

CHAPTER 1

The Politics of Holocaust Remembrance after Communism

The Holocaust holds a central place in the global public memory of the twentieth century, especially in the West.¹ It is the paradigmatic trauma of that century, and a formative event and one of the foundational stories of the European Union.²

This was not always the case. What we today refer to as “the Holocaust” did not exist as a concept or as a marker in global collective memory prior to the early 1960s.³ Holocaust memory has developed over time, and has gone through various phases in various countries and over various periods. The Holocaust we understand today is not the Holocaust as it was understood in the immediate aftermath of WWII, and it is certainly not understood in the same way across different countries—especially in Germany, Israel, and the United States, perhaps the most critical countries for the development of Holocaust memory in the West. The concept of “the Holocaust,” therefore, did not really *exist* for at least a decade after the end of WWII.⁴

The development and transformation of Holocaust memory is often grouped into three phases: the immediate post-WWII period, the rising awareness since the 1960s, and the consolidation of a global memory of the Holocaust since the early 1990s. In the immediate aftermath of WWII, the Holocaust was not recognized as a unique event with its own trajectory, meaning, and consequence, but was subsumed under the broad understanding of WWII, and as one of many examples of Nazi cruelty and extensive war crimes.⁵ This was the case in the West, which memorialized its victory over fascism and resistance to the occupation, the victory of democracy over totalitarianism, and above all else, the military triumph of the Allied forces. The Nuremberg trials, clearly the most important “memory event” of this period, presented abundant documentary evidence of Nazi extermination policies, but this evidence was universalized to all Nazi victims without focusing on particularly Jewish suffering.⁶

But this was also the case in the Soviet-dominated East, which placed events of the WWII within a larger narrative of communist revolutionary triumph and antifascist heroism.⁷ Communist memory was hegemonic memory, not open to alternative or particular claims on suffering, such as the suffering of the Jews. In fact, communist regimes in the immediate aftermath of the war had a very clear understanding of who constituted a “victim of fascism” and who was not included and, thus, did not deserve such remembrance. In a July 1945 statement by the German Communist Party (in the Soviet Occupied Zone), this categorization was made very explicit:

There are millions of people who are victims of fascism, who have lost their home, their apartment, their belongings. Victims of fascism are the men who had to become soldiers and were deployed in Hitler’s battalions, those who had to give their lives for Hitler’s criminal war. Victims of fascism are the Jews who were

persecuted and murdered as victims of racial mania, the Jehovah's Witnesses, and the work-shy. But we cannot stretch the term "victims of fascism" to include them. They have all endured much and suffered greatly, *but they did not fight*.⁸

Starting with the 1960s, a more discreet narrative of the Holocaust emerges in the West, in large part due to major Holocaust trials—of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem in 1961 and the Auschwitz Trials in Frankfurt in 1964. These trials and their media coverage provided detailed accounts of the horrors of the Holocaust and began to build a narrative of the Holocaust as a uniquely catastrophic historical event, spatially and temporarily located within the larger context of WWII, but in its meaning and significance for the predominantly Jewish victims, now placed outside of the war, standing on its own. Another significant memory event in this period was the 1978 American TV show *Holocaust* and especially its broadcast in Germany in 1979, which then further solidified the main narrative arc of the Holocaust, popularized it for mass audiences, and created a visual representation of the Holocaust that has since remained mostly stable.⁹

At the same time, in communist Eastern Europe, Holocaust remembrance was exclusively produced through the framework of antifascism because this link established the communist regime with its new postwar identity and provided it with ongoing political legitimacy. Communist Holocaust remembrance, as Jeffrey Herf notes, was built on "Marxist orthodoxy which placed the Jewish question on the margins of the class struggle, viewed anti-Semitism primarily as a tool to divide the working class (rather than as a belief system with autonomous and widespread impact) and fascism as a product of capitalism."¹⁰

More broadly, throughout Soviet-controlled communist Europe, the memory of WWII was reduced to the memory of the victory of the Soviet Union over fascist forces.¹¹ The communist focus on antifascism as a military and ideological battle with the ultimate triumph of the communist idea, therefore, completely effaced the unique experience of the Jews during WWII. For example, while Buchenwald concentration camp was a central site of memory in the GDR throughout the communist period, its presence in the East German narrative of WWII was about fascist persecution of communists and, ultimately, communist revolt and liberation—a narrative that completely marginalized the Jews who were killed at Buchenwald and ignored the role of the US troops in camp liberation while glorifying and embellishing communist resistance in the camp.¹²

This effacing of the Jewish experience under communism also continued after the war, as the Jewish identity—especially its religious element—was drowned out by the new construction of the supranational, de-ethnicized, and secular subject. The two ways of remembering, East and West, therefore, diverged almost immediately after the war and developed in quite different directions throughout the postwar period.

Holocaust as Universal Memory

Since the 1990s, as part of the larger global shifts after the Cold War, yet another narrative of the Holocaust has developed, which anchors the Holocaust to the emerging narrative of global human rights after the collapse of communism. Holocaust memory in this period began to solidify as an issue of human rights, the foundational event in the growing architecture of international justice, institutionalized in the establishment of international criminal tribunals for the former Yugoslavia, Rwanda, and the permanent International Criminal Court, all within one decade. Invoked as a warning that the promise of "never again" has been unfulfilled in the aftermath of genocides in Rwanda and Bosnia, the Holocaust becomes a narrative of atrocity prevention, forward- as much as backward-looking. Steven Spielberg's massively successful film *Schindler's List* (1993) presented the visual narration of the Holocaust but also this period's particularly appealing messages of rescue and survival. The opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, DC, that same year provided a physical place for Holocaust memory and a historical account that removes the stories of the Holocaust from their immediate locations (the memorials at former concentration camps or ghetto sites, for example), and makes them denationalized and universal. A "cosmopolitan memory" of the Holocaust was born.¹³

Holocaust remembrance since the 1990s, then, has contributed to the formation of a common European cultural memory. It is so central to European identity that it has become a "contemporary European entry ticket," where joining, contributing, and participating in a shared memory of the Holocaust defines what a European state is, especially for late Eastern European entrants to the EU.¹⁴

While this cosmopolitan memory of the Holocaust has global reach, its main storylines are canonized in the West.¹⁵ As Maria Mälksoo argues, "The centrality of this event in the political consciousness of contemporary Western society has dictated the tuning and hierarchical organization of the overall public remembrance of WWII,

totalitarian crimes and modern mass death.”¹⁶ From the perspective of the East, even the scholarly field of memory studies has developed within the context of this Western imperialist blind spot and has ignored Eastern European contributions.¹⁷

European Holocaust memory, in other words, has taken on a particular mnemonic code—a way of remembering—of its own. The memory of Jewish suffering was a critical element of this code, as, in the poignant words of Tony Judt, “the recovered memory of Europe’s dead Jews has become the very definition and guarantee of the continent’s restored humanity. It wasn’t always so.”¹⁸

The new universal memory of the Holocaust has over time expanded beyond the centrality of the Jewish experience to also include the victimization of the Roma and Sinti ethnic groups, homosexuals, and the disabled, with some of the first historical work on these victims published in the 1970s.¹⁹ Parallel to the narrative of Holocaust victims, a central element of the cosmopolitan Holocaust memory is memory of resistance—both Jewish resistance and broader antifascist resistance to the Nazi regime. Much of this resistance, of course, was resistance by communists, which is a particularly problematic “memory knot” for the postcommunist Holocaust narrative, as I describe in detail later in the book.²⁰

Over time, however, the Western, cosmopolitan memory of the Holocaust also began to subtly efface the Jews. In its focus on universal lessons of the Holocaust, on broader issues of racism, human rights abuses, crimes against humanity, mass atrocity, and education for tolerance, equality, and democracy, this narrative pushed aside the uniqueness of the Jewish experience of the Holocaust. The mission of the Anne Frank House, for example, is increasingly to educate the youth about the perils of discrimination and broader issues of social justice, and less on the specifically *Jewish* experience of Anne Frank herself. More bluntly, when it was first unveiled in Ottawa in 2017, the Canadian National Holocaust Memorial failed to mention the Jews at all, but instead commemorated “millions of men, women and children murdered during the Holocaust.”²¹ As Holocaust memory in the West developed from a particular story about the tragedy of the Jews into a universal lesson about inhumanity, the Jews have partly disappeared from this memory.²²

The cosmopolitan memory approach to Holocaust remembrance, further, overlooks the fundamental cleavage in European memory, which is that the memory of the Holocaust in postcommunist Europe is qualitatively different from the memory of the Holocaust as developed in the West. This is because the Holocaust simply does not signify the central “good vs. evil” narrative in the East in the same manner it does in the West. The role of evil in postcommunist Europe is, instead, reserved for communism, as the more recent and immediate source of oppression and victimization. The encroaching (Western) European centrality of the Holocaust is therefore threatening and destabilizing to these state identities. That is the principal problem that this book takes on.

