Post-imperial Memory Irruptions in turn-of-the-millennium Northwest Europe (c.1995 – c.2005)



Christel Arlette Zunneberg
Brasenose College
University of Oxford
Trinity 2025

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History

Short Abstract

Every so often since the end of empire, there have been heated public debates about the imperial past in ex-metropoles in Northwest Europe. In these extraordinary, vibrant episodes, the nation's burdensome past was debated vehemently in the public sphere. Since the 1990s, the region has seen a *retour de l'impérial*, with 'post-imperial memory irruptions' happening in former imperial powers quasi-simultaneously and with increased frequency. Despite the acceleration of empire memory, with skeletons tumbling from the closet all throughout the region, post-imperial memory irruptions have never been studied comparatively as a European phenomenon.

Now, what happened that prompted the reassessment of empire in Northwest Europe? Were quasi-simultaneous memory irruptions around the turn of the millennium (c.1995 - c.2005) somehow linked, and was there cross-fertilisation? How far were they a manifestation of European millennial reckoning in a *fin de siècle* memory landscape? And how and why did they unfold similarly and differently? To answer these questions, this thesis dissects fierce public empire debates in the Netherlands (1994-1995), France (2000-2002) and Germany (2004), based on a substantial corpus of newspaper articles and radio- and television broadcasts.

It finds that post-imperial memory irruptions in Northwest Europe around the turn of the millennium were largely disconnected and happened in near-complete isolation, without significant cross-border inspiration, -participation, or transnational spill-over. They were national, self-centred affairs really, which took place in domestic public spheres and were triggered and shaped by particular commemorative moments that occurred in each country. They were essentially attempts to (re)negotiate the moral reprehensibility of imperial violence and to (re)assess the process of 'working through' (*Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung*). That said, they did not produce a societal consensus about the past that changed the political dial. They were thus not a European story of working through, but largely nation-centric arguments characterised by moral comparisons, often self-exculpatory in nature.

Long Abstract

After some early heated public debates about empire in the late 1960s and early 1970s in Northwest Europe – for example, in Germany (1966/67), Great Britain (1968), and the Netherlands (1969) – it was not until the mid-1990s that post-imperial memory irruptions made a phenomenal comeback. During the long turn of the millennium (c.1995 - c.2005), post-imperial memory irruptions happened all throughout the region.

Although they and their simultaneity have not been overlooked – due to their very nature, these instances of broad and intense memory contestation have not gone unnoticed –, they have never been studied as a (European) phenomenon. In existing literature, post-imperial memory irruptions are usually part of national studies on the long trajectories of remembering empire. Irruptions feature more or less extensively either as illustrations of the conflict-laden nature of empire memory and former imperial powers' struggle of dealing with their pasts; or as heuristic instruments to grasp a now decades-long process, in which heated debates were anomalies or landmarks. There are thus (national and Europe-wide) studies in which post-imperial memory irruptions feature in passing, but hardly any national studies and no comparative European studies of which they were the primary focus.

The apparent co-incidence of memory irruptions in Northwest Europe around the turn of the millennium (c.1995 - c.2005) raises questions about simultaneity and connectivity. What happened that prompted the reassessment of empire in the region? Were quasi-simultaneous memory irruptions somehow linked, and was there cross-fertilisation? Naturally, this study is concerned not only with the occurrence of the phenomenon and its transnational dimensions but also with its manifestation(s) as it took shape within distinct national contexts throughout the region. For one thing, the question arises as to what post-imperial memory irruptions in turn-of-the-century Northwest Europe were really about. How far were they a manifestation of European millennial reckoning in a *fin de siècle* memory landscape? For another, the phenomenon's expression across different national contexts gives rise to questions of similarity and difference. Which recurring features, typical trajectories and common characteristics marked such debates? And how and why did post-imperial memory irruptions in Northwest Europe play out differently? This thesis also seeks to understand how the phenomenon fits in the international memory context of a global(ising) Holocaust memory. It investigates

multidirectional memory by looking at how memories of European imperialism and the Holocaust stumbled upon each other in the public arena, when empire memory irrupted.

To explore these questions, this thesis examines moments that have been identified as instances of particularly intense, broad memory contestation – and it does so in a comparative perspective. It zooms in on three heated public debates about empire in the Netherlands (1994-1995), France (2000-2002) and Germany (2004). Early on in 1994, the Dutch took an exceptional interest in their imperial history in the face of the upcoming 50th anniversary of the Indonesian declaration of Independence (1995). The semicentenary triggered a fierce public debate about the violent decolonisation war the Netherlands had waged in the Dutch East-Indies (1945-1949). A few years later, such 'post-imperial memory irruptions' happened in other European countries, amongst others in France and Germany. Shocking testimonies about French torture during the Algerian Independence War (1954-1962) provoked a public outcry in France (2000-2002); and the centenary of the start of the Herero and Nama War (1904-1908) in German Southwest Africa (GSWA), which had culminated in a genocide, unleashed a media frenzy in Germany (2004).

The selection of case studies offers a rich comparative framework. For one thing, the cases reflect markedly different histories of colonial violence. For another, each country assumed a distinct role during the Second World War and maintains a unique relationship to the Holocaust and its postwar reckoning – further diversifying the analytical landscape and particularly interesting in light of multidirectional memory.

Beyond its comparative approach, this thesis is curious about transnationality and attentive to distinct patterns of connection between the different case studies and beyond. Was there foreign participation in memory irruptions? Were participants aware of memory irruptions happening in other former Northwest European imperial powers and/or of their imperial records? And (how) did memory makers use post-imperial memory irruptions as a vehicle to (also) address other contemporary issues?

This study is not about episodes of colonial violence, but about what people made of them in turn-of-the-millennium Europe. It is about collective memory, media and the public sphere, but also about public history and the politics of history. Memory contestation was played out principally in the public sphere, through national media. These episodes arose prior to the large-scale digitalisation of the public sphere: around the turn of the century, television, radio and

newspapers still demarcated the public sphere. These irrupting public empire debates being the object of study themselves, broadcasts and newspaper articles by national media outlets are the primary sources to study the phenomenon.

This thesis dissects irruptions in the Netherlands, France and Germany by means of a very substantial number of radio- and television broadcasts, and articles from leading newspapers at the time. The corpus of primary source material for each case-study contains national broadcast and print media outlets from across the socio-political spectrum to capture the broad range of opinions held on empire. It includes a wide range of different current affairs programmes (e.g. the daily news, documentaries, interviews, talk shows) and newspaper articles (interviews, reportages, reviews, opinion pieces and readers' letters).

The first chapter focuses on the Dutch semicentenary debate. When, in spring 1994, President Suharto invited Queen Beatrix for a state visit in Indonesia's 1995 jubilee year, a debate ensued that grew ever more heated as the state visit approached. Was the Queen to attend the Indonesian independence celebrations on 17 August 1995? An official state visit on this day would equal an admission of guilt. Moreover, was the Queen to apologise at the state banquet for the excessively violent way it had repressed the country's desire for independence after 1945? In the countdown to the state visit in August 1995, there were all sorts of ideas about what her speech should (not) contain.

The 1994-1995 debate was primarily about the moral reprehensibility of, and desirability of an official apology for excessive violence perpetrated by the Dutch military in the Indonesian Independence War. These questions proved truly divisive. Rival voices dug in their positions rather than moving towards each other. Both incriminating and exculpatory voices measured the reprehensibility of excessive violence by the Dutch colonial army in Indonesia against atrocities committed by the Nazis, other European empires, and Indonesian freedom fighters. Assessing the status quo of memory affairs, participants also had the process of working through World War II at the back of their minds; and memory politics were debated primarily with reference to the supposed expectations and needs of the Indonesians. The debate was a national rather than a European matter. It was still conspicuously quiet in neighbouring countries, and commentators from abroad played no role in the semicentenary debate.

Ultimately, no consensus was reached on how morally reprehensible Dutch military action in the Indies had been, and Queen Beatrix did not attend the Indonesian independence celebrations or offer an apology at the state banquet. With the date chosen (on 21 August, close to yet not on the day of the Proclamation) and the words spoken (although she spoke in a

remorseful tone, she did not apologise) the Queen sought to please a deeply divided audience back home. Quickly after, public debate on the violent ending of the Dutch East-Indies (DEI) subsided.

Chapter II analyses the French Torture Debate, which was set off when in June 2000 a former Algerian Independence fighter, Louisette Ighilahriz, testified in *Le Monde* how she and other women had been brutally raped and tortured by French paratroopers during the Battle of Algiers (1957). Shocking revelations from military leaders who had played a key role in the war fuelled the media frenzy and massive outpouring that followed the interview.

The question was not so much whether there had been torture. Rather, the 2000-2002 debate, on the one hand, dealt with the scale, origin, purpose, and reprehensibility of torture committed by the French Army in Algeria between 1954 and 1962. Assessing the moral reprehensibility of French torture, participants in the debate drew comparisons to atrocities committed by the *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN), by violent others (inside or outside of a colonial context); and in Vichy France – and that to opposite ends. On the other hand, responsibility and 'repentance' for French torture were subjects of debate. Should the French state officially apologise to the Algerian people? And, if so, on behalf of whom? The status quo on the Algerian past was compared to the state of affairs regarding Vichy, and those in favour of speeding up the process of working through referred mainly to the memory work done on French complicity in the Holocaust. Even though colonialism had been a European venture, the Torture Debate was first and foremost a national affair: there was remarkably little consideration of the afterlife of empire in other ex-metropoles or foreign participation in the debate.

The debate did not have a built-in climax after which it faded out, like in the Dutch case, but died out naturally. As in the Netherlands a few years earlier, the French came to no consensual reading of the past or to a general agreement about how it should best be dealt with. If anything, the series of events following Ighilahriz's testimony testified to an extremely divided public memory. Even though small steps towards a reappraisal of French imperial history were taken, calls for and gestures of condemnation invariably met with firm resistance and opportunities for common commemoration were not seized. The Torture Debate did not sort things out: it constituted the beginning of a disruptive obsession with the Algerian Independence War.

Chapter III deals with the 2004 debate in Germany, where the centenary of the start of the Herero and Nama War triggered unprecedented media attention. Like in the Dutch case, the momentum of an anniversary year finally set things in motion, and again, one key moment awaited. The centenary year's irrefutable milestone was the commemoration ceremony in Okakarara on 14 August 2004, and the speech that Germany's Federal Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development, Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, would deliver on that occasion.

The German debate was less broad than the Dutch and (especially the) French one, both in terms of players and the issues addressed. It centred on the questions how the events of 1904-1908 were related to the Holocaust; how bad German colonial rule had been; and whether an official 'compensation-relevant' apology was due. The reprehensibility of German conduct was compared to the record of the rebellious Herero and other European imperial powers. Contributors compared the current state of memory affairs on empire to the way the Holocaust had been dealt with, and to the Herero remembrance of events. Memory politics was shaped in response to Herero reparation demands, who compared their cause with the Jewish people's. Foreign memory entrepreneurs did not play a significant role in the debate, and not much consideration was given to how other former empires had been dealing with their past over the turn of the millennium.

At first sight, the German irruption was profoundly different from the ones in its neighbouring countries: an overall self-critical consensus emerged from it. The much greater temporal distance from the events, and the much greater discursive and socio-political currency of *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung* (that is, regarding the two totalitarian and dictatorial regimes in German contemporary history) furthered a self-critical reading of empire in 21st-century Germany. In Okakarara, Wieczorek-Zeul even asked the Herero for forgiveness for the crimes of the German colonial rulers on behalf of her country. On closer inspection, however, the meaning of the German case turned out not to be so different after all. The self-critical consensus would prove to be shallow, ephemeral and without consequences. The surge in media-output had been considerably less than in the Netherlands and France, and the debate had been of a less emotional and more intellectual nature. Wieczorek-Zeul's apology came as a complete surprise, met with much political push-back, and did not materialise in terms of reparations. The self-critical consensus was not enough to change the political dial. Finally, the colonial past largely disappeared again from the public and political agenda with the end of the centenary year.

Post-imperial memory irruptions (c. 1995 – c. 2005) clearly were not a manifestation of European millennial reckoning in a *fin de siècle* memory landscape. The revival of colonial memory in the 1990s may be explained by the coming together of multiple contemporary pressures, and tragic legacies of imperialism or neo-imperialist acts might have spurred the phenomenal comeback of empire, too. However, of immediate and paramount importance seemed to have been trigger events in particularly explosive and distinct national contexts. Contributors did not draw on the shared historical context that allegedly prompted reassessments of empire in ex-metropoles by the 1990s.

Quasi-simultaneous post-imperial memory irruptions in Northwest Europe around the turn of the century were largely disconnected and happened in near-complete isolation, without significant cross-border inspiration, participation or transnational spill-over. They were national, self-centred affairs really, which took place in domestic public spheres and were shaped by particular commemorative moments that occurred in each country.

Post-imperial memory irruptions were perceived by contemporaries as something momentous and extraordinary, which had happened never or only once or twice since the end of empire. Besides as something out of the ordinary, they felt the stakes were high. Memory irruptions were essentially attempts to (re)negotiate the moral reprehensibility of imperial violence and to (re)assess the process of working through. That said, they did not produce a societal consensus about (how to deal with) the past that changed the political dial, and cannot realistically be seen as transformative social projects. A substantial proportion of different constituencies – most notably veterans, the political establishment of the time and their successors, as well as right-wing political parties (and their electorates) and -media – still did not think they had anything to apologise for or were not willing to issue an apology for pragmatic reasons.

Instead, these episodic and time-limited media events can best be understood as expressions of social memory, as sites of contestation for (oftentimes self-interested) carrier groups that engaged in what Alexander called a "trauma process", seeking to construct and reproduce cultural trauma through performative speech acts, while others actively sought to avoid doing so.[1] Participants opportunistically drew superficial and moralising comparisons to other empires (which made for some kind of 'imagined connectivity'), the other warring party and another 'dark' past (the Second World War and the Holocaust) in order to rigidly argue their

[1] J. Alexander, *Trauma. A Social Theory* (Cambridge, 2012), p. 11.

case or to advance sectional interest. Moral comparisons were instrumentalised towards opposite ends, in both exculpatory and incriminating ways, and, in the Dutch and French cases, sharpened existing memory divisions more than they contributed to a consensual reading of the past and of the process of sorting it out.

Thus, post-imperial memory irruptions in the region were not a *European* story of *working through* but largely *nation*-centric *controversies* characterised by moral comparisons and moral relativism. Whereas post-war Europeanness is defined by signing up for complicity in the Holocaust – as Tony Judt's well-known thesis suggests – recognising the atrocities of empire clearly was not part of being European around the turn of the millennium.[2]

[2] T. Judt, 'Epilogue. From the House of the Dead: An Essay on Modern European Memory', in *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York, 2005), pp. 803-831.

To my children Rahel and Isaak,
who journeyed with me through every page
from the warmth of the womb

Acknowledgements

I am profoundly grateful to my supervisors Robert Gildea and James McDougall for their invaluable guidance and unwavering support throughout a project that unfolded over a much longer timeline than they likely anticipated – delayed by a global pandemic and closed archives, and by the arrival of two children and a year and a half of maternity leave.

This research was generously funded by the *Ernst Ludwig Ehrlich Studienwerk* (ELES) and *Stichting dr. Hendrik Muller's Vaderlandsch Fonds*, and I warmly thank the many archivists who welcomed and assisted me during the countless hours spent among their collections.

I am deeply thankful to Wim van Meurs, mentor from my *alma mater*, who has always believed in me; to my Oxford friends, with whom this journey first began; and to the friends I have known for a lifetime and who continually gave me the confidence that I was on the right path – especially in moments when I felt otherwise.

My heartfelt thanks go to everyone who took care of my children and made space for me to work.

Most of all, I thank my husband Max, who supported me in every imaginable way – with immeasurable patience, a grounded spirit, and the kindest heart.

Contents

Short Abstract		*ii*
Long Abstract		*iii*
Acknowledgements		*xi*
List of Abbreviations		*xv*
Introduction		1
I.	The Dutch semicentenary debate (1994-1995)	30
	Suharto's invitation (April 1994): Indonesian clemency	35
	Graa Boomsma's trial (May 1994 – January 1995): the Nazi analogy	43
	Van Liempt's 'A Kind Word for War' (May 1994): international disapproval of 'Police Actions'	51
	The visa (re)application of Poncke Princen (December 1994): the mobilisation of veterans	56
	Deetman's proposal for a political debate (January 1995): a typically Dutch debate	61
	Disagreement over apologies: the Declaration of the Council of Churches (January 1995) & Letter of Dutch Roman Catholic Bishops (July 1995)	66
	Investigations into excessive violence: reprint of the 1969 Memorandum on Excesses (February 1995) & TV documentary The Excesses of Rawagedeh (15 August 1995)	72
	Commemorating 1940-1945: the double anniversary year & Beatrix's address to the Knesset (28 March 1995)	76
	Historians at the palace (May 1995): decolonisation in comparison	79
	Veterans on TV (August 1995): Republican excesses	84

Beatrix's speech in Jakarta (21 August 1995): directed at her divided home audience 90

Conclusion 96

II. The French Torture Debate (2000-2002) 101

Papon's double trial (October 1997- April 1998) & the official recognition of 1954-1962 as a 'war' (October 1999) 107

President Bouteflika in the *Assemblée Nationale* (June 2000): a reminder of colonial guilt 111

Manifesto of *Les Douze* (October 2000, May 2001): the Gestapo comparison 118

Paul Aussaresses' testimony (November 2000, May 2001): an apology for torture 125

Raphaëlle Branche's book (January 2001): the scale, origin and purpose of French torture 134

Opinion polls (November 2000, May 2001): divided opinion 139

Round table discussion with *Le Monde Diplomatique* (May 2001): widening the lens? 144

Fortieth anniversary of the 1961 Paris massacre (October 2001): a condemnation of colonial violence in the heart of France? 149

First state visit of the French President to Algeria since 1989 (December 2001): brushing things under the carpet 153

Fortieth anniversary of the 1962 Evian Agreement (18 March 2002): the commemoration of the end of the Algerian War 157

Conclusion 161

III. The German centenary debate (2004) 166

The Herero lawsuit (September 2001): no different from victims of Nazi Germany 173

Seyfried's novel (February 2003): late start, early exit 180

The Blue Book reprinted (May 2003): the myth of the superior coloniser 185

Waterbergfeier prohibited (August 2003): settlers' provocative commemoration and 'historical lies' 195

Historikerstreit 2.0: 'From Windhoek to Auschwitz' 202

Resisting apology: pre-visits to Africa (October 2003, January 2004) & Namibia Resolution (June 2004) 214

'Death in the desert' (12 August 2004): Herero and German memorialisation 220

Wieczorek-Zeul's unexpected apology (14 August 2004): persistent concerns about compensation payments 224

Conclusion 229

Conclusion 237

Bibliography 253

Primary sources 253

Chapter I. 253
Chapter II. 267
Chapter III. 280

Secondary sources 296

List of Abbreviations

AD	Algemeen Dagblad
Asaf	Association de soutien à l'armée française
AVRO	Algemene Vereniging Radio Omroep
BR	Bayerischer Rundfunk
BVA	Brulé-Ville Associé
CDA	Christen-Democratisch Appèl
CDU	Christlich Demokratische Union
CRIF	Conseil Représentatif des Institutions Juives de France
CSA	Conseil Sondages Analyses
CSU	Christlich-Soziale Union
D66	Democraten 66
DDR	Deutsche Demokratische Republik
DEI	Dutch East-Indies
DL	Démocratie libérale
DOP	Dispositif Opérationnel de Protection
DRA	Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv
DW	Deutsche Welle
EO	Evangelische Omroep
FAZ	Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung
FDP	Freie Demokratische Partei
FLN	Front de Libération Nationale
FLNC	Front de Libération Nationale de la Cabylie
FN	Front National
FNACA	Fédération Nationale des Anciens Combattants en Algérie, Maroc et Tunisie
GIA	Groupe Islamique Armé
GSWA	German South West Africa
HR	Hessischer Rundfunk
IIAS	International Institute for Asian Studies
IKON	Interkerkelijke Omroep Nederland
INA	Institut National de l'Audiovisuel

KNIL	Koninklijk Nederlands-Indisch Leger
KRO	Katholieke Radio Omroep
MDR	Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk
MNR	Mouvement National Républicain
MRAP	Mouvement contre le Racisme et pour l'amitié entre les Peuples
NBC	Namibian Broadcasting Corporation
NCRV	Nederlandse Christelijke Radio Vereniging
NDR	Norddeutscher Rundfunk
NIPO	Nederlandsch Instituut voor Publieke Opinie
NOS	Nederlandse Omroep Stichting
NPS	Nederlandse Programma Stichting
NRC	Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant
NSB	Nationaal-Socialistische Beweging
NSDAP	Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei
NTR	Nederlandse Televisie en Radiovereniging
NUDO	National Unity Democratic Organisation
OAS	Organisation Armée Secrète
PCF	Parti Communiste Français
PRG	Parti Radical de Gauche
PS	Parti Socialiste
PvdA	Partij van de Arbeit
RB	Radio Bremen
RBB	Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg
RPR	Rassemblement pour la République
RTL	Radio Télévision Luxembourg
SGP/FO	Syndicat general de la Police-Force Ouvrière
SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands
SS	Schutzstaffel
SWAPO	South-West Africa People's Organisation
SWR	Südwestrundfunk
SZ	Die Süddeutsche Zeitung
TAZ	Die Tageszeitung
TELEAC	Televisie Academie

UDF	L'Union pour la démocratie française
VARA	Vereniging van Arbeiders Radio Amateurs
VOMI	Vereniging Oud-Militairen Indiëgangers
VPRO	Vrijzinnige Protestantse Radio Omroep
VOO	Veronica Omroep Organisatie
VVD	Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie
WDR	Westdeutscher Rundfunk

Introduction

This thesis explores the fortunes of a reckoning with the colonial past in three former European metropoles at the turn of the millennium. It investigates 'memory irruptions': extraordinary, vibrant episodes during which the nation's burdensome past was debated vehemently in the public sphere.[3] It is about public memory, 'perpetrator trauma' and the existence and efficacy of the process of *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung,* or coming to terms with the past. Finally, this study examines 'multidirectional memory' by looking at what happened when memories of European imperialism and the Holocaust stumbled upon each other in the public arena.[4]

Every so often since the end of empire the imperial past has been feverishly discussed in former European metropoles. In the late 1960s there were some public debates about empire in Northwest Europe – for example in Germany (1966/67), Great Britain (1968) and the Netherlands (1969). These early, 'first generation' of post-imperial memory irruptions were provoked by the coming together of, amongst others: substantial immigration from (former) colonies; generational change and -protest against 'neo-colonial' political violence and violent interventions that could be read in colonial terms (most notably the Vietnam War), and which discredited European colonialism at large; late, global decolonisation; the rise of the Third World movement and public interest in campaigns for national independence in the Third World.[5]

It was then not until the mid-1990s that post-imperial memory irruptions made a phenomenal comeback. During the long turn of the millennium (c.1995 - c.2005), a 'second generation' of heated public debates on empire happened all throughout Northwest Europe. Early on, in 1994, the Dutch took an exceptional interest in their imperial history in the face of the upcoming 50th anniversary of the Indonesian declaration of independence (1995). The commemoration year triggered a fierce public debate about the violent decolonisation war the Netherlands had waged

[3] Notion coined by Alexander Wilde in: 'Irruptions of Memory: Expressive Politics in Chile's Transition to Democracy', *Journal of Latin American Studies,* 31/2 (1999), pp. 473–500.
[4] M. Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Oxford, 2009).
[5] B. Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany. Memories of Empire in a Decolonized Nation* (Oxford, 2014), pp. 137-138; P. Bijl, *Emerging Memory. Photographs of Colonial Atrocity in Dutch Cultural Remembrance* (Amsterdam, 2015), pp. 192-193; U. Lindner et al. (eds.), *Hybrid Cultures - Nervous States: Britain and Germany in a (Post)colonial World* (Amsterdam, 2010), pp. xxix-xxx.

in the Dutch East-Indies (1945-1949). Turmoil continued all throughout 1994 and only tailed off in the summer of 1995.

A few years later, in the late 1990s and early 2000s, post-imperial memory irruptions happened in other European countries. Adam Hochschild's exposé of the brutal Belgian colonialism in the Congo (1998) and Ludo de Witte's account of the assassination of Congo's PM Lumumba (1999) provoked so much turmoil in Belgium that the parliament installed a commission of enquiry. This coincided with the sensational double trial (1997-1999) of Maurice Papon, who was tried for the murder of Jewish citizens in Vichy France, but had also been responsible for the massacre of Algerian protestors in Paris (1961); with public outcry in the Netherlands over the disclosure in 1998 of the excessive violence used in the Atjeh War under the command of Hendrik Colijn; and with a controversial exhibition in the National Maritime Museum (1999) that unveiled the evil realities of Britain's slave trade, attracted a record number of visitors and unleashed a vigorous debate on radio, television and in the newspapers. Then, in the year 2000, shocking testimonies about French torture during the Algerian Independence War (1954-1962) provoked a public outcry and a media frenzy in France that would only fade out in the course of 2002.

Subsequently, in and around 2005, vigorous memory debate was triggered in France by the parliamentary act that mandated the teaching of positive aspects of colonial history. This happened concomitantly with fierce public controversy in Belgium (following the exhibition *The Memory of the Congo: The Colonial Era* in the Royal Museum of Central Africa); in the Netherlands (after the PM praised the mentality of the Dutch East Indian Company in parliament); in Great Britain (triggered by Caroline Elkins' *Imperial reckoning: the untold story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya*); and in Germany (where the centenary of the start of the Herero and Nama War (1904-1908) in German Southwest Africa provoked unprecedented media attention). Over the turn of the millennium, Northwest Europe thus saw a '*retour de l'impérial'*, with heated public debates on empire happening in the region quasi-simultaneously.

Status quaestionis

Despite the acceleration of empire memory, with skeletons tumbling from the closet all throughout the region during the long turn of the century, post-imperial memory irruptions have never been studied as a (European) phenomenon. Although they (and their simultaneity) have not been overlooked – due to their very nature, these instances of broad and intense memory contestation have not gone unnoticed –, they have not themselves been the object of

study themselves.[6] There are (national and Europe-wide) studies in which post-imperial memory irruptions feature in passing, but hardly any national studies and no comparative European studies of which they were the primary focus.

In existing literature, post-imperial memory irruptions are usually part of national studies on the long trajectories of remembering empire. Irruptions feature more or less extensively either as illustrations of the conflict-laden nature of empire memory and former imperial powers' struggle of dealing with their pasts; or as heuristic instruments to grasp a now decades-long process, in which heated debates were anomalies or landmarks. In *From Empire to Exile* (2016), for instance, Claire Eldridge cites vigorous memory conflicts to display the "combative character" of empire memory in France.[7] In *A guilty conscience. The painful processing of the Indonesian War of Independence in the Netherlands* (2022) Meindert van der Kaaij discusses episodes of "noise" about the past since 1950 that broke and alternated with long periods of silence.[8] And according to Britta Schilling in *Postcolonial Germany: Memories of Empire in a Decolonized Nation* (2014), as a final example, the 1966/67 debate ended a persistent colonial legend.[9] Rarely in such *longue durée* studies have memory irruptions been discussed under separate subheadings.[10] Even less frequently have they been the subject of scholarly publication themselves – and if at all, then in the years immediately following their occurrence, as a contemporary reflection.[11]

Europe-wide accounts deal with the memory of (the end of) empire, but do not examine its irruptions. Multiple-*n* studies that have appeared on 'post-metropolitan memory' in Europe (and beyond) are typically composed of separate country studies, in which irruptions of empire memory are again treated as incidents in a national context. Although, for instance, Dietmar Rothermund briefly addresses 'memory wars and the surfeit of commemorations', they merely

---

[6] On simultaneity see e.g.: R. Aldrich, 'Remembrances of Empires Past', *Portal: Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies*, 7/1 (2010), pp. 9-10; R. Aldrich, 'Apologies, Restitutions, and Compensation: Making Reparations for Colonialism', in M. Thomas and A. Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Ends of Empire* (Oxford, 2017), pp. 717-718; M. Albrecht, 'German Multiculturalism and Postcolonialism in Comparative perspective', in D. Göttsche and A. Dunker (eds.), *(Post-)Colonialism across Europe. Transcultural History and National Memory* (Bielefeld, 2014), pp. 39-40, 52, 55.

[7] C. Eldridge, *From empire to exile: History and memory within the pied-noir and harki communities, 1962-2012* (Manchester, 2016), p. 239.

[8] Published in English and Dutch. M. van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten: De worsteling met de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog vanaf 1950* (Amsterdam, 2022), p.12.

[9] Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, p. 146.

[10] E.g.: Eldridge, 'Memory wars, 1999-2012', in *From empire to exile*, pp. 239-293; Van der Kaaij, 'Hueting en de storm die volgde', in *Een kwaad geweten*, pp. 129-146; Van der Kaaij, 'Het staatsbezoek aan Indonesië', in *Een kwaad geweten*, pp. 223-242.

[11] E.g.: V. Houben, 'A Torn Soul: The Dutch Public Discussion on the Colonial Past in 1995', *Indonesia*, 63 (1997), pp. 47-66; E. Michels, 'Geschichtspolitik im Fernsehen. Die WDR-Dokumentation "Heia Safari" von 1966/67 über Deutschlands Kolonialvergangenheit', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte,* 56/3 (2008), pp. 467-492.

serve as anchors for the extended memory trajectories in the country chapters of his edited volume *Memories of Post-imperial Nations. The Aftermath of Decolonization, 1945-2013* (2015).[12] In Tom Bentley's collected work *Empires of Remorse* (2015), as a further example, episodes of societal commotion and controversy over the conventional colonial narrative are touched upon in country chapters only as catalysts for the unexpected apologies issued by several European states to their former colonies in the 21st century.[13] Thus, even in European studies in which post-imperial memory irruptions appear, they are not the subject of comparison. No Europe-wide accounts have yet appeared with a thematic chapter dedicated to heated empire debates – let alone one that is entirely about post-imperial memory irruptions.

Considering this, Itay Lotem's recent comparative work *The Memory of Colonialism in Britain and France: The Sins of Silence* (2021), on public empire memory, - debate and memory activism in two former metropoles after the 1960s to the present day, is significant. Even though the author's primary objective is not to understand post-imperial memory irruptions as a European phenomenon, but rather to compare two long genealogies of remembrance, his work demonstrates an unusually high degree of analytical depth and sustained attention to episodes of intense public debate.[14] Elisabeth Buettner's *Europe after Empire. Decolonization, Society, and Culture* (2016) is particularly noteworthy too. As part of the final chapter 'Remembering and forgetting empires', she briefly spotlights "[public] controversies surrounding colonial history", in which "selected episodes from the imperial past [were] subjected to intense bouts of critical reappraisal."[15] Succinctly, in some twenty pages, and based on secondary sources only, Buettner discussed what triggered vigorous debates in Britain, Belgium, the Netherlands and France.[16] Even if these debates were not her primary concern, and although she did not delve into them to examine their dynamics, or scrutinise them through primary sources – all that would be necessary to understand the phenomenon in all its complexity – her work is still the closest thing to a comparative study of post-imperial memory irruptions.

[12] D. Rothermund, *Memories of Post-imperial Nations. The Aftermath of Decolonization, 1945–2013* (Delhi, 2015), e.g. pp. 6-7, 49-50, 62, 71-73, 87.
[13] T. Bentley, *Empires of Remorse: Narrative, postcolonialism and apologies for colonial atrocity* (London, 2015), e.g. pp. 90-91, 114-115.
[14] I. Lotem, *The Memory of Colonialism in Britain and France: The Sins of Silence* (Cham, 2021), e.g. pp. 78-86. See also: I. Lotem, *Dealing with dark pasts. A European history of autocritical memory in global perspective* (Cambridge, 2024), pp. 45-66.
[15] E. Buettner, *Europe after Empire. Decolonization, Society, and Culture* (Cambridge, 2016), pp. 428, 447-448.
[16] Buettner, *Europe after Empire*, pp. 425-447.

There are three explanations for this current state of affairs. First, scholarly work on 'trauma' in the former metropole is still in its infancy. In collective memory studies, 'victim trauma' has taken prominence over 'perpetrator trauma' ever since the mid-1990s, when *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung* loomed large as a field of inquiry. In *Writing History. Writing Trauma* (2014), Dominick LaCapra stresses that perpetrator trauma "must itself be acknowledged and in some sense worked through if perpetrators are to distance themselves from an earlier implication in deadly ideologies and practices."[17] Fifteen years ago, two decades after the 'memory boom', Kiyoteru Tsutsui still concluded: "While there is a growing body of literature on collective trauma of perpetration, this is still an undertheorized area of collective memory studies."[18] Besides, in trauma theory, a subfield of collective memory studies, trauma has been typically discussed concerning the Holocaust. It was only after the memory boom, which coincided with the increasing prominence of post-colonial studies, that scholars no longer discussed trauma only in the context of the Holocaust, but more and more also regarding European imperialism.

Until recently, post-metropolitan memory has not figured prominently in post-colonial studies either. Traditionally, the field critically examines colonies and empires from the past, and their 'remains' in the (neo-colonial) present.[19] Scholars in the discipline set out to investigate how colonial relations (continue to) shape(d) the global world order – in material and non-material ways. Even though *memory* of the colonial past and post-colonial memory politics have been an integral part of postcolonial research, and although it is assumed that colonialism has shaped the *metropole* as much as it did the colonised regions, *memory in the metropole* was not high on the discipline's agenda until well into the new millennium.[20]

In *Memory and Postcolonial Studies: Synergies and New Directions* (2019), Dirk Göttsche observes that a "proper dialogue" between the two fields has only recently taken off.[21] He notes there have been "productive synergies" inside academia – as recent studies on postcolonial memory attest –, but also beyond, in political activism, literature and culture.[22]

[17] D. LaCapra, *Writing History. Writing Trauma* (Baltimore, 2014), p. 79.
[18] K. Tsutsui, 'The Trajectory of Perpetrators' Trauma: Mnemonic Politics around the Asia-Pacific War in Japan', *Social Forces,* 87 (2009), p. 1392; J. Winter, 'The Memory Boom in Contemporary Historical Studies', *Raritan,* 21/1 (2001), pp. 52-66.
[19] P.K. Nayar, *The Postcolonial Studies Dictionary* (Chichester, 2015), p. *x*.
[20] D. Göttsche (ed.), *Memory and Postcolonial Studies: Synergies and New Directions* (Oxford, 2019), p. 1; H. Fischer-Tiné, 'Postcolonial Studies', *European History Online* (3 December 2010), https://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/europe-and-the-world/postcolonial-studies/harald-fischer-tine-postcolonial-studies (22 April 2025).
[21] Göttsche, *Memory and Postcolonial Studies*, p. 4.
[22] *Ibid*., p. 4.

Göttsche mentions, amongst others, "high-profile debates" about the colonial past around the turn of the century in Germany and France.[23] Scholarly research into post-imperial memory irruptions unites academic and non-academic synergies, and arguably is a logical next step.

Secondly, perpetrator trauma in the metropole has, if at all, been studied from a national perspective. Scholars of empire memory did not lead the way on humanities' transnational turn. In the humanities, interest in the transnational and the transcultural has risen exponentially over the past decade – and memory studies were no exception. In the 1980s, Pierre Nora's *Lieux de mémoire* brought the first phase of the discipline's founding father and protagonists to an end and heralded a new era. This second phase centred around national remembrance.[24] Since about a decade ago, we seem to be witnessing what some, such as Aleida Assmann and Nelly Bekus, thought of as a 'transnational turn', and what others, for instance Lucy Bond, Jessica Rapson and Astrid Erll, labelled the 'transcultural turn'.[25] Rosanne Kennedy and Maria Nugent saw a new field of scholarship emerging within memory studies: "the study of how memory travels *across borders of all sorts*."[26] Erll wondered if memory studies would enter a third phase, which would mean "moving away from site-bound, nation-bound (…) research" and "would then imply a specific curiosity and attentiveness to the border-transcending dimensions of remembering and forgetting."[27]

Scholars of empire memory, however, have not been in the forefront of these developments. It seems to be the observation that there is no such thing as transnational empire memory – comparable to a global Holocaust memory – which has dampened their interest in exploring transnationalism. In *Colonialism and Decolonization in National Historical Cultures and Memory Politics in Europe* (2015) Karel van Nieuwenhuyse and Idesbald Goddeeris concluded that the potential of Europe's collective imperial venture to become an integral part of a European memory culture has not yet been fulfilled.[28] Dietmar Rothermund, in *Memories*

[23] *Ibid*., pp. 6-7.
[24] G. Feindt et al., 'Entangled memory: toward a third wave in memory studies', *History and Theory*, 53 (2014), pp. 24-44.
[25] N. Bekus, 'Agency of international transnationalism in social memory', *The British Journal of Sociology,* 0/0 (2018), pp. 3. A. Assmann, 'Transnational Memories', *European Review*, 22/4 (2014), pp. 546-556; L. Bond and J. Rapson (eds.), *The Transcultural Turn. Interrogating Memory Between and Beyond Borders* (Berlin, 2014); A. Erll, 'Travelling Memory', *Parallax,* 17/4 (2011), pp. 4-18.
[26] R. Kennedy and M. Nugent, 'Scales of Memory: Reflections on an Emerging Concept', *Australian Humanities Review*, 59 (2016), p. 63.
[27] Erll, 'Travelling Memory', p. 15.
[28] K. van Nieuwenhuyse and I. Goddeeris, 'Postkoloniale Erinnerungskulturen in Europa. Eine fragmentierte, geteilte und national gebundene Erinnerungslandschaft: Zur Einführung', in U. Fenske et al. (eds.), *Kolonialismus und Dekolonisation in nationale Geschichtskulturen und Erinnerungspolitiken in Europa: Module für den Geschichtsunterricht* (Frankfurt am Main, 2015), pp. 215-218.

of Post-imperial Nations. The Aftermath of Decolonization, 1945–2013 (2015), explained how "(t)he European Union did offer a new perspective for post-imperial nations, but their memories were still affected to a large extent by their national past."[29] He too concluded that "(t)hese memories have a distinctly national framework" and "recent debates on the imperial past (…) have not had a transnational impact as yet."[30] These observations may be accurate, but are problematic nevertheless. The conception of transnationality as a *product* (i.e. transnational empire memory) is limited as it neglects the possibility of transnationality as a *process* (of 'working through' empire). Moreover, the focus on the present state of affairs disregards the turn of the millennium as a possible transnational *moment*.

Thirdly and finally, the fact that post-imperial memory irruptions have been employed as a heuristic instrument rather than studied as a phenomenon, underlies a particular understanding of collective memory, trauma and *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung*.[31] If collective memory is perceived as something that is continuously present, certain events as inherently traumatic and working through as something happening also beneath the surface, post-imperial memory irruptions are merely a very visible manifestation of intangible things like memory and trauma, and a convenient tool with which to study the otherwise elusive process of coming to terms.[32] These assumptions offer little impetus for investigating the phenomenon in its own right. If, however, public memory is understood as performative, and as "a site of contestation for a wide range of different interest groups", and trauma as something cultural – which, according to Jeffrey Alexander, is constructed and reproduced in performative speech acts by self-interested 'carrier groups' whose narratives resonate with the wider public – post-imperial

[29] Rothermund, *Memories of Post-imperial Nations*, p. 4.
[30] Rothermund, *Memories of Post-imperial Nations*, p. 4; D. Rothermund, 'The Self-consciousness of Post-imperial Nations. A Cross-national Comparison', *India Quarterly,* 67/1 (2011), p. 16.
[31] The term '*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*' was coined in the 1950s by historian Hermann Heimpel and popularised by Bundespräsident Theodor Heuss. Based on the conviction that dealing with the past is an ongoing and not a finite process, the alternative and less problematic concept of '*Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung*', of which Adorno first spoke in 1959, started to gain currency after the mid 1980s. See: J. Vergau, *Aufarbeitung von Vergangenheit vor und nach 1989. Eine Analyse des Umgangs mit den historischen Hypotheken totalitärer Diktaturen in Deutschland* (Marburg, 2000), pp. 17-19. For a semantic discussion see e.g.: M. Sabrow, '"Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung" als Epochenbegriff', *Merkur. Deutsche Zeitschrift für europäisches Denken*, 67/6 (2013), pp. 494–505.
[32] This psychoanalytical approach was decisively shaped by Cathy Caruth. See: C. Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore, 1995); C. Caruth (ed.), *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore, 1996).

memory irruptions are eminently relevant as a subject of research in themselves.[33]

Terminology

This thesis departs from precisely this point and puts the phenomenon centre stage for the first time. The term 'post-imperial memory irruptions' is coined here, and there are things to say about both of its component parts. Better than 'post-colonial', the adjectival qualifier 'post-imperial' signals that memory contestation occurred in the metropole. Colonialism is often considered imperialism (attitudes and practices of a metropolitan centre) settled down, in a distant territory.[34] In contrast to colonialism, imperialism has always operated from the centre – where heated debates about empire now flared up.[35]

The second part of the term borrows from Latin America scholar Alexander Wilde. He used 'irruptions of memory' to describe *Expressive Politics in Chile's Transition to Democracy* (1999), describing them as "charged" public events that "[suddenly intrude] into national consciousness", "receive extensive coverage in the media", and during which a country "becomes an arena of deeply divided public discourse, shot through with contending and mutually exclusive collective representations of the past".[36] Then, ten years ago, Nico Wouters used the metaphor of 'memory irruptions' to describe vehement memory contestation in the context of transitional justice after World War II in north-western Europe, during the 'third wave of democracy' in southern Europe, and after the end of the Cold War in eastern Europe. According to him, memory irruptions occurred when a memory incident (which triggers brief but broad political or public contestation outside of the dissident's closed subgroup) "becomes so strong and uncontrollable that it fundamentally damages or ruptures the existing consensus, in the longer run marking the shift towards a new memorial regime."[37]

Twenty years before, in the mid-1990s, Daniel Lindenberg introduced the idea of 'memory wars' to describe how France's memory on critical periods of the 20th century provoked "particularly violent controversies."[38] Postcolonial scholars who wielded the concept – such as Eric Savarese (2007), Benjamin Stora and Thierry Leclère (2008), Pascal Blanchard

[33] C. Weedon and G. Jordan, 'Collective memory: theory and politics', *Social Semiotics*, 22/2 (2012), p. 144; J. Olick, *In the House of the Hangman. The Agonies of German Defeat, 1943-1949* (London, 2005), p. 20; J. Alexander, *Trauma. A Social Theory* (Cambridge, 2012), pp. 4, 26, 28.
[34] E. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London, 1993), p. 8.
[35] R. Young, *Empire, Colony, Postcolony* (Chichester, 2015), p. 54.
[36] Wilde, 'Irruptions of Memory', p. 475.
[37] N. Wouters (ed.), *Transitional Justice and Memory in Europe (1945-2013)* (Cambridge, 2014), p. 386.
[38] D. Lindenberg, 'Guerres de mémoire en France', *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'Histoire,* 42/1 (1994), pp. 78.

and Isabelle Veyrat-Masson (2010) – did so to describe the divisive effect of competing memory discourses in a fractured post-imperial France.[39] Doing so, they arguably "run the risk of affording it a potentially dangerous credibility."[40] In *Rethinking France's "memory wars": Harki and Pied-Noir collective memories in Fifth Republic France* (2015) Laura Jeanne Sims compellingly argues that Lindenberg's war metaphor falsely implies the existence of monolithic rival camps and the reproduction of players and positions of the Algerian War in the present; and proves the concept to be counterproductive as it evokes "a zero-sum game of irreconcilable memories."[41] Wilde's and Wouters' concept of memory irruptions is a welcome, less charged alternative to Lindenberg's well-established, yet ill-defined and arguably counterproductive paradigm in theorising memory contestation.

Research questions

The apparent co-incidence of memory irruptions in Northwest Europe around the turn of the millennium raises two sets of questions, about simultaneity and connectivity. Why did they happen at the same time, and were they connected? The first set of questions pertains to what happened that prompted the reassessment of empire in the region in the late 1990s. Could the revival of colonial memory in the 1990s be explained by 'real events', such as the crises of Marxism and *tiers-mondisme*, the rise of Asia and fall of Africa in the 1990s, crises and tragedies in former colonies, tragic legacies of imperialism (e.g. the Rwanda genocide in 1994) or neo-imperialist acts (e.g. the War on Terror), new migration from former colonies and heightened visibility of colonial immigrants?[42]

Or did cultural and 'imagined' factors, such as anniversaries of (the ends of) empire, or a millennial reckoning spur the *retour de l'impérial* and explain the concurrent resurgence of memory (too)?[43] According to some, all this supposedly happened in a *fin de siècle* memory

[39] J. Sims, *Rethinking France's "memory wars": Harki and Pied-Noir Collective Memories in Fifth Republic France* (PhD thesis, University of North Carolina, 2015), p. 33. See: E. Savarese, *Algérie: La guerre des mémoires* (Paris, 2007); B. Stora and T. Leclère, *La Guerre des Mémoires: La France face à son passé colonial* (Paris, 2008); P. Blanchard and I. Veyrat-Masson, *Les guerres de mémoires: La France et son histoire* (Paris, 2010).
[40] M. Stevens, 'Visibility, equality, difference: drawing the battle lines in France's "memory wars"', *Journal of Romance Studies,* 9/3 (2009), p. 104.
[41] Sims, *'Rethinking France's "memory wars"'*, pp. iv., 34-35; G. Hirschberger, 'Collective Trauma and the Social Construction of Meaning', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9 (2018), pp. 1-14.
[42] E.g.: R. Aldrich, 'Coming to Terms with the Colonial Past: The French and Others', *Arts: the Proceedings of the Sydney University Arts Association,* 28 (2006), pp. 95-96; R. Gildea, *Empires of the Mind. The Colonial Past and the Politics of the Present* (Cambridge, 2019), p. 9.
[43] Several milestone anniversaries took place around the long turn of the century, among them: the 50th anniversary of the proclamation of Indonesian independence (1995); the 40th anniversary of the end of the Algerian War (2002); and the centenary of the outbreak of the Herero and Nama War (2004).

landscape, which in at least parts of post-imperial societies would have created a sense of urgency and opportunity for self-critical views of nations' imperial pasts. Gert Oostindie, for instance, notes that as regards transatlantic slave trade Western European countries were "weighing up, and not infrequently condemning events that had earlier been glorified or glossed over in deliberate omission" in "a *fin-de-siècle* mood". Even if governments often did not proceed to apologise, he sees how "much they would have liked to express regret – perhaps in a *fin de millénaire* spirit (…)".[44] There appeared to be an end-of-century interest in weighing up the past, a mood of millennial reckoning. Can the quasi-simultaneous commemoration of violent colonial wars in post-colonial Europe also (partially) be explained in this manner?

A second set of (related) questions concerns connectivity. Were quasi-simultaneous post-imperial memory irruptions connected or disconnected? Did they happen in isolation, without any cross-border inspiration or transnational spill-over? Or were they somehow linked, and was there cross-fertilisation going in one way or another? Rothermund – one of the few who explicitly addresses the matter – rejects transnationality altogether, observing that former metropoles "know very little about their respective experiences" and "(p)ublic debates on the consequences of the colonial past are hardly taken note of even in neighbouring countries."[45] Since he does not delve into these debates in any depth, and his claims are not supported by thorough source-based research, they warrant further examination. Were participants indeed unaware of memory irruptions happening in other former Northwest European imperial powers and/or of their imperial records? Besides, even if Rothermund's claims hold and post-imperial memory irruptions did not happen in chain reaction, the question remains whether these heated debates around the turn of the millennium might have been connected in other ways – through people and ideas. Did memory entrepreneurs from other former metropoles participate in

[44] Oostindie cites the Dutch establishment at the turn of the millennium as an example, which "engaged with a certain eagerness to the challenge to 'do good', to speak out against moral flaws of the nation in a distant past, to present conciliatory gestures." See: G. Oostindie, *Facing up to the past: Perspectives on the Commemoration of Slavery from Africa, the Americas and Europe* (Kingston, 2001), pp. 9, 10. Italics not in the original quotes; G. Oostindie, 'History brought home: Postcolonial migrations and the Dutch rediscovery of slavery', in U. Bosma (ed.), *Post-Colonial Immigrants and Identity Formations in the Netherlands* (Amsterdam, 2012), p. 162. Elizabeth Kowaleski Wallace, as a further example, gave the introduction to her book *The British slave trade and public memory* the subtitle 'millennial reckonings'. She describes how the 2000 Parekh Report – a voluminous expert report about multi-ethnic Britain that was perceived as an attack on the concept of British identity – was "a millennial document with a specific agenda", namely to reshape Britain as "an outward-looking, generous, inclusive society". According to the report's framers, it was "a coincidence but symbolically apt" that it was published at the start of the new millennium. Wallace also observes the trend of the publication of novels on slavery in Britain in the last decade of the 20th century, which testify to an "end-of-the-century interest in "telling the untold story" of Britain's slave trade." See: *The Parekh Report* (2000), p. 3, quoted in: E. Kowaleski Wallace, *The British Slave Trade and Public Memory* (Chichester, 2006), pp. 3, 17.

[45] Rothermund, 'The Self-consciousness of Post-imperial Nations', p. 2.

debates abroad? And was there a shared historical context that actors instrumentalised, with post-imperial memory irruptions serving as a vehicle to address contemporary issues in Northwest Europe?

Naturally, this study is concerned not only with the *occurrence* of the phenomenon and its *transnational* dimensions but also with its *manifestation(s)* as it took shape within distinct *national* contexts throughout the region. For one thing, the question arises as to what post-imperial memory irruptions in turn-of-the-century Northwest Europe were really about. What endeavours were participants involved in – intentionally or unintentionally? Were contemporaries 'working through' the past and were these heated public debates about empire attempts at coming to terms with it? In other words, how far were post-imperial memory irruptions in the region around the turn of the millennium a European tale of millennial reckoning? For another, the phenomenon's expression across different national contexts gives rise to questions of similarity and difference. Which recurring features, typical trajectories and common characteristics marked such debates? And how and why did post-imperial memory irruptions in Northwest Europe play out differently?

This thesis seeks to understand the phenomenon in its international memory context. It asks how post-imperial memory irruptions around the turn of the millennium fit into the contemporary memory landscape of a global(ising) Holocaust memory. Stef Craps finds that, due to the traditional national focus of memory studies, too little research has been done on the interrelatedness of Holocaust- and postcolonial memory.[46] Most scholars point to the uniqueness of the Holocaust and employ the notions of 'competitive memory' and 'memory hierarchy' to explain the overriding presence of the Holocaust memory in the collective consciousness to the detriment of empire memory. They deem the capacity to remember traumatic events limited, and conceive of the public sphere as equally limited.[47] A few pioneering studies, most importantly Michael Rothberg's paradigm-shifting *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (2009), challenge the basic assumptions of such mainstream competitive thinking and demonstrate how the memory of different pasts are entangled and overlapping. Rothberg, theorising memory in a transnational age, considers memory to be multidirectional – with dynamic transfers, ongoing negotiations

[46] S. Craps, *Postcolonial Witnessing. Trauma out of Bounds* (Houndmills, 2013), p. 80.
[47] *Ibid*.; Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, p. 3.

and cross-referencing between traumatic historical events.[48] The present thesis, then, could have had the reversed subtitle *Remembering Empire in the Age of global(ising) Holocaust memory.* It looks at how memories of European imperialism and the Holocaust stumbled upon each other in the public arena, when empire memory irrupted. What does the new laboratory of post-imperial memory irruptions teach us about multidirectional memory?

A comparative approach

This research does not seek to discover previously overlooked post-imperial memory irruptions: as previously mentioned, they stand out because of the broadness and intensity of the memory contestation. It examines moments identified as particularly intense, broad memory contestation, and it does so in a comparative perspective. In *The Empire Writes Back* (1989), one of the field's defining publications, Ashcroft et al. point at international Postcolonial Studies' "inherently comparative methodology".[49] Yet comparative postcolonial studies only really took off about a decade ago and have since borne fruit. Dirk Göttsche and Axel Dunker's edited volume *(Post-)Colonialism across Europe. Transcultural History and National Memory* (2014) is a case in point. Comparisons of socio-political conditions in former European metropoles in the first part of their volume (about postcolonial immigration and multiculturalism) are insightful indeed, and these important comparative insights will partially explain why post-imperial memory irruptions have played out differently. Göttsche and Dunker rightly stress the discipline's "intrinsic need for comparative study" and argue that the development of comparative Postcolonial Studies is essential for gaining a better understanding of the interconnectedness and distinctiveness of European (post)colonialism(s).[50]

This thesis dissects irruptions in the Netherlands (1994-1995), France (2000-2002) and Germany (2004). Decisive in the case-study country selection was the wish to contribute to moving beyond the traditional focus in post-colonial studies. Göttsche and Dunker criticised "the established canon of Anglophone and Francophone postcolonial theory and research".[51] They convincingly argued for comparative inquiry "between European colonialisms beyond the Anglophone and Francophone universes" and for "the development of postcolonial theory

[48] Craps, *Postcolonial Witnessing*, p. 80.
[49] B. Ashcroft, G. Griffiths and H. Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back. Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London, 1989), p. 36.
[50] Göttsche and Dunker, *(Post-)Colonialism across Europe*, pp. 7-8, 12-14.
[51] *Ibid*., p. 7.

that avoids Anglocentricism along with language-specific methodology and terminology."[52] Their edited collection of case-studies encompasses highly interesting "countries that have often remained at the margins of international Postcolonial Studies", amongst others the Netherlands and Germany, along with traditional cases, such as France.[53] Since Göttsche's and Dunker's critique, edited volumes on post-metropolitan memory have increasingly incorporated also less commonly examined country studies, but Anglo- and Francocentrism remains deeply ingrained, still serving as the default comparison.[54]

The present thesis' selection of case studies is particularly compelling because it offers a rich comparative framework. The cases reflect markedly different histories of colonial violence – with the excessively violent wars waged by the Dutch (1945-1949) and French (1954-1962) to prevent respectively Indonesian and Algerian independence standing in stark contrast to the much earlier German genocide against the Herero and Nama (1904-1908) in what is now Namibia. Moreover, each case study country assumed a distinct role during the Second World War and maintains a unique relationship to the Holocaust and its postwar reckoning – further diversifying the analytical landscape and particularly interesting in light of multidirectional memory.[55]

This study adds a further comparative dimension, introduced by actors in the debates themselves. The case studies are approached comparatively, while also being attentive to how participants employed comparison in constructing their arguments. Comparative statements produced by contributors often worked at the level of comparison to other imperial powers, to the nation's Second World War past, and between different forms of violence enacted by insurgents and counterinsurgents. As will be shown, the act of comparing "evils" frequently formed part of the structure of the debate within each national context.

[52] *Ibid*., pp. 8, 15.
[53] *Ibid*., pp. 8-9.
[54] See e.g. Lotem, *The Memory of Colonialism in Britain and France*; Gildea, *Empires of the Mind.*
[55] Belgium was not included as a case study, as its public sphere is uniquely divided between the Flemish- and Frenchspeaking communities, introducing a bifurcated dynamic that would, in effect, require two distinct case studies in one.

Primary sources

This study approaches post-imperial memory irruptions as a media(ted) phenomenon. This approach builds on scholarship in media and memory studies that conceptualises collective memory as an "inherently mediated phenomenon" and stresses mass media's pivotal role in shaping contemporary collective memories.[56] In *On Media Memory* (2011) Neiger et al. explain that the existence of collective memory is contingent upon public articulation, which is why many memory studies concentrate on the media. Maurice Halbwachs, 'founding father' of contemporary memory studies, argued that collective memory is a process in which the past is reinterpreted to align with current beliefs and emotional needs of society, and scholars following in his footsteps stressed the ongoing societal struggle it involves, with interpreters competing to assert their representations of the past in the public domain. Neiger et al. point out mass media's dual role in shaping collective memory: they are modern societies' most prominent site for such reinterpretation on the one hand, and "authoritative social storytellers of the past" on the other.[57]

Having established media sources as the primary sources for the mediated phenomenon under study, the question arises which media should be prioritised. This research centres on traditional media. Around the turn of the century, television, radio and newspapers demarcated the public sphere. Large segments of the European population consumed news via TV (87% in 2000), radio (58%) and newspapers (59%) daily or several times a week (see also *Figure 1*).[58] An analysis of these media identifies the irruptions examined in this study, displaying pronounced surges of media attention to the nation's imperial past (see *Graph 1*, *Graph 2* and *Graph 3*).

Furthermore, national press and broadcasters are prioritised over regional ones. National media constitute an obvious choice of sources, as the study concerns public memory of the nation's empire past. Memory contestation was played out principally in the public sphere through national media rather than through regional ones, which in turn report more locally-focused events and spaces (conferences, exhibitions, civil society initiatives).

[56] M. Neiger, O. Meyers and E. Zandberg (eds.), 'Editors' Introduction' in idem, *On Media Memory: Collective Memory in a New Media Age* (Hampshire, 2011), p. 3.
[57] *Ibid*., p. 7; also pp. 3-7, 10, 13.
[58] For news consumption through different media in 1995, 2000 and 2005 see: *Eurobarometer 43.1* (April - May 1995), questions 41-43; *Eurobarometer 53* (April - May 2000), questions 5.3 a-c; *Eurobarometer 63.4* (May - June 2005), question Q.A17.

Two major developments in the media context, one shortly before and one during the period of this thesis, were taken into account in the process of source selection. A major transformation in the European media landscape occurring from the 1980s through the early 1990s was the commercialisation of radio and television. Public broadcasting services lost their monopoly, and in all European countries a pluralistic system emerged in which commercial and public broadcasters coexisted.[59] Even though market forces became central, including for the remaining public broadcasters that were compelled to compete for audience share, a basic distinction characterised the new system: whereas public broadcasting journalism typically was more informational and placed greater emphasis on matters of public and social concern, commercial broadcast journalism was entertainment-driven and adopted a more sensationalist style.[60] Given that around the turn of the millennium, the colonial past was, indeed, taken up mainly by public broadcasters, this study almost exclusively draws on sources from public broadcasting organisations. The newspaper material used is, however, of commercial origin, as the European press was commercialised already in the 19th century.

Then, the internet spread from the mid-1990s onwards, coinciding with the period of this thesis. In all three case studies, the long turn of the millennium marked a phase of digital acceleration, with internet use and online reporting expanding rapidly, yet in each case, the internet and online media had not yet assumed a meaningful role in public debate. The Dutch 1995 irruption occurred on the eve of this period of rapid development. Although conventional media (such as broadcaster VPRO in 1994 and newspapers NRC and De Telegraaf in 1995) took their first steps online in the mid-1990s, online media were still in their infancy.[61] Internet usage stood at a modest 6% a few years later in 1997, rising to 25% only in 2000.[62] The French 2000-2002 debate coincided precisely with the beginning of the digital age in the country. At the start of the debate, internet usage was only 15%, but in 2001, it had already increased to 27%.[63] The website of the newspaper Le Monde, a notable example, which had merely reposted print articles since 1995, began to operate with a certain degree of autonomy, producing some

[59] V. Grassmuck and B. Thomass, 'The Media in Northwestern Europe in the Last Three Decades', in S. Papathanassopoulos, and A. Miconi (eds.), *The Media Systems in Europe: Continuities and Discontinuities* (Cham, 2023), pp. 73-78.
[60] D. Hallin and P. Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics* (Cambridge, 2004), pp. 252, 277, 280. See also: P. Bakker and O. Scholten, *Communicatiekaart van Nederland* (Houten, 1997), p. 75; W. Schrag, *Medienlandschaft Deutschland* (Munich, 2006), pp. 95-96.
[61] C. van der Heijden, '25 jaar digitale transitie in de journalistiek 4: eerste zelfstandige stappen, vol twijfel', *journalismlab, https://www.journalismlab.nl/en/25-jaar-digitale-transitie-in-de-journalistiek-4-eerste-zelfstandige-stappen-vol-twijfel/* (19 March 2019).
[62] C. David, 'Information Society Statistics. PCs, Internet and mobile phone usage in the EU', *Statistics in focus,* 15/2003 (2003), p. 4. See also Bakker and Scholten, *Communicatiekaart van Nederland*, p. 177.
[63] David, 'Information Society Statistics', p. 4.

of its own original reporting and in 2000, for the first time, published an exclusive scoop online.[64] Nevertheless, the French turning point was only reached in 2005, with the vote on the European Constitutional Treaty, when more than half of the population (52%) used the internet, which began, for the first time, to function as a platform for civic engagement and public debate.[65] By the time of the German centenary debate in 2004, the internet was already widespread. At this point, 55% of the German population was online.[66] However, data indicate that the internet still was not a place of participation (only 16% used its interactive possibilities) but of information consumption. In the centenary year, two-thirds of internet users made use of it only "occasionally as a source of information".[67] Given that the online public sphere had not (fully) materialised in any of the three case studies, this research turns its focus to offline media.[68]

Having carefully selected media – traditional or new, commercial or public, regional or national –, each of the three case-studies is analysed using a very substantial number of newspaper articles (an overall total of 751) with nationwide circulation, and radio- and television broadcasts (an overall total of 483) by public broadcasters. Due to the scope of the project, no other primary sources were systematically included, aside from occasional references to opinion polls or parliamentary documents. The analysis focuses on media sources and, consequently, on the mediated representation of the debate.

This carries methodological implications for the handling of these sources, and for the selection of media outlets and formats. Media are treated as historical actors of a partisan nature, whose articulations are shaped by institutional structures, editorial practices, funding

[64] F. Lazare, 'Le Monde Moves a Big Story to Its Web Site', *Nieman Reports*, 54/4 (2000), pp. 76-77.
[65] K. Koc-Michalska and T. Vedel, *Mapping Digital Media: France* (Open Society Foundations, 17 February 2013), p. 16; 'En 2005, le débat public sur le traité constitutionnel européen a été bouleversé par Internet', *Le Monde* (28 May 2025); EUobserver, 'Internet was strong forum for French 'no' vote' (24 August 2005), https://euobserver.com/eu-political/19717. In its annual report *L'Année Internet* (2005), media audience research institute Médiamétrie wrote about "France de l'après 50%". For Médiamétrie, 2005 was the year of Web 2.0 — the year when the web stopped being just an online copy of the "traditional" world, but when new communicative, collective and relational forms of use took hold. See: 'Internet: la seconde révolution française a eu lieu en 2005', *La Tribune* (18 March 2006), https://www.latribune.fr/archives/2006/sectoriel/IDCD9F9E0CE70B5B6FC125713400290E96/internet-la-seconde-revolution-francaise-a-eu-lieu-en-2005.html
[66] B. van Eimeren, H. Gerhard, B. Frees, 'Internetverbreitung in Deutschland: Potenzial vorerst ausgeschöpft? ARD/ZDF-Online-Studie 2004', *Media Perspektiven*, 8 (2004), p. 352.
[67] Van Eimeren et al., 'Internetverbreitung in Deutschland', pp. 355-356.
[68] The second half of the 2000s, Northwestern Europe witnessed a growing centralization of social dialogue on global online communication platforms. See: Grassmuck and Thomass, 'The Media in Northwestern Europe in the Last Three Decades', pp. 22-23. In Eurobarometer surveys, the use of conventional media (radio, television, and newspapers) was monitored since 1970, whereas a standard question regarding internet and social media use was not incorporated until 2010. See: *Eurobarometer 74.2* (November-December 2010), questions 550-554.

models, and audience orientations. The corpus of primary source material for each case-study captures the broad range of opinions held on empire as the collections of sources contain media outlets from across the socio-political spectrum. The contextualisation of media outlets and formats necessitates a solid understanding of the pertinent media systems and landscapes (see also primary sources bibliography).

The Dutch media system operates according to what Daniel Hallin and Paolo Mancini refer to as a democratic corporatist logic. In *Comparing Media Systems* (2004), a seminal work in the field and still the basis for comparative studies today, they differentiate between the North Atlantic or Liberal Model, the North/Central European or Democratic Corporatist Model and the Mediterranean or Polarized Pluralist Model, which vary in four key respects: the structure of the media market, political parallelism, journalistic professionalism and the role of the state.[69] The Democratic Corporatist Model features a well-established mass-circulation press; media that often reflect partisan and broader social divisions while maintaining a high degree of journalistic professionalism; and a regulatory framework that coexists with robust protections for press freedom. Journalists demonstrate a broad consensus regarding professional norms, a firm commitment to serving the public interest, adherence to objective reporting styles, and a clear distinction between editorial commentary and news reporting. After commercialisation, public broadcasting services continued to be treated as a 'res publica' that must be safeguarded by the state. Primarily financed through public funds, they relied only modestly on advertising revenue, and strong press councils moderated market-driven competition.[70]

At the time of the 1994-1995 debate, an overwhelming majority of the Dutch population watched current affairs programmes on television (93%), the radio (72%) and/or read newspapers (82%) at least once a week (see *Figure 1*).[71] Now, how did the Dutch media landscape look in the mid-1990s? The Dutch press system was characterised by a highly concentrated national newspaper market (eight titles, together accounting for 44,2% of domestic circulation in 1995). Four of the five largest national newspapers were published by

[69] For a concise overview see: Hallin and Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems*, pp. 73-75; 251–255.
[70] Hallin and Mancini, 'The North/Central European or Democratic Corporatist Model' in idem, *Comparing Media Systems*, pp. 143-197.
[71] The average weekly time spent reading newspapers in 1995 was 2 hours. In 1994, people listened to the radio for an average of 168 minutes per day and watched TV for an average of 152 minutes per day. See: Bakker and Scholten, *Communicatiekaart van Nederland*, pp. 23, 94, 128.

Perscombinatie (PCM), a publishing company that, prior to international acquisitions from 2005 onwards, was governed by newspaper foundations motivated by concern for journalistic independence and media pluralism rather than by profit-making.[72]

During the 1994-1995 debate, public broadcasters still dominated the market (a combined 43% of the Dutch radio market and 51% of the TV market in 1994, while commercial radio and TV broadcasters accounted for 37% and 33% respectively).[73] Nine broadcasting associations jointly operated five public radio and three television channels, fostering collaboration to enable the public broadcasting system to better compete with commercial broadcasters. National public broadcasters in the Netherlands relied on a combination of public funding and advertising, with the latter accounting for just one-fifth of total resources, while the sector's non-commercial character was preserved by having advertising managed independently by the Stichting Ether Reclame (STER).[74]

Until the mid-1960s, Dutch society had been organised into 'pillars' – Protestant, Catholic and Socialist subcommunities with their own political parties, social movements, educational systems and media. Hallin and Mancini refer to it as the 'civic model' of broadcast governance – characterised by the strong representation of organised civil society – par excellence. Although the pillars gradually eroded, the seven public broadcasters that originated in pillarisation continued to exist (alongside two new and more neutral broadcast organisations) and to a lesser degree retained their distinct signature. When they lost their pillar identity, newspapers attempted to distinguish themselves in other ways, along left-right and interest lines.[75]

[72] Bakker and Scholten, *Communicatiekaart van Nederland*, pp. 14-17, 26-28; M. de Waal et al., *Mapping Digital Media: Netherlands* (Open Society Foundations, 12 October 2011), p. 69.
[73] A turning point occurred in 1996, when commercial broadcasters gained the upper hand. Bakker and Scholten, *Communicatiekaart van Nederland*, pp. 94, 128.
[74] Bakker and Scholten, *Communicatiekaart van Nederland*, pp. 74, 80, 104, 112; Hallin and Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems*, p. 42.
[75] Hallin and Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems*, pp. 31-32, 151-152, 165-166, 182.

Figure 1. News consumption in the Netherlands (1995), France (2000) and Germany (2005)[76]

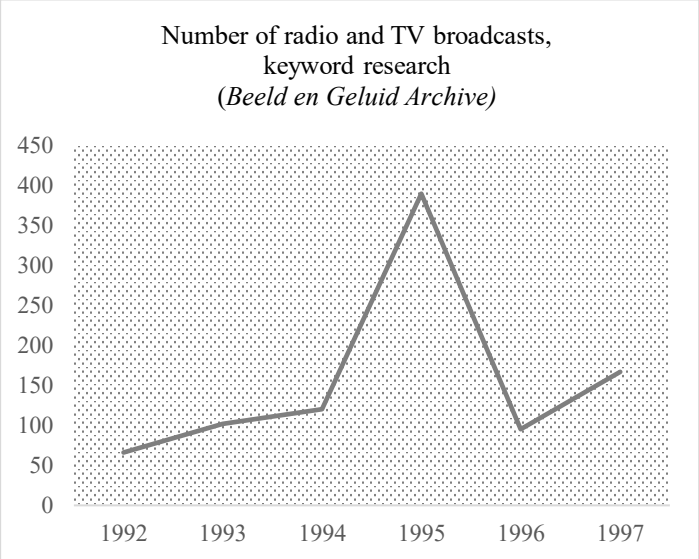
	NL (1995)	FR (2000)	DE (2005)
TV (everyday)	72	59	70
TV (several times a week)	16	21	20
TV (once or twice a week)	5	11	4
Radio (everyday)	52	36	56
Radio (several times a week)	15	13	19
Radio (once or twice a week)	5	12	5
Newspapers (everyday)	61	26	52
Newspapers (several times a week)	11	14	17
Newspapers (once or twice a week)	10	18	10

The Dutch 1994-1995 post-imperial memory irruption is examined by means of a large number of radio, television, and newspaper articles that appeared between January 1994 and December 1995. The audio-visual material is held at the national audio-visual archive of the *Nederlands Instituut voor Beeld en Geluid* in Hilversum. The *Beeld en Geluid* archive, tasked with archiving the programs of the national public broadcasting agencies, contains more than 70% of Dutch audio-visual heritage from the late 19th century until today. One of the four pillars of their collection is 'News, information and current affairs', which encompasses a wide variety of current affairs programmes. The (meta-data of the) entire digital collection of the *Beeld en Geluid* archive for the years 1994 and 1995 was searched for (combinations and variations of) the key terms: 'decolonisation', 'independence', 'East Indies', 'Indonesia', 'police actions' and 'excesses' – a deliberately broad query. Of the approximately 500 broadcasts generated with keyword-research, approximately half of which were duplicates (see *Graph 1*), a total of 155 relevant broadcasts were viewed or listened to and transcribed. The radio material (75 broadcasts) includes broadcasts from 34 different (mostly current affairs) programmes, and productions of ten different public broadcasters. The television material (80 broadcasts) includes broadcasts from 22 different current affairs programmes, and productions of twelve different public broadcasters (with a religious affiliation, a political affiliation, and without a religious or political affiliation) (see primary sources bibliography).

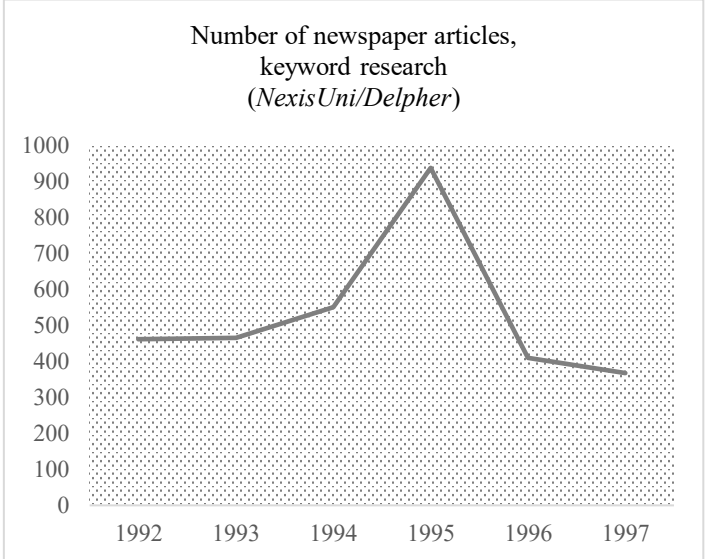
[76] See fn. 58.

In addition, hundreds of newspaper articles used to study the 1994-1995 post-imperial memory irruption were extracted from the online newspaper databases *NexisUni* and *Delpher.* Together, they provide digital access to the near to complete collections of the five largest-circulation national dailies at the time, spread across the political spectrum: the *Algemeen Dagblad* (AD) (1994-1995), the *NRC Handelsblad* (NRC) (1994-1995), *Trouw* (1994-1995), *De Telegraaf* (1994), and *De Volkskrant* (1994-1995) (see primary sources bibliography). *Delpher* was used only when archival material for one of the national dailies was missing from the *NexisUni* collection (i.e. *De Volkskrant* in 1994 and *De Telegraaf* in 1994). Of the roughly 1500 newspaper articles generated with keyword-research (see *Graph 1*), 521 were identified as most relevant, and read closely. The corpus of primary source material for each case-study encompasses a wide range of different newspaper articles (interviews, reportages, reviews, opinion pieces and readers' letters) and current affairs formats (e.g. the daily news, documentaries, interviews, talk shows).

Graph 1. Primary sources Dutch case-study



The number of results for keyword research in the graph does not represent the actual number of broadcasts on the topic, which, in reality, was lower. The search engine did not enable search strings with the operator 'OR'. Therefore, various search combinations had to be carried out separately, accounting for a high number of duplicates among the results of the different search combinations. Checked and corrected for duplicates (manually), there were approximately 250 broadcasts in the years 1994 and 1995 that responded to the query. Among them were also broadcasts that contained key terms in the metadata, but were nonetheless irrelevant.



The graph does not include results that were not available in either *Delpher* or *NexisUni* (i.e. *De Telegraaf* in the years 1995, 1996 and 1997); and contains a relatively small number of duplicates from searches performed in the *Delpher* database (i.e. *De Telegraaf* and *De Volkskrant* in the years 1992, 1993 and 1994). The search results also included broadcasts that contained key terms in the body of the text, but were nonetheless irrelevant.

France's media system is a borderline case, in between the Democratic Corporatist and the Polarized Pluralist model, in which political influence on the media is typically much higher and the level of journalistic autonomy and professionalism much lower. In some respects, and increasingly so from the 1980s onwards, France differed from the polarised pluralist countries of Southern Europe, leaning instead toward the democratic corporatist systems of the North. As in other Mediterranean countries, the media were regarded as a social institution subject to extensive state regulation, but in France, political polarisation did not impede the state's ability to regulate. The French state proved far more capable than its Mediterranean counterparts of developing a *dirigiste* approach of intervention in the market. Besides, and in contrast to other Southern European countries, in the late 1980s, government control of broadcast organisation (what Hallin and Mancini refer to as the 'government model' of broadcast governance) shrank significantly with the establishment of an independent audiovisual regulatory authority. In other respects, France was and remained different from the Democratic Corporatist model, leaning towards the Polarized Pluralist model. Firstly, French journalism was commentary-oriented, that is a journalism of expression and opinion-pieces more than of observation and reportage, involving policy advocacy and normative judgments of political conduct. Against the backdrop of pronounced ideological divisions, commentary is valorised, whereas neutrality is often viewed as inconsistent, naïve, or opportunistic. Secondly, French public service broadcasting had always been a mixed-revenue system, drawing a substantial portion of its resources from advertising, while public subsidies remained modest relative to those in many other European countries. At the turn of the century, almost half of revenues for public broadcasting came from advertising and other commercial sources – a condition under which journalism becomes vulnerable to sensationalism.[77]

Substantively, the French media landscape is best characterised not by pillarisation – like in the Netherlands –, but by a combination of an ideologically segmented opinion press and a republican-universalist broadcasting model, in which pluralism was articulated discursively rather than institutionally. Around the turn of the century, the national newspaper market was moderately concentrated – comprising ten national political and general-interest dailies (together accounting for 32% of domestic circulation in 2001) and ten specialised titles. Since the late 1970s, the French daily press has been dominated by a small number of dominant

[77] 45.5% in 1998. Hallin and Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems*, pp. 30, 42, 98-100, 106, 120-21, 126, 131, 139.

conglomerates, controlled by powerful family-based or industrial owners. Alongside these, the Le Monde media group stood out for its hybrid form of corporate media organisation with preserved, institutionally mediated, editorial autonomy.[78]

Television and radio markets in mainland France were highly concentrated. Both were dominated by three competing private operators, facing one main public operator (broadcasting seven national networks). Commercial broadcasters prevailed across both markets. In 1999, public television channels accounted for 42.2% of the audience, compared with 53.1% for commercial channels; and public radio claimed just over a quarter of listeners in 2003. Whereas public radio was funded almost exclusively through license fees, public television also drew on annual state budget allocations and substantial advertising revenue. Notwithstanding the state's participation as shareholder in various radio and television enterprises, the legal framework safeguarded broadcasters' operational autonomy.[79]

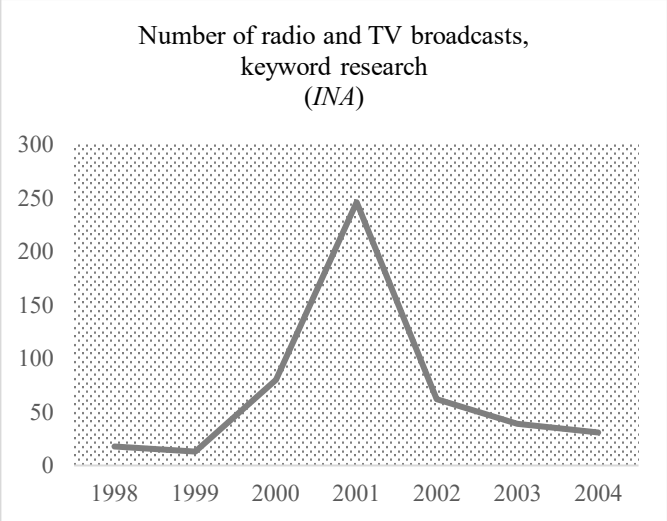
The French 2000-2002 debate is investigated mainly through audio-visual material. At the time of the 2000-2002 debate, almost everyone watched current affairs programmes on television (91%) at least once a week. A significantly lower number listened to the news on the radio (61%) or read the newspaper (58%) weekly (see *Figure I*).[80] Since live debates on the radio (like on television) give an excellent insight into the wider debate – the guests are often carefully selected because of their different points of view, so that the programme's discussion mirrors the larger public debate – it was decided to include this source material anyway. Newspaper searches in the left-leaning *Le Monde* and right-leaning *Le Figaro* – two newspapers of record – were made for specific key events during the debate only.

The audio-visual material is available at the *Institut National de l'Audiovisuel* (INA). The INA – founded in 1975 and in charge of the legal deposit of French audiovisual heritage and online media – collects and preserves more than seven decades of French radio and television programmes. It is an enormously rich resource for digitised audiovisual content, with over fifteen million hours of programmes from more than 160 public and private radio and television channels made available for consultation. The programmes cover a diversity of genres, amongst others documentaries, current affairs programmes, news bulletins and talk

[78] Commissariaat voor de Media, *A mapping study of media concentration and ownership in ten European countries* (Hilversum, 2004), p. 43; J. Charon, *Les medias en France* (Paris, 2003), pp. 38-39, 67-69; Direction du développement des medias, *Tableaux statistiques de la presse – 2000* (Paris, 2000), p. 12.
[79] Charon, *Les medias en France*, pp. 42-45, 70-75, 80, 106-107.
[80] Average listening time for radio was 183 minutes in the last quarter of 2000, and average TV viewing time was 204 minutes. See: Charon, *Les medias en France*, pp. 106-107.

shows. The (meta-data of the) entire digital collection of the *Inatheque* (accessed in Paris) for 2000, 2001 and 2002 was searched for key terms 'Algerian War' and 'torture'. Of the 388 broadcasts generated with keyword research (see *Graph 2*), 163 relevant broadcasts (78 on the radio and 85 on television), from 59 different programmes and ten different broadcasters (one of which commercial) were viewed or listened to and transcribed (see primary sources bibliography).

Graph 2. Primary sources French case-study



The INA search engine allows for Boolean searches, so that duplicates could be filtered out. A small number of broadcasts contained key terms in the metadata, but were nonetheless irrelevant.

The German media system is democratic corporatist, like the Dutch, featuring the corresponding characteristics; a 'civic model' of broadcast governance (with proportional representation of socially relevant groups in each individual media outlet, rather than at the level of the media system as a whole); and an even smaller share of advertising revenue for public broadcasting – yet with an important deviation, shaped by the country's totalitarian history.[81] Journalism in post-war Germany displays a deep awareness of the importance of critical and evaluative reporting – an inclination toward evaluation, commentary, and advocacy, resembling the traditions of the French polarised pluralist system.[82]

[81] In 2005, 84% of public broadcasters' revenues in Germany came from license fees, with the remainder from advertising and other sources. See: H. Schröder, et al., *Mapping Digital Media: Germany* (Open Society Foundations, 16 July 2011), p. 66.
[82] Hallin and Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems*, pp. 29, 42, 161, 166-68, 174, 180.

In 2004, large shares of the German people followed current affairs programmes on television (94%), on the radio (80%), and/or read newspapers (79%) at least once a week (see *Figure 1*).[83] The television market was highly concentrated, dominated by two public broadcasters (each operated a flagship national channel and a small number of shared thematic channels, while one – constituted as a consortium of nine regional broadcasters – also maintained a large portfolio of regional channels; together accounting for approximately 44% of total market share) that competed with two main dominant private operators (each holding a market share of between 20% and 25%). The radio market exhibited an even stronger regional orientation, leading to lower market concentration. At the national level, private radio stations were absent, while public radio stations were limited in number and played only a marginal role. Commercial radio licences were issued by the federal states, within which the aforementioned nine regional broadcasters held substantial market shares (approximately 45% in the biggest state, Bavaria, in 2003). The establishment of robust federal structures and a well-developed regional public broadcasting system in post-1945 Germany reflects a deliberate effort to prevent potential totalitarian actors from seizing control of the media.[84]

Germany also featured an exceptionally strong local and regional newspaper sector: in 2003, the seven leading national daily newspapers accounted for less than 20% of total domestic circulation. Even the small number of newspapers that circulated across the entire country, all with readily identifiable slants, had strong regional bases. Notwithstanding the proliferation of titles (a total of 381 in 2003), a small number of publishers held the majority of market power, with Axel Springer AG, a family company that had sold 19% of its shares in 2003 to an American investor, being the largest German newspaper publisher (with a market share of 22.7% in 2004).[85]

The German 2004 irruption is studied through radio, television, and newspaper material produced throughout the debate. Unlike in the Dutch and French cases, no single archive collects German television heritage and makes it accessible to researchers free of charge. Instead, the material is held in the broadcasters' archives, cannot be searched by scholars

[83] Average daily media consumption in 2005: 222 minutes of radio and 221 minutes of TV. See: Schröder et al., *Mapping Digital Media: Germany*, p. 17.
[84] W. Schrag, *Medienlandschaft Deutschland* (Munich, 2006), pp. 74; J. Bösch et al., 'Media Ownership and Concentration in Germany', in E. Noam, *Who owns the world's media? Media concentration and ownership around the world* (Oxford, 2016), pp. 115-117, 120; Schröder et al., *Mapping Digital Media: Germany*, p. 19.
[85] Bösch et al., 'Media Ownership and Concentration in Germany', pp. 108, 110; W. Schütz, 'Deutsche Tagespresse 2004', *Media Perspektiven*, 2 (2005), pp. 214, 222; Hallin and Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems*, p. 108; Commissariaat voor de Media, *A mapping study of media concentration*, pp. 67-71.

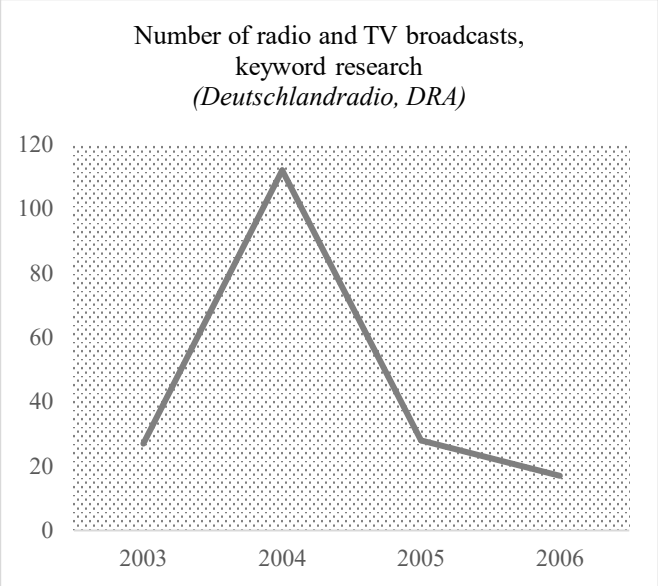
themselves and can only be requested and ordered (often not free). On request, broadcast archivists searched for (combinations and variations of) keywords 'Herero' and 'Namibia' or 'German Southwest Africa' in 2003, 2004 and 2005. To also be able to self-select material and specifically request specific broadcasts from broadcasters, television guides from those years were browsed and the *Deutsches Rundfunkarchiv* (DRA) was asked to carry out the same search.[86]

Radio material from national public broadcasters and public broadcasters at federal level is available in the archive of *Deutschlandradio*. The collection of over 200,000 hours was accessed in the *Deutschlandradio Funkhaus* in Berlin and searched for the same key words in the same period. A total of 165 broadcasts (of which 98 on the radio and 67 on television), from 97 different formats and thirteen different public broadcasters were viewed or listened to and transcribed (see primary sources bibliography). Because of the pronounced federal structure of the public broadcasting system, regional broadcasters were considered as well – differing from the approach taken in the Dutch and French case studies.[87]

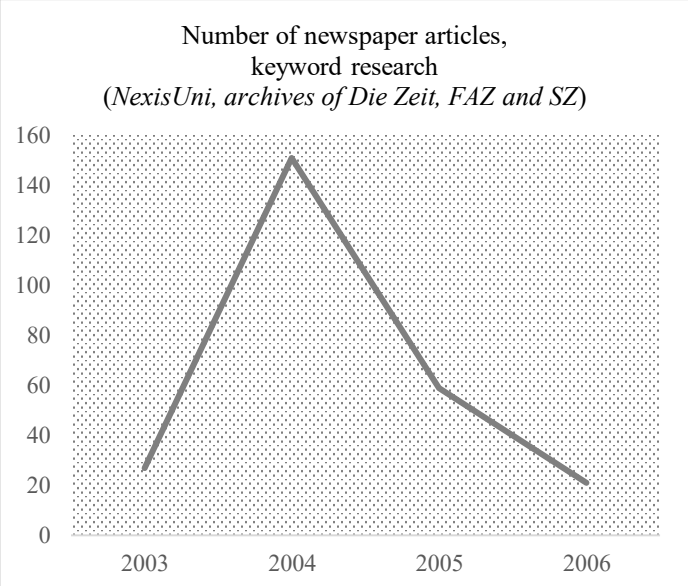
Additionally, a large number of articles from newspapers and one news magazine – together covering the full political spectrum and generally regarded as the core of the national quality and opinion press – were used to study the 2004 irruption. Press material from *Der Spiegel, Die Tageszeitung* (TAZ) and *Die Welt* was extracted from the online newspaper database *NexisUni.* The material from *Die Zeit,* the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ) and *Die Süddeutsche Zeitung* (SZ) may be accessed in the newspapers' online digital archives (accessible for subscribers and through the *Staatsbibliothek* in Berlin) (see primary sources bibliography). It was searched for the same (combinations and variations of) key terms and in the same period. All of 237 relevant articles that were published in these print media between January 2003 and December 2005 (see *Graph 3*), were read closely.

[86] DRA collects broadcasts from before 1945, as well as GDR television and radio until 1991, but has access to meta-data of productions from public broadcasters *ARD* and *Deutschlandradio*.
[87] Hallin and Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems*, pp. 167-168.

Graph 3. Primary sources German case-study



The number of broadcasts in the graph is accurate since duplicates are filtered out (manually), as were broadcasts that responded to the query but were nonetheless irrelevant.



The number of newspaper articles in the graph is accurate for *NexisUni* excluded duplicates. Articles generated by keyword-research in *Die Zeit, FAZ and SZ* online archives were added to the yearly total.

Chapter summaries

The first chapter focuses on the Dutch 1994-1995 debate. Only twice before since the loss of the Indies in 1949, had the extreme Dutch recolonisation violence been the subject of such heated debate, in 1969 and (to a lesser extent) in 1987. The semicentenary debate gained momentum when, in spring 1994, President Suharto invited Queen Beatrix for a state visit in Indonesia's 1995 jubilee year. A debate ensued about the state visit that grew ever more heated as it approached. Was the Queen to attend the Indonesian independence celebrations on the 17 August 1995? An official state visit on 17 August would imply recognition of Indonesia's Declaration of Independence on 17 August 1945 – rather than the Netherlands' recognition of Indonesian independence at the end of the war (27 December 1949) – and would equal an admission of guilt. Moreover, was the Queen to apologise for everything that happened between the declaration and the granting of independence, or even for the long era of Dutch colonial rule? In the countdown to the state visit in August 1995, there were all sorts of ideas about what her speech should (not) contain.

The 1994-1995 debate was primarily about the moral reprehensibility of, and desirability of an official apology for excessive violence perpetrated by the Dutch military in the Indonesian Independence War. These questions proved truly divisive. Rival voices dug in

their positions rather than moving towards each other. Both incriminating and exculpatory voices measured the reprehensibility of excessive violence by the Dutch colonial army in Indonesia against atrocities committed by the Nazis, other European empires, and Indonesian freedom fighters. Assessing the status quo of memory affairs, participants also had the process of working through World War II at the back of their minds; and memory politics were debated primarily with reference to the supposed expectations and needs of the Indonesians. Contemporaries described the debate as intense and emotionally charged. The debate was a national rather than a European matter. It was still conspicuously quiet in neighbouring countries, and commentators from abroad played no role in the Dutch debate.

Ultimately, no consensus was reached on how morally reprehensible Dutch military action in the Indies had been, and Queen Beatrix did not attend the Indonesian independence celebrations in Jakarta or offer an apology at the state banquet. With the date chosen (on 21 August, close to yet not on the day of the Proclamation) and the words spoken (although she spoke in a remorseful tone, she did not apologise) the Queen sought to please a deeply divided audience back home. Quickly after, political and public debate on excessive Dutch violence in the Indonesian Independence War subsided.

Chapter II analyses the French Torture Debate through a series of events. After decades of mostly 'forgetting' the Algerian War of Independence, the first post-imperial memory irruption in France took place at the turn of the century (2000-2002). Smaller public controversies in the 1970s and early 1980s had not been of comparable magnitude. In June 2000 a former Algerian Independence fighter, Louisette Ighilahriz, testified in *Le Monde* how she and other women had been brutally raped and tortured by French paratroopers during the Battle of Algiers (1957). Shocking revelations from military leaders who had played a key role in the war fuelled the media frenzy and massive outpouring that followed the interview. The debate ignited more spontaneously than in the Dutch anniversary year, and developed its own momentum.

The question was not so much whether there had been torture. Rather, the 2000-2002 debate, on the one hand, dealt with the scale, origin, purpose, and reprehensibility of torture committed by the French Army in Algeria between 1954 and 1962. Assessing the moral reprehensibility of French torture, participants in the debate drew comparisons to atrocities committed by the *Front de Libération Nationale* (FLN), by violent others (inside or outside of a colonial context); and in Vichy France – and that to opposite ends. On the other hand, responsibility and 'repentance' for French torture were subjects of debate. Should the French state officially apologise to the Algerian people? And, if so, on behalf of whom? The status

quo on the Algerian past was compared to the state of affairs regarding Vichy, and those in favour of speeding up the process of working through referred mainly to the memory work done on French complicity in the Holocaust. Commentators characterised the debate as fierce, broad and omnipresent. Even though colonialism had been a European venture, the Torture Debate was first and foremost a national affair: there was remarkably little consideration of the afterlife of empire in other ex-metropoles or foreign participation in the debate.

The debate did not have a built-in climax, or one decisive moment after which it faded out, like in the Dutch case, but died out naturally. As in the Netherlands a few years earlier, the French came to no consensual reading of the past or to a general agreement about how it should best be dealt with. If anything, the series of events following Ighilahriz's testimony testified to an extremely divided public memory. Even though small steps towards a reappraisal of French imperial history were taken, in the end calls for and gestures of condemnation invariably met with firm resistance and opportunities for common commemoration were not seized. The Torture Debate did not sort things out: it constituted the beginning of a disruptive obsession with the Algerian Independence War.

Chapter III deals with the German centenary debate. After the 2001 Herero reparations lawsuit had awoken a broad German public to the colonial past, the centenary of the start of the Herero and Nama War just a few years later triggered unprecedented media attention in Germany in 2004. Only once before since Wilhelmine Germany had lost its colonies in 1919, had German colonial history been the subject of self-critical public discussion – and that was as long ago as 1966. Like in the Dutch case, the momentum of an anniversary year finally set things in motion, and again one key moment awaited. The irrefutable milestone of the centenary year was the commemoration ceremony in Okakarara on 14 August 2004, near the Waterberg, and the speech that Germany's Federal Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development, Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, would deliver on that occasion. She was the first federal government member ever to travel to Namibia to attend the commemoration. Several key moments in the run-up to her speech pass in review.

The German debate was less broad than the Dutch and (especially the) French one, both in terms of players and the issues addressed. It centred on the questions how the events of 1904-1908 were related to the Holocaust; how bad German colonial rule had been; and whether an official 'compensation-relevant' apology was due. The reprehensibility of German conduct between 1904 and 1908 was compared to the record of the rebellious Herero and other European imperial powers. Contributors compared the current state of memory affairs on

empire to the way the Holocaust had been dealt with, and to Herero remembrance of the 1904-1908 events. Memory politics was shaped in response to the Herero appeal, who compared their cause with the Jewish people's. Foreign memory entrepreneurs did not play a significant role in the debate, and not much consideration was given to how other former empires had been dealing with their past over the turn of the millennium.

At first sight, the German irruption was profoundly different from the ones in its neighbouring countries: an overall self-critical consensus emerged from it. The much greater temporal distance from the events, and the much greater discursive and socio-political currency of *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung* (that is, regarding the two totalitarian and dictatorial regimes in German contemporary history) furthered a self-critical reading of empire in 21st-century Germany. In Okakarara, Wieczorek-Zeul even asked the Herero for forgiveness for the crimes of the German colonial rulers on behalf of her country. On closer inspection, however, the meaning of the German case turned out not to be so different after all. The self-critical consensus would prove to be shallow, ephemeral and without consequences. The surge in media-output had been considerably less than in the Netherlands and France (in absolute numbers, see *Graphs 1, 2* and *3*), and the debate had been of a less emotional and more intellectual nature. Wieczorek-Zeul's apology came as a complete surprise, met with much political push-back, and did not materialise in terms of reparations. The self-critical consensus was not enough to change the political dial. Finally, the colonial past largely disappeared again from the public and political agenda with the end of the centenary year.

