Is Eastern European ‘Double Genocide’ Revisionism Reaching Museums?

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Dedicated to the memory of Leonidas Donskis (1962–2016)

In contrast to twentieth-century Holocaust Denial, the most recent assault on the narrative of the genocide of European Jewry has emanated from a sophisticated revisionist model known as Double Genocide, codified in the 2008 Prague Declaration. Positing ‘equality’ of Nazi and Soviet crimes, the paradigm’s corollaries sometimes include attempts to rehabilitate perpetrators and discredit survivors. Emanating from pro-Western governments and elites in Eastern Europe in countries with records of high collaboration, the movement has reached out widely to the Holocaust Studies establishment as well as Jewish institutions. It occasionally enjoys the political support of major Western countries in the context of East-West politics, or in the case of Israel, attempts to garner (eastern) European Union support. The empirical effects to date have included demonstrable impact on museums, memorials and exhibits in Eastern Europe and beyond.

Keywords: Double Genocide; Holocaust Denial; Holocaust in Eastern Europe; Holocaust Revisionism; Prague Declaration; Seventy Years Declaration

The demise of twentieth-century-style Holocaust denial in mainstream Western society is aptly symbolized by David Irving’s loss to Deborah Lipstadt in the London High Court in 2000.1 But around the same time, a new and more irksome method of writing the Holocaust out of history was emerging under the radar, this time without necessarily denying any of the historical events or a single death. Particularly in Eastern Europe, it was being forged with state funding and more subtle powers of persuasion in academia, the media, the arts and international diplomacy. Instead of challenging any of the facts (e.g. about the numbers of victims in a certain territory), the new century’s revisionists largely accepted the facts presented in the standard scholarly works of Raul Hilberg, Martin Gilbert, Yehuda Bauer and others. They did not challenge the Holocaust’s historicity, but rather its uniqueness.2

1Text available at: http://www.hdot.org/en/trial/judgement.html. All links herein as per July 2016. My profound thanks to Professor Gavriel Rosenfeld (Fairfield University) for his generosity of spirit in reading and providing singularly important comments to earlier drafts, as well as to several anonymous readers whose comments resulted in changes. Naturally, the author alone assumes responsibility for the content, views, errors and shortcomings herein.

2This claim is symbolically encapsulated by coinages of a distinct word-sign for the signified: The Holocaust (Hebrew ha-Shoá, Yiddish der Khúrbn), which achieved standard international usage alongside...
That is not to say that the Holocaust cannot or should not be compared with other instances of genocide. To be sure, it is challenging to find a nation-state that pursued, with the full force of its military and state structures, the immediate physical annihilation of an entire ethnic/racial/religious minority far from its own borders (i.e. outside of contested borders) as a matter of precise policy to such an overwhelming extent. Still, scholars, politicians and educators who stress the similarities between the Holocaust and the cases of genocide in Armenia, Cambodia and Rwanda, are generally not driven by any ‘anti-Holocaust consciousness’, much less any antisemitic agenda. Quite the opposite; most scholars are driven to learn from the facts and circumstances they unearth and analyze.

In certain parts of Eastern Europe, however, scholarship on the Holocaust has often been driven by the political goal of revising the history of the event in the direction of a ‘tale of two genocides’ – the Soviet one and the Nazi one. The operative strategy is to challenge the Holocaust’s uniqueness by recasting it as equal to (and locally, as lesser than) Soviet crimes in the same Eastern European territory where the vast majority of Holocaust victims perished. Originally called ‘Symmetry’ in the 1990s, the ‘Double Genocide’ paradigm reconceptualized the Holocaust as one of two genocides (or in some Eastern European local parlance, ‘two holocausts’) committed by two equal totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century.

