimizing narrative represented FIDESZ's unidirectional approach to history, it also triggered a wave of intense debate, that is, a sort of productive multidirectionality. It was, in fact, the museum's failure to produce a nuanced historical perspective that generated a wide range of discussions from the theorization of "comparative victimhood" (Judt 2005: 826–830, see also: Benazzo 2017; Turai 2009; Zombory 2019) to the critique of memorial museums (Creet 2013; Sodaro 2018), which greatly enriched our understanding of memory. While debates around the House of Terror Museum have been limited to professional and academic circles in this case, the open-air exhibition the museum organized on the occasion of the 1956 uprising's fiftieth anniversary in 2016 activated not only professional but also civil responses. The Living Memorial installed a guerrilla exhibition to complement the museum's installation with two further tableaus displaying political figures and groups

underrepresented or left out of the official narrative, including Imre Nagy and other reform communist politicians, portraits of workers and texts about the communist Petőfi Circle that participated in the 1956 uprising. The list of suppressed elements indicates that it is largely histories related to the political left that are invisible in the museum's narrative, which is in line with the meanings attributed to the removal of the Imre Nagy Memorial.

Conflict generated by an exclusory unidirectional narrative is often the very trigger of the emergence of multidirectional memories, as the Living Memorial's first action demonstrated (Munteán 2019). To commemorate the victims of WWII in the Holocaust memorial year, the government decided to erect the Memorial for Victims of the German Occupation (2014) in Liberty Square, the symbolism of which denied Hungary's responsibility in the Holocaust. The memorial represents Hungary as the allegorical figure of Archangel Gabriel holding the state symbol in his hands, with Germany above him in the form of the imperial eagle attacking Hungary – which in fact is erroneously not even the Nazi symbol, according to István Rév's observation (2018). As a response to the planned memorial that depicts Hungary as an innocent victim of the Nazi Germany, the Living Memorial organized a flash mob and invited people to place personal objects around the intended memorial. By means of the ongoing and ever-changing, ephemeral memorial consisting of objects, photographs, texts and other memorabilia, the activist group managed to transform the site into a memorial in its own right to counter the values of the planned state memorial (Fig. 7). The demonstrators addressed issues including the memorial's denial of Hungary's complicity in the Holocaust through its problematic symbolism (Erőss 2016; Kovács and Mindler-Steiner 2015; Kovács 2017; Rév 2018; Ungváry 2014) – a problem that has already been raised regarding the House of Terror Museum (Blutinger 2010; Sodaro 2018; Turai 2009). Alongside the counter-monument – not in the sense that it adopts "anti-monumental strategies, counter to traditional monument principles" but as a memorial "designed to counter a specific existing monument and the values it represents" (Stevens et. al. 2012: 951) – the Living Memorial community has been organizing *in situ* public discussions to share memories the official narrative fails to represent, opening up discursive space to frame personal and collective recollections of the past. The juxtaposition of the two memorials reveals a conflicting dynamics of uni- and multidirectional memories, which László Munteán sums up as follows: "Paradoxically, the governmental will that carried out the construction of the memorial to the occupation without public consent did not simply enact its own interpretation of the past at the cost of others but, inadvertently, it also initiated an ongoing movement of counter-memory that would have remained dormant had it not been awakened by indignation" (Munteán 2019: 80).

The subsequent demonstration of the Living Memorial against the removal of the Imre Nagy Memorial reaffirms the paradoxical dynamics of multidirectional memories, while it extends the discussion on different histories. In that case, the governmental will to remove a memorial generated public discussions on the memory of the regime change and the traumatic heritage of the communist era, which might have remained limited to professional debates otherwise. This echoes Rothberg's argument on productive multidirectionality that understands memory "as subject to ongoing negotiation, cross-referencing, and borrowing; as productive and not privative." (Rothberg 2009: 3). The clash between different versions of history also activated personal recollections of the past alongside professional discussions, which underlines that memory is essentially a social practice and cannot be overwritten by top-down memory politics (Erőss 2018). The persistent memory activism of the Living Memorial thus highlights that conflicting memories triggered by top-down interventions in the public space may generate urgent public debates that would remain hidden or underexplored otherwise.