This study's focus is on the long turn of the millennium (c. 1995 – c.2005) – the region's most turbulent phase of post-imperial memory. Naturally, the long genealogy of empire memory since decolonisation, and any early 'first generation' memory irruptions are also discussed in the following country-chapters. However, the case-study analyses do not start with long historical overviews of empire memory. Instead, they delve into the turn-of-the-millennium irruption straight away – much like contemporaries were suddenly faced with the nation's 'dark' empire past – and each chapter then moves back in time throughout the chapter to historicise events and narratives when necessary.

I. The Dutch semicentenary debate (1994-1995)

Early on in 1994, the Dutch took an exceptional interest in their imperial history in the face of the upcoming 50th anniversary of the Indonesian Declaration of Independence (1995). The commemoration year triggered a fierce public debate about the violent colonial war the Netherlands had waged in the Dutch East Indies (DEI) (1945-1949). Only twice before since the loss of the Indies in 1949 had extreme Dutch recolonisation violence been the subject of such heated debate, in 1969 and (to a lesser extent) in 1987. Turmoil continued all throughout 1994 and only tailed off after the summer of 1995. This chapter is about the 1994-1995 post-imperial memory irruption.

On August 17, 1945, two days after the Japanese capitulation, which marked the end of World War II in the DEI, Sukarno and Mohammad Hatta proclaimed the independent Republic of Indonesia. The Dutch government was unwilling to concede this independence and sought to restore the old colonial order, which had been disrupted by the Japanese Occupation of the Indies in 1942. Only after years of dragging negotiations, excessive violent warfare and two euphemistically called 'Police Actions' in the summer of 1947 and the winter of 1948 – which took a much higher toll on the Republican than on the Dutch side – did it cede sovereignty to the Republic of Indonesia on 27 December 1949.

In the Netherlands, public remembrance of the violent endgame of colonial rule in the *Indies* got off to a late start, and was then remembered in fits and starts, with irregular bursts of activity.[88] The slow pace and volatile nature of self-critical debate since 1949 on excessive Dutch violence was due to a lack of critical voices 'pushing' and 'pulling': neither were influential voices in Dutch society keen on critical introspection, nor did the Republic of Indonesia insist on it.[89] In the first two decades after the loss of the Indies, it was not subject to self-critical public debate. The Dutch were too busy rebuilding the country after the German Occupation to remember a lost war that had been fought far away and out of sight.

[88] On the undulations that were characteristic of Dutch Empire memory since 1949, see e.g. G. Oostindie and M. van der Kaaij, 'Een kwaad geweten. De moeizame verwerking van de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog in Nederland', in G. Oostindie et al (eds.), *Over de grens. Nederlands extreem geweld in de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog, 1945-1949* (Amsterdam, 2022), pp. 413, 437.
[89] On 'pull-factors' see: S. Scagliola, *Last van de Oorlog. De Nederlandse oorlogsmisdaden in Indonesië en hun verwerking* (Amsterdam, 2002), p. 107, 191, 357.

All of this changed radically when on 17 January 1969 Indies veteran Joop Hueting testified to excessive violence by Dutch troops in Indonesia on national television. Against the backdrop of the Vietnam War, a conflict read in colonial terms, his testimony in the TV programme *Achter het Nieuws* came like a bombshell and triggered a first memory irruption. The subsequent government archival research into Dutch military action in the Indies (January - June 1969) was concluded with the *Memorandum on Excesses* – a list of instances of excessive violence. The government remained of the view that excessive violence had been the exception, not the rule. Parliament refrained from passing judgement on Dutch troops' conduct and a parliamentary inquiry did not ensue. Despite the government's condoning conclusion, the Indies became a source of guilt and shame for the country. Soon after, it went quiet again around war crimes in the DEI.[90]

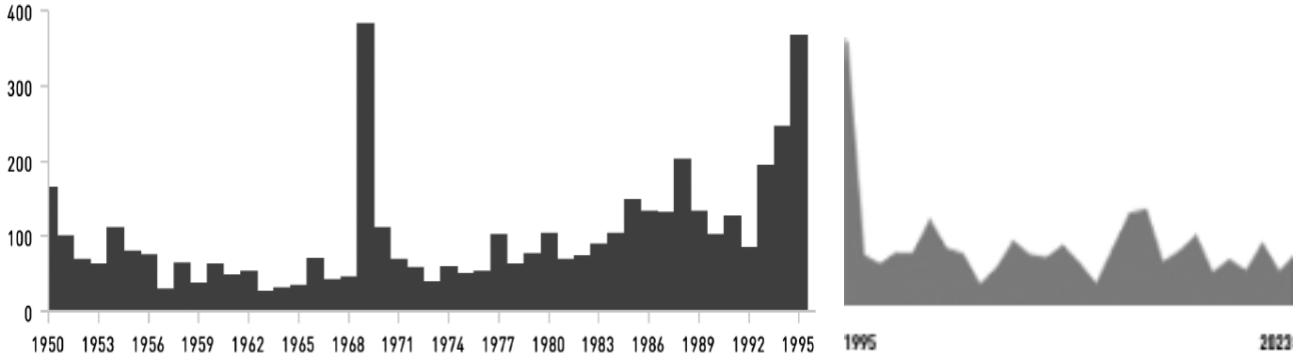
After 1969, excessive Dutch violence was 'rediscovered' and critically reassessed every now and then, but it would take another two decades before it would again be hotly debated. Feelings ran high in 1987 (though not as high as in 1969) when a draft text from the famous national historian Lou de Jong about Dutch war crimes was leaked. The leaked manuscript of the *Epilogue* of his magnum opus – the 12-volume *The Kingdom of the Netherlands in the Second World War* (published between 1969 and 1988) –, which dealt with the violent ending of Dutch colonial history in Indonesia, triggered another controversy. A few years later another fierce debate took place, in the run-up to the anniversary year 1995 and Queen Beatrix's state visit to Indonesia in August that year.

The semicentenary debate truly was a memory irruption. The number of newspaper articles and radio and television broadcasts on the violent ending of Dutch presence in the East soared in December 1994, and sank back to previous levels after the Queen's state visit – the commemoration year's culminating point. A long-term overview (see *Graphs 1.1* and *1.2*) shows a high rise in publicity in 1969, heightened interest after De Jong's leaked manuscript in 1987, and a surge of attention in the mid-1990s.

[90] P. Pattynama, *Bitterzoet Indië. Herinnering en nostalgie in literatuur, foto's en films* (Amsterdam, 2014), pp. 12-14; 'De excessennota', dir. *Andere Tijden* (TV, broad. NTR/VPRO, 9 April 2002).

Graph 1.1. Newspaper coverage 'Police Actions' (1950-1995) (Delpher database)[91]

Graph 1.2. Newspaper coverage 'Police Actions' (1995-2023) (NexisUni database)[92]



Until after Beatrix's state visit, debate over extreme Dutch violence in the Indies monopolised opinion pages.[93] According to contemporaries, the debate was broad and omnipresent in the national media.[94] One observer in January 1995 called it "inescapable" even: "nothing else is discussed in the media anymore. The press is full of it."[95]

The irruption was not just measurable, it was also 'felt'. Contemporaries described the debate as intense and emotionally charged. Early on in 1995, current affairs shows noted that after nearly 50 years, excessive Dutch violence in Indonesia still caused "runaway emotions and bitter recriminations".[96] The discussion about the Queen's state visit was described as "fierce."[97] The historian Vincent Houben looked back on the debate two years later and spoke of a "complex chemistry of emotions".[98]

[91] The Delpher database contains over 4500 newspaper articles with the term 'Police action*' from national outlets. The graph is distorted due to a much higher volume of newspapers from pre-1970 compared to 1970-1995. The database contains 5831 newspapers from 1969, 3425 from 1994, and only 1543 from 1995. The number of newspapers drops sharply from 1995 to 2005, with no post-2005 data. Therefore, Delpher cannot generate a graph for 1950-2023.
[92] The NexisUni database includes over 1,900 newspaper articles from *NRC*, *De Volkskrant*, *Trouw*, and *AD* containing the term 'Police action*' and covers these newspapers for the full 1995-2023 period. The coverage of *De Telegraaf* is limited (from 1999 - now). NexisUni primarily covers newspapers post-1990, making it impossible to create a graph for 1950-2023.
[93] Scagliola, *Last van de Oorlog*, p. 114.
[94] E.g. Prof. Dommering in: *Kenmerk* (TV, broad. IKON, 9 February 1995).
[95] J. Wattilete in: *Suara Maluku* (radio, broad. NPS, 14 January 1995).
[96] E.g.: *Kenmerk* (TV, 12 January 1995); *Dingen die gebeuren* (radio, broad. KRO, 10 January 1995); *Nova* (TV, broad. VARA/NOS, 7 February 1995).
[97] *Staatsbezoek Koningin Beatrix aan Indonesië* (TV, broad. NOS, 27 August 1995).
[98] Houben, 'A Torn Soul', p. 64.

Collective psychoanalysis was used to make sense of what the country was dealing with. Contemporaries thought they were suffering from "an unprocessed past".[99] Right at the start of the debate, the historian Elsbeth Locher-Scholten spoke of a "collective trauma": "Apparently, the colonial trauma lives on unconsciously and every now and then it unexpectedly surfaces violently in the collective consciousness."[100] The last years of the Dutch East Indies was recurrently referred to as an "exposed nerve", after an eponymous TV series on the colonial past in the East.[101] Similar metaphors were also used, such as a festering wound eventually bursting open.[102]

Even though contemporaries used many names to describe the debate – simply a "media-discussion", an "eruption", or a "riot about the past" – they agreed on it being exceptional.[103] It was recalled that something similar had happened only once or twice since the loss of the DEI. Listeners to current affairs programmes and documentaries were reminded of emotional debates in 1969 and 1987.[104] More often than the debate following De Jong's leaked draft paragraph (1987), the 1969 debate triggered by whistleblower Hueting came to mind and served as a reference point.

Contemporaries felt that the stakes were high. Heated debate preceded Beatrix's state visit, because at the state banquet in Jakarta, the Queen would have to take a public stand about the countries' violent break-up. Not long after the debate's conclusion, Houben explained: "The visit of the Queen [, an eminent national symbol,] in a way "actualised" the troublesome colonial past because it could not wholly evade, (…) a clear collective position that would allow the Dutch to stand firm in the present relative to their own past."[105]

When it was decided in July 1994 that the Queen would visit Indonesia in the second half of 1995, a broad public debate set off – involving veterans, politicians, historians, the cultural and

[99] E.g.: *Radiojournaal* (radio, broad. AVRO, 25 December 1994); *Kenmerk* (TV, 12 January 1995).
[100] 'Indië en het collectieve geheugen', *NRC* (9 April 1994). Also e.g. P. Princen in: 'Onze jongens in de oost', dir. *Vesuvius* (TV, broad. IKON, 24 November 1994).
[101] *Nova* (TV, 7 February 1995). Also e.g. 'Belevenissen van soldaat 270925129', dir. *Brandpunt* (TV, broad. KRO, 13 August 1995).
[102] E.g. J. Hueting in: *Dingen die gebeuren* (radio, 10 January 1995).
[103] E.g.: *De ronde tafel van Pam* (radio, broad. NPS, 13 February 1995); 'Inzicht', *Volkskrant* (31 May 1995); *Vesuvius* (TV, 24 November 1994).
[104] *Dingen die gebeuren* (radio, 10 January 1995). Also e.g.: *Vesuvius* (TV, 24 November 1994); *Brandpunt* (TV, 13 August 1995).
[105] Houben, 'A Torn Soul', p. 65.

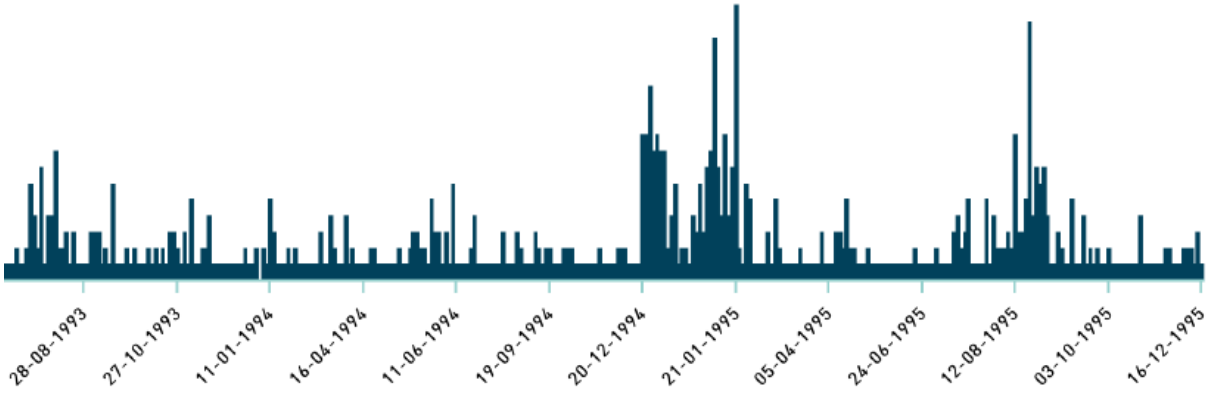
creative sector, journalists, and the Dutch Churches – about the design of the state visit, which grew ever more heated as it drew near. The Netherlands was in turmoil, and the devil was (also) in the date. Should the Queen attend the Indonesian celebrations of 50 years of independence on 17 August 1995, when Sukarno had declared independence in 1945? A visit by Queen Beatrix on 17 August would have far-reaching implications since the official transfer of sovereignty had only been on 27 December 1949. It would equal an admission of guilt, an acknowledgement that Indonesia should have achieved independence directly after the Second World War and that military action against Indonesian nationalists had been wrong.

Would the Queen, upon arrival, give back looted art, as her parents had in 1970? Who would accompany her as representatives of Dutch society? And should she, as a reconciliatory gesture, pay tribute to Sukarno? These questions rose in the run-up to the state visit. However, most hotly debated besides the appropriate date were the words the Queen would speak at the state banquet. Should she apologise for everything that had happened between the declaration and granting of independence, or even for the long era of Dutch colonial rule? In the countdown to the visit, there were all sorts of ideas about what her speech should (not) contain. In a constitutional parliamentary democracy, the design of a sovereign's state visit was a matter of ministerial accountability – and, in this case, one in which the population also took an interest.

The Queen eventually appeared in Indonesia four days after the official celebrations, on 21 August. She did not apologise, was accompanied by a large trade delegation and a few Dutch veterans, did not visit Sukarno's grave and did not return looted art, but presented the host with a stud bull instead.

How can the debate that preceded the state visit explain its course? This chapter examines various debate episodes in the lead-up to the visit that shed light on the framing of the state visit and the Queen's speech. Throughout the 1994-1995 debate, publicity was not continuously heightened. There were different episodes of high publicity, with quieter intermezzos in which news coverage waned (yet remained elevated) (see *Graph 1.3*). Still, these publicity outbursts were part of something bigger: a single memory irruption. The debate never dissolved entirely until after the state visit, and when it fired up again, participants picked up where they had left off. Each of these episodes opens a window on the semicentenary debate. It had no clear start- and endpoint, but was most intense between the winter of 1994 and the summer of 1995.

Graph 1.3. Newspaper coverage 'Police Actions' (1993-1995)[106]



Suharto's invitation (April 1994): Indonesian clemency

The debate gained momentum when, in spring 1994, President Suharto invited Queen Beatrix for a state visit in Indonesia's 1995 jubilee year. The visit would occur in a new, third chapter of bilateral relations. The first two chapters had left little room for critical reflection on excessive Dutch violence after 1945.

At the 1949 *Round Table Conference*, where the transfer of sovereignty had been decided, both sides had agreed to grant mutual amnesty. Besides the lack of legal ramifications, both governments had refrained from passing historical judgement in the years that had followed. In the chilly first phase in the post-colonial bilateral relationship (1949-1962), critical examination of excessive violence on either side had not been opportune.[107] The relationship with Indonesia had deteriorated dramatically due to, amongst others, the drawn-out conflict around Dutch New Guinea – the area of the DEI that had remained in Dutch hands after 1949.[108] In 1960, Indonesia had even broken off relations, and it had almost come to armed conflict when both countries had sent soldiers to the area.

Considering the strained bilateral relations, and how the Netherlands had had to manoeuvre to keep them from spiralling down, it had not been a good time to examine the violent decolonisation war critically.[109] Besides, the Indonesian political elite had not pushed

[106] Newspaper articles from national newspapers (in Delpher database) containing the search term 'Police Action*'.
[107] G. Oostindie and H. Schulte Nordholt, 'Nederland en zijn koloniale verleden: moeizame overgang van dekolonisatie naar buitenlands beleid', *Internationale Spectator*, 60/11 (2006), p. 573.
[108] Scagliola, *Last van de Oorlog,* p. 107.
[109] *Ibid*.

for a critical examination of excessive violence during the War of Independence. Jakarta had had reasons beyond tense bilateral relations for being reluctant to confront the ex-metropole with the suffering it had caused. It presumably had not wished to be reminded of its own part in the brutal guerrilla struggle and of mutual Indonesian violence during the war.[110] The young Republic had not chosen a narrative of victimhood but had rather nurtured the founding myth of a heroic struggle for independence.[111]

After the West New Guinea dispute had finally been settled – the territory was placed under UN administration in October 1962 and formally transferred to Indonesia in May 1963 – Indo-Dutch bilateral relationship had resumed and entered a much warmer second phase (1963-1992), especially after the fall of Sukarno and Suharto's seizure of power (March 1967).[112] In 1969 the Dutch authorities had kept a tight rein on the investigation following whistleblower Hueting's revelations: it had not wanted to draw attention to Indonesian misdeeds to avoid jeopardising bilateral relations that had been on the mend yet still fragile.[113] The Hague had chosen good ties with Indonesia over a "clear reconstruction of the facts", which would have exposed excessive violence on both sides.[114]

Ultimately, the *Memorandum on Excesses* (published June 1969) had documented almost exclusively instances of excessive violence by the Dutch military. Therefore, the full title of the memorandum had been 'Memorandum on archival research into data concerning excesses committed in Indonesia *by Dutch soldiers* in the period 1945-1950'.[115] References to Republican violence had been censored.[116] The *Memorandum* had contained an overview of publications in several Dutch newspapers and periodicals from 1945 to 1950 on excesses by the Dutch military.[117] Only five per cent of the total number of articles that had reported on excessive violence by Dutch troops in Indonesia (1945-1950) had reported also on atrocities

[110] *Ibid*.; Oostindie and Van der Kaaij, 'Een kwaad geweten', p. 421.
[111] Oostindie and Van der Kaaij, 'Een kwaad geweten', p. 421; Scagliola, *Last van de Oorlog,* p. 237.
[112] Oostindie and Schulte Nordholt, 'Nederland en zijn koloniale verleden', p. 574.
[113] Scagliola, *Last van de Oorlog,* p. 135.
[114] *Ibid.,* pp. 177, 359. See also: N. van Horn, 'De Excessennota na een halve eeuw. Een bestandsopname', *Leidschrift,* 31/3 (2016), pp. 80, 90-91.
[115] Italics by the author of this DPhil thesis.
[116] Scagliola, *Last van de Oorlog,* p. 177.
[117] *De Excessennota*. *Nota betreffende het archiefonderzoek naar de gegevens omtrent excessen in Indonesië begaan door Nederlandse militairen in de periode 1945-1950,* [Introduction by Jan Bank] (Den Haag, 1995), pp. 254-281.

by the other side or explained Dutch atrocities in response to Republican terror and -guerrilla warfare.[118]

Neither Suharto nor his ambassador Natadiningrat officially responded to the content of the *Memorandum* after it had been published. However, without mentioning the *Memorandum*, Natadiningrat had said in a newspaper interview one month after publication:

> In general, the Dutch army acted correctly during the Police Actions in Indonesia. There may have been occasional excesses, but they occurred on both sides. (…) Relations between Indonesia and the Netherlands are very good now. So why stir up old issues? Let's rather look at the future.[119]

The results of the Dutch enquiry had not changed the official 'mantra' of looking forward together instead of back.[120] Presumably, President Suharto's regime had wanted to avoid drawing attention to the 1965-1966 killings of members of the large yet unarmed communist opposition (now sometimes considered to have been genocidal in scale), which had followed the coup that had cleared the way for the overthrow of his predecessor and for his rise to power. Possibly, there had also been an economic explanation for the Republic being so future-orientated. In this phase of bilateral relations, development assistance was at the core of the relationship.[121] For 1969, the Netherlands had promised the Indonesian government 125 million guilders as part of the aid programme. The new Suharto regime, a military dictatorship without freedom of expression, had imposed censorship on the press to cultivate the myth of a heroic fight for independence that emphasised 'heroes' rather than victims.[122]

Soon after the 1969 debate, reciprocal and almost breezy state visits in 1970 and 1971 had sealed a good second phase in the bilateral relationship. When Queen Juliana and Prince Bernard had spontaneously kissed Suharto's wife in greeting her at the beginning of the 1971 state visit to Indonesia, the Indonesian press had concluded that the colonial past had been put to rest.[123] Because it had become clear during the preparations that neither government was

[118] Research by author of this DPhil thesis. The 26-page overview listed 418 articles from 19 different newspapers and periodicals from the General Dutch Press Office *ANP*, and for the rest mostly communist, leftist, religious and former Resistance publications. Of the 418 articles, 20 (5%) contained such references.
[119] 'Indonesiërs zijn optreden Westerling niet vergeten. Onmenselijke daden eisen bestraffing', *De Tijd* (7 July 1969).
[120] Oostindie and Van der Kaaij, 'Een kwaad geweten', p. 421.
[121] Oostindie and Schulte Nordholt, 'Nederland en zijn koloniale verleden', p. 574.
[122] For the variety of reasons mentioned here see: Scagliola, *Last van de Oorlog,* pp. 107, 183, 191-193, 237.
[123] 'Handdruk bij begin van staatsbezoek Beatrix's, *NRC* (21 August 1995).

keen to look back on the violent decolonisation struggle, the matter had not been brought up during the state visit. In her table speech, the Queen had very generally addressed "the conflict situation, which we had to go through in a political sense." The state visit had been universally referred to as highly successful.[124]

Now, under how much pressure from Jakarta to take a critical look at the past were the Dutch in the semicentenary? Beatrix's state visit took place in a new chapter of bilateral relations. A third phase had begun in 1993, after the so-called 'Pronk affair' (1992) had put things on edge. After Minister of Development Cooperation Jan Pronk (Labour Party, PvdA) had criticised Indonesia's violation of human rights in East Timor and had threatened to cut off development aid, Suharto had broken off relations with the Netherlands. Before the Queen's state visit in August 1995, visits to Jakarta by Dutch dignitaries had already taken place to minimise the damage done and to re-establish bilateral relations. Even if Dutch media thought The Hague's laborious realignment efforts had cleared the air and saw "no reason to believe that Indonesia's reception of the Dutch royal couple would be less enthusiastic than the welcome extended to [the royal couple] in 1971", historians Gert Oostindie and Henk Schulte Nordholt characterised Dutch policy post-Pronk as "anxious caution, [and the] absence of [clear] vision."[125]

No conditions were attached to the invitation. The Indonesian government did not demand an official apology from Queen Beatrix nor her presence on the day of the Independence celebrations on 17 August. The Indonesian ambassador in the Netherlands, Soedarmanto Kadarisman, thought it best not to reopen old wounds. On Dutch television he stated that apologies would not make any difference, "because we have already forgotten and forgiven."[126] Emil Salim, chairman of the national committee that organised the 50th anniversary festivities, confirmed that Jakarta would not seize on the Queen's state visit to ask for an apology, for: "it considers everything that has happened a thing of the past, and (…) does not hold a grudge against its former colonial ruler."[127]

[124] 'Soeharto: hoogtepunt van vriendschap bereikt', *Trouw* (27 August 1971); Oostindie and Van der Kaaij, 'Een kwaad geweten', p. 426.
[125] 'Indonesië', *Telegraaf* (6 June 1994). Also e.g.: 'Kooijmans positief over mensenrechten Indonesië', *NRC* (7 April 1994); Oostindie and Schulte Nordholt, 'Nederland en zijn koloniale verleden', p. 574.
[126] *NOS Journaal* [8 p.m.] (TV, broad. NOS, 12 January 1995). See also Kadarisman in: 'Premier Kok kritiseert Pronk', *AD* (13 January 1995).
[127] 'Jakarta vraagt geen excuus tijdens staatsbezoek Beatrix's, *AD* (17 July 1995).

Few Indonesian voices were heard in the Dutch 1994-1995 debate.[128] One journalist in the left-leaning daily *Trouw* maintained it would be "nearly impossible" to get Indonesians to talk about the 'Police Actions' 50 years ago, for they would not "worry so much about [it] as the Dutch".[129] A journalist in the progressive and left-leaning *Volkskrant* reasoned: "From the near absence of contributions from Indonesian citizens to the debate (…) one gets the impression that they are far less occupied with the bloody [endgame of the colonial era] than we are."[130]

In the summer of 1995, though, most likely because of the state visit, some testimonies featured in Dutch media from Indonesians arguing that all had been forgiven and forgotten. During a gathering of former freedom fighters on a square in Jakarta during the independence celebrations, one of them told a reporter from the programme *Echo* that they were not traumatised like their former adversaries, and harboured no resentment toward them.[131] *The Volkskrant* wrote about historian Taufik Abdullah, who remembered that once the Dutch flag had been taken down and the Indonesian flag had been hoisted, his father had forgotten all about the cruelty of the Dutch.[132]

Thus, all kinds of participants in the 1994-1995 debate believed that Indonesians did not harbour a grudge, and that the former adversary had long since 'moved on'. Some of those who had travelled to the Republic, recalled they had been pleasantly surprised by the people's kindness. The friendly way Dutchmen and even Dutch veterans ('war tourists') were treated in Indonesia, was repeatedly presented in the Dutch debate as the ultimate proof.[133]

Some commentators juxtaposed Indonesian clemency with the former coloniser with Dutch resentment of 'the Germans'.[134] One of the veterans at the television show '*Our Boys in the East*' told he had been relieved when he had travelled back to Indonesia that "[t]hose people are (…) not hateful, (…) like we are hateful towards the Germans".[135] Poet and Indies veteran Jan Eijkelboom, asked by the editors of the show *Kenmerk* to draft the Queen's speech, liked

[128] E.g. 'Desertie', *Volkskrant* (24 December 1994).
[129] 'Je hebt de zaak verloren, geef dat maar toe', *Trouw* (16 June 1995).
[130] 'Het is voorbij, voorbij, voorgoed voorbij', *Volkskrant* (21 January 1995).
[131] 'De ooggetuigen van die dagen', dir. *Echo* (radio, broad. KRO, 17 August 1995).
[132] 'Indisch verleden als bron van wijsheid', *Volkskrant* (22 July 1995).
[133] E.g.: 'Onbevangen blik op Nederlands-Indië', *Telegraaf* (21 December 1994); 'Een correctie op de geschiedenis', *Volkskrant* (30 December 1994).
[134] E.g. Poncke Princen. See: 'Kamerdelegatie verdeeld over Princen', *NRC* (10 January 1994); 'Princen: Over eerherstel oordeelt de geschiedenis', *AD* (24 December 1995). Also e.g. F. Rüter (professor of criminal procedural law) in: *Nova* (TV, 5 January 1995).
[135] *Vesuvius* (TV, 24 November 1994).

to hear her say: " (…) [W]e marvel at your generosity, at the fact that you are not resentful of what we have done there, as [here] adolescents (…) are resentful of what the Germans have done, long before they were born."[136] Eijkelboom himself had returned to Indonesia in 1963, as a reporter of *Vrij Nederland.* He remembered: "The total absence of rancour in the people I spoke to there was wonderful. (…) I felt like a *Kraut* in [the Dutch seaside town] Zandvoort just after the war."[137]

Participants in the 1994-1995 debate came up with various explanations for Indonesian generosity. Pragmatic explanations were suggested, such as: a war won was more easily coped with than a war lost;[138] Indonesians had other, more pressing things to worry about, trying to earn a living;[139] and the demographics of forgetting (ninety percent of the population was younger than 44 years old, and had no personal memory of the Independence War at all).[140] Also, it was thought that the Indonesian government might not look back at the approximately 100,000 Indonesian casualties between 1945-1949 to avoid calling attention to the half a million victims of General Suharto's coup in the mid-1960s.[141] A distinct cultural explanation pertained to the nature and beliefs of the easterner, who were supposedly naturally more forgiving.[142]

Indonesians who spoke up in the Dutch public debate, did not take up any of the more pragmatic explanations yet confirmed it was in their nature and culture to let bygones be bygones.[143] Taufik Abdullah explained Indonesians' lack of resentment toward the Dutch with their "rather fatalistic view of history". He was quoted in the *Volkskrant* saying: "[E]verything that happened was our fate, it was preordained. That means you don't have to argue about it – the past is rather a source of wisdom for us (…) for the future."[144] Abdul Harris Nasoetion, former commander-in-chief of the army and former minister of defence, talked about his former

[136] *Kenmerk* (TV, 9 February 1995).
[137] 'Ik wil Poncke Princen graag ontmoeten'; Dichter en oud-Indiëstrijder - Eijkelboom voelt zich niet gekwetst', *NRC* (22 December 1994).
[138] E.g.: Van Doorn in: *De Schrijftafel* (radio, broad. NPS, 17 August 1995); 'Geen plaats voor atheïsme', *NRC* (19 August 1995); A. Koper in: 'Het is voorbij, voorbij, voorgoed voorbij'; J. Blokker in: 'De weelde van het bewaren', *Volkskrant* (18 June 1994) and 'Oud zeer(2)*', Volkskrant* (15 July 1995); J. Goor in: *Faros* (radio, broad. TELEAC, 25 June 1994).
[139] P. Princen in: 'Geen plaats voor atheïsme'.
[140] Bishop Muskens in: *ibid*.; 'Bisschop Muskens erkent fouten Nederlandse r.-k. kerk in Indië', *Trouw* (7 July 1995).
[141] E.g. 'Wijsheid achteraf', *Volkskrant* (14 January 1995).
[142] E.g. by Princen. See: 'Onze jongens moeten niet tot SS-er worden gemaakt', *AD* (9 January 1995). E.g. also film maker T. Verheul in: *Radio uit* (radio, broad. NPS 18 August 1995).
[143] 'Generaal Nasoetion: Waarom haatdragend?', *Trouw* (14 January 1994).
[144] 'Indisch verleden als bron van wijsheid'.

opponents with respect, for the Islam taught him forgiveness.[145] In the programme *Welingelichte Kringen,* a former independence fighter also played out a particular performance of Muslim subjectivity for a Dutch audience:

> *Presenter: [F]or you it is history, it is over (...) but for us it obviously is not (...) It is not an Indonesian problem, but it is a Dutch problem?*
> Exactly (…)
> [In the colonial era, the Dutch treated us as *Untermenschen*]. (…) [It was just our fate] to become *Untermenschen*.
> *Presenter: This not being vindictive cannot apply to an entire people, can it? (...)*
> If one can get to the core of religion, one no longer experiences hatred. [The belief in one God] is [one of] our guiding principle[s] (…).[146]

"As an Indonesian", it was a mystery to him how, on the 4th of May (National Remembrance Day) the Dutch passed on hatred of the Germans to the next generation, "as in a relay".[147] In an interview with the NRC – a national daily with a centrist orientation and progressive-liberal affinity –, Salim, who knew President Suharto well, was asked how the head of state felt about the royal visit. "The President is a true Javanese. [They] are very good at overcoming past woes."[148]

Not everybody believed Indonesians had truly 'forgiven and forgotten' though. According to theatre-maker Jan Blokker, many Dutchmen were suspicious of Indonesians' absolution – and all because they themselves still bore malice towards the Germans.[149] Before the state visit, some commentators sought to dismantle what they thought was a myth. With the Indonesians, sceptics found traces of a past that was not all forgiven and forgotten. An anonymous opinion piece in the NRC read: "The tradition that the Indonesians, unlike the Dutch, have erased the colonial past from their memory, is a myth. Near every war monument, old and new, a few young people explain to visitors what happened here."[150]

---

[145] 'Generaal Nasoetion: Waarom haatdragend?'
[146] S. Sosrosuwarno in: *Welingelichte kringen* (radio, broad. VPRO, 13 January 1995).
[147] 'Wat een verschil, we moeten vooruitkijken, niet achterom', *NRC* (12 January 1995).
[148] 'Indonesië is jullie gewetensprobleem'; 'Ceremoniemeester over staatsbezoek van koningin', *NRC* (22 July 1995).
[149] 'Oud zeer', *Volkskrant* (11 July 1995).
[150] 'Vijftig jaar Indonesië', *NRC* (16 August 1995).

Meanwhile, immigrant communities from the former colony were conspicuous by their absence in (and before) the 1994-1995 debate. Between 1945 and 1965, about 300,000 Europeans had come to the Netherlands, of whom about one-third had been 'full-blooded' Dutch who had lived in the DEI for a few years, or had been born there; and about two-thirds had been of mixed Indonesian-Dutch descent (so-called 'Indos' or 'Indische Nederlanders'), who had the legal status of European in the DEI, and had therefore been in principle eligible to migrate to the Netherlands. Moreover, a relatively small group of ethnic Indonesians had come to the ex-metropole: about 12,500 Moluccan fighters (and their relatives), who had served on the Dutch side in the Indonesian independence struggle. Busy reconstructing the country after the German occupation, the population had showed no interest in the newcomers, whom the Dutch government had reluctantly admitted only when the situation had become too unsafe for them in post-colonial Indonesia. Whereas Indonesian Dutch had assimilated silently and had merged into society (as had been expected of them), Moluccans had remained isolated on its fringes. Both had kept away from public discussions about the decolonisation war.[151]

Having remembered their communities' histories in private for decades, the Indos and the Moluccans had organised and emancipated themselves, and had begun to demand a place in the public sphere in the 1970s and 1980s, seeking both recognition and (financial) redress. However, when they had intervened in the public debate, it had not been primarily extreme Dutch violence between 1945 and 1949, in which they had been interested. They had had their own agendas.

For the Indos, the Japanese occupation in World War II had always held a more important place than the decolonisation war. Besides, for them, the first phase of the Indonesian revolution had been most horrific: the so-called 'Bersiap', an exceedingly violent period after the Declaration of Independence (August 1945 – March 1946). In the power vacuum after the Japanese occupation, nationalist Indonesian paramilitary organisations had targeted (Indische) Dutchmen and those who were suspected of having collaborated with them. Although they had had some successes in the years before, their main concern during the 1994-1995 debate – which coincided with the 50th celebration of the end of the Second World War – was still the inclusion of World War II in Asia in Dutch collective memory. The Moluccan community had been (and continued to be so in 1994-1995), above all else, concerned with the lack of respect

[151] E.g.: Bosma, *Post-Colonial Immigrants*, pp. 205-206; Pattynama, *Bitterzoet Indië*, pp. 15-17, 29; G. Oostindie, 'Ruptures and Dissonance. Post-colonial Migrations and the Remembrance of Colonialism in the Netherlands', in Rothermund, *Memories of Post-imperial Nations*, pp.47-48; Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, pp. 16-24, 189-198; Oostindie and Van der Kaaij, 'Een kwaad geweten', pp. 419-421.

paid to them by the Dutch government for their service in the *The Royal Netherlands East Indies Army* (KNIL) after 1949, and demanded the support of the Dutch government for their self-proclaimed independent Republic of the South Moluccas (1950). As such, Indo's and the Moluccans had rather sought recognition of their particular suffering in the years *before* and *after* the 'Police Actions' respectively.

In the third chapter of bilateral post-colonial relations, as in the first and second chapter, Indonesian officials – who did not attach any conditions to Suharto's invitation, and, like other Indonesian voices in the Dutch semicentenary debate, proclaimed to have forgiven and forgotten – did not put pressure on the Dutch to critically reappraise their past (at least not publicly). Thus, the debate that followed Suharto's invitation about the design of the state visit and the Queen's speech, did not take place in a 'Dutch vacuum', but really was an all-Dutch affair.

Graa Boomsma's trial (May 1994 – January 1995): the Nazi analogy

In May 1994, novelist Graa Boomsma found himself in court because of a statement he had made two years earlier. In March 1992, in an interview with the *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden* about his latest literary work *The last Typhoon,* he had allegedly compared the Dutch army's methods in the Indies to those of Hitler's *Schutzstaffel*. He had said: "They were not SS men, no, although they could be compared to them because of the things they did."[152] A higher court had ruled that a previous case against him had been wrongly dismissed. Now, one of many infuriated veterans hauled Boomsma up in court for libel. Initially, it was a civil case, with veterans' honour at stake. In January 1995, Boomsma sat in the dock again, this time charges were pressed by the state itself.[153] The trial was followed closely by the media and emotions ran high.

Boomsma certainly was not the first who (supposedly) drew a comparison to the German SS, or Nazi Germany. In fact, the comparison was as old as the crimes committed. It had forced itself upon contemporaries: it had been only months after the complete liberation of Dutch mainland on 5 May 1945, that the government had mobilised troops to go to the Indies.[154] On

[152] E. Schaafsma, 'Geen SS-ers, nee, ook al konden ze door de dingen die ze deden, daar wel mee worden vergeleken'*, Nieuwsblad van het Noorden* (6 March 1992).
[153] 'De tentakels van de Indië-lobby', *De Groene Amsterdammer* (11 January 1995).
[154] These were war volunteers. From 1946, deployments of divisions of conscripts followed.

the wagons of the first troop trains had been inscriptions like: *'If we only were NSB'ers!* (members of the Nationalist Socialist Movement in the Netherlands before and during World War II).[155] Later on, Dutch Communists had protested against troop deployments to Indonesia with the slogan: "Don't turn our boys into SS men". War critics had also spoken of '*Moffen*-methods' (a common derogatory term for Germans) to describe the practices of Dutch soldiers in the Indies. Seven per cent of the articles published between 1945 and 1950 that had reported on excessive violence by Dutch troops in Indonesia had contained comparisons to German and or Japanese war crimes.[156] These had been published in a number of leftist, progressive-church and former Resistance papers and periodicals. Leftist MP's had also used this "vicious weapon" in Parliament.[157]

For their part, ordinary soldiers had "almost stereotypically" drawn parallels to what the Germans had done. Even the highest military ranks had concluded early on that methods employed in South Celebes were remarkably similar to German and Japanese practices.[158] Tempers in parliament had run to unprecedented heights after *De Groene Amsterdammer* had published a letter (in February 1949) by a reservist who had compared the misconduct of the *Korps Speciale Troepen* (*Special Forces Corps*) around Djokdjakarta with a disproportionate collective reprisal by the Germans in the Dutch village of Putten.

Comparisons to Nazi Germany had cropped up again after Hueting's revealing television testimony (1969). The day after, *Trouw* had concluded: "[T]he Dutch army behaved no better in Indonesia than the German army in the occupied territories (…)".[159] The programme editors had received hundreds of, mostly angry, viewers' letters. Had war crimes committed by Dutch soldiers during the *Police Actions* been truly comparable to Gestapo and SS methods?

In response to the 1969 *Memorandum*, only the Pacifist Socialist Party had challenged government amnesty for crimes committed in the Indies, pointing at the prosecution for similar crimes by the Nazis and the Japanese Gestapo.[160] Even so, there had been illustrations in the press showing soldiers being led to a prisoners' wagon that said 'Neurenberg'.[161]

---

[155] L. De Jong, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog (1939-1945). Deel 12: Epiloog - tweede helft* (Amsterdam, 1988), p. 824.
[156] See fn 97. Of the 418 articles in the Memorandum press overview, 31 (7%) contained such references.
[157] J.A.A. van Doorn, *Gevangen in de tijd. Over generaties en hun geschiedenis* (Amsterdam, 2002), p. 53.
[158] *Ibid*., p. 56.
[159] 'Terugkijken Oorlogsmisdaden', *Trouw* (18 January 1969).
[160] Van Doorn, *Gevangen in de tijd*, p. 55.
[161] *Ibid*.

In the mid-1980s, there had been some uproar over the supposed presence of a large number of former Dutch SS men in the East during the War of Independence.[162] Research had revealed that after the defeat of Nazi Germany, an unknown number of former Dutch SS personnel had been given the choice of being interned, or fighting as soldiers in the DEI to rehabilitate themselves. The Ministry of War's policy of rehabilitating political offenders of the previous war through participation in the next one provided the army with many extra soldiers.[163]

A few years later, in the leaked manuscript of his *Epilogue* (1987), about the violent ending of Dutch colonial history in Indonesia, De Jong had emphasised the reversal of roles by drawing some disturbing comparisons. In his draft text, he had reasoned out the reprehensibly passive attitude of Dutch authorities: that the Dutch had been truly capable of German-like crimes must have been unthinkable to most people. In the conclusion, he had argued that double standards had been applied in the prosecution of the Japanese, the Germans and the Dutch.[164] De Jong had not been the first historian to apply the same standard to imperial violence, but any such parallels drawn by a scholar of his standing kicked up a fuss. Pressured by various parties, De Jong had been censored and had changed the paragraph in question upon publication (1988) to 'excesses' instead of 'war crimes'.[165] The final text had still contained comparisons to German and Japanese war crimes, yet no longer came from De Jong's pen. Under the subheading 'excesses at interrogations' he had quoted contemporaries who had compared Dutch interrogation methods to the Gestapo's, or had referred to them as 'relics from the Japanese Kenpeitai'.[166]

Comparisons to Nazi Germany duly reappeared in the 1994-1995 debate. In a show with the telling title *De Open Zenuw* (*The Exposed Nerve),* sociologist and author of *Indische Lessen* (*Indonesian Lessons*) (1995) Jacques Van Doorn observed that the comparison returned time and again.[167] The debate about the appropriateness of the SS-comparison would revolve around

[162] *Ibid*., p. 56.
[163] C. van Esterik, 'Politionele delinquenten onder de wapenen in "Ons Indië"', *NRC* (30 November 1985).
[164] Scagliola, *Last van de Oorlog,* pp. 227-228. Scagliola refers to De Jong's draft text of the war crimes paragraph, pp. 1426-1427.
[165] De Jong, *Epiloog (II)*, pp. 1011-1060. De Jong addressed the affair and the changes he made in a footnote on page 1012. On the manuscript affair see e.g.: A. de Baets, 'Censorship of History in France and the Netherlands (1945-2014): A Survey', *Deshima,* 8 (2014), p. 267; Scagliola, *Last van de Oorlog,* pp. 221-240.
[166] De Jong, *Epiloog (II),* p. 1035.
[167] 'De Open Zenuw: de veteranen (politionele acties in Indonesië')', dir. *Nova* (TV, 10 February 1995); H. Wesseling, 'Roeping', in R. Meijer (eds.), *Oostindisch doof: Het Nederlandse debat over de dekolonisatie van Indonesië* (Amsterdam, 1995), pp. 91, 93-94.

Boomsma's statement. "Anyone who does such a thing automatically becomes part of a ritual of anger and counter anger", the *Volkskrant* wrote.[168] This writer's lawsuit sparked fierce public debate about the freedom of speech and whether the country was still struggling to come to terms with the past.[169] Whereas amnestied veterans never came to court because of the crimes they had committed, the comparison between them and SS men did.

The SS comparison was thus old, but was first discussed in court when the millennium drew to a close. The comparison was no more controversial than before; it was just that the veterans who now turned their sights on Boomsma had fully organised themselves in the previous decades. Starting from the second half of the 1970s, when enough time had passed, they had slowly consolidated organisationally and had proactively sought recognition and appreciation.[170] They had been sent to war by the then government(s) in impossible circumstances, under false pretences; and upon their return – after the war had been lost at the negotiating table – they had not received the political and social recognition they had deserved. Back home, politicians and the people had wanted to forget about this lost colonial war as soon as possible. In the second half of the 1980s, the veteran community had managed to gain a firm foothold in the public debate on the Indonesian Independence War, successfully portraying themselves primarily as victims.[171] Shortly before the semicentenary, in the late 1980s and early 1990s, the veteran community had achieved significant successes. Amongst other victories, a national monument for servicemen fallen in the Indies and New Guinea had been erected (1988); an official and active veterans policy had been adopted, including monuments, celebrations, personal medals of honour and a one-time payment (1990); and apologies had been offered by the Minister of Defence (PvdA) for the cold welcome that had been given to them (1990). With their self-awareness now at an all-time high, the next time they were publicly vilified, one of them took the case to court.

The first hearing of the case against Boomsma was "a complete media circus", followed by a "burst of emotions".[172] As images from the first hearing reached Dutch living rooms. Veterans expressed their anger in front of the camera.[173] According to a representative of the *Bond van*

[168] 'Inschikken in de loopgraaf', *Volkskrant* (4 June 1994).
[169] Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, p. 184.
[170] E. Locher-Scholten, 'Die "Indische Generation" in den Niederlanden. Koloniales Erbe als innen- wie außenpolitisches Problem (1950-2005)', *WerkstattGeschichte*, 43 (2006), p.75.
[171] Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, p. 199.
[172] 'De tentakels van de Indië-lobby'; *Vesuvius* (TV, 24 November 1994).
[173] *Nova* (TV, 26 May 1994).

Wapenbroeders (*Union of Brothers in Arms*) – the oldest and largest national general association of former and active servicemen – the comparison fell short: the SS had been an army group led from above, tasked with murder.[174] After Boomsma was acquitted in the first instance, an appeal was lodged in January 1995. Journalists interviewed former soldiers who demonstrated at the courthouse.[175] In his capacity as advisor to veterans' organisations, Sjoerd Lapré said on behalf of the veterans: "(…) the German Waffen-SS is the greatest human-destruction organisation of all time, and to be compared to it is a flagrant insult. We do not accept this."[176] In the radio programme *Echo*, the chairman of the veterans' organisation *Vereniging Oud-Militairen Indiëgangers* (Former Dutch East Indies Soldiers' Association VOMI) reacted with dismay to the final acquittal.[177]

Not all veterans were resentful though. In contrast to the official position taken by veterans' organisations, some found the term 'SS methods' rather accurate. In a studio interview, one veteran divulged that Dutch soldiers had even used a German expression to describe how the Dutch wreaked havoc: The horrible way in which people were interrogated and then killed, "(…) was simply called *Umlegen,* the same word the Germans had used!"[178] Ger Vaders – veteran, journalist and former editor-in-chief of the newspaper that had conducted the 1992 interview with Boomsma – compared the way Dutch troops made indigenous villages ('Kampongs') disappear off the face of the earth to the massacre of Oradour-sur-Glane, the French village burned to the ground by a division of the Waffen-SS on the 10th June of 1944.[179]

Veterans may have dominated the debate, but it was not only their affair. In response to the trial, other contributors also considered the accuracy of the SS comparison. In a broadcast of the programme *Brandpunt*, for example, a day after the appeal hearing (12 January 1995), historian Locher-Scholten and journalist Herman Wigbold – who, as editor-in-chief of the news programme that had done the 1969 interview with Hueting had played an important part in triggering the 1969 post-imperial memory irruption – compared the way the Dutch army had

[174] *NOS Journaal* [8 p.m.] (TV, 26 May 1994).
[175] *Nieuws op 1* (radio, broad. NPS, 12 January 1995); *NOS Journaal* [8 p.m.] (TV, 12 January 1995).
[176] *Nova* (TV, 12 January 1995); *Nieuws op 1* (radio, 12 January 1995). For other examples of infuriated veterans see e.g. *Nova* (TV, 10 February 1995)
[177] H.V. Swart in: *Echo* (radio, 26 January 1995).
[178] *Hier en nu praatradio* (radio, broad. NCRV, 21 December 1994).
[179] *Nova* (TV, 12 January 1995). See e.g. S. Farmer, *Martyred Village: Commemorating the 1944 Massacre at Oradour-sur-Glane* (Berkeley, 1999).

burnt down Kampongs and slaughtered the indigenous population to the actions of the Americans in My Lai and of the Germans in the Dutch village of Putten.[180]

In connection with the SS comparison, the question of how systematic excessive violence by the Dutch army had been, presented itself again (though would not lead to a debate on scale, see subheading *Reprint of the 1969 Memorandum on Excesses*). The SS comparison namely implied that excessive violence by the Dutch army had been systematic and ordered from above. Boomsma's lawyer sought to hush up his client's affair, saying the comparison with SS personnel only applied to a limited number of people.[181]

Incidentally, the comparison by Boomsma also prompted some participants to think again about the actual number of SS men that had fought in the Indies. In an article about Boomsma's trial, *De Groene Amsterdammer* recalled that an estimated 15,000 to 30,000 'Dutch boys' had worn a SS uniform "a war earlier".[182] In a radio talk show, historian Pieter Drooglever argued that he had not seen "a shred of evidence" for it.[183]

Inside and outside the court, Boomsma stuck to his guns and did not mince his words. He called the rumpus "absurd": many people before him had mentioned the SS. Besides, he had not put Dutch soldiers on a par with SS men, he insisted. He had not meant to blame those who had been sent there involuntarily. On the contrary, they had become the dupe of a pointless political mandate.[184] Even after the final verdict had been handed down, Boomsma kept on repeating that he had never compared individual soldiers to SS men, which would have been "cheap, coarse and incorrect".[185] His trilogy was meant to investigate how ignorant soldiers had come to commit acts they did not think they were capable of.[186]

In his defence, he and his lawyer pleaded for the freedom of speech, certainly in the context of a public debate, and stressed it had only been a metaphor.[187] Boomsma was a man on a mission, and as a writer left with no other device than the free word and "razor-sharp

[180] *Brandpunt* (TV, 13 January 1995).
[181] *Nieuws op 1* (radio, 12 January 1995).
[182] 'Boomsma voor de rechter', *De Groene Amsterdammer* (25 May 1994).
[183] *De ronde tafel van Pam* (radio, 13 February 1995).
[184] *Nova* (TV, 26 May 1994).
[185] *Dingen die gebeuren* (radio, 30 November 1995).
[186] *Punch* (radio, broad. VARA, 18 December 1995).
[187] *Nieuws op 1* (radio, 12 January 1995). About Boomsma and the freedom of speech see also: *Radiojournaal* (radio, 28 May 1994).

metaphors", "[f]or what else can you do as a writer to stir up the conscience of a people, or to stimulate it?", he asked.[188]

Considering the uproar the comparison caused, there was remarkably little reflection on the desirability of comparing violence. Some individuals objected to such penetrating metaphors because they would only sidetrack the discussion. The *Volkskrant* wrote: "[n]ew resistance is excited by introducing a loaded term like SS into the Indonesian context. In no time [the debate] then revolves around whether the Dutch were any better than the Germans. The discussion thus again [gets] sidetracked."[189] The historian Cees Fasseur argued in an edited collection of interviews with well-known authors, journalists and scholars that "[t]he use of metaphors makes everyone adopt a position, which is not the basis for a fruitful discussion (…)."[190] Whether such comparisons were constructive or unhelpful was not a topic of broad discussion.

Ultimately, the judge sympathised with those at whom the comparison was aimed, and asked Boomsma for his understanding: "(…) surely you will agree with me that (…) the term SS men, in whatever context you use it, is extremely sensitive."[191] Even though the judge understood why the plaintiff felt wronged, he eventually ruled in the defendant's favour.

Boomsma's trial went beyond what Dutch soldiers had been up to in the Indies after 1945. In court, Boomsma also reflected on how the past had (not) been worked through over the past fifty years. In order to get a grip on the present state of memory affairs, some contributors to the debate looked at how former Axis powers had dealt (and were dealing) with their past. Boomsma, for example, did so in his defence plea:

> Mr. President. A ghost haunts the Netherlands. The spectre of unprocessed history. As the Germans describe it: die *unbewältigte Vergangenheit*. (…) People deal with their national past as with a nuclear power plant. With radioactive waste for which no definitive

[188] *Dingen die gebeuren* (radio, 9 June 1994).
[189] 'Verdringingsrituelen', *Volkskrant* (24 December 1994). See also: 'Smoezen en uitvluchten', *Volkskrant* (23 January 1995).
[190] C. Fasseur, 'Roeping', in Meijer, *Oostindisch doof*, p. 115. See also historians Wesseling in: 'Roeping', p. 93); and Locher-Scholten in: 'Nederland leert niet van zijn oorlogsmisdaden', *NRC* (20 May 1994). Locher-Scholten acknowledged that World War II offers "immediately recognizable metaphors," but rejected historical comparisons to other violence, asserting that "[s]uffering simply cannot be compared."
[191] *NOS Journaal* [8 p.m.] (TV, 26 May 1994).

> destination has yet been found. I came across this striking comparison in (…) [an] essay on the process of coming to terms with the Second World War in Germany and Japan. Many want to secretly bury the radioactive debris (…) [b]ut the past remains active, it proliferates, suddenly erupts, proves uncontrollable. (…).[192]

Boomsma had explained the unfinished business of Dutch Empire history so "clearly", namely with reference to Germany's "unresolved past", that the radio programme *OVT* released a complete recording of his statement.[193] It was not the burden and *Aufarbeitung* of Germany's imperial past, but of its Nazi past, that served as a point of reference here. Besides to Boomsma, there were others in the 1994-1995 debate to whom memory contestation in the neighbouring country was illuminating. A history teacher, for example, interviewed from his classroom about the lack of attention paid to Indonesia in the curriculum, reasoned that dealing with a problematic past was always challenging; in Germany too, National Socialism was not discussed for years and still caused commotion.[194] The *Volkskrant* noted that Germans had not rehabilitated deserters from their lost war either, and recent debate about it in the *Bundestag* demonstrated just "[h]ow laborious the questions of war and peace, justice and injustice, and right and wrong are".[195]

Shortly after Suharto's invitation, Boomsma's trial thus showed how divided the country was. It surely was a novelty that a novelist like Boomsma was in the eye of the storm. Even 'post-Hueting', production from the cultural sector in which the colonial war had figured, had been scanty, and had rarely addressed excessive violence.[196] Moreover, none of the novelists who, like Boomsma, had drawn comparisons to Nazi Germany in the 1950s, in 1969 and late 1980s, had ever been indicted, let alone brought to trial.[197]

[192] *OVT* (radio, broad. VPRO, 29 May 1994).
[193] *Ibid*.
[194] *Kenmerk* (TV, 7 April 1994).
[195] 'Niemand eert deserteur van verloren krijg', *Volkskrant* (23 December 1994).
[196] Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, pp. 180-187.
[197] A. H. den Boef, 'Met heldendom in Indië was al lang afgerekend', *Volkskrant* (25 May 1994). Den Boef identified six novels on decolonisation in which comparisons to Nazi Germany had been drawn, published in 1951, 1953, 1959, 1969, 1988, and 1989.

Van Liempt's 'A Kind Word for War' (May 1994): international disapproval of 'Police Actions'

Ad van Liempt – journalist, non-fiction writer and editor-in-chief of the current affairs television program *Nova* – was puzzled by the fact that a country would start a war two years after its liberation, against the will of almost the entire world. This was why he had written *Een Mooi Woord Voor Oorlog* (*A Kind Word For War*) (1994), about the intriguing Dutch decision-making process during the two months preceding the first 'Police Action' in 1947.[198] In his book, he addressed two questions that concerned many participants in the 1994-1995 debate.

First, contributors wondered: why did we go there to begin with? At the time, many had thought of Dutch military intervention in the Indies as a continuation of World War II – so it was stressed by exonerating voices in the debate, mainly those of veterans. After the capitulation of Nazi Germany, Dutch soldiers had allegedly believed they needed to continue the work of the Allied forces and free the Indies from the Japanese and their legacy of Indonesian nationalism.[199] A former DEI army chaplain confirmed "[w]hen we were liberated, the general mood was: "and now we will liberate Indonesia too".[200] An ex-sergeant remembered that after the liberation by the Allies, young men had felt obliged to sign up for the Indies.[201] Like others who had volunteered at the time, a former resistance fighter explained he had thought of the Japanese as an enemy of the same kind as Nazi Germany.[202] At the beginning of the Indonesian anniversary year, historian Fasseur testified to the perceived Japanese influence on Indonesian nationalism. "In those first years (…) many Dutch people saw the [Indonesian] Republic as a Japanese creation (…) [T]he Republic was often identified with the enemies of the Second World War."[203]

Contributors recalled that, in the eyes of many, Sukarno had been a collaborator.[204] After Japanese troops had occupied the DEI in 1942, Sukarno cooperated with them, assuming it

[198] A. van Liempt in: *Vesuvius* (TV, 24 November 1994).
[199] E.g.: *Via Ria* (TV, broad. AVRO, 16 January 1995); 'Voorheen Nederlandsch-Indië. Episode 2: De Strijd', *Close up,* dir. J. Bosdriesz and F. Glissenaar (TV, broad. AVRO, 28 December 1994); G. Vaders in: *Woensdagbijlage* (radio, broad. AVRO, 23 March 1994).
[200] C. Sobering in: 'Wij wenden ons tot God en Jan Soldaat', dir. *Werelden* (TV, broad. IKON, 17 August 1995).
[201] H. van Groenendaal in: 'Episode 2: sergeant H. van Groenendaal'*, Indiëstrijders*, dir. F. Bromet (TV, broad. VPRO, 13 August 1995).
[202] *Het Capitool* (TV, broad. NPS, 15 January 1995).
[203] C. Fasseur in: *2 Vandaag* (TV, broad. EO/VOO, 11 January 1995).
[204] N. Mathijssen, 'Terrorist of Vrijheidsstrijder?', *De Groene Amsterdammer* (12 August 2020). Sukarno was seen as a collaborator not only in the Netherlands. In other Western countries, he was seen as "Asian Hitler".

would eventually win him independence from the Netherlands – which was indeed promised to them in October 1944. Sukarno had even fundamentally sided with the Axis powers and had praised Hitler and the brave German nation. Quite regularly in the 1994-1995 debate, he was compared to Anton Mussert, the leader of the Dutch National-Socialist Movement.[205] A veteran stated on the national news: "We went there thinking "what Mussert did here, Sukarno did there." (…) [w]e thought that these people had to be liberated (…)".[206] Be that as it may, incriminating voices in the 1994-1995 debate, such as Van Liempt, were disturbed by the reversal of roles – some veterans included.[207]

Secondly, contributors asked: why did 'we' intervene militarily despite international pressure? Participants highlighted the Dutch complete misappraisal of the new post-'45, anti-colonial world order, and the international community's strong disapproval of Dutch military action in the Indies. In *A Kind Word For War* (1994), Van Liempt reckoned the Dutch had become "unworldly" after having been isolated in the Second World War.[208]

Like De Jong in his *Epilogue* (1988), several historians and journalists who participated in the 1994-1995 debate described how, whenever the Dutch-Indonesian conflict had come up at the United Nations (UN), almost the entire international community had taken the Republic under protection and how international opposition to the Dutch 'Police Actions' had facilitated defeat.[209] With the two 'Police Actions' (in July 1947 and December 1948), the 'domestic' conflict had become internationalised. They had been condemned in UN Security Council resolutions and aborted under international pressure. The historian Herman Von der Dunk explained that the self-declared Republic of Indonesia, "as a symbol of the struggle for independence and nationalism, had (…) the world's sympathy on her side".[210] Heavily pressured by the UN and threatened with the discontinuation of U.S. Marshall Aid, the

---

See: D. Webster, *Fire and the Full Moon. Canada and Indonesia in a Decolonising World* (Vancouver, 2009), p. 139.

[205] E.g. *De Schrijftafel* (radio, 17 August 1995); *Nova* (TV, 10 February 1995).

[206] *NOS Journaal* [8 p.m.] (TV, 12 January 1995).

[207] E.g. *Brandpunt* (TV, 13 August 1995); 'Poncke Princen', dir. *Marathoninterview* (radio, broad. VPRO, 18 August 1995).

[208] J. Tromp about Van Doorn's book in: 'Generaal Spoor wilde koste wat kost oorlog in Indië', *Volkskrant* (18 May 1994).

[209] De Jong, *Epiloog (II),* pp. 715-722. See e.g. Fasseur in: *2 Vandaag* (TV, 11 January 1995); Drooglever in: *Indonesië* (radio, broad. TELEAC, 21 October 1995). See also: 'Met alle geweld moest Indië heroverd worden; 1945/1949', *NRC* (12 January 1995); 'Bijna niemand was tegen de 'morele nederlaag' in Indonesië', *AD* (14 January 1995); 'Na vier eeuwen op weg naar een volwassen relatie', *Trouw* (12 August 1995).

[210] 'De oorlog om 'Indië': terugblik na 50 jaar', *Trouw* (9 December 1995).

Netherlands had been forced to serious negotiations with the 'insurgents' at the Round Table Conference. Historian Jan Bank concluded that "[i]n the end, the cabinet yielded to world opinion".[211]

Van Liempt and other contributors to the 1994-1995 debate stressed that the three consecutive Dutch governments between 1945 and 1949 had clearly miscalculated the new post-war balance of power.[212] They had misjudged the Indonesian Independence struggle as a domestic issue and underestimated the international importance of the decolonisation conflict in the new post-colonial world order. Writer Jan Wolkers concluded that: "politicians of the size of garden gnomes (…), understood nothing of what was going on in the world. (…)".[213]A journalist of NRC figured it must have been the Netherlands' hundred-year neutrality that had alienated it from the forces regulating international affairs.[214] Von der Dunk thought it had been the majority belief of the Dutch government and people after 1945 about having pursued a model colonial policy that had led to a misapprehension of the true nature of the Republican liberation movement and post-war international relations.[215]

Several participants in the 1994-1995 debate condemned in no uncertain terms the then political elite against the backdrop of international disapproval. They criticised its obstinacy.[216] One filmmaker emphasised that the Dutch political elite had been warned time and again that the only real option had been the unconditional recognition of Indonesia's independence: "With a mixture of bad faith, good intentions, lack of a sense of reality, but also blindness, they hung on for another four years and found out it couldn't be done."[217] Some even maintained that the international community had prevented worse. In *Trouw*, a journalist wrote that it had been "thanks only to the resolute action of the Security Council that [PM's Louis] Beel and [Willem] Drees did not saddle us with our own Vietnam."[218] Amongst them was also Von der Dunk, who believed: "an outright war would undoubtedly have degenerated into a disastrous sort of

[211] 'Indonesië op de achtergrond', *NRC* (24 November 1995).
[212] E.g. historians Von der Dunk, 'Een open samenleving moet zijn zelfbeeld kunnen herzien', *NRC* (19 January 1995); and J. Bank, 'Een zwijgzaam bestuurder in de politiek', *NRC* (9 September 1995). Also e.g. *Thema: Herinneringen aan Nederland (1945-1962)*, dir. H. Hofland and H. Keller (TV, broad. VPRO, 17 December 1995); S.W. Couwenberg, 'Nederland wilde zijn beschavingsmissie niet opgeven', *Volkskrant* (14 January 1995).
[213] *Radio uit* (radio, 13 February 1995).
[214] 'Een exercitie in zelfkwelling', *NRC* (13 January 1995).
[215] Von der Dunk, 'Een open samenleving moet zijn zelfbeeld kunnen herzien'.
[216] E.g. Boomsma, 'Laat verzoening het winnen van verbittering', *NRC* (12 January 1995).
[217] 'Karbouwenhuid', *NRC* (30 August 1995).
[218] 'Willem Dreesplantsoen moet worden herdoopt in Poncke Princenplantsoen', *Trouw* (23 December 1994).

Indo-China or Vietnam for the Netherlands. (…) That [the Police Actions] had to be quickly broken off under the compulsion of the UNO and the US, has only been a blessing for the Netherlands (…)."[219] To make matters worse, some stressed that in December 1949, The Hague still had not learned its lesson. One professor of constitutional law, for example, reminded readers that:

> That was not the end of it because, during the 1949 sovereignty transfer, we still did not want to give up New Guinea. (…) In 1962, the UN (…) had to make clear for the second time that no country still stood by us.[220]

Some contributors described, to some exculpatory effect, how the Dutch had perceived international resistance at the time of the 'Police Actions'. They explained to the public that the then government, parliament and overwhelming majority of the population had believed the international community misunderstood them. It was the Netherlands against the rest of the world, which did not seem to understand that it was busy doing its duty. As the legitimate colonial ruler, the Netherlands was to protect the Dutch and the local population against a handful of ex-collaborators and insurgents, who thwarted plans of future co-determination of the Indonesian people. The ruling elite was indifferent to the anger of the international community, of which it had an inadequate understanding. It was thought that the UN wanted to prove itself at their expense, through the Indonesian question. Reluctantly, the Dutch ultimately gave in; the evil outside world prevented its good intentions from coming to fruition.[221]

A very vocal share of the veteran community squarely defended Dutch military action despite knowing that "the colonial era (had been) over".[222] It was a common strategy of veterans and their representatives in the semicentenary debate to turn things around when confronted with soldiers' wrongdoings in Indonesia. Besides stressing how, after liberating Indonesia from the Japanese, they had brought 'order and peace' in the ensuing *Bersiap* period, veterans and

[219] 'De oorlog om 'Indië': terugblik na 50 jaar'. See e.g. also: 'Willem Dreesplantsoen moet worden herdoopt in Poncke Princenplantsoen'.
[220] 'Graag een echt Indonesië-debat', *NRC* (11 January 1995). Also e.g. 'Hamid moest Hendrik heten', *AD* (16 December 1995).
[221] E.g.: 'Hamid moest Hendrik heten'; Von der Dunk, 'Een open samenleving moet zijn zelfbeeld kunnen herzien'; 'Luchtmobiele missie sterft stille dood', *NRC* (22 March 1995); *Nova* (TV, 8 February 1995); 'Na vijftig jaar', *Trouw* (17 August 1995); 'Geachte redactie: toen twijfelde niemand aan onze nobele taak', *Volkskrant* (21 January 1995).
[222] Veteran in: 'Alsnog een ereteken, want ze brachten orde en rust', *Volkskrant* (1 March 1995).

veterans' organisations stressed the humanitarian work they had done there.[223] During Boomsma's appeal trial, for instance, veterans demonstrated in front of the courthouse, pointing out their good deeds. They emphasised the helpfulness, mercy, and generosity of the Dutch soldier; and the gratitude of the Indonesian people, who allegedly had been sad to see them go. The NRC reported on site on one of the protesting veterans, who pulled a photo from his pocket showing Dutch soldiers building a bridge. "We took care of the entire infrastructure. All [that is now] forgotten (…) Only a few excesses attract attention."[224] According to Lapré, chairman of the *Stichting Japanse Ereschulden,* Dutch soldiers had "wholeheartedly slaved away" and their work had "garnered the admiration of UN observers."[225]

None other than vice-premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs Hans Van Mierlo (centrist party *Democrats 66*, D66) was unwilling to condemn Dutch military intervention despite international opposition. In a broadcast of *Het Capitool* in April 1995, he said that, in retrospect, the Netherlands had operated out of step with world history in 1947 and 1948, trying to violently hold on to its colony with 'Police Actions'.[226] Still, he called the actions understandable, given the time in which they were taken.

The answers to the two key questions posed by Van Liempt show how moral judgement in the centenary balanced different arguments. Participants who tried to pass a moral judgement balanced out different considerations. Whereas contemporaries' believes of good intentions and good deeds may have comforted some around the turn of the millennium, the 'reversal of roles' and the international censure of the 'Police Actions' disturbed others. In the end, many other arguments would weigh in.

[223] E.g. vice-chairman of the VOMI in: 'Oud-Indiëgangers niet naar Indonesië: Geen rancune', *AD* (14 August 1995); editor of the magazine of the *Bond van Wapenbroeders* in: *Vesuvius* (TV, 24 November 1994).
[224] 'Emoties lopen hoog op bij Fries schrijversproces', *NRC* (12 January 1995).
[225] 'Objectief oordeel over de strijd in Indië is nog steeds gewenst', *AD* (8 September 1994). See also Lapré in: 'Guerrilla tegen het nationaal schuldgevoel', *AD* (28 January 1995). See also 'Jan Soldaat ging naar Indië om te helpen', *AD* (14 January 1995); and VOMI vice-chairman Lentz in: 'Ik heb helemaal geen koloniale oorlog gevoerd', *Trouw* (7 January 1995).
[226] *Het Capitool* (TV, 2 April 1995). The next day, he was quoted in all national dailies. See e.g.: 'Van Mierlo betreurt politionele acties', *Volkskrant* (3 April 1995); 'Van Mierlo: politionele acties historisch gezien foute reactie', *NRC* (3 April 1995); 'Acties in Indië historisch gezien foute reactie', *AD* (3 April 1995).

The visa (re)application of Poncke Princen (December 1994): the mobilisation of veterans

From all of this, the question arose whether conscientious objectors and deserters had not been right after all. Newspapers published readers' letters expressing understanding of why some who had suddenly found themselves in the role of oppressor, had deserted or refused to fight.[227] This fundamental question was discussed in connection with another specific affair. When, by the end of 1994, the deserter Jan 'Poncke' Princen, still resident in Indonesia and now an old man in poor health, re-applied for a visa on humanitarian grounds to spend Christmas with his family in the Netherlands, a media frenzy broke out.

In March 1946, the twenty-year-old Princen had been called up for military service in the DEI. He had refused service and fled to France, but had been arrested and sent to the Indies in December 1946 after all. In a prison camp on West Java, Princen had served a sentence of several months for his attempt to evade military service. Soon after his release, in September 1948, he had deserted while on leave. In fact, Princen had sided with 'the enemy': he had joined the republican army and had been militarily active in ambushes and bombardments of Dutch troops. The Dutch army command had given the order to eliminate Princen, but an attempt on his life in August 1949 had been in vain. Princen would never live in his home country again.

In August 1993 Princen applied for a visa to enter the Netherlands but was refused. The affair caused upheaval, though mainly among veterans. In 1980, they had already threatened to 'wait for' Princen whenever he would visit. A successful reapplication by Princen in December 1994 finally plunged the country into great turmoil. A radio host noted that the discussion on Dutch violence during the Indonesian freedom struggle "erupted in full force" after Princen's visit in December 1994. In another current affair programme on national television, the country was said to be "buzzing" since his visit.[228] Upon his return, Princen acknowledged the "tremendous commotion" his visit had caused.[229]

"One moment one never hears the name, and the next one hears it everywhere. Poncke this, Poncke that," commented a radio programme in January 1995.[230] Even though he had been one of twenty-six defectors, all eyes were on him. After the transfer of sovereignty, he had been

[227] E.g. 'Gesprek Kooijmans met Poncke Princen nodig', *Volkskrant* (2 April 1994); 'Poncke Princen 3', *Telegraaf* (22 December 1994).
[228] *Brandpunt* (TV, 13 January 1995).
[229] *Marathoninterview* (radio, 18 August 1995).
[230] *Het Roze Rijk*, (radio, broad. NPS, 14 January 1995).

a high-profile human rights activist in Indonesia. Throughout his post-independence career in Indonesia, he had been imprisoned by the Indonesian state for his critical views multiple times.[231] In 1992 Princen had received the prestigious *Yap Thiam Hien Human Rights Award*.[232] Two years later, the visa affair swayed Dutch national politics and public debate. The Dutch struggled to recognise the historical right of deserters and the estimated 6,000 conscripts who had refused to go to the Indies.[233]

On several occasions during the 1994-1995 debate, Princen explained why he had deserted in 1948. He believed it had everything to do with a traumatic experience during the Second World War. In 1943, he had been arrested while attempting to flee the country and enlist in the Allied forces, convicted of aiding the enemy, and sentenced to death. Although he had been lucky – the country was liberated before the sentence was carried out –, he refused to repeat in Indonesia what he had "been a victim of" himself.[234] Princen remembered that, even before his deployment in the Indies, he had "(…) found it odd that we were actually repeating what we had just experienced, namely [the] German occupation."[235]

In a marathon-interview, Princen recalled from the time he was still serving his home country, how he and his comrades would sing songs in imitation of the SS: "In the east there soon will be a glow. All of Djokja is on fire. That's how it should be! (…)".[236] Before he defected, Princen had discussed with his comrades in the army on which side right lay. "It was tragic that my friends thought of themselves as a kind of *Übermenschen*, who had to teach the *Untermenschen*, the Indonesians, something," Princen explained.[237] He remembered thinking: "the other side is right. Just as we were right about the Germans," and felt history was on his side.[238] In a letter to his family after he had deserted, Princen had imagined "[h]ow the Germans would laugh if they'd know everything that happens here."[239]

---

[231] 'Spijt betekent voor Poncke Princen ontrouw aan idealen', *Trouw* (12 January 1995).
[232] Awarded by the NGO the *Human Rights Study Center Foundation* (YAPUSHAM) to Indonesian individuals or organisations who contributed greatly to the advancement of human rights in the country.
[233] *Kenmerk* (TV, 20 April 1994).
[234] *Hier en nu praatradio* (radio, 17 April 1995).
[235] *Marathoninterview* (radio, 18 August 1995).
[236] *Ibid.*
[237] *Interview van Clary Polak met Poncke Princen*, dir. NIBG (radio, broad. NIBG, 11 January 1995).
[238] *Hier en nu praatradio* (radio, 17 April 1995). See e.g. also: *Interview van Clary Polak met Poncke Princen* (radio, 11 January 1995); 'De consequentie van een keuze', dir. *Damokles* (radio, broad. KRO, 26 September 1995); *Aan de grens van de herinnering* (TV, broad. IKON, 4 May 1995).
[239] *Damokles* (radio, 26 September 1995).

He used a comparison with resistance fighters in the Second World War to convince even his biggest critics in the semicentenary debate: "[Ted] Meines [chairman of the *Veteranenplatform*] helped Jews during the war. (…) It was a choice for the party that was weakest at the time. (…) [I]n Indonesia, I was also faced with the choice, (…) strong or weak. And my sympathies were on the weak side."[240] Princen, like some other participants, sought to create understanding for the Indonesian resistance by comparing the Indonesian striving for and attainment of independence to the liberation from Nazi Germany.[241]

Princen's visa application caused a storm of indignation in large parts of the veteran community – even beyond the portion that had furiously rejected the SS comparison. The fact that his visa application was even being considered was enough to "spoil their Christmas", said the *Workgroup Indie Veterans Netherlands* chairman.[242] As the community's mouthpiece, Meines took a stand: to show mercy to Princen would be unfair to the more than 200,000 soldiers who had completed their military service. He recalled that, after Princen had switched sides, there had been a price on his head: Meines and his fellows had been chasing him for not doing his part.[243] To these veterans, it was a matter of principle. What Princen had done was still beyond them, even if there was a grain of truth in the SS comparison. Veterans who opposed Princen's visa in principle did not seem to think there could be any reason whatsoever to betray country and comrades, not even immoral practices that were reminiscent of the SS. One veteran in the debate remembered he had disapproved of the SS-like methods used, yet had never thought of betraying his comrades: he "surely was no Princen".[244]

Exasperated veterans were not the only ones who were dead set against Princen's visit. The issue mobilised a remarkable number of citizens to contribute to programmes like *Hier en nu praatradio* – amongst whom also many critics. They were no less principled on the matter. In an episode aired a few days before Christmas 1994, one listener wondered how Foreign Minister Van Mierlo would have reacted if Princen "had been a German". When asked about Von Staufenberg, who had carried out an attack on Hitler on 20 July 1944, another listener maintained that "a deserter is a deserter".[245]

---

[240] *Aan de grens van de herinnering* (TV, 4 May 1995).
[241] *Hier en nu praatradio* (radio, 17 April 1995). See e.g. also: *Hier en nu praatradio* (radio, 21 December 1994); *Radiojournaal* (radio, 25 December 1994).
[242] G. Veenendaal quoted in: 'Onafhankelijkheidsdag Indonesië al lang erkend. Ambassadeur in Jakarta gaat naar de festiviteiten', *Trouw* (28 December 1994). See also Hueting quoting veterans in: *Dingen die gebeuren* (radio, 10 January 1995).
[243] *Aan de grens van de herinnering* (TV, 4 May 1995).
[244] *Tabee Toean*, dir. T. Verheul (TV, broad. NCRV, 17 August 1995).
[245] *Hier en nu praatradio* (radio, 21 December 1994).

On the other side were those who wished Princen a merry Christmas with his family. Some of them – such as the group *Welkom Poncke Princen*, campaigning in front of the courthouse during Boomsma's appeal hearing – simply hoped his stopover would open up the debate on the contested colonial past, which they thought was long overdue.[246] Although referring to 1940-1945 was more in vogue amongst Princen's opponents, some who supported granting him a visa also had the Second World War in mind. Another listener of *Hier en nu praatradio,* for example, referred to the release of the last German war criminals serving life sentences in the Dome prison in the city of Breda, in January 1989: "[I]f the Breda Three can go free, then Poncke Princen can go too."[247] A *Volkskrant* reader argued that the illegality of desertion was not enough to condemn him or deny a visa. After all, the resistance in World War II was also "illegal".[248]

The few veterans who spoke up for Princen appreciated that he had done what he believed was right, just as he had done opposing the Germans. KNIL-officer Donald Poetiray admitted he had experienced a heartfelt hatred for Princen, but when he had heard that Princen had fought in the resistance against the Germans (just like himself), he had understood that the man was "simply principled". He wondered why people made such a fuss about Princen's visit and asked what they themselves had done "to stop the Germans."[249]

In the end, Foreign Minister Van Mierlo let Princen in. Those who had feared that "a club of veterans" would "dictate to a democracy" were reassured.[250] While it was not the first time that Princen visited his home country since Indonesian independence in 1949, it was the first time he did so on a Dutch visa.[251] Still, it was not a particularly enjoyable stay. Princen was asked not to talk to the press – a demand he did not comply with – and received anonymous death threats from infuriated veterans.

[246] *Nova* (TV, 12 January 1995).
[247] *Hier en nu praatradio* (radio, 21 December 1994). Also e.g.: 'Drie van Breda', *Volkskrant* (24 December 1994); *Dingen die gebeuren* (radio, 10 January 1995).
[248] 'Fatsoen is zoek in affaire rond Princen', *Volkskrant* (24 December 1994).
[249] *OVT* (radio, 29 January 1995).
[250] *Hier en nu praatradio* (radio, 21 December 1994).
[251] In 1978 and 1984, he had gotten a Benelux-visa, with which he had circumvented Dutch authorities. 'Een bijzonder dappere daad', *Trouw* (20 December 1994).

The reactions to Princen's successful visa application illustrate how the semicentenary debate was emotionally charged. For large parts of the veteran community, it continued to be an existential issue that triggered an aggressive response. Already in the 1950s, inwards, pressure had been exerted to keep quiet about extreme violence; outwards, critical journalists had occasionally been harassed. When in 1969 whistleblower veteran Hueting had lashed out, a majority of veterans had rejected the accusations, and Hueting and his family had been threatened. During the semicentenary, organisations and 'high-profile' veterans (still) left little room for criticism by 'in- or outsiders'.[252] A handful of 'dissidents' and deserters in their ranks who were openly self-critical fuelled the debate. Antipathy against Princen was stronger now than during his previous visits, when he had stayed under the radar.[253] Around the turn of the millennium, emotions simply ran higher because Princen came to the fore this time, when heated debate divided his motherland.

Even though enraged veterans could not prevent Princen from coming, the conditions attached to his visa were certainly a partial success for the veterans' lobby. Boards of veterans' organisations intervened prominently in the debate on behalf of their members.[254] Ultimately, a fairly small "bigmouthed" veteran lobby with "liaisons in the media world" would prove highly effective in manipulating the press and shaping memory politics in the semicentenary.[255] Granting him a visa, yet forbidding him to talk to the press, the authorities steered a middle course between competing claims – an approach that characterised government memory politicy in the anniversary year.

The Princen affair further exposes how moralising patterns in thinking about the Second World War were replicated in the debate on empire. The binary frame used to make sense of 1940-1945 reappeared in the discussion on Princen's visa. Few were indifferent to the matter or nuanced in their opinion. As one columnist put it: "Now [Princen] is back in Indonesia, leaving Holland in doubt. Was he good, or bad at the time? (…). If they say he was bad, they call him a traitor, a defector, a deserter. And if they say he was good, he was a freedom fighter who stood up for the rights of an oppressed people."[256] To historian Wesseling, it was understandable that people were thinking about the colonial past and Princen in terms of 'right'

[252] Oostindie and Van der Kaaij, 'Een kwaad geweten', pp. 413-418.
[253] *Nova* (TV, 10 February 1995).
[254] In the mid-1990s, there were still about 120,000 Indies veterans, approximately 40% of whom were members of a veterans' organisation. This membership percentage, based on email correspondence with the Nederlands Veteraneninstituut, is unofficial. See also: Ministry of Defence, *De veteranennota* (2022-2023), p. 7.
[255] Hueting in: *Nieuwsradio* (radio, broad. VOO, 21 August 1995); L. de Jong in: 'Met een ruim hart naar Indonesië', *AD* (11 January 1995).
[256] *Dingen die gebeuren* (radio, 10 January 1995).

and 'wrong'. After all, it was still challenging to write about World War II differently, he concluded in a radio programme in January 1995.[257] The binary framework and moralising patterns found in the visa affair were characteristic of the wider debate.

Deetman's proposal for a political debate (January 1995): a typically Dutch debate

During the New Year meeting with the parliamentary press, the Chair of the House of Representatives Wim Deetman proposed a political debate on the course of events surrounding the independence of the DEI. He argued that all the recent commotion showed the great need for a political debate, which was to be completed before the Queen's upcoming state visit to Indonesia. Deetman was not the first political figure to call for debate. Members of PM Wim Kok's own Labour Party, Maarten van Traa (MP and foreign affairs spokesperson for the PvdA) and Minister Pronk, had preceded him. Coming from the chamber president himself, the proposal now caused a stir.

Deetman's proposal set off a short-lived nation-wide discussion about such a debate. None other than national historian De Jong was asked for his opinion in a newspaper interview, a few days after Deetman had launched his idea. He declared himself to be in favour: a discussion in the House of Representatives could be useful in familiarising the public with the historical facts. In the same interview, De Jong was asked whether the Dutch stood out above other empires. He responded in the affirmative: the way the past was dealt with, made the Netherlands stand out positively: "[We do better than the rest] [i]n so far as a debate takes place and so many years later people ask themselves whether excesses were committed, [and] whether the Netherlands conducted the right policy."[258] De Jong believed that the 1994-1995 debate was "a typically Dutch phenomenon" and thought it "remarkable" that discussions on the subject did not take place in other former metropoles.[259]

When Deetman's plan was up in the air, historian Locher-Scholten too was asked if she expected any good from it. She firmly believed that no country had ever addressed its history this way, and was fascinated by this "unique solution" – an organised political or social debate,

[257] *In gesprek* (radio, broad. AVRO, 30 January 1995). See also Wesseling in: 'Dekolonisatie vergelijkenderwijs', *NRC* (17 August 1995).
[258] 'Met een ruim hart naar Indonesië'.
[259] *Ibid*.

fifty years later, aimed at channeling the emotions that had arisen.[260] In the *Volkskrant* she explained why the Dutch were taking a lead here:

> Britain and France have not yet shown similar reactions to their colonial past. The decolonisation process was [namely] less painful in India. It had been set in motion before 1940 and [in contrast to the Netherlands] Britain kept control of its course. (…) The French unprocessed past rather concerns the Vichy period, while reckoning with the painful decolonisation of Algeria – similar to the Indies – is hampered by (…) Algerian fundamentalism.[261]

Locher-Scholten was not as approving as De Jong though. How such a debate would be conducted mattered just as much to her. She was "a bit wary" that it would turn out to be a "right/wrong debate", which she thought was just as typically Dutch.[262]

In the end, an organised political debate never came about. Public opinion was divided on the plan: a poll showed that a slight majority of the Dutch population (53%) was against a national political debate (35% was in favour and 12% had no opinion).[263] Political preference did not play a role here: Opponents were in the majority among supporters of governing and opposition parties.[264] While there was public dissension on the question whether Dutch military action (of which 81% 'had heard') had been justified – 30% answered 'yes', 37% 'no', and 37% could not make up their mind –, a national debate clearly was not appealing.

Deetman's proposal also met with firm political resistance, including from his own party, the Christian democratic party CDA. According to MP and foreign affairs spokesman Jaap De Hoop Scheffer (CDA), Deetman had spoken in his capacity as chairman, not on behalf of the party. The social-democratic PvdA was divided, but the other three biggest (centre- to centre-right) political parties (D66, CDA, and the liberal conservative VVD) did not have to think long to reject the proposal.[265] They felt that a political debate was unnecessary. Amongst

[260] 'Moralisme helpt ons Indië niet verwerken', *Volkskrant* (16 January 1995). See also Locher-Scholten in: *Dingen die gebeuren* (radio, 10 January 1995).
[261] 'Moralisme helpt ons Indië niet verwerken'.
[262] *Ibid*.
[263] NIPO poll results were presented in: *2 Vandaag* (TV, 11 January 1995).
[264] 'Meerderheid tegen Indië-debat', *AD* (13 January 1995).
[265] E.g. '"SGP: Koningin pas in 1999 naar Indonesië"', *Trouw* (25 January 1995). In Cabinet Lubbers III (Nov 1989–Aug 1994), CDA had 54 seats, PvdA 49, VVD 22, and D66 12. CDA and PvdA were in government;

other things, they pointed out that it had already taken place in 1969. As back then, the political elite now contended that the debate and sorting out of the past should not take place in the Lower House, but in civil society instead.[266] PM Kok – who had rejected an earlier, similar proposal from his party colleague Minister Pronk – believed one should be careful assessing decisions of the then government *ex-post*, but had nothing against the ongoing public debate. When his proposal was dismissed after a few weeks of consideration, Deetman did not want to comment. According to his spokesman, he had never explicitly intended a parliamentary debate.

In the 1994-1995 debate, the political elite did not promote self-critical historical reflection and kept out of the public debate as much as possible. This was nothing new: until 1969, successive governments had successfully staved off a debate on the war's legitimacy and extreme violence, without significant opposition. After Hueting's revelations, the centre-right cabinet had reluctantly commissioned an investigation resulting in the 1969 *Memorandum*, which it had kept a tight rein on. It had got parliament to agree to the condoning conclusion that apart from instances of excessive violence, the Dutch army had behaved correctly. Subsequent cabinets had tried to curb debate as much as possible.

There had been several reasons for The Hague's longstanding 'cover-up' policy, aside from the fragile relationship with Indonesia. First, the political elite had tried to cover up their (predecessors') involvement. The three major political parties after 1949 – PvdA, (predecessors of the) CDA, and VVD – had all been part of cabinets that had been at the helm during the decolonisation of the DEI, and had ordered the 'Police Actions'. Besides, successive governments had sought to appease veterans, who had pushed back on further critical examination. The 'cover-up' policy had been facilitated by the lack of pressure from Jakarta for critical historical reassessment, and the Dutch political culture of consensus, favourable to neutralising the impact of disclosures.

Yet there had been something of a right-left divide since 1949, and again in the 1994-1995 debate. Conservative and confessional circles had generally supported the colonial project, and the attempt to prevent the colony's independence militarily. Therefore, the (right wing of the)

VVD and D66 in opposition. In Cabinet Kok I (Aug 1994–May 1998), PvdA had 37 seats, CDA 34, VVD 31, and D66 24. PvdA, VVD, and D66 were in government; CDA in opposition.

[266] 'Een verscheurde ziel om een traumatische interventie', *Volkskrant* (21 January 1995); *Met het oog op morgen* (radio, broad. NOS, 24 January 1995).

VVD had traditionally maintained close relations with veterans. The Social Democrats, on the contrary, had been jointly responsible for both 'Police Actions', but had always been deeply divided over military action in the DEI. After Hueting's revelations in 1969, international events prompted them (then the biggest opposition party) to call for critical introspection. In the 1994-1995 debate, few social democrats (Van Traa and Pronk) deviated from the official party line and advocated a more critical assessment of Dutch decolonisation policy. In the mid-1990s, small leftist opposition parties – the Socialist Party and especially GroenLinks – unambiguously championed critical introspection.[267]

Returning to the reasons for opposition to Deetman's proposal, the belief that the Indonesians had 'forgiven and forgotten' was a much-heard argument too. The VVD leader argued that there was no "foreign-policy need" to do so – the Indonesian ambassador had "made that perfectly clear".[268] Even the leader of the biggest opposition party, the CDA, rejected Deetman's proposal partly for this reason.[269] Representatives of major veterans' organisations also had recourse to Indonesians' assumed lack of interest in the past. The secretary of the *Werkgroep Indie Veteranen Nederland* thought a public debate would be fruitless: "If people already stop[ped] talking about it there, what do we want to achieve with such a discussion here (…)?"[270] The chairman of the *Veteranenplatform* made an example of the way they had distanced themselves from the past and were future-orientated.[271] A journalist in the *NRC* reckoned Indonesians would not understand the "self-torment" of a debate 50 years *ex-post*, for they had long since reconciled with the former coloniser.[272] To Deetman, all this did not matter: he made his proposal, granted he did not know whether the Indonesians wanted a debate.[273]

With the public debate carrying on unabated, some individuals continued to take an interest in what was typical for or different about the Dutch way of dealing with the past. In an interview about his recently published book *Indische Lessen*, sociologist and veteran Van Doorn said he

[267] Scagliola, *Last van de Oorlog,* pp. 134-135, 137, 176-180; Oostindie and Van der Kaaij, 'Een kwaad geweten', pp. 422-429, 437.
[268] *Met het oog op morgen* (radio, 24 January 1995).
[269] *Televizier* (TV, broad. AVRO, 17 January 1995). See also Enneüs Heerma in: 'Een verscheurde ziel om een traumatische interventie'.
[270] Van der Pluijm in: 'Schaduw 'Demon uit de dessa' over herdenking', *AD* (28 December 1994).
[271] 'Parlement verdeeld over Indië-debat', *Volkskrant* (10 January 1995).
[272] J. Heldring, 'Na bevrijding komt verzoening', *NRC* (30 December 1994); 'Een exercitie in zelfkwelling'.
[273] 'Deetman bepleit politiek debat over Nederlands-Indië', *Volkskrant* (10 January 1995).

believed the Dutch were more strongly preoccupied with empire and guilt-ridden than countries like France. He thought Dutch Calvinism heightened feelings of fallibility:

> (…) unlike other countries [say, England or France], we allowed our Calvinistic nature to come into play. (…) [T]here is hardly anything in [discussions about the end of the colonial relationship] of a cool assessment, a balancing act of (…) pros and cons (…). It is a constant hand-wringing wondering what our duties and virtues are, [and] what is our fault.[274]

The Deetman affair is insightful in two ways. From the political elite's firm rejection of Deetman's proposal, it becomes clear that The Hague did not break with its longstanding cover-up policy when the millennium drew to a close. Besides, the portrayal of Deetman's proposed and ongoing debate as 'typically' or 'uniquely' Dutch shows that participants in the semicentenary did not anticipate that, during the long turn of the century in Western Europe, many more memory irruptions with some of the very same features would still follow. They did not seem to be aware of the omens in France in the early 1990s, where Harki protests for 'justice' in the summer of 1991, Jean-Luc Einaudi's *La Bataille de Paris* (1991), the anniversary of the end of the Algerian War, and the documentaries *Les années algériennes* (1991) and *La Guerre sans nom* (1992) had sparked public interest in the Algerian Independence War. They did not consider them remotely relevant to what was happening in the Netherlands. A press review demonstrates limited interest in contemporary French post-colonial issues in the mid-1990s. France then suffered from terrorist attacks on its territory by fundamentalist Muslim organisations from its former colony Algeria. The Algerian Civil War, which had started in 1991 and was ongoing during the semicentenary debate, was covered by Dutch media, but its (post)colonial dimensions were not often expanded on.

[274] *De Schrijftafel* (radio, 17 August 1995). Also e.g.: W. Wertheim, 'Ontvoogding', in Meijer, *Oostindisch doof*, pp. 161-62; Houben, 'A Torn Soul', p. 64.

Disagreement over apologies: the Declaration of the Council of Churches (January 1995) & Letter of Dutch Roman Catholic Bishops (July 1995)

In the 1994-1995 debate, the Council of Churches – an alliance of Christian churches, including the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches – was remorseful of having kept quiet when the Dutch government had violently suppressed Indonesia's desire for independence in the 1940s. Churches on Dutch mainland had ignored alarming messages by Protestant and Catholic missionaries in Indonesia, who had sympathised with the Indonesian cause. During the Independence War, Dutch Churches had hardly criticised the political and military policy pursued: the confessional parties to which they were narrowly affiliated, had been strictly against decolonisation. In the decades following independence, churches and repatriated clergy had been rarely critical of Dutch colonial warfare after 1945.[275] Only in the mid-1990s, probably in response to the ongoing and to some extent self-critical public debate, did churches critically review the events of 1945-1949, and the part they had played in them. In January 1995, Dutch Churches issued a public statement expressing regret for having had too little eye for the "legitimate and broadly rooted pursuit of an independent Indonesia" before 1949 and for having remained silent during the Police Actions.

The president of the VOMI reacted to the *Declaration of the Council of Churches* reservedly. He thought it was one-sided: it addressed 'excesses' by Dutch soldiers but made no mention of what had happened on the other side.[276] The chairmen of three of the biggest veterans' organisations (VOMI, *Veteranenplatform* and *Stichting Japanse Ereschulden*) took a clear stance in the 1994-1995 debate on behalf of their members: in judging the 'Police Actions', *both* sides should be closely scrutinised.[277]

Roman Catholic Bishop Martinus Muskens was convinced that the Indonesian Churches had not been keen to receive the Council's expression of regret.[278] According to Henk Koetsier – who had been a missionary pastor in Indonesia, and was now one of the *Declaration*'s co-authors and chairman of the *Indonesia Research and Information Program* (aimed at improving relations between the two countries) – their Indonesian counterpart had actually

[275] Oostindie and Van der Kaaij, 'Een kwaad geweten', p. 432.
[276] 'Kerken betuigen spijt over Indië-verleden', *Trouw* (12 January 1995).
[277] Lapré in: 'Objectief oordeel over de strijd in Indië is nog steeds gewenst'; 'Guerrilla tegen het nationaal schuldgevoel'; 'Vergelijking (3)', *AD* (28 June 1994).
[278] 'Indonesische kerken zitten niet te wachten op spijtbetuiging Raad van Kerken', *Trouw* (16 January 1995).

been deeply appreciative of the *Declaration*. When it was presented with sections before publication, representatives of the Indonesian Council of Churches had not shown signs of not wanting to rake up the past, Koetsier wrote in *Trouw*.[279] He and a member of the *Interkerkelijk Vredesberaad* (*Interdenominational Peace Council*) pointed out that the bilateral relationship was currently still damaged by the past: as soon as the former metropole criticised human rights issues, it got confronted with the colonial past.[280]

While with the *Declaration* the Council had taken responsibility for their part, it did not seem to think of the Churches as the main culprit. Shortly before publication, one of the *Declaration*'s authors had stated on the radio: "The Dutch government and the majority of the Dutch people sent these young soldiers. So that's where the primary responsibility lies."[281] In the public debate, the matter was not contentious: there seemed to be a common sense of shared responsibility. Contributors outside of politics charged the then governments and the electorate with guilt.[282] Participants who argued that veterans did not bear primary responsibility for their actions, for the Police Actions had been the decision of democratically elected governments, were not contradicted.