Auschwitz vs. the Gulag

The narrative of Stalinism was just as much constructed as was the narrative of the Holocaust. The construction of what we today understand as the Stalinist gulag owes much to literary sensations, such as the *Gulag Archipelago* by Aleksandar Solzhenitsyn, published in English in 1973, and since translated into more than thirty languages, which provided the first detailed survivor account of the network of Stalin’s prison and torture camps. Another important literary work was *Life and Fate*, a semi-fictionalized memoir of the Holocaust and of subsequent communist oppression in the Soviet Union, written by Vasily Grossman and published posthumously in Switzerland in 1980.

But these two early accounts themselves arose out of very different political motivations. Solzhenitsyn, a Russian nationalist, from the beginning pitted the memory of Stalinism against that of the Holocaust. Grossman, in contrast, turned against Soviet ideology in large part in revulsion against Stalin’s censorship of the *Black Book* project, a comprehensive and first of its kind report on the Holocaust in the Soviet Union written by Grossman and another famous Jewish communist writer, Ilya Ehrenburg, immediately after the end of the war.²³

In communist Europe, there was obviously very limited political space to discuss the crimes of Stalinism, even many decades after its worst horrors subsided. A rare window was provided by Nikita Khrushchev in 1956 with his attempt at “de-Stalinization” and publication of the “secret” report to the Soviet Communist Party Congress, which denounced Stalin and his campaign of mass terror. But this effort was sidelined when Khrushchev was deposed in 1964. Instead, memories retreated to the private sphere and remained almost exclusively in the domain of victims of terror and their families, creating a very inward looking “victimhood nationalism.”²⁴

The collapse of communism provided an opportunity to completely revisit the history of Eastern Europe’s twentieth century and the histories of both the Holocaust and Stalinism. Many archives opened for the first time, and historical research could proceed under seemingly little ideological control. Among many important postcommunist memory events, it was perhaps the 1997 publication of the *Black Book of Communism* (first

published in France, then translated into English and other languages) that marked a specific moment in which the memory of communism was flattened to represent one unitary evil akin to Nazism and not a collection of disparate regimes over a long period of time, each with unique features and degrees of repression.²⁵ Again, the memory of communism was constructed against the memory of the Holocaust—the authors of the *Black Book of Communism* chose this title precisely to mirror Grossman’s and Ehrenburg’s *Black Book* of the Holocaust. The two memories, in other words, were in conflict from the beginning. Europe’s divided memory is not a recent invention.

The postcommunist historical moment was quickly politicized, and it became the moment to reject all legacies of communism in the pursuit of a completely new system of meaning that provided new postcommunist regimes political and popular legitimacy.²⁶ To be fully rejected, communism needed to be fundamentally discredited, delegitimized, and criminalized. Thus it became symbolized by the gulag. The postcommunist narrative of Stalinism—a discrete historical period associated with Joseph Stalin’s personality cult and reign of terror—came to represent *all* of communism, including its later, less systematically murderous manifestations after Stalin’s death. It also came to represent the communist experience in countries with no history of brutality to mirror Stalinist crimes, and countries that developed a very different, more open brand of communism, such as socialist Yugoslavia.

Of course, by subsuming all varieties of communism under Stalinism, all previous regimes were equally delegitimized and various national narratives of crimes of communism spread across the postcommunist memoryscape, regardless of whether this interpretation fit the historical record of real, everyday experience of life under communism. References to communist history disappeared, replaced by increasing references to an imaginary precommunist national golden age (often imperial or at least monarchic, often very Christian) and a narrative that connected this mythical national past with enduring national values of righteousness, honor, sacrifice, and heroic suffering.²⁷ This nationalist narrative left very little space for minorities, and almost no space whatsoever for the millions of Jews who were also, once, citizens of these countries. And because communism elevated the heroism of communists, partisans, and antifascists in resisting Nazism, the postcommunist narrative completely erased them.

The end of communism and the “return to Europe” of its East, then, brought the memory of Auschwitz and the memory of the gulag to a head. New states emerging after communism were expected to participate in and contribute to the already established and canonized Holocaust remembrance as developed in the West. But that was a difficult and often impossible demand to meet. This Holocaust remembrance was not central to these states’ identities, it was overpowering the remembrance of communism which *was* central to their identities, and it asked for a reckoning with past crimes that was threatening, unwanted, and offensive to the newly constructed postcommunist nationalist narratives. However, to participate in the one joint Europe, postcommunist states could not just reject Holocaust remembrance outright. They needed a way to participate in the larger European memory space, but on their own terms.

Strategies of Memory Appropriation

To overcome these threats to their identities, postcommunist states pursued a variety of strategies to transpose their specific memory of communism onto the symbolic memory architecture of the broader Europe and institutionalize a completely new transnational memory of communism. But instead of crudely naming postcommunist Holocaust remembrance a form of Holocaust denial, it is more productive to talk about *memory appropriation*, where the Holocaust is remembered as a proxy for remembering something else—in this case for remembering communism. And while some form of memory appropriation has occurred in all of postcommunist Europe (with Russia remaining most tightly attached to the dogmatic Soviet-era Holocaust remembrance), there is still considerable diversity in individual state responses.

Some states—such as Serbia—have pursued *memory inversion*, where the Holocaust, its crimes, and its images are directly appropriated in order to make space for the discussion of crimes of communism. The Holocaust is not denied—it is not even obviously trivialized—but it is only remembered heuristically, as a vehicle for remembering the crimes of communism. It is used to invert the suffering and victimization of the Holocaust’s principal victims—the Jews—and instead represent other victims—the ethnic majority—as its primary targets. The consequence of this strategy is that Holocaust remembrance and memorialization is no longer about the Holocaust at all, but about the nationalist needs of an ethnically homogenous society that is using the existing narratives—textual and visual—of Jewish extermination to pursue its own political needs in the present.²⁸

Other states—such as Croatia—have engaged in *memory divergence*. Here, the Holocaust is decoupled from other genocidal crimes committed during WWII in order to make the Holocaust a uniquely Nazi (that is, German) problem and absolve the local political community from participation in it. With this strategy, the ethnic majority is also absolved from carrying out other racial and ethnic crimes against non-Jews that occurred under the shadow of

the Holocaust. The implication of this narrative intervention is also that fascism, anti-Semitism, and racialized ideologies that justified violence against the Jews and other “undesirables” are foreign imports with no indigenous roots. This outsourcing of ideology then also allows for the outsourcing of communism, which is treated as a foreign imposition with no local resonance or commitment. This narrative opens up space for a connection with an imagined precommunist past—the true home of the national state, unpolluted by external forces of violence and terror. The national self remains pure.

Finally, some states—such as Lithuania—have used *memory conflation*, where the Holocaust is directly combined with other atrocities, such as Stalinism. This historical narrative recognizes only one dimension of terror, tallies the victims of the Holocaust and Stalinism together, and obfuscates the understanding of the Holocaust as a distinct historical event with its own trajectory, consequences, and victims. This process has further led to the application of the legal infrastructure developed to prosecute crimes of the Holocaust (the Nuremberg principles) to now prosecute crimes of communism.

Memory studies scholarship has already pointed out that Europe’s memory is “at war,” and there have been studies detailing postcommunist responses to Holocaust memory.²⁹ But to fully understand this memory conflict, we need to actually analyze why it has come to be and why it has taken this particular shape. To this end, it is useful to apply insights from the ontological security theoretical framework, and it is there that I turn next.

