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IDEOLOGY, MEMORY AND RELIGION IN
POST-COMMUNIST EAST CENTRAL EUROPE:
A COMPARATIVE STUDY FOCUSED ON POST-HOLOCAUST

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Abstract: Post-communist East-Central Europe is witnessing a clash of memories focused on its recent past. Whereas Western memory is constructed around the “politics of regret” and responsibility-assumption vis-à-vis the Holocaust, Eastern memory focuses to a large extent on responsibility-attribution for the trauma of communist rule. These are comparable traumatic experiences, but due to different “cognitive mapping” and different mnemonic social frameworks, Eastern memory has produced a post-mnemonic framework that allows for a creeping justification of interwar Radical Right ideologies; for the transmogrification some of their standard-bearers into anti-communist heroes and martyrs; and the obfuscation World War II history. In some countries, religion and its past representatives are used for the same purpose.

Key Words: antisemitism, Judeo-Communism, Holocaust, genocide, crimes against humanity, Prague Declaration, Competitive Martyrdom, Double Genocide, Holocaust Obfuscation.

The Holocaust, as Yehuda Bauer repeatedly told us,¹ would have never become possible in the absence of an ideology that both prompted and justified it. Its “basic motivation was purely ideological, rooted in an illusionary world of Nazi imagination, where an international Jewish conspiracy to control the world was opposed to a parallel Aryan quest.” The defeat of the Nazis led to a partition of Europe, but one thing that seemed to unify the otherwise opposing halves of the continent seemed to be precisely their joint repudiation of the former common enemy’s ideology. As Dan Stone shows in a recent book, that joint repudiation was nonetheless built on different mnemonic pillars. Contorted as it undoubtedly was², Western memory was built on an antifascist consensus that was Liberal- Christian-Democrat in form and Social-Democrat (the welfare state) in content, but one that left some room for contest. That consensus would eventually collapse in the 1990s.³

By the time communism had collapsed in East Central Europe in 1989, many of the region’s countries had undergone episodes of either national communism or national Stalinism.⁴ The latter had often meant the nearly explicit rehabilitation of prominent anti-communist figures, such as Marshal Ion Antonescu in Romania’s case, or (less obvious) Roman Dmowski in Poland’s case. As is well known, communist regimes everywhere subjected the Holocaust to oblivion or, at best, to manipulation. To utilize Shari Cohen’s terminology, they indulged into “state-organized national forgetting.”⁵

New regimes are everywhere engaged in what has been termed as the search for a “usable past” and the post-communist regimes were no exception.⁶ The search for a “usable past” is particularly strong in societies uncertain of what should replace their left-behind identity and who should be chosen to symbolize the new identity. This is precisely the case of East-Central Europe after the fall of communism. The West (or what they believed the West stood for) was only an exogenous, and therefore insufficient legitimation instrument. Which past was deemed as worthy to be “used” or “re-used” from among the indigenous pasts was just as important. What Romanian historian Andrei Pippidi called the “macabre comedy of posthumous rehabilitations all over Eastern Europe after 1989” demonstrated that the past was undergoing a process of being reshaped “by partisan passions, with each political family introducing in the national pantheon those historic figures in whom it can recognize itself or whom it abusively claims [as its own].” The 1990s were a time when “all Central East European countries” rejected “the Soviet model, searching for an own (old or new) national identity,” a time when historians and politicians competed “for the reinterpretation of the past.”⁷

This competition, however, entailed above all an ideological remix. Against the background of the communist *tabula rasa* of the Holocaust, why should Iron Guard leader Corneliu Zelea Codreanu and Marshal Ion Antonescu, Admiral Miklós Horthy and Arrow Cross leader Ferenc Szálasi,

President Jozef Tiso, Croat Ustaša leader Ante Pavelić or (though the historical context is somewhat different) the Slovene Domobranci not re-emerge as “model figures” of national heroes, whose only fault rests in their having (nilly rather than willy) supported or allied themselves with those who were fighting communism and/or the traditional enemy of their nation? Why, furthermore, would even lesser historically tainted figures such as those of Roman Dmowski⁸ not reemerge as the valiant defenders of their nations? Their crimes having been ignored, why should not the Baltic Waffen SS volunteers who fought the Soviets not emerge as hero models, as one had hardly heard about some of the same people’s participation in the extermination of Jews even before the Nazi’s arrival to witness the massacres or of having served as guards in extermination camps? For, as Timothy Snyder has shown one of the greatest Hitler propaganda successes was to imbue the populations of Eastern Europe subjected to Soviet rule in 1940 or to partial Soviet occupation with the equation “Jew=Bolshevik.”⁹ Yet this was only partly the merit of that propaganda. As Snyder puts it, “With or without German agitation, many people in interwar Europe associated Jews with communism... Rightwing parties confused the issue by arguing that since many communists were Jews therefore many Jews were communists. These are very different propositions; the latter one was never true anywhere.” Yet, “The idea that only Jews served communism was convenient not just for the occupiers but for some of the occupied as well.”¹⁰

And convenient it remained after the communist fall as well. However, the ideological remix called for the transformation of these interwar and wartime leaders into patriots defending the same values as those of the West, and thus implicit democrats who had fallen victims to the West’s betrayal, epitomized at Yalta. Rather than witness a de-ideologization of post-communist East Central Europe, ideology returned to the region as powerfully as ever. But it did so via the back door. More precisely, it waged what Stone and (independently) the author of these lines termed as “wars of memory.”¹¹

Most former communist countries nowadays witness a “competitive martyrdom” struggle between the memory of the Holocaust and that of communist oppression. Coined by several scholars in the context of debates around the extent, the limit or the desirability of emulating the alleged¹² post-war de-Nazification in Western Europe, competitive martyrdom is a complex issue, influenced not only by the immediate communist past and its treatment of the Holocaust in official history, but also, and above all, by socio-psychological factors linked to collective memory and to the social frameworks of the memory¹³ of specific groups within society. One such element is the “cognitive” or “mental mapping” of the actors.¹⁴ Under “actors” we mean both politicians, cultural elites strategically placed to articulate collective perceptions, but also those

under their influence. All these are both subjects and objects when it comes to the forging of what is called collective or historic memory.¹⁵

After World War II, antisemitism was by and large discredited everywhere, except the lunatic fringe. Yet it survived under different guises, from Outright Denial and Comparative Trivialization in the West, to anti-cosmopolitanism and anti-Zionism in the East. In East Central Europe, it resurged after the fall of communism, particularly in different modalities of Holocaust denial, aimed to wash away the “dark pasts”¹⁶ of collaboration, though more common and more vulgar forms (desecration of cemeteries, violence against Jews, etc.) were registered as well. Outright Denial was successfully imported from the West almost as soon as the former regime had disappeared.¹⁷ Side by side, regionally specific forms of old and new forms of antisemitism developed in the first decade or so. Deflective Negationism, for example, transferred the responsibility for the perpetration of crimes to members of other nations and minimized own-nation participation in them to insignificant local “aberrations”; the deflection comprised either attribution of responsibility to Germans alone or to “fringes” in one’s own society, but also the transformation of victims (the Jews) into perpetrators. A breed between Outright and Deflective negationism, Selective Negationism excluded any participation of one’s own nation, presenting it as some sort of Haven surrounded by Hell. While encompassing many forms encountered in the West as well, Comparative Trivialization sought to demonstrate that the Holocaust was neither without precedent in mankind’s history nor did it stop with the end of World War II. Communization, according to some of these latter versions, had been a continuation of state-organized crime on par with the Holocaust and even worse.¹⁸

Three inter-linked features characteristic of post-communist antisemitism in the region were born as a result. These three features are constitutive, that is to say each enforces the new ideology and is dependent on the other two.

Competitive Martyrdom

The first (a) is competitive martyrdom.¹⁹ As the region as a whole strove to integrate at international regime level,²⁰ it became clear that Holocaust denial and Holocaust trivialization were likely to stir negative reaction. Indeed, in cases such as Romania’s, official distancing from the phenomena was a clear precondition for admission to NATO and the European Union [EU].²¹ For, as Zoltán Dujisin points out, international regimes are at one and the same time also mnemonic regimes (or memory regimes or regimes of remembrance) that employ “institutionalized rituals that express” their members’ “approach to providing a [common] framework for citizens to relate to their histories.”²² While in the early 1990s the Western mnemonic regime was largely constructed on “the one

and only negative myth of remembrance” based on what Jeffrey Olick called “the politics of regret,”²³ the East Central European collective memory sought to *attribute* guilt rather than assume it, substituting a positive myth of anticommunist resistance for the negative myth of the Holocaust, which emphasized bystanding and collaboration.²⁴ Once more, the legend of the *Zydokomuna* was revived for this purpose, though one may doubt that it had ever died. “The theme of Judeocommunism,” Himka and Michlic observe “serves to justify and minimize any wrongdoing against the Jews during the Holocaust and to reinforce the narrative of one’s own victimhood during World War II and in the post-1945 communist period.”²⁵

Consequently, a new ideological formula was sought, one likely to squeeze in unsanctioned by the joint regime of remembrance; a formula that managed to enlist the support of figures hardly likely to be suspected of antisemitism (as in the case of the deniers) or of subjectivity, ill-will or ignorance (as in that of the trivializers). The 2008 Prague Declaration, initiated, among others, by such prominent former anticommunist dissidents as the former Czech and Lithuanian presidents Václav Havel and Vytautas Landsbergis, fit the bill from this perspective. Among other things, the Prague Declaration called for establishing 23 August (the date of the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact in 1939) as the European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism²⁶ (meanwhile introduced in several European countries and in one form or another heeded by several European international organizations). The Declaration reflected both reminiscences of the “totalitarian model” that placed the Nazis and the Communists on par²⁷ and apparently legitimate calls stemming from East-Central Europe for a “democratic memory” that would take into accounts the ordeals of nations subjected to Stalinist-imposed rule.

