

History 600/10: European Lives in the Twentieth Century
Fall 2006, W 1:20-3:20, 5255 Humanities
Instructor: Dr. Koshar (rjkoshar@wisc.edu)
Office hours: 4101 Humanities, TR 4-5, & 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 is available for purchase at the Underground Textbook Exchange. 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. 18) =	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.

Required Reading:

Linda Anderson, *Autobiography: The New Critical Idiom*. Routledge.

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

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

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

Sebastian Haffner, *Defying Hitler: A Memoir*. Picador.

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

Course Schedule

Sept. 6 Introduction
Sept. 13 Autobiographical Practice in Past and Present
Reading: Anderson; start Carles
Sept. 20 A French Countrywoman's Progress
Reading: 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
Oct. 11 Defying Hitler
Reading: finish Haffner
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. 18 **Final papers due by noon, 4101 Humanities**