

Bulletin of the GHI Washington

Issue 40

Spring 2007

Copyright

Das Digitalisat wird Ihnen von perspectivia.net, der Online-Publikationsplattform der Max Weber Stiftung – Stiftung Deutsche Geisteswissenschaftliche Institute im Ausland, zur Verfügung gestellt. Bitte beachten Sie, dass das Digitalisat urheberrechtlich geschützt ist. Erlaubt ist aber das Lesen, das Ausdrucken des Textes, das Herunterladen, das Speichern der Daten auf einem eigenen Datenträger soweit die vorgenannten Handlungen ausschließlich zu privaten und nicht-kommerziellen Zwecken erfolgen. Eine darüber hinausgehende unerlaubte Verwendung, Reproduktion oder Weitergabe einzelner Inhalte oder Bilder können sowohl zivil- als auch strafrechtlich verfolgt werden.

FEATURES

EUROPE: A COMMUNITY OF MEMORY?

Twentieth Annual Lecture of the GHI, November 16, 2006

Aleida Assmann

University of Konstanz

“The project of a united Europe will probably require the readjustment of historical narratives—and possibly the recasting of various collective memories from East and West.”

—Jan-Werner Müller

In 1882, at the very peak of the development of nationalism, the French anthropologist Ernest Renan prophesied: “Nations are not permanent. They began and they will end sometime. It is very likely that they will be replaced by the European confederation.”¹ At the beginning of the twenty-first century, we can only confirm this statement: The concept of the nation is receding as a dominant reference point for collective identity. New forms of collective identity have appeared both above and below the level of nationhood. In this process the downward tendency toward disintegration is at least as strong as the upward tendency toward integration on a higher level. An obvious example is the United States, where national myths and visions lost both color and persuasive power to make room for ethnic identities. The immigrants had been expected to relinquish their origins and histories so that they could dedicate themselves completely to the common national project. This nation was united not by a common heritage but by a promise, a common dream. “To be an American (unlike being English or French or whatever),” wrote Leslie Fiedler in the late 1960s, “is precisely to imagine a destiny rather than to inherit one since we have always been, insofar as we are Americans at all, inhabitants of myth rather than history.”² The rationale of this immigration policy was that a common future would gradually replace divided pasts.

Today, we see that the future has lost much of its power to integrate, while the past is becoming increasingly important in the formation of identity. This shift of orientation from future to past occurred in the 1980s and 1990s with the growing acknowledgement of historical traumas. In the aftermath of the Holocaust, colonialism, and slavery, the experience of

the victims found growing recognition and served as a new basis for the formation of collective identity. This fragmentation of national identity into subgroups has become manifest in the so-called hyphenated identities, such as African-American, Caribbean-British, or Jewish-Austrian.

European Identity Formation

Generally speaking, collective identities require both a common goal for the future and common points of reference in the past. This applies also to the case of the European Union. There is currently little disagreement about the guiding values for the present and the future: the basic rights of democratic civil society are compulsory for all member states. The political scientist Bassam Tibi, a German Muslim from Syria and a student of Max Horkheimer, coined the term “European guiding culture” [*europäische Leitkultur*] to identify this normative framework for integration.³ Starting from the premise that every community needs “a consensus of values and an identity,” Tibi defined the standard for a “European identity for Germany” in the following way:

Precedence of reason over religious revelation, that is, over the authority of absolute religious truths; precedence of *individual* human rights over communal rights; a secular democracy based on the separation of church and politics; *universally recognized* pluralism as well as mutually effective tolerance. The acceptance of these values alone forms the substance of a civil society.⁴

At the same time, various actions have been taken to create something like a common historical memory for the growing European Union which, it is hoped, will reinforce the bonds between the member states. Politicians, historians, museologists, and image designers are currently in search of a collective European history, which is to be disseminated through common symbols, textbooks, and commemorative practices. Politicians and historians have laid the foundation for a museum of Europe that is to open in 2007 on the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the European Community. It is intended to strengthen the consciousness of a transnational European identity among the citizens of the EU by providing a historical narrative and giving it concrete and visible shape.⁵ Another historical project discussed by a group of international historians is the search for shared “European sites of memory.” The project of *Lieux de mémoire* (1984–1992), launched for France by Pierre Nora and his colleagues and successfully imitated in many European countries such as the Netherlands, Spain, Austria, and Germany, is thereby to be raised to a transnational level.⁶ In addition to these projects, various European research teams—most of them funded by the European

Science Foundation—are engaged in investigating key historical events that make up something like the European *imaginaire*.⁷

The Holocaust as the Memory of Europe?

