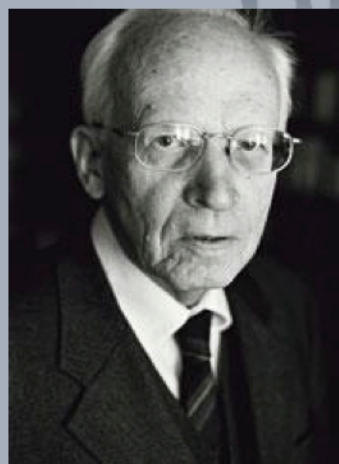


FROM HISTORICAL REVISIONISM...



ERNST NOLTE

(born 11 January 1923) is a German historian and philosopher. Nolte's major interest is the comparative studies of Fascism and Communism. He is Professor Emeritus of Modern History at the Free University of Berlin

He attempted to partially rehabilitate National Socialism as a defender of Nazism against Bolshevism.

"Historical revisionism is either the legitimate scholastic re-examination of existing knowledge about an historical event, or the illegitimate distortion of the historical record."

"The Bolshevik class-extermination was the logical and factual prius of the nazi race-extermination"

... TO HISTORICAL COMPARATIVISM

Historical comparativism is a way of analysing historical events the aim of which is to identify common aspects and peculiarities which come to light

"Comparison represents a neutral praxis of measuring reality that does not imply any judgment of value" Giovanni Gozzini



GIOVANNI GOZZINI

(born 13 july 1955 in Florence)

is an Italian professor of contemporary history at Siena university and the director of the "Gabinetto Scientifico Letterario Viesseux".

DIFFICULTIES

- Recent opening of the former Soviet archives
- Calling into question the interpretative paradigm of the uniqueness of the Nazi extermination of the Jews

Imbalance of the historiographical research

Other examples of ethnic cleansing (Armenia, Cambodia, Ruanda) resemble the Nazi phenomenon

But this is NOT a "reduction" of these crimes

ANALOGIES

- A new political leadership, with a project of radical transformation of the state, that had to face an internal crisis of consensus and an external crisis of international isolation
- A group of citizens was identified as a double enemy, internal and external, excluded from the national community, imprisoned and murdered
- Violence and terror

DIFFERENCES

- German Jews were neither a menace for the government nor a potential opposition
- Russia had a long tradition of forced labour and deportation to Siberia
- The Nazi Lager identifies with precision his victim on the basis of political and then racial criteria, while soviet GULag house a multiform category of "people's enemy"
- Importance of productive labour in the Soviet labour camps
- Lager used a complex technology aimed at "scientific extermination", while the deaths in the GULag were mainly caused by the exhausting forced-labour
- After 1939 it was impossible to obtain freedom from the lager, while in GULag there was a high turn-over
- Lager was not essential for the regime survival, while GULag was necessary for the conservation of the power

■ Deaths ■ Survivors



Glavnoe Upravlenie LAGerej



"They had our own making, they were average human beings, intelligent on average, bad on average" Primo Levi



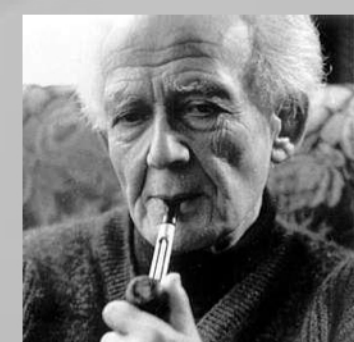
THE THEORIES



TZVETAN TODOROV

(born March 1, 1939 in Sofia) is a franco-bulgarian philosopher. He has lived in France since 1963 with his wife Nancy Huston and their two children, writing books and essays about literary theory, thought history and culture theory.

In one of his major works, *Facing the Extreme*, Todorov asks whether it is true that nazi concentration camps and the soviet GULags revealed that in extreme situations "all traces of moral life evaporate as men become beasts locked in a merciless struggle for survival". That opinion is a commonplace of popularized accounts of the camps, and also appears in accounts of survivors themselves. Primo Levi, quoted by Todorov, writes that camp life is a "continuous war of everyone against everyone." To survive, all dignity and conscience had to be sacrificed and everyone is alone. Reports from gulag survivors are similar. However, in his reading of actual survivor testimonies, Todorov says the picture is not that bleak, that there are many examples of inmates helping each other and showing compassion in human relationships despite the inhumane conditions and terror. Survivors point out that survival always depended on the help of others. He concludes that **life in the camps and GULags did not follow the law of the jungle and that the counterexamples are numerous, even in Levi's work.**



ZYGMUNT BAUMAN

(born 19 November 1925 in Poznań) is a Polish sociologist who, since 1971, has resided in England after being driven out of Poland by an anti-Semitic campaign, engineered by the Communist government which he had previously supported.

Bauman has developed the thesis that the Holocaust should not simply be considered to be an event in Jewish history, nor a regression to pre-modern barbarism. He argued, **the Holocaust should be seen as deeply connected to modernity** and its order-making efforts. Procedural rationality, the division of labour into smaller and smaller tasks, the taxonomic categorisation of different species, and the tendency to view rule-following as morally good all played their role in the Holocaust coming to pass. And he argued that for this reason **modern societies have not fully taken on board the lessons of the Holocaust**; it is generally viewed - to use Bauman's metaphor - like a picture hanging on a wall, offering few lessons. In Bauman's analysis **the Jews became 'strangers' par excellence in Europe**; the Final Solution was pictured by him as an extreme example of the attempts made by societies to excise the uncomfortable and indeterminate elements existing within them.

Riccardo Titi & Leonardo Magnani

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