The political elite, however, proved unwilling to condemn the governments that had ordered the 'Police Actions'. In the TV show *Conversation with the Prime Minister* two days after the *Declaration* had been issued, PM Kok thought it too easy to look back critically retrospectively, with the knowledge and insights of today.[283]

About a month before the Queen departed for Indonesia, in July 1995, the Dutch Roman Catholic Bishops, including Muskens, issued their own statement. It did not contain words of regret. It read that the Netherlands had not been prepared for the Indonesian Declaration of Independence, and in that respect had been no different from other colonial powers, which had not been ready to accept the independence of their colonies either.[284] Muskens clarified that the episcopal letter was addressed at the Dutch rather than the Indonesians. It was written out of a need to come to terms with the colonial past in the Netherlands. The bishops had no intention

[279] 'Spijtbetuiging Raad van Kerken zorgvuldig samengesteld', *Trouw* (27 January 1995).
[280] *Ibid*.; 'Veteraan zondebok Indiëganger vocht verkeerde oorlog namens ons', *Trouw* (20 January 1995).
[281] *De andere wereld* (radio, broad. IKON, 1 January 1995).
[282] E.g. historian Locher-Scholten in: *Dingen die gebeuren* (radio, 10 January 1995).
[283] 'Gesprek met de minister-president', dir. *Nova* (TV, 13 January 1995).
[284] NRC published a short version of the statement: 'Onafhankelijkheid Indonesië te lang gedwarsboomd', *NRC* (7 July 1995).

of "bothering the people in Indonesia with our desire for a public confession".[285]

Bishop Muskens, who had written his dissertation on Indonesia, where he had lived and worked as director of the *Documentation Centre of the Indonesian Bishops' Conference* (1970-1978), also got involved in the debate on his own behalf. In various media outlets, he explained the failure to take the independence struggle seriously and the late transfer of sovereignty with a sense of superiority toward the indigenous population. Muskens found the same superior attitude with other empires:

> Because of their sense of superiority, Europeans could not take the native seriously enough. As a result, Dutch politicians in those years also formulated a policy, which we, in hindsight, find wrong.[286]

The editors of *Trouw* asked Muskens to draft the speech the Queen would give in Jakarta. In this 'capacity', he put these words (about superiority) in the Queen's mouth.[287]

Muskens certainly was not alone in drawing comparisons to other European empires and their reluctance to give up their colonies. In the 1994-1995 debate, comparisons were drawn to suffering inflicted by other former imperial powers in their overseas territories. This was nothing new. Already in the Indonesian Independence War, the most senior Dutch colonial officials in Jakarta had laundered highly controversial Dutch methods, for instance with reference to less targeted airstrikes carried out by the British Royal Air Force against communist rebels in British Malaysia in 1948.[288] After independence, unfavourable comparisons with other imperial violence had continued to cause a stir in the former metropole, whereas favourable ones had not.

Conflicts abroad that had been "read in colonial terms" and perceived as "manifestations of western imperialism", especially the Vietnam War, had caused a shock of

[285] 'Bisschop Muskens erkent fouten Nederlandse r.-k. kerk in Indië'.
[286] 'Wij kunnen niet om betekenis van Sukarno heen', *Volkskrant* (3 August 1995).
[287] 'Tragische vergissing die vele levens eiste', *Trouw* (19 August 1995). Muskens was not alone in making this point. In an interview with Dutch broadcaster *VPRO* (March 1994), Edward Said discussed the hubris with which European countries, including the Netherlands, had ruled other cultures. See: 'Leidt plaatsverandering tot een andere stijl van denken?', *NRC* (14 March 1994).
[288] T. Brocades Zaalberg and B. Luttikhuis, 'De koloniale schuldclassificatie voorbij. Nederlands, Brits en Frans extreem geweld in vergelijkend perspectief, 1945-1962', in Oostindie et al., *Over de grens*, p. 383.

recognition in the late 1960s.[289] In his doctoral thesis (May 1968), Hueting had claimed that things like the My Lai massacre had happened in the DEI too.[290] On camera, Hueting had stated that the Dutch had done "unpleasant" things, and "in that respect, were not so different from other peoples".[291] Against the international political background, Hueting's testimony had had wide public resonance: the Netherlands seemed to have had 'its own Vietnam'.[292] The left opposition had alluded to the catchphrase, fuelling the turmoil the country was plunged into.[293] The day after Hueting's television interview, *Trouw* had concluded that the Dutch army had not behaved any better than "the French army in Algeria and the American army in Vietnam."[294]

Although the leaked draft of De Jong's 1988 *Epilogue* had also set off controversy, it was not because of his apologetic comparisons to other decolonisation wars. In the final part of his work, he had toned down his otherwise harsh judgement and brisk conclusions about excessive Dutch violence by subscribing to other historians' favourable comparisons with other, allegedly grimmer, decolonisation wars.[295] He had written:

> [W]hoever takes note of the course of decolonisation wars in the French and Portuguese overseas territories and of the violence unleashed on Vietnam, must conclude that the Netherlands acted comparatively less harshly in all respects.[296]

In the semicentenary debate, the Algerian Independence War and the Vietnam War continued to feature as comparative histories. Anyone following the Boomsma trial in the media was subtly reminded of the similarity to what had happened later in the Vietnam War. In his address to the court, Boomsma recalled watching the images of war crimes in Vietnam on television

[289] Bijl, *Emerging Memory*, p. 196; H. Lutz, K. Gawarecki (eds.), *Kolonialismus und Erinnerungskultur. Die Kolonialvergangenheit im kollektiven Gedächtnis der deutschen und niederländischen Einwanderungsgesellschaft* (Münster, 2005), p. 192. See also: Bijl, *Emerging Memory*, pp. 192-193; Locher-Scholten, 'Die "Indische Generation"', p. 74; Van Doorn, *Gevangen in de tijd*, p. 54; Scagliola, *Last van de Oorlog*, p. 108; M. Kuitenbrouwer, *Nederland en de opkomst van het moderne imperialisme. Koloniën en buitenlandse politiek 1870-1902* (Amsterdam, 1985), p. 20.
[290] Drooglever about Hueting's dissertation in: *De ronde tafel van Pam* (radio, 13 February 1995).
[291] Hueting about the 1969 interview in: *Nova* (TV, 19 December 1994).
[292] E.g.: Scagliola, *Last van de Oorlog*, p. 108; J. Bank in: *Met het oog op morgen* (radio, 13 February 1995).
[293] M. Bossenbroek, *Fout in de Koude Oorlog: Nederland in tweestrijd, 1945-1989* (Amsterdam, 2016), p. 238. The catchphrase resurfaced in the late 1980s. See e.g. 'Herinneringen aan ons eigen Vietnam', *NRC* (3 September 1988).
[294] 'Terugkijken Oorlogsmisdaden'.
[295] Brocades Zaalberg and Luttikhuis, 'De koloniale schuldclassificatie voorbij', pp. 382-386.
[296] De Jong, *Epiloog (II),* pp. 1040-1041. De Jong quoted J.A.A. Van Doorn and W.J. Hendrix, *Ontsporing van geweld. Het Nederlands-Indonesisch Conflict* (Amsterdam, 1985), p. 48.

together with his father, himself an Indies veteran, who had muttered that history was repeating itself.[297] When his trial was still pending, Boomsma remembered in more detail in *Trouw*:

> Hueting's story came into the room like [a bombshell]. At the time, what was happening in Vietnam was in the news every night. And suddenly it was not America seen as the culprit but the Netherlands, […] that had waged a similar war.[298]

In a radio broadcast the next day, Boomsma called the Dutch "hypocritical": one could freely condemn, for example, the Vietnam War, but had to walk on eggshells when it concerned Indonesia.[299] When the appeal was lodged in January 1995, Boomsma's supporters had adopted this narrative. In front of the courthouse, the 'Friends of Graa' and 'Welcome Poncke' groups, carried banners reading 'The Netherlands was wrong' and 'Indonesia = Vietnam'.[300]

When the country was in an uproar over Princen's visa, *Trouw* journalist and veteran Henk Biersteker pointed out that "(…) we weren't the only [bad boy in class]. Later also the Portuguese, the English, the French in Algeria. (…) This process of decolonisation has been terrible everywhere."[301] When Princen had returned to Indonesia, his brother Kees, who had also been sent to the Indies but had not deserted, was interviewed by *Trouw.* Looking back, he felt they should have questioned the mandate to fight a dirty war, saying: "Let's be honest, Indonesia has been the Netherlands' Vietnam."[302] Kees Princen suspected many veterans who kept silent were feeling the same way.

In an episode of the television programme *Brandpunt* historian Locher-Scholten argued that massacres of the local population by the U.S. military in My Lai and by Dutch soldiers in Galoeng-Galoeng (DEI) had been "strictly similar".[303] In the same *Brandpunt* broadcast, Wigbold, said:

---

[297] *OVT* (radio, 29 May 1994).
[298] 'Graa Boomsma en de gaten in de geschiedenis', *Trouw* (24 February 1994).
[299] *Ophef en Vertier* (radio, broad. VARA, 28 May 1994).
[300] 'Premier Kok kritiseert Pronk'; 'Emoties lopen hoog op bij Fries schrijversproces'.
[301] *Hier en nu praatradio* (radio, 21 December 1994).
[302] '"Indonesië was ons Vietnam" Kees Princen: Van broer van 'de schoft' tot broer van 'de held'', *Trouw* (12 January 1995).
[303] *Brandpunt* (TV, 13 January 1995).

> [W]e don't want to acknowledge that we are like other nations. (…) [I]t happened in Algeria and Vietnam (…), in almost all decolonisation [conflicts]. But we think we're so decent that it doesn't happen to us. I really don't understand what that thought is based on.[304]

Comparisons with other empires were not usually drawn wider than the process of decolonisation, excluding the long imperial era before decolonisation, and the period after decolonisation.[305] Few of the commentators who compared Dutch military action in Indonesia with decolonisation wars waged in other empires, claimed others had been worse, or the Netherlands better, for that matter.[306] Equally few believed other empires had done a better job decolonising.[307] Most contributors argued that the Netherlands had been 'just as bad'. Asked to compare how dirty the Dutch war in Indonesia had been in comparative perspective, historian Drooglever thought it had been "average".[308] Van Doorn argued that, compared to several other metropoles, the Netherlands had steered a reasonable middle course in the years 1945-1950:

> It was not content with an offhand abandonment of the colony – as was Belgium in the Congo – nor did it seek to crush the nationalist party by brute force, as did France in Algeria and Portugal in Angola and Mozambique. In the diplomatic game, [it was] extremely patient, and military actions were primarily intended to bring about political reconstruction.[309]

---

[304] *Ibid*.
[305] E.g.: Van Goor (historian) in: *Faros* (radio, 25 June 1994); Van Doorn in: *De Schrijftafel* (radio, 17 August 1995); *Indonesië* (radio, 21 October 1995).
[306] W. Oltmans (freelance journalist), for instance, stated: "The Dutch have turned out to be the worst loser in European colonial history". See: 'Psychohistorie kan helpen drama Indië te verklaren', *Volkskrant* (21 January 1995). Jan Blokker said that "little blood had been spilled" compared to other wars of independence, and that the four-year war had been "a relatively short period". See: 'We hadden geen leger moeten sturen, maar de koningin; Jan Blokker over zijn toneelstuk Soekarno', *NRC* (24 November 1995).
[307] E.g. 'Benauwende lectuur over benauwde mentaliteit', *Volkskrant* (5 November 1994): "In any case, the Netherlands (…) was not a good decoloniser. (...) Surely Britain used to handle things more coolly and less traumatically."
[308] *De ronde tafel van Pam* (radio, 13 February 1995).
[309] J.A.A. Van Doorn, *De laatste eeuw van Indië: Ontwikkeling en ondergang van een koloniaal project* (Amsterdam, 1994), p. 248. Van Doorn was quoted as saying this by Jan Bank in: 'Progressief gezinde technische intelligentsia in Indië', *Volkskrant* (26 March 1994).

Recapitulating, at the beginning of the anniversary year, new winds seemed to be blowing from the Dutch Churches when the Council of Churches issued a statement of regret. Half a year later, however, the Catholic Bishops published their own, less remorseful letter, containing exculpatory references to other colonial powers. The Dutch Churches came up with different interpretations of the past. It illustrated the immense challenge awaiting Beatrix in Jakarta, where she was to make one single statement that would or would not amount to a royal apology.

The statement by the Council of Churches was the only official expression of regret issued in the anniversary year before the start of the state visit – and it clearly did not inspire the political elite to do the same or to also look back critically. Reactions were mild as the Churches apologised for their part. Much fiercer reactions could be expected to a royal apology, which the Queen, as head of state, would make on behalf of the collective.

Investigations into excessive violence: reprint of the 1969 Memorandum on Excesses (February 1995) & TV documentary The Excesses of Rawagedeh (15 August 1995)

Shortly after the controversy about Princen's visa and Deetman's debate had subsided, the 1969 *Memorandum on Excesses* was reprinted on 9 February 1995. The *Memorandum* was published unchanged, with a nine-page foreword by historian and Indies expert Jan Bank. The original, fourteen-page long introductory note to the *Memorandum* (which otherwise consisted only of annexes) by PM De Jong, was kept. In the new preface to the reprint, Bank concluded: "The *Memorandum* may not have been complete, but it was so detailed that [supplementary research] would have led to a larger number but not to a substantially different picture."[310]

A poll at the start of the anniversary year showed that the then government's reading of the 1969 *Memorandum* held up with the public. A (relative) majority of respondents was quite sure that war crimes had happened incidentally. Of the respondents, 49% believed soldiers had (probably) committed war crimes (compared to 15% who thought they had not), while 65% assumed this occurred on a (very) small scale (as opposed to 16% who suspected it happened on a (very) large scale).[311]

[310] *De Excessennota* [Introduction by Bank], pp. 15-16.
[311] *2 Vandaag* (TV, 11 January 1995).

The question of scale did not dominate the semicentenary debate as it had done in 1969. Unlike the 1969 irruption, which had primarily been about fact-finding, uncovering new historical facts now was not a primary objective. Although in the mid-1990s participants did not rule out that new research would find instances of extreme violence left undescribed – the *Memorandum* had been written somewhat hastily, and was accepted to be incomplete even in 1969 – the relevant facts were assumed to be known.[312] Just like when the *Memorandum* was published back then, it was now believed that additional research would not throw a completely different light on things. In the media, historians (amongst whom De Jong) argued that the problem was not the lack of historical research done, but that it had not reached the general public.[313] Not even participants who believed that all had been gloomier than estimated as hitherto necessarily called for new historical research.[314]

Veterans' organisations too spoke out against new and broad investigations into excessive violence, which "in the commemorative year would only mean trouble".[315] Surprisingly, amongst the few who called for new investigations into the 'Police Actions' was advisor of the *Veteranenplatform*, off-duty Colonel Jan Van Neden. He believed the Dutch military had committed more crimes than uncovered, stating on national television in February 1995 that the research done "amounted to nothing." [316] He was heavily criticised from within his own ranks. The Platform was very displeased at its advisor's proposal: historical research would be hampered by the lack of reliable witnesses so long after date, and Indonesians would not appreciate the Dutch digging into the past again.[317] Incidentally, historian and first author of the original 1969 *Memorandum*, Fasseur, was sceptical of a second one for the same two reasons.[318]

[312] *De Excessennota* [Introduction by Bank], p. 12; W. Ijzereef in: *Nova* (TV, 9 January 1995); 'Erken de fouten', *Volkskrant* (11 January 1995).
[313] 'Met een ruim hart naar Indonesië'. Also e.g. Ijzereef in: *Nova* (TV, 9 January 1995).
[314] E.g. Boomsma, 'Laat verzoening het winnen van verbittering'.
[315] Chairman of the *Stichting Maatschappij en Krijgsmacht* in: 'Premier De Jong schrapte in excessennota term 'oorlogsmisdrijven'', *Volkskrant* (11 February 1995). For standpoint of VOMI see: *Ibid*.; ''Tientallen incidenten bij politionele acties nooit gemeld'', *Volkskrant* (11 February 1995).
[316] *Nova* (TV, 9 February 1995).
[317] 'Indië-veteranen tegen nieuw onderzoek politionele acties', *AD* (11 February 1995).
[318] *Woensdageditie* (radio, broad. VARA, 9 August 1995).

Upon the reprint, Bank and other historians recalled that Hueting's testimony had caused so much turmoil and had prompted the 1969 excesses investigation because of the simultaneous American 'imperial' struggle.[319] On the occasion of the reprint, Drooglever was a guest on a radio talk show, in which he spoke about 70 known cases of excessive violence "the size of My Lai".[320] Now, in the semicentenary debate, Fasseur, compared the magnitude of the Dutch war *effort* (not: *crimes*) to the American one in Vietnam. In the three-part documentary series about the DEI *Close up: voorheen Nederlandsch-Indië* (December 1994), he estimated that, given the national population and the number of soldiers deployed overseas, the Dutch war effort had been larger.[321]

The ink was barely dry on the reprint when investigative journalism uncovered a new, much more gruesome truth about one of the cases of excessive violence described in the *Memorandum*. One week before the start of state visit, the TV documentary *The Excesses of Rawagedeh* was aired about the massacre in the village of Rawagedeh in 1947. It was broadcast by the new commercial television station RTL4 because, according to one of the documentary makers, public broadcasters had no appetite for it. Documentary makers Alfred Edelstein and Karin van Coeverden had gone to the village to learn more about what had happened. It was the first time since independence that Dutch journalists had travelled to Indonesia to investigate a site of excessive violence. Despite villagers' hospitality, Edelstein confessed he had felt "like a German in the Netherlands on [national Remembrance Day]".[322] The documentary makers maintained that the actual number of victims had been much higher than previously assumed: 431 instead of 170.

Even though the 1994-1995 debate was not so much about fact-finding, with new testimonies made and investigative journalism done, bits and pieces of new information surfaced suggesting that extreme violence had indeed occurred on a larger scale than previously assumed. It was not until shortly before Queen Beatrix's departure for Indonesia, that because of the documentary *Rawagedeh* the question of scale briefly occupied centre stage.

[319] Bank in: *Met het oog op morgen* (radio, 13 February 1995).
[320] *De ronde tafel van Pam* (radio, broad. NPS, 13 February 1995).
[321] *Close up* (TV, 28 December 1994).
[322] 'Wat geweest is, is geweest', *AD* (15 September 1995).

The AD spoke of a "shocking revelation," stating that the 1969 *Memorandum* "turns out to be a dated piece."[323] The *Volkskrant* wrote: "[i]t is yet another indication that the role of the Dutch army at the time was less fine than the official reading would have you believe."[324] De Jong said Rawagedeh was just "the tip of the iceberg."[325] Besides Fasseur, few participants seemed confident that no more "Rawagedehs" would surface.[326]

While the four major political parties and the public prosecutor's office wanted to verify what had happened in Rawagedeh to end speculation as to whether the new numbers cited in the documentary were correct, no major general historical investigation like in 1969 followed. The semicentenary debate had been building up to the state visit, and the momentum was gone soon after. With new evidence that things might have been worse, and without new conclusive research or continued debate, the scale issue remained open to question.

The *Memorandum* reprint prompts further comparison with the 1969 memory irruption. In the anniversary year, the question of moral reprehensibility arose again, but the semicentenary debate was not 1969 all over again. Some previous issues were left be or remained in the background, and the question of apologies was now widely debated for the first time. Like the discussion on scale took more of a backseat in the mid-1990s, there was less of a semantic discussion than in 1969 (when the *Memorandum* established the term 'excesses' to describe what had happened) and in 1987 (when De Jong was pressured to change the title of his draft paragraphs on 'war crimes'). Despite occasional criticism of 'concealing' terminology, contributors seemed to go with the established terms 'excesses' and 'Police Actions' to avoid a semantic controversy, and to allow for a substantive debate.

The *Rawagedeh* documentary tells us something about the media as an actor in the semicentenary debate. That it was investigative journalists who uncovered a much more terrible truth, acting on their initiative, demonstrated that the media were powerful actors of their own. By the mid-1990s, Dutch media had a considerable track record in the public debate on excessive Dutch violence in the Indonesian Independence War. In 1994, it was not the media that triggered the irruption (as had been the case in 1969 and 1987), but they certainly added fuel to the fire. Media reacted to current events in (the run-up to) the anniversary year, but also searched for their own news.

[323] 'Schokkende onthulling', *AD* (10 August 1995).
[324] 'Nederlandse leger zou 400 personen hebben gedood in Javaans dorp', *Volkskrant* (9 August 1995).
[325] 'OM onderzoekt optreden leger bij executies in Rawagedeh', *Volkskrant* (10 August 1995).
[326] Fasseur in: *Woensdageditie* (radio, 9 August 1995).

Commemorating 1940-1945: the double anniversary year & Beatrix's address to the Knesset (28 March 1995)

It was not just *Rawagedeh*'s main finding that caused a stir. The date on which the documentary was aired, caused as much commotion. The *Stichting Herdenking 15 Augustus 1945* and the *Stichting Japanse Ereschulden* – two foundations that looked after the interest of victims of the Japanese occupation of the DEI – were furious when they learned that a television documentary about excessive Dutch violence after 1945 was scheduled to be broadcast on 15 August 1995, the very day on which victims of World War II in Asia were commemorated.[327]

The Indonesian anniversary year 1995 coincided with the 50th anniversary of the end of the Second World War. So it happened that, in the Netherlands, the mid-nineties' struggle for recognition was two-fronted. Two groups felt neglected and discriminated against in comparison to victims of World War II on Dutch mainland and now called for appropriate recognition: victims of the Second World War in Asia, who had lived through this period in the Indies and had been occupied by the Japanese, and Indies veterans. Much like World War II in Asia, the Indonesian Independence War had unfolded over there, far away and out of sight. Moreover, due to the alleged 'victim status' of the Netherlands in the Second World War, memories of 1940-1945 had gained in importance and popularity far more rapidly than memories of the dirty decolonisation war in Indonesia shortly thereafter.[328]

Indies veterans put themselves forward in the struggle for recognition. Conscripts who had fought overseas felt that recognition of their service needed to be brought up to the level of victims of the Second World War. To them, it was all about catching up. They felt there was a competitive relation between the processing of both episodes, which both fed from the limited resource of public attention. The spokesman of the VOMI was upset that the National Monument on Dam Square in Amsterdam (officially unveiled in 1956) – the symbol of national unity par excellence – did not represent overseas parts of the Kingdom and that, unlike military and civilian victims of the Second World War, the number of those who fell in battle amongst

[327] *Nieuws op 1* (radio, 14 August 1995).
[328] Locher-Scholten, 'Die "Indische Generation", p. 74.

their ranks was not usually mentioned.[329] He asked for equal recognition, not for "a preferential treatment".[330]

The coincidence of anniversaries thus opened a window of opportunity for Indies veterans, yet simultaneously stood in the way of self-critical debate on empire. As the fiftieth anniversary in Indonesia of the end of Dutch oppression threatened to throw a spanner in the works now the Dutch prepared to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the liberation from Nazi Germany, conservative forces sought to keep the national discussion about the decolonisation war low. A sociologist noted in the NRC that especially around the celebration of the "glorious national Liberation Day", "national feelings" were to be "spared" from the ache of remembering an oppressive colonial war.[331]

In the double anniversary year, Beatrix would make not one but two state visits. On 27 March 1995, a three-day state visit of Queen Beatrix and Prince Claus to Israel began. It was the first time a Dutch head of state visited the country since its establishment in 1948. The highlight of the state visit was Beatrix's speech in the Knesset, which was broadcast by Israeli and Dutch television. In her address, she went into detail about the horrors of the Holocaust and refuted the myth of the Dutch people having acted heroically in defence of their Jewish compatriots.[332]

The Queen's recent state visit to Israel was mentioned in the debate on the upcoming state visit. In an interview before Beatrix's departure for Indonesia, Foreign Minister Van Mierlo stressed that she had made no apologies to Israel either, even though, in contrast to the Indonesians, Israelis were still deeply moved by the events of 50 years ago.[333]

The *Aufarbeitung* of the Second World War shaped the design of Queen Beatrix's pending state visit in yet other ways. PM Kok maintained that the exact date of the Queen's visit did not really matter: 1995 was about looking back at not just one, but two historical episodes. The

[329] Although the monument included urns with historical soil from special World War II sites across the 11 Dutch provinces, as well as soil from Dutch honorary cemeteries in the former DEI, the commemorative text only mentioned soil gathered from all over the Netherlands. See E. Locher-Scholten, 'Van Indonesische urn tot Indisch monument: vijftig jaar Nederlandse herinnering aan de Tweede Wereldoorlog in Azië', *Bijdragen en Mededeelingen van het Historisch Genootschap*, 114 (1999), p. 204.
[330] J. Dijkema in: *Het Capitool* (TV, 15 January 1995).
[331] R. Haleber, 'Bij herdenkingen niet meten met twee maten', *NRC* (17 January 1995).
[332] T. Ensink, 'The Footing of a Royal Address: An Analysis of Representativeness in Political Speech, Exemplified in Queen Beatrix' Address to the Knesset on March 28, 1995', *Current Issues in Language & Society,* 3/3 (1996), pp. 205-232.
[333] *Brandpunt reporter*, dir. KRO (TV, broad. KRO, 10 October 1995).

whole of Europe was now commemorating what had happened between 1940 and 1945. In a radio programme in January 1995, he said:

> [I] think it is much more important that, when the state visit takes place, the Queen expresses how the Netherlands looks back on those events 50 years later (…) just as the entire year of 1995 in internal European relations is, of course, about looking back and trying (…) to draw certain lessons for the future and to maintain and develop a mature relationship with countries that have brought us into a great state of humiliation and upheaval.[334]

In the matter of official apologies, participants in the 1994-1995 debate also looked at how former Axis powers (had) dealt with their unresolved past, and wondered whether the Dutch were to take a leaf out of their book. One contributor brought it to a head, asking whether the Queen was supposed to "kneel like some Willy Brandt or Helmut Kohl (…) and apologise to Suharto."[335] With the two commemoration dates so close, it was especially Japan's attitude towards victims of crimes committed in the Second World War, that came to mind.[336] Looking ahead to the upcoming Indonesian independence celebrations, sociologist and South(east) Asia specialist Jan Breman raised awareness of the discrepancy between the Dutch government's negligence to ask Indonesia for forgiveness for Dutch Empire's sins, and the way the Dutch were all up in arms when the Japanese would not bite the bullet.[337] Other commentators felt Axis powers simply had much more to apologise for.[338]

In the week before Queen Beatrix's state visit to Indonesia, the Japanese PM Murayama would eventually apologise for the crimes of World War II. When a Dutch *mea culpa* in Indonesia

[334] *Met het oog op morgen* (radio, 27 January 1995).
[335] 'Oud Zeer'.
[336] E.g.: 'Maak een einde aan koloniale mythe', *Volkskrant* (31 December 1994); 'Onrecht', *Volkskrant* (24 December 1994); 'Vergeven en vergeten', *Volkskrant* (21 August 1995).
[337] *Kenmerk* (TV, 23 June 1994). About Dutch hypocrisy see also historian Von der Dunk, 'Een open samenleving moet zijn zelfbeeld kunnen herzien'.
[338] E.g. *De ronde tafel van Pam* (radio, 13 February 1995).

did not happen, critics would argue that this smacked of hypocrisy.[339] In their opinion, the Dutch had forfeited the right to demand further apologies from the Japanese.[340]

After Beatrix's visit, historian Peter Maas would commend Queen Beatrix for her speech, contending it would have been "inappropriate" for her to apologise. He would reason that countries like Japan and Germany, "with a devastating war record", would "inevitably had to apologise at some point", but that "[o]ur position then, was very different: We felt responsible for every Indonesian, (…) for law and order. We had disagreements and saw no way out at one point than to take armed action."[341] Others would judge Queen Beatrix's visit to Indonesia as weak compared to her performance in Israel.[342]

Looking at the double anniversary year, it becomes clear that not only memory, but also memory politics was multidirectional – at least in one direction. The commemoration and *Aufarbeitung* of 1940-1945 mobilised veterans' memory lobby and informed the government's design of the Queen's state visit. After Beatrix's speech to the Knesset, where one most certainly had not 'forgiven and forgotten', it was not to be expected that the government would have her apologise in Jakarta. For that matter, 1995 was a double commemoration year only in the Netherlands. It clearly was not, as Kok concluded about World War II, a European year of remembering empire. Except for a few omens in France, it was still conspicuously quiet in neighbouring countries.

Historians at the palace (May 1995): decolonisation in comparison

> "Never has a royal speech been worked so hard on as the one Queen Beatrix will deliver tonight at the gala dinner at the palace in Jakarta. Every word has been weighed and weighed. Not least by Beatrix herself."
>
> *Trouw*, 21 August 1995

[339] E.g.: 'Instemming en teleurstelling na tafelrede Beatrix's, *NRC* (22 August 1995); 'Troonrede in de tropen…', *NRC* (22 August 1995); 'Meer zullen we van Japan niet krijgen', *Volkskrant* (28 August 1995).
[340] Many considered Murayama's apology too little, too late. Several survivors' organisations demanded apologies from the full government, from parliament, or even from the emperor himself.
[341] *2 Vandaag* (TV, 21 August 1995).
[342] *Brandpunt reporter* (TV, 10 October 1995).

Although ultimately the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the PM pulled the strings and decided on the Queen's speech down to the smallest details, Beatrix took the matter very seriously and sought historians' advice.[343] In May 1995, she invited prominent historians to the palace, where they were asked numerous questions in the presence of her sons, husband, and Foreign Minister van Mierlo. Meanwhile, the Queen was allegedly constantly taking notes.[344]

When in the mid-1990s, Dutch 'excesses' were up for public debate again, there was still not much of a historiographical tradition on the Indonesian Independence War and extreme Dutch violence therein. While the government decision in 1969 to make colonial archives accessible had given historians free rein, only a handful of serious historical studies on the matter had appeared before the semicentenary.[345] Equally notable as the limited scholarly output was the decorum and self-censorship among scholars who had taken on the subject. They had omitted detailed descriptions of acts of violence and had refrained from moral judgements and controversial terminology (using 'excesses' rather than 'war crimes'). Notable was also the lack of reverberation in society and media of the few studies that these scholars – struggling to find a publisher for their works – had managed to get published.[346]

In the 1994-1995 debate, a select number of professional historians (some of whom had also appeared in the 1969 debate) participated, generally taking a cautious stance. There was hardly a radical or polemical tradition among Dutch scholars, as was the case for example in France. In the Netherlands, academics did not typically challenge the establishment but were experts and consensus builders in political controversies about the past. They were not usually inclined to side with the political Left or Right in controversial matters.[347] Academics either kept aloof from the public debate in the mid-1990s, or were reluctant to venture historical judgement on extreme Dutch violence in the Indies after 1945 – with a few eye-catching

[343] Scagliola, *Last van de Oorlog*, p. 355. For the roles of the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs in writing Queen Beatrix's 1995 Indonesia speech, see: C. van Baalen, J. Brouwer, 'Laat Beatrix geen gemeenplaatsen uitspreken', *NRC* (8 December 2005).
[344] 'Beatrix werkte keihard aan rede', *Trouw* (21 August 1995).
[345] Hendrix and Van Doorn, *Ontsporing van geweld* (1970, 1983, 1985); W. IJzereef, *De Zuid-Celebes affaire: Kapitein Westerling en de standrechtelijke executies* (Dieren, 1984); De Jong, *Epiloog (II)*; P. Groen, *Marsroutes en dwaalsporen. Het Nederlands militair-strategisch beleid in Indonesië 1945-1950* (1991); S.L. van de Wal en P.J. Drooglever, *Officiële bescheiden betreffende de Nederlands-Indonesische betrekkingen 1945-1950*, 20 Vols. (Den Haag, 1971-1996).
[346] Oostindie and Van der Kaaij, 'Een kwaad geweten', pp. 432-434; Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, pp. 109-114, 165-176.
[347] Scagliola, 'Cleo's 'unfinished business'', p. 420.

exceptions.[348] Two years after the semicentenary debate, historian Houben concluded: "professional historians in Holland have proven largely unable or unwilling to propose a more or less conclusive historical judgement on the colonial past. (…) [They] tended toward complacency (…)."[349]

Interestingly, in parallel to the public debate, a historians' debate took place, conducted through different media, in response to the thesis of publicist Rudy Kousbroek (April 1994) that Dutch historians were not critical enough of the DEI. Kousbroek spoke of a "cover-up" and historians' "fearful neutrality toward the Dutch East Indies".[350] Kousbroek was convinced that historians only comment on a historical matter when it was politically uncontroversial. By far most historians (among whom prominent Indies experts Bank, Van Doorn and Fasseur) rejected Kousbroek's criticism.[351]

What role did historians play then, when in the mid-1990s the nation had become embroiled in a debate on the past? In retrospect, Houben saw some historians had demanded a post-moralistic debate and historian colleague Stef Scagliola concluded that the division of labour had been roughly as follows: "Television journalism in particular tried to draw attention to Dutch war violence. Politicians spoke soothing words and historians explained the context of the violence in the media."[352] However, behind the palace doors, historians also influenced the course of things.

The conversation at the palace was confidential. However, word did spread through the media about who the Queen had consulted: Fasseur, Bank and Wesseling. Beatrix had turned to her *alma mater* for advice: her advisors all held a chair at Leiden University, where she had studied law from 1956 to 1961. Still, the Queen would certainly not have asked them, had they been known for their unconventional opinions.[353] Knowing who had been among the chosen ones was revealing: the historians in question were also active contributors to the public debate, so that the views of her advisors were known.

---

[348] Scagliola, *Last van de* Oorlog, pp. 183, 191-3. See also: S. Scagliola, 'Heen en weer geslingerd tussen feiten en emoties. Een kritiek op de visie van J.J.P. de Jong', *Nieuwste Tijd*, 1 (2001), pp. 42-58; Houben, 'A Torn Soul', pp. 48, 55-56.
[349] Houben, 'A Torn Soul', p. 65, see also p. 56.
[350] R. Kousbroek, 'P. Princen en de doofpot van onze Indische historie', *NRC* (20 August 1993); R. Kousbroek, 'De diachronie van de doofpot: historici en hun angstvallige neutraliteit tegenover Nederlands-Indië', *NRC* (29 April 1994).
[351] Scagliola, *Last van de Oorlog*, pp. 184-189.
[352] *Ibid*., p. 356; Houben, 'A Torn Soul', pp. 56.
[353] Scagliola, *Last van de Oorlog*, p. 193.

Even though she would not draw comparisons to other empires in her speech, the reputation of other imperial powers proved important to the Queen in preparing for the state visit. *Trouw* wrote that with her advisors, she had "gone deeply into the question of whether the Netherlands ha[d] done worse as a colonial power than other countries with overseas possessions."[354] Two of her advisors had previously expressed their views on the question. In the series *Close up: voorheen Nederlandsch-Indië* (December 1994) Fasseur had estimated that the Dutch war effort had been larger than the American one in Vietnam.[355] In the television show *Het Capitool*, Bank had argued that the Netherlands had not been that bad, compared to France and Portugal.[356] These royal advisors did not seem to principally object to ranking former empires in terms of barbarity.

After his service to the Queen, in August 1995, Beatrix's third advisor Wesseling published an article in the NRC titled '*Decolonisation in comparison'*. He noted that decolonisation had generally been considered inevitable, and that those who had resisted it, were thought to have been wrong. Wesseling addressed the only question that, in his view, remained: "who performed least badly, relatively speaking". He summarised: "(…) England, which quickly withdrew from India, [often] gets a good mark, the Netherlands is reprimanded because of the Police Actions, France condemned for Vietnam and Algeria, and Portugal, which held on to its colonies, is considered the biggest culprit." Wesseling advocated a comparative approach that was analytical rather than moralising:

> Anyone who wants to understand and assess Dutch decolonisation will have to compare it with the English and the French, the Portuguese and the Belgians. It soon becomes apparent that an explanation in terms of intelligent British, provincial Dutch, obtuse French, backward Portuguese, frightened Belgians et cetera is not enough, but that the various factors that played a role in the various countries and colonies must be analysed and compared.[357]

[354] 'Beatrix werkte keihard aan rede'.
[355] *Close up* (TV, 28 December 1994).
[356] *Het Capitool* (TV, 15 January 1995).
[357] 'Dekolonisatie vergelijkenderwijs'.

Thereupon he addressed some historical specifics that he believed had decisively influenced the course of decolonisation processes: the part played in the Second World War, and the presence of settlers.

> Also politico-psychologically, there were major differences [between the colonial powers]. England in 1945 was among the victors. It was poor but confident. France suffered from the trauma of Vichy and the occupation. Dutch politics was also influenced by the memories of the German occupation. (…) Even more important, however, were the differences between the colonies themselves. (…) In those cases where many white colonists were present (Algeria, Rhodesia and Angola for example) decolonisation always led to bloody conflicts. In other cases it also sometimes did, but by no means always.[358]

The 1994-1995 debate was limited to excessive military violence by the Dutch army in Indonesia after 1945. It was unusual for contributors, firstly, to take a step back from the endgame and take stock of 350 years Dutch colonial rule; and secondly, to also find positives.[359] Two of Beatrix's advisors, Wesseling and Fasseur, belonged to a school of historians, however, who believed that European expansion had also had positive aspects. In 1988, Wesseling had compared European administration officials in the Indies to development workers *avant la lettre*.[360] This "Leidse school [of thought]" distinguished itself from the "Amsterdam school," a collective of historians who contended that European expansion had only had negative aspects.[361] In her speech, Beatrix would point out that, at the time, the Netherlands had underestimated the desire for independence because it had been convinced that its "colonial

[358] *Ibid*. Sociologist Van Doorn also linked the Second World War's outcome to the willingness to decolonize. See Van Doorn in: *De Schrijftafel* (radio, 17 August 1995).
[359] Bishop Muskens and the Dutch Roman Catholic bishops, for example, cited the Pax Neerlandica as an achievement of 350 years of Dutch colonial rule. Law professor J. de Meij mentioned healthcare, crop improvement, and education, while NRC journalist J. Heldring highlighted the elevation of the native people and the creation of viable political units. See Muskens in: *Echo* (radio, 6 July 1995); Bishops in: 'Onafhankelijkheid Indonesië te lang gedwarsboomd'; De Meij in: 'Graag een echt Indonesië-debat'; Heldring in: 'Gesublimeerd kolonialisme', *NRC* (15 April 1994).
[360] H. Wesseling, *Indië verloren, rampspoed geboren en andere opstellen over de geschiedenis van de Europese expansie* (Amsterdam, 1988), p. 42.
[361] 'Leids of Amsterdams', *Volkskrant* (24 December 1994). On the Leidse and Amsterdamse school see: M. Kuitenbrouwer, 'Het imperialisme-debat in de Nederlandse geschiedschrijving', *BMGN- Low Countries Historical Review*, 113/1 (1998), pp. 72-73. For the academic debate on the positive or negative effects of colonialism see: J.A.A. van Doorn, *De laatste eeuw van Indië. Ontwikkeling en ondergang van een koloniaal project* (Amsterdam, 1994), pp. 11-17.

administration was beneficial for both parties".[362] She would even identify an unintended positive of Dutch policy *after* 1945: the struggle for Independence had undoubtedly strengthened the bonds between the many different peoples of the vast Indonesian archipelago.[363]

Faced with an extremely divided country in the run-up to her state visit, Queen Beatrix thus turned to Dutch historians – who were not known for a polemical tradition anyway – with non-controversial views in the field. A few weeks after the state visit, some members of Parliament argued that the impression had been created "that all kinds of Leiden historians [had] interfered with the monarch's [speech]".[364] Given what she would say in her address, she seemed to have been influenced by them indeed. After the state visit, these members of Parliament and PM Kok argued that the Queen's advisors should henceforth remain a 'palace secret', and the media were asked not to disclose more names in the future.[365]

Veterans on TV (August 1995): Republican excesses

In August 1995, around Queen Beatrix's state visit, three TV documentaries were broadcast in which veterans were given a stage. The transmission dates overlapped. From 6 August until 27 August film maker Frans Bromet portrayed the story of four former combatants in his four-part interview series *Indiëstrijders*.[366] On the historic date 17 August, the documentary *Tabee Toean* (Indonesian for 'Goodbye Sir') by filmmaker Tom Verheul was broadcast, in which five Indies veterans with an act of violence on their conscience travelled back to Indonesia. A few days earlier, on 13 August 1995, the documentary *The story of soldier 270925129* had been aired, featuring a now 67-years-old Hueting revisiting sites in Indonesia where he had witnessed atrocities committed by fellow soldiers. Each of the documentaries testified to the immediate devastation wrought by war and the lasting and devastating impact of war on former soldiers.

[362] Full transcript in *Trouw*: 'De uitroeping van de Republiek Indonesië kwam dan ook als een volslagen verrassing', *Trouw* (22 August 1995).
[363] Few outside the army highlighted the achievements of 1945-1949. Historian Drooglever's assessment was unusual, as he balanced the positives and negatives of Dutch policy after 1945, acknowledging "the successes of that period." He argued that the War of Independence and the Dutch federal experiment prepared the self-declared Republic for self-rule. See Drooglever in: 'Proklamasi kwam te vroeg voor Indonesië', *Volkskrant* (19 August 1995). Sociologist van Doorn also noted that Indonesians found unity in their struggle for independence. See: *Staatsbezoek Koningin Beatrix aan Indonesië* (TV, 27 August 1995); *De Schrijftafel* (radio, 17 August 1995).
[364] 'Kabinet moet zich meer bemoeien met opzet staatsbezoeken', *AD* (5 October 1995).
[365] *Ibid*.; 'Paleisgeheimen', *Volkskrant* (6 October 1995).
[366] Three former DEI fighters and one former Indonesian independence fighter.

When confronted with excessive violence by Dutch soldiers in the Indonesian Independence War, (representatives of) veterans' organisations and a very vocal share of the community, including veterans who featured in the August documentaries, turned things around. They stressed that every (guerrilla) war is dirty; that Indonesian independence fighters had committed atrocities too – not just in direct combat with Dutch soldiers, but also on the civilian population in and after the *Bersiap*; and that excessive violence by the Dutch military had been *counter*terror. These narratives had a long history.

Once 'Dutch boys' had arrived in the East, initial resistance had faded, and the population had united behind the government's policy, against the adversary.[367] Indonesian Republicans had successfully been portrayed as a gang of 'extremists' and 'terrorists', and Dutch military presence as a mammoth humanitarian mission, 'cleansing' and 'bringing justice and security', unfortunately yet inevitably involving violence. After the war, these narratives had continued to appear whenever the Dutch war effort was questioned. In his introductory note to the 1969 *Memorandum*, PM De Jong had catered to Dutch veterans – who had opposed the investigation in the press because it largely excluded excesses by the other warring party –, emphasising that actions of Dutch soldiers had "occasionally degenerated" in reaction to guerrilla warfare by Indonesian gangs.[368] When, years later, historian De Jong's manuscript of the 1987 *Epilogue* had been leaked, he had been severely pressured by infuriated veterans and his supervisory committee to substantially rewrite the '*War Crimes*' paragraph. Important changes in the final version had been: a much stronger emphasis on excessive violence on the Republican side (the newly titled '*Excesses*' paragraph began with a subsection on 'Republican excesses'); a description added of how atrocities committed by Republican opponents elicited counteractions on the Dutch side; and a reflection included on how Indonesia allegedly had no need for acknowledgement of the suffering inflicted by the Netherlands, knowing it had also committed atrocities.[369]

These exculpatory narratives resurfaced again in the semicentenary debate and in two of the three August documentaries. Veterans organisations and quite a few veterans in a personal capacity emphasised that (guerrilla) war "always comes along with dirty hands" and "there is

[367] See opinion polls referred to by De Jong in: *Epiloog (II),* pp. 841, 975.
[368] *De Excessennota*, pp. 31-32. See also p. 23.
[369] Scagliola compared the draft text with the epilogue's final version. See: Scagliola, *Last van de Oorlog,* pp. 224-239. De Jong addressed the manuscript affair and the changes he made in a footnote on page 1012 of the epilogue.

no such thing as a clean war".[370] The (vice) chairmen of *Stichting Maatschappij en Krijgsmacht*, the *Stichting Dienstverlening Veteranen* (Veterans Services Foundation) and the VOMI, all argued that excesses are inevitable in wartime.[371] Veterans who participated in Verheul's *Tabee Toean* clarified what it meant to be trapped in a guerrilla war:

> You don't go out on patrol to see how beautiful everything is growing and blossoming, do you?", [asked] one of them (…). Another: "In a guerrilla, it's shoot or be shot. You are forced to do things you don't want to do. "In a guerrilla war," a third looks back, "only the law of the jungle applies. You can raise all kinds of moral and legal questions about that afterwards, but given the nature of such a war, that's nonsense.[372]

Indies veterans in the media vividly recalled the unparalleled brutality of the opponent. The VOMI secretary mentioned slain comrades found with their genitals in their mouths – an example of what the other side was capable of that was given more frequently in the debate.[373] A veteran in *Tabee Toean* admitted "almost anyone was eager to shoot [prisoners]" yet maintained "[t]hey were even crueller than we were".[374] Another one, in *Indiëstrijders*, recalled: "We Europeans just shot someone, but for the Indonesian[s] [that was not enough]. People [in Kampongs] were killed in horrible ways. Pregnant women were stabbed with their foetus on a pole and carried around."[375] Such graphic, anecdotal personal testimonies were plenty.

---

[370] 'Dagorder', *AD* (8 September 1994); *Vesuvius* (TV, 24 November 1994). See also e.g.: 'Kritiek op landmacht-bevelhebber houdt aan', *AD* (23 July 1994); *Het Capitool* (TV, 15 January 1995); *NOS Journaal* [8 p.m.] (TV, 26 May 1994).
[371] 'Premier De Jong schrapte in excessennota term 'oorlogsmisdrijven''; 'Veteraan zoekt erkenning', *NRC* (8 June 1994); 'Ik heb helemaal geen koloniale oorlog gevoerd'; 'Oud-Indiëgangers niet naar Indonesië: geen rancune'.
[372] 'Tabee Toean', *Trouw* (17 August 1995). See e.g. also one of Verheul's veterans quoted in: 'Indië-veteranen vertellen in film over moorden. "Neerknallen van gevangen peloppors was normaal"', *Volkskrant* (5 August 1995).
[373] E. Muller van Madjoe quoted in: 'Premier De Jong schrapte in excessennota term 'oorlogsmisdrijven''. See e.g. also J. Colijn in: *Werelden* (TV, 17 August 1995).
[374] 'Indië-veteranen vertellen in film over moorden'.
[375] Former sergeant Van Groenendaal in: *Indiëstrijders* (TV, 13 August 1995). See also Van Groenendaal in: 'De verwoestende kracht van de Indië-oorlog', *NRC* (14 August 1995).

A portion of the veteran community and their representatives went on to say that Dutch excessive violence had been a response to the other warring party's violence.[376] According to Lapré, chairman of the *Stichting Japanse Ereschulden*, ruthless liquidations by the Republicans had created "a kind of breeding ground for (personal) vengeance back and forth and consequently for excesses".[377] Veterans in *Indiëstrijders* recollected how republican atrocities had them push their boundaries. One of them recalled seeing fellow soldiers cut to pieces and eaten by wild boars. "Those are the moments when you cross the line yourself".[378]

It was not just veterans, though, who stressed the intrinsic cruelty of (guerrilla) warfare, crimes committed on *both* sides, and the dynamics of (counter)vengeance and (counter)terror. Several historians and other scholars emphasised how guerrilla wars are structurally excessive and do not allow for setting standards of acceptable violence properly. They pointed out the escalatory (group)dynamic inherent to war situations in Vietnam and the Algerian and Indonesian independence wars.[379]

These considerations were also found with journalists. One (right-liberal) publicist and Indologist opined in the conservative and right-leaning daily *Telegraaf* – which had been the mouthpiece of veterans for a long time – that "as a rule, natives took the initiative [of excesses]. They are known for their rage attacks (mata gelap) and tendency to run amok."[380] A journalist in the progressive and left-leaning *Volkskrant,* in contrast, cynically commented that invoking exculpatory arguments, such as calling it all a chain reaction of (counter)terrorism, had been "the rule" of "the game" since the great discussion in 1969.[381]

At this point, it is easy to see how, in the semicentenary, there was also something of a left-right divide in the media. Traditionally, left-leaning media outlets tended to be more critical of Dutch military action in the Indies than right-leaning ones. Left-leaning media had broken the twenty-year silence in 1969 by giving whistleblower Hueting a stage, and had brought excessively violent conduct by Dutch soldiers to the attention of the public in cleverly directed interviews. Even then, the right-leaning *Telegraaf* had put itself forward as the protector of

[376] E.g. 'Soldaat Princen', *Volkskrant* (22 December 1994).
[377] 'Objectief oordeel over de strijd in Indië is nog steeds gewenst'.
[378] 'Episode 1: korporaal S. Klinge', *Indiëstrijders* (TV, 6 August 1995).
[379] Bank cited collegues Van Doorn and Hendrix in: *Met het oog op morgen* (radio, 13 February 1995); Drooglever in: *De ronde tafel van Pam* (radio 13 February 1995); Sociologist C. Schuyt in: 'Gevoel en Verstand', *Volkskrant* (16 January 1995).
[380] G. Hiltermann, 'De zelfbevlekkers', *Telegraaf* (25 June 1994).
[381] 'Inschikken in de loopgraaf'. In court, Boomsma also spoke of "an endless chain reaction of error and counter-terror", see: 'Graa Boomsma nam het juist voor hen op', *Volkskrant* (27 May 1994).

veterans' interests. Later, in 1987, it had been the *Telegraaf* in which De Jong's draft was leaked.

In all instances, comparisons were of the cruelty of both warring parties, not the number of victims each side had suffered. There was no denying that the number of casualties on Indonesian side (at least 100,000 dead) had been a multiple of the number of casualties on Dutch side (approximately 6,000), as was emphasised by several contributors.[382]

Despite the exculpatory narratives in them, the August documentaries depicted how the past still haunted Indies veterans who had committed war crimes. One of the veterans in *Tabee Toean* had travelled to Indonesia to ask a former adversary if he ever struggled with atrocities he had committed. *Trouw* noticed that he clearly hoped his former opponent would answer in the affirmative, as he was still tormented by the things he had done.[383] In reviews of *Tabee Toean*, this scene attracted the attention of other media as well.[384] A traumatologist commented on the documentary and sought to set veterans' minds at ease: "[W]e [truly] are as we are in peacetime (…) [W]ar is such an extreme situation, it doesn't define who we are."[385]

The story of soldier 270925129 was a much more critical account of events by Hueting – as to be expected from him. His 1969 testimony had contradicted the dominant idea that 'Dutch boys' had only brought peace and security. His eyewitness account had been an indictment of the Dutch army, not the Republican one. Hueting had illustrated excessive Dutch war crimes in different situations, in none of which he thought it had been a (justified) response to actions of the other warring party. Dutch violence had been ruthless, not necessarily motivated by revenge, and at times completely random, without the opponent having given cause for it in any way, he had argued.[386] In the 1969 interview, Hueting had graphically described how an Indonesian man was heavily beaten and then hoisted up on a beam with a rope around his ankles, and how in the ensuing fall his head clattered on the concrete floor, "until the blood

[382] E.g.: J. Blokker, 'Kanalisering van een nationaal narcisme', *Volkskrant* (12 August 1995); H. Biersteker in: 'Ik heb helemaal geen koloniale oorlog gevoerd'; M. De Meij, 'Graag een echt Indonesië-debat'; J. Pronk in: 'Spijt betuigen is toch niet zo moeilijk', *AD* (2 March 1995). For an estimate of the number of casualties see: R. Limpach, '"Ze vielen als gemaaid koren", Een beschouwing over de verliescijfers in Indonesië, 1945-49', *Militaire Spectator*, 191/1 (2022), pp. 32-49.
[383] 'Tabee Toean', *Trouw* (17 August 1995).
[384] E.g. 'Patrouille op weg naar een trauma', *Volkskrant* (17 August 1995).
[385] A. Van Dantzig in: *2 Vandaag* (TV, 16 August 1995).
[386] 'Dr Hueting: Nederlandse oorlogsmisdaden in Indonesië', *Volkskrant* (19 December 1968).

came out just about everywhere and there was a cracking sound from his head".[387] In the 1995 documentary, he visited this torture site and was visibly emotional, even after all these years.

Hueting did not just reappear on the scene as late as August 1995, in the *Brandpunt* documentary. He had been in on the 1994-1995 debate from the very beginning. He stood his ground, passing a scathing judgement like in 1969. After attending the first hearing of Boomsma's trial, Hueting stated to the press that it blew his mind that veterans still took offence at a comparison with the SS.[388] Like Poncke Princen, Hueting compared the Indonesian striving for and attainment of independence to the liberation from Nazi Germany.[389] He criticised the "peculiarly Dutch", short-lived "panic" that broke out at issues such as the Boomsma and the Princen affair, and was therefore in favour of a substantial and steady debate as proposed by Deetman.[390] Hueting also spoke out against Dutch hypocrisy: it seemed to him that the Dutch had nothing good to say about the French and others, but were unwilling to face their own imperial past.[391] Finally, He was one of the few who had another try at the semantic discussion of 1969, commenting cynically that "'war crimes' [is applied] to the whole world, only for the Netherlands the non-word 'excesses' [applies]."[392]

In the years following the Hueting affair, chiefly Dutch television had ensured that the decolonisation war and excessive Dutch violence had regularly been brought to the general public's attention with independent productions and a critical, agenda-setting attitude.[393] By the semicentenary, twenty-eight documentaries had been made on the topic, usually told from the perspective of veterans, who were primarily portrayed as victims.[394] In August 1995, no fewer than three TV documentaries starring veterans were broadcast, one of which again gave a stage to former whistleblower Hueting, and which, taken together, painted a more complex picture than since 1969.

[387] *Achter het Nieuws* (TV, broad. VARA, 17 January 1969). Hueting retells this anecdote in: *Brandpunt* (TV, 13 August 1995).
[388] *Nova* (TV, 26 May 1994).
[389] *Brandpunt* (TV, 13 January 1995).
[390] *Dingen die gebeuren* (radio, 10 January 1995).
[391] *Ibid*.
[392] *Brandpunt* (TV, 13 January 1995).
[393] Van der Kaaij, *Een kwaad geweten*, pp. 178-180.
[394] C. Vos, 'Televisie is niet debet aan verdringing van oorlogsmisdaden', *NRC* (30 May 1994); C. Vos, 'Een open zenuw: televisie over de koloniale oorlog in Indië, 1945-1950', *Tijdschrift voor mediageschiedenis*, 2/2 (1999), p. 84.

To one of the filmmakers, all this was indicative of a particularly profound process of working through. Verheul thought that countries that had performed violence similar to the 'Police Actions' in the Dutch Indies, such as France, were not dealing with the past as thoroughly. He brought the example of the documentary *La Guerre San Nom* (1992), by his French colleague Bernard Traverier: "A beautiful film but not as harrowing as this one. When I listen to his stories (…) it is always like: "well, cheers! Forgotten. Stop. This is getting too bad"".[395] Verheul was one of the few to mention what had gone on in France in the early 1990s.

Beatrix's speech in Jakarta (21 August 1995): directed at her divided home audience

The belief that Indonesians had already 'moved on' stood in the way of Deetman's debate and further investigations into excessive violence by the army between 1945-1949. All kinds of participants used Indonesian lenience also to thwart plans about royal apologies in Jakarta. In the major national dailies, journalists opposed a belated apology because Indonesians 'did not ask for it'.[396] In an interview with the AD, even historian De Jong argued apologies were "superfluous" for this reason.[397] Foreign Minister Van Mierlo maintained that neither the Indonesians, nor the Dutch would benefit from official apologies: the former were not keen on receiving them, and the latter would not manage to lay the past to rest by offering them.[398] A retired general considered Minister Pronk's suggestion to apologise paternalistic. Presumably, Pronk thought he knew better than the Indonesians "what was good for [them]".[399]

Shortly before and during the state visit, Dutch media reported on Indonesians showing little interest in the Dutch PM's congratulatory television speech on 17 August, and the Queen's visit a few days later. It was noted that Indonesian newspapers published short articles on bilateral trade relations, but made no mention of the colonial war.[400] A correspondent in Jakarta reported that PM Kok's TV speech – in which he said that Indonesia had rightly strove for independence 50 years before – had neither been watched by many Indonesians, nor had it provoked many reactions.[401] Another reporter observed that Beatrix's visit was not the talk of

[395] *Radio uit* (radio, 18 August 1995).
[396] E.g.: 'Merdeka', *Trouw* (8 August 1995); 'Weekbladen: Princen zou graag aan Pronk-debat meedoen', *Volkskrant* (12 January 1995); 'Schokkende onthulling'; 'Na bevrijding komt verzoening'; 'Een exercitie in zelfkwelling'.
[397] 'Met een ruim hart naar Indonesië'.
[398] 'Van Mierlo: politionele acties historisch gezien foute reactie'.
[399] General Huyser in: *Nova* (TV, 28 December 1994).
[400] 'Volgens enquête willen meeste Indonesiërs excuses van Beatrix's, *Volkskrant* (21 August 1995).
[401] *Nieuws op 1* (radio, 17 August 1995).

the day: in street interviews with Jakarta residents, most people turned out not to recognise her on seeing a photo.[402] A journalist in the AD reported that "ordinary Indonesians" showed no interest whatsoever in her Majesty's visit. Although billboards of the Queen and her husband had been put up next to those of the Suharto couple in several places, hardly anyone seemed to know about it.[403] The noted lack of Indonesian interest was in stark contrast to the fuss surrounding the state visit in the ex-metropole.

A pragmatic explanation was given for the apparent lack of interest — many foreign heads of state had congratulated on that day, and many foreign delegations had attended the independence celebrations — but it surely made it look like the Indonesians had forgotten and forgiven.[404] The official narrative of the host country during the state visit gave no reason to doubt that the former colony had indeed 'moved on'. President Suharto's speech at the banquet was strongly future-oriented. After praising "the heroes of the Indonesian independence", he stated:

> The Netherlands and Indonesia are linked by a long history of three and a half centuries. The memories of that relationship are still tangible everywhere. Both our countries have shown [to be wise]. We have both learned from the past and on that basis, we are building a new relationship for the future, focused on new goals.[405]

Suharto further stressed the importance of respect for national sovereignty and bilateral relations in a global economy. Incidentally, whereas Suharto's speech barely evoked interest in the former metropole, the entire Dutch nation was glued to the television to hear and see the Queen's long-awaited speech:

> [T]he Declaration of the Republic of Indonesia on 17 August 1945 came as a complete surprise. The Netherlands was not at first prepared to accept the Indonesian pursuit of complete and immediate

[402] *Radiojournaal* (radio, 20 August 1995).
[403] A. Paans, 'Stroef begin in Jakarta', *AD* (22 August 1995).
[404] A Jakarta correspondent offered alternative explanations: the PM's speech aired during street celebrations, and in Indonesia's rising economy, trade opportunities overshadowed the Queen's visit. See: *Nieuws op 1* (radio, 17 August 1995). Also e.g.: *Radiojournaal* (radio, 20 August 1995).
[405] 'Respect voor elkaars soevereiniteit hoort voorop te staan', *Volkskrant* (22 August 1995). Only the *Volkskrant* published Suharto's speech in full, without comment.

> independence. The separation between our two countries thus became a lengthy process, costing much pain and bitter conflict. When we look back on that time, (…) it deeply saddens us that so many died in that struggle or have had to bear its scars for the rest of their lives.
>
> A few days ago, Mr President, Indonesia celebrated the fact that it declared its independence 50 years ago, on 17 August. Since then, that has been your national day. We much appreciate the opportunity (…) to be your guests here, at a moment that is preeminently suitable to offer you and the people of Indonesia on behalf of all my countrymen *Jauh di mata, tetapi dekat di hati* [far from the eye but near to the heart] our best wishes for a bright and happy future.

After the state dinner, Suharto's right-hand man Mudijoni expressed satisfaction at the fact that Beatrix had not apologised, stating that he would have been annoyed had the Queen raked up the past.[406]

Nevertheless, several Dutch media outlets noticed that the atmosphere during the state visit was "distant", "cool" and "aloof".[407] The interaction between the two head-of-state couples was less cordial and spontaneous than during Queen Juliana's 1971 state visit. Preparatory visits by Dutch officials had clearly not fully mended matters after the 1992 Pronk Affair. Diplomatic incidents during the state visit led some to believe that the Indonesian government had quietly hoped for more. The visit was "marred by just a little too much protocol bullying", so the NRC.[408] Shortly after the royal couple's arrival, a group of students demonstrated in front of the presidential palace – something the government normally did not allow –, demanding the recognition of 17 August 1945 as Independence Day. Conspicuously little coverage of the state visit in Indonesian (state-controlled) media supposedly explained why there were no cheering crowds along the side of the roads. Moreover, the official programme did not go as planned. Amongst other things, the lunch with the sultan of Yogyakarta and the Queen's private lunch with President Suharto were cancelled last minute for unknown reasons, and the private conversation that was organised instead, lasted shorter than officially announced. Historian Schulte Nordholt and journalist Aboeprijadi Santoso argued in *Trouw*

[406] A Jakarta correspondent quoted Mudijoni saying this in: *Echo* (radio, 22 August 1995).
[407] E.g.: 'Handdruk bij begin van staatsbezoek Beatrix's; 'Een koel bezoek (1)', *Trouw* (1 September 1995).
[408] K. Versteegh, 'Van Mierlo vindt bezoek bevredigend', *NRC* (30 August 1995).

that these and other incidents were not coincidences in Suharto's New Order.[409] The NRC headlined: *'The Netherlands have been badly humiliated in Indonesia*'.[410]

Contributors who read something into the much-discussed incidents provided distinct explanations.[411] An NRC editor believed Suharto had been offended by Dutch criticism of human rights violations, which he thought was an unacceptable interference in Indonesia's domestic affairs.[412] Schulte Nordholt thought the President had been insulted by the Queen turning down his invitation to spend a few days prior to the visit at the presidential country residence on the island of Batam.[413] In an article together with an Indonesian journalist resident in the Netherlands, he also suggested that *Veteranenplatform* chairman Meines' rejection of Bishop Muskens' proposal to lay a wreath at the statue of Sukarno-Hatta during the state visit, had stirred up bad blood.[414] Jan Peters, a researcher of the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), thought the "disastrous" state visit was mainly because it had begun on 21 August, whereas Suharto had actually wanted Queen Beatrix there on 17 August.[415]

The Indonesian reception of the state visit, and of the Queen's speech in particular, met with interest. Dutch media reported mixed reactions from Jakarta, where the state visit had finally come to life after Beatrix's address. Peters had monitored Indonesian reporting during the state visit and noticed that only PM Kok's congratulations on 17 August had been ignored, while felicitations by Germany, France "and even Belgium" had been widely published.[416] The Queen's ensuing state visit had been considered a catastrophe, as Peters judged based on the predominantly negative media coverage in Indonesia. *Media Indonesia*, for example, wrote that it had "strong doubts about attempts by the Netherlands to cope with the trauma purely through an economic approach".[417] In a broadcast of *Reporter* in October 1995, Peters reported that Indonesian media passed harsh judgement on how the Dutch dealt with their imperial past:

[409] 'Het staatsbezoek van de gemiste kansen', *Trouw* (7 September 1995).
[410] H. Moll, 'Nederland is verpletterend vernederd in Indonesië', *NRC* (29 August 1995).
[411] E.g. W. Breedveld, 'Schimmenspel', *Trouw* (13 October 1995).
[412] 'Nederland is verpletterend vernederd in Indonesië'.
[413] *Brandpunt reporter* (TV, 10 October 1995). See also Abdoelgani in: 'Koningin Beatrix wees 'gebaar van vriendschap' van Soeharto af', *Trouw* (11 October 1995).
[414] N. Schulte Nordholt and A. Santoso, 'Het is voor Nederland nog niet te laat om besar hati te tonen', *NRC* (8 September 1995).
[415] J. Peters in: 'Staatsbezoek "rampzalig"', *AD* (14 September 1995).
[416] *Brandpunt reporter* (TV, 10 October 1995).
[417] 'Staatsbezoek "rampzalig"'. The 'Parallel Economic Mission' accompanying Beatrix on the state visit was the largest trade delegation the Netherlands had ever sent.

> [Indonesian newspapers] draw comparisons between the (…) way the past is processed in the Netherlands and the way it is processed in Germany. (…) [and] conclude (…) that the Germans are actually further along in processing an even more fraught past than the Dutch. (…) [A] rather painful conclusion for us Dutch.[418]

The most outspoken critic of the Queen's speech, political scientist and president of the Islamic Muhammadiyah movement Amien Rais, made it into Dutch papers:

> That no apologies were made, shows the arrogance of the Dutch. (…) How can we turn the page, if [the past is] ignored? Apologise, acknowledge our Independence Day, only then can we continue on an equal footing.[419]

Even positive reactions from Indonesia to the Queen's speech showed signs of a past not yet 'forgiven and forgotten'. Dutch correspondents in Jakarta reported that many Indonesians were pleased with her address, precisely because they read regret and recognition between the lines. One correspondent told the radio programme *Echo* that what the Indonesians found most important in Beatrix's speech was her acknowledgement that Dutch rule had caused pain.[420] According to a *Volkskrant* correspondent, most reactions in the Indonesian press acknowledged that, given the turbulence in her own country, the Queen could not have been much clearer.[421]

Shortly after the state visit, officials from both sides spoke more freely. In an interview with the *Volkskrant* a few days after the state visit, Foreign Minister Van Mierlo revealed that he had never really believed that the Indonesians had forgotten and forgiven.[422] During the Indonesia-Netherlands Conference, organised by *Clingendael* (*Netherlands institute of International Relations*) (The Hague, 1 and 2 September 1995), the Indonesian delegation

---

[418] *Brandpunt reporter* (TV, 10 October 1995).
[419] 'Reacties op rede Beatrix in Jakarta overwegend goed'; 'Reserves in Jakarta, kampong viert feest', *Trouw* (24 August 1995).
[420] *Echo* (radio, 22 August 1995).
[421] 'Kroonprins verbaasd over Nederlandse beroering rond koloniaal verleden', *Volkskrant* (23 August 1995). E.g. also: 'Reacties op rede Beatrix in Jakarta overwegend goed'; 'GroenLinks mist expliciete excuses voor Nederlands optreden in Indonesië', *Volkskrant* (22 August 1995).
[422] This did not contradict his and his party's plea against royal apologies: he believed Indonesians had not forgotten the past, but were nevertheless not in need of apologies. 'Minister Van Mierlo ziet staatsbezoek aan Indonesië als begin voor waardevollere betrekkingen', *Volkskrant* (26 August 1995).

confirmed that Beatrix's non-attendance and inability to fully recognise 17 August as the Republic's birthday had led to a sense of disappointment.[423]

Now, if the Indonesians had longed for Dutch apologies and the Queen's presence on 17 August, why had they not asked for it? Months before the Queen appeared in Jakarta, the *Volkskrant* already wrote it was also because of "eastern courtesy".[424] Film maker Bromet had come to realise that one could not take their word for it, when Indonesians said they had put the past behind them. He expounded: whereas the westerner is reputedly straightforward and offensive, "[t]he easterner lies, but does not offend [others]".[425] After the state visit, Schulte Nordholt and Santoso explained that it was not that Indonesians did not want an apology, they just did not want to ask for it. They clarified how asking for an apology was considered "berjiwa kecil (small-hearted)" and "a sign of weakness". The other should be "so generous" or "berjiwa besar (big-hearted) to apologise of his own accord.[426] In Dutch media before and after Queen Beatrix's visit, few Indonesian officials confirmed being mindful of 'good manners' indeed. Roeslan Abdulgani, former soldier and adviser to Presidents Sukarno and Suharto, and Emil Salim clarified that asking for a royal apology or requesting her Majesty's presence on 17 August was considered impolite and indecent and went against what they call 'sopan santun' (good manners).[427] However, it did not seem to be a matter of the heart only: according to Nordholt Schulte and Santoso, Suharto's good manners could not be separated from the economic gain that would come with the 'Parallel Economic Mission' accompanying Beatrix on her state visit.[428]

In the end, the cabinet had eagerly listened to only part of the mixed signals from Indonesia about the state visit, Schulte Nordholt and Santoso concluded.[429] The Hague had heard ambassador Kadarisman loud and clear when he said that apologies were unnecessary, but hardly anyone seemed to have heard him add: "We would appreciate [apologies] of course."[430]

---

[423] 'Het staatsbezoek van de gemiste kansen'.
[424] A. Bleich, 'Wijsheid achteraf'. Another reason given was that the Indonesian government might avoid revisiting the 100,000 Indonesian casualties of 1945-1949 to prevent drawing attention to the half a million victims of Suharto's 1960s coup.
[425] 'De westerling liegt niet, maar kwetst', *AD* (5 August 1995).
[426] 'Het is voor Nederland nog niet te laat om besar hati te tonen'; 'Het staatsbezoek van de gemiste kansen'.
[427] Salim in: 'Indonesië is jullie gewetensprobleem'; Ceremoniemeester over staatsbezoek van koningin'; Abdulgani in: *Brandpunt reporter* (TV, 10 October 1995). See also: 'Het is voor Nederland nog niet te laat om besar hati te tonen'.
[428] 'Het staatsbezoek van de gemiste kansen'.
[429] *Ibid*.
[430] *NOS Journaal* [8 p.m.] (TV, 12 January 1995). See also Kadarisman in: 'Premier Kok kritiseert Pronk'.

Schulte Nordholt and Santoso also accused the cabinet of selective hearing when they had decided to postpone the state visit until after the independence celebrations. PM Kok had justified the decision, saying that Suharto himself did not want Queen Beatrix present on 17 August.[431] In reality, the message 'from Suharto's circles', about the Indonesian people preferably celebrating independence without foreign heads of state, had followed only after a vain attempt to get the Queen to come on 17 August.[432] Once the dates of the state visit had been set and it had been clear that she would not attend the 50th anniversary, Indonesian diplomats had politely played along, pretending the Queen being an unwanted guest on 17 August, to avoid The Hague losing face.[433] Jakarta's backroom diplomacy of mixed signals and 'good manners' had thus given the Dutch government room for manoeuvre to shape the state visit according to the divided home audience.

Conclusion

The 50th anniversary of the Indonesian Declaration of Independence and Queen Beatrix's state visit on that occasion triggered a post-imperial memory irruption in the Netherlands about the moral reprehensibility of and official apologies for excessive Dutch violence in the Indonesian Independence War. More than anything else, it was a national controversy.

The debate was nation-centric: Indonesian victim- and perpetratorhood was discussed only to pass judgement on harm done by and to the Dutch. Moreover, it was mainly a Dutch affair, with hardly any interference by Indonesians 'over there' or 'back here'. Immigrant communities in the Netherlands sought recognition of their particular suffering in the years *before* and *after* the 'Police Actions', and Jakarta expressed its wishes only behind the scenes. With her speech, the Queen sought primarily to please her home audience. Furthermore, reappraising empire clearly was a Dutch rather than a European matter. Except for a few omens in France, it was still conspicuously quiet in neighbouring countries, and foreign memory entrepreneurs played no role in the Dutch debate.

[431] Even after the state visit, Minister of Foreign Affairs Van Mierlo stuck to this story. See e.g. 'Van Mierlo: Kritiek op staatsbezoek is onzinnig', *AD* (29 September 1995).
[432] E.g. 'Koningin volgend jaar naar Indonesië', *Telegraaf* (6 July 1994); 'Beatrix gaat pas naar Indonesië na jubileumsfeest', *Volkskrant* (7 July 1994).
[433] *Brandpunt reporter* (TV, 10 October 1995). See also: 'Koningin Beatrix wees 'gebaar van vriendschap' van Soeharto af'.

Something of a left-right divide ran through the debate. Whereas leftist parties and media tended to champion critical introspection, right-wing parties and media were much more hesitant. Perhaps more importantly, there was a divide between those who had and those who had not been (in)directly involved in (ordering) the 'Police Actions'. Retired veterans with time on their hands and (successors of) political parties compromised in the late 1940s, were on the defensive. Younger parties and generations were not busy saving their skin.

The question of how morally reprehensible extreme Dutch violence had been, was truly divisive. Assessing reprehensibility, comparisons to others played an important role. The reprehensibility of excessive Dutch violence was measured against atrocities committed by the Nazis, other European empires and Indonesian freedom fighters. As important as its frequency was that moral comparisons were used by prominent figures in the debate. In fact, some contributors stood out precisely because they drew contentious comparisons. Many narratives had a long history: the violent end of empire had always been remembered by thinking about others.

Exempting voices stressed how Dutch soldiers had gone to the Indies thinking they would carry on the work of the Allied forces, believing Sukarno was a collaborator. They categorically rejected comparisons made between the Dutch army in the East and the German SS. They were also comforted by the belief that the Dutch had been 'no different from' or 'just as bad' as other imperial powers. Furthermore, they stressed that Dutch atrocities had really been *counter*terror, in retaliation for barbarities by Indonesian independence fighters; they emphasised the intrinsic cruelty of guerrilla warfare; or tried to shift focus away from Dutch violence by drawing attention to the humanitarian work done by Dutch troops in the Indies immediately after 1945. Besides veterans and right-wing media there were other contributors to the debate, such as professional historians, who used or backed up some of these exonerating arguments.

Accusatory voices – amongst whom novelist Graa Boomsma, deserter Poncke Princen, left-wing media, and key figures from the 1969-debate – in contrast, were disturbed by the reversal of roles, puzzled by the fact that a country would start a war two years after its own liberation; believed the comparison to 'SS methods' was rather accurate; did not find it hard to accept that some conscripts, who had suddenly found themselves in the role of oppressor, had deserted or refused to fight; and occasionally compared the Indonesian striving for and attainment of independence to the liberation from Nazi Germany. They emphasised how the Dutch had gone against the new post-colonial world order, were not comforted by the idea that other empires had been just as evil. They stressed that the Dutch had had 'their own Vietnam';

and knowing the Dutch had operated out of step with 'world history' made Dutch military action seem even more reprehensible to them.

Ultimately, no consensus was reached on how morally reprehensible Dutch military action in the Indies had been. Moral comparisons were instrumentalised yet ultimately did not settle the question. Quite the contrary: it provided exonerating voices as much ammunition as incriminating ones. Opposing voices, both resorting to morally charged comparisons, dug in their positions rather than moved towards each other.

When evaluating how the past was and should be dealt with, moral comparisons also played a principal part. Looking back and assessing the status quo of memory affairs, some participants had the process of working through World War II at the back of their minds. By looking at how this other 'dark' past was sorted out (also in post-war Germany), some learned that *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung* was an arduous task. More so, Indies veterans used the commemoration of the Second World War as a standard. The scathing verdict of a very vocal group of infuriated Indies veterans – who (like victims of the Second World War in Asia) demanded recognition equal to victims of the Second World War on Dutch mainland – was heard loud and clear. When (re)assessing the process of working through, fewer contributors (yet among whom key actors like national historian De Jong and whistleblower Hueting) also stressed what was 'typically Dutch' about it. They seemed to agree on *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung* in the Netherlands being different from the way other ex-metropoles did (not) deal with their past, but disagreed about whether the Dutch stood out positively or negatively.

Looking ahead at Beatrix's imminent state visit, memory politics were not shaped and debated primarily by the *Aufarbeitung* of the Second World War or in other ex-metropoles, but with reference to the (supposed) expectations and needs of the other warring party. The conviction that Indonesians had long since 'forgiven and forgotten' figured prominently in the debate. It was grounded in testimonies from and official communication by the Republic about the state visit. It was a much-heard argument against Deetman's proposed debate, against further investigations into excessive military violence between 1945-1949, and royal apologies in Jakarta. Before the visit, there had been some doubts about whether Indonesians had truly 'moved on'. Testimonies (also by high-ranked Indonesian officials) that made it plausible that Indonesian forgiveness had been a mere 'courtesy', were made or drawn attention to *ex post* – when the state visit had not run so smoothly, and Dutch media had reported reactions from Jakarta showing signs of a past not yet 'forgiven and forgotten'.

At the outset of the anniversary year, the Dutch people had been deeply divided on apologies. A poll in January 1995 shows that 34% of respondents thought the Queen should offer apologies, 38% thought she should not, and 27% were not sure.[434] Even if by July, more people had made up their mind – fewer people still did not know (20%), the percentage of those in favour of an apology had remained the same (32%), and a relative majority of people was now against a royal apology (48%) – the nation was still split at the time of the Queen's departure for Indonesia.[435]

The debate in the run-up to the state visit ended in a stalemate. In an attempt to make everyone happy, after quite a tug of war, the Queen eventually made her appearance in Indonesia four days after the official celebrations, on 21 August, and beat around the bush when she delivered her speech. With the date chosen (close to yet not on the day of the Proclamation) and the words spoken (not an apology but delivered in a remorseful tone) she sought to please an audience back home that was divided to the core. Reactions to the state visit and the Queen's speech were as divided as in the months leading up to it. Quickly after the state visit political and public debate on excessive Dutch violence in the Indonesian Independence War subsided (see *Graph 1.3*).

Only in the longer run, did the 1994-1995 post-imperial memory irruption prove to have been a tipping point – first of all on an official level. Whereas previous debates in 1969 and 1987 had ended on an exculpatory note, after 1995 Dutch governments were increasingly regretful, first about the illegitimacy of military action taken (Minister Foreign Affairs Ben Bot in 2005), and later also about (particular instances of) Dutch extreme violence (PM Rutte in 2011 and 2022, and King Willem-Alexander in 2020). The semicentenary debate was a tipping point in yet another way: not long after, the focus gradually started to shift to another aspect of Dutch colonial history (see *Graph 1.2*). Gert Oostindie stresses that in the years to come, "Atlantic slave trade and slavery in the Caribbean colonies [were] increasingly singled out as the nadir of colonial history."[436] Already in 2008, there would be no other episode in Dutch history that elicited more embarrassment than Dutch slave trade.[437] The Dutch 'rediscovery' of Atlantic slave trade after the turn of the century – a response to claims for recognition by the Black

[434] *2 Vandaag* (TV, 11 January 1995).
[435] Poll results e.g. in: 'Een derde Nederlanders: excuses aan Indonesië', *AD* (10 July 1995).
[436] Oostindie, 'History brought home', p. 158.
[437] *De Geschiedeniskrant* (26 March 2008), quoted in: Oostindie, 'History brought home', p. 158.

Atlantic and part of a broader trend in the Western world – moved the violent ending of the DEI down the public agenda.[438]

[438] Oostindie, 'History brought home', pp. 158-159, 161, 163-65.

II. The French Torture Debate (2000-2002)

After decades of mostly 'forgetting' the brutalities committed by French troops during the Algerian Independence War (1954-1962), the first full-fledged post-imperial memory irruption in France took place at the turn of the century (2000-2002). In June 2000 a former Algerian Independence fighter, Louisette Ighilahriz, testified in *Le Monde* how she and other women had been brutally raped and tortured by French paratroopers during the Battle of Algiers (1957). The interview created a media frenzy and sparked off vast outpouring that was fuelled by shocking revelations by military figures who had played a key role in the Algerian Independence War. This chapter is about the French 'Torture Debate'.

Roughly one hundred twenty years since the French had arrived in Algeria in 1830 and had begun to establish French rule, France fought a brutal war against the Algerian Independence movement FLN. The Algerian movement for Independence gained momentum after the Second World War, when France did not live up to its promises of greater Algerian autonomy. In 1954 then, the FLN started a liberation war against the colonial oppressor, which managed to hold the reins only with approximately half a million French soldiers and through brutal measures. The savagery of it all eroded support for the war in France and internationally, and in 1959 Charles de Gaulle spoke out in favour of Algerian self-determination. With the 1962 Evian Agreement, Algeria finally became independent.

After the end of the Algerian War, France immediately sought to erase the traces of a lost and ugly war.[439] Until the early 1980s, there was what renowned historian and Algeria expert Benjamin Stora has described as 'collective amnesia', which was imposed from above through an official 'doctrine of oblivion' or 'politics of concealment' – the backbone of which was a general amnesty on crimes committed during the war.[440] The first amnesty law was enacted by decree in 1962, the final one adopted by parliament in 1982. In the first two decades after Algeria's violent decolonisation, the silence on this chapter in French history was deafening: there were no commemorations, ceremonies, or monuments; it was not part of school curricula;

[439] A. Hubbell, *Remembering French Algeria. Pieds-Noirs, Identity, and Exile* (Lincoln, Nebraska, 2015), p. 28; Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, p. 201.
[440] B. Stora, *La Gangrène et l'oubli: la mémoire de la guerre d'Algérie* (Paris, 1991).

and neither academics nor the public took much notice.[441] The barbarities from 1954-1962 were not entirely forgotten but receded into the background. In the late 1960s, there was no heated public debate on empire in France as in neighbouring countries, and only few minor public controversies followed in the 1970s and early 1980s.

For a long time, the public debate on empire, if at all, revolved not around the decolonisation war in *l'Algérie Française*, but rather around its (unwanted) post-colonial consequences: the contentious presence of colonial immigrants in the ex-metropole. Mostly in vain, various '*lobbies de mémoire*' – veterans and (French and Algerian) migrants from the former colony – drew attention to their Algerian past. With the arrival of the political Left under Mitterrand's presidency (1981-1995) and the rise of the extreme-right *Front National*, a phase of heightened polarisation on the question of colonial immigration commenced, with xenophobia and (anti-Arab) racist violence against colonial immigrants. While French Algeria thus was about the problematic post-colonial present, historical debates in France revolved around Vichy. Until the 1990s, Vichy and collaboration during the Second World War preoccupied the whole of French society: politics, courts, academia, and the public.[442]

In the early 1990s, several things came together so that from then onwards, people's interest began to extend beyond the postcolonial consequences of Algerian Independence to the decolonisation war itself. The Algerian Civil War (1991-2002); the thirtieth anniversary of the 1961 massacre of Algerian protestors in Paris (1991) and of the end of the Algerian War of Independence (1992); and the "wave of memory that swept Western societies" after the end of the Cold War all together prompted the French to start reflecting on 1954-1962.[443] Mitterrand's death (1996) and the disappearance of other politicians who had been in office between 1954-1962 cleared the way for the state to break the official silence.[444]

This endeavour started with Jacques Chirac's presidency and the coming to power of a new generation of politicians in the mid-1990s. However, official remembrance and recognition were not about the suffering inflicted, but about honouring the historical actors of the colonial period and those who had fought to preserve French Algeria.[445] It was only after the trial of Maurice Papon (1997-1998), who had been responsible for the murder of both

[441] R. Assaoui and C. Eldrige (eds.), *Algeria Revisited. History, Culture and Identity* (London, 2017), pp. 215-218.
[442] J. Jansen, 'Politics of Remembrance, Colonialism and the Algerian War of Independence in France', in M. Pakier and B. Stråth (eds.), *A European Memory? Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance* (New York, 2010), p. 280.
[443] G. Enjelvin and N. Korac-Kakabadse, 'France and the Memories of "Others": The Case of the Harkis', *History and Memory,* 24/1 (2012), p. 154.
[444] Enjelvin and Korac-Kakabadse, 'France and the Memories of "Others"', pp. 154-155.
[445] Jansen, 'Politics of Remembrance', p. 290.

Jewish citizens in Vichy France and Algerians in Paris in 1961, that the violent endgame of empire became subject of intense public debate. The trial marked the transition from an obsession with Vichy to a preoccupation with Algeria – from the 'Vichy syndrome' to an 'Algerian syndrome'.[446] The 2000-2002 Torture Debate was the first post-imperial memory irruption in a new era of 'obsession' with the Algerian Independence War.

On 20 June 2000, *Le Monde* published an interview with former FLN militant Louisette Ighilahriz. As a twenty-year old girl, she had been brutally raped and tortured by General Jacques Massu's paratroopers in Algiers. Through this medium, "Lila", as she was known in the war, now aged sixty-nine, sought to pay tribute to and hoped to get in touch with the French military doctor who had saved her from the three evil men who had held her captive in 1957: General Massu, General Bigeard, and her direct torturer captain Graziani.[447]

Over the following days, the two military commanders still alive responded to Ighilahriz's testimony in the same newspaper. They issued contradictory statements. Bigeard firmly dismissed her story: "this woman's testimony is a tissue of lies."[448] Massu – who did not recall having been involved in what had happened to her, but from the early 1970s had always openly admitted torture in Algeria –, in contrast, publicly admitted regret for torture in Algeria:

> Maybe her story is a bit exaggerated, but it doesn't have to be, and in this case, I really regret it. It was all part of a certain atmosphere, at the time, in Algiers. (…)
> "[T]orture is not indispensable in wartime; (…) We could have done things differently.[449]

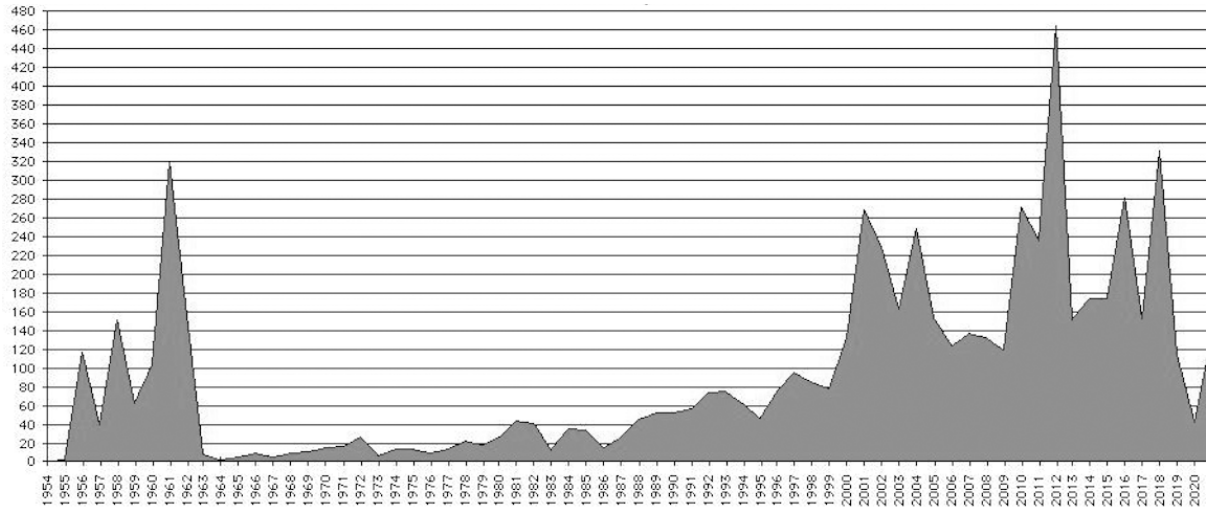
[446] A. Brazzoduro, 'Postcolonial Memories of the Algerian War of Independence, 1955-2010: French Veterans and Contemporary France', in E. Godin and N. Vince (eds.), *France and the Mediterranean. International Relations, Culture and Politics* (Oxford, 2012), p. 287.
[447] 'Torturée par l'armée française en Algérie, "Lila" recherche l'homme qui l'a sauvée', *Le Monde* (20 June 2000).
[448] '"Le témoignage de cette femme est un tissu de mensonges. Tout est faux, c'est une manoeuvre"', *Le Monde* (22 June 2000).
[449] '"La torture faisait partie d'une certaine ambiance. On aurait pu faire les choses différemment"', *Le Monde* (21 June 2000). See also Massu's testimony in November 2000: '"Si la France reconnaissait et condamnait ces pratiques, je prendrais cela pour une avancée"', *Le Monde* (22 November 2000).

Massu went on and told *Le Monde* that he had known Ighilahriz's rescuer, commander Richaud, well. He had been very fond of him, "a humanist and a charming man" with whom he had kept in touch until his death about one and a half years earlier. Massu even offered to help find his relatives.

Ighilarhriz had succeeded in identifying her rescuer, but after having kept silent for decades, she would not leave it at the interview she gave *Le Monde* in June 2000. She was adamant in her effort to bring the government to an official apology, and to turn the page for the sake of her children' and grandchildren's generation.[450]

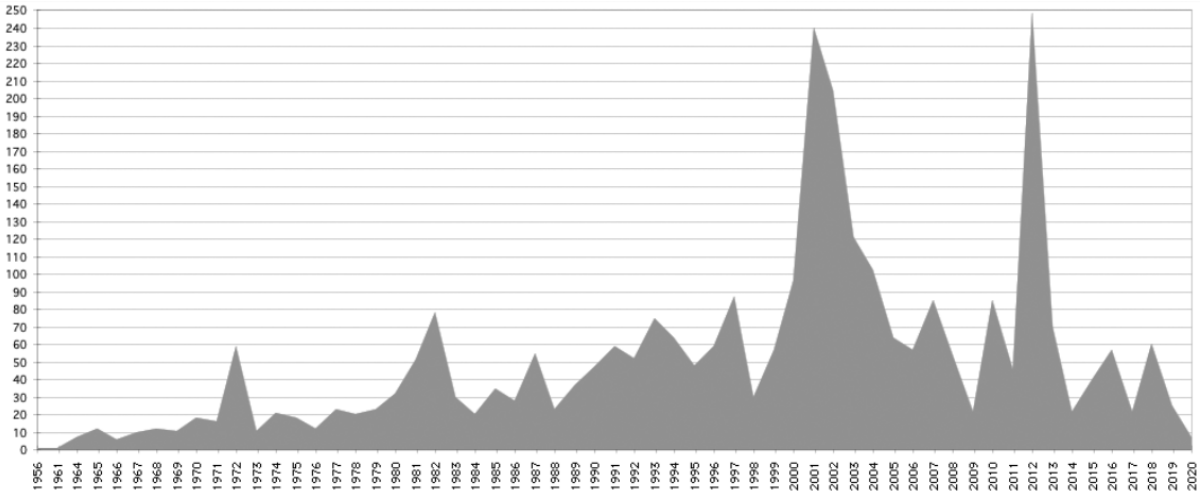
Ighilahriz's testimony and the generals' contradictory responses reopened the debate on torture in Algeria.[451] The interview with Ighilahriz unleashed a media frenzy and started a chain reaction of testimonies and events over the course of two years. The "mediatic event" that was France's first post-imperial memory irruption would only tail off in 2002 (see *Graphs 2.1* and *2.2*).

Graph 2.1. Distribution radio broadcasts (1954-2020) on 'guerre d'Algérie' (INA database)



[450] *Radio libre* (radio, broad. France Culture, 19 May 2001).
[451] 'Le témoignage de Louisette Ighilahriz rouvre le débat sur la torture en Algérie', *Le Monde* (23 June 2000).

Graph 2.2. Distribution TV broadcasts (1956-2020) on 'guerre d'Algérie' (INA database)



Some historians and other scholars who partook in the Torture Debate stressed that controversies on the Algerian War had occurred periodically since 1962. Sociologist Jacqueline Costa-Lascoux spoke of a "*résurgence périodique du débat*".[452] Historian Sylvie Thénault pointed at *polémiques* in 1972, when General Massu had published his mémoires on the Battle of Algiers, and in 1981 when it was revealed that François Mitterrand, who then abolished the death penalty, had ordered the execution of forty-five Algerian prisoners in his capacity as minister of Justice (1956-1957).[453] Then there were the events of the early 1990s, which combined fuelled the interest in the Algerian War. However, the broad public 2000-2002 debate – to which veterans, politicians, historians, figures from the cultural and creative sectors, human rights organisations, and the media itself actively contributed, and in which the voices of colonial immigrants were heard occasionally – was of an unprecedented magnitude.

Contemporaries used collective psychoanalysis to make sense of what was happening. France now was confronted with "a taboo", "a past that did not pass", "a gangrene [that is] very alive

[452] *En attendant la suite* (radio, broad. France Culture, 21 August 2001).
[453] *Première édition* (radio, broad. France Culture, 18 September 2001). 'May 1968' might have been an "anticolonial revolution for a decolonial future", as R. Young argues, but it did not cause a publicity outburst. See: R. Young, 'May 1968: Anticolonial Revolution for a Decolonial Future', Interventions, 23/3 (2020), pp. 432-447.

in the country's collective unconscious".[454] The "repressed memory" now finally "resurfaced, and the current debate was "the only way to exorcise what has happened".[455]

Commentators characterised the debate as fierce, broad and omnipresent. France was "horrified" by testimonies of several senior officers, which caused "a stir", plunged the country into "turmoil", and "brutally reopened" the debate on the Algerian War.[456] The matter was addressed with "sensationalism" and "urgency".[457] Forty years after the end of the Algerian Independence War, "tongues [were] wagging" and "the Algerian War [was] at the heart of national history and memory".[458] *Le Monde* wrote: "The end of the conflict was so bloody that 40 years later the war in Algeria is the only thing on our minds".[459] According to Stora, Algeria was "an obsession": there was a "desire to constantly recall the history of the Algerian War" in the public arena.[460] The '*débat sur la torture en Algérie'* was described as "very polemical", a "*cacophonie sincère*", even as a "*guerre de mémoire*".[461]

Contemporaries saw the current debate as something momentous. They stressed it was now '*40 ans après'*. After forty years, the French finally experienced a '*Liberation de la parole'*, and the stakes were high.[462] Maryvonne de Saint-Pulgent, member of the *Conseil d'État,* for instance, contended that it was "a question of clarifying our values for the future".[463]

The debate did not have a built-in climax, or one decisive moment, like the Dutch debate. This chapter examines the series of events that followed the interview with Ighilahriz, and draws conclusions on the debate, looking at the sum of its parts. Considered that torture in Algeria was common knowledge really, what was the debate essentially about?[464] And what did it

---

[454] E.g.: *Envoyé spécial* (TV, broad. France 2, 7 February 2002); *Journal 08h00* (radio, broad. France Inter, 3 May 2001); *Là bas, si j'y suis* (radio, broad. France Inter, 7 May 2001).
[455] E.g.: 'Pierre Vidal-Naquet, historien: "il se manifeste une gigantesque envie de verité à propos de l'Algérie', *Le Monde* (27 November 2000); *Là bas, si j'y suis* (radio, 10 November 2000); G. Halimi in: *Culture et dépendances* (TV, broad. France 3, 6 March 2002).
[456] E.g.: *Là bas, si j'y suis* (radio, 7 May 2001); *19 20 Edition nationale* (TV, broad. France 3, 9 May 2001); *Inter soir 19h00* (radio, broad. France Inter, 5 May 2001); *Diagonales* (radio, broad. France Inter, 10 December 2000).
[457] E.g.: *En attendant la suite* (radio, 21 August 2001); *En attendant la suite* (radio, 21 August 2001).
[458] E.g.: *Ecoutez, des anges passent* (radio, broad. France Inter, 12 January 2001); *En attendant la suite* (radio, 21 August 2001).
[459] '1962-2002, France et modernité', *Le Monde* (17 March 2002).
[460] 'La mémoire retrouvée de la guerre d'Algérie?', *Le Monde* (18 March 2002).
[461] E.g.: *13 heures le journal* (TV, broad. France 2, 4 May 2001); *Mots croisés* (TV, broad. France 2, 21 May 2001); *Radio libre* (radio, 25 November 2000). See: B. Stora, *La guerre des mémoires – La France face à son passé colonial. Entretiens avec Thierry Leclère* (2007).
[462] E.g. A. Liechti in: *Radio libre* (radio, 25 November 2000).
[463] *La suite dans les idées* (radio, broad. France Culture, 7 December 2000).
[464] Several debate contributors noted that torture in Algeria was widely known. See e.g.: *13 heures le journal* (TV, 6 May 2001); *Là bas, si j'y suis* (radio, 7 May 2001); *Première édition* (radio, 28 November 2000);

eventually lead up to? Why was no agreement reached in the run-up to the 40th anniversary of the Evian Agreement (March 2002) about something as seemingly straightforward as the end date for the Algerian War, after almost two years of public debate?