The historian Dan Diner has argued that these efforts to construct a European history are unnecessary because Europe already has a common point of reference in the past, namely, the Holocaust. This, he argues, is the paradigmatic European *lieu de mémoire*, and every construction of a European identity must acknowledge it as a point of departure. Indeed, steps have been taken to institutionalize this common memory as the core of European identity. Prime Minister Göran Persson of Sweden invited representatives of sixteen nations (among them thirteen present and future members of the European Union) to a forum in Stockholm on January 27, 2000, to discuss and define a common framework for commemorating and teaching the Holocaust. In the first year of the new millennium, fifty-five years after the liberation of Auschwitz, there was agreement that the murder of six million European Jews should become a common memory and, in turn, that this memory should inform the values of European civil society and serve as a reminder of the obligation to protect the rights of minorities. A task force was created in 1998 (which has meanwhile grown to encompass twenty-two nations) that is committed to perpetuating the memory of the Holocaust. The last article of the Stockholm declaration states: “It is appropriate that this, the first major international conference of the new millennium, declares its commitment to plant the seeds of a better future amidst the soil of a bitter past. We empathize with the victims’ suffering and draw inspiration from their struggle. Our commitment must be to remember the victims who perished, respect the survivors still with us, and reaffirm humanity’s common aspiration for mutual understanding and justice.”⁸

Though Europe was the stage for the Holocaust, the memory of it is no longer specifically European but extends far beyond Europe’s boundaries. On January 24, 2005, the United Nations for the first time in its history commemorated the Holocaust in a special session. In his address, Kofi Annan emphasized that “the evil which destroyed six million Jews and others in these camps still threatens all of us today; the crimes of the Nazis are nothing that we may ascribe to a distant past in order to forget it. . . . It falls to us, the successor generations,” he said, “to lift high the torch of remembrance, and to live our lives by its light.”⁹ This development of a progressive extension of the memory of the Holocaust beyond the boundaries of Europe confirms the thesis of a book by Daniel Levy and Nathan Sznajder. In *Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age*, the authors argue that “as nothing was more ‘cosmopolitan’ than the concen-

tration and extermination camps of the Nazis" (25), this trauma needs to be answered by a globalization of Holocaust memory. In the globalized modern world, whose most important characteristic is displacement, deterritorialization, and the transcending of borders, the "cosmopolitan memory" of the Holocaust provides the foundation for a global politics of human rights, based on commonly remembered barbarism.¹⁰ A globalization of the Holocaust, I would like to argue, has indeed come about, but in a slightly different way from that envisaged by Levy and Sznajder. The Holocaust has not become a single universally shared memory, but it has become the paradigm or template through which other genocides and historical traumas are very often perceived and presented. The Holocaust has thereby not replaced other traumatic memories around the globe but has provided a language for their articulation.

European Memories after 1945

In Europe, the historical site of the German genocide of the Jews, Holocaust memory has a different quality and resonance than it has, for instance, in the United States, where it is far removed from its local contexts. In Europe this memory is anything but abstract and removed, but rather deeply engraved in local and national history. We therefore have to consider the difference between a global and a European Holocaust memory, and, furthermore, a European and a national Holocaust memory. In Europe, this memory is embedded in the history of the Second World War, which all the nations of Europe experienced but which each experienced differently. In other words, in Europe the transnational memory runs up against a variety of national memory constellations and collisions.¹¹ If we ignore these historical levels of memory or paint them with too broad a brush, we run the risk of ending up with a rather abstract memory construct. In Germany, for instance, there is the danger that, in the adoption of this victim memory, its own perpetrator memory will disappear. Therefore, Volkhart Knigge objected to such an adoption and warned against the "naïve importation of concepts, such as that of 'Holocaust Education.'"¹² Reinhart Koselleck made the following emphatic comment on behalf of the Germans: "By no means may we hide behind victim groups, specifically the Jews, as if by doing so we had gained a Holocaust memorial, as other nations of the globe have done."¹³

The problem on which I would like to focus here was incisively stated by the Swiss author Adolf Muschg when he wrote: "What binds Europe and divides it is at its core one thing: the common memory."¹⁴ More than sixty years after the events, we Europeans are still far from a unified memory; on the contrary, we have to acknowledge that the Second World War and the Holocaust remain subjects of conflict and debate. Appar-

ently, national memories cannot be integrated within a European memory as easily as the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research might wish.