Political Memory and Ontological Security

As applied to states, the concept of ontological security is based on the assumption that states care as much about their ontological security—the security of their identity—as about material, physical security.³⁰ To continue being secure, states need predictability and order; they strive for routine and stable relationships with other states in the international system.³¹ They also need stable narratives about their pasts, which form the basis of their identities.

While this stability is desirable, it is, however, fleeting. Crises or “critical situations” create stress, anxiety, and ontological insecurity.³² Whether the critical situation truly is a crisis is beside the point—what is significant is how meaningful it is to the states themselves and what actions it produces.³³ Critical situations not only create ruptures in routines; they also lead to the questioning of state identity and, most important, the questioning of foundational state narratives on which this identity is built.

All states face ontological insecurities, but the nature of these insecurities varies depending on the sources of state identities and anxieties. In the United States, for example, the loss of international hegemonic status and perceived decline in power is creating a sense of ontological insecurity.³⁴ A sense of insecurity in a state’s identity may develop over very different moments of crisis in very different ways. Without a full understanding of the significance and impact of this type of state insecurity, our analysis of state behavior is incomplete. And while ontological insecurity is a feature of all states, it is especially states with unresolved or uncertain identities or states with internalized feelings of stigmatization and peripheral status that will experience this anxiety most acutely.³⁵

It is here that I want to propose that conflict over political memory can be seen as an example of a critical situation that destabilizes both state identity and its relationships with other states. Memory is critical to ontological security. Just as our own individual memory constitutes our identity, political memory is what constitutes state identities.³⁶ Political memory helps create and sustain a particular biographical narrative through the use of historical signposts and careful curating of select events, setbacks and triumphs, myths, and symbols.³⁷ Political memory, therefore, is never just about the past but is also very much about a particular political project in the present that it supports and maintains, which of course was the principal insight of Maurice Halbwachs.³⁸

Securing a desirable memory, one that presents the state and the nation as heroes rather than villains of some commonly shared and recognizable international story (of a global war, for example) is necessary both for the state’s continuing sense of stability and for its status seeking—for membership in prestigious international clubs (such as the European Union) and for securing all sorts of international reputational benefits. In fact, national memories of violent pasts almost exclusively operate within one of three normatively acceptable frames: nation as victorious over evil, nation as resister of evil, and nation as victim of evil.³⁹ A desirable memory of the Holocaust, then, is an example of a type of memory that is important for states to maintain and promote in order to belong to the international society of liberal European states.

The memory of the Holocaust is a clear example of a type of public memory that can lead to cultural, collective trauma—as it is often not events themselves that are traumatic but rather their consequent social remembrance that creates trauma.⁴⁰ The collective consciousness of a trauma is then institutionalized through routinized practices of remembrance such as museum exhibits, memorial sites, days of commemoration, history textbooks, or even

inscribed law.⁴¹ As we shall see in the discussion of postcommunist Holocaust representation in museums across and beyond Eastern Europe, historical museums are especially important memory actors as they are the main sites where historical narratives are being reproduced.⁴²

The opening of the discussion about the Holocaust after communism in Eastern Europe can then be seen as a form of trauma, a flood of repressed, unwanted memories that the group does not know how to deal with but is unable to continue to avoid. We can understand contemporary postcommunist Holocaust remembrance practices as a way of dealing with this cultural trauma, changing the identities of these societies in the process. As I argue in the next section of this chapter, the attempt to introduce a “European,” cosmopolitan, pan-national memory of the Holocaust into postcommunist states in Europe has created an especially acute case of ontological insecurity not only in these states themselves but also in the larger European Union. In other words, the ontological stress of having to confront the Holocaust after communism is a manifestation of the stress of reconciling history with memory.

Holocaust Remembrance and Ontological Insecurity in Postcommunist Europe

The stunningly rapid collapse of communism over only two years (1989–91) created a feeling of profound ontological insecurity across Eastern Europe. Since a coherent, stable, and hegemonic system of meaning basically vanished overnight, all of the routine relationships these states had established and maintained with other international actors became immediately disrupted, and new ones needed to be built from scratch. Political memory of the old state no longer served its legitimizing purpose; new histories needed to be constructed to make sense to the new polities.⁴³

This moment of insecurity was also driven by internalized feelings of backwardness and inferiority vis-à-vis the West.⁴⁴ This anxiety over being seen as backward was especially acute during the EU’s period of Eastern enlargement, when the organization expressed some dismay at candidate states’ reluctance to discuss the Holocaust and viewed them “as lagging behind and thus in need of re-education where the remembrance of Shoah is concerned.”⁴⁵ The EU saw this Holocaust avoidance as a “moral failing or as a sign of backwardness” that needed to be rectified.⁴⁶ This position, however, conveniently overlooked the deep wells of social complicity in the Holocaust and profound reluctance to deal with it in the Western European “core”—in France, the Netherlands, Italy, or Belgium, a problem not lost on Eastern European critics.

From the perspective of postcommunist states, however, while Holocaust memory was not central to their identity, it proved useful for the larger project of bringing East Central Europe “back to Europe.” Without directly challenging the Western memory of the Holocaust, the “new Europeans” instead pursued a form of memory reconciliation by promoting the idea that twentieth-century Europe experienced two totalitarianisms and two genocides—Nazism and Stalinism. The argument here is that the new, enlarged Europe after communism cannot be united unless it has a shared memory, which means adding Stalinism into the core European memory of the twentieth century. At the heart of this project was a profound sense of ontological insecurity and a feeling of being abandoned by Western Europe throughout much of the post-WWII period. This desire to belong to the European mnemonic and cultural center is clearly elaborated, for example, in this introduction to the Museum of the Occupation in Riga, Latvia:

Fifty-one years of occupation took a heavy toll on Latvia. About a third of the population perished or were exiled as a result of political murders and genocide, war action and inhuman treatment in the Gulag, or became refugees at the end of World War II to escape the return of the Soviet regime. In their place, settlers from other parts of the Soviet Union were brought in. They did not speak the Latvian language and were strangers to Latvian culture and traditions. From the very first, both occupation powers tried to deprive the Latvian nation of its national pride and to deny, falsify or distort the history of Latvia and Latvia’s historical ties to Europe. Latvia was estranged from the cultural foundations of Western culture. After war’s end, the political economic and social life in the Western world thrived; at the same time, all progress in Latvia stopped. The Western world forgot Latvia. The name of Latvia disappeared from books of history, as though it never had existed. The borders of the Baltic states disappeared from maps.⁴⁷

What is striking in this narrative is the almost exclusive focus on the Soviet occupation and especially the erasure of Latvian national identity through Sovietization. The one ambiguous reference to Nazism under “both occupation powers” is also presented as catastrophic for Latvian nation and culture and detrimental to its ties to Europe; ninety-four thousand Latvian Jews (5 percent of Latvia’s prewar population) and their annihilation in the Holocaust—by Germans but with the help of their Latvian collaborators—are completely absent in this narrative of

occupation.⁴⁸ They are not an important part of Latvian state identity, and not a constitutive element of this state's national biography.

This is not a careless omission. In fact, I would suggest that the centrality of the Holocaust as a foundational European narrative is soundly rejected across postcommunist Europe because of its perceived elevation of Jewish victimhood above victimhood of other regional majority ethnic groups, a move that is increasingly openly resented.⁴⁹ In the absence of almost any Jews across vast swaths of the East, postcommunist national identities were built on a rejection of the communist pan-national identity project (where the organizing narrative was loyalty to the socialist and not the ethnic subject) in favor of narratives based on ethnic majoritarianism, a very homogeneous basis that left almost no room for the incorporation of minority narratives. As Antonin Weiss-Wendt explained in his study of Estonia, Holocaust remembrance there was linked exclusively to the Jewish minority and was referred to as “the Jewish issue.” Since the Jewish minority in Estonia is very small, Holocaust remembrance simply does not matter for the majority ethnic population and, when brought up, brings about ethnic resentment and often new waves of anti-Semitism.⁵⁰ It challenges the security of a nation's identity because it problematizes the very biography on which this identity was founded.

