The Gulag and the Holocaust in Opposition: *Official Memories and Memory Cultures in an Enlarged Europe*

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Official Memories and Memory Cultures in an Enlarged Europe

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Despite "Europe's reunification" into a 27-member union, the continent remains divided in its collective memories. In a study of the differences between how Western and Central and Eastern Europe remember the Holocaust and Soviet crimes, Emmanuel Droit reveals a "remembrance iron curtain." Eager to fill in the blank pages of their communist past, the people and leaders of Central and Eastern Europe have compared the violence perpetrated upon them to the Holocaust. More often than not, this has led them to play down the significance of the Holocaust and to ignore their own countries' role as Nazi Germany's auxiliaries. Indignation in the West over this biased rewriting of history has resulted in our Central and East European neighbors feeling that their own suffering is being minimized because they are being denied the status of victim. In this paper, Emmanuel Droit identifies ways of emerging from this dialogue of the deaf and building a basis for a shared European memory.

On March 24, 2004, Sandra Kalniete, former Latvian Ambassador to France in the 1990s, spoke in the *Gewandhaus*, the famous Leipzig concert hall, at the opening of the traditional Book Fair. As a result of her remarks, Salomon Korn, Vice-President of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, walked out of the room, and over the next few days, a major controversy ensued in the German and German-speaking press.[1] "[Researchers] have shown that both totalitarian regimes – Nazism and Communism – were equally criminal. We should never differentiate between them just because one was on the winning side."[2] Sandra Kalniete's words were deemed scandalous because she was underscoring her own compatriots' suffering under Soviet rule without addressing the question of the participation of hundreds of Latvians in the extermination of Jews between 1941 and 1944. By taking this stance, which was related to her own personal experience,[3] she wounded Western Europeans' sense of the relative importance of memories of the Holocaust over the Gulag. Simone Weil stressed this theme a few months earlier in a speech she gave in the Bundestag on January 27, 2004, in which she said: "The Holocaust is not recognized enough in some East European countries. Manipulated by

(1) Sonja Margolina, "Die Opfer im Wettbewerb: Europas divergierende Erinnerungen an den Weltkrieg."*Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, March, 29, 2005; Stefan Troebst, "Holomor order Holocaust?" *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* July 4, 2005.

(2) *TAZ* 7331 (June 10, 2004), 11. Translated by the author.

(3) Sandra Kalniete, *En escarpins dans les neiges de Sibérie* (Paris: Éditions des Syrtes, 2003). Kalniete was born in 1952 in Togur, Tomsk Oblast, and came from a family deported to Siberia by the NKVD. This is her autobiography.

long-standing communist regimes, the memory of the suffering inflicted by Nazi occupiers on occupied populations has erased the memory of the suffering inflicted on Jews, sometimes with the complicity of these very populations. . . . At a time when Europe is expanding toward the East, this trend is a cause for alarm because these obvious historical controversies deeply affect the identity of a future Europe."[1] These two speeches are incisive summaries of the tragedies experienced by the European continent in the twentieth century, and they reveal the disparity between West and East European memory cultures[2] at a time when a dual enlargement of the European Union (EU) toward the East is being celebrated.

Unlike France, Germany is fertile ground for both discussion and controversy regarding the place and importance of the Holocaust and the Gulag in official remembrance policies as well as in the collective memory of Eastern Europe's post-communist societies. Besides geographic proximity, the main reason is that Germany was the only West European country to have a had dual experience of totalitarianism in its eastern sector. Moreover, the way the Federal Republic confronted the 1933-1945 era has made Germany a European exemplar of how to handle the past (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*).[3] In practice, "handling the past" not only refers to all the political, legal, and symbolic measures implemented by governments, but also to the remembrance efforts undertaken by civil society. By referring to this concept, this study need not restrict itself to institutional forms of Holocaust remembrance. Rather, it intends to build a foundation on which to assess how official remembrance policy has been received by populations.[4] The aim is to identify "memory entrepreneurs"[5] and the practices they use. More generally, this way of thinking allows for the asking of a number of questions, which are connected to the idea of European identity and were widely discussed at the time of talks over the European Constitution in 2005: To what extent can – or should – the Holocaust be the central element of collective European memory? Should there be a hierarchy of memories of suffering linked to Nazi and Soviet domination? How can two essential categories, remembrance of the Holocaust and remembrance of the Gulag, coexist within an expanded Europe without reciprocal suspicions of denial?

Firstly, the paper will review the dividing line over remembrance that, like a fault line, has separated Western Europe from Eastern Europe since 1989. A differentiated, transnational approach will then be developed in order to evaluate the place of Holocaust remembrance in official memorials and collective memories in Eastern Europe. Finally, a concluding section will focus on the prospect for a just allotment of memory (Paul Ricoeur's "*juste mémoire*")[6] shared across all of Europe.

(1) "Fondation pour la Mémoire de la Shoah," accessed from http://www.fondationshoah.info/FMS/DocPdf/Discours/FL%20Discours%20Berlin.doc

(2) See Konrad Jarausch, "Zeitgeschichte und Erinnerung: Deutungskonkurrenz oder Interdependenz?" in *Verletztes Gedächtnis: Erinnerungskultur und Zeitgeschichte im Konflikt*, ed. Konrad Jarausch and Martin Sabrow (Frankfurt am Main: CampusVerlag, 2002), 9-37. By "memory culture," we mean the total shared descriptions of the past, which are the result of interaction between historical memory and ordinary memory, i.e., between official remembrance policies and individual memories.

(3) Helmut König, "Von der Diktatur zur Demokratie, oder was ist Vergangenheitsbewältigung," in Special Issue no. 18 "Vergangenheitspolitik am Ende des 20. Jahrhunderts," ed. Helmut König, Michael Kohlstruck, and Andreas Wöll, *Leviathan*, 371-92.

(4) This sociological perspective, championed by Marie-Claire Lavabre especially, is outlined in this paper but would benefit from additional fieldwork being carried out simultaneously in different countries since this type of study can only be undertaken within the framework of collective research.

(5) The expression "memory entrepreneurs" alludes to the term "moral entrepreneur" used by the U.S. sociologist Howard Becker in *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (New York: The Free Press, 1985). "Memory entrepreneur" refers to any group or individual who creates, attempts to have recognized, or applies remembrance standards in a public space.

(6) Paul Ricœur, *La Mémoire, l'histoire, l'oubli* (Paris: Seuil, 2000).

A "Remembrance Iron Curtain"

An analysis of the respective importance of memories of the Holocaust and the Gulag highlights a disparity between Western and Eastern Europe in memory cultures about World War II. A priori, the war is always presented as a coherent event, beginning (at least in Europe) on September 1, 1939 and ending on May 8, 1945. This point of view is of course valid from a macro-historical and factual perspective. But it is much more problematic when the event is looked at from the point of view of "second-degree history," i.e., official memory, or from a transnational perspective.[1] Compared to a Western European, for a Latvian or a Hungarian, May 8, 1945 is much less meaningful as the date of liberation from the Nazi yoke than as the beginning of Soviet occupation.[2] It is also often heard in Latvia that 1991 marks the end of World War II because that is the date that corresponds to the restoration of independence, whereas 1945 was only a change of occupation, following those of 1940 and 1941. In Hungary, the Communist authorities insisted on the public use of the word "*felszabadulás*," meaning "liberation." Today, people prefer to talk of "*megszabadulás*," which expresses effective liberation from a dictatorship without including the concept of freedom for the country. Even in Germany, the celebration of the 60th anniversary of World War II led to published arguments over whether one could speak of liberation for all of Germany in 1945 since its eastern part was occupied by Soviet armed forces.[3]