To recognize the heterogeneous memory territory of Europe more clearly, we need to turn to the history of European memory after 1945. With a series of writings culminating in his recent book *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945*, the historian Tony Judt has made us aware of Europe's highly selective postwar memory constructions. Memories, he argues, were politically explosive and unusable during the era when Europe was both divided and bound together by a sharp ideological contest between the two superpowers of East and West. At a time when "the enemy" had been re-identified, it was inopportune, for instance, to recall that the Soviet Union had recently been one of the Allies in the war against Hitler and the Axis powers. Without Hitler, this alliance quickly collapsed and was replaced by the "Iron Curtain," which led to the freezing of memory and history in conformity with the political status quo of the Cold War.¹⁵

In an essay entitled "Myth and Memory in Postwar Europe" (1992), Tony Judt showed that during the Cold War the national memories of Europe were frozen in such a way as to support the political status quo. According to Judt, the official European version of the wartime experience included the "universally acknowledged claim that responsibility for the war, its suffering and its crimes, lay with the Germans."¹⁶ The scale of the evil that had been committed by Nazi Germany had evidently surpassed the limits of experience and imagination, so this consensus was certainly grounded on more than "an intuitive logic." Judt, however, points to the comforting effect of this formula for European nations: Within this framework, many memories of what had happened during and after the war "got conveniently lost."¹⁷ The Hungarian writer Peter Esterházy expressed a similar idea in the speech he gave in St. Paul's Church in Frankfurt upon receiving the 2004 Peace Prize of the German Book Trade, when he said: "To conceal one's own guilt by referring to Germany's crimes is a European habit. Hatred for the Germans is the foundation of the postwar period."¹⁸

During this period there were two generally recognized and honorable roles for European nations to assume: victim and/or resister. Austria can serve as an example of the first, the nation as victim, and France of the second, the nation as resister. In both countries, of course, there were people who were victims of Hitler's Germany and people who engaged in acts of resistance. Memory was not necessarily distorted after the war but a selective memory was generalized and politically instrumentalized. Psychoanalysts speak of "screen memories" that suppress other memories and serve to protect a positive self-image. To put it another

way, one remembers something in order to be better able to forget something else. When applied to the realm of national memory, this means that one recalls one's own suffering in order to avoid being reminded of one's own guilt. Remembering oneself in the role of victim can also block memory of other victims, particularly the Jewish victims. Myths arise when partial memories supported by experience are claimed as the homogeneous and exclusive memory for the national collective, while memories deemed inappropriate are excluded from the national discourse and expunged from the collective self-image.

We could witness how these defensive strategies began to crumble in Western Europe in the 1980s. After a period of extremely stylized and standardized images of the past, many European nations were finally confronting conflicting, painful, and shameful memories. As the protective shields and myths collapsed, they gave way to controversy and more complex representations. In France the acknowledgement of Vichy's collaboration shattered the national "myth of the resistance"; in post-Waldheim Austria the official version of Austria as "Hitler's first victim" became problematic, and even Switzerland, the neutral state and haven for so many refugees, was confronted with its own "sites of memory" in the form of its banks and its border.

Differences in East and West

The year 1989 marked a far-reaching political turning point. The collapse of the bipolar political framework triggered an eruption of suppressed memories. The thaw after the long freeze revived not only memories of the past but also the idea of Europe. But while in Western Europe national myths were challenged and debunked, that was by no means equally the case in Eastern Europe. Here we may invoke another quotation from Renan's speech of 1882: "The act of forgetting—I might almost say historical error—plays a significant role in the creation of a nation, and therefore advances in the field of history are often a threat to the nation."¹⁹ While the Western European nations increasingly brought their national constructions of the past into line with the standards of historical scholarship, the nations that emerged from the Eastern bloc did not necessarily undertake similar reconstructions. Their experience of two dictatorships gave rise to inextricably intertwined memories of both persecution and collaboration, of both victimization and guilt. Far from confronting these complexities, however, many of these nations are now engaged in reestablishing old national myths or creating new ones.

As an example one can cite Poland, which had no fascist movements or structures of collaboration and whose population endured especially harsh suffering at the hands of the Germans. Its national myth continues

to revolve around the victim role. Unlike in Austria, the Polish sense of victimization is backed by centuries of historical experience and cultural tradition. The Polish self-image as “Christ of the nations” highlights this sacrosanct status of Polish martyrology. In light of this deeply entrenched cultural pattern of experience, it is virtually impossible to acknowledge the status of other victims—such as the Jews—and to deal with their own guilt in the context of Catholic anti-Semitism, which became an issue in the story of Jedwabne. Once again, what we see is not so much historical error (as Renan had it) but the generalizing of one respectable memory covering up other uncomfortable memories. The national status as victim can lead to self-immunization against guilt and responsibility.²⁰

The Hungarians also saw themselves, in the *longue durée* of European history, as the victims of oppression and foreign domination by the Ottomans, the Habsburgs, the Nazis, and the Communists. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Hungary could once again refer to these old models of experience and their enduring appeal to the public in its new national self-definition. A similar process took place in the Czech Republic, whose national historical myth revolves around the recurring experience of a legendary defeat (the Battle of White Mountain on November 8, 1620). After the abolition of the unifying socialist vision of history, old national patterns resurfaced and structured the ways in which the historical experience of World War II was processed.

