WARFUN diaries

VOLUME 1 | 2022

Exploring the plurality of experiences and emotional articulations of war

CONTENTS

The experience of war 02
The seduction of war 05
A place for fun and pleasure in war research? 08
From the archives 12
Tourist in Afghanistan: Field notes 19
Perpetrators: A book conversation 22
WarFun art 26
Why humans fight: A book conversation 30
Fun, love and humanization 33
War virtually: A book conversation 37
Gendered military satire in Norway 41
The Merry Wind 43

WARFUN DIARIES

Edited by Antonio De Lauri

The *WARFUN Diaries* is an open access publication connected to the project "War and Fun: Reconceptualizing Warfare and Its Experience (WARFUN)", funded by the European Research Council and led by Research Professor Antonio De Lauri at the Chr. Michelsen Institute.

WARFUN is a European Research Council (ERC) Consolidator Grant project - Grant agreement ID: 101001106

Cover image: Antonio De Lauri

The experience of war: The WARFUN project

ANTONIO DE LAURI

According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, total global military expenditure increased by 0.7 per cent in 2021, to reach a historical record of $2.113 trillion. The United States is by far the largest spender, followed by China, India, the United Kingdom, and Russia – these five together account for 62 per cent of total expenditure. These figures indicate the global armed governance that characterizes geopolitics and international relations. After World War II, millions of lives have been claimed by wars waged by imperial powers such as the United States, Russia, and the United Kingdom, and by conflicts and unrest in contexts such as Darfur, Myanmar, Kivu, or Yemen. Of course, the immediate scale and intensity of a specific conflict are not the only elements to define the long-term tragedy that war generates. The bombing of Libya by the multi-state NATO-led coalition in 2011, for example, produced widespread national and regional instability that, to this day, is far from being resolved.

The military intervention was implemented under the auspices of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 proposed by France, Lebanon, and the United Kingdom (with the declared intention to *protect* civilians) and voted for by several Security Council members, including the United States, then under the administration of Nobel Peace Prize winner Barak Obama. Libyans know how much peace the bombing brought. Indeed, wars always involve a high degree of irony.

More recently, the war in Ukraine (which can be divided into two phases, 2014–22 and 2022–present) resuscitated, in its second phase, a certain dangerous fascination with war. Journalists, analysts, and politicians wearing real or symbolic military helmets have proliferated globally. Notions such as patriotism, the defence of democratic values, the right side of history, or a new fight for freedom are mobilized as imperatives for everyone to take sides in this war. It is not surprising, then, that a large number of so-called foreign fighters have been willing to go to Ukraine to join one side or the other.

Image: Livio Senigalliesi

I met a few of them when I visited the Poland–Ukraine border, where I was working with a Norwegian film crew to interview soldiers and foreign fighters who were either entering or exiting the war zone. Some of them never actually got to fight or even be recruited as they lacked military experience or appropriate motivation. The people we met had different backgrounds. Some of them had spent years in the military, while others only did military service. Some had family at home waiting for them; others had no home to go back to. Some had strong ideological motivations; others were just willing to shoot at something or someone.

There is also a large group of former soldiers who transitioned towards 'humanitarian work'. As we were crossing the border to get into Ukraine, a former United States soldier told me: 'The reason why many retired or former soldiers moved to humanitarian work might easily be the need for excitement'. Once you leave the military, the closest activity that can take you to the 'fun zone', as another one said, referring to the war zone in Ukraine, is humanitarian work – or, in fact, a series of other businesses mushrooming in the proximity of war, including contracting and crime. 'We are adrenaline junkies', the former United States soldier said, although he now only wants to help civilians, something he sees as 'a part of my process of healing'.

What many of the foreign fighters have in common is the quest for a purpose in life as well as excitement. K, a Scandinavian man in his early 20s who decided to join the legion of foreign fighters, said he believed that 'being there' was the right thing to do. He said he was willing to die and to kill. At the same time, he found it an exciting experience and said at least one-third of the foreign fighters he had met were there to have fun. The category of 'fun' appears to a large extent as an oxymoron when associated with war. And yet in the stories of soldiers and veterans, we find regular reference to ideas such as joy, excitement, allure, and fun. The former United States soldier mentioned above said that 'we would be overjoyed' after a military operation. A former military official I interviewed in Italy told me that being in a combat zone is thrilling, and 'you can experience fun, at times with a sense of guilt'.

Clearly, fun has many shades of connotation, from the most joyful to the most sinister. In the project I lead entitled 'War and Fun: Reconceptualizing Warfare and Its Experience (WARFUN)',[1] funded by the European Research Council, we use war stories related to what soldiers and fighters describe as 'fun' as an entry point into the realm of war, an angle that allows us to explore the emotional and experiential articulation of war from the perspective of those who fight, without forcing them into rigid external categories. The meaning of fun is often taken for granted both in scientific literature and everyday interactions; beyond dictionary definitions, there are few explanations of what fun involves and how to differentiate it from other social experiences. In our project, fun is understood to be an expression of both direct and indirect communication, a manner of public engagement as well as a 'ritual of inversion' in which the proprieties of structure (the declared mandate and rules of war) are lampooned and violated, yet the finalities of the project of war (dominion, control, violence, and so on) remain intact.

One striking element that has emerged from our research to date is that military personnel are often the most critical of what war really is in all its contradictions, beyond rhetorical descriptions. Indeed, one of the main goals of the project is to challenge the narrative of exception that often accompanies war's brutality. For instance, there is the dominant propaganda that seems to suggest war can be conducted according to a set of acceptable, standardized, and abstract rules. It puts forth the idea of a well-behaved war in which only military targets are destroyed, force is not used in excess, and right and wrong are clearly defined. This rhetoric is used by governments, the mass media, and even scholars to make war more acceptable, even attractive, for the masses. Whatever deviates from this idea of a proper and noble war is considered an exception. United States soldiers torturing prisoners in Abu Ghraib: an exception. German soldiers playing with a human skull in Afghanistan: an exception. The United States soldier who went on a house-to-house rampage in an Afghan village, killing sixteen civilians, including several children, for no reason: an exception. War crimes committed by Australian troops in Afghanistan: an exception. Iraqi prisoners tortured by British troops: an exception. Members of the Stryker Combat Brigade in Afghanistan accused of killing civilians for sport: an exception. French airstrikes on a wedding party in Mali: an exception. The Mahmudiyah case in which United States soldiers raped and killed a 14-year-old girl and murdered her family: an exception.

the suffering and hardship that humans endure within war cannot be stressed enough. It is precisely for this reason that we need a nuanced understanding of what happens in war

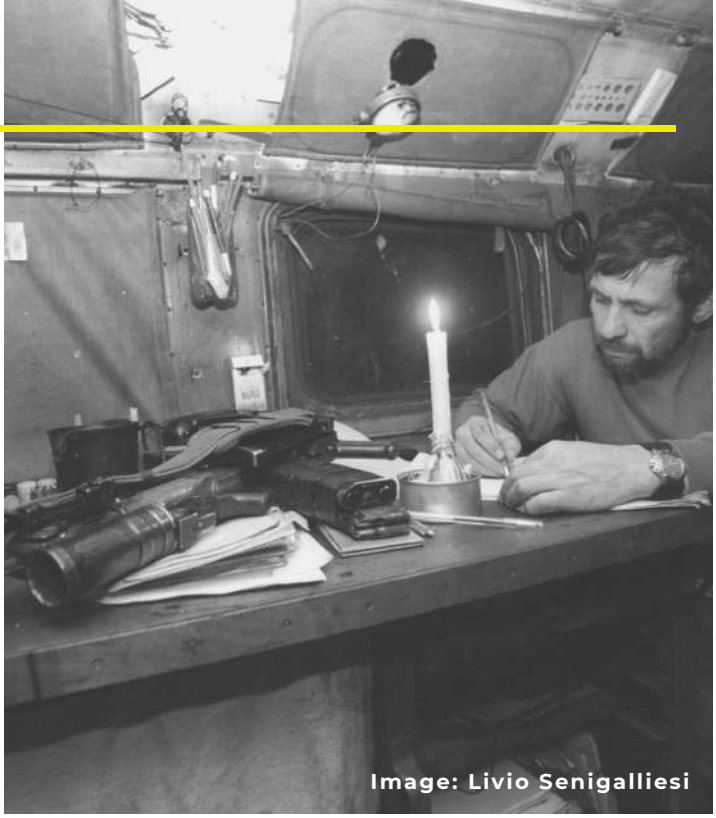


Image: Livio Senigalliesi

Stories of soldiers torturing other soldiers or civilians and other troubling pieces of news are extensively emerging in the current war in Ukraine too. All exceptions? No. This is exactly what war is. Governments make great efforts to explain that these kinds of episodes don't belong to a *normal war* conducted according to international humanitarian law, reiterating the idea of the possibility of a decent war without any excess or extravagance.

In the narrative of the good and decent war, the killing of civilians is recounted with hypocrisy as an avoidable side effect, even though systematic targeting of civilians is a feature of all contemporary wars. Hundreds of thousands of civilians have been directly killed in the US post-9/11 wars alone, with many more losses due to those wars' reverberating impacts (for an overview, see for example the work of the Costs of War project of the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs at Brown University). Veterans know well that the idea of a clean and efficient war is a lie. War is a chaotic universe of military strategies intertwined with inhumanity, violations, uncertainty, doubts, and deceit. Emotions such as fear, shame, pleasure, joy, excitement, surprise, anger, cruelty, and compassion coexist in all combat zones.

The ongoing production of glorifying representations of war constantly adds to a massive body of films, articles, books, songs, and so on that disguise war as something noble to be encouraged. Social scientists have long explained that, together with understanding the causes and reasons for war (politics, conquest, profit, intolerance, access to resources, as well as liberation and independence) we should understand the way war is justified or promoted, using patterns that often obscure historical processes and misuse specific cultural, religious, or social categories and differences. We should constantly question the systematic attempt to beautify war, or even create the illusion that war can be just and good. By addressing the perspective of those who fight in war, the WARFUN project tries to look at war for what it is. We do not hold a pre-established moral position; rather, we delve into the different moralities and emotions of war expressed by fighters (ranging from horror to pleasure).

The suffering and hardship that humans endure within war cannot be stressed enough. It is precisely for this reason that we need a nuanced understanding of what happens in war. WARFUN aims to unveil the plurality of experiences and emotional articulations that can be easily neglected by the exclusive focus on the normative and institutional aspects of war and soldiering.

[1] https://www.cmi.no/projects/2535-erc-war-and-fun.

The seduction of war

MEETING FOREIGN FIGHTERS AND VETERANS AT THE POLISH-UKRAINIAN BORDER

HEIDI MOGSTAD

How can anyone describe the Ukrainian war theatre as a place of fun? Moreover, why do so many veterans go to Ukraine to engage in humanitarian work? In April 2022, Antonio De Lauri and I travelled to the Polish-Ukrainian border with a small documentary team. Our purpose was to talk and we hoped to record a few video interviews with some of the many 'ordinary' citizens we had learned were travelling to the new war theatre in Europe to join the Ukrainian Foreign Legion.

However, we also ended up talking to many veterans who had reinvented themselves as humanitarian workers and were travelling to Ukraine to 'do good'. Our conversations complicated the ideologization of the war in Euro-American public discourse and raised broader questions about foreign soldiers' quest for excitement, thrill and meaning.

SUNDAY 3 APRIL 2022

Since Russia launched a large-scale invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022, several million Ukrainian civilians have fled the country to seek refuge elsewhere in Europe. However, like other crisis zones, the war in Ukraine has not only pushed people to leave but also *pulled* people to come. Following in the footsteps of a diverse set of foreign actors – including journalists, humanitarians, traffickers, and foreign fighters – we travelled to the Polish-Ukrainian border with the intention of speaking with some foreign fighters.

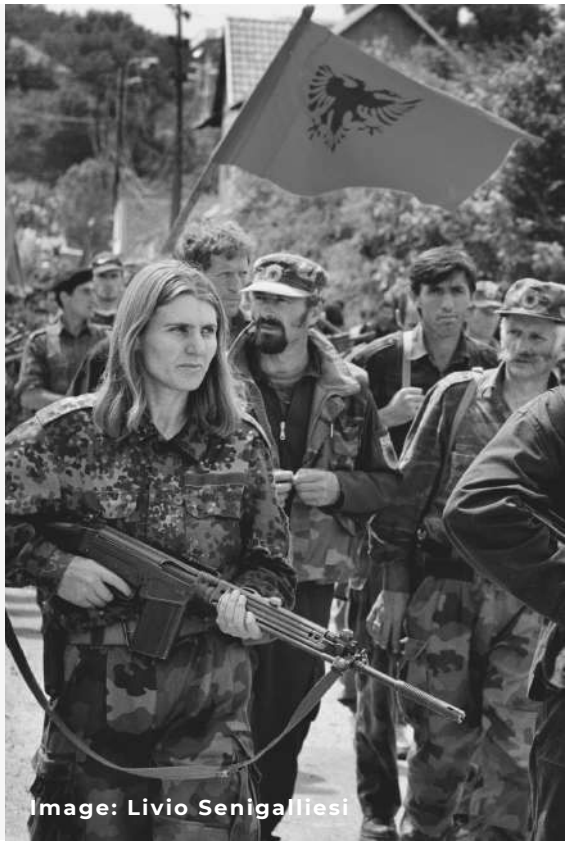


Image: Livio Senigalliesi

After arriving at the airport in Krakow on Sunday morning, we drove straight to the Polish town of Rzeszow, about an hour's drive from the border. A week earlier, United States President Joe Biden had travelled there to signal the United States' intention to defend its NATO allies if the war spills westwards. After sharing pizzas with some United States soldiers stationed in the area, Biden had told them they were 'in the midst of a fight between democracy and an oligarch'. Certainly, this ideologization of the war was not new. Since the onset of Russia's escalation of the war in February, Euro-American public discourse has continuously framed the Russo-Ukrainian war as a battle between democracy and dictatorship, civilization and barbarism, good and evil. There are several problems with this framing. First, it simplistically and inaccurately portrays NATO as a community of democratic values rather than a pragmatic security arrangement (Vik and Harpviken 2022). Second, this way of thinking nourishes the idea of a radical division between Russia and 'the West', thus reinforcing the mantra that war is inevitable (De Lauri et al. 2022), or even noble and desirable (De Lauri 2013).

Furthermore, ideology was far from the only motivation that pulled people to the warzone. We had not had anything to eat that day, so we stopped at a restaurant by the train station in Rzeszow. While waiting at the counter to pay for our lunch, a middle-aged white man with short hair and tattooed muscular arms turned towards us with a beer in his hand. 'Are you guys heading to the fun zone?', he asked with a cheeky smile and nodded to the film camera my colleague was carrying. I had to struggle to contain my mixed feelings of excitement, bewilderment, and repulsion. How could anyone describe the war theatre in Ukraine – with its horrendous damage to human lives and infrastructure – as a place of fun?

In scholarly literature, war is generally framed as destructive and undesirable. Moreover, participating in war is portrayed as a brutal and painful experience, demanding enormous sacrifice and causing suffering or alienation (Welland 2018). However, in recent years, some scholars have challenged this view. Exploring war from the vantage point of soldiers' narratives and anticipations, they have shown that war can be imagined and experienced as entertaining, pleasurable, and even personally regenerating (Dyvik 2016; Pedersen 2017).

Our encounter at the restaurant in Rzeszow seemed to affirm these observations, but also added different nuances. The man who approached us, 'Peter', turned out to be a United States Army veteran who had served several tours in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Central America. When Peter's mother first saw her son in his military uniform, she had cried with pride, and Peter had felt honored and accomplished. However, his many years of military service had not come without costs. About six months ago, Peter was involuntarily discharged from the army after being diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). He took it hard: soldiering had become part of his identity and lifestyle, and he did not know what else to do. Therefore, after watching the news about the Russian escalation of the war in February 2022, Peter bought a plane ticket to Poland. 'I'm here to help, not to fight', he underscored during our short conversation at the restaurant. But when we invited him for dinner the following day, Peter offered a more complex set of reasons for why he had come to the new war theatre in Europe. 'I am an adrenalin junkie', he said plainly when we asked him why he had referred to Ukraine as a fun zone. Additionally, Peter admitted that he was not only a humanitarian, but also an entrepreneur. More specifically, his short-term plan was to help people, but his long-term goal was to learn enough about the situation on the ground to get a contract with the United States Army (see also De Lauri 2022).

During our short trip to the Polish-Ukrainian border, we had several other conversations that complicated the image of the war as a clear-cut ideological battle. Some of the people we spoke to were planning to volunteer for the Ukrainian Foreign Legion. For instance, in the village of Medyka, at the busiest border crossing between Poland and Ukraine, we met 'Mathias', a 25-year-old man from Finland. While growing up, Mathias had been 'taught by [his] uncle to hate the Russians'. However, his personal motivations for going to Ukraine were not primarily ideological (Rekawek 2022). As he explained to us over a pint of beer, Mathias considered volunteering for the Foreign Legion a chance to participate in 'a real big war': the first such opportunity since World War II and, in Mathias's opinion, far more interesting than what the Finnish peacekeeping forces were currently experiencing in countries like Lebanon and Mali. Like most of the Norwegian soldiers I interviewed, Mathias also wanted to 'test himself' and the skills he had gained when serving in the Finish army as a conscript.