The dissolution of the Eastern bloc made it inevitable that post-socialist States would look at their past in a new light, one that was free of the mythological dimension about World War II imposed on them by the USSR. This put them out of step with Western European countries, in which the memory of the Holocaust takes up three quarters of remembrance space for World War II, whereas the Gulag represents a real "memory hole."[4]

The Dominant Holocaust Paradigm in the West

As regards the Holocaust, since the 1960s, Western Europe has generally been moving away from a national "resistance" paradigm toward a transnational "universalist" paradigm. This shift needs to be placed in the context of the period, which was marked by the importance of the Eichmann trial in 1961, the Frankfurt trial of 1963-1965,[5] and by the Six-Day War in 1967. In many Western countries, and especially in France,[6] Belgium, and Italy, the 1970s decade marked a break with the past to the extent that the societal consensus created after 1945 on the resistance myth was beginning to crumble and memory of the Holocaust was no longer limited to Jewish communities.[7] In France, the Holocaust truly entered official and collective memory in the 1990s following the trials of Touvier and Papon. At the same time, the concept of a "duty of remembrance"[8]

(1) Étienne François, "Meistererzählungen und Dammbrüche: Die Erinnerung an den Zweiten Weltkrieg zwischen Nationalisierung und Universalisierung," in *Mythen der Nationen 1945: Arena der Erinnerungen*, vol. 1, ed. Monika Flacke (Mainz: DHM, 2004), 13-28.

(2) In France, 1944 and the period of the Liberation have remained in the collective memory. By contrast, it has always been difficult to commemorate May 8, 1945 because of France's limited role in actual fighting.

(3) Hubertus Knabe, *Tag der Befreiung? Das Kriegsende in Ostdeutschland* (Berlin: Propyläen, 2005).

(4) This expression is borrowed from Roger Bastide, who defined a "memory hole" as "both empty and full." It is "empty because it cannot be filled with images of collective memory, and yet full, since it is not really absence, nothingness, or nothing." See Roger Bastide, "Mémoire collective et sociologie du bricolage." *L'Année Sociologique* 21:65-108.

(5) Rebecca Wittmann, *The Auschwitz Trial* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005).

(6) Henry Rousso, *Le Syndrome de Vichy de 1944 à nos jours* (Paris: Seuil, 1987).

(7) For Germany, see Norbert Frei, "Auschwitz et les Allemands" in *1945 und wir: Das Dritte Reich im Bewußtsein der Deutschen* (Munich: Beck, 2005), 156-83.

(8) Sarah Gensburger and Marie-Claire Lavabre, "Entre devoir de mémoire et abus de mémoire: La sociologie de la mémoire comme tierce position," in *L'Histoire entre mémoire et épistémologie: Autour de Paul Ricœur*, ed. Bertrand Müller (Lausanne: Payot, 2005), 75-96.

imposed itself on public discourse. Overall, since the end of the 1970s and the impact of the U.S. mini-series *Holocaust* (1979)[1] followed by Claude Lanzmann's documentary *Shoah* (1985), Auschwitz gradually became a place of universal memory.[2] The Holocaust is now considered such a powerful "rupture of civilization"[3] that Auschwitz has today become the "signature of an entire era,"[4] namely the twentieth century.

However, the specifically historical uniqueness of this event – and uniqueness should not be taken to mean incomparability[5] – has been succeeded by a remembrance uniqueness that is being challenged today in Germany by other victim groups, such as Gypsies and homosexuals.[6] As Henry Rousso has pointed out, the predominance of Holocaust remembrance is no doubt the legitimate recognition of and relative compensation for the decades of silence that surrounded the extermination of the Jews after 1945. However, it tends to ignore other categories of victims while founding Jewish identity on the suffering experienced by their ancestors.[7]

Holocaust remembrance holds this central position in both state activity (such as official repentance, late political trials, and the establishment of commissions on the plunder of Jewish property)[8] and civil society initiatives (such as the Vél' d'Hiv' Memorial in Paris or the Holocaust Memorial in Berlin on the site of Hitler's former Chancellery)[9] as well as in cinema.[10] In fact, the "universalization" of Holocaust remembrance[11] is predominantly a Western perspective, specific to the United States and Western Europe.

The Holocaust as a "Copenhagen Remembrance Criterion"

Since the mid-1990s, remembrance of the Holocaust has been a priority for the EU, leading a hierarchy so clearly expressed at the political level that one can speak of a "Copenhagen Remembrance Criterion." This is also supported in research by Western European and U.S. historians.

In the political world, remembrance of the Holocaust played a significant role in the negotiations that led to the EU's enlargement to 10 new members on May 1, 2004. Among the admission criteria connected to respect for democratic values, acknowledgement of the Holocaust was an implicit criterion for entry into the club, a kind of "Copenhagen remembrance criterion." This duty of remembrance was a political and moral requirement of the West, expressed many times by the European Parliament in the form of resolutions. In 1995, the European Parliament requested that a European Day be established to commemorate

(1) See "Die amerikanische TV-Serie 'Holocaust' – Rückblicke auf eine betroffene Nation: Beiträge und Materialen," *Historische Sozialforschung* 30(2005): 114.

(2) Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1999).

(3) Dan Diner, *Das Jahrhundert verstehen: Eine universalhistorische Deutung* (Munich: Luchterhand Literaturverlag, 1999).

(4) Jürgen Habermas, "Geschichtsbewußtsein und posttraditionale Identität: Die Westorientierung der Bundesrepublik," in *Eine Art Schadensabwicklung: Kleine politische Schriften* vol. 6 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1987), 161-79.

(5) Jacques Sémelin, *Purifier et détruire Usages politiques des massacres et génocides* (Paris: Seuil, 2005).

(6) Jean-Michel Chaumont, *La concurrence des victimes: Génocide, identité, reconnaissance* (Paris: La Découverte, 1997).

(7) Henry Rousso, *La hantise du passé: Entretien avec Philippe Petit* (Paris: Textuel, 1998).

(8) For a comparative analysis of the Volckler and Bergier Commissions in Switzerland and the Mattéoli Comission in France, see *Historians as Political Trouble-Shooters: Officially Commissioned Surveys of Holocaust Legacies in France and Switzerland*, The Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies, *Working Paper* 80 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2003).

(9) Peter Carrier, *Holocaust Monuments and National Memory Cultures in France and Germany since 1989* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2005).

(10) Among others, see Steven Spielberg, *Schindler's List* (1993); Roberto Benigni, *La vita è bella* (1997); Radu Mihaileanu, *Train de vie* (1999); Peter Kassovitz, *Jakob the Liar* (1999). On the relationship between cinema and the Holocaust, see Toby Haggith and Joanna Newman (eds.), *The Holocaust and the Moving Image* (New York: Wallflower Press, 2005).