Russia offers a further example of the reconstruction of a national historical myth that disregards the memories of others and the standards of historical research. Here a victor’s memory asserts its “sovereignty” by claiming an absolute and exclusive interpretation of history that will not brook contradiction. At the center of this vision is the fatherland’s mission in the Great Patriotic War. Thanks to the troops of the Red Army, Hitler was defeated, concentration camps were liberated, and a shattered Europe was given a new future. The great historical liberation of 1945 is the kernel of a heroic self-image that does not permit the introduction of other, conflicting elements, such as the victims of the Stalinist dictatorship and the gulag, into this picture.

Again we must acknowledge that these distorted national memory constructs do not necessarily involve a falsification of history but rather the strategic *selection* of expedient recollections. Thus in the case of Russian national memory, the historically accurate recollection of the difficult victory over National Socialism acts as a broad defensive shield against recalling the victims of Communist terror. The victors who write history have the power to suppress counter-memory and to prevent the writing of different histories by keeping the archives locked. As the victor in 1945, Russia claims the privilege of not having to submit its memories to close European scrutiny. Thus memory reveals itself to be inseparable from the

question of power, with “sovereignty” consisting of the privilege to indulge in one’s memories and to construct one’s national myths in a self-validating way. In such states it falls to civic initiatives to construct a counter-memory of the victims and to keep it alive. The nationalistic group *Pamyat* was able to gain official acceptance of its memory. The non-governmental organization *Memorial*, by contrast, is dedicated to historical investigation of the crimes of totalitarian communist regimes on behalf of the victims. Fully in the spirit of Renan, this group deploys the power of historical research to erode the simplistic structure of national myth.²¹

Guidelines for Dealing Peaceably with National Memories

It is becoming more and more obvious that memories serve not only as avenues to unification but also stand in its way. Memories can promote a more critical self-image, but they can also produce conflicts by tearing open old wounds and reanimating inveterate conflicts. A particularly clear example of this ambiguous potential inherent in memories is the current exhibition in Berlin “Flight and Expulsion in Twentieth-Century Europe,” which, according to its organizers, stresses the universality of suffering, but which at the same time has triggered new political conflicts.²² Migration, the streaming of millions of refugees across national borders, is a dominant experience of twentieth-century Europe that calls for a transnational perspective. In 2002, the Polish scholar Karol Sauerland had pointed out that “there are no more problems surrounding the theme of the expulsion of Germans,” to which he added, “The fact that this is no longer a subject of disagreements is seen by historians as one of the most important successes of the Polish/German relationship after the fall of the Berlin Wall.”²³ But it took only a single stroke to undo this hard-won success. One year later, Erika Steinbach, president of the Alliance of Expellees, put forward a proposal to establish a “Center Against Expulsion” in the symbolically charged city of Berlin and to add a new day of national commemoration to the German calendar. Many in Poland immediately began to worry that this German experience of suffering would thereupon be connected to claims concerning the restitution of lost property.

Other concerned observers see in the call for a “Center Against Expulsion” a rival to Holocaust memory.²⁴ While the majority of the victims of the Holocaust and their descendants now live outside of Europe, the majority of the victims of expulsion continue to live within Europe. Is perhaps a German memory of victimhood in the process of replacing the German memory of guilt at a moment when living witnesses are becoming scarce and a new generation is taking over? There are also voices that

plead for forgetting in view of the growing collision of one-sided memories. Can European integration perhaps be achieved only at the price of mutual oblivion?²⁵ There are indeed important instances in history when forgetting proved an important resource for social peacemaking, especially after civil wars, but the intertwined conflicts in those instances are fundamentally different from the asymmetric violence between Nazi perpetrator and Jewish victim that lies behind our post-traumatic age. In addition, in the two world wars, Europe was the stage for an unimaginable unleashing of extreme violence that targeted civilians as well as combatants. The traumatic impact of this violence, which only gradually became evident decades after the war and which still troubles Europe, cannot simply be overcome by a *Schlussstrich*. Shared memory rather than amnesia is today considered a more adequate response to the traumatic legacy of that violence. The network of death and labor camps that covered Europe like a rash during the Nazi period; the battlefields of both world wars, from the Marne to Stalingrad, and the bombed-out cities, from Guernica and Coventry to Dresden—all these have already become European *lieux de mémoire*. “Europe needs its memory sites,” writes the Dutch historian Pim de Boer, “not just as a mnemonic means for identifying mangled corpses, but in order to promote understanding, forgetting, and forgiveness.”²⁶ Common memory sites, according to de Boer’s somewhat paradoxical statement, are needed to forget and overcome the divisive potential in memories.

