

Abstracts

Eva Pfanzelter

The (un)processed memory of the resettlement of the South Tyroleans in 1939

The article begins with the question as to why one of the central events in the collective memory of the South Tyrolean population – the referendum or *Option* of 1939 – has barely been commemorated by visible memorials. It then examines in detail the historical development of memories of the *Option*. The author identifies as a central issue the tenacious persistence of the idea of victimhood in the collective memory of German and Ladin-speaking South Tyroleans. That is to say, the *Option* is seen as a commonly experienced collective stroke of fate at the hands of foreign forces an interpretation that has the approval not only of the majority of those who opted to leave but never did, but also of the prosecuted minority of those who opted to stay and those who actually had to leave. At the same time, public memorials of the *Option* would provoke an ongoing confrontation with South Tyrol's Fascist and National Socialist past and hence with the role of members of all three language groups (German, Italian, Ladin) as perpetrators. This form of engagement with the past is difficult and implies continuous self-criticism, because it does not involve a reckoning solely with guilty individuals, but instead affects the whole of society. The historical analysis of memories of the *Option* make clear that, despite all the progress made, the goal of 'closure' has not been reached.

Carlo Romeo

The choices of others. Italian memory of the resettlement of 1939

The author analyzes the different phases in the Italian reception of the various resettlement (*opzioni*) that took place in north-east Italy in 1939. The planning and realization of these resettlement took place within the context of the political power dynamics between the Fascist and National Socialist regimes from 1938 to 1939 (the Austrian *Anschluss* with Germany, the signing of the 'Pact of Steel', and the outbreak of the Second World War). The Fascist authorities succeeded in upholding the principle of voluntary and individual choice in the *opzioni*, but they were unsuccessful in countering propaganda from the German *Reich*. In particular, the result of the referendum for the resettlement in Alto Adige / South Tyrol constituted a failure for Fascist policy in the region. In the post-war period, the Italian government used the result of the referendum (in which the majority voted for Germany) as a means of putting pressure on the Austrian government. For decades, the most debated

historiographical question has been the extent to which Italy or the “Third Reich” bore greater or lesser responsibility for the resettlement idea. Since the 1970s, new historical studies have distanced themselves from the climate of controversy surrounding the *opzioni* and these have made their mark in the Italian discussion as well. There, the focus has shifted to the social and psychological aspects of the *opzioni*, which have been disseminated among the wider public thanks to exhibitions, films and novels.

Hansjörg Stecher

On the trail of Anton Spechtenhauser. A South Tyrolean Fascist as a victim of South Tyrolean Nazis

In following the trail of Anton Spechtenhauser, a South Tyrolean Fascist who became a victim of South Tyrolean Nazis, this article examines from a micro-historical and biographical perspective a series of events at the local level, which took place in the village of Graun/Curon in the Vinschgau/Val Venosta between the resettlement (*Option*) of 1939 and the armistice of September 8, 1943. The author looks at the reasons for Spechtenhauser’s deportation to a concentration camp as well as questions of collaboration with Italian Fascism and local responsibility for involvement in Nazi crimes. In doing so, the article raises on the one hand the issue of the Nazis’ revenge against their political opponents in South Tyrol following the German invasion of the region after 8 September 1943 and on the other hand the question of how South Tyrol has dealt with its Fascist and National Socialist past in the post-war period. Taking the forgotten concentration camp victim Anton Spechtenhauser as an example, the author uses archival sources, newspapers and interviews with contemporary witnesses to reconstruct a previously unwritten chapter in the history of South Tyroleans as victims and perpetrators of National Socialism, as well as the repression of that history after 1945.

Elisa Heinrich

Resettlement, gender and memory. Gender specific actions and spaces in the memory of contemporary witnesses to the South Tyrolean Option of 1939

This article looks at the South Tyrolean *Option* of 1939 from a gender historical perspective, which has hitherto barely been used for the analysis of what Sabine Schweitzer has termed a politically induced change of direction and break in continuity for the German-speaking population of South Tyrol. Using a selection from interviews carried out in 2013 with sixty female and male contemporary witnesses, the author asks what relevance should be attributed

to the category of gender in their narratives about the *Option*. In this respect, the author looks firstly at the room for action available to women and the role of politics in the everyday life of the contemporary historical actors. Which roles were allocated to women and how did women deal with these roles (in terms of acceptance, dissent or resistance)? Secondly, the author investigates how constructions of gender condition what is remembered and how gender-specific models of interpretation and representation are remembered.

Sabine Merler

Heimat: On the (un)changeability of a concept

This article deals with concepts of *Heimat* (the homeland) within the context of the South Tyrolean *Option* in 1939. In addition, conceptions of *Heimat* among young musicians in North and South Tyrol are included in the analysis in order to determine breaks and continuities in the notion of *Heimat* and to ascertain how the concept is passed on from great-grandparents or grandparents to today's generation. As a starting hypothesis, the author assumes that the basic idea of *Heimat* in North and South Tyrol can be comprehended as a phenomenon that transcends different age groups because it is so strongly determined by the socio-political environment. She then examines from an ethnological and contemporary historical perspective the meanings, interweaving of ideas, values and concepts emerging from the discussions about *Heimat*. The analysis is based on the following questions: Which conceptions of *Heimat* can be decoded from the memories of contemporary witnesses? On what are these conceptions based, and how have they been handed down to the present day? What relation do these ideas of *Heimat* have to those held by the young musical artists?