But I would go further in suggesting that the Western European Holocaust memory's focus on Jewish suffering is also rejected in much of post-communist Europe because it brings about debates about extensive and deep local complicity in the Holocaust and the material and political benefits for majority populations across Eastern Europe of the complete Jewish absence. This is an issue of great historical importance, and while carefully documented it is profoundly and persistently resisted by much of the Eastern European public.⁵¹

Eastern Europe is not only the main site of the Holocaust, but it is also the main witness to and the main beneficiary of the Holocaust. The extermination of the European Jewry was not only carried out behind the barbed wires of concentration camps, hidden from plain sight. It was also carried out in public view of non-Jewish citizens of these countries, on streets, squares, and farms across Eastern Europe. Non-Jews benefited from this Jewish erasure, often for generations after the Holocaust.⁵² Jewish businesses, homes, and property have over decades of looting followed by communist seizures slowly been distributed within the general economy, with difficult and sporadic attempts at restitution. It is certainly not in the majority's interest to dig up whose apartments the new tenants now live in, whose dental practices they inherited, whose family heirloom brooch is in their jewelry box.

This is why much of post-Holocaust Eastern Europe has been described as a purposeful “site of nonmemory,” a “landscape of erasure.”⁵³ Ewa Ponowska Ziarek wrote of Poland, but her description is apt for the entire postcommunist political space when she describes “the erasure of collective and individual memories of Jewish life . . . , the lack of mourning for the Jewish tragedy, and the overwhelming loss of awareness of the absence of Jews and Jewish culture.”⁵⁴

The fact that post-WWII Jewish communities in these countries are negligible in numbers and have limited political clout is not incidental to this condition.⁵⁵ These countries were once multicultural societies with large Jewish minorities, but today most are ethnically homogeneous, making Eastern Europe a site of “dismembered multiethnicity.”⁵⁶ This very fact of postwar ethnic homogeneity is a problem of “cultural intimacy”—an issue of domestic identity building, the thing that builds the nation together—but simultaneously also an issue of international embarrassment and sometimes even shame.⁵⁷

This argument builds on the already well-developed social psychology literature that emphasizes the need for cognitive consistency in the face of moral transgressions. People who have carried out an act that is inconsistent with their core beliefs or with their own self-identity (as “good,” “victim,” or “innocent”) seek to reduce this cognitive dissonance and restore their self-esteem either by deflecting blame onto the victims of their actions, by flat denial, or by attributing the wrongdoing to external circumstances outside of their immediate control.⁵⁸

Of particular interest for my argument is research that shows that it is not only direct perpetrators but also their descendants and even much larger social groups to which perpetrators have belonged that react in anger and defiance, even engaging in further victimization of minority groups when confronted with the wrongdoings of their in-group members in the past.⁵⁹ The classic and very relevant example of this is so-called secondary anti-Semitism, where reminders of the crimes of the Holocaust and the long-term impact on Jewish suffering induce guilt and further strengthen anti-Semitism among contemporary Germans—even the youth, who are generations removed from the events of WWII.⁶⁰

It is against this background that the destabilizing effects of Holocaust memory in both postcommunist Europe and the larger European Union can be best understood. Holocaust memory, as institutionalized in the Western mnemonic cannon, created significant stress and anxiety in postcommunist states. It challenged these states' biographies, their narratives about themselves and their past. It brought up undesirable memories that were contrary to their identities of victimization at the hands of German and Soviet occupiers. These memories needed to be challenged and confronted straight on.

Constructing Holocaust Remembrance after Communism

Communism strictly regulated Holocaust remembrance, primarily by absorbing it as just one event within the much larger story of WWII. Also, due to the region's international political and social isolation, communist Holocaust memory developed and solidified in almost complete marginalization from the cohering European Holocaust narrative in the West.

Postcommunist European states first encountered the European push for a unified cosmopolitan memory of the Holocaust as they tried to join various European organizations after 1991—foremost in their applications for European Union membership, but also in attempts to gain membership in other European institutions such as the Council of Europe. In 1995, the European Parliament passed the Resolution on the Return of Plundered Property to Jewish Communities, which contained explicit demands for Eastern European states to return property looted in the Holocaust, but also “welcome[d] the fact that certain Central and Eastern European countries have apologized publicly for the crimes committed against Jews during the Second World War and have recognized their responsibilities in respect of these crimes.”⁶¹ Implied in this statement was that the rest of the Eastern European states should do the same.⁶²

Of course, the fact that none of the European Parliament documents have ever issued a similar demand for an apology for local complicity in the Holocaust from any Western European government—France, Belgium, Italy, Austria, and the Netherlands are obvious candidates—has further fueled the Eastern Europeans' sense of resentment and injustice. Eastern European elites are keenly aware that there is continuing denial of the extent of complicity in the Holocaust by the governments of these Western countries, which have anchored their memory of the Holocaust on glorifying anti-Nazi resistance and downplaying—if not flatly ignoring—pervasive local collaboration.⁶³

Further infuriating Eastern European states has been Western Europe's lack of acknowledgment of its role in carving up the post-WWII East, making a deal with the Soviet Union that effectively handed over these states to Stalin's control. This issue would come up repeatedly in the discussions about appropriate Holocaust remembrance. Many Eastern European politicians have explicitly asked Western European governments to acknowledge that they had historically betrayed the East before any further debate was to occur regarding Eastern European complicity in the Holocaust. What post-communist states asked of the West was to admit that they “morally capitulated to the Soviets,” as a Lithuanian Member of the European Parliament remarked.⁶⁴

In January 2000, in a major European institutional push to regulate Holocaust remembrance across the continent, Sweden convened the Stockholm Forum on the Holocaust to define a common framework for European Holocaust remembrance, research, and education.⁶⁵ The forum established the International Task Force on Holocaust Education, Remembrance and Research, renamed International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) in 2012. It remains the international organization that most explicitly “constructs, institutionalizes and diffuses” transnational Holocaust memory in Europe.⁶⁶ In 2005, the European Parliament adopted its most complete resolution on the Holocaust, the Resolution on Remembrance of the Holocaust, Anti-Semitism and Racism, which established January 27 (the day of the liberation of Auschwitz in 1945) as “European Holocaust Memorial Day across the whole of the EU.”⁶⁷

And while postcommunist states accepted this new regulation, signed documents, and adopted major parameters of the memory framework, presumably not wanting to jeopardize the delicate process of EU accession, they also demanded a thorough renegotiation of European memory politics.⁶⁸ To respond to this reconfigured memory setting after communism, and to resolve the ontological insecurity it had brought, newly emerged East Central European states developed a memory strategy that presented a competing memory to that of the Holocaust—the memory of Stalinism. The memory of Auschwitz was now in competition with the memory of the gulag.

This new remembrance of communist crimes, however, was not a completely organic development. It did not emerge solely out of a collection of private and public memories that gathered, unrecognized and repressed during communism. Instead, communist remembrance in East Central Europe was constructed after 1989 using the already existing model of Holocaust remembrance.⁶⁹ Engaging in active historical knowledge production, various memory actors—historical commissions, institutes of national memory, and newly established museums of communism—used the Holocaust remembrance template, with a stratification of the victims, perpetrators, modes of terror, suffering, and death that already made epistemological sense to Western European audiences.⁷⁰

These institutions performed memory events in the narrative language of Holocaust remembrance. This included the already existing repertoire of Holocaust imagery, such as concentration camps, slave labor, death marches, deportations, forced hunger, and deprivation, as well as visual cues of abandoned suitcases and

boxcars—tropes of Holocaust remembrance that had now been repurposed to represent crimes of communism.⁷¹ Holocaust memory was thus reclaimed to represent the memory of communism in quite a direct way. Communist crimes began to be referred to as the “Red Holocaust” or “the other Holocaust.”