The questions then arise: How are we to move from trauma to understanding? How to move from dividing and aggressive memories to memories that strengthen the process of European integration? How to clear memory blockages on the one hand and contain the aggressive potential inherent in memories on the other? There are political norms and standards for a peaceful coexistence within the European Union, but there are as yet no norms and standards for the peaceful coexistence of European memories. In the remainder of this article I would like to propose some practical guidelines that might help to regulate the use and banish the abuse of collective memories. It is hoped that identifying some rules and exposing ‘malign’ practices will make it easier to universally recognize and reject such practices.

1. Separating memory from argument

We have to distinguish between a memory and the arguments that can be built upon it. One example is the commemoration rites enacted on the sixtieth anniversary of the bombing of Dresden. Some of the city’s residents participated in the official commemoration with the mayor and representatives of Britain, France, and the United States in attendance.

Some marched through the streets carrying banners that read "Bombing Holocaust." And some set up a series of large posters bearing the names of the cities Dresden, Nagasaki, New York, and Baghdad. In these commemorative acts, one event, the bombing of Dresden, was associated with three completely different messages: one diplomatically conciliatory, one aggressive and vengeful, and one pacifistic. Memories are constantly associated with arguments, but the arguments are never an intrinsic part of those memories. To neutralize the malignant potential of memories, a line must be drawn between what has been experienced and what follows from the experience in terms of interpretation, evaluation, claim, and consequence. The same holds true of the assessment of the year 1945 in German memory. After decades of considering it in terms of "catastrophe" and "downfall," the notion of "liberation" was introduced and took hold in the heads of the younger generations. Again, it is not the events that we have changed, but our frames for interpreting them.

2. No more offsetting of guilt

A widespread and completely untenable device in the battle of memories is the tactic of offsetting. In such cases, a historical situation is presented as a zero-sum game: proof of your opponent's guilt automatically reduces or nullifies your own guilt. In this form of competition, both sides use memories as a club. The only memory that is important is the guilt of the other, and establishing that guilt is seen as wiping out one's own guilt. While connecting memory with argument leads to the instrumentalization and politicization of memory, setting off guilt results in minimizing one's own guilt.

3. No more competition among victims

Whereas the offsetting of guilt is intended to minimize one's own share in it or to make it disappear entirely, competition among victims is a battle for recognition of one's own suffering. This sort of memory contest takes the form of a struggle for precedence. Victim groups vie for public recognition and resources. Placing one trauma in a privileged position can serve to eclipse another trauma according to the precept: what is worse covers up what is bad. Focusing on the worst experience (the Holocaust) may make one blind to bad experiences (bombing, expulsion) deemed undeserving of recognition in Germany during the eighties and nineties. To acknowledge one trauma must not mean to marginalize or even discard another.

4. From exclusion to inclusion of memories

Memories that support a collective identity are not only selective but also tend toward uniformity. One memory grows in size to crowd another

out. This serves as a protective shield against other memories; one memory is used to immunize oneself against another. Therefore, the critical question is: how exclusive or how inclusive is a collective memory? The fixation on the crimes of others makes one's own conveniently disappear. For the Germans, as Christian Meier has pointed out, the "negative privileging" of the Holocaust cast a shadow over other atrocities, hiding them from view and consciousness. He asked: "Have not atrocities like those which we perpetrated against Poland and Russia . . . disappeared under the shadow of the Holocaust?"²⁷ While simplistic memories have impeded European integration, more complex memories can promote that process and provide a foundation for it.

5. From a divided to a shared memory

In his speech in Frankfurt's St. Paul's Church, Peter Esterházy negatively summed up the status quo of European memory: "What was supposed to be united has been torn apart in self-hatred and self-pity. . . . Besides the untruth of the exclusive perpetrator, there is the untruth of the exclusive victim, and the unspoken 'we' of the national memory lies hidden beneath both. . . . A common European knowledge about ourselves as both perpetrators and victims is not yet in view."²⁸ For Esterházy, the road to a common European community of memory winds through the memory of one's own guilt and the acknowledgment of the suffering of others. It was the failure of empathy that made the war and the Holocaust possible; in our postwar traumatic age, it is memory that can ameliorate the situation. A divisive memory that leaves the memory of suffering to the affected victim groups perpetuates the original murderous constellation. This fatal polarity can be overcome and lead to a shared memory through the empathetic recognition of the victim's memories.

