

Tale of “Two Totalitarianisms”: The Crisis of Capitalism and the Historical Memory of Communism

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On June 3, 2008, a group of conservative Eastern European politicians and intellectuals signed the Prague Declaration on European Conscience and Communism in the Czech parliament. The signatories to this Declaration proclaimed that the “millions of victims of Communism and their families are entitled to enjoy justice, sympathy, understanding and recognition for their sufferings in the same way as the victims of Nazism have been morally and politically recognized” and that there should be “an all-European understanding . . . that many crimes committed in the name of Communism should be assessed as crimes against humanity . . . in the same way Nazi crimes were assessed by the Nuremberg Tribunal.” The signatories addressed their demands to “all peoples of Europe, all European political institutions including national governments, parliaments, the European Parliament, the European Commission, the Council of Europe and other relevant international bodies.”¹

The Prague Declaration contains a list of demands, including compensation for victims. There are also calls for the establishment of a European “day of remembrance of the victims of both Nazi and Communist totalitarian regimes, in the same way Europe remembers the victims of the Holocaust on January 27th.” The Prague Declaration further advocates for the creation of a supranational “Institute for European Memory and Conscience” as well as increased support for memorials, museums, and national historical institutes charged with investigating the crimes of communism. Finally, the Prague Declaration demands the “adjustment and overhaul of European history textbooks so that children could learn and be warned about Communism and its crimes in the same way as they have been taught to assess the Nazi crimes.”²

Over the next four years, and against a backdrop of growing social unrest in response to the global financial crisis and Eurozone instability in Spain

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and Greece, European leaders instituted many of the recommendations in the Prague Declaration. The "European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism" was created by the European Parliament in 2008, and it was also supported by the Organization of Security and Co-operation in Europe in the Vilnius Declaration of 2009, a declaration that also instructed the nations of Europe to create a collective policy on "the world financial crisis and the social consequences of that crisis."³ The Platform of European Memory and Conscience was founded in Prague in 2011, and by 2013 this consortium of nongovernmental organizations and research institutes had forty-three Members from thirteen European Union countries as well as in Ukraine, Moldova, Iceland, and Canada.⁴ The United States is home to two organizations that are members of the European Platform for Memory and Conscience: the Joint Baltic American National Committee and the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation.⁵ The latter is an organization headed by Lee Edwards, the Heritage Foundation's "Distinguished Fellow in Conservative Thought," and "a leading historian of American conservatism."⁶

On January 20, 2012, the seventieth anniversary of the 1942 Wannsee conference that decided the Final Solution, the academics Dovid Katz and Danny Ben-Moshe presented the Seventy Years Declaration to the president of the European Parliament. This declaration was signed by seventy members of the European Parliament, and rejected all "attempts to obfuscate the Holocaust by diminishing its uniqueness and deeming it to be equal, similar or equivalent to Communism as suggested by the 2008 Prague Declaration."⁷ The Seventy Years Declaration rejected the idea that European history textbooks should be rewritten to promote the idea of the "Double Genocide,"—the moral and historical equivalence of the Jewish victims of Nazism and the East European and German victims of Soviet communism.

As an ethnographer of postsocialist Eastern Europe, I watched these debates rage with increasing curiosity. More than half a century had passed since the end of the Second World War and almost twenty years since the collapse of communism. Why were these historical issues being resurrected? What had changed in the European political landscape that precipitated the desire to rewrite history textbooks across the Continent? Clearly these new ideas arose after the initial wave of East European accession to the European Union on May 1, 2004. The first resolution officially condemning the crimes of communism in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) was issued in January 2006, and conservative East European politi-

cians spearheaded subsequent anti-communist activism. However, the real push to institutionalize the “double genocide” thesis came after the beginning of the global financial crisis in 2008.

European debate about the history of communism is not merely an academic skirmish about the past; it serves a wide variety of contemporary political purposes. In this essay, I explore the recent ethnographic history of this debate through three distinct moments: its roots in the late 1980s with the German *Historikerstreit* [historians battle]; Pierre Nora’s defense of the French refusal to publish a translation of Eric Hobsbawm’s *The Age of Extremes* in the 1990s; and the broader political context of the Prague Declaration. The current upsurge in East European commemorations for the victims of communism originates from a regional desire for victimhood status. The victims are not simply constructed discursively as the direct heirs of their own totalitarian pasts: the double genocide language produces a historical narrative wherein post-Soviet and postsocialist nations become martyrs—nation-states sacrificed by the West on the red alter of Soviet imperialism. In countries such as Latvia where local populations and Nazi-allied governments participated in the systematic murder of domestic Jews, the double genocide narrative mitigates their culpability by questioning the uniqueness of the Holocaust.⁸

In addition to the desire for historical exculpation, however, I argue that the current push for commemorations of the victims of communism must be viewed in the context of regional fears of a re-emergent left. In the face of growing economic instability in the Eurozone, as well as massive anti-austerity protests on the peripheries of Europe, the “victims of communism” narrative may be linked to a public relations effort to link all leftist political ideals to the horrors of Stalinism. Such a rhetorical move seems all the more potent when discursively combined with the idea that there is a moral equivalence between Jewish victims of the Holocaust and East European victims of Stalinism. This third coming of the German *Historikerstreit* is related to the precariousness of global capitalism, and perhaps the elite desire to discredit all political ideologies that threaten the primacy of private property and free markets.

This anti-communist political project requires the production of a certain historiography of the communist past, and in this project, both Western and East European academics have perhaps unwittingly obliged, as long as the European Union provides the funds. It is ironic that the present day

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historiography of the communist past is so ideologically driven. With the tacit support of Brussels, there exists today in Eastern Europe an institutionally sanctioned *Denkverbot* [prohibition on thinking] about the everyday lived experiences of communism. In an era of supposed free speech and freedom of conscience, politicians, scholars, and activists silence other stories about the past, including any open discussion of socialism’s achievements in terms of literacy, education, women’s rights, and social security by focusing exclusively on the crimes of Stalin and the double genocide thesis. The Platform for Memory and Conscience in Europe is manipulating the official history—the officially commissioned histories for textbooks that are published by various European states, to state one example—and stifling public debate using methods that mimic those once deployed by the very communist regimes they are so keen to criticize and discredit.⁹

A Potted History of the Historian’s Battle

The Historikerstreit was a major public debate between right-leaning and left-leaning historians in West Germany in the late 1980s. Public intellectuals took to the broadsheets of their country’s major newspapers to exchange views on the enduring legacies of the Nazi past. The conflict was sparked by U.S. President Ronald Reagan’s May 1985 visit to the Bitburg Military cemetery. Together with West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, Reagan spent eight minutes in a graveyard that contained the final resting places of forty-nine Waffen SS soldiers after weeks of fierce opposition in both West Germany and the United States. The following day, Bernard Weinraub of the *New York Times* reported: “White House aides have acknowledged that the Bitburg visit is probably the biggest fiasco of Mr. Reagan’s Presidency. The visit, which was made at the insistence of Mr. Kohl, was overwhelmingly opposed by both houses of Congress, Jewish organizations, veterans’ groups and others.”¹⁰ The Bitburg visit, and Reagan’s explicit commemoration of Nazi soldiers and Holocaust victims on the same day, set off a firestorm of controversy that precipitated the Historikerstreit.