It is not a coincidence, then, that the founders of the Romanian Sighet Memorial Museum of Communism claimed to have come to the idea of creating such a museum after visiting Auschwitz in 1996, or that in 2000 Slovakia decided to revamp its national Museum of the Slovak National Uprising “to fill empty areas in the historical memory so as to be able to correspond to a European standard.”⁷² In fact, most of the museums of communism that sprung up after 1991 in some form instrumentalize already existing aesthetics of Holocaust remembrance, often for quite overt nation-building purposes, with narrative frames that used to be reserved for stories of fascism now used to narrate communism.⁷³ Universalization of the Holocaust, therefore, allowed for the Holocaust to be a “‘container’ for remembering different victims.”⁷⁴

This new communist remembrance was also to a large extent built on already existing communist remembrance in the West. For example, the already discussed, hugely influential *Black Book of Communism* quite explicitly built the case for the horrors of Stalinism on the existing Holocaust memory template. As Máté Zombory documents, the authors of the *Black Book of Communism* directly influenced subsequent debates in East Central Europe, including the establishment of the House of Terror museum in Budapest, as members of its founding board. This new construction of communist remembrance, then, “was the cooperative effort of a pan-European network of activists, scholars, and politicians engaged in the struggle for a legitimate anti-Communist revision of history.”⁷⁵ Significantly, Eastern European states forged alliances with the Western European right, most directly the European People’s Party in the European Parliament, in pushing for EU resolutions and proclamations that would decentralize the Holocaust from pan-European memory and add crimes of communism as the second and equal part of this memory project.⁷⁶ These campaigns then gave the “new Europeans” the opportunity and platform to elevate their presence in the European Parliament on issues of great importance.⁷⁷

The first in a series of EU resolutions on crimes of communism came in 2005—The Future of Europe Sixty Years after the Second World War. Ironically, this expansion of totalitarianism to include all of communism—not only its most totalitarian Stalinist expression—also led to the return to a communist-era interpretation of the Holocaust, which deemphasized the uniqueness of Jewish suffering. The European Parliament’s 2005 resolution on the sixtieth anniversary of the end of the Second World War in Europe on May 8, 1945, thus no longer referred to Jews as the Holocaust’s principal victims, but instead to “all the victims of Nazi tyranny,” thereby elevating the victimization of non-Jewish ethnic majorities in Eastern Europe.⁷⁸

This demand to commemorate side by side—as consequentially the same—the “two twentieth-century totalitarianisms” culminated in two European Union documents, the 2008 Declaration on the Proclamation of 23 August as European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism and the Resolution on European Conscience and Totalitarianism, which built on the 2008 Prague Declaration of the same name.⁷⁹

The Prague Declaration explicitly lays out the ideological framework postcommunist European states have used regarding the place of the Holocaust and communist memory. The rhetorical move of referring to “communist crimes” instead of “Stalinist crimes” is critical here as it implies that terror was communism’s central organizing feature, which then makes it easy to equate it narratively with fascism. Indeed, while the first article states, “Both the Nazi and the Communist totalitarian regimes [should] each be judged by their own terrible merits,” the declaration then goes on to claim that “exterminating and deporting whole nations and groups of population were indivisible parts of the ideologies they availed themselves with,” which explicitly takes the specifically genocidal aspect of Nazism—extermination of whole nations—and attributes it to communism. This equation of the two regimes as being structurally the same even led one member of the European Parliament to declare, “I ask the European Parliament to stand in solidarity with the victims of *Fascist Communism*.”⁸⁰

Acting on the 2008 Prague Declaration’s invitation to treat communism similarly to the Holocaust, a group of East-Central European politicians and civil society actors—mostly from the right—organized another conference in Prague in 2010, which produced the Declaration on Crimes of Communism. This document explicitly demands that communism be retroactively criminalized and a special international tribunal be established “in a similar way as the Nazi crimes were condemned and sentenced by the Nuremberg tribunal.”⁸¹

While the political purchase for postcommunist states of equating Nazism and communism is clear, a further implication of this mnemonic practice is that by appropriating the Holocaust to criminalize communism, postcommunist countries have also succeeded in removing the memory of antifascist resistance and its instrumental role in defeating Nazism from the memory of WWII. Here I do not only mean the obvious role of the Soviet Red Army in defeating the Wehrmacht and liberating concentration camps in the East, but even more so the role that hundreds of thousands of partisans across occupied Europe played in sabotaging, disrupting, distracting, and also directly fighting the Nazis and their local collaborators throughout the war.⁸²

It was the surviving socialists and communists of the Buchenwald concentration camp (many of them Jews themselves) who gathered in the first few days after camp liberation on April 19, 1945, and took an oath to “destroy Nazism from its roots . . . as our responsibility to our murdered comrades and their relatives.”⁸³ The Buchenwald Oath, and its decidedly antifascist narrative, is probably the earliest public act of Holocaust memorialization. Removing this resistance from the memory of the Holocaust is not only a move in selective historical narration, but it also denies the very foundation of Holocaust memory. Of all the victims of Nazism and Stalinism, these resistance fighters seem to be left without anybody to advocate for their remembrance and increasingly, as the next three chapters of the book demonstrate, are facing retroactive criminalization themselves.

It is precisely this concern that some on the European left have expressed in the European Parliament. In a rebuttal to the 2013 Parliament proposal for a program titled Europe for Citizens, which adopted the two totalitarianisms narrative, a group of European United Left/Nordic Green Left (GUE/NGL) EP members dissented, on the grounds that “that future generations should [not] be told the historical lie that seeks to put Communists on a par with Nazis, nor should they be encouraged to forget both the fascist dictatorships that once held sway in southern Europe and the colonial past.”⁸⁴ Similarly, Glyn Ford, the representative of the Party of European Socialists pleaded, “While I am in favour of the maximum objectivity in analyzing Europe’s history, and while I recognize the horrific nature of the crimes of Stalinist Russia . . . I am not willing to equate the crimes of the Nazis, the Holocaust and the genocide that saw six million Jews, along with Communists, Trade Unionists and disabled, die, with those of Stalinist Russia. This political relativism threatens to dilute the unique nature of the Nazi crimes, and in doing so provides an intellectual underpinning to the ideologies of today’s neo-Nazis and fascists.”⁸⁵

New European Memory from East to West

Postcommunist Holocaust remembrance and the elevation of communist crimes to the central historical narrative of the twentieth century has not remained an exclusively Eastern European phenomenon. Instead, through tremendous entrepreneurship by Eastern European memory actors including politicians allied with right-wing European political parties, this new European memory has now become a full feature of *all* European memory projects, East and West.

The full equation of fascism and communism and their leveling as two European totalitarianisms has gotten perhaps its clearest physical manifestation in the new House of European History (HEH), which after decades of delays—some political, some administrative—finally opened in Brussels in May 2017.⁸⁶ HEH was a key EU project aimed at shoring up the cultural foundation for integration, strengthening European identity and building EU legitimacy across the continent.⁸⁷ This is why the museum makes both the Holocaust and communist terror integral to the history of Europe, one that leads, teleologically, toward European integration.

HEH specifically avoids singling out the experience of the European Jewry and has no separate remembrance of their annihilation—a curating decision agreed upon early in the development of the museum.⁸⁸ Instead, the Holocaust is woven through other narratives of WWII and post-WWII remembrance, leading one scholar to wonder “to what extent history politics and remembrance policies of EU institutions more generally have become East Europeanized.”⁸⁹

There is a vibrant scholarship that looks at this outcome approvingly. As Maria Mälksoo has argued, postcommunist European memory projects were simultaneously about seeking recognition from and status in Europe while at the same time rejecting the dominant European narrative of its past, including the centrality of the Holocaust to European postwar identity.⁹⁰ Mälksoo sees this postcommunist move as a form of Eastern European emancipatory decolonization, where postcommunist states rejected both Western European and Soviet hegemony over memory.⁹¹ This is similar to Jay Winter’s call to shift the European memory center of gravity “from Paris to Warsaw.”⁹²

The problem, however, is that this Eastern European desire to jump historically over the illegitimate communist period and find national legitimacy in the precommunist past finds itself immediately confronted with the collaborationist and often murderous quality of many of these past regimes, including fully homegrown fascist regimes in Slovakia, Croatia, Hungary, and Romania and many collaborationist forces across all other Eastern European states, a normative problem that the decolonization thesis often ignores. The search for the buried memory, then, also further stigmatizes the national body politic. Looking for good memories, only worse ones are found. Because it is difficult to erase or deny these memories, an easier path is to invert them—and claim that crimes of Nazism and their local collaborators were in fact crimes of communism. The criminal past is not fully denied, but the responsibility for it is misdirected, accomplishing two things: the absolution of the national criminal past and the criminalization of communism.