In what could be viewed as the “first shot” fired at the target, a conference titled “United Europe, United History” was held in Tallinn on 22 January 2008. The keynote speaker was European Parliament Member (MEP) György Schöpflin; his MEP colleague Landsbergis, the future initiator of the Prague Declaration, also addressed the meeting. The conference called for the formation of a working group named “United Europe, United History,” tasked with dealing “with the most important developments of the European 20th century history, including unrecognized or forgotten crimes or other abuses of human rights.”²⁸ The gathering may be considered to have laid the foundation for what Dujisin calls a “dedicated coalition of memory-makers in international arenas,”²⁹ though at EU institutional level the pioneering innovation came under the Slovene Presidency of the EU. In April 2008, that presidency organized in Brussels together with the European Commission a public hearing on “Crimes Committed by Totalitarian Regimes.”³⁰ Taking advantage of the European Union Presidency’s being held by four former communist

countries led by “parties belonging to the anti-communist side of the political cleavage,” the coalition (both horizontal, that is to say internal, and vertical, i.e. within the EU)³¹ managed to push the agenda that would eventually lead to the establishment in October 2011 of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience (PEMC); the Platform coordinates the work of institutes and NGOs dealing with the communist or, jointly, Nazi and communist crimes.³²

The argument of the Platform is perhaps best summarized in an article authored by Maria Mälskoo of the University of Tartu, Estonia. She speaks out against the “West-centric writing of European history” and even calls for an “ideological decolonization” of Central-East European memory, one that was, it is claimed, imposed on the new members of the EU ahead of accession.³³ “While the recollection of the Holocaust has become increasingly institutionalized and internationalized,” Mälskoo writes, the crimes of the communist regimes and their *traumatic repercussions* for contemporary European politics have hardly received comparable academic and political attention.”³⁴ Addressing the case of Poland and the Baltic States, Mälskoo notes that, in fact, one “could distinguish at least four major mnemonic communities in the European memory landscape in relation to World War II.” Hand in hand with the Atlantic-West European memory, one finds a separate German memory, a yet different Russian one and the East-Central European mnemonic experience of the war. “The Baltic States and Poland have emerged in the vanguard of the so-called ‘new European’ commemorative politics, demanding the inclusion of their wartime experiences in the pan-European remembrance of this war.”³⁵ In the course of the negotiations for adhering to NATO and the EU (which she dubs a “ritually liminal phase of becoming European”) some “elements of their past had to be consciously *put on hold* without an opportunity to reflect on them in any deep manner before the context had become more ‘enabling’ for such reflection and, consequently, for a more autonomous construction of their selves.”³⁶

That “liminal phase” is now over, however, and unless Europe recognizes the East’s right to its own memory and includes it in the pan-European one there can be no joint European memory. The Prague Declaration of June 2008, as well as the setting up of the PEMEC, it seems to me, are efforts to end what Mälskoo calls the “subaltern” status of East Europeans in memory reconstruction. One cannot fail to observe that the article is mainly directed at Western audiences. It is full of Left-wing political science jargon, but the jargon is employed for defending nationalist and (usually Right and Extreme Right) actions.

Similar, if less jargon-loaded, demands have been ventured elsewhere in the region. In the preface of a book published in 2014 that strives to unmask the “idea that twists the mind” (communism), three Romanian authors write that European reunification has been pursued “exclusively

through the westernization” of the East. This, however, had imposed on the region a “new iron curtain.” Unlike the former curtain, the new one is “no longer dividing Europe in line with a geographic axe running—as the old one did—from Szczecin to Trieste, but runs through the soul of every European, dividing his memory and dissociating his sensibility.” Those who lived behind the former iron curtain, they write, “have other memories, *are marked by other traumas*, remember differently and are otherwise wounded in their soul than [are] people in the former West.” Postcommunist Westernization has meant the transformation of its memory (the allusion to the Holocaust is clear) into a common memory.” Yet, [t]he other memory, the memory of communism and of the totalitarian trauma that did not last a decade but half a century, is still not common.”³⁷

Let us pause and submit what these four authors write to an analytical perspective that is seldom used in this particular connection. Competitive memories and competitive martyrdoms, I believe, are both the outcome of the fact that although both competitors display similar characteristics, each of them is responding to different traumas against a background in which the Holocaust has become the paradigmatic genocide of the last century. Paradoxical as this may sound, one reason for the emergence of Eastern counter-memory should be sought in the success of the international community of Holocaust survivors and “second-and-third” generation survivors to make the Shoah be perceived as the “symbol of absolute victimhood.”³⁸

Somehow this created the feeling that unless placed in the genocidal category, no community’s suffering stands the chance of being similarly acknowledged at international level. It is this subjective, rather than any objective criteria that plunges the Holocaust-Gulag competitive martyrdom into the realm of cognitive mapping. International law distinguishes between genocide and crimes against humanity, and both are exempt from the status of limitations. Furthermore, on closer examination, the definition of genocide as reflected in the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide adopted by the United Nations General Assembly on 9 December 1948 is considerably narrower than that of crimes against humanity, as defined by the International Criminal Court in its Roma statutes, adopted in July 1998.³⁹ Logically, then, partisans of communist crimes retribution should rely on the latter, rather than the former legislation. Yet this is not so. Critics of the 1948 convention claim that due to mainly political reasons and Soviet objections, the definition is too restrictive, including only “national, racial, ethnical and religious” groups, but leaving out “political” groups. Yet, apart from the fact that the Soviet Union was by no means the single country to oppose the inclusion of such groups—the Americans, the British and the French were just as opposed for their own reasons⁴⁰—on close examination and in combination with the 1998 international legislation,⁴¹

experts such as William Shabas conclude that “questioning the ‘gaps’ in the Genocide Convention is like speculating on ‘improvements’ to Picasso’s *Guernica*, Marc Anthony’s eulogy, Siegfried’s funeral music, or asking whether new ingredients should be added to a classic dry martini or whether one can make oysters Rockefeller using chicken.”⁴²

Since genocide is perceived to be “the crimes of crimes,” competitive martyrdom promoters refused to be absent at *The Judgment*, when the bells are tolling. This would also smooth the way in for the success of the Double Genocide theories in the region (see below). Here are a few reasons why:

While in the case of the Holocaust one mostly deals nowadays with “postmemory,”⁴³ the memory of communism is still first-hand experience combined with postmemory (family, friends) socialization. Both are traumatic, but in different ways.

American sociologist Robert Bellah and his associates have shown that side by side with the large national community “defined by its history and by the character of its representative leaders” there exist smaller, but just as important “communities of memory.”⁴⁴

Jeffrey Alexander’s concept of “cultural trauma” can help us further elucidate this situation. In what is basically a Freudian approach, the American sociologist writes that a cultural trauma “occurs when members of a collectivity feel that they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memory forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways.” The construction of such cultural traumas, he adds, makes it possible for “social groups, national societies, and sometimes even entire civilizations not only cognitively [to] identify the existence and the source of human suffering, but [to] ‘take on board’ some significant responsibility for it.” That does *not* necessarily mean that these communities become inclined to accept responsibility for the suffering of those who are not members of the group. Rather, they perceive it as their duty to seek those responsible for those traumatic events outside the group itself. These groups “can, and often do, refuse to recognize the existence of others’ trauma...By denying the reality of others’ suffering, people not only diffuse their own responsibility for the suffering but often project the responsibility for their own suffering on these others.”⁴⁵

Many of the reactions of Poles to the work of Jan Gross, starting with *Neighbors*, continuing with *Fear* and *Golden Harvest*, and up to the recent Polish president’s (still pending) decision to withdraw from him the Order of Merit bestowed on Gross in 1996, reflect such attempts to deflect responsibility for collaboration with the Nazis and postwar acts of antisemitism.⁴⁶ True, the Poles are widely known to consider themselves to be the eternally victimized “Christ of Nations,” and one cannot help remarking that competitive martyrdom ultimately leads to the substitution of *imitatio Christi* by *imitatio Judae*. As Polish historian Witold Kukla put it,

“In the past, the Jews were envied for their money, qualifications, positions and international contacts—today they are envied for the very crematoria in which they incinerated.”⁴⁷ The “Auschwitz Crosses” saga⁴⁸ is but one example among many,⁴⁹ and Poland itself is but one example among many East European competitors for victimhood.

Alexander underlines that “events do not, in and of themselves, create collective traumas. Trauma is a socially mediated attribution.” The attribution of trauma status, the sociologist adds, is not necessarily due to the “actual harmfulness” of the events “but rather because these phenomena are believed to have abruptly, and harmfully, affected collective identity.” In other words, the traumatic event is one that affects “Individual security [which] is anchored in structures of emotional and cultural expectations that provide a sense of security and capability.”⁵⁰

Cultural traumas thus become what Yael Zerubavel has termed as “master commemorative narratives,” by which she means a narrative that “focuses on the group’s distinct social identity and highlights its historical development,” thus structuring collective memory. In dominant commemorative narratives, “[the] power of collective memory does not lie in its accurate, systematic or sophisticated mapping of the past, but in establishing basic images that articulate and reinforce a particular ideological stance.”⁵¹ At this particular point, Zerubavel notes in what is a key remark for understanding postcommunist competitive martyrdom:

Thus, collective memory can transform historical events into *political myths* that function as a lens through which group members perceive the present and prepare for the future. Because turning points often assume symbolic significance as markers of change, they are more likely to transform into myths. As such, they not only reflect the social and political needs of the group that contributed to their formation but also become active agents in molding the group’s needs.⁵²

Political myths, understood in the significance attributed to them by George Sorel, that is to say as mobilizing constructs that cannot be refuted by logical argument,⁵³ are primarily the work of intellectuals acting as links between politicians and society at large. Dujisin calls them “memory makers,” but it should be added that these intellectuals are no less influenced by what we called “cognitive mapping” than are politicians and the population at large. And in that mapping, Stalin’s Soviet Union and his successor leaders share the role of the primary traumatic collective experience. Concomitant, those believed to have helped bring the trauma about are necessarily viewed with hostility. These intellectuals do not necessarily belong to the *Lumpenintellektuellen* strata, as did their predecessors in Nazi Germany. Indeed, the three Romanian protagonists

introduced above are viewed by many as belonging to the *crème de la crème* of elitist society.

To understand why Double Genocide is so attractive, one should turn to Maurice Halbwachs' *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire* and his insistence on memory being particularly powerful when constructed around family and peer group values. While it would be untrue to claim that all those persecuted under communism shared the values of interwar radical right (indeed some were opponents of those values), it is nonetheless true that the politically hounded shared the same persecutions while imprisoned or subjected to other maltreatments. Under that situation, members of families depicted as class enemies and subjected to social isolation (the *lishentsy* of Eastern Europe)⁵⁴ were hardly inclined to make distinctions between themselves and families of genuine extreme right wingers whose fathers or grandfathers had aimed at placing in power one set of totalitarianism against the now persecuting set. Among the persecuted, there was solidarity both in the camps and outside them. Obviously, there was also cognitive dissonance between what was being taught by official history and what was whispered at home and peer groups. In postcommunism, such cognitive dissonance either disappears or becomes the object of *the* struggle for memory.

There is no reason to desist from applying what Zerubavel does in analyzing the context of the emergence of Zionist collective memory to postcommunist East Central Europe. Just as in the former case, in the latter one encounters communities of memory that underwent a cultural trauma. In search for positive heroes and against the background of communist Holocaust neglect and/or distortion, the Double Genocide approach (see below) is fast becoming in these countries the master commemorative narrative, one in which the myth of anticommunist resistance finds both hero-models and exculpation for the past. Within the framework of a century dominated by a paradigmatic genocide, competitive martyrdom is the synthesis of all these elements. *It strives to provide an alternative dominant narrative, not an alternative paradigm.* In the substituted narrative, the collective trauma of de-nationalization and Sovietization prevails over any attempt to drive attention to the suffering of Jews and Roma during the Holocaust, the more so as Jews continue to be perceived as instruments of communization.