Papon's double trial (October 1997- April 1998) & the official recognition of 1954-1962 as a 'war' (October 1999)

The sensational Papon 'double trial' (1997-1998) was a transformative moment in French empire memory that had created a receptive atmosphere for the interview with Ighilahriz.[465] Whilst officially tried for his role in the Vichy Regime, unofficially – amnesty laws for all parties in the Algerian War did not allow for official prosecution – Maurice Papon was put to the stand for his role in the Algerian War.

France's two painful pasts came together in the person of Maurice Papon. As a senior policy official in the Vichy regime, he had been responsible for the implementation of anti-Semitic laws, the 'dejudaisation' of companies and the deportation of more than 1500 Jewish citizens from Bordeaux to Nazi death camps (1942-1944).[466] After the Liberation, his career included several stints in North Africa. As Chief Administrator of Constantine (1956-1958), Papon had been in charge of the police and had ordered police crackdowns on the native population and acts of repression against countryside insurrectionists.[467] As prefect of the Parisian Police (1958-1967), Papon had inaugurated similar repressive measures against Algerian citizens. In 1958 he had responded to a planned FLN offensive with massive roundups – detaining Algerians arrested in the streets of Paris in centres from which European Jews had been transported – and in 1961 had ordered what came to be known as 'the Massacre of Paris'.[468]

By the end of the Algerian War, some 350,000 Algerians who had come as workers after the Second World War resided in France. On 17 October 1961, some 200 of them were massacred in central Paris at the hands of Papon's police force at an anti-war demonstration called for by the FLN leadership in France. The French Police had violently crushed a peaceful

'Torture. Les réactions aux confessions des généraux Massu et Aussaresses', *Le Figaro* (30 November 2000); Vidal-Naquet in: *La fabrique de l'histoire* (radio, broad. France Culture, 27 March 2000).
[465] J. House and N. MacMaster, *Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror, and Memory* (Oxford, 2006), p. 10.
[466] 'Maurice Papon une carrière française', *Le Monde* (19 September 2002).
[467] J. Einaudi, *La Bataille de Paris. 17 octobre 1961* (Paris, 1991), p. 48.
[468] R. Golsan, 'Memory Time Bombs: The Trial of Maurice Papon and the Algerian War', in *Vichy's Afterlife: History and Counterhistory in Postwar France* (Nebraska, 2000), pp. 164-167.

demonstration of some thirty thousand Algerians in the capital. Marchers had been brutally attacked: a far larger number than the authorities had wanted to admit had been heavily beaten, shot, or drowned in the Seine. Arrested Algerians, often badly wounded, had been transported to detention centres, in which they had been held captive and had endured inhuman conditions. The Algerian War had come home.

The *Massacre of Paris* had prompted comparisons between the Parisian police and the Nazis, and between Algerian and Jewish victims. Shortly after the horrifying events, numerous prominent authors and academics had drawn up a petition, saying that: "We refuse to distinguish between the Algerians stacked up at the Palais des Sports and [some 65,000] Jews [earlier] parked at Drancy [from which they were deported to German extermination camps]."[469] According to *Les Temps Modernes,* it had been a "pogrom", and in the *Témoignage Chrétien* it had read:

> In 1936 (…), Himmler explained to the Jews that the ghettos had been created to ensure their protection. In 1961, Papon assured the Muslims that the curfew measures [of 5 October, which triggered Algerian mass protest in Paris] had been put in place 'with their interests in mind.' (…) [T]he Jews were required to wear (…) the yellow star. So when will we see green stars on the chests of Algerians?[470]

Contemporaries in 1961 had deliberately drawn such comparisons to incite outrage and put an end to ongoing injustice.[471]

Until the early 1980s, almost nobody spoke about the Parisian massacre: the French state had silenced and censored anybody who sought to make the extraordinary brutality of the police public.[472] In the early and mid-1980s youth movements with broad appeal among the *Beurs*

[469] Quoted in J. Einaudi, *La Bataille de Paris: 17 Octobre 1961* (Paris, 1991), p. 225.
[470] H. Bourges, *Témoignage Chrétien* (27 October 1961). In *Les Temps Modernes* it read: "Pogrom. Le mot jusqu'ici ne s'écrivait pas en francais", quoted in Stora, *La Gangrène et l'oubli*, p. 98.
[471] Golsan, 'Memory Time Bombs', pp. 178-179.
[472] R. Derderian, 'Algeria as a lieu de mémoire: Ethnic Minority Memory and National Identity in Contemporary France', *Radical History Review*, 83 (2002), pp. 34-35; K. Jones, 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung à la française. Post-Colonial Memories of the Herero Genocide and 17 October 1961', in M. Perraudin and J. Zimmerer (eds.), *German Colonialism and National Identity* (New York, 2011), pp. 215; J. Cole, 'Remembering the Battle of Paris. 17 October 1961 in French and Algerian memory', *French Politics, Culture & Society,* 21/3 (2003), pp. 24-26, 29, 36.

(backslang of 'arabe') emerged, which sought to educate the French about the massacre of 1961. In 1991, Jean-Luc Einaudi's book *La Bataille de Paris, 17 Octobre 1961* appeared. With the police archives on the Paris massacre still closed, Einaudi managed to reconstruct the number of 200 deaths with alternative sources. It was his doing that, after 30 years, the matter turned from a subject of interest of the French Left into a topic of broad public discussion. Media covered the events of 17 October 1961 in depth for the first time. Einaudi's version of events became the standard reference among historians.[473]

In October 1997, the trial against the 87-year-old Vichy official Papon began. He was charged with crimes against humanity committed between June 1942 and May 1944 as the deputy to the prefect of Bordeaux. The court felt, however, that the accused's actions between 1940-1945 could not be judged without examining his later career. Vichy and the Algerian conflict were conflated in the Papon trial.[474] Einaudi, whose book now received renewed public attention, was called to testify in what commentators called a "trial within a trial".[475] As in 1961, memories of the two historical episodes converged also outside of court, in the mainstream press.[476]

In April 1998, after the longest trial in French history, Papon was convicted for complicity in crimes against humanity and sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment. While awaiting his appeal, which was ultimately invalidated by his attempted escape to Switzerland, Papon struck back with a lawsuit of his own. He sued Einaudi for libel in response to an opinion piece published in *Le Monde* on 20 May 1998, in which Einaudi had labelled the events of 17 October 1961 a "massacre" perpetrated "by police forces acting under the orders of Maurice Papon". Not only did Einaudi win the case (February 1999), in its verdict the court accepted "massacre" an apt term for what had happened. Amnesty laws thus prevented official prosecution, but did not hinder judicial historical judgement. After less than three years in prison, in September 2002, the 92-year-old Papon was released – too old and too sick to serve his sentence.

[473] Cole, 'Remembering the Battle of Paris', pp. 26-34; Jones, 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung à la française', p. 217.
[474] Golsan, 'Memory Time Bombs', pp. 161-162.
[475] Cole, 'Remembering the Battle of Paris', p. 27.
[476] Golsan, 'Memory Time Bombs', p. 177; Cole, 'Remembering the Battle of Paris', p. 26-34.

Papon's conviction built momentum for the official recognition of 1954-1962 as a 'war' in 1999 and the Torture Debate thereafter.[477] The bill to recognise the Algerian 'war' – which for more than forty-five years had been called 'a law enforcement operation' – and to award those who had taken part in it the status of veteran, was unanimously adopted by the National Assembly (June 1999) and the Senate (October 1999). At the turn of the century, the generation that had lived through and fought in Algeria had come to power: when the 1999 bill was issued, some thirty veterans were in Parliament, on either side of the political spectrum. *Le Monde* headlined that the Algerian War was no longer a *"guerre sans nom"*, a "war without a name".[478]

The Papon trial is commonly thought to mark a transition from the 'Vichy syndrome' to an 'Algerian syndrome'.[479] In this new memory era, '*guerre des mémoires'* proliferated in which strains and cleavages from the war years reappeared.[480] It would not take long before the first in a series of heated public debates about the Algerian Independence War commenced.

Participants in the Torture Debate would also forge a causal link between the trial and the 2000-2002 debate. Over the course of it, the irruption itself turned into a matter of interest. Fundamental questions asked were 'why now?'[481], and 'why not earlier?'. Why would recent revelations suddenly resonate strongly, whereas books and movies from the 50s, 60s and 70s that had uncovered torture by the French army in Algeria did not resonate at the time?[482] In a radio programme in September 2001, film producer Laurent Emmam, for instance, saw growing curiosity for this episode from national history since the prosecution of Papon.[483] In a television programme in December 2000 historian Pierre Vidal-Naquet also argued that, after the Algerian war had been dormant for a long time, the Papon trial was at the origin of the current debate on empire.[484]

---

[477] See also: R. Bensmaia, 'The War that Haunts France', *L'Esprit Créateur,* 54/4 (2014), p. 7.
[478] 'La guerre d'Algérie n'est plus une "guerre sans nom"', *Le Monde* (11 June 1999).
[479] E.g.: Brazzoduro, 'Postcolonial Memories', p. 287; N. MacMaster, 'The Torture Controversy (1998-2002): Towards a 'new history' of the Algerian War?', *Modern & Contemporary France*, 10/4 (2002), p. 450; Jones, 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung à la française', p. 214.
[480] See fn 39. J. Lewis, *The Algerian War in French/Algerian Writing. Literary Sites of Memory* (Cardiff, 2018), p. 22.
[481] *Inter matin* (radio, broad. France Inter, 29 January 2001); *Le journal de l'histoire* (TV, broad. France 5, 24 May 2001); *En attendant la suite* (radio, 21 August 2001); *Algérie: paroles de tortionnaires*, dir. J. Deniau (film, broad. France 5, 18 March 2002).
[482] E.g. H. Alleg, *La Question* (Paris, 1958); *Un si jeune Paix*, dir. J. Charby (1965); *Général Paris de Bollardiere*, dir. A. Gazut (1974).
[483] *Première édition* (radio, 18 September 2001).
[484] *Des mots de minuit* (TV, broad. France 2, 13 December 2000). See also Vidal-Naquet in: *La suite dans les idées* (radio, 17 September 2001); *Là bas, si j'y suis* (radio, 4 May 2001).

President Bouteflika in the Assemblée Nationale (June 2000): a reminder of colonial guilt

Just a few days before Ighilahriz's testimony in *Le Monde,* President Bouteflika had concluded the first state visit of an Algerian head of state to France since 1983. The visit was high on his priority list: since taking office in April 1999, Bouteflika had only visited Tunisia, Morocco and the Vatican.[485] An unusually long four-day state visit was planned (from 13 June until 17 June), which was eventually cut short by one day due to the funeral of the Syrian President Hafez El Assad.

During the preparations, French diplomats emphasised there would be no sensational announcements made: the visit would simply be about confirming the "new climate" and "rapprochement between the two countries" as "Algeria emerges from crisis".[486] The visit was meant to be primarily political, and to rebuild relations between the two countries after ten years of mutual misunderstanding.[487] The dispute had started when Islamists had disrupted the Algerian 1991 parliamentary elections; had intensified because both countries had taken different sides in the conflict over the future of Western Sahara; and had been triggered again when Paris criticised the controversial conditions that won Bouteflika the election in April 1999. Gradually now, Bouteflika's Algeria was regaining its place on the international stage: the new Head of State's policy of "civil concord" in his civil war-torn country was yielding some results.[488] French diplomats spoke of a "new Algeria" and the two capitals now desired rapprochement.[489]

To emphasise the importance of the state visit, Bouteflika and the seven ministers accompanying him were welcomed "with much pomp and circumstance" by President Chirac at Orly airport, where a long red carpet had been laid out and detachments from the three armed forces stood lined up.[490] This was followed by a scheduled meeting between the two presidents, which was reportedly "warm and long".[491] The Algerian Prime Minister and the French president made statements of the same tenor, about how the two countries now resumed their dialogue and journey towards a common future.[492]

---

[485] 'Deuxième visite d'un chef d'Etat algérien en France depuis l'indépendance; Tapis rouge pour Bouteflika', *Le Figaro* (14 June 2000).
[486] 'La France se prépare à accueillir avec faste le chef de l'Etat algérien', *Le Monde* (9 June 2000).
[487] 'M. Bouteflika à Paris, pour relancer les relations franco-algériennes', *Le Monde* (15 June 2000).
[488] 'Premier discours d'un chef d'Etat algérien devant l'Assemblée nationale; Un 'autocrate éclairé', *Le Figaro* (15 June 2000).
[489] 'M. Bouteflika à Paris, pour relancer les relations franco-algériennes'.
[490] 'Mémoire et situation politique au coeur de la visite du président algérien', *Le Monde* (16 June 2000).
[491] *Ibid*.; 'Deuxième visite d'un chef d'Etat algérien en France depuis l'indépendance'.
[492] 'Mémoire et situation politique au coeur de la visite du président algérien'.

It was therefore rather unexpected that in his 45-minute speech to the French parliament on 14 June - the highlight of his visit - Bouteflika reminded France of its colonial guilt and spoke of the need to set history straight.[493] During his short time in office, he had come to be known as a "taboo-breaker" and for his theatricality.[494] In French and in a very literary style, Bouteflika addressed the *Assemblée Nationale*:

> Respectable institutions like the Church, and states as old as yours, Mr President, today do not hesitate to confess (…) the most unjust crimes that once tainted their past. From Galileo to the Shoah (…) [T]hese examinations of history are an invaluable contribution to the ethics of our time (…) [and should be] extended to other contexts. Especially the colonial fact cannot be ignored.
>
> It would be an encouraging step in the work of truth that you have undertaken, for the greater good of historical knowledge and the cause of justice between people, to bring the Algerian war out of the shadow of the unspoken, by mentioning it by name (…) [and by] rectify[ing] the sometimes distorted image of certain episodes of colonisation in school textbooks.[495]

The 'work of truth' Bouteflika was talking about had only just begun, with Chirac's acknowledgement of France's role in the Holocaust in 1995 and the recognition of the Algerian 'war' in 1999. Bouteflika appealed to France to carry on, referring to a global age of confession.

Bouteflika's address in the *Assemblée* was a historic moment. *Le Monde* wrote about "an emotional, dignified and powerful moment between France and Algeria."[496] This had everything to do with the setup and the personal involvement of many attendees in the Algerian Independence War:

---

[493] E.g. *Le Journal de la nuit* (TV, broad. A2, 14 June 2000); 'Mémoire et situation politique au coeur de la visite du président algérien'.
[494] 'Premier discours d'un chef d'Etat algérien devant l'Assemblée nationale'.
[495] *Le Monde* published the main passages from Bouteflika's address: 'M. Bouteflika: "L'indifférence internationale face au terrorisme"', *Le Monde* (16 June 2000).
[496] 'L'Algérie et la France', *Le Monde* (17 June 2000).

> Almost 40 years after the war of independence ended nearly a century and a half of colonisation, a president of the Algerian Republic addressed French elected representatives in Paris from the podium of the National Assembly. And not just any president: Abdelaziz Bouteflika, [a veteran of the independence struggle]. And not just any generation of French deputies and officials: from Jacques Chirac, a lieutenant in Algeria, to Lionel Jospin, who was born into politics by demonstrating against the colonial war, (…), almost all the people the Algerian Head of State spoke to in Paris were involved in the conflict.[497]

Roughly half of the French right-wing opposition members refused to attend the speech, citing the 'duty of remembrance' towards the two million so-called Pieds-Noirs (former settlers who repatriated after Algeria became independent), and a far smaller number of Harkis (Algerians who had served in the French colonial army) living in France.[498] This was a new departure. In the past, it had been precisely far-right and mainstream parliamentary parties to the right that had stirred up racist violence against colonial immigrants.

After Algerian Independence, two groups of colonial migrants had come to France, neither of which had received a warm welcome. The approximately one million former settlers repatriated between 1961 and 1962 had been bitter and discontent: migrating from Algeria to and rebuilding their lives in the former metropole had been deeply traumatic. In a dense network of organisations, the self-designated Pieds-Noirs had mourned the loss of French Algeria. The repatriates had nostalgically remembered the land that they had first civilised, where they had lived in inter-ethnic harmony with the Algerians, and that they had then been forced to leave behind. They had blamed the 1954-1962 conflict on a handful of fanatics in a colony that had tragically been abandoned against the will of the majority. The Pieds-Noirs had felt misunderstood, displaced and unwelcome in their new home country, which squarely pointed the blame for colonisation at them. Some 25,000 of them had not made it back: they had been massacred after the French had left Algerian soil.[499]

---

[497] *Ibid*.

[498] 'De nombreux députés de droite, se référant au passé, ont boycotté le discours à l'Assemblée', *Le Monde* (17 June 2000). In 1962, an estimated 500,000 Harkis arrived in France. The number of Harkis living in France during the 2000-2002 debate is unclear, as France does not record people's religion or ethnicity, and because being a Harki was long considered shameful and not owned up to.

[499] J. Cohen, 'Postcolonial immigrants in France and their descendants. The Meanings of France's 'Postcolonial Moment'', in U. Bosma et al (eds.), *Postcolonial migrants and identity politics: Europe, Russia, Japan and the United*

In the months after Independence, Algerians who had served in the French colonial army had been slaughtered as collaborators. Of the about 180,000 Harkis, approximately one-third had managed to arrive in France, where they had been assigned to the periphery of French towns, forced to live in spatial confinement and isolation in so-called transit camps, regarded as uncivilised and uncivilizable. Both in Algeria and in France, their memory had been marginalised.[500]

Since decolonisation, adherents of the extreme Right had retrospectively defended empire. They had held the political Left responsible for its tragic and avoidable end and the distorted public understanding of the imperial era. According to them, France did not owe its former colonies development aid: it had not exploited them, but had left them prosperous – their catastrophic decline had commenced after France's withdrawal.[501] The extreme Right had perceived the overwhelming influx from the former colonies as "the source of a wide range of economic, social and cultural ills" in post-colonial France, which also brought with it the threat of Islamic fundamentalism.[502] They had believed that 'colonisation in reverse' was a "deliberate attempt at domination in revenge for the past".[503] The virulence of the extreme Right's anti-immigrant discourse can be partially explained with its older generation, among whom were Algerian war veterans (most notably Jean-Marie Le Pen himself), and former members of the far-right French dissident paramilitary *Organisation Armée Secrète* (OAS) that had carried out attacks on the FLN.[504]

With the successes of the (far) Right in the mid-1980s, xenophobia and (anti-Arab) racist violence against colonial immigrants had been stirred up. There had been violent attacks against Muslim and Algerian-looking immigrants (and their descendants) in French cities in

States in comparison (New York, 2012), pp. 29-30; C. Eldridge, 'Passing the Torch: Memory Transmission and Activism within the *Pied-Noir* Community Fifty Years after Algerian Independence', in R. Aissaoui and C. Eldridge (eds.), *Algeria Revisited. History, Culture and Identity* (London, 2017), pp. 216-217; Hubbell, *Remembering French Algeria*, p. 57.

[500] R. Graham, 'The ties that blind forty years on', *Financial Times* (16 March 2002); E. Savarese, 'The Post-colonial Encounter in France', in Rothermund, *Memories of Post-imperial Nations,* p. 81; Enjelvin and Korac-Kakabadse, 'France and the Memories of "Others"', p. 161; J. Hiddleston, 'Cultural memory and amnesia: the Algerian War and 'second-generation' immigrant literature in France', *Journal of Romance Studies,* 3-1 (2003), p. 63.

[501] C. Flood and H. Frey, 'Defending the Empire in Retrospect: The Discourse of the Extreme Right', in T. Chafer and A. Sackur (eds.), *Promoting the Colonial Idea. Propaganda and Visions of Empire in France* (London, 2002), pp. 197-98, 204-206.

[502] Flood and Frey, 'Defending the Empire', p. 206.

[503] *Ibid*., p. 205.

[504] N. Vince, 'Questioning the Colonial Fracture: The Algerian War as a 'Useful Past' in Contemporary France and Algeria', in Godin and Vince, *France and the Mediterranean*, p. 331.

the 1980s.[505] The rise of the *Front National* (FN) had contributed decisively to turning the visible presence of (colonial) immigrants into a political obsession.[506] The FN had been successful with its rhetoric about the disastrous consequences of decolonisation – massive immigration into France from the former colonies – and the stigmatisation of postcolonial immigrants and their descendants.[507] Mainstream parliamentary parties to the right had adopted some of the FN's successful xenophobic rhetoric and had entered into local coalitions with the FN.[508] The arrival of the political Left under Mitterrand's presidency (1981) – the first left-wing president under the 5th Republic –, had thus ultimately not heralded a new era of intercultural solidarity, as it initially appeared, but of heightened polarisation on (colonial) immigrants in France.[509]

Against this historical background of racism and marginalisation, Pieds-Noirs and Harkis were pleased with Bouteflika's call for an effort of remembrance from the French. Before the start of the visit, they had feared French-Algerian reconciliation would come "at the expense of historical truth" about the French government's responsibility for the massacre of up to 150,000 Harkis and the fate of 25,000 Pieds-Noirs after the 1962 Evian Accord.[510] One Pied-Noir commented Bouteflika "was right, of course, [to ask of the French what he did] and his approach is legitimised by the care he has taken, over the past few months, to ask the same effort from his compatriots."[511]

During his visit, however, Bouteflika also gravely insulted the Harkis by comparing them to 'collabos' – a term used for French who collaborated with the Nazis. On *France 2* he rejected the possibility of Harkis visiting Algeria: "it would be exactly the same as asking a French member of the Resistance to shake hands with a collaborator".[512] The Harkis used Bouteflika's statement to promote their cause in the public space. Harkis protests in the summer

[505] Cole, 'Remembering the Battle of Paris', p. 41; G. de Laforcade, ''Foreigners', Nationalism and the 'Colonial Fracture'. Stigmatized Subjects of Historical Memory in France', *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 47/3-4 (2006), pp. 220-222; Derderian, 'Algeria as a lieu de mémoire', pp. 38-39.
[506] Cohen, 'Postcolonial immigrants in France', pp. 36-37.
[507] Flood and Frey, 'Defending the Empire', pp. 197-98, 204-206; Cohen, 'Postcolonial immigrants in France', pp. 36-37.
[508] Cohen, 'Postcolonial immigrants in France', pp. 36-37; De Laforcade, ''Foreigners', Nationalism and the 'Colonial Fracture', pp. 220-222.
[509] The socialist government granted immigrants the right to create associations, valorised indigenous culture, acknowledged the ill effects of colonialism and stressed France's 'duty to remember' (*devoir de mémoire*). De Laforcade, ''Foreigners', Nationalism and the 'Colonial Fracture', pp. 220-222.
[510] 'Le président Bouteflika a appelé les Pieds-Noirs à revenir investir dans leur pays natal qu'ils avaient dû fuir en 1962', *Le Figaro* (10 June 2000).
[511] 'Pourquoi je suis un pied-noir en colère', *Le Monde* (24 June 2000).
[512] Quoted in: 'Abdelaziz Bouteflika a quitté la France "les mains vides", mais "confiant"', *Le Monde* (18 June 2000).

of 1991 had been a "turning point" after which the community had begun to move "from the margins into the mainstream".[513] However, being a group 'without resources' the Harkis had to make an extra effort to promote their cause.[514] In August 2001, still outraged by Bouteflika's statement, Harki associations would lodge a legally inadmissible, symbolic complaint against X [a person unknown] for "crimes against humanity and complicity": the massacre of tens of thousands of them after the Evian Agreement, that the French State had failed to prevent.[515]

Bouteflika's state visit meant much, especially to the *Beur* community, made up of North African immigrants with a dual cultural heritage and nationality. The surge of racially motivated violence in the 1980s had elicited intense popular mobilisation of grassroots *Beur* organisations.[516] Now, many of them followed Bouteflika's address on television or radio. On *Beur FM*, listeners were invited to comment, which they did *en masse*. His speech and his call on France to 'confess its mistakes' were widely appreciated within the community.[517]

The Algerian press – clearly restricted in its freedom – also reported positively on the President's visit and urged political leaders to seize the opportunity and embark on ambitious cooperation.[518] According to the editor of *El Yaoum*, criticism hid behind Algerian compliments and invitations to cooperate: "The French political class is still the one that fought the Algerian war (…) It continues to believe that Algeria is a lost part of France, or even that the Algerian war is not yet lost."[519]

Two days after Bouteflika's address, the right-leaning daily *Le Figaro* "opened the debate" in its '*debats et opinions*' section. Contributors – amongst whom philosopher Alain Finkielkraut,

[513] Enjelvin and Korac-Kakabadse, 'France and the Memories of "Others"', p. 163; Eldridge, *From empire to exile*, pp. 202-236.
[514] Savarese, 'The Post-colonial Encounter', p. 86.
[515] C. Brun, 'Quel(s) savoir(s) pour quelle(s) mémoire(s) de la guerre d'Algérie?', *Revue Internationale de la Fondation Auschwitz,* 117 (2014), pp. 67-74.
[516] In 1983, the 'Marche des Beurs' for equality and against racism began in Marseille and ended in Paris with 60,000 participants meeting President Mitterrand. In 1984 and 1985, new youth movements like S.O.S. Racism emerged, which were popular among the *Beurs*. De Laforcade, ''Foreigners', Nationalism and the 'Colonial Fracture', pp. 220-222.
[517] 'Conclusion d'un accord de conversion en investissements; L'émotion des Algériens de France', *Le Figaro* (16 June 2000).
[518] 'M. Bouteflika à Paris: l'humeur de la presse algéroise', *Le Monde* (15 June 2000).
[519] Quoted in: 'M. Bouteflika à Paris: l'humeur de la presse algéroise'.

a journalist of *Le Figaro*, and a republican politician – were sceptical about the West's ongoing eagerness "to repent".[520] Besides, they wondered who the Algerian President was to criticise:

> Is a former FLN terrorist, president of a corrupt regime, promoter of an ambiguous national agreement in favour of armed Islamism, backed by a military-police system, the best person to give lessons in morality, to suggest that France repent for colonisation, to rewrite our history books?[521]

Another shared criticism voiced in *Le Figaro*'s opinion pages, was about Bouteflika abusing his suggestion of French 'truth work' for political purposes: to divert attention from Algeria's internal problems. The *International Federation for Human Rights* had questioned the desirability of Bouteflika speaking to the French parliament – regardless of what he was going to say.[522] Outside the parliament building, about a hundred protesters gathered for an "anti-Boutef" rally highlighting disappearances, women's rights, undocumented migrants, and deteriorating living conditions in Algeria. [523]

The *Fédération Nationale des Anciens Combattants en Algérie, Maroc et Tunisie* (FNACA), with some 370,000 members the largest veterans' federation, and many politicians, also on the Left, wanted Algeria to take its share of the atrocities committed in the Algerian Independence War. In a brief meeting with Algeria's Head of State during his state visit in Paris, the president of the FNACA emphasised that "total and reciprocal reconciliation" presupposed "a correct and balanced writing [of history]".[524] Finkielkraut contended that "France's indelible moral debt" should not be a pretext to delay Algeria's reckoning with its own past and FLN atrocities.[525]

---

[520] A. Finkielkraut and P. Tesson in: 'Après le discours d'Abdelaziz Bouteflika demandant à la France de "confesser ses erreurs", Le Figaro ouvre le débat', *Le Figaro* (16 June 2000).
[521] François d'Aubert (republican politician) in: *Ibid*.
[522] 'Un rapport critique sur les droits de l'homme en Algérie publié avant la visite de M. Bouteflika à Paris', *Le Monde* (14 June 2000).
[523] 'Mémoire et situation politique au coeur de la visite du président algérien'.
[524] ''L'idée d'une commission d'historiens sur la torture durant la guerre d'Algérie fait son chemin', *Le Monde* (26 November 2000).
[525] 'Après le discours d'Abdelaziz Bouteflika demandant à la France de "confesser ses erreurs"', Le Figaro ouvre le débat'.

That said, there was no official response to Bouteflika's call in the Assemblée, and a substantive French debate on his statement did not get off the ground, likely because something else hit like a bomb.[526] Bouteflika was just back at the presidential palace in Algiers when Ighilahriz's testimony was published. Almost one year later, Raymond Forni, president of the *Assemblée Nationale,* would call the visit of President Bouteflika to the National Assembly a historic moment of peace between France and Algeria.[527]

With the unforeseen historical appeal of Bouteflika – which met with mixed reactions in France – it seemed for a moment that the reappraisal of history initiated with Papon's trial was going to be a bilateral affair. However, the Torture Debate kicked off by Ighilahriz shortly afterwards would be an exclusively metropolitan matter.

Manifesto of Les Douze (October 2000, May 2001): the Gestapo comparison

Revelations about torture led a group of twelve prominent individuals, all closely connected to the Algerian War, to issue a petition in the originally socialist and communist daily *L'Humanité* in October 2000. In a public appeal, '*les Douze*' demanded the whole truth be told about torture practised by the French army during the Algerian War, and urged President Chirac and socialist Prime Minister Jospin to condemn these practices. They also believed that torture "cannot go unpunished". Amongst the signatories were former resisters from the Second World War (Germaine Tillion and Jean-Pierre Vernant), former resisters from the French army in Algeria (Henri Alleg, Laurent Schwartz, Pierre Vidal-Naquet, Alban Liechti, Noël Favrelière and the widow of Jacques de Bollardière), and spokespersons of Algerian independence fighters (the lawyers Nicole Dreyfus and Gisèle Halimi, and the widow of Maurice Audin). The historian and secretary of the *Audin Committee* Madeleine Rebérioux, also a signatory, received 1200 letters in response to the Manifesto.[528] Initially, people wrote with a desire to sign the petition. Then, many testimonials by eyewitnesses followed.[529]

[526] About the lack of an official response see: G. Pervillé, 'Une politique de l'oubli. La mémoire de la guerre en France et en Algérie', *Le Sociographe*, 2/46 (2014), pp. 88.
[527] *Mots croisés* (TV, 21 May 2001).
[528] The *Comité Audin* (established in 1957) was tasked with bringing to light the fate of the anti-colonial activist and independence fighter Maurice Audin, who disappeared during the Battle of Algiers. Other members of *les Douze,* notably Schwartz and Vidal-Naquet, were also in the committee.
[529] M. Rebérioux, 'Par la voie politique', *L'Humanité* (7 December 2000).

Comparisons to the Gestapo were popular amongst *les Douze*. In an interview in December 2000, historian Pierre Vidal-Naquet explained that to him and his father, who the Gestapo had tortured, it had been intolerable that the French army and police had used the same methods in Algeria.[530] When Vidal-Naquet, from Jewish descent, had been thirteen year old, his father had been disbarred as a lawyer by the Vichy regime and deported to Auschwitz, together with his mother.[531] Like others in the Torture Debate, Halimi – a Tunesian-French lawyer who had defended members of the FLN from the 1950s onwards, and now one of The Twelve – recalled why Paul Teitgen had resigned as secretary general at the prefecture of Algiers in 1957: as a former member of the French resistance, who himself had suffered torture at the hands of the Gestapo, Teitgen had been outraged by the routine use of torture during the Algerian war.[532] Throughout the debate, another member of *Les Douze*, Simone de Bollardière intervened on behalf of her late husband General Jacques Pâris de Bollardière. Bollardière, who had fought with the maquis in France, had clashed with General Massu over the use of torture, had requested to be moved back to France and had been thrown in military prison. More than once throughout the 2000-2002 debate, his widow seized the opportunity to explain that he had left the French army in 1957 because he had refused "to turn into a Nazi". She compared French methods of torture in Algeria with "what the Germans had done against the maquisards in France."[533]

The Twelve were reviving arguments from the 1950s. Comparisons to the Gestapo had already been made during the Algerian Independence War. Throughout the conflict, French political authorities had accused the FLN of Nazi-like behaviour, the same comparison the political Left had used for the French army.[534] Frequently, public attention had been drawn to torture by newspapers that published evidence, most importantly *L'Express, France-observateur, Le Monde*, and *Témoignage chrétien.*[535] A resister, deportee, and anti-colonialist of the first hour Claude Bourdet had asked in the *Observateur* in December 1951: "Is there an Algerian Gestapo?". A few years later, in the same paper, he had answered positively in "*Votre gestapo*

[530] *Diagonales* (radio, 10 December 2000).
[531] P. Vidal-Naquet, 'Foreword', in D. Bailly (ed.), *The Hidden Children of France, 1940-1945. Stories of Survival* (New York, 2010), pp. xi-xviii.
[532] G. Halimi in: *Culture et dépendances* (TV, 6 March 2002). Teitgen's reason to resign was instanced repeatedly throughout the memory irruption. See e.g. *L'ennemi intime*, dir. P. Rotman (TV, broad. France 3, 6 March 2002).
[533] *Inter matin* (radio, 19 March 2002). See also: *19 20 Edition nationale* (TV, 26 June 2001).
[534] W. Cohen, 'The sudden Memory of Torture. The Algerian War in French Discourse, 2000-2001', *French Politics, Culture & Society,* 19/3 (2001), p. 85.
[535] Cohen, 'The sudden Memory of Torture', p. 82.

d'Algérie" (January 1955).[536] In the summer of 1957, more than 40 years before she would co-publish the Manifesto of *Les Douze*, Germaine Tillion had gone to Algeria on behalf of the *International Commission Against Concentrationist Regimes*. She, herself a former deportee to Ravensbrück, had come to investigate torture and had found that "[a]mong the witnesses of the sufferings of this foreign people, were some French people who had endured the same crushing experiences twenty years ago".[537] Subversive texts, such as Maurice Maschino's *Le Refus* (1960), were published. It told the story of a young teacher who had refused conscription after witnessing "the French (…) behaving like Germans, torturing just like them".[538] The political establishment refused to see torture as something 'homegrown'. Instead, it was understood as 'a disease from the Nazis' caught by the French.[539]

It were not just *Les Douze* who compared historical evil in the 2000-2002 debate. In fact, veterans themselves often compared the French army to the Gestapo. According to Vidal-Naquet and Rebérioux, the series of events that began with Ighilahriz's testimony created a "catharsis", a "couch" for the veterans to remember the war's 'dark side'.[540] In anonymous statements as well as close-up portraits, veterans testified to the unexpected horrors they had witnessed first-hand. In a television show, one of them described witnessing torture methods while imprisoned at a Northern Algerian farm. Upon seeing a tortured prisoner, the Gestapo had come to his mind immediately.[541] Another veteran compared Villa Susini, a notorious torture and detention centre in Algiers, with La Rue des Saussaies and the massacre at Oradour-sur-Glane – both references to the barbaric SS.[542]

There surely were veterans who dismissed the resemblance to Hitler's secret police, but the comparison did not realise its disruptive potential — not even amongst the targeted veterans. From the general lack of sensation following comparisons with the Gestapo, it seems there was no dissension in turn-of-the-century France about the fact that operating procedures of (at least certain divisions of) the French army bore similarity.

---

[536] C. Bourdet, 'Y a-t-il une gestapo algérienne?', *France-Observateur* (6 December 1951); C. Bourdet, 'Votre Gestapo d'Algérie', *France-Observateur* (13 January 1955). Bourdet figured in the 2000-2002 debate, e.g. quoted by Vidal-Naquet in: *Diagonales* (radio, 10 December 2000).
[537] G. Tillion, *Les Ennemis Complémentaires* (Paris, 1960), pp. 151-152.
[538] M. Maschino, *Le Refus* (Paris, 1960), p. 123.
[539] R. Khanna, 'Racial France, or the Melancholic Alterity of Postcolonial Studies', *Public Culture*, 23/1 (2011), p. 197.
[540] Quoted in: Cohen, 'The sudden Memory of Torture', p. 87.
[541] A. Teyssonnière in: *Culture et dépendances* (TV, 6 March 2002). See another veteran in: *Cosmopolitaine* (radio, broad. France Inter, 3 March 2002).
[542] *Algérie: paroles de tortionnaires*, dir. J. Deniau (film, 18 March 2002).

It should be noted that in the Torture Debate, the conduct of the French between 1954 and 1962 was not usually compared to Nazi Germany in more generic wording. Now and then, references were made not to the Gestapo specifically, but to "the Germans".[543] Most often, the French army in Algeria – or, more restrictively, the *Dispositif Opérationnel de Protection* (DOP) unit – was compared to the German Gestapo.[544]

In contributions to the debate, several of The Twelve were unpleasantly surprised by what former resistance fighters had shown to be capable of in Algeria and tried to wrap their heads around France's paradoxical track record. Madeleine Rebérioux wondered how a nation like France – a country that had just came out of the Second World War, a country of resistance fighters, some of whom had been tortured and deported – could have committed torture itself.[545] From the generation of resisters, who had liberated France, some had been back 10 years later, torturing Algerians. Noël Favrelière, who had deserted from the French army in Algeria in August 1956, explained his reasons for desertion multiple times throughout the debate. He had been puzzled by the fact that French officers, most of whom had been resistance fighters, had used the same methods a few years later.[546] On television, Vidal-Naquet engaged in a conversation on the matter. In response to the host, who wondered how former members of the *Résistance* could have become torturers during the Algerian War, Vidal-Naquet recognised the urgency of the question, yet was not ready with an answer.[547] In the Torture Debate, it was standard practice to point out, even if only in passing, what Algeria veterans who came up for discussion or who contributed to the debate had been up to in the Second World War.[548]

It was not only now, that the moral paradox was raised. The resistance generation had already tried to reconcile their heroic past with the brutal war fought in Algeria. Immediately from the end of the war in Europe on 8 May 1945, France had tried to entrench its position in North Africa. Defeated and occupied by Axis powers, and humiliated at the hands of the Allies, the Fourth and Fifth French Republic had been desperate to reassert its greatness. Even though France had then been governed by the generation that emerged from the Free French and the

[543] *Là bas, si j'y suis* (radio, 10 November 2000).
[544] The DOP was a separate unit in the French army, tasked with intelligence gathering through all means necessary.
[545] *Radio libre* (radio, 25 November 2000).
[546] *Ca se discute* (TV, broad. France 2, 23 May 2001).
[547] *1956, Une sale histoire*, dir. E. Plasseraud (film, broad. France 2, 4 July 2002).
[548] E.g.: *Ecoutez, des anges passent* (radio, 12 January 2001); *Culture et dépendances* (TV, 6 March 2002); *Pot au feu* (radio, broad. France Culture, 14 June 2001); *La suite dans les idées* (radio, 17 September 2001).

metropolitan resistance, she had been ever so keen to re-establish the French Empire. The Resistance generation had put together language of civilisation and liberation with the reality of colonial domination and violence.[549] From the foundation of the Algerian FLN in 1954, all the way up to Algerian Independence in 1962, France had been divided over the Algerian issue. Alongside the question whether to let go of *l'Algérie française* and give up its imperial dream, at stake had also been the nature of the French Republic and the Resistance. Robert Gildea explains:

> For one camp, to hold onto Algeria was to defend the Republic as universal, colour-blind, civilising and liberating. It was also a continuation of the French Resistance, which had established a provisional government in North Africa and from there liberated France and defeated Germany. For the other camp, however, holding onto Algeria and in particular the anti-terrorist measures that were used, represented a betrayal of the Republic that had defined itself against Nazi barbarism.[550]

Against this, however, the idea had risen that the Resistance was now on the side of Algerian Muslims. Underground networks to support the FLN had emerged. The founder of the best-known one, the *Réseau Jeanson*, described it as not just "a simple escape network but as a movement of resistance to the Algerian War and fascism".[551]

Until the 1970s, the patriotic myth of mass resistance in France in the Second World War, which underestimated the influence of the Vichy regime on French society and overestimated French Resistance, had been a dominant narrative. The youth of 1968 had brought together French Resistance and empire. The 1968 generation had seen the Algerian War, for which it had been a formative event, through the lens of the French resistance. They had been born just before, during or just after the Second World War, and were inspired by or keen to make up for their parents' actions in 1940-1945 – who had resisted, tolerated, or collaborated with the Nazis. Often, they had been politically educated by prominent anti-war campaigners who had criticised France for now oppressing Algerian freedom fighters,

[549] R. Gildea, 'Empire Replayed, Resistance changes sides (1945-1962)', lecture series (2013), https://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/happ/Events/annual-lectures/wiles-lecture-series/PastLectures/WilesLectures2013/Lecture2/ (24 May 2025).
[550] *Ibid.*
[551] F. Jeanson, *Notre Guerre* (Paris, 1960), pp. 47, 50, 54, 75.

employing Nazi-like methods.[552] Deconstructed in the 1970s, the Resistance myth left its mark: when torture became a matter of national interest in turn-of-the-century France, it gave rise to a moral paradox.

As often as the paradox of France both as a nation of resistance fighters and torturers was addressed during the Torture Debate, as sparse were the attempts at solving it. Some thought patriotism was key to unravelling France's mixed record. Henri Alleg believed both Nazi resistors and those who tortured to prevent Algerian independence had been patriots at heart. Alleg had been born in 1921 the son of Polish-Jewish parents, and as a journalist had supported Algerian Independence. In June 1957, he had been arrested by French paratroopers during the Battle of Algiers. *La Question*, his account of the terrible torture he had been subject to during his one-month imprisonment, had been published by the Resistance publisher *Éditions de Minuit* (1958) and had continued to be printed and distributed in France despite government censorship. In a television broadcast in July 2002, Alleg argued:

> People who fought in the resistance (…) were taught that France was great because it had colonies. (…) [To them] those who talk about ending the empire were bad patriots. And so resistance fighter[s], (…) became torturer[s] in Algeria or Africa, to (…) 'save the empire'.[553]

There certainly were voices in the debate sympathising with French soldiers who had faced this moral dilemma in Algeria; and voices emphasising that a (more) substantial number of soldiers had made the 'right' choice. Jean-François Deniau – who had been a diplomat and public servant between 1963 and 1980 – for instance, stressed that both the Second World War and the Algerian War had been "dramatic cases of morality and conscience".[554] However, the fact that the overwhelming majority of contributors who pointed out the paradox would or could not solve the conundrum, was probably not very reassuring.

In their call for action, *Les Douze* sought to capitalise on the progress made in coming to terms with Vichy to finally make headway with empire. "France justly says it is committed to the duty to remember, which should know no discrimination of period or place," read the

[552] Gildea, 'Empire Replayed'.
[553] *1956, Une sale histoire* (film, 4 July 2002).
[554] *Mots croisés* (TV, 21 May 2001).

Manifesto. It was a reference to the 1995 apology for the French treatment of Jews, by President Chirac. PM Jospin endorsed the Manifesto at the CRIF's (*Conseil Représentatif des Institutions Juives de France*) annual dinner (Yom HaShoah, 6 May), calling for the 'duty of memory' and 'the work of truth'. *Le Figaro* rightly noted that the time and place of his endorsement were no coincidence:

> The context chosen by the PM that evening (…) was in fact intended to draw a public parallel between the responsibility of the Vichy government for the fate of the Jews – a responsibility acknowledged by Jacques Chirac in 1995 – and that of the Fourth Republic for the treatment [of] Algerian opponents.[555]

The French Communist Party (PCF) supported the Twelve's appeal, and asked state authorities for an unambiguous condemnation of torture. The party led the Left's remembrance campaign. This sought to have acts of torture recognised as a 'crime against humanity', in which case amnesties would be nullified. The right-leaning *Le Figaro*, in contrast, called on the political right to intervene: it was now up to the republican President Chirac to "clarify the ambiguous support given by his [socialist] Prime Minister to the "Appeal of the Twelve".[556] The conservative daily rejected official condemnation "to which the twelve intellectuals are inviting[,] following in the footsteps of Algerian President Bouteflika". Instead, said in *Le Figaro,* historians were to be tasked with determining whether the Republic's highest representatives had ordered torture.[557]

The debate on the desirability of the condemnation of torture thus seemed to get going more in response to forces pushing from within France (i.e. the Manifesto) than to forces pulling from outside (i.e. Bouteflika's address in the *Assemblée Nationale*). A left-right divide emerged in response to the Manifesto and persisted throughout the debate. Repeatedly, calls for critical introspection – such as by Bouteflika and *Les Douze* – would be followed by strong pushback. The appeal of *Les Douze* was reissued in May 2001.

---

[555] 'Polemique. La campagne visant à condamner la pratique de la torture par l'armée française pendant la bataille d'Alger rebondit', *Le Figaro* (23 November 2000).
[556] *Ibid*.
[557] *Ibid*.

Besides, comparisons to Vichy France in the Torture Debate draw attention to the fact that the Papon trial, which is commonly thought to mark a *transition* from the 'Vichy syndrome' to an 'Algerian syndrome', in fact instigated a *co-existence*.[558] Algeria might have come to the front, yet with Vichy still in the background. Even though it is true that "[t]he clearing of the national conscience over Vichy has paved the way for a more even-handed look at Algeria (…)", as Robert Graham maintains, one would clearly be mistaken to think that they took turns.[559] And even if "national psychic energy that had gone into the long and heated battle over French collaboration during the Second World War and the deportation of Jews" was now "reinvested in the issue of colonial repression and violence", as Neil MacMaster put it, it obviously was not a matter of 'either, or'.[560] The two painful pasts coexisted and interacted in the public debate on empire.

Paul Aussaresses' testimony (November 2000, May 2001): an apology for torture

On 23 November 2000, the testimony of one individual, first in *Le Monde* and then live in a television news programme on *France 2,* caused an outright scandal. With a stupefying lack of remorse, the superannuated General Paul Aussaresses confessed to torture by French soldiers under his command.[561] Aussaresses had been born a few days before the end of the First World War in the South of France. War would be a constant in his biography. He fought during World War II and the Indochina War (1946-1954) before joining the 41st Parachute Demi-Brigade at Philippeville as an intelligence officer (1955) and heading a counter-espionage unit in the Battle of Algiers (1957). After the Algerian war, Aussaresses arguably taught the "techniques of the Battle of Algiers" to US special forces (employed by them during the Vietnam War) and Latin American dictatorships in the 1970s.[562]

In the interview he gave, Aussaresses defended torture as a routine counter-intelligence and counter-insurgency method, ordered by the military top brass. He himself had not committed torture, so he claimed, yet readily admitted having summarily executed 24 members of the FLN. He was "*sans regrets ni remords*", without regret or remorse, about it all.[563] It did not

[558] On 'transition' see: Brazzoduro, 'Postcolonial Memories', p. 287.
[559] Graham, 'The ties that blind forty years on'.
[560] MacMaster, 'The Torture Controversy (1998-2002)', p. 450.
[561] "Je me suis résolu à la torture... J'ai moi-même procédé à des exécutions sommaires...'', *Le Monde* (23 November 2000); *20 heures le journal* (TV, broad. France 2, 23 November 2000).
[562] 'Escadrons de la mort: l'école française', dir. *Lundi Investigation* (TV, broad. Canal+, 1 September 2003).
[563] "Je me suis résolu à la torture...''.

end there: Aussaresses expanded on this account with his book *Services Spéciaux Algérie 1955-1957: Mon témoignage sur la torture* in the spring of 2001 (3 May 2001).[564] It contained very visual descriptions of how prisoners were beaten, electrocuted through electrodes attached to their ears or testicles, and held or drowned under water. Even those who talked, were not spared and executed mercilessly, often by Aussaresses himself.[565] After his book's release, Aussaresses continued appearing in the media, elaborating on what had happened in Algiers under his command.

The French were horrified by Aussaresses' story.[566] His testimony struck an open nerve and "opened Pandora's box".[567] This old man with an eye patch, cold-bloodedly testifying to torture in Algeria, was the incarnation of the most contested chapter of French imperial history. In the ensuing debate, France's other 'dark past' was also implicated.

Aussaresses' testimony provoked comparisons between French torture and methods used by the Gestapo. Aussaresses himself rejected such comparisons. He resolutely turned down allusions to the ill-famed Gestapo interrogation method known as 'bathtub torture'.[568] Besides, Aussaresses' case pre-eminently raised the moral paradox. He had been a one-time resistance hero himself. As a member of the British Jedburgh commandos, he had been parachuted into German-occupied France in August 1944, and into Germany in Nazi Uniform for 'Operation Vicarage' in 1945. Aussaresses had not been alone – others from the resistance had returned a decade later, torturing Algerians. Even though, in an interview, Ighilahriz said Aussaresses was the first to come to her mind when discussing this moral paradox, she believed there had been "many other Aussaresses out there".[569]

In the Torture Debate, the war record of the other warring party was often used as a gauge. In the many interviews he gave, Aussaresses admitted they had used all means necessary (including torture and summary executions), though only to combat FLN terrorism.[570]

---

[564] An English translation appeared in 2002, titled *The Battle of the Casbah: Terrorism and Counter Terrorism in Algeria, 1955-57*.
[565] *TF1 20 heures* (TV, broad. TF1, 3 May 2001). In his book, Aussaresses confirmed systematic torture during the Algerian War of Independence and his role as head of a death squad ("escadron de la mort").
[566] E.g.: *Là bas, si j'y suis* (radio, 7 May 2001); *19 20 Edition nationale* (TV, 9 May 2001); *Inter soir 19h00* (radio, 5 May 2001); *Diagonales* (radio, 10 December 2000).
[567] 'Georges Fogel, ancien militant contre la guerre en Algérie', *Le Monde* (29 July 2009).
[568] *L'ennemi intime* (TV, 4 March 2002).
[569] *Pot au feu* (radio, broad. France Culture, 14 June 2001).
[570] *L'ennemi intime* (TV, 6 March 2002).

According to the general, the French army had respected the Geneva Convention: it had not tortured prisoners, but 'terrorists'.[571]

Other veterans in the Torture Debate also used this line of argumentation – amongst them General Maurice Schmitt. In June 2001, three former FLN militants accused him of ordering torture in summer 1957 while serving as a lieutenant in the 3rd Colonial Parachute Regiment in Algiers. Not only did he deny the accusations directed at him, he also exonerated the French army, which had supposedly resorted to such means out of self-defence.[572] Even before the accusations, Schmitt had claimed in an interview there had been no other way to address FLN "urban terrorism".[573] He categorically rejected comparisons made between the French resistance and Algerian independence fighters: unlike the *Résistance* in the Second World War, members of the FLN had been terrorists.[574]

General Jacques Massu made the same case in contributions to the debate following his initial response to Ighilahriz's testimony. In 1956, the division under his command had been sent to Algeria after FLN attacks. During the Battle of Algiers (1957), his forces had managed to arrest the FLN leadership only after having taken captive and tortured members of the organisation. Almost five decades later, as the debate flared up, Massu willingly admitted to the use of torture as a 'preventive' strategy to "discover the bombs that were about to explode and prevent new war damages, and assassinations."[575] In a 1960 radio fragment replayed in an interview in June 2001, he had said torture had aimed to prevent the loss of life of innocent women and children.[576]

Pierre Alban Thomas, a former intelligence officer who had attended several torture sessions, maintained that torturers had "committed no act of sadism", but had only tortured to obtain intelligence.[577] Other ordinary regiment soldiers also claimed torture had been essential for gathering intelligence.[578] Senator and veteran Jean Faure admitted that FLN atrocities had

[571] *Envoyé spécial* (TV, 3 May 2001). See also: *Pièces à conviction* (TV, broad. France 3, 27 June 2001); *Inter soir 19h00* (radio, broad. France Inter, 26 November 2001).
[572] 'Le général Schmitt est à nouveau accusé de torture en Algérie', *Le Monde* (18 March 2005). See also: M. de Jaeghere et al., *Le livre blanc de l'armée française en* Algérie (Paris, 2001); and M. Schmitt, *Alger – Été 1957: Une victoire sur le terrorisme* (Paris, 2002).
[573] *Inter matin* (radio, 29 January 2001). See also Schmitt in: *Envoyé spécial* (TV, 14 June 2001).
[574] *Inter matin* (radio, 29 January 2001).
[575] *Ripostes* (TV, broad. France 5, 3 December 2000).
[576] *Trafic d'influences* (radio, broad. France Inter, 22 June 2001).
[577] *L'ennemi intime* (TV, 5 March 2002).
[578] *Ibid*.

provoked a "cascade of emotions", but insisted that information obtained through torture had been to protect French soldiers and the Algerian population.[579]

During the Algerian War itself, the primary justification for the excessive use of torture had been FLN insurgency tactics. French authorities had referred to 'insurrection', 'rebellion' or 'terrorism' – suggesting it was a French internal affair rather than a war. From the outset, civil and military authorities had emphasised that intelligence-gathering was critical to fight urban terrorism, and torture was supposedly the key to that. According to General Massu in 1957, the "subversive revolutionary war" required "clandestine counter-revolutionary actions".[580]

In French army propaganda, the FLN had been depicted as corrupt, devious, exploitative (of fellow-Algerians) and internally divided, and the Arab guerrilla fighter as a barbaric bloodthirsty *fellagha* ('bandit'). French propaganda had been directed at the Algerian population, on which the FLN, fighting a guerrilla war, had depended for support and among which it had recruited. With its propaganda, the French army had sought to weaken the FLN's support base among Algerian civilians, prevent them from joining FLN ranks, and even to get them to provide the French Army with intelligence or turn in FLN members.[581]

Several historians and journalists in the Torture Debate rendered the rhetoric of inevitability plausible by pointing at the type of conflict in a more general sense. Trying to explain why French troops had gone down the road of torture, they were not caught up in trying to determine what had come first – the chicken or the egg, torture or terrorism. Instead, they argued that in a subversive war, the practice of torture was inescapable, typical or 'common' at the very least. Journalist and writer Yves Courrière bluntly stated: "[W]e should not be hypocritical (…): when there is a subversive war, there must be torture."[582] The Algerian war was fundamentally different from a 'classic war', and so was intelligence gathering, historian and journalist Jacques Julliard explained:

---

[579] *Le journal de l'histoire* (TV, 24 May 2001).
[580] Quoted in: R. Branche, 'Torture of terrorists? Use of torture in a "war against terrorism": justifications, methods and effects: the case of France in Algeria, 1954-1962', *International Review of the Red Cross*, 89/867 (2007), p. 549.
[581] N. Aggoun, 'Psychological Propaganda during the Algerian War – Based on a Study of French Army Pamphlets', in M. Alexander et al. (eds.), *The Algerian War and the French Army, 1954-1962. Experiences, Images, Testimonies* (New York, 2002), pp. 196-197; M. Alexander, M. Evans, and J. Keiger, 'The 'War Without a Name', the French Army and the Algerians: Recovering Experiences, Images, and Testimonies', in M. Alexander, M. Evans, and J. Keiger (eds.), *The Algerian War and the French Army*, pp. 19-21; P. Lorcin, *Imperial Identities: Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Race in Colonial Algeria* (Lincoln, Nebraska, 2014), pp. 53-55.
[582] *Le journal de l'histoire* (TV, 24 May 2001).

> Since it's a question of dismantling networks among a population, one needs to have information, so torture was (…) almost contained in the mandate (…) To win this war, torture was inevitable.[583]

Henri Alleg and Maurice Vaïsse thought of torture not as the sole means to obtain the necessary counter-intelligence, though as typical for these kinds of conflicts. Both were appalled at how the quest for intelligence typically gradually turned into practicing torture in wars of this type.[584]

Other participants in the debate made French torture seem understandable – rather than necessary and inevitable in the face of FLN terrorism or inescapable and common in guerrilla wars – by pointing at (comparable) violence on the opponent's part. Not surprisingly, primarily veterans felt the urge to set straight the alleged one-sided image that had risen in the past months of intense public debate. Bernard le Moal was one of them:

> [I] came to try to re-establish the truth somewhat, because we talk about the horrors and the tortures done to the Algerians, [and this] is true, but the tortures inflicted on the French (…) must not be forgotten either (…).[585]

The president of the FNACA also argued that "we should not lose sight of the fact that there was rape and torture on both sides".[586] General LeBorgne recalled the high number of soldiers who had fought under the French flag and had been "massacred by the FLNC".[587] Another veteran remembered how cruel executions by the FLN had blown the good intentions he had had upon his arrival.[588] These veterans did not claim moral superiority over the FLN, as Guy Mollet had done in 1958.[589] To make French torture seem less reprehensible, it was argued that the French army had been only as cruel as the adversary.

---

[583] *Accents d'Europe* (radio, broad. RFI, 14 May 2002).
[584] Vaisse in: *La suite dans les idées* (radio, 28 March 2001); Alleg in: *Cosmopolitaine* (radio, 23 September 2001).
[585] *13 heures le journal* (radio, 2 December 2000).
[586] Vladyslas Marek in: *20 heures le journal* (TV, 22 November 2001).
[587] *Mots croisés* (TV, 21 May 2001).
[588] *L'ennemi intime* (TV, 4 March 2002).
[589] In *Cosmopolitaine* (radio, 3 March 2002) an audio fragment played in which Mollet said they did not retaliate using their opponents' methods, for "France is the country of human rights in the world".

Public historians acknowledged violence performed by the adversary. In a radio interview, Vidal-Naquet, for instance, stressed he had "never denied the horrors of the FLNC."[590] In a direct dialogue with director André Gazut in January 2001, Girardet criticised the film *Jacques De Bollardière et la torture* (1974) – which had still not been broadcast in France by then – for failing to allude to FLN terrorism.[591]

Veterans waved aside the Aussaresses affair with yet another argument. Aussaresses' book was published in May 2001, a few days before the annual May 8 commemoration of the Allied victory over Nazi Germany and made for somewhat of "a gloomy atmosphere".[592] According to *Le Figaro*, the French military noted with exasperation that some were trying to make them shoulder part of the moral blame.[593] During the 2001 commemoration, veterans present were reluctant to comment on the Aussaresses affair. On camera, they explained not to see "the point in all this fuss", for "the whole world had tortured".[594]

Comparative references in the 2000-2002 debate to 'violent others' were not geographically limited to European neighbours (see *Round table discussion with Le Monde Diplomatique*), but extended to state-violence in Israel and Palestine, dictatorial regimes in South-America, Armenia and Asia.[595] Sophie Thonon, for example, a lawyer who represented French who disappeared in Argentine, saw techniques of repression used in the Algerian War replicated by Latin American regimes.[596] Without seeking to exonerate France, human rights activists stressed that "torture is of all times" – also of the present time.[597] Human rights lawyer William Bourdon attested to the fact that state torture still happened in more than 150 (even democratic) countries all over the world.[598]

[590] *Là bas, si j'y suis* (radio, 4 May 2001).
[591] *Arrêt sur images* (TV, 7 January 2001).
[592] 'Professionnalisation, loi de programmation militaire: le 8 Mai commémoré dans une ambiance morose', *Le Figaro* (8 May 2001).
[593] *Ibid*.
[594] *19 20 Edition nationale* (TV, 8 May 2001).
[595] E.g.: *Mémorables* (radio, broad. France Culture, 13 July 2001); *Radio libre* (radio, 25 November 2000); *Des mots de minuit* (TV, 9 May 2001); *La suite dans les idées* (radio, 7 December 2000); *Culture et dépendances* (TV, 6 March 2002).
[596] 'L'ombre de la disparition, l'escamotage du 17 octobre 1961', dir. M. Veilletet (radio, broad. France Culture, 3 November 2001).
[597] E.g. *Là bas, si j'y suis* (radio, 1 January 2001).
[598] *Radio libre* (radio, 25 November 2000). See e.g. also an *Amnesty International* employee in: *Ripostes* (TV, 3 December 2000).

Some went so far generalising, namely citing human nature, that they took the comparative element out of it altogether. Occasionally, Hannah Arendt's idea of the banality of evil was invoked and applied to argue that everybody may turn into a torturer.[599] The director of the *Conseil Supérieur de l'Audiovisuel*, Hervé Bourges, who also had Algerian citizenship, gave his opinion on Aussaresses' confessions in an interview with *France 5*. He was rather pessimistic about the human condition and called man "a coward" and "a beast" in the "exceptional conditions of the [19]40s, [and] the Algerian war."[600]

Aussaresses' TV testimony in November 2000 gave rise to a debate in which exonerating considerations featured prominently, and was not met with unequivocal disapproval. In *L'Humanité*, the PCF vainly urged state authorities to condemn torture solemnly and unambiguously. Neither the Minister for the Armed Forces or any other generals, nor the highest political authorities proclaimed their indignation. Some participants were disgusted at the lack of outrage and unanimous condemnation.

In the 'debate and opinions' section of *Le Figaro,* novelist Jean-Marie Rouart was stunned by how Aussaresses "found sympathetic ears", and how the issue turned into "a casuistical quarrel" over when torture was permissible and its effectiveness – setting civilisation back two centuries, before the Revolution that abolished it.[601] Rouart explained why the general's comments should not go unpunished:

> Generals can't flout the great principles with impunity: law and justice are prerogatives without which France would not be [France]. They are the cornerstone of an edifice of civilisation inherited from the Enlightenment. (…) When we abandon these values, we also abandon France.[602]

Rouart thought the political class should seize the opportunity to reaffirm key principles and argued for symbolic sanctions against Aussaresses.[603]

---

[599] E.g. *Là bas, si j'y suis* (radio, 10 November 2000).
[600] *Le journal de l'histoire* (TV, 7 December 2000).
[601] 'Se garder des débordements', *Le Figaro* (5 December 2000).
[602] *Ibid*.
[603] *Ibid*.

Finally, after the publication of Aussaresses' book, the highest political and military authorities swiftly expressed their denunciation. The Minister of Defence, Alain Richard, found the terms Aussaresses had expressed himself in "ethically and politically absolutely reprehensible."[604] With his disgraceful comments, he had scorned the honour of the army.[605] PM Jospin was "deeply shocked" by the general's "revolting cynicism" and contended that the "terrible acts of violence" Aussaresses described called for "total moral condemnation".[606] President Chirac too was "horrified" by Aussaresses' confession and once again "condemned the atrocities, acts of torture, summary executions and murders that may have been committed during the Algerian war", while stressing one must not "forget the millions of young Frenchmen, of Algerian origin or from mainland France, who fought with courage and honour".[607] Immediately, Chirac called for action to be taken against the general. The day after the book release, he asked the Minister of Defence to propose 'disciplinary sanctions' to the army supreme council; and the chairman of the Council of the Order of the Legion of Honour to suspend Aussaresses from the *Légion d'honneur*.[608] In June 2001, Aussaresses was compulsorily retired and stripped of his medal and military rank.[609]

Given the way Paris had ignored Bouteflika's plea in the *Assemblée*, it is rather unlikely that eventual political condemnation of the brutalities described by Aussaresses in Spring 2001 was a response to Algeria's request for it.[610] More likely, upon publishing his book, after six months of media frenzy, the political authorities realised that the affair would not blow over, and they could not just let things pass. The president's censure was firm yet circumspect: he cracked down on the person of Aussaresses, taking care not to incriminate the French army.

---

[604] 'Torture; Richard pour des mesures disciplinaires', *Le Figaro* (11 May 2001).
[605] Aussaresses' testimonies met with resistance from the military. See e.g.: 'Les 'confessions' du général et les réactions qu'elles ont suscitées provoquent un débat chez les militaires', *Le Figaro* (21 May 2001); 'Aussaresses. D'office à la retraite', *Le Figaro* (7 June 2001).
[606] 'Torture en Algérie; Jospin: 'Totale condamnation morale'', *Le Figaro* (4 May 2001).
[607] 'Sanctions à l'étude contre Aussaresses; Torture en Algérie: Chirac veut des sanctions contre Aussaresses', *Le Figaro* (5 May 2001).
[608] 'Torture. Après la confession publique du général sur ses pratiques pendant la guerre d'Algérie; Chirac demande des sanctions contre Aussaresses', *Le Figaro* (5 May 2001).
[609] 'Aussaresses. D'office à la retraite'; 'Legion d'honneur; Aussaresses suspendu', *Le Figaro* (28 June 2001).
[610] The Algerian authorities and FLN party had reacted cautiously to the Aussaresses affair and had urged France "to take action today against the criminals who plagued the Algerian war, just as it was able to judge the crimes against humanity perpetrated under the Vichy government, in particular those committed by Papon". See: 'Algérie. Les révélations du général sur la torture; Alger gère prudemment l'affaire Aussaresses', *Le Figaro* (7 May 2001).

Within a week of the book's release, several legal complaints were filed against him.[611] Human rights associations sued Aussaresses for 'apologising for war crimes' in his book. A complaint against him for 'crimes against humanity', filed by the *Mouvement contre le Racisme et pour l'amitié entre les Peuples* (MRAP), had been rejected: the crimes described in his book were time-barred and amnestied by the law of 31 July 1968. The trial would not take place until the end of November 2001.

In the month following the publication of Aussaresses' book, *Le Figaro* dived behind the scenes of what the newspaper thought was "*un coup éditorial*".[612] The newspaper interviewed Georges Fleury, who knew Aussaresses well and to whom the general had entrusted the first version of his memoirs. According to Fleury, there were major differences between the original manuscript and the ghostwriter's final version in the way the events of 1957 were presented: "It is (…) aimed at a huge audience with an appetite for suspense. A kind of 'Torture Story', with a morbid penchant for complete voyeurism."[613] The newspaper published Hélène Aussaresses' reaction to her father's book: "I don't recognise him in the book that has just been published: it's neither his style nor his spirit."[614] *Le Figaro* thought nobody would believe her: with his one eye and "smashed-up" face, and his "self-indulgent" and "arrogant" style, he was "the epitome of a 'bad guy', and made for an "ideal culprit".[615] In an interview with the newspaper, Aussaresses emphasised that he was the book's author and took full responsibility.[616]

The Aussaresses affair demonstrates a tendency to focus on scapegoats, as had been the case with Papon. Occasionally, the crystallisation around the person of Paul Aussaresses and his testimony was criticised. Some thought it "(…) prevents us from getting to the bottom of the question."[617] Intellectual and activist Edgar Morin, for instance, who had spoken out against the Algerian War early on, believed it was crucial not to focus on high-ranking officers, but to

[611] On the cases filed see e.g.: 'Affaire Aussaresses; Plainte de la veuve de Maurice Audin', *Le Figaro* (10 May 2001).
[612] 'Révélations sur l'affaire Aussaresses. Le récit d'une vie s'est transformé en ouvrage centré sur la torture; Les coulisses d'un coup éditorial', *Le Figaro* (19 May 2001).
[613] *Ibid*.; Georges Fleury: 'Torture Story'', *Le Figaro* (19 May 2001).
[614] 'Qui était vraiment le 'commandant O'?', *Le Figaro* (19 May 2001).
[615] *Ibid*.
[616] 'Aussaresses: "Je n'ai engagé que moi-même"', *Le Figaro* (27 June 2001).
[617] H. Leclerc in: *En attendant la suite* (radio, 21 August 2001). See also Lindenberg in: *Le bien commun* (radio, broad. France Culture, 12 May 2001).

investigate how widespread the practice of torture had been in the French army between 1954 and 1962.[618]

At the surface, the Torture Debate was indeed strongly personalised. It was fuelled repeatedly by revelations and interventions by a small selection of contemporaries who had lived through the Algerian War, amongst whom General Aussaresses. However, even though he and few other contemporaries never ceased to play a prominent role, the debate was much more than (the discussion of) individual testimonies. Rouart's observation – about the "casuistical quarrel" on the permissibility and effectiveness of torture in colonial wars and against terrorism – was spot on.[619]

In an interview on the controversy sparked by Aussaresses' book, Xavier de Bartillat, head of the publishing house that had printed it, said: "(…) there has been a lot of emotion now (…) I think that very quickly it will fade away and we will return to a more normal debate and to a debate of substance."[620] However, months of heated debate were still to come.

Raphaëlle Branche's book (January 2001): the scale, origin and purpose of French torture

On 5 December 2000, a young graduate of the *Ecole Normale Supérieure*, Raphaëlle Branche, defended her 1211-page doctoral thesis in history on torture during the Algerian War in front of an audience of academics and journalists in the *Institut d'études politiques* in Paris. Having discovered new sources – operations logs kept by the regiments, numerous civilian and military archives and plenty and lengthy interviews with veterans – she formulated key theses on the scale, origin and purpose of torture by the French army during the Algerian struggle for Independence. When Branche had started her project four years before, in a "climate of general indifference" she could not have foreseen that at completion, France would be in the middle of what jury-member Vidal-Naquet called a "catharsis".[621] The jury rightly predicted that her "masterly" work, would "go down in history", as it "reveals the hidden face of the Republic".[622]

Branche's work came at an opportune moment. A week and a half before her viva, the Communist Party had vainly requested the establishment of a parliamentary commission to

[618] *Mémorables* (radio, 13 July 2001).
[619] 'Se garder des débordements'; 'Qui déshonore l'armée?', *Le Figaro* (28 November 2000).
[620] *Première édition* (radio, 24 May 2001).
[621] 'Guerre d'Algérie: une thèse souligne la généralisation de la torture', *Le Monde* (7 December 2000).
[622] *Ibid*.

finally investigate acts of torture in the Algerian war. Since the loss of French Algeria, no official, large-scale government investigation had been conducted into the violent end of empire. The Socialist President of the National Assembly Raymond Forni and many other politicians opposed setting up such a parliamentary committee: "we know that there was torture in Algeria" and "a compilation of statements" would only "add horror to horror".[623] PM Jospin had rejected the alternative idea of a commission of historians, which had been gaining ground particularly within his *Parti Socialiste* (PS).[624] In November 2000 Jospin had then promised to open the archives, which were still partially under embargo and difficult to access.[625] However, nothing came of his plans and promises. Many sensitive documents remained inaccessible.[626]

With her book *La torture et l'armée pendant la guerre d'Algérie (1954-1962)*, published by Gallimaerd in January 2001, Branche contributed to the ongoing public controversy in at least three ways. First, she answered one of the key questions that had arisen in response to Ighilahriz's and senior army officials' testimonies: the question of scale. One of the main thrusts of Branche's book was that torture had not been the work of a few sadistic soldiers, but a large-scale practice. She stressed that torture had been widespread yet not 'systematic': with the exception of the DOP – a quasi-official structure under the orders of the Joint High Command in Algeria that had been tasked with carrying out 'tough' interrogations of Algerian prisoners between August 1956 and May 1960 – it had not been institutionalised. Branche later clarified: "[T]orture was at the disposal of soldiers in Algeria. Whoever they were. In my opinion, this constitutes a form of system, but it is totally inaccurate to say that torture was systematic."[627]

Fellow historians and other participants in the debate testified to torture's widespreadness – often with less terminological precision. Historian Madeleine Rebérioux, for instance, thought torture had been practised "systematically", on a "massive" scale.[628] Journalist Jacques Duquesne, who had been in Algeria at the time investigating French army methods, stated: "It

[623] Forni in: *Le journal 08h00* (radio, broad. France Inter, 5 May 2001).
[624] *Inter soir 19h00* (radio, 24 November 2000); *TF1 20 heures* (TV, 25 November 2000); 'L'idée d'une commission d'historiens sur la torture durant la guerre d'Algérie fait son chemin'.
[625] Jospin in: *Infos* [8 pm] (TV, broad. Canal+, 28 November 2000).
[626] In June 2001, an archivist estimated that about half of the archived material was still under the 60-year privacy limit. See: *Pièces à conviction* (TV, 27 June 2001).
[627] 'Chat avec Raphaëlle Branche: La torture pendant la guerre d'Algérie', *Le Monde* (13 March 2002). On the ambiguity of the term 'systematic', see also Branche in: *Des mots de minuit* (TV, 26 September 2001).
[628] *Radio libre* (radio, 25 November 2000).

was commonly practised, (…) to the point where it had become almost a system."[629] Several contributors pointed out that Generals Massu and Aussaresses themselves had admitted to systematic torture during the Algerian War of Independence.[630] In conversation with film director Gazut and historians Stora and Girardet, a TV host concluded that "we're going to find out more and more that torture was much more systematised" than had hitherto been thought.[631] In May 2001, an editor of *Le Monde* announced further investigations into the extent to which French authorities at the time had been aware of the systematic use of torture in Algeria.[632]

Secondly, Branche contributed to the Torture Debate with a thesis on the origin of French torture during the Algerian Independence War. She confirmed that French torture had not been created *ex nihilo*, out of nothing, in the mid-1950s, but had originated in the colonial system and the Indochina War.[633] The editors' blurb on her book read: "although reference[s] to the period of German occupation [are] pervasive, [the torture mechanisms] had their origins in colonial racism and methods inherited from the war in Indochina".

Branche highlighted the Indochina War's essential importance, where the French had developed their strategy for combating revolutionary wars – a model later used to create the DOP.[634] In *Le Monde Diplomatique*, historian Alain Ruscio also explained the continuation of torture by pointing to the short period between the two conflicts: "Less than a hundred days passed between the Indochinese Geneva (20 July 1954) and the start of the Algerian war. Not enough time for "bad habits" to be forgotten."[635] Indeed, in his first testimony in *Le Monde* General Massu recalled General Bigeard saying while torturing an Algerian prisoner in 1955: "We were already doing that in Indochina, we're not going to stop here!".[636]

However, Branche stressed that since the beginning of the French colonisation of Algeria in 1830, Algerians had never been considered equals, and violence had been a central

[629] *Pièces à conviction* (TV, 27 June 2001). See e.g. also the Algerian historian Daho Djerbal in *Radio libre* (radio, 25 November 2000).
[630] E.g. in: *TF1 20 heures* (TV, 3 May 2001); Gazut in: *Arrêt sur images* (TV, 7 January 2001); listener in: *Là bas, si j'y suis* (radio, 4 May 2001). In May 2001, the International Federation for Human Rights announced it would file a complaint for crimes against humanity, citing the systematic and institutionalised nature of the crimes in Algeria as revealed in Aussaresses' book. See: *Journal 07h00* (radio, broad. France Inter, 8 May 2001).
[631] *Arrêt sur images* (TV, 7 January 2001).
[632] *Là bas, si j'y suis* (radio, 1 January 2001).
[633] 'Guerre d'Algérie: une thèse souligne la généralisation de la torture'.
[634] *Ibid*.
[635] 'Du Tonkin à Alger, des "violences de détail"', *Le Monde diplomatique* (June 2001).
[636] '"La torture faisait partie d'une certaine ambiance. On aurait pu faire les choses différemment"'.

feature of French colonial rule.[637] In an interview in September 2001, she discussed the "long duration of colonial violence" in Algeria.[638] Other participants also argued that large-scale torture had been a symptomatic manifestation of the French colonial logic.[639] Two members of *Les Douze*, Vidal-Naquet and Tillion, for instance, maintained that the practice of torture had intensified during the Algerian War, but had existed long before 1954.[640]

Like Branche, colonial immigrants in the metropole believed that violence had rooted in the colonial system. In the 2000-2002 debate, their side of the story was told by few prominent individuals from Algerian descent who (were invited to) participate(d) in an otherwise very French debate. Their take on the issue mattered: they were treated as representatives of the former colonised. They contradicted the idea that French torture had been a response to Algerian violence. It had commenced (long) before the start of the Algerian War in 1954, they argued.

Some of them had been personally involved in the liberation war and spoke from their own experience. Ighilahriz, most importantly, gave multiple interviews throughout the debate. The colonial regime's longstanding practice of violence had been why she and her FLN combatants had recognised and been prepared for French violence in the decolonisation process.[641] Other prominent individuals of Algerian descent, like the renowned historian Mohammed Harbi, got involved in the debate from a professional point of view. On several occasions, Harbi too assured the French audience that torture by the colonial army had not been a reaction to FLN violence: "[It] pre-existed the War of Independence. (…) You can't separate it from the colonial fact."[642] He and other representatives of the former colonised in the debate stressed there had been a long history behind the violent reaction of Algerians.[643] They explained Algerian violence as the product of discrimination and humiliation of the Algerian population under French rule.[644]

---

[637] R. Branche, 'La Torture aux Colonies', in: *La torture et l'armée pendant la guerre d'Algérie (1954-1962)* (Paris, 2001), pp. 28-39.
[638] *Première édition* (radio, 18 September 2001).
[639] E.g. *La suite dans les idées* (radio, 7 December 2000).
[640] *Ibid*. (17 September 2001); *Diagonales* (radio, 10 December 2000). See also Alleg in: *Cosmopolitaine* (radio, 23 September 2001).
[641] *Trafic d'influences* (radio, 22 June 2001). See e.g. also Yacef Saadi, former colonel of the *l'Armée Libération Nationale* in: *Mots croisés* (TV, 21 May 2001).
[642] *Inter matin* (radio, 29 January 2001); *1956, Une sale histoire* (film, 4 July 2002). See also: *Diagonales* (radio, 14 October 2001); *Mémoire d'un continent. Panorama de l'histoire africaine* (radio, broad. RFI, 22 July 2002).
[643] *Diagonales* (radio, 14 October 2001).
[644] E.g. Halimi in: *Culture et dépendances* (TV, 6 March 2002).

Thirdly and lastly, besides on scale and origin, Branche made a statement on the purpose of French torture. She argued that torture had not been just another means of obtaining intelligence: it served at least as much to intimidate the adversary. On the radio, Vidal-Naquet praised Branche's work for showing that torture was to "make people suffer (…), to mark their bodies in some way".[645] In the same broadcast, Branche herself explained that torture was "also and above all to mark the [opponent's] spirit" and to demonstrate who was in power.[646] Broad definitions of 'rebels', 'terrorists' and 'suspects' had served to legitimise this behaviour, she said in another interview.[647]

Other sceptics also questioned torture's claimed preventive purpose. A film producer brought it right to the point, without mincing words: "When you torture a child, it's not for information. When you napalm a village, it's not for information. When you torture a woman when you rape her, it's not for intelligence."[648] Even some veterans admitted torture had been nonsensical and arbitrary.[649] In an interview in January 2001, General Jean Crépin, who had replaced General Massu in 1958, admitted that "in the barracks, there were no terrorists, there were only civilians (…) All the men were tortured. (…) There was no bomb (…) they were wrong to be Arab, that's all."[650]

Besides questioning the alleged reactive nature, inevitability, and preventive purpose of torture by the French army, critical contributors to the debate stressed the incomparability of French and Algerian perpetratorship and either side's victimhood. On the one hand, Branche and others contended that one cannot draw a parallel between French torture and FLN barbarity – as was so often done.[651] After all, they stressed, one side had sought to maintain colonised territory, while the other had fought for its independence.[652] Henri Leclerc, *Président d'honneur de la Ligue des droits de l'homme*, emphasised that "[t]he violent acts of the dominated are not the (…) violent acts of the dominators".[653] On the other hand, sceptics denied the comparability of victimhood. Alleg and others argued that the suffering of the French cannot be paralleled with the much greater losses on the Algerian side:

[645] *La suite dans les idées* (radio, 17 September 2001). In *Diagonales* (radio, 10 December 2000), Vidal-Naquet claimed that cases of terrorists being tortured for information were extremely rare.
[646] *La suite dans les idées* (radio, 17 September 2001).
[647] *Des mots de minuit* (TV, 26 September 2001).
[648] J. Charby in: *Aléas* (TV, broad. France 3, 11 June 2001).
[649] E.g.: *L'ennemi intime* (TV, 6 March 2002).
[650] *Inter matin* (radio, 29 January 2001).
[651] *Première édition* (radio, 18 September 2001).
[652] E.g. journalist Paul-Marie de la Gorce in: *Culture et dépendances* (TV, 6 March 2002).
[653] *En attendant la suite* (radio, 21 August 2001).

> There were 25,000 French deaths on the one side, which is still too many of course, but on the other side there were hundreds and hundreds of thousands of deaths. So, to try to establish a sort of balance between the two sufferings, I don't think that's very correct.[654]

While there was no political appetite for a parliamentary commission of enquiry into French torture, Branche's ground-breaking academic research fuelled public debate. It thus were not just testimonies of eyewitnesses that sparked off debate. Only one month after Aussaresses' TV testimony had given rise to a group of narratives with an exonerating undertone, Branche articulated and gave rise to more critical reflections on the French army's actions in Algeria.

Opinion polls (November 2000, May 2001): divided opinion

Now, what were the French to make of all of this? Opinion polls were taken at two crucial moments in the debate, right after Aussaresses' testimony in November 2000, and shortly after the publication of his book in May 2001. Surveys were conducted by polling agencies CSA and BVA on representative samples of approximately one thousand people. The CSA polls were published in *l'Humanité* (27 November 2000) and *Le Parisien* (5 May 2001), and the BVA polls in *Le Monde* (24 and 25 November 2000) and *Libération* on (9 May 2001).

The BVA poll in the autumn of 2000 confirmed that most people (three out of five respondents) were convinced that France had practised torture during the Algerian War. One in five did not believe torture was a fact, and the same percentage had no opinion.[655] The share of respondents who considered torture proven, was as high among the 'Algeria generation' (50-64-year-olds) as in the general population. The percentage was higher among supporters of the parliamentary Left (73%) than among supporters of right-wing parties (56%).[656]

Polls in the autumn of 2000 further demonstrated that a moderate majority of respondents considered the use of torture during the Algerian war "reprehensible" (57% in the CSA poll) and "unjustifiable" (58% in the BVA survey). Of the CSA respondents, 33% thought it was "not reprehensible given the situation on the ground at the time", and 23% of BVA respondents

[654] *13 heures le journal* (radio, 2 December 2000).
[655] These figures stood at odds with the assumption that torture in Algeria was common knowledge (see fn 444).
[656] 'L'opinion est prête à un débat lucide sur l'usage de la torture', *Le Monde* (29 November 2000).

felt torture was "understandable".[657] Again, the percentage of BVA survey participants condemning the use of torture was higher among left-wing sympathisers (80% in communist circles) than among right-wing (50%) or far-right sympathisers (38%). Apart from a political divide, there was also a generational divide on this question. Younger people were most indignant about French torture in Algeria (72% of 18-24-year-olds; nearly two-thirds of 25-49-year-olds; 55% of the 50-64-year-olds; and 40% of the over-65s).[658]

One year into the public debate, in spring 2001, public opinion had shifted towards a more unequivocal condemnation of torture. The percentage of CSA respondents who condemned torture increased from 57% in November 2000 to 70% six months later.[659] At this point in the debate, veterans were divided. Having published several articles on the war, the Catholic newspaper *La Croix* received many veterans' testimonies of a very different tenor.[660] One third of them were stories highlighting the positive sides of French colonisation; another third were eyewitness accounts of torture; and the last third featured statements against the war that had been waged.[661]

Polling agencies surveyed not only public opinion on the reprehensibility of, but also on the responsibility for French torture during the Algerian war. According to the BVA poll in autumn 2000, the French were divided on the question of who bore responsibility: this included French political authorities of the time (39%), senior army officials (24%), or soldiers on the ground (9%).[662] Indeed, the public debate featured differing views on the extent to which the then government had been involved in and had thus (partly or primarily) been responsible for torture in the Algerian Independence War.

Some thought the highest political leaders or the entire political class had been fully aware of "systematic" torture in Algeria. [663] Others believed the political establishment had encouraged its practice, even if not explicitly or in writing. [664] Yet others were convinced that after 12 March

[657] 'L'idée d'une commission d'historiens sur la torture durant la guerre d'Algérie fait son chemin'; 'Les Français face à la torture en Algérie', *Le Monde* (29 November 2000).
[658] 'L'opinion est prête à un débat lucide sur l'usage de la torture'.
[659] 'Jacques Chirac demande des sanctions contre le général Aussaresses', *Le Monde* (6 May 2001); *Là bas, si j'y suis* (radio, 7 May 2001).
[660] 'Vos guerres d'Algérie', *La Croix* (3 March 2001).
[661] Cohen, 'The sudden Memory of Torture', p. 88.
[662] 'L'opinion est prête à un débat lucide sur l'usage de la torture'.
[663] E.g. Alain Gresh (editor of *Le Monde*) in: *Là bas, si j'y suis* (radio, 1 January 2001); Vidal-Naquet in: *Là bas, si j'y suis* (radio, 4 May 2001).
[664] E.g. Antoine Conte (lawyer) in: *20 heures le journal* (TV, 4 May 2001); the host of *Arte info* (TV, broad. ARTE, 4 May 2001).

1956, when the assembly had voted to grant special powers to the military, terror had become a system instituted by the military and covered up by the political authorities.[665]

The CSA survey of November 2000 demonstrated that a majority of 59% was in favour of "the authorities acknowledging their responsibility", and a minority of 30% was against.[666] BVA polls demonstrated that in November 2000 a relative majority of the French people (47%) and in May 2001 an absolute majority of the population (56%) was unhappy with the amnesty laws in place.[667] They would like to see "legal proceedings to be brought against the officers" who had "ordered acts of torture involving the French army".[668] Whilst the percentage was evenly distributed among left- and right-wing sympathisers, younger respondents advocated prosecution most strongly (in November 2000 69% of under-25 year olds; 34% of the 50-64-year-olds; and 25% of the over-65s).[669] Finally, according to the May 2001 BVA survey, 56% of the French favoured "Jacques Chirac and Lionel Jospin officially asking the Algerian people for forgiveness on behalf of France". One in four respondents (24%) were against an official apology.

Poll respondents who supported nullifying the amnesty laws and a French *mea culpa* may have had (the reckoning with) Vichy in mind when they cast their vote. It can be seen from the debate that the *Aufarbeitung* of France's other 'dark past' served as a point of reference. Comparisons with Vichy appeared helpful in understanding, amongst other things, what post-colonial France was now suddenly faced with. Radio and television hosts identified Algeria as a past that did not pass, just like Vichy.[670] While this might have created sympathy for and understanding of the mammoth task of sorting out Algeria, their verdict on the comparative lack of progress was scathing. Compared to the process of coming to terms with Vichy, working through Algeria was found to be still in its infancy.

Inspired by and modelled after France's way of dealing with Vichy, numerous contributors to the Torture Debate called for the legal prosecution of colonial crimes committed in Algeria. They demanded the application of the category 'crimes against humanity' – the

[665] E.g. host of *Pièces à conviction* (TV, 27 June 2001). Generals Massu and Aussaresses also claimed that the system of summary executions was institutionalised by the political powers of the time, see: *TF1 20 heures* (TV, 23 November 2000).
[666] 'L'idée d'une commission d'historiens sur la torture durant la guerre d'Algérie fait son chemin'.
[667] In November 39% thought the opposite and 14% did not know.
[668] 'L'opinion est prête à un débat lucide sur l'usage de la torture'; 'La veuve de Maurice Audin, torturé en Algérie, va déposer plainte pour crimes contre l'humanité', *Le Monde* (10 May 2001).
[669] 'L'opinion est prête à un débat lucide sur l'usage de la torture'.
[670] *Première édition* (radio, 18 September 2001); *1956, Une sale histoire* (film, 4 July 2002).

central juridical tool against Vichy – in which case amnesties would be null and void.[671] In a radio broadcast in July 2001, socialist politician Pierre Joxe, whose father had been involved in negotiating the Evian Agreement, contended France should have judged French culprits – modelled after the Nuremberg trials.[672]

Advocates of 'repentance' – as the president's apology to the Jews was termed – frequently referenced the 1995 presidential apology as a precedent, and they did so more explicitly than *Les Douze* in the *Manifesto* and Jospin at CRIF's annual dinner. They denounced the fact that France's political class had admitted to the Vichy past, but still not admitted to systematic torture overseas. Human rights advocates and others contended that political recognition of Vichy crimes should be followed by political recognition of colonial crimes. In a broadcast of *Radio France Internationale*, Mouloud Aounit, secretary general of MRAP, stated it would be "to the honour of the President (…) and France as a whole" if he would now also recognise atrocities committed during the colonial war.[673]

Estimates of how challenging this would be varied. Historian Daniel Lindenberg expected such a declaration on Algeria to be less problematic than the one on Vichy. He did not think the President would face the same debates as in 1995, when the issue of Vichy had questioned the continuity of the Republic – something that, according to him, would not happen with the recognition of colonial crimes.[674] Others were more pessimistic.[675] In a broadcast, Maryvonne de Saint-Pulgent, member of the *Conseil d'État*, stated that admitting to what the Vichy regime had really been, had been an exception to a distinctly French tradition of doing exactly the opposite, to France's "historical habit".[676]

Poll respondents opposing an official apology might have disapproved because they did not consider torture a fact, did not find it reprehensible, thought something else was needed, or considered repentance problematic. Various contributors to the 2000-2002 debate argued that it was not a matter of repentance, but of (finding and speaking) the truth (amongst others

[671] See also: Jansen, 'Politics of Remembrance', p. 280. See also: E. Conan and H. Rousso, *Vichy, un passé qui ne passe pas* (Paris, 1996).
[672] *Mémorables* (radio, 9 July 2001).
[673] *Invité matin* (radio, broad. RFI, 24 November 2000). See also Henri Leclerc, honorary chairman of the *Ligue des droits de l'homme,* in: *En attendant la suite* (radio, 21 August 2001).
[674] *Le bien commun* (radio, 12 May 2001).
[675] E.g. *La suite dans les idées* (radio, 7 December 2000).
[676] *Ibid*.

Rebérioux), and of recognition or condemnation (like Audin).[677] Other participants (such as Vidal-Naquet) principally dismissed repentance as a religious notion, at odds with French state secularism (*laïcité*); or rejected collective responsibility and were therefore sceptical about an apology on behalf of France.[678]

The majority of the political class was reluctant for the French authorities to 'repent' – even on the Left.[679] Like several members of *Les Douze,* PM Jospin was in favour of the whole truth be told about and the condemnation of torture, but against repentance. In an interview in November 2000, he took position against such a gesture: "Torture in Algeria, (…) [is not] a matter of collective repentance, but part of the search for the truth".[680] The only duty he felt was incumbent on today's political leaders was the duty to remember, *Le Figaro* wrote in May 2001.[681] According to Branche, a generational change amongst politicians had forged a breakthrough in conceding to Vichy. It had taken until Chirac presidency – who had not been in politics at the time – for the government to do so. Conversely, Branche blamed Chirac's and Jospin's hesitancy to admit to systematic torture in Algeria on their prior involvement in the decolonisation war.[682] Politicians on either side of the political spectrum were hesitant to meet what they believed was a demand for 'repentance'. Other than in the case of Vichy, denouncing the Algerian War was thought to be a political risk.[683]

Even though the French Defence Minister Alain Richard said that the French army was not hostile to official repentance over torture in Algeria, veterans seemed divided on the matter.[684] Prominent examples were General Aussaresses, who was hostile to the idea of France repenting, and General Massu, who favoured such a gesture.[685] Part of the veteran community pleaded that it was them, who were owed an official apology.[686]

---

[677] Rebérioux in: *Journal 07h30* (radio, broad. France Inter, 23 November 2000); Audin in: *Inter soir 19h00* (radio, 5 May 2001). Also e.g. PM Jospin in: *Inter soir 19h00* (radio, 24 November 2000); Jean-Pierre Vittori and Pierre Pelissier in: *13 heures le journal* (radio, 2 December 2000); Michel Rocard (member of the socialist party) in: *Première édition* (radio, 28 November 2000).
[678] On 'repentance' see e.g.: Vidal-Naquet in: *Diagonales* (radio, 10 December 2000); Audin in: *Inter soir 19h00* (radio, 5 May 2001); Forni in: *Mots croisés* (TV, 21 May 2001). On collective responsibility see e.g.: *Le journal de l'histoire* (TV, 7 December 2000); Deniau in: *Mots croisés* (TV, 21 May 2001).
[679] *19 20 Edition nationale* (TV, 9 May 2001); 'Guerre d'Algérie. Refusant de céder à la pression communiste', *Le Figaro* (17 May 2001); 'Affaire Aussaresses. Plainte de la veuve de Maurice Audin'.
[680] *TF1 20 heures* (TV, 25 November 2000).
[681] 'Guerre d'Algérie. Refusant de céder à la pression communiste'.
[682] *Des mots de minuit* (TV, 26 September 2001).
[683] Cohen, 'The sudden Memory of Torture', pp. 89-90.
[684] On Richard: *TF1 20 heures* (TV, 23 November 2000).
[685] *19 20 Edition nationale* (TV, 23 November 2000.
[686] E.g. General Schmidt in: *Inter matin* (radio, 29 January 2001).

Polls on reprehensibility, responsibility, and repentance at two key moments in the debate allowed contemporaries (and now us) to take stock. Looking at the increased percentages of respondents who condemned torture (57% in November 2000, and 70% in May 2001) and were unhappy with the amnesty laws in place (47% in the fall and 56% in spring), it seems that at this stage in the Torture Debate incriminating narratives carried more weight in and reverberated more strongly with the population than exculpatory ones. Polls further show that left-right and generational divides among 'memory makers' could also be found among 'memory consumers'. Despite the vote of a majority of between 55 and 60 per cent of their constituencies, the political elite still proved unwilling to acknowledge responsibility and seek forgiveness.

Round table discussion with Le Monde Diplomatique (May 2001): widening the lens?

A few days after the publication of Aussaresses' book, the team of *Le Monde Diplomatique* was invited for a round table discussion in the radio magazine *Là bas, si j'y suis*, broadcast by *France Inter*.[687] The newspaper had played a key role in the public debate so far: *Le Monde* had triggered and revived the debate by interviewing Ighilahriz (June 2000), Aussaresses and Massu (November 2000), by giving the floor to veterans who had participated in or witnessed torture, and by commissioning the BVA poll (November 2000).[688] According to *Le Figaro*, there had been a premediated 'campaign' against the French army's actions in Algeria by *Le Monde* and *L'Humanité* for months.[689] At this point in the debate, which *Le Monde Diplomatique* thought had reached an impasse, its editorial team tried to steer it in a different direction.