This essay describes the origins of the post-Soviet Double Genocide paradigm and examines how it has come to shape the landscape of major Eastern European cities in the form of comparative (Soviet–Nazi) museums. It refers to specific sites in Estonia, Hungary, Latvia and Lithuania (along with Poland, for contrast), as well as a planned new museum in Brussels to be sponsored by the EU; it also makes reference to these museums’ relationship to Jewish and Western museums. Lithuania, which has invested more political capital than other countries in such institutions, receives the most attention. The essay does not attempt to offer a comprehensive or comparative treatment of all Double-Genocide-oriented museums and commemorative institutions. That remains a task for the future. Likewise, analyzing the intellectual history of earlier incarnations of the movement remains a pressing necessity; popular phrases, such as, ‘It’s the same as what the Communists did’, ‘The Communists were worse’, ‘The Communists did their murders first’, ‘The Jews were Communists and got what they deserved’, ‘1940 comes before 1941’, in addition to other, analogous sayings, ultimately date back to the time of the first Eastern European Holocaust killings. This essay focuses largely on developments since the turn of the millennium.

internationalization of its Hebrew-derived de facto synonym, The Shoah. In all, the definite article (present or understood) makes clear the word refers to a one-time specific event.


4 The author of the present paper has been based in Vilnius, Lithuania, since 1999 and has edited DefendingHistory.com since 2009.
The contemporary Double Genocide paradigm

The drive to equalize Nazi and Soviet crimes is part of a larger effort to cleanse ‘the lands between’ (in Eastern Europe) of their historical record of wartime collaboration, delegitimize the anti-Nazi Soviet partisan resistance, and reconceptualize the Holocaust as a kind of joint ‘Nazi–Soviet’ production. A common result is the diminution and conceptual dismemberment of the Holocaust as such. This need not entail outright denial. Rather, the movement’s central idea is to achieve a ‘sameness’ or ‘equivalence’ between Nazi and Soviet crimes. The frequent rootenedness of these ideas in a particular brand of antisemitism, has been noted by various scholars of antisemitism, including Leonidas Donskis, Manfred Gerstenfeld, Clemens Heni, Alvin Rosenfeld, Robert Rozett, Efraim Zuroff and the late Robert Wistrich. Scholars have also displayed spirited resistance towards the particular Double Genocide branch of the new Eastern European Holocaust revisionism, generally in publications for a more general readership. Timothy Snyder’s recent book, Bloodlands, for instance, sparked considerable scholarly response.


The Double Genocide movement’s foundational text is the Prague Declaration, which was signed in June 2008 by a group of mostly right-wing Euro-parliamentarians and political leaders. The following five sentences, particularly the repeated use of the word ‘same’ (italic face type added), provide a flavor of its prevailing discourse:

(1) Consciousness of the crimes against humanity committed by the Communist regimes throughout the continent must inform all European minds to the same extent as the Nazi regime’s crimes did.

(2) Believing that 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.

(3) Recognition that many crimes committed in the name of Communism should be assessed as crimes against humanity serving as a warning for future generations, in the same way Nazi crimes were assessed by the Nuremberg Tribunal.

(4) Establishment of 23rd August, the day of signing of the Hitler–Stalin Pact, known as the Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact, as a 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 27th January.

(5) Adjustment and overhaul of European history textbooks so that children may learn and be warned about Communism and its crimes in the same way as they have been taught to assess the Nazi crimes.

The Prague Declaration was critiqued in various circles. But it did not attract mainstream media notice. In the absence of any significant extra-Europarlimentary scrutiny, its organizers


Parliament. One of its four sections may be construed as a direct response to ‘Prague’, entailing the following points:

We the undersigned … reject:
 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;
 Equating Nazi and Soviet crimes as this blurs the uniqueness of each and threatens to undermine the important historical lessons drawn from each of these distinct experiences;
 Attempts to have European history school books rewritten to reflect the notion of ‘Double Genocide’ (‘equality’ or ‘sameness’ of Nazi and Soviet crimes);
 As unacceptable the glorification of Nazi Allies, and of Holocaust perpetrators and collaborators, including the Waffen SS in Estonia and Latvia, and the Lithuanian Activist Front in Lithuania;
 Attempts to legalize or sanitize the public display of the swastika by racist and fascist groups;
 Efforts to have the Holocaust remembered on one common day with the victims of Communism.

The resulting upheaval in Vilnius included the then foreign minister of Lithuania, Audronius Ažubalis, who proclaimed, ‘It is not possible to find differences between Hitler and Stalin except in their moustaches (Hitler’s was shorter)’. He went on to accuse the eight Lithuanian signatories, all Social Democrats, of effectively being agents of Moscow. This was followed by a remarkable media debate between the foreign minister and the then-shadow foreign minister,Vytenis Andriukaitis.