6. Contextualizing

Another tool for dulling the malignant energy of memories is the ability to place experience and memory into a larger context. This is possible only in retrospection and is a cognitive achievement of historical consciousness. Experiencing and remembering never take place in such a context; those who lost hearth and home in 1945 and took part in dangerous and uncertain treks westward did not automatically view the experience as a just punishment for Hitler's criminal war of aggression. Yet nothing is gained by discarding lived experiences merely because they do not conform to a broader historical perspective. Everyone has a human right to his or her memories. That, however, does not exclude the necessity to place such memories that have been articulated and

recognized on a wider horizon. As contextualized memories, they lose the taint of irreconcilable solipsism. Only by retrospectively placing them in a larger context can they be made compatible with other memories.

7. *Framing*

The European unification project presumes a common framework in which multiplicity of memory plays a double role. On the one hand, it is to be recognized and preserved; on the other, whatever is psychologically damaging or politically divisive within these memories is to be subdued. The common framework must consist in a canon of values and goals. Memories are not just located, but also *framed* within this horizon of values that challenges their built-in tendency toward self-hypnosis. Here the double aspect of identity, based on memories and values, again comes into play. Memories can retain their unmistakable variety and diversity, but they must lose their divisive effects. Only through integration within a common framework of identity and values can they be made to coexist without constantly reigniting old conflicts by adding new fuel. In this way, preserving the past goes hand-in-hand with mastering the past. Between forgetting, on the one hand, and continuously reactivating the past on the other, there is a third possibility, namely, memory as a form of closure in order to open a way to the future.

Europeans are obviously still far from attaining Esterházy's vision of a "common European knowledge of ourselves." With each election, we see that populism and right-wing nationalism are gaining ground, and that is leading to a reestablishment of boundaries between the EU member states. We are dealing, then, with a European knowledge that is not yet a reality, but rather a vision and certainly the great potential inherent in the project of European unification. It offers the opportunity "to face history and ourselves."²⁹ Applied to Europe, this slogan means, in practice, learning to see national histories from a transnational perspective and thus to transform external national borders into internal European ones. National memory and national identity, writes Jan-Werner Müller, are mutually constitutive. And he continues: "This type of memory . . . sometimes conflicts with individual memories."³⁰ In Europe, each national memory is in effect in conflict with that of its neighbor. To the extent, however, that seeing beyond national borders becomes a European habit of thought, the self-serving nature of national myths will become more and more untenable.

"Europe," the Swiss writer Adolf Muschg once wrote, "is a community of destiny."³¹ This community of destiny could become a community

of memory in which, after the unspeakable atrocities and horrors of the twentieth century, all histories of suffering are remembered, including precisely those one would most like to forget. Establishing Europe as a transnational frame for memory would mean building a common European consciousness as victims and perpetrators. National memory constructs will have to be measured against this common "European knowledge," a knowledge of historical events in their context. Historical consciousness does not *eliminate* national memories but rather *integrates* them. Within such a framework, Europeans could learn to face up to their memories and to listen to others with empathy. Such a European memory would not provide a platform for political legitimization; rather, it would work against exaggerated self-images and antagonistic images of others. If national memory is not taught within a common framework of shared historical consciousness, the project of a United States of Europe will remain an empty dream.³²

Lord Dahrendorf once said in an interview: "A happy country does not agree about the future, but is basically in agreement about the past; in an unhappy country the reverse is true."³³ In this sense, Europe is still far from being "a happy country."

Notes:

¹ Ernest Renan, "What is a Nation?" lecture held at the Sorbonne on March 11, 1882, in Geoff Eley and Ronald Grigor Suny, eds., *Becoming National: A Reader* (Oxford, 1996), 41–55.

² Leslie Fiedler, *Cross the Border, Close the Gap* (New York, 1972), 73. There are exceptions to this policy, one of which is the statement by Theodore Roosevelt that I found on a commemoration plaque on Kossuth House in Washington D.C.: "Only he can become a good citizen who remains true to the heritage of his native land."

³ Bassam Tibi, *Europa ohne Identität? Leitkultur oder Wertebeliebigkeit* (Munich, 1998), xiv.

⁴ Tibi's concept of "European *Leitkultur*" was quickly appropriated as "national German *Leitkultur*" by conservative politicians. For Tibi, the distinction between multiculturalism and pluralism is of primary importance. Whereas the former term stands for an unstructured fusion of migration and the globalization of the market, ranging from postmodern indifference to "cultural racism," the latter stands for a consensus of values which guarantees both difference *and* integration. In Tibi's view, the German state is currently risking its values of modern individualism and secularism, which is why he heavily criticized the Minister of the Interior W. Schäuble who conceded communal rights to Muslim immigrants in Germany.