During the round table discussion, one of the editors lamented that a crucial aspect had been overlooked in the public debate. Torture had not only been a systematic practice of the Republic, but had been innate to European colonisation, so he argued. To focus on the person of General Aussaresses and to turn him into a monster was to not put the practise of torture in historical perspective, the editor contended. This was precisely what the editorial team would do in a forthcoming issue.[690] Because the Algerian war had been just one episode in the history

[687] *Là bas, si j'y suis* (radio, 1 January 2001).
[688] 'La mémoire torturée', *Le Monde* (3 December 2000).
[689] 'Polemique. La campagne visant à condamner la pratique de la torture par l'armée française pendant la bataille d'Alger rebondit'; 'Guerre d'Algérie: quand le PC refait l'histoire', *Le Figaro* (23 November 2000).
[690] *Le Monde Diplomatique* was a monthly supplement to the daily *Le Monde*.

of colonisation, he and his colleagues felt the urge to delve deeper into what they thought was at the root of European colonialism: the idea of superior and inferior races. Alain Gresh, editor of *Le Monde,* explained:

> [I]t has nothing to do with the Algerian war (…) [I]n the[ir] colonies, French, British and Belgian authorities used torture [to manage] the local populations (…) [T]his touches on the essential unspoken part of this debate, (…): the use of systematic torture during the period of colonisation. That is the real heart of the debate. (…) [I]t leads to the question of what colonisation was (…) [At] the end of the day, [in the West] they were seen as non-human or were inferior human beings.[691]

In the next issue of *Le Monde Diplomatique*, the dossier '*Impasses in the debate on torture in Algeria'* was then introduced as follows:

> Torture was not only linked to situations of conflict; it was an integral part of colonisation (…) Above all, it expressed the reality of Europe's relationship with the Other (…).[692]

The editors were largely right: little attention was paid to the violent nature of European colonialism in the Torture Debate. However, some contributors reminded their audience that colonialism had been a European venture really, and that it had been at the expense of indigenous populations. In spring 2001, when the debate was going at full speed, Deniau quoted De Gaulle saying that many countries went through "a colonial phase":

> I was appointed ambassador to [Mauritania] at a very young age. I was in Algeria very often (…) [I]t were not the French who left the worst memories (…) [O]ne day General de Gaulle (…) told me all the countries went through a colonial phase (…) of course the Americans now, the Russians and Soviets, the English. He told me they [the

[691] *Là bas, si j'y suis* (radio, 1 January 2001).
[692] 'Les impasses du débat sur la torture en Algérie', *Le Monde diplomatique* 567/48 (June 2001), pp. 10-12.

> English] were the champions of the bunch. (…) And we went through that phase too, for better or worse.[693]

There was also a sense that the violent ending of French Algeria had not been an exception. Some participants pointed out that, as a matter of course, the endgame of the inherently violent venture of European colonialism had been destructive. Alleg argued that colonial war was generated by the colonial system, in Algeria, in Spanish Latin America and elsewhere. In "unjust wars" such as these, using "unjust means" was a "sort of normal", he said.[694] Another historian, Gilbert Meynier, also stressed that excessive violence had not been peculiar to the Algerian war: what had happened in Dutch Indonesia had not been fundamentally different.[695]

Whereas former imperial powers' violent episodes of (de)colonisation occasionally served as a yardstick in the debate, post-imperial memory irruptions in neighbouring countries seemed to go largely unnoticed. Broadcasts on Queen Beatrix's state visit to Indonesia and the heated national debate on this matter (1995), had been very few in France.[696] According to a Dutch historian, his French colleagues were amazed when, in 1995, he told them about the Indonesian dispute: "That's exactly what we have with Algeria," was their response. "The same psychological problem, the same comparisons: how do we reconcile Vichy with Algiers, et cetera."[697] Even when France was engaged in a similar debate a few years later, the Dutch semicentenary debate was not looked back on.[698] French media barely even noticed a parallel post-imperial memory irruption in turn-of-the-century Britain: the simultaneous debate ignited by the *Parekh Report* (2000) hardly reverberated.[699]

Even the abstract and general realisation that other former imperial powers had struggled – and were still struggling – with the atrocities they had committed overseas was unusual in the Torture Debate. There were not many like De Bartillat, head of the publishing house that had printed Aussaresses book, who noted that:

---

[693] *Mots croisés* (TV, 21 May 2001).
[694] *Cosmopolitaine* (radio, 23 September 2001).
[695] *Mémoire d'un continent. Panorama de l'histoire africaine* (radio, broad. RFI, 22 July 2002).
[696] Search terms (Beatrix, Indonesia, Poncke Princen, Deetman, and Rawagedeh) yielded few relevant results in the INA-Pro database for 1994-1995 (searched under *Mots clés & titres*). E.g.: 'Fax: Djakarta', dir. *ARTE* (TV, 17 August 1995); 'Le prix de l'indépendance', dir. ARTE (TV, 20 August 1995); 'L'Indonésie. Les enjeux internationaux', dir. *France Culture* (radio, 26 July 1995).
[697] Wesseling, 'Roeping', pp. 91, 93-94.
[698] Search terms on Dutch colonialism and the DEI yielded no relevant results in the INA-Pro database for 2000-2002 (searched under *Mots clés & titres*).
[699] The search term 'Parekh' yielded no relevant results in the INA-Pro database (2000-2002, searched under *Mots clés & titres*). The same applied to search terms on British colonialism and the bloody Mau Mau uprising in Kenya.

> [I]t is 10 years of history that (…) we are facing like some foreign countries. They have done this kind of memory work concerning other painful events (…). I think that we can face this painful history as others have done in other countries. (…)[700]

Somewhat more often than against *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung* in other former metropoles, the French process of coming to terms with Algeria was measured against international standards. Some participants in the debate were concerned with how the French approach did (not) fit in with international norms on dealing with injustice. The lack of repentance in post-colonial France was (re)assessed from an international moral perspective, and the amnesty laws that had been put in place from an international legal perspective.

Those who referred to international moral norms thought differently about how much they had penetrated French inner life. In a radio broadcast on torture in Algeria, in which historian Pierre Nora and veteran Pierre Dabezies responded to listeners, the latter rejected the idea of collective repentance. It was not, he argued, "part of our culture".[701] When asked about Aussaresses' belated confessions, historian Raoul Girardet, on the contrary, cited "a contemporary culture of confession" as a possible explanation.[702]

Those who considered French amnesty laws noticed how they had been contrary to international conventions at the time of their adoption, and how they would have been ineffective under present international law. Michel Zaoui, a French lawyer who had participated in the Papon trial, noted that France had refused to sign and ratify international conventions stating that war crimes are not time-barred.[703] Human rights lawyer Bourdon pointed at "a gap between international law today and what used to be international law". Whereas back then, French amnesty laws definitively prohibited the entire judicial process, nowadays "[t]here is no amnesty law that can be a legal obstacle to the identification of the torturers and the reparation of the pain suffered (…)" – providing few exceptions.[704]

Some participants did not stop at holding up French measures of *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung* to international (moral and legal) standards. They shifted attention away from torture in the Algerian Independence War, even from the past, towards international community's future

[700] *Première édition* (radio, 24 May 2001).
[701] *Le téléphone sonne* (radio, broad. France Inter, 29 January 2001).
[702] *Arrêt sur images* (TV, broad. *France 5*, 7 January 2001).
[703] *Le bien commun* (radio, 12 May 2001).
[704] Bourdon in: *Radio libre* (radio, broad. *France Culture*, 25 November 2000).

dealings with torture. The extensive radio broadcast *Torturer, Algérie – 40 ans après,* aired in November 2000, is particularly interesting in this regard. In three extensive round-table discussions, a line-up of prominent memory entrepreneurs was to shed light on the torture question.[705] The third part rolled out a roadmap to ensure a solid international legal preventive strategy and response to the practice of torture.[706]

Yet other contributors to the debate were concerned with how France's present or aspired role in the international community was (in)compatible with its colonial record. In their view, France was the last to preach, either because of its historical record or its deficient way of dealing with it. Before Aussaresses was reprimanded, novelist Rouart asked: *"*How can France, the land of human rights, still be indignant about the actions of the Pinochets, the Videlas and the Milosevics, if it does not punish [Aussaresses] for legitimising and condoning torture?"[707] Hervé Bourges urged his compatriots to "(…) stop talking about human rights when we know that we were capable of such horrors at certain periods of our history."[708] Similarly, historian Lindenberg summoned France to mind its own business before acting as moral police on the international stage: "I am sensitive to the contradiction [Ighilahriz] highlights between a French Parliament that denounces crimes against humanity in other countries, (…) but that does not sweep in front of its own door (…)."[709]

From all this, it becomes clear that the Torture Debate was largely looked at from a national perspective. If at all, it had an international more than a European dimension. Attempts of the editorial team of *Le Monde* to broaden and open up the debate, and to initiate a discussion on torture from a European angle, were in vain.

[705] Amongst others, historians Rebérioux, Vidal-Naquet, Djerbal, Girardet, Thénault, Ruscio and Stora; generals Massu, Aussaresses and Bigeard; former resisters from the French army in Algeria Alleg and Liechti; officials Stéphane Hessel and Didier Gallo; human rights advocates Bourdon, Paul Thibault and Jean-Jacques de Felis; and film director Gazut.
[706] *Radio libre* (radio, 25 November 2000).
[707] 'Torture. Après les déclarations du general Aussaresses sur la guerre d'Algérie', *Le Figaro* (5 December 2000).
[708] *Le journal de l'histoire* (TV, 7 December 2000).
[709] *Le bien commun* (radio, 12 May 2001).

Fortieth anniversary of the 1961 Paris massacre (October 2001): a condemnation of colonial violence in the heart of France?

On 17 October 2001, it had been forty years since the Paris massacre. The anniversary got unprecedented media attention and provided impetus for several novels and historical publications, film screenings, exhibitions, plays and other artistic events in the Paris area and the provinces.[710] None other than Jean-Luc Einaudi was asked to recall the sequence of events.[711] The massacre's 40th anniversary was marked by the unveiling of a commemorative plaque to honour the Algerians killed on that fateful autumn day in 1961 – an initiative by the capital's socialist mayor Bertrand Delanoë. It was installed in Paris on the Pont Saint Michel, one of the places where they had been thrown into the Seine, with the inscription: "in memory of the many Algerians killed during the bloody repression of the peaceful demonstration of 17 October 1961". A polemic surrounded the installation of the plaque.

The police unions took a dim view of the tribute paid to the victims of the Paris massacre. In a press release, the *Alliance* union stressed that "the evocation of a harrowing period in our history can only serve to distance the national police force from the French people".[712] This would compromise the Vigipirate plan (implemented to enhance security against terrorism after 9/11), which involved citizen participation. Besides, the *Syndicat general de la Police-Force Ouvrière* (SGP/FO) contended that the mayor was to "do the same for all the police officers (…) murdered (…) by the FLN".[713] The head of the Parisian police, Jean-Paul Proust, also emphasised his "duty to remember the police officers who [had been] killed in their line of duty during the Algerian war".[714]

While the Parisian police force was unanimous in its disapproval, the Paris City Council was divided. Right-wing opposition parties denounced the initiative of the Paris municipality, led by the pluralist Left. As the anniversary date approached, at the end of September, opposition

[710] 'Le 17 octobre 1961, la réalité d'un massacre face à un mensonge d'Etat', *Le Monde* (15 October 2001); 'Le massacre du 17 octobre 1961 obtient un début de reconnaissance officielle', *Le Monde* (17 October 2001). For an (incomplete) overview of cultural productions see: '17 octobre 1961, quarante ans après', *Le Monde* (15 October 2001).
[711] E.g. Einaudi in: *Diagonales* (radio, 14 October 2001).
[712] 'La polémique enfle sur la commémoration du 17 octobre 1961', *Le Monde* (15 October 2001); 'Le massacre du 17 octobre 1961 obtient un début de reconnaissance officielle'; 'Quarantième anniversaire de la répression du 17 octobre 1961 sur fond de polémique', *Le Monde* (17 October 2001).
[713] 'Le massacre du 17 octobre 1961 obtient un début de reconnaissance officielle'.
[714] 'Quarantième anniversaire de la répression du 17 octobre 1961 sur fond de polémique'.

groups *Rassemblement pour la République* (RPR), *L'Union pour la démocratie française* (UDF), *Démocratie libérale* (DL) and *Tibéristes* voted against the content and the timing of the tribute. The chairman of the RPR group, Philippe Séguin, argued that the origins and the course of events on 17 October 1961 remained to be clarified, denounced a "Manichean approach" to history, and deemed it "pointless to reopen controversies".[715] Claude Goasguen, DL spokesman and Paris councillor, objected to a "selective duty of remembrance" and "an act of unilateral repentance", and demanded that the Algerian government "also acknowledge[d] its wrongs". He bitterly called upon the mayor of Algiers to also place a plaque to commemorate the murder of thousands of Harkis.[716] Against the background of global Muslim extremism, the opposition warned against reviving the troublesome relationship between the French and the Algerian community.[717] For all that, the Left, spoke of "a mass crime ordered and covered up by the highest authorities of the State" and mocked "the Right's solidarity with Maurice Papon".[718] The debates and tensions in the Paris City Council were echoed in the French National Assembly. A political controversy thus accompanied the unveiling.

The electorate was equally divided. A CSA poll conducted on 13 October 2001 (published in *L'Humanité Hebdo*) demonstrated a low awareness of what had happened on 17 October 1961. A majority of respondents was completely unaware of the fatal event; less than fifty percent had "heard of it"; and only twenty percent knew "what it [had been] about". Still, a relative majority (45%) thought the violent repression of the Algerian demonstration had been unjustifiable (33% thought the opposite), and a minority (39%) wished for "official condemnation by the French authorities" (41% were against). Again, support for official condemnation was considerably higher among communists and socialists (65% and 50% respectively) than among the electorate of right-leaning parties (up to 59% among extreme right voters were against).[719]

[715] 'Le massacre du 17 octobre 1961 obtient un début de reconnaissance officielle'. See also Séguin in: 'Quarantième anniversaire de la répression du 17 octobre 1961 sur fond de polémique'.
[716] Goasguen quoted in: 'La polémique enfle sur la commémoration du 17 octobre 1961'; 'Le massacre du 17 octobre 1961 obtient un début de reconnaissance officielle'; 'Les controverses politiques sur la guerre d'Algérie marquent la commémoration du 17 octobre 1961', *Le Monde* (19 October 2001).
[717] 'La polémique enfle sur la commémoration du 17 octobre 1961'; 'Le massacre du 17 octobre 1961 obtient un début de reconnaissance officielle'.
[718] 'Le massacre du 17 octobre 1961 obtient un début de reconnaissance officielle'; 'Les controverses politiques sur la guerre d'Algérie marquent la commémoration du 17 octobre 1961'.
[719] 'Une violence "injustifiable" pour 45% des Français', *Le Monde* (17 October 2001).

Human rights organisations welcomed Mayor Delanoë's initiative, but felt it did not go far enough. The *Ligue des droits de l'homme* argued that the City Council's recognition "would be incomplete if the highest authorities of the Republic were to remain silent on the subject".[720] The *Collectif unitaire du 17 octobre 1961* – made up of some sixty associations (e.g. the *Ligue des droits de l'homme* and the MRAP), trade unions and (far-)left parties (amongst others Trotskyist and communist parties, the Green party and the Paris federation of the Socialist Party) – called for official recognition of the crime, access to archives, a memorial for the victims, and inclusion in school curricula.[721]

In this tense atmosphere and protected by an impressive police presence, Mayor Delanoë, unveiled the commemorative plaque. It was placed on the Saint-Michel bridge not on the side of the 5th *arrondissement* (where there was an RPR mayor), but on the side of the 4th *arrondissement* (governed by a socialist mayor).[722] The inauguration was boycotted by members of the municipal right-wing opposition. Present were only members of the Parisian executive, elected left-wing representatives, and remembrance associations.[723] Despite the substantial share of the French population that denounced the events and called for official condemnation, no government members or presidential representatives attended.[724] The absence of government officials was remarkable: just a month before, at the first *Journée Nationale d'Hommage aux Harkis* (25 September 2001), Chirac had come very close to admitting culpability for the 1962 massacre of Harkis that France had "failed to prevent by leaving Algerian soil".[725]

The 17 October ceremony was a "commemoration of booing and cheering", *Le Monde* reported.[726] Some two hundred people attended, either to pay their respects, or to protest at the call of the republican party *Mouvement National Républicain* (MNR).[727] The extreme Right provoked incidents. MNR supporters carried a banner that said 'Shame on the FLN

[720] 'La polémique enfle sur la commémoration du 17 octobre 1961'; 'Le massacre du 17 octobre 1961 obtient un début de reconnaissance officielle'.
[721] 'Le massacre du 17 octobre 1961 obtient un début de reconnaissance officielle'; 'Quarantième anniversaire de la répression du 17 octobre 1961 sur fond de polémique'.
[722] 'Le massacre du 17 octobre 1961 obtient un début de reconnaissance officielle'.
[723] 'Quarantième anniversaire de la répression du 17 octobre 1961 sur fond de polémique'; 'Le massacre du 17 octobre 1961 obtient un début de reconnaissance officielle'.
[724] Bensmaia, 'The War that Haunts France', p. 6. See also: *Mots croisés* (TV, 21 May 2001).
[725] Chirac had argued that the massacres of 1962 "must be recognised" and that "French, by leaving Algerian soil, [had] failed to prevent them." Brazzoduro, 'Postcolonial Memories', p. 292.
[726] 'Octobre 1961: une commémoration entre huées et youyous', *Le Monde* (17 October 2001).
[727] *Ibid*.

collabos'.[728] Later that day, as many as five thousand people joined in a march initiated by the *Collectif unitaire du 17 octobre 1961* and led by a few Algerian eyewitnesses, following the route of the FLN demonstrators on that bloody night of October 17, 1961.[729]

The Torture Debate was thus not limited to the conduct of French soldiers on Algerian soil. When the debate was well underway, on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the *Massacre of Paris*, attention was paid to how the Algerian war had taken place not only 'over there', but also 'back here'. The circle was complete: in the late 1990s, the Papon double trial had revived the memory of 17 October 1961 and had set off French obsession with the Algerian War, and now, after a year and a half of intense public debate, the *Paris massacre* took centre stage.

After thirty years of denial and ten years of struggle by second-generation Algerian immigrants, anti-racist associations and later also by intellectuals, receiving some official recognition at the fortieth anniversary of the Paris massacre was something momentous. The secretary general of the MRAP recalled: "Ten years ago, there were only fifteen or so of us here… Tenacity has overcome oblivion (…)", and the president of *Au nom de la mémoire* was delighted about this "demonstration of rediscovered dignity".[730] However, if anything, the heated debate that accompanied the plaque's unveiling testified to the divided memory of the Algerian War. *Le Monde* rightly concluded that, on this occasion, the multiplicity of and tensions between memories of the Algerian War became painfully clear.[731]

The political elite was conspicuous by its absence at the unveiling ceremony. Denouncing violence committed by French civil servants in the heart of France clearly was not part of the President's wider effort to commemorate the Algerian War and those who had fought in it.[732] Condemning French colonial violence within metropolitan France proved at least as tricky as condemning violence overseas. This also seemed true for a cross-section of the French population: Whereas in May 2001 an absolute majority (56%) of BVA poll respondents had been in favour of the President and Prime Minister asking for forgiveness from the Algerian people, a relative majority (41%) was against an official condemnation of the events of 17 October 1961 by the French authorities.

---

[728] 'Les controverses politiques sur la guerre d'Algérie marquent la commémoration du 17 octobre 1961'.
[729] *Ibid*.; 'Quarantième anniversaire de la répression du 17 octobre 1961 sur fond de polémique'; 'Le massacre du 17 octobre 1961 obtient un début de reconnaissance officielle'.
[730] 'Les controverses politiques sur la guerre d'Algérie marquent la commémoration du 17 octobre 1961'.
[731] 'Le massacre du 17 octobre 1961 obtient un début de reconnaissance officielle'.
[732] Chirac had instigated the National Day of Homage to the Harkis himself. Brazzoduro, 'Postcolonial Memories', p. 292.

First state visit of the French President to Algeria since 1989 (December 2001): brushing things under the carpet

In December 2001, it was the first French presidential visit to Algeria since Mitterrand's trip in 1989. Despite earlier invitations from Bouteflika, Chirac had not visited Algeria since his election in 1995. Now he did, it was quick and all about the Afghan crisis, Islamic terrorism and the global war on terrorism. In 48 hours, Chirac visited the Maghreb region (Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco) to take pulse of and deepen diplomatic dialogue with France's Mediterranean partners after 9/11.[733] Each of them had direct experience with extremist Islamism.[734] With his visit, Chirac also intended to send a message of friendship between the West and the Muslim world.[735]

After his arrival in the White City, the two Heads of State visited Bab el-Oued, a neighbourhood badly hit by floods and mudslides the month before. The people, who had booed Bouteflika during his first visit to the disaster area, warmly welcomed the French president. There were banners with *'Solidarité France-Algérie: merci'*, *'France-Algérie: histoire commune, avenir commun*'. Chirac waved and blew kisses into the cheering crowd. The only time bad memories surfaced was at the sight of banners about Aussaresses – the verdict in the court case against him was then pending –, reading: '*Aussaresses: No. Chirac: Yes'* or '*Aussaresses = GIA* [*Groupe Islamique Armé*] *= Bin Laden'*.[736] The two Presidents concluded the visit with a working dinner.[737]

The Algerian leg of Chirac's Maghreb visit – which raised the appearance of an official state visit, but was not – was the longest and most symbolic.[738] It carried emotional significance, for tumultuous bilateral relations were still marked by the Algerian Independence War.[739] Nevertheless, his visit was nothing like the bilateral state visit of Dutch Queen Beatrix to Indonesia in 1995, where the shared colonial past had occupied centre stage, and was not the subject of intense public debate.

[733] 'En visite au Maghreb, M. Chirac entend dénoncer le piège de l'amalgame entre terrorisme et islam', *Le Monde* (2 December 2001).
[734] 'La France et le Maghreb', *Le Figaro* (1 December 2001).
[735] 'Le président de la République à Tunis, Alger et Rabat; Chirac resserre les liens avec le Maghreb', *Le Figaro* (1 December 2001).
[736] 'Retrouvailles à Bab el-Oued', *Le Figaro* (3 December 2001).
[737] 'Maghreb. Le président de la République entame aujourd'hui une brève tournée en Algérie, en Tunisie et au Maroc', *Le Figaro* (1 December 2001).
[738] *Ibid*.
[739] 'Le président de la République à Tunis, Alger et Rabat; Chirac resserre les liens avec le Maghreb'.

In the one-and-a-half year before Chirac's state visit, contributors to the Torture Debate had been moderately interested in the process of *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung* in Algeria. French assessments of memory affairs in the former colony tended to be critical. The most common criticism was a lack of penance in an authoritarian-run Algeria. A distinction was made between the regime, which appeared to stick its head in the sand, and the population, which did not seem to categorically oppose a more critical approach. A reporter for *France Inter* in Algeria noted:

> (…) Algerians have organised themselves into associations to fight oblivion. … [These] associations receive practically no support from the public authorities (…), [which] reinforces the idea of a regime that is itself embarrassed by the debate on torture (…). [F]or the moment, the Algerian regime prefers to remain silent and to consider this a Franco-French polemic.[740]

Sociologist Véronique Grappe-Nahoum thought the authoritarian regime was to blame for insufficient repentance at the grassroots level:

> The denunciation of the crimes of the French army was done in a somewhat Stalinist way, by the state (…) [T]he crimes of colonialism have not been denounced in a real enough way, sociologically anchored in the perception of the historical reality of the population itself.[741]

Writer and veteran Benoist Rey also believed the problem lay with the authoritarian regime. He expected that, as soon as the democratic movement in Algeria gained strength, memory work would be done.[742] Pierre Nora went beyond the distinction between regime and population. He found fault with generic terminology that was used to describe how 'the Algerians' were handling their past – for the Algerian authorities, the press, and even different sections of the population all dealt with the burdened past in a distinct manner. He noted how the Algerian youth were actively seeking justice.[743]

---

[740] 'Journée spéciale torture pendant la guerre d'Algérie', dir. *France Inter* (radio, broad. France Inter, 29 January 2001).
[741] *La suite dans les idées* (radio, 28 March 2001).
[742] *Mémorables* (radio, 12 July 2001).
[743] *Arrêt sur images* (TV, 7 January 2001).

Even though how the French debate reverberated in Algeria was nothing that got much attention, observers noted a great contrast between the state of memory affairs in France, where the issue of torture had resulted in a true polemic, and in a civil war-torn Algeria, where torture was not the order of the day.[744] Some expressed the hope that remembrance work done in France "be exported to Algeria", and that "the firm condemnation of torture may help break the silence of Algerian politicians and help people in Algeria to also look at their history."[745]

Memory work done in France in the eighteen months before Chirac's Maghreb visit had been work towards Franco-French historical reconciliation.[746] Several participants in the debate raised awareness about how the Algerian war had been almost always discussed from a French point of view. "One appeals to the memory of the Pieds-Noirs, to the French army and the French supporters or opponents of Algerian independence, but more rarely to those who experienced it on the other side (…)," a radio host concluded.[747]

In the past, Daniel Lindenberg observed, reconciliation between the French had taken priority, and Algerians had largely been forgotten. The amnesty laws were to prove his point.[748] Fellow historian Benjamin Stora, described how the Evian Agreement had allowed society to turn a deaf ear to citizens from Algerian descent, every time they had sought to address their agony. Stora recalled attempts by authors with Algerian roots in the 1970s to make themselves heard had been in vain, and when TV documentaries in the 1980s and 1990s had shown their sufferings, "people did not want to listen."[749]

Some pointed out that nothing seemed to have changed, for in the present Torture Debate, people of Algerian origin were shouted down by those with no genealogical ties to the former colony.[750] A few argued that the disadvantaged position of Algerians in post-colonial France and the marginal role they had played in French collective memory on 1954-1962, were inextricably linked. According to Philippe Bernard, journalist at *Le Monde*, "[t]he link with the questions of integration is undeniable (…) if we consider that integration is the collective inscription (…) in a story (…)".[751] Therefore, Bernard thought that working on memory might facilitate the integration of French citizens with Algerian roots.

---

[744] E.g. 'Journée spéciale torture pendant la guerre d'Algérie', dir. *France Inter* (radio, broad. France Inter, 29 January 2001).
[745] Host of *Ripostes* (TV, 13 May 2001); Host of *La suite dans les idées* (radio, 7 December 2000).
[746] *Mots croisés* (TV, 21 May 2001).
[747] *2000 ans d'histoire* (radio, broad. France Inter, 1 November 2001).
[748] *Le bien commun* (radio, 12 May 2001).
[749] *Algérie: paroles de tortionnaires*, dir. J. Deniau (film, 18 March 2002).
[750] E.g. host of *Arrêt sur images* (TV, 7 January 2001).
[751] *Le bien commun* (radio, 1 June 2002).

Just as Franco-Algerian historical reconciliation in the metropole had not been a priority since Algerian Independence and in the Torture Debate, it was no priority for the French political elite on a bilateral level at the turn of the millennium. This had already become clear from the political reactions to Bouteflika's surprising appeal in the *Assemblée.* After his visit in June 2000, bilateral rapprochement had remained on the political agenda. In spring 2001, *Assemblée* president Forni, for instance, thought a strong symbolic act such as the handshake between Kohl and Mitterrand – a comparison he knew might come as a shock to some – was necessary to turn the page in the history of bilateral relations between both countries.[752] However, even the French political Left was concerned more with the present than the past. François Hollande, the socialist party's number two at the time, argued France should focus on present events in Algeria, not on what had happened between the two countries in the past.[753]

Even parties to the left thought historical reconciliation should take place below state level and saw French and Algerian historians at the forefront. They were to write a common history that would not put the blame exclusively on either one side. In the 2000-2002 public debate, Maxime Gremetz, member of the National Assembly for the PCF, pleaded for a collaboration between historians of French and Algerian origin.[754] Being asked whether he would favour official repentance, Minister of Defence Alain Richard (PS) reservedly expressed satisfaction with the regular cooperation between Algerian and French historians: "Now it's the work of historians. (…) We [the Ministry of Defence] now have Algerian and French historians working on this issue regularly (…)."[755]

In December 2001, it was reaffirmed that French political leaders prioritised reconciliation over apology, and a shared future over a contested past. When Chirac set foot in Algeria, rapprochement was driven not by the Algerian War, but by the urgent need to combat global terrorism. Thus, Franco-Algerian bilateral rapprochement was not equivalent to Franco-Algerian historical reconciliation. Looking at the Torture Debate in the metropole and the state visits at the beginning and towards the end of it, France clearly was not working towards Franco-Algerian, but Franco-French historical reconciliation. Whereas Bouteflika had

[752] *Mots croisés* (TV, 21 May 2001).
[753] *Inter soir 19h00* (radio, 2 May 2001).
[754] *Mots croisés* (TV, 21 May 2001).
[755] *L'invité* (radio, broad. France Info, 22 November 2000).

provoked the former coloniser in the Assembly, after 9/11 he positioned himself as a partner of the West in the fight against Islamic terrorism.

Fortieth anniversary of the 1962 Evian Agreement (18 March 2002): the commemoration of the end of the Algerian War

18 March 2002 marked the fortieth anniversary of the Evian peace agreement. Several films and books were (re)released on this occasion.[756] The upcoming anniversary set off a '*guerre des dates*', a dates war, on an official commemoration date for the war's end, waged between communities linked to the history of colonial Algeria.[757] On 22 January 2002 the National Assembly voted on a bill from the *Parti Radical de Gauche* (PRG) that proposed to turn 19 March into a "national day of remembrance and meditation in memory of the civilian and military victims of the Algerian war and fighting in Tunisia and Morocco". On 19 March 1962 at noon, the ceasefire concluded the day before had taken effect. The passage of the 2002 bill was a close call (278 votes in favour and 204 against) and would, as *Le Monde* predicted, only be "the provisional end of a debate that had demonstrated the difficulty of anchoring decolonisation in national memory".[758]

The year 2002 got off to a tumultuous start. In January 2002, on the eve of the vote on the 19 March bill, 490 generals who had served in Algeria between 1954 and 1962 signed the Manifesto of the *Association de soutien à l'armée française* (Asaf) – which sought to "rehabilitate the army's actions in Algeria in the face of widespread defamation".[759] The signatories protested against the image portrayed by Aussaresses, and were in a hurry to clear their names, stressing that not all of them had been torturers. The General's Manifesto was published as a preface in a new print run of the *Livre blanc de l'armée française en Algérie* (published on 21 January 2002).[760] The generals described the army's actions in Algeria as a

[756] E.g. *L'Ennemi Intime,* dir. P. Rotman (broad. France 3, 4 March 2002); *La Guerre d'Algérie* (dir. Y. Courrière and P. Monnier, 1972), *The Algerian War, 1954-1962* (dir. Peter Batty, 1984), and *La Guerre sans Nom* (dir. B. Tavernier and P. Rotman, 1993) were released on DVD; *France 5* aired an exceptional 36-hour documentary program on Algeria until December 2002; and on the occasion of the 40th anniversary, *France-Inter* broadcast live from Algiers.
[757] 'Guerre d'Algérie: l'impossible anniversaire', *Le Monde* (24 January 2002).
[758] *Ibid*.
[759] Quoted from the Manifesto in: 'Guerre d'Algérie: 500 généraux montent en ligne', *Le Libération* (23 January 2002). See also: Graham, 'The ties that blind forty years on'.
[760] The first edition of the White Book (December 2001) featured a prefacing Manifesto signed by 328 generals, while a later 2002 edition had 521 generals sign it.

"fight against all forms of torture, murder and ideologically motivated and methodically organised crimes". Signatories stressed that the military had fought "without any directives" and "with total efficiency, honour and dignity".[761] They recalled that their mission had been "not only military, but human and social".[762] In the Manifesto, France's "work of civilisation" was contrasted with the FLN's "crimes against humanity".

A few days later, on 25 January 2002, the court verdict in the case against Aussaresses was handed down. The three-day trial against him and his publishers before the Paris Criminal Court had begun on 26 November 2001. The civil parties had denounced the General's trivialisation of torture, his lack of remorse, and his 'complacency' and tendency towards self-congratulation. In a report on the judicial process, Michel Tubiana, president of the *Ligue des Droits de l'Homme*, had reminded the audience that it was forbidden to claim that torture had been just, as it was prohibited to revile Jews.[763] For the prosecutor, the offence had been Aussaresses' "cold and detached tone".[764] Aussaresses rejected accusations of bragging about his actions and denied having apologised for war crimes: he had simply told a "truth worth telling".[765] According to the General's council, it had been a political trial: by condemning the alleged apology, an attempt was made to denounce the war crimes themselves. This was a no-go, he had argued, for "[i]t is not for us to judge either side. Atrocities were committed on both sides".[766]

Eventually, at the start of the new year, Aussaresses was punished not for his actions, but for how he had spoken about them. The punishment was much less severe than the statutory maximum for 'apology of war crimes' of five years' imprisonment and a fine of 300,000 francs. The court fined Aussaresses 7,500 euros for "complicity in the defence of war crimes", half as much as the publishers, who had exploited his testimony to sell the book. Aussaresses was granted mitigating circumstances: the court saw an "elderly man", who had "[given] in to the temptation of the media" and had been "brought out of his silence". The publication of his book had been "poorly controlled by him, if not mapped out by others".[767]

---

[761] Quoted from the Manifesto in: 'Guerre d'Algérie: 500 généraux montent en ligne'.
[762] Quoted from the Manifesto in: 'Algérie – l'appel des 480', *Le Figaro* (21 January 2002). See also: 'Torture - Le "manifeste" des 490 généraux: vive la guerre d'Algérie', *L'Humanité* (28 January 2002); 'Torture - Quand la grande muette fait la sourde oreille', *L'Humanité* (25 January 2002); '490 généraux défendent "l'action de l'armée française"', *Le Monde* (24 January 2002).
[763] *20 heures le journal* (TV, 25 January 2002).
[764] '100 000 francs d'amende requis contre Aussaresses', *Le Figaro* (29 November 2001).
[765] 'La torture sur le banc des accusés', *Le Figaro* (28 November 2001); '"Rien qu'un soldat qui a fait son travail"', *Le Figaro* (26 November 2001).
[766] '100 000 francs d'amende requis contre Aussaresses', *Le Figaro* (29 November 2001).
[767] 'Le general Aussaresses condamné à 7 500 euros d'amende', *Le Figaro* (26 January 2002).

The debate on the 19 March bill thus took place in turbulent times. For supporters of the bill, it was straightforward: after the recognition of the 'war' in June 1999, the next logical thing was to find a date to mark its end.[768] The FNACA had been campaigning for the 19 March commemoration for years. The *Fédération*, close to the Left, could count on the support of PM Jospin's left-wing government.[769]

Opponents of the bill had a completely different take. The former political editor of *Le Figaro* emphasised that 19 March 1962 certainly was not "a moment of glory".[770] Indeed, most right-wing MPs and some veterans understood 19 March 1962 as a French political defeat. The fact that five years before, in 1997, a stamp had been issued in Algeria commemorating 19 March as 'victory day', was to prove their point. A UDF delegate joked one might as well "commemorate the 1940 armistice" and the RPR mayor of the 15th *arrondissement* believed that this date, which "corresponds to the surrender of the French army", was an "insult to our dead".[771] Harkis and Pieds-Noirs had their own reasons for rejecting 19 March as the date to mark the war's end. They pointed to the horrors they had suffered after that date.[772] March 19 had not been the end of the war, but the start of the massacres of Europeans and Harkis, so they argued. Pieds-Noirs strongly opposed to the commemoration date, calling it "a falsification of history."[773] A few days before the 40th anniversary, on 13 March 2002, eleven families of Pieds-Noirs who had disappeared or had been murdered after the Evian Accords, filed a complaint in Paris against X (a person unknown) for "crimes against humanity, arbitrary arrest and detention". The complaint was expected to be legally inadmissible, like the Harki case just six months earlier. The gesture was primarily symbolic and therapeutic.[774]

With the Right's return to power in May 2002 – when PM Jospin lost the presidential election against incumbent President Chirac and was succeeded by the new Republican PM Jean-Pierre Raffarin – the bill was shelved. Months later, on 5 December 2002, Chirac inaugurated the Quai Branly memorial, a *Mémorial National de la Guerre d'Algérie et des Combats du Maroc et de la Tunisie, 1952–1962*, close to the Eiffel Tower. With 5 December officially an annual

[768] 'Guerre d'Algérie: l'impossible anniversaire'; 'Guerre d'Algérie, bataille mémorielle', *Le Monde* (16 March 2012).
[769] 'Guerre d'Algérie: l'impossible anniversaire'.
[770] 'Anniversaire. Le 19 mars 1962, en application des accords d'Evian, un cessez-le-feu intervenait en Algérie après une guerre de plus de sept ans', *Le Figaro* (18 March 2002).
[771] 'Guerre d'Algérie: l'impossible anniversaire'; 'Conseil de Paris pose aujourd'hui de la première pierre du mémorial parisien; Polémique sur la commémoration des accords d'Evian', *Le Figaro* (19 March 2002).
[772] 'Guerre d'Algérie: l'impossible anniversaire'.
[773] 'Anniversaire. La réussite d'un Bourguignon né à Alger la Blanche', *Le Figaro* (19 March 2002).
[774] Brun, 'Quel(s) savoir(s)?', pp. 67-74.

commemoration day for French fallen in North Africa, the *guerre des dates* about the most suitable official remembrance date for the Algerian War revived.[775] Chirac then tasked a national commission with the 'impossible anniversary'.[776] The commission brought together a dozen veterans' organisations and reached a consensus about 5 December, which per government decree (September 2003) was turned into the national day of tribute to those who had died fighting for France during the Algerian War, in Morocco and Tunesia. Parliament's 19 March bill would finally be approved by the (then left-dominated) Senate 10 years later (November 2012) – after which there were two separate commemoration dates for the same event: 19 March and 5 December.[777]

The difficulty in agreeing on something as seemingly straightforward as a date for the end of the war was symptomatic of the partitioned and conflicting memory that characterised the Torture Debate. Every time political frameworks for commemoration were set up, fault lines were exposed again. In *Le Monde* in March 2002, Stora concluded that:

> [The] lack of consensus on a date means that it is difficult to reconcile [opposing memories] (…) Community strategies re-emerge and prevent the creation of a unified and pluralistic national memory.[778]

A CSA poll, conducted on behalf of *l'Humanité* and published on 18 March to mark the fortieth anniversary of the end of the Algerian war, demonstrated that after two years of intense public debate, the French were divided in two.[779] Half of the respondents (50%) thought French authorities should "solemnly condemn" the government of the time, and half (45%) did not.[780]

[775] A. Hargreaves (ed.), *Memory, Empire, and Postcolonialism. Legacies of French Colonialism* (Lanham, 2005), pp. 3-4.
[776] 'Guerre d'Algérie: l'impossible anniversaire'.
[777] While the preparatory work before the Senate suggested that 19 March was to replace 5 December as a commemorative day, this intention was not reflected in the Act of 6 December 2012.
[778] 'La mémoire retrouvée de la guerre d'Algérie?'
[779] The poll was conducted by phone in early March with a representative national sample of 1,000 people.
[780] 'Quarantieme anniversaire de la fin du conflit Algerien. Selon un sondage CSA-L'Humanité, les Français en condamnent la nature et les methodes', *L'Humanité* (19 March 2002). Generational and political divides emerged again: younger respondents (63% of 15-24 year olds) and PCF voters (66%) called for condemnation more than older respondents (33% of those 65+) and right-wing voters.

After the '*guerre des dates*', France's first post-imperial memory irruption would gradually come to an end. According to a majority of poll respondents (63%) it was talked about the Algerian war "just enough" (36%) or "too much" (27%). Just over a third (36%) believed that "not enough [was] said about the Algerian war".[781] The certain saturation that spoke from the poll was a likely reason why the Torture Debate would then slowly die out.

Conclusion

The interview with Louisette Ighilahriz triggered a post-imperial memory irruption in France about the scale, origin, purpose, and reprehensibility of, and the responsibility and 'repentance' for torture committed by (sections of) the French Army in Algeria between 1954 and 1962. It was a national dispute above all else.

The debate was strongly nation-centred. It was first and foremost an attempt to make sense of France's (wrong-)doings in Algeria more than to grasp what the Algerians had gone through – even if two sides of the same coin. It was mainly about reconciliation between the French. With the voices of a substantial number of people of Algerian descent in the ex-metropole still underrepresented; the way in which the French debate reverberated in Algeria being nothing that got a lot of attention; and with Franco-Algerian historical reconciliation not at all a priority, it was a predominantly Franco-French affair. Even though Harkis and Pieds-Noirs did make themselves heard and although their particular causes featured in the debate, their voices and stories were marginalised in a controversy that was primarily about French Torture in Algeria. Moreover, even if colonialism had been a European venture, the Torture Debate was a very national matter: there was remarkably little consideration of *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung* in other ex-metropoles or foreign participation in the debate.

If anything, the series of events that followed Ighilahriz's testimony testified to an extremely divided public memory. The French were divided along generational and political lines, with younger people and left-wing voters, -parties and -media more inclined to adopt a critical stance. *Le Monde, L'Humanité,* and the French Communist Party took the lead in a 'campaign' to encourage historical self-criticism, and the electorate of the parliamentary Left was most

[781] The "not enough" response was higher on the left (61%) and among younger respondents (56% of 18-24 year olds), while "too much" was higher on the right (62%) and among older respondents (46% of those 65+).

responsive. Furthermore, groups with different (post-)war realities split up the former metropole. The Harkis, Pieds-Noirs and French veterans all had their own stories of 1954-1962 and after, and (had) sought recognition of their particular suffering. There was a sense of competition not only between different groups with an Algerian past, but also with Holocaust victims. The Harkis and their offspring wanted what the Jews had successfully obtained.[782]

If the Torture Debate (re)exposed the fault lines of the Algerian war, and between generations and both ends of the political spectrum, the discursive means through which empire was debated – namely through moral comparisons – unlikely helped to appease these. Assessing the moral reprehensibility of French torture, participants in the debate drew comparisons to atrocities committed by the FLN; by violent others (within and outside of a colonial context); and by Vichy France – and that to opposite ends. Some of these narratives went way back, all the way to the Algerian War itself.

Exonerating voices reminded their audience that colonialism had been a European venture, of which excessive violence and torture would have been an inherent feature; and emphasised that also outside of a colonial setting, the French had not been the only ones who committed evil, for '(guerrilla) war is always dirty' and 'torture is of all times' and places. They stressed atrocities by both sides; were convinced that French torture had been inevitable or understandable in the face of FLN terrorism; or typical for or at least 'common' in subversive colonial wars.

Incriminating voices compared French soldiers in Algeria to the Gestapo – notorious for its brutal methods of torture and investigation to force statements during interrogations – or occasionally to Nazi Germany in more generic wording; wondered how France, a nation of resistance fighters, could have committed torture; and from time to time compared the French occupation and liberation of Algeria to the German occupation and liberation of France. They contended that systematic torture by the French had not convincingly been a reaction to Algerian violence; that torture had not been the only way to obtain counter-intelligence; and that torture had not been practised to gather information, but out of perversion. They argued that the suffering of the French could not be paralleled with the much greater losses on the Algerian side; and stressed that the one side had sought to maintain colonised territory, whilst the other had fought for its independence.

[782] Enjelvin and Korac-Kakabadse, 'France and the Memories of "Others"', pp. 162-163.

Those who drew upon the above-mentioned exonerating comparisons considered French torture in Algeria not reprehensible but understandable and were hesitant about doing any more memory work. Those in favour of speeding up the process of working through were occasionally concerned with how the French approach (did not) fit in with international norms on dealing with injustice; and with how France's present or aspired role in the international community was (in)compatible with the French colonial record and its poor way of dealing with it. Some hoped memory work done in France would be exported to and help break the silence in authoritarian-run Algeria. It was mainly the memory work done on Vichy, however, they brought up. The status quo on the Algerian past was found to be unsatisfactory compared to the state of affairs regarding Vichy. They criticised amnesty laws adopted after the Evian Agreement, taking the Nuremberg trials as a positive example; and sought to capitalise on the progress made in coming to terms with Vichy – that is the opening of archives containing material on the Second World War, and especially Chirac's 1995 apology for the French treatment of Jews – to now finally make headway with empire.

The Torture Debate did not sort things out. On several occasions, France's highest political authorities were asked to condemn or repent French torture of Algerians between 1954 and 1962. President Bouteflika requested so in his address to the *Assemblée Nationale* (June 2000), *Les Douze* in their Manifesto (October 2000), the French communist party with its request for a parliamentary commission to investigate acts of torture in the Algerian war (November 2000), and a slight majority of the French population through polls (May 2001 and March 2002). Small steps towards a condemnation of events and a more collective reading of the past were taken, most importantly the political conviction of and sanctions against Aussaresses (June 2001) and the first *Journée nationale d'*hommage *aux* Harkis (September 2001). However, calls for and gestures of condemnation invariably met with firm resistance (as was illustrated by the polemic surrounding the installation of the plaque on the occasion of the 40th anniversary of the Paris massacre in October 2001); historical reconciliation was not prioritised (see the first state visit of a French President to Algeria since the end of the Cold War in December 2001); and attempts at common commemoration encountered strong opposition (as with the fortieth anniversary of the Evian Agreement in March 2002).

The Torture Debate was an intriguing moment, a turning point really, in the long genealogy of French empire memory. Never before had there been a public controversy on this scale and of this intensity, and never after would this 'dark past' be shrouded in near-complete silence again (see *Graphs 2.1* and *2.2*). It was the first post-imperial memory irruption in the history of the Fifth Republic, and it would certainly not be the last. The Torture Debate consolidated the momentum created by Papon's double-trial and constituted the beginning of an obsession with the Algerian Independence War. With the first post-imperial memory irruption, 'amnesia' had been overcome, and from then on, memory 'accelerated'.[783] After the Torture Debate, the Algerian War would stir up controversy repeatedly, with only short intervals of relative quiet in between.

After the 2003 *Année de l'Algérie* – with more than two thousand cultural events, prompted by the two Heads of State after the fortieth anniversary of Evian Accords, and intended to mark Franco-Algerian friendship and to take the edge off the controversial debates on the Algerian question in France – it would not take long before the country was plunged into turmoil again.[784] In the year 2005, the colonial question came back full force. After the passage of a law in 2004 that banned the wearing of religious paraphernalia in public schools, which targeted Muslim pupils wearing headscarves, the militant group *Mouvement des Indigènes de la République* was formed in January 2005, which published a manifesto stating that people of colonial descent were 'relegated to the margins of society', their treatment being 'an extension of colonial policies', and that 'decolonising the Republic was still a priority'.[785] Shortly after, the 23 February 2005 law that mandated that school curricula conferred the 'positive role' of French colonialism in North Africa caused a massive outcry, not least in the academic world. There were months of intense rioting in the *banlieues* after two teenagers of Algerian descent died hiding from the police in a Parisian suburb in October. It led to one of the most significant episodes of civil disorder in France since May 1968, described in the national press as 'social and colonial crisis'. Parallels were drawn with 17 October 1961. At the peak of the 2005 debate, three French historians published a book tellingly titled *La fracture coloniale.*[786]

[783] B. Stora, '1999-2003, guerre d'Algérie, les accélérations de la mémoire', in M. Harbi and B. Stora (eds.), *La Guerre d'Algérie: 1954-2004, la fin de l'amnésie* (Paris, 2004), pp. 501-514.
[784] Enjelvin and Korac-Kakabadse, 'France and the Memories of "Others"', pp. 170-71.
[785] '"Nous sommes les Indigènes de la République!" Appel pour des Assises de l'anti-colonialisme post-colonial' (19 January 2005), https://histoirecoloniale.net/nous-sommes-les-indigenes-de-la/ (12 May 2025).
[786] P. Blanchard, N. Bancel, S. Lemaire (eds.), *La fracture coloniale: La société française au prisme de l'héritage colonial* (Paris, 2005).

In the end, during his presidency (1995-2007), Chirac refused to officially recognise state responsibility for colonial violence committed – in sharp contrast with his apology for France's treatment of the Jews. Before the end of his term in office, *Le Monde* concluded that the '*président du devoir de memoire'* – who had committed to France's 'duty to remember' – had failed when it came to Algeria.[787] His attempts at incorporating the legacy of the Algerian War into France's memorial culture only intensified competition between various memory-carrying groups.[788] He struggled to reconcile or transcend their competing versions of the past, and instead offered piecemeal concessions to different lobbies at different times.[789] In 2007, Stora would publish a book entitled *La guerre des mémoires*, about the conflicting accounts that effectively recreated divisions and disputes inherited from the Algerian Independence War.[790]

There was still a long way to go to overcome the memorial divides that threatened social cohesion. Two decades after the Torture Debate, President Macron describes an urgent need to "unite the mosaic of French destinies with Algeria" and to soothe "diverse and contradictory memories".[791] Throughout his presidency, he sought to "calm rival memories" and to establish a "peaceful, shared, common memory", with "parity between all wounded memories".[792] In the summer of 2020, the Elysée commissioned a report from a renowned historian, Benjamin Stora, to promote "reconciliation between the French and Algerian people", also in France. The Stora Report (January 2021) recommended "building bridges" on sensitive issues. In November 2023, a commission composed of five French and five Algerian historians – announced by the two Heads of State and established in August 2022 – first met to study the period from the beginning of French colonisation to the end of the War on Independence (1830-1962) together.

[787] 'Chirac, le président du devoir de mémoire', *Le Monde* (12 March 2007). At the turn of the millennium, the phrase 'devoir de mémoire' – initially associated with Holocaust remembrance and popularised in the mid-1990s – was applied to France's colonial past.
[788] Jansen, 'Politics of Remembrance', p. 288.
[789] Assaoui and Eldrige, *Algeria Revisited*, pp. 215-216.
[790] B. Stora, *La guerre des mémoires – La France face à son passé colonial. Entretiens avec Thierry Leclère* (Paris, 2007).
[791] 'Emmanuel Macron: "Je ne demande pas pardon à l'Algérie et j'explique pourquoi"', *Le Point* (11 January 2023).
[792] 'Emmanuel Macron et l'Algérie, une longue histoire contrariée', *Le Monde* (25 August 2020).

III. The German centenary debate (2004)

The 100th anniversary of the start of the Herero and Nama genocide (1904-1908) in its former colony *Deutsch-Südwestafrika* triggered unprecedented media attention in Germany in 2004. Only once before since Wilhelmine Germany had lost its colonies in 1919 had German colonial history been the subject of self-critical public discussion—and that was as long ago as 1966. With the end of the centenary year, the colonial past largely disappeared again from the public and political agenda. This chapter is about the 2004 post-imperial memory irruption.

The German flag had been raised in South-West Africa in 1884. On 12 January 1904, the Herero rose against German colonial rule: the nomadic tribe was threatened in its existence after German settlers had managed to dispossess them of 80 per cent of their territory. Some seven months later, on 11 August 1904, the Herero were encircled by German soldiers around the Waterberg. When the Herero chief decided to flee with his people after the decisive Battle of Waterberg to bordering Bechuanaland, the general of the *Schutztruppe* Von Trotha had the waterless desert through which they sought to flee sealed off. He ordered every Herero within the German border be shot. Von Trotha's order of October 1904 read in full:

> I, the great general of the German soldiers, send this letter to the Herero people. The Herero are no longer German subjects. They have murdered and stolen (...) The Herero people must (...) leave the country. If they don't, I will force them to do so with [a big cannon]. Within the German border, every Herero with or without a rifle, with or without cattle, will be shot; I will no longer take in women and children, drive them back to their people or have them shot.

As German public opinion increasingly protested against this annihilation policy, Von Trotha had to rescind his now infamous *Vertreibungs*- and *Schießbefehl* (expulsion and shooting order) in December 1904. Surviving Herero were put then into deadly concentration camps together with the Nama – who had also risen up against the German colonists in October 1904 –, from which they were released in 1908. By then, more than two-thirds of the Herero (i.e. 60,000 people) and about half of the Nama (i.e. 10,000) were killed.

The Treaty of Versailles (1919) meant the end of the German Empire: its colonial possessions were annexed. Germany would never experience noteworthy postcolonial migration because its colonies were handed over to and controlled by Britain, France, Belgium and South Africa for (more) than half a century.[793] The League of Nations mandated GSWA to South Africa, which would control the territory until Namibian independence in 1990. It would take almost half a century before the first self-critical public debate about empire would occur in (West) Germany. In the early Weimar Republic and the *Third Reich*, dissatisfaction with the Versailles Treaty and its colonial provisions was high and colonial revisionism flourished.

After the Second World War, East Germany invented itself as anti-colonial. In West Germany, the political system allowed for heterogeneous approaches to empire: some built on pre-war empire fantasies, others rejected such myths.[794] Initially, with a large part of the globe still colonised, Germans could not possibly forget about (their) empire.[795] Later, however, decolonisation struggles in other empires in the 1950s and 1960s distracted from Germany's role in the European colonial venture.[796] The colonial past played a marginal role in West German politics for a long time, partly because of the lack of critical impetuses. Unlike other former European colonial powers, West Germany was not forced to critically rethink empire because of decolonisation struggles in the 1960s and 1970s.[797] Without an immigrant community from the former colonies, there were also no influential groups in Germany that demanded or sparked a confrontation with the past.[798] Besides, silence on empire was induced by the focus of memory politics on the Holocaust, and by the Cold War. All taken together led to the idea that colonialism was something others had to deal with.[799]

---

[793] M. Albrecht, 'Postcolonialism and Migration into Germany's Colonial Past', *German Life and Letters*, 65/3 (2012), p. 364; B. Schilling, 'Material Memories of Empire: Coming to terms with German Colonialism', in K. Mühlhahn (ed), *The Cultural Legacy of German Colonial Rule* (Berlin, 2017), p. 24.
[794] J. Verber, 'Remembering at a Time of Forgetting. Weimar Colonialism in West Germany', in F. Krobb and E. Martin (eds.), *Weimar Colonialism. Discourses and Legacies of Post-Imperialism in Germany after 1918* (Bielefeld, 2014), pp. 226-227; F.F. Müller, 'Kolonien unter der Peitsche' (Berlin, 1962) referenced in: B. Schilling, 'The Empty Plinth, 1968-1990', in *Postcolonial Germany*, pp. 144-145.
[795] M. Albrecht, '(Post)-Colonial Amnesia? German Debates on Colonialism and Decolonization in the Post-War Era', in Perraudin and Zimmerer, *German Colonalism*, p. 187.
[796] R. Kössler and H. Melber, 'Nicht vergeben, nicht vergessen - Deutscher Kolonialismus I', *iz3w*, 275 (2004), pp. 22-26, https://www.freiburg-postkolonial.de/Seiten/Melber-Koessler-Kontinuitaeten2004.htm (12 May 2025).
[797] Y. Robel, *Verhandlungssache Genozid. Zur Dynamik geschichtspolitischer Deutungskämpfe* (München, 2013), p. 263.
[798] S. Conrad, *German Colonialism. A Short History* (Cambridge, 2012), p. 10; Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, p. 203; Robel, *Verhandlungssache Genozid*, p. 264.
[799] Robel, *Verhandlungssache Genozid*. pp. 264-265.

Critical public debate was provoked for the first time in 1966, in West Germany. A strong public reaction followed the deliberately polemical documentary movie *Heia Safari* (1966), which was highly critical of German colonial history. The public responses that were triggered were strong yet conflicting.[800] The documentary maker was threatened with death, and the television station received hundreds of mostly angry viewers' letters. The broadcast agency decided to follow up with a television discussion forum for viewers and academics, providing an outlet for the ensuing turmoil. Just around the time when *Heia Safari* was broadcast, student protests began, which also contributed to taking down empire myths. Students toppled a monument in front of Hamburg University that glorified the prominent German conqueror Hermann von Wissmann (first in 1967 and then in 1968, after it had been put up again).

After that, nearly four decades would pass without self-critical public debate on empire. The year 1968 was a turning point after which empire ceased to be a stand-alone topic of public debate in West Germany. If at all, empire was remembered together with the Shoah. The Holocaust came to occupy centre stage and overshadowed empire.[801] The 1970s and 1980s were a time of flickering, increasingly localised and more superficial confrontation with the nation's imperial past. Memory of the German empire ceased to shape the collective national understanding of the past, was non-existent in the politicial realm and insignificant in the sociocultural sphere.[802]

The 'Namibia question', the liberation struggle of the *South-West Africa People's Organisation* (SWAPO) against the South-African Apartheid regime, was high on the political agenda of both Germanies, but did not evoke memories of German colonialism. It was about global politics instead: since the 1960s, East Germany had openly supported the SWAPO (which was considered communist), and by the 1980s, almost every party-affiliated foundation in West Germany had ties to Namibia, supporting opposite causes (Namibia's independence and the continuation of the South African apartheid's regime). However, the Namibia question, the work of East and West German historians, and local student activism and street protest after 1968 could not prevent Germany's colonial past from receding from public memory. [803]

In the remembrance year 1984, the centenary of the proclamation of GSWA, there was debate between colonial revisionists and supporters of the SWAPO liberation struggle, but

[800] Schilling, 'The Empty Plinth', p. 146.
[801] Kössler and Melber, 'Nicht vergeben, nicht vergessen', pp. 22-26.
[802] Schilling, 'The Empty Plinth', pp. 141-142.
[803] *Ibid*., pp. 135, 148-151.

media presence did not increase. Despite critical local iconoclasm and street-renaming campaigns before and after 1984, the broader public opinion still thought of (German) colonialism as a sometimes unjust, but ultimately necessary form of progress for indigenous peoples.[804]

In anticipation of Namibia's independence and only months before the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, the West German *Bundestag* committed in February 1989 to a 'special historical responsibility' for the country, which amounted to large sums of development aid. It did so in the Cold War context: both East and West Germany gave gifts to former German colonies at independence.[805] The year 1990 was a new beginning for both former colony and former coloniser. Two big constitutional moments happened shortly after one another: In March of that year, Namibia finally attained independence, and in October, East and West Germany were reunited. Questions raised in parliament when 'historical responsibility' was decided on, about the genocidal nature of the 1904-1908 events and the consequences of this classification, were nevertheless not the subject of public debate in the years after.[806] After reunification, politicians and media acknowledged the undeniable importance of anti-Semitism in their national history, but the mainstream attitude continued to be that colonial racism was a burden other European states had to carry.[807] This had everything to do with how the German-Herero war was (not) remembered in Namibia – the Herero were a minority within the population, 1904-1908 could not easily be fitted into the nation's founding liberation narrative; and there was an absence of pressure exerted on the former metropole out of fear of being cut off from development aid.[808]

[804] M. Albrecht, 'Kolonialphantasien im postkolonialen Deutschland. Zur kritischen Revision einer Denkfigur der deutschen Postkolonialen Studien', in G. Dürbeck and A. Dunkel (eds.), *Postkoloniale Germanistik. Bestandsaufnahme, theoretische Perspektiven, Lektüren* (Bielefeld, 2014), pp. 418-420; C. Bürger, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte(n). Der Genozid in Namibia und die Geschichtsschreibung der DDR und BRD* (Bielefeld, 2017), pp. 263-264; Kössler and Melber, 'Nicht vergeben, nicht vergessen', pp. 22-26.
[805] Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, pp. 196-197.
[806] L. Müller, '"We Need to Get Away from a Culture of Denial"? The German-Herero War in Politics and Textbooks', *Journal of Educational Media, Memory & Society*, 5/1 (2013), pp. 54-55.
[807] A. Eckert, 'Germany and Africa in the late Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries: an entangled History?', in H. Haupt and J. Kocka (eds.), *Comparative and Transnational History. Central European Approaches and new Perspectives* (Oxford, 2009), p. 227; A. Eckert, 'The First Postcolonial Nation in Europe? The End of the German Empire', in Thomas and Thompson, *The Oxford Handbook,* p. 104.
[808] Müller, 'The German-Herero War in Politics and Textbooks', pp. 54-55.

After the turn of the century, a 'public renaissance of empire' in Germany began in a small way.[809] In 2001, a wider German public was faced with the nation's colonial history when Herero representatives sued the German Federal government and several complicit German companies in a US Federal Court for material compensation for atrocities committed under colonial rule for a total of four billion dollars.[810] The Herero class action certainly had the potential to generate major public debate, but ultimately did not: 9/11 diverted media attention, and an international court case ultimately did not take place.[811] Finally, in the 2004 centenary year, the colonial past gained public prominence like never before.[812]

Like in the Netherlands, the momentum of an anniversary year finally set things in motion. Dirk Göttsche identifies the centenary of the start of the Herero War as a catalyst for the rise of post-colonial memory.[813] Winfried Speitkamp also attributes the comeback of empire memory in the public domain to the centenary, amongst other things.[814] However, it was not the 2004 anniversary alone that explained why the 100th anniversary, in contrast to the 90th anniversary in 1994, caught unprecedented attention. Most likely, empire had not been as relevant to the German public back then because the Herero had not put as much pressure in the mid-1990s, when the Federal Republic, only few years post-reunification, was focused on domestic and European issues; whereas post-2000, when the Herero also filed their lawsuit, global north-south relations were more in focus.

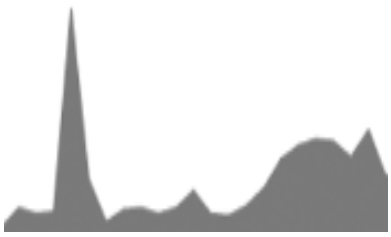
Like in turn-of-the-century debates in neighbouring countries, the centenary year was felt to be momentous and was believed to bear much potential. At the start of the centenary, the left-leaning weekly news magazine *Der Spiegel* wrote: "100 years [later], the Germans, it seems, will no longer be able to avoid their colonial past."[815] Contemporaries perceived 2004 as a "chance to remember and to learn for the future".[816]

---

[809] W. Speitkamp, 'Kolonialdenkmäler', in J. Zimmerer, *Kein Platz an der Sonne. Erinnerungsorte der deutschen Kolonialgeschichte* (Frankfurt, 2013), p. 420. See also: J. Zeller, 'Decolonisation of the Public Space? (Post)Colonial Culture of Remembrance in Germany', in Lindner et al., *Hybrid Cultures*, p. 72.
[810] S. Rausch, ''We're equal to the Jews who were destroyed. […] Compensate us, too'. An affective (un)remembering of Germany's colonial past?', *Memory Studies*, 15/2 (2022), p. 418.
[811] K. de Wolff, *Post-/koloniale Erinnerungsdiskurse in der Medienkulture: Der Genozid an den Ovaherero und Nama in der deutschsprachigen Presse von 2001 bis 2016* (Bielefeld, 2021), pp. 241-248.
[812] D. Göttsche, *Remembering Africa. The Rediscovery of Colonialism in Contemporary German Literature* (New York, 2013), pp. 7-8.
[813] D. Göttsche, 'Post-imperialism, Postcolonialism and beyond: Towards a Periodization of cultural Discourse about colonial Legacies', *Journal of European Studies*, 47/2 (2017), pp. 114, 119.
[814] Speitkamp, 'Kolonialdenkmäler', p. 420.
[815] 'Die Peitsche des Bändigers', *Der Spiegel* (12 January 2004).
[816] E.g. Hans Lessing (theologian) in: 'Erinnern und für die Zukunft lernen. 100 Jahre Herero-Aufstand und der deutsche Kolonialismus', dir. *Camino* (radio, broad. HR, 11 January 2004).

For most of 2003, it still seemed as if the Herero War was completely forgotten.[817] On the occasion of the centenary then, there was a wide range of exhibitions; conferences, symposia, lecture series, discussions and seminars (where actors from academia, politics and the churches sat together to discuss the past); civil society initiatives and ceremonies (organised by human rights and international solidarity groups) across Germany. They were small-scale, local, uncoordinated, and directed mainly at a small, dedicated audience.[818] Moreover, German Empire gained unprecedented media attention in 2004 – even if on a different scale than in the Netherlands (1994-1995) and France (2000-2002).[819] Heightened media attention largely coincided with the anniversary year: it peaked after its start and started to wane as soon as it had ended (see *Graph 3.1*). Kathryn Jones metaphorically concludes: "Debates were given a new dynamic and the longstanding veil of amnesia covering German colonial legacies seemed to have been partly lifted, even if perhaps only temporarily."[820]

Graph 3.1. Newspaper coverage 'Herero' (2000-2023) (database NexisUni)[821]



The anniversary year 2005, of the start of the Maji Maji War (1905-1907) in German East Africa (Tanzania), did not nearly trigger the same response. In this simultaneous colonial war, an estimated 250.000 people had died, about a third of the population, the majority of them by famine. The German colonial rulers had sought to break indigenous resistance by destroying

[817] 'Völkermord an den Herero? Deutsche kolonialpolitik und ihre Nachgeschichte', dir. *SWR 2 Forum* (radio, broad. SWR, 18 February 2003).
[818] J. Zeller, 'Genozid und Gedenken: Ein dokumentarischer Uberblick', in H. Melber (ed.), *Genozid und Gedenken: Namibisch-deutsche Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Frankfurt am Main, 2005), pp. 163-188; R. Kössler, 'La Fin d'une Amnésie? L'Allemagne et son Passé colonial depuis 2004', *Politique africaine*, 2006/2 (2006), pp. 50-66; Jones, 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung à la française', p. 213; Robel, *Verhandlungssache Genozid,* pp. 265-266. Due to its limited scope, this chapter focuses on the public media debate.
[819] Göttsche, *Remembering Africa,* pp. 7-8.
[820] Jones, 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung à la française', p. 213.
[821] The graph shows the distribution of nearly 700 newspaper articles (from *Die Welt*, *Die Tageszeitung*, and *Der Spiegel*) containing the term 'Herero*' (2000-2023) in NexisUni, which includes only a selection of German newspapers. NexisUni lacks access to the *SZ* and *FAZ*, and *Die Zeit*'s coverage is limited to 2008-present. NexisUni and other digital databases don't support long-term graphs (1945–present). Archives of *FAZ, SZ*, and *Die Welt* (dailies that began to publish shortly after World War II) are available only from 1990 onward.

their food base.[822] While the genocide of the Herero and Nama occupied a prominent position in post-colonial memory, other events, such as the almost simultaneous Maji Maji War, were hardly remembered.[823] On the historical date 20 July 2005, the day the uprising had begun 100 years previously, radio network *Deutsche Welle* (DW) concluded that the Maji Maji uprising had aroused little public interest, and was discussed only by a very small group of experts.[824] The Maji-Maji War possibly barely attracted attention because it had been mainly Askari, that is Africans (mercenaries on the side of the Germans) who fought against Africans. Also, it was not until 2017 that Tanzanian legislators urged their government to seek compensation from Germany.

The post-imperial memory irruption thus dealt with the Herero War, and was largely limited to the 2004 anniversary year. In turn-of-the-century Germany, the Herero and Nama genocide was perceived as the most brutal period in German colonial history. In contributions to the 2004 debate, it was described as "the most horrible" or "cruellest" German colonial war; or "the darkest chapter of German colonial history".[825]

Historical dates and focal points of the 2004 debate – in which historians, *Bundesregierung* and *Bundestag*, human rights activists, and figures from the cultural and creative sectors engaged with the past, and in which the voices of 'colonial tradition associations', the Herero, and the German settler community in Namibia were also heard — were the 100th anniversary of the beginning of the war (12 January 2004), and the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Waterberg (11 and 12 August). The irrefutable milestone of the centenary year was the commemoration ceremony in Okakarara on 14 August 2004, near the Waterberg, and the speech Germany's Federal Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development, Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul (Social Democratic Party, SPD), would deliver on that occasion.[826] She would be the first federal government member ever to travel to Namibia to attend the commemoration.

---

[822] E.g. F. Becker and J. Beez, *Der Maji-Maji-Krieg in Deutsch-Ostafrika: 1905-1907* (Berlin, 2005).
[823] J. Zeller, 'Das schwierige Erinnern an die koloniale Vergangenheit', in H. Gründer and H. Hiery (eds.), *Die Deutschen und Ihre Kolonien* (Berlin, 2017), p. 305.
[824] Franz Ansprenger (historian) in: *Weltspiegel Afrika* (radio, broad. DW, 20 July 2005).
[825] E.g.: 'Die Weißen zehrten das Glück auf und brachten Krieg', dir. *Studiozeit - Kulturelles Feature* (radio, broad. Deutschlandfunk, 16 January 2004); *IQ* (radio, broad. BR, 8 January 2004); 'Der Herero-Aufstand', dir. *Dok 5 - Das Feature* (radio, broad. WDR, 11 January 2004); *Evangelische Perspektiven* (radio, broad. BR, 14 July 2004); '100 Jahre Hereroaufstand und noch keine Entschuldigung', dir. Deutschlandradio (radio, broad. Deutschlandradio, 11 January 2004); '100 Jahre nach Niederschlagung des Herero-Aufstandes – Entwicklungshilfeministerin Wieczorek-Zeul kommt nach', dir. *Informationen am Morgen* (radio, broad. Deutschlandfunk, 12 August 2004).
[826] Jones, 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung à la française', p. 213; L. Jamfa, 'Germany Faces Colonial History in Namibia: A Very Ambiguous "I Am Sorry"', in M. Gibney et al. (eds.), *The Age of Apology. Facing Up to the Past* (Philadelphia, 2008), pp. 202-215.

There and then Wieczorek-Zeul, addressing the Herero as representative of the German government and parliament, did something no one had seen coming: she asked the Herero for forgiveness for the crimes of the German colonial rulers. It came as a complete surprise to both Namibians and Germans.

The process of acknowledging the 1904-1908 genocide came to a head during the centenary.[827] Why was a German apology in Okakarara ruled out? And how come Wieczorek-Zeul apologised there and then, against all odds? This chapter will unpack this intriguing moment by unfolding several key events throughout the centenary debate, in the run-up to the commemoration ceremony.

The Herero lawsuit (September 2001): no different from victims of Nazi Germany

Shortly before the turn of the century, the Herero saw themselves forced to take legal action. The Namibian state had not backed up their demands for recognition and reparation since the 1990s.[828] After the International Court of Justice had rejected a claim for material compensation in 1998 (because only states were admissible as plaintiffs), the *Herero People's Reparations Corporation* filed a complaint in the district court of Colombia – where the Alien Tort Claims Act of 1789 allowed for such civil action to be brought by plaintiffs from foreign countries in respect of violations occurring outside the United States – in September 2001.[829] The Herero sued the *Bundesrepublik* (as the legal successor to the Wilhelmine Empire) and several German companies in a US Federal Court, for (aiding and abetting) genocide and other colonial atrocities.

Kuaima Riruako, paramount chief of the Herero since 1978, announced the lawsuit in the run-up to the *UN World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance* in Durban (31 August – 7 September 2001), in which he also participated. The Durban conference linked colonial legacies with contemporary antiracism struggles, and global civil society activism impacted the re-emergence of colonial history in the German domestic public sphere.

[827] J. Garsha, 'Expanding Vergangenheitsbewältigung? German Repatriation of Colonial Artefacts and Human Remains', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 22/1 (2020), p. 46.
[828] Müller, 'The German-Herero War in Politics and Textbooks', p. 55
[829] Rausch, 'We're equal to the Jews', p. 418.

Riruako himself connected the Herero genocide, African liberation political activism in the 1960s and 1970s, and the emerging international global justice agenda of the late 1990s and early 2000s. He had been born in a Herero reserve in the Omaheke Region. His grandfather had been a veteran of the 1904 war. Riruako had joined the National Unity Democratic Organisation (NUDO) in 1964 and had gone into exile, searching for a safe haven in different African countries, from which he actively supported the Namibian liberation struggle.[830] With the aid of the UN Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees he had got to New York in 1969, where he earned a BA in political science and philosophy at the City University of New York. After his return to Namibia in 1977, he had been elected Paramount Chief of the Herero and chairman of NUDO (1978). Riruako had then become the figurehead of the fight for reparations against German colonial atrocities.

The Herero plaintiffs were inspired by the successful Holocaust restitution movement in the 1990s, which had prompted claims from other victims of Nazi domination.[831] The Herero lawsuit was triggered by the class action of forced labourers during the Nazi era.[832] In 1998, on behalf of workers forced into *Zwangsarbeit*, American and German lawyers had sued big German industrial companies that had been involved in, and had profited from businesses in Hitler's Germany. Legal and political pressure from the United States had pushed the German *Bundestag* to finally include forced labourers in German compensation law. In August 2000, the law establishing the foundation *Erinnerung, Verantwortung und Zukunft (Remembrance, Responsibility and Future)* had come into force. This body had got billions of D-marks to distribute among *Zwangsarbeiter* and survivors of the Nazi regime. The German press noticed how one thing led to another: the successful lawsuit by former Nazi forced labourers made the African call for reparations louder and prompted the chief to go to court as well.[833]

[830] V. Tonchi et al., *Historical Dictionary of Namibia* (Plymouth, 2012), p. 370.
[831] D. Schaller, '"Every Herero Will Be Shot". Genocide, Concentration Camps, and Slave Labor in German South-West Africa", in R. Lemarchand, *Forgotten Genocides: Oblivion, Denial, and Memory* (Pennsylvania, 2011), p. 53.
[832] E.g.: 'Keine Entschuldigung, keine Entschädigung', *TAZ* (10 October 2004); '100 Jahre Hereroaufstand und noch keine Entschuldigung' (radio, broad. Deutschlandradio, 11 January 2004); *Dok 5 - Das Feature* (radio, 11 January 2004); '"Vernichtung des Hererovolkes". Völkermord aber nicht Vorläufer des Holocaust', *Die Welt* (14 January 2004); 'Für Afrikaner hat die Afrika-Beauftragte keine Zeit', *FAZ* (31 July 2004); 'Herero-Aufstand in Deutsch-Südwest-Afrika vor 100 Jahren', dir. DW (radio, broad. DW, 11 August 2004); 'Eine frage der politischen ethik', *TAZ* (12 August 2004).
[833] See e.g. 'Tilgung der Altschulden der Kolonialgeschichte', *FAZ* (6 October 2004); 'Das "düstere Kapitel"', *FAZ* (12 January 2004); 'Völkermord unter Kaiser Wilhelms Kolonialregierung. Die Herero hoffen auf deutsche Milliarden', *SZ* (24 January 2003).

The Herero lawsuit was not only triggered by, but also modelled after the *Zwangsarbeiter* case. The legal foundation and indictment were identical. Both were based on the Alien Tort Claims Act, and in both cases, the accused were charged with genocide.[834] According to the Herero plaintiffs, the defendants had "anticipated the unspeakable horror of the Holocaust [with ice-cold precision]" just a few decades ahead, and had used "methods of extermination, destruction of ethnic culture and its social organisation, concentration camps, forced labour, medical experimentation and exploitation of women and children".[835] A historical justification, rather than a legal one, was thus put forward, as historian Gesine Krüger concluded on the radio.[836]

In 2004, key figures in the Herero community continued to compare their cause with that of the Jewish people, and their voices echoed in the German media. Riruako himself was quoted at the beginning of the anniversary year, saying: "The Germans have dealt with the Holocaust of Jews, Sinti and Roma, now they will also have to deal with the genocide of the Herero."[837] He highlighted the discrepancy: while Germany had acknowledged the Jewish genocide, offered apologies and paid compensation, it treated the Herero differently.[838] Professor Mburumba Kerina, coiner of the name Namibia, co-founder of the SWAPO and intellectual father of the complaint, was quoted in the centre-right daily FAZ, asking: "If it was possible to set up foundations for Jews, why not for us?"[839] After all, his people and the Jews in the *Third Reich* had suffered the same fate.[840] When the German Federal Government argued that they were not entitled to compensation because the Geneva Conventions dated from after the Second World War, the Herero countered that the same applied to Jewish victims of National Socialism, who had nevertheless been compensated.[841]
Some explained the disparate treatment with racism. Senior church councillor Wilfried Neuse contended:

[834] 'Die Qualen eines vergessenen Volkes', *SZ* (10 January 2004); 'Für Afrikaner hat die Afrika-Beauftragte keine Zeit'.
[835] 'Die Qualen eines vergessenen Volkes'.
[836] *SWR 2 Forum* (radio, 18 February 2003).
[837] 'Die Peitsche des Bändigers'.
[838] E.g. Riruako in: *Tod in der Wüste. Kaiser Wilhelms Krieg in Deutsch- Südwestafrika,* dir. P. Dreckmann (film, broad. MDR, 12 August 2004).
[839] 'Die Überlebenden', *SZ* (30 October 2003).
[840] *Ibid*.
[841] *Studiozeit* (radio, 16 January 2004).

> It is a renewed form of racism and cynicism when [about 100 billion euros in compensation have been made available for] the victims and the descendants of the Shoah, but in the case of black people we think: "that would not be necessary".[842]

Listeners of the *Deutsche Welle* also heard politician and speaker of the Herero Asser Mbai suggest they were discriminated against because of their skin colour.[843] In a radio broadcast shortly before the August commemoration, public prosecutor Uschi Eid denied that the apologies made to European Jews, but not to the Herero and Nama, had anything to do with a lack of respect for Africa. She believed it was just that "this genocide" had simply been suppressed in German collective memory.[844]

The Herero thus tried to gain sympathy for their cause by holding Germany up to the standards it had set for itself in dealing with the Holocaust.[845] In turn-of-the-century Germany, Riruako's moral historical appeal struck a nerve indeed. To the great annoyance of an editor of Namibia's *Allgemeine Zeitung*, the paramount chief knew how to "handle the Germans" and to exert pressure on them.[846] In the *Bundesrepublik*, *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung* had great discursive and socio-political currency – at least regarding the totalitarian and dictatorial Nazi- and DDR regimes.[847] Like the Herero, some German stakeholders in the centenary debate argued against applying double standards.[848]

Occasionally, the longstanding preoccupation with the Nazi past was used as a template for dealing with 1904-1908. Historian Klaus Dirks, for instance, thought of Willy Brandt falling to his knees in Warsaw and contended that "a *Willy-Brandischen Kniefall*" to the Herero people would not do the *Bundesregierung* any harm.[849] From the experience of dealing with victims of the Nazi regime, there was an understanding that compensation alone would not do. Ullrich Delius of the *Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker* (*Society for Threatened Peoples*), for example, argued that:

---

[842] *BeispielsWeise* (radio, broad. Deutschlandradio, 7 February 2004).
[843] 'Namibia: Junge Nation - schwieriges Erbe', dir. *Journal* (TV, broad. DW, 11 August 2004).
[844] 'Deutsche Veranwortung für kolonialverbrechen in Afrika – Telefoninterview mit Uschi Eid', dir. *DW Exklusiv* (radio, broad. DW, 12 August 2004).
[845] Schaller, '"Every Herero Will Be Shot"', pp. 53-54.
[846] 'Auf deutschen spuren in Namibia', dir. *Abendjournal Spezial* (radio, broad. NDR, 27 August 2005).
[847] See fn 32. On its socio-political currency see e.g.: C. Crawford and A. Smolina, *Umgang mit Vergangenheit - Aufarbeitung in Deutschland seiner beiden Diktaturen* (2018).
[848] E.g. *Studiozeit* (radio, 16 January 2004).
[849] *ZeitZeichen* (radio, broad. WDR, 11 August 2004).

> [T]owards the Jewish people, no one would think "now we'll push over 5 or 6 checks and that'll solve the problem". Look at what German politicians do when they travel to Israel. Each time they acknowledge the responsibility of the German state and many Germans. And that is ultimately what these people in Namibia want to hear.[850]

Sahra Rausch convincingly demonstrates that it would take another decade for German media to increasingly inscribe "the remembrance of colonialism into the Holocaust template" and to call for the *Aufarbeitung* of empire to "match its high commemorative standards established concerning the Holocaust".[851] Still, the first advocates actually already made themselves heard in the 2004 debate and its immediate aftermath.[852]

It should be noted that the question of whether 'compensation relevant' apologies were to be offered to the Herero in the centenary year, was not exclusively answered with (the treatment of) victims of Nazi Germany in mind. Human rights organisations were the main ones demanding such an apology, and they did so also irrespective of Berlin's dealings with victims of Nazi Germany. To them, it was not only a matter of comparison, but also of principle.[853]

Apart from the plaintiffs invoking Germany's other 'dark past' and the way it had been dealt with, the Herero complaint was important in still another way. It was a landmark in European postcolonial history: never before had a former European imperial power been sued for material compensation for colonial atrocities. Several participants in the debate transposed Germany's situation onto other former colonial powers. The German state stood trial, but what was still in store for other former colonial powers? It was pointed out that the Herero lawsuit – regardless of the outcome – could enormously impact other European countries. In the summer of 2003, *Der Spiegel* wrote:

---

[850] '100 Jahre Hereroaufstand und noch keine Entschuldigung' (radio, broad. Deutschlandradio, 11 January 2004).
[851] Rausch, 'We're equal to the Jews', pp. 429-430.
[852] E.g. Jürgen Zimmerer, one of Germany's leading experts in colonial history, in: 'Die verordnete Versöhnung', *TAZ* (19 September 2005).
[853] E.g. *Gesellschaft für bedrohte Völker* in: 'Herero/Namibia - Wiedergutmachungs-Forderung an Deutschland', dir. *Politik Aktuell* (TV, broad. DW, 6 January 2004). E.g. *Der Internationalen Liga für Menschenrechte* in: 'Gespräch mit Rolf Gössner: Menschenrechtsorganisationen fordern von der Bundesregierung eine offizielle Entschuldigung für den Völkermord an den Herero', dir. *SWR International* (radio, broad. SWR, 11 August 2004).

> [F]ormer colonial powers are to be prosecuted for the injustices they committed: After the Namibian Herero filed a lawsuit against Germany for genocide from 1904 in the USA, Great Britain is also to be held accountable for the brutal suppression of the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya.[854]

Several experts noted that all ex-metropoles, also those that had not hitherto been charged, were now in danger of being tried. Indeed, in spring 2004 Ugandans and Kenyans would file compensation lawsuits against the UK in British courts.

Speculation about the legal repercussions of the Herero lawsuit for other ex-metropoles would continue into the centenary year. If the Herero won in court, this would open the floodgates to compensation claims by other formerly oppressed indigenous peoples. In a radio programme on the eve of the anniversary year 2004, legal expert Manfred Hinz emphasised that compensation of the Herero would set a precedent with far-reaching consequences: "it would affect all peoples: aborigines, Indians, half of Africa. All colonial powers would then have to pay indemnities to all former colonies".[855] The programme's host stressed what a turnaround this would be. In the run-up to the 2001 UN anti-racism conference, there had still been bitter struggle about whether injustices suffered as a result of colonialism and slavery even belonged on the agenda, and how they should have been referred to as; and at the conference, former colonial powers had devalued all monetary claims.[856]

Experts noted that even if the Herero were ultimately unsuccessful, former colonial powers that had waged wars against independence in their colonies in the 1950s and 1960s could not breathe a sigh of relief. In the *FAZ*, law professor Axel Kämmerer explained that the chances of success of lawsuits for "late colonial acts of violence" were better than for events that took place before the establishment of universal international (humanitarian) law in the 1940s and 1950s, and the adoption of the UN Declaration of Human Rights (1948) and the Geneva Conventions (1949). "Therefore," he concluded, "the failure of the Herero lawsuit does not mean an all-clear for Great Britain or France, which was involved in several wars of

[854] 'Klage gegen die Kolonialmacht', *Der Spiegel* (21 July 2003).
[855] 'Die Hereros. Ein koloniales Gespenst meldet sich zurück', dir. *SWR Extra: Afrika* (radio, broad. SWR, 30 December 2003).
[856] §98-§106 of the Durban Declaration addressed "effective remedies, recourse, redress, and compensatory and other measures".

Independence."[857] Kämmerer wrote about the legal aftermath of colonial cruelties that had now begun.[858]

Eventually, the international trial did not go ahead. The District Court in Columbia declined jurisdiction, and the Herero abandoned the action against the German state in the summer of 2003. Even though the lawsuit did not trigger heated public controversy in 2001, it did at least (briefly) generate publicity and confronted a broad German public with its colonial past. It was important as a beginning of increased public awareness of the Herero genocide and as a first impetus for the German parliament to address the issue.[859] The multibillion-dollar lawsuit built momentum for the centenary, just two and a half years later, to become an occasion for unprecedented debate.

The way the plaintiffs mirrored their quest for justice to victims of Nazi Germany, had an ambivalent effect at best. Perpetuating beliefs on the singularity of the Holocaust and the near-sacred status of Jewish victims might have put a brake on doing justice to victims of colonial genocide. The FAZ noticed how "[t]he sacralisation of Jewish victims (…) corresponds to the profanation of the other victims of National Socialist atrocities as well as of other mass crimes (…)."[860] Rausch finds that, in the 2001 trial, the Herero's attempt to integrate colonial genocide into the Holocaust-narrative was, in fact, counterproductive. Her research demonstrates that German media labelled material compensation claims "morally reprehensible", and rejected any parallels drawn with the "emotionally unique" Holocaust.[861] Pragmatic concerns of the far-reaching financial implications of holding the *Aufarbeitung* of the Shoah as a standard, will not have vanished into thin air either. By the year 2000, the *Bundesrepublik* had paid more than 100 billion D-marks for reparations to victims of the *Third Reich*.[862] These considerations might explain why – despite German susceptibility to Riruako's clever historical moral appeal – it was considered highly unlikely that Wieczorek-Zeul would risk upsetting Holocaust victims and further indebting the German state.[863]

[857] 'Spätfolgen des Imperialismus', *FAZ* (6 August 2004).
[858] *Ibid*.
[859] Müller, 'The German-Herero War in Politics and Textbooks', p. 55; Rausch, 'We're equal to the Jews', p. 418; Wolff, *Post-/koloniale Erinnerungsdiskurse*, pp. 241-248.
[860] 'Das lange, das nicht beendete Jahrhundert der Völkermorde'.
[861] Rausch, 'We're equal to the Jews', p. 429.
[862] R. Ludi, *Reparations for Nazi Victims in Postwar Europe* (Cambridge, 2012), p. 104.
[863] 'Segen für die "rote Heidi"', *TAZ* (10 November 2004).

Seyfried's novel (February 2003): late start, early exit

In February 2003, cartoonist and caricaturist Gerhard Seyfried debuted with his historical novel *Herero*. It described the events of 1904-1908 through the eyes of a German soldier. In six hundred pages it told the story of German cartographer Carl Ettmann, who in 1903 had left for GSWA and suddenly had got caught up in the Herero War. Unexpectedly, the reservist had been called to serve in the imperial *Schutztruppe*. Seyfried had done three years of research, including in Namibia, and had analysed the diaries of *Schutztruppe* soldier Victor Franke, which were still unpublished at the time. With his novel, Seyfried tried to find out what had gone on in the minds of Germans who had to defend themselves by shooting insurgent Herero.[864] In the run-up to the centenary, Seyfried's historical novel received much attention.

In a radio interview about his book in February 2003, Seyfried returned to where it had all started: the Scramble for Africa. He stated: "Back then, the Germans just thought: 'we want our place in the sun now too (...) and the others are all doing the same, and if we don't do it soon, there will be nothing left'." [865] It was not just Seyfried, who mentioned this. Contributors often remembered that the German Empire had been short-lived compared to other European empires. Almost every newspaper article, television- or radio broadcast on the topic began by noting that Wilhelmine Germany had been a latecomer in Africa. Right-leaning daily *Die Welt*, for instance, recalled that the Kaiser "almost overslept the era of colonialism".[866] *Der Spiegel*, a left-leaning weekly news magazine, reminded its readers that the "belated German nation" 120 years before, on 24 April 1884, had been the last to become a colonial power.[867] In the radio magazine *Kalenderblatt* on the events of 11 August 1904, the host introduced the topic saying:

> When Germany began to take an interest in colonies, the world was already spoken for. Portugal, Spain, England and France had already begun to divide the cake among themselves 300 years earlier. When

[864] 'Gespräch mit Gerhard Seyfried zu dem Roman "Herero"', *Galerie* (radio, broad Deutschlandradio, 21 February 2003).
[865] 'Gespräch mit Gerhard Seyfried über seinen Roman "Herero"', dir. *Journal* (radio, broad. NDR, 18 February 2003).
[866] 'Musikantenstadt in der Steppe', *Die Welt* (12 October 2003).
[867] 'Die Peitsche des Bändigers'.

> Germany started to acquire colonies, there were already telephones and trams in Berlin.[868]

The early end of the German Empire was of equal importance to the late starting point mentioned by Seyfried and others. Invariably, it was noted that it had been forced to an early exit. In the documentary *Straße der Deichgrafen* (2003), for instance, the voice-over called the abandoned stations of the *Südbahn* colonial railway line in present-day Namibia "lone memorials to the era of German colonialism that ended so quickly."[869] *Die Welt* wrote: "[a]lready in 1914, the imperial glory was a thing of the past".[870] The left-leaning daily TAZ recalled that "[t]he Treaty of Versailles had forced Germany to cede the few possessions in West and South West Africa (...) while its competitors continued to colonise zealously."[871]

It was undeniable though, that Germany – however long or short – had been part of the European imperialist venture. Contributors acknowledged that, even if Germany had been 'last in, first out', it had acquired a 'place in the sun'. The catchphrase *'Platz an der Sonne'* repeatedly reappeared in the centenary debate.[872] It referred to the historic 1897 '*Platz an der Sonne*' speech of foreign minister Bernhard Von Bülow, who had envisioned Germany as a colonial power. Von Bülow had addressed the German *Reichstag* with the words:

> We definitely do not feel the need to have a finger in every pie. But we believe it is inadvisable, from the outset, to exclude Germany from competition with other nations in lands with a rich and promising future." (…) "In short, we do not want to put anyone in our shadow, but we also demand our place in the sun.[873]

[868] 'Herero-Aufstand niedergeschlagen', dir. *Kalenderblatt* (radio, broad. BR, 11 August 2004).
[869] *Straße der Deichgrafen. Ein Diamantenfund und seine Folgen,* dir. M. Damolin (film, broad. NDR, 31 December 2003).
[870] 'Musikantenstadt in der Steppe'.
[871] 'Indien - made in Germany', *TAZ* (6 August 2005).
[872] E.g.: *SWR 2 Forum* (radio, 18 February 2003); 'Spätfolgen des Imperialismus'; 'Nützliche Eingeborene mit kriegerischen Eigenschaften', dir. SWR (radio, broad. SWR, 2 May 2005).
[873] *Stenographische Berichte über die Verhandlungen des Reichstags*, IX LP, 5th Session, Vol. 1, (Berlin, 1898), p. 60.

Krüger explained how Bismarck, initially opposed to colonies, ultimately 'joined the circle of great colonial powers' in 1884 – another popular historical catchphrase in the centenary debate.[874]

Participants pointed to the importance of the 1884 Berlin Conference, where Germany and European states had devised the partition of Africa on paper, and after which the Scramble for Africa had begun.[875] The left-leaning daily SZ wrote:

> Like other colonial powers, Germany also annexed 'protectorates' and pushed ahead with spatial expansion. This expansion was driven by the awareness of (…) a final division of the world that was underway and [by the determination that] Germany should under no circumstances stay behind.[876]

That Wilhelmine Germany had been particularly successful in 'scrambling' was rarely mentioned, though. A radio broadcast reported that the German empire had had "a noteworthy scale" since the 1880s.[877] A reader in the SZ fully understood, "considering the spirit of the time", that it had been keen on having "a few colonies" as well.[878] In fact, however, Germany had been the third-largest European colonial power in Africa between 1885 and 1919, after the United Kingdom and France.[879] Interestingly, the comparatively vast size of the German Empire in Africa was mentioned much less often than its comparatively short duration.