Double Genocide

Let us return to the Prague Declaration. On face, there is nothing antisemitic in it. Yet by calling for establishing 23 August as the “day of remembrance of the victims of both Nazi and Communist totalitarian regimes, in the same way Europe remembers the victims of the Holocaust on January 27” it obviously equated the victims, pulling them together⁵⁵; furthermore, it invited the question why should the Holocaust continue to

be observed separately and/or whether such separate observance was not merely a question of time. Finally, the Declaration seemed to subscribe to the oft-ventured post-communist antisemitic view that Jews indulge into a “monopoly over suffering.”

Some of the follow-up declarations adopted by international organizations sought to alleviate this sentiment. For example, the resolution adopted by the European Parliament on 2 April 2009 stated that “millions of victims were deported imprisoned, tortured and murdered by totalitarian and authoritarian regimes during the 20th century in Europe,” but added: “the uniqueness of the Holocaust must nevertheless be acknowledged.”⁵⁶ Another Prague Declaration follow-up gathering of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), held in Vilnius in July 2009, made reference to the European Parliament’s resolution of a few months earlier “to proclaim August 23...as a Europe-wide Day of Remembrance for the Victims of Stalinism and Nazism,” but it also acknowledged the “uniqueness of the Holocaust” and, furthermore, reminded participants “of its impact and the continued acts of antisemitism” occurring through the OSCE region. The same resolution expressed “deep concern at the glorification of totalitarian regimes, including the holding of public demonstrations glorifying the Nazi or Stalinist past, as well as the possible spread and strengthening of various extremist movements and groups.”⁵⁷ Notably, there were differences of nuance between the three documents. Whereas the Prague Declaration had called for a “day of remembrance of the victims of both Nazi and Communist totalitarian regimes” and the European Parliament for “a Europe-wide Remembrance Day for the victims of all totalitarian and authoritarian regimes,” the OSCE resolution differentiated between communism in general and its “Stalinist past.” Implicitly, then, the OSCE resolution subscribes to the distinction earlier made by French historian Henri Rousso⁵⁸.

One can only speculate to what extent such differences reflect a compromise among the drafters. For if the OSCE resolution seems the most moderate among them, it is nonetheless remarkable that it and only it refers to both Nazism and Stalinism as genocidal regimes.⁵⁹

The Prague Declaration correctly utilized the term “crimes against humanity” in reference to its call to emulate the Nürnberg Tribunal (where “genocide” was not utilized in the indictment) but those familiar with developments in the region could hardly overlook that its spirit had long been manifest in the “Double Genocide” formula that anteceded the Declaration by many years and prepared the ground for it.

In a nutshell, the “Double-Genocide” theory places the Gulag and its local derivative on par with the Holocaust. In its more benign form, it calls for “symmetry” in condemning the two, equally repulsive in its eyes, atrocities of the last century, and for a similar “symmetry” in applying punishment for those guilty for them.⁶⁰ In its (rather common) aggressive

form, it insists on the role played by Jews in communization, which should exculpate, in the eyes of the theory's partisans, local collaboration with the Nazis. This latter form has many elements in common with deflecting the guilt for the Holocaust onto the Jews themselves.

The Double Genocide theory was first ventured in the Baltic States (to be more precise, in Lithuania) soon after the fall of communism. Lithuania was also the first state to grant Double Genocide institutional recognition, by passing legislation that prohibits the denial of both Nazi and communist "genocides" in 2010.⁶¹ It was followed in the same year by Hungary. The denial of communist crimes was also introduced in the penal code (albeit in different forms) in Latvia, the Czech Republic, Poland and Moldova.⁶²

As Bartov points out,⁶³ a prominent role in the endeavor was played by *The Black Book of Communism*, first published in 1997 in France. Stéphane Courtois, the editor of the book wondered in the introduction why should there be a difference between a Ukrainian child of a "kulak" who starved to death during the Great Famine and a Jewish child who died of hunger in the Holocaust; what interests could be served by concealing the similarity, he asked.⁶⁴ In his work Courtois strives to demonstrate that communist rule was just as, and perhaps even more, genocidal than Nazi rule.⁶⁵ He became the dean of the Romanian Sighet Summer School, where a memorial museum for the victims of communist regimes organizes every year lectures on communist crimes. Eric Weitz, who is by no means an opponent of comparing the Soviet and Nazi regimes, attributes to Courtois the same (in)famous role as that played in the West by Ernst Nolte, the chief trivializer of Nazi regime crimes by deflection of guilt to Lenin and Stalin's Russia. Both historians, he writes, "engaged in polemics that masked as scholarship."⁶⁶

Let us examine a few examples among many. On 7 March 1998, Floricel Marinescu, a Romanian historian with links with the previous regime, was writing in *Aldine* (a supplement of the daily *România liberă*) : "from the strict quantitative perspective, the number of crimes perpetrated in the name of communist ideology is much larger than that of those perpetrated in the name of Nazi or similar ideologically-minded regimes." Unlike President Emil Constantinescu, who had apologized for his country's role during the Holocaust during a recent visit to Washington, Marinescu wrote, "no prominent Jewish personality [from Romania] has apologized for the role that some Jews have played in undermining Romanian statehood, in the country's Bolshevization, in the crimes and the atrocities committed [by them]. Proportionally speaking, the Romanians and Romania suffered more at the hands of the communist regime, whose coming the Jews had made an important contribution to, than the Jews themselves had suffered from the Romanian state during the Antonescu regime.... The Red Holocaust was incomparably more grave than Nazism." Historian Gheorghe Buzatu (1939-2013) published in 1995 a

brochure titled *This is How the Holocaust Against the Romanian People Began*⁶⁷ and other historians soon followed suit.⁶⁸ In the early 2000s the former anti-communist dissident Paul Goma authored in his Paris exile a book titled *The Red Week*, published in numerous editions in Romania and Moldova. In strident antisemitic tones (which he denied), Goma depicted the crimes committed against the Jews by the Antonescu regime as a response to the humiliations allegedly suffered at their hand by Romanian troops forced to retire from Bessarabia in the wake of the 1940 Soviet ultimatum.⁶⁹

Alexandra Laignel-Lavastine, who was among the first Western authors to analyze this postcommunist trend in Romania, was noting back in 1999 that "The pathos, indeed the intentionally provocative tone of the militant parallelism [between Nazism and communism]" makes use of the term "Red Holocaust" primarily in order to utilize a notion (Holocaust) that "allows the reality it describes to immediately attain, in the Western mind, a status equal to that of the extermination of the Jews by the Nazi regime."⁷⁰ Furthermore, "the spirit of the wording is one of a claim of victimization careful to legitimize itself in a sort of mimetic rivalry with Jewish memory." That is the competitive martyrdom component of Double Genocide. But Laignel-Lavastine's intuitive article also alludes to an ideological basis at the foundations of such efforts. In her opinion, postcommunist Romanian historiography had been captured by (both inter-war and national-communist) ideology.⁷¹

Romania's however, is by no means a singular case. The late Polish historian Tomasz Stremboz, reacting to Gross's *Neighbors*, portrayed the Jews of Jedwabne burned alive by their neighbors "as communists who had previously betrayed Poland and the Poles during the Soviet occupation of eastern Polish territories from 17 September 1939 to 22 June 1941." On the other hand, Polish anticommunist fighters emerge as "men who despite the Jewish betrayal of Poland, saved Jews from the Nazis."⁷² In his concluding remarks to a volume where Double Genocide seems to be the common denominator unifying nearly all postcommunist countries, Omer Bartov notes: "Self-perception as victim often immunizes the individuals and nations from seeing themselves as perpetrators. This is an especially effective mechanism when perpetrators were indeed also victims of mass violence."⁷³ He illustrates this with the case of Hungary, where radical rightists argue that the Jews' role in the repressive communist security apparatus "balances out the murder of hundreds of thousands of Jews with the collaboration and active participation of Miklós Horthy's regime and the fascist Arrow Cross Party."⁷⁴ The House of Terror museum in Budapest, "which restricts the Holocaust to a couple of rooms while devoting the rest of its ample space to communist crimes,"⁷⁵ meticulously lists Jews among the communist perpetrators but not among the victims of the Stalinist system.⁷⁶ For Randolph Braham, the House of Terror attempts to turn Germany's last ally into its last victim,⁷⁷ an

attempt furthered in 2014 with the inauguration of Budapest's Memorial to the Victims of the German Invasion depicting Hungary as Germany's victim, but ignoring Hungary's responsibility and collaboration with the Nazis in exterminating Jews.⁷⁸ As I have shown elsewhere, this memorial is an amalgam between Deflective Negationism, Double Genocide and Holocaust Obfuscation.⁷⁹

In a collection of articles published in 1998, titled *In the Devil's Cauldron of Dictatorships*,⁸⁰ historian Mária Schmidt, who is believed to be a close advisor to Prime Minister Viktor Orbán, presents the history of Hungarian-Jewish relations up to 1919 in an unrecognizable idyllic light. The article titled "The Place of the Holocaust in the Modern History of the Hungarian Jewry (1945-1956)," fully embraces the Double Genocide approach. The Hungarian liberal nobility and the leadership of the Hungarian Jewry, she writes, had "signed a pact in the middle of the nineteenth century" entailing a separation of functions in the state: the Jews would act only in the economic sphere and the professions, while the nobility would provide political leadership. It was the Jewry that had infringed on the pact by taking over the leadership of the 1919 Hungarian Soviet revolution. Yet, according to Schmidt, not only did not the Hungarian elites of the time retaliate, but between 1928 and 1938 one witnessed "the second flowering of Hungarian Jewry." The local Jewry supposedly bloomed under Admiral Horthy's anti-Jewish legislation and discrimination, if one were to believe Schmidt. According to her, the regime "was not friendly to the Jews but until 1938 its representatives were not antagonistic either." Schmidt then ventures the opinion that "On 19 March 1944 Hungary's sovereignty ceased to exist" and "the country that was directed by Nazi puppets no longer defended its Jewish citizens." That the "puppets" were by and large the same with those who had directed the fate of "sovereign Hungary" seems immaterial.

It is when Schmidt addresses the postwar period that her views fully reveal themselves. After the war, she claims, practically all political parties of left or center were in Jewish hands. Depending on how one defines "center," this is still a gross exaggeration, but the contemporary context of the assertion is clear: liberals and left-wingers (Orbán's political foes) are supported by Jews or in their hands. She goes on to cite the Italian political scientist Roberto Michels' assertion that "in Hungary the parties of the working class were entirely in Jewish hands," to which she adds: "in Hungary's case this statement with more or less modifications was true until 1956." In other words, Stalinist crimes in Hungary were Jewish crimes, just as the fascist crimes had been German crimes. Hungary had nothing to do with either and consequently has nothing to atone for.