It was the West German historian Ernst Nolte who launched the first salvo in the Historian’s Battle on June 6, 1986 with an article that appeared in the conservative newspaper, *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (FAZ). The article, “Vergangenheit, die nicht vergehen will” [The Past that Will Not Pass] was an abridged missive from his forthcoming book, *Der europäische Bürgerkrieg* [The European Civil War]. In the FAZ article, Nolte argued against a reigning

paradigm that viewed the Holocaust as a unique product of German history, and asserted that Hitler's embrace of National Socialism was an understandable reaction to Russian Bolshevism. Nolte catalogued early Soviet crimes; he employed traditional right-wing terms such as "Asiatic deeds" to do so. In addition, he proposed that fascism was a counterrevolution against communism—that communism was the original totalitarianism. He wrote: "Wasn't the gulag archipelago more original than Auschwitz? Wasn't Bolshevik 'class murder' the logical and actual predecessor to National Socialist 'race murder'?"¹¹ According to Nolte, the Nazis only made more efficient the mechanisms for mass murder previously invented by the communists.

An immediate rebuttal came from the sociologist and philosopher Jürgen Habermas who attacked Nolte for trying to relativize the Holocaust: "Nolte's theory offers a great advantage. He kills two birds with one stone: the Nazi crimes lose their singularity in that they are understood to be an answer to Bolshevik threats of destruction (which are apparently still present today); and Auschwitz shrinks to the dimensions of a technical innovation and is to be explained through an 'Asiatic' threat from an enemy who still stands before our gates."¹² The opposing views espoused by these two articles ignited a vitriolic public debate among German intellectuals, pitting the conservative Nolte and a handful of colleagues against Habermas, and eventually against the majority of West German public opinion.¹³

In a twenty-year retrospective on the Historikerstreit published in the journal *German History* in 2006, Norbert Frei argued that the conflict was an intergenerational tussle initiated by those German historians born during the Weimar Republic. These men lived through the Nazi period as teenagers, "often as members of the Hitler Youth or as young soldiers."¹⁴ Frei argued that the Historikerstreit was the product of "a generation of researchers and individuals who had a specific autobiographical agenda and were facing retirement at the start of the 1990s."¹⁵ Thus, the Historikerstreit reflected a wider West German generational shift that was taking place in the late 1980s as younger Germans who had never participated as soldiers or members of Hitler Youth replaced those scholars with personal memories of the War. Frei argued that the Historikerstreit was part of a "protracted political farewell" on the part of those Germans born under the Weimar Republic.¹⁶

For almost three years, fierce barbs were traded in West Germany's mainstream newspapers. Nolte's continued insistence that Hitler's anti-Semitism was a rational extension of his anti-Marxism, because Marxists

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were supposedly Jews, and his unwillingness to distance himself from rightwing activists eager to use his arguments to exonerate Hitler, swayed the debate in favor of Habermas and those who believed it preposterous that Nazi crimes could be excused if they were reimagined as a sensible response to Stalinism. In a 1980 lecture, Nolte said: "It is hard to deny that Hitler had good reason to be convinced of his enemies' determination to annihilate long before the first information about the events in Auschwitz became public. . . . [Zionist leader] Chaim Weizmann's statement in the first days of September 1939, that in this war the Jews of all the world would fight on England's side . . . could lay a foundation for the thesis that Hitler would have been justified in treating the German Jews as prisoners of war, and thus interning them."¹⁷ Ernst Nolte emerged from the Historikerstreit isolated in his opinions.¹⁸ It was the left-wing intellectuals who triumphed at the end of the Historikerstreit, and Habermas believed that the extended public debate had permanently subverted the historiographical exoneration of Adolf Hitler. But neither Habermas nor Nolte could imagine that the Berlin Wall would fall before the end of the decade. The terms of the debate would suddenly and unexpectedly tip in Nolte's favor.

Historikerstreit 2.0: Pierre Nora versus Erik Hobsbawm

Francis Fukuyama claimed that the collapse of East European communist regimes in 1989 and the eventual implosion of the Soviet Union in 1991 was "The End of History."¹⁹ In this view, liberal democracy and free market capitalism were the pinnacles of human social achievement, and the collective dreams of the left were crushed in the maelstrom of anti-Marxist triumphalism that marked the decade of the 1990s. As the German Democratic Republic was swallowed up into the Federal Republic of Germany, and East European countries rushed headlong into the arms of the West, the once settled issues of the Historikerstreit were thrown open for a new round of debate.

Although there were many intellectual skirmishes that followed the events of 1989, perhaps the best example of the Historikerstreit 2.0 was a conflict between two eminent historians in the 1990s, one British and the other French. In 1994, the unrepentant Marxist historian Eric Hobsbawm published *The Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 1914–1991*, a book that followed his popular trilogy on the "long nineteenth century": *The Age of Revolution*, *The Age of Capital*, and *The Age of Empire*. *The Age of Extremes* was

an instant international success, translated into twenty languages in about thirty countries, and hailed as a masterpiece by critics on all points of the political spectrum.²⁰ The remarkable success of the book in nations as disparate as Taiwan, the United States, and Bulgaria came despite the scandal caused when Hobsbawm suggested in a 1994 BBC interview with Michael Ignatieff that the many crimes of the Soviet Union would have been forgiven if they had given birth to a functioning communist society:

IGNATIEFF: In 1934, millions of people are dying in the Soviet experiment. If you had known that, would it have made a difference to you at that time? To your commitment? To being a Communist?

HOBSBAWM: . . . Probably not.

IGNATIEFF: Why?

HOBSBAWM: Because in a period in which, as you might imagine, mass murder and mass suffering are absolutely universal, the chance of a new world being born in great suffering would still have been worth backing. . . . The sacrifices were enormous; they were excessive by almost any standard and excessively great. But I'm looking back at it now and I'm saying that because it turns out that the Soviet Union was not the beginning of the world revolution. Had it been, I'm not sure.

IGNATIEFF: What that comes down to is saying that had the radiant tomorrow actually been created, the loss of fifteen, twenty million people might have been justified?

HOBSBAWM: Yes.²¹

Hobsbawm's personal commitment to the communist ideal initially prevented the book's translation into French. Even as the book was being read in German, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, Russian, and almost every language of the former Eastern Bloc, not a single French publisher—not even Fayard, the publisher of Hobsbawm's trilogy on the nineteenth century—was willing to invest in the book. Given the book's commercial success outside of France, it was clear that the French publishing establishment was effectively censoring Hobsbawm. Writing for *Lingua Franca* in November 1997, Adam Shatz argued that there were three trends that prevented the translation of Hobsbawm's book: "the growth of a vituperative anti-Marxism among French intellectuals; a budget squeeze in humanities publishing; and, not least, a publishing community either unwilling or afraid to defy these trends."²²

Hobsbawm's book appeared just two years after Tony Judt's *Past Imperfect: French Intellectuals 1944–1956*, published in French as *Un passé imparfait* by

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Fayard in October 1992. Judt's book contributed significantly to the growing "vituperative anti-Marxism among French intellectuals."²³ In *Past Imperfect*, Judt eviscerated the left politics of Albert Camus, Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, arguing that their commitment to the communist ideal blinded them to the tyranny of Stalinism. This blind faith in communism supposedly reflected a fatal flaw in French intellectual culture, and Hobsbawm may have been seen as reproducing that flaw.

