What is the role of memory for a society?

Who creates history?

Is reconciliation possible?
“Speaking to One Another – Personal Memories of the Past in Armenia and Turkey”, Exhibition view Paris 2012, venue: La Péniche ANAKO
Paul Watzlawick, the well-known Austrian communications theorist, sociologist, and philosopher, said that you cannot not communicate, since all communication (not only speech) is behavior, and, as you cannot not behave, you cannot not communicate. In this sense, the conflict between Turkey and Armenia, between the Turkish and the Armenian people has been dominated by behavior for the past 98 years. However, listening to each other, initiating a dialog has, in fact, not happened. Like a mantra, both sides repeat their respective national narratives or remain silent. In this context, the project “Speaking to One Another” (the first phase of which was most fittingly entitled “Learning to Listen”) by the Institute for International Cooperation of the German Adult Education Association [dvv international] and its local partners attempted to create spaces for communication and dialog. The four-year project pursued this approach on various different levels, with a multitude of methods and for different target groups.

One of these spaces was the exhibition space: The idea was to use material from a previously published book entitled “Speaking to One Another. Whom to forgive? What to forgive?” for a traveling exhibition. The book is mainly based on interviews with residents of Eastern Anatolia and present-day Armenia. The stories collected in this volume deal with the perspective on the respective other, with the orally transmitted narratives about their coexistence before the genocide of 1915, with present-day Armenia and everyday life in Turkey, with suffering, guilt, and forgiveness. Whereas in an earlier phase of the project a precursor of the subsequent exhibition had traveled to various cities in Armenia and Turkey, the presentation in the context of which this little catalog is published focused on the places of the Armenian and the Turkish diaspora: Tbilisi, Batumi, Nicosia, Berlin, and Paris. Apart from wall panels with images and texts, as well as video displays, the exhibition featured a symbolic round table. At this table, the visitors were asked to take a stand by answering three questions, which were presented on paper fixed to clipboards:

What is the role of memory for a society? Who creates history? Is reconciliation possible?

With threads of different length, the visitors then hung their answers up in the exhibition space for everybody to read. With each place the exhibition was shown at, new answers were added, completing the suspended archive. In Paris, at the end of the tour, several hundreds of answers to the same three questions had been accumulated; answers in ten different languages.

The initial project outline had only included the presentation of the “answer sheet archive” to the visitors of the exhibition—and then it was supposed to disappear into nowhere like the rest of the show. It was only after dismantling the last exhibition in Paris, while packing up and sifting through the remaining material, that we, the exhibition organizers, realized the treasure that lay before us: answers from people from different countries, different cultural and religious backgrounds, of different ages, of different political opinions and with different native languages, answers to the ever-same questions so important for our living together in Europe.

Matthias Klingenberg, June 2013
WHAT IS THE ROLE OF MEMORY FOR A SOCIETY?
Collective memory includes everything what the nation went through during the history of its development. I wish that our fellow Armenians never had to go through such horrible things as the events of 1915 again.

Memory is a phenomenon that bridges the past to the present and than to the future. Without it, achievements in the past cannot be translated into the future and coming generations will be void of their moral obligations and commitments.
What is the role of memory for a society?

It reflects the future. It continuously challenges and negotiates identities.

Welche Rolle spielt Erinnerung für eine Gesellschaft?

"Biransin bingaha Civarke ne !!? "
Dapjira min ya Qurbarne Komkeyi bi Kurdeke zelal ew Biransin ji min re vedigoting ji bar wa min bi Kurdi ni wis."
Remembering is confronting the past. Without remembering and telling (oral history), it won’t be possible to make peace and to share and understand the pain. Remembrance means new children, new generations as well. I wish there would be no massacres and denials anymore.

An important one: it enables people to deal with their ancestors and their experiences, to try to understand them and perhaps to try to change something. Perhaps it serves to understand who I am, where I stand.
What is the role of memory for a society?

Creation of meaning, identification, communalization, justification, restriction of the capacity to act, legitimation, self-confidence, reminder...