The activism of the Living Memorial, however, not only sheds light on the inherent paradox of multidirectional memories but also demonstrates that multidirectionality alone fails to create a form of "differentiated solidarity" (Rothberg 2011) in the context of the Hungarian illiberal system. Discussions enabled by the protests have undoubtedly contributed to a better understanding of diverse memories and of the experiences of various victim groups, but they did not necessarily facilitate more understanding between the groups of society represented by the Living Memorial and the ones that identify with the official version of history. On the one hand, the demonstrations activated discourses on historical traumas and silenced memories by visually articulating counter-memories and -histories. On the other hand, despite the Living Memorial's indisputable merit in making distinct pasts imaginable and present in the public sphere, their activities could not escape reproducing conflict between official narratives and counter-narratives, and between (political) identities devoted to either side. In the light of the case studies, Rothberg's proposition about the positive impact of multidirectionality applies as far as cross-referencing, exchange and stimulation is concerned between various memory traditions, but the emergence of multidirectional memories alone cannot reinforce more solidarity in the overall society within the Hungarian context.

Conclusion

The nonviolent political demonstrations I analyzed concern different stages of memory in different historical and political contexts, including the democratic transformation and illiberal democracy, yet they both play a critical role in the articulation and visualization of memories with artistic tools. The public rehabilitation of Imre Nagy, including its monumental stage design, not only highlighted the element of hope in the context of mourn-

ing a national trauma but also contributed to making the revolutionary moment of the regime change imaginable and transmittable. When the protest-performance recreated the funeral's design three decades later, it reflected the loss of hope in terms of the possibility of dialogue between memories and identities, indicating a disruption in the working through of traumas and painful histories within the illiberal system. At the same time, the action brought silenced memories back into the public sphere, and for a short while it re-signified the area around the Parliament – the trauma site of the 1956 Revolution – which has since been completed as the *par excellence* representative space of the official historical narrative. The case studies demonstrated that memory activism has the potential to create both physical and discursive spaces of memory that are able to transform the discourse on traumatic heritage, and they confirmed the role of art in making the past re-imaginable from diverse perspectives. However, while the 1989 public funeral is widely remembered as a moment of national unity, the potential of the protest-performance to promote memory pluralism remains limited to a relatively small group of society and it does not necessarily facilitate more solidarity between various political identities.

The complexity and specificity of the Hungarian examples of memory activism shed light on the difficulties of embedding Eastern European traumatic heritages in the dominant European memory discourse. Besides the considerable differences between Eastern and Western experiences and memorialization practices of historical traumas of the 20th century, the focus of Western (and Anglo-Saxon) art and academia has been placed on the memory of the Holocaust, slavery and crimes committed by colonial powers, therefore the conceptual and visual framework of memorialization has also been developed based on these contexts. Simultaneously, post-socialist societies continue to have discussions on their own traumatic histories, which make use of dominant theorizations of memory and trauma, yet they often necessitate distinct perspectives and novel conceptual apparatuses that are able to reflect on local experiences of multiple victim groups. The negotiation of the past by means of museums, memorials and memory activism continues to diversify the understanding of history in Hungary, yet it does not move beyond the politics of recognition that reproduces conflict rather than bringing reconciliation.

Bibliography

Allier-Montaño E, Crenzel E [Eds] (2015) The Struggle for Memory in Latin America. Recent History and Political Violence. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137527349

Andermann J [Ed.] (2015) Place, Memory and Mourning in Post-Dictatorial Latin America. Memory Studies Special Issue. London: SAGE.

