

History 600/8: European Lives in the Twentieth Century
Fall 2005, T 1:20-3:20, 2625 Humanities
Instructor: Dr. Koshar
Office hours: 4101 Humanities, MW 1-2:15 & by appt.

Historians use terms such as mass politics, mass culture, and mass death to analyze twentieth-century Europe. But in the age of the masses, individual perspectives in the form of autobiographical literature, memoirs, firsthand accounts of key historical events, and published correspondence flourished as never before. How does the historian use this evidence in an era for which only “big structures, large processes, and huge comparisons,” to quote sociologist Charles Tilly, seem to matter? What do individual narratives offer that more synthetic historical analyses do not? How does an individual life either exemplify or challenge general historical accounts? Do such sources make us skeptical about historical narratives using class, gender, race, or nation as conceptual linchpins? Are such structural concepts finally too coarsely grained to understand individual experiences and moral choices? For what audiences are memoirists autobiographers writing? What is the “agenda”? What are the limits of such narratives? What do such accounts tell us about historical agency and selfhood in Europe’s most violent age?

We will range broadly across twentieth-century Europe in considering such questions. The seminar will consist of assigned readings and discussion of a number of personal accounts, contextualized by material on the historical period in which the person lived. Critical thinking and writing, in addition to gaining knowledge of individual experiences, are our main goals. All required reading except for the excerpt on autobiography by Jeremy Popkin (a course handout) is available for purchase at the Underground Textbook Exchange on State Street. The books are also on reserve at Helen C. White.

Grading will be determined as follows:

One essay of 5-7 pages (due Oct. 11) =	20 points
One in-class presentation on research topic =	20 points
Discussion/participation/attendance =	20 points
Research paper of 15-20 pages (due Dec. 16) =	40 points
Total =	100 points

The grade scale is: A=100-93; AB=92-88; B=87-83; BC=82-78; C=77-70; D=69-60.

Late papers lose 5 points for each day they are tardy. Each unexcused absence from seminar means a loss of 2 points from the student’s discussion grade. Students may rewrite the first essay in consultation with the instructor, provided they turned in the paper on time, and that they undertake a substantial revision; the due date is Oct. 18. Rewriting a paper does not guarantee a higher grade.

Required Reading:

Emilie Carles, *A Life of Her Own: The Transformation of a Countrywoman in Twentieth Century France*. Penguin.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters & Papers from Prison*. Touchstone.

Veronique Garros, et al, eds., *Intimacy and Terror: Soviet Diaries of the 1930s*. The New Press.

"Giorgio," *Memoirs of an Italian Terrorist*. Carroll & Graf.

Heda Margolius Kovaly, *Under a Cruel Star: A Life in Prague 1941-68*. Holmes & Meier.

Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz: The Nazi Assault on Humanity*. Touchstone.

Jeremy Popkin, "History and Autobiography," in *History, Historians, and Autobiography*, 11-32. Chicago. Course handout.

Jasmina Tesanovic, *The Diary of a Political Idiot: Normal Life in Belgrade*. Midnight Editions.

Course Schedule

Sept. 6	Introduction
Sept. 13	Autobiography, Memoir, History Reading: Popkin, 11-32; start Carles
Sept. 20	A French Countrywoman's Progress Reading: finish Carles
Sept. 27	Intimacy and Terror: Soviet Diaries in the 1930s, I Reading: Garros
Oct. 4	Intimacy and Terror: Soviet Diaries in the 1930s, II Reading: Garros; start Bonhoeffer
Oct. 11	Anti-Nazi Resistance Reading: finish Bonhoeffer Short essay due in class.

- Oct. 18 Auschwitz and the Culture of Survival
Reading: Levi
- Oct. 25 Living Under Two Dictatorships: From Nazism to Stalinism
Reading: Kovály
- Nov. 1 Italian Terrorism in the 1970s
Reading: Giorgio
- Nov. 8 The Yugoslav Wars
Reading: Tesanovic
- Nov. 15 Student presentations
- Nov. 22 Student presentations
- Nov. 29 Student presentations
- Dec. 6 Student presentations
- Dec. 13 Student presentations
- Dec. 16 **Final papers due by noon, 4101 Humanities**