Moreover, Mathias had run into economic problems at home and wanted a new start, in a new country. He was willing to take big risks for a chance to experience 'real war' and restart his life. In two days, Mathias had agreed to drive a van to Mariupol to deliver medical supplies. He hoped this act of bravery would be noticed and that he would soon be invited to join the Foreign Legion or, even better, the Ukrainian army.

As scholars observed about Lesvos during the 'refugee crisis' (Cabot 2019; Franck 2018; Papataxiarchis 2016), the Ukrainian-Polish border attracted all kinds of people with different motivations and agendas. We saw journalists, celebrities, religious organizations, and a wide range of humanitarian volunteers, including a group of Chinese dissidents and a young woman giving out 'free hugs' and kinder eggs. However, it was striking how many veterans we met who told us they were going to Ukraine to do humanitarian work. Like the foreign fighters, these soldiers-turned-humanitarians told stories that fitted uneasily with the ideologization of the war that has characterized Western public discourse. For instance, at the so-called Chinese tent by the border, we met a Dutch veteran named 'Dirk'. Dirk had served several tours in Afghanistan and Iraq, but emphasized that he was now here to do humanitarian work. Before leaving for Poland, Dirk had bought a big old bus, refurbished it, and painted it white. The next day, he and another veteran were driving to Kiev to deliver medicine and food and to bring back as many elderly people, women, and children as they could fit on the bus. When we asked Dirk why he was doing this, he said he had the necessary skills and experience to navigate a war zone. However, reflecting on his transition from soldiering to humanitarian work, he also said that he 'wanted to share love rather than aggression'. Dirk further emphasized that he did not want to join the Ukrainian army or the legion because that meant he would have to pick a side. 'There are victims on both sides of the war, and I don't want to shoot Russian kids', he elaborated, referring to the many young Russian soldiers who reportedly were told they were heading for military exercises (Harding 2022).

Notably, all the veterans we spoke to decried politics (democratic or otherwise), describing it as inherently self-interested and 'dirty'. However, in contrast to many European politicians, their personal experiences of participating in wars and military operations had also made them skeptical of military power as a means to bring peace and security. For instance, while crossing the border into Ukraine, we met 'Michael', an American veteran who was currently working on a humanitarian project to rebuild damaged infrastructure in Ukraine. After his second tour in Iraq, Michael had grown increasingly disillusioned with the war and described the US missions in the Middle East as utterly stupid and meaningless. Similarly, 'Jonas', a Norwegian veteran who had started a humanitarian organization providing aid to Ukraine, said the post-intervention developments in countries like Kosovo and Afghanistan had made him and many of his former colleagues question the purpose of Norway's military efforts. 'Like many others, I was seeking adventure and I truly enjoyed the experience of serving abroad and mastering soldiering. However, in retrospect, it feels bittersweet. Did we really risk our lives for nothing?', he pondered when we met at a café in Norway a few months later.

Finally, while defining themselves as adrenalin junkies or adventure-seekers, several veterans pointed to the more sinister aspects of soldiering. As Peter told us soberly, 'War corrupts people. It makes you do things that feel natural and justified then, but later come back to haunt you.' Peter described his humanitarian work in Ukraine as not just a quest for adrenalin and money, but also a means to heal or even atone for the wounds he had inflicted on himself and others. Similarly, Michael framed his transition from soldiering to humanitarianism as a way to 'make amends' and 'regain agency and control of his actions'.

However, regardless of how the veterans felt about the current war in Ukraine, and whether or not they carried any guilt or misgivings about their soldiering past, they all appeared seduced by the war. What is more, the pull of war seemed to have much less to do with what they could do for the Ukrainians than what the war could offer them. As Jonas explained: 'The war does not leave our bodies when we return home from the battlefield. We veterans, we are like *spente buer* [tight arrows]. We need to go somewhere to release our tension.' For him, as for many of the other veterans and foreign fighters we met during our short trip, the war in Ukraine was a good option as it promised both thrill and purpose.

References

Cabot, H. 2019. 'The Business of Anthropology and the European Refugee Machine'. *American Ethnologist* 46(3): 261–275.
De Lauri, A. 2013. 'Introduction.' In: *War*, ed. A. De Lauri. *Antropologia*, Milan: Ledizioni. pp. 7–24.
De Lauri, A., Jelusic, I., Johais, E., and Mogstad, H. 2022. 'Militarisation, Racism and Russophobia: What the War in Ukraine Produces and Reveals'. *Public Anthropologist Blog*,10 March.
De Lauri, A. 2022. 'The Idea of Clean and Efficient War is a Dangerous Lie'. *FocaalBlog*, 18 April.
Dyvik, S. L. 2016. '"Valhalla Rising": Gender, Embodiment and Experience in Military Memoirs'. *Security Dialogue* 47(2): 133–150.
Franck, A. K. 2018. 'The Lesvos Refugee Crisis as Disaster Capitalism'. *Peace Review* 30(2): 199–205.
Harding, L. 2022. 'Demoralised Russian Soldiers Tell of Anger at Being "Duped" into War'. *The Guardian*, 4 March.
Papataxiarchis, E. 2016. 'Being "There": At the Front Line of the "European Refugee Crisis"'. Parts 1 and 2. *Anthropology Today* 32(2–3).
Pedersen, T. R. 2017. 'Get Real: Chasing Danish Warrior Dreams in the Afghan "sandbox"'. *Critical Military Studies* 3(1): 7–26.
Rekawek, K. 2022. 'Ukraine's Foreign Legion: 12 Important Points'. *RightNow*, C-REX blog, University of Oslo, 18 March.
Vik, I., and Harpviken, K. B. 2022. 'Russia's War in Ukraine Is a Stress Test of Norway's Public Debate'. *PRIO Blogs*, 7 July.
Welland, J. 2018. 'Joy and War: Reading Pleasure in Wartime Experiences'. *Review of International Studies* 44(3): 438–455.

Is there a place for fun and pleasure in war research?

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN EVA JOHAIS AND CATHERINE LUTZ


Image: Livio Senigalliesi

This is the edited transcript of a podcast published on 27 September 2022.

Eva Johais (EJ): Hello, and welcome everyone. My name is Eva Johais, and I am a researcher at the Christian Michelsen Institute. Our guest today is Catherine Lutz. So welcome, Catherine. I'm so pleased to have you with us today.

Catherine Lutz (CL): Wonderful to be here, Eva.

EJ: Thank you. So, I would briefly like to introduce our guest. Catherine Lutz is Thomas J. Watson, Jr. Professor Emerita of Anthropology and International Studies at Brown University. Currently, she co-directs the Costs of War project at the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs.

This project takes stock of the human and financial costs of the United States military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and related counterterrorism efforts. And I'm really honored that Catherine was ready for this conversation today, because she has contributed in so many ways to the anthropology of war and militarization. But Catherine also thought about what emotions are and how we can approach them. In this episode, we will discuss whether we can and whether we should study fun in the context of war. This means that we deal with moral and conceptual questions of war research.

Now, to start off, I think we can assume that it's a common understanding that war is cruel and causes enormous suffering and destruction. In the face of that, it seems absolutely out of place to associate war with fun. So it's probably not surprising that we often got negative or bewildered reactions from other scholars when we introduced our project title – 'WARFUN'. Now, Catherine, what do you think: Why do we get these reactions? And can we talk about something like fun when we do research on war after all?

CL: Well, Eva, I think, again, I've been studying war for many years, and I have seen people who have participated in a war system or a war society, a society at war, in many different ways. And I think, you know, there's an incredible range of human feelings associated with war. As you say, at the heart, though, is cruelty, is pain, is sadness, is anger. But there are a lot of positive emotions that one can see occurring in the people and in the relationships that constitute war. You can see people feeling proud of themselves particularly for participating as soldiers. You can see citizens who are not on the battlefront feeling pleasure in seeing their side, their army win or punish others. So there are various forms of both pain and pleasure involved. It's much more complex than perhaps we've been led to believe by that sort of basic sense that war is simply some violence with pain as a result. There are people who are making war, preparing for war first of all, and then making war and being the recipients of the sharp end of the spear of war. So we can't reduce any aspect of war to a single emotion. I think that it is very much possible to talk about what it is that sometimes makes some people, in the course of preparing for war, going to war, or being the victim of war, feel certain forms of pleasure. I think that's perfectly appropriate.

EJ: Okay, I think you already got at a very important point on the question of whether we should study fun or pleasure in the context of war. And if I got your response correctly, you understand that similarly to how we understand fun as a kind of entry point to get a more nuanced understanding of what it means to be at war and to understand this kind of complex emotional experience of war. And with making this perhaps somewhat provocative nexus between fun and war, we hint at this complexity.

CL: Absolutely. Yeah, it's not just appropriate, I think, to talk about pleasure where it's involved in war, but to explore who is feeling that pleasure, who is having fun, or even 'Schadenfreude' [malicious joy] or, you know, all other sorts of pleasures: the thrill of feeling like a moral victor, the pleasure of feeling like you have been a good person, the pride that comes with having played one's role in a war system, whether as a civilian or a soldier. I think it leads us to ask about the things that draw people into a war system and not just chase them away from it. Because, in fact, what we have to understand is how war continues to be such a central part of our contemporary world, and how we can understand the reason why everyone doesn't flee from the idea and the practice of war. Obviously, the victims of war are never choosing to be there. But so many people do choose: our politicians, our soldiers, our families that in some cases willingly and proudly send their children off to war. These are all things that we have to explain if we're going to intervene and short-circuit some of those routes of pleasure that lead the system to have so much wide support to continue as it is.

EJ: If we would kind of restrict our perspective on war or war research or war epistemologies to a normative perspective, then we would maybe fail to understand the conditions of possibility for war in the first place.

CL: Right. And I think people see themselves, it's not non-normative, to use a double negative, it's normative in some cases and in some populations for war to be pleasurable, for people to see that as a positive thing, for someone to be standing proudly in uniform ready to go off to war. I think that's considered normal and good, that people shouldn't feel fear, they should at least control fear, and certainly shouldn't feel shame about participating in war in those ways. I should also mention that a central aspect of modern war is that it is a profit-seeking system. And there are many, many people whose pleasure, whose fun of war is that they can and do make lots of money and gain power through war. So I think we have to look at that as well.

EJ: Okay, it's very good that you introduced this more nuanced perspective on the conditions of possibility of war, that there are different explanations for that: the individual psychological, emotional motivation or affect is only one explanation or dimension.

And another aspect that you point out is that what I frame as a common understanding – that war is repulsive, that we reject war – is perhaps my point, in this case it is my morality or my moral perspective on war. But as you explained, for other people, groups, or societies, the conduct of war might be more positively connotated.

CL: Yes. And again, as part of a larger set of emotional states and emotional relationships between themselves. We have to see it again as a very complex system where the soldier has a certain relationship with their parents where some of those positive emotions might play out, and a different set of relationships with their comrades in arms, for whom a certain kind of love is frequently described by participants, the love for others who are in the same situation of risk and mutual help. So, I think we have to look at this as a relationship question as well, for the individuals and institutions that participate in war.

EJ: Now, you already gave some examples of the kinds of positive emotions that soldiers or people who participate in war can experience. In our project, we use the notion of fun as this kind of entry point into the emotional realm of soldiering or of war experience. But I noticed that you prefer to talk about pleasure. So maybe you could explain this concept of pleasure a little bit more. And why do you think that it might be maybe more adequate to capture this emotional experience of war?

CL: Well, I think pleasure is just a larger category. It includes more forms of positive emotion. So the notion of fun, I think, describes perhaps a narrower segment of what I would call the pleasures of war. That includes things like the idea that war is a certain kind of spectacle. In fact, people have talked about the era of modern war, in which very few people actually put on uniforms and go to fight in war in comparison with the number of people who participate in civilian roles, particularly as spectators. And spectatorship, the role of the spectator, is a concept in sports, in theatre, in movies. It's the fun of having an often moral story played out in front of you. Again, it's fun for people to watch certain aspects of the war, the wars that occur in a modern context where they're not participating, but they're watching it on television. And what they're watching is a curated set of images and ideas that don't include the worst cruelties and so on, right? Or where the narrative surrounding the images focuses on the fun of being the victor or working towards victory. So they're watching the game play out in a sense.

For those spectators, it is a game. Nothing seems to be at risk in watching something like an American football game, where there's a lot of physical cruelty and violence on the field. But it's considered perfectly normal and morally acceptable for us to cheer on those people on our team and to take great pleasure when one of them attacks and knocks over and potentially harms another player on the other team. So I think there's a series of analogies that work. And they work so well that in American football, in particular, there are a lot of intersections between the National Football League and the Pentagon in the United States, where those venues where a large group of spectators are assembled in person and on TV, are targeted as potential recruits, either into the army or into enthusiastic support for large military budgets. So it draws our attention to what exactly is happening in war: Not just the paradigmatic centerpiece of war, which is people with guns shooting at each other or a military jet bombing civilian targets. It's much more than that, and that needs to be explained. And it includes all of those people who are having fun watching, having fun making money off the contracts, having fun participating in what is called a band of brothers and is often portrayed in popular culture as groups usually of men who are enjoying each other tremendously off the battlefield and loving each other in the heat of battle.

EJ: Yeah, I'm very grateful that you introduced this concept of the spectator. And I would like to unpack this maybe a little bit more. This implies that war experience, as you mentioned, is something broader than just what happens on the battlefield, like people shooting at each other in this kind of very narrow sense of war as combat. So, it gives us a new perspective on war because it implies all of us are in war. Now when we're talking about the war in Ukraine as the prominent crisis that gets a lot of attention, it's not just in the Donbas or in the Ukrainian cities where soldiers fight and civilians are affected, but it's also us at home in the West watching on TV. We don't just watch a distant war scene, we have our own war experience in watching this war.

CL: Yes, absolutely. And certainly, there are so many different audiences, because there are so many different national contexts and interests that are watching. The Russian public filters it through their media, and the American public filters it through their media. Obviously, there are various Ukrainian publics, for sure.

And again, so much of what I think social science in general has done in the study of war in the last several decades is to try to decenter the battlefield, not to ignore, as Elaine Scarry said, that the injured bodies are at the very core of what war is. It is the breaking open of bodies to understand its larger exoskeleton or infrastructure. The battlefield, the moments of violence are, in fact, a very small portion of the larger total of human effort that has gone into making that war and that continues to go into it. Again, soldiers themselves, just the people who actually fight and have that experience on the battlefield, represent a fraction of 1 per cent of human beings on the planet at any moment. And obviously, the number of victims is much larger than that, given the destructive power of modern weaponry. But we have to put that in proportion to understand how the whole system works.

EJ: And what I also find very instructive are your analogies to sports, for example. Because I think this works against this assumption of the exceptionalism of war. So what these analogies help me understand is that the emotional experiences that people can have in war situations or in relation to war are not totally different from emotional experiences in other situations.

CL: Yes, I think so. Just to back up: I think many people don't necessarily connect morality and emotional life. So the idea of fun is the idea of having a particular set of feelings about your activity. But morality is itself something that defines the good and the bad, defines virtue and vice. And so when war is involved, we have to see that it's producing moralities. There are moralities associated with it: this is a good way to fight war; this is a bad way to fight war; you can do it with this weapon, not that weapon; you can do it with these people under these circumstances, and not these people under these circumstances. So there's a constant moral parsing in the context of war. You can make weapons as a scientific professional, and be engaged in virtuous behavior, because you're helping the nation defend itself from immoral enemies. So war is involved in a morality production, which itself is a judgement as emotions are. They involve assessments that people learn to make about how to behave, and how others should behave. And the feelings that are associated with this are these relational feelings of things like pride. You do this and I am your parent. You go off to war and I'm either proud of you, or I'm anxious for you. But all in a context of thinking about participation in war as a moral question.

And the post-war context is the site where people have to deal with what are increasingly called the moral injuries of war, which are very closely associated with feelings of shame and fear, a whole series of feelings that come from having participated. So the moralities and the emotions of war have to be seen in conjunction with each other, almost by definition.

EJ: And these moralities of war that you're talking about: How do you relate them to the broader political culture, in the sense that our perspective on war reveals the larger political, cultural understandings in a society? Because another implication that I was thinking about in relation to the sports analogies and the 'decentering' of the battlefield is: War is part of social-cultural practices 'at home' and when we decenter the battlefield, as you said, does this also help us see war or warlike practices – or we could say violence – as forming part of our social life more generally?