(11) Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, *Erinnerung im globalen Zeitalter: Der Holocaust*. (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 2001).

the Holocaust in all present and future member States.[1] In 1998, it called on the European Commission and the European Council "out of respect for the memory of millions of victims and the most elementary human rights, to bring every pressure to bear on the governments concerned to ensure that . . . assets [plundered from Jews during World War II] are disclosed and returned to their original owners or those now entitled to them."[2] Between 1998 and 2000, some member countries of the EU (namely the United Kingdom and Sweden) played a key role in the implementation of a structure for international cooperation on education about the Holocaust. Of the 16 countries that supported this initiative, alongside the United States and the countries of Western Europe were four East European countries, all of which were candidates for entry into the EU: Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Lithuania.[3]

In academia, the position is supported especially by Anglo-American historians, including British historian Robert Conquest and U.S. historian Charles S. Maier. In his book *Reflections on a Ravaged Century*,[4] Conquest admits that despite his unreserved condemnation of communist atrocities, his feeling was that the Holocaust was worse than Stalin's crimes.[5] According to him, the black book of Nazism remains blacker than that of communism, although he recognized the extraordinary extent of communist crimes, including political famines, ethnic cleansing, legal murders, and the gulags. In a paper published in the journal *Le Débat* in 2002, Maier borrowed a metaphor from nuclear physics, linking the memory of Nazi crimes (or "hot memory") to "historical plutonium contaminating the landscape over centuries with its destructive radiation."[6] Meanwhile, he associated tritium (an isotope that dissolves relatively quickly) with the memory of communism (or "cold memory"). He explained this difference in "radioactive memory" by (among other reasons) the fact that the remembrance community of victims of Nazism included the whole of Europe whereas the USSR only subjected Eastern Europe to its terror and domination. He also recalled that the Holocaust was not just a simple process of ethnic cleansing or organized famine, as in Ukraine. Finally, it should be added that Western visual culture is based on images of Nazi camps and not on those of Soviet labor camps (which are very rare).[7]

(1) European Parliament Resolution on a day for commemorating the Holocaust. *Official Journal of the European Communities* C 166, July 3, 1995. During the International Forum on the Holocaust held in Stockholm in January 2000, Member States of the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education decided to make January 27 (the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz) "Holocaust Remembrance Day." This has been celebrated throughout Europe since 2003.

(2) European Parliament Resolution on the restitution of the possessions of Holocaust victims. *Official Journal of the European Communities* C 292, September 21, 1998.

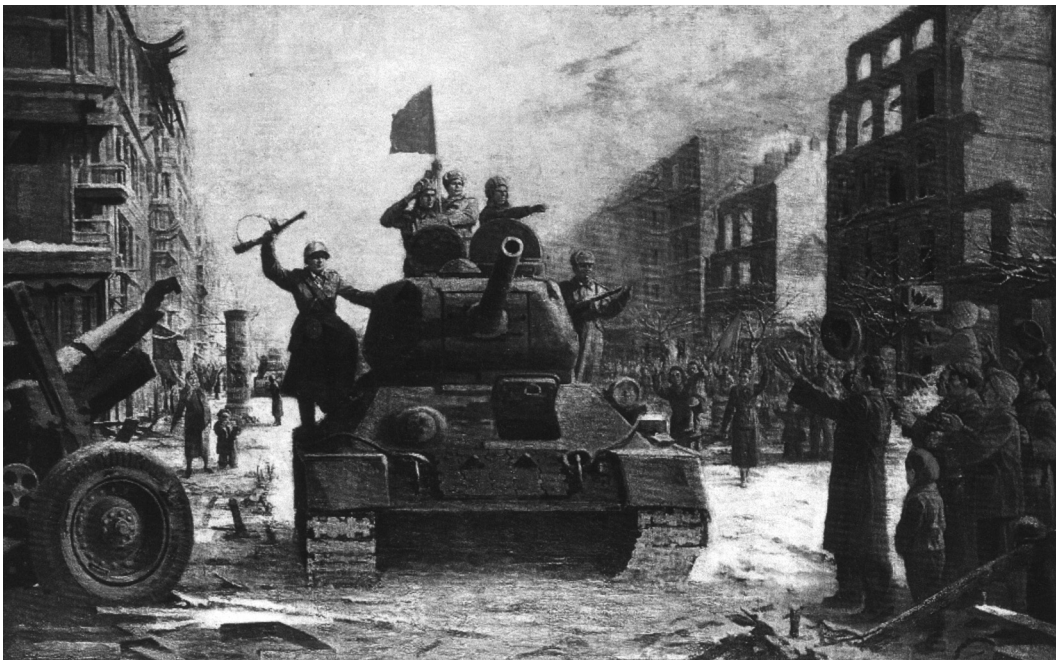
(3) Henry Rousso, "Das Dilemma eines europaïschen Gedächtnisses." *Zeithistorische Forschungen. Studies in Contemporary History* 3 (2004). Accessd from hhttp:/ www.zeithistorische-forschungen.de/portal/alias__zeithistorische-forschungen/ lang__de/tabID__40208268/Default.aspx

(4) Robert Conquest, *Reflections on a Ravaged Century* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999). Translated as *Le Féroce 20e siècle* (Paris: Éditions des Syrtes, 2001).

(5) *Ibid.*, 12.

(6) Charles S. Maier, "Heißes und Kaltes Gedächtnis: Über die politische Halbwertszeit von Nazismus und Kommunismus." *Transit: Europäische Revue* 22(2002): 153-65. Translated into French as "Mémoire chaude, mémoire froide: Mémoire du fascisme, mémoire du communisme." *Le Débat* 122 (2002): 110.

(7) Anne Applebaum, *Goulag: Une histoire* (Paris: Grasset, 2005).



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1. Sándor Ék, *La Libération de Budapest*, 1952 (Hadtörténeti intézet és Múzeum, Budapest).
This painting represents the T-34 tank, symbol of the Soviet victory, crossing Budapest under the acclamations of the people. This obviously did not occur.

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2. Deportation of Latvians, June, 14th 1941.

Whether political or academic, this Western position is a problem to the extent that it does not take account of the memory culture of East European countries, especially those that are candidates for entry into the EU. From the perspective of enlargement, recognition of this vital memorial category has sometimes been ill received by people who have seen it as a sign of Western cultural imperialism. This recognition, they argue, tends to obscure the collective memory of post-Socialist European countries, which lived under communism for more than 40 years. In fact, the current hierarchy of memories in Western Europe is the expression of a specifically Western perspective. At a time when the West is asking these countries to remember the Holocaust, they are focused primarily on highlighting their own role as victims and distancing themselves from official Soviet memory.

A Return to National Historical Memory in the East

In Eastern Europe, return to national sovereignty has come with a desire to break with the official historical memory imposed by the USSR for more than 40 years, with the "Great Patriotic War," the "international struggle against Fascism," and May 9, 1945 represented and celebrated as the day of "Liberation by the Red Army." This memory culture, which has been promoted by cultural media (monuments, posters, postage stamps, paintings, schoolbook illustrations, films, etc.) and political speeches and reified each year in ritual commemorations formed the basis of a belief in a new society founded on "anti-fascist resistance" and the "liberating" role of the Soviets (Document 1).[1]

Return to independence by countries of the former Soviet bloc in the early 1990s was everywhere accompanied by a general reaction that led to nationalizing history and memory at a time when many countries in Western Europe were starting to deconstruct their own national history. After 1989, the post-socialist States of Central and Eastern Europe implemented a process of "ideological decolonization."[2] The validation of national suffering was considered a form of justice and of the liberation of collective memory, which had been stifled under Soviet rule. A specific example will make clear the inverted hierarchy of memories of the Gulag and the Holocaust in these countries.

In the Baltic States, the image of the cattle car is always associated with mass deportations to Siberia under Stalin,[3] whereas in Western Europe, it is the symbol of the deportation of Jews (Document 2). The Deportation Monument unveiled in June 2001 in Riga, Latvia, was in fact an original car of the period. In Hungary, official memory, as used by the national conservative right, which has been in power in the first half of the 1990s, focused on 1956 and the "Hungarian Stalingrad," i.e., the crushing of the Second Hungarian Army by the Red Army on the River Don in January 1943, which was compared to defeat by the Turks at the Battle of Mohács in 1526. The memory of that earlier battle took on a religious dimension with the building of a chapel to the memory of the Danube catastrophe, which was opened by the Hungarian President in 1993. At the same time, the government intentionally forgot to mention that Hungary was an ally of Nazi Germany during World War II.