What this process has produced, however, are new ruptures within states and within the EU, where Holocaust

memory is still pan-European and cosmopolitan and where nationalized, particularized memories are threatening. Postcommunist memory politics therefore has had a boomerang quality to it: the European push for cosmopolitan Holocaust memory created a national particularistic backlash, which then created further insecurities both in the states themselves and between the postcommunist states and the larger European Union.

To sum up, because the Holocaust is a “constitutive element of the European polity,” removing the centrality of the Holocaust from European memory destabilizes the core of the European Union, which was built on the memory of WWII—no WWII, no European Union.⁹³ What postcommunist European remembrance demonstrates, however, is that it is not only post-communist states that are facing narrative crises. It is also the EU itself—by being confronted with the fact that, first, its foundational narrative of the Holocaust is no longer the central unifying narrative in Europe and, second, its foundational mission of peace is also on the verge of collapse after the EU so thoroughly failed to prevent war and genocide in Europe in the 1990s. Postcommunist remembrance, then, causes self-doubt within core European states, destabilizes relationships with the “new Europeans” in the East, and produces conditions that can contribute to old and new types of Holocaust revisionism, denial, and neofascist resurgence.

The Eastern Europeanization of Holocaust remembrance also destabilizes the “old” EU because it deconstructs the solidified narrative of primarily German responsibility and opens up a variety of new narratives about multiple responsibilities for the Holocaust in the West. It can bring, for example, a new reevaluation of Italy’s fascism and its inadequate postwar repudiation, or focus new attention on the extent of collaboration and meeker resistance in occupied France, Belgium, and the Netherlands than has been maintained over the past decades.

This new European memory also endangers another of the EU’s foundational narratives: that of post-WWII integration and progress as contrasts to the darkness of the Holocaust. By deconstructing these narratives, it also destroys the shield that has absolved the contemporary EU from reckoning with its problems of continuing racism or broader human rights deficits today. Finally, if the Holocaust and WWII are not “time zero” for the EU, this starts to bring up extremely uncomfortable memories of Europe’s colonial crimes that in many ways foreshadowed the Holocaust.⁹⁴ The renegotiation of the official European memory of the twentieth century, then, can open up space for the renegotiation of Europe’s more distant imperial past and thus situate WWII not as an aberration but a continuation of European history and the technology of violence, cutting at the core of the EU’s contemporary identity.

The European Union as a whole and EU member states as its constitutive parts are in crisis—uncertain about their identities, the cohesion of their union, the strength of their mutual commitments, and about each other. This crisis can best be understood as a feeling of profound ontological insecurity—an insecurity of identity. I argued in this chapter that an additional contributing factor to this sense of general unease within the EU is its contested political memory, especially memory of the Holocaust and memory of communism. As the EU has enlarged to the East, a completely new set of memories and mnemonic practices was introduced to the European narrative. This process has been neither easy nor smooth, and it is far from resolved. It has also produced tremendous narrative rewriting, relaxing some of the most established mnemonic canons of the twentieth century (the memory of the Holocaust), which has in turn created a political environment fertile for memory challenges, disruptions, and revisions.

Encouraged by the European Union’s declarations equating crimes of Nazism with crimes of communism under the umbrella of crimes of totalitarianism, many Eastern European states have appropriated Holocaust memory and even imagery to talk about crimes of previous communist regimes. Holocaust remembrance, then, is no longer about the Holocaust at all, but is about very acute ontological security needs of new states that are building their identity as fundamentally anticommunist, which then in turn makes them more legitimately European and capitalist.⁹⁵ Holocaust remembrance does not only provide a state its mnemonic security needs, but it secures its ideological legitimacy as well.

Political memory, therefore, can be both a source and a product of state ontological insecurity. It can destabilize identities within states themselves, by radically changing accepted state biographies and biographical narratives, but it often also destabilizes state relationships with other states and international actors, relationships that gave the state a sense of routine, familiarity, and calm. At the same time, new versions of political memory can be a result of state ontological insecurities. When states feel insecure, they may try to affix a certain memory in place, or try to replace bad memories with those more favorable to the state view of self. These radical mnemonic ruptures, however, can then further destabilize state internal and external relationships, to significant international political effect.

1. The literature on the meaning of the Holocaust for the twentieth century is vast and cannot be fully summarized here. Some of the critical texts that discuss the role of the Holocaust in public memory in Europe and beyond are Peter Novick, *The*

- Holocaust in American Life* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999); Jeffrey C Alexander, "On the Social Construction of Moral Universals: The Holocaust from War Crime to Trauma Drama," *European Journal of Social Theory* 5, no. 1 (2002): 5–85; James Edward Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993).
2. Aleida Assmann, "Transnational Memories," *European Review* 22, no. 4 (2014): 546–56.
 3. Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, "The Politics of Commemoration: The Holocaust, Memory and Trauma," in *Handbook of Contemporary European Social Theory*, ed. Gerard Delanty (London: Routledge, 2006), 289–97, here 292.
 4. Levy and Sznaider, "Politics of Commemoration," 292.
 5. Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider, "Memory Unbound: The Holocaust and the Formation of Cosmopolitan Memory," *European Journal of Social Theory* 5, no. 1 (2002): 87–106, here 93.
 6. For conceptualization of "memory events," see Alexander Etkind, Rory Finnin, Uilleam Blacker, Julie Fedor, Simon Lewis, Maria Mälksoo, and Matilda Mroz, *Remembering Katyn* (Cambridge: Polity, 2013).
 7. Alon Confino, "Remembering the Second World War, 1945–1965: Narratives of Victimhood and Genocide," *Cultural Analysis* 4 (2005): 46–75.
 8. Quoted in Peter Monteath, "Holocaust Remembrance in the German Democratic Republic—and Beyond," in *Bringing the Dark Past to Light: The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe*, ed. John-Paul Himka and Joanna B Michlic (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013), 223–60, here 227–28, emphasis added.
 9. For the role of atrocity photographs in affixing a visual collective memory of the Holocaust, see Barbie Zelizer, *Remembering to Forget: Holocaust Memory through the Camera's Eye* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).
 10. Jeffrey Herf, "The Emergence and Legacies of Divided Memory: Germany and the Holocaust after 1945," in *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past*, ed. Jan-Werner Müller (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 184–205, here 192; also see John-Paul Himka and Joanna B. Michlic, eds., *Bringing the Dark Past to Light: The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013).
 11. Herf, "Emergence and Legacies."
 12. Monteath, "Holocaust Remembrance."
 13. Levy and Sznaider, "Memory Unbound."
 14. Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin Press, 2005), 803. Also, Maria Mälksoo, "The Memory Politics of Becoming European: The East European Subalterns and the Collective Memory of Europe," *European Journal of International Relations* 15, no. 4 (2009): 653–80.
 15. This is not to say that there is no diversity of repertoires of Holocaust remembrance in the West. For some attempts at mapping this diversity, see Rebecca Clifford, *Commemorating the Holocaust: The Dilemmas of Remembrance in France and Italy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); Dan Diner, "Restitution and Memory: The Holocaust in European Political Cultures," *New German Critique* 90 (Autumn 2003): 36–44; Magorzata Pakier and Bo Stråth, *A European Memory?: Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2010).
 16. Maria Mälksoo, "'Memory Must be Defended': Beyond the Politics of Mnemonical Security," *Security Dialogue* 46, no. 3 (2015): 221–37, here 226.
 17. Joanna Wawrzyniak and Magorzata Pakier, "Memory Studies in Eastern Europe: Key Issues and Future Perspectives," *Polish Sociological Review* 183, no. 3 (2013): 257–79.
 18. Judt, *Postwar*, 805.
 19. Some of the earliest accounts of the Roma Holocaust are Donald Kenrick and Grattan Puxon, *The Destiny of Europe's Gypsies* (London: Sussex University Press, 1972); Gabrielle Tyrnauer, *The Fate of the Gypsies during the Holocaust: Report to the United States Holocaust Memorial Council* (Vt.: G. Tyrnauer, 1985); for an early survivor account of the extermination of homosexuals see Heinz Heger, *The Men with the Pink Triangle* (Boston: Alyson Publications, 1980).
 20. For the conceptualization of "memory knots," see Michael Rothberg, "Introduction: Between Memory and Memory: From Lieux de mémoire to Noeuds de mémoire," *Yale French Studies*, no. 118/119 (2010): 3–12.
 21. Dan Bilefsky, "Canadian Holocaust Memorial Neglects to Mention Jews," *New York Times*, October 5, 2017.
 22. I thank an anonymous reviewer for bringing up this very insightful point.
 23. As the concept of "the Holocaust" did not exist in 1946, this project had the long and meandering title of *The Black Book: The Ruthless Murder of Jews by German-Fascist Invaders Throughout the Temporarily-Occupied Regions of the Soviet Union and in the German Nazi Death Camps Established on Occupied Polish Soil during the War 1941–1945*.
 24. Jie-Hyun Lim, "Victimhood Nationalism in Contested Memories: National Mourning and Global Accountability," in *Memory in a Global Age: Discourses, Practices and Trajectories*, ed. Aleida Assmann and Sebastian Conrad (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 138–62.
 25. Stéphane Courtois, *Le Livre noir du communisme: Crimes, terreur, répression* (Paris: Robert Lafont, 1997).
 26. Kristen Ghodsee, "A Tale of 'Two Totalitarianisms': The Crisis of Capitalism and the Historical Memory of Communism," *History of the Present* 4, no. 2 (2014): 115–42.
 27. Aleida Assmann, "Europe's Divided Memory," in *Memory and Theory in Eastern Europe*, ed. Uilleam Blacker, Aleksandr Etkind, and Julie Fedor (New York: Palgrave, 2013), 25–41.
 28. While not the focus of my book, this kind of appropriation of Holocaust remembrance for contemporary nationalist needs is certainly highly visible in Israel. See Idith Zertal, *Israel's Holocaust and the Politics of Nationhood* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
 29. The most comprehensive academic project on this topic was the international collaboration "Memory at War," which resulted in a detailed website, <http://www.memoryatwar.org>, and an edited volume, *Memory and Theory in Eastern Europe*,