The text of the Seventy Years Declaration is available on its website, www.SeventyYearsDeclaration.org, and in a number of European languages in Defending History, http://defendinghistory.com/the-seventy-years-declaration-in-various-languages.

Lithuanian titles are produced here in their English translation; the originals are available at the web addresses provided. See BNS and Lrytas.info, “History: Decision by Group of Social Democrats to Sign Declaration Against Equating Nazi and Soviet Crimes is Pathetic,” Lrytas.lt, Dec. 20, 2012, http://kultura.lrytas.lt/-1327087583126542156-grup%C4%85s-socialdemokrat%C5%B3-sprendimas-pasira%C5%A1yti-deklaracij% C4%85-kurioje-prie%C5%A1taraujama-naci%C5%B3-ir-soviet%C5%B3-nusikaltim%C5%B3-sulyginimui-%C5%B3-sulyginimu-apgal%C4%97inas.htm (English translation: http://defendinghistory.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Lietuvos-rytas-on-Azubalis-reaction-to-Seventy-Years-Declaration-20-January-2012.pdf).


The result of the 2012 SYD was not to ‘defeat’ the Prague Declaration, but to recalibrate its status from one of obvious truisms to one of contested status. Resolutions that Western parliamentarians and journalists had been led to believe were uncontroversial were in fact artful syntheses of (wholly legitimate) anti-Communist statements with (illegitimate) revisions of the Holocaust in the spirit of the proposed equalization of Nazi and Soviet crimes as a future uniting principle of the EU.

Corollaries of Double Genocide

From the perspective of Holocaust history, Eastern Europe (much of which nowadays prefers the moniker ‘East Central Europe’ to imply a geo-ideological anti-Russian or anti-Soviet core) can be divided into two components. First, there are those countries in which most of the members of the Jewish population were deported from their hometowns to camps or other sites for extermination, and where locals (including neighbors) were not used extensively by the Nazis for local killing, for example, Poland and Hungary. Then there are the cases of the Baltic states (Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia) and Ukraine, where numerous local killers did much (and in many locations, most) of the actual murdering, and where their proficiency from the Nazis’ point of view was so high that they were exported beyond their countries’ borders for guarding, transporting and killing their Jewish victims, and Jews from further west were brought to these countries for murder. The Double Genocide paradigm has been evolving most dramatically among the countries where the Jews were mostly shot and buried in nearby mass graves.

The paradigm includes a variety of corollaries. First, some ‘Double Genociders’ see a need to mitigate the history by discrediting the victims. Such tactics often have their roots in Eastern European antisemitism, where the phrase, ‘Many of the Jews were Communists, and they got what they deserve’, is still widely heard. Only in Lithuania, however, was a means found to promote the stereotype with an organized campaign. In 2006, officials belonging to the state-sponsored Genocide Center, together with the antisemitic newspaper, Respublika, launched proceedings against Holocaust survivors who had escaped death during the Holocaust by joining up with Soviet-sponsored anti-Nazi partisans. In many locations, these partisans were the only serious force fighting the Nazis and often the only option open to Jews for resistance. The leaders of Lithuania’s Jewish community, Dr Shimon Alperovich, and of its Union of Former Ghetto and Concentration Camp Inmates, Tuvia Jafet, stated in their 2008 letter of protest:

The prosecutors of Lithuania do not cease to persecute anti-Nazi Jewish partisans. The Prosecution Service’s claims that ‘hundreds of witnesses are being questioned’ are belied by the fact that only Jewish names are being heard in the media: Yitzhak Arad, Fania Brantsovsky, Rachel Margolis, and others.22

Lithuania’s state campaign against Holocaust survivors who joined the resistance is extensively documented.23