(1) *Vingtième Siècle: Revue d'Histoire* is grateful to József Lugosi of Hadtörténeti Intézet és Múzeum for agreeing to the free publication of this reproduction.

(2) Pierre Nor, "Gedächtniskonjunktur." *Transit: Europäische Revue* 22(2002): 14.

(3) Jean-Jacques Marie, *Les peuples déportés de l'Union Soviétique* (Brussels: Complexe, 1995). On the night of June 13-14, 1940, about 15,000 Latvian citizens (or 1% of the population), of which 2,400 were children aged under 10, were arrested and deported to Siberia. For the most part, these were families belonging to the Latvian political, economic, and cultural elite. A second wave of deportation took place in 1949, both to break armed Latvian resistance and to eliminate peasants who were resisting collectivization. In March 1949, about 43,000 people (or 2.5% of the total population), mainly farmers, were deported to Siberia. After 1945, Latvia had lost one-third of its pre-war population through death in the war, deportation, or exile, compared to 17.5% in Estonia.

Whereas Western Europe has been trying since the beginning of the 1990s to impose official remembrance of the Holocaust without recognizing the crimes of the communist regimes of Eastern Europe, the post-socialist States of the former Soviet bloc have created a new post-dictatorship memory culture. This was based on validating their victimhood under Soviet occupation while keeping hidden or even denying any responsibility in the extermination of Jews during World War II. This silence only prolonged the official one that had been decreed by the Soviet Big Brother between 1945 and 1989. Using specific examples, I will now show how the "Copenhagen remembrance criterion" was effectively implemented and received in various East European countries. This will enable the presentation of a differentiated picture of the importance of Holocaust remembrance in these countries.

Holocaust Remembrance in Post-Socialist Europe

Undeniably, the EU, through pressure and incentives, has contributed to speeding up a phase of anamnesis, i.e., a return of memory. In order to analyze how the memory of the Holocaust has been integrated into Eastern Europe since 1989,[1] indicators linked to symbolic, museum, and cultural policies in these countries will be used. However, beyond official remembrance policy, it is necessary to grasp how this anamnesis phase was received in civil society.

Official Memorial Policies

Under pressure from the EU and the United States, some governments have made official apologies to their Jewish communities, created compensation funds, and inscribed Holocaust remembrance into their national calendar. Latvia has been a model in this. At the beginning of the 1990s, July 4 was established as an official day of commemoration, marking the anniversary of the burning of the Riga synagogue in 1941. By the end of the 1990s, it was relatively easy for most other countries to provide a place for the Holocaust in their national calendar. However, in Slovakia, this had to wait until 2002 and the commitment of President Rudolf Schuster, when September 9 was dedicated to the victims of the Holocaust and of racially motivated violence. This was ratified by a large majority of legislators (85 out of 87 present). In Hungary, the right-wing government of Victor Orbán defended the position that the suffering of Hungarians under communism was the same or greater than that of the Jews during World War II. The result was the creation of two commemorative days: the first, February 25, was established in 1999 and dedicated to the memory of the victims of Communism, while the second, which was introduced in 2000, is a Holocaust day of commemoration, celebrated on April 16. This "remembrance competition" reflects Hungary's own remembrance hierarchy. This was also the case in Romania, where President Ion Iliescu was still insisting in 2002 that no extermination of Jews had occurred in Romania, just as he downgraded Marshal Antonescu's actions.[2] Finally, under international pressure, President Iliescu established an independent commission chaired by Elie Wiesel, which concluded that Romania did

(1) The case of the former Yugoslavia, which was marked by civil wars and the Bosnian genocide, is not included in this analysis. In this case, memories of the Holocaust and the Gulag have been completely overshadowed by memories of the massacres carried out by Serbs and Croats from the 1940s to the 1990s.

(2) Ion Victor Antonescu (1882-1946) was a Romanian soldier and politician. He was Prime Minister and *Conducător* (dictator) of Romania between 1940 and 1944. During World War II, he chose alliance with Hitler. He was arrested when Romania, and under threat from the Red Army, went over to the Allies. He was finally judged responsible by a people's tribunal for the death of more than 300,000 Jews and executed in April 1946.

indeed share in the responsibility for planning and deporting 280,000 to 380,000 Romanian and Ukrainian Jews. These conclusions led the Romanian government to organize, on October 9, 2004, a day of commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust. At that time, President Iliescu officially apologized on behalf of the Romanian State.

Official apologies were sometimes made under pressure from academic researchers and civil society, as in the case of Poland. There, despite the inauguration and commemoration of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising in 1948 (a way for Communist authorities to ignore the memory of the Home Army uprising that began on August 1, 1944), the memory of the Holocaust was obscured, even after 1989. For the majority of Poles until the early 2000s, Auschwitz was first and foremost a place of Polish martyrdom during World War II. Katyn was also a highly sensitive memorial site in Polish collective memory, and it has been in the forefront of remembrance since 1990. In May 2000, the Polish-American sociologist Jan T. Gross published a study of the massacre of Jews in Jedwabne in July 1941,[1] which Poles committed without direct German intervention. With his investigation, which highlighted Poles as executioners rather than victims, Gross started a resounding and passionate debate in Poland.[2] For the first time, the country truly confronted this infamous part of its past, and Jedwabne became a significant milestone in official national memory, as witnessed by the official apology made by President Kwaśniewski in 2001 on the 60th anniversary of the tragedy. The controversy that surrounded Gross' book showed how difficult it was for Polish society to truly admit that others had experienced similar suffering. In fact, Poland has happily made use of the martyr argument to present itself as a victim of history.[3]

Beyond these formal methods, the degree of integration of the Holocaust in official memory can be measured by the existence of museums dealing with the question of the extermination of Jews. In Eastern Europe, the museum landscape is clearly dominated by museums and memorials to crimes committed by Communist regimes and the USSR (mass deportations, summary executions, torture, etc.)[4] In the Baltic States, there is currently no museum dedicated to the memory of the Holocaust. Latvia and Estonia have a Museum of the Occupation, which only deals with the suffering of the indigenous population under Soviet and Nazi rule.[5] In Riga, the Museum of the Occupation, which was opened in 1993, is in a building that housed the Museum of the Red Latvian Riflemen until 1990.[6] The exhibit in the first room is an apt illustration the remarks by Sandra Kalniete mentioned above. Visitors come upon portraits of Stalin and Hitler, which is a striking summary of Latvia's position, which equates Nazi and Soviet dictatorships. As in its Baltic neighbors, the space in Lithuania's Museum to the Victims of Genocide (*Genocido aukų muziejus*) deals for the most part with Lithuanian suffering under Soviet occupation. Here, the term

(1) Jan T. Gross, *Neighbors: The Destruction of the Jewish Community in Jedwabne, Poland* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001).

(2) Ruth Henning, *Die Jedwabne Debatte in polnischen Zeitungen und Zeitschriften* (Potsdam: Deutsch-Polnische Gesellschaft Brandenburg, 2001). See also Anthony Polonsky and Johanna B. Michilic (eds.), *The Neighbors Respond: The Controversy over the Jedwabne Massacre in Poland* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

(3) Wodzimierz Borodziej, "Abschied von der Martyrologie in Polen?" in *Zeitgeschichte als Streitgeschichte: Grosse Kontroversen seit 1945*, ed. Martin Sabrow, Ralph Jessen, and Klaus Grosse Kracht (Munich: Beck, 2003), 288-305.