CL: Yes, I mean, in the United States, the war system is large, as large as it has ever been in almost any society. It involves so many people. So if we don't decenter the battlefield, we don't see this thing that's below. The battle is the tip of the iceberg or the spectacle at which everyone's attention is directed. But that draws us away from understanding: How did this spectacle get staged? How did it get promulgated? It got propagated through the efforts of so many people. When we talk about the military-industrial-congressional-university complex, we are trying to point to all of those different institutions that participate, in a massive and daily way, in producing the ability to go to war: the spectacle of weapons on display, of war gaming, all of the things short of the battlefield that we should be able to try and understand. And that's more where the fun is, I would argue, than in the violence center. So if people have trouble seeing the fun of war, it's partly because they have not been led to think about it in ways that decanter the battlefield and to look more closely at the more pleasurable, even fun parts of the system that allow that violent moment to occur.

EJ: It is great that you again brought up the political-economic aspect too. So I think what I take from this is that there are at least two tasks of understanding for war research: this kind of structural-material context that undergirds war efforts and, on the other hand, the cultural underpinnings and the realm of emotional experiences and moralities of war. Thank you very, very much, Catherine, for taking the time today. And have a great day.

From the archives

IVA JELUŠIĆ

BRINA, THE CONTEMPORARY DANCER

Marta Paulin – Brina dancing for the soldiers of the newly established Rab Brigade in the fall of 1943.

Photograph by Jože Petek, Slovenian partisan and war photo reporter (1912–1945). Reproduced courtesy Muzej novejše zgodovine Slovenije (Museum of Contemporary History of Slovenia), Ljubljana, Slovenia.

On the evening of 8 September 1943, an Italian soldier in the guardhouse of the Rab concentration camp (northern Adriatic) shouted: 'The war is over, let's go home!' Some soldiers had left the camp, and after a rally in the so-called Hunger Square, the inmates disarmed and captured the remaining guards.

About 1,750 of the approximately 5,000 former camp inmates organized themselves into a Rab Brigade, which contained five battalions and a headquarters. After being transported to the mainland, some of the brigade members went to Banija (central Croatia), and some to southern Slovenia (while the partisan forces of Croatia deployed most of the others in the partisan-held territories).

THE 'BATTLE DANCE'

it was a dance expression rooted in the soil of the home, in a person's participation in the historical events of their people, in the participation in the liberation struggle of a people who do not know despair, who are aware of their power and their mission

When the members of the Rab Brigade arrived at the hamlet of Mašun in Slovenia, they took an oath of allegiance before a military priest of the XIV division. The ceremony was accompanied by a performance by the cultural group led by the poet Karel Destovnik – Kajuh.

For a couple of weeks, since the very end of August, contemporary dancer Marta Paulin – Brina was part of Kajuh's cultural group. She greeted the fighters of the Rab Brigade with a 'battle dance', and they accompanied her dance with clapping and singing.

The circumstances of war changed quickly.

Most members of the Rab Brigade were too weak to fight. The former detainees were soon after deployed in smaller numbers to other units. Brina's partisan dance performances ended with the march of the XIV division to Styria in January and February 1944. Due to inappropriate footwear and very cold winter weather, she got frostbite on her legs. Although she avoided amputation, she could no longer dance.

Recalling her short partisan dance career, Brina primarily remembered that unique combination of hope, conviction, joy and fun that were a part of her partisan experience:

> *It was a dance expression rooted in the soil of the home, in a person's participation in the historical events of their people, in the participation in the liberation struggle of a people who do not know despair, who are aware of their power and their mission. Dance calls for battle, wins in battle; it evolves into joy: because of the struggle, because of the endured efforts, because of the power, because of the historical act itself. In this dance circle, we gave each other our hands. Our circle was firmly closed: with effort and suffering, amid gasps and smiles. As a dancer, standing alone among a crowd of fighters with the awareness that I would be able to express with my dance talent and weak body what united us, that I would be able to master the immense space of nature, I felt strength in my legs as I stomped hard earth. The hands felt the extent of the woods and climbed over the treetops.*

Jože Javoršek (partisan, but not a member of the Rab Brigade) testified that Brina's dance was indeed a unique sight:

> *I will never forget Brina how she danced to the sounds of the wind and the rustling of branches, to the chirping of birds and to the rhythm produced by the quiet breathing of the earth.*

Sources

Komelj, Miklavž. 2009. *Kako misliti partizansko umetnost?* [How To Think Partisan Art?]. Ljubljana: Založba /*cf.
Milohnić, Aldo. 2021. *Gledališče upora* [Theatre of Resistance]. Ljubljana: Akademija za gledališče, radio, film in televizijo Univerze v Ljubljani.
Paulin-Brina, Marta. 1975. "Plesna umetnost v partizanih" [Dance Art in the Partisans]. In *Partizanska umetnost* [Partisan Art], eds. Filip Kalan et al. Ljubljana: Zveza kulturno-prosvetnih organizacij Slovenije / Delavska enotnost. pp. 20–27.

MIRA, THE BALLET DANCER

Illustration by Dario Jelušić

When World War II broke out, the ballerina Mira Sanjina was part of the Croatian National Theatre (Hrvatsko narodno kazalište) ensemble in Zagreb. After the establishment of the Ustasha-led Independent State of Croatia (Nezavisna Država Hrvatska), Sanjina (who was of Jewish descent) and her husband Ljubiša Jovanović (who was a Serb) fled from Zagreb to Split and then to Ljubljana. Finally, in 1943, they joined the partisans and the Theatre of the People's Liberation (Kazalište narodnog oslobođenja, KNO) in the liberated territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Recalling her first performance as a member of the KNO, the ballet choreography she performed to Dvořák's Sixth Slavonic Dance played by pianist Andrija Preger, Sanjina described the intense feeling of pleasure: "I danced cheerfully, enjoyed the dance, surrendered to it; I danced in a very beautiful, white, fluttering costume made of parachute silk." Her dance and her costume, however, caused embarrassment for the audience. That is, the differences in the understanding of appropriate female appearance and behaviour made it impossible for Mira Sanjina to share the pleasure of ballet dancing with the Bosnian audience. For many attending the event, Sanjina was probably the first ballerina they had ever seen:

> *I was not aware of the extent to which it was a shock for an unaccustomed audience, the partisan fighters who lived under very harsh conditions, the Muslim women who had never seen a ballet. The appearance of a ballerina was something quite unexpected for them. […] The Muslim women felt shame while I was enjoying the dance. While I was getting carried away and dancing it up, they were ashamed. It seemed to me that they were exiting the hall bit by bit.*

For her later wartime performances, Sanjina adjusted both her dance and her appearance. For instance, for the anniversary of the October Revolution observed later in 1943, she chose to play the 'more suitable' Joan of Arc. In addition, the military superiors controlled her costume. On that occasion, Sanjina wore a dark grey woolen leotard. Moreover, until the end of the war, she for the most part danced in classical ballet performances, which usually contained folklore elements.

Informed by traditions and religion, local beliefs about appropriate femininity limited Mira Sanjina's ability to perform expressively. However, although her classical ballet performances were customized with elements of folklore and although her revealing ballet dresses were replaced with more modest costumes, the wartime spectators, she maintains, responded to the adjustments with immense enthusiasm:

> *Even today I think that it was perhaps my most beautiful audience […] standing for a long, long time, breathless, […] watching and immersing itself [in the performances] with such curiosity and such attention. I think that I never have had such a nice experience and such wonderful contacts [with audiences] during and after my performances, certainly not in such a way. In the way of a wonderful, chaste audience that was so infinitely grateful, so curious, [the audience] that watched me dance with such pleasure.*

Sources

Milohnić, Aldo. 2021. *Gledališče upora* [Theatre of Resistance]. Ljubljana: Akademija za gledališče, radio, film in televizijo Univerze v Ljubljani.

1971. *Tako je rođena nova Jugoslavija. Kazivanje učesnika II. zasjedanja AVNOJ-a. Mira Sanjina.* [That Is How the New Yugoslavia Was Born. Statements of the Participants of the 2nd Session of AVNOJ. Mira Sanjina]. Režija Žika Spasić, produkcija Muzej zasjedanja AVNOJ-a u Jajcu. https://www.muzejavnoj.ba/video-arhiv.

IRENA, THE ACTRESS

Still from the film

Actors on set

Still from the film

Portraits of the actors Dubravko Dujšin and Irena Kolesar

The first Yugoslav film, *Slavica*, released in 1947, in which the protagonist was played by Irena Kolesar.

Illustration from Balašćak 2020, 14

In the summer of 1943, Irena Kolesar joined the Yugoslav partisans. Having caught the eye of Šime Šimatović and Jože Gregorin, members of a theatre group that was visiting her unit, she was invited to an audition. She spent the rest of the war acting in several major theatre groups (and continued her successful acting career after the war ended).

In a 1972 interview for the Yugoslav magazine *Start* published in Zagreb, Kolesar testified to a common aspect of partisan life: 'When things were most difficult for us, we sang. No one believes us today.' But many memoirs bear witness to singing in the most unexpected, oftentimes grim and difficult moments.

Irena Kolesar's recorded memories also reveal an unsurprising but barely mentioned aspect of officially organized entertainment of the partisan war – that artists were usually bored by their assignments, and were also unwelcome and even slighted by their comrades in arms. Kolesar was not particularly straightforward about this. The reason, it seems, was her good-natured personality. Neither the theatre colleague who 'forgot' to return her trousers, nor the anonymous person who stole her shoes while she was sleeping (shoes were a valuable asset among the partisans, as many soldiers spent long periods of time in soft peasant footwear or barefoot), nor even the fact that military units, as a rule, considered actors a burden and treated them accordingly, failed to affect her kind disposition towards everyone she mentioned in her texts and interviews.

Yet there are one or two interesting negative observations in her small written legacy. These concern the partisan cultural evenings that usually consisted of theatrical performances organized for the civilian populations followed by informal socializing accompanied by music, singing, and dancing. These were well-attended events at which young village girls wore their best dresses. There were, however, always fewer men (usually only the members of the visiting theatrical group) than girls, and so there was a scramble for suitable dance partners. Because of this, Kolesar writes, female members of theatre groups had to approach the guests and ask them to dance. She adds: 'As uninteresting as that was to me, I know it was the same for those girls!' It comes as no surprise then, that if a partisan took a liking to a comrade – as was the case with Irena Kolesar and Šime Šimatović who courted each other until he proposed to her in the summer of 1944 – they might find such arrangements tiresome. Moreover, the mention of the small numbers of the opposite sex at some of the partisan cultural evenings is an obvious allusion to girls' desire to indulge in heterosexual socializing. In other words, the partisan cultural evenings, alongside the official emphasis on political and cultural education, were used by young people as opportunities to meet, mingle, and have fun, as in peacetime.

Sources

Balašćak, Vladimir. ed. 2020. *Osmeh porculanske figurine* [The Smile of a Porcelain Figurine]. Sremska Mitrovica: Društvo Rusina i Novinarska asocijacija Rusina

Kolesar, Irena. 1983. "Moji doživljaji, moja sjećanja" [My Experiences, My Memories]. *Dani Hvarskoga kazališta: Građa i rasprave o hrvatskoj književnosti i kazalištu* 10(1): 269–286.

Zagorac, Đuro. 1972. "Još uvijek je zovu Slavica" [They Still Call Her Slavica]. *Start* 80, 9 February 9, 26–28.

INA, THE POET

Photograph 1 from Skrigin 1968, 248. Photographs 2 and 3 from Konjikušić 2021, 214, 319.

1. Kozarčanka (Girl from the Kozara Mountain), December 1943, photographer Žorž Skrigin.

2. Two nurses relaxing with a patient, playing darts, 1944, photographer unknown.

3. Nurse tending to the wounded fighter of the Gubec Brigade, September 1944, photographer John Philips.

Remembering the moment when perhaps the most famous photograph of the People's Liberation Struggle, "Kozarčanka" (Girl from the Kozara Mountain), was taken, one-time partisan nurse Milja Marin said:

> *Even today, I don't know how that smile in Skrigin's photograph appeared on my face. I gave in to my emotions, although I did not feel like laughing, but I believed that my personal suffering at that time and the suffering of my family must come to an end.*

Indeed, the everyday challenges faced by nurses in the Yugoslav partisan army were numerous and draining. Ina Jun Broda, another wartime nurse, explained that to both doctors and the wounded soldiers, the nurses 'represented something between the "mother of God", the self-sacrificing comrade and the "hospital bedpan"'. As a well-educated woman particularly inclined to poetry, Jun Broda expressed her weariness, grief, and compassion, but also the irony and mockery she sometimes felt in writing. The poem "Samokritika" (Self Criticism) captures this combination of emotions well:

I confess, comrades, it is my fault.
It is my fault that I survived every assault
While the comrades died on the mountain peaks,
I still have all my limbs.

I confess, comrades, it is my fault:
I still don't know when was the third assault
Because, during the political course,
I escaped to the park through the hospital doors.

I had to for a while be alone!
I enjoyed the evening's dark tone…
A petit-bourgeois song rising from my chest was so nice and fine
Yet it certainly was not along the Party line…

Comrades, I confess that it is my fault
I sinned against the collective.
It is horrible: I would like to have my own home, my own dreams,
My own toothbrush,
my own shoelaces,
my own shoes –
my thoughts…
my comrade and his embrace
and my child…
I know, it is not right
because of my kid
to forget our orphans and their afflict
But I know that I would love that son of mine
even more than the Red Army and Stalin at the same time!

Sitting under Tito's photo until late last night
I spoke to our hateful ally.
Joe is good and humble, honest and kind
And ours. But wounded – he was wounded only two times!

Three years of fighting and still head on his shoulder!
I don't know, maybe he is not such a devoted soldier?
And so, comrade Commissar, I would like to be informed
Did I sin against our norms…

That's all. Now let the comrades decide
So be it as they derive.
If I'm guilty, liquidate me.
Put a bullet through my head simply.
Perhaps it was meant to be –
The real consciousness, the new, has not yet been awakened in me
I'm confused and I have no one else to blame but me:
I still don't know, comrades, how to live.
Should I follow fervor or head – a new blind allegiance or the old compliance?
Cold discipline or my own ardor,
My heart or instead – the revolver???!

It is too hard, comrades, that's why I said:
Bullet in the head. – But when they put me in front of a wall
once again I will boldly exclaim:
Death to fascism!!! – and freedom, freedom, freedom for woman![1]

Sources

Bakšić, Lucija, Grubački, Isidora, and Jelušić, Iva. Forthcoming, 2023. "Ina Jun Broda." In *Texts and Contexts from the History of Feminism and Women's Rights in East Central Europe*, eds. Zsófia Lóránd, Adela Hîncu, Jovana Mihajlović Trbovc, and Katarzyna Stańczak-Wiślicz.
Kovačević, Dinka. 2007. "Mlada partizanka iz čitanke" [Young Partizanka from a Textbook]. *Nezavisne novine*, 8 June. http://www.nezavisne.com/novosti/bih/Mlada-partizanka-izcitanke/10554.
Skrigin, Žorž. 1968. *Rat i pozornica* [War and Stage]. Belgrade: Turistička štampa.
Konjikušić, Davor. 2021. *Red Glow: Yugoslav Partisan Photography, 1941–1945*. Berlin and Boston: Deutscher Kunstverlag.

[1] Translation by Iva Jelušić. The poem *Samokritika* is a part of Ina Jun Broda's wartime diary. It's retyped contents, entitled *Iz moje Crne bilježnice* [From my Black Notebook], are kept in her collection at the archives of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts.

BELA, THE ACTRESS

Scene from the pastoral Plakir, May 1943; Bela Krleža is third from the right.

Photo courtesy Croatian State Archives (Hrvatski državni arhiv, HDA), Collection of theatre photography of Mladen Grčević (HR-HDA-1424).

Miroslav Krleža is widely considered the greatest Croatian writer of the twentieth century. However, immediately following the establishment of the Nazi puppet Independent State of Croatia (*Nezavisna Država Hrvatska*, NDH), his works were banned and, after spending a few days in Ustasha prison, the author went into isolation. Sick, anxious, and inclined to the usage of barbiturates, he devotedly nursed his own ego in the pages of his diary. The left-wing writer did not change his position throughout the war, although the Ustasha leadership gradually eased pressure on him. The author even got the opportunity to say no to Ante Pavelić, the head of the NDH, who in the fall of 1943 wanted to hire him as director of the Croatian State Theatre in Zagreb.

Miroslav Krleža wallowed in his misfortunes thanks to influential colleagues and friends and his wife, Bela Krleža, who performed in the very theatre where he refused to work. Her professional compromise – which, given that she was a Serbian, could have been fatal for her – provided them with insurance against political persecution as well as existential security (for the second time during their marriage).

In his diary, Miroslav mocked the pretentiousness of the life of the Zagreb bourgeoisie as well as their seeming obliviousness to grim wartime reality. And Bela was not spared much pity because, he writes, during the war she became 'an actress in the bureaucratical sense, de facto acting in some horrible things'. The plays in which his wife performed were by and large light-hearted, escapist comedies with romantic overtones – for instance, she acted in the adaptation of *A Friend of Women* (*L'Ami des femmes*, 1864) and *The Lady of the Camellias* (*La Dame aux Camélias*, 1848) written by Alexandre Dumas fils, and in the pastoral Plakir (1556) written by one of the most celebrated Croatian Renaissance authors, Marin Držić – intended to amuse and please those people that her husband mocked as well as the members of the leadership of the state, which both had reason to fear.