A second corollary, and one that is widespread throughout the eastern states of the EU and (western) Ukraine, is that Holocaust collaborators, and even perpetrators, are often redeemable as contemporary national heroes. The common denominator has been that ‘national heroes’ who were anti-Soviet are thought to deserve national hero status, regardless of their affiliation to Nazi Germany or the status of being Holocaust collaborators or perpetrators.24 In Latvia and Estonia, this usually takes the form of adulation for those nations’ Waffen SS groups, which came into existence after most of the Jewish population had been annihilated. These were battle units that were mobilized against the Soviets and swore oaths of loyalty to Hitler; they were racist, pro-Nazi, often comprised of Holocaust perpetrators who were retrained for battle.25 In Hungary, there has been adulation for political leaders who carried out the Nazis’ bidding regarding deportation of the Jews.26 In Lithuania, there are streets, public plaques and sculptures, and a state university lecture hall that have been named for Holocaust collaborators and perpetrators.27 A nadir was reached in 2012 when the state repatriated, for reburial with full honors, the remains of its 1941 Nazi puppet prime minister who had personally signed orders for the Jews of his city, Kaunas (Kovno), to be sent to a death camp and the remainder to be confined to a ghetto.28 In Ukraine, the state continues to glorify Stepan Bandera, whose...
followers were responsible for hundreds of thousands of murders of Jews and Poles. For a long time, the phenomenon of ‘Bandera worship’ was limited to western Ukraine and Lviv, but in July 2016, shocking news came of a street in the capital, Kiev (Kyiv), being named for the fascist leader; as has often been the case in recent years, the news coverage was limited to ‘Jewish’ and ‘Russian’ publications. It seems a strange point to have to make, but those committed to commemorating the Holocaust need to understand that virtually all of the voluntary killers of Eastern Europe (primarily east of the Molotov–Ribbentrop line) were very anti-Soviet and yearned for a Nazi victory. It seems perhaps stranger to have to remind today’s patriotic leaders in these countries that had Hitler won the war, there would have been no nation-states ready for independence in 1991. Their destruction as nations in Nazi planning is well documented.

A third corollary is usually invoked locally in Eastern Europe rather than for Western audiences. While Double Genocide resolutions in the European Parliament and the Prague Declaration speak of the ‘sameness’ of Nazi and Soviet crimes, local institutions often go further and attempt to demonstrate that Soviet genocide was much greater or, in fact, ‘the real one’. This goes into the issue of ‘Holocaust envy’, which is outside the scope of the present paper. Nevertheless, the phenomena are illustrated by a text that was displayed on the website of the Genocide Center in Vilnius for many years:

One may cut off all four of a person’s limbs and he or she will still be alive, but it is enough to cut off the one and only head to send him or her to another dimension. The Jewish example clearly indicates that this is also true about genocide. Although an impressive percentage of the Jews were killed by the Nazis, their ethnic group survived, established its own extremely national state and continuously grew stronger …

A fourth corollary is the denial or minimization of local voluntary participation in the Holocaust. Of course, the Holocaust in Eastern Europe was imported by Germany and Austria and not conceived locally, but in the Baltics and (western) Ukraine, violence, mass humiliation of neighbors, and murder broke out in the time between the rapid collapse of Soviet authority on 22/23 June 1941 and the actual setting up of German rule in the days and weeks that followed. The time span varied according to location and the date when German forces arrived and established their local administration. Much recent Baltic and Ukrainian scholarship omits or denies the reality of ‘pre-German violence’. A further sub-corollary is the minimization of voluntary local participation in the actual killing in the period after German rule was firmly established.


32One straightforward statement of this policy came in a statement offered by the executive director of the Lithuanian government’s International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet
Geopolitical entanglement

In recent years, Holocaust commemoration has been shaped by geopolitical pressures. In 2009, US policy in the Baltics changed from cautious observation to active pro-government activism in matters pertaining to the Holocaust. Various explanations have been offered for this development. They tend to share as a common factor the profound enmeshing of Holocaust issues in foreign policy and East–West relations, particularly since the decline of relations between Washington and Moscow in recent years. The Baltics and Ukraine today represent NATO’s embattled eastern frontier. One pronounced result has been a reluctance among the USA, the EU and NATO to acknowledge that the anti-Russia nations at the eastern rim of the Atlantic alliance could be worthy of criticism on human rights issues, let alone on ‘mere matters of history’. Since the 2014 Maidan revolution in Ukraine, that country, not bound by EU norms and even less susceptible to Western criticism in a period of active armed conflict, has rapidly outdone its Baltic and other neighbors in revising Holocaust history, honoring perpetrators and criminalizing dissent.

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34 The 2015 Ukraine law received considerable coverage and criticism in a few major Western publications.