(4) Volkhard Knippe and Ulrich Mählert (eds.), *Der Kommunismus im Museum: Formen der Auseinandersetzung in Deutschland und in Ostmitteleuropa* (Köln: Böhlau, 2005).

(5) Céline Bayou, "Le Musée letton des occupations: Écrire l'histoire pour construire l'avenir." *Le Courrier des Pays de l'Est* 1052(2005): 75-8.

(6) These military units were celebrated during the Soviet era for having fought beside the Bolsheviks in the Civil War. This was a way of showing the close link that had united Latvia and the USSR since 1917.

"genocide" in does not in any way refer to the extermination of Jews. Apart from Hungary, no other country has marked the memory of the Holocaust in a museum.

The creation of a Hungarian museum, now known as the Holocaust Memorial Center, was decided by the Orbán government and was above all intended to compensate for the highly biased "House of Terror" (*Terror háza)*, which opened in February 2002 in Budapest and reflected the desire of the Hungarian government of the time to promote the memory of Soviet terror at the expense of the Holocaust. Located on Andrássy Avenue, the most prestigious street in Budapest (the "Hungarian Champs-Élysées") in a building that housed first the Gestapo, then the pro-Nazi Arrow Cross party, and finally the Hungarian secret police until 1956, the museum, which was curated by Maria Schmidt, showed for the most part Arrow Cross and Communist violence, with the Holocaust taking up only two of the museum's 25 rooms. The central exhibit in the permanent display was a T63 Soviet tank, a reminder that Hungary was a victim of the USSR. The museum's logo – an arrow cross and a red star – underscored how Nazism and Communism were equated, which meant that stress should be laid on the suffering of the Hungarian people, initially ruled by a "handful of collaborators," and later by a foreign power.

As a token to the Jewish community (the largest in Eastern Europe, with about 100,000 members) and a show of its good intentions, Victor Orbán's government decided to create a museum to commemorate the Holocaust. With Hungary under a Socialist government, the Holocaust Memorial Center was opened on April 15, 2004 by Israeli President Katsav. It was the first museum of its kind in Eastern Europe. During the ceremony, the Socialist Prime Minister Peter Medgyessy admitted to the "heinous crimes committed by the Hungarian people against the Hungarian people."[1] With this inauguration and speech, the Socialist government of Hungary wanted to show that the country was confronting its past by conforming to Western imperatives for remembrance. The names of about 60,000 Hungarian victims of the Holocaust are carved on an inner wall, which is sheltered by an arcade, with exhibit rooms on the lower ground floor. However, before the museum's inauguration, there was controversy in the press and among public opinion. Criticism centered mainly on the choice of site, a renovated nineteenth century synagogue located in a narrow side street well away from the city center and with no parking for visitors. Moreover, the choice of a synagogue was problematic because the Holocaust could not be reduced to Judaism but was in fact an event that should include all of Hungarian society. Those were the reasons for Imre Kertész's refusal to take part in the museum's inauguration. According to him, its location symbolized the place of the Holocaust in Hungarian collective memory. The case of Hungary therefore shows how museum spaces constitute a political instrument in the hands of political forces, which transform themselves into "memory entrepreneurs," with Fidesz Party conservatives cleverly putting aside the memory of Jewish victims to set themselves apart from the anti-Semitic far right while trying to capture its voters.

However, the study of remembrance should not limit itself to an analysis of formal memorials established since the early 1990s in various East European countries under the initiative of outside "memory entrepreneurs" such as the EU or the United States. Memory is first and foremost a social fact. It is therefore important to evaluate the place of the Holocaust in the collective memory of East European civil societies.

(1) Quoted in Richard Chaim-Schneider, "Das Holocaust-Museum von Budapest." *Die Zeit*, June 3, 2004.

The Holocaust as the Memory Culture of Civil Societies

Discussions on the sensitive question of collaboration in the extermination of Jews provide a good indicator of the speed of integration of the Holocaust into the memory culture in civil society. In general, controversy centers on the appropriate attitude toward the indigenous auxiliary units that fought beside the Wehrmacht in SS divisions. In this respect, the Baltic States present a particularly interesting case. Over the decades of Soviet occupation, survivors of Latvian and Estonian SS foreign legions were officially seen as "fascist collaborators." Today, they are viewed favorably by the majority of their compatriots, who regard them primarily as fighters who courageously resisted the Soviet invaders. This positive image, which is promoted by the survivors themselves in publications and pamphlets, is reinforced by current discourse recalling that in 1945, the Western Allies did not consider members of these legions as war criminals. In Latvia, March 16 is the date of annual commemoration of legionnaires who died in combat. Although government representatives participated in this event until 1998, international pressure forced them to withdraw, and the commemoration lost its status as a national holiday and became private. Today, the legion remains shrouded in silence. In Latvia, it remains taboo to mention the fact that the legion had many trainers and officers from the Latvian Auxiliary Police, especially the famous Arajs Kommando, which was responsible for the massacre of 26,000 Jews. In a multi-ethnic society with a large Russian-speaking minority,[1] Latvia is slowly beginning to adopt current Western European standards, even though prohibitions surrounding the SS Legion remain powerful. Although the political will to confront the past is one of the pillars of a democratic constitutional state, it is not in harmony with civil society's memory culture.

The problem is the same in Estonia.[2] In 2003, there was a strong reaction to the erection in Pärnu cemetery of a monument commemorating those who fought for the SS Legion in World War II, to be funded jointly by the municipality and the Estonian government. Under pressure from the EU, no member of the government attended the inauguration ceremony. The speeches made at the time stressed the fact that the monument was intended to honor the memory of all those who fought for Estonia, whatever their uniform. A preliminary version of this memorial had been briefly erected in the summer of 2002 before being withdrawn because it represented an Estonian soldier in a German army uniform. In Hungary, the question of collaboration was rapidly dealt with by placing the entire responsibility on the minority Arrow Cross party. Beyond official speeches and controversy over the question of shared responsibility for the extermination of Jews, integration of the Holocaust in the collective memory of civil society in post-Socialist countries remains very limited. Overall, recognition of responsibility in the extermination of Jews does not go hand in hand with remembrance efforts in these societies, which constitutes clear evidence that memory cannot easily be dictated to.

Other than official "memory entrepreneurs" and a handful of historians, only Jewish intellectuals (whether they claim to be or not) discuss Holocaust remembrance in the public arena. The writer Imre Kertész is one such example, who also works in film, having written the screenplay from his book *Fateless*.[3] Yet even in Hungary, national Jewish communities

(1) Emmanuel Droit, "Lettonie: Les russophones entre intégration et repli identitaire." *Le Courrier des Pays de l'Est* 1052(2005): 10-8.

(2) Ruth Bettina Birn, *Die Sicherheitspolizei in Estland 1941-1944: Eine Studie zur Kollaboration im Osten* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 2006).

(3) Gábor Eröss, "Représenter l'irreprésentable? Être sans destin et le cinéma hongrois face à l'Holocauste," *Positif* 542(2006): 86-9.

have no role as catalysts of change. Despite the commitment of intellectuals and the political will to make changes to the content of schoolbooks (with financial support from the EU), results remain extremely modest. In fact, Imre Kertész expressed his disappointment in his 2002 philosophical work, *A Language in Exile*, in which he wrote that: "In Hungary, the Holocaust is not seen as a trauma of civilization at all; one could say that the Holocaust does not exist in the historical or moral conscience of this country."[1] In effect, Hungarians are more in a repression phase than in the German collective remorse phase. Yet they are not alone. The journalist Tomas Sniegon summarized the position of his Czech compatriots even more succinctly when he commented that: "Their Holocaust is not our Holocaust."[2]

Even though officially, Poland, Hungary, Romania, and the Baltic States are slowly beginning to abandon their sense of victimhood and acknowledge their share of responsibility in the Holocaust, efforts at the political level face indifference from large segments of civil society, even hostility toward an activity seen as imposed from outside by the EU. When in 1995, Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas made his country's official apology before the Knesset for the participation of many of his compatriots in the Final Solution, this powerful symbolic political act caused massive uproar in his country.