Since she was one of the most active actresses during the war years, Bela Krleža was exposed to enormous publicity. Moreover, she was loved by both audiences and critics. And when, in the fall of 1945, her colleagues faced the so-called court of honor, she was most probably saved from political persecution by her husband's war silence and his post-war reconciliation with the leadership of the Yugoslav Communist Party.

Sources

Banović, Snježana. 2012. "Bela i Miroslav Krleža u NDH – Vedri repertoar kao cijena za život" [Bela and Miroslav Krleža in the NDH – Bright Repertoire as the Price of Life]. In *Intelektualci i rat 1939–1947.: Zbornik radova s Desničinih susreta 2011* [Intellectuals and the War 1939–1947: Proceedings from the Meetings of the Desnica's Gatherings in 2011], eds. Drago Roksandić and Ivana Cvijović Javorina. Zagreb: Filozofski fakultet u Zagrebu. pp. 9–24.

Banović, Snježana. 2021. *Država i njezino kazalište: Hrvatsko državno kazalište 1941. – 1945* [The State and Its Theatre: Croatian State Theatre 1941–1945]. Zagreb: Profil.

Krleža, Miroslav. 1977. *Dnevnik 3 (1933–1942)* [Journal, volume 3 (1933–1942)]. Sarajevo: Oslobođenje.

Krležin gvozd. 2021. "Bela Krleža – televizijski prilog povodom obljetnice rođenja" [Bela Krleža – Birth Anniversary Television Contribution]. 6 December. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5kU8rKN25DQ.

Puljizević, Jozo. 1973. "Jedna biografija - sto života: Bela Krleža o sebi i Miroslavu Krleži" [One Biography – A Hundred Lives: Bela Krleža about Herself and Miroslav Krleža]. *Vjesnik u srijedu*, 4 July, 24–26.

Tourists in Afghanistan: Field notes

Image: Antonio De Lauri

HEIDI MOGSTAD

When presenting the WARFUN project to other scholars, several have objected to the title and focus on 'war and fun', suggesting that it is inappropriate and provocative. However, the vast majority of the Norwegian soldiers and veterans I interviewed easily related to the idea that war can be experienced as pleasurable, thrilling, and even joyful. What follows below are some passages from my interview with a Norwegian veteran, 'Simon', who served on a Military Observatory Team in Northern Afghanistan for seven months in 2008 and 2009.

Simon was 23 years old and had recently finished a bachelor's degree in economics when he went on his first and only tour to Afghanistan. He now works for the Norwegian police force.

The passages have been transcribed, translated into English, and cut out from the full interview transcript, but remain largely unedited. They mainly foreground the notion of Norwegian soldiers as tourists in Afghanistan, which we shall see relate to various desires for and experiences of adventure, excitement, beauty, and novelty. However, they also touch upon other central themes in my interview material, including Norwegian exceptionalism, military ethics and professionalism, meaning and boredom.

Heidi Mogstad (HM): You said earlier you wanted to go to Afghanistan 'because of the experience'. Would you describe this experience as fun?

Simon (S): I thought it was a lot of fun!

HM: What was fun about it?

S: We were basically tourists there. We just travelled around on our own. I mean, not really tourists, because we had a job to do. But we had a big operational area and travelled around so our liaison could speak to all kinds of people: the police, local chiefs, Afghan military, village leaders, border guards, NGO personnel… A typical day might entail visiting villages, an NGO project and a checkpoint or a border, patrolling and showing our face here and there, and checking out this and that. And then we usually had a break in one of the local villages, where we bought soda and bread to recharge our batteries and spread some dollars and goodwill. Things like that. We often planned our own missions and spent many days outside the base, camping in nature on beautiful hills with amazing views. We also travelled through small, quirky villages and beautiful landscapes. And we often got to speak with local people and kids. It was really a lot like backpacking!

HM: Some soldiers describe the war zone as a space of freedom. Can you relate to that?

S: Yes, a lot. But we were, of course, bound by the tasks and missions provided to us. I have seen a few documentaries about American units south in Afghanistan, and there you get the impression that it is complete anarchy. They shoot in all directions while standing in their boxer shorts and they do pretty much what the fuck they want. They also have this 'them against us' attitude.

HM: Are Norwegian soldiers not like that?

S: Well … compared to soldiers from other countries, I would say we are pretty gentle and well-behaved. I mean, we do what we can to help; we hand out food, we give medical aid to anyone who is injured, and we are generally restrictive with the use of violence. I'm not saying our presence made a big difference. But I don't think Faryab [province in Northern Afghanistan where Norway took a lead role from 2005 and sent several Provincial Reconstruction Teams] could have fared any better with a different 'invasion force' [smiles].

it is incredibly boring most of the time, so you just have to try to enjoy what you see and experience: the nature, villages, and culture; drinking tea and talking to the local population. Being there was truly enjoyable

HM: In an interview I watched on TV, [former chief of the Norwegian Armed Forces] Diesen characterized Norwegian soldiers as 'less trigger happy'.

S: It probably varies, but in general, I would say so too…

***

Here Simon explained that he thought it had to do with how Norwegian soldiers are trained and their relatively high level of education compared to soldiers from other nations.

***

HM: You previously compared yourself to a tourist. Have you heard about the term 'TIC tourism'?

S: No, I have not heard it before, but I think I understand what it means…

***

I clarified that TIC (Troops in Combat) tourism is a term coined by military scholar Harald Høiback to describe a strong desire to experience combat, leading some units or military teams to take unnecessary risks and place their own lives or the lives of other soldiers or civilians in danger. We discussed this further.

***

S: I believe that [TIC tourism] definitely occurred. And I think that is one of the reasons why we lost quite a few people there [in Afghanistan]. Saying so does not make me very popular, because some of these people [who died] are celebrated as heroes. However, I know some of the units that replaced us behaved like this. When our unit left, we had just started to work inside Gowrmach [an insurgency-controlled district neighbouring Faryab], which was considerably tenser. But our task was not to catch the 'bad guys'; it was to collect information. However, my impression – and also what I have heard from other people in the Armed Forces – is that some of the units that came after us drove into the worst areas in Gowrmach to provoke the Taliban, so they would get a reaction from them, and be allowed to retaliate. And if that is true, it is extremely unprofessional. Some of these people have been honored as heroes for their acts of bravery in combat situations, when in fact they should not have been there in the first place. And they were told that 'this is a bad idea' but did not listen.

HM: Another term I have picked up is 'signature mission', that is, the idea that each tour should have at least one 'proper mission' to satisfy soldiers' desire to experience combat.

S: For us, it was in fact the opposite. We [Simon and the other soldiers in his team] were very eager to take more risks, as we were getting a bit bored. But our team leader, our liaison, did not want anything to do with the Taliban. I am not saying that we tried to find the Taliban and provoke a combat situation. But we wanted to move around more and talk to people, show our faces, and persuade people to be or stay on our side. Therefore, it was really frustrating that our liaison was so risk-averse, and this created some tension within the team.

HM: You said you were getting bored. This reminds me of one of the other veterans I interviewed who characterized his tour in Afghanistan as '99 per cent boredom and 1 per cent action'.

S: Yes, or even less than 1 per cent action. It is incredibly boring most of the time, so you just have to try to enjoy what you see and experience: the nature, villages, and culture; drinking tea and talking to the local population. Being there was truly enjoyable, but it was not like a *sydenferie* [charter tour to Southern Europe]. It got really cold there. At one point it was minus 20 degrees and on another assignment, we had a full week of rain, zero degrees and lots of sleet. And I was *always* sitting in an open car. During my seven months in Afghanistan, I was not once inside the car or behind a window. So I was cold and wet a lot, and I must admit I got really fed up sometimes.

HM: I would have hated freezing for so long! But despite this, you describe it as mostly fun?

S: Yes, for me, the whole experience was overwhelmingly positive. I had a really good time, and I also got to test myself and my skills, and feel mastery [*mestring*] like we talked about earlier [previously in the interview, Simon had described 'testing himself' and feeling control and mastery in combat and medical situations].

HM: Do you miss anything?

S: Yes, I do miss freezing sometimes [laughs].

HM: You now work in the police, what are the similarities and differences?

S: Well, I still get to realize myself through my work, both physically and mentally. But I feel more useful in my current job, as I have done things that actually make a positive difference to society.

HM: So, would you say your current job is more meaningful?

S: Objectively, yes. But I like travelling, and nothing beats the feeling of being in a foreign country when you get the tingling sense of excitement that anything can happen at any time…

HM: I see. Would you be interested in going back to Afghanistan, or on a new tour?

S: Yes and no. Yes, because I had such a good experience, I really did. But no, because I am a proper adult now and know better. I simply don't have the conscience to shoot anyone there – not even a Taliban soldier who shoots at me, because I know now that he is probably just a poor farmer who needs money or who is forced to participate in a war he does not want. There are just too many innocent people who have died in that war. And now [after the return of the Taliban to power in August 2021], it feels like the whole mission was a complete waste.

Perpetrators: Encountering humanity's dark side

BOOK CONVERSATION: ANTONIO DE LAURI, ANTONIUS ROBBEN, ALEXANDER HINTON

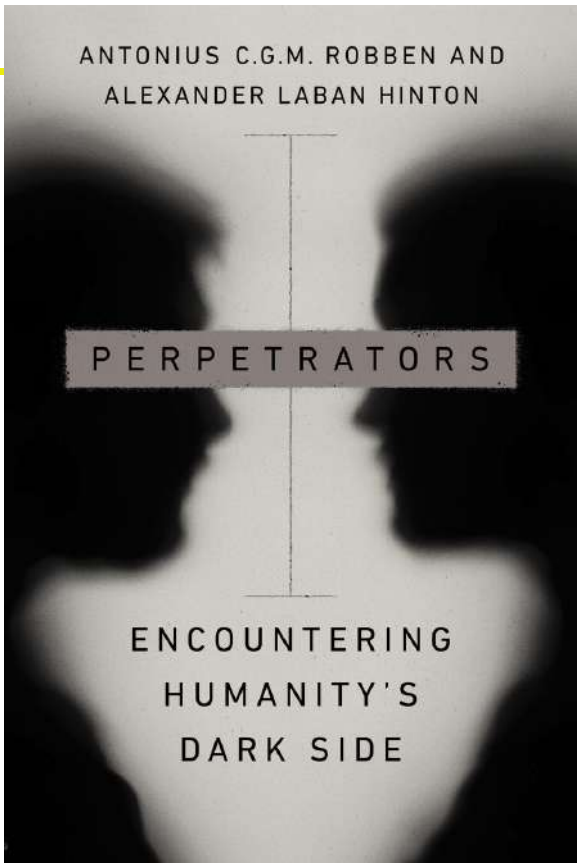


Image: Stanford University Press

Antonius C.G.M. Robben and Alexander Laban Hinton. 2023. *Perpetrators: Encountering Humanity's Dark Side*. Stanford University Press.

Antonio De Lauri (ADL): What's the story behind this book, and how did you come to write it together?

Antonius Robben (AR): Thank you, Antonio, for inviting us to reflect on our book in this forum. The idea about the book arose in June 2018 after I finished reading Alex's *Man or Monster? The Trial of a Khmer Rouge Torturer* (2016, Duke). In his book, he relates a nightmare in which he gets lost in Phnom Penh's Tuol Sleng Security Prison, now a genocide museum. At the time, he was in Cambodia attending the trial of Duch, the prison's former commander. It so happened that I had just published an article about my field dreams in Argentina when I was conducting research there on the forced disappearances of the military dictatorship. There are many publications about ethnographic fieldwork on political violence but hardly any address the methodological problems and dilemmas of interviewing and writing about perpetrators, let alone about how they influence our dreams. We decided to address these three issues in a short book that would draw on our fieldwork experiences in Argentina and Cambodia. The origin of our collaboration goes back much further, as Alex can explain best.

Alex Hinton (AH): It does. Although we had met and corresponded before, our first sustained dialogue about these issues took place in 2010 in Buenos Aires. I was in town for a conference and was able to attend the domestic trial of Alfredo Astiz, nicknamed the 'the Blond Angel' and notorious for the crimes he perpetrated during the military dictatorship (1976-83). Tony was in town doing fieldwork research. We agreed to meet for coffee and spent hours talking about perpetrators. Those conversations continued both at professional meetings and through interaction with one another's research and writing. I was delighted when Tony proposed that we collaborate on this project. What was particularly fascinating and exciting about the book was the way it truly emerged through dialogue. The first draft looked very different than the final draft, which was informed not just by reviewer comments (and we got excellent ones) but by our pushing each other. The result is a text that has a structure that mirrors the conceptual focus and content. The roots of that dialogue go far back in time, but 2010 stands out as a key moment that led to this book – as we note in the introduction, which starts with the words, 'This book began with the Blond Angel'.

ADL: How do you define perpetrators of mass violence?

AR: We make a distinction between ordinary perpetrators and political perpetrators. Ordinary perpetrators are offenders of civil and criminal law, such as burglars, swindlers, and murderers. Our scholarly interest is in political perpetrators, who we define as 'active participants in state institutions and repressive organizations or informal associations and networks who carry out genocide, mass killings, or violent acts for the presumed greater good of the state, a people, or an ideology'. This definition applies as much to state agents as to members of revolutionary and terrorist organizations, and racist and supremacist groups. It includes not only violent actors, such as torturers and executioners, but also high-ranking commanders who justified and organized the mass violence, guards at political prisons, physicians who monitored captives during torture, and white supremacists who openly called for racist violence. We are using this broad definition because too often the existing literature restricts political perpetrators to state agents operating in intelligence agencies, the armed forces, the police, and the border control.

AH: Tony covered the key ground in responding to this question. So perhaps I might take it in a slightly different direction. Even as we define terms like perpetrator, which is always important to do, we also emphasize the importance of constant reflexivity about the use of such terms. We discuss this issue in the introduction, and it is not a coincidence that the first two chapters are titled, 'Spectacular Perpetrators' and 'Seductive Perpetrators'. The book concludes with six 'guideposts' for perpetrator research, which center on subjectivity, abjection, composition, critique, craft, and limitation. Our emphasis on critique and limitation, in particular, stresses the importance of constant reflection about the assumptions – ranging from the conceptual to the methodological – that mediate perpetrator research. This interrogation includes the category and definition of 'perpetrator'. Chapter 5, 'Curation', plays on this idea through the argument that the first lesson for perpetrator research is that 'There is a Medusa in the room'. This metaphor is a bit mysterious, I know, but hopefully also an encouragement to pick up a copy of the book, which discusses it in detail!

ADL: Ethnographic fieldwork with perpetrators can be emotionally challenging and create ethical dilemmas. How did you find a balance between the need to listen, the risk of giving too much resonance to perpetrators, and the urge not to harm their victims?

AH: That's a great question. In one sense, it's also difficult to answer in a broad manner given the dyadic and granular space of the interview. Each interview is different and unfolds in a distinct way. On the other hand, based on our experience, we provide a number of guideposts for researchers that provide strategies for perpetrator researchers about this and many other matters. Broadly, the book centers on phronesis, or the practical wisdom we have gained in the field about such matters. And there are points in the chapters where you can see differences of approach.

But there is much convergence about the need to attend to issues like ethnographic seduction, the focus of one of Tony's chapters, or our projections onto 'the spectacular perpetrator', the focus of one of my chapters (I should note, as an aside, that we have built dialogue into the chapters so that each of our voices is present in all the chapters).

But, to return to your question, I think that, with proper reflexivity, it is possible to find a balance with traditional ethnographic methods and strategies, including, as best as we are able, the suspension, within the context of the ethnographic encounter (writing, or 'curation' as we put in the book, involves other considerations and affordances, as we discuss in detail), of our projections and emotions. Interviewing people involved in torture and mass murder may evoke strong emotions, including revulsion, anger, sadness, existential dread, and so forth. For me at least, successful perpetrator research begins with creating a space in which we acknowledge the humanity of the perpetrator even as we know they denied that affordance to their victims. This is, of course, one of the many reasons why perpetrator research is so hard and, perhaps, why many people chose not to undertake it. Tony, I know, has much to say on the issues you raise.

AR: Antonio, Alex's response shows that your questions are hard to answer and that much depends on the research context. What I found particularly stressful in Argentina was to interview a perpetrator in the morning and a torture victim later that day. It had to do with my methodological approach that consisted of cognitive and affective empathy, which I explain more fully in our book. Cognitive empathy allowed me to discover the Argentine military's political ideology and the state terrorism inflicted on the guerrilla insurgency and the heterogeneous leftist opposition movement. By imagining their mental representations of Argentina's turbulent political reality and their vision of the country's future, I was able to discover the strategic reasoning behind the state terrorism and delineate the tactical and operational organization of the systematic disappearances.