⁵ Two projects for a European museum have been developed, one in Brussels and one in Aachen. In Brussels, during the last decade, the scientific director Krzysztof Pomian, together with his team, has created a concept that takes its starting point from the Greeks, Romans, and Celts. In addition to antiquity, it covers the periods of Christianity, Enlightenment, and the process of unification. The initiative of the Aachen project, which began much later, is organized around pivotal dates of European history. It starts from the year 800, using the historical site to establish Charlemagne as the founding father of Europe. While the project recently collapsed in Aachen over the communal issue of an appropriate museum building, this problem remains yet unsolved in Brussels.

⁶ Heinz Duchhardt et al., eds., *Schwerpunktthema: European lieux de mémoire? Jahrbuch für Europäische Geschichte*, vol. 3 (2002); See also Alexandre Escudier, ed., *Gedenken im Zwiespalt: Konfliktlinien europäischen Erinnerns* (Göttingen, 2001); Benedikt Stuchtey, report on the conference "European Lieux de Mémoire," German Historical Institute London, 5.-7. Juli 2002, in *GHIL Bulletin* 24 no. 2 (2002), 121–125.

⁷ An example is the Research Project on European Historiography begun in 2006 under the direction of Oliver Rathkolb (Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for European History and Public Spheres, Vienna, Austria) in cooperation with research groups at the Universities of Basel (Switzerland), Giessen (Germany), and the European University at Florence (Italy).

⁸ <http://taskforce.ushmm.org/about/index.php?content=stockholm>

⁹ *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, lead article, January 25, 2005; UN <http://www.un.org/Press/docs/2005/sgsm9686.doc.htm>.

¹⁰ Daniel Levy and Nathan Sznajder, *Holocaust and Memory in the Global Age* (Philadelphia, 2005). A research project is being carried out by Sibylle Quack at the University of Hannover on "The Process of European Unification and the Memory of the Holocaust in the Trans-Atlantic Dialogue."

¹¹ In 2004, Monika Flacke organized an exhibition around this theme, which was also published in book form: Monika Flacke, ed., *Mythen der Nationen: 1945—Arena der Erinnerungen*. Katalog zur Ausstellung im Deutschen Historischen Museum Berlin. (Mainz, 2004).

¹² Afterword in Volkhard Knigge, Norbert Frei, eds., *Verbrechen erinnern: Die Auseinandersetzung mit Holocaust und Völkermord* (Munich, 2002), 445.

¹³ Reinhart Koselleck, "Formen und Traditionen des negativen Gedächtnisses," in *Verbrechen erinnern*, 21–32; 28.

¹⁴ Adolf Muschg, "Kerneuropa. Gedanken zur europäischen Identität," in *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 31.5.2003. See also his recent book: Adolf Muschg, *Was ist europäisch? Reden für einen gastlichen Erdteil* (Munich, 2005).

¹⁵ Take the years 1962–63 as an example: Shortly after the building of the wall there were the prominent visits by American politicians to Berlin (L. B. Johnson, Robert F. Kennedy, and JFK himself) to convince the West Berlin citizens of their undivided loyalty and support vis à vis the aggressive politics of the Soviet sector. At the same time, paradoxically, the former allies, who had become the new enemies, still had one last joint duty to perform: namely the changing of the guard at the Spandau Prison where three Nazi criminals were kept who had been sentenced at the Nuremberg trials.

¹⁶ Tony Judt, "The Past is Another Country: Myth and Memory in Postwar Europe," in *Daedalus* 121 (Fall 1992): 160; see also Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York, 2005).

¹⁷ Tony Judt, "The Past is Another Country," 163. Ian Buruma described this logic as follows: "It was comforting to know that a border separated us from the nation that embodied the evil. They were evil, so consequently we must have been good. The fact that we grew up in a country which had suffered under the German occupation meant, to us, that we were on the side of the angels." Ian Buruma, *Erbschaft der Schuld: Vergangenheitsbewältigung in Deutschland und Japan* (Munich, 1994), 11. Confronted by members of the "Committee for Jewish Claims on Austria," the Austrian government declared, "All suffering of the Jews during this period was inflicted upon them by the Germans and not by the Austrians; Austria bears no guilt for all of these evil things, and where there is no guilt, there is no obligation for restitution." Quoted in Heidmarie Uhl, "Vom Opfermythos zur Mitverantwortungsthese: NS-Herrschaft, Krieg und Holocaust im Österreichischen Gedächtnis," in Christian Gerbel et al., eds., *Transformationen gesellschaftlicher Erinnerung: Studien zur Gedächtnisgeschichte der Zweiten Republik* (Vienna, 2005), 57.

¹⁸ Peter Esterházy, "Alle Hände sind unsere Hände," in *Süddeutsche Zeitung* (11 October 2004), 16.

¹⁹ Ernest Renan, "What is a Nation?" (see note 1).