In January 1997, in an introduction to a 100-page symposium in the French journal, *Le Débat*,²⁴ Pierre Nora—the founding editor of *Le Débat* and the editor of France's most distinguished history series at Éditions Gallimard—justified his refusal to publish a translation of *The Age of Extremes*²⁵ by citing budgetary constraints and the shrinking proportion of the French population interested in scholarly history books. The length of *The Age of Extremes* (627 pages in English) rendered the cost of translation prohibitive, and Nora argued that his press would surely lose money on such an undertaking. But Nora also admitted to having some ideological reservations about the book. In his introduction to the symposium, Nora argued that France was "the longest and most deeply Stalinised country" in Europe and that Hobsbawm's book appeared at a moment when French public culture was just shaking off its attachment to communist idealism.²⁶ This "decompression" followed the collapse of the Soviet Union, and "accentuated hostility to anything that could from near or far recall that former pro-Soviet, pro-communist age, including plain Marxism. Eric Hobsbawm cultivates this attachment to the revolutionary cause, even if at a distance, as a point of pride. . . . But in France at this moment, it goes down badly."²⁷ Nora continued by saying that all publishers " . . . whether they want to or not, are obliged to take into account the intellectual and ideological circumstances in which they publish. There are serious reasons to think . . . that [Hobsbawm's] book would appear in an unfavourable intellectual and historical climate."²⁸

Part of the problem was that *The Age of Extremes* was published just before François Furet's highly successful *Le Passé d'une illusion*, a book that asserted that Nazism and communism were the twin scourges of the twentieth century.²⁹ Furet's book was more in line with the reigning intellectual fashion in Paris, and French publishers perhaps feared that Hobsbawm's tome would not find an audience. Furet dedicated an extended footnote to Ernst Nolte's work, blaming the communist illusion for producing a romanticized culture of anti-fascism among European intellectuals. According to Furet, this led to

a misreading of the Spanish Civil War and prevented the acknowledgment of the fundamental similarities between fascism and communism.

Furet's *Le Passé d'une illusion* itself was the subject of an extended symposium in *Le Débat*. There, none other than Ernst Nolte himself contributed an essay supporting Furet's indictment of communism and its equivalence with Nazism.³⁰ There were important differences in the positions of Nolte and Furet. Still, the success of *Le Passé d'une illusion* in Germany led to a partial rehabilitation of Nolte's views. In a series of letters later exchanged between the two historians,³¹ Nolte acknowledged that Furet's book had helped the international historical community to see the legitimacy of his approach "despite a number of individual differences of opinion."³²

The ongoing refusal to translate *The Age of Extremes* was further buttressed by the political storm unleashed in France after the 1997 publication of *Le Livre noir du communisme: Crimes, terreur, répression* by Éditions Robert Laffont. This tome—over eight hundred pages—was a collection of essays attempting to produce a worldwide tally of communist victims. Furet had initially been tapped to write the introduction to the book, but after his death in July 1997, the task fell to the editor Stéphane Courtois who asserted that there were 100 million worldwide victims of communism, a number four times that of the victims of Nazism. Courtois inveighed against all twentieth century communist leaders, and argued that the "single-minded focus on the Jewish genocide" had impeded the accounting of communist crimes.³³ Given the revelations contained in newly opened Soviet and East European archives, Courtois argued that *Le Livre noir du communisme* definitively exposed the criminal nature of all communist regimes, and claimed that all Western intellectuals who supported communist ideals were no better than "common prostitutes."³⁴

Almost immediately after the book's publication, however, two of the prominent historians contributing to the volume, Jean-Louis Margolin and Nicolas Werth, attacked Stéphane Courtois in an article published in *Le Monde*, stating that they disagreed with his vitriolic introduction and its overt political agenda.³⁵ Margolin and Werth disavowed the book, claiming that Courtois was obsessed with reaching a figure of one hundred million, and that this led to sloppy and biased scholarship. They further claimed that Courtois wrote the book's introduction in secret, refusing to circulate it to the other contributors. They rejected Courtois's equation of Nazism and communism, with Werth telling *Le Monde* that "death camps did not exist in the

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Soviet Union.”³⁶ Indeed, in a 2000 review of *The Passing of an Illusion* and *The Black Book of Communism*, the Soviet historian J Arch. Getty pointed out that over half of the 100 million deaths attributed to communism were “excess deaths” resulting from famine. Getty writes: “The overwhelming weight of opinion among scholars working in the new archives (including Courtois’s co-editor Werth) is that the terrible famine of the 1930s was the result of Stalinist bungling and rigidity rather than some genocidal plan. Are deaths from a famine cause by the stupidity and incompetence of a regime . . . to be equated with the deliberate gassing of Jews?”³⁷

Despite the inhospitable climate in France for *The Age of Extremes*, Hobsbawm did not back down. He fought for the French translation, which was finally undertaken through a joint effort of the Belgian publisher Editions Complexe and the French newspaper *Le Monde diplomatique*. In a December 5, 1999 introduction to an article by Hobsbawm, the editors of *Le Monde diplomatique* lashed out at Pierre Nora and the French publishing establishment:

*With France having undergone a long period of ‘Stalinisation’ from which it had finally emerged, it was felt that the ideological and intellectual climate was not right for its [The Age of Extremes] publication. Publishers preferred books defending the ideas of French writer François Furet who held that the century boiled down to communism and nazism [sic], and that both were equally dangerous forms of totalitarianism. . . . In deciding to translate Hobsbawm’s book, Editions Complexe and Le Monde diplomatique have refused to reduce history to a single official theory. French-speaking readers have applauded this stand.*³⁸

Five years after its publication in English, the French translation appeared and was an instant success, particularly given the context of the broader French debates about memory after the publication of Pierre Nora’s *Lieux de Memoire* project. One month after the French release of *The Age of Extremes*, forty thousand copies were in print and the book was climbing to the top of all of the bestseller lists. Yet despite its commercial success in France in 2000, the book continued to spark debate. Michele Tepper argued in *Lingua Franca* that the “continuing backlash in Paris against the Marxist leanings that shaped French intellectual culture for most of the twentieth century may well continue to keep publishing house doors barred against the next Hobsbawm.”³⁹

Indeed, in the same year that Hobsbawm’s *The Age of Extremes* was finally available in French, the Germany Foundation—an organization associated

with the center-right German Christian Democratic Union—awarded Ernst Nolte the prestigious Konrad Adenauer Prize, prompting Robert Cohen in the *New York Times* to proclaim: “Hitler Apologist Wins German Honor.”⁴⁰ An immediate controversy ensued in Germany, particularly given the context of the far right’s political ascendance in several local elections in the Bundesländer of the former GDR as well as increases of violent neo-Nazi activity against asylum seekers and other immigrants. With the Front National gaining popularity in France and Jörg Haider and the FPÖ ascending in Austria, right wing parties were creeping back onto the political scene across the Continent. The recognition of Nolte’s work by prominent German historians precipitated fierce accusations that Nolte was a Holocaust denier. Many Jewish organizations decried the Germany Foundation’s decision to award Nolte a prize that had previously been bestowed on Helmut Kohl. Nolte’s rehabilitation, they argued, would embolden scholars who questioned the so-called cult of the Holocaust.