I was not only interested in how the Argentine military justified and organized the massive violence but also in how they experienced it. Affective empathy was a way to gain access to their emotions; not just by coaxing them in an interview to reveal their sentiments about past violent acts but for me to sense how they experienced the violence they masterminded, organized and exercised. It is particularly this affective empathy that made it so hard to interview perpetrators and their victims because one has to step in the shoes of both. This may come at the cost of strong negative emotions that may emerge during an interview, such as anger, fear and irritation, or lead to anxiety and depression during the fieldwork.

Furthermore, one has to be cautious about the risk of identification and buying into the interviewee's self-serving narrative. Perpetrators may be keen to persuade researchers that they could not have acted differently if they wanted to protect the state, and that they all did it for the good of the people. The researcher has to be conscious of this rhetorical manipulation and not give in to feelings of sympathy that may arise during an emotional conversation. This awareness prevents one from inadvertently adopting and advocating the views of perpetrators.

Finally, empathy is not compassion. Of course, as human beings we cannot but have compassion for defenseless victims of torture and disappearance, but compassion for perpetrators who committed crimes against humanity in the pursuit of their political and military objectives or who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder for having thrown captives from planes flying over sea? These perpetrators have forfeited my compassion. However, my professional interest in the cultural constitution and social practices of human beings makes me want to document and understand those atrocities through cognitive and affective empathy.

This brings me to the dreams about perpetrators that stood at the origin of this book. I had the good fortune of conducting research in a country in which psychoanalysis is a commonly accepted practice and interpretational model of social reality. I went into analysis to understand this national fascination with psychoanalysis. The unexpected benefit was that the reflective exchanges with my analyst about the dreams and feelings evoked during my fieldwork gave me a better insight into the emotional consequences of interacting with perpetrators. It enhanced my emotional stability and allowed me to be aware of the intersubjective manipulation by perpetrators of the interviews when they resorted to silences, evasions, denials, and outright lies to influence my understanding of Argentina's complex political past. Of course, I understand that it's unfeasible for researchers to follow this path, but I know for a fact that my graduate students have benefitted from my urging them to pay attention to their emotions and dreams during fieldwork.

ADL: Many perpetrators live ordinary lives and often do not resemble the ferocious villains portrayed in much of the popular culture. Do you find that Hannah Arendt's notion of the banality of evil is still valid and, as some believe, that anyone can become a perpetrator under specific circumstances?

AH: This is such an important question. The quick answer is that the vast majority of perpetrators are not monsters, though a small number are sadists or sociopaths or have these tendencies. Likewise, it is also true that the vast majority of people could become perpetrators – the perpetrator researcher included!

That may sound outrageous or even offensive to some. But, to me, this is one of the key insights of perpetrator research. We need to recognize that almost anyone, put in the right circumstances, could become a perpetrator (for this reason, I am wary of the over-valorization of 'heroes', in part because this plays into our preconceptions of ourselves as people who could never do such things – who wants to identify with a perpetrator!)

But it is precisely the acknowledgment that anyone could become a perpetrator that is the first step to making sure that this doesn't happen. A quick look at history underscores this point about how easily people can become perpetrators even as they believe they are 'right' or doing good. Look at the Crusades or the history of mass violence intertwined with colonialism. In the United States, where I live, the abuse of the enslaved was widespread, common place, and accepted as proper for hundreds of years. Look at the atrocities in Ukraine. Look at Hiroshima. Look at the abuse of indigenous peoples. The list goes on and on.

But I want to close my response to your question by looping back to two philosophers who we discuss, even if in passing, in the book (and who directly inform my own writing on this topic more broadly). The first is Adorno. His essay, 'Education after Auschwitz', argues that prevention is intertwined with the need to teach students to critically self-reflect, an endeavor that involves denaturalization and historicization – two methods that combat the stilted 'reified consciousness' that thingifies complex human beings.

The second is the one your question mentioned, Hannah Arendt. Arendt didn't equate the banality of evil with desk bureaucrats as so many mistakenly believe. Indeed, she barely discusses the term. For her, like Adorno, the key was thinking. Eichmann's downfall was his failure to think. Those who critique Arendt for missing Eichmann's anti-Semitism miss themselves the point that holding such beliefs is also 'thoughtless'. Adorno and Arendt – as well as much perpetrator research including our book – make this point that we can all be thoughtless and therefore begin to fall down the slippery slope toward perpetration. But we all also have the ability and responsibility to think or, in the case of scholars and educators like us, the responsibility to help teach our students and the broader public how to think. Our book is meant as a small contribution in this regard. Given the current state of the world, in which democratic backsliding and authoritarianism are on the rise, this task is all the more urgent.

AR: I completely agree with Alex about Arendt's notion of the banality of evil. And like him, I also take distance from the common view that perpetrators are monsters and agree that they should be studied as human beings with moral strengths and weaknesses. The flip side of this argument is then that anyone can potentially become a perpetrator. This idea became very popular after Stanley Milgram's obedience-to-authority experiment at Yale University in 1961. Research participants were induced to administer supposedly lethal electric shocks to research subjects who pretended to be in great pain. When these participants wanted to stop with the experiment, Milgram's assistants assured them that they assumed full responsibility for all harmful consequences to the suffering research subject. I must add that some scholars have criticized Milgram for overemphasizing the majority's willingness to comply and that he understudied the minority's refusal to continue with the experiment. Certainly relevant here is Alex's insight that perpetrators need to be primed for action through a larger context of political violence, economic crisis, and a perceived threat to life and loved ones; only then obedience to authority, group dynamics and personal objectives come into play. Also, Christopher Browning's book *Ordinary Men* (1992, HarperCollins) about German Reserve Police Battalion 101 has contributed to the belief that anyone can become a perpetrator. Browning showed that very few members refused to shoot Jews during the battalion's genocidal campaigns in Poland. The majority participated in the executions while a minority avoided killing by assuming subsidiary tasks such as rounding-up victims, loading guns and standing guard. This division of labor corresponds to our definition that perpetrators come in many guises and that, yes, many people may become perpetrators in specific circumstances but that they can influence their degree of participation in the atrocious acts of violence in which they became entangled.

Selfie

TRINE BERNTSEN

This painting was inspired by the brutalities that occurred in the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq. In the painting, a couple of United States soldiers take a selfie of themselves in an intimate pose. Behind them, the tortured and exhausted bodies of their prisoners lay on top of each other in a sort of human pile that makes it impossible to distinguish them and see their faces, a representation of the dehumanization they suffered.

During the early stages of the Iraq War, members of the United States Army and the CIA committed a series of human rights violations and war crimes against detainees in the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, including physical and sexual abuse, torture, rape, and the killing of Manadel al-Jamadi.

The abuses were brought to the public's attention with the publication of photographs of the abuse. The incidents caused shock and outrage, receiving widespread condemnation internationally.

Memories

TRINE BERNTSEN

Memories' is a true story about an Iraqi fighter pilot who was captured by ISIS. I got in touch with this man through a good friend from the United States who studied to be a pilot with him. We arranged a FaceTime meeting and talked for around two hours. I was moved deeply not only by his story but also by him as a person. A beautiful and calm soul that had gone through brutal things in life, he was now in a very good place. He wants to stay anonymous. He told me the story of how he was captured, tortured, and then thrown into a dungeon with other prisoners. They were told when they would be killed and how. They were just sitting there waiting for the day to come. Every day, jailers came down to the dungeon to pick one soldier to kill. And every day, they would come back to show the dead body to the other prisoners so that they could see what was waiting for them.

I asked the difficult question: 'Did you manage to use humour in such a dark place, and if so how?' He answered, 'The human mind works like this – when you know you are going to die, you want to tell someone your story, and mostly the happy sides of your story.' Because he was by nature calming, trustworthy and a good listener, he became the person in the group of prisoners that everybody used as a sort of therapist and they told him their stories. And they laughed.

This painting tries to reflect him sitting there with his mind and thoughts, his head hidden under a bag that jailers had placed on him. He is listening to his friend, who is laughing while telling his life story and holding his own skull in his hand, knowing he will die. His neck is already half-cut and bleeding, but still, good memories make him laugh. Fun emerges even in the darkest places.

Marriage

TRINE BERNTSEN

Soldiers deployed for war train and prepare for all kinds of danger and even death – but sometimes they find love.

This painting is inspired by the story of an American soldier who unexpectedly found love while serving on a small outpost in the remote mountains of eastern Afghanistan. Here she became friends with an Afghan interpreter who was always kind and helpful to all those around him. She admired this about him.

After her tour ended, the two remained friends and stayed in close contact. Over time, the friendship grew into something more and two years later, the former United States soldier returned to the tiny outpost in Afghanistan, this time as a civilian to get married. The two were married in a simple wedding and honeymooned in the capital, Kabul.

This story touched me, as it shows that love can be found even in the toughest moments in life. It demonstrates that even amid the chaos of war, we as humans still have the desire for friendship and love. In my painting, you see this couple on their wedding day with the groom in traditional clothes and the bride in her military uniform, a reminder of how war brought them together.

Why humans fight

BOOK CONVERSATION: ANTONIO DE LAURI AND SINIŠA MALEŠEVIĆ

Siniša Malešević. 2022. *Why Humans Fight: The Social Dynamics of Close Range Violence*. Cambridge University Press.

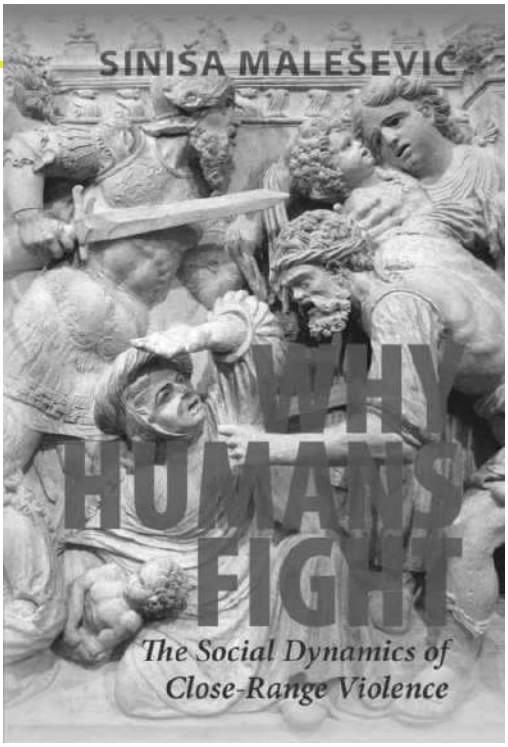


Image: Cambridge University Press

Antonio De Lauri (ADL): When and how did the idea of this book emerge?

Siniša Malešević (SM): In some respects, the idea for the book developed as a result of my own experience with war and the military. Socialist Yugoslavia had compulsory military service, where all healthy men had to serve for one year. So, I was recruited as soon as I completed my secondary school education and served as a soldier in the Yugoslav People's Army in Belgrade from September 1988 to September 1989. This experience was important in giving me a sense of how military organizations operate. Only two years later, the Yugoslav federation collapsed in a series of bloody wars and this traumatic episode has shaped my long-term interest in the study of war, violence, and nationalism. I was an undergraduate student living in Zagreb during the war so, apart from several air raids, I did not experience the actual violent conflict. However, in 1991 and early 1992, I often travelled between Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina (mostly to Banja Luka where my family lived at that time) and could see the carnage that war brought on the region. During this period, I started thinking about motivations for fighting as some people of my age showed eagerness to join the military or para-military organizations while others were unwilling to fight and decided to emigrate to avoid conscription. So, the idea for this book gradually fermented over the years. Later on, the key impetus was a project that I coordinated in 2011 in which we studied the experiences of ex-combatants from the 1991–1995 wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the IRA's military campaign in Northern Ireland.

ADL: So, what would your straightforward answer be to the old question of why humans fight?

SM: One of the key points that I try to make in the book is that fighting cannot be explained by focusing on individual motivations. The conventional approaches often interpret fighting as a means to an end. That is fighting is conceptualized as a tool of economic, political, military, or ideological power. In the book, I explore the role of many different factors – from biology and psychology to economics, coercion, and political and ideological motivations – and argue that although all these factors contribute to the fighting experience, none of them can explain the phenomenon on their own. Instead, I show that fighting has a *sui generis* quality whereby this violent experience generates its own social dynamics which can transform human beings involved in fights.

The traditional explanations overemphasize individual motives for fighting, such as self-interest, deep ideological commitments, unique personality traits, coercive pressure, or political processes and see fighting as a relatively uniform human experience. In contrast, I emphasize that fighting is for the most part a social and relational phenomenon that is characterized by enormous cultural, historical, and social variability. I particularly focus on the interdependence of emotional bonds of micro-group solidarity and how they link with the coercive and ideological capacity of social organizations that are the purveyors of violence (i.e., military forces, criminal syndicates, terrorist cells, organizations involved in genocidal projects, insurgency units, revolutionary secret societies, and so on). The book aims to show that the dominant reductionist views misunderstand the structural complexity and the sociability of fighting. The experience of fighting generates strong emotional responses, it impacts knowledge and understanding of one's social environment and the groups involved in combat. In this context, my focus is primarily on what I call the phenomenon of social pugnacity.

ADL: Can you tell us more about the research you have conducted for this book, which also includes interviews with former combatants?

SM: The first part of the book is mostly theoretical and historical. I critically explore the strengths and weaknesses of the recent studies on fighting across different disciplines – from biology, neuroscience, psychology, economics, political science, military studies, anthropology, and sociology. I also articulate the theoretical framework for my analysis and illustrate each chapter with historical and contemporary examples from all over the world.

The second part of the book is mostly based on my own primary research, which includes interviews with the former soldiers from the 1991–1995 wars in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as the former IRA combatants from the Northern Irish conflict who decommissioned their weapons and stopped fighting after the signing of the Good Friday agreement in 1998. I have interviewed many former combatants, but have decided to only focus on those who had direct experience of frontline combat. So, the book discusses the interviews I have conducted with former members of the Croatian army and the Bosnian Serb army (mostly conscripts and some volunteers).

There is also an analysis of interviews with former members of the Provisional IRA who took part in different violent campaigns. In addition, I have analyzed letters from soldiers who fought in different wars such as the Indian military units who participated in the British campaign of World War I, the United States volunteers who fought in the Spanish Civil War, and the Nazi SS units that were deployed to the Russian front. Using these different research techniques has helped me get a better sense of different war experiences.

ADL: In the WARFUN project we focus on war from the perspective of those who fight. This implies taking into account the emotional articulations and the different moralities that emerge in war contexts. In your opinion, are there aspects related to war and fighting that scholars still struggle to recognize and accept?

SM: I think that we still do not know enough about the micro-sociology of fighting. Much of our knowledge about the social dynamics of violence on the battlefield comes from history or conventional military studies. Many such contributions tend to reproduce highly stereotypical views of violent experiences and do not focus much, or at all, on the key sociological processes that shape human experiences of fighting through time and space. Thus, violence is often portrayed in a very similar way and even the perspectives of those who fight are often framed in a uniform fashion. If you read military history books, most of them resemble each other – morality tales with a lot of detail about specific events, locations, and individuals and very little if any analysis of the micro-sociological processes that make fighting possible. We still do not know much about the emotional complexities and moral dynamics that develop on the front lines.

This book aims to bring the micro-sociological analysis to the frontline experience. In this context, I focus on what I define as the process of social pugnacity. This concept stands for the relational, changeable, and collective character of close-range fighting. Social pugnacity is not an individual attribute, but a collectively shaped phenomenon that results from the cumulative action of social organizations, ideological diffusion, and the micro-interactional dynamics. Human beings are highly complex creatures defined by behavior plasticity and adaptability. Thus, our interactions, including those on the battlefield, are not predetermined by fixed biological or psychological characteristics but are created through the interactions of specific social organizations, ideological frames, and micro-interactional processes.

fighting is for the most part a social and relational phenomenon that is characterized by enormous cultural, historical, and social variability

Image: Raw Pixles

This means that fighting is not a uniform, trans-historical and trans-cultural practice with stable and recognizable patterns. Instead, social pugnacity indicates a great deal of diversity, variability, and context dependence. For example, combatants who face the same realities of close-range fighting show very different emotional reactions and even the same individual can display different emotional responses in very similar fighting situations, acting as a heartless killer in the morning and crying profusely when committing the same act of violence a few days later. In my interviews, I explore this variability in the context of one's willingness to kill on the battlefield.

ADL: To conclude, one chapter of your book addresses the issue of profiting off fighting. What are the main features of the economics of micro-level violence?

SM: Many studies on the behavior of combatants emphasize the self-interested motivation of those who engage in fighting. The utilitarian tradition that ranges from the rational choice and political economy perspectives to neo-Marxist explanations is centered on the economic sources of fighting. There are many good analyses written from these perspectives that show how and when fighting can be profitable. For example, Ilmari Käihkö has recently produced an insightful analysis of the second Liberian civil war (1999–2003) where the focus is on the economic motivations of combatants. Stathis Kalyvas has written many important articles and a book, *The Logic of Violence in Civil War* (2006), in which profiting from violence in civil wars plays a crucial role in the explanation of micro-dynamics of conflict. Such analyses see fighting as a means to an end – acquiring scarce resources, improving one's life chances, settling old scores, or attaining higher social status through violence. The focus is often on the collective action problem and how individual self-interested behavior is transformed into a collective fighting experience. For example, Kalyvas explores the strategic uses of selective and indiscriminate violence in different civil war contexts and is interested in how ordinary people often use civil war to pursue their own economic interests.