To "demonstrate" it, Schmidt is not merely emulating other extreme Right wingers from Hungary (but the same applies to Romania, Poland and other places) by mentioning the names of communist leaders with Jewish origins, such as Mátyás Rákosi, Mihály Farkas, Ernő Gerő or József Révai

while passing over in silence non-Jewish leaders.⁸¹ She also adds that most of the judges who passed sentences on the four hundred or so war criminals in the postwar years had Jewish origins. Schmidt became one of the first post-Communist historians to advocate the rehabilitation of Premier László Bárdossy, executed on 10 January 1946 for war crimes, and thus to identify herself with the demand first raised by the ultranationalist and antisemitic Justice and Life Party (MIÉP).⁸² In such a situation, according to Schmidt, it was to be expected that antisemitism would arise, since those who were in power came from “the persecuted” – a word put by her in citation marks. The reader is thus led to conclude that in interwar Hungary there had been only marginal antisemitism, but in postwar Hungary there was plenty of it, provoked by the Jews. What is more, in post-1989 Hungary antisemitism has the same cause, for after the change of the regime “the comrades of Jewish origin managed to get themselves into important positions in the new democracy,” in which they “received important, well paid jobs, uniforms, ranks, fabulous careers.”⁸³

Holocaust Obfuscation

Combining both competitive martyrdom and Double Genocide theories, Holocaust obfuscation is a synthetic construct of both. Its main novelty rests in making possible for promoters of the “dark past” to transform it into a luminous episode in their country’s recent history and to promote the perpetrators of the Holocaust and/or their supporters as national heroes. The door is thus widely opened for rehabilitating not only such “heroes,” but their ideology as well.

First utilized by Dovid Katz⁸⁴ (an American-born Yiddish scholar of Lithuanian descent), Holocaust obfuscation involves several consecutively interconnected objectives: “Deflate Nazi crimes; inflate Soviet crimes; make their ‘equality’ into a new sacrosanct principle for naive Westerners who like the sound of ‘equality’; redefine ‘genocide’ by law to include just about any Soviet crime; find ways to turn local killers into heroes (usually as supposed ‘anti-Soviet’ patriots); fault victims and survivors, especially those who lived to join the anti-Nazi resistance.”⁸⁵ It was, however, Efraim Zuroff, the well-known Nazi-hunter, who summarized quite clearly the purpose of Holocaust obfuscation by calling it “an attempt to turn everything topsy-turvy”:

If Communism equals Nazism, then Communism is genocide, which it is not. If Communism is genocide, then Jews committed genocide because among the Communists, some of them were Jews. If Jews committed genocide, then obviously it does undermine the arguments of Jews against the peoples in Eastern Europe, who helped the Nazis

mass-murder the Jews. In other words, this is designed to deflect the criticism of Nazi collaboration in Eastern Europe, which was far more lethal than Nazi collaboration anywhere else.⁸⁶

As Omer Bartov remarks, the Baltic States “have a particular penchant for employing the totalitarian model as a mean of contextualizing the Nazi genocide of the Jews with the larger framework of Soviet crimes against indigenous Baltic populations.” He notes that “Latvian history textbooks tend to juxtapose the ‘Latvian genocide’ by the Soviets with the Holocaust,” while “specific details of the latter are often omitted and local hostility to the Jews is ascribed to alleged Jewish treachery.” The situation is no different in Estonia, where “segments of Estonian public opinion seem to concur with the implication that Jews try to exaggerate the extent of their victimization by Germans and Estonians in order to divert attention from Soviet-Jewish crimes against Estonians.”⁸⁷ This is indeed so, but the three Baltic States are also pioneers in transmogrifying perpetrators of the Holocaust into national symbols. More precisely, the governments turn a blind eye to the metamorphosis, tacitly condoning it and occasionally join in the practice.

Admirers of Lithuanian Activist Front march twice a year⁸⁸ in Kaunas and Vilnius to commemorate their wartime defense against the USSR. The Front was a short-lived resistance organization created in 1940 to liberate Lithuania after the Soviet occupation. It planned and executed the June 1941 uprising and established the short-lived Provisional Government of Lithuania; but Germany disbanded the government and banned the Front in September. The Front’s antisemitic (and anti-Polish) policies are well documented. Its members subsequently formed various military units; some participated in the liquidation of local Jews and joined the murderous Nazi *Battalion Schutzmannschaften* that operated in Poland, Ukraine, and Russia. And they participated in the July-September 1942 Warsaw ghetto deportation to Treblinka. They also served at Majdanek and fought partisans in Russia.⁸⁹

Participants displayed modified Nazi symbols at many of these marches—defying the 2008 law that forbade public display of Soviet and Nazi symbols⁹⁰—some of them shouting “Jews out” and “Lithuania for the Lithuanians.”⁹¹

The Lithuanian government does not officially endorse these marches, but government funding helped reinter wartime Provisional Government Premier Juozas Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis (who died in US exile in 1974) in Kaunas on 20 May 2012. In 2014, marchers in Kaunas and Vilnius carried his portrait; in 2016, his portrait was carried again, side by side with those of Adolfas Ramanauskas-Vanagas, Povilas Plechavičius, Kazys Škirpa, Antanas Baltūsis-Žvejas and Jonas Noreika. The carriers were

members of The Union of Nationalist Youth of Lithuania, and their banner read: “We know our nation’s heroes.” All these “heroes” are Nazi collaborators, and Jonas Noreika (a.k.a. Generolas Vetra) is known to have signed the order to send the Jews of the Siauliai region into ghettos on 22 August 1941; several hundred were then murdered on the spot, others were liquidated later⁹² One should add that in Lithuania not a single suspected war criminal has been put on trial. And that despite the fact that the US denaturalized fourteen of them and deported them back to Lithuania to be tried.⁹³

Two former presidents, Vytautas Landsbergis and Valdas Adamkus, attended the ceremony of Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis’ interment. Adamkus had honored him posthumously in 2009 with Lithuania’s highest award. Ambrazevičius-Brazaitis had signed the order for the expulsion of Jews from Kaunas to the Seventh Fort, where they were murdered, and a subsequent order to transfer the surviving Jews to the Kovno ghetto within four weeks.⁹⁴

Not only did Lithuania fail to prosecute suspected war criminals, but in line with equating Nazi and communist crimes, it launched an investigation against Yitzhak Arad, a prominent Shoah historian, former head of Yad Vashem, and a member of the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania, set up in 1998. Lithuanian-born Arad was a Soviet partisan and subsequently became an Israel Defense Forces brigadier-general. Arad had nothing to hide,⁹⁵ but in their effort to equate the Holocaust and Soviet crimes, Lithuanian prosecutors opened against him an investigation on war crimes and crimes against humanity. The investigators claimed he had served in the NKVD and participated in the liquidation of anti-Soviet resistance in 1943/44. Yad Vashem protested and suspended its participation on the joint commission and other bodies.

The prosecutors also investigated two elderly Lithuanian women who had fought with the Soviet partisans, Fania Yocheles Brantsovsky, 86, and Rachel Margolis, 87, both living in Israel. Arad’s case was “reluctantly” closed in September 2008, with the prosecution insisting that “the investigation of partisan activities as potential ‘war crimes’ rested on objective legal criteria that allow the prosecution of pro-Soviet occupiers and collaborators.”⁹⁶

Marches in commemoration of the Waffen SS locals who fought against the Soviets also take place in Latvia and Estonia. Every year, on 16 March, members of the former Latvian Legion march in Riga. Once more, the event benefits from tacit or overt support of parties that are considered mainstream rather than extremist. The distinction, however, is blown away by the winds of reality, For example, the For Fatherland and Freedom Party, formed in 1993, considered moderately conservative, and a government coalition leader in 1997–1998, merged with the far-right All for Latvia Party in 2011, forming the National Alliance. Several scandals

have surrounded this formation for its support of the march. As Efraim Zuroff stressed in 2009, this party's public homage paying to the Latvian SS Legion does not reflect "harmless nostalgia," but is rather part of an "insidious plan to gain recognition for a perversely distorted version of European history which will officially equate communism with Nazism." This would transform nations with a high percentage of Nazi collaborators in genocide into victims of a supposed genocide and cover up these countries' failure "to prosecute their own Nazi war criminals."⁹⁷

Zuroff shows that whereas march supporters claim that the Legion's men were patriotic soldiers who "fought against the Soviets and had no connection to SS crimes," this is barely a partial truth. In fact, whereas the Legion itself did not participate in Holocaust crimes, many of its men had actively participated in murdering Jews before the Legion's establishment in early 1943, by which time nearly all of Latvia's 90,000 Jews, as well as many tens of thousands of Jews in Belarus, had been murdered by Latvian security police units. Many of these murderers, including from the infamous Arajs Kommando, subsequently volunteered to join the Legion.

Yet, mainstream Latvian politicians, including former President Andris Bērziņš, defend the march because the Legionnaires allegedly deserve respect, not condemnation. While still in office, Bērziņš said in 2012 that these men were conscripted into the Waffen-SS, went to war to defend Latvia, and "were not war criminals," omitting that about one-third volunteered and participated in sending 90,000 Warsaw ghetto Jews to Treblinka.⁹⁸

A monument commemorating local Latvian Waffen SS was unveiled in Bauska in September 2012.⁹⁹ In June 2013 the Saeima unanimously passed a law forbidding public display of Nazi symbols; however, it was not enforced when Latvian Legionnaires proudly displayed their symbols on 16 March 2014. Moreover, in July 2014, President Andris Bērziņš promulgated a constitutional preamble, passed by the Saeima, honoring Latvia's "freedom fighters" and—in line with the Prague Declaration—condemning both "the communist and Nazi totalitarian regimes and their crimes."¹⁰⁰

The parallel Estonian event is held on 6 July. Since the early 1990s, an organization carrying the name of a post-World War I veterans' association had been pressing governments to attribute the status of "Freedom Fighters" to those who have fought in World War II against the Soviet Union.¹⁰¹ The status was finally granted by the parliament on 14 February 2012 to World War II veterans, regardless of what side (Soviet or Nazi) they had fought on. But Waffen SS veterans dominate the Estonian Freedom Fighters Union. The Waffen SS Estonian division was established in January 1944 and was formed by volunteers. While it did not participate in Holocaust crimes (it was established after the Jews of Estonia had already been murdered on German orders, mostly by the Estonia Self Defense Kommandos,¹⁰² its members included men who had previously

been involved in killing Jews and Gypsies.¹⁰³ Furthermore, “Estonian auxiliary police units were a very important part of the German murder machine against Jews in Belarus, and even in Poland and Ukraine.”¹⁰⁴ In July 2013, Defense Minister Urmas Reinsalu posted on his ministry’s website a laudatory message to the Union – for keeping “the ideals of liberty alive.”¹⁰⁵

In January 2014 Estonia buried Waffen-SS veteran Harald Nugiseks with full military honors; he was one of four Estonians to receive the Knight’s Cross- the Third Reich’s highest award for bravery in battle. He had volunteered for the division after escaping to Germany. In 1945 his division surrendered and he was sent to a labor camp in Siberia, returning home in 1958. Following independence in 1991, Nugiseks received an honorary captain’s rank from the military. Reinsalu called him “a legendary Estonian soldier whose tragedy was that he could not fight for Estonian freedom in an Estonian uniform.”¹⁰⁶ One cannot but agree with Anton Weiss-Wendt, who writes “the Holocaust runs counter to the Estonian national narrative.”¹⁰⁷

But it runs counter to national narratives elsewhere in the region as well. To a large extent, these are all countries whose “regimes of historicity” is axed around the nineteenth century.¹⁰⁸ Under its first postcommunist government, Hungary reburied Admiral Horthy in the (albeit “private”) presence of several members of the government. A creeping but unabated campaign for the rehabilitation of Horthy’s memory has been ongoing under all cabinets headed by Viktor Orbán.¹⁰⁹ Although claiming to pursue a conservative agenda, Orbán’s Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Alliance embraced (first) the political discourse of MIÉP and later that of the far-right Movement for a Better Hungary (Jobbik).