Contributors to the centenary debate were tempted to infer from the (relatively short) duration of the German empire, its alleged (minor) significance.[880] On the eve of the centenary year, a radio station noted that "[t]he marginal importance of German colonial policy in global terms was underlined by the fact that it lasted barely four decades."[881] Besides, in a radio

[874] Krüger in: 'Der Neger beugt sich nur der rohen Gewalt. Der Herero-Aufstand in Deutsch-Südwestafrika', dir. *Wissenswert* (radio, broad. HR, 12 January 2004). See e.g.: 'Spuren der Sammelwut', *TAZ* (13 November 2004); 'Blicke ins Dunkel – Eine Lange Nacht über deutsche Geschichte in Afrika (Episode 1)', dir. *Lange Nacht* (radio, broad. Deutschlandfunk, 16 October 2004).
[875] E.g. Joachim Zeller (historian) in: 'Wettlauf um Afrika - Die Berliner Konferenz 1884/1885', dir. *MerkMal* (radio, broad. Deutschlandradio, 15 November 2004).
[876] 'Eisernes trojanisches Pferd', *SZ* (30 December 2004).
[877] '11.08.1904: Die deutschen kaiserlichen Truppen greifen die Herero an', dir. SWR (radio, broad. SWR, 11 August 2003).
[878] 'Geldgierige Anwälte', *SZ* (30 October 2003).
[879] 'Die Peitsche des Bändigers'.
[880] J. Zimmerer, 'Rassenkrieg gegen die Herero', *SZ* (10 January 2004).
[881] *SWR Extra: Afrika* (radio, 30 December 2003). Two years later still, *Die Welt* concluded that "[f]or about 35 years Germany was a colonial power, or let's say: Germany had colonies." See: 'Prügeltage in Darassalam', *Die Welt* (8 November 2005).

broadcast in July 2004, Eberhard Hitzler, Africa advisor of the Evangelical Church in Germany, rightly noted that the persistent focus on duration sometimes distracted from the (violent) nature of the colonial project:

> [T]he colonial guilt of the Germans (...) is sometimes somewhat minimised when it is said that the colonial period of the Germans was so short after all. [I]t is [then] often overlooked what brutality also German colonial history went hand in hand with.[882]

The brief duration also contributed to its fading into forgetfulness. In the left-leaning weekly newspaper *Die Zeit* it read:

> In Germany, the short "adventure" in the southwest has long been forgotten. Two world wars and the Holocaust overshadowed the memory of all previous crimes. (…) Only now, on the centenary commemoration, the oblivion of history is clearing.[883]

The centenary was an opportunity for participants to take stock. A significant number of them bemoaned the lack of progress that had been made in dealing with empire due to the preoccupation with the Nazi past. In the run-up to the centenary, some deplored that "(…) nowadays this German chapter is not widely known [for it is] eclipsed in the general historical consciousness by the process of coming to terms with later genocides."[884] During the centenary year, countless media put a finger on this sore spot. The extermination of European Jews had been definitive for Germany's self-image and collective identity to the extent that "[t]he colonial war had simply been faded out of the historical consciousness," according to the *FAZ*.[885] The SZ summarised what seemed to be the prevailing view: "In the German culture of remembrance, colonial history disappears behind the Holocaust."[886]

Some stakeholders demanded that it was time now to "(…) finally include Trotha's war of extermination against the Herero people in the burden of Germany's past."[887] After the

[882] *Evangelische Perspektiven* (radio, broad. BR, 14 July 2004).
[883] 'Aufräumen, aufhängen, niederknallen!', *Die Zeit* (5 August 2004).
[884] 'Zinnsoldaten für Afrika', *FAZ* (22 March 2003).
[885] 'In der Wüste, wo das zwanzigste Jahrhundert begann', *FAZ* (3 February 2004).
[886] 'Negativer Kontinent'.
[887] 'Grausame Namenspatrone' *SZ* (13 December 2004).

centenary year, in which empire occupied centre stage like never before, some thought the preoccupation with the Holocaust still obstructed the *Aufarbeitung* of empire. A documentary filmmaker sent a letter to the TAZ to express his dissatisfaction with public broadcasters, which, he argued, were to blame for the lack of discussion about German colonialism. "Instead of reappraising German colonial history, German media prefer to indulge in Hitler's last days or take pleasure in the architecture of fascism", keen as they are on high ratings, he criticised.[888]

Some, however, attempted to smooth things over, asking for sympathy for the backlog of work on Germany's imperial past. A reader's letter to the SZ read:

> We Germans already have a very large and heavy cross to bear, with the guilt of the genocide of the Jews of Europe .... There comes the SZ and reminds us once again that we had already messed up once before (…).[889]

At this point, attention briefly returns to Seyfried. In contributions to the debate, he too observed how the colonial past had been "crushed" by the Second World War, the Holocaust and the *Third Reich*. All this had been "enough history for one generation", Seyfried explained apologetically.[890]

All this demonstrates that the centenary was not just an opportunity for self-critical introspection. Even after 100 years, there still were tendencies (deliberately or not) to minimise German colonial violence and to set up the discussion so as to shut it down more easily – the consistent framing of German colonialism as 'belated' and 'brief'. In the 1950s and 1960s, when other Western powers had violently suppressed independence struggles in their respective colonies, the German public had felt morally superior – having lost its colonies relatively early. Around the turn of the millennium, the early end of the German Empire still seemed a reason for leniency.

[888] 'Afrika bringt keine Quote', *TAZ* (26 September 2005).
[889] 'Opposition der vaterlandslosen Gesellen', *SZ* (16 January 2004).
[890] *Kultur heute* (radio, broad. Deutschlandradio, 12 January 2004); *Galerie* (radio, 21 February 2003).

The Blue Book reprinted (May 2003): the myth of the superior coloniser

In the spring of 2003, the Dutch publishing house Brill (Leiden) published an annotated reprint volume of the 1918 *Blue Book*, making this historic text once again accessible to the general public.[891] First published by the British government in September 1918, the *Blue Book's* harrowing accounts from the war against the Herero and the Nama peoples depicted Germany as an extremely violent colonial power. The reprint stimulated discussion in Germany in the run-up to the centenary year.

In the international press, Von Trotha's actions had shaped the image of 'the nasty colonial Germans'.[892] Shortly after the British had published the *Blue Book*, World War One was over. The victorious powers had justified the annexation of German colonial possessions with reference to the *Blue Book*. According to the Allied powers, Germany had proven itself unfit to be part of the European colonial 'civilising mission'.[893] In Versailles, Germany was stripped of its colonies, and the *Blue Book* had substantially influenced the decision.[894]

In early 20th-century Germany, the *Blue Book* had provoked indignant reactions and, having been publicly exposed, the Germans had been ever keener to demonstrate their positive colonial legacy.[895] Towards this end, post-war Germany had employed a dual strategy. It had gone on the defensive: the *Blue Book* had been rejected as vulgar war propaganda and was countered with a German smear campaign. German propaganda had fabricated accounts in which British, French, American and indigenous sources praised the German colonial administration. Simultaneously, the *Reichskolonialamt* had launched a counter-offensive. With the German *White Book* (1919) and the '*Schwarze Schmach am Rhein*' campaign, they sought to blacken the reputation of the British and French empire respectively.[896]

In the Weimar Republic, dissatisfaction had grown with the Versailles Treaty and its colonial provisions.[897] Colonial revisionists in *Kolonialverbände* (colonial associations that continued to exist after 1918) and in the *Reichstag* had dreamt of taking back former German

[891] J. Silvester, J. Gewald (eds.), *Words Cannot Be Found. German Colonial Rule in Namibia: An Annotated Reprint of the 1918 Blue Book* (Leiden, 2003).
[892] *Traum und Trauma der deutschen Kolonien: Afrika brennt* (Part 2), dir. G. Graichen and P. Prestel (TV, broad. ZDF, 15 November 2005).
[893] G. Metzler, 'Krisen und Niedergang der europäischen Imperien', *izpb* (20 November 2018), https://www.bpb.de/shop/zeitschriften/izpb/europa-zwischen-kolonialismus-und-dekolonisierung-338/280662/krisen-und-niedergang-der-europaeischen-imperien/ (9 April 2025).
[894] Verber, 'Remembering at a Time of Forgetting', p. 212.
[895] *Ibid*.
[896] *Ibid*., pp. 212-213.
[897] Metzler, 'Krisen und Niedergang'; Krobb and Martin (eds.), *Weimar Colonialism*, pp. 9-10.

colonies, or at least of taking over the League of Nations' mandates over them.[898] The accusations of the victorious powers had been rejected as *'Kolonialschuldlüge'* (colonial guilt lie), a notion that would be central to colonial revisionism in the Weimar Republic and Nazi Germany.[899] Later, in 1926, once it had done its job of discrediting German colonialism, the *Blue Book* had been suppressed by the British government.

In the spring of 2003 then, the *Blue Book* was reprinted, entitled *Words cannot be found: German colonial rule in Namibia: an annotated reprint of the 1918 Blue Book*. The editors, historians Jeremy Silvester (University of Namibia) and Jan-Bart Gewald (Leiden University) traced the *Blue Book*'s genesis, provided the reader with background information and the original German sources upon which the *Blue Book* was based. The reprint was co-published with the National Archives of Namibia and was part of the series 'Sources for African History'. The editors contended that the *Blue Book*, despite its obvious propaganda purpose, remained significant as a mediator of victim accounts. The reprint aimed to "give voice to African testimony" on the events of 1904-1908.[900] In its preface, Namibian Bishop and liberation theologian Zephania Kameeta wrote:

> The re-publication of the Blue Book of 1918 is an invaluable gift from a period in which we have mostly one-sided or vague accounts of what really happened during that time. This book offers a better and more comprehensive understanding of the liberation struggle and the suffering of the Namibian people.[901]

There was no doubt that the *Blue Book* had been a propagandist document. Besides the editors of the reprint, other experts in the centenary debate pointed out that it had been written to justify the seizure of the German colonies.[902] A few individuals dismissed the *Blue Book* altogether, as nothing more than British war propaganda. A reader of the FAZ*,* for instance, wrote: "In the

[898] Metzler, 'Krisen und Niedergang'.
[899] *Ibid*.; H. Schnee, *Die koloniale Schuldlüge* (Berlin, 1924); Verber, 'Remembering at a Time of Forgetting', p. 213.
[900] Silvester and Gewald, *Words Cannot be Found*, blurb.
[901] Z. Kameeta, 'Preface', in *ibid*., p. vii.
[902] J. Zeller, 'Weltreich für Würdige. Neu aufgelegt: Das Blaubuch des deutschen Kolonialismus', *SZ* (28 July 2003).

Federal Republic of Germany [Blue Book forgeries] unfortunately still serve some German historians as a serious source of history."[903]

The 2003 reprint triggered debate in Germany on how bad German colonial rule had been in comparative perspective. After a somewhat selective reading of the facts (see *Seyfried's novel*), contributors to the centenary debate often came to a substantive (re)assessment of the German Empire as a coloniser, often drawing comparisons to other European empires. At the outset of the year, *Der Spiegel* put the impending debate on the agenda: „In such a debate, many things would have to be clarified – for example, whether the "belated" [Germans], (…), can be happy about at least one circumstance, despite all the dark phases of its recent past: that it is less guilty of colonial atrocities than other peoples."[904]

A number of participants in the debate, amongst whom also authoritative figures, reached a verdict consistent with the *Blue Book's* main thrust: German colonisers had been extraordinarily atrocious. Shortly before its publication, in a radio broadcast in February 2003, Krüger had already pointed out that German violence had been brutal even measured by the standards of the time. The radio host suggested that "extreme racism in all Western European societies" had been the reason why "many of the inhibition threshold regulations for warfare against European powers did not apply in the first place".[905] Krüger invalidated this explanation: from soldiers' diaries, she knew that even soldiers had been appalled at the "improper" war being waged. Officers in GSWA had written about how they were fighting "with a level of passion and acrimony almost unknown in a colonial theatre." [906]

After the publication of the reprint, more contributions along these lines followed. In September 2003, historian and Africa expert Andreas Eckert wrote in *Die Zeit* about GSWA as "one of the darkest chapters of European colonialism in Africa."[907] In August 2003, editors of the broadcaster *Südwestrundfunk* (SWR) identified a tipping point, after which the Herero War was no longer "one of the countless, unfortunate colonial wars that took place all over the world", namely after the battle of Waterberg, when the Herero were driven into and left to wither in the waterless desert, half of the surviving ones later dying in concentration camps.

[903] 'Wunderbares Namibia', *FAZ* (18 March 2004). See also another reader's letter: 'Namibia stellvertretend', *FAZ* (29 April 2004).
[904] 'Die Peitsche des Bändigers'.
[905] *SWR 2 Forum* (radio, 18 February 2003).
[906] S. Kuss, 'The Herero and Nama War', in *German Colonial Wars and the Context of Military Violence* (London, 2017), p. 37.
[907] 'Die deutsche Kolonialgeschichte wird wieder entdeckt', *Die Zeit* (25 September 2003).

"Von Trotha crossed a line in warfare that was already controversial according to the ideas of international law at the time," so they argued.[908] At the outset of the centenary year, Jürgen Zimmerer, one of Germany's leading experts in colonial history, maintained in the SZ that the colonisation of East and Southwest Africa had been "one of the bloodiest and most consequential in the entire colonisation of Africa":

> Certainly, colonial wars have always been waged, and by all powers, with great ferocity, and the inherent racism of colonialism made it easier to move from legally contained practices of warfare to warfare against women and children[.] Nevertheless, the systematic nature of the burning and murdering in 'the Southwest' sets these battles apart from other wars at that time.[909]

During the commemorative events in January 2004 then, even Wolfgang Massing, German ambassador in Namibia, would say that these acts had been "brutally inhumane and inconceivable even by the standards of the colonial era."[910]

Without ruling out that imperial Germany had been exceptionally atrocious, others focused on how European colonialism had been inherently violent. In April 2003, a conference about colonialism, colonial discourse, and genocide had taken place in the Evangelischen Akademie Bad Boll. Mihran Dabag of the organising *Bochum Institute for Diaspora and Genocide Research* wondered, "whether collective violence and genocide were inevitable consequences of colonialism, i.e. whether annihilation was part of the "programme" of European expansion."[911] Zimmerer, who was one of the speakers, noted that notions such as *'Rasse und Raum'* (race and space) and the actual extermination of other ethnicities had been characteristic of European colonialism.[912] According to fellow historian Klaus Lorenz, quoted in *Der Spiegel*, German dealings with the Nama and Herero after 1904 had not been a genocide, but rather an "example of colonial warfare by European colonial powers in the age of imperialism".[913]

---

[908] '11.08.1904: Die deutschen kaiserlichen Truppen greifen die Herero an' (radio, broad. SWR, 11 August 2003).
[909] 'Rassenkrieg gegen die Herero'.
[910] *Evangelische Perspektiven* (radio, 14 July 2004).
[911] 'Tod durch Entkräftung. Der koloniale Genozid – eine Vorstufe zum Holocaust?', *FAZ* (2 April 2003).
[912] *Ibid*. See also Zimmerer in: 'Rassenkrieg gegen die Herero'.
[913] 'Die Peitsche des Bändigers'.

In contributions to the public debate, historians and other scholars informed their audience about how European colonials had acted from a 'bigger plan' and had used violence in the belief that the extinction of these indigenous races was inevitable, sooner or later. A military historian in a radio broadcast in early 2003 explained that European colonialists had shared the conviction "that there are peoples who are [chosen] to rule the world and others [destined] to be ruled."[914] In the same broadcast, Krüger addressed what lay behind Von Trotha's Extermination Order: the conviction that "if the world court, if you will, does not enforce the law of nature, the German military must do it." [915] According to her, it was the "topos of the time that so-called races like the Herero would disappear from the face of the modern world anyway."[916] In the TV documentary *Tod in der Wüste* (see page 220) in August 2004, German ethnologist Larissa Förster also threw light on colonial violence against indigenous races from an ethnological perspective:

> It was a racial struggle between civilised and uncivilised peoples, and in a certain way they were also convinced that those who were lower in their level of civilisation, so to speak, would die out in the long run anyway. So the colonial powers were in principle (...) handmaidens of this long-term divine or whatever plan that these inferior races would die out.[917]

That European colonial powers had possibly been racist to a different degree, was considered far less often. According to historian Michael Salewski, for instance, in the FAZ, "the racial discourse of this age" had been "particularly vehement in Germany".[918] A reader in the *Spiegel* believed that:

> German colonial rule did differ fundamentally from the traditional colonial powers in one decisive aspect. As a colonial newcomer, the German administration (...) introduced an officially imposed racist regime: it classified the population according to race and skin colour.[919]

[914] D. Walter in: *SWR 2 Forum* (radio, 18 February 2003).
[915] *Ibid.*
[916] *Ibid.*
[917] *Tod in der Wüste* (film, 2004).
[918] 'Fehlendes Unrechtsbewußtsein', *FAZ* (31 December 2003).
[919] 'Mord verjährt nicht', *Der Spiegel* (26 January 2004).

However, not many participants seemed curious about the possibly varying degrees to which European powers had been racist.

Several historians in the centenary debate emphasised that what had happened in Namibia had not been singular. They pointed very specifically at concentration camps established by the British shortly before the German war against the Herero and Nama, during the Second Boer War (1899-1902). In a radio broadcast on the eve of the 2004 anniversary year, the German-Namibian historian Joachim Zeller mentioned that 'concentration camp' had been contemporary terminology. The term had entered the German language when the English had set up such camps in southern Africa.[920] Other prior examples, namely concentration camps on Cuba (1896) and in the Philippines (1899-1902), did not crop up in the 2004 debate.[921]

In a radio broadcast in January 2004, historians Horst Gründer and Zeller agreed that the mortality rate in German concentration camps in Namibia, in which almost every second African prisoner had perished, had been just as high in English concentration camps – whereas actually the death rate in GSWA had been more than twice as high as in the British South Africa camps.[922] Gründer went on to say that and explain why colonial genocide like in GSWA had also occurred in other settler colonies:

> Settler societies ultimately have only three solutions for those who live in these societies before: exterminate, displace or enslave (...) [The] mentality [to destroy all the indigenous people] prevailed to a certain extent also in other settler societies (...) So, what happened in Namibia was not unique.[923]

Gründer contented that German colonial crimes, typical as they had been of the time, did not mark a specifically *German Sonderweg* to the Holocaust (see *Historikerstreit 2.0*).[924]

[920] *SWR Extra: Afrika* (radio, 30 December 2003). Also e.g. Krüger in *Wissenswert* (radio, 12 January 2004).
[921] J. Hyslop, 'The invention of the Concentration Camp: Cuba, Southern Africa and the Philippines, 1896-1907', *South African Historical Journal,* 63/2 (2011), pp. 261-262.
[922] *SWR 2 Forum* (radio, broad. SWR, 13 January 2004). On death rates see: Hyslop, 'The invention of the Concentration Camp', p. 32.
[923] *SWR 2 Forum* (radio, 13 January 2004).
[924] *Ibid.*

Yet other participants made sweeping statements, lumping all former colonisers together. Instead of pointing at particular others who had performed as badly as the Germans, they argued that all had wreaked havoc – an important difference. On the radio, a journalist concluded: "The fact is that everywhere in the colonies, the respective powers (…) were brutal to the indigenous population. It was normal back then."[925] Similar views were published in and by papers from all across the political spectrum. The right-leaning *Welt* wrote that "European powers had always had little regard for the "natives" in their possessions; many millions of people had already perished in some four centuries of occidental colonial rule."[926] Readers' letters in the same spirit also appeared in left-leaning newspapers. Early on, in autumn 2003, a reader stressed in the left-leaning SZ that "[a]ll colonial powers forged their empires by "eliminating" resistance."[927] Later on, in the summer of 2005, a reader of the TAZ wrote about the "tremendous brutality and bestiality with which every empire (...) has to defend itself at its edges (whether at the Waterberg in South-West Africa, whether in Amritsar, Algeria, Vietnam, in Fallujah or Guantánamo)".[928]

In a series of radio interviews following his novel's publication, Seyfried too insisted that colonial conflicts and crimes had been similar everywhere. The novelist called what had occurred at the Waterberg a "major crime [that] had been committed by almost all colonial powers – more or less".[929] He left it open though, whether, in his view, in the German case it had been 'more' or 'less'. From where he stood, what had happened had been near-to normal: "the same conflict had played out in every colony"[930], "with the usual atrocities and cruelties".[931]

Thus, not everyone in the centenary debate believed that the Herero War had been (one of) the darkest chapter(s) of European colonialism in Africa. In fact, some few contributors maintained that the German Empire had not been as cruel as other (or succeeding) colonial powers, or cultivated the idea that Wilhelmine Germany had been a 'particularly capable coloniser'. A reader of *Der Spiegel*, for example, believed that "other colonisers (...) partially behaved much worse – America and the Indians, the Spanish in South America, the Dutch in Southeast Asia,

[925] F. Räther in: 'Namibia "Blaubuch", dir. Deutschlandradio (radio, broad. Deutschlandradio, 12 January 2004).
[926] S. Kellerhoff, '"Vernichtung des Hererovolkes". Völkermord aber nicht Vorläufer des Holocaust'.
[927] 'Geldgierige Anwälte'.
[928] 'Nur Gegenwehr kann sie bremsen', *TAZ* (5 August 2005).
[929] *SWR 2 Forum* (radio, 18 February 2003).
[930] *SWR Extra: Afrika* (radio, 30 December 2003).
[931] *Mikado* (radio, 11 August 2004).

the British in India and all of them together in China."[932] Horst Junk, the chairman of the Jenfeld '*Kulturkreis*' (cultural area) and initiator of the *Tansania Park* in Hamburg was quite sure that the Africans had "had it better under German rule than under the English [one]."[933] Book and film author Gisela Graichen pointed out that this legend did not only continue to crop up in Germany, but even in former German colonies:

> In Togo and Cameroon, we met local historians who affirm that the Germans are even more popular today because they were much fairer as a colonial power, albeit harsh, but more predictable than the English and French who succeeded them.[934]

Then there was the *Traditionsverband ehemaliger Schutz- und Überseetruppen* (*Association for the Tradition of Former Protection- and Overseas Troops*) – an association, founded in 1956, that openly cultivated an exculpatory image of colonial history. The *Zeit* imaginarily quoted their "historical fantasies": "The Englishman was brutal, wasn't he? And the Portuguese! Not to mention the Belgian. But "our Negroes" liked us."[935]

The *Blue Book* testified to the competitive endeavour that was European imperialism. Comparisons with other empires had been at the heart of Germany's colonial ambition. When Wilhelmine Germany had eventually opted into the European colonial venture it had intended to be "better" and "different" from other, old colonial powers like Spain and Great Britain.[936] After the end of German empire then, the myth of Germany as a superior coloniser had served different purposes in German history. In the early Weimar Republic and Nazi Germany, it had served imperial revisionism. Eckert emphasises that the revisionist consensus in the early Weimar Republic had been rooted both in alleged atrocities of Allied colonial rule and in the idea of the 'loyal native' who wished for German colonial rule to return.[937] In Nazi Germany it had been thought that, whereas other, brutal, imperial powers did not know what to do with the Africans, the tough but fair Germans had brought civilisation and progress – wherefore they

[932] 'Mord verjährt nicht'.
[933] 'Afrika: Eine deutsche Hölle', *die Zeit* (30 June 2005). The '*Tansania Park*', created in 2003 by Kulturkreis Jenfeld, is an unofficial memorial site displaying monuments from German colonial history, including the *Schutztruppen* monument.
[934] 'Prügeltage in Darassalam'.
[935] 'Afrika: Eine deutsche Hölle'.
[936] U. Lindner, 'Encounters over the Border: The Shaping of Colonial Identities in Neighbouring British and German Colonies in Southern Africa', in Lindner et al., *Hybrid Cultures*, pp. 7-10, 21.
[937] A. Eckert, 'Mit deutschem Blick', *FAZ* (31 December 2003).

would be welcomed back with open arms.[938] After 1945, the *Traditionsverband,* composed of former members of the *Schutztruppe*, their widows and other like-minded people, had continued to promote the image of Germans as superior colonisers.[939] The legend of the Germans as particularly capable colonisers had been cultivated in parts of West German society in the 1950s and 1960s as an antidote to the most recent past.[940] West Germans who had built on pre-war empire fantasies had been desperate to get past the Nazi era: the idea that Germany had been an ideal coloniser, had been to improve their self-image and to clear their names after the Second World War.[941]

Already in the second half of the 1960s, critics had started to challenge the myth. The controversial TV documentary movie *Heia Safari – the legend of the German colonial idyll* (1966/7) had contributed to debunking the myth of the ideal German colonial master.[942] The *Westdeutscher Rundfunk* (WDR) had broadcast this deliberately provocative movie called after Von Lettow-Vorbeck's youth book *Heia Safari* (first published 1920, last published in 1952), which had glorified what had actually been oppressive German rule in East Africa. In the documentary, the Herero war had been called the first genocide of the 20th century. It had been essentially about the discrepancy between the brutal historical reality before 1918 and the picture of German colonial idyll in Africa that had been fabricated after 1919. *Heia Safari* had condemned West Germany for peddling the fact that it had ceased to be a colonial power in 1918 in its relations with newly founded African states, and for maintaining it had been more humane than other European colonial rulers. The movie had triggered a first heated public debate in West Germany, almost half a century after the end of empire in 1919.[943]

The documentary maker had wanted to provoke, but could not have anticipated the scale and sharpness of the reactions. By this time, television had been already the most popular medium, and 7.2 million people (12.5 per cent of the population) had witnessed the colonial epoch themselves. Hundreds of protest letters had been written by older viewers, who had felt the country's most recent past had been the subject of enough critical debate and could not bear to be deprived of another illusion about Germany's past; and by a small minority that had been

[938] 'Blicke ins Dunkel (Episode 2)', *Lange Nacht* (radio, 17 October 2004).
[939] Verber, 'Remembering at a Time of Forgetting', pp. 214-220.
[940] Albrecht, 'Kolonialphantasien im postkolonialen Deutschland', p. 426.
[941] *Ibid*., p. 443; Verber, 'Remembering at a time of forgetting', pp. 210, 220, 224-225. In the GDR, Wilhelmine Germany had never been remembered as the 'ideal coloniser', see Gründer in: *SWR 2 Forum* (radio, 13 January 2004).
[942] Schilling, 'The Empty Plinth', p. 146. See also Gründer in: *SWR 2 Forum* (radio, 13 January 2004).
[943] Michels, 'Geschichtspolitik im Fernsehen', pp. 475-477.

to Africa as travellers, soldiers, administrators, or settlers and had been offended by the documentary's angle. It had been mainly younger viewers, born in the mid-twenties or later, who were receptive to a radically different interpretation of German colonial history.[944]

Because the movie had provoked such uproar, the broadcast agency had decided to follow up with a two-hour television discussion forum, broadcast in full length in February 1967. The first round had been among experts, who seriously challenged the image of a more humane German ruler and agreed on a causal link between post-1918 apologetic literature and the positive memory of German colonial history. Thirty viewers, mostly older men, had been invited to a second round of discussions, but instead of exchanging views, their contributions were accusatory and aggressive. They had blown off steam, repeating arguments from viewers' letters, claiming Germans had disciplined and modernised African society, and deferring the discussion to the crimes of other colonial powers – which, by the way, had behaved much worse and yet were not concerned with their past.[945]

Even if the discussion forum had functioned as intended, as an outlet for the turmoil that had been caused, it left a bitter taste. Critical press and viewers alike had been shocked at the studio guests' frightening degree of German-nationalist sentiment. The academic discussion had also reverberated strongly with the wider public: it had become evident that historians would no longer leave the positive recollection of German imperialism uncontested.[946]

Together with *Heia Safari* and the work of historian Helmut Bley (1968) – praised by *Der Spiegel* as the first scientific publication on the topic in West Germany –, students had challenged the idea of Wilhelmine Germany as an ideal coloniser. When students had toppled the Wissmann monument in the late 60s, they had recited anti-colonial heroes Che Guevara, Ho Chi Minh and Patrice Lumumba.[947] Even though the toppling had been more a protest against neo-colonial wars in Vietnam and Congo-Kinshasa than a comprehensive reflection on the German colonial past, the importance of this superficial critical engagement with German empire cannot be underestimated.[948] The fact that students had sought to make an anti-war statement by linking contemporary conflicts to Germany's memorialisation of colonialism was

[944] *Ibid*., pp. 468-469, 480-483, 491.
[945] Schilling, 'The Empty Plinth', p. 146; Michels, 'Geschichtspolitik im Fernsehen', pp. 483, 487-488.
[946] Michels, 'Geschichtspolitik im Fernsehen', p. 489; Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, pp. 13, 197.
[947] Speitkamp, 'Kolonialdenkmäler', p. 418. On Wissmann also see: Zeller, 'Decolonisation of the Public Space?', pp. 67-68.
[948] R. Kössler, *Namibia and Germany: Negotiating the Past* (Windhoek, 2015), p. 64.

significant. By tearing down the statute, students had contributed to taking down the myth of the superior German empire.

However, upon reunification, the myth had still not been definitively dismantled. In the historic 1989 parliamentary session, when West Germany had taken on 'special historical responsibility' for Namibia, MP and South-Africa expert Günter Verheugen (SPD) had felt the urge to warn against the "dangerous myth" of Germany as a superior coloniser.[949]

Some four decades later, the (remnants of the) myth of Germany as a particularly capable coloniser still figured in the centenary debate. *Heia Safari* was not re-shown during the 2004 debate, nor did participants refer back to it (like the Dutch in 1994-1995 to the 1969 debate). Some two months before the start of the centenary, a radio host noted that: "German Southwest stands on the one hand for the myth of (…) a better, German colonialism, on the other hand for one of the darkest chapters of European domination in Africa."[950] After one hundred years, the era of colonial legends was now gradually coming to an end, *Der Spiegel* justly concluded.[951] This also applied to the colonial legends that strutted on favourable comparisons with other colonies. However, Gründer did not seem to be quite right when he stated in a radio programme in January 2004 that there would not be "a need to catch up here [in deconstructing the myth of the better German colonies]."[952]

Waterbergfeier prohibited (August 2003): settlers' provocative commemoration and 'historical lies'

Descendants of both victims and perpetrators live in present-day Namibia. Unlike Dutch and French colonists after Indonesian and Algerian independence, German settlers had stayed on their land after the end of the German Empire and after Namibian independence. After the loss of GSWA, they had subordinated themselves to the successive new rulers, and had contended that they could no longer be addressed as colonial masters.[953] When Namibia gained independence, the SWAPO had proclaimed a general amnesty: everybody was needed to build up the country. The focus had not been on the past but on the future. Around the turn of the

[949] 'Plenarprotokoll 11/129, Stenographischer Bericht', *Deutscher Bundestag* (Bonn, 24 February 1989), p. 9508.
[950] 'Eine internationale Matinee mit dem Botschafter von Namibia in Berlin', dir. *Apropos…Namibia* (radio, broad. RBB, 9 November 2003).
[951] 'Die Peitsche des Bändigers'.
[952] *SWR 2 Forum* (radio, 13 January 2004).
[953] *Ibid.* (18 February 2003).

century, there were some 25,000 (ethnic) third-generation Germans in Namibia. As a rule, this relatively small group was overrepresented in prominent positions in politics and especially in the economy.[954] 'They carefully maintained German traditions as if in a time capsule.[955]

Every year on 11 August since 1923, German settlers in Namibia celebrated *Waterbergtag* at the German cemetery at the foot of the Waterberg. The *Waterbergfeier* included provocative symbolism like the raising of the *Reichskriegsflagge* (Imperial War Flag).[956] With independence, the popularity of the *Waterbergfeier* in the settler community had declined. However, the commemoration, which had always been most popular in conservative circles, had been carried on by reactionary community members, who traced their historical identity back to the German colonial period.[957] It had been organised by German organisations such as the (Namibian section of the) *Traditionsverband*, whose members openly cultivated exonerating views of German colonial history.[958] They glorified the colonial era, nostalgically propagated "historical fantasies" and "mythologised German heroic deeds".[959] Based in the city of Hamburg, the organisation also had a Namibian section, and among its members were also German settlers in the former colony. In January 2004, political scientist and sociologist Henning Melber, who had immigrated with his parents to Namibia in the 1960s, explained in the TAZ how conservative and reactionary settlers in Namibia and reactionary colonial apologists in Germany glorified and relativised the horrors of that era as a 'civilising mission'.[960]

President Sam Nujoma forbade the *Waterbergtag* in August 2003 at very short notice through the first presidential decree in the country's history. He was allegedly "shocked" at the fact that a small German-speaking minority celebrated "the darkest and saddest period in Namibian history".[961] The "provocative celebration" hurt the feelings of many Namibians and threatened to undermine national reconciliation, Nujoma argued.[962] The Namibian police had orders to do

[954] *Apropos…Namibia* (radio, 9 November 2003).
[955] *Heimat in der Wüste. Deutscher Alltag in Namibia* (1996), dir. M. Höft and A. Greve (film, broad. NDR, 11 January 2004).
[956] *SWR 2 Forum* (radio, 13 January 2004); *Politik Aktuell* (TV, 6 January 2004); 'WeltReise: Namibia: Herero - Farmer', dir. *WeltBilder* (TV, broad. NDR, 29 September 2004).
[957] J. Zimmerer and J. Zeller (eds.), *Völkermord in Deutsch-Südwestafrika: Der Kolonialkrieg (1904-1908) in Namibia und seine Folgen* (Berlin, 2003), p. 213; L. Förster, *Postkoloniale Erinnerungslandschaften. Wie Deutsche und Herero in Namibia des Kriegs von 1904 gedenken* (Frankfurt, 2010), p. 232.
[958] Zeller, 'Decolonisation of the Public Space?', pp. 76-77. See also: 'Geschichte dekodieren', *TAZ* (29 September 2004).
[959] B. Grill, 'Afrika: Eine deutsche Hölle'; H. Melber, 'Vorwärts und schnell vergessen', *TAZ* (10 January 2004); 'Kranzniederlegung im Tansania Park', dir. *Hamburg Journal* (TV, broad. NDR, datum).
[960] 'Vorwärts und schnell vergessen'.
[961] Nujoma quoted in: Förster, *Postkoloniale Erinnerungslandschaften*, p. 243.
[962] Nujoma quoted in: *Ibid*.

everything they could to prevent the *Waterbergfeier* from taking place. It was the end of a 78-year-old tradition.[963]

At first sight, with the presidential decree the Namibian President seemed to side with the Herero. Nujoma explicitly mentioned the Herero and Nama's suffering and conceded they had been pioneer 'freedom fighters'. What Nujoma really did, labelling the *entire* nation "victims of the genocide", however, was to generalise the memory of the war and to dispossess the Herero and Nama of their particular suffering.[964] He sought to unite a multi-ethnic state plagued by inter-ethnic rivalry. The approximately 120,000 Herero and Nama peoples comprised only just under 7% of the population in a multi-ethnic country run by an Ovambo-dominated government.

Ethnic rivalries shaped how the events of 1904-1908 were commemorated in Namibia. The yearly Herero Day (or Maharero Day) (26 August) – on which, since 1924, Hereros from all over the country gathered in Okahandja at the grave of Herero chief Samuel Maharero, who had led the war against the Germans – was not a state commemoration. There were, however, multiple national, Ovambo-dominated holidays commemorating SWAPO's liberation struggle against the South African occupation.[965] A few months before the start of the anniversary year, in October 2003, there was still no agreement on what the centenary commemoration would look like.[966] Out of ethnic rivalry, the Ovambo government wanted to keep the commemoration of the Herero Uprising small and embed it in the nation's liberation history.[967] Chief Riruako refused to commemorate the Herero Uprising in a framework in which the SWAPO government highlighted its own achievements in the liberation struggle. He claimed 2004 as 'their year' and wanted their pioneering anti-colonial liberation struggle to be the focal point.[968] President Nujoma and other senior government officials turned down an invitation from Herero

[963] Förster, *Postkoloniale Erinnerungslandschaften*, pp. 243-246; H. Melber, 'Der Waterberg', in Zimmerer, *Kein Platz an der Sonne*, p. 482.
[964] Förster, *Postkoloniale Erinnerungslandschaften*, p. 243.
[965] Independence Day (21 March), Cassinga Day (4 May) and Heroes Day (26 August). A national Herero and Nama Genocide Remembrance Day was established only in May 2024, set for 28 May from 2025 onward, marking the 1908 closure of their concentration camps.
[966] *Echo des Tages* (radio, broad. WDR, 4 October 2003).
[967] *Evangelische Perspektiven* (radio, 14 July 2004); 'Die Demokratie hat sich rückwärts entwickelt', dir. NDR (radio, broad. NDR, 8 January 2004).
[968] 'Die Demokratie hat sich rückwärts entwickelt' (radio, broad. NDR, 8 January 2004). Notably, many Herero leaders disagreed with the two commemorative committees (*National Preparatory Committee for the Commemoration of 1904* and *Ovaherero Genocide 1904-1908*) that negotiated plans for the commemoration year and the main ceremony on 14 August.

leaders to attend the commemoration ceremony of the 100th anniversary of the start of the war in January 2004 in Okahandja.

In mid-August, however, Nujoma's designated successor Hifikepunye Pohamba (SWAPO) attended the most important Herero commemoration of the year, in Okakarara.[969] All Herero leaders and thousands of Herero from Namibia, Botswana and South Africa would gather here, and a handful of non-Herero were invited. Pohamba presumably accepted the invitation because Wieczorek-Zeul, representing Namibia's biggest donor country, and an influential traditional leader from the region formerly known as 'Ovamboland' (the SWAPO's stronghold) had also signed up.[970]

The suddenness and severity of President Nujoma's decree caused furious reactions among German-Namibians.[971] Representatives of the associations that organised the *Waterbergfeier* produced a *Schutztruppen* calendar for 2004, which showed battle scenes in GSWA from 1896-1915. The radio broadcast WDR reported that the closer the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Waterberg approached, the more the events of 1904-1908 were played down by German-Namibians. According to the programme's host, this group systematically "suppressed the historical truth" and told "historical lies", for example in the German-language *Allgemeine Zeitung* published in Windhoek, which since 1916 had been the mouthpiece of German-Namibians.[972] They maintained, for instance, that the *Schutztruppen* had fought with honour; that the Herero had gone into the desert voluntarily because they wanted to go to British Bechuanaland; that the Germans had not at all been able to commit such a genocide; and that 30,000 instead of 60,000 Herero had been killed. Media in Germany reported on how the historical truth was systematically suppressed by many ethnic Germans in Namibia. WDR listeners heard the representative of the *Traditionsverband* in Windhoek, whose members included German settlers in the former colony, deny that new mass graves had been found on the Hamakari Farm at the Waterberg. According to him, the Battle of Waterberg had been nothing more than a skirmish, after which the Herero had not been driven into the Omaheke desert, but had gone there at the command of their own chiefs. He denied that the honourable *Schutztruppen* had subsequently poisoned waterholes: the water had not been drinkable

[969] For the Herero memorial calender until the Okakarara commemoration, see: Förster, *Postkoloniale Erinnerungslandschaften*, pp. 274-277.
[970] H. Melber, 'How to Come to Terms with the Past: Re-Visiting the German Colonial Genocide in Namibia', *Africa Spectrum*, 40/1 (2005), p. 142.
[971] *Dok 5 - Das Feature* (radio, 11 January 2004). See also: Förster, *Postkoloniale Erinnerungslandschaften*, pp. 244-245.
[972] *Dok 5 - Das Feature* (radio, 11 January 2004).

because of dead cattle in it. Moreover, the *Traditionsverband* denied that labour camps and concentration camps had existed. There had not even been a fence around the camps, so it was argued.[973] Shortly before the start of the August 2004 commemorations in Namibia, the Africa correspondent of the *Zeit* impersonated the majority of white people in Namibia thinking:

> Mass murder? The numbers are exaggerated. Concentration camps? They were rescue centres! And the victims' testimonies, documented in the British Blue Book? Nothing but enemy propaganda. Besides, the rebellious Herero have only themselves to blame for their fate. Quite apart from the fact that many survived…[974]

A minority of German settlers was willing to face history self-critically and sought reconciliation.[975] Most German-Namibians preferred to just let the anniversary year pass by.[976] As descendants of German colonialists, they still felt criminalised.[977] Moreover, many settlers were anxious about the 100th anniversary of the Herero uprising because they were still settling on Herero land.[978] Relations between the German settlers and the Herero in the centenary year were strained by the unequal distribution of farmland between them – which had been at the very origin of the Herero Uprising one hundred years earlier. The colonial period had led to an extremely unjust distribution of land in present-day Namibia: the whites (only 1.2 per cent of the total population) still owned more than half of the fertile land, while the black majority lived on 'communal land', the former reservations.[979] The land issue was highly explosive, and the situation was tense: German settlers on Herero Land feared for a 'second Zimbabwe', where white farmers had been brutally expropriated and expelled. Herero Chief Riruako indeed threatened that if the matter were handled in the wrong way, "we could end up like Zimbabwe. Then our boys will also occupy the white farms and take back the land."[980] With Zimbabwe in mind, the *Bundesregierung* (technically and financially) supported the land reforms of the

---

[973] *Ibid*.
[974] 'Aufräumen, aufhängen, niederknallen!'
[975] *SWR 2 Forum* (radio, 13 January 2004); *Mikado* (radio, 11 August 2004); *Thema Heute* (radio, broad. DW, 11 August 2004).
[976] *Echo des Tages* (radio, 4 October 2003); *Dok 5 - Das Feature* (radio, 11 January 2004); 'Herero aus der ehemaligen deutschen Kolonie Namibia fordern 100 Jahre nach dem Völkermord Entschädigung', dir. NDR (radio, broad. NDR, 9 August 2004); *SWR 1 - Thema Heute* (radio, broad. SWR 1, 7 August 2004).
[977] *Echo des Tages* (radio, 4 October 2003); *Evangelische Perspektiven* (radio, 14 July 2004).
[978] 'Herero-Aufstand (12.01.1904)', dir. *Kalenderblatt* (radio, broad. BR, 12 January 2004).
[979] 'Aufruhr in der Savanne', *SZ* (1 December 2003). E.g. also: 'Erinnern und für die Zukunft lernen' (radio, 11 January 2004); 'Namibia – Deutschland', dir. *Scala - Schwerpunkt* (radio, broad. WDR, 5 March 2004).
[980] 'Aufräumen, aufhängen, niederknallen!'

Namibian government, which sought to redress colonial injustices by a regulated redistribution of land: white farmers would be expropriated and compensated, and their land transferred (back) to the Herero. On the radio, Krüger explained German settlers were trying to present the war as having been 'clean' because their privileged position and large(-scale) land ownership in present-day Namibia depended on "their grandfathers and great-grandfathers being honoured".[981]

In Germany, there was little sympathy for the attitude of the German settlers. How the German community commemorated the events of 1904-1908 was frowned upon in the ex-metropole. Words used to describe the *Waterbergfeier* were 'tactless', 'provocative' and 'distasteful'. On the 100th anniversary of the battle of Waterberg, a radio host concluded that every year, scouts and veterans "pour salt in the wounds of the Herero" by laying wreaths and sometimes even by displaying the swastika.[982] One listener argued it was only logical that the Namibian people felt provoked by settlers' "tactless" commemorative traditions, and compared the Waterberg day to humiliating Soviet victory parades on 8 May in Berlin.[983] Historian Klaus Dirks called German-Namibians' way of remembrance a "provocation of the highest order":[984]

> The matter is not as innocent as it is now being portrayed by many Germans (…) [It] is being paraded with military drill. (…) [O]ld comrades from the *Traditionsverband der deutschen Schutztruppen* [and] German explorers distastefully appear here in *Schutztruppen*-like uniforms. Wreaths with the German *reichskriegs Farben* [imperial war colours] of black, white and red are being laid again, which is just as distasteful as if someone from Germany wanted to honour the dead of Auschwitz and laid a wreath with the swastika on it.[985]

[981] *Wissenswert* (radio, 12 January 2004).
[982] *ZeitZeichen* (radio, 11 August 2004).
[983] *Evangelische Perspektiven* (radio, 14 July 2004).
[984] *ZeitZeichen* (radio, 11 August 2004).
[985] *Evangelische Perspektiven* (radio, 14 July 2004).

Germans in the ex-metropole were still somewhat fascinated with the traces of German colonialism in Namibia (e.g. street names and the number of people still speaking German) and with how settlers cultivated German traditions. Germans 'over there' were regarded with a mixture of fascination and disapproval. It was "one of the best-studied tribes in all of Africa",[986] and yet these far-away compatriots remained 'alien' and 'foreign' to people in the *Bundesrepublik*. *Die Zeit* wrote:

> [Namibian Germans] have long been a people of their own, a nation without a state (…) Germans whose national history only mentions Hitler in passing, who learn nothing or almost nothing about Auschwitz in school, who have not experienced the Wall and [have] no '68, no shame, no self-doubt, nothing at all. Many of them celebrate the Kaiser's birthday. In their opinion, it was mainly the Negroes who were to blame for the war of 1904. They have coffee and cake daily, like *Leberkäse* [meat loaf] in the evening. ... One could say they are Germans in the mental state of 1904. Shock-frozen [in time].[987]

German-Namibians, in other words, were no 'real Germans', for they did not have what defined Germanness in the 21st century: being preoccupied with and ashamed of the Nazi past. Anyway, the lack of understanding about dealing with 1904-1908 was mutual. Descendants of the German colonialists were fed up with Germans coming down there and bothering them with the events of a hundred years ago.[988]

There was also little sympathy for the commemorative activities of the *Traditionsverband* in Germany. It was numerically very small, and its members were curious outsiders in the Federal Republic. Every year since 1958, on *Volkstrauertag* (national mourning day), the *Traditionsverbände* have laid a wreath at the *Schutztruppen* Memorial in Hamburg for the soldiers who had died in the German colonies.[989] They turned the monument into a place of

[986] *SWR 2 Forum* (radio, 18 February 2003).
[987] H. Martenstein, 'Namibia: Damals, Kinder, in Afrika…', *Die Zeit* (10 March 2005). See also: 'Heimat in der Wüste. Die Nacht der deutschen Kolonien', dir. *NDR Themennacht* (TV, broad. NDR, 11 January 2004).
[988] *Mikado* (radio, 11 August 2004).
[989] *Volkstrauertag*, held in November, commemorates victims of war and tyranny, including those of German colonial rule.

pilgrimage for military nostalgics.[990] In 2004, the *Gesellschaft für Bedrohte Völker* demonstrated on the site as part of a nationwide protest campaign at colonial monuments, and in 2005 activists would protest against the wreath-laying ritual of the *Traditionsverbände* by also laying wreaths in front of the monument for the victims of German colonial crimes.[991]

Turn-of-the-century Germany thus faced a complex Namibian memory landscape: it had to deal with the Herero, the Namibian government, and the German settlers, to all of whom the events of 1904-1908 meant something different. While provocative commemorative activities of and clear 'historical lies' by German-Namibians and the *Traditionsverband* in Germany were strongly disapproved of, exculpatory narratives circulated also in the mainstream debate.

Historikerstreit 2.0: 'From Windhoek to Auschwitz'

> "A new generation of historians and writers is coming to terms with the half-forgotten, semi-glorified era between 1884 and 1918."[992]
>
> *Der Spiegel*, 12 January 2004

A new feature of the 2004 public debate was scholars' consensus on the importance of colonial genocide.[993] The debate between them focused on the connection between colonial genocide and the Holocaust.[994] Some even spoke of a veritable *Historikerstreit.*[995] Like in the 1986-1988 *Historikerstreit* – a debate on the singularity of the Holocaust in which numerous academics, journalists and other authors had participated, and that had quickly spread through features in major daily and weekly newspapers – historians and representatives of related disciplines as well as journalists and publicists took a stand in the 2004 media debate. The *Historikerstreit 2.0*, if you will, was not about the gulags and the Holocaust, like in the late 1980s, but about

[990] 'Unsere Jungs in Afrika', *TAZ* (26 July 2005); H. Möhle, 'Kolonialverherrrlichung im Grünen', *Hamburg Global* (12 December 2013), https://www.hamburg-global.de/v1.0/placemarks/32#fnr1 (9 April 2025).
[991] H. Möhle, 'Hamburg-Jenfeld: Von der Traditionspflege zum postkolonialen Erinnerungsort? Der "Tansania-Park" in der ehemaligen Lettow-Vorbeck-Kaserne', in U. Van der Heyden and J. Zeller (eds.), *Kolonialismus hierzulande: eine Spurensuche in Deutschland* (Erfurt, 2007), pp. 277-279.
[992] 'Die Peitsche des Bändigers'.
[993] Kössler, 'La Fin d'une Amnésie?', p. 64.
[994] B. Kundrus, **'**Grenzen der Gleichsetzung. Kolonialverbrechen und Vernichtungspolitik', *Blätter des Informationszentrums Dritte Welt,* 275 (2004), pp. 33.
[995] E.g.: *Diwan – Büchermagazin* (radio, broad. BR, 18 October 2003).

the German campaign against the Herero and the Nama in GSWA and the Shoah. The public debate and historians' debate intertwined.

It was not just in 2004, that the connection between Germany's 'dark pasts' was discussed. In fact, the question had risen immediately after the end of the Second World War. In the 1950s, empire had been used in the public domain in East Germany as a stick to beat West Germany with. In the context of the Cold War, the new communist German Democratic Republic had invented itself as anti-colonial and anti-fascist.[996] Colonial monuments had been dismantled in the context of a comprehensive anti-fascist policy. From this dual founding narrative, it did not take much before connections between West Germany's violent colonial and national socialist past were drawn.[997] In the 1960s, intellectuals in East Germany had been the first to forge connections between colonialism and National Socialism. They had established a thesis on colonial genocide.[998] In 1966, Horst Drechsler, one of the most prominent researchers on German colonial history in East Germany, had been the first to claim that the German campaign against the Herero and Nama peoples had been a genocide.[999]

In West-Germany, ideas about a link between German colonialism and fascism had been explored in the late 1960s. Student movements and the rising anti-imperialist movement had understood colonialism as an expression of German authoritarian traditions, and as having paved the way for fascism.[1000] The 1968 students protests had been directed against the remnants of colonialism and fascism in post-war Germany.[1001] It had not only been student activists who had explored the connection between two violent episodes in German contemporary history though. Influenced by East German scholars and generational change, the *Sonderwegthese* entered West German Left circles. The *Sonderwegthese* had not been mainly about colonialism, but had incorporated it. A critical social history perspective in the late 1960s and 1970s had produced historical work that uncovered German society's structural shortfalls; and colonialism was seen as an expression of Germany's incomplete economic,

[996] J. Zeller, 'Decolonisation of the Public Space?' p. 70.
[997] Müller, 'Kolonien unter der Peitsche' referenced in: Schilling, 'The Empty Plinth', pp. 144-145.
[998] C. Bürger, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte(n)*, pp. 155-156.
[999] H. Drechsler, *Südwestafrika unter deutscher Kolonialherrschaft. Der Kampf der Herero und Nama gegen den deutschen Imperialismus (1884-1915)* (Berlin, DDR, 1966).
[1000] Albrecht, 'Kolonialphantasien im postkolonialen Deutschland', pp. 427-429; Speitkamp, 'Kolonialdenkmäler', p. 418.
[1001] Schilling, *Postcolonial Germany*, pp. 196-197.

social and political modernisation.[1002] In the early 1970s, empire had still caused controversy and polarisation on the matter of continuity with the Holocaust.[1003] Since the late 1970s, systematically rewriting the continuity- and genocide thesis had been at the core of colonial-apologetic endeavours.[1004] Implicitly, the end of the *Historikerstreit* imposed a ban on research comparing instances of mass violence. Within these intellectual parameters, public and academic awareness of empire had been marginalised.[1005]

It was only after the Herero had filed their lawsuit in 2001 that ever more authors started to wonder about the links between colonial genocide and the Holocaust.[1006] In global genocide studies, the turn of the millennium constituted the early beginnings of the 'colonial/cultural turn'. Some scholars, among whom Patrick Wolfe and Dirk Moses, began exploring the link between genocide and colonialism.[1007] Raphael Lemkin, the founder of the UN's genocide convention, had already defined genocide as 'intrinsically colonial'.[1008] In an attempt to answer the question of which colonies had been prone to genocidal violence, the thesis of settler colonies based on genocide emerged in global genocide research.[1009] With the start of the new millennium, genocide's inherently colonial character and genocidal characteristics of settler colonialism came under scrutiny.[1010]

At the outset of the anniversary year, a radio broadcast reported that, after one hundred years, historians still disagreed on whether the campaign against the Herero could be described as a premeditated genocide.[1011] Another radio station reported about the *Historikerstreit* that had flared up, in which "[o]ne faction denies the intention of extermination and interprets the sources as a retaliatory action of the German *Schutztruppe* against attacks of the rebellious

[1002] W. Speitkamp, 'Otto von Bismarck und die Koloniapolitik – ein Ausweg aus der Wirtschaftskrise?', in M. Epkenhaus and U. von Hel (eds.), *Otto von Bismarck und die Wirtschaft* (Paderborn, 2013), p. 59; Conrad, *German Colonialism*, pp. 4-10.
[1003] S. Conrad, 'Schlägt das Empire zurück?', *Werkstatt Geschichte,* 30 (2001), p. 73.
[1004] Bürger, *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte(n)*, pp. 263-264.
[1005] J. Zimmerer, 'Colonial Genocide: The Herero and Nama War (1904-8) in German South West Africa and Its Significance', in D. Stone (ed), *The Historiography of Genocide* (New York, 2008), p. 335.
[1006] K. Bachmann, 'On the Margins of German Vergangenheitsbewältigung. Germany's Colonial Past Revisited', *Przegląd Zachodni,* 1 (2014), p. 150.
[1007] E.g.: D. Moses, 'An Antipodean genocide? The origins of the genocidal moment in the colonization of Australia', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 2/1 (2000), pp. 89-106; P. Wolfe, 'Settler colonialism and the elimination of the native', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 8/4 (2006), pp. 387-409.
[1008] J. Docker, 'Raphael Lemkin's history of genocide and colonialism', contribution for the United States Holocaust Museum, Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies (unpublished paper, 26 February 2004), https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/20040316-docker-lemkin.pdf (10 April 2025).
[1009] Zimmerer in: 'Das lange, das nicht beendete Jahrhundert der Völkermorde'.
[1010] D. Short, *Redefining Genocide: Settler Colonialism, Social Death and Ecocide* (London, 2016), pp. 1-4, 13-37.
[1011] *Studiozeit* (radio, 16 January 2004).

Herero."[1012] Several historians pointed out in national media a major difference between 'Windhoek' and Auschwitz – namely that the former had culminated in a genocidal massacre, and the latter had been planned as such – for this reason they denied a (direct) link between the two episodes.[1013] After all, "[t]he term '*Auslösung*' in the linguistic usage of the *Kaiserreich* was not the same as its later meaning in the *Third Reich*. Around 1900, annihilation did not mean the complete extermination of a people, but rather total military defeat", a radio host reported on the historians' debate.[1014] In February 2003, a military historian brought up that the primary motivation for building colonial concentration camps (in GSWA, but also by the British Boer War), had been to try to control a widely dispersed population with a relatively small number of soldiers – an entirely different motivation from the Nazi concentration camps.[1015]

Even so, the vast majority of participants in the public debate, amongst whom also historians from the other faction, were convinced that the events of 1904-1908 had constituted a genocide. There was no doubt in turn-of-the-century Germany that what had followed the Battle of Waterberg had gone way beyond self-defence. When Herero chief Maharero decided to flee with his people after the battle of Waterberg, the Herero *de facto* ceased to be a warring party and German colonial rule had no longer been in peril. General Von Trotha yet had the waterless desert through which they sought to flee sealed off, issued his *Vertreibungs*- and *Schießbefehl*, and later had the surviving Herero put in deadly concentration camps. In the centenary debate, Von Trotha's order – which in almost every contribution to the centenary debate was read out in full – was therefore consistently cited as evidence of genocidal intent and read as a *Vernichtungsbefehl* (extermination order).[1016]

In a radio programme of the *Deutsche Welle* in January 2004, Zeller spoke of a "merciless war of extermination", waged "not only to break the military resistance of the Africans, (…) but to destroy the societies of the Herero and Nama to their roots."[1017] A year before, Krüger had already explained how it had been a genocide on multiple levels:

[1012] *Diwan – Büchermagazin* (radio, 18 October 2003).
[1013] E.g. a military historian and Krüger in: *SWR 2 Forum* (radio, 18 February 2003).
[1014] *Studiozeit* (radio, 16 January 2004). See also: I. Hull, *Absolute Destruction. Military culture and the practices of war in imperial Germany* (London 2005), pp. 5-90.
[1015] *SWR 2 Forum* (radio, 18 February 2003).
[1016] A reader in the *FAZ* objected to the conventional interpretation of Von Trotha's order in the debate. See: 'Wunderbares Namibia'.
[1017] *Politik Aktuell* (TV, 6 January 2004).

> There were the actual war victims, the victims in captivity, and then also the destruction of their livelihood through expropriation, as well as the destruction of the political organisation and, therewith of course, of cultural and religious communities.[1018]

Invariably, the small number of German casualties was contrasted with the catastrophic impact of the events of 1904-1908 on the Herero and Nama peoples. Against the exact number of 123 German settlers and soldiers who had died in the first days of the war, more than two-thirds of the Herero (i.e. 60,000 people) and about half of the Nama (i.e. 10,000) had been killed – numbers that were mentioned again and again.[1019] The fact that Von Trotha had not spared women and children was considered particularly shocking. It did not go unnoticed that the Herero had not been as ruthless and had released German settler women.[1020] Africa-correspondent of the *Zeit* aptly summed it up: the Herero had ignited a "*Furor Teutonicus* [Teutonic Fury]".[1021]

In April 2004, the FAZ wrote: "Many historians regard this war as the first genocide in German history, and some even see a close connection between the genocide of the Herero and the Holocaust."[1022] Sequencing episodes of violence was not a privilege reserved for historians, though. Many participants in the centenary debate sought to integrate the Herero War into national history, leaving much ambiguity regarding a possible connection. Throughout the centenary debate, it was good practice to point ahead to the Holocaust when introducing the subject, almost ritually really.

A standard practice was to build a sequence through (numeral) signal words. Various newspaper articles and broadcasts described colonial violence against the Herero and the Nama as "Germany's *first* genocide", or the "*first* genocide of the 20th century".[1023] This was purely semantic, sequencing empire- and Nazi atrocities without further comment. It should be noted

[1018] *SWR 2 Forum* (radio, 18 February 2003).
[1019] E.g.: 'Namibia: Die Angst der weißen Farmer', dir. *DW Journal* [7 am] (TV, broad. DW, 3 January 2003); *SWR Extra: Afrika* (radio, 30 December 2003); *ZeitZeichen* (radio, 11 August 2004); *Weltspiegel Afrika* (radio, 16 August 2004); *RadioWissen* (radio, broad. BR, 27 June 2005).
[1020] E.g. 'Rassenkrieg gegen die Herero'.
[1021] B. Grill, 'Aufräumen, aufhängen, niederknallen!'
[1022] See also: 'Das Roecheln der Sterbenden verhallte in der erhabenen Stille', *Der Spiegel* (13 August 2004).
[1023] E.g.: *Redaktion Hintergrund* (radio, broad. BR, 13 January 2004); 'Wir haben die Deutschen überlebt', *TAZ* (10 January 2004); 'Rassenkrieg gegen die Herero', *SZ* (10 January 2004); 'Tod in der Wüste', *Die Welt* (12 January 2004); 'Kriegsgewinnler von der Küste', *Die Zeit* (5 August 2004); *Weltspiegel Afrika* (radio, 11 August 2004); 'Schönfärberich über deutsche Kolonialherrschaft', *FAZ* (6 September 2004).

that the two statements are profoundly different: the former integrates the Herero War into German history, the latter accommodates 1904-1908 in an extremely violent century in world history. The same goes for references to "the *first* concentration camps in German history"[1024] and to "the *series of atrocities* of the 20th century [that] began on 12 January 1904 with the genocide of the Herero people".[1025]

A (disconnected) sequence was also brought about, casting the shadow of the Shoah ahead. Illustrative is the following phrasing from the 2004 debate: "Th[e] racial state [, war of extermination, and genocide] point ahead, from colonial Southwest Africa to *what was to follow* in German history."[1026] Zimmerer saw the genocide in GSWA as a "warning sign" of "what was to come".[1027] Many participants, however, went beyond suggestive sequencing and unequivocally forged a connection.

Zimmerer's catchphrase 'from Windhoek (or: Waterberg) to Auschwitz' summarised and streamlined the debate.[1028] As the phrase suggests, colonial genocide was typically treated as a starting point, rather than a link between earlier, less organised genocides, and the highly bureaucratised Holocaust.[1029] Ulrich Delius of the *Gesellschaft für Bedrohte Völker*, for instance, argued on the radio that one simply "cannot keep saying that the problem of systematic extermination of peoples started only with the Holocaust. It started (…) in 1904."[1030] Rarely was Windhoek understood not as a starting point, but as a *Zwischenschritt* (intermediate step). Zeller maintained that colonial genocide had been a *Vorstufe* ('pre-step') of the Holocaust, a bureaucratised mass murder by an unjust state. In a radio broadcast in January 2004, he explained:

> Genocide (…) in its modern form, has developed in various stages (...) In the very early days in the colonies in Australia [and] in North America, it was individual groups of settlers and militias that committed

[1024] E.g.: 'Bundestag drückt sich vor Kolonialzeit', *TAZ* (19 June 2004); 'Erinnern und für die Zukunft lernen' (radio, 11 January 2004).
[1025] 'Mit dem Mördervolk muss aufgeräumt werden', *TAZ* (10 January 2004).
[1026] 'Rassenkrieg gegen die Herero'.
[1027] 'Die Peitsche des Bändigers'.
[1028] J. Zimmerer, 'Holocaust und Kolonialismus. Beitrag zu einer Archäologie des genozidalen Gedankens', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 51/12 (2003), pp. 1098–1119.
[1029] E.g. '"Vernichtung des Hererovolkes". Völkermord aber nicht Vorläufer des Holocaust'.
[1030] *OrtsZeit* (radio, broad. Deutschlandradio, 4 January 2003).

> genocidal massacres. Namibia (...) [was] a step further, here the [German] state [was] (...) very present.[1031]

After all, Zeller added, Berlin was informed about what Von Trotha was doing there and initially let him have his way. Likewise, his historian colleague Zimmerer stated on the radio just two days earlier:

> [I]n an overall history of genocide in modern times, the colonial war in German South-West Africa stands at a crucial intersection between the American and Australian Frontier massacres perpetrated by settler gangs and local militias and the quasi-industrial death-driven mass murder of the *Third Reich*.[1032]

However, for the vast majority of participants things had started in Windhoek, and they were concerned with how the two violent episodes in German history were related.

In the FAZ's 'Letters to the editors' section, it was argued that German history had been a "permanent *succession* of crimes", within which those of 1933-1945 "were by no means just a slip".[1033] Although it was common sense that they were chapters of the same book, participants in the centenary debate held fundamentally different views on how (closely) the two were connected.[1034]

Fine linguistic nuances indicated more or less of a close link. The attempted extermination of the Herero and Nama peoples was thought of, amongst others, as the bedrock ("*Grundlage*" or "*Grundstein*") for the Shoah;[1035] forerunner ("*Vorgeschichte*" or "*Vorform*") of the Holocaust;[1036] or precedent for the genocide of European Jews during the Second World

[1031] *SWR 2 Forum* (radio, 13 January 2004). Sabine Kebir (literary scholar with special focus on German colonial history) found the degree of bureaucratization in "both genocides attributable to Germany" "astonishing". See Kebir in: 'Was ist ein Genozid?', *SZ* (21 January 2005).
[1032] *Dok 5 - Das Feature* (radio, 11 January 2004).
[1033] 'Umerziehung im Reiseteil', *FAZ* (23 March 2004).
[1034] Exceptionally, an article in *Die Welt* argued that the two episodes were completely disconnected. See: '"Vernichtung des Hererovolkes". Völkermord aber nicht Vorläufer des Holocaust'.
[1035] 'Annäherung 100 Jahre nach dem Genozid', *TAZ* (6 March 2004); 'Spuren der Sammelwut'.
[1036] '"Vernichtung des Hererovolkes". Völkermord aber nicht Vorläufer des Holocaust'; 'Jenseits von Afrika', *Die Welt* (15 August 2004); 'Spätfolgen des Imperialismus'. See also: 'Blicke ins Dunkel (Episode 1)', *Lange Nacht* (radio, 16 October 2004).

War ("*Prezedentsfall*" or "*Vorwegnahme*").[1037] Each of these notions is ambivalent: they are partly interchangeable and not easily distinguishable. Besides, it is questionable how carefully participants chose their words – even if, paradoxically, semantics mattered – and with what intention. More meaningful than the terms used to describe an indirect connection, was therefore the rationale behind them.

One school of thought perceived the genocide in GSWA as a 'taboo breach', having paved the way for the Shoah some three decades later. In the run up to the 2004 anniversary, historians already publicly scrutinised the accuracy of a teleological interpretation. In a newspaper article in the SZ, Zimmerer pointed at everyday discrimination against the indigenous people under German colonial rule and the administration's discourse on racial segregation.[1038] According to him, National Socialist ideology and politics were too complex and eclectic to trace Nazi crimes straight back to colonialism. He contended that empire did, however, constitute a "taboo breach" (namely to act upon ideas about the extermination of other ethnicities), without which the Holocaust would have been inconceivable.[1039] This thought was also widely held in the anniversary year. It was argued that while there might not have been a straight path leading from colonialism to National Socialism, phenomenological similarities between the *Kaiserreich* and Hitler's Germany had been particularly evident in ideological concepts of space and race.[1040] Although the terms may not have been used at the time, the idea of '*Herrenmenschen*' and '*Untermenschen*' was thought to have informed radical racism in GSWA.[1041] German colonialists saw themselves as biologically superior to indigenous peoples indeed.[1042] At the Okakarara commemoration Wieczorek-Zeul would even point to the "colonial delusion" that had once opened the door to violence, discrimination, racism and extermination.[1043]

Some put the idea of a taboo breach into a European context. In other words, the taboo of racial extermination had not been broken by Wilhelmine Germany, but by imperial Europe.

[1037] 'Negativer Kontinent'; 'Die geteilte Geschichte', *TAZ* (26 November 2004); *BeispielsWeise* (radio, 7 February 2004).
[1038] J. Zimmerer, 'Igel nach Windhoek tragen', *SZ* (8 September 2003).
[1039] A. Eckert, 'Tod durch Entkräftung'. See e.g. also: R. Gerwarth and S. Malinowski, 'Hannah Arendt's Ghosts: Reflections on the Disputable Path from Windhoek to Auschwitz', *Central European History,* 42 (2009), pp. 279-300.
[1040] E.g. 'In der Wüste, wo das zwanzigste Jahrhundert begann'.
[1041] E.g.: 'Negativer Kontinent'; 'Auch im Herzen des Ehrenmannes gibt es eine hölle', *SZ* (27 February 2004).
[1042] B. Grill, *Wir Herrenmenschen. Unser rassistisches Erbe: Eine Reise in die deutsche Kolonialgeschichte* (München, 2019).
[1043] 'Deutschland entschuldigt sich für Kolonialverbrechen', *Der Spiegel* (15 August 2004).

The SZ brought up the renowned philosopher Hannah Arendt, who in *the Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951) had spoken of the "greenhouse" effect of European imperialism, which, she had argued, had racialised political discourse in Europe.[1044] In fact, in the FAZ Zimmer did not draw back a line from the Shoah to German colonial genocide, but to mass exterminations in European imperialism.

A second school of thought understood GSWA at the beginning of the 20th century as a blueprint, serving as a model, template, or 'laboratory' at the time of the *Endlösung*. In a newspaper article in March 2003, concentration camps in present-day Namibia were called a "trial in the desert for later horror".[1045] Colonial concentration camps and the conduct of medical experiments in GSWA figured in the centenary debate, mainly to prove that "[m]uch of what the Nazis brought to perfection (…) a few decades later was first tried out in German South-West Africa."[1046] Other than a 'taboo breach', which pushed the boundaries of imagination, the notion of a blueprint had much more to do with practice. National Socialists had presumably drawn practical knowledge and inspiration from the colonial era.

Written contributions to the 2004 debate reported that surviving Herero were put into 'concentration camps', where they were put to work until 1908, often fatally. The use of inverted commas pointed ahead at later Nazi camps.[1047] Thinking about whether camps in GSWA had indeed been similar to the ones in Hitler Germany, Zeller argued: "[o]ne can indeed draw parallels to camps like Buchenwald or Dachau. But not, that would be nonsense, with extermination camps like Treblinka or Auschwitz."[1048] Semantics were invoked, though, to prove colonial concentration camps had been precursors of Auschwitz. The fact that Herero camps had been called *Konzentrationslager* already back then, was brought up regularly during the 2004 debate.[1049] The FAZ, for instance, stressed it had been contemporary terminology: "[C]oncentration camps [were] set up by the German colonial administration at the beginning of the war – a term used by Chancellor Bülow as early as January 1905."[1050] Participants who

[1044] 'Negativer Kontinent'.
[1045] T. Döring, 'Zinnsoldaten für Afrika'.
[1046] U. Trüper, 'Unabhängigkeit allein reicht nicht', *TAZ* (28 February 2004). See also: *MerkMal* (radio, broad. Deutschlandradio, 8 January 2004).
[1047] E.g.: 'Der totale Feldzug', *TAZ* (10 January 2004); 'Vernichtung des Hererovolkes. Völkermord, aber nicht Vorläufer des Holocaust'.
[1048] *SWR 2 Forum* (radio, 13 January 2004).
[1049] E.g.: *SWR Extra: Afrika* (radio, 30 December 2003); 'Rassenkrieg gegen die Herero'; 'Unabhängigkeit allein reicht nicht'; 'Das Roecheln der Sterbenden verhallte in der erhabenen Stille'; *MerkMal* (radio, 8 January 2004).
[1050] 'Mit und ohne Gewehr', *FAZ* (17 April 2004).

pointed at identic terminology (involuntarily) implied a connection of events. In *Die Welt,* Zimmerer was quoted, saying: "The genocide in German South-West Africa is (…) significant as a prehistory of the Holocaust. (…) [T]erms like concentration camp and genocide suggest a connection."[1051]

Other contributors described the German colonies in Africa as an 'experimentation space'. German listeners learned from a radio documentary that the Germans had carried out genetic experiments in GSWA that had later served as a model for Josef Mengele.[1052] Readers of the TAZ were informed that: "[t]he women had to scrape the flesh off their husbands' severed skulls so that they could be sent clean to Berlin for scientific examination. This booty was then used by the National Socialists for their abstruse racial mania and has not been returned to the Herero to this day."[1053]

Yet other voices pointed to continuity in key players, who had been involved in both early- and mid-century mass extermination. This third school of thought pointed out that not just the practice of medical experiments had returned: even actors made their comeback under the Nazi regime. The Freiburg geneticist Eugen Fischer was a prominent example in the 2004 debate. After the suppression of Herero and Nama uprisings, in 1908, he had conducted 'scientific' studies on site to demonstrate that mixed marriages between Germans and indigenous women produced 'degenerate' children, and had dissected corpses of 'natives' to prove their inferiority. Fischer had been one of the exponents of the discipline of 'measuring anthropology' at that time, which later became the cornerstone for the National Socialists' racial- and eugenic extermination policy. He had co-authored the Nuremberg Race Laws and, as the first director of the *Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Anthropology, Human Heredity and Eugenics* in Berlin (from 1927 to 1942), had produced racial expert reports for the authorities. Contributors who discussed Fischer's biography could hardly get around another notorious character: one of his students at the institute had been the Auschwitz camp doctor Josef Mengele.[1054]

Besides the curriculum vitae of physicians from the colonial era who would later serve National Socialism pursuing 'racial hygiene policies', participants also mentioned the careers and ancestry of some high-ranking colonial army officers who reappeared on the stage during

[1051] 'Vernichtung des Hererovolkes. Völkermord, aber nicht Vorläufer des Holocaust'.
[1052] E.g.: *Studiozeit* (radio, 16 January 2004); *Thema Heute* (radio, broad. DW, 11 August 2004).
[1053] 'Mehr als ein "Sorry"', *TAZ* (3 September 2004).
[1054] 'Rassenforschung', *TAZ* (10 January 2004); 'Spuren der Sammelwut'; 'Aufräumen, aufhängen, niederknallen!'; *SWR 2 Forum* (radio, 13 January 2004); 'Blicke ins Dunkel (Episode 2)', *Lange Nacht* (radio, 17 October 2004).

Nazi rule. Multiple sources report on Paul von Lettow-Vorbeck, who had been sent to GSWA in 1904.[1055] As a young adjutant he had been at the front line of General von Trotha's extermination campaign. After he had commanded German troops in German East Africa during the First World War, streets had been named after him by the Nazi regime, and in August 1939 Hitler had appointed him *General zur besonderen Verwendung* (General for Special Employment). Although he had not joined the *Die Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei* (NSDAP), Lettow-Vorbeck had approved of racism and the *Lebensraum* philosophy of the Nazis.[1056] He had been very committed to repossessing the colonies, as were the National Socialists. Until the late 1990s, he had still been revered as a hero, and in 2004, his career connected two contested chapters in German contemporary history.

The centenary was the first time a large public debate occurred around the connection between the attempted mass extermination of the Herero and Nama and the Shoah. The question of how the events of 1904-1908 related to the Holocaust was the most hotly debated issue in the anniversary year. Whereas claims of a direct connection sparked controversy, it was largely uncontroversial to claim that colonial genocide and the Holocaust had been connected somehow. Linking the two episodes raised awareness about the gravity of events in GSWA amongst a general public that was largely ignorant of what had happened far away some hundred years ago. In turn-of-the-century Germany, everything associated with the Holocaust appeared even darker, including colonial genocide.[1057] The closer the connection, the heavier the burden of guilt loaded onto Wilhelmine Germany.[1058] At the same time, the wording used ('bedrock' or 'forerunner') and the ideas of colonial genocide as 'taboo breach' or 'experimentation space' left no doubt that the Holocaust was considered the greater of two evils.

From all this, it seems that the Herero genocide was important, though less in itself than because it could be seen as a point of origin for the Holocaust. The Herero case did not departicularise the Holocaust, neither in the German public sphere, nor in parts of German academia whose work seem to remain within a 'geneaology of the Holocaust' frame as well.

[1055] E.g. 'Pardon wird nicht gegeben. Streit über Kasernenname in Leer kocht hoch', *TAZ* (4 February 2004).
[1056] Uwe Schulte-Varendorff (historian) in: B. Morgenrath, 'Lettow-Vorbeck. Korrektur eines zweifelhaften Heldenepos', *Deutschlandfunk* (5 April 2014), https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/lettow-vorbeck-korrektur-eines-zweifelhaften-heldenepos-102.html (10 April 2025).
[1057] J. Zimmerer, 'Menschenfresser und barbusige Mädchen', *SZ* (24 November 2005).
[1058] Zimmerer explained how those who were trying to integrate German colonialism into German history as a positive epoch, had to deny any ideological link to Nazi racial and extermination policies. See: 'Menschenfresser und barbusige Mädchen'.

This stood in sharp contrast to what was happening more generally in scholarship on the history of genocides: around the same time, historians of mass violence were beginning to think earlier than the 20th century, and in much larger terms, and the Holocaust was no longer seen as solely paradigmatic.[1059] It was not the gradual loosening of the singularity of the Holocaust in second-wave genocide studies at this time that allowed for critical introspection in the ex-metropole, as Tom Bentley contends in *Empires of Remorse*.[1060]

A number of historians found the central role of the Holocaust in the rediscovery of German colonial history problematic. On the radio at the outset of the centenary year, Gründer disapproved of the fact that the *Third Reich* still was the central point of German history, and how a "one-way road" was being built towards it – like in the *Sonderwegstreit* – from a genocide forty years earlier.[1061] Krüger's plea the year before had been in vain: during the centenary it was referred to the later Holocaust obsessively when rediscovering the colonial past, and more than the public (re)discovery of Germany as a colonial power, 2004 was the public (re)discovery of the first genocide in German history.[1062]

The Holocaust would thus continue to take up a prominent place during the 2004 post-imperial memory irruption – as, by then, it had done for decades. For the longest time, empire had been eclipsed by the overriding presence of the Nazi past. If empire had been present in the public sphere at all, its contours had been heavily informed by Holocaust memory. The 2004 debate was one of the first and few occasions upon which empire played the lead – at least on the face of it. Valid questions are: Were discussions about empire also (or: just) another angle from which to talk about 1940-1945? Did participants in Germany, in fact, seek to trace back the origins of the Holocaust? Was a line drawn not 'from Windhoek to Auschwitz', as they said, but the other way around? And was it getting on with the *Aufarbeitung* of the Holocaust that stakeholders in post-imperial memory irruption were also (or: really) after?

[1059] E.g. J. Sémelin, *Purifier et détruire. Usages politiques des massacres et génocides* (Paris, 2005); B. Kiernan, *Blood and Soil: A World History of Genocide and Extermination from Sparta to Darfur* (New Haven, 2007).
[1060] T. Bentley, 'The German apology for the Herero genocide', in Bentley, *Empires of remorse*, p. 93.
[1061] *SWR 2 Forum* (radio, 13 January 2004).
[1062] *Ibid.* (18 February 2003).

Resisting apology: pre-visits to Africa (October 2003, January 2004) & Namibia Resolution (June 2004)

On an official visit to Namibia ahead of the centenary year, in October 2003, the German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer (Green Party) announced that compensation (and therefore a 'compensation relevant apology') was out of the question. He said: "We stand by our history, we mean it, but I cannot make a statement that could be relevant to compensation."[1063] Fischer's acknowledgement of Germany's historical responsibility and refusal to offer an '*Entschädigungsrelevante Entschuldigung'* was completely in line with the position of successive German governments, irrespective of their party-political hue.[1064] The *Bundesregierung* was repentant, but anxious to avoid reparations.

At the 2001 UN anti-racism conference in Durban, Fischer had been the first high-ranking German official to lament the horrors of the colonial period. He had said:

> We have to start this conference with the past. In many parts of the world, the pain of the consequences of slavery and the exploitation of colonialism, which continue to have an impact to this day, still runs deep. Past injustice cannot be undone. But recognising guilt, taking responsibility and facing up to our historical obligations can at least restore the dignity stolen from the victims and their descendants. I would therefore like to do this here and now for the Federal Republic of Germany.[1065]

In Durban, however, Fischer had not used the word 'apology' because of the financial claims that could be made from it in court. The centre-right newspaper FAZ and the right-leaning *Welt* had sneered at Fischer's remorseful words. The former wrote: "Unlike Great Britain, Spain, Portugal, France and the Netherlands, Germany does not look back on a distinct colonial past."[1066] The latter devoted an entire article to other former European colonial powers that had

[1063] *Redaktion Hintergrund* (radio, broad. BR, 29 October 2003). E.g. also: *Informationen am Morgen* (radio, Deutschlandfunk, 12 August 2004).
[1064] Kössler, 'La Fin d'une Amnésie?', p. 58.
[1065] Parts of his speech were published, see: 'Von der Vergangenheit lernen, um die Zukunft besser zu gestalten', *Die Welt* (3 September 2001).
[1066] 'Zutiefst empörte und beschämte Deutsche', *FAZ* (6 September 2001); 'Fischer gesteht deutsche Schuld in Afrika ein', *Die Welt* (3 September 2001).

not apologised officially.[1067] Left-leaning newspapers, albeit more appreciative of Fischer's gesture, had not been full of praise either.[1068] The SZ had drawn attention to the fact that several African states at the Durban Conference actually wanted reparations.[1069]

During his 2003 visit to Namibia, Fischer reiterated, "[w]e have a special relationship because of our responsibility for colonial history. That is why Germany will continue to provide material aid to Namibia."[1070] The 'special historical responsibility' for the former colony that the *Bundesregierung* had taken on upon reunification figured as a 'diplomatic standard formula'.[1071] It had translated into development aid for the new state rather than material compensation for the Herero people.[1072]

Equally repetitive, German media in the run-up to and during the centenary mentioned the 500 million Euros development aid paid by the German government to Namibia since its independence in 1990. Again and again, it was stressed that Germany was Namibia's 'biggest funder', or 'most important donor'.[1073] It was also highlighted that the German government granted Namibia the biggest share of its overall development aid budget.[1074]

German development aid was transferred to the Namibian treasury and did not benefit the Herero in particular. On different occasions in the centenary year, the *Bundesregierung* clarified it could only fulfil its responsibility for today's Namibia if all its population groups were equally supported. It pursued the goal of national reconciliation – a 'united Namibia' – and was careful not to tear apart the social structure and give cause for new ethnic conflicts by singling out one group.[1075]

German media registered the Herero people's weak position in Namibia's multi-ethnic state. The Herero were embittered not only because prosperous white farmers lived off their

[1067] 'Der Umgang mit der Kolonialzeit', *Die Welt* (3 September 2001).
[1068] E.g.: 'Hass statt Versöhnung', *SZ* (3 September 2001); 'Fischer anerkennt Schuld bei Sklaverei', *TAZ* (3 September 2001).
[1069] 'Fischer erkennt deutsche Schuld für Sklaverei an UN-Konferenz gegen Rassismus in Durban', *SZ* (3 September 2001).
[1070] *Redaktion Hintergrund* (radio, 29 October 2003).
[1071] 'Entwicklungsministerin Wieczorek-Zeul in Namibia', dir. *Informationen am Mittag* (radio, broad. Deutschlandfunk, 13 August 2004); *Echo des Tages* (radio, 4 October 2003).
[1072] Müller, 'The German-Herero War in Politics and Textbooks', pp. 54-55.
[1073] E.g.: 'Fischer reist in drei Länder Afrikas', *SZ* (12 October 2003); *Redaktion Hintergrund* (radio, 29 October 2003); 'Erinnern und für die Zukunft lernen' (radio, 11 January 2004); *Informationen am Morgen* (radio, Deutschlandfunk, 12 August 2004).
[1074] E.g.: *MDR aktuell – Spätausgabe* (TV, broad. MDR, 11 January 2004); *Newslink Africa* (radio, broad. DW, 11 August 2004).
[1075] *Informationen am Morgen* (radio, Deutschlandfunk, 12 August 2004). See also Uschi Eid (public prosecutor) in: *OrtsZeit* (radio, 4 January 2003); *DW Exklusiv* (radio, 12 August 2004).

land, but also because they were demographically and politically dominated by the Ovambo tribe.[1076] The Ovambo-dominated government did not support the Herero lawsuit against the German government.[1077] At the beginning of Wieczorek's visit to Namibia in August, one day before the Herero commemoration ceremony, President Nujoma would stress that German-Namibian relations were in no way strained.[1078] Herero were not pleased with the lack of support from their own government and accused the Ovambo administration of channelling German money mainly into Ovambo areas.[1079]

Participants in the 2004 debate did not seem too worried about it. There was no strong call upon the government to transfer the money directly to the Herero. Possibly, they were convinced by the *Bundesregierung*'s concern with a unified Namibia. Also, there was no denying the 'special responsibility' assumed by the German government in 1989, or disagreement with the high sum of development aid that had been (and continued to be) invested in Namibia's economic and social development since then.

The question was, instead, whether something more was needed: an apology to and compensation for the Herero. There were voices in the anniversary year saying that responsibility went beyond development aid. A critical note was struck about Berlin taking the easy way out by paying large sums of development aid. In August 2004, the Africa correspondent of the *Zeit*, for instance, compared German development aid to indulgences.[1080] Still, not nearly enough pressure was exerted – neither by the German public nor the Namibian government – for the *Bundesregierung* to reconsider its official policy.

In January 2004 then, *Bundeskanzler* Gerhard Schröder (SPD) visited Africa (18 January – 24 January), not to attend the commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Herero Uprising, but to help and encourage developing countries Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa, and Ghana 'to help themselves'. He was on a tight schedule: he visited all four countries. It was the first trip to Africa by a German Chancellor since Helmut Kohl (conservative Christian Democratic Union, CDU) had gone to South Africa and Namibia in 1995. On the first official state visit to Namibia since independence, Kohl had tellingly addressed the attendees as "*liebe Landsleute*" (dear compatriots); had pointed out German merits in the country's development; and had refused to

[1076] E.g.: *Diwan* (radio, 18 October 2003); *Evangelische Perspektiven* (radio, 14 July 2004).
[1077] *SWR 2 Forum* (radio, 13 January 2004).
[1078] *Redaktion Hintergrund* (radio, broad. BR, 13 August 2004).
[1079] *SWR Extra: Afrika* (radio, 30 December 2003); *Politik Aktuell* (TV, 6 January 2004).
[1080] B. Grill, 'Aufräumen, aufhängen, niederknallen!'

meet with Herero deputies (with no official reason given).[1081] In the same year, Queen Beatrix had spoken remorsefully in Indonesia (August 1995) and Queen Elizabeth had apologised to the Maoris for the colonial injustices committed against them (November 1995).[1082]

Prior to Schröder's Africa visit at the outset of the centenary year, the German government made a striking statement. Berlin had the ambition of becoming a medium-sized European power in Africa, for stability on the African continent "should not be left only to the former colonial powers".[1083] The Africa editor of the TAZ noted that Germany clearly and wrongly did not to think of itself as a (former) colonial power: "Germany mistakenly considers itself "unburdened" in Africa. (…) A clear proof of German colonial amnesia (...)"[1084]

A few months later, on 17 June 2004, the *Bundestag* passed a resolution that reaffirmed Germany's historical responsibility for Namibia, and expressed its sorrow over the victims, but skirted the question of official apologies.[1085] Parliament was reserved across the board, from Left to Right. The resolution emphasised the importance of maintaining and deepening good bilateral relations between Germany and Namibia and of continuing development cooperation at a high level – given Germany's historical and moral responsibility. Its aim was "to contribute to restoring dignity and honour to the tens of thousands of victims."[1086] The resolution, which anxiously avoided the issue of official apologies, had been drafted by governing parties SPD and *Bündnis 90/Die Grünen*. Before the resolution was presented to parliament, any reference to 'annihilation', 'systematic extermination' and 'concentration camps' was removed from the first draft. Focused mainly on future Namibian-German development cooperation, a detailed description of events in the former GSWA simply did not seem necessary.[1087] The adopted resolution contained terminology like 'colonial war', 'military campaign', and 'insurgency' – which sounded as if two sides had fought a 'usual' colonial conflict – instead of 'extermination

[1081] H. Melber, '"Wir haben überhaupt nicht über Reparationen gesprochen". Die namibisch-deutschen Beziehungen: Verdrängung oder Versöhnung?', in Zimmerer and Zeller (eds.), *Völkermord in Deutsch-Südwestafrika*, p. 220; Robel, *Verhandlungssache Genozid*, p. 263. The dismissive attitude of Chancellor Helmut Kohl and other representatives of the *Bundesregierung* in the 1990s also motivated the Herero to a legal battle. See: Wolff, *Post-/koloniale Erinnerungsdiskurse*, p. 240.
[1082] 'An den deutschen Völkermord in Afrika denken', *FAZ* (8 August 2004).
[1083] E.g. 'Schröder entdeckt Afrika', *Der Spiegel* (15 January 2004).
[1084] D. Johnson, 'Koloniale Amnesie', *TAZ* (17 January 2004).
[1085] Kössler, 'La Fin d'une Amnésie?', p. 59. This holds true for speakers from all parties (SPD, Greens, CDU/CSU, FDP). The resolution passed with FDP and CDU/CSU abstaining (due to its sudden introduction). See: 'Plenarprotokoll 15/114, Stenografischer Bericht', *Deutscher Bundestag* (Berlin, 17 June 2004), pp. 114-119 (10428B – 10428B).
[1086] 'Drucksache 15/3329', *Deutscher Bundestag* (16 June 2004), p. 1. This document was discussed in parliament the following day. See also: 'Plenarprotokoll 15/114', p. 118 (10428B).
[1087] Robel, *Verhandlungssache Genozid*, pp. 277-281.

war' or 'extermination campaign'.[1088] The wording sharply contrasted with the general belief about what kind of conflict it had been: an existential struggle and a genocidal war.

In the centenary debate, there was no denying that it had all started with the Herero Uprising and the murder of 123 German settlers.[1089] However, it was widely believed that the Herero had not had much of a choice: the Herero Uprising was understood as an existential struggle.[1090] Oftentimes, articles and broadcasts included a one-liner such as:

> On 12 January 1904, the rebellion of the Herero against German colonial rule began (...) [A] proud cattle-herding people felt their existence threatened as the Germans took ever larger vast territories from them.[1091]

In a radio broadcast on the eve of the 100th anniversary of the start of the Herero Uprising, German listeners heard Bishop Kameeta argue that it had not been an 'uprising', which sounded as if it had been merely rebellion. The host confirmed that the Herero had not been concerned with "individual skirmishes or regional successes", but with claiming the land necessary for their survival as farmers and cattle breeders.[1092]

Moreover, it was regularly pointed out that the Herero had not stood a chance against a modern military power like Wilhelmine Germany.[1093] A military historian at the *Hamburg Institute for Social Research* stated in a radio interview in February 2003 that it had not been a symmetrical war between powers of approximately equal strength, but an asymmetrical war in which the means of power had been distributed extremely unequally.[1094] On the 100th anniversary day of the battle of Waterberg, the *Deutsche Welle* reported how "[i]n the area around the Waterberg, the Herero were encircled by the German soldiers. The pastoral people had no chance against the machine guns of modern times."[1095]

[1088] *Ibid*., pp. 276-277.
[1089] E.g. M. Salewski (historian) in: 'Fehlendes Unrechtsbewußtsein'.
[1090] E.g.: 'Die Demokratie hat sich rückwärts entwickelt' (radio, broad. NDR, 8 January 2004); *RadioWissen* (radio, 27 June 2005).
[1091] E.g. 'Die Demokratie hat sich rückwärts entwickelt' (radio, broad. NDR, 8 January 2004).
[1092] 'Erinnern und für die Zukunft lernen' (radio, 11 January 2004).
[1093] E.g. *SWR Extra: Afrika* (radio, 30 December 2003).
[1094] D. Walter in: *SWR 2 Forum* (radio, 18 February 2003).
[1095] *DW Journal* [7 am] (TV, 11 August 2004).

Besides resorting to concealing terminology and avoiding calling it what it had been, namely a genocide, members of the German *Bundestag* were tempted to sweeping generalisations about how European colonial powers had all got their hands dirty. Even though the *Namibia Resolution* rejected any relativisation of the injustice done by comparisons with other colonial powers, a member of the SPD brought up in plenary debate that "[t]he actions of the imperial colonial troops, like those of other colonial powers, were characterised by what historians describe as a racist mindset."[1096]

In the run-up to Wieczorek-Zeul's visit, there was no doubt as to what was (not) going to happen. Foreign Minister Fischer and parliament stuck to the official government policy since reunification: 'special historical responsibility' yes, 'compensation-relevant apologies' no. Shortly before the August remembrance ceremony, Wieczorek-Zeul herself would affirm that Germany felt a special responsibility towards Namibia and indicated that the Federal Republic would increase its support.[1097]

German dignitaries explained the government's position. German ambassador in Namibia Wolfgang Massing stressed that "[w]e made clear again and again how much we regret what happened back then", and that avoiding the word 'apology' was something "purely legal".[1098] In a telephone interview two days before the Waterberg commemoration, public prosecutor Uschi Eid confirmed that the government's restraint was about money.[1099] Be that as it may, colonial-apologetic tendencies in *Bundesregierung* and *Bundestag* alike cannot all be explained by fear of compensation claims.

[1096] 'Plenarprotokoll 15/114', p. 114 (10424C).
[1097] *Weltspiegel Afrika* (radio, 11 August 2004). See also: 'Interview mit Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul, SPD, Bundesministerin für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit', dir. *Informationen am Morgen* (radio, broad. Deutschlandradio, 14 August 2004).
[1098] *Tod in der Wüste* (film, 2004).
[1099] *DW Exklusiv* (radio, 12 August 2004).

'Death in the desert' (12 August 2004): Herero and German memorialisation

On the historical date 12 August 2004, the *Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk* (MDR) broadcast a 45-minute TV documentary by Peter Dreckmann, filmmaker and programme director with the broadcast agency, with the telling title *Tod in der Wüste; Kaiser Wilhelms Krieg in Deutsch-Südwestafrika* – or *Death in the desert*. The documentary testified to the terrible suffering of the Herero in the Omaheke desert. A voice-over described the events through archive photos, old maps, images of the arid landscape that was the scene of bitter fighting, preserved eyewitness accounts – with ominous music playing in the background. The voice-over was interspersed with interview clips with German ethnologist Larissa Förster and Alexander Kaputu – a well-known Namibian radio journalist for the Herero service of the *Namibian Broadcasting Corporation* (NBC), influential oral historian of Herero history, and prominent figure within the Herero community.

Tod in der Wüste was about contrasts, between the existential Herero struggle and the German extermination campaign for one thing, and between Herero and German memorialisation for another. Förster described how in August 1904, the suppression of the uprising had finally developed into a targeted genocide.[1100] The documentary also demonstrated how the events of 1904-1908 were still very present for the Herero in present-day Namibia.

Förster and Kaputu educated documentary viewers about the traditional poems and stories Herero would tell each other, whenever they got together – stories about "expulsion, death, hunger and torture" that were being passed on from generation to generation.[1101] Förster gave an example: "[T]here is a line of verse that is told that the women gave the breast to the men instead of the babies so that the men would survive to fight".[1102] A Namibian journalist in the documentary confirmed that he was told a modified version: "(…) many women lay dead on the ground, (…), but their children were still alive. They were sucking on their breasts."[1103] The documentary film also played surviving eyewitness accounts, which included another telling anecdote:

[1100] See also Förster in: *SWR 2 Forum* (radio, 18 February 2003).
[1101] *Tod in der Wüste* (film, 2004).
[1102] *Ibid*.
[1103] *Ibid*.

> When they came to a sand well that had run out of water, there were dead people and dead cattle on top of each other. (…) They opened their friend's stomach and drank the water. They had no other choice.[1104]

Without eyewitnesses on either side still alive – unlike in the French and Dutch post-imperial memory irruptions around the turn of the century –, the brutality of the German troops and the suffering of the opposing side were illustrated exclusively anecdotally and metaphorically in the centenary debate, like in *Tod in der Wüste*, with the same imagery over and over again.[1105]

On the historic dates 11 and 12 August 2004, other German media also noted that the Herero, unlike the Germans, cultivated a very lively tradition of remembrance. It was not just the strong oral tradition described by Förster and Kaputu, and it was nothing new. Krüger pointed out that the annual public commemoration in Okahandja had begun as early as the mid-1920s.[1106] The *Deutsche Welle* noted that the colonial legacy was "omnipresent" among the Herero, a people that "could not forget".[1107] A Herero in the same broadcast confirmed that, to this day, his people lived with a "[deep] wound from the past".[1108] In another airing that same day, *Deutsche Welle* concluded:

> In Germany, this dark past has long since been forgotten. In Namibia, the former colony of German Southwest Africa, however, the memories of the German occupiers are more vivid than ever.[1109]

The stark contrast had been noted previously in the debate. Shortly before the start of the anniversary year, the SWR noted that "[w]hat has remained a central theme for the Herero to this day, has left no traces in the consciousness of their former main enemy."[1110] At the beginning of 2004, the SZ wrote that the genocide against the Herero had been quickly forgotten – "at least on the German side".[1111] In March, the WDR noted that while in Namibia the memories of the awful war were passed on, German tourists in Namibia were allegedly

[1104] *Ibid*.
[1105] E.g. also in: 'Erinnern und für die Zukunft lernen' (radio, 11 January 2004).
[1106] *Ibid*. See also Krüger in: *SWR 2 Forum* (radio, 18 February 2003).
[1107] *DW Journal* [7 am] (TV, 11 August 2004).
[1108] *Ibid*.
[1109] *Weltspiegel Afrika* (radio, 11 August 2004).
[1110] *SWR Extra: Afrika* (radio, 30 December 2003).
[1111] 'Die Qualen eines vergessenen Volkes'.

unaware of any wrongdoing and would not suffer from feelings of guilt.[1112] However, the disparity seemed preeminently relevant on the eve of the Herero commemoration ceremony.

Reports of how very much the past was still alive for the Herero, like in *Tod in der Wüste*, made it painfully clear just how much the past had been forgotten in Germany, and probably contributed to the general sense in the anniversary year that the *Bundesrepublik* should engage with its colonial past more, and more critically. At this juncture, it should be noted that the contrast with how surviving Herero (i.e. the victim) memorialised the past may have contributed to this infinitely more than the contrast with *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung* by other perpetrators did.