An excellent example of the far-reaching legacy of the renewed Historikere Streit was an article that appeared in the *Journal of Historical Review* in 2000. Mark Weber, director of the conservative Institute for Historical Review,⁴¹ argued that Nolte’s receipt of the Adenauer Prize might be a portent for “greater historical objectivity.”⁴²

*A Jewish view of 20th-century history—which includes what even some Jewish intellectuals call the ‘Holocaust cult’ or ‘Holocaust industry’—is obviously incompatible with a treatment that is objective and truthful. . . . [A]s the recent award to Ernst Nolte suggests, there are signs that the intellectual climate is changing. Not just in Germany, but across Europe, there is growing acknowledgement that the historical view imposed by the victorious Allies in 1945, as well as the Judeocentric view that now prevails, is a crass and even dangerous distortion. Contributing to this ‘historicization’ has been the end of the Soviet empire, with its outpouring of new revelations about the grim legacy of Soviet Communism, and the collapse of a major pillar of the ‘anti-fascist’ view of 20th-century history. Although powerful interests may succeed for a time in stemming the tide, in the long run a more ‘revisionist’ treatment of history, even Third Reich history, is inevitable.*⁴³

Weber’s article was prescient of a later wave of American popular histories embracing Nolte’s revisionist position.⁴⁴ For instance, the journalist Anne Applebaum’s two books, *Gulag: A History* and *Iron Curtain: The Crushing of Eastern Europe 1944–56* both support the idea that the horrors of communism were equal to or worse than the terrors of Nazism. It is no surprise, therefore, that

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Applebaum was awarded the Hungarian Petőfi Prize at the Budapest Terror House Museum on December 14, 2010, for her “outstanding efforts made to advance freedom and democracy in Central-Eastern Europe.”⁴⁵ More importantly for my argument, however, is that Weber rightly foresaw that Nolte’s recognition would have a real impact on the “Judeocentric” historiography of World War II. Nolte’s positions in the German Historikerstreit laid the intellectual foundations for the Prague Declaration, and the way that the idea of double genocide is used today.

These various public battles between European historians about the nature of twentieth century communism, and Stalinism in particular, informed a recent boom in historical scholarship in the former Eastern Bloc countries.⁴⁶ The European Union and the Visegrád Group—Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and Czech Republic—provide funding for this scholarship through the Platform for European Memory and Conscience. In museums such as the Hungarian House of Terror⁴⁷ and the Lithuanian Museum of Genocide Victims,⁴⁸ more space was allocated to the victims of communism than to the victims of the Holocaust. Historical institutes, such as the Institute for Studies of the Recent Past (ISRP) in Bulgaria⁴⁹ and the Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes and the Memory of the Romanian Exile (IICCMRE), focus on the crimes of communism against domestic East European populations and downplay the effects of the local alliances with Nazi Germany.⁵⁰

In the remainder of this essay, I will turn to an ethnographic case study of Bulgaria, the country that I know the best and where I have been doing research for the better part of twenty years. By examining the case of one postcommunist East European country, especially a former Nazi ally, I wish to demonstrate how the double genocide discourse operates at the local level—both to exculpate Bulgarians for their complicity in the death of the Thracian and Macedonian Jewish populations and to undermine and discredit contemporary left-inspired political alternatives to global capitalism.

Bulgaria and World War II

In order to understand how the historical memory of communism is linked to contemporary politics, it is necessary to review briefly Bulgaria’s World War II history, even while recognizing that this history is still contested.⁵¹ There are few completely uncontroversial facts that one can assert about Bulgaria during the Second World War; for the purposes of simplicity, I will

just sketch a broad outline based on what non-Bulgarian scholars have written.⁵² What is incontrovertible is that Bulgaria was an Axis ally during World War II. Although Nazi troops were allowed to pass through Bulgaria on their way to Greece, Bulgaria was under full control of the Bulgarian Royal Army. King Boris III made this allegiance with the hope of regaining lost Bulgarian territories in the Balkans. The Bulgarians occupied large parts of Northern Greece and Vardar Macedonia, which remained under their administration until September 9, 1944 when Bulgarian communists overthrew the monarchy, through a revolution or a coup d'état, depending on whom you ask.

In November 1940, the Bulgarian government under Prime Minister Bogdan Filov proposed legislation entitled the "Law for the Protection of the Nation," which included a variety of harsh measures directed against Bulgaria's Jewish population. The Bulgarian National Assembly voted to enact this law one month later.⁵³ Thus, even before Bulgaria was officially allied with Germany, Bulgaria's political elite voted to deprive Bulgarian Jews of their civil rights.⁵⁴ The law established a Commissariat for Jewish Affairs, which was charged with overseeing the enforcement of all laws pertaining to the Jewish population, including restrictions on where Jews could live, forced name changes, exclusion from public service, confiscation of their property, and other restrictions on their economic and professional activities.⁵⁵

At the end of 1940, before the Bulgarian monarchy threw in its lot with Nazi Germany, the Bulgarian Communist party organized the Sobolev Campaign, a popular democratic effort to sign a friendship and mutual assistance pact with the Soviet Union. The Soviet General Secretary of Foreign Affairs, Arkady Sobolev, made the original proposal to the Bulgarian government in November 1940. It guaranteed Soviet support for Bulgarian territorial claims in Yugoslavia and Greece in exchange for the establishment of Soviet military bases on the Black Sea. King Boris III's government refused the offer.⁵⁶

In response, the Bulgarian Communist Party mobilized a massive action to popularize the Soviet proposal. They circulated petitions and collected signatures in the hope of using democratic pressure to force the Bulgarian government to reverse its decision. It is estimated that between 350,000 and 500,000 Bulgarians signed the petition, an impressive result for a poor country with little communications infrastructure and a population of only 5.2 million.⁵⁷ Despite the number of signatures collected, the Bulgarian government, fearing a Bolshevik-style revolution, rejected the proposal. Three months after the Sobolev action, Prime Minister Bogdan Filov signed the

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Figure 1: Adolf Hitler greets Bulgaria's King Boris III in Berlin. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, courtesy of National Archives and Records Administration, College Park.

Tripartite Pact. On March 1, 1941 Bulgaria officially entered the war on the side of the Axis Powers.

A year later, Bulgarian soldiers helped German officials deport 11,459 Jews from Bulgarian-occupied Greece and Macedonia.⁵⁸ In reaction to the deportation of the Greek and Macedonian Jews, the ranks of Bulgaria's communist-led partisan movement swelled.⁵⁹ According to the historian Frederick Chary, there were about four hundred Jewish partisans out of ten thousand active resistance fighters, a membership rate that was "four times greater than the population as a whole."⁶⁰ The Bulgarian government of Bogdan Filov used this fact to justify its anti-Semitic and anti-communist policies.⁶¹ As the rebel numbers grew, the Bulgarian government responded by further increasing its efforts to stamp out the guerilla threat. The government created a special gendarmerie force with almost unlimited power to hunt down and persecute partisans and their civilian helpers.⁶²

The partisans were scattered and disorganized. Still, the Bulgarian government blamed them for acts of sabotage against German supply lines and for targeted political assassinations. A man named General Hristo Lu-

kov was president of the Bulgarian Union of Legionnaires, a “full-fledged fascist organization.”⁶³ A virulent anti-Semite, Lukov called for the ethnic cleansing of the Bulgarian nation, and was assassinated in February 1943.⁶⁴ Although the killers escaped, the Bulgarian government blamed the murder on a nineteen-year-old girl—a Jewish, communist partisan—and used the assassination as an excuse to step up their persecution of the resistance movement.⁶⁵ In his diary, Prime Minister Bogdan Filov recounts a conversation with the current Minister of Interior, Petar Gabrovski, in which they decided to “begin a newspaper campaign against the Communists and the Jews, while tightening repressive measures against them.”⁶⁶