The US State Department has invested extensively in a ‘Jewish public relations’ effort to mask the unfolding events.\(^\text{35}\)

A second major area involves Israeli foreign policy towards the Baltics. One view has held that adjustments in Holocaust history are a modest and necessary price for Israel to pay for the support it needs from the Baltics and other eastern EU countries in such international forums as the United Nations, UNESCO, the EU and NATO. The *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* hosted a debate in 2010 in response to a paper by the late Barry Rubin.\(^\text{36}\) Recent years have seen a number of less academic ‘Jewish debates’ played out in international Jewish media over these issues. ‘Eruptions’ from 2009 onward have embroiled the Jerusalem Book Fair (in 2009), the alleged instrumentalization of Menachem Begin’s biography in a Vilnius plaque (2012), and debates concerning the alleged pressuring of Yad Vashem to rejoin the Lithuanian state ‘Red-Brown Commission’ (formally: the International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania) (2012).\(^\text{37}\)

Like the changing US/Western approach to Eastern European Holocaust policies, the Israeli dimension also calls for a monograph to do these issues justice. But it would be unseemly to omit two particularly powerful incidents that transcend the usual rough and tumble of these debates. In 2009, then Israeli ambassador to Latvia and Lithuania, the internationally admired Chen Ivri Apter (1958–2012), stationed in Riga, traveled to Tel Aviv to participate in an evening to honor Dr Rachel Margolis (1921–2015), one of the Israeli Holocaust survivors defamed by Lithuanian authorities and prosecutors. His speech at the event will remain a major document of steadfastness in the midst of a slipping foreign policy on such matters.\(^\text{38}\) Then, in 2011, when Lithuanian prosecutors arranged for Interpol to disturb Holocaust survivor Joseph...
Melamed, then chairperson of the Association of Lithuanian Jews in Israel (cited above), Israel’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs failed to make any public statement in his support. To the contrary, he found himself under continued pressure to withdraw a list of alleged Holocaust perpetrators from circulation. It seemed to many observers that the Israeli Foreign Ministry was waiting for the last Holocaust survivors and their supporters to die or grow too old and frail to stand up for Holocaust history, in order to accede to Baltic demands for acquiescence to some form of the revisionist paradigm of Holocaust history, or at least to maintain silence in extreme corollary cases, such as state glorification of Holocaust perpetrators.  

Revisionism in museums

Considering the current Eastern European state investment in revisionism, exhibits and museums represent an important weapon in the contemporary battle of ideas. In its verbal forms, Double Genocide presentations often use formulations of ‘It’s complicated’ as a point of departure for blurring the ethical, historical and conceptual distinction between perpetrator and victim, and persuading Western visitors that the line of demarcation between perpetrators and victims is not as clear as once thought. In fact, the forces in play on occasion found that one of the clearest moral lines in history – between the perpetrators and victims of the Holocaust – to be one that could be blurred in a certain postmodernist spirit.  

While the cumulative and long-term effects of the revisionist campaign’s conferences, events, trips, publications, state awards, films and sundry other projects may be paramount, the immediate impact of museum exhibitions offers a temptation in its own league that targets the much-larger audience of a general public rather than specialists or roots-seekers. One of the most important institutions in Eastern Europe is what we might critically call the ‘Double Genocide museum’. This is a new type of museum where the ‘overall equality’ of Nazi and Soviet crimes is a given, and every exhibit becomes part of the revisionist narrative. In fact, as the eastern EU and adjacent areas, such as western Ukraine (‘New Europe’), have become home to attractive routes for tourism and Westerners’ roots-seeking, so, too, have ‘Double Genocide museums’. As the number of Holocaust survivors and children of survivors dwindles each year, the new paradigm is ever more easily transferred to the West by the many thousands who have been exposed to these Eastern European museums and exhibits as an introduction to the events surrounding World War II. To those of non-Jewish background, visits often lead to the idea that Soviet crimes represented the bulk of what is called genocide


40 One example is American author Ellen Cassidy’s statement to a Vilnius publication: ‘I went to Lithuania, hoping to decide who was right and who was wrong; to put people in a column, who was a victim, who was a killer. And then those lines began to blur’, VilNews.com, Apr. 29, 2012, http://vilnews.com/2012-04-13523; cf. http://defendinghistory.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/05/VilNews.htm. In 2015, a YouTube posting of an excerpt of an interview by the director of Lithuania’s commission on Nazi and Soviet crimes, declaring that the same Holocaust victims were also potential perpetrators, came as a shock to many who had been familiar only with the commission’s educational activities: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pXjl0DvqJPS&feature=youtu.be.