Both FIDESZ and MIÉP-Jobbik denounced the Trianon Treaty, perceiving it as an expression of the international conspiracy that dismembered Greater Hungary at the end of World War I. Three statues commemorating Trianon in this light were erected in Hungary between 1998 and 2002.¹¹⁰ A first (life-size) Horthy statue in postcommunist Hungary was unveiled in May 2012 in the southwestern village of Kereki, near Lake Balaton. Just a few days later, Reformed Bishop Gusztáv Bölcsei unveiled a restored marble Horthy plaque at the Debrecen University of Reformed Theology. A fortnight on, on 1st June a square in the town of Gyömrő, some 30 kilometers southeast of Budapest, was renamed after the admiral. In fact, this was a restoration of some sorts, since between 1937 and 1945 the square had been called Horthy Square. During the same month, another monument (a bust) honoring Horthy was erected in the village of Csókakő, Fejér County. The initiative belonged to several ultranationalist organizations, such as the local branch of Jobbik, its paramilitary group Hungarian Guard (see below) and the revisionist Sixty Four County Youth Movement. The latter’s local leader, László Toroczka, told audiences that it was not enough to erect Horthy statues. “We have to

continue pursuing his policy as well and demand the revision of the Trianon Dictate; we have to put the slogan ‘no, no, never’ and ‘everything back’ on our banners.” Indeed, hand in hand with the bust’s inauguration it was announced that the former Bánya Square would henceforth be called *Nagy-Magyarország* (Greater Hungary).¹¹¹

Jobbik has called for unveiling a Horthy statue in Budapest’s historic Gellért Square, on the hundredth anniversary of the admiral’s entry into Budapest in November 1919.¹¹² On the occasion of the 95th anniversary of that event, as every year, Jobbik organized a march in the capital. Calvinist Pastor Lóránt Hegedűs Jr., Deputy Chairman of Jobbik, told a crowd of supporters: “As long as they can publicly defame the memory of Admiral Horthy with impunity, they can do this with the entire Hungarian nation.”¹¹³ No one asked who “they” might be, since it was clear: Jews and the Leftists who march to their tune. Hegedűs, who is an admirer of British negationist David Irving, has a long record of antisemitic pronouncements.¹¹⁴ On 3 November 2013, a bust of Horthy was unveiled on the grounds of the church in central Budapest where Hegedűs serves as pastor.

More recently, the Hungarian statues saga added an additional page. On 24 February 2014, a bust of Hungarian politician György Donáth was placed on the building where he used to live, just around the corner of Budapest’s Holocaust Memorial Center. The communists executed Donáth on trumped up charges in 1947. At that time he was a member of the Smallholders Party, but as a member of parliament between 1939-1944 (representing the ruling Movement of Hungarian Life led by Béla Imrédy) he had given vent to his strong antisemitism and supported anti-Jewish legislation.¹¹⁵ The initiative for the memorial belonged to *Politikai Elítéltek Közössége* (Community of Political Prisoners), an association representing former political detainees. Scheduled to speak on the occasion were former Premier Péter Boross, whose views are now close to those of Jobbik, and Fidesz Deputy Chairman Gergely Gulyás. The ceremony was attended by some one hundred supporters of Donáth’s memory. It had to be cancelled, however, as the speakers were hissed and booed by some three hundred protesters—Jews and members of opposition parties. The Federation of the Jewish Communities of Hungary had earlier issued a statement saying “The disgraceful political role of György Donáth cannot be ignored even if he became a victim of communism in a show trial in which he was sentenced to death.” The protesters carried banners with inscription such as “Those who celebrate racists are racists themselves” and members of opposition parties called Donáth “a man of hatred, who hated Jews, ethnic Germans and Romanians.” Leaving the site, Gulyás said that while he did not agree with views that excluded minorities, Donáth was a martyr and deserved to have a statue in Budapest.¹¹⁶

A Holocaust-Gulag clash of memories? That, too. But above all, the occasion provided an illustration of competitive martyrdom and, beyond

doubt, of Holocaust obfuscation. The incident also reminded one of a similar occurrence registered just a few months earlier. On 6 March 2015 a court of justice heeded to the efforts of the son of historian Bálint Hóman to rehabilitate his father. The decision meant that the confiscated properties of Hóman would be returned to his family. Hóman had served as minister of culture in several interwar governments, was a strong supporter of anti-Jewish legislation, and remained a member of the Hungarian parliament even under the Arrow Cross government of Szálasi installed by the Germans after invading Hungary in 1944. Based on the Nürnberg precedent, he was put on trial in 1946 for having participated in the meeting of the László Bárdossy cabinet that decided on Hungary's entry in the war against the Soviet Union on 26 June 1941.¹¹⁷ One can argue about why Hóman was put on trial alongside Bárdossy and one other minister, while other members of the same cabinet were not. But one cannot argue about the charge of "crime against peace" without delegitimizing the Nürnberg process itself. Hóman was sentenced to life in prison and he died in jail in 1951. Soon after the judicial rehabilitation, plans emerged for erecting a statue immortalizing Hóman in the town of Székesfehérvár, some 60 kilometers south of Budapest. He never had anything to do with that town, but the mayor of Székesfehérvár is a Fidesz member and the city hall approved the plan, said to have been initiated by a private foundation linked to Jobbik and the erection of the statue was partly funded by the state.¹¹⁸ In fact, it later emerged that Premier Orbán was personally involved in the planning. Only a strong reaction against the statue from the United States (acknowledged by President Barak Obama but angrily refuted by the Hungarian government) eventually resulted in the scrapping of the plan.¹¹⁹

Rehabilitations and the ideological significance of revised memory are at the order of the day in recently renewed tensions between Serbia and Croatia as well. They have been mutually accusing the other of attempts to cleanse the past, and for once they are both right. In May 2015, Serbia rehabilitated Chetnik leader Dragoljub ("Draža") Mihailović, executed in May 1946 for high treason and collaboration with the Nazis. A court of justice in Belgrade ruled that his trial at the hands of Tito's communist regime had been "political and ideological" and serious legal errors had been committed in the course of the trial.¹²⁰ Mihailović's rehabilitation did not ring an alarm-bell for the Jews, but it certainly did for the Croats.¹²¹ The Jews had their own "Serbian worries."

Another Serbian rehabilitation seems to be immanent, and this one cannot leave Jews indifferent: the family of Milan Nedić and the Association of Political Prisoners and Victims of the Communist Regime started judicial procedure for the rehabilitation of the wartime Nazi puppet regime head of the so-called Government of National Salvation, that functioned from August 1941 until October 1944. Under his regime, Belgrade became the first capital city in the world to be declared *Judenrein*.

By the end of the war, some 90 percent of Serbia's Jewish population had been murdered by the Nazis.¹²² Nedić's legal successors argue that his trial (he committed suicide in prison in 1946) had been politically motivated. His apologists go even further, claiming that his suicide was actually murder and that while head of the government, Nedić had given refuge to some 600,000 Serbs from all over the Balkans and thus helped Serbs survive Nazi occupation.¹²³ Nazi hunter Zuroff, on the other hand, denounced the attempt to turn Nedić into a "victim." In an op-ed published in the Serbian newspaper *Dnas*, Zuroff said the move was part and parcel of similar attempts in the former communist countries, particularly in the Balkan states and Hungary. "If Nedić had any illusions that he could influence German policy regarding Serbia and Serbian Jewry, he should have realized long before his Quisling government was disbanded that he was virtually powerless and was merely a puppet of the Nazis and completely at their mercy," Zuroff was quoted to say, noting that during the period of his rule some 300,000 Serbs were murdered, in addition nearly sixteen hundred Jews, a significant number of whom were killed on the outskirts of Belgrade.¹²⁴

On the other side of River Drina, Croat President Kolinda Grabar-Kitarović said in reaction to Mihailović's rehabilitation that the verdict could not erase "the atrocities of the Chetnik movement, committed in collaboration with the Nazis and fascists during World War II, which brought great pain and suffering to all nations in this region." "As president of Croatia" she added, "I most resolutely condemn any attempt at historical revisionism."¹²⁵ Yet, on the very same day of Mihailović's rehabilitation Grabar-Kitarović paid a private visit to Bleiburg, southern Austria, and to Macelj and Tezno across the border in Slovenia, where she lit candles and laid wreaths. In the words of the presidential office, Grabar-Kitarović was thus paying "respect to victims killed in the tragic events in May 1945." In these events, civil servants and members of the Ustaša fascist movement of Ante Pavelić's regime trying to flee Zagreb were caught and executed without a trial by Tito's Partisans. Grabar-Kitarović explained the visit saying: "'A crime is a crime and it cannot be justified by any ideology."¹²⁶ On the other hand, the new Croatian president (who had taken office in February the same year) stayed away in April from the official ceremonies at the Jasenovac concentration camp, where at least 83,000 Serbs, Roma, Jews and political prisoners had perished at the hand of the Ustaše. Instead, she sent as representative Hollywood producer and Auschwitz survivor Branko Lustig.¹²⁷

Although this was by far better than what went on around Jasenovac under Croatia's first president, Franjo Tuđman,¹²⁸ it still reflected the strong presence among the Croat leadership of more than one shade of "dark past." It must be pointed out, however, that long before Grabar-Kitarović had placed Jasenovac and Bleiburg on the same footing, two Zagreb university professors, Radko Goldstein and his son Ivo, had

published a book titled *Jasenovac and Bleiburg are not the same* (2011). The book, of course, was a reflection of ongoing arguments embracing the Double Genocide theory in its worst version, namely Holocaust obfuscation. An exiled Croat academic from Sidney, Australia, called the two authors on her blog “Pundits of totalitarian regimes’ victims discrimination.”¹²⁹