Tensions rose again on May 23, when the Commissariat for Jewish Affairs issued orders for the immediate deportation of the roughly 25,000 Bulgarian Jews living in Sofia.⁶⁷ Sofia’s Jews were given only three days to depart from the capital, taking with them only what they could carry.⁶⁸ Men were expected to report to Sofia train station with their families and a complete inventory of their personal effects, leaving their homes and businesses behind. Officially, the government wanted to resettle the Jews in smaller towns in the Bulgarian provinces, but at the time many believed understandably that the deportation to the provinces represented a first step in their ultimate deportation to Treblinka. A July 1943 article in the *Worker’s Cause*, an underground newspaper of the Bulgarian communists, attempted to rally other citizens to action:

*It is the patriotic duty of every Bulgarian to unite in a powerful campaign in defence of the Jews, which will embrace all democratic and patriotic forces in this country and prevent the materialization of the intentions of the king, the government, and the remaining agents of Hitler in this country. . . . We warn you that the problem of the deportation of the Jews from the country is not precluded. The government was obliged to put it off for the time being, but, under favorable circumstances, it will try to fulfill its criminal intentions. The latter can be prevented only with a consistent, bold, and persistent struggle. . . . With joint efforts and decisive actions, the fascist beast will be crushed.*⁶⁹

If Bulgarians heeded this call, they put themselves in grave personal danger. Anyone caught aiding the resistance could be arrested and summarily executed.⁷⁰ The gendarmes and the local police also took to burning the family homes of known partisan fighters. In addition, the gendarmes committed many atrocities: gang rapes, decapitations, and bodily mutilations.⁷¹ They often displayed the severed heads of dead partisans on the tops of long

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pikes in village squares as a warning to those whose sympathies lay with the resistance. People were frightened into submission by the sheer brutality of the Bulgarian government’s reprisals.⁷² Ultimately, the Bulgarian government did manage to save its *own* Jewish population from deportation, and this is a fact proudly remembered every year since 2011 on a day set aside for the commemoration of the victims of Bulgarian communism.

Bulgaria’s Victims of Communism

On February 1, 2013, Bulgarians brought their wreaths to the monument for the victims of communism. This monument, designed by the architects Atanas Todorov and Dimitar Krastev, sits near a chapel in a slightly hidden alcove in the park in front of the National Palace of Culture (NDK) in Sofia. The monument was completed in 1999 for the ten-year anniversary of the collapse of Bulgarian communism.⁷³ An openly pro-American government funded its construction. The architects of the monument etched an emotional message in Bulgarian on the monument. The following words are literally written in stone:

Bow before this wall, fellow Bulgarians! It contains the suffering of our people. This memorial has been erected for our compatriots, victims of the communist terror: those who lost their lives, those who vanished without a trace, those who were shot by the so-called “people’s tribunal.” It commemorates the concentration camp prisoners, the political prisoners, those who were interned, those subjected to political repression, and their ill-fated families and relatives. May the memory of the innocently shed blood burn in our hearts like an eternal flame. May the past never repeat itself!

*Lord, give peace to the souls of your martyrs, grant them your justice. Accept them as our guardians, holy and immortal—now and forever. Amen.*⁷⁴

To increase accessibility to the monument, a virtual monument was also constructed in 2009. In addition, the American Research Center in Sofia launched a website—victimsofcommunism.bg—for the twentieth anniversary in 1989.⁷⁵ The website includes over 17,000 names of people said to be victims of communism, and it warns Bulgarians never to forget the evils of their communist past. The description on the project’s homepage clearly echoed Nolte’s idea of the two totalitarianisms: “The 20th century created two monsters: nazism [sic] and communism. While no educated, humane, and democratically minded person today would defend nazism, many still justify communism, a regime responsible for the death of over 100 million

people worldwide. In 1944, communism was forcefully introduced in Bulgaria. Terror followed overnight and lasted a very long time. Thousands were murdered or sent to prisons and concentration camps for being wealthy, educated, skilled, politically ‘dangerous’ or *for no pretext whatsoever*.⁷⁶ Apparently, the innocent blood shed “for no pretext whatsoever” continues to haunt Bulgaria’s political elites today. In 2009, a new government commissioned yet another physical monument to the victims of communism. In her emotional speech on February 1, 2013, Vice President Margarita Popova declared: “No one has the right to falsify history or to rewrite it, and no one can take away the memories of the people whose relatives were massacred.”⁷⁷

Of course, there were innocent victims of the communist regime in Bulgaria, sent to labor camps by paranoid dictators. But it is important to remember that the specific date chosen for the Day of Homage and Gratitude—February 1—marks the death sentences in 1945 of 147 members of the Bulgarian WWII government. One English language daily in Bulgaria reported that those murdered by the communists included: “the three regents during the time of then-boy king Simeon II, 22 former cabinet ministers, eight royal advisers, 67 members of parliament and 47 generals and senior officers, including the commanders of all armed forces. . . . At the hands of the communist ‘People’s Court,’ Bulgaria’s former political and military elite was liquidated at a single stroke.”⁷⁸ Sending the story out on the news-wire, the Associated Press reported that some Bulgarians laid wreaths at the foot of a wall inscribed with the names of many who died at the hands of the communists: “The victims memorialized on the wall include many political opponents of communism executed after September 1944, when Bulgaria’s communists seized power in this tiny Balkan country.”⁷⁹ Around the world the AP story was published and republished on news websites under the headline, “Bulgaria honors victims of communism.” None of these articles mentions Bulgaria’s World War II alliance with Hitler, nor is there any discussion of who is included among these 147 members of the country’s political and military elite.

The double genocide narrative works to exonerate the deeds of known fascists and make “victims” of men openly allied with the Third Reich. These victims of communism include major military and political figures who worked closely with Nazi Germany. Bogdan Filov was the Bulgarian prime minister from 1940 to 1943.⁸⁰ His government passed the 1940 Law for the

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Protection of the Nation, and set up the Commissariat for Jewish Affairs. Although Filov yielded to local pressure to save Bulgaria’s own Jewish population, it was his government that decided that roughly eleven thousand men, women, and children in the annexed territories in Macedonia and Greece would be deported to the death camps in Treblinka.⁸¹ Filov was a committed ally of Hitler. He was sentenced to death by a people’s court and executed by firing squad in February 1945.⁸² Today, he is honored as an innocent victim of communism.

Petar Gabrovski served as the Minister of Interior under Filov and in 1943 he was briefly Bulgaria’s Prime Minister.⁸³ He enforced the infamous Law for the Protection of the Nation and was himself a virulent anti-Semite. Gabrovski started his political career as a Nazi, but ultimately decided to form a new political movement called the Ratniks for the Advancement of the Bulgarian National Spirit. Although the Ratnik movement never became a popular nationalist movement among the country’s peasants, several prominent politicians openly identified as Ratniks. In his 1972 book, *The Bulgarian Jews and the Final Solution 1940–1944*, historian Frederick Chary published English translations of the actual warrants concerning the fate of the Greek and Macedonian Jews. One of these warrants states, “The Commissar for Jewish Questions is charged to deport from the borders of the country in agreement with the German authorities up to 20,000 Jews, inhabiting the recently liberated territories.”⁸⁴ It is signed personally by Petar Gabrovski.