41 Although Robert Eaglestone’s Postmodernism and Holocaust Denial (Cambridge, UK: Icon Books, 2001) argues ably against necessary ‘responsibility’ of postmodernism for forms of Holocaust denial, much of its adduced material is illustrative of how ‘flexible mindsets’ can be (ab)used by revisionists to confound the overriding clarity of the distinction between Holocaust perpetrators and victims.
in the area. Such naiveté can, to some degree, affect even younger professional correspondents from leading outlets for whom the revised Eastern European genocide narrative seems part of the local color and objective history.

In Hungary, for example, there is the House of Terror museum, founded in 2002, whose exterior and interior iconography present the same message. The local wartime fascist symbol, the arrow cross (which is much less toxic to foreigners than the swastika) is used to represent Hitlerism, while the Soviet star represents Communism. In other words, the iconography per se is used to symbolically diminish Nazism from the building’s exterior and interior.
In Tallinn, Estonia, the Museum of the Occupation, founded in 2003, welcomes visitors with an elaborate piece of Double Genocide modern art. It received international attention in 2013, when the president of Estonia, Toomas Hendrik, posed with Germany’s president, Joachim Gauck, himself a native of the former East Germany and signatory of the Prague Declaration, right between the representationally equivalent halves of the equation.42

In Riga, Latvia, the analogous museum was established in 1993, and has recently moved to new and larger premises. It is called the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia 1940–1991. The name is certainly more factual and historical than others, but the apparently neutral branding of the museum’s conceptual space by country and year is itself an element of persuasion in an equalization effort evident from the exhibits’ character, proportion and presentation. It is not

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entirely clear to many visitors that the murder of close to 100% of Latvian Jewry in the Holocaust is implicitly equated with the lack of political and religious freedom in Soviet times and sundry abuses and killings. At least that is one of the interpretations, and one that is exponentially strengthened by visiting the sequence of exhibits.\textsuperscript{43} In the current (2016) exhibit, the entire history is mounted on red (Soviet) and brown (Nazi) colored panels. Naturally, the red far outnumber the brown (of course, Soviet rule was indeed much longer in duration), and there is little to make actual genocide qualitatively distinct in the eyes of the visitor. In the online ‘virtual museum’, the section called ‘The Holocaust and Repressions against Civilian Residents’ (itself a dilution of the Holocaust) is one of dozens of conceptually parallel representations.\textsuperscript{44}

The ‘mother’ of Double Genocide museums within the EU, however, is the Museum of Genocide Victims in central Vilnius, which was founded in 1992.\textsuperscript{45} For many years, it has been the most extreme public encapsulation of the local representation of Double Genocide, albeit one that fades into a misleading claim about a Single Genocide. The Soviets, for all their many evils, did not commit genocide in Lithuania. In fact, the USSR left the nation a larger population at the end of its misrule than at its start.


\textsuperscript{44}See the museum website (okupacijasmuzejs.lv) photo gallery of the opening of this ‘temporary’ version of the ‘permanent exhibit’, \url{http://okupacijasmuzejs.lv/en/foto-galerijas/pagaidu-ekspozicijas-atklasana-raina-bulvari-7}.

\textsuperscript{45}The museum’s web page, part of the Genocide Center’s website, is at: \url{http://genocid.lt/muziejus/}. For more information see the \textit{Museums of Lithuania} website: \url{http://www.muziejai.lt/vilnius/genocido_nukumuzieje.en.htm}. 
Until 2011, the word ‘Holocaust’ was not mentioned in the Museum of Genocide Victims in Vilnius, in the heart of the city whose Jewish citizens (between 70,000 and 80,000) were nearly entirely wiped out. The museum features a major entrance-level hall (image of one panel on p. 15) extolling the supposed heroism of the Lithuanian Activist Front, crediting the LAF ‘white-armbanders’ of June 1941 with a ‘rebellion’ that drove out the Soviet army. This statement grossly distorts the historical reality. The Soviets were fleeing from invading German troops, not from the white armbanders who were busy killing and attacking defenseless Jewish neighbors.