Answer in German from a visitor in Paris

Welche Rolle spielt Erinnerung für eine Gesellschaft?

die Möglichkeit, etwas zu begreifen, zu verstehen und Lernen daraus zu ziehen. Man könnte alles besser machen, von Generation zu Generation! Wunderschöne Vorstellung!

Answer in German from a visitor in Berlin

The possibility to comprehend something, to understand and to learn from it. One could do everything better, generation by generation! What a wonderful idea!
What is the role of memory for a society?

Memory is the base of the common identity. And the common identity is a necessity for a healthy future.

What is the role of memory for a society?

Memory must be a seed of life and not a painful grave. How to make life with the memory of the genocide? I don't know. But if not, Talaat could win. But he can't win!
What is the role of memory for a society?

...et quel est le rôle de l'Inconscient collectif face au déni ?

...de crime génocidaire !

Answer in English from a visitor in Paris

Answer in French from a visitor in Paris

...and what is the role of the collective unconscious in the face of denial? ...of genocidal crime!

Memory shapes the history of humanity and allows it to grow. That's why trying to smother it means tyrannizing, means preventing people from thinking. It means regressing, cheating, stealing their souls.
If only we could all get Alzheimer's at some point.

There is no future without the past, but we shouldn't look back all the time!
Very huge: on the one hand, collective memory is based on a society as in its birth.

First answer: None

Second answer: It frames and affects the present and the future. – Positively or negatively it depends on the living (those who are alive).

Two answers in Greek from visitors in Nicosia
To help us not to forget the mistakes of the past, and not to repeat them.

Psalli 21/5/2012
WHO CREATES HISTORY?
Experiences. But these are censored when it comes to official history. That’s why oral history matters. It narrates experiences with the words of the persons who made them. That’s history...

Answer in Turkish from a visitor in Nicosia

We, the people. Actions, thoughts and feelings of the people in the process play an important role in creating history.

Answer in Turkish from a visitor in Berlin

Tarihi kim yaratır?

Biz isgale dayalı tarihi, insanların süreci içinde yaptıkları eylemleri – sır ve duyguları ve düşünceleri – yaratma ve oluşturur...
Who creates history?

Us people.
The Good.
The BAD. 
STUGLY.
Who creates history?

historie tworzymy my

Qui crée l’histoire ?

We are creating history.
Who creates history?

Unfortunately, those who hold the power.

CPG
Who creates history?

Shido Knopp, leider!

Guido Knopp, unfortunately!

Wer schreibt Geschichte?

Wir alle schreiben Geschichte.

Indem wir handeln, beweisen wir, dass wir aktiv sind. Wir haben eine Verantwortung, und wir müssen dafür sorgen, dass wir niemals passiv sind.
Witnesses are those who create history!

 Qui crée l’histoire ?
 Ce sont les témoins qui créent l’histoire !

 Who creates history?

 History is not written by the vanquished or the damned.
 "Leaving Beirut" Roger Waters
Great grandfather – grandfather – children (the young generation)

History was first created by Herodot!
Unfortunately, history is often created by violence, wars, and battles for power. As a great utopian, Marx said that history will stop when there is no war anymore or any other form of violence, when men are equal in all respects, when there is real democracy and when the world is peaceful! 

Answer in French from a visitor in Paris.

Qui crée l’histoire ?

Malheureusement et souvent, l’histoire est créée par la violence, les guerres et les batailles de pouvoir !

Marx dit, en grand utopiste, que l’Histoire s’arrêtera lorsqu’il n’y aura plus de guerre, ni toute autre violence, lorsque les Hommes seront égaux, surtout les jeunes, qu’il y aura une réel démocratie et que le monde sera pacifique !

Answer in French from a visitor in Paris.
IS RECONCILIATION POSSIBLE?
I heartily wish the hatred between two nations would disappear. Let's not search for an enemy, because we won't find one, it’s nameless; we will only find political powers. The new generation is not in charge; let's not create an enemy from the new generation. If we consider ourselves meritorious human beings, we should consider Turks meritorious human beings too, and only then, there will be peace.
Yes! Within the scope of an organized effort that concerns political leadership, academic and civil society.

If there were no wolves, the sheep would be getting along very well. It is global imperialism itself that makes humans inhumane.