András E (2013) Hungary in Focus: Conservative Politics and Its Impact on the Arts. Artmargins.com

Arendt H (1958) Totalitarian Imperialism: Reflections on the Hungarian Revolution. The Journal of Politics 20(1): 5–43. https://doi.org/10.2307/2127387

Assmann J (1995) Collective Memory and Cultural Identity. New German Critique 65: 125–133. [JSTOR 488538] https://doi.org/10.2307/488538

Assmann J (2008) Communicative and Cultural Memory. In: Erll A, Nünning A (Eds) Cultural Memory Studies. An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook. Berlin, New York: 109–118.

Benazzo S (2017) Features of Fidesz's Politics of Memory. In: Journal of Nationalism, Memory & Language Politics 11(2): 198–221. https://doi.org/10.1515/jnmlp-2017-0009

Benziger KP (2000) The Funeral of Imre Nagy: Contested History and the Power of Memory Culture. In: History and Memory 12(2): 142–164. https://doi.org/10.2979/his.2000.12.2.142

Blutinger J (2010) An Inconvenient Past: Post-Communist Holocaust Memorialization. Shofar 29(1): 73–94. https://doi.org/10.1353/sho.2010.0093

Boros G (1997) Emlékművek '56-nak. 1956-os Intézet.

Creet J (2013) The House of Terror and the Holocaust Memorial Centre: Resentment and Melancholia in Post-89 Hungary. European Studies 30: 29–62. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789401208895_004

Csillag Á (2018) Tiltakozás a Nagy Imre emlékmű eltávolítása ellen (video, 23 September 2018). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0IssmEqsCzw&feature=emb_title

David L (2020) The Past Can't Heal Us: The Dangers of Mandating Memory in the Name of Human Rights. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108861311

Erll A, Rigney A (2009) Mediation, Remediation, and the Dynamics of Cultural Memory. De Gruyter.

Erőss Á (2016) "In Memory of Victims": Monument and Counter-monument in Liberty Square, Budapest. Hungarian Geographical Bulletin 65: 237–254. https://doi.org/10.15201/hungeobull.65.3.3

Erőss Á (2018) Living Memorial and Frozen Monuments. The Role of Social Practice in Memorial Sites. Urban Development Issues 55: 19–32. https://doi.org/10.2478/udi-2018-0002

Eyerman R (2016) Social Movements and Memory. In: Tota AL, Hagen T (Eds) Routledge International Handbook of Memory Studies. London: Routledge: 79–83.

Fridman O (2015) Alternative Calendars and Memory Work in Serbia: Anti-war Activism After Milošević. Memory Studies 8(2): 212–226. https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698014558661

Gárcia Márquez G (2003a) [1957] Magyarországon jártam [I Visited Hungary]. Nagyvilág 48(11): 884–896.

Gárcia Márquez G (2003b) [1958] Nagy Imre hős vagy áruló [Imre Nagy, Hero or Traitor]. Nagyvilág 48(11): 884–896

Gárcia Márquez G (1983) Our Own Brand of Socialism. In: New Left Review.

Gutman Y (2017) Memory Activism: Reimagining the Past for the Future in Israel-Palestine. Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv16759tr

György P (2000) Néma hagyomány. Kollektív felejtés és a kései múltértelmezés [Silent tradition. Collective forgetting and delayed evaluation of the past]. Magvető, Budapest.

Halbwachs M (1992) On Collective Memory. University of Chicago Press. Translated from: Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1952, originally published in Les Travaux de L'Année Sociologique, Paris, F. Alcan, 1925. https://doi.org/10.7208/chicago/9780226774497.001.0001

Harms V (2017) A Tale of Two Revolutions: Hungary's 1956 and the Un-doing of 1989. In: Laczó F, Wawrzyniak J (Eds) East European Politics and Societies: and Cultures 31(3): 479–499. https://doi.org/10.1177/0888325417703184

Human Platform (2020) Hungary Turns Its Back on Europe: Dismantling Culture, Education, Science and the Media Under Orbán. Hungarian Network of Academics.

Jelin E (2003) State Repression and the Labors of Memory. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press. https://doi.org/10.3362/9781899365654

Judt T (2005) Postwar. A History of Europe Since 1945. Penguin Books.