In the Genocide Museum’s main hallway stands a large ‘comparison chart’ (see image below) aimed to equalize Nazi and Soviet in a classic museum representation of the curious phenomenon of Holocaust envy.

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46 By most accounts there were around 60,000 Jews living in (Polish) Wilno in the late 1930s, but the number swelled by tens of thousands of refugees who fled the parts of Poland invaded by the Nazis in September of 1939. The 70,000–80,000 range reflects varying estimates of the Jewish population on 21 June 1941.

For several years from 2008, the only word in the museum starting with the letters *H–O–L*–*O* was Holodomor, as part of a large extended visit on Ukraine that made clear its view on the Hitler–Soviet comparison.

In 2010, the Vilnius-based web journal *Defending History* published a report on the museum with photographs by British-origin photojournalist Richard Schofield.\(^{48}\) In 2011, after the exclusion of the Holocaust from the local ‘genocide museum’ became untenable following a number of diplomatic protests from Vilnius-based Western ambassadors, a single small Holocaust exhibit was added, amidst much pomp and ceremony (including

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the prime minister). Until 2015, the Genocide Museum featured three antisemitic caricatures from the 1950s – that is, after the Holocaust – from the postwar anti-Soviet ‘Forest Brothers’, some of whom were recycled Nazi war criminals who had participated in the Holocaust in 1941. None of these was accompanied by any curatorial disclaimer. One features a jeep driven by Lenin, Stalin and ‘Yankelke the Jew’ (žydas Jenkelė in the original); another shows a caricature of a Jew behind Stalin blowing his economic bubbles (along with a soap dish adorned with a star of David to ensure the viewer does not miss the point); and the third depicts an antisemitic caricature serving as the Soviet torturer of Lithuanian patriots.

Photo by Richard Schofield

In 2011, as noted, in response to mounting protest, the Genocide Museum added a single cellar room about the Holocaust that is inadequate on numerous counts, even discounting the lop-sided disproportionality to the historic genocide committed in the country. It is heavily politicized by, for example, choosing to deal with components of the history that can be related to ‘the Germans alone’, while continuing to spew the fiction that the LAF killers actually brought ‘order’ to the country for the German forces’ arrival and setup.\textsuperscript{50}

Whether this museum – or any museum – succeeds in ‘capturing’ the viewer regarding the Holocaust in the context of ‘genocide victims’ depends largely on visitors’ background knowledge. A

\textsuperscript{50}Ibid. The critique of this Holocaust exhibit in the basement and the various opinions concerning its messaging are beyond the scope of this paper.
seasoned Guardian reporter in 2008, for example, felt compelled to critique the museum’s ethos after his visit. But a younger New York Times reporter in 2015 gushed in amazement without sensing that something might be controversial, as did a San Francisco Examiner correspondent in 2016.

Another example is the famed ‘Lenin Park’ outside Druskininkai, in southeastern Lithuania. Formally known as Grūto parkas, it is an elaborate and popular theme park and outdoor museum to which many statues of Lenin and other Soviet figures were removed after independence from the USSR. Although the park is privatized, signs make it clear that the historic inscriptions are courtesy of the state’s Genocide Center. Its ‘history lesson’ signs contain direct attacks on the Jewish partisans who fought the Nazis in the forests of Lithuania.

The outdoor museum has a propensity to select representative Soviet villains with Jewish names and/or appearance. In places where the name is not a giveaway, signs provide text to help the viewers understand more about the nation’s enemy.

Ukraine has even more extreme examples of state-sponsored Holocaust obfuscation within the Double Genocide framework. It is not surprising that the most dramatic case of distortion is to be found in a museum in Lviv, Ukraine, where ultranationalists have their main base of power. The Lonsky (or Lontsky) Street Prison National Memorial Museum, which opened in 2009 in a building that had been a prison under Polish, Soviet, Nazi and Ukrainian rule, is another case of a far-right effort by elements of the state to manipulate history and diminish the Holocaust and the mass murders by local fascist organizations glorified by the contemporary Ukrainian government.

It prominently features the following photograph:

51 Steele, “In the Jerusalem of the North.”
54 See above, notes 29–30.
The image purports to depict a Ukrainian woman looking for a relative murdered by the KGB in the days immediately following the launch of Operation Barbarossa in 1941. The added circles, depicting Soviet atrocities against Ukrainians with numbers of Ukrainian victims alleged in each case, obscure what is really shown in the photograph: the bodies of the Jews murdered in the Lviv Pogrom before the Germans took control of the city. The original photograph looks rather different.