Nevertheless, I am skeptical of such explanations. They can explain some aspects of the fighting experience, but economic interpretations are generally inadequate in capturing the long-term processes that make fighting possible. What at the surface might seem to be nothing more than self-interested behavior is often more complex than that. Profit maximization is rarely the most important motive for fighting on the micro-level. In contrast to the rational choice perspectives that emphasize the self-interested nature of fighting, I argue that most combatants fight for others rather than themselves: their comrades, family members, friends, and peers. The patterns of social pugnacity are often moulded by specific organizational and ideological processes. However, these processes can operate successfully only when fully embedded in the micro-level solidarities. In the book, I illustrate this with a sociological analysis of violence by organizations that are usually considered to be solely driven by profit maximization, such as the Sicilian mafia or Charles Taylor's AFL and ATU in the Liberian civil war, and show that even in these cases the motivations were complex and diverse.

Image: Livio Senigalliesi

Fun, love, and humanization

A CONVERSATION BETWEEN LUIGI ACHILLI AND HARMONIE TOROS

This is the edited transcript of a recorded interview.

Luigi Achilli (LA): Hello and thanks for having this conversation with me, Harmonie. As a way of introduction, a few words about your expertise: Harmonie Toros is a reader in International Conflict Analysis at the University of Kent and was selected as one of six research fellows for the United Kingdom's signals intelligence organization, GCHQ. She has carried out field research in Europe, the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Africa focusing on the lived experience of war and violence. Most recently, she was named deputy director of Kent's Institute of Cyber Security for Society.

Now, in the WARFUN project, our common interest is to unveil the plurality of experiences and affective grammars that would otherwise be neglected by the exclusive focus on war destruction. Since your work has some convergence with the project, can you tell us more about your current research – not least because you are currently writing a monograph on the human experience of war, which aims to include fun and love and so many other things that we generally hesitate to look for in war.

Harmonie Toros (HT): Thanks very much. I think the WARFUN project is wonderful. And it makes me very happy that it exists. It makes me very happy that we work on the question of fun. It shows that there is great imagination in our field. I've long been fascinated by the human experience of war. I covered war as a journalist, first for a major international news agency in my 20s. And as a journalist, I focused on the death and the destruction. In general, reporting on war does not focus on how life rebuilds and finds new pathways during war situations. I remember doing what so many journalists do, so it's not a criticism, I think it's just some recognition of the habit that we speak about the hospital that has been bombed and the people who have died in the bombing of the hospital. But we speak much less about how immediately after the hospital is bombed, a makeshift hospital is created right next door to bring in those people who didn't die, those people who were injured in the attack. It is the idea that life has to find a pathway to rebuild around war. War does not only exist through pain and suffering, because human beings don't only live in pain and suffering. That is not what human life and experience are like. And we know this from our lives.

I've taught this a lot. I've taught a course at Kent called 'Humans at War' for the past ten years. And we focus precisely on this constant mixing of unmaking and remaking that exists all the time, but that emerges so much more clearly in war. I realized that what fascinates me most about war is that a lot of the processes and practices, a lot of the relationships and the logics that exist in all our lives all the time become clearer in war. All of a sudden it is right in your face, and you can't ignore it. So, by studying war, we learn something about life outside of war.

I'm writing a book on this now after ten years of teaching this module. Now I think I'm finally ready to write my monograph on this. Love and fun not only figure as part of the materials I want to cover, but I've decided to do an experiment in using love as method. I have realized over the years that the engagements that have taught me the most about war are those linked to loving relationships. I've come to believe that this knowledge could only be shared because there was love in the relationship, and therefore trust and care. I don't mean love in the sort of, you know, the very obvious romantic version of it. I understand love as an unqualifiable and definitely unquantifiable, but real, powerful connection that joins human beings, and therefore it's a much broader understanding. Love does not exclude pain and suffering and radical disagreements. But what it does exclude is the unnecessary, the perfunctory, the box-ticking. When you're engaging in that moment, it's not 'oh well I said what I had to say'. No, you say what you want to say. And that's what makes it a special relationship.

I experiment with love as a criterion for data selection and sampling. I only interview people that I love. I experiment with love as an interview technique. I will make sure that care is at the absolute foundation of any interaction. I will not ask questions if I feel that those questions in any way can make someone uncomfortable. Now, that may be true in any interview, but I think if we recognize it as love it works better. And I use love as an approach to writing. I will try to love writing this book. How many times do we say I hated writing that book, I suffered through it. I don't want to suffer through it. I want to love writing this book. And I think this makes this book and this research, completely unreplicable. So, the notion of replicability goes away because the material that emerges can only emerge in this specific relationship between myself and this other person.

Therefore, I'm bringing something that exists from that moment into the book. The validity of the research is no longer based on whether my research is replicable, or whether anybody could pick up the same data and come to the same conclusion, which seems to be the way we understand validity. On the contrary, the validity is based on the fact that the reader trusts me to give exactly what I felt. It's based on trust. This is what I'm working on: it's love not only inside war, but love as a method to study war.

LA: Thanks, Harmonie. I am a big fan of your research. Due to time constraints, I cannot go into detail about everything I like about your project. But there is something that I would like to link up with the next question, which is the complexity of feelings such as fun and love, especially when they are put in connection with war. To me, love and fun – and other supposedly 'positive' feelings, can be put in conversation with something as appalling as war. A case in point is the construction of the enemy, or the dialectic of friend versus foe. A plethora of studies in anthropology and sociology have shown that war, for example, requires dehumanization. The enemy must be perceived as something different, not fully human. In your experience, what is the role of fun or similar feelings such as love, for example, in the symbolic and concrete construction of the enemy?

HT: I worked on dehumanization quite a lot when I did my PhD work on how we dehumanize enemies to avoid being able to negotiate with them. If they are not human, you cannot interact with them, you can't then negotiate with them. I think in the narratives that the parties at war put out there is certainly a lot of dehumanization. But I'm not sure how true it is on an individual human level. In fact, I think we are more interested in the humanization of those we kill. If you read in some of the literature, when you speak to people who have engaged in war, I think there's an intense recognition, and one may even relate this to love, that one kills another while recognizing that they are the same, that it is like killing oneself. This is what I find most intriguing, that it's a moment of saying, you are my brother, or you are my sister and I understand that I could be exactly in your position. You are me on the other side. I do this because this is what I'm here to do. I think this is so powerful. And to a certain degree, so terrible for many people, for instance when they return from war and face this notion that they actually have humanized the enemy.

They have recognized that they have killed someone like themselves and like their loved ones. I think it's those who are capable of recognizing it, but not dying inside from it that are the strongest. But I think the moment that is most difficult for those at war, is that moment of recognition that actually the other person is just like you. Although the public narratives of armed groups or states are very much based around dehumanization, I'm not sure it actually works on an individual human level.

LA: So you say that despite this tendency from states and from armed groups to try to dehumanize the enemy, actually at the individual level there is a process of humanization involved in killing?

HT: I think so. I think it's very difficult to avoid that. There's interesting research on the experience of drone operators and how they deal with being in a situation that is so remote from war. But even then, I'm not sure that the dehumanization actually gets through as we imagine at the individual level. They're actually still stuck with the idea that the person on the other end of their drone is a human being. And that's what makes it so difficult for many of them to live through.

LA: In this regard, I would like to ask you about the role of fun and coping with alienation and destruction generated by war and violence. To what extent is fun a tool to cope with war? Is this the case that you encountered during your research? Because there are researchers that have shown in their research how fun and love provide a venue for re-creating the ordinary in the midst of frustration, violence, and destruction. In Sarajevo, Ivana Maček notes that fun becomes a significant form of resilience that provides people with creative ways to acquire a sense of normalcy and create new values amidst political and social instability. Sharif Kanaana writes about 'intifada humor' and 'intifada jokes' – referring to the jokes and funny stories made by Palestinians to cope with the everyday pain and misery of the Israeli occupation. In the context of your research, have you noted similar practices?

HT: Absolutely, I think having fun and love are actually an intrinsic part of all war experience. It makes me think of the work of Carolyn Nordstrom, who's one of the pioneers of anthropological approaches to war.

She says we have a tendency of extracting violence and war from lived normal life as if it's outside of social relations, when in fact it is completely enmeshed and part of our social relations, which means there is also fun, and there's also love, and there's also a series of other things. I mean, I think it's an essential part of our lives. It's true in hospitals; it's true in jails; it's true in war zones. I think we've all been in situations in hospitals where we found fun or laughter, because life in hospitals can be very, very long. If you don't have any fun or laughter, what are you going to do? And war is similar, right? When you speak particularly to people who have been in combat, they will tell you that there are endless hours of boredom where nothing happens. Absolutely nothing happens and you have to fill those hours. Because all of a sudden then something very, very exciting will happen for 25 minutes. But for the 24 hours before that, or the two weeks before that, you have to fill those hours and fun is an obvious way, right? There's a lot of cards, there's a lot of the classic things that people do just sitting there waiting for life, for that moment of excitement to happen. There's also a lot of what would be seen as destructive behavior. It's very often linked to alcohol and sex. A friend of mine calls it lots of drinking and lots of shagging. That's his description of war experience.

I think life in a war situation is in excess. It's this idea that there is more up front, obvious, right there in your face than you're used to. And therefore, that is true also of the fun, it has to be as powerful as what you're expecting later. I think there's an attempt to live the fun in excess in a war situation also. I'm not sure they always succeed in doing that, which is probably for the best. It's very hard for the general public to conceive of this, maybe because of Hollywood, or because of a very strong moral code that has been established around war as serious, as painful. And because people die, that's fair enough, you know, this is all true. But I think in the general consciousness, this idea of war and fun is a very difficult one to accept, because how can you have fun in war? What does that say about you as a human being?

A moment I think that epitomizes this the most is the images of the Dutch peacekeepers after they left Srebrenica. When the UN pulls out of the safe zone that was being protected by Dutch forces – they've been through a long standoff with the Serb forces and they finally leave.

Image: Getty Images

There are images of all these young men, and they're all in their early 20s and they start drinking and dancing and partying. You can sense this incredible relief. But you as a viewer know that at the same time, thousands of men and boys are being killed in Srebrenica because these peacekeepers left. So, on the one side for me, as someone who researches war, I understand what they're doing, but I can understand also that from the general public's point of view, it's unbearable to watch. Even for me, it's very difficult to watch because I know that people are being killed at the same time. They don't know this. I mean, they could have probably guessed, but they're alive and they want to feel alive. And that involves a lot of fun.

LA: It's true. It's hard to recognize the presence, the relevance of fun and love, feelings that are usually associated with positive elements of our life, extremely positive elements, with something that is as traumatic as war. Yet, it's a fact witnessed by many who have been willing or unwilling witnesses and actors at the center of this drama. And this leads me to introduce another dimension of war and fun: the euphoria and thrill of engaging in violent actions. Take Tolstoy's classic, *War and Peace*. Let me quote it:

> *Passing between the companies that had been eating porridge and drinking vodka a quarter of an hour before, he [Andrei Bolkonsky, one of the main characters of the novel] saw everywhere the same rapid movement of soldiers forming ranks and getting their muskets ready, and on all their faces he recognized the same eagerness that filled his heart. 'It [the war] has begun! Here it is, dreadful but enjoyable!' was what the face of each soldier and each officer seemed to say.*

Now, it should be added that this passage is not only based on fiction, but on the real-life experience of Tolstoy, who was a soldier during the Crimean war in 1851. His words resonate with the findings of a few scholars in anthropology and related disciplines who remarked how individuals can perceive their participation in social violence as a good opportunity to have fun, which produces a feeling of togetherness and shared intimacy. Is this something you have come across too in your research?

HT: I've come across this in a variety of ways in my life. I remember the first time I was in a newsroom, I must have been in my mid-20s and it was during the war in Kosovo. I remember being in this newsroom full of journalists, cameramen, photographers – mostly men – I think you've got to recognize that there was an excitement. Everybody wanted to be asked to go. It is the excitement of it, the fact that everything is amplified; everything is in excess. The feelings are so much more powerful. Everything is magnified. I think the difficulty for me, and it's something I'm working on in the book, is that this is part of the romantic. I'm not saying it's not true. I'm just saying it is part of the romantic image of war. It creates this idea, and we see it in researchers; we see it in humanitarians; we see it in journalists; we see it in a lot of Westerners, people of the Global North if you want – people of privilege – who then want to go and have that experience and then go back home. That is a really interesting, and I would say problematic, side effect of war as fun. It is to a certain degree used by certain people of privilege as a playground. I don't think they necessarily realize they are using it as a playground, because when you're in it, you think you're doing good. You're reporting, you're helping out, you're doing all these things. But I think there is an element of other people's war as a playground, which is incredibly problematic, right?

I'm working, for example, on this idea of rest and recuperation. It's a classic. Not only the UN, but also governments have it, and the UN has standardized it. So, every four, six, eight, or 12 weeks, depending on how dangerous your posting is, you get a week of rest and recuperation in a nearby capital that is safe. Now, this idea that you get to rest and recuperate from war is an extraordinary idea. If you think about it, it's slightly absurd. You go there, you get tired and then, oh well, you need a week off, go and rest and recuperate. And then you can come back. Think about what it means for the person who's stuck in the war, who never gets to rest and recuperate. But even conceptually, I find it very bizarre. I think it's really important to recognize war as fun because it will explain a whole series of behaviors, particularly of the international community, but also local actors. But at the same time, it also explains some of the darker sides of why people go to war, which I think are important to recognize.

LA: Thanks a lot, Harmonie. I think that will be all. I wish you all the best with your research and monograph and we look forward to reading more of your research.

War virtually

BOOK CONVERSATION: ANTONIO DE LAURI AND ROBERTO J. GONZÁLEZ

Roberto J. González. 2022. *War Virtually: The Quest to Automate Conflict, Militarize Data, and Predict the Future*. University of California Press.

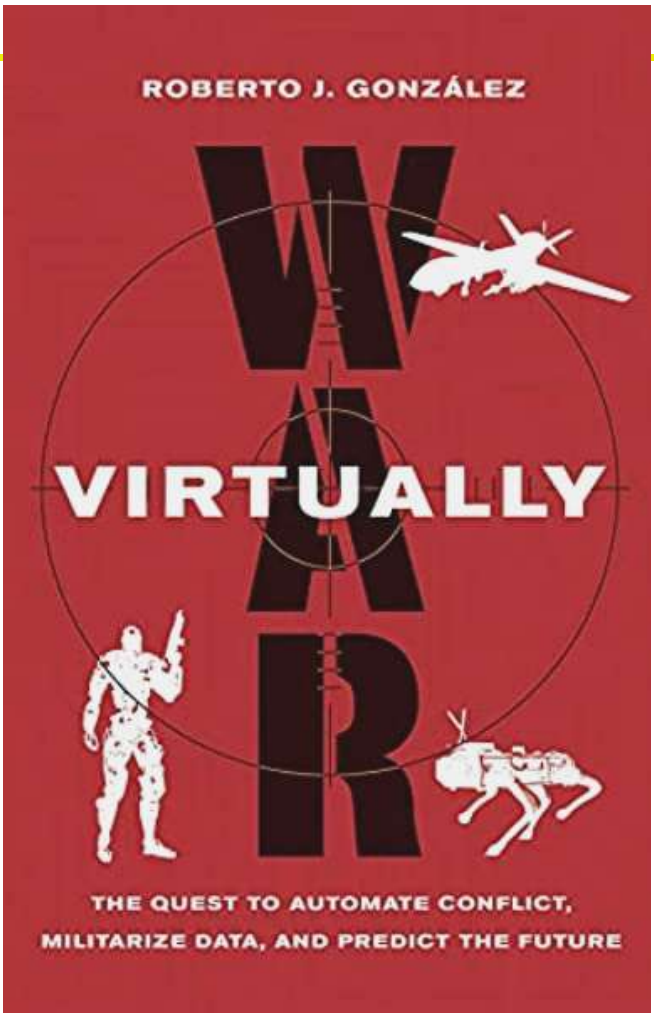


Image: University of California Press

Antonio De Lauri (ADL): What motivated you to write this book?

Roberto J. González (RJG): The book has been a long time in the making. I've been interested in militarization for more than 15 years, and began by examining the roles of social scientists in the United States military and intelligence agencies. Around 2012, I began to notice a shift in the way the Defense Department and military contractors were interacting with social scientists. There seemed to be less interest in using cultural knowledge for counterinsurgency, and a greater emphasis on using such knowledge to make sense of big data. It also became clear that psychological operations, or psyops, changed very quickly following the widespread adoption of smartphones and social media apps between 2008 and 2011. The more I looked into these changes, the more I began to detect a pattern of United States military and intelligence agencies preparing for war using algorithms. And so, I began collecting materials to better understand these processes.