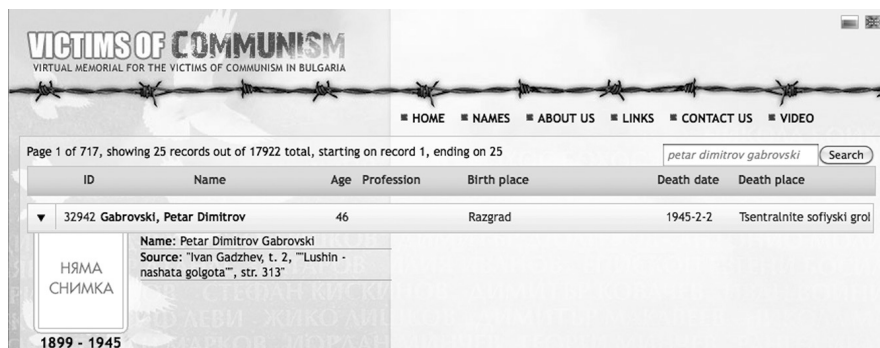


Figure 2: Petar Gabrovski’s name on the Victims of Communism website. Gabrovski personally signed the deportation orders of over 11,000 Jews from Bulgarian-occupied Thrace and Macedonia. Screen shot by K. Ghodsee.

Another listed victim of communism in Bulgaria was General Nikola Zhekov, a personal friend of Adolf Hitler,⁸⁵ and the head of the Bulgarian far-right Legionnaires.⁸⁶ After the Red Army entered Bulgaria in September 1944, Zhekov fled Bulgaria fearing political persecution by the new communist regime. He was already in Germany when the People's Court sentenced him to death on February 1, 1945. He died in Bavaria in 1949 at the age of 84, far from any Bulgarian firing squad. Since his name appears on the list of the "political and military elite" who were found guilty of collaboration with the government of Bogdan Filov, however, he is still celebrated as a "victim of communism."⁸⁷

An extreme case was General Hristo Lukov, the nationalist supposedly assassinated by a nineteen-year-old Jewish partisan.⁸⁸ Although the government blamed Lukov's 1943 death on the communists, Lukov was dead well before the People's Courts ever had a chance to execute him by firing squad.⁸⁹ He served as the Bulgarian Minister of War and an extreme right-wing politician who led the Union of Bulgarian National Legions—the Legionnaires. Lukov called for the racial and ethnic purity of the Bulgarian people during the First and Second World Wars. In 2013, he was still a beacon for neo-Nazi sympathizers in Bulgaria.⁹⁰ In fact, in 2011, the European Network Against Racism (ENAR) issued a press release asking the mayor of Sofia to ban an impending Lukov March.

The letter protested the annual permit granted to this march, which was organized by a coalition of nationalist forces in the name of Hristo Lukov. The letter states: "The Lukov March is the most important public event of [right-wing] groups in Bulgarian society, which have showed open or covert adherence to fascist, neo-Nazi and ultra national-populist ideas. [The] Lukov March is especially dangerous for its impact on young people, promoting authoritarian and anti-democratic ideas under the guise of patriotism and reverence for the national war heroes."⁹¹ A European NGO against racism can protest against marches held in Lukov's name, but in Bulgaria he is listed as an innocent victim of communism. About men such as these, the Victims of Communism memorial monument tells us: "Lord, give peace to the souls of your martyrs, grant them your justice. Accept them as our guardians, holy and immortal—now and forever. Amen."

The February 1 memorialization is not without controversy in Bulgaria. The Bulgarian Antifascist Union,⁹² a national organization with leftist sym-

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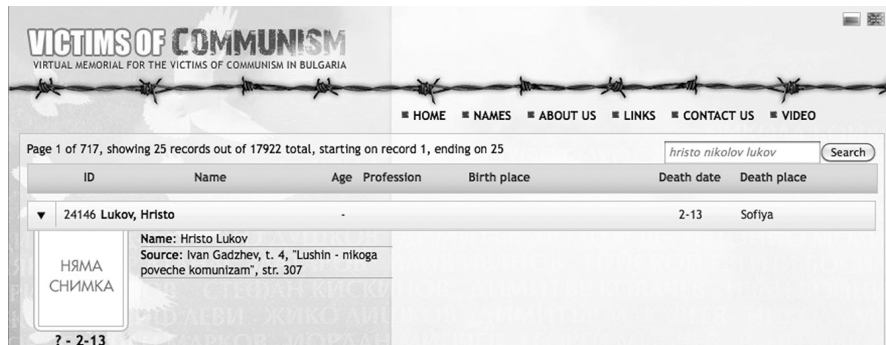


Figure 3: Hristo Lukov's name on the Victims of Communism website. Lukov is still a hero of neo-Nazi groups in Bulgaria today. Screen shot by K. Ghodsee.

pathies, actively opposed the Day of Homage and Gratitude to the Victims of the Communist Regime. The holiday was only marked in a few Bulgarian cities in 2012 and the number of people in attendance was small. Most ordinary Bulgarians were not convinced by political rhetoric that was most likely meant for international consumption. Like all postsocialist countries, Bulgaria is keen to reassure foreign investors and Western governments that their communist days are long behind them.

Conclusion

Is it a coincidence that this sudden surge of concern with commemorating the victims of communism appeared in the wake of the global financial crisis that began in 2008? As markets plunged and the Eurozone economies teetered on the edge of collapse, the European Parliament passed the resolution establishing the European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism. Bulgaria's economy had also been devastated by the crisis, and popular faith in democracy and capitalism had evaporated. In this context it became necessary to honor and pay gratitude to all victims of communism, no matter who they were or what they did as staunch allies of Hitler.

According to the Prague Declaration and its double genocide narrative, class murder and race murder are moral equivalents. The European Union's uncritical embrace of this double genocide ideology seems designed to protect the interests of the political and economic elites in both Western and Eastern Europe. Just when neoliberal capitalism is facing devastated economies and extreme inequalities of wealth, European leaders gravitate toward

an intellectual paradigm in which: 1) any move towards redistribution and away from a completely free market is seen as communist; 2) anything communist inevitably leads to class murder; and 3) class murder is the moral equivalent of the Holocaust. Although the European Union's leaders may not be intentionally cultivating the discourse, their support of the double genocide thesis has a real impact on the nature of public debate. Any challenge to unfettered capitalism—whether in the form of protests in Greece and Spain or Obamacare in the United States—can be painted as the moral equivalent of Auschwitz even as, ironically, European popular discourses also blame “Jewish” financial interests in the United States for creating the crisis in the first place.

This narrative is already impacting the future of Europe. Across the continent today, right-wing parties are once again on the rise, and they are finding mass support from populations weary of the increasing presence of Middle Eastern, South Asian, or African immigrants. Non-European and ethnic minority populations can become an easy scapegoat in times of economic austerity; across Europe there is rising anti-immigrant, anti-Semitic, and anti-Roma violence. As the German government, the European Central Bank, and the International Monetary Fund move to dismantle welfare states in Europe's periphery for the sake of stabilizing global financial markets, an increasing number of Greeks, Spaniards, Bulgarians, Romanians, Portuguese, and Ukrainians find themselves drawn to the far right. Since the evils of communism are, according to the narrative, so incredibly grave, one need not worry too much about fascist elements, so long as they are opposing communism. On the double genocide story, even the extremes of fascism are no worse than the “inevitable” outcome of steps towards socialism; if they are morally equivalent, then the political and economic elite do no wrong by choosing the pole that accords with their own financial interests.

