

**Betrayal Revisited:
Historical Perspectives on Treachery in Central Europe**

By early 2025, arguments about ‘betrayal’ have made a triumphant return to the domain of global politics, underscoring the emotive underpinnings of a particular US- and NATO-centric global order, particularly from the perspective of the Global North. At the same time, rhetoric from many of the main actors involved has operated with the concept of betrayal since nobody wants to betray the trust of the respective ‘nation’. This situation has evoked memories of historic betrayals, from the Munich Agreement to the Phoney War, from the Yalta Conference to the failure of the Budapest Memorandum, as well as individual betrayals both domestic and foreign. The resurgence of interest in treachery in Central Europe is in line with a number of historiographical trends since the 1990s. On the one hand, it is driven by a new generation of historians seeking to challenge post-socialist narratives with their black-and-white, national typologies. On the other hand, it is a reaction to the resurgence of such dualistic narratives in conservative and right-wing historiography. Concurrently, and not by chance, Julien Benda’s *La trahison des clercs* (*The Treason of the Intellectuals*, orig. 1927) experienced a revival in the region, marking the return of yet another discourse on betrayal.

The present issue of the diamond open access journal *Střed/Centre* will contribute to this growing Central European debate on the histories of treachery and betrayal. Contributions are invited on the period from the onset of the 19th century to the present day, and the space stretching from Bregenz to Luhansk and from Dubrovnik to Tallinn. Comparative and transnational approaches are particularly welcome in this context.

Potential themes or questions to discuss are:

- What terms are used in the languages of Central Europe to discuss concepts of betrayal or treachery in a variety of historic political or personal contexts? Where does this language come from and how has it evolved?
- What criteria are used by governments or in the general public for evaluating treachery or betrayal? Which discourses and which emotional regimes do they relate to (social, cultural, gender, religious, colonial, national etc.)?
- How has the criteria employed in incidents of treachery changed over time? How has this affected the criteria for atonement? How far is atonement for treachery ever possible?
- Where and why have notorious figures of betrayal or treachery appeared or disappeared over the course of the last two centuries? How far have they involved new forms of collective identification in the Central European region (e.g. class, gender, ethnicity) in evolving forms of state or society?
- What happens when discourses about betrayal clash with each other? – e.g. different national perspectives (as in the 1938 ‘Munich betrayal’), or conflicts about betrayal on a more personal level such as adultery or oath-breaking.

- How and why are certain incidents or figures of treachery long-lasting? Who sustains these historic incidents in the public memory, and how are they reconfigured for new purposes in later decades by regimes or society?
- To what extent are there key sites or spaces in Central Europe which evoke memories of betrayal, treachery or treason?
- How far do incidents or discourses about treachery have regional limits, or are they also transnational with some examples from Central Europe having an international resonance?

Please send a title and an abstract of no more than 250 words to the editors at stred@mua.cas.cz by April 10, 2025. Authors of accepted proposals will be expected to submit their full papers by October 1, 2025.

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