edited by Uilleam Blacker, Aleksandr tkind, and Julie Fedor (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). For comparative studies of postcommunist Holocaust remembrance, see Alejandro Baer and Natan Sznaider, *Memory and Forgetting in the Post-Holocaust Era: The Ethics of Never Again* (Milton Park: Routledge, 2017); Himka and Michlic, *Bringing the Dark Past to Light*.

30. The concept of ontological security was first developed in psychoanalysis in R. D. Laing, *The Divided Self: A Study of Sanity and Madness* (London: Tavistock Publications, 1960), and applied to sociology in Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990). Applications in the field of international relations to explain the behavior of states include Catarina Kinnvall, *Globalization and Religious Nationalism in India: The Search for Ontological Security* (New York: Routledge, 2006); Jennifer Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma," *European Journal of International Relations* 12, no. 3 (2006): 341–70; Brent J. Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations: Self-Identity and the IR State* (London: Routledge, 2008); and Aye Zarakol, "Ontological (In)security and State Denial of Historical Crimes: Turkey and Japan," *International Relations* 24, no. 1 (2010): 3–23.

31. Bill McSweeney, *Security, Identity, and Interests: A Sociology of International Relations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Jef Huysmans, "Security! What Do You Mean?: From Concept to Thick Signifier," *European Journal of International Relations* 4, no. 2 (1998): 226–55.

32. Filip Ejdus, "Critical Situations, Fundamental Questions and Ontological Insecurity in World Politics," *Journal of International Relations and Development* 21, no. 4 (2018): 883–908.

33. Steele, *Ontological Security*.

34. Jelena Subotic and Brent J Steele, "Moral Injury in International Relations," *Journal of Global Security Studies* 3, no. 4 (2018): 387–401.

35. Aye Zarakol, *After Defeat: How the East Learned to Live with the West* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

36. Jeffrey K Olick and Joyce Robbins, "Social Memory Studies: From 'Collective Memory' to the Historical Sociology of Mnemonic Practices," *Annual Review of Sociology* (1998): 105–40.

37. Felix Berenskoetter, "Parameters of a National Biography," *European Journal of International Relations* 20, no. 1 (2014): 262–88; Catarina Kinnvall, "Globalization and Religious Nationalism: Self, Identity, and the Search for Ontological Security," *Political Psychology* 25, no. 5 (2004): 741–67; Vamik D. Volkan, *Bloodlines: From Ethnic Pride to Ethnic Terrorism* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1997).

38. Maurice Halbwachs, *On Collective Memory* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992); also Pierre Nora, "Between Memory and History: Les lieux de mémoire," *Representations* 26 (1989): 7–24.

39. Assmann, "Transnational Memories," 553.

40. Jeffrey C Alexander, "Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma," in *Cultural Trauma and Collective Identity*, ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander et al. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 1–30, here 1.

41. Levy and Sznaider, "Politics of Commemoration"

42. Ljiljana Radoni, "Post-communist Invocation of Europe: Memorial Museums' Narratives and the Europeanization of Memory," *National Identities* 19, no. 2 (2017): 269–88, here 271.

43. Richard J. Evans, "Redesigning the Past: History in Political Transitions," *Journal of Contemporary History* 38, no. 1 (2003): 5–12.

44. Julie Mostov, "The Use and Abuse of History in Eastern Europe: A Challenge for the 90s," *Constellations* 4, no. 3 (1998): 376–86.

45. Ewa Staczyk, "Transnational, Transborder, Antinational? The Memory of the Jewish Past in Poland," *Nationalities Papers* 44, no. 3 (2016): 416–29, here 418.

46. James Mark, *The Unfinished Revolution: Making Sense of the Communist Past in Central-Eastern Europe* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), xvi.

47. Main print catalogue of the Museum of the Occupation in Riga, Latvia, quoted in Kevin M. E. Platt, "Occupation versus Colonization: Post-Soviet Latvia and the Provincialization of Europe," in *Memory and Theory in Eastern Europe*, ed. Uilleam Blacker, Alexander Etkind, and Julie Fedor (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 125–48, here 136.

48. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "Latvia," accessed January 31, 2019, <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005443>.

49. Baer and Sznaider, *Memory and Forgetting*.

50. Anton Weiss-Wendt, "Why the Holocaust Does not Matter to Estonians," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 39, no. 4 (2008): 475–97.

51. John-Paul Himka, "Obstacles to the Integration of the Holocaust into Post-communist East European Historical Narratives," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 50, nos. 3–4 (2008): 359–72.

52. Volha Charnysh and Evgeny Finkel, "The Death Camp Eldorado: Political and Economic Effects of Mass Violence," *American Political Science Review* 111, no. 4 (2017): 801–18.

53. Omer Bartov, "Eastern Europe as the Site of Genocide," *The Journal of Modern History* 80, no. 3 (2008): 557–93, here 557; Jennifer A. Jordan "A Matter of Time: Examining Collective Memory in Historical Perspective in Postwar Berlin," *Journal of Historical Sociology* 18, no. 1–2 (2005): 37–71, here 39; Baer and Sznaider, *Memory and Forgetting*, 105.

54. Ewa Ponowska Ziarek, "Melancholic Nationalism and the Pathologies of Commemorating the Holocaust in Poland," in *Imaginary Neighbors: Mediating Polish-Jewish Relations after the Holocaust*, ed. Dorota Glowacka and Joanna Zylińska (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007), 301–26, here 302.

55. For example, Jews made up almost 10 percent of the prewar population of Poland, and at least 30 percent in the major

cities of Warsaw, Krakow, and Vilna. Hungary's capital, Budapest, was 23 percent Jewish before the Holocaust. Today, Hungary is the only country in the region with a sizeable Jewish population (one hundred thousand). Jewish communities in the rest of postcommunist Europe are largely non-existent. Michael Shafir, *Between Denial and "Comparative Trivialization": Holocaust Negationism in Post-Communist East Central Europe* (Jerusalem: Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Vidal Sassoon International Center for the Study of Antisemitism, 2002).

[56.](#) Karolina S. Follis, *Building Fortress Europe: The Polish-Ukrainian Frontier* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012).

[57.](#) Michael Herzfeld, *Cultural Intimacy: Social Poetics in the Nation-State* (New York: Routledge, 2005); Jelena Suboti and Aye Zarakol, "Cultural Intimacy in International Relations," *European Journal of International Relations* 19, no. 4 (2013): 915–38.