This photograph, in its original and edited versions, attained international notoriety in 2012 when the museum’s director was invited on a North American tour that included a lecture at Harvard University and a meeting with then Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper. The distortion was exposed thanks to the courage and tenacity of a single scholar, Per Anders Rudling of Lund, Sweden.\(^5^6\)

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The particular Ukrainian branch of Double-Genocide-oriented Holocaust revisionism has also made some dramatic inroads into Canadian museums, most controversially the reaction to ‘Jewish’ attempts to have a permanent gallery dedicated to the Holocaust in the Canadian Museum of Human Rights, which opened in September 2014 in Winnipeg. The Ukrainian nationalist lobby, including the Ukrainian Canadian Civil Liberties Association and the Ukrainian Canadian Congress, launched a public campaign entailing the glorification of the Waffen SS Galizien and the militant UPA wing of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists, while obfuscating or denying their extensive and murderous Holocaust involvement. A major campaign of opposition was led by the prominent scholar, Catherine Chatterley. The distortion of the Holocaust in mainstream Canada at the behest of the Ukrainian nationalist lobby goes far beyond the debates over any one museum.

Moreover, the Double Genocide model of Holocaust revisionism has made deep inroads into the EU’s own pan-EU museum culture. The Prague Platform, the popular name for the Prague-based ‘Platform for European Conscience and Memory’, is the major ‘de facto instant creation’ of the Prague Declaration. It continues to post the Prague Declaration on its home page as a kind of established European truth while using EU funds for a wide array of history-revisionist projects, alongside more neutral projects that usefully educate Europe about the evils of Communism. One of its future projects is a mix-and-match museum of Nazi and Soviet crimes to be built in Brussels and stamped with the authority of the European Parliament itself.

In addition to its permanent museum projects, the EU-financed Prague Platform project, which lies at the heart of the revisionists’ ongoing base in the EU, is ‘quietly’ (i.e. without parliamentary declarations) chipping away at the Western narrative of the Holocaust by a series of events and exhibitions that travel to the far corners of the 28 nations of the EU and well beyond. Starting in 2012, the Platform organization has been sending its mobile exhibition, ‘Totalitarianism in Europe’, financed by the European Commission to numerous countries. After its 2012 debut in Bratislava, Slovakia, it appeared, from 2012 to 2016, in Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Ukraine, as well as in

references to Rudling’s excellent work, see his page at Academia.edu: https://lu.academia.edu/PerAndersRudling.


60 See the website of the Platform of European Memory and Conscience: www.memoryandconscience.eu/. For critical monitoring, see Defending History’s section, “Prague Platform”: http://defendinghistory.com/category/prague-platform.

61 See the Platform website’s announcement of the launch of the exhibition “Totalitarianism in Europe”:


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New York City and Washington. The exhibition has become the anchor for Holocaust revisionism in educational curriculums, helped along by two publications available gratis from the Prague Platform, courtesy of the European Commission. One is the *Catalogue of the International Travelling Exhibition ‘Totalitarianism in Europe’*. The other is the accompanying textbook, *Lest We Forget. Memory of Totalitarianism in Europe*. The exhibition’s lead-in poster, which is titled ‘Totalitarianism in Europe: Fascism – Nazism – Communism’, goes on to warn of the presumed injustice that

There still exists a difference between the common perception of the Fascist and Nazi dictatorships on the one side and the Communist dictatorship on the other. … In contrast, it has not yet become public knowledge that Communist totalitarianism … [from 1927 until now] is responsible for much larger losses of human lives than World War II.

There have also been efforts to inject the Double Genocide concept into existing museums. One incident that attracted some attention concerned Brussels’ Parlementarium Museum, which is attached to the European Parliament itself. But most such instances have gone unnoticed by outside observers.

An exhaustive critical study of this ‘foundational traveling exhibit’ is called for on the part of Holocaust Studies specialists. The means of obfuscation are manifold and highly localized for each country. For example, the Lithuanian far right’s insistence that various collaborators and perpetrators were ‘also’ somehow resisting the Nazis, works its