As I write this, a particularly potent lingering effect of the *Historikerstreit* may be emerging in Ukraine. As of March 8, 2014, the Russians are in the Crimea, and American pundits are warning that there is a new Cold War looming. The United States has unequivocally backed a new Ukrainian government that contains unsavory right-wing elements.⁹³ Careful observers have tried to call attention to the role that the far-right, anti-Semitic party, *Svoboda* [Freedom], played in the Maidan protests and in creating the political instability in Ukraine.⁹⁴ Members of the nationalist *Svoboda* party have

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taken up key posts in the interim government after the ouster of pro-Russian President Yanukovich.

At the same time, the right-wing media and blogosphere in the United States are painting Putin’s Russia as communist. This theme has been taken up by Marion Smith, the new director of the U.S. Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, one of the only two American member organizations of the European Platform for Memory and Conscience, and a conservative proponent of the double genocide. In a March 5, 2014 article in the *Washington Examiner*, Smith was quoted as saying: “I consider it a sacred responsibility to keep alive the memory of 100 million people who were killed by Communist regimes since 1917. Unfortunately, recent events in Ukraine—the reprise of Soviet-style rhetoric, and a rise of pro-Communist sentiments among segments of the population—have highlighted the difficulty of overcoming the legacy of Soviet communism. The work of our foundation is needed more than ever.”⁹⁵

Over at foxnews.com, a resident national security analyst likewise sees Russia as promoting communism, writing that “Putin claims the greatest tragedy of the 20th century was the breakup of the Soviet Union. He studied the causes and planned the comeback.”⁹⁶ Pundits at the *National Review* claim that the Russian aggression in Ukraine is a harbinger of “National Bolshevism.”⁹⁷ At *Forbes*, Roger Scruton authored an article entitled: “To Understand Ukraine, We Must Remember The Communist Past.”⁹⁸ In it he asserted: “Few of the current generation of West European politicians have had to wrestle with the inner nature of the Soviet Union, or to explore the deep psychology of those like Vladimir Putin and his circle, who were formed as secret police officers under communism.”⁹⁹

If Russia’s actions in Crimea are seen as steps toward the second coming of communism, then this will certainly affect foreign policy moves by the West, especially as the Western nations sort through their options in the wake of the annexation of Crimea and the larger Russian threat to Ukraine and perhaps other former Soviet Republics. If right-wing pundits can convince the American public that Putin is a communist, then the double genocide version of history would mandate that we oppose him with the same vigor as we would someone advocating another Holocaust. Although both Congress and the American public were wary of engaging with Russia over Crimea, Fox News and the right wing blogosphere attacked Obama for his “weakness” in not standing up to Putin. A hypothesis that was deemed

a dangerous fringe view in Germany in the 1980s, and was continuously challenged by scholars throughout the 1990s, has gained increasing traction in the United States and may end up influencing American foreign policy.

As Ukraine erupts into civil violence, it is only a matter of time before the West faces the stark choice between supporting the far right or the far left in countries destabilized by the global financial crisis such as Greece where the immigrant-friendly, anti-austerity, left-wing SYRIZA coalition is opposed by the neo-fascist Golden Dawn party. If both sides of this spectrum are equally evil, then there will be no moral qualm in choosing the side more likely to serve Western political and economic interests, even if this means the institutionalization of a new nationalist xenophobia. If communism and fascism are moral equivalents, threats to the private property of the super-rich or political acts that will destabilize global markets are the moral equivalents of the systematic murder of immigrants and internal others. The double genocide thesis and its production of the “victims of communism” discourse not only aims to prevent a return of leftist politics. It can also be used to justify acceptance of neo-fascism.

My thanks to Scott Sehon, Jill Smith, Susan Faludi, and Krassimira Daskalova for their comments and thoughts on various stages and sections of this manuscript. I am indebted to Susan Neiman for initially pointing out the relevance of the Historikerstreit to the Bulgarian case, and to the editors and reviewers at History of the Present for their helpful suggestions and comments.

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Notes

1. All text in this paragraph is from the Prague Declaration, available in English online at: <http://www.praguedeclaration.eu/>.
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3. Organization of Security and Co-Operation in Europe. “Press release issued by the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly” <http://www.osce.org/pa/51129>.
4. <http://www.memoryandconscience.eu/>.
5. <http://www.memoryandconscience.eu/2011/08/18/platform-members/>.

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7. <http://www.seventyyearsdeclaration.org/the-declaration.html>.
8. Monica Lowenberg, "Riga, Capital of European Culture: Waffen SS, Stags and Silence?" *DefendingHistory.com*, February 4, 2014, <http://defendinghistory.com/riga-capital-of-european-culture-waffen-ss-stags-and-silence/63468>.
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10. Bernard Weinraub, "Reagan Joins Kohl in Brief Memorial at Bitburg Graves," *New York Times*, sec. A, May 6, 1985.
11. Ernst Nolte quoted in Daniel Schönplflug, "Histoires croisées: François Furet, Ernst Nolte and a Comparative History of Totalitarian Movements," *European History Quarterly* 37 (2007): 282.
12. Habermas quoted in Mark S. Peacock, "The desire to understand and the politics of Wissenschaft: an analysis of the Historikerstreit," *History of the Human Sciences* 14 (2001): 95.
13. Gerhard Hirschfeld, "Erasing the Past?" *History Today* 37 (1987): 8–10.
14. Norbert Frei, "The Historikerstreit Twenty Years On," *German History* 24, (2006): 590.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Ernst Nolte quoted in Ian B. Warren, "Throwing Off Germany's Imposed History—The Third Reich's Place in History: A Conversation with Ernst Nolte," *The Journal of Historical Review* 14 (Jan.–Feb. 1994): 15–22, http://www.ihr.org/jhr/v14/v14n1p15_Warren.html.
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21. Quoted in Alex Massie, "Eric Hobsbawm and the Fatal Appeal of Revolution" - *Spectator Blogs*, October 2, 2012, <http://blogs.spectator.co.uk/alex-massie/2012/10/eric-hobsbawm-and-the-fatal-appeal-of-revolution>.
22. Adam Shatz, "Chunnel Vision."
23. Ibid.
24. "Sur l'histoire du XXe siècle" [On the History of the 20th Century], *Le Débat* (January-February 1997).
25. Pierre Nora, "Traduire: nécessité et difficultés," *Le Débat* 142, no. 93 (January/February 1997): 93–95.
26. Pierre Nora as quoted in Eric Hobsbawm, "A History of the 20th Century: Age of Extremes defies French Censors," *Le Monde diplomatique* December 5, 1999, <http://mondediplo.com/1999/12/05hobsbawm>.
27. Ibid.