Comparisons to other perpetrators' handling of the past had an ambivalent effect, if any at all. In April 2003, Eckert noticed: "Interest in colonialism, and especially in the question of whether colonial history should also [like in other ex-metropoles] play a greater role in the German case than it is generally given, seems to be growing again in this country."[1113] Most participants in the centenary debate did not seem to think of empire anymore as something only other ex-metropoles had to worry about. It was now time for Germany to deal with its colonial past too, so most people seemed to think. Some few of them contended, the *Bundesrepublik* had to accelerate to keep up with *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung* abroad and to not negatively stand out in an age in which states tended to apologise for past wrongs. The idea of 'keeping up' reared its head again: now, the Federal Republic had to keep up not in acquiring colonies, but in sorting out having had them. In a radio broadcast at the beginning of the anniversary year, for example, the programme's host maintained that Germany fell short in an age of apology:

> During their visits to Africa, American Presidents Clinton and Bush apologised for slavery and the history of the apartheid system in South Africa. Japan has apologised for the abuse of so-called Comfort Women, sex slaves during the Second World War. Germany continues to refuse an official apology for the genocide in its colony of Southwest because of reparations demands.[1114]

[1112] *Scala - Schwerpunkt* (radio, 5 March 2004).
[1113] 'Tod durch Entkräftung'.
[1114] *Studiozeit* (radio, 16 January 2004).

Occasionally, however, the small number of participants in the debate who still felt Germans did not need to work through their colonial past argued that other former empires would have also stopped worrying about it. One reader, who clearly was not aware of post-imperial memory irruptions that had taken place in Western Europe around the turn of the century, wrote in the SZ:

> Do the Belgians (…) still think about their equally cruel colonial policy in the beautiful Congo? And the British (…)? They probably just claim – and use this as an excuse – that they were not the first to destroy their subjects on the Black Continent – the Germans had started it![1115]

These sceptics continued to think of 'self-castigation', a certain eagerness to take on guilt, as typically German. Bishop Keding, for instance, thought "[n]o Englishman is keen to apologise. No Frenchman either. But we Germans, are again only too happy to take the blame."[1116] Those who brought this up did not usually regard the habit as commendable, like Keding in *Tod in der Wüste*.[1117] A reader in the left-leaning *Spiegel*, for instance, believed: "We, the Germans, have a particular way of beating ourselves up for our real or apparent sins. Other colonial powers, of which some were way worse (…) do not do that at all."[1118] A reader in the centre-right FAZ even thought that foreign countries looked at the Germans with pity:

> Oh, how I envy the Spanish, the English, the Dutch, the Belgians, the French and the Americans, who pass over the darkest points of their (colonial) history with enviable unconcern and can only shake their heads at the national masochism of many Germans.[1119]

A press review demonstrates that German media had not failed to notice heated debates on empire abroad, for example in the Netherlands in 1994-1995 and in France in 2000-2002, at the time of their occurrence.[1120] The evidence found supports Speitkamp's thesis about empire

[1115] 'Opposition der vaterlandslosen Gesellen'.
[1116] *Studiozeit* (radio, 16 January 2004).
[1117] Keding in: *Tod in der Wüste* (film, 2004). He contended that Germans should answer to their history, rather than saying "that was colonialism and that's how people dealt with each other back then."
[1118] 'Mord verjährt nicht'.
[1119] 'Umerziehung im Reiseteil'.
[1120] A keyword search in major German newspapers shows that media took note of Dutch and French post-imperial memory debates in 1994-1995 and 2000-2002, with 35 and 40 articles respectively genuinely aiming to understand what their neighbours were so upset by. For German media on the Dutch debate see: 'Niederlande;

debate in France being one of the reasons for a "public renaissance of empire" in Germany around the turn of the century.[1121] However, when in the centenary empire was finally seen by most as something Germany had to worry about too, foreign irruptions did not come to mind.[1122] In 2004, Germany was one of the last former European metropoles around the turn of the millennium to experience a post-imperial memory irruption. It was probably because debates abroad had not been examples of thorough working through, that German participants who liked to see the country engage with its empire past more critically, did not revert to them. Besides, whether or not other empires had apologised for their colonial atrocities played no role in the debate. Neither examples of heads of state who had apologised (e.g. Queen Elizabeth in New Zealand in 1995), nor of heads of state who had refused to do so (e.g. President Chirac in 2000-2002), or who had done something in between (e.g. Queen Beatrix in Indonesia in 1995), were cited as an argument for or against an apology by Wieczorek-Zeul in Okakarara.

Wieczorek-Zeul's unexpected apology (14 August 2004): persistent concerns about compensation payments

The Herero August centenary commemoration at the Waterberg was looked forward to in the German media with great interest.[1123] It was the anniversary year's pivotal moment. Wieczorek-Zeul's commemoration speech in Okakarara was not the subject of heated public debate, however – as had been the case in the Netherlands, when Queen Beatrix visited Indonesia in 1995. There was no lively discussion on the date of the visit; on why the

SS-Vergleich', *TAZ* (11 June 1994); 'An Poncke Princen scheiden sich in Holland die Geister', *Die Welt* (30 December 1994)'; 'Vergangenheit spaltet die Niederländer', *SZ* (18 January 1995); 'Selbstkritische Diskussionen in den Niederlanden', *FAZ* (4 May 1995); 'Verleugnetes Erbe', *Die Zeit* (18 August 1995). For German media on the French debate see e.g.: 'Europa erinnert sich an seine Verbrechen. In Frankreich und Belgien beginnt eine Debatte um die schmutzige Geschichte der Auflösung der Kolonialreiche', *TAZ* (24 June 2000); 'Französische Generäle erinnern sich. Eine Debatte über Folter im Algerien-Krieg rührt an das Selbstverständnis der Republik', *FAZ* (27 December 2000); 'In Frankreich brechen erneut die Wunden der Vergangenheit auf; Wieder debattiert das Land über Algerien', *Die Welt* (14 May 2001); 'Untergang einer Staatslüge.Vierzig Jahre nach dem Ende des Algerienkriegs: Ein Gespräch mit dem französischen Historiker Pierre Nora über die Wunden der Geschichte', *Die Zeit* (14 March 2002); 'Erinnerung, schweig. Der Algerienkrieg wird in Frankreich noch immer verdrängt', *SZ* (5 July 2002).

[1121] Speitkamp, 'Kolonialdenkmäler', pp. 418-420.

[1122] Among the many newspaper articles reviewed, none in 2004 mentioned specific foreign post-imperial memory irruptions. Only a handful referred more generally to how imperial brutalities had come to the public's attention in ex-metropoles in previous years. See e.g. Axel Kämmerer in: 'Spätfolgen des Imperialismus'.

[1123] For a detailed description of the hour-long ceremony see: Förster, *Postkoloniale Erinnerungslandschaften*, pp. 278-285; W. Nachtwei, 'Gedenken an den Deutsch-Hererokrieg. Hundert Jahre danach Durchbruch für Versöhnung' (16 July 2015), http://nachtwei.de/downloads/gedenken_herero.pdf (12 April 2025).

Bundeskanzler would not attend the ceremony instead;[1124] or fervent public attempts to actively influence the content of Wieczorek-Zeul's speech. Observers had no doubt about what she was (not) going to say: she would certainly refrain from an apology that could be significant to compensation claims.[1125] Not even a few days beforehand was there any uncertainty: the Red-Green government was not ready to apologise officially.[1126]

Until the very last moment, Wieczorek-Zeul rigidly stuck to the *Bundesregierung*'s position. One day before the commemoration ceremony, she stated that her participation in the commemorations "should also contribute to making reconciliation possible through conscious remembrance, which also means that we acknowledge our colonial guilt," but firmly rejected Herero compensation demands nevertheless.[1127] And so, with her speech the next day, she astonished friend and foe alike. Against all odds, and on the verge of tears, Wieczorek-Zeul acknowledged on behalf of Germany:

> A century ago, the oppressors – blinded by colonialist fervour – became agents of violence, discrimination, racism and annihilation in Germany's name. The atrocities committed at that time would today be termed genocide – and nowadays a General von Trotha would be prosecuted and convicted. We Germans accept our historical and moral responsibility and the guilt incurred by Germans at that time. And so, in the words of the common Lord's Prayer, I ask you for the forgiveness of our offences and our guilt.[1128]

During her scripted speech, her voice almost cracked with emotion.[1129]

[1124] There were several reasons – both formal and informal – why Wieczoreck-Zeul, rather than Schröder attended. Public Prosecutor Uschi Eid stated that a visit by the *Bundeskanzler*, as the highest-ranking official, to the Herero commemoration could undermine Namibia's efforts to unify its diverse ethnic groups by creating the perception of a special relationship with the Herero. See Eid in: *DW Exklusiv* (radio, 12 August 2004). Moreover, Wiezoreck-Zeul was able to promote reconciliation and Germany's responsibility without the same political sensitivity that would have surrounded Schröder. The latter, facing a tight re-election campaign, carefully avoided any politically divisive actions on sensitive historical issues. Whatever the decisive reason was, it certainly caused no stir that Wieczoreck-Zeul attended in Schröder's place: in her capacity as Minister for Development, she had the diplomatic mandate and responsibility for addressing matters related to Germany's historical ties with former colonies.
[1125] E.g. *Redaktion Hintergrund* (radio, 13 August 2004); Zeller in: *SWR 2 Forum* (radio, 13 January 2004); Chief editor of the German *Allgemeine Zeitung* in Namibia in: *Weltspiegel Afrika* (radio, 11 August 2004).
[1126] E.g. *ZeitZeichen* (radio, 11 August 2004).
[1127] *Redaktion Hintergrund* (radio, 13 August 2004).
[1128] *Weltspiegel Afrika* (radio, 16 August 2004).
[1129] *Redaktion Hintergrund* (radio, broad. BR, 15 August 2004).

The Herero were pleasantly surprised, German media informed. The *Deutsche Welle* reported from Windhoek how the Herero struggled to believe what had happened, the women "dancing for joy".[1130] Herero being moved to tears demonstrated that the minister had set something in motion.[1131] In the days that followed, interviews with Herero revealed that it had mainly been the German minister's sincerity that made the difference. They had noticed Wieczorek-Zeul's voice trembling in the middle of the speech.[1132] To them, "it was extremely important that she apologised, but even more so how she did it".[1133] Previous, reluctant apologies from German officials had not come "from the heart".[1134]

The sincerity of Wieczorek-Zeul's apology inspired Herero to leniency. Caught off guard, Riruako had to throw his whole speech around. He quickly crossed out the usual passages in which he demanded precisely what the minister had just done. The paramount chief did not hesitate for a moment and accepted her apology. Riruako even assured that his legal team would not pursue the billion-dollar lawsuit filed against the *Bundesregierung*. "Why punish the repentant?", he asked.[1135] When Wieczorek-Zeul, against all expectations, offered apologies, things thus suddenly seemed to take a turn for the better.

However, at a press conference in Windhoek a few days later, Riruako qualified his statement. German media quoted him saying that it would be "naive to assume that a verbal utterance alone could satisfy the desire of our people", and that Wieczorek-Zeul's apology was "not nearly enough."[1136] He clarified that he could only "suspend" his legal action against the *Bundesrepublik* if the dialogue with the Germans would bring decisive progress.[1137] Riruako demanded some kind of "Marshall-Plan", a concrete agreement with the federal government, and a dialogue to "complete unfinished business" – and everybody knew reparation payments

[1130] *Weltspiegel Afrika* (radio, 16 August 2004).
[1131] *Redaktion Hintergrund* (radio, 15 August 2004).
[1132] 'Namibia Besuch', dir. HR (radio, broad. HR, 16 August 2004).
[1133] Herero testimonial in: *Ibid*.
[1134] Herero testimonial in: *SWR Extra: Afrika* (radio, 30 December 2003).
[1135] 'Namibia Besuch' (radio, broad. HR, 16 August 2004).
[1136] 'Wieczorek-Zeul begeistert Namibia', *TAZ* (21 August 2004); 'Herero fordern großzügige finanzielle Wiedergutmachung von Berlin', *Agence France Presse* (19 August 2004).
[1137] 'Wieczorek-Zeul begeistert Namibia'. He said this, although in fact there was no pending lawsuit against the German state at the time. Pending was only the appeal against the 2003 dismissal of the Herero case against several German companies (ultimately rejected in November 2004). The claim against the German state had not been pursued on appeal.

were meant.[1138] Riruaku and the Herero hoped the apology would be the start of concrete joint projects, and a reconciliation commission was to be set up.[1139]

People in the metropole were equally surprised. Nothing had indicated that Wieczorek-Zeul would deviate from the official government line in Okakarara. The *Deutsche Welle* called her apology "completely unexpected".[1140] As Wieczorek-Zeul herself, at the beginning of her visit to Namibia, had already firmly rejected Herero demands for compensation, there was speculation about why she had offered an apology that would possibly be 'compensation relevant'. Had it been a calculated risk? Had she speculated that an apology would mean more to the Herero than compensation?[1141] And had she seemed right at first, immediately after her speech, when Herero representatives suggested dropping the case, and had it turned out to be a miscalculation after all, when Riruako watered down this promise? Or had she got lost in translation? In German, the religious phrasing *'vergib uns unsere Schuld'* ('forgive us our trespasses') was harmless under international law, but Wieczorek-Zeul had simply translated '*Schuld*' with 'guilt' – a potentially legally disastrous term.

In any case, and despite other diluting formulations in her speech – the emphasis on Von Trotha and German settlers deflected responsibility from the German state – she seemed to have been personally sincere.[1142] 'Red Heidi', as she was called because of her hair colour and her left-wing position in the SPD, was considered a passionate, combative, stubborn and assertive politician. She fought against what she considered injustice, and Africa was especially close to her heart. The trained teacher and daughter of a greengrocer was protestant and described her Christian conviction as her "guiding principle".[1143]

In Germany, concerns about the financial implications of Wieczorek-Zeul's words arose almost immediately. At first, religious wording was thought to protect against compensation claims,

[1138] 'Herero fordern großzügige finanzielle Wiedergutmachung von Berlin'; *Weltspiegel Afrika* (radio, 16 August 2004).
[1139] 'Namibia Besuch' (radio, broad. HR, 16 August 2004).
[1140] *Weltspiegel Afrika* (radio, 16 August 2004).
[1141] E.g. 'Mutig in Namibia', *SZ* (16 August 2004). See also: *Weltspiegel Afrika* (radio, 16 August 2004).
[1142] For a deconstruction of the apology text see: Bentley, 'The German apology', pp. 79-81.
[1143] H. Wieczorek-Zeul, *Gerechtigkeit und Frieden sind Geschwister* (Marburg, 2018), p. 11. For character sketches see: 'BMHWZ', *Der Spiegel* (7 June 2009); 'Die rote Kämpferin: Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul', *Deutscher Bundestag* (29 April 2013), https://www.bundestag.de/webarchiv/textarchiv/2013/44315973_wege_aus_politik_zeul-212024 (9 April 2025).

but soon doubts arose.[1144] Two days after the ceremony, the host of *Weltspiegel Afrika* stressed that it could not "be ruled out that after this appearance of the minister in Namibia, the *Bundestag* will soon have to deal with Herero demands again."[1145] His guest, Matthias Basedau of the Institute of African Studies in Hamburg could not yet foresee whether "a potential mistranslation (…) now means that a new chapter must be opened in compensation payments."[1146]

Especially right-wing critics were afraid that Germany would pay dearly for her apology. The conservative *Die Welt* wrote: "For good reason Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer, (...) and the German *Bundestag* had previously refrained from formulations that could have had legal consequences".[1147] It feared that Wieczorek-Zeul's apology would open "a new chapter in the legal dispute".[1148] The development policy spokesperson of the CDU/CSU parliamentary group expressed his concerns in parliament about how, after Wieczorek-Zeul's "expensive emotional outburst", government and German companies would soon face claims of four billion euros.[1149] The German-speaking *Allgemeine Zeitung* in Windhoek criticised Wieczorek-Zeul's performance critically for the same reason:

> [T]he Social Democrats should not be surprised if the Herero take Minister Wieczorek-Zeul's words as a welcome template for their lawsuit against the Federal Republic of Germany. The ice on this sensitive German-Namibian issue has become thinner after the minister's appearance [at the Waterberg].[1150]

Left-leaning media, in contrast, were nevertheless largely positive. The minister's speech was mostly seen as an important step towards reconciliation. The Africa editor of the TAZ called it "a big step forward in the relationship between the Germans and the hardest hit victims of

---

[1144] 'Wieczorek-Zeul entschuldigt sich bei Herero für Gräueltaten', *SZ* (16 August 2004).
[1145] *Weltspiegel Afrika* (radio, 16 August 2004).
[1146] *Ibid*.
[1147] 'Namibia', *Die Welt* (16 August 2004).
[1148] *Ibid*.
[1149] 'Randnotiz, Hau Ruck', *Frankfurter Rundschau* (20 August 2004); 'CDU/CSU im Abseits', *TAZ* (21 August 2004). Wieczorek's speech was occasionally also criticised for other reasons, with e.g. one reader in *Die Welt* questioning who gave her the authority to apologise on behalf of the Germans, pointing out that it was not the people but aristocratic officers under the German emperor responsible for the massacre. See 'Vergebung - doch in wessen Namen?', *Die Welt* (17 August 2004).
[1150] Quoted in: 'Blick in die Presse', *SZ* (28 August 2004). The German settler community also pointed out that while Germany acknowledged its role in the 1904 war, the Herero's shared responsibility (including starting the war with farmer killings and conflicts over land and cattle) was overlooked. They argued that true reconciliation requires both sides to take responsibility. See 'Vergebung - doch in wessen Namen?'

German colonial rule".[1151] A reader of the SZ thought Wieczorek-Zeul had taken "a courageous step", removing an obstacle that continued to strain relations.[1152] Another reader, of the local left-liberal daily newspaper *Frankfurter Rundschau* compared it to Willy Brandt's prostration.[1153] When, in November 2004, the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland awarded Wieczorek-Zeul and Bishop Kameeta the Peter-Beier-Prize for their peace and reconciliation efforts, the TAZ headlined: *Segen für die 'rote Heidi'* (praise for red Heidi).[1154]

Her apology even met with general acclaim from throughout the *Bundestag*. In a parliamentary hearing in early September, she said about her speech in Okakarara: "Dear colleagues, (...) It was time, I think, to do [and say] the right and necessary thing."[1155] She received the endorsement of governing parties SPD (her own party) and the Green Party, but also of opposition parties FDP (Free Democratic Party) and CDU/CSU. Wieczorek-Zeul concluded: "I am sure, your reaction just now confirmed it: I was able to say what I said at the commemoration ceremony at the Waterberg with the approval of you[,] the German *Bundestag*."[1156] Nevertheless, out of a continuing fear of having to pay compensation, the German government did not officially endorse her position, dismissing it as a personal statement.[1157]

Conclusion

After the 2001 Herero lawsuit had awoken a broad German public to the colonial past, the centenary of the start of the Herero and Nama War just a few years later saw public debate on empire of unprecedented magnitude. The centenary debate was about the reprehensibility of, and apology and reparations for the genocide of the Herero and Nama people in former GSWA, and about how the Holocaust might have originated from it. It was a pre-eminently national and predominantly self-critical debate, yet with persistent colonial-apologetic tendencies and significant pushback.

[1151] 'Der erste Schritt zu wirklicher Versöhnung', *TAZ* (16 August 2004).
[1152] 'Mutig in Namibia'.
[1153] 'Leserbriefe', *Frankfurter Rundschau* (1 September 2004).
[1154] 'Segen für die "rote Heidi"'.
[1155] 'Plenarprotokoll 15/122, Stenografischer Bericht', *Deutscher Bundestag* (Berlin, 8 September 2004), p. 100 (11174C-D).
[1156] *Ibid*.
[1157] Kössler, *Negotiating the Past*, p. 257.

Around the turn of the millennium, Herero demands were heard loud and clear in the *Bundesrepublik*. The response to them was something the Germans settled between themselves: there was no community of migrants from the former colony in the ex-metropole, the Namibian government stayed out of it, and foreign memory entrepreneurs and *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung* in other former empires did not play a significant role in the debate. There was much attention paid to the suffering of the Herero (who did not have to compete with stories about German suffering, like in the Dutch and French debates), but getting to the bottom of German perpetratorship was at least as important.

Due to the absence of eyewitnesses one hundred years on, the German debate was mainly of an intellectual nature – as opposed to the more emotional debates in France and the Netherlands – and the dividing line not a generational one (as had been the case in 1966 in reaction to *Heia Safari*), but more a political one. Again, left-wing media and parties generally tended to be more critical of the past than right-leaning ones – although *Bundestag* and *Bundesregierung* would adopt a unanimous position in the matter of reparations, irrespective of their party-political hue.

Moral comparisons, which had always been part and parcel of German empire memory, played an important part in the centenary debate. The reprehensibility of German conduct between 1904 and 1908 was assessed in comparison with the record of the Herero and other European imperial powers. These comparisons contributed greatly to the overall self-critical reading of the past in the centenary year. For the most part, comparisons with and connections to others were incriminating.

The Herero Uprising was understood as an existential struggle. There was no doubt that the ensuing war had been asymmetrical, that the Herero had not stood a chance, and that what followed the Battle of Waterberg had gone way beyond self-defence. There was consensus that Von Trotha's expulsion order had *de facto* been an extermination order; and that what had taken place had been a racial conflict and a genocide. Even if Germany had been 'last in, first out', it had acquired a 'place in the sun'. The prevailing view crystallising in the centenary was that the German Empire had been as evil as (some) other colonial powers. Some authoritative figures in the debate even maintained that Germany had actually been worse than others, and that German colonial violence had been brutal even measured by the standards of the time, and called the attempted extermination of the Herero and the Nama (one of) the darkest chapters of European colonial history in Africa. The generally accepted historical narrative in turn-of-the-

century Germany thus ran from an existential struggle and an asymmetrical war to a genocide with disastrous consequences for Herero and Nama tribes.

Moreover, many participants forged a connection from Windhoek to Auschwitz. Some thought genocide in GSWA had been a 'taboo breach', having paved the way for the Shoah some three decades later, and without which the Holocaust would have been inconceivable. Others understood GSWA at the beginning of the 20th century as a blueprint, serving as a model, template, or 'laboratory' at the time of the *Endlösung* or pointed at continuity in key players, who had been involved in both early- and mid-20th century mass extermination. It was common sense that they were chapters of the same book. Debate in 2004 was mainly about how exactly colonial genocide and the Holocaust were connected. Whereas claims of a direct connection sparked controversy, it was largely uncontroversial to claim that colonial genocide and the Holocaust had been connected somehow.

The general sense in the anniversary year was that Germans should engage with their colonial past more, and more critically. Most contributors did not seem to think of empire as other ex-metropoles' burden. Moral comparisons contributed to a rather critical assessment of the current state of memory affairs. Some contributors bemoaned the lack of progress that had been made in sorting out empire past due to the preoccupation with the Second World War; and felt Germany fell short in an era in which perpetrators apologised for past wrongs. Comparisons to the lively Herero remembrance of the 1904-1908 events made it painfully clear how little the past was still alive in Germany. The Herero community compared their cause with that of the Jewish people and their moral appeal struck a nerve in Germany. Some stakeholders in the debate believed it would not be right to apply double standards. There were voices favouring a 'compensation-relevant' apology, saying that responsibility went beyond development aid, which was occasionally compared to indulgences.

In the end, SPD minister Wieczorek-Zeul apologised to the Herero in the name of the first (and only) 'red-green' coalition (of the Social Democratic Party and the Green Party) in the history of the *Bundesrepublik* (1998-2005). There seems to be some truth in Bentley's observation that "a left-leaning government (…) enabled a space where, unlike in previous decades, colonial introspection and apologies were possible."[1158] The reception of her apology was fairly positive. At a conference in Bremen at the end of the centenary year 2004, Wieczorek-Zeul

[1158] Bentley, 'The German apology', p. 93.

looked back, explaining: "I had the feeling that in Namibia, but also here in Germany, many people are simply happy that I said this because they also feel relieved themselves."[1159]

Since the mid-2000s, several postcolonial associations have been created in different German cities (for example *Berlin Postkolonial*) that endeavour to critically reappraise regional colonial history and decolonise the public space, for instance through 'anticolonial guided tours' and street-renaming campaigns. Change was not limited to the increased visibility of remembrance in public spaces. Since 2004, the *Bundestag* was steadily preoccupied with German colonial history and left-leaning parties pushed for self-critical memory politics. On the initiative of *Die Linke* (Left Party), material compensation for the Herero and Nama was debated in the German parliament for the first time in 2007 – which was significant in and of itself. The same goes for motions by *Die Linke*, the SPD and *Die Grünen* (Green Party) that put the recognition of mass crimes in GSWA as 'genocide', official apologies, and reparations back on the agenda in 2012.[1160] In 2018, one hundred years after the end of German Empire, the *Aufarbeitung* of this history was mentioned in a coalition agreement for the first time – in that of Merkel's fourth government (March 2018 – December 2021). Governing parties CDU/CSU and SPD stated that working through Germany's colonial history was "part of the basic democratic consensus in Germany" and commissioned a working group to develop a policy regarding objects from former colonies in German archives.

Robel rightly stressed that, considering how persistently mass violence by imperial Germany had been overlooked for decades, the historical-political developments in and as a result of 2004 were "almost revolutionary".[1161] Without disregarding the importance of later impulses – most importantly the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide (2015) that induced the *Bundestag* president (CDU) and the foreign ministry to refer to the Herero and Nama genocide as well, and President Macron's new restitution policy of African cultural heritage (2017) that increased the pressure on the German government to finally push ahead with the commemoration and remembrance of German colonialism – the development towards more self-critical memory politics carried back to the 2004 anniversary year. [1162]

[1159] 'Kongress in Bremen: 100 Jahre Herero-Krieg', dir. RB (radio, broad. RB, 19 November 2004).
[1160] Robel, *Verhandlungssache Genozid*, pp. 265-267, 304.
[1161] *Ibid*., pp. 265-266.
[1162] On later impulses see: E. Pape, 'Postcolonial debates in Germany – An Overview', *African Sociological Review*, 21/2 (2017), p. 3; 'Drucksache 19/7735', *Deutscher Bundestag* (13 February 2019), pp. 1-2.

Despite all this, however, exculpatory voices and tendencies (whether consciously or not) persisted even after a century had passed. Even though the vast majority was (more or less) critical of the events of 1904-1908 and how they had been dealt with, the centenary was not just an opportunity for self-critical introspection. Contributors to the centenary debate consistently framed German colonialism as 'belated' and 'brief'; were tempted to infer from the (relatively short) duration of the German empire, its alleged (minor) significance; and the persistent focus on duration sometimes distracted from the (violent) nature of the colonial project. Prior to Schröder's Africa visit at the outset of the centenary year, even the *Bundesregierung* issued a statement from which it seems that it thought of Germany as unburdened in Africa. Some participants focused on how European colonialism had been inherently violent; stressed that what had happened in Namibia had in any case not been singular; argued that all had wreaked havoc; or even maintained that the German Empire had not been as cruel as other (or succeeding) colonial powers. The idea that Germany had made for a superior colonial power, as had long been cultivated in German post-colonial memory, was still not entirely over and done with.

Even one hundred years later, a small number of participants in the debate felt Germans did not need to work through their colonial past. Sometimes they advanced as an argument that other former empires would have also stopped worrying about it. Some mocked 'self-castigation', a certain eagerness to take on guilt, as something typically German; or asked for sympathy on the backlog of work on German Empire, for the *Third Reich* had been 'enough history for one generation' and already a 'very large and heavy cross to bear'. In its Namibia Resolution the *Bundestag* used concealing terminology and skirted the question of official apologies; and the *Bundesregierung* was not under significant pressure (neither by the German public, nor by the Namibian government) to reconsider its official policy mantra that went: 'development aid yes, compensation no'. Perpetuating beliefs on the singularity of the Holocaust and the near-sacred status of Jewish victims and pragmatic concerns of the far-reaching financial implications of holding the *Aufarbeitung* of the Shoah as a standard, weighed in heavily.

When Wieczoreck-Zeul, against all odds and off her own bat, issued a religious apology, there were immediate worries about how costly her emotional outburst would be, and not even a 'red-green' government formally supported her. There was even something selfish about Wieczorek-Zeul's apology. Even if the minister may have been personally sincere in this case,

the symbolism, performativity and religious framing of her apology put the moral burden on the Herero, who were placed in the position of having to grant forgiveness, and which disavowed a material responsibility of the German state.

After the centenary debate, not all suddenly changed. Albrecht pointed out that media events such as the centenary year in Germany "had the potential to function as a welcome wake-up call for broader audiences", but soon after, many things seemed to be back to square one (see *Graph 3.1*).[1163] Public attention proved fleeting and the consensus about a need to self-critically engage with German empire not so enduring. The German public slipped back into old habits and seemed hardly interested in the colonial past. Already in 2005, the TAZ noted:

> One hundred years after the Herero uprising against the German occupiers and their bloody downfall, Development Minister Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul asked for forgiveness on site – but the past in sub-Saharan Africa does not play a major role in Germany's collective memory.[1164]

In a 2008 documentary film, the existence of some 300 Namibian skulls in Germany was revealed, which, according to sociologist Reinhard Kössler, "helped to sensitise sections of the German public to the issue to a larger extent than had been the case before."[1165] However, in 2010 Zeller observed a "widespread lack of interest among the broader public, if not an enduring colonial nostalgia that goes hand in hand with mechanisms of suppression" and concluded that "Germany's colonial past is still largely bound to a simplified interpretation that swings between self-accusation and apologia".[1166] The handover of skulls to a visiting Namibian delegation in 2011 did not cause a wider public debate.[1167]

[1163] Albrecht, 'German multiculturalism' p. 39.
[1164] 'In der Dunkelkammer', *TAZ* (11 November 2005).
[1165] *Koloniales Erbe*, FAKT, dir. M. Frenzel (Documentary, broad. ARD, 21 July 2008). Kössler, *Negotiating the Past*, p. 284.
[1166] Zeller, 'Decolonisation of the Public Space?', pp. 76, 77-78.
[1167] S. Goebel, 'Die Konstruktion neokolonialen Wissens in Deutschen Dokumentarfilmen über die Deutsche Geschichte', *Przegla D Zachodni*, 350/1 (2014), p. 209.

Moreover, the self-critical consensus from the centenary year was not enough to change the political dial. Wieczorek-Zeul's apology did not set off a significant shift in official policy. It did not materialise in terms of reparations. Almost a year after the apology made, in June 2005, reconciliation was still a long way off. Riruako was deeply unsatisfied with the progress made since Wieczorek-Zeul's apology. Ten months had passed, and the dialogue with the Herero still had not started; the *Bundesregierung* sought to exert influence on who would participate in the said dialogue from the Namibian side; and the 20 million Euros (for development and reconciliation for a period of ten years) that Wieczorek-Zeul announced in May 2005 had not been previously discussed with the victims. Riruako now reverted to comparisons with compensation for Jewish people. He said he was sure that the German government would have behaved differently "if the people killed during the 1904-1908 war had been white" and recalled that German reparations for the crimes against the Jews had been agreed with Israel through years of negotiations.[1168]

In 2010, colonialism still played a marginal role in the German state's official commemoration policy.[1169] Subsequent federal governments held on to rhetoric that tried to avoid material compensation, which was mainly down to right-leaning parties CDU/CSU and FDP. In successive resolutions (2007, 2008, 2012), the *Bundestag* refused to recognise the events of 1904-1908 as a 'genocide' (the reason given was that the 1948 Genocide Convention did not apply retroactively) and cited existing development aid as proof of the historical and moral responsibility already taken on.[1170] The German government showed itself largely indifferent to Herero and Nama grievances at the handover of the skulls (2011), and threatened to withdraw multimillion-dollar bilateral agreements should the gesture (of returning the skulls) be used to demand compensation.[1171]

[1168] 'Herero-Führer klagt Dialog mit Berlin ein', *TAZ* (6 June 2005).
[1169] Zeller, 'Decolonisation of the Public Space?', p. 77.
[1170] Müller, 'The German-Herero War in Politics and Textbooks', p. 56; J. Zimmerer, 'Der erste Völkermord des 20. Jahrhunderts', in Deutsches Historisches Museum (ed.), *Deutscher Kolonialismus: Fragmente seiner Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Darmstadt, 2016), pp. 141-145; Robel, *Verhandlungssache* Genozid, pp. 270-271.
[1171] The German government showed a lack of official involvement in the repatriation of Namibian remains, with no Foreign Office representative at the airport to greet the Namibian delegation and no high-ranking officials present during the skull handover. Additionally, Germany refused to sign a formal memorandum of understanding, opting instead for a less binding joint political declaration. See: V. Shigwedha, 'The return of Herero and Nama bones from Germany: the victims' struggle for recognition and recurring genocide memories in Namibia', in J. Dreyfus and E. Anstett (eds.), *Human remains in society: curation and exhibition in the aftermath of genocide and mass-violence* (Manchester, 2016), pp. 202, 204.

Herero and Nama representatives filed another compensation lawsuit in 2017, and would again invoke Germany's other violent past.[1172] In 2020, Jeremiah Garsha noted that: "Little progress has been made since 2004 regarding reconciliation and reparations."[1173] In 2021, Angela Merkel's government officially recognised the Herero and Nama genocide, and agreed to pay 1.1 billion Euros as 'a gesture of reconciliation' – that is, no legally binding 'reparations', to avoid setting a legal precedent.

[1172] The renewed class action explicitly linked the Shark Island concentration camps to Auschwitz. In their pursuit of reparations, the Herero and Nama also invoked the concept of *Wiedergutmachung*. Riruako's successor expressed that the Herero still favoured out-of-court settlements, similar to those pursued by Jewish organisations. See: Rausch, 'We're equal to the Jews', pp. 425-426.
[1173] Garsha, 'Expanding Vergangenheitsbewältigung?', p. 51.

Conclusion

During the long turn of the century (c. 1995-2005), there were post-imperial memory irruptions – exceptionally heated and broad public debates in former metropoles about episodes of brutal colonial violence that were regarded as the nadir of national colonial history – throughout Northwest Europe. This study set out with the initial question of whether these irruptions could be considered a transnational phenomenon, prompted by the striking simultaneity with which similar debates emerged across the region. However, as demonstrated by in-depth case studies of memory irruptions in the Netherlands (1994-1995), France (2000-2002) and Germany (2004), these discussions unfolded predominantly within national contexts.

As supposed, numerous political, socio-economic and cultural precipitating factors combined – amongst which allegedly new migration from former colonies and heightened visibility of colonial immigrants – might have contributed to the resurgence of empire around the turn of the millennium, and may explain the co-incidence of post-imperial memory irruptions in the region. However, the present thesis finds that contributors did not draw on a shared context. They did not use post-imperial memory irruptions as a vehicle to (also) address other contemporary issues, such as immigration and integration. Moreover, there was some sense of 'if not now, when?', especially in the German centenary debate, but no evidence was found of a strong mood of millennial reckoning.

Neither did post-imperial memory irruptions in this time and place trigger similar debates in neighbouring countries in immediate response. There was no cross-fertilisation or transnational spill-over, with memory irruptions happening in a chain reaction. This study provides empirical substantiation to Rothermund's earlier assertion that they were barely noticed abroad. Through rigorous source-based investigation, this study demonstrates that participants in the three debates under scrutiny were generally unaware of, or uninterested in empire debate in other ex-metropoles. This was more conspicuous in the French and German cases – at which time there were and had been several post-imperial memory irruptions in neighbouring countries – than in the Dutch case, which was at the very start of post-imperial memory irruptions in turn-of-the-millennium Northwest Europe.

Instead, trigger events in particularly explosive and distinct national contexts seem to have been of immediate and paramount importance. Besides, none of the three case studies saw significant participation by memory entrepreneurs from neighbouring ex-metropoles. Even if

connected in much more subtle ways (discussed further below), post-imperial memory irruptions in Northwest Europe around the turn of the millennium were, above all, nationally driven discussions between domestic actors. They were, at best, quasi-simultaneous, but largely disconnected. This is, in itself, a noteworthy conclusion. While some may find it unsurprising that debates concerning national pasts tend to remain confined within national frameworks, their national character cannot simply be assumed, but deserves thorough investigation and — in the face of clear chronological convergence and a shared European history of colonialism — deserves emphasis.

Now, having explored the *occurrence* of the phenomenon and its (lacking) transnational dimensions, this study offers particularly rich insights into its (national) *manifestation(s)*. By comparing national articulations of the phenomenon, the subsequent comprehensive comparative analysis contributes to a better understanding of what such debates were essentially about and helps define its key features.

As an initial comparative observation, it is noteworthy that the region witnessed debates of varying dimensions, with different groups of players debating various aspects of imperial violence. In all these respects, debates in the Netherlands and France were much more similar and differed from the one in Germany. The German centenary debate was not as voluminous (in terms of publicity), nor as diverse (in terms of participants), nor as multifaceted (in terms of issues of debate). Dissimilarities were primarily due to disparate historical facts and the different lengths of time that had elapsed, as well as the different amounts of memory work that had been done previously.

Players

By the turn of the millennium, nearly five decades had passed since the Indonesian and Algerian Independence wars, and it had been twice as long since the Herero Uprising. Unlike in neighbouring former metropoles, no eyewitnesses or contemporaries were left alive at the time of the German centenary. Veterans, who were very vocal in the Dutch and French debates, had long since passed away. The much larger temporal distance to the Herero and Nama genocide influenced not only the composition of participants, but also public participation, the role played by media, and the standing of historians in the public debate. Because the German colonial empire was such a distant past, the general public was less involved in the public debate than

in the Netherlands and France. Readers' letters did appear in newspapers, but there were hardly any television or radio formats in which 'ordinary Germans' participated – as was the case in the Dutch and French debates around the turn of the century, and as had also been the case in the 1966/67 debate on *Heia Safari*. Moreover, whereas Dutch and French media were actors in and of themselves (fact-finding and trying to steer the debate in a certain direction), German media were primarily occupied with familiarising the public with the historical facts: one hundred years later, it could not be assumed that the general population had any knowledge of the events of the time. Lastly, without eyewitness testimonials, historians were the sole authority in the centenary debate. As a result, the German debate was more intellectual in nature. In political controversies about the past in neighbouring countries, historians may have traditionally played very different roles – consensus builders in the Netherlands and challengers of the establishment in France –, but at least expert opinions existed alongside eyewitness testimonies in both cases.

In addition, because the (post)colonial facts were decisively different, a Namibian immigrant community was non-existent in the German centenary debate. Germany had never experienced noteworthy postcolonial migration because its colonies had been handed over to and controlled by Britain, France, Belgium and South Africa for (more) than half a century. A German settler community made itself heard in the centenary debate 'from over there' instead – as did the Herero and Nama. After Wilhelmine Germany had been stripped of its colonies at the end of the First World War, German settlers had stayed in former GSWA. After the loss of the DEI and French Algeria, in contrast, Dutch and French settlers (the Indo's and Pieds-Noirs) and immigrants from the former colony (Moluccans, Harkis and a large group of ethnic Algerians) had migrated (back) to the ex-metropoles. Incidentally, despite their presence, their voices and particular stories were largely absent (in the Dutch case) or marginalised (in the French case) in millennial debates that were chiefly about the 'dark' collective past: Dutch 'Police Actions' in the DEI and French torture in Algeria.[1174]

[1174] On the role of postcolonial minorities in 21st century debates on empire in Germany and France see also: Albrecht, 'German multiculturalism', pp. 39-40, 52, 55.

No matter what composition of and roles played by participants, post-imperial memory irruptions were a negotiation between them. This study demonstrates that memory irruptions can best be understood as an expression of social memory, which arguably is performative rather than continuously present and "is a site of contestation for a wide range of different interest groups."[1175]

Furthermore, in line with Jeffrey Alexander's social theory on cultural trauma – which explains how trauma is constructed and re-produced in performative speech acts by self-interested carrier groups whose narratives resonate with the wider public – memory irruptions appear to be catalysts and indicators of cultural trauma(tisation).[1176] This study shows how they are dynamic, interactive episodes, subject to circumstantial opportunity and human agency, triggered (un)intentionally in a particular explosive context and driven by the (re)negotiation of memory makers' competing narratives. As the term '*ir*ruptions' suggests, memory does not erupt periodically by force of nature, but rather *in*trudes, enters *into* the public sphere. It should be noted that such a constructivist view of memory irruptions does not mean emotions remain out of it. On the contrary, Alexander rightly noticed that "when social groups do construe events as gravely endangering, suffering becomes a matter of collective concern, cultural worry, social panic, gut-wrenching fear, [and] catastrophic anxiety."[1177]

In the face of the near exhaustion of collective memory studies two decades after its boom, and against the backdrop of its still poor conceptual toolbox, directing focus onto the phenomenon of post-imperial memory irruptions might provide fresh momentum to the field.[1178] Pierre Nora's *lieux de mémoire* have long been canonical in collective memory studies and have also kept postcolonial scholars busy. As sites of memory where historical continuity persists, his concept has been severely criticised, amongst others for neglecting social agency and process.[1179] To study '*irruptions de mémoire'*, if you will, – quintessentially dynamic debates in which human agency plays a key role – is to address this critique.

[1175] Weedon and Jordan, 'Collective memory', p. 144; Olick, *In the House of the Hangman*, p. 20.
[1176] Alexander, *Trauma,* pp. 4, 26, 28.
[1177] Alexander, *Trauma*, p. 3.
[1178] A. Erll and A. Nünning (eds.), *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* (Berlin, 2008), pp. 2-3; E. Boesen, 'Peripheral Memories – Introduction', in: E. Boesen et al. (eds.), *Peripheral Memories Public and Private Forms of Experiencing and Narrating the Past* (Bielefeld, 2012), p. 7.
[1179] I. Sengupta, 'Introduction. Locating lieux de mémoire: A (Post)colonial Perspective', in I. Sengupta (ed.), *Memory, History, and Colonialism. Engaging with Pierre Nora in Colonial and Postcolonial Contexts* (London, 2009), p. 5. Postcolonial scholars have no choice but to critique Nora: in his edited volume, he does not deal with imperial or colonial memory, except in a very Francocentric chapter on the Colonial Exhibition of 1931. See C. Ageron, 'L'Exposition colonial de 1931. Mythe républicain ou myth impériale?', in P. Nora, *Lex lieux de mémoire: La Republique* (Paris, 1984), pp. 561-591.

Arena

Since post-imperial memory irruptions are a media(ted) phenomenon, they are shaped by the media systems and -landscapes in which they unfold. In the case studies under review, it was not so much how media arenas were structured (and differences between the case study countries in this regard) as the (differing) logics according to which the markets operated that left their mark on the debates. Germany's distinct institutionalised regional public broadcasting system, for instance, did not, in practice, result in fragmented public debate. Strong national outlets sustained a shared national arena of discussion, while regional broadcasters remained closely aligned with the national debate on a nationally salient issue. Although the latter highlighted local dimensions and manifestations of the imperial past often neglected by national media, these were typically framed in relation to the broader national debate.

The North/Central European Democratic corporatist logic of the Dutch and German media spheres, and France's greater alignment with the Mediterranean polarised pluralist logic did, in contrast, have a substantive impact – most clearly on the tone of the debate. A mixed-revenue system of public service broadcasting and journalism of expression and normative judgments made for a French debate about empire that was pushed to greater extremes, that is more sharply polarised and of a more sensationalist nature than in the Dutch and German cases, which were characterised by a high degree of journalistic professionalism, adherence to objective reporting styles and public funding.[1180]

Issues

Now, what dimensions of the most brutal episodes of colonial violence did different compositions of carrier groups address? Unlike post-imperial memory irruptions in turn-of-the-century Netherlands and France, the German centenary debate was not so much about scale, purpose, and responsibility. The scale of German mass crimes was not as much of a mystery: they had not been hidden in the dispersed battle grounds of a guerrilla war, or torture cellars, but had been committed first after a more conventional battle (Von Trotha's *Vertreibungs*- and *Schießbefehl* after the Battle of Waterberg) and then in concentration camps. The purpose of these mass crimes was not the topic of intense debate either: Von Trotha's expulsion and extermination order was consistently cited as evidence of genocidal intent. The question of

[1180] See fn. 77.

responsibility had much less contemporary relevance in turn-of-the-century Germany. One hundred years later, there were no contemporaries left alive or political successors to blame. Moreover, the German people had been less involved in the colonial war fought 'over there' than the Dutch and French population in their respective decolonisation wars. Not a large number of conscripts, but a relatively small number of German imperial troops had been sent to GSWA to deal with the Herero – which had not been a democratic, but an imperial ruling.[1181]

The French debate was still broader than the Dutch one, also because little prior memory work had been done. The Torture Debate was the first full-fledged post-imperial memory irruption since the loss of *L'Algérie française*, and after decades of mostly 'forgetting', many issues demanded clarification. In the Netherlands, in contrast, the 1969 debate had mostly settled the question of scale already: when 'Police Actions' in the DEI were the subject of intense public controversy a second time around, in the mid-1990s, the government's reading of the 1969 *Memorandum on Excesses* appeared to have held up. Moreover, the debate in France was broader because French torture, unlike crimes committed by the KNIL in Indonesia after the Second World War, seemed to have had a longer history (in French colonial rule, and the Indochina War). The Dutch did not trace back the origins of atrocities by the KNIL, but sought and found them in the conflict itself. The German centenary debate was not about the origins of colonial violence either, but, conversely, on how the Holocaust might have originated from it.

Whether more or less multi-faceted, central to all the debates under scrutiny were the issues of reprehensibility and recognition. The debates were primarily about the moral reprehensibility of atrocities committed in the DEI (1945-1949), French Algeria (1954-1962) and GSWA (1904-1908) respectively, and the desirability of official apologies for these acts of violence. In fact, clarifying scale and purpose of (Dutch and French) colonial brutalities was mainly in the service of (re)assessing moral reprehensibility; and allocating responsibility was linked to the question of recognition – who was to apologise, and in the name of whom? Only in Germany was there a question ranking alongside the issues of reprehensibility and recognition, namely that of the origin of the Holocaust.

[1181] Less than one percent of the army officers corps served in the overseas *Schutztruppen*. See: Michels, 'Geschichtspolitik im Fernsehen', p. 467.

This study finds that post-imperial memory irruptions in Northwest Europe around the turn of the millennium were essentially efforts to (re)examine the nation's violent historical record for one thing, and to (re)evaluate the process of coming to terms with it for another. These two endeavours were not defined as such by participants, but are rather a scholarly observation. (Re)assessing imperial violence presupposed sufficient historical knowledge (which is why efforts were made to educate the public about what had happened) and involved passing contemporary moral judgement of historical facts. (Re)assessing *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung* built on the parallel discussion about moral reprehensibility. It was asked whether past and present efforts of dealing with this 'dark' chapter in national history were adequate and satisfactory, and subsequently the agenda was set on how to advance from the status quo onwards. It was all about memory politics: amnesties, justice, and compensation.

The 'second generation' of post-imperial memory irruptions in Northwestern Europe around the turn of the millennium appear to have been distinct from memory irruptions that happened in the late 1960s and early 1970s – first generation irruptions, which were discussed in passing in the country chapters. Memory irruptions in the late 1990s and early 2000s appear to be distinctive, first, because the (re)eassessment of the historical record and the (re)evaluation of the process of working through were equally significant – while the former undertaking was of overriding importance in the first generation. Related to this, memory irruptions around the turn of the century differed in the way they were triggered: their emergence owed less to new historical revelations, as had been the case in the first generation, than to contemporary triggers, reflecting a reconfiguration of cultural sensibilities. Moreover, in the wake of the commercialisation of radio and television in the 1980s and early 1990s, memory irruptions appear to have become more overtly sensational. Further primary-source research into the first generation is needed to substantiate these observations. Given that the third generation was left unexamined, it is entirely for further research to reveal how post-imperial memory irruptions around the long turn of the century differed from the ones that occurred in the digital day and age, after the social media revolution had taken up speed. One question that arises is whether, over time, memory irruptions were ever less concerned with empire itself, and ever more leveraging history as a tool or language through which to highlight and debate major social and political issues and divisions.

Three constitutive comparators

Returning to the 'second generation' irruptions under study and what they involved, this thesis demonstrates that moral comparisons were instrumentalised towards both unpremeditated undertakings, and therefore a principal feature of post-imperial memory irruptions around the turn of the century. Participants in the debates instrumentalised three constitutive comparators: other empires (former rival powers and their respective imperial pasts), the other warring party (insurgent colonial subjects), and the other violence (the Holocaust and the Second World War more broadly). Moral reprehensibility was measured against excessive violence committed by other former imperial powers, by the ex-colony, and in the Second World War. They served as a measuring rod and functioned as "*cadres de conscience*".[1182] Furthermore, the nation's attempts at sorting out empire were gauged against *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung* in other former metropoles, by the former colonised, and of another 'dark' past. Distinct (post)colonial realities shaped how the three constitutive comparators unfolded differently in the case studies under review.

Firstly, in the three post-imperial memory irruptions under examination, comparisons were drawn to the other warring party. In the assessment of wartime violence, it has been customary to interpret actions in relation to an adversary's conduct, reflecting the inherently responsive nature of combat—a dynamic that cultural historians like Wayne Lee characterise as a mutually escalating dialogue, albeit a brutal one.[1183] (Re)negotiating reprehensibility, it was stressed in both the Dutch and French debates that atrocities had been committed by either side ('excesses' and 'torture' had allegedly been an understandable or even inevitable response hereto) –, and that brutalities had been inherent to the (guerrilla) war that had been waged 'over there'. In the Dutch case, comparisons of this kind had a self-exculpatory effect: the memoirs of Dutch veterans, about excessive violence on both sides and (counter)vengeance, went undisputed. In France, the alleged reactive nature, inevitability, and preventive function of French torture did not go uncontested. In the German centenary debate, in contrast, reprehensibility was not measured in comparison to the other warring party: the German extermination campaign in GSWA could not possibly be explained with the existential Herero struggle.

[1182] S. Thénault in: *Première édition* (radio, 18 September 2001).
[1183] W. Lee, *Waging War. Conflict, Culture, and Innovation in World History* (Oxford, 2016), pp. xvii, 1.

Participants in all three debates took stock of the status quo of memory affairs 'over there', in the former colony, and contrasted it with the situation in the ex-metropole. In the German centenary, reports of how the past was still very much alive for the Herero made it painfully clear how much the past had been forgotten in the *Bundesrepublik* and likely helped spread the idea that Germans ought to examine their colonial past more closely and critically. In the French case, it was exactly the other way around: participants concluded and criticised that the Algerian War was much less alive in authoritarian-run Algeria than in the ex-metropole, where the issue of torture resulted in a true polemic. In the Dutch case then, there was much confusion as to the state of affairs in Indonesia. The persistent myth of Indonesians having already 'forgiven and forgotten' and not being in want of further digging into the past, was a much-heard argument against working through in the ex-metropole.

Despite references to the other, post-imperial memory irruptions were very national affairs. Perpetrator trauma was (re)constructed through *comparisons with*, more than *in conversation with* the former colonised. None of the three case studies saw significant 'foreign' participation by Herero, Indonesians or Algerians – whether overseas or in the European capitals. Even though the colonial *other* figured prominently in them post-imperial memory irruptions were paradoxically preeminently *ego*centric. Victim- (and perpetrator)hood of the other warring party was discussed only to pass judgement on harm done by and to the ex-metropole. Even if two sides of the same coin, these fierce public debates were first and foremost about perpetrator trauma in the metropole, not about how the former colony had suffered at its hands. Participants sought to integrate the violent colonial past into national history and to respond to it in the present. The debates were about national historical reconciliation more than historical reconciliation with the former colonised. Even if memory politics was directed towards the other, it was shaped more in response to the historical debate in the metropole than in response to the (supposed) expectations and needs of former colonial subjects – about which the Indonesian government was much less unequivocal ahead of the state visit than the Herero in court and President Bouteflika in the *Assemblée*.

Secondly, in the post-imperial memory irruptions under review, comparisons were drawn to other empires – the second of the three constitutive comparators. In *Histories of the Hanged*, appearing at the close of the long turn of the millennium in 2005, Anderson reflected on the impulse to create a "league table of barbarity".[1184] In the Dutch and German debates, there was

[1184] D. Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged. The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (London, 2005), p. 6.

a wide bandwidth of opinions, from having performed 'better' to having performed 'worse' than other imperial powers. In all cases, however, participants usually concluded from comparisons with foreign imperial violence that (some) others had been just as bad. This holds true also for comparisons in the Torture Debate to *any* kind of state-led violence, besides and beyond European colonial brutalities: among nations both past and present that (had) committed atrocities of the same magnitude, France supposedly did not stand out either favourably or unfavourably. Comparisons to colonial 'successors' – a point of comparison unique to the German case –, who had supposedly performed similarly, were to the same effect. Without explicitly condemning its own nation's cruelties nevertheless, statements about how (some) other former European metropoles had also brought ruin upon their respective colonial subjects had an apologetic more than an incriminating effect.

Whereas the way other ex-metropoles had been and were (not) working through played virtually no part (as outlined above), contributors frequently instrumentalised (superficial) knowledge of foreign imperial records. National constituencies might have "know[n] very little about their respective experiences", as Rothermund claimed, but leaned heavily on their rudimentary understanding of other empires. Quasi-simultaneously happening post-imperial memory irruptions were therefore not completely disconnected, as is prematurely assumed by Rothermund, but subtly connected through (cursory) comparisons to other imperial records. Such comparisons made for some sort of 'imagined connectivity' – a novel way of thinking about transnational connectedness that is curious about and attentive to "how memory travels across borders of all sorts".[1185]

Third and finally, the Holocaust and the Second World War was the go-to comparison in cases of historical (im)morality. Whereas Dutch and French participants focused on the question of (dis)similarity (of the Dutch KNIL and the SS, and (divisions) of the French colonial army and the Gestapo), participants in the German debate emphasised (dis)continuity (between Windhoek and Auschwitz). The subject and object of the historical comparison were different in each case. The episodes of colonial violence, as well as countries' (views on their) World War II pasts, were distinct. In the Netherlands and France, prevalent ideas about how the country had been, respectively, a victim and heroic in the Second World War were out of tune with the violent decolonisation wars the countries had waged a few years later. In both cases, the 'reversal of roles' gave rise to a moral paradox. How could those who had contributed to

[1185] Kennedy and Nugent, 'Scales of Memory', p. 63.

resistance and liberation then behave like Nazis? In Germany, in contrast, it was precisely the perpetrator role in both historical episodes that caused discomfort.

In all three cases, the (marginal) place occupied by empire in the national narrative was contrasted with the (much more prominent) place taken up by World War II. In France and Germany, comparisons to sorting out Vichy and the *Third Reich* respectively led to the conclusion that working through empire was still in its infancy and made clear that there was much work(ing through) to do on empire. In France, the verdict on the comparative lack of progress was scathing, and the contrast was pointed out by contributors who sought to capitalise on the progress made in coming to terms with Vichy (culminating in Chirac's acknowledgement of France's role in the Holocaust in 1995), and who now finally wanted to make headway with empire. In Germany, things were more ambiguous. Some stressed it was time now to finally include the Herero War in the burden of Germany's past and argued the *Bundesrepublik* should live up to the standards of *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung* it had set regarding the Holocaust. Others asked for sympathy for the overdue memory work on German Empire, arguing that the *Third Reich* was enough to worry about, and were concerned with the near-to-sacred status of victims of the Shoah and the far-reaching financial implications of holding the way the Shoah was dealt with as a benchmark. In the Netherlands, by contrast, it was not self-critically working through 1940-1945 (i.e. complicity in the mass murder of Jewish compatriots) – which had begun comparatively early, yet reached its official peak (with Queen Beatrix's 1995 Knesset speech) later than in Germany and concurrently with France – that was taken as an example in the semicentenary.[1186] Instead, the commemoration of both pasts was compared – a very vocal group of infuriated Indies veterans was aggravated by the comparative lack of commemoration and demanded equal recognition to victims of the Second World War on Dutch mainland – and occasionally comparisons were drawn to the way former Axis powers sorted out their past.

Besides a phenomenon worth looking at in and of itself, (post-imperial) memory irruptions constitute an ideal laboratory for all kinds of memory-related questions. As instances where something as intangible as collective memory manifests itself under a magnifying glass, they

[1186] I. de Haan, 'Shame and Pride. The Memory of the Rescue of Jews in the Netherlands, 1945 to the Present', in N. Aleksium, R. Utz and Z. Wóycicka (eds.), *The Rescue Turn and the Politics of Holocaust Memory* (Detroit, 2024), pp. 23-63; R. Golsan, 'The Legacy of World War II in France. Mapping the Discourses of Memory', in R. Lebow, W. Kansteiner, C. Fogu (eds.), *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe* (London, 2006), pp. 73-101; W. Kansteiner, 'Losing the War, Winning the Memory Battle. The Legacy of Nazism, World War II, and the Holocaust in the Federal Republic of Germany', in Lebow et al. (eds.), *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*, pp. 102-146.

contain a wealth of information. They could be broached as a novel 'source' on collective memory – for instance on multidirectional memory. With the instrumentalisation of 'the other violence' being a key feature, post-imperial memory irruptions prove to be a rich yet untapped well of learning about multidirectional memory. This study sheds light on what happened when memories of European imperialism and the Holocaust intersected with each other in the public arena. As complex moments full of ideas about how the two relate to one another, post-imperial memory irruptions have proven to be a test site for further examining multidirectionality – and that from the opposite direction. Instead of commemorating the *Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (the subtitle of Rothberg's groundbreaking work), they are about remembering empire in the age of a global Holocaust memory.

The findings presented here confirm what Rothberg described as the "productive interplay of disparate acts of remembrance", and the "possibilities of memory and countermemory".[1187] The 'other violence' was instrumentalised in (re)negotiating the moral reprehensibility of empire violence and in (re)assessing the way it had been dealt with. This study also advances Rothberg's idea of multidirectional memory. The use of this new laboratory has taught us that multidirectional memory is not limited to the things Rothberg's gave in-depth analyses of: influential texts (such Hannah Arendt's *The Origins of Totalitarianism*); "diasporic spaces as sites of multidirectional exchange" (like the Warsaw Ghetto in 1949); or "moments of epochal change" (such as the pivotal year 1961, when many colonies became independent, while public awareness of the Holocaust grew more and more).[1188] The present thesis demonstrates that multidirectionality is not something that exists exclusively in the minds of renowned intellectuals, or that only 'happened' in reality, where and when histories came together. This practice of drawing moral comparisons in post-imperial memory irruptions in turn-of-the-millennium Western Europe demonstrates that multidirectional memory is just as well 'performed', in the discursive space that is the public sphere, and 'instrumentalised' by participants of all sorts. Where Buettner briefly touched on the deployment of Holocaust analogies in Belgian public empire memory and the variety of agendas these comparisons served, this study extensively demonstrates that multidirectionality is not just sporadic and intellectual, but a practice, or performance, through the act of comparing brutalities.

[1187] Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory*, pp. 309-310.
[1188] *Ibid*., pp. 2, 27.

Moral comparisons

Even when comparisons to constitutive comparators played out differently in the case studies under review, there is no doubt that drawing moral comparisons was a principal feature of post-imperial memory irruptions in Northwest Europe around the turn of the millennium. Such comparisons were not in themselves a peculiarity of these debates. They had always shaped the course of empire memory: many comparative narratives dated back to the bloody struggle for decolonisation or even the colonial venture itself. Striking was, however, the intensity of comparison on these occasions. As instances at which empire was debated on an exceptional scale and with unparalleled intensity, post-imperial memory irruptions were 'hotspots' of moral comparisons.

Regardless of how each comparator featured (similarly and differently) in the debates under examination, as discussed above, there are general conclusions to be drawn about the comparative lens worn by contemporaries. To begin with: moral comparisons were typically superficial, impeding in-depth discussions of empire. Comparisons to other empires were typically sketchy and shallow. More important than *what* particular others or the specifics and context of foreign processes of decolonisation, seemed to be the mere fact *that* there had been others. Such comparisons did not usually deepen the debate, but as a rule cut off discussion. There also was not much depth to participants' abstract observation that other ex-metropoles buried and were dealing with (or had dealt with) painful episodes of (de)colonisation too. Contributors did not look into these foreign (quasi-simultaneous) processes of sorting out dark (colonial) pasts.

Furthermore, it is worth noting how moral comparisons functioned both as a driver and as a manifestation of polarisation within the debate. Comparisons to others were instrumentalised towards opposite ends, in exculpatory and incriminating ways, and with opposite effects, spurring and curbing *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung*. Rivalling voices both resorted to moral comparisons, digging in their positions rather than moving towards each other. Often, moral comparisons amounted to 'whataboutery' – a form of rhetorical deflection characterised by the repeated use of the question "What about … [others]?" – and sidetracked the debate on imperial violence. In the Dutch case, the SS comparison was so contentious, and participants got so caught up in discussing its accuracy, that it side-tracked the debate. Although in Germany it was generally uncontroversial to assert that the two historical episodes were somehow related,

the way in which they were connected, was subject of public controversy too. The centenary debate seemed also (perhaps even: just) another way to talk about the Holocaust. Despite all this, there was little reflection on the use and desirability of comparing "evils". The practice of comparing came naturally to participants and was not given much thought.

European millennial reckoning?

In the French case, the debate developed its own momentum, was continuously (re)triggered by testimonials and events, and died out naturally. The duration of the Dutch and German debates was more artificially limited (to the duration of the anniversary celebrations) and had a built-in climax (i.e. Queen Beatrix's state visit to Indonesia and Minister Wieczoreck-Zeul's visit to the remembrance ceremony in Okakarara).

Ultimately, none of the post-imperial memory irruptions examined produced a societal consensus about the past that set off a significant shift in official memory politics. Both the Dutch and French public were split in two. No consensus was reached on how morally reprehensible Dutch military action in the DEI and French torture had been, or on how the past was to be handled. By arriving in Jakarta not on, but just a few days after the Proclamation date, and by speaking remorsefully yet not issuing an apology, Queen Beatrix attempted to appease a polarised home audience. In the French debate, calls for and gestures of condemnation were always met with strong(er) resistance, and official 'repentance' was not forthcoming. The German centenary debate seemed very different – an (overall self-critical) consensus emerged, and in Okakarara Wieczorek-Zeul apologised in the name of the *Bundesrepublik* – but ultimately was not. Even after one hundred years, exculpatory voices and tendencies persisted; and the self-critical consensus did not change the political dial. There was much political push-back and Wieczorek-Zeul's unexpected religious apology did not materialise in terms of reparation payments. The Algerians would ultimately not be offered a presidential apology like the Jews in 1995, and the Herero would not be offered compensation like victims of Nazi Germany.

This is not to say that the post-imperial memory irruptions under review were inconsequential. In line with what Wouters concluded about memory irruptions in cases of transitional justice in Europe after 1945 – about them "marking the shift towards a new memorial regime [in the longer run]" – post-imperial memory irruptions were significant in the case study countries' long genealogy of empire memory.[1189] The semicentenary debate seemed to have been a tipping point after which Dutch governments spoke out every more self-critically on the matter, and after which the Police Actions in the DEI gradually ceased to be the focus of public empire memory. The French Torture Debate constituted the beginning of a disruptive obsession with the Algerian Independence War. In Germany, the development towards more self-critical memory politics after 2004 carried back to the centenary year.

Even though deeper change can thus be detected in all three case studies, post-imperial memory irruptions in Northwest Europe around the turn of the millennium cannot realistically be seen as transformative social projects. Buettner rightly observed that "even intense debates could be followed by a retreat back into more palatable memories and comfortable forms of forgetting after the controversy subsided."[1190] In the Dutch and German cases, the colonial past largely disappeared again from the public and political agenda after (state visits in) the anniversary years. It would still take more than two decades before general and generous apologies for Dutch extreme violence would be offered (by King Willem-Alexander in 2020 and PM Rutte in 2022); Angela Merkel's government officially recognised the Herero and Nama genocide and agreed to pay 1.1 billion Euros as 'a gesture of reconciliation' as late as 2021; and in 2023 the French government had yet to apologise, and – despite his denunciation of French colonialism during his 2017 presidential campaign – President Macron was still trying to overcome the memorial divides that threatened social cohesion in France.

Post-imperial memory irruptions in Northwest Europe (c. 1995 – c. 2005) clearly were not a European story of millennial reckoning, but largely nation-centric controversies characterised by moral comparisons and moral relativism. The three case studies shed light on the phenomenon and on what it did and did not mean to be European around the turn of the millennium. While Tony Judt's famous thesis states that, after 1945, Europeanness is defined by acknowledging complicity in the Holocaust, being European at the turn of the millennium evidently did not require acknowledging colonial genocides and imperial brutalities.[1191] Some

[1189] Wouters, *Transitional Justice*, p. 386.
[1190] Buettner, *Europe after Empire*, p. 482. See also pp. 474, 490.
[1191] Judt, 'Epilogue. From the House of the Dead', pp. 803, 830-831.

astute contemporary scholars who participated in these heated debates already realised this at the time. In the SZ in the German centenary year, the British sociologist Paul Gilroy (one of the very few foreign contributors to the debate) wrote about contemporary "politics of denial": "In many European countries (…) the view of the history of the modern world is defined precisely by the denial of the central importance of colonial power for the idea of Europe."[1192] In the FAZ, Jürgen Zimmerer wrote about how the thesis of settler colonies founded on genocide "challenged the still widespread assumption that the Europeanisation of the earth had been a project of progress" and "does not fit into the image of the moral superiority of the West, which is largely congruent with the former colonial powers and the former settler colonies."[1193] Post-imperial memory irruptions around the turn of the millennium testify to an unwillingness to review the West's positive foundational civilising narrative. Around the turn of the millennium, the idea of Europe and European togetherness took priority and came at the expense of clarity about Europe's place in world history.

[1192] 'Negativer Kontinent'.
[1193] 'Das lange, das nicht beendete Jahrhundert der Völkermorde'.

Bibliography

Primary sources

Chapter I.

a. Radio

Broadcasting organisations[1194]

AVRO	Algemene Vereniging Radio Omroep. Public radio and television broadcasting organisation, no religious or political affiliation. Members in 1995: 650.000. Market share of 11% in 1996.
EO	Evangelische Omroep. Public radio and television broadcasting organisation, Evangelical and reformist. Members in 1995: 541.754. Market share of 7% in 1996.
IKON	Interkerkelijke Omroep Nederland. Public radio and television broadcasting organisation, representing seven denominations. Market share of 5% in 1996.
KRO	Katholieke Radio Omroep. Public radio and television broadcasting organisation, originally Catholic. Members in 1995: 619.576. Market share of 13% in 1996.
NCRV	Nederlandse Christelijke Radio Vereniging. Public radio and television broadcasting organisation, originally Protestant. Members in 1995: 549.197. Market share of 12% in 1996.
NOS	Nederlandse Omroep Stichting. Public radio and television broadcasting organisation, no religious or political affiliation. No membership base. Market share of 27% in 1996.
NPS	Nederlandse Programma Stichting. No religious or political affiliation. No membership base. Market share of 9% in 1996.

[1194] Bakker and Scholten, *Communicatiekaart van Nederland*, pp. 110-111, 129. Market share figures (1996) for broadcasting organisations—active in both radio and television—are based on their television operations.

TELEAC	Televisie Academie. Public radio and television broadcasting organisation, no religious or political affiliation. Market share of 7% in 1996.
VARA	Vereniging van Arbeiders Radio Amateurs. Public radio and television broadcasting organisation, originally socialist. Members in 1995: 506.858. Market share of 15% in 1996.
VOO	Veronica Omroep Organisatie. Public radio and television broadcasting organisation, no religious or political affiliation.
VPRO	Vrijzinnige Protestantse Radio Omroep. Public radio and television broadcasting organisation, originally Protestant. Members in 1995: 529.880. Market share of 6% in 1996.

Programmes

Damokles	Weekly night programme, broadcast by the KRO. Radio documentary on a contemporary issue that tells the stories of *Ordinary people with extraordinary stories* – the subtitle of the programme [Dates consulted: 26.09.1995]
De andere wereld	Weekly programme, broadcast by the IKON, with reports and interviews with people in the cultural and political domain about what inspires them [Dates consulted: 01.01.1995]
De avonden	Weekly cultural informative magazine, broadcast by the VPRO, with interviews, reports and live performances [Dates consulted: 17.01.1995]
De ronde tafel van Pam	Weekly talkshow with journalist Max Pam, broadcast by the NPS [Dates consulted: 13.02.1995; 21.11.1995]
De Schrijftafel	Weekly literature programme, broadcast by the NPS [Dates consulted: 17.08.1995]
Dingen die gebeuren	Current affairs programme on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday, broadcast by the KRO [Dates consulted: 09.06.1994; 22.12.1994; 10.01.1995; 14.04.1995; 29.11.1995; 30.11.1995]
Echo	News programme broadcast every other day by the KRO. Conversations with guests in the studio, reports and correspondents about the (background of) current affairs. Last episode on 31st of

	August 1995, replaced by 'Radio 1 journaal' [Dates consulted: 09.06.1994; 12.01.1995; 26.01.1995; 06.07.1995; 17.08.1995; 22.08.1995]
Echo: De ooggetuigen van die dagen	Ten-part series of the programme *Echo* about fifty years of Indonesian independence. Eyewitnesses accounts about the events surrounding the proclamation of the Indonesian Republic on August 17, 1945 [broadcast between 18.07.1995 and 17.08.1995]
Faros	Weekly cultural-scientific magazine, broadcast by TELEAC [Dates consulted: 25.06.1994]
Goedemorgen Nederland	Weekday morning programme, broadcast by the NCRV, with news, current affairs, music and information. Successor of the programme *Dingen die Gebeuren [Dates consulted*: 18.08.1995]
Het gesprek	Weekly interview programme, broadcast by the EO [Dates consulted: 29.06.1994]
Hier en nu praatradio	News programme, broadcast by the NCRV. Live call-in program, in which listeners could participate by phone and engage in disussions with guests [Dates consulted: 12.01.1994; 21.12.1994; 17.04.1995]
In gesprek	Weekly interview programme, broadcast by the AVRO, with an academic whose work is taken an interest in [Dates consulted: 13.03.1995; 30.01.1995]
Indonesië	A five-part interview series, broadcast by TELEAC, on the decolonisation of Indonesia with historian P.J. Drooglever [Dates consulted: 21.10.1995; 30.09.1995; 14.10.1995]
Interview van Clary Polak met Poncke Princen	Interview, dir. Nederlands Instituut voor Beeld en Geluid [11.01.1995]
Marathoninterview	A few-hours long interview with one guest about his life and work, broadcast several times a year by the VPRO [Dates consulted: 18.08.1995]
Met het oog op morgen	Daily late-evening radio programme, broadcast by the NOS about (the background to) current affairs. Every episode includes an overview of the news on radio and television, headlines of next-day

	newspapers and informative interviews on current affairs [Dates consulted: 20.12.1994; 24.01.1995; 27.01.1995; 13.02.1995]
Nieuws op 1	Current affairs programme, broadcast by the NPS (no religious or political affiliation) on weekdays between January and September 1995, with studio interviews and reports [Dates consulted: 12.01.1995; 14.08.1995; 17.08.1995; 21.08.1995]
Nieuwsradio	Current affairs radio show, broadcast by VOO on weekdays, which covered 'popular' domestic news at a rapid pace [Dates consulted: 27.12.1994; 21.08.1995]
Ophef en vertier	Weekly programme, broadcast by the VARA, with interviews with Dutch people from the art and culture scene. In a two-hour broadcast, guests are given ample of time to talk about (what drives) their work [Dates consulted: 28.05.1994]
Opium	Weekly cultural magazine, broadcast by the AVRO, with studio interviews, reports, tips, and music [Dates consulted: 04.02.1994]
OVT	Weekly history programme, broadcast by the VPRO, with discussions, reports and eyewitness (oral history) accounts. The programme covers historical episodes that have an impact on our present time, and parallels are drawn between past and present. The title OVT (Onvoltooid Verleden Tijd) stand for 'unfinished past tense' [Dates consulted: 27.03.1994; 29.05.1994; 29.01.1995]
Punch	Weekly critical magazine, broadcast by the VARA, with reports and interviews on current, engaging topics. Heated debates with guests who have made a name for themselves in the broadcasts' subject area. Listeners comment via the telephone [Dates consulted: 18.12.1995]
Radio 1 avond-journaal	Daily current affairs programme, broadcast in the evening by the NOS, which covers (background to the) news [Dates consulted: 07.09.1995]
Radio uit	Daily cultural current affairs programme, broadcast by the NPS [Dates consulted: 13.02.1995; 18.08.1995; 12.07.1996]
Radiojournaal	News programme, broadcast by the AVRO several times a week. Continued in 1995 in off-peak hours [Dates consulted: 28.05.1994; 25.12.1994; 20.08.1995]

Reflector	Weekly information programme, broadcast by the EO, mostly on current Christian topics [Dates consulted: 04.02.1995]
Schuim en as	Weekly cultural programme, broadcast by the NCRV, with focus on dance, theatre, literature and visual arts. Two-hour long conversation with programme makers, actors and writers [Dates consulted: 08.06.1995; 01.12.1995]
Spijkers met koppen	Weekly playful informative and satirical magazine, broadcasted by the VARA from a café in the city of Utrecht, with guests who were in the news [Dates consulted: 14.01.1995]
Suara Maluku	Weekly informative programme, broadcast by the NPS, made by and for Moluccans in the Netherlands [Dates consulted: 14.01.1995]
Uit het nieuws	Weekly Q&A, broadcast by the NPS, with people who have been in the news for a longer period of time – amongst others with Herman Wigbold, former editor-in-chief of the well-known programme 'Achter het Nieuws' [Dates consulted: 01.06.1995]
Vrijdageditie	Weekly programme, broadcast by the VARA, with news, current affairs and music. Considered the radio counterpart of the television programme 'Achter het Nieuws'. Critical journalism with a 'left-wing' bias [Dates consulted: 23.12.1994; 25.03.1994]
Weldenkende mensen	Weekly talkshow, broadcast by the NPS, with. discussions with (experience)experts on current affairs [Dates consulted: 19.01.1995]
Welingelichte kringen	Weekly radio programme, broadcast by the VPRO from an Amsterdam based Artsclub, in which a panel discusses current affairs with guests (politicians and experts) in the studio or on the telephone [Dates consulted: 13.01.1995]
Woensdagbijlage	A weekly supplement of AVRO's Radiojournaal, which takes a closer look at the news and current affairs [Dates consulted: 23.03.1994]
Woensdageditie	Weekly programme, broadcast by the VARA, with an overview of the news, current affairs and music [Dates consulted: 09.08.1995]

Zendtijd voor politieke partijen	Broadcasts in which political parties explain their viewpoints and advertise themselves [Dates consulted: 20.04.1994]

b. Television

Broadcasting organisations[1195]

MTNL	Multiculturele Televisie Nederland. Public television broadcasting organisation, broadcast via local public stations in four major cities and, from the 1990s onwards, increasingly focused on major current affairs relevant to migrant communities.
RVU	Radio Volksuniversiteit. Public radio and television broadcasting organisation, no religious or political affiliation. No membership base. Market share of 4% in 1996.

Programmes

2 Vandaag	News programme, broadcast from Monday to Saturday, with the aim to unravel the news for a broad audience. Co-production of the EO and VOO [Dates consulted: 19.12.1994; 11.01.1995; 22.02.1995; 22.08.1995; 16.08.1995; 21.08.1995; 25.08.1995; 01.12.1995]
Aan de grens van de herinnering	Documentary by Jan Schmeitz, broadcast by IKON, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Europe form Nazi Germany. Deals with memories of the Second World War and the question of whether lessons can be learned from the past. In that context, attention is also paid to the colonial war of the Netherlands in the Dutch East Indies [Dates consulted: 04.05.1995]
Brandpunt	Current affairs programme, broadcast by the KRO, with a lot of attention for the Catholic faith and the development of humans in society. With many foreign reports and sometimes taboo-breaking domestic subjects on ethical issues [Dates consulted: 13.01.1995; 13.08.1995]

[1195] See overview radio broadcasters on page 253-254.

Brandpunt reporter	Special investigative section of 'Brandpunt', revealing social wrongs, often followed by debates in parliament [Dates consulted: 10.10.1995]
De excessen van Rawagedeh	Documentary by Alfred Edelstein and Karin van Coeverden, broadcast by the commercial television station RTL5, on Dutch war crimes against the population of the village of Rawagedeh (West Java, Indonesia) after the Second World War [Dates consulted: 15.08.1995]
Close up: Voorheen Nederlandsch-Indië.	'Close up' is a series of weekly reports and documentaries, broadcast by the AVRO, on art and culture subjects. Best watched art programme on Dutch television, often co-produced with foreign broadcasters and with the help of cultural funds and the EU. 'Voorheen Nederlandsch-Indië', is a three-part *Close up* series of documentaries by Jan Bosdriesz and Frans Glissenaar about the former Dutch East Indies [Dates consulted: 21.12.1994; 28.12.1994; 04.01.1995]
Het capitool	Weekly discussion programme, broadcast by the NPS from a neo-classical garden house, in which important national and international news is analysed and explained. Somewhat sedate discussions between politicians and prominent figures were found too boring, and the programme was therefore succeeded in 1995 by 'Buitenhof' [Dates consulted: 15.01.1995; 02.04.1995]
Het meer der herinnering	Report of a journey by the writer Rudy Kousbroek through North Sumatra, where he had spent youth, reflecting on the colonial relations of the time. Broadcast by the RVU [Dates consulted: 23.12.1994]
Indië-herdenking 1995	Report by the NOS, live from The Hague, of the commemoration of victims of the Second World War in the Dutch East Indies [Dates consulted: 15.08.1995]
Indiëstrijders	Four-part interview series by Frans Bromet, with former combatants who had fought in the Indonesian war of Independence. Broadcast by the VPRO [Dates consulted: 06.08.1995; 13.08.1995; 20.08.1995]
Kenmerk	Interdenominational current affairs programme, broadcast by the IKON, with a wide range of social topics. Considered to have a left-wing affinity, with a special interest in third world and politically

	unstable countries [Dates consulted: 24.11.1994; 12.01.1995; 09.02.1995; 07.04.1994; 20.04.1995; 23.06.1994]
Multiculturele uitzending	Weekly series, broadcast by MTNL about the idealism of present-day emancipatory groups [Dates consulted: 28.04.1994]
NOS Journaal [8 pm]	The 'NOS Journaal' is the umbrella name of a few dozen news broadcasts of the NOS on television and radio. Aims to be independent and objective, and to produce content that is understandable to the broadest audience possible [Dates consulted: 26.05.1994; 09.06.1994; 27.12.1994; 06.01.1995; 09.01.1995; 10.01.1995; 12.01.1995; 02.04.1995; 08.06.1995; 06.07.1995; 14.08.1995; 17.08.1995; 21.08.1995]
Nova	Leading and ambitious current affairs programme, co-produced by the VARA and the NOS, broadcast from Monday until Saturday. Focus on background of daily news, with reports, and interviews with key players and experts. Successor of VARA's well-known programme 'Achter het nieuws' [Dates consulted: 26.05.1994; 19.12.1994; 28.12.1994; 05.01.1995; 08.01.1995; 09.01.1995; 12.01.1995; 13.01.1995; 07.02.1995; 08.02.1995; 09.02.1995; 10.02.1995; 11.08.1995; 15.08.1995; 09.11.1995; 07.09.1996]
Nova-special uit Jakarta	Special from the current affairs programme *Nova*, report live from Jakarta of the celebration of the 50th anniversary of the independence of Indonesia [Dates consulted: 17.08.1995]
Oeroeg	Three-part television series by Hans Hylkema, broadcast by the NPS, based on the novel "Oeroeg" by Hella S. Haasse. The story takes place in the Dutch East Indies against the background Indonesian Independence War [Dates consulted: 20.15.1995]
Vesuvius: Onze jongens in de oost	Weekly discussion program, broadcast by the IKON, on pressing contemporary matters. Broad range of topics linked to current affairs, discussed with experts and people involved [Dates consulted: 24.11.1994]
Soekarno	Documentary about the (making of) Jan Blokker's play "Soekarno", broadcast by the KRO [Dates consulted: 29.11.1995]
Staatsbezoek koningin Beatrix aan Indonesië	Series of broadcasts, broadcast by the NOS, dedicated to the state visit of Queen Beatrix to Indonesia (from August 21 August to September 3, 1995) [Dates consulted: 21.08.1995; 27.08.1995]

Tabee Toean	Documentary, directed by Tom Verheul, broadcast by NCRV [17 August 1995]
Televizier	Long-running weekly current affairs program, broadcast by the AVRO [Dates consulted: 17.01.1995]
Thema: herinneringen aan Nederland	The VPRO regularly broadcasts full-length theme broadcasts on one particular topic, which is discussed in depth. Broadcasts, with images and interviews, on a wide range of topics. The *Thema* episode 'Herinneringen aan Nederland' is a documentary by Henk Hofland and Hans Keller about the difficult process of decolonisation of the Dutch East Indies and New Guinea [Dates consulted: 17.12.1995]
Via Ria	Discussion program, broadcast by the AVRO two times a week, on current affairs. Viewers can react by telephone [Dates consulted: 16.01.1995]
Werelden: Wij wenden ons tot God en Jan Soldaat.	Series of reports and documentaries, broadcast by the IKON, that presents the work of established and new filmmakers. 'Wij wenden ons tot God en Jan Soldaat' is a documentary with interviews with four pastors who look back on their time as army chaplains in Indonesia at the time of the Police Actions [Dates consulted: 17.08.1995]

c. Press[1196]

Algemeen Dagblad	National daily with (political) right affinity. Generally considered a 'popular' newspaper that pursues a more populist style. Characterised by conservative sensationalism and human-interest journalism. Mass market newspaper with market share (of paid dailies) of approx. 20% in 1994 and 1995. Published by Perscombinatie (PCM), which held a market share of 30.8% in 1995. Readership broadly reflects cross-section of the Dutch population [Dates consulted: 1994-1995]
De Telegraaf	National daily with (political) right affinity. Generally considered a 'popular' newspaper that is entertainment-oriented and pursues a populist style. Characterised by conservative sensationalism and human-interest journalism. Mass market newspaper with market

[1196] Bakker and Scholten, *Communicatiekaart van Nederland*, pp. 15, 28.

	share (of paid dailies) of approx. 35% in 1994 and 1995. In-house newspaper publisher with a market share of 24,3% in 1995. Readership broadly reflects cross-section of the Dutch population. [Dates consulted: 1994]
NRC Handelsblad	National centre-right daily, generally considered a quality newspaper. Market share (of paid dailies) of almost 15% in 1994 and 1995. Published by PCM. Higher income and education groups overrepresented among readers [Dates consulted: 1994-1995].
Trouw	National centre-left daily. Former Protestant newspaper, with a Christian affinity. Generally considered a quality newspaper. Market share (of paid dailies) of more than 5% in 1994 and 1995. Published by PCM. Higher income and education groups overrepresented among readers. [Dates consulted: 1994-1995]
Volkskrant	National (political) left-leaning daily. Former Catholic newspaper, with a centrist, liberal (social-democratic) orientation. Generally considered a quality newspaper. Market share (of paid dailies) of more than 15% in 1994 and 1995. Published by PCM. Higher income and education groups overrepresented among readers [Dates consulted: 1994-1995]

Referenced newspaper articles

‘Acties in Indië historisch gezien foute reactie’, *AD* (3 April 1995)
‘Alsnog een ereteken, want ze brachten orde en rust’, *Volkskrant* (1 March 1995)

‘Benauwende lectuur over benauwde mentaliteit’, *Volkskrant* (5 November 1994)
‘Beatrix gaat pas naar Indonesië na jubileumsfeest’, *Volkskrant* (7 July 1994)
‘Beatrix werkte keihard aan rede’, *Trouw* (21 August 1995)
‘Bij herdenkingen niet meten met twee maten’, *NRC* (17 January 1995)
‘Bijna niemand was tegen de 'morele nederlaag' in Indonesië’, *AD* (14 January 1995)
‘Bisschop Muskens erkent fouten Nederlandse r.-k. kerk in Indië’, *Trouw* (7 July 1995)
‘Boomsma voor de rechter’, *De Groene Amsterdammer* (25 May 1994)

‘Dagorder’, *AD* (8 September 1994)
‘De diachronie van de doofpot: historici en hun angstvallige neutraliteit tegenover Nederlands-Indië’, *NRC* (29 April 1994)
‘Deetman bepleit politiek debat over Nederlands-Indië’, *Volkskrant* (10 January 1995)
‘Dekolonisatie vergelijkenderwijs’, *NRC* (17 August 1995)
‘De oorlog om 'Indië': terugblik na 50 jaar’, *Trouw* (9 December 1995)
‘De tentakels van de Indië-lobby’, *De Groene Amsterdammer* (11 January 1995)

De uitroeping van de Republiek Indonesië kwam dan ook als een volslagen verrassing', *Trouw* (22 August 1995)
'De verwoestende kracht van de Indië-oorlog', *NRC* (14 August 1995)
'De weelde van het bewaren', *Volkskrant* (18 June 1994)
'De westerling liegt niet, maar kwetst', *AD* (5 August 1995)
'De zelfbevlekkers', *Telegraaf* (25 June 1994)
'Dr Hueting: Nederlandse oorlogsmisdaden in Indonesië', *Volkskrant* (19 December 1968)
'Drie van Breda', *Volkskrant* (24 December 1994)

'Een bijzonder dappere daad', *Trouw* (20 December 1994)
'Een correctie op de geschiedenis', *Volkskrant* (30 December 1994)
'Een derde Nederlanders: excuses aan Indonesië', *AD* (10 July 1995)
'Een exercitie in zelfkwelling', *NRC* (13 January 1995)
'Een koel bezoek (1)', *Trouw* (1 September 1995)
'Een open samenleving moet zijn zelfbeeld kunnen herzien', *NRC* (19 January 1995)
'Een verscheurde ziel om een traumatische interventie', *Volkskrant* (21 January 1995)
'Een zwijgzaam bestuurder in de politiek', *NRC* (9 September 1995)
'Emoties lopen hoog op bij Fries schrijversproces', *NRC* (12 January 1995)
'Erken de fouten', *Volkskrant* (11 January 1995)

'Fatsoen is zoek in affaire rond Princen', *Volkskrant* (24 December 1994)

'Geachte redactie: toen twijfelde niemand aan onze nobele taak', *Volkskrant* (21 January 1995)
'Geen plaats voor atheïsme', *NRC* (19 August 1995)
'Geen SS-ers, nee, ook al konden ze door de dingen die ze deden, daar wel mee worden vergeleken', *Nieuwsblad van het Noorden* (6 March 1992)
'Generaal Nasoetion: Waarom haatdragend?', *Trouw* (14 January 1994)
'Generaal Spoor wilde koste wat kost oorlog in Indië', *Volkskrant* (18 May 1994)
'Gesprek Kooijmans met Poncke Princen nodig', *Volkskrant* (2 April 1994)
'Gesublimeerd kolonialisme', *NRC* (15 April 1994)
'Gevoel en Verstand', *Volkskrant* (16 January 1995)
'Graa Boomsma en de gaten in de geschiedenis', *Trouw* (24 February 1994)
'Graa Boomsma nam het juist voor hen op', *Volkskrant* (27 May 1994)
'Graag een echt Indonesië-debat', *NRC* (11 January 1995)
'GroenLinks mist expliciete excuses voor Nederlands optreden in Indonesië', *Volkskrant* (22 August 1995)
'Guerrilla tegen het nationaal schuldgevoel', *AD* (28 January 1995)

'Hamid moest Hendrik heten', *AD* (16 December 1995)
'Handdruk bij begin van staatsbezoek Beatrix's, *NRC* (21 August 1995)
'Herinneringen aan ons eigen Vietnam', *NRC* (3 September 1988)
'Het is voorbij, voorbij, voorgoed voorbij', *Volkskrant* (21 January 1995)

‘Het is voor Nederland nog niet te laat om besar hati te tonen’, *NRC* (8 September 1995)
‘Het staatsbezoek van de gemiste kansen’, *Trouw* (7 September 1995)

‘Ik heb helemaal geen koloniale oorlog gevoerd’, *Trouw* (7 January 1995)
‘Ik wil Poncke Princen graag ontmoeten'; Dichter en oud-Indiëstrijder - Eijkelboom voelt zich niet gekwetst’, *NRC* (22 December 1994)
‘Indië en het collectieve geheugen’, *NRC* (9 April 1994)
‘Indië-veteranen tegen nieuw onderzoek politionele acties’, *AD* (11 February 1995)
‘Indië-veteranen vertellen in film over moorden. “Neerknallen van gevangen peloppors was normaal”’, *Volkskrant* (5 August 1995)
‘Indisch verleden als bron van wijsheid’, *Volkskrant* (22 July 1995)
‘Indonesië’, *Telegraaf* (6 June 1994)
‘“Indonesië is jullie gewetensprobleem”’; Ceremoniemeester over staatsbezoek van koningin’, *NRC* (22 July 1995)
‘Indonesië op de achtergrond’, *NRC* (24 November 1995)
‘“Indonesië was ons Vietnam” Kees Princen: Van broer van ‘de schoft’ tot broer van ‘de held’’, *Trouw* (12 January 1995)
‘Indonesiërs zijn optreden Westerling niet vergeten. Onmenselijke daden eisen bestraffing’, *De Tijd* (7 July 1969)
‘Indonesische kerken zitten niet te wachten op spijtbetuiging Raad van Kerken’, *Trouw* (16 January 1995)
‘Inschikken in de loopgraaf’, *Volkskrant* (4 June 1994)
‘Instemming en teleurstelling na tafelrede Beatrix’s, *NRC* (22 August 1995)
‘Inzicht’, *Volkskrant* (31 May 1995)

‘Jakarta vraagt geen excuus tijdens staatsbezoek Beatrix’s, *AD* (17 July 1995)
‘Jan Soldaat ging naar Indië om te helpen’, *AD* (14 January 1995)
‘Je hebt de zaak verloren, geef dat maar toe’, *Trouw* (16 June 1995)

‘Kabinet moet zich meer bemoeien met opzet staatsbezoeken’, *AD* (5 October 1995)
‘Kamerdelegatie verdeeld over Princen’, *NRC* (10 January 1994)
‘Kanalisering van een nationaal narcisme’, *Volkskrant* (12 August 1995)
‘Karbouwenhuid’, *NRC* (30 August 1995)
‘Kerken betuigen spijt over Indië-verleden’, *Trouw* (12 January 1995)
‘Koningin Beatrix wees ‘gebaar van vriendschap’ van Soeharto af’, *Trouw* (11 October 1995)
‘Koningin volgend jaar naar Indonesië’, *Telegraaf* (6 July 1994)
‘Kritiek op landmacht-bevelhebber houdt aan’, *AD* (23 July 1994)
‘Kroonprins verbaasd over Nederlandse beroering rond koloniaal verleden’, *Volkskrant* (23 August 1995)

‘Laat verzoening het winnen van verbittering’, *NRC* (12 January 1995)
‘Leids of Amsterdams’, *Volkskrant* (24 December 1994)

‘Leidt plaatsverandering tot een andere stijl van denken?’, *NRC* (14 March 1994)
‘Luchtmobiele missie sterft stille dood’, *NRC* (22 March 1995)

‘Maak een einde aan koloniale mythe’, *Volkskrant* (31 December 1994)
‘Meer zullen we van Japan niet krijgen’, *Volkskrant* (28 August 1995)
‘Merdeka’, *Trouw* (8 August 1995)
‘Met alle geweld moest Indië heroverd worden; 1945/1949’, *NRC* (12 January 1995)
‘Met een ruim hart naar Indonesië’, *AD* (11 January 1995)
‘Met heldendom in Indië was al lang afgerekend’, *Volkskrant* (25 May 1994)
‘Minister Van Mierlo ziet staatsbezoek aan Indonesië als begin voor waardevollere betrekkingen’*, Volkskrant* (26 August 1995)
‘Moralisme helpt ons Indië niet verwerken’, *Volkskrant* (16 January 1995)

‘Na bevrijding komt verzoening’, *NRC* (30 December 1994)
‘Na vier eeuwen op weg naar een volwassen relatie’, *Trouw* (12 August 1995)
‘Na vijftig jaar’, *Trouw* (17 August 1995)
‘Nederland is verpletterend vernederd in Indonesië’, *NRC* (29 August 1995)
‘Nederland leert niet van zijn oorlogsmisdaden’, *NRC* (20 May 1994)
‘Nederland wilde zijn beschavingsmissie niet opgeven’, *Volkskrant* (14 January 1995)
‘Nederlandse leger zou 400 personen hebben gedood in Javaans dorp’, *Volkskrant* (9 August 1995)
‘Niemand eert deserteur van verloren krijg’, *Volkskrant* (23 December 1994)

‘Objectief oordeel over de strijd in Indië is nog steeds gewenst’, *AD* (8 September 1994)
‘OM onderzoekt optreden leger bij executies in Rawagedeh’, *Volkskrant* (10 August 1995)
‘Onafhankelijkheidsdag Indonesië al lang erkend. Ambassadeur in Jakarta gaat naar de festiviteiten’, *Trouw* (28 December 1994)
‘Onafhankelijkheid Indonesië te lang gedwarsboomd’, *NRC* (7 July 1995)
‘Onbevangen blik op Nederlands-Indië’, *Telegraaf* (21 December 1994)
‘Onrecht’, *Volkskrant* (24 December 1994)
‘Onze jongens moeten niet tot SS-er worden gemaakt’, *AD* (9 January 1995)
Oud-Indiëgangers niet naar Indonesië: Geen rancune’, *AD* (14 August 1995)
‘Oud zeer’, *Volkskrant* (11 July 1995)
‘Oud zeer(2)*’, Volkskrant* (15 July 1995)

‘Paleisgeheimen’, *Volkskrant* (6 October 1995)
‘Parlement verdeeld over Indië-debat’, *Volkskrant* (10 January 1995)
‘Patrouille op weg naar een trauma’, *Volkskrant* (17 August 1995)
‘Politionele delinquenten onder de wapenen in “Ons Indië”’, *NRC* (30 November 1985)
‘Poncke Princen 3’, *Telegraaf* (22 December 1994)
‘Premier Kok kritiseert Pronk’, *AD* (13 January 1995)
‘P. Princen en de doofpot van onze Indische historie’, *NRC* (20 August 1993)
‘Princen: Over eerherstel oordeelt de geschiedenis’, *AD* (24 December 1995)

‘Progressief gezinde technische intelligentsia in Indië’, *Volkskrant* (26 March 1994)
Proklamasi kwam te vroeg voor Indonesië’, *Volkskrant* (19 August 1995)
‘Psychohistorie kan helpen drama Indië te verklaren’, *Volkskrant* (21 January 1995)

‘Reserves in Jakarta, kampong viert feest’, *Trouw* (24 August 1995)
‘Respect voor elkaars soevereiniteit hoort voorop te staan’, *Volkskrant* (22 August 1995)

‘Schaduw ‘Demon uit de dessa’ over herdenking’, *AD* (28 December 1994)
‘Schimmenspel’, *Trouw* (13 October 1995)
‘Schokkende onthulling’, *AD* (10 August 1995)
‘“SGP: Koningin pas in 1999 naar Indonesië”’, *Trouw* (25 January 1995)
‘Smoezen en uitvluchten’, *Volkskrant* (23 January 1995)
‘Soeharto: hoogtepunt van vriendschap bereikt’, *Trouw* (27 August 1971)
‘Soldaat Princen’, *Volkskrant* (22 December 1994)
‘Spijt betekent voor Poncke Princen ontrouw aan idealen’, *Trouw* (12 January 1995)
‘Spijtbetuiging Raad van Kerken zorgvuldig samengesteld’, *Trouw* (27 January 1995)
‘Spijt betuigen is toch niet zo moeilijk’, *AD* (2 March 1995)
‘Staatsbezoek “rampzalig”’, *AD* (14 September 1995)
‘Stroef begin in Jakarta’, *AD* (22 August 1995)

‘Tabee Toean’, *Trouw* (17 August 1995)
‘Terrorist of Vrijheidsstrijder?’, *De Groene Amsterdammer* (12 August 2020)
‘Terugkijken Oorlogsmisdaden’, *Trouw* (18 January 1969)
‘Tragische vergissing die vele levens eiste’, *Trouw* (19 August 1995)
‘Troonrede in de tropen…’, *NRC* (22 August 1995)

‘Van Mierlo betreurt politionele acties’, *Volkskrant* (3 April 1995)
‘Van Mierlo: Kritiek op staatsbezoek is onzinnig’, *AD* (29 September 1995)
‘Van Mierlo: politionele acties historisch gezien foute reactie’, *NRC* (3 April 1995)
‘Van Mierlo vindt bezoek bevredigend’, *NRC* (30 August 1995)
‘Verdringingsrituelen’, *Volkskrant* (24 December 1994)
‘Vergelijking (3)’, *AD* (28 June 1994)
‘Vergeven en vergeten’, *Volkskrant* (21 August 1995)
‘Veteraan zoekt erkenning’, *NRC* (8 June 1994)
‘Veteraan zondebok Indiëganger vocht verkeerde oorlog namens ons’, *Trouw* (20 January 1995)
‘Vijftig jaar Indonesië’, *NRC* (16 August 1995)
‘Volgens enquête willen meeste Indonesiërs excuses van Beatrix’s*, Volkskrant* (21 August 1995)

‘Wat een verschil, we moeten vooruitkijken, niet achterom’, *NRC* (12 January 1995)
‘Wat geweest is, is geweest’, *AD* (15 September 1995)
‘Weekbladen: Princen zou graag aan Pronk-debat meedoen’, *Volkskrant* (12 January 1995)

‘We hadden geen leger moeten sturen, maar de koningin; Jan Blokker over zijn toneelstuk Soekarno’, *NRC* (24 November 1995)
‘Wij kunnen niet om betekenis van Sukarno heen’, *Volkskrant* (3 August 1995)
‘Wijsheid achteraf’, *Volkskrant* (14 January 1995)
‘Willem Dreesplantsoen moet worden herdoopt in Poncke Princenplantsoen’, *Trouw* (23 December 1994)

d. Printed

Bank, J., *De Excessennota*. *Nota betreffende het archiefonderzoek naar de gegevens omtrent excessen in Indonesië begaan door Nederlandse militairen in de periode 1945-1950* (Den Haag, 1995)

Van Liempt, A., *Een mooi woord voor oorlog. Ruzie, roddel en achterdocht op weg naar de Indonesië-oorlog* (Den Haag, 1994)

Chapter II.

a. Radio

Broadcasters[1197]

France Culture	National cultural radio station with a market share of less than 1% in 2000. Operated by the Radio France group (with a market share of 21.7% in 2001).
France Inter	Flagship generalist public radio station, combining news, commentary and entertainment. Market share of 11,7% in 2000; 11,8% in 2003. Operated by the Radio France group (with a market share of 21.7% in 2001).
France Info	Public radio channel structured around a continuous news model, with a market share of 10,6% in 2003. Operated by the Radio France group (with a market share of 21.7% in 2001).
RFI	Radio France Internationale. An international public broadcaster with global transmission in French and many other languages, providing the French perspective on world news. Marginal player in the French

[1197] Charon, *Les medias en France*, pp. 75, 106; P. Badillo et al., ‘Media ownership and concentration in France’, in Noam, *Who owns the world’s media?*, p. 86.

	national radio market – and generally not included in standard Médiamétrie audience rankings – but with millions of listeners worldwide. Operated by France Médias Monde (state-owned).