²⁰ Rudolf Jaworski, "Geschichtsdenken im Umbruch," in Jaworski et al, eds., *Umbruch im östlichen Europa: Die nationale Wende und das kollektive Gedächtnis* (Vienna, 2004); Ewa Kobyliska and Andreas Lawaty, *Erinnern, Vergessen, Verdrängen: Polnische und deutsche Erfahrungen* (Wiesbaden, 1998).

²¹ <http://www.memorial.de/nachr.php?nid=50>

²² Erika Steinbach speaks of a postulate of an indivisible humanity [*Postulat der unteilbaren Humanitas*]. Catalogue of the Exhibition *Erzwungene Wege: Flucht und Vertreibung im Europa des 20. Jahrhunderts*, 8.

²³ Karol Sauerland, "Minenfelder. Schwieriger Dialog: Deutsche und polnische Historiker," in *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 300 (27 December 2002): 35.

²⁴ The Austrian historian Heidemarie Uhl asked, "Is Germany leaving behind that phase of reassessment of its past which since the eighties was framed by a discourse on guilt?" *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 29 October 2003.

²⁵ Ulrike Ackerman, "Vergessen zugunsten der Zukunft?" in *Merkur* 56:643 (November 2002): 992–1001.

²⁶ Pim de Boer does not exclude communal forgetting as a possible consequence of communal remembering. Pim de Boer, "Lieux de mémoire et identité de l'Europe," in Pim de Boer and Willem Frijhoff, eds., *Lieux de mémoire et identités nationales* (Amsterdam, 1993), 29.

²⁷ Christian Meier, *Vierzig Jahre nach Auschwitz: Deutsche Geschichtserinnerungen heute* (Munich, 1987), 14.

²⁸ Peter Esterházy, "Alle Hände sind unsere Hände" (see note 18).

²⁹ "Facing History and Ourselves" is the name of an organization founded in 1976 that deals with causes and consequences of racism and collective violence. An important prerequisite of this pedagogical history project is that the citizens of a country not only be conscious of the high points of their national history, but that they also confront its baggage.

³⁰ Jan-Werner Müller, "Introduction," *Memory and Power in Post-War Europe: Studies in the Presence of the Past* (Cambridge, 2002), 3.

³¹ Adolf Muschg, "Kerneuropa: Gedanken zur europäischen Identität," in *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 31 May 2003.

³² This idea did not originally refer to the Holocaust, but consisted very generally of the "complete elimination of the economic and political causes of the two World Wars." In connection to a "Europe Day" in Milan in 1985, it was resolved that this idea become anchored in an annual commemoration date on May 9, harking back to a famous speech by Robert Schuman in Paris on May 9, 1950.

³³ "Als die Gestapo mich abholte: Gespräch mit dem Sozialwissenschaftler Lord Ralf Dahrendorf," in Stefan Aust and Gerhard Spörl, eds., *Die Gegenwart der Vergangenheit: Der lange Schatten des Dritten Reichs* (Munich, 2004), 32–33.

European identity, collective memory, memory politics, European integration. The phenomenon of the united Europe has already become a commonplace in contemporary globe. Transparent borders, the common currency and the institutions of Brussels as well as other aspects of integration have become a part of everyday life for both Europeans and the rest of the world. But this conventional image is constantly being questioned. This memory underlines the particularity of this community and distinguish it from the others. The events of the past reconstructed in the public consciousness allow this group to imagine their history, to recognize themselves in the timeline. "Project Europe 2030", a report undertaken by the Reflection Group to explore the European Union's choices over the next two decades, was published on 9 May 2010 and presented to the European Council. In the first of a three-part series, Kalypso Nicolaïdis - one of the group's twelve members and a regular openDemocracy contributor - outlines the report's scope and aims. Depending on which one of us you talk to, Europe is above all a community of law, a community of exchange, a community of memory, or a community of values. In other words, we were all sceptically committed to the European cause, but in very different ways and with very different emphases! In this, we reflected much of the diversity that remains the heart and soul of our union itself. Europe: A community of memory? Bulletin of the German Historical Institute, 40, 11-25. Bačirbašić, B. (2011). Tjelo, Åenskost i moć: Upisivanja patrijarhalnog diskursa u tijelo. Zagreb: Synopsis. Baer, A., & Sznajder, N. (2017). Memory and forgetting in the post-Holocaust era: The ethics of never again. London and New York: Routledge. Bajford, J. (2009). The Europeanization of Holocaust memory and Eastern Europe. East European Politics & Societies, 30(1), 97-119. Kuljić, T. (2002). Prevladavanje proćlosti: Uzroci i pravci promene slike istorije krajem XX veka. Beograd: Helsinćke sveske. Kuljić, T. (2005). Monumentalizacija srpske monarhije: O suvremenim debatama oko restauracije monarhije u Srbiji.