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28. Ibid.
29. François Furet, *The Passing of an Illusion: The Idea of Communism in the 20th Century* (2000).
30. Communisme et fascisme au XXe siècle" [Communism and Fascism in the 20th Century]. *Le Débat* (March-April 1996).
31. François Furet and Ernst Nolte, *Fascism and Communism* (2004).
32. Ernst Nolte cited in Daniel Schönplflug "Histoires croisées," 284.
33. Stéphane Courtois quoted in Adam Shatz, "The Guilty Party," *Lingua Franca* (October 1999), <http://linguafranca.mirror.theinfo.org/br/9911/shatz.html>.
34. Ibid.
35. Jean-Louis Margolin and Nicolas Werth, "Communisme: Le Retour a l'histoire," *Le Monde*, November 14, 1997.
36. Nicolas Werth quoted in J. Arch Getty, "The Future Did Not Work," *Atlantic Monthly* 285, no. 3 (2000): 114.
37. J. Arch Getty, "The Future Did Not Work," 114.
38. Eric Hobsbawm, "A History of the 20th Century: Age of Extremes defies French Censors," *Le Monde diplomatique*, December 5, 1999, <http://mondediplo.com/1999/12/05hobsbawm>.
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41. www.ihr.org.
42. Mark Weber, "Changing Perspectives on History in Germany: A Prestigious Award for Nolte: Portent of Greater Historical Objectivity?" *The Journal of Historical Review* 19, no. 4 (2000): 29.
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44. "Anne Applebaum Receives Petőfi Prize" U.S. Embassy in Budapest, http://hungary.usembassy.gov/event_12142010.html.
45. Ibid.
46. I would like to thank one of the anonymous reviewers for pointing out that there is also an ongoing debate about the expulsion of ethnic Germans from the East, the "Vertriebenen." Apparently, discussion of the expelled Germans used to be limited to a handful of marginal scholars collaborating with the Association of the Expulsed or the Sudeten Germans Day. Today, however, debates about Germans as victims of expulsion, massacres, and rape in the East are now relatively mainstream, and there is a center documenting and memorializing German expulsions scheduled to open in 2016. There are also heated debates regarding the allied bombings of cities such as Dresden and Hamburg. In this discourse, Germans are now considered victims of war crimes perpetrated by the Allies. Although these debates are more about internal German memory politics than they are about anticommunism, they are interesting to consider alongside the "double genocide" thesis. For further information on German victims

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- of WWII, see: <http://www.zeitgeschichte-online.de/thema/online-ressourcen-zur-debatte-um-das-zentrum-gegen-vetreibungen-und-zum-diskurs-zum-thema-der>.
47. http://www.terrorhaza.hu/en/index_2.html.
48. <http://www.genocid.lt/muziejus/en/>.
49. See their website at: <http://www.minaloto.org/> Access date: September 1, 2013.
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51. Roumen Daskalov, *Debating the Past: Modern Bulgarian History: from Stambolov to Zhivkov* (2011).
52. I refer heavily to Marshall Lee Miller, *Bulgaria During the Second World War* (1975), because I assume that the historiography is the least informed by internal Bulgarian feuds.
53. Marshall Lee Miller, *Bulgaria During the Second World War* (1975), 93–106.
54. Frederick B. Chary, *The Bulgarian Jews and the Final Solution 1940–1944* (1972), 105–109.
55. On the history of the Bulgarian Jews see Tzvetan Todorov, *The Fragility of Goodness: Why Bulgaria's Jews Survived the Holocaust* (2003); Frederick B. Chary, *The Bulgarian Jews and the Final Solution 1940–1944* (1972); Marshall Lee Miller, *Bulgaria During the Second World War* (1975): 93–106, and Rumen Avramov and Nadya Danova, *Deportiraneto na Evrite ot Vardarska Makedoniya, Belomorska Trakiya I Pirov, Mart 1943, Tom I-II (Komplekt)* (2013).
56. Miller, *Bulgaria During the Second World War*.
57. Stephen Tsanev, *Bulgarski Hronikli: Tom 3* (2008): 552.
58. Rumen Avramov and Nadya Danova, *Deportiraneto na Evrite*. Also see Roumen Daskalov, *Debating the Past*, 183.
59. For an account of WWII in Bulgaria from the perspective of a Jewish partisan fighter, see Angel Wagenstein, *Predi Kraya na Sveta: Draskulki ot Neolita* (2011). Also see the excellent documentary film by Andrea Simon and Arcadia Pictures: *Art is a Weapon*, <http://arcadiapictures.org/>.
60. Frederick B. Chary, *The History of Bulgaria* (2011), 100.
61. *Ibid.*, 100–101.
62. Miller, *Bulgaria During the Second World War*, 195–203.
63. Daskalov, *Debating the Past*, 162.
64. Miller, *Bulgaria During the Second World War*, 117–118.
65. Chary, *The Bulgarian Jews*, 139.
66. Todorov, *The Fragility of Goodness*, 84–85.
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68. Todorov, *The Fragility of Goodness*, 104–105.
69. *Ibid.*, 108–111.
70. Peter J. Conradi, *A Very English Hero: The Making of Frank Thompson* (2012), 370.
71. *Ibid.* See also Orlin Vasilev, *Vaorazhenata saportiva 1923–1944* (1946), 606–633.
72. Fred Inglis, *The Cruel Peace: Everyday Life and the Cold War* (1991), 24–27.

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73. <http://www.apnewsarchive.com/1999/Bulgarian-Monument-Unveiled/id-888026bba4df4e583c6d7df8790a4164>.

74. This is the full text as translated by the Victims of Communism website. Please see a screen shot of this official translation preserved on my personal website here: <http://scholar.harvard.edu/kristenghodsee/galleries/bulgarian-victims-communism-website>.

75. The original website page was <http://arcsofia.org/en/page/38-Victims-of-Communism-Project>. This page was removed by ARCS, but I have archived it on my personal website at <http://scholar.harvard.edu/kristenghodsee/galleries/bulgarian-victims-communism-website>.

76. Just as I wrote this intervention, and perhaps in response to a critical article that I published in *Anthropology News* (<http://www.anthropology-news.org/index.php/2013/02/22/blackwashing-history/>), the original text on the website was removed. The [victimsofcommunism.bg](http://www.victimsofcommunism.bg) website was renamed “Prosopography of Political Repressions in Bulgarian Territory: 1944–1989,” although it kept the same url: <http://www.victimsofcommunism.bg/>. This change coincided with funding from the German Konrad Adenauer Foundation, a right-wing German think tank. I had taken screen shots of all texts and the names of the Bulgarian leaders responsible for many atrocities during WWII from the original website. These can be found in a media gallery on my personal website: <http://scholar.harvard.edu/kristenghodsee/galleries/bulgarian-victims-communism-website>. Italics mine.

77. “Bulgaria honours memory of victims of communism,” February 1, 2013, <http://sofiaglobe.com/2013/02/01/bulgaria-honours-memory-of-victims-of-communism/>.

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79. Associated Press, “Bulgaria Honors Victims of Communism,” February 1, 2013, <http://www.boston.com/news/world/europe/2013/02/01/bulgaria-honors-victims-communism/WC9K54KlpYcgzOeV985lhP/story.html>.

80. The United States Holocaust Memorial Museum has a collection of Bogdan Filov’s papers (Fond 456), as well as his diary. Bogdan Filov, *Dnevnik*, ed. Ilcho Dimitrov. Sofia: Izdatelstvo na Otechestveniya Front. An English translation of Filov’s diary can be found in “The Diary of Bogdan Filov” *Southeastern Europe* 1, no. 1 (1974): 60.

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82. Chary, *The History of Bulgaria*, 121–122.

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84. Ibid., 212–14.

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