Just as worrisome was the inclusion in the Grabar-Kitarović appointed government of historian Zlatko Hasanbegović, who held the portfolio of culture minister. Fortunately, due to inner conflicts, that cabinet lasted just a few months— from January to June 2016. Apparently a protégé of the president, Hasanbegović is known to have belonged in his youth to the Croatian Liberation Movement (*Hrvatski oslobodilački pokret*, or HOP), a party founded in exile by Ante Pavelić in the 1950s and officially registered in postcommunist Croatia in 1992. At that time, as revealed after his appointment, he wrote extensively for the HOP publication *Nezavisna Država Hrvatska* (Independent State of Croatia, NDH) an Ustaše-cleansing journal. Photos showing Hasanbegović wearing the Ustaša beret also emerged. Nowadays a member of the Tuđman-founded Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ), Hasanbegović had made the transition via another far-right formation, The Croatian Pure Party of Rights (*Hrvatska Čista Stranka Prava* or HČSP), founded in 1992, where he headed the youth wing of that formation. Hasanbegović is also a member of the Bleiburg Honorary Platoon, an NGO that honors the Ustaše executed by Tito’s partisans in 1945; and it is not accidental that soon after being sworn in, the presidency of the parliament elected in November 2015 decided to reinstate sponsorship of the Bleiburg commemoration. The sponsorship had been withdrawn in 2012—a move Hasanbegović had harshly denounced. In articles published in *NDH*, he had called the Ustaše “heroes” and “martyrs,” in the best spirit of what would later emerge as Holocaust obfuscation. And in the same spirit, after his appointment as minister he rejected criticism and calls for his resignation, saying that anti-fascism was just “an empty phrase” and arguing that “Stalin Tito and Pol Pot were all anti-fascists” who after victory went on to establish dictatorships in their countries.¹³⁰

A final word about Romania. Holocaust obfuscation is more than apparent in a sustained campaign calling for the canonization by the Romanian Orthodox Church of the so-called “Saints of Prison.” These were all, or nearly all, former Iron Guardists, some of which had been imprisoned already by Marshal Antonescu for having participated in the Legionary Rebellion against him January 1941. The “Saints of the Prison” are considered to be “martyrs” in the Romanian resistance against the communist regime. Their past as members of the Iron Guard is seldom mentioned, and if it is, no mention is made of the Guard’s antisemitism. On the contrary, deeds attributed to some of them are never mentioned in the prison memoirs of Jews who spent time in jail with them—for example

Pastor Richard Wurmbrand. A converted Jew and a former communist, Wurmbrand is claimed to have had his life saved by Valeriu Gafencu but he never mentions that in his autobiographical works.¹³¹ There must be dozens of books on the Romanian market by now, and pilgrimages are made to the tomb of Arsenie Boca at the Prislop Monastery, where “wonders” are said to take place. These pilgrimages are apparently very lucrative for those involved in organizing them.¹³²

It is not an accident that authors known for their previous attempts to rehabilitate the Iron Guard and its members, including founder Corneliu Zelea Codreanu, edit many of these books. Titles are also worth pondering on. For example, in a volume edited by Răzvan Codrescu (one of the first to attempt Codreanu’s rehabilitation), one finds articles by himself, by Sorin Lavric—the author of a eulogy volume on philosopher Constantin Noica and the Iron Guard¹³³—but also by Radu Preda, who was appointed in May 2014 director of the Institute for the Investigation of Communist Regime Crimes and the Memory of Romanian Exile (IICMER). His predecessor, the young historian Andrei Muraru, carefully avoided any IICMER implication into competitive martyrdom and links to Iron Guard promoters. Muraru became a presidential counselor to newly elect President Iohannis Klaus, but his departure radically changed IICMER’s face. Right upon his appointment, Preda, a theologian by training, stated that it was his obligation “to put ‘the case of the ‘Saints of Prison’ on the agenda of the institute.”¹³⁴ In the aforementioned volume, he authored two articles: one titled “Memory’s Mercenaries” and the other “Memory as an Obligation.” Lavric’s contribution was titled “The Need of Martyrs,” while Codrescu himself wrote on “The Martyrology of Communist Jails” and reported on the recently held “First Symposium of Martyrdom.”¹³⁵

Apologists of the Guard were also on the vanguard of attacks against the National Institute for the Study of the Holocaust in Romania “Elie Wiesel” (INSHREW) and its director, Radu Florian. Under the auspices of the Professor George Manu Foundation—one of several specializing in Iron Guard cleansing—Cezarina Condurache published in 2015 a volume titled *Faces of Romanian Dignity. Heroes of the Nation and Saints of Prison* and edited another tome titled *The Anticomunist Heroes and Saints of Prison Re-Incriminated by Law 217/2015*.¹³⁶ Law 217 had been approved by the parliament and was (or rather should have been) enforced starting with 30 July 2015.¹³⁷ The law aimed at covering *lacunae* in Governmental Ordinance 31/2002, approved by the parliament as Law no. 107 in 2006. To be more precise, prosecutors had time and again interpreted the law as not applying to the Legionary Movement, claiming that its fascist character was debatable; they also claimed that the text of the 2002 governmental ordinance prohibiting Holocaust denial does not apply to Romanian territory, since allegedly no Holocaust had taken place on Romanian territory proper. The INSHREW and Florian personally had long pressed

lawmakers for the change, and that is what brought on them the wrath of critics and opponents.

Publications with an overt neo-Legionary character aside, mainstream intellectuals also criticized Law 217. Preda was among the first to claim that the new law was discriminatory, calling the legislation “pro-communist,” since it ignored crimes committed by the communist regime.¹³⁸ Other prominent intellectuals concurred, among them Pleșu, who in the best spirit of Double Genocide and of Holocaust obfuscation, called for “symmetry” in addressing legally the two totalitarian legacies and claimed the tribunals that had sentenced wartime Romanian intellectuals had been under communist influence.¹³⁹ The wrath intensified as Florian successfully demanded the nullification of the decision to make writer Vintilă Horia (an interwar admirer of Adolf Hitler sentenced in absentia to life in prison) an honorary citizen of his birthplace.

The “Prison Saints” phenomenon is not unique to Romania. In Serbia, the dominant Orthodox Church had transformed the virulently antisemitic Bishop Nikolaj Velimirović (1880-1956) from “traitor,” as he was dubbed by the communists, into a “saint.”¹⁴⁰ Slovak attempts to bring about the beatification of Bishop Ján Vojtaššák were thwarted after Israeli historians wrote to Pope John Paul II, showing that the bishop had been a Nazi sympathizer and had participated in a meeting of the Slovak National Council in March 1942, where the plans to deport 58,000 Jews (most of whom perished in extermination camps), had been discussed. Vojtaššák was a Deputy Chairman of the council headed by Mgr. Jozef Tiso himself in the clerical fascist state. He was sentenced in 1950 to 24 years in prison and released in 1963, under an amnesty. Vojtaššák died in 1995 and his conviction was quashed in 1990. Yet the attempts are continuing by the Slovak Bishops Conference.¹⁴¹ Croat Archbishop Alojzije Viktor Stepinac, who was Ante Pavelić’s spiritual advisor under the Ustaša regime and supreme military vicar in the Independent State of Croatia army, was beatified by Pope John Paul II in 1998, because he had been tried by the communists and sentenced to 16 years in prison for “treason” and collaboration with the former regime. He was later confined to his home village and was made a cardinal by Pope Pius XII in 1952. Upon beatification, Stepinac was declared a “martyr,” and to the chagrin of the Serbs, he might soon be canonized (He was one of the initiators of the forcible conversion of the Orthodox Serbs).¹⁴² Bearing in mind the role played in Poland by Radio Maryja,¹⁴³ it would be wise to abstain from dismissing the possible political impact of this aspect.

Concluding Remarks

The Prague Declaration follow-up is a successful story, but not as one-sidedly successful as one may believe. In December 2010 the European Commission (the forum that takes binding decisions when all is said and

done) refused to heed a Lithuanian initiative (supported by the foreign ministers of Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Hungary and Romania) that would have made Double Genocide into binding legislation for all EU members. The proponents wanted to criminalize the denial of communist crimes the same way denying the Holocaust is banned in EU countries. The Commission said in its decision that “opinions on the matter are too divided” and “there is no consensus on it.” EU justice spokesman Matthew Newman was quoted as saying: “The bottom line is, obviously, what they did was horrendous, but communist regimes did not target ethnic minorities.”¹⁴⁴ That should have been the end of the story—only that it wasn’t, as this article showed.

Yet, European Commissions come and go and in a not too distant future the horizontal and vertical network of influence and lobbying might succeed where it failed in 2010. What is more, the winds have been blown over the Atlantic. On 23 May 2014, heeding (again) a Lithuanian initiative moved through Congressman John Shimkus of Illinois and strongly backed by the Joint Baltic American National Committee (JBANC), the U.S. House of Representatives approved legislation recognizing 23 August as the Day of Victims of Soviet Communist and Nazi Regimes—or Black Ribbon Day, as it came to be also denominated.¹⁴⁵ Marked by the trauma of Soviet occupation and sharing this cognitive mapping with all other former communist countries where Stalin imposed his system, there is little chance and no justification to deny these people their own right to memory. What *must* nonetheless be hindered is the attempt to amalgamate perpetrators and victims, transforming that mix into means to bring back old ideologies parading as freedom fighters and occasionally doing so masked as piety.

Notes

¹ Yehuda Bauer, *Rethinking the Holocaust* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2001), 48, also 266. Also, Bauer, “Reviewing the Holocaust Anew in Multiple Contexts,” *Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs*, (1 May 2009), http://www.jcpa.org/JCPA/Templates/ShowPage.asp?DRIT=3&DBID=1&LNGID=1&TMID=111&FID=624&PID=0&IID=2927&TTL=Reviewing_the_Holocaust_Anew_in_Multiple_Contexts.

² To date, the best reference to the period in the West remains Tony Judt, *Postwar. A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York: The Penguin Press, 2005), 803–20, 826–31.

³ Dan Stone, *Goodbye to all that? The Story of Europe since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), VIII. According to Stone, “the postwar consensus went hand in hand with a particular memory of the Second World War” and “the death of that consensus should not be understood only economically... but also politically and especially in terms of memory politics.” Thus, he writes, “the collapse of the political project of social democracy in the West and communism in the East went hand in hand with the death of antifascism, hence the

reappearance of ideas and values which had long been assumed to be dead, or at least marginal or lunatic.” Stone, *Goodbye to all that?*, IX. I believe Stone overstretches the link between the collapse of the post-war consensus and Social Democracy.