During the course of my work, I had the opportunity to communicate with Jack Poulson, a mathematician and data scientist who worked for several years as a senior research scientist at Google. When news of a secret contract between Google and the United States Defense Department was made public, he quit the company and founded Tech Inquiry, a non-profit that investigates the connections between the Pentagon and the tech industry. In one of our conversations, Poulson said: 'I believe we are witnessing the transition of major Unites States tech companies into defence contractors and would go so far as to predict them purchasing defence firms in the coming years – something like Amazon buying Raytheon.' At that point, I knew it was time to write a book synthesizing my research.

ADL: What exactly is a 'virtual war'?

RJG: Virtual warfare means different things to different people. There isn't an agreed-upon definition for it, which gave me room to interpret the term broadly, holistically, and anthropologically. I take a wide-angle view in *War Virtually*, focusing on four different elements: robotic and autonomous weapons systems; a high-tech version of psychological operation or psyops; predictive modelling and simulation programmes, which some call 'computational counterinsurgency'; and cyberwarfare, meaning the attack and defence of critical infrastructure. These technologies and techniques are predicated on the production, availability, and analysis of massive quantities of data—often surveillance data—collected from drones, satellites, cameras, cellphones, electronic transactions, social media, email messages, and other internet sources. As mentioned earlier, we can think of this as war by algorithm. Increasingly, technologies make use of artificial intelligence or AI to automate decision-making processes. The development of virtual weapons relies on the combined efforts of a wide range of scientists and technical experts – not only chemists, physicists, engineers, computer programmers, and data analysts, but also biotech researchers, political scientists, psychologists, and anthropologists. Much of the work is rather banal, and takes place in nondescript buildings in suburban office parks, tech campuses, or university laboratories. Silicon Valley has emerged as a major center for this kind of defence and intelligence work.

In some ways, virtual warfare is a continuation of the so-called Revolution in Military Affairs or RMA, a doctrine that was articulated by the Pentagon's Office of Net Assessment in the 1980s and 1990s. It leaned heavily towards technology-based solutions. After 9/11, when the United States went to war against global networks of insurgents armed with relatively simple technologies, such as improvised bombs, rifles, and grenade launchers, the RMA lost steam, and counterinsurgency became fashionable after a long hiatus. But now, in a period marked by rapid innovation, algorithmic modes of governance, and the rise to power of rival nation-states like China and Russia – each of which is pursuing its own virtual warfighting technologies – computerized combat has once again taken center stage among United States military establishment elites.

ADL: In your book, you alert the reader to the dangerous aspects of weaponizing technology. What would you consider the most alarming features of virtual wars?

RJG: The prospect of virtual warfare is alarming for a number of reasons. At first glance, some of the most troubling technologies are fully autonomous weapon systems – for example, aerial drones that use AI to select targets and execute missile strikes without humans 'in the loop'. However, it turns out that despite lots of advances in the development of these systems, many if not most rank-and-file human pilots and soldiers distrust these technologies. The major United States military research laboratories have hired scores of social scientists – I refer to them as 'trust engineers' – to overcome this lack of trust by experimenting with a host of possible techniques: developing more anthropomorphic designs, programming a sense of 'ethics' into the AI software, implementing new military training regimens, and creating new user interfaces. An example of this is the effort to create 'bidirectional transparency' between soldiers and machines that would allow humans to automatically communicate their biophysical, mental, and emotional states to robots, which would in turn instantaneously report their effectiveness, efficiency, and predictive outcomes to their users.

Another disturbing aspect of virtual warfare is that many United States military strategists believe that they're locked into a global AI arms race with China, and that they're losing that race. Once rival superpowers are convinced that they're on parallel tracks, the possibilities can be frightening. I don't think it's an exaggeration to compare the current situation to the nuclear arms race in the early years of the Cold War. Military elites and corporate executives in Big Tech and Big Defence have a vested interest in pushing their agendas forward, which is why *War Virtually* includes a political-economic analysis of the military-industrial-technology complex.

One can make a strong argument that some inventions ought not to have ever been invented – for instance, mustard gas, napalm, and the atomic bomb – and that autonomous weapons fall into this category, and therefore should be banned before they're unleashed. There's no reason to doubt that if and when they're developed and put into use by military forces, nonstate actors and individuals will eventually have access too, which is yet another cause for concern.

My own perspectives have shifted since I began writing *War Virtually*. Initially, I thought that the biggest threat posed by high-tech digital warfare would come from fully autonomous weapons systems. Now, I'm not so sure. The speed with which social media and the internet have been weaponized over the past five years is astonishing. When I began the book, I didn't plan on including a chapter about high-tech data-driven psyops and propaganda campaigns, but it became increasingly evident that these techniques are now an essential tool for conducting war virtually. In the United States and elsewhere, social media has played a signal role in helping political operatives create deep divisions and foment internal violence. This is probably the most significant immediate threat facing many democratic societies today.

ADL: How do virtual wars change the role of soldiers?

RJG: That's a great question, because unless you or a loved one are in the military, you probably haven't given much thought to how autonomous weapon systems or predictive modelling software can change the roles of soldiers, pilots, or sailors. To start with, we need to explode the myths surrounding virtual warfare. The technological fantasy of virtual warfare is alluring – even seductive – because it suggests that someday we may conduct wars without soldiers, without physical battlegrounds, and maybe even without death. Despite the fact that increasingly lethal robotic and autonomous weapons are under development, we're somehow expected to believe that soldiers won't suffer traumatic injuries or death.

The reality is quite different. *War Virtually* documents cases of 'friendly fire' incidents in which automated weapon systems ran amok, such as the so-called Patriot fratricides, when United States military semi-autonomous ballistic missiles killed British and American fighter pilots during Operation Iraqi Freedom. Another widely publicized case of 'friendly fire' occurred in Afghanistan in 2011, when a robotic Predator drone fatally attacked United States troops. The new technologies and techniques don't eliminate the fog of war – they make it worse. This is one reason that so many soldiers and pilots don't trust the technologies. Yet they may soon have to work alongside semi-autonomous weapon systems in what are called 'centaur' warfighting units that incorporate 'human-machine teaming'.

Among other things, *War Virtually* asks whether someday *Homo sapiens* will be capable of dehumanizing members of its own species (as it has for centuries), even as it simultaneously humanizes the robots sent to kill them.

We can already see the changing roles of war-fighters if we consider the case of aerial drone operators, for example, those stationed at Creech Air Force Base in Nevada. A popular misconception is the idea that pilots who operate drones are able to kill with a clear conscience, as if long-distance warfare is less traumatic for the war-fighter. In fact, recent research has revealed that drone operators undergo tremendous psychological strain – and in some cases, even post-traumatic stress disorder – as they engage in virtual warfare by day at United States Air Force bases, before returning home at night to their suburban homes.

ADL: Can you tell us more about the research and methods used to write this book?

RJG: When you're researching military and intelligence programmes, you have to be creative in terms of methods. Hugh Gusterson, in an article reflecting on Nader's notion of 'studying up', pointed to the problem: 'How does an anthropologist study such institutions as weapons laboratories and corporations? In most cases participant-observation will be highly problematic, if not impossible … participant-observation is a research technique that does not travel well up the social structure.' For *War Virtually*, I relied on three methods – documentary analysis, interviews with people knowledgeable about the military's deployment of big data analytics, and what Laura Nader once referred to as 'self-analysis' – an awareness of how one is perceived, deflected, and described by representatives of powerful organizations.

The most important of these three methods was documentary analysis. There's an incredibly rich body of material online, including peer-reviewed articles by researchers funded by the United States military; promotional materials and annual reports from defence firms; thousands of internal memos and PowerPoint presentations; publicly available information such as Congressional budget reports on Defense Department programmes and contracts; and industry journals. It's not always easy to decipher these documents – military and intelligence agencies use thousands of acronyms!

Although I didn't use any documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act, anthropologist David Price has done a great job of using FOIA materials to expose the history of American intelligence agencies such as the FBI and CIA. Also, leaked or confidential documents posted to WikiLeaks, Public Intelligence, and the Snowden Surveillance Archive can provide useful information for scholars researching United States military and intelligence agencies.

ADL: *War Virtually* has been written with the ambition to reach a broad audience beyond academia. This is essential, especially considering that there is not enough public discussion and awareness about the potential harm military corporations and technology can do to democratic governance. Military spending and power are growing globally. Do you see a glimmer of action to reverse this trend?

RJG: You're right — I wrote *War Virtually* for a broad readership, which I hope will include military personnel, tech workers, concerned citizens, and policymakers. One reviewer described the book as 'science journalism', which I take as a compliment. I think it's crucially important to have much more public understanding and debate about autonomous weapons systems, propagandistic psyops campaigns, and predictive policing programmes because all of these technologies are being developed very quickly. They're mostly unregulated, and many people have only a dim awareness of the threats they pose.

Certain topics in the book are easy to describe in a compelling way – for example, our imaginations are captivated by vivid accounts of military robots that trot like horses or crawl like crustaceans. But most of the technologies are esoteric – how can you make predictive modelling and simulation software appealing to laypeople? A good way of engaging audiences with such subjects is, of course, through absorbing narratives, interesting character sketches, and provocative illustrations. I've attempted to incorporate some of these elements into *War Virtually*.

Not surprisingly, some academic reviewers seem bothered by the book's overtly critical stance, and by what some perceive as excessively dystopian scenarios.

The most exhausting critiques are those that ask for more scholarly references – as if 63 pages of endnotes and bibliographic material isn't enough! Such comments reveal an elite academic conservatism that still frowns upon popular writing.

To answer your question: *War Virtually* documents multiple efforts to push back against the merging of Big Tech and Big Defence. An example is the International Committee for Robot Arms Control, an organization co-founded and chaired by computer scientist Noel Sharkey. That group, along with other civil society organizations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, formed a coalition that came to be known as the Campaign to Stop Killer Robots in 2013. Two years later, they released an open letter warning of a robotic arms race and calling for a ban on autonomous weapons systems. Thousands of people signed the letter, including prominent figures like Stephen Hawking, Elon Musk, Steve Wozniak, and many more.

Another important effort is what I call the 'tech resistance' movement, which consists mostly of current and former researchers, scientists, and other employees of technology firms, including the giants – Google, Microsoft, Amazon, Facebook/Meta, and Apple. There are several examples of these workers pushing back against their companies' involvement in military projects: Google researchers who protested Project Maven (a contract in which the company used AI to analyze drone footage); Amazon workers' protests against the use of facial recognition technology by United States Immigrations and Customs Enforcement and other federal agencies; and Microsoft employees' opposition to the firm's contract to provide augmented reality headsets to the United States Army. The tech resistance movement also includes non-profits and activist organizations like Tech Inquiry, dedicated to exposing links between tech firms and the United States Defense Department; EPIC (the Electronic Privacy Information Center), which has uncovered government contracts with Palantir and other tech firms; Foxglove, a United Kingdom organization that is fighting biased algorithms, digital surveillance, and other tech abuses; and a whole host of new efforts like Mijente and NeverAgain.tech. These are but a few of many recent efforts aimed at creating more democratic and humane technological futures. There's reason for optimism, but much more still needs to be done.

Gendered military satire in Norway

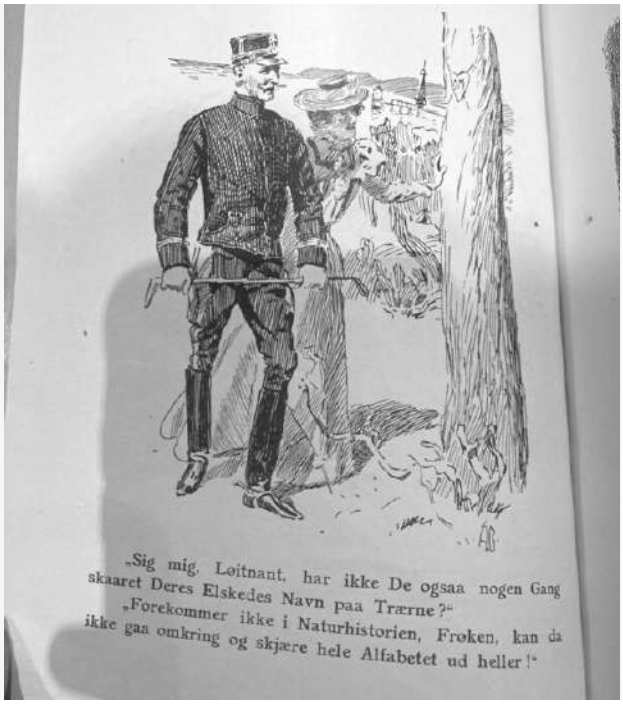
HEIDI MOGSTAD

MILITARY HUMOR

The woman: 'Tell me, lieutenant, haven't you also carved your lover's name on a tree?'

The cavalry officer: 'That would never happen in "naturhistorien" [the history of nature]. My lady, I cannot possibly walk around and carve out the entire alphabet.'

Image: From Bloch, A. (1906) *Præsenter gevær! Militærhumoresker fra korsaren.* Kristiania: Korsarens Forlag. Sourced from the Norwegian Armed Forces Museum, Oslo.



As soldiering is a male-dominated profession, it is no wonder that military satire tends to be deeply gendered. However, like other humor genres, satire can be both inclusive and exclusionary, reinforcing or undermining engrained stereotypes and inequalities. I took the picture above when reading a military humoresque book published in 1906 (Bloch 1906) that I found at the special library of the Norwegian Armed Forces Museum in Oslo. The librarian explained to me that cavalry soldiers were often subjects of mockery and ridicule. Their military specialization entailed many expenditures, and in the seventeenth century, many struggled economically. However, the cavalry soldiers were regularly depicted as self-absorbed, superficial, and stupid people who put themselves in debt to buy expensive uniforms and horses. They were also described as *kvinnebedårere* (womanizers) who cared more about themselves and their horses than their wives.

Fast forward to present-day Norway, and military satire still draws upon gendered stereotypes, yet in different and occasionally more subversive ways. A good example is *Førstegangstjenesten* (The Conscription Service), a popular sketch comedy TV show created by the comedian and Instagrammer Herman Flesvig that began airing in 2019. The show centers around four main characters, all played by Flesvig: a war enthusiast, a spoiled graduate, a white wannabe gangster rapper, and a 'female male chauvinist'.

Image: Livio Senigalliesi

That last character, Tanja Laila Gaup, is a brusque and vulgar young woman from Northern Norway who is far stronger and coarser than the male conscripts. Throughout the show, she caricatures and destabilizes gendered and military norms and stereotypes through, for instance, displaying force and violence, sexually harassing male soldiers, and trying to conceal her own emotions.

In the show's second season, we also learn that Tanja Laila is the only character who passed the selection for the special forces. It is hard not to read this as an intervention into ongoing public debates concerning the role of women in the Norwegian Armed Forces. Despite official targets and ambitions, women still make up only a small, albeit growing, minority in the Norwegian war force (Stai et al 2021). However, besides the all-female special forces training programme *Jegertroppen* (Hunter Troops), no woman has ever been selected for the special forces. While some have objected to this and called for greater inclusion and gender quotas, others argue that introducing quotas is detrimental to the operational strength and capacity of the Norwegian war force, and the special operation forces in particular (see e.g., Høiback 2016). The debate has raised questions of not only military skills and biology, but also what it means to treat men and women (un)equally within the Armed Forces and whether or not the latter's representation should be regulated by political ideals and ambitions of gender equality. Norwegian ethnographers studying all-male combat units have added to the debate by showing that female participation is not merely a question of physical capacity; women are also commonly described as potential threats to male asexual cohesion and solidarity (Danielsen 2018; Totland 2009). Finally, there have been multiple reports and accounts of sexual harassment in the Norwegian Armed Forces in recent years, with some suggesting a culture of impunity exists.

Førstegangstjenesten, and the character Tanja Laila in particular, address these debates by exposing and (at times) subverting gendered military norms and narratives. The show has succeeded in making many Norwegians laugh, but also invites the audience to question their preconceived ideas about masculinity, sexuality, and violence.

References

Bloch, A. 1906. *Præsenter gevær! Militærhumoresker fra korsaren.* Kristiania: Korsarens Forlag.
Danielsen, T. 2018. *Making Warriors in a Global Era: An Ethnographic Study of the Norwegian Naval Special Operations Commando.* Lanham, MD: Lexington Books.
Høiback, H. 2016. *Forsvaret: et kritisk blikk fra insiden*. Oslo: Cappelen Damm.
Stai, N. K., Rødningen, I., Olsson, L., and Tollefsen, A. F. 2021. 'Breaking Down Barriers for Norway's Deployment of Military Women'. *GPS Policy Brief*, 1. Oslo: PRIO.
Totland, O. M. 2009. 'Det operative felleskapet. En sosialantropologisk studie av kropp, kjønn og identitet blant norske soldater i Telemarksbataljon'. Masters thesis, Institute for Social Anthropology, University of Oslo.