[58.](#) Aarti Iyer, Colin Wayne Leach, and Faye J Crosby, "White Guilt and Racial Compensation: The Benefits and Limits of Self-Focus," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 29, no. 1 (2003): 117–29; Emanuele Castano and Roger Giner-Sorolla, "Not Quite Human: Infrahumanization in Response to Collective Responsibility for Intergroup Killing," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 90, no. 5 (2006): 804; Mirosław Kofta and Patrycja Slawuta, "Thou Shall Not Kill . . . Your Brother: Victim/Perpetrator Cultural Closeness and Moral Disapproval of Polish Atrocities against Jews after the Holocaust," *Journal of Social Issues* 69, no. 1 (2013): 54–73.

[59.](#) Katie N Rotella and Jennifer A Richeson, "Motivated to 'Forget' the Effects of In-group Wrongdoing on Memory and Collective Guilt," *Social Psychological and Personality Science* 4, no. 6 (2013): 730–37; Nyla R Branscombe, Michael T Schmitt, and Kristin Schifffhauer, "Racial Attitudes in Response to Thoughts of White Privilege," *European Journal of Social Psychology* 37, no. 2 (2007): 203–15.

[60.](#) Roland Imhoff and Rainer Banse, "Ongoing Victim Suffering Increases Prejudice: The Case of Secondary Anti-Semitism," *Psychological Science* 20, no. 12 (2009): 1443–47.

[61.](#) European Parliament, Resolution on the Return of Plundered Property to Jewish Communities, December 14, 1995, Brussels.

[62.](#) Marek Kucia, "The Europeanization of Holocaust Memory and Eastern Europe," *East European Politics and Societies* 30, no. 1 (2016): 97–119.

[63.](#) These denials occasionally pop up to the surface, and produce much international embarrassment—such, as, for example, the statement by the French far-right presidential candidate Marine Le Pen in 2017 that "France wasn't responsible for Vel d'Hiv," referring to the largest round-up of French Jews by the French police in 1942, most of whom were then transported to Auschwitz. Adam Nossiter, "Marine Le Pen Denies French Guilt for Rounding Up Jews," *New York Times*, April 10, 2017.

[64.](#) Quoted in Alina Hogeia, "European Conscience and Totalitarianism: Contested Memory in the European Union," *Revista Română de Jurnalism și Comunicare* 7, no. 3/4 (2012): 59–71, here 66.

[65.](#) Being at the forefront of European Holocaust remembrance effort was also important for Sweden's own sense of political identity as a "rescuer state" during the Holocaust. Karl Christian Lammers, "The Holocaust and Collective Memory in Scandinavia: The Danish Case," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 36, no. 5 (2011): 570–86. For the history of the Stockholm Forum, see Larissa Allwork, *Holocaust Remembrance between the National and the Transnational: The Stockholm International Forum and the First Decade of the International Task Force* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015).

[66.](#) Kucia, "Europeanization of Holocaust Memory," 105.

[67.](#) European Parliament, Resolution on Remembrance of the Holocaust, Anti-Semitism and Racism, January 27, 2005. The European Parliament was very active on this front. Between 1989 and 2014, the parliament adopted twelve separate documents on Holocaust remembrance. Kucia, "Europeanization of Holocaust Memory," 102.

[68.](#) Mälksoo, "Memory Politics"; Annabelle Littoz-Monnet, "Explaining Policy Conflict across Institutional Venues: European Union-Level Struggles over the Memory of the Holocaust," *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 51, no. 3 (2013): 489–504.

[69.](#) Máté Zombory, "The Birth of the Memory of Communism: Memorial Museums in Europe," *Nationalities Papers* 45, no. 6 (2017): 1028–46.

[70.](#) On the network of historical memory institutes and their efforts to change European Union policies and legislation on remembrance, see Laure Neumayer, "Advocating for the Cause of the 'Victims of Communism' in the European Political Space: Memory Entrepreneurs in Interstitial Fields," *Nationalities Papers* 45, no. 6 (2017): 992–1012.

[71.](#) For an exploration of ways in which the Holocaust was visualized, see Barbie Zelizer, *Visual Culture and the Holocaust* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2001).

[72.](#) Radoni, "Post-communist Invocation," 273.

[73.](#) Radoni, "Post-communist Invocation," 271.

[74.](#) Ljiljana Radonic, "Conflicting Memories in 'Unified Europe'—Standards of Remembrance in the Center and at the Periphery," *Der Donauraum* 50, no. 3–4 (2010): 213–24, here 219.

[75.](#) Zombory, "Birth of the Memory," 1034.

[76.](#) Annabelle Littoz-Monnet, "The EU Politics of Remembrance: Can Europeans Remember Together?," *West European Politics* 35, no. 5 (2012): 1182–1202; Laure Neumayer, "Integrating the Central European Past into a Common Narrative: The Mobilizations Around the 'Crimes of Communism' in the European Parliament," *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 23, no. 3 (2015): 344–63.

[77.](#) Neumayer, "Integrating the Central European Past."

[78.](#) European Parliament, Resolution on the 60th Anniversary of the End of the Second World War in Europe on 8 May

1945, May 12, 2005, Brussels.

79. European Parliament, Declaration on the Proclamation of 23 August as European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism, September 23, 2008, Brussels; European Parliament, Resolution on European Conscience and Totalitarianism, April 2, 2009, Brussels. The equation of two totalitarianisms was also institutionalized by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in its 2009 Vilnius Declaration, available at the OSCE website, accessed January 31, 2019, <https://www.oscepa.org/documents/all-documents/annual-sessions/2009-vilnius/declaration-6/261-2009-vilnius-declaration-eng/file>.

80. Neumayer, "Integrating the Central European Past," 353, emphasis added.

81. "Declaration on the Crimes of Communism," in *International Conference: "Crimes of the Communist Regimes"* (Prague: Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes, 2011), 454–55, here 454.

82. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "Non-Jewish Resistance," <https://www.ushmm.org/wlc/en/article.php?ModuleId=10005420>.

83. Baer and Sznajder, *Memory and Forgetting*, 9.

84. European Parliament, *Report on the Proposal for a Council Regulation Establishing for the Period 2014–2020 the Programme "Europe for Citizens"* (Brussels: European Parliament, 2013), 49.

85. Quoted in Aleksandra Gliszczyska-Grabias, "Communism Equals or Versus Nazism? Europe's Unwholesome Legacy in Strasbourg," *East European Politics and Societies* 30, no. 1 (2016): 74–96, here 75.

86. House of European History website, accessed January 31, 2019, <https://historia-europa.ep.eu/en>.

87. Wolfram Kaiser, "Limits of Cultural Engineering: Actors and Narratives in the European Parliament's House of European History Project," *JCMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 55, no. 3 (2017): 518–34, here 518.

88. The purposeful marginalization of the Holocaust is evident in the extremely problematic composition of the Museum's Academic Committee, which includes Maria Schmidt, the director of the House of Terror in Budapest. Schmidt is a prominent Hungarian revisionist historian whose controversial views on the Holocaust have been notable for decades. Michael Shafir, "Hungarian Politics and the Post-1989 Legacy of the Holocaust," in *Holocaust in Hungary: Sixty Years Later*, ed. Randolph L. Braham and Brewster S. Chamberlin (New York: Rosenthal Institute for Holocaust Studies, Graduate Center of the City University of New York, 2006), 257–90, here 275. Also, Kaiser, "Limits of Cultural Engineering," 529.

89. Kaiser, "Limits of Cultural Engineering," 531.

90. Mälksoo, "Memory Politics."

91. Mälksoo, "Memory Politics." For an even stronger elaboration of this thesis, see Maria Mälksoo, "Nesting Orientalisms at War," in *Orientalism and War*, ed. Tarak Barkawi and Keith Stanski (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 177–96.

92. Quoted in Michael Rothberg, "Between Paris and Warsaw: Multidirectional Memory, Ethics, and Historical Responsibility," in *Memory and Theory in Eastern Europe*, ed. Uilleam Blacker, Alexander Etkind, and Julie Fedor (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 81–102, here 81.

93. Littoz-Monnet, "Explaining Policy Conflict," 490.

94. Benjamin Meiches, *The Politics of Annihilation: A Genealogy of Genocide* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2019).

95. Ghodsee, "Tale of 'Two Totalitarianisms.'"