⁴ For the difference see Vladimir Tismaneanu, *Stalinism for All Seasons. A Political History of Romanian Communism* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2003), 32-35 and Tismaneanu, “What Was National Stalinism?” in *The Oxford Handbook of Postwar European History*, ed. Dan Stone (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2012), 462-479.

⁵ Shari J. Cohen, *Politics without a Past: The Absence of History in Postcommunist Nationalism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1999).

⁶ Jacques Rupnik, “Revoluție–Restaurație,” *Lettre internationale* (Romanian edition), (Winter 1992-93): 4-6.

⁷ Andrei Pippidi, *Despre statui și morminte: Pentru o teorie a istoriei simbolice* (Iași: Polirom, 2000), 8, 22. The process is still ongoing, as the case of Poland demonstrates (see Matthew Day, “Poland to Change its Street Names in Bid to ‘De-communise’ the Country,” *The Telegraph*, (18 February 2016), <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/poland/12164051/Poland-to-change-its-street-names-in-bid-to-de-communise-the-country.html>).

⁸ On the “Neo-Dmowskism” of the Władysław Gomułka regime (1956-1970) in Poland see Jan C. Behrens, “Nation and Empire: Dilemmas of Legitimacy during Stalinism in Poland (1941-1956),” *Nationalities Papers* 37/4 (2009): 443-466. On Dmowski himself see Adam Bromke, *Poland's Politics: Idealism vs. Realism* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967), 7-18. On the role played in that regime by former Nazi collaborationist and leader of the pre-war fascist Falanga who broke away from Dmowski's *Endecia*, Bolesław Piasecki, as leader of the Catholic Pax movement see Mikołaj Kunicki, “The Red and the Brown: Boleslaw Piasecki, the Polish Communists, and the Anti-Zionist Campaign in Poland, 1967-68,” *East European Politics and Societies*, 19 (2005): 185-225; and Rafal Pankowski, *The Populist Radical Right in Poland: The Patriots* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), 31-39, 50. Cf. also Andrzej Paczkowski, *The Spring Will Be Ours: Poland and the Poles from Occupation to Freedom* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2003), 300-306 and Jan T. Gross, “After Auschwitz: The Reality and Meaning of Postwar Anti-Semitism in Poland” in *The Holocaust in International Perspective* ed. Dagmar Herzog (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2006), 81.

⁹ “Entering the lands that they had conceded to Stalin in 1939, the Germans used NKVD crimes as a propaganda justification for the bloody massacres of Jews in summer 1941, in which Lithuanians, Ukrainians, Poles and others took part.” Timothy Snyder, “Echoes from the Killing Fields of the East,” *The Guardian*, (28 September 2010), <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/cifamerica/2010/sep/27/secondworldwar-poland>.

¹⁰ Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands. Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010), 194, 196.

¹¹ Dan Stone, “Memory Wars in the ‘New Europe’,” in *The Oxford Handbook of Postwar European History* ed. Dan Stone (Oxford: Oxford University Press: 2012), 714-731; Michael Shafir, “Holocaust Representation in Transitional Romania: An Updated Motivational Typology,” in *Holocaust Memory and Antisemitism in Central*

and Eastern Europe, (Bucharest: „Elie Wiesel” National Institute For the Study of the Holocaust in Romania, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung 2007), 117-172; Shafir, “Nuremberg II? Le mythe de la dénazification et son utilisation dans la martyrologie compétitive Shoah-Goulag,” *Revue d’Histoire de la Shoah* 194 (Janvier-Juin 2011): 557-82; Shafir, “The ‘Second Nürnberg’: Legend vs. Myth in Postcommunism (I),” *Holocaust. Studii și cercetări*, VI (7): 109-44; Shafir, “Wars of Memory in Post-Communist Romania,” in *Post-Socialist Memory Revisited: Post-Socialist Historiography Between Democratisation and New Politics of History*, ed. Oto Luthar (Budapest: Central European University Press, forthcoming 2016).

¹² Shafir, “The ‘Second Nürnberg’ (I)”; Shafir, “The ‘Second Nürnberg’: Legend vs. Myth in Postcommunism (II),” *Holocaust. Studii și cercetări*, VIII (7), 2015: 243-280.

¹³ I am employing Maurice Halbwachs’ concept of “social frameworks”. Cf. his *Les cadres sociaux de la mémoire*, 2 édition, (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2008).

¹⁴ On cognitive mapping cf. Les Roberts (ed.), *Mapping Cultures: Place, Practices, Performance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012). On mental mapping see Alan K. Henrikson, “The Geographical ‘Mental Maps’ of American Foreign Policy Makers,” *International Political Science Association*, 1,4 (1980): 495-530. These concepts have been used in general for analyzing decision-making processes at international leadership level, but all individuals make decisions all the time and are influenced by their earlier “cognitive mapping” of the order of things. A cognitive map, one is told by Sandra Breux and Min Reuchamps, might ultimately be reduced to the formula: “Cognitive map= perception + imagination.” Sandra Breux, Min Reuchamps, “Introduction,” in *Carte mentale et science politique. Regards et perspectives critiques sur l’emploi d’un outil promoteur*, dir. Sandra Breux, Min Reuchamps, Hugo Loiseau (Bruxelles: Peter Lang, 2011), 9.

¹⁵ As I formulated it elsewhere, “while historiography is the privileged field of professionals, memory engulfs entire communities or entire groups within communities. Memory requires no footnotes against which arguments might be checked... It makes little sense to argue against memory, as [Tony] Judt does, since memory is primarily sentiment. And sentiments know no professional boundaries. They are above all shared, which means that not only historians, not only politicians or writers, not just university or high-school graduates, but also shopkeepers, blue-collar workers and peasants constitute the make-up of memory.” Shafir, “The ‘Second Nürnberg’: Legend vs. Myth in Postcommunism (I),” *Holocaust. Studii și cercetări*, VI (7), (2015): 115.

¹⁶ I am utilizing the concept introduced by John-Paul Himka and Joanna Beata Michlic in the title of their edited book *Bringing the Dark Past to Light. The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe*, eds. John-Paul Himka and Joana Beata Michlic (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2013).

¹⁷ Michael Shafir, “Ex Occidente Obscuritas: The Diffusion of Holocaust Denial from West to East,” *Studia Hebraica*, (2003): 23-82.

¹⁸ Michael Shafir, “Between Denial and ‘Comparative Trivialization’: Holocaust Negationism in Post-Communist East Central Europe,” *ACTA* no. 19, (Jerusalem: The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, The Vidal Sasoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, 2002); Shafir, “Rotten Apples, Bitter Pears: An Updated Motivational Typology of Romania’s Radical Right’s Anti-Semitic Postures in Post-Communism,” *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies*, vol. 7 issue 21, (Winter 2008).

¹⁹ For earlier use of the concept see Jean-Michel Chaumont, *La Concurrence des victime: génocide, identité, reconnaissance* (Paris: Éditions La Découverte, 1997); Alain Besançon, *Nenorocirea secolului: Despre comunism, Nazism și unicitatea Shoah-ului* (Bucharest: Humanitas, 1999), 138 [Translated from the French original *Le Malheur du siècle. Sur le Communisme, le Nazisme et l'unicité de la Shoah*, (Paris: Fayard, 1998)]; Omer Bartov, *Mirrors of Destruction: War, Genocide and Modern Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 71-75; Alan S. Rosenbaum, "Introduction to First Edition," *Is the Holocaust Unique? Perspectives on Comparative Genocide* ed. Alan S. Rosenbaum, second edition, (Boulder: Westview, 2001), 2.

²⁰ On "international regimes" see Stephen D. Krasner, "Structural Causes and Regime Consequences: Regimes as Intervening Variables," in *International Regimes*, ed. Stephen D. Krasner, (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 1-22.

²¹ Michael Shafir, "Memory, Memorials, and Membership: Romanian Utilitarian Anti-Semitism and Marshal Antonescu," in *Romania Since 1989: Politics, Culture and Society* ed. Henry F. Carey (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2004), 67-96.

²² Zoltán Dujisin, "Post-Communist Europe: On the Path to a Regional Regime of Remembrance" (paper presented at the Association of the Study of Nationalities, Columbia University, New York, 24-26 April 2014).

²³ Jeffrey K. Olick, *The Politics of Regret: On Collective Memory and Political Responsibility* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

²⁴ For the distinction between "myth" and "legend" and its utilization in the politics of postcommunist mnemonic politics see Shafir, "The Second Nürnberg: Legend vs. Myth"(I) and "The 'Second Nürnberg': Legend vs. Myth (II).

²⁵ John-Paul Himka, Joanna Beata Michlic, "Introduction," in *Bringing the Dark Past to Light. The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe*, eds. John-Paul Himka and Joana Beata Michlic (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 7.

²⁶ "Prague Declaration on European Conscience and Communism. June 9, 2008," in *Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation*, <http://www.webcitation.org/5yf4HFF6d>.

²⁷ There were several documents adopted by The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe that preceded the Prague Declaration, reflecting the "totalitarianism" approach and thereby smoothing the tone and content of the 2008 Declaration in. The first was adopted on 27 June 1996 and was titled "Measures to dismantle the heritage of former communist totalitarian systems" (see Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, "Resolution 1481. Need for international condemnation of crimes of totalitarian communist regimes," 25 January 2006, <http://assembly.coe.int/nw/xml/XRef/Xref-XML2HTML-en.asp?fileid=17403&lang=en>). The latter resolution was specifically mentioned in the Prague Declaration.

²⁸ György Schöpflin, "United Europe, United History," http://schopflingyorgy.hu/news_display/united_europe_united_history/.

²⁹ Dujisin.

³⁰ Peter Jambrek (ed.), *Crimes Committed by Totalitarian Regimes*. Ljubljana: Slovenian Presidency of the Council of Europe, 2008, Translations the Secretariat-General of the Government of the Republic of Slovenia.

http://www.mp.gov.si/fileadmin/mp.gov.si/pageuploads/mp.gov.si/PDF/poprava_krivic/Crimes_committed_by_Totalitarian_Regimes.pdf.

³¹ Dujisin.

³² “Platform of European Memory and Conscience - A Brief History,” August 17, 2011,

http://www.mp.gov.si/fileadmin/mp.gov.si/pageuploads/mp.gov.si/PDF/poprava_krivic/Crimes_committed_by_Totalitarian_Regimes.pdf.

³³ Maria Mälksoo, “The Memory Politics of Becoming European: The East European Subalterns and the Collective Memory of Europe,” *European Journal of International Relations*, 15(4), (2009): 653, 656.

³⁴ Mälksoo, “The Memory Politics of Becoming European,” 653-654. Emphasis mine.

³⁵ “The Memory Politics of Becoming European,” 654.

³⁶ “The Memory Politics of Becoming European,” 656. Emphasis mine.

³⁷ Andrei Pleșu, Gabriel Liiceanu, Horia-Roman Patapievici, *O idee care sucește mintile*, (Bucharest: Humanitas, 2014). Emphasis mine.