The Merry Wind

AUTHOR: FILIP KALAN
TITLE: VESELI VETER [THE MERRY WIND]
PUBLISHER: CANKARJEVA ZALOŽBA, 1975 (1956)
PAGES: 97–102
ORIGINAL LANGUAGE: SLOVENIAN
TRANSLATION AND INTRODUCTION: IVA JELUŠIĆ

Image: Cankarjeva Založba

Introduction

Considering his experiences of the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939), George Orwell noted that 'in war *all* soldiers are lousy, at least when it is warm enough. The men who fought at Verdun, at Waterloo, at Flodden, at Senlac, at Thermopylae – every one of them had lice crawling over his testicles' (1977: 36). In other words, the author suggests, some elements of the experience of war remain unaltered through centuries of warfare. Beyond lice (which may not be a problem for some modern armies) and beyond the obvious, the fact that war encapsulates adversity, violence, and death, literary expert Kate McLoughlin adds:

> *each war has its own poesis[1][sic], its 'natural' way (or ways) of being represented. Sometimes, this is a question of genre: in ancient Rome, warfare was such an entrenched part of epics that bella ('wars') became a shorthand for the genre, while it now seems evident that the First World War's natural form was the lyric poem, that the Second World War's was the epic novel, that the Vietnam War's was the movie, that the Iraq Wars' may well turn out to be the blog (2011: 10).*

[1] In Plato's *Symposium*, Diotima of Mantiea explains to Socrates that humans strive to move beyond the natural cycle bounded by birth and death through the process of *poiesis*. The human bid for immortality can happen by way of natural poiesis through sexual procreation, by 'poiesis in the city' through the attainment of (heroic) fame, and by 'poiesis in the soul' by development of knowledge. http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/symposium.html.

How participants write about the war they are waging, or sing about it, or mock it by and large depends on the time period they live in and their culture, whether they are invading territory or defending themselves, whether they are winning or losing. Ultimately, it depends on the social and political vision that a certain warring side pursues. For the supporters of the People's Liberation Movement in Yugoslavia during the Second World War, partisan theatre became the *poiesis* of choice.[2]

The leadership of the Communist Party of Yugoslavia considered the struggle for cultural education and general 'enlightenment' an integral part of their military efforts. From the first months of the war, the so-called cultural-educational work (*kulturno-obrazovni rad*) took place within the framework of partisan military units in the liberated territories and of the activities of the emerging communist authorities as well as the antifascist organizations of women and youth. Cultural workers and artists who joined the partisan army have sometimes contributed to the goals of the NOP by participating in armed battles. As the war progressed and the partisan army grew stronger, however, there were more and more opportunities for them to dedicate themselves exclusively to cultural and artistic work. Among the numerous activities labelled as cultural and/or educational that they could participate in, the partisan theatre occupied the most prominent place and the greatest number of cultural workers and artists gathered in these institutions. In addition, both soldiers and civilians were eager and even happy to attend theatre performances. As the source testifies, civilians sometimes walked for hours and risked encounters with enemy soldiers to enjoy an evening of partisan theatrical performance. And, although the soldiers welcomed theatrical groups with the same enthusiasm, they did not hesitate to leave them without any protection and without weapons if there was a sudden shooting (see, e.g., Kolesar 1983).

Cultural workers and artists used their knowledge, imagination, and creativity to produce politically correct theatrical programmes that would socialize the partisan fighters as well as the interested civilian population into a desirable set of beliefs and values. Promoting the by-now long-obsolete idea of brotherhood and unity, the partisan theatre offered an antipode to the monstrous war as well as a radically new vision of the future. More importantly, cultural workers and artists were in charge of boosting the morale of all NOP participants, especially partisan soldiers. For example, in May 1943, the political commissar of the 1st Slavonian Corps sent an instruction to the political commissars of all units in the area that, among other things, included a note on the importance of the cultural-educational work: 'It is necessary to organize travelling libraries, music and singing groups, reciting choirs, theatre sections, oral and wall newspapers. All this activity should enable cheerfulness, joy, good mood, and cultural elevation of our fighters'.[3] There was, of course, pragmatic reasoning behind what can only be interpreted as an extravagant waste of human and material resources for the (generously speaking) limited partisan living conditions. The leadership of the partisan army recognized and accepted the importance of fun for successful warfare. If to some among the policymakers such a thing seemed inappropriate, the poet Matej Bor warned: 'Laughter, cheerfulness in the midst of fire and blood! Does it seem immoral to you? Think about tomorrow and you will understand' (Komelj 2009). So, the above mentioned political commissar continued: Only a politically aware, militarily trained, disciplined, cheerful army that is always in a good mood will be able to resist all the enemy's attacks and land strong assaults on all occasions'.[4] The communist authorities, therefore, aimed to provide a politically correct yet diverse and engaging system of entertainment. Partisan theatre groups throughout Yugoslavia endeavored to distract, amuse, and motivate their soldiers, in other words, to provide a safe space for them to unwind and recuperate, as in moments of relative peace offered in (usually temporarily) liberated areas, also during the most difficult enemy offensives.

[2] People's Liberation Movement (*Narodnooslobodilački pokret*, NOP) refers to the coming together of people in the United People's Liberation Front of Yugoslavia *(Ujedinjeni narodnooslobodilački front Jugoslavije*, JNOF) as well as partisan units to fight against foreign occupation forces and their collaborators in the territory of Yugoslavia during World War II (1941–1945). The Communist Party of Yugoslavia (*Komunistička partija Jugoslavije*, KPJ), led by Josip Broz Tito, played a leading role in the NOP.

[3] "Uputstvo političkog komesara 1. slavonskog korpusa od 25. maja 1943. o najvažnijim zadacima političkih komesara i o pripremi jedinica za pojačana ofenzivna dejstva" ("Instructions of the Political Commissar of the 1st Slavonian Corps on the Most Important Tasks of the Political Commissars and on the Preparation of Units for Intensified Offensive Actions Dated May 25, 1943"), in *Zbornik dokumenata i podataka o Narodnooslobodilačkom ratu jugoslavenskih naroda, tom IX, knjiga 3: Partijsko-politička dokumenta 1943. godine (Collection of Documents and Data on the People's Liberation War of the Yugoslav Peoples, volume IX, book 3: Party-Political Documents from 1943)* (Belgrade: Vojnoistorijski institut, 1967), 694.

[4] "Uputstvo političkog komesara 1. slavonskog korpusa."

During the war, Filip Kalan, wartime director of the Slovenian people's theatre in the liberated territory of Lower Carniola, recorded how partisan theatre developed as an integral part of the NOP. At the end of the war, nostalgic for harmony, brotherhood, and the productive spirit of creation, he edited his war diary and published it in two editions. He gave it an unexpected name: *The Merry Wind*. The title was supposed to illustrate the revolutionary enthusiasm of Slovenian cultural workers and artists who, according to Kalan, already before the war dreamed 'of a strong, healthy and a cheerfully merciless wind' (1975, 16),[5] and with their wartime contribution strengthened the conditions for the emergence and development of a new society. And, while working to achieve these lofty goals, they made sure that everyone had a good time.

EXCERPT FROM VESELI VETER: SEPTEMBER 1943

Flyers, slogans, Slovenian flags with a red star.

The collapse of Duce's Italy. The disintegration of the whites and blues near Grčarice and on Turjak. Partisan tricolour in Ajdovščina. Vipava liberated. Battles near Gorica. Preparations for the elections for the assembly of delegates in Kočevje. Cars and trucks, tanks and armoured vehicles. Partisan armoured train on the Škofljica–Trebnje rail. But not for long: the rail has to be torn down. It would not be right for this freedom to be too short. Partisans in boots and Italian officer uniforms. The newcomers alongside them: half in civilian clothes, with hats, caps, bushy peasant moustaches. Encounters and goodbyes. Handshakes, hugs, kisses, touches. And telling stories at length. Volunteers from Ljubljana: students, workers, low-level clerks. They say that over 7,000 people arrived from Ljubljana in two days alone. New brigades. Eight sections of the administrative commission for the liberated territory. And printing presses: as if there will be no more cyclostyles. Newspapers are already being printed: on the machines and with letters from Novo Mesto and Kočevje. And the headquarters in the spacious rooms of the castle on the top of a gorge over the river Krka: offices, telephones, couriers. In the yard: trucks, cars, motorcycles, bicycles. And horses and mules in the castle's stables: riding horses, artillery horses, pack mules.

Everything, as if it was for real.

Mobilization.

Big events everywhere, outdoors, in halls, in clearings in the middle of the wood. A veritable flood of official decrees: circulars, instructions, statistical notes, censuses, passes. All seven factories of the liberated territory are working from night until dawn. There is no real life during the day: bombs from German Stukas; bombs over Novo Mesto, Mokronog, Črnomelj. In the villages and squares, noisy rallies with speeches, with shouting, with wine, with dancing, with the accordion. And at the same time, shrill calls of guards and patrols in the partisan night and the screeching of hay wagons: they are carrying the hastily bandaged wounded, covered with overcoats, blankets, and tent wings from the positions. And rain sprinkles at times, over them and over their overcoats and tent wings. They are talking in the headquarters, but more among themselves, that the Germans are preparing a major offensive on the liberated territory that will cover almost half of Slovenia. Amid all this, the brigades attack fortified outposts across the entire territory towards the river Sava. Dull clatter of canons, clatter from the side of Sava. And columns of farm wagons with ammunition day and night; they are retreating to the hiding places in the forest of (Kočevski) Rog and in Gorjanci.

[5]''o silnem in zdravem in veselo neusmiljenem vetru'.

And despite everything:
Elation and enthusiasm and worries and a silent foreboding that the enemy divisions will invade this strange country of assemblies, nightly hustle, and light-hearted freedom.

And during this fall:
In the middle of this small country, this light-hearted freedom, these assemblies, these nights with patrols, columns, wagons: a partisan acting group from Rigelj above Poljanska dolina in the Lower Carniola.

It was the first group of professional theatre people in the liberated territory (in Slovenia), the first outside of the netted towns, squares, villages. Their friends from the divisional headquarters are checking in with them, up there in the brick houses on Rigelj: (Matej) Bor from the fifteenth, (Karel Destovnik) Kajuh from the fourteenth, (Anton – Tone) Seliškar from the eighteenth. Up there among the brick houses are the people from the Ljubljana Opera: the Stritar sisters, Nada and Bogdana, Smiljan Samec and Rado Simoniti, Mario Kristančič and Stane Česnik. Also from the Drama: Janez Jerman and Ema Starc, Jože Tiran and Vladoša Simčič, Jože Gale and France Presetnik. He has just returned from the partisan hospital and is lying around, grumpy, difficult, and quick to get angry: he was wounded by a mine while he was crawling through the wire fence in front of Ljubljana. Lojze Potokar is among the newcomers in Ribnica, on the other side of the Rog's forests. They are waiting for him in Rigelj (…). Some others are already there, musicians: Franc Šturm, Karel Pahor, and Sveto Marolt. Everyone especially likes Marolt. He is fair-haired and in good spirits, he is called Špik (Spike) and everyone knows that he is gifted. And others will also come, they say. With Kajuh in the fourteenth performs Brina: that is Marta Paulin from Ljubljana, a dancer, a former student of Meta Vidmar. Everyone knows her too. She is very thin and petite, very timid and lovely in her grey uniform; everyone also knows her boots, better suited for *kazachok* than for marching.

It is like this with these theatre actors:
They are still young and enterprising, at least most of them, at least enterprising, people without a biography, without a famous artistic biography, fed up with the old conditions, eager to live a new life. And everyone in the liberated territory already knows them because they are performing all over the former 'Ljubljana province', in halls and squares, on a stage and under the village linden tree. This group has no theatre backdrops yet, they are making do with curtains made from parachutes, with pantomime cues, and with tips from the announcer. Their programme is for the time being very similar to the old assemblies of the romantic partisanship, but with a slight overtone of romantic cabaret creeping into their program: singers and recitational choir, a trio and a quartet, dance numbers, witty chronicle in verse, recitations and solo singing accompanied by an accordion, humorously told current events by the announcer.
These current events are narrated by the theatre's leader, actor Janez Jerman.

This is not yet a theatre, but it is not partisanship either.

This is an enterprising and temperamental company of travelling theatre actors with partisan habits.

Image: The Everett Collection

And that fall, on the fourth of October 1943 in Kočevje:
Klopčič's *Mother*.

That was the first theatrical success of that group from Rigelj: it was a night performance, on the fourth night in the hall of Kočevje after the meeting of the delegates.

Ceremonially decorated hall, the end of the delegates' assembly. A lively group of people from all over Slovenia. The delegates sleep during the day and hold meetings at night: we are still partially illegal, enemy planes are cruising over the liberated territory. Silence in the hall. This is the first play written by a professional writer and played in a partisan hall: Klopčič's *Mother*. Directing: Janez Jerman. Ema Starc plays the mother, Jože Tiran plays Petar, Vladoša Simčič is Minca, Jože Gale is Andrej. Audience: from everywhere. They came by car and by train, on foot and on horseback, across the rivers Sava and Isonzo, past bunkers and through ambushes, through clearings and through woods, along dangerous roads and in the safe silence of spruce and pine trees. Old men are mixed among peasant girls and hale young men with submachine guns.

Klopčič's play is simple:
It is unobtrusively encouraging and concluded with a war-related bottom line: a mother's son dies in the partisans, and the mother gives his rifle to her other son to revenge his brother's death. A propaganda play in the good sense of the word, a skit, as we call these one-act plays. There are no dramatic conflicts in this story, and the characters themselves do not reveal any special theatrical dynamism. I remember how, after one later performance, a good-humored spectator remarked that the main character in this play was unfortunately not a man, but a rifle. There is always some truth in cynical remarks. And yet, that night, following the first all-Slovenian assembly in the liberated territory, in the middle of the war, after two anxious years of occupation, after two years of public silence and difficult battles, the people sat in the hall quiet and overwhelmed. It was in the heart of Hitler's Europe: here, in this hall, the free Slovenian word was coming from the stage in the middle of the night.

Sometimes I think that we will never be this touched again: In the semi-darkness, you could see among the spectators this and that partisan with wet eyes.

(And over a year and a half later, a few days before the end of the war, approximately around Easter 1945, I added this:)

There was something in this Klopčič's play:
And it was carried all over the Slovenian territory to Croatia and Serbia and across the sea to the partisan bases in Italy. Even more, they say that the French played it in Algiers. And during that time, it was performed more than 200 times in various places, that is how we evaluated the response (of the audience). It was heartfelt simplicity and true patriotic love. This play will not find its place among real (sic!) dramatic texts. But it will forever relate to the difficult times.

And this:
That stage christening in the late nightly hours in October 1943 also marks the unofficial birth date of the permanent Slovenian theatre in the liberated territory.

Sources

Kalan, Filip. 1975. *Veseli veter* [The Merry Wind]. Ljubljana: Cankarjeva založba.
Kolesar, Irena. 1983. 'Moji doživljaji, moja sjećanja' [My Experiences, My Memories]. *Dani Hvarskoga kazališta: Građa i rasprave o hrvatskoj književnosti i kazalištu* 10(1): 269–286.
Komelj, Miklavž. 2009. 'Predavanje u Modernoj galeriji' [Lecture in the Modern Gallery]. Ljubljana, December 22.
McLoughlin, Kate. 2011. *Authoring War: The Literary Representation of War from the Illiad to Iraq*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Orwell, George. 1977. *Homage to Catalonia*. London: Penguin books.
1967. 'Uputstvo političkog komesara 1. slavonskog korpusa od 25. maja 1943. O najvažnijim zadacima političkih komesara i o pripremi jedinica za pojačana ofenzivna dejstva' [Instructions of the Political Commissar of the 1st Slavonian Corps on the Most Important Tasks of the Political Commissars and on the Preparation of Units for Intensified Offensive Actions Dated 25 May 1943]. In *Zbornik dokumenata i podataka o Narodnooslobodilačkom ratu jugoslavenskih naroda, tom IX, knjiga 3: Partijsko-politička dokumenta 1943. godine* [Collection of Documents and Data on the People's Liberation War of the Yugoslav Peoples, volume IX, book 3: Party-Political Documents from 1943]. Belgrade: Vojnoistorijski institut.

THE WARFUN PROJECT

Project Team

Chr. Michelsen Institute

Antonio De Lauri, Principal Investigator

Katharina Maria Sewening, Project Controller

Emily Hume, Project Assistant

Iva Jelušić, Postdoctoral Researcher

Eva Johais, Postdoctoral Researcher

Heidi Mogstad, Postdoctoral Researcher

Luigi Achilli, Affiliated Senior Researcher

Collaborators: Trine Berntsen (artist), Livio Senigalliesi (photographer), Aron Corbett (WARFUN Diaries' publication design), Ragnhild Dybdahl (ethics adviser).

Advisory Board: Catherine Lutz (Brown University), Erin Finley (UT Health San Antonio), Henrik Syse (Peace Research Institute Oslo), Siniša Malešević (University College Dublin), Martin Bricknell (King's College London).

Webpage

https://www.cmi.no/projects/2535-erc-war-and-fun

Contact

Antonio De Lauri

antonio.delauri@cmi.no

https://www.cmi.no/staff/antonio-de-lauri

WARFUN