Since 1990, there has been a trend to rehabilitate former "collaborators," and this has been extremely popular in East European countries. This has been the work of political parties and newspapers, and it has been favorably received by the majority of the population. In Romania, despite a highly negative image disseminated over decades by the post-war Communist regime, the figure of Marshal Antonescu became widely celebrated, to the point where in the 1990s the political authorities tried to rehabilitate him. In 1991, the Romanian Parliament observed a minute's silence to commemorate the 45th anniversary of his execution. In the middle of the 1990s, a press campaign led by the popular newspaper *Ziua* was aimed at naming one of Bucharest's main boulevards after him.[3] In Hungary, the phenomenon involved László Bárdossy, the former Hungarian Prime Minister who was hanged in 1946 for taking his country into the Axis. Yet this counter-remembrance movement was even more organized in Slovakia, where countless attempts have been made to rehabilitate Monsignor Tiso.[4] The campaign has played on many levels. At the national level, it was spearheaded by the National Slovak Party (*Slovenská národná strana* – SNS), in power since the last election in June 2006. At the local level, municipalities such as Zilina (in 2002) decided to erect a commemorative plaque in memory of Tiso. It was only under political pressure from higher up that the Zilina municipal authorities canceled the project.

Only Bulgaria stands out as having a real Holocaust memory culture, which is spread widely throughout civil society.[5] It is one of the rare countries, along with (then) Czechoslovakia, where the Holocaust was dealt

(1) Imre Kertész, *A szamüzött nyelv* [A Language in Exile] (Budapest: Magvetö Könyvkiado, 2001).

(2) Tomas Sniegon, "Their Genocide or Ours? The Holocaust as a Litmus Test of Czech and Slovak Identities." in *Echoes of the Holocaust: Historical Cultures in Contemporary Europe*, ed. Klas-Göran Karlsson and Ulf Zander (Stockholm: Nordic Academic Press, 2003), 177-200.

(3) "Antonescu was not Hitler, Mussolini, or Horthy. He did not kill Jews, he saved Jews." *Ziua*, August 12, 1995.

(4) Jozef Tiso (1887-1947) was Archbishop of Bratislava. He was also one of the leaders of the Slovak Populist Party led by Monsignor Andrej Hlinka, who died in 1938. On March 10, 1939, Tiso declared Slovakian independence and installed a dictatorship controlled by Nazi Germany. He was arrested in 1945 and executed in Bratislava on April 18, 1947.

(5) Emmy Barouth (ed.), *History and Memory: Bulgaria Facing the Holocaust* (Sofia: Open Society Foundation, 2003); See also Tzvetan Todorov, "Bulgarien: Meilensteine einer kontroversen Selbstfindung." in *Mythen der Nationen 1945: Arena der Erinnerungen*, ed. Monika Flacke (Berlin: Deutsches Historisches Museum, 2004), 95-122.

with in society even before 1989. During the Communist era, the authorities naturally promoted the Communist Party and, more generally, the "Bulgarian people." Since the fall of the Iron Curtain, however, the Holocaust has truly been a remembrance issue of greater importance that the memorial treatment of Communist crimes because it is at the center of a real "competition of saviors" between national conservatives and neo-communists. In fact, in Bulgaria, the question of culpability is entirely set aside in favor of another kind of debate. Bulgarians are very proud of emphasizing their role in "saving (their) Jews," which was recognized by the Israeli State in 1996 with the inauguration of a "Bulgarian Park" in Tel Aviv. However, even this event is the center of a remembrance battle waged by two intervening newspapers. On one side is *Duma*, a neo-communist newspaper that in the pre-1989 tradition denounced King Boris III as a "war criminal" and highlighted the role of the "people" and "anti-fascist resistance fighters" in saving 48,000 Bulgarian Jews. The neo-communists also brought up the deportation of more than 10,000 Jews in Thrace and Macedonia, which were annexed by Bulgaria during World War II. In the opposite camp, conservatives underscored in the *Demokratsiya* newspaper the monarch's role as savior, ignoring anti-Semitic legislation of December 1940 that curtailed the civil rights of Jews, his support for Hitler, and his decision to deport the "Bulgarian Jews" of Macedonia in the spring of 1943. Conservatives also denounced the myth of the "popular anti-fascist resistance" and the exaggeration of the role of the Communist leader Todor Zhivkov in saving Jews. This argument complicated the problem of the point of view schoolbooks should adopt. In response, the 1993 history textbook developed a consensual perspective, including all actors and underscoring the humanity of the Bulgarian people.[1] This political battle around the memory of the Holocaust eclipsed the settling of scores over the Communist past, which was mostly resolved after the destruction of the Dimitrov Mausoleum in 1999.

Despite greater symbolic political action and expressions of good will, denial flourishes in most traditionally anti-Semitic countries in Eastern Europe, to such an extent that it can be seen as a "democratization of denial." Moreover, this is no longer the monopoly of parties of the far right. Even in Bulgaria, the writings of writers such as Robert Faurisson, Jürgen Graf, and Richard Hardwood are circulating. Thus, Graf's book, in which he denies the occurrence of the Final Solution, describes how Stalin was worse than Hitler and how the "genocide" is in fact Zionist propaganda, is already in its second edition. Unlike Hungary and Poland, Bulgaria had until then been spared both anti-Semitism (including during the inter-war period) and denial. The sociologist Liliana Deyanova explains the current emergence of anti-Semitism in Bulgaria by setting it within the developing framework of general "anti" discourse: anti-modern, anti-European, etc. Moreover, she highlights the socioeconomic difficulties linked to the transition to entry into the EU.[2]

Despite active official policy, the memory of the Holocaust has not yet found its place in the memory culture of people in the Central and East European countries that have joined the EU. Meanwhile, on the borders of the Union, countries such as Russia and Belarus still largely ignore the memory of the Holocaust.

In Moscow's Orbit: The Forgotten Holocaust

A characteristic of the former Soviet republics still effectively in Moscow's orbit is the

(1) Todorov, "Bulgarien," 112.

(2) Liliana Deyanova, "Postcommunist negationism," In Barouth, *History and Memory*, 128-42.

near-absence of discourse about the Holocaust.[1] In Russia, the authoritarian political framework promotes a monopoly of expression for an official memory culture committed to validating the former USSR and to an intentional policy of ignoring the memory of both the Holocaust and the Gulag. In Russia, since its defeat in the Cold War, victory over Nazi Germany is the only form of identification for the Russian nation, as are the validation of the memory of the battle of Stalingrad or renewal of the cult of Stalin. The Russification of World War II Soviet memory culture provides Russia, a country still scarred by its loss of geopolitical influence, with symbolic compensation, enabling it to maintain the illusion of being a "great power."[2] The German sociologist Isabelle de Keghel sees in this the expression of "mixed Russo-Soviet identity."[3] However, some civil society initiatives do occur, such as the construction in Moscow of a memorial dedicated to the victims of the Gulag (the Butovsky Polygon).