³⁸ Bartov, *Mirrors of Destruction*, 79.

³⁹ William A. Shabas, “Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity: Clarifying the Relationship,” in *The Genocide Convention. The Legacy of 60 years*, ed. H.G. van der Wilt, J. Vervliet, G.K. Sluiter and J. Th .M. Houwink ten Cate, (Leiden, Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 2012), 9.

⁴⁰ Shabas, “Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity,” 7.

⁴¹ “According to the most recent definition, comprised within the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, crimes against humanity include persecution against any identifiable group or collectivity on political, racial, national, ethnic, cultural, religious, gender or other grounds that are universally recognized as impermissible under international law. This contemporary approach to crimes against humanity is really no more than the ‘expanded’ definition of genocide that many have argued for over the years.” William A. Shabas, *Genocide in International Law: The Crime of Crimes*, Second edition, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 12.

⁴² Shabas, “Genocide and Crimes Against Humanity,” 4.

⁴³ Marianne Hirsch, *The Generation of Postmemory. Writing and Visual Culture After the Holocaust* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012).

⁴⁴ Robert Bellah et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), in *The Collective Memory Reader* eds. Jeffrey K. Olick, Vered Vinitzki-Seroussi, Daniel Levy (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press), 229-230.

⁴⁵ Jeffrey C. Alexander, “Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma,” in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, Jeffrey C. Alexander et al. (eds.), (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 1. Emphasis mine.

⁴⁶ Jan T. Gross, *Neighbors* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001); Gross, *Fear. Anti-Semitism in Poland After Auschwitz* (New York: Random House, 2006); Gross, *Golden Harvest. Events at the Periphery of the Holocaust*, With Irena Grudzińska Gross, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012). Cf. also Antony Polonski, Joanna B. Michlic (eds.), *The Neighbors Respond. The Controversy Over the Jedwabne Massacre in Poland*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004). On the recent events see Matthew Day, “Polish-American Historian Could Be Stripped of Honours After Claiming Poles Killed More Jews,” *The Telegraph*, (2 November 2015), http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/poland/11970221/Polish-American-historian-could-be-stripped-of-honours-after-claiming-Poles-killed-more-Jews.html?utm_campaign=Echobox&utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Fa

cebook, and Alice Develey, „La Pologne veut déchoir un historien de la Shoah,” *Le Figaro*, (16 February 2016), <http://www.lefigaro.fr/culture/2016/02/15/03004-20160215ARTFIG00185-la-pologne-veut-dechoir-un-historien-de-la-shoah.php>.

⁴⁷ Cited in Joanna Beata Michlic, Małgorzata Melchior, “The Memory of the Holocaust in Post-1989 Poland: Renewal—Its Accomplishments and Its Powerlessness,” in *Bringing the Dark Past to Light. The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe*, eds. John-Paul Himka and Joana Beata Michlic, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 416.

⁴⁸ See Geneviève Zubrzycki, *The Crosses of Auschwitz. Nationalism and Religion in Post-Communist Poland*, (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2006.)

⁴⁹ Michael Shafir, “Istorie, memorie și mit în martirologia competitivă Holocaust-Gulag,” in *Miturile politice în România contemporană*, Sergiu Gherghina, Sergiu Miscoiu eds., (Iași: Institutul European, 2012), 297-358.

⁵⁰ Alexander, 8-9.

⁵¹ Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), 8.

⁵² Zerubavel, 8. Author’s emphasis.

⁵³ “A myth cannot be refuted, since it is, at bottom, identical with the conviction of a group, being the expression of these convictions in the language of movement; and it [is] in consequence unanalyzable into parts which could be placed on the plane of historical descriptions” (George Sorel, *Reflections on Violence* (New York: Collier Books, 1961), 50. As Vladimir Tismaneanu rightly remarks, “Myths are not banal descriptions of the desired society, but calls for action.” Tismaneanu, *Fantasies of Salvation. Democracy, Nationalism and Myth in Post-Communist Europe* (Princeton: Princeton University Press 1998), 13.

⁵⁴ In the Soviet Union, the *lishentsy* were “those who in the 1920s and early 1930 were legally disenfranchised, subject to all sort of discrimination, and generally dishonored.” They included “*kulaks*, czarist officers, priests, the petty traders and industrialists of the New Economic Policy, and the bourgeoisie and nobles of the old regime; many of them were fired, evicted from their homes, denied rations, or barred from education”. The *lishentsy* were officially replaced as a category in the 1930s by the “social marginals,” whom Weitz describes as “a highly fluid category that largely overlapped with the *lishentsy* and demonstrated disturbing similarities with the ‘asocials’ targeted by the Nazis.” See Eric D. Weitz, *A Century of Genocide. Utopias of Race and Nation*. With a new preface by the author (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2003), 65. Many of the East European intellectuals who became partisans of competitive martyrdom would recognize themselves in this description.

⁵⁵ There have been precedents to this endeavor, particularly in West Germany. See Bartov, *Mirrors of Destruction*, 39, 112-114.

⁵⁶ “European Parliament resolution on European conscience and totalitarianism,” 2 April 2009, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+IM-PRESS+20090401IPR53245+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN./>

⁵⁷ “Vilnius Declaration of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and Resolutions Adopted at the Eighteenth Annual Session,” Vilnius, 29 June to 3 July 2009, <https://www.oscepa.org/documents/all-documents/annual-sessions/2009-vilnius/declaration-6/261-2009-vilnius-declaration-eng/file>.

⁵⁸ Henry Rousso, "Introduction: The Legitimacy of a Historical Comparison" in *Stalinism and Nazism. History and Memory Compared*, ed. Henry Rousso (Lincoln and London: Nebraska University Press, 2004), 1-24.

⁵⁹ Adrian Cioflâncă, "Nazism și comunism, laolaltă," *Ziarul de Iași*, (21 august 2009), available on the author's blog, <http://adriancioflanca.blogspot.com/2009/08/nazism-si-comunism-laolalta.html>.

⁶⁰ Vyngantas Vareikis, "'Double Genocide' and the 'Holocaust-Gulag' Rhetoric in Lithuania" (paper presented at the international conference "Jews and Antisemitism in the Public Discourse of Post-Communist European Countries," Jerusalem, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem 24-26 October 2000).

⁶¹ In Lithuania, "genocide" has been officially "redefined to include victims of Soviet deportations" and the NKVD and the KGB were "officially declared to be criminal organizations, thus bringing them in line with the Nuremberg tribunal's definition of the SS." Omer Bartov, "Conclusion," in *Bringing the Dark Past to Light. The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe*, eds. John-Paul Himka and Joana Beata Michlic, (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press 2013), 668.

⁶² Gabriel Andreescu, "Interzicerea negării crimelor comuniste pe plan european: Norme, ideologie, drepturi," *Noua Revistă de drepturile omului* 1 (2011): 41-58; Vladimir Socor, "Moldova Condemns Communism at Long Last," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 9, (12 July 2012), http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=39633&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=587&no_cache=1#.VJVocZ0BUk.

⁶³ Bartov, *Mirrors of Destruction*, 71.

⁶⁴ Stéphane Courtois, "Introduction: The Crimes of Communism," in *The Black Book of Communism. Crimes, Terror, Repression*, eds. Stéphane Courtois et al., Translated by Johnathan Murphy and Mark Kramer (Cambridge, Mass, London: Harvard University Press, 1999), 9, 17, 19, 23.

⁶⁵ Stéphane Courtois, *Communism si Totalitarism*, Translated by Anca Ciucan Țuțuianu from the French original *Communisme et Totalitarisme*, (Paris: Perrin, 2009); (Iași: Polirom, 2011).

⁶⁶ Weitz, X. Courtois is by no means the only Western historian to put communist crimes on par with Nazi crimes. See, among other authors, Norman M. Naimark, "Stalin and the Question of Soviet Genocides," in *Political Violence, Belief, Behavior and Legitimation*, ed. Paul Hollander (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 39-47 and *Stalin's Genocides* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2010); James A. Gregor, *The Faces of Janus. Marxism and Fascism in the Twentieth Century* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000); Vladimir Tismaneanu, *The Devil in History. Communism, Fascism, and Some Lessons of the Twentieth Century* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2012). On the other hand, one is reminded of the words of Robert Conquest, who, more than any scholar in the West, contributed to making Stalin's crimes known: "Late in 1997, the Paris *Le Monde* interviewed me by phone. I was asked did I find he Holocaust 'worse' than Stalinist crimes. I answered yes, I did, but when the interviewer asked me why, I could only answer honestly with 'I feel so.' ...[T]his primary 'feeling,' based indeed on knowledge, has a validity of its own. I would argue, too, that, whatever view one takes, without feeling the Holocaust one cannot feel, or understand Stalinism." Robert Conquest, *Reflections on a Ravaged Century* (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2001). No further comment.

⁶⁷ Gheorghe Buzatu, *Așa a început Holocaustul împotriva poporului român* (Bucharest: Editura Majadahonda, 1995).

⁶⁸ See Michael Shafir, "Unacademic Academics: Holocaust Deniers and Trivializers in Post-Communist Romania," *Nationalities Papers*, 42 (6), (2014): 942-964.

⁶⁹ Paul Goma, *Săptămâna roșie, 28 iunie-3 iulie 1940 sau Basarabia și evreii* (Bucharest: Editura Vremea XXI, 2004). For an important review see Radu Ioanid, "Haïr à Belleville ou la chute d'un ex-dissident roumain," *Le meilleurs des mondes*, 5 (automne 2007): 136-41.

⁷⁰ The endeavor met with success. See, for example, Steven Rosefielde, *Red Holocaust* (London and New York: Routledge, 2010).

⁷¹ Alexandra Laignel-Lavastine, "Fascism and Communism in Romania: The Comparative Stakes and Uses," in *Stalinism and Nazism. History and Compared*, ed. Henry Rousso (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 173. On the latter aspect see the sub-chapter titled "The Capture of Historiography by Ideology," 180-183.

⁷² Michlic and Melchior, 412.

⁷³ Bartov, "Conclusion," 668.

⁷⁴ Bartov, "Conclusion," 668-669.

⁷⁵ Bartov, "Conclusion," 669.

⁷⁶ Michael Shafir, "Hungarian Politics and the Post-1989 Legacy of the Holocaust," in *The Holocaust in Hungary: Sixty Years Later* eds. Randolph L. Braham and Brewster S. Chamberlin (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006), 257-290.

⁷⁷ Randolph L. Braham, "Assault on Historical Memory: Hungarian Nationalists and the Holocaust," in *Studies on the Holocaust: Selected Writings*, Vol. 2, ed. Randolph L. Braham (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001), 208.

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been Jews” (Hanebrink, “The Memory of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Hungary”).

⁸² Braham, “The Assault on the Historical Memory of the Holocaust.”

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