Judt T (1992) The Past Is Another Country: Myth and Memory in Postwar Europe. Daedalus 121(4): 83–118. [Retrieved February 27, 2021]

Katriel A, Reading T (2015) Cultural Memories of Nonviolent Struggles. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1057/9781137032720

Kiss C (2006) The Misuses of Manipulation: The Failure of Transitional Justice in Post-Communist Hungary. Europe-Asia Studies 58(6): 926–940. https://doi.org/10.1080/09668130600831142

K Horváth Zs (2008) The Redistribution of the Memory of Socialism. Identity Formations of the 'Survivors' in Hungary after 1989. In: Sarkisova O, Apor P (Eds) Past for the Eyes: East European Representations of Communism in Cinema and Museums After 1989. Central European University Press: 247–274.

Kovács É (2005/2006) The Cynical and the Ironical. Remembering Communism in Hungary. Transit 30: 155–169.

Kovács É (2017) The Hungarian Holocaust Memorial Year 2014. Some Remarks. In: S.I.M.O.N. Shoah: Intervention, Methods, Documentation 4: 109–121.

Kovács H, Ursula K. Mindler-Steiner UK (2015) Hungary and the Distortion of Holocaust History. The Hungarian Holocaust Memorial Year 2014. In: Politics in Central Europe 11(2): 49–72. https://doi.org/10.1515/pce-2015-0010

Landsberg A (2004) Prosthetic Memory. The Transformation of American Remembrance in the Age of Mass Culture. Columbia University Press.

Mark J (2010) The Unfinished Revolution: Making Sense of the Communist Past in Central-Eastern Europe. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Mark J, Blaive M, Hudek A, Saunders A, Tyszka S (2015) 1989 After 1989: Remembering the End of Communism in East-Central Europe. In: Kopeček M, Wciślik P (Eds) Thinking through Transition. Liberal Democracy, Authoritarian Pasts, and Intellectual History in East Central Europe After 1989. Central European University Press, 463–505.

Mihancsik Zs (1994a) Nagy Imre temetése, és az 56-os emlékmű születése – Interjú Jovánovics Györggyel. [Imre Nagy's funeral and the birth of the 1956 Memorial – Interview with György Jovánovics] Budapesti Negyed 3 (1)

Mihancsik Zs (1994b) Nagy Imre temetése, és az 56-os emlékmű születése – Interjú Rajk Lászlóval. [Imre Nagy's funeral and the birth of the 1956 Memorial – Interview with László Rajk] Budapesti Negyed 3(1).

Munteán L (2019) Shockwave Memories: Multidirectional Sites of the Holocaust in Budapest. In: Kalogeras Y, Waegner CC (Eds) Ethnic Resonances in Performance, Literature, and Identity. New York: Routledge, 64–81. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003016274-5

Nagy G (2015) Increasingly Radical Interventions: The New Wave of Political Art in Hungary. In: Krasztev P, Van Til J (Eds) The Hungarian Patient: Social Opposition to an Illiberal Democracy. Central European University Press, 291–316.

Nora P ([22 November] 2002) The Reason for the Current Upsurge in Memory. In: Transit Online. Accessed 10 September 2020. http://www.iwm.at/transit/transit-online/the-reasons-for-the-current-upsurge-in-memory/

Palonen E (2008) The City-text in Post-communist Budapest: Street Names, Memorials, and the Politics of Commemoration. GeoJournal 73: 219–230. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10708-008-9204-2

Pető A (2017a) Roots of Illiberal Memory Politics. Remembering Women in the 1956 Hungarian Revolution. Södertörns University, Baltic Worlds 10(4): 42–58.

Pető A (2017b) Hungary's Illiberal Polypore State. European Politics and Society, Newsletter Winter 2017: 18–21.

Pfaff S, Yang G (2001) Double-Edged Rituals and the Symbolic Resources of Collective Action: Political Commemorations and the Mobilization of Protest in 1989. Theory and Society 30(4): 539–89. https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1011817231681 [Accessed November 21, 2020]

Potó J (2003) Az emlékeztetés helyei. Emlékművek és politika [Sites of memory. Memorials and politics]. Osiris, Budapest.

Rév I (2005) Retroactive Justice. Prehistory of Post-Communism. Stanford University Press, Stanford.

Rév I (2018) Liberty Square, Budapest: How Hungary Won the Second World War. Journal of Genocide Research 20(4): 607–623. https://doi.org/10.1080/14623528.2018.1522820

Rigney A (2018) Remembering Hope: Transnational Activism Beyond the Traumatic. Memory Studies 11(3): 368–380. https://doi.org/10.1177/1750698018771869

Rigney A (2020) The Afterlife of Hope: How the Killing of Demonstrators is Remembered. The Connecting Memories Podcast. https://anchor.fm/connectingmemories/episodes/On-memory-and-social-movements-with-guest-speaker-Prof-Ann-Rigney-University-of-Utrecht-efo8dh [Accessed 22 June 2020]

Rothberg M (2009) Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization. Stanford University Press.

Rothberg M (2011) From Gaza to Warsaw: Mapping Multidirectional Memory. Criticism 53(4): 523–548. https://doi.org/10.1353/crt.2011.0032

Sartre J-P (1968) The Ghost of Stalin. New York, G. Braziller.

Seleny A (2014) Revolutionary Road. 1956 and the Fracturing of Hungarian Historical Memory. In: Bernhard M, Kubik J (Eds) Twenty Years After Communism. Oxford University Press, 37–59. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199375134.003.0003

Sodaro A (2018) Exhibiting Atrocity: Memorial Museums and the Politics of Past Violence. Rutgers University Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctt1v2xskk

Stan L (2009) Transitional Justice in Eastern Europe and the Former Soviet Union: Reckoning with the Communist Past. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203887783

Stan L, Nedelsky N [Eds] (2015) Post-Communist Transitional Justice: Lessons from Twenty-Five Years of Experience. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107588516

Stevens Q, Franck KA, Fazakerley R (2012) Counter-monuments: the Anti-monumental and the Dialogic. The Journal of Architecture 17(6): 951–972. https://doi.org/10.1080/13602365.2012.746035

Turai H (2009) Past Unmastered: Hot and Cold Memory in Hungary. Third Text 23(1): 97–106. https://doi.org/10.1080/09528820902786735

Ungváry K (2014) The Living Horror. Hungarian Spectrum. Original publication: Az élő borzalom. In: HVG, 21 January 2014. https://

hungarianspectrum.wordpress.com/2014/01/24/krisztian-ungvary-on-the-memorial-to-the-german-occupation-of-hungary-the-living-horror/ [Accessed 10 May 2021]

Ungváry K (2017) A szembenézés hiánya. Felelősségre vonás, iratnyilvánosság és átvilágítás Magyarországon 1990–2017 [The lack of facing the past. Accountability, public access to documents and lustration in Hungary 1990–2017]. Jaffa kiadó, Budapest.

Young JE (1992) The Counter-Monument: Memory against Itself in Germany Today. University of Chicago Press, Critical Inquiry 18(2): 267–296. https://doi.org/10.1086/448632

Van Vree F (2013) Absent Memories. Cultural Analysis 12: 1–12.

Violi P (2012) Trauma Site Museums and Politics of Memory. Tuol Sleng, Villa Grimaldi and the Bologna Ustica Museum. In: Theory Culture & Society 29 (1): 36–75. https://doi.org/10.1177/0263276411423035

Williams R (1970) Marxism and Literature. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Villalón R [Ed.] (2017) Memory, Truth, and Justice in Contemporary Latin America. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Zombory M (2019) Traumatársadalom. Az emlékezetpolitika történeti-szociológiai kritikája [Society of trauma. The historical and sociological critique of memory politics]. Budapest, Kijárat Kiadó.