Yes! In this particular case of political economy, science, academic and community leaders are conducting the politics.

If there were no wolves, the sheep would be getting along very well. It is global imperialism itself that makes humans inhumane.
Is reconciliation possible?

Nachdem die Quelle des Konflikts erkannt und erannt wurde, dann erst kann an eine Annäherung in Hinblicken gedacht werden.

Answer in German from a visitor in Berlin

When the source of conflict has been identified and named. Only then, reconciliation in small steps can be considered.
Is reconciliation possible?

IF THERE IS NO REDEMPTION — THEN WE ARE DOOMED

DT.

19/MAY/12.
Is reconciliation possible?
Everything is possible. People's power is unique, but the people lost momentum and direction...
Is reconciliation possible?

Yes!

Yes! I want to believe that it is.

Answer in English and Turkish from a visitor in Nicosia.

"Forgive and you will be forgiven!"

Answer in Georgian from a visitor in Georgia.
That depends on the situation and the problems. Of course, we must be able to give ground, but we should not forget our principles.
Children should not be responsible for the behavior of their parents. The future should be bright and civilized. Reconciliation is a precondition for future relationships.

No, because we always keep a bit of hate inside us.
La réconciliation est-elle possible?

Reconciliation?
But which reconciliation? I don't know the exact definition of this word. What I do know is that both parties recognize their faults, etc...

In any case, look carefully and you will see that this reconciliation is against nature for everyone, for both the Armenians and the Turks. People need peace, but, above all, they aspire to justice and fairness. And this reconciliation does not seem to correspond with justice to me. It is a pity.

If we remain conditioned to believe that we are born, that we live and that we all will die in "civilizations"--no, reconciliation is not possible.

But if we acknowledge the equality of every human being and go beyond it (and) that from failure a better relationship is born, a better creation, [then], yes; but we would not even evoke the term "reconciliation" but rather the term 'need'.

S. M.
La réconciliation est-elle possible ?

On ne peut pas faire l’économie de la reconnaissance du génocide des Arméniens par la Turquie.
On ne peut pas faire l’économie des réparations dues au peuple arménien.
Alors oui... la réconciliation.

L.D. 15.11.2012

Question in French from a visitor in Paris.

We cannot do without the recognition of the Armenian genocide by Turkey. We cannot do without the reparation due to the Armenian people. So, yes... reconciliation.

NO. Yes, if the descendants of yesterday’s executioners agree to move on by letting their stupid obstinacy go... Because memory will always be present to “refresh” their lies... Honesty is the only driving force.
Is reconciliation possible?

Inshallah, mais sa va être compliqué.

Answer in French from a visitor in Paris.

Ist Versöhnung möglich?

Was bedeutet das? Ist Deutschland bereit, die armenische Genozid zu erkennen, und nur dann eine Art von Versöhnung zu beginnen. Was für einen Dialog meinen Sie? Wenn Deutschland, mit all seinen Möglichkeiten, nach mehr als 95 Jahren noch nicht den armenischen Genozid erkennen kann. Wie viele Jahrhunderte sollten wir warten, bis die Türkei entwickelt ist, zu einer moderneren und zu ihrer eigenen Geschichte zu akzeptieren. Wenn Deutschland nicht bereit ist, es zu erkennen, was sollte man erwarten?

Answer in Armenian from a visitor in Berlin.

What kind of dialog do you mean. If Germany, with all its possibilities, still hasn’t recognized the Armenian Genocide after more than 95 years. How many centuries should we wait for Turkey to develop, to become more civilized and to accept its own history. If Germany isn’t ready to recognize it, what should we expect from the Turks. First of all, Germany should recognize it, and only then initiate any kind of reconciliation.
Արդյոք այս հարցը էլ չի կորուստվում մեզի համար?

24/11/2012
EXHIBITION VIEWS
What is the role of memory for a society?

Memory is the base of the common identity
And the common identity is a necessity for a healthy future
Visitor in Nicosia, Cyprus, 2012

Who creates history?

History is not written by the vanquished, but by the victors.

“History is written by the victors.”

What is the role of memory for a society?

If I lose
It continues
Chilled
near

Visitor in Nicosia, Cyprus, 2012