Programmes

2000 ans d'histoire	Historical programme, broadcast by *France Inter* on weekdays. Discuss important events and men in the history of humanity, from the first until the 20th century. Includes expert interviews, archive and film extracts [Dates consulted: 01.11.2001]
Accents d'Europe	Magazine about European society broadcast by *Radio France Internationale* on weekdays, and produced in collaboration with BBC World Service, Deutsche Welle, Radio Nederland, Radio Lisbon and RFI Bulgaria. Discusses a particular subject from the viewpoint of different Western societies [Dates consulted: 14.05.2002]
Cosmopolitaine	Weekly cultural magazine, broadcast by *France Inter.* With interviews about current events in music, cinema, literature or theatre, and excerpts from the literary works presented [Dates consulted: 23.09.2001; 03.03.2002]
Diagonales	Weekly magazine, broadcast by *France Inter,* about pressing contemporary (also historical) matters. Debates between expert studio guests [Dates consulted: 10.12.2000; 14.10.2001]
Ecoutez, des anges passent	Weekly reports, broadcast by *France Inter,* that tell the stories of 'normal' people from around the world [Dates consulted: 12.01.2000]
En attendant la suite	Cultural magazine, broadcast by *France Culture* [Dates consulted: 21.08.2001]
Ephéméride	Daily humorous chronicle on key events of the day's date in previous years, broadcast by *France Inter* [Dates consulted: 28.05.2000]
France Culture	'L'Indonésie. Les enjeux internationaux' [26 July 1995]; 'L'ombre de la disparition, l'escamotage du 17 octobre 1961' [3.11.2001][1198]
Inter soir 19h00	Daily news programme, broadcast by *France Inter* [Dates consulted: 24.11.2000; 02.05.2001; 03.05.2001; 04.05.2001; 05.05.2001; 08:05.2001; 09.05.2001; 23.05.2001; 16.06.2001; 06.07.2001; 26.11.2001; 27.11.2001; 25.01.2002]

[1198] Items with incomplete metadata in the INA archive.

Inter treize quatorze	News magazine, broadcast by *France Inter* on weekdays, with a news section and a magazine section devoted to current cultural events [Dates consulted: 29.01.2001; 03.05.2001; 04.05.2001; 08.05.2001; 26.11.2001; 27.11.2001]
Invité Afrique	News programme, broadcast by *Radio France Internationale* on weekdays, about African affairs. Every day, a key actor from the African news is interviewed [Dates consulted: 15.06.2000; 23.06.2000]
Inter matin	Morning news program, broadcast by *France Inter* [Dates consulted: 29.01.2001; 19.03.2002]
Invité matin	News programme, broadcast by *Radio France Internationale* in the morning on weekdays. Deals with one or two main current (inter)national events, as seen through the eyes of a player in contemporary society. Interviewee is often a French elected representative, in a position to comment on social, political, cultural or economic fields [Dates consulted: 24.11.2000]
Journal 07h00, 07h30, 08h00	Daily news programme, broadcast by *France Inter* [Dates consulted: 23.11.2000 [7.30 am]; 03.05.2001 [7 am, 8 am]; 05.05.2001 [7 am, 8 am]; 06.05.2001 [7 am]; 08.05.2001 [7 am, 8 am]; 09.05.2001 [7.30 am]; 10.05.2001 [7 am]; 18.05.2001 [8 am]; 16.06.2001 [8 am]]
L'éloge du savoir	Daily lecture series, broadcast by *France Culture* on weekdays in the fourth week of the month, produced in association with cultural organisations. The lectures are given by a professor at the *Bibliothèque Nationale de France*, in the presence of an audience [Dates consulted: 22.03.2002]
L'esprit public	Weekly current affairs programme, broadcast by *France Culture.* Debate between guests (journalists from the written press and historians) about political, economic or cultural news [Dates consulted: 26.11.2000]
L'invité	Interview programme by *France Info* [Dates consulted: 22.11.2000]
Là bas, si j'y suis	Magazine, broadcast by *France Inter* on weekdays, of which most episodes are made up of reports devoted to a wide variety of subjects (a news item, but also on social issues or everyday life). Listeners have their say via the programme's answering machine, and the presenter

	also reads extracts from listeners' letters [Dates consulted: 10.11.2000; 01.01.2001; 04.05.2001; 07.05.2001; 09.05.2001; 21.05.2001]
La fabrique de l'histoire	Magazine on contemporary history, broadcast by *France Culture* on weekdays. The episodes cover the week's theme in different ways: interviews with contemporaries and historians, historiographical debates, and visits to places of remembrance [Dates consulted: 17.01.2000; 27.03.2000]
La rumeur du monde	Weekly current affairs programme, broadcast by *France Culture.* Journalists of *Le Monde* discuss a geopolitical, social, economic or cultural theme with guests (journalists, actors from the news, analysts or practitioners) in the studio or by telephone [Dates consulted: 13.07.2002]
La suite dans les idées	Weekly educational programme, broadcast by *France Culture.* A researcher or expert presents the result of his or her work on human and social sciences, which then becomes the subject of a debate involving several more experts in and people from the field [Dates consulted: 28.03.2001; 07.12.2000; 17.09.2001; 18.07.2002]
Le bien commun	Weekly debate or round table discussion, broadcast by *France Culture.* With two guests (writers, sociologists or researchers) who give their opinion on current French or foreign affairs [Dates consulted: 12.05.2001; 01.06.2002]
Le téléphone sonne	Current affairs programme, broadcast by *France Inter* several times a week. One or more experts on the subject under debate, who often hold opposing views on the matter, answer(s) questions from the editorial staff and listeners [Dates consulted: 29.01.2001]
Mémoire d'un continent. Panorama de l'histoire africaine	Weekly history magazine, broadcast by *Radio France Internationale,* about contemporary history of the African continent, and issues relating to the African diasporas [Dates consulted: 15.07.2022; 22.07.2002]
Mémorables: Guerre d'Algérie, retour sur témoins	'Mémorables' is an interview collection, broadcast by *France Culture,* with personalities from the world of the arts, entertainment, academia, politics and literature, who have marked our era. The series 'Guerre d'Algérie, retour sur témoins', encompass interviews with five witnesses and actors of the Algerian war [Dates consulted: 09.07.2001; 10.07.2001; 11.07.2001; 12.07.2001; 13.07.2001]

Pot au feu	Magazine by *France Culture* [Dates consulted: 29.05.2001; 14.06.2001]
Première édition	Cultural magazine, broadcast by *France Culture* on weekdays, with interviews with one or two guests (writers, painters, musicians, photographers, actors, publishers, museum curators and gallery owners) [Dates consulted: 28.11.2000; 24.05.2001; 18.09.2001]
Question directe	Interview programme, broadcast by *France Inter*, with professionals from all kinds of fields [Dates consulted: 30.11.2000; 03.05.2001]
Radio libre	Weekly magazine, broadcast by *France Culture,* with producers given airtime to cover whatever theme they like, in whatever form they like (interviews, debates, reports, documentaries) [Dates consulted: 25.11.2000; 19.05.2001]
Res publica	A weekly political programme, broadcast by *France Inter,* with a guest from French or international political scene [Dates consulted: 02.05.2001]
Journée spéciale torture pendant la guerre d'Algérie	An entire day devoted to torture committed in the Algerian War of Independence, broadcast by *France Inter* [Date: 29.01.2001]
Trafic d'influences	Cultural magazine, broadcast by *France Inter,* with interviews with people from the cultural sector about their latest work [Dates consulted: 22.06.2001]
Une semaine en France	Weekly news magazine, broadcast by *Radio France Internationale.* Discussion of week's most important news with guest(s) [Dates consulted: 01.12.2001]
Une vie, une oeuvre	Weekly documentary, broadcast by *France Culture*, about the life and cultural work of people who have marked our times (philosophers, artists, public figures etc.) [Dates consulted: 20.05.2001]

b. Television

Broadcasters[1199]

ARTE	Franco-German cultural channel, not part of France Télévision, with a market share of 1.6% in 2000.
France 2	A public-service generalist channel, combining national news, and cultural programming, operated by France Télévision with a general-interest program for all audiences, with a market share of approximately 22% in 2000-2002.
France 3	A public channel operated by France Télévision that combines a structure of regional channels (emphasizing local news) with national programming. Market share of approximately 16% in 2002.
France 5	An educational public channel operated by France Télévision, broadcasting during the day on a channel occupied in the evening and at night by ARTE. Market share, of 1.8% in 2000.
TF1	France's leading commercial broadcaster (with a market share of 35,1% in 1999; 32,7% in 2002), born from the privatisation of the former leading public service channel in 1987. Defined by its emphasis on mass entertainment, audience ratings, and advertising-driven programming strategies.

Programmes

12 14 Edition nationale	Afternoon news programme by *France 3* [Dates consulted: 04.05.2001; 08.05.2001]
13 heures le journal	Afternoon news programme by *France 2* [Dates consulted: 02.12.2000; 04.05.2001; 06.05.2001]
19 20 Edition nationale	Evening news programme by *France 3* [Dates consulted: 23.11.2000; 03.05.2001; 04.05.2001; 06.05.2001; 08.05.2001; 09.05.2001; 06.06.2001; 14.06.2001; 26.06.2001; 22.11.2001; 25.11.2001; 26.11.2001; 27.11.2001; 03.03.2002; 27.10.2002]

[1199] Charon, *Les medias en France*, pp. 73, 107; Badillo et al., 'Media ownership and concentration in France', p. 87.

1956, Une sale histoire	Film directed by Emmanuel Plasseraud, broadcast by *France 2* [4.07.2002]
20 heures le journal	Evening news programme by *France 2* [Dates consulted: 23.11.2000; 03.12.2000; 03.05.2001; 04.05.2001; 06.05.2001; 16.05.2001; 06.06.2001; 28.06.2001; 22.11.2001; 25.11.2001; 01.12.2001; 25.01.2002; 03.06.2002]
Aléas	Series of reports, broadcast by *France 3,* about (events, encounters and incidents in the) everyday lives of Frenchmen. Testimonies paint a sociological portrait of France [Dates consulted: 11.06.2001]
Algérie: paroles de tortionnaires	Film directed by Jean-Charles Deniau, broadcast by *France 5* [18 March 2002]
Les dossiers de l'Histoire	Weekly series of historical documentaries, broadcast by *France 3.* With archive images and interviews with experts on the historical subject [Dates consulted: 12.06.2000]
Arrêt sur images	Weekly programme, broadcast by *France 5,* with guests critically reviewing television material of the past week [Dates consulted: 07.01.2001; 03.06.2001]
Arte info	Daily news programme, broadcast by ARTE, that covers international, European and domestic news from France and Germany [Dates consulted: 23.11.2000; 02.12.2000; 04.05.2001; 19.07.2001]
Arte[1200]	'Fax: Djakarta' [17.08.1995]; 'Le prix de l'indépendance' [20.08.1995]
Ca se discute	Magazine about societal affairs, broadcast by *France 2,* with testimonies by guests, specialists who comment and reactions from the audience [Dates consulted: 23.05.2001]
Culture et dépendances	Weekly cultural magazine, broadcast by *France 3.* Studio guests and columnists from press and media engage in a debate about current cultural events and issues [Dates consulted: 06.03.2002]
Des mots de minuit	Weekly cultural magazine, broadcast by *France 2,* with journalists, critics and guests discussing cultural themes, history and current affairs [Dates consulted: 13.12.2000; 09.05.2001; 26.09.2001]

[1200] Items with incomplete metadata in the INA archive.

Envoyé spécial	Weekly current affairs magazine, broadcast by *A2.* Consists of several reports on (inter)national current affairs, raising awareness about important things happening, and presenting another view on them [Dates consulted: 03.05.2001; 14.06.2001; 07.02.2002]
France Europe Express	Monthly news magazine, broadcast by *France 3,* with a focus on Europe. It compares France's and other European countries' position on current affairs. The main guest is a political figure; secondary guests are significant in light of the topic(s) being discussed; and the audience is made up of experts or professionals [Dates consulted: 06.05.2001]
L'ennemi intime	A documentary television film about the Algerian Independence War by Patrick Rotman (2002), broadcast by *France 3* [Dates: 04.03.2002; 05.03.2002; 06.03.2002]
Le journal de l'histoire	Daily magazine, broadcast by *France 5,* devoted to current events in history. Divided into three parts: 'History in the spotlight, 'History in the news' and 'Agenda' [Dates consulted: 06.12.2000; 07.12.2000; 15.05.2001; 24.05.2001]
Le journal de la nuit	Nightly news programme by *France 2* [Dates consulted: 14.06.2000; 23.11.2000; 03.05.2001; 09.05.2001]
Les images oubliées de Germaine Tillion	Two-part interview with Germaine Tillion, which later appear in the documentary film about *Germaine Tillion* by François Gauducheau (2001) [Dates: 09.06.2000; 10.07.2000]
Metropolis	Weekly cultural magazine, broadcast by *ARTE,* about cultural news in Europe and the world [Dates consulted: 12.05.2001]
Mots croisés	Monthly political magazine, broadcast by *France 2.* Debate current affairs with two or more guests (political figures or experts). With interventions and questions from the audience (mostly students) [Dates consulted: 21.05.2001]
Nous n'irons pas la faire	ARTE documentary dedicated to four conscripts who deserted the French army during the Algerian Independence War [Dates: 09.11.2000]
Pièces à conviction	Monthly investigative magazine, broadcast by *France 3,* about what happens behind the scenes of major current affairs [Dates consulted: 27.06.2001]

Ripostes	Weekly magazine, broadcast by *France 5,* in which current (socio-economic, political or cultural) issues that are causing controversy in France, were discussed – together with experts who hold different views on the matter [Dates consulted: 03.12.2000; 13.05.2001]
Saga cités	Weekly magazine, broadcast by *France 3,* about current affairs in the suburbs [Dates consulted: 16.03.2002]
Soir 3 journal	Evening news programme by *France 3* [Dates consulted: 04.05.2001; 077.05.2001; 21.01.2002; 19.03.2002]
TF1 20 heures	Evening news programme by *TF1* [Dates consulted: 14.06.2000; 17.07.2000; 23.11.2000; 25.11.2000; 03.12.2000; 03.05.2001; 04.05.2001; 11.05.2001; 25.11.2001; 26.11.2001; 25.01.2002; 27.10.2002]
Tout le monde en parle	Weekly talk show, broadcast by *France 2,* [Dates consulted: 21.04.2001]
Un an de plus	A monthly programme, broadcast by *France 3*, revisiting significant news stories from the previous year [Dates consulted: 27.11.2001]

c. Press[1201]

Le Figaro	National high-end daily historically aligned with centre-right conservatism. Its pages blend serious political and economic coverage with broadly accessible reporting. It combined reporting, the predominant journalistic function, with a smaller shares of interpretative content, background analysis, and opinion pieces. Held a market share of approximately 15.8% among paid dailies in 2002. Published by Socpresse, one of the main daily newspaper publishers in France, originating from Hersant Group (by newspaper magnate Robert Hersant).
Le Monde	National high-end daily with centre-left orientation. Generally considered an elite newspaper that pursues a sober, analytical style. Characterised by fact-based reporting, limited use of images, and focus on politics, international affairs, and opinion leadership. It combined reporting, the predominant journalistic function, with a smaller shares of interpretative content, background analysis, and opinion pieces.

[1201] Charon, *Les medias en France*, pp. 68-69, 101; Hallin and Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems*, p. 99.

Held a market share of 16,5% among paid dailies in 2002. Published by the Le Monde media group, which stood out for its hybrid form of corporate media organisation with preserved, institutionally mediated, editorial autonomy.

Referenced newspaper articles

‘100 000 francs d'amende requis contre Aussaresses’, *Le Figaro* (29 November 2001)
‘17 octobre 1961, quarante ans après’, *Le Monde* (15 October 2001)
‘1962-2002, France et modernité’, *Le Monde* (17 March 2002)
‘490 généraux défendent “l'action de l'armée française”’, *Le Monde* (24 January 2002)

‘Abdelaziz Bouteflika a quitté la France “les mains vides”, mais “confiant”’, *Le Monde* (18 June 2000)
‘Affaire Aussaresses; Plainte de la veuve de Maurice Audin’, *Le Figaro* (10 May 2001)
‘Algérie – l’appel des 480’, *Le Figaro* (21 January 2002)
‘Algérie. Les révélations du général sur la torture; Alger gère prudemment l’affaire Aussaresses’, *Le Figaro* (7 May 2001)
‘Anniversaire. La réussite d'un Bourguignon né à Alger la Blanche’, *Le Figaro* (19 March 2002)
‘Anniversaire. Le 19 mars 1962, en application des accords d'Evian, un cessez-le-feu intervenait en Algérie après une guerre de plus de sept ans’, *Le Figaro* (18 March 2002)
‘Après le discours d'Abdelaziz Bouteflika demandant à la France de “confesser ses erreurs”, Le Figaro ouvre le débat’, *Le Figaro* (16 June 2000)
‘Aussaresses. D’office à la retraite’, *Le Figaro* (7 June 2001)
‘Aussaresses: “Je n'ai engagé que moi-même”’, *Le Figaro* (27 June 2001)

‘Chat avec Raphaëlle Branche: La torture pendant la guerre d'Algérie’, *Le Monde* (13 March 2002)
‘Chirac, le président du devoir de mémoire’, *Le Monde* (12 March 2007)
‘Conclusion d'un accord de conversion en investissements; L'émotion des Algériens de France’, *Le Figaro* (16 June 2000)
‘Conseil de Paris pose aujourd'hui de la première pierre du mémorial parisien; Polémique sur la commémoration des accords d'Evian’, *Le Figaro* (19 March 2002)

‘De nombreux députés de droite, se référant au passé, ont boycotté le discours à l'Assemblée’, *Le Monde* (17 June 2000)
‘Deuxième visite d'un chef d'Etat algérien en France depuis l'indépendance; Tapis rouge pour Bouteflika’, *Le Figaro* (14 June 2000)
‘Du Tonkin à Alger, des “violences de détail”’, *Le Monde diplomatique* (June 2001)

‘Emmanuel Macron et l’Algérie, une longue histoire contrariée’, *Le Monde* (25 August 2020)
‘En visite au Maghreb, M. Chirac entend dénoncer le piège de l'amalgame entre terrorisme et islam’, *Le Monde* (2 December 2001)

‘Georges Fogel, ancien militant contre la guerre en Algérie’, *Le Monde* (29 July 2009)
‘Guerre d'Algérie, bataille mémorielle’, *Le Monde* (16 March 2012)
‘Guerre d'Algérie: l'impossible anniversaire’, *Le Monde* (24 January 2002)
‘Guerre d’Algérie. Refusant de céder à la pression communiste’, *Le Figaro* (17 May 2001)
‘Guerre d'Algérie: une thèse souligne la généralisation de la torture’, *Le Monde* (7 December 2000)
‘Guerre d'Algérie: quand le PC refait l'histoire’, *Le Figaro* (23 November 2000)

‘Jacques Chirac demande des sanctions contre le général Aussaresses’, *Le Monde* (6 May 2001)
“Je me suis résolu à la torture... J'ai moi-même procédé à des exécutions sommaires...’’, *Le Monde* (23 November 2000)

‘L'Algérie et la France’, *Le Monde* (17 June 2000)
‘La France et le Maghreb’, *Le Figaro* (1 December 2001)
‘La France se prépare à accueillir avec faste le chef de l'Etat algérien’, *Le Monde* (9 June 2000)
‘La guerre d'Algérie n'est plus une “guerre sans nom”’, *Le Monde* (11 June 1999)
‘La mémoire retrouvée de la guerre d'Algérie?’, *Le Monde* (18 March 2002)
‘La mémoire torturée’, *Le Monde* (3 December 2000)
‘La polémique enfle sur la commémoration du 17 octobre 1961’, *Le Monde* (15 October 2001)
‘“La torture faisait partie d'une certaine ambiance. On aurait pu faire les choses différemment”’, *Le Monde* (21 June 2000)
‘La veuve de Maurice Audin, torturé en Algérie, va déposer plainte pour crimes contre l'humanité’, *Le Monde* (10 May 2001)
‘Le 17 octobre 1961, la réalité d’un massacre face à un mensonge d’Etat’, *Le Monde* (15 October 2001)
‘Le general Aussaresses condamné à 7 500 euros d'amende’, *Le Figaro* (26 January 2002)
‘Le général Schmitt est à nouveau accusé de torture en Algérie’, *Le Monde* (18 March 2005)
‘Legion d’honneur; Aussaresses suspendu’, *Le Figaro* (28 June 2001)
‘Le massacre du 17 octobre 1961 obtient un début de reconnaissance officielle’, *Le Monde* (17 October 2001)
‘Le président Bouteflika a appelé les Pieds-Noirs à revenir investir dans leur pays natal qu'ils avaient dû fuir en 1962’, *Le Figaro* (10 June 2000)
‘Le président de la République à Tunis, Alger et Rabat; Chirac resserre les liens avec le Maghreb’, *Le Figaro* (1 December 2001)

‘Les ‘confessions’ du général et les réactions qu'elles ont suscitées provoquent un débat chez les militaires’, *Le Figaro* (21 May 2001)
‘Les controverses politiques sur la guerre d'Algérie marquent la commémoration du 17 octobre 1961’, *Le Monde* (19 October 2001)
‘Les Français face à la torture en Algérie’, *Le Monde* (29 November 2000)
‘“Le témoignage de cette femme est un tissu de mensonges. Tout est faux, c'est une manoeuvre”’, *Le Monde* (22 June 2000)
‘Le témoignage de Louisette Ighilahriz rouvre le débat sur la torture en Algérie’, *Le Monde* (23 June 2000)
‘La torture sur le banc des accusés’, *Le Figaro* (28 November 2001)
‘L’idée d’une commission d’historiens sur la torture durant la guerre d’Algérie fait son chemin’, *Le Monde* (26 November 2000)
‘L’opinion est prête à un débat lucide sur l’usage de la torture’, *Le Monde* (29 November 2000)

‘Maghreb. Le président de la République entame aujourd'hui une brève tournée en Algérie, en Tunisie et au Maroc’, *Le Figaro* (1 December 2001)
‘Maurice Papon une carrière française’, *Le Monde* (19 September 2002)
‘M. Bouteflika à Paris: l'humeur de la presse algéroise’, *Le Monde* (15 June 2000)
‘M. Bouteflika à Paris, pour relancer les relations franco-algériennes’, *Le Monde* (15 June 2000)
‘M. Bouteflika: “L'indifférence internationale face au terrorisme”’, *Le Monde* (16 June 2000)
‘Mémoire et situation politique au coeur de la visite du président algérien’, *Le Monde* (16 June 2000)

‘Octobre 1961: une commémoration entre huées et youyous’, *Le Monde* (17 October 2001)

‘Par la voie politique’, *L’Humanité* (7 December 2000)
‘Pierre Vidal-Naquet, historien: “il se manifeste une gigantesque envie de verité à propos de l’Algérie’, *Le Monde* (27 November 2000)
‘Polemique. La campagne visant à condamner la pratique de la torture par l'armée française pendant la bataille d'Alger rebondit’, *Le Figaro* (23 November 2000)
‘Qui était vraiment le ‘commandant O’?’, *Le Figaro* (19 May 2001)
‘Pourquoi je suis un pied-noir en colère’, *Le Monde* (24 June 2000)
‘Premier discours d'un chef d'Etat algérien devant l'Assemblée nationale; Un ‘autocrate éclairé’, *Le Figaro* (15 June 2000)
‘Professionnalisation, loi de programmation militaire: le 8 Mai commémoré dans une ambiance morose’, *Le Figaro* (8 May 2001)

‘Retrouvailles à Bab el-Oued’, *Le Figaro* (3 December 2001)
‘Révélations sur l'affaire Aussaresses. Le récit d'une vie s'est transformé en ouvrage centré sur la torture; Les coulisses d'un coup éditorial’, *Le Figaro* (19 May 2001)

‘Révélations sur l'affaire Aussaresses. Entretien avec l'homme qui détient le manuscrit original des souvenirs d'Aussaresses; Georges Fleury: ‘Torture Story’’, *Le Figaro* (19 May 2001)
‘“Rien qu'un soldat qui a fait son travail”’, *Le Figaro* (26 November 2001)

‘Sanctions à l'étude contre Aussaresses; Torture en Algérie: Chirac veut des sanctions contre Aussaresses’, *Le Figaro* (5 May 2001)
‘Se garder des débordements’, *Le Figaro* (5 December 2000)
‘“Si la France reconnaissait et condamnait ces pratiques, je prendrais cela pour une avancée”’, *Le Monde* (22 November 2000)

‘Torture. Après la confession publique du général sur ses pratiques pendant la guerre d'Algérie; Chirac demande des sanctions contre Aussaresses’, *Le Figaro* (5 May 2001)
‘Torture. Après les déclarations du general Aussaresses sur la guerre d’Algérie’, *Le Figaro* (5 December 2000)
‘Torture en Algérie; Jospin: ‘Totale condamnation morale’’, *Le Figaro* (4 May 2001)
‘Torture en Algérie: l’aveau des généraux’, *Le Monde* (23 November 2000)
‘Torture. Les réactions aux confessions des généraux Massu et Aussaresses’, *Le Figaro* (30 November 2000)
‘Torturée par l'armée française en Algérie, “Lila” recherche l'homme qui l'a sauvée’, *Le Monde* (20 June 2000)
‘Torture; Richard pour des mesures disciplinaires’, *Le Figaro* (11 May 2001)

‘Une violence “injustifiable” pour 45% des Français’, *Le Monde* (17 October 2001)
‘Un rapport critique sur les droits de l'homme en Algérie publié avant la visite de M. Bouteflika à Paris’, *Le Monde* (14 June 2000)

‘Quarantième anniversaire de la répression du 17 octobre 1961 sur fond de polémique’, *Le Monde* (17 October 2001)
‘Qui déshonore l’armée?’, *Le Figaro* (28 November 2000)

d. Printed

R. Branche, R., *La torture et l’armée pendant la guerre d’Algérie (1954-1962)* (Paris, 2001)

Aussaresses, P., *Services Spéciaux Algérie 1955-1957: Mon témoignage sur la torture* (Paris, 2001)

Chapter III.

a. Radio

Broadcasters

BR	Bayerischer Rundfunk, regional public radio and television broadcaster Bavaria. One of the larger ARD members in terms of budget, audience reach, and organisational scale.
Deutschlandradio	Public radio broadcaster with nationwide stations Deutschlandfunk and Deutschlandfunk Kultur, offering ad-free programs on news, culture, and knowledge for listeners across all federal states.
DW	Deutsche Welle, international public broadcaster that aims to contribute to shaping Germany's image worldwide, with content in 30 languages. Regulated and funded by the *Bundesrepublik* rather than by broadcasting fee. Member of ARD.
HR	Hessischer Rundfunk, regional public radio and television broadcaster Hessen. Member of ARD.
NDR	Norddeutscher Rundfunk, regional public radio and television broadcaster northern Germany. One of the larger ARD members in terms of budget, audience reach, and organisational scale.
RB	Radio Bremen, regional public radio and television broadcaster Bremen. One of the smaller ARD members, covering a limited region with correspondingly limited resources.
RBB	Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg, regional public radio and television broadcaster Berlin-Brandenburg. Member of ARD.
SWR	Südwestrundfunk, regional public radio and television broadcaster southwest Germany. One of the larger ARD members in terms of budget, audience reach, and organisational scale.
WDR	Westdeutscher Rundfunk, regional public radio and television broadcaster western Germany. One of the larger ARD members in terms of budget, audience reach, and organisational scale.

Programmes

Abendjournal Spezial	News programme by the NDR [Dates consulted: 27.08.2005]
Africa this week	News programme by the DW [Dates consulted: 17.01.2004]
Apropos: Namibia	Programme by the RBB [Dates consulted: 09.11.2003]
Redaktion Hintergrund	A programme by the BR, providing background analyses on current affairs [13.01.2003]; [29.10.2003]; [13.08.2004]; 15.08.2004]
BeispielsWeise	Programme by Deutschlandradio [Dates consulted: 07.02.2004]
Bücher – ein Magazin für Leser	Literature magazine, broadcast by the BR [Dates consulted: 01.03.2003]
Camino	Programme broadcast by HR [Dates consulted: 11.01.2004]
Deutschlandradio	'100 Jahre Herero-Aufstand - Namibias Ureinwohner verlangen Entschädigung' [05.10.2003]; '100 Jahre Hereroaufstand und noch keine Entschuldigung' [11.01.2004]; 'Namibia "Blaubuch" [12.01.2004][1202]
Deutsche Welle	'Seyfried / Herero' [29.04.2003]; 'Fischer Namibia' [29.10.2003]; 'Fischer Namibia' [30.10.2003]; 'Herero Aufstand' [09.01.2004]; 'Herero Aufstand' [08.01.2004]; 'Interview Schröder Afrika' [23.01.2004]; 'Herero Rechtslage' [02.02.2004]; 'Herero Entschädigung' [09.02.2004]; 'Namibia Deutschland' [13.04.2004]; 'Interview Hinz Herero' [09.08.2004]; 'Herero Aufstand' [11.08.2004]; 'Deutschland Namibia' [11.08.2004]; 'Herero Aufstand in Deutsch-Südwest-Afrika vor 100 Jahren' [11.08.2004]; 'Namibia Entschädigungen' [12.08.2004]; 'Interview Eid Namibia' [12.08.2004'; 'Namibia Eignungen' [12.08.2004]; 'Namibia Deutschland' [13.08.2004];

[1202] Items with incomplete metadata in the Deutschlandradio archive

	'Interview Wieczorek-Zeul herero' [14.08.2004]; 'Herero' [15.08.2004]; 'Namibia Herero' [11.08.2005]; 'Kolonialismus' [04.11.2005]; 'Interview Pohamba Deutschland Namibia' [03.12.2005][1203]
Diwan - Büchermagazin	Weekly book magazine, broadcast by the BR, with reviews of new publications (both fiction and non-fiction); commentaries on the literary scene and publishing landscape; and interviews with writers [Dates consulted: 18.10.2003]
Dok 5 - Das Feature	Weekly investigative reports and documentaries on current topics from e.g. politics, society and science, broadcast by the WDR [Dates consulted: 11.01.2004]
Dokha	Programme by the HR [Dates consulted: 11.01.2004]
DW Exklusiv	A weekly news magazine by the DW, featuring exclusive in-depth interviews and investigative reports [Dates consulted: 12.08.2004]
Echo des Tages	Daily news programme, broadcast by the WDR, with the important news of the day - in 30 minutes [Dates consulted: 04.10.2003]
Evangelische Perspektiven	Weekly programme, broadcast by the BR, with information and orientation about church and religion, theology and spirituality [Dates consulted: 14.07.2004]
Fazit	Daily programme, broadcast by Deutschlandfunk, with a daily overview of cultural events of the day (theatre and film premieres, exhibition openings, discussion forums), cultural-political problems, trends and phenomena [Dates consulted: 08.08.2004; 28.10.2005]
Galerie	Weekly cultural magazine, broadcast by Deutschlandradio. One-hour interview about the life and work of a guest (more or less well-known in the fields of culture, politics, business or science [Dates consulted: 21.02.2003]
Gesprächszeit	A radio talk series on Nordwestradio (RB) featuring listener participaton [Dates consulted: 20.08.2004]

[1203] *Idem.*

Hessischer Rundfunk[1204]	'Namibia Besuch' [16.08.2004]
Hintergrund: Geschichte Aktuell.	Daily magazine by Deutschlandfunk, with analyses of domestic and foreign politics. On certain historical dates and in case of important historical events, the magazine is published as 'Geschichte aktuell' [Dates consulted: 10.01.2004]
Informationen am Abend	Daily news programme in the evening, broadcast by Deutschlandfunk [Dates consulted: 13.08.2004]
Informationen am Mittag	Daily news programme in the afternoon, broadcast by Deutschlandfunk [Dates consulted: 04.10.2003; 13.08.2004]
Informationen am Morgen	Flagship early morning news programme by Deutschlandfunk. Studio guests (from fields of politics, business, science, and culture) often "said it for the first time on Deutschlandfunk". Includes reports, features and interviews with correspondents at home and abroad, and press reviews of national and international newspapers [Dates consulted: 08.03.2004; 12.08.2004; 14.08.2004; 09.09.2004]
Insight	A weekly 45-minute TV talk magazine by the DW [Dates consulted: 27.10.2003]
IQ	Educational programme on weekdays, broadcast by the BR. Reports on current research and controversies from fields such as medicine, climate and society [Dates consulted: 08.01.2004]
Kalenderblatt	Informative magazine, broadcast by the BR on weekdays, about historical events that happened on that day's date [Dates consulted: 12.01.2004; 11.08.2004]
Kultur heute	Daily cultural magazine, broadcast by Deutschlandfunk, with an overview of cultural events of the day, in Germany and abroad. With background reports and commentaries about cultural-political problems, trends and phenomena [Dates consulted: 12.01.2004]
LänderReport	Programme about political, economic, social and cultural events and developments, illustrated by the example of the state of affairs

[1204] *Idem.*

	in German federal states. Broadcast by Deutschlandradio on weekdays [Dates consulted: 10.02.2005]
Lange Nacht: Blicke ins Dunkel – Eine Lange Nacht über deutsche Geschichte in Afrika	'Lange Nacht' is a three-hour programme series on a particular topic from contemporary history, politics, psychology and society, arts and literature, broadcast by Deutschlandfunk. The broadcast 'Blicke ins Dunkel – Eine Lange Nacht über deutsche Geschichte in Afrika' dealt with German colonial history in Africa [Dates: 16.10.2004; 17.10.2004]
MerkMal	Programme by Deutschlandradio [Dates consulted: 08.01.2004; 12.01.2004; 15.11.2004]
Mikado	Programme by the HR [Dates consulted: 08.03.2004; 11.08.2004]
Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk[1205]	'Heidemarie Wieczorek-Zeul bei Gedenkfeier des Herero-Aufstandes' [15.08.2004]
Newslink Africa	Daily news programme, broadcast by the DW, on African affairs [Dates consulted: 12.01.2004; 11.08.2004]
NDR Journal	News programme by the NDR [Dates consulted: 18.02.2003]
Norddeutscher Rundfunk[1206]	'Die Demokratie hat sich rückwärts entwickelt' [08.01.2004]; 'Herero aus der ehemaligen deutschen Kolonie Namibia fordern 100 Jahre nach dem Völkermord Entschädigung' [09.08.2004]
NWR-Journal	Regional news magazine by RB [Dates consulted: 18.11.2004]
OrtsZeit	Daily thoroughly researched magazine by Deutschlandradio with in-depth information about daily events at home and abroad [Dates consulted: 04.01.2003; 10.08.2004]
Radio Bremen[1207]	'Gerhard Seyfried: Herero' [10.03.2003]; 'Kongress in Bremen: 100 Jahre Herero-Krieg' [19.11.2004]
Radiofeuilleton	Daily programme, broadcast by Deutschlandradio Kultur, with a focus on current affairs in arts, culture and science [Dates consulted: 21.11.2005]

[1205] *Idem.*
[1206] *Idem.*
[1207] *Idem.*

RadioWissen	Daily educational programme, broadcast on weekdays by the BR, that covers a wide range of fields (philosophy, psychology, biology, economics, politics and so on) [Dates consulted: 27.06.2005]
Scala - Schwerpunkt	Cultural news programme, broadcast by the WDR, on weekdays [Dates consulted: 05.03.2004]
Studiozeit - Kulturelles Feature	Cultural programme by Deutschlandfunk [Dates consulted: 16.01.2004]
Südwestrundfunk[1208]	'Völkermord an den herero? Deutsche kolonialpolitik und ihre Nachgeschichte' [18.02.2003]; '11.08.1904 : Die deutschen kaiserlichen Truppen greifen die Hereros an' [11.08.2003]; 'Die Hereros' [30.12.2003]; 'Nützliche Eingeborene mit kriegerischen Eigenschaften' [02.05.2005]
SWR International	A multicultural radio magazine, broadcast twice daily by the SWR [Dates consulted: 11.08.2004]
SWR 1 - Thema Heute	Daily current affairs programme by the SWR [Dates consulted: 07.08.2004]
SWR 2 Forum	Debate programme, broadcast by the SWR, with several participants discussing contemporary political, economic, scientific, religious affairs etc [Dates consulted: 18.02.2003; 13.01.2004]
Thema Heute	Daily news magazine by the DW [Dates consulted: 11.08.2004]
Weltspiegel Afrika	Programme by the DW [Dates consulted: 11.08.2004; 13.08.2004; 16.08.2004; 24.06.2005; 20.07.2005]
Westdeutscher Rundfunk[1209]	'Ein Teil von mir ist auch deutsch. Ein Herero sucht seine Wurzeln' [14.06.2004]
ZeitZeichen	Daily programme by the WDR about events in world history [Dates consulted: 11.08.2004]

[1208] *Idem.*
[1209] *Idem.*

Wissenswert	Information programme, broadcast by the HR several times a year, that reports on current research and in an accessible way [Dates consulted: 12.01.2004]

b. Television

Broadcasters[1210]

ARD	Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Rundfunkanstalten Deutschlands, German association of public service broadcasters made up of nine regional broadcasting corporations. Market share of 14%, and an aggregate market share of its regional members of 13,4% in 2003.
MDR	Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk, regional public radio and television broadcaster central Germany. Member of ARD.
SR	Saarländischer Rundfunk, regional public radio and television broadcaster Saarland. One of the smaller ARD members, covering a limited region with correspondingly limited resources.
ZDF	Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen, national public TV broadcaster. Market share of 13,2% in 2003.
3Sat	Generalist channel with a cultural focus, jointly offered by ARD and ZDF. Market share of 1% in 2005.

Programmes

Aspekte	Weekly cultural programme, broadcast by ZDF, that presents current social debates and meets thinkers, artists, and musicians [Dates consulted: 31.01.2003]
Abendschau	Daily news magazine by RBB [Dates consulted: 24.11.2004]
Abenteuer Wissen	Weekly educational ZDF magazine on 'life sciences' [Dates consulted: 09.11.2005]

[1210] Deutsches Steuerzahlerinstitut, *Der öfentlich-rechtliche Rundfunk in Deutschland: Bedeutung, Finanzierung und Reformoptionen* (Bonn, 2013), p. 76; Schrag, *Medienlandschaft Deutschland*, p. 209. See also broadcasters overview on page 280.

ARD-Mittagsmagazin	Daily news magazine by the ARD, with interview guests in the studio, background information and reports [Dates consulted: 12.01.2004; 13.08.2004]
Auslandsreporter	Documentary series, broadcast by SWR, that shows journalists who have gone abroad to tell personal stories of people who find themselves in a particularly challenging (social) context [Dates consulted: 07.07.2004]
Bulthaupt in: Namibia	'Bulthaupt in...' is an MDR travel programme with Axel Bulthaupt [Dates consulted: 18.07.2004]
Buten un binnen	Daily news magazine, broadcast by the RB [Dates consulted: 18.11.2004; 02.09.2005; 18.11.2005]
Cosmo TV	Weekly programme, broadcast by the WDR, critically dealing with issues of integration [Dates consulted: 09.04.2005]
Das kleine Fernsehspiel	Platform by the ZDF (national public TV broadcaster) for film and television makers' first films [Dates consulted: 05.07.2004; 28.11.2005]
Deutsche Kolonien	Three-part film by Gisela Graichen und Peter Prestel, broadcast by the ZDF [Dates consulted: 08.11.2005; 15.11.2005; 22.11.2005]
Dienstag - das starke Stück der Woche	Weekly programme, broadcast by the HR, about contemporary political issues [Dates consulted: 24.06.2003]
DW Journal	Daily news magazine by the DW [Dates consulted: 03.01.2003 [7 am]; 12.01.2004 [7 am]; 07.08.2004 [1 pm]; 11.08.2004 [7 am]; 14.08.2004 [9 pm]]
Heimat in der Wüste. Deutscher Alltag in Namibia	Film from 1996, directed by Michael Höft and Andrea Greve, broadcast by NDR [11.01.2004]
Hessen aktuell	Daily news magazine by the HR [Dates consulted: 12.01.2004]
Heute Journal	'Heute' and 'Heute Journal' are daily ZDF news magazines [Dates consulted: 11.01.2004; 11.08.2004; 12.08.2004; 14.08.2004; 15.11.2004]

Hier ab 4	Weekday news magazine by the MDR with daily news, studio guests and audience participation [Dates consulted: 22.12.2005]
Kaiser Wilhelms Wüstenkrieg. Namibia 100 Jahre nach dem Herero-Aufstand	Film by Stefan Schaaf, broadcast by SWR, about the war against the Herero and Nama tribes in German Southwest, and the struggle of *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung* on both sides [Date: 31.07.2005]
Kulturweltspiegel	Culture magazine, broadcast by the WDR, with the aim to enrich regular foreign reporting with cultural topics. Explores links between culture and politics, also in developing countries [Dates consulted: 02.02.2003]
Kulturzeit	Weekday programme on cultural and cultural-political issues, coproduced by ARD and ZDF [Dates consulted: 18.09.2003; 13.08.2004]
LeseZeichen	Literature programme, broadcast by the BR, with critical reviews of literary works [Dates consulted: 16.02.2003]
LexiTV. Wissen für alle	Educational programme, broadcast by the WDR on weekdays. Presents new research about man, nature, technology, culture and society [Dates consulted: 09.04.2003]
Lokalzeit Bergisches Land	Daily local news programme, broadcast by WDR [Dates consulted: 06.02.2004; 26.04.2005]
MDR aktuell – Spätausgabe	Daily late-night news programme, broadcast by the MDR [Dates consulted: 11.01.2004; 14.08.2004]
Nachtkultur	Weekly cultural programme, broadcast by the SWR at night [Dates consulted: 28.02.2003; 04.04.2003]
NDR-Themennacht: Die Nacht der deutschen Kolonien	'NDR-Themennacht' is a night dedicated to one particular theme, broadcast by the NDR. The episode 'Die Nacht der deutschen Kolonien' dealt with German colonial history [Dates: 10.01.2004-11.01.2004]
Politik Aktuell	News magazine of the DW [Dates consulted: 06.01.2004]

Recht brisant	A programme about legal issues, broadcast by 3Sat [Dates consulted: 04.06.2003]
Reisen in ferne Welten	Travel programme, broadcast on SR a few times a year [Dates consulted: 15.07.2004]
Rückblende	Short documentary about historical events, broadcast once a week by the BR [Dates consulted: 26.07.1995]
Schümer & Dorn: Der Büchertalk	Biweekly literary talk show, broadcast by the SWR, in which newly published books are reviewed [Dates consulted: 28.02.2003]
Schwaben und Altbayern	Weekly news magazine by the BR, with regional news of wider importance [Dates consulted: 18.01.2004]
Sehnsucht nach Namibia	Documentary by the ZDF about descendants of the German colonial rulers in present-day Namibia [Date: 25.03.2005]
Seine Majestät; Wilhelm II	Two-part documentary about the last German Emperor Wilhelm II, broadcast 90 years after the beginning of the First World War. Cooperation by ZDF and Spiegel TV [Dates consulted: 20.07.2004]
Schwarz und weiß am Diamanten-strand: Gerd Ruge in Namibia	A film by Gerd Ruge (2002), broadcast by the WDR about the traces of the colonial era in Lüderitz [09.08.2003]
Straße der Deichgrafen. Ein Diamantenfund und seine Folgen	A documentary directed by Mario Damolin, broadcast by the NDR [31 December 2003]
SWR Extra: Afrika	Detailed reports on current affairs by the SWR [Dates consulted: 30 December 2003)
Tagesschau	Daily news programme by the ARD [Dates consulted: 14.08.2004]
Tagesthemen	Extensive half-hour late edition of the ARD *Tagesschau* with news, background reports, analyses and interviews [Dates consulted: 11.01.2004; 15.11.2004]
Ticket	Programme by the RBB [Dates consulted: 13.03.2003]

Tod in der Wüste. Kaiser Wilhelms Krieg in Deutsch Südwestafrika	A film by Peter Dreckmann (2004) about the war of Emperor Wilhelm in South-west Africa, its legacies in present-day Namibia and the omnipresence of its memory in the commemoration year 2004, produced and broadcast by the MDR [12.08.2004]
Traum und trauma der deutschen Kolonien	A three-party documentary directed by G. Graichen and P. Prestel, broadcast by the ZDF [Dates consulted: 08.11.2005; 15.11.2005; 22.11.2005]
Waterberg 1904. Mission und Kolonialkrieg in Südwestafrika	Documentary by the RBB, about the Battle of Waterberg and the colonial war in German Southwest-Africa [18.09.2004]
Weltbilder	Weekly reportage from a foreign country, broadcast by the NDR [Dates consulted: 29.09.2004]
Weltspiegel	Weekly magazine, broadcast by the ARD, with correspondents reporting on complex political issues abroad [Dates consulted: 14.09.2003; 08.08.2004]
WestArt am Sonntag	Weekly talk show on Sunday mornings, broadcast by the WDR, about socio-political and culturally relevant topics [Dates consulted: 14.03.2004]
ZDF-Mittagsmagazin	ZDF news magazine, broadcast on weekdays in the afternoon, with studio interviews [Dates consulted: 04.08.2005; 07.11.2005]
ZDF-Morgenmagazin	ZDF news magazine, broadcast on weekdays in the morning, with in-depth reports and interviews about e.g. politics and culture [Dates consulted: 08.11.2005]
ZDF-Themenabend: Afrika unter der Pickelhaube - Deutschlands koloniale Vergangenheit	'ZDF-Themenabend' is an evening dedicated to one particular theme, broadcast by ZDF. 'Afrika unter der Pickenhaube – Deutschlands koloniale Vergangenheit' dealt with German colonial history [Date: 02.08.2004]

c. Press[1211]

Der Spiegel	National (political) left-leaning weekly news magazine. Generally considered quality press. Sold circulation of 1,1 million copies/week in 2004. Published by Spiegel-Verlag, unique ownership model where the Mitarbeiter KG (an employee-led partnership) acts as the majority shareholder with a 50.5% stake, ensuring editorial independence from external corporate interests [Dates consulted: 01.01.2003 - 01.01.2006]
Die Tageszeitung	National (political) left-wing daily. Not typically considered a high-quality newspaper. While identified as having national significance, its 2004 circulation was below 85,200 copies/day and therefore represented less than 8.97% of the total circulation of national subscription newspapers. To ensure editorial independence, it is owned by a reader-supported cooperative, published by TAZ Verlagsgenossenschaft [Dates consulted: 01.01.2003 - 01.01.2006]
Die Welt	National (political) right-wing daily. Liberal tendency with regard to economic policy, and a conservative tendency with regard to social policy. Not typically considered a high-quality newspaper. Sold circulation of 202,200 copies/day in 2004, accounting for approx. 1% of the total German daily newspaper market. Published by Axel Springer AG (family company, largest German newspaper publisher with a market share of 22.7% in 2004) [Dates consulted: 01.01.2003 - 01.01.2006]
Die Zeit	National (political), left-leaning weekly newspaper. Left-liberal tendency with regard to social policy, and a liberal tendency with regard to economic policy. Generally considered a quality newspaper. Sold circulation of 472,000 copies/week in 2004. Published by Zeitverlag and owned by the Holtzbrinck-Gruppe, its editorial independence is protected by a redactional statute [Dates consulted: 01.01.2003 - 01.01.2006]
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung	National daily newspaper, (political) centre-right oriented. Liberal tendency with regard to economic policy, conservative tendency with regard to social policy. Generally considered a quality newspaper. Sold circulation of 377,700 copies/day, accounting

[1211] Schütz, 'Deutsche Tagespresse 2004', p. 223; Schrag, *Medienlandschaft Deutschland*, pp. 152-168; Commissariaat voor de Media, *A mapping study of media concentration*, pp. 67-68.

	for 39.75% of the total circulation of national subscription newspapers. Unique for having no single editor-in-chief, but a committee of five editors appointed by the non-profit Fazit-Stiftung, which ensures the paper remains independent of the commercial interests of the *FAZ GmbH* publishing house [Dates consulted: 01.01.2003 - 01.01.2006]
Süddeutsche Zeitung	National, (political) left-leaning daily. Generally considered a quality newspaper. Sold circulation of 430,100 copies/day, accounting for 45.26% of the total circulation of national subscription newspapers. Published by the Süddeutscher Verlag (with SWMH as a major shareholder since 2002), maintaining its independence through an editorial statute [Dates consulted: 01.01.2003 - 01.01.2006]

Referenced newspaper articles

'Afrika bringt keine Quote', *TAZ* (26 September 2005)
'Afrika: Eine deutsche Hölle', *die Zeit* (30 June 2005)
'Annäherung 100 Jahre nach dem Genozid', *TAZ* (6 March 2004)
'An den deutschen Völkermord in Afrika denken', *FAZ* (8 August 2004)
'Auch im Herzen des Ehrenmannes gibt es eine hölle', *SZ* (27 February 2004)
'Aufräumen, aufhängen, niederknallen!', *Die Zeit* (5 August 2004)
'Aufruhr in der Savanne', *SZ* (1 December 2003)
'Blick in die Presse', *SZ* (28 August 2004)
'BMHWZ', *Der Spiegel* (7 June 2009)
'Bundestag drückt sich vor Kolonialzeit', *TAZ* (19 June 2004)

'CDU/CSU im Abseits', *TAZ* (21 August 2004)

'Das "düstere Kapitel"', *FAZ* (12 January 2004)
'Das lange, das nicht beendete Jahrhundert der Völkermorde', *FAZ* (20 January 2004)
'Das Roecheln der Sterbenden verhallte in der erhabenen Stille', *Der Spiegel* (13 August 2004)
'Der erste Schritt zu wirklicher Versöhnung', *TAZ* (16 August 2004)
'Der totale Feldzug', *TAZ* (10 January 2004)
'Der Umgang mit der Kolonialzeit', *Die Welt* (3 September 2001)
'Deutschland entschuldigt sich für Kolonialverbrechen', *Der Spiegel* (15 August 2004)
'Die deutsche Kolonialgeschichte wird wieder entdeckt', *Die Zeit* (25 September 2003)
'Die geteilte Geschichte', *TAZ* (26 November 2004)
'Die Peitsche des Bändigers', *Der Spiegel* (12 January 2004)
'Die Überlebenden', *SZ* (30 October 2003)
'Die verordnete Versöhnung', *TAZ* (19 September 2005)

‘Die Qualen eines vergessenen Volkes’, *SZ* (10 January 2004)

‘Eine frage der politischen ethik’, *TAZ* (12 August 2004)
‘Eisernes trojanisches Pferd’, *SZ* (30 December 2004)
‘Erinnerung, schweig. Der Algerienkrieg wird in Frankreich noch immer verdrängt’, *SZ* (5 July 2002)
‘Europa erinnert sich an seine Verbrechen. In Frankreich und Belgien beginnt eine Debatte um die schmutzige Geschichte der Auflösung der Kolonialreiche’, *TAZ* (24 June 2000)

‘Fehlendes Unrechtsbewußtsein’, *FAZ* (31 December 2003)
‘Fischer anerkennt Schuld bei Sklaverei’, *TAZ* (3 September 2001)
‘Fischer erkennt deutsche Schuld für Sklaverei an UN-Konferenz gegen Rassismus in Durban’, *SZ* (3 September 2001)
‘Fischer gesteht deutsche Schuld in Afrika ein’, *Die Welt* (3 September 2001)
‘Fischer reist in drei Länder Afrikas’, *SZ* (12 October 2003)
‘Französische Generäle erinnern sich. Eine Debatte über Folter im Algerien-Krieg rührt an das Selbstverständnis der Republik’, *FAZ* (27 December 2000)
‘Für Afrikaner hat die Afrika-Beauftragte keine Zeit’, *FAZ* (31 July 2004)

‘Geldgierige Anwälte’, *SZ* (30 October 2003)
‘Geschichte dekodieren’, *TAZ* (29 September 2004)
‘Grausame Namenspatrone’ *SZ* (13 December 2004)
‘Hass statt Versöhnung’, *SZ* (3 September 2001)
‘Herero-Führer klagt Dialog mit Berlin ein’, *TAZ* (6 June 2005)

‘Igel nach Windhoek tragen’, *SZ* (8 September 2003)
‘In der Dunkelkammer’, *TAZ* (11 November 2005)
‘In der Wüste, wo das zwanzigste Jahrhundert begann’, *FAZ* (3 February 2004)
‘Indien - made in Germany’, *TAZ* (6 August 2005)
‘In Frankreich brechen erneut die Wunden der Vergangenheit auf; Wieder debattiert das Land über Algerien’, *Die Welt* (14 May 2001)

‘Jenseits von Afrika’, *Die Welt* (15 August 2004)

‘Keine Entschuldigung, keine Entschädigung’, *TAZ* (10 October 2004)
‘Klage gegen die Kolonialmacht’, *Der Spiegel* (21 July 2003)
‘Koloniale Amnesie’, *TAZ* (17 January 2004)
‘Kriegsgewinnler von der Küste’, *Die Zeit* (5 August 2004)

‘Mehr als ein “Sorry”’, *TAZ* (3 September 2004)
‘Menschenfresser und barbusige Mädchen’, *SZ* (24 November 2005)
‘Mit dem Mördervolk muss aufgeräumt werden’, *TAZ* (10 January 2004)

‘Mit deutschem Blick’, *FAZ* (31 December 2003)
‘Mit und ohne Gewehr’, *FAZ* (17 April 2004)
‘Mord verjährt nicht’, *Der Spiegel* (26 January 2004)
‘Musikantenstadt in der Steppe’, *Die Welt* (12 October 2003)
‘Mutig in Namibia’, *SZ* (16 August 2004)

‘Namibia’, *Die Welt* (16 August 2004)
‘Namibia: Damals, Kinder, in Afrika…’, *Die Zeit* (10 March 2005)
‘Namibia stellvertretend’, *FAZ* (29 April 2004)
‘Negativer Kontinent’, *FAZ* (24 September 2004)
‘Niederlande; SS-Vergleich’, *TAZ* (11 June 1994)
‘Nur Gegenwehr kann sie bremsen’, *TAZ* (5 August 2005)

‘Opposition der vaterlandslosen Gesellen’, *SZ* (16 January 2004)

‘Pardon wird nicht gegeben. Streit über Kasernenname in Leer kocht hoch’, *TAZ* (4 February 2004)
‘Prügeltage in Darassalam’, *Die Welt* (8 November 2005)

‘Rassenforschung’, *TAZ* (10 January 2004)
‘Rassenkrieg gegen die Herero’, *SZ* (10 January 2004)

‘Schönfärberich über deutsche Kolonialherrschaft’, *FAZ* (6 September 2004)
‘Schröder entdeckt Afrika’, *Der Spiegel* (15 January 2004)
‘Segen für die “rote Heidi”’, *TAZ* (10 November 2004)
‘Selbstkritische Diskussionen in den Niederlanden’, *FAZ* (4 May 1995)
‘Spätfolgen des Imperialismus’, *FAZ* (6 August 2004)
‘Spuren der Sammelwut’, *TAZ* (13 November 2004)

‘Tilgung der Altschulden der Kolonialgeschichte’, *FAZ* (6 October 2004)
‘Tod durch Entkräftung. Der koloniale Genozid – eine Vorstufe zum Holocaust?’, *FAZ* (2 April 2003)
‘Tod in der Wüste’, *Die Welt* (12 January 2004)

‘Umerziehung im Reiseteil’, *FAZ* (23 March 2004)
‘Unabhängigkeit allein reicht nicht’, *TAZ* (28 February 2004)
‘Unsere Jungs in Afrika’, *TAZ* (26 July 2005)
‘Untergang einer Staatslüge.Vierzig Jahre nach dem Ende des Algerienkriegs: Ein Gespräch mit dem französischen Historiker Pierre Nora über die Wunden der Geschichte’, *Die Zeit* (14 March 2002)

‘Vergangenheit spaltet die Niederländer’, *SZ* (18 January 1995)
‘Vergebung - doch in wessen Namen?’, *Die Welt* (17 August 2004)

‘Verleugnetes Erbe’, *Die Zeit* (18 August 1995)
‘“Vernichtung des Hererovolkes”. Völkermord aber nicht Vorläufer des Holocaust’, *Die Welt* (14 January 2004)
‘Völkermord unter Kaiser Wilhelms Kolonialregierung. Die Herero hoffen auf deutsche Milliarden’, *SZ* (24 January 2003)
‘Von der Vergangenheit lernen, um die Zukunft besser zu gestalten’, *Die Welt* (3 September 2001)
‘Vorwärts und schnell vergessen’, *TAZ* (10 January 2004)

‘Was ist ein Genozid?’, *SZ* (21 January 2005)
‘Weltreich für Würdige. Neu aufgelegt: Das Blaubuch des deutschen Kolonialismus’, *SZ* (28 July 2003)
‘Wieczorek-Zeul entschuldigt sich bei Herero für Gräueltaten’, *SZ* (16 August 2004)

‘Wieczorek-Zeul begeistert Namibia’, *TAZ* (21 August 2004)
‘Wir haben die Deutschen überlebt’, *TAZ* (10 January 2004)
‘Wunderbares Namibia’, *FAZ* (18 March 2004)

‘Zinnsoldaten für Afrika’, *FAZ* (22 March 2003)
‘Zutiefst empörte und beschämte Deutsche’, *FAZ* (6 September 2001)

c. Official records and proceedings

‘Drucksache 15/3329’, *Deutscher Bundestag* (16 June 2004), pp. 1-4

‘Plenarprotokoll 15/122, Stenografischer Bericht’, *Deutscher Bundestag* (Berlin, 8 September 2004), pp. 1-116

‘Plenarprotokoll 11/129, Stenographischer Bericht’, *Deutscher Bundestag* (Bonn, 24 February 1989), pp. 1-42

‘Plenarprotokoll 15/114, Stenografischer Bericht’, *Deutscher Bundestag* (Berlin, 17 June 2004), pp. 1-192

Secondary sources

Albrecht, M., 'German Multiculturalism and Postcolonialism in Comparative perspective', in D. Göttsche and A. Dunker (eds.), *(Post-)Colonialism across Europe. Transcultural History and National Memory* (Bielefeld, 2014), pp. 33–56

– 'Kolonialphantasien im postkolonialen Deutschland. Zur kritischen Revision einer Denkfigur der deutschen Postkolonialen Studien', in G. Dürbeck and A. Dunkel (eds.), *Postkoloniale Germanistik. Bestandsaufnahme, theoretische Perspektiven, Lektüren* (Bielefeld, 2014), pp. 417-456

– '(Post)-Colonial Amnesia? German Debates on Colonialism and Decolonization in the Post-War Era', in M. Perraudin and J. Zimmerer (eds.), *German Colonialism and National Identity* (New York, 2011), pp. 187-196

– 'Postcolonialism and Migration into Germany's Colonial Past', *German Life and Letters*, 65/3 (2012), pp. 363-377

Aldrich, R., 'Apologies, Restitutions, and Compensation: Making Reparations for Colonialism', in M. Thomas and S. A. Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Ends of Empire* (Oxford, 2017), pp. 714-732

– 'Coming to Terms with the Colonial Past: The French and Others', *Arts: the Proceedings of the Sydney University Arts Association,* 28 (2006), pp. 91-116

– 'Remembrances of Empires Past', *Portal: Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies*, 7/1 (2010), pp. 1-19

Alexander, J., *Trauma. A Social Theory* (Cambridge, 2012)

Alexander, M. et al. (eds.), *The Algerian War and the French Army, 1954-1962. Experiences, Images, Testimonies* (New York, 2002)

Anderson, D., *Histories of the Hanged. The Dirty War in Kenya and the End of Empire* (London, 2005)

Ashcroft, B. et al. (eds.), *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* (London, 2000)

Ashcroft, B., G. Griffiths and H. Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back. Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures* (London, 1989)

Assaoui, R. and C. Eldrige (eds.), *Algeria Revisited. History, Culture and Identity* (London, 2017)

Assmann, A., ‘Transnational Memories’, *European Review*, 22/4 (2014), pp. 546-556

Bachmann, K., ‘On the Margins of German Vergangenheitsbewältigung. Germany’s Colonial Past Revisited’, *Przegląd Zachodni,* 1 (2014), pp. 137-152

Bakker, P. and O. Scholten, *Communicatiekaart van Nederland* (Houten, 1997)

Bekus, N., ‘Agency of international transnationalism in social memory’, *The British Journal of Sociology,* 0/0 (2018), pp. 1-22

Bensmaia, R., ‘The War that Haunts France’, *L’Esprit Créateur,* 54/4 (2014), pp. 6-14

Bentley, T., *Empires of Remorse: Narrative, postcolonialism and apologies for colonial atrocity* (London, 2015)

Bijl, P., *Emerging Memory. Photographs of Colonial Atrocity in Dutch Cultural Remembrance* (Amsterdam, 2015)

Boesen, E., ‘Peripheral Memories – Introduction’, in E. Boesen et al. (eds.), *Peripheral Memories Public and Private Forms of Experiencing and Narrating the Past* (Bielefeld, 2012), pp. 7-20

Brazzoduro, A., ‘Postcolonial Memories of the Algerian War of Independence, 1955-2010: French Veterans and Contemporary France’, in E. Godin and N. Vince (eds.), *France and the Mediterranean. International Relations, Culture and Politics* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 275-299

Brocades Zaalberg, T. and B. Luttikhuis, ‘De koloniale schuldclassificatie voorbij. Nederlands, Brits en Frans extreem geweld in vergelijkend perspectief, 1945-1962’, in G.J. Oostindie et al (eds.), *Over de grens. Nederlands extreem geweld in de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog, 1945-1949* (Amsterdam, 2022), pp. 381-408

Bond, L. and J. Rapson (eds.), *The Transcultural Turn. Interrogating Memory Between and Beyond Borders* (Berlin, 2014)

Branche, R., ‘Torture of terrorists? Use of torture in a “war against terrorism”: justifications, methods and effects: the case of France in Algeria, 1954-1962’, *International Review of the Red Cross*, 89/867 (2007), pp. 543-560

Brun, C., ‘Quel(s) savoir(s) pour quelle(s) mémoire(s) de la guerre d’Algérie?’, *Revue Internationale de la Fondation Auschwitz,* 117 (2014), pp. 67-74

Buettner, E., *Europe after Empire. Decolonization, Society, and Culture* (Cambridge, 2016)

Bürger, C., *Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte(n). Der Genozid in Namibia und die Geschichtsschreibung der DDR und BRD* (Bielefeld, 2017)

Caruth, C. (ed.), *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore, 1996)

– *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* (Baltimore, 1995)

Charon, J., *Les medias en France* (Paris, 2003)

Cohen, J., 'Postcolonial immigrants in France and their descendants. The Meanings of France's 'Postcolonial Moment'', in U. Bosma et al (eds.), *Postcolonial migrants and identity politics: Europe, Russia, Japan and the United States in comparison* (New York, 2012), pp. 23-60

Cohen, W., 'The sudden Memory of Torture. The Algerian War in French Discourse, 2000-2001', *French Politics, Culture & Society,* 19/3 (2001), pp. 82-94

Cole, J., 'Remembering the Battle of Paris. 17 October 1961 in French and Algerian memory', *French Politics, Culture & Society,* 21/3 (2003), pp. 21-50

Commissariaat voor de Media, *A mapping study of media concentration and ownership in ten European countries* (Hilversum, 2004), pp. 1-255

Conrad, S., *German Colonialism. A Short History* (Cambridge, 2012)

– 'Schlägt das Empire zurück?', *Werkstatt Geschichte,* 30 (2001), pp. 73-83

Craps, S., *Postcolonial Witnessing. Trauma out of Bounds* (Houndmills, 2013)

David, C., 'Information Society Statistics. PCs, Internet and mobile phone usage in the EU', *Statistics in focus,* 15/2003 (2003), pp. 1-7

De Baets, A., 'Censorship of History in France and the Netherlands (1945-2014): A Survey', *Deshima,* 8 (2014), pp. 253-278

De Haan, I., 'Shame and Pride. The Memory of the Rescue of Jews in the Netherlands, 1945 to the Present', in N. Aleksium, R. Utz and Z. Wóycicka (eds.), *The Rescue Turn and the Politics of Holocaust Memory* (Detroit, 2024), pp. 23-63

De Jong, L., *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog (1939-1945). Deel 12: Epiloog - tweede helft* (Amsterdam, 1988)

De Waal, M. et al., *Mapping Digital Media: Netherlands* (Open Society Foundations, 12 October 2011), pp. 1-107

Derderian, R., 'Algeria as a lieu de mémoire: Ethnic Minority Memory and National Identity in Contemporary France', *Radical History Review*, 83 (2002), pp. 28-43

Deutscher Bundestag, 'Drucksache 19/7735', (13 February 2019), pp. 1-12

Direction du développement des medias, *Tableaux statistiques de la presse – 2000* (Paris, 2000)

Docker, J., 'Raphael Lemkin's history of genocide and colonialism', contribution for the United States Holocaust Museum, Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies (unpublished paper, 26 February 2004), https://www.ushmm.org/m/pdfs/20040316-docker-lemkin.pdf (10 April 2025)

Eckert, A., 'The First Postcolonial Nation in Europe? The End of the German Empire', in M. Thomas and S. A. Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Ends of Empire* (Oxford, 2017), pp. 102-122

Einaudi, J., *La Bataille de Paris: 17 Octobre 1961* (Paris, 1991)

Eldridge, C., *From empire to exile: History and memory within the pied-noir and harki communities, 1962-2012* (Manchester, 2016)

– 'Passing the Torch: Memory Transmission and Activism within the *Pied-Noir* Community Fifty Years after Algerian Independence', in R. Aissaoui and C. Eldridge (eds.), *Algeria Revisited. History, Culture and Identity* (London, 2017), pp. 212-234

Enjelvin, G. and N. Korac-Kakabadse, 'France and the Memories of "Others": The Case of the Harkis', *History and Memory* 24/1 (2012), pp. 152-177

Ensink, T., 'The Footing of a Royal Address: An Analysis of Representativeness in Political Speech, Exemplified in Queen Beatrix' Address to the Knesset on March 28, 1995', *Current Issues in Language & Society,* 3/3 (1996), pp. 205-232

Erll, A. and A. Nünning (eds.), *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* (Berlin, 2008)

Erll, A., 'Travelling Memory', *Parallax,* 17/4 (2011), pp. 4-18

European Commission, *Eurobarometer 43.1* (April - May 1995)

– *Eurobarometer 53* (April - May 2000)

– *Eurobarometer 63.4,* (May - June 2005)

– *Eurobarometer 74.2* (November - December 2010)

EUobserver, 'Internet was strong forum for French 'no' vote' (24 August 2005), https://euobserver.com/eu-political/19717

Feindt, G. et al., 'Entangled memory: toward a third wave in memory studies', *History and Theory*, 53 (2014), pp. 24-44

Fischer-Tiné, H., 'Postcolonial Studies', *European History Online* (3 December 2010), https://www.ieg-ego.eu/en/threads/europe-and-the-world/postcolonial-studies/harald-fischer-tine-postcolonial-studies (22 April 2025)

Flood, C. and H. Frey, 'Defending the Empire in Retrospect: The Discourse of the Extreme Right', in T. Chafer and A. Sackur (eds.), *Promoting the Colonial Idea. Propaganda and Visions of Empire in France* (London, 2002), pp. 195-210

Förster, L., *Postkoloniale Erinnerungslandschaften. Wie Deutsche und Herero in Namibia des Kriegs von 1904 gedenken* (Frankfurt, 2010)

Garsha, J., 'Expanding Vergangenheitsbewältigung? German Repatriation of Colonial Artefacts and Human Remains', *Journal of Genocide Research*, 22/1 (2020), pp. 46-61

Gerwarth, R. and S. Malinowski, 'Hannah Arendt's Ghosts: Reflections on the Disputable Path from Windhoek to Auschwitz', *Central European History,* 42 (2009), pp. 279-300

Gildea, R., *Empires of the Mind. The Colonial Past and the Politics of the Present* (Cambridge, 2019)

– 'Empire Replayed, Resistance changes sides (1945-1962)', lecture series (2013), https://www.qub.ac.uk/schools/happ/Events/annual-lectures/wiles-lecture-series/PastLectures/WilesLectures2013/Lecture2/ (24 May 2025)

Goebel, S., 'Die Konstruktion neokolonialen Wissens in Deutschen Dokumentarfilmen über die Deutsche Geschichte', *Przegla D Zachodni*, 350/1 (2014), pp. 209-226

Göttsche, D. (ed.), *Memory and Postcolonial Studies:* Synergies and New Directions (Oxford, 2019)

Göttsche, D., 'Post-imperialism, Postcolonialism and beyond: Towards a Periodization of cultural Discourse about colonial Legacies', *Journal of European Studies*, 47/2 (2017), pp. 111-128

– *Remembering Africa. The Rediscovery of Colonialism in Contemporary German Literature* (New York, 2013)

Golsan, R., 'The Legacy of World War II in France. Mapping the Discourses of Memory', in R. Lebow, W. Kansteiner, C. Fogu (eds.), *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe* (London, 2006), pp. 73-101

– *Vichy's Afterlife: History and Counterhistory in Postwar France* (Nebraska, 2000)

Grassmuck, V. and B. Thomass, 'The Media in Northwestern Europe in the Last Three Decades', in S. Papathanassopoulos, and A. Miconi (eds.), *The Media Systems in Europe: Continuities and Discontinuities* (Cham, 2023), pp. 69-97

Hallin, D. and P. Mancini, *Comparing Media Systems: Three Models of Media and Politics* (Cambridge, 2004)

Hargreaves, A. (ed.), *Memory, Empire, and Postcolonialism. Legacies of French Colonialism* (Lanham, 2005)

Hiddleston, J., 'Cultural memory and amnesia: the Algerian War and 'second-generation' immigrant literature in France', *Journal of Romance Studies,* 3/1 (2003), pp. 59-71

Hirschberger, G., 'Collective Trauma and the Social Construction of Meaning', *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9 (2018), pp. 1-14

Houben, V., 'A Torn Soul: The Dutch Public Discussion on the Colonial Past in 1995', *Indonesia*, 63 (1997), pp. 47-66

House, J. and N. MacMaster, *Paris 1961: Algerians, State Terror, and Memory* (Oxford, 2006)

Hubbell, A., *Remembering French Algeria. Pieds-Noirs, Identity, and Exile* (Lincoln, Nebraska, 2015)

Hull, I., *Absolute Destruction. Military culture and the practices of war in imperial Germany* (London 2005)

Hyslop, J., 'The invention of the Concentration Camp: Cuba, Southern Africa and the Philippines, 1896-1907', *South African Historical Journal,* 63/2 (2011), pp. 251–276

Jamfa, L., 'Germany Faces Colonial History in Namibia: A Very Ambiguous "I Am Sorry"', in M. Gibney et al. (eds.), *The Age of Apology. Facing Up to the Past* (Philadelphia, 2008), pp. 202-215

Jansen, J., 'Politics of Remembrance, Colonialism and the Algerian War of Independence in France', in M. Pakier and B. Stråth (eds.), *A European Memory? Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance* (New York, 2010), pp. 275-293

Jones, K., 'Vergangenheitsbewältigung à la française. Post-Colonial Memories of the Herero Genocide and 17 October 1961', in M. Perraudin and J. Zimmerer (eds.), *German Colonalism and National Identity* (New York, 2011), pp. 213-223

Judt, T., 'Epilogue. From the House of the Dead: An Essay on Modern European Memory', in *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York, 2005), pp. 803-831

Kansteiner, W., 'Losing the War, Winning the Memory Battle. The Legacy of Nazism, World War II, and the Holocaust in the Federal Republic of Germany', in Lebow et al. (eds.), *The Politics of Memory in Postwar Europe*, pp. 102-146

Kennedy, R., and M. Nugent, 'Scales of Memory: Reflections on an Emerging Concept', *Australian Humanities Review*, 59 (2016), pp. 61-76

Khanna, R., 'Racial France, or the Melancholic Alterity of Postcolonial Studies', *Public Culture*, 23/1 (2011), pp. 191-199

Koc-Michalska, K. and T. Vedel, *Mapping Digital Media: France* (Open Society Foundations, 17 February 2013), pp. 1-114

Kössler, R., 'La Fin d'une Amnésie? L'Allemagne et son Passé colonial depuis 2004', *Politique africaine*, 2006/2 (2006), pp. 50-66

– *Namibia and Germany: Negotiating the Past* (Windhoek, 2015)

Kössler, R. and H. Melber, 'Nicht vergeben, nicht vergessen - Deutscher Kolonialismus', *iz3w*, 275 (2004), pp. 22-26

Kowaleski Wallace, E., *The British Slave Trade and Public Memory* (Chichester, 2006)

Krobb, F. and E. Martin (eds.), *Weimar Colonialism: Discourses and Legacies of Post-imperialism in Germany After 1918* (Bielefeld, 2014)

Kuitenbrouwer, M., 'Het imperialisme-debat in de Nederlandse geschiedschrijving', *BMGN-Low Countries Historical Review*, 113/1 (1998), pp. 56-73

– *Nederland en de opkomst van het moderne imperialisme. Koloniën en buitenlandse politiek 1870-1902* (Amsterdam, 1985)

Kundrus, B., **'**Grenzen der Gleichsetzung. Kolonialverbrechen und Vernichtungspolitik', *Blätter des Informationszentrums Dritte Welt,* 275 (2004), pp. 30-33

Kuss, S., 'Evaluation and Memory', in *German Colonial Wars and the Context of Military Violence* (London, 2017), pp. 263-296

LaCapra, D., *Writing History. Writing Trauma* (Baltimore, 2014)

Laforcade, de G., ''Foreigners', Nationalism and the 'Colonial Fracture'. Stigmatized Subjects of Historical Memory in France', *International Journal of Comparative Sociology*, 47/3-4 (2006), pp. 217-233

Lazare, F., 'Le Monde Moves a Big Story to Its Web Site', *Nieman Reports*, 54/4 (2000), pp. 76-77

Lee, W., *Waging War. Conflict, Culture, and Innovation in World History* (Oxford, 2016)

Lester, A., *Deny & Disavow: Distancing the Imperial Past in the Culture Wars* (London, 2022)

Lewis, J., *The Algerian War in French/Algerian Writing. Literary Sites of Memory* (Cardiff, 2018)

Limpach, R., '"Ze vielen als gemaaid koren", Een beschouwing over de verliescijfers in Indonesië, 1945-49', *Militaire Spectator*, 191 (2022), pp. 32-49

Lindenberg, D., 'Guerres de mémoire en France', *Vingtième Siècle. Revue d'Histoire,* 42/1 (1994), pp. 77-96

Lindner, U., 'Encounters over the Border: The Shaping of Colonial Identities in Neighbouring British and German Colonies in Southern Africa', in U. Lindner et al. (eds.), *Hybrid Cultures - Nervous States: Britain and Germany in a (Post)colonial World* (Amsterdam, 2010), pp. 3-22

Lindner, U. et al. (eds.), *Hybrid Cultures - Nervous States: Britain and Germany in a (Post)colonial World* (Amsterdam, 2010)

Locher-Scholten, E., 'Van Indonesische urn tot Indisch monument: vijftig jaar Nederlandse herinnering aan de Tweede Wereldoorlog in Azië', *Bijdragen en Mededeelingen van het Historisch Genootschap*, 114 (1999), pp. 193-222

– 'Die "Indische Generation" in den Niederlanden. Koloniales Erbe als innen- wie außenpolitisches Problem (1950-2005)', *WerkstattGeschichte*, 43 (2006), pp. 63-83

Lorcin, P., *Imperial Identities: Stereotyping, Prejudice, and Race in Colonial Algeria* (Lincoln, Nebraska, 2014)

Lotem, I., *The Memory of Colonialism in Britain and France: The Sins of Silence* (Cham, 2021)

Ludi, R., *Reparations for Nazi Victims in Postwar Europe* (Cambridge, 2012)

Lutz, H. and K. Gawarecki (eds.), *Kolonialismus und Erinnerungskultur. Die Kolonialvergangenheit im kollektiven Gedächtnis der deutschen und niederländischen Einwanderungsgesellschaft* (Münster, 2005)

MacMaster, N., 'The Torture Controversy (1998-2002): Towards a 'new history' of the Algerian War?', *Modern & Contemporary France*, 10/4 (2002), pp. 449-459

Meijer, R. (eds.), *Oostindisch doof: Het Nederlandse debat over de dekolonisatie van Indonesië* (Amsterdam, 1995)

Melber, H., 'Der Waterberg', in J. Zimmerer, *Kein Platz an der Sonne. Erinnerungsorte der deutschen Kolonialgeschichte* (Frankfurt, 2013), pp. 473-486

– 'How to Come to Terms with the Past: Re-Visiting the German Colonial Genocide in Namibia', *Africa Spectrum*, 40/1 (2005), pp. 139-148

Metzler, G., 'Krisen und Niedergang der europäischen Imperien', *izpb* (20 November 2018), https://www.bpb.de/shop/zeitschriften/izpb/europa-zwischen-kolonialismus-und-dekolonisierung-338/280662/krisen-und-niedergang-der-europaeischen-imperien/ (9 April 2025)

Michels, E., 'Geschichtspolitik im Fernsehen. Die WDR-Dokumentation "Heia Safari" von 1966/67 über Deutschlands Kolonialvergangenheit', *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte,* 56/3 (2008), pp. 467-492

Möhle, H., 'Kolonialverherrrlichung im Grünen', *Hamburg Global* (12 December 2013), https://www.hamburg-global.de/v1.0/placemarks/32#fnr1 (9 April 2025)

Morgenrath, B., 'Lettow-Vorbeck. Korrektur eines zweifelhaften Heldenepos', *Deutschlandfunk* (5 April 2014), https://www.deutschlandfunk.de/lettow-vorbeck-korrektur-eines-zweifelhaften-heldenepos-102.html (10 April 2025)

Müller, L., '"We Need to Get Away from a Culture of Denial"? The German-Herero War in Politics and Textbooks', *Journal of Educational Media, Memory & Society*, 5/1 (2013), pp. 50-71

Nachtwei, W., ‘Gedenken an den Deutsch-Hererokrieg. Hundert Jahre danach Durchbruch für Versöhnung’ (16 July 2015), http://nachtwei.de/downloads/gedenken_herero.pdf (12 April 2025)

Nayar, P., *The Postcolonial Studies Dictionary* (Chichester, 2015)

Neiger, M., O. Meyers and E. Zandberg (eds.), *On Media Memory: Collective Memory in a New Media Age* (Hampshire, 2011)

Nielsen, M., *Britain, Germany and Colonial Violence in South-West Africa, 1884-1919. The Herero and Nama Genocide* (Cham, 2022)

Noam, E., *Who owns the world’s media? Media concentration and ownership around the world* (Oxford, 2016)

Olick, J., *In the House of the Hangman. The Agonies of German Defeat, 1943-1949* (London, 2005)

Oostindie, G., *Facing up to the past: Perspectives on the Commemoration of Slavery from Africa, the Americas and Europe* (Kingston, 2001)

– ‘History brought home: Postcolonial migrations and the Dutch rediscovery of slavery’, in U. Bosma (ed.), *Post-Colonial Immigrants and Identity Formations in the Netherlands* (Amsterdam, 2012), pp. 155-174

Oostindie, G. and M. van der Kaaij, ‘Een kwaad geweten. De moeizame verwerking van de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog in Nederland’, in G. Oostindie et al (eds.), *Over de grens. Nederlands extreem geweld in de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog, 1945-1949* (Amsterdam, 2022), pp. 409-440

Oostindie, G. and H. Schulte Nordholt, ‘Nederland en zijn koloniale verleden: moeizame overgang van dekolonisatie naar buitenlands beleid’, *Internationale Spectator*, 60/11 (2006), pp. 573-577

Pape, E., ‘Postcolonial debates in Germany – An Overview’, *African Sociological Review*, 21/2 (2017), pp. 2-14

Pattynama, P., *Bitterzoet Indië. Herinnering en nostalgie in literatuur, foto’s en films* (Amsterdam, 2014)

Pervillé, G., ‘Une politique de l'oubli. La mémoire de la guerre en France et en Algérie’, *Le Sociographe*, 2/46 (2014), pp. 85-95

Rausch, S. ‘‘We’re equal to the Jews who were destroyed. […] Compensate us, too’. An affective (un)remembering of Germany’s colonial past?’, *Memory Studies*, 15/2 (2022), pp. 418-435

Robel, Y., *Verhandlungssache Genozid. Zur Dynamik geschichtspolitischer Deutungskämpfe* (München, 2013)

Rothermund, D., *Memories of Post-imperial Nations. The Aftermath of Decolonization, 1945–2013* (Delhi, 2015)

– ‘The Self-consciousness of Post-imperial Nations. A Cross-national Comparison’, *India Quarterly,* 67/1 (2011), pp. 1-18

Rothberg, M., *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Oxford, 2009)

Sabrow, M., ‘“Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung” als Epochenbegriff’, *Merkur. Deutsche Zeitschrift für europäisches Denken*, 67/6 (2013), pp. 494-505

Said, E., *Culture and Imperialism* (London, 1993)

Scagliola, S., ‘Cleo’s ‘unfinished business’: coming to terms with Dutch war crimes in Indonesia's war of independence’, *Journal of Genocide Research*, 14/3-4 (2012), pp. 419-439

– ‘Heen en weer geslingerd tussen feiten en emoties. Een kritiek op de visie van J.J.P. de Jong’, *Nieuwste Tijd*, 1 (2001), pp. 42-58

– *Last van de Oorlog. De Nederlandse oorlogsmisdaden in Indonesië en hun verwerking* (Amsterdam, 2002)

Schaller, D., ‘“Every Herero Will Be Shot”. Genocide, Concentration Camps, and Slave Labor in German South-West Africa”, in R. Lemarchand, *Forgotten Genocides: Oblivion, Denial, and Memory* (Pennsylvania, 2011), pp. 51-70

Schilling, B., *Postcolonial Germany. Memories of Empire in a Decolonized Nation* (Oxford, 2014)

– ‘Material Memories of Empire: Coming to terms with German Colonialism’, in K. Mühlhahn (ed), *The Cultural Legacy of German Colonial Rule* (Berlin, 2017), pp. 23-50

Schrag, W., *Medienlandschaft Deutschland* (Munich, 2006)

Schröder, H. et al., *Mapping Digital Media: Germany* (Open Society Foundations, 16 July 2011), pp. 1-103

Schütz, W., 'Deutsche Tagespresse 2004', *Media Perspektiven*, 2 (2005), pp. 205-232

Sengupta, I., 'Introduction. Locating lieux de mémoire: A (Post)colonial Perspective', in I. Sengupta (ed.), *Memory, History, and Colonialism. Engaging with Pierre Nora in Colonial and Postcolonial Contexts* (London, 2009), pp. 1-10

Shigwedha, V., 'The return of Herero and Nama bones from Germany: the victims' struggle for recognition and recurring genocide memories in Namibia', in J. Dreyfus and E. Anstett (eds.), *Human remains in society: curation and exhibition in the aftermath of genocide and mass-violence* (Manchester, 2016), pp. 197-219

Short, D., *Redefining Genocide: Settler Colonialism, Social Death and Ecocide* (London, 2016)

Silvester, J. and J. Gewald (eds.), *Words Cannot Be Found. German Colonial Rule in Namibia: An Annotated Reprint of the 1918 Blue Book* (Leiden, 2003)

Sims, J., *Rethinking France's "memory wars": Harki and Pied-Noir Collective Memories in Fifth Republic France* (PhD thesis, University of North Carolina, 2015)

Speitkamp, W., 'Otto von Bismarck und die Koloniapolitik – ein Ausweg aus der Wirtschaftskrise?', in M. Epkenhaus and U. von Hel (eds.), *Otto von Bismarck und die Wirtschaft* (Paderborn, 2013), pp. 59-76

– 'Kolonialdenkmäler', in J. Zimmerer, *Kein Platz an der Sonne. Erinnerungsorte der deutschen Kolonialgeschichte* (Frankfurt, 2013), pp. 409-423

Spivak, G., 'The Rani of Sirmur: An Essay in Reading the Archives', *History and Theory*, 24/3 (1985), pp. 247-272

Stevens, M., 'Visibility, equality, difference: drawing the battle lines in France's "memory wars"', *Journal of Romance Studies,* 9/3 (2009), pp. 102-109

Stora, B., '1999-2003, guerre d'Algérie, les accélérations de la mémoire', in M. Harbi and B. Stora (eds.), *La Guerre d'Algérie: 1954-2004, la fin de l'amnésie* (Paris, 2004), pp. 501-514

Thomas, M. and A. Thompson (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of the Ends of Empire* (Oxford, 2017)

Tonchi, V. et al., *Historical Dictionary of Namibia* (Plymouth, 2012)

Tsutsui, K., 'The Trajectory of Perpetrators' Trauma: Mnemonic Politics around the Asia-Pacific War in Japan', *Social Forces,* 87 (2009), pp. 1392-1422

Van der Heijden, C., '25 jaar digitale transitie in de journalistiek 4: eerste zelfstandige stappen, vol twijfel', *journalismlab,* https://www.journalismlab.nl/en/25-jaar-digitale-transitie-in-de-journalistiek-4-eerste-zelfstandige-stappen-vol-twijfel/ (19 March 2019)

Van der Heyden, U. and J. Zeller (eds.), *Kolonialismus hierzulande: eine Spurensuche in Deutschland* (Erfurt, 2007)

Van der Kaaij, M., *Een kwaad geweten: De worsteling met de Indonesische onafhankelijkheidsoorlog vanaf 1950* (Amsterdam, 2022)

Van Doorn, J.A.A., *De laatste eeuw van Indië. Ontwikkeling en ondergang van een koloniaal project* (Amsterdam, 1994)

– *Gevangen in de tijd. Over generaties en hun geschiedenis* (Amsterdam, 2002)

Van Eimeren, B., H. Gerhard, B. Frees, 'Internetverbreitung in Deutschland: Potenzial vorerst ausgeschöpft? ARD/ZDF-Online-Studie 2004', *Media Perspektiven*, 8 (2004), pp. 350-370

Van Horn, N., 'De Excessennota na een halve eeuw. Een bestandsopname', *Leidschrift,* 31/3 (2016), pp. 79-94

Van Nieuwenhuyse, K. and I. Goddeeris, 'Postkoloniale Erinnerungskulturen in Europa. Eine fragmentierte, geteilte und national gebundene Erinnerungslandschaft: Zur Einführung', in U. Fenske et al. (eds.), *Kolonialismus und Dekolonisation in nationale Geschichtskulturen und Erinnerungspolitiken in Europa: Module für den Geschichtsunterricht* (Frankfurt am Main, 2015), pp. 215-218

Verber, J., 'Remembering at a Time of Forgetting. Weimar Colonialism in West Germany', in F. Krobb and E. Martin (eds.), *Weimar Colonialism. Discourses and Legacies of Post-Imperialism in Germany after 1918* (Bielefeld, 2014), pp. 209-227

Vergau, J., *Aufarbeitung von Vergangenheit vor und nach 1989. Eine Analyse des Umgangs mit den historischen Hypotheken totalitärer Diktaturen in Deutschland* (Marburg, 2000)

Vidal-Naquet, P., 'Foreword' in D. Bailly (ed.), *The Hidden Children of France, 1940-1945. Stories of Survival* (New York, 2010), pp. xi-xviii

Vince, N., 'Questioning the Colonial Fracture: The Algerian War as a 'Useful Past' in Contemporary France and Algeria' in E. Godin and N. Vince (eds.), *France and the Mediterranean. International Relations, Culture and Politics* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 305-341

Vos, C., 'Een open zenuw: televisie over de koloniale oorlog in Indië, 1945-1950', *Tijdschrift voor Mediageschiedenis*, 2/2 (1999), pp. 69-99

Weedon, C. and G. Jordan, 'Collective memory: theory and politics', *Social Semiotics*, 22/2 (2012), pp. 143-153

Wilde, A., 'Irruptions of Memory: Expressive Politics in Chile's Transition to Democracy', *Journal of Latin American Studies,* 31/2 (1999), pp. 473–500

Winter, J., 'The Memory Boom in Contemporary Historical Studies', *Raritan,* 21/1 (2001), pp. 52-66

Wolff, de K., *Post-/koloniale Erinnerungsdiskurse in der Medienkulture: Der Genozid an den Ovaherero und Nama in der deutschsprachigen Presse von 2001 bis 2016* (Bielefeld, 2021)

Wouters, N. (ed.), *Transitional Justice and Memory in Europe (1945-2013)* (Cambridge, 2014)

Young, R., *Empire, Colony, Postcolony* (Chichester, 2015)

– 'May 1968: Anticolonial Revolution for a Decolonial Future', Interventions, 23/3 (2020), pp. 432-447

Zeller, J., 'Das schwierige Erinnern an die koloniale Vergangenheit', in H. Gründer and H. Hiery (eds.), *Die Deutschen und Ihre Kolonien* (Berlin, 2017), pp. 297-316

– 'Decolonisation of the Public Space? (Post)Colonial Culture of Remembrance in Germany', in U. Lindner et al., *Hybrid Cultures – Nervous States. Britain and Germany in a (Post)Colonial World* (Amsterdam, 2010), pp. 56-88

– 'Genozid und Gedenken: Ein dokumentarischer Uberblick', in H. Melber (ed.), *Genozid und Gedenken: Namibisch-deutsche Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Frankfurt am Main, 2005), pp. 163-188

Zimmerer, J., 'Colonial Genocide: The Herero and Nama War (1904-8) in German South West Africa and Its Significance', in D. Stone (ed), *The Historiography of Genocide* (New York, 2008), pp. 323-343

– 'Der erste Völkermord des 20. Jahrhunderts' in: Deutsches Historisches Museum (ed.), *Deutscher Kolonialismus: Fragmente seiner Geschichte und Gegenwart* (Darmstadt, 2016), pp. 138-145

– 'Holocaust und Kolonialismus. Beitrag zu einer Archäologie des genozidalen Gedankens', *Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaft*, 51/12 (2003), pp. 1098-1119

Zimmerer, J. and J. Zeller (eds.), *Völkermord in Deutsch-Südwestafrika: Der Kolonialkrieg (1904-1908) in Namibia und seine Folgen* (Berlin, 2003)