In Belarus, the dominant paradigm is that of the "Great Patriotic War" coupled with that of the "Partisan War." When the USSR was dissolved, executions carried out by the NKVD under Stalin between 1937 and 1941 and uncovered in 1988 by an archeologist in Kuropaty (near Minsk) became a focus of debate. However, no monument to the memory of the 200,000 victims was ever built, as a result of President Alexander Lukashenko's accession to power in 1994.[4] However, the United States did finance the erection of a granite monument, which has been vandalized three times since 1994. The Belarus President, who has never mentioned Kuropaty in his speeches, tried to obliterate this remembrance site by building a highway there in 2002. The project met with opposition led by young members of the Belarusian Popular Front.[5] As for the Holocaust, it has never been discussed or debated in public, even after 1990. Today, despite Lukashenko's authoritarian regime, a citizens' movement is committed to including the "Belarus Auschwitz" of Trostinec in its heritage. Yet any emphasis on remembrance of Jewish victims is still considered offensive today for the majority of Belarus citizens because it inherently sidelines the suffering of non-Jewish victims. Moreover, when a mass grave was discovered near the former camp that housed victims of Stalin's purges, this was an embarrassment to the current government. The competing memory cultures concentrated around this camp have been the subject of a documentary by the Belarus filmmaker Kolas. However, the Belarus authorities refused to broadcast it in its entirety. The sedimentation of memories linked to Nazi and Soviet horrors is reminiscent of the German situation, in which the Sachsenhausen and Buchenwald concentration camps were used by Soviet occupation forces between 1945 and 1949 to intern or eliminate former Nazis but also liberal and social-democratic opponents to Soviet rule. Stifled at the time of the German Democratic Republic (DDR), the memory of these special camps (*Speziallager*) surfaced again in the early 1990s.[6]

(1) Zvi Gittelman, "History, Memory, and Politics: The Holocaust in the Soviet Union." *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 5(1990): 23-7; See also Lucjan Dobroszycki and Jeffrey Gurock (eds.), *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union* (New York: Armonk, 1993).

(2) Jutta Scherrer, "Sowjetunion/Russland: Siegesmythos versus Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung," in *Mythen der Nationen 1945: Arena der Erinnerungen* vol. 2, ed. Monika Flacke (Berlin: Deutsches Historisches Museum, 2004), 619-70.

(3) Isabelle de Keghel, "Die Staatssymbolik des neuen Russland im Wandel: Vom antisowjetischen Impetus zur russländisch-sowjetischen Mischidentität," in *Arbeitspapier an der Forschungsstelle Osteuropa* (Bremen University, 2003).

(4) Ondrej Soukup, "Massengräber in Kuropaty und offizielle Geschichtspolitik in Belarus: Geschichte im Dienste der Diktatur." Lecture given on January 11, 2006 at Chemnitz University of Technology.

(5) Barbara Oertel, "200,000 Tote unter Minsker Asphalt." *TAZ* 6608 (2001), 11.

(6) Peter Reif-Spirek and Bodo Ritscher (eds.), *Speziallager in der SBZ: Gedenkstätten mit "doppelter Vergangenheit"* (Berlin: Links, 1999).

3. Babi Yar Memorial

In Ukraine, despite the recent democratization process, remembrance remains highly polarized between competing cultures, reflecting the geographic division at the political level during the Orange Revolution of November-December 2004. Ukraine was one of World War II's main battlefields, and it has had its share of massacres and horrors, notably the mass executions of more than 30,000 Jews at Babi Yar on September 29 and 30, 1941. Ukraine's borders became definitive after World War II, with the annexation in the west of territories previously controlled by Poland and Romania. Yet, these Western Ukrainians were never included in the Russian Empire or the USSR. This has consequences today on the memory culture. Before independence in 1991, Ukraine propagated the official memory as decreed by Moscow, and Soviet-era schoolbooks never mentioned Babi Yar. In the 1990s, this glossy image was exploded. The Ukrainian case highlighted two sets of memories, reflecting an ideological gap between Red Army sympathizers and nationalistic Ukrainians who participated in the war against Nazi Germany. This disparity is expressed geographically. The eastern part of the country maintains its attachment to the "Great Patriotic War," whereas the western part speaks of a "German-Soviet war," in which Ukraine was undoubtedly involved but not as an actor, which is one way of avoiding responsibility for the Holocaust. This remembrance dichotomy can be successfully analyzed through the example of May 9.[1]

May 9 remains a national holiday in Ukraine. In the country's eastern and southern areas, residents passionately celebrate the Red Army's victory over Germany. In the western part, especially in the town of Lviv (formerly Lemberg), a new remembrance trend is developing to commemorate the Ukrainian nationalist resistance movement, the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA), which, under the leadership of Stepan Banderas, fought against the USSR and for Ukrainian independence. In October 2002, the western part of the country celebrated the UPA's 60th anniversary, and a bronze statue of Stepan Banderas was inaugurated for the occasion. The cities of Lviv and Rovno even wanted to establish February 23 as a Day of Remembrance in honor of homeland defense, which would have replaced the old Soviet Homeland Defense celebration. Yet the UPA collaborated with the Germans and was part of the first units to invade Soviet territory in June 1941 and to exterminate Jews.[2] Pro-Russian Ukrainian political circles compare this cult of Banderas to that of Hitler under the Third Reich. In their defense, the Western nationalists say, for example, that the UPA helped save the lives of many Jews by providing them with false papers.

Within the framework of this conflict between two memory cultures, there is little room for the Holocaust, even though the Ukrainian government recognized Babi Yar in 1991 as the "symbol of Jewish martyrdom" and erected a bronze monument on the site of the massacre, with inscriptions making explicit reference to the fate of these 33,000 Jews (Document 3). Although a monument was initially erected in 1976, it was located more than a kilometer away from the site of the massacre, and it made no mention of the martyrdom of the Jews. It was built in the Social Realist style, with 11 bronze figures. The inscription merely recalled "the massacre of hundreds of thousands of Kiev residents and prisoners of war." Later, the Ukrainian government established a Day of Remembrance on September 29.

(1) Jutta Scherrer, "Ukraine. Konkurrierende Erinnerungen," in *Mythen der Nationen 1945: Arena der Erinnerungen* ed. Monika Flacke (Berlin: Deutsches Historisches Museum, 2004), 719-36.

(2) John-Paul Himka, "Ukrainian Collaboration in the Extermination of the Jews during the Second World War: Sorting out of the Long-Term and Conjunctural Perspectives," in *The Fate of the European Jews 1939-1945*, ed. Jonathan Frankel (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 170-89.

In 1994, President Leonid Kuchma met exiled Ukrainian Jews in New York and promised to punish under the law war criminals who were still alive. However, this was not a priority. Moreover, topics such as the great famines of 1932-1933 and the Ukrainian Gulag, which were once the preserve of Nikita Khrushchev, were more widely discussed and debated.

The gradual and genuine recognition of the Holocaust can be observed in the official national memories of a number of East European countries. It is no surprise that this involves countries joining (or applying to join) the EU, which has strongly encouraged them to "westernize" their historical memory so that they can "be part of the club." However, this trend, which is often perceived as imposed from outside by the population of these countries – since their Jewish populations were almost entirely exterminated between 1942 and 1945 and not in a position to take responsibility for Holocaust remembrance – is not without controversy, clumsiness, debate, and conflict, often based on anti-Semitism and denial. Overall, the memory of the Holocaust remains less important than that of the Gulag, which for these people represents a lived – or reported – experience associated with Soviet rule. These current changes lead to a final investigation of the possible emergence of a common memory culture in Europe, a "just memory" (Ricoeur's *juste mémoire*) shared by the largest number.

Toward a Convergence of Memory Cultures?

On April 10, 2005, Spanish writer Jorge Semprun launched an appeal to have recognize the memory of Communist crimes in Western Europe recognized and to memory cultures shared as Europe irrevocably moves from an era of witnessing to an era of commemoration.[1] In his speech given in the Weimar National Theater on the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Buchenwald concentration camp (a speech that went relatively unnoticed by the European press), Semprun said that he hoped: "that for the next commemoration in 10 years' time, in 2015, the experience of the Gulag will have been integrated in our collective European memory. We hope that, next to the books of Primo Levi, Imre Kertész, and David Rousset, will also feature the Kolyma tales of Varlam Shalamov. That would mean that we were no longer paralyzed on one side and that Russia would have made a decisive step toward democracy."[2]

Unlike Sandra Kalniete's speech in Leipzig, putting the memory of Nazi and Soviet camps on the same footing in such a way did not give rise to protest because it called for the recognition of the Others and of remembrance of them. In fact, this appeal by Semprun conceals a call to empathy for the victims of other remembrance communities. On the eve of May 8, 2005, Salomon Korn admitted that different memories must be able to co-exist peacefully and that West and East European remembrance imperatives must not exclude each other. Korn also suggested conditions for the co-existence of these imperatives in a reunited Europe by stating that: "The ethical core of the imperative that has now become beyond question in Europe is to preserve the memory of the massacre of European Jews. For the same reason, the East European remembrance imperative is justified so long as this requirement does not turn against the West European consensus."[3]

Every European citizen should remember Auschwitz and Kolyma. According to Marek Edelman, forgetting that the Holocaust was

(1) Annette Wieviorka, "1992: Réflexions sur une commémoration." *Annales ESC* 3(1993): 703-14.

(2) Jorge Semprun, "Niemand wird mehr sagen können: 'Ja, so war es'." *Die Zeit* 16, April 14, 2005, 52.

(3) Salomon Korn, "Die Zukunft der Erinnerung in Europa." *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, June 2, 2005, 8.

a precondition for the building of a European identity would be a "posthumous victory for Hitler."[1] Would not forgetting the Gulag in Europe's collective memory be as reprehensible and represent in some way a posthumous victory for Stalin? The fall of the Iron Curtain speeded up the process of European construction. But it also posed the question of recognizing different memory cultures. Regrettably, Western empathy is often limited to mere intellectual recognition, without authentic sharing. Integrating the memory of the Gulag into a common European memory must be supported by increased cultural exchanges and the spread of knowledge about these countries and their history through schools and universities and the media. At the political level, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe recently adopted by a large majority a resolution condemning the "crimes of Soviet regimes." This symbolic act follows a call made in early 2005 by Baltic legislators to Franco Frattini, the European Commissioner for Justice, requesting that the EU place the banning of Nazi signs and Communist signs on an equal footing. The document was drafted by Göran Lindblad, a Swedish legislator from the European People's Party, and approved on January 25, 2006. Prior to that move, representatives of countries joining the EU had denounced the fact that millions of victims of Soviet dictatorship were "second-class victims."[2] Yet there were also protests against this resolution from a number of Communist parties, including the French Communist Party (PC). It is clear that in countries such as France, where communism is not associated with a regime of dictatorship or terror, some among the intellectual elite find it difficult to accept the memory culture of East Europeans. Without wishing to deny the specifics of Nazi genocidal policy and despite a lack of rigor in the document mentioned above, this condemnation of the crimes of Communist regimes is a sign that the memory of this violence is being recognized and denounced on an equal footing with Nazi violence by a Western institution based in Strasbourg.

In conclusion, this paper has made it possible to highlight the demarcation line that divides Western Europe and post-Socialist Europe as regards remembrance. The memory culture of West Europeans does not match that of East Europeans. In Western Europe, the extermination of Jews constitutes the most abominable crime on the twentieth century's scale of horrors, with Auschwitz raised to the level of absolute evil. In these countries, the Holocaust represents the benchmark for inhumanity, to which modern conscience refers each time it is afraid of straying. By contrast, the new East European members of the EU promote the painful memory of Soviet occupation, which is incarnated by the Gulag, their own yardstick. The West regards the Holocaust as Europe's core memory, whereas East Europeans, who believe that Westerners devalue the role of Communism, criticize this perspective. In return, Westerners denounce East European anti-Semitism because questioning the uniqueness of Nazi terror is thought to downplay the Holocaust. This dialogue of the deaf is an enduring reality. In Eastern Europe, the Holocaust is still considered as one mass massacre among others, and one that was imposed from outside. Remembrance of it is still largely ignored in former Soviet republics. The reunification of the European continent sanctioned by the enlargement of May 1, 2004 has not come with a reunification of memories.

(1) Carlo Ginzburg, "Beweis, Gedächtnis, Vergessen." *Werkstattgeschichte* 30(2002): 50-60.

(2) Furthermore, in June 2006, the German Government made a gesture toward the victims of the despotism of the East German dictatorship by granting about 70,000 people a pension. Depending on the time spent in prison, the pension was between €150 and €500 per month.

Memory works to a different rhythm, and change will probably require several generations. Transnational discussion and exchanges facilitate the intellectual opening-out of these countries and leads them to confront their own taboos and the sensitive question of their share in the responsibility for the Holocaust. Confronting this painful history is an important step for young democracies on the path to stability since their entry into the EU. Yet Western democracies must also recognize the memory of the Gulag.

The political and moral requirement we impose on these countries can make us forget that France took some time before it confronted Vichy[1] and the Algerian war. There is therefore a long way to go before we can speak of a common, European memory culture in which each group of victims finds its place. Despite better treatment of Holocaust remembrance in many Eastern countries, there is still great resistance as well as reluctance. Some countries still do not recognize – or recognize only with difficulty – certain categories of victims, such as Gypsies in Slovakia and Romania. Since for each group, to remember is to exist and to forget is to disappear, this competition among victims leads to selection (as seen in the disappearance of the tragic memory of Soviet prisoners of war during World War), a fragmentation of memory, and the creation of opposing memory cultures, undermining the consensualization process hoped for by Jorge Semprun.

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Abstract

— This article sheds light on the "Iron Curtain" that divides collective memory in Western Europe from that in post-Communist Europe. In Western Europe, the extermination of the Jews during World War 2 represents the most abominable crime of the twentieth-century horrors, to such an extent that since the end of the 1970s Auschwitz has become a symbol of absolute evil. However, in the former Soviet countries, and especially those who are currently EU candidate members, the emphasis is placed above all on the very painful memory of Soviet occupation. Eastern Europeans are critical of the weight given to the memory of the Shoah, as they believe that Western Europeans minimize the crimes of Communism in relation to the extermination of the Jews. In return, Western Europeans denounce Eastern European anti-Semitism. Under pressure from the European Union, many Eastern European countries have begun a phase of anamnesis. However, in spite of official policy, collective memory of the Shoah in civil society in these countries is still limited. Within the former Communist bloc, the former Soviet republics that remain close to Russia continue to celebrate the "Great Patriotic War," masking attempts to cultivate collective memory of the Shoah. This dialogue of the deaf between Western and Eastern Europe is an enduring reality. It is for this reason that intellectuals like Jorge Semprun are calling for the establishment of a mutual recognition of memories of both the Shoah and the Gulag throughout Europe which would serve as a basis for a future common European memory.

Keywords: Shoah, Gulag, communism, memory, Europe.

(1) Henry Rousso and Éric Conan, *Vichy. Un passé qui ne passe pas* (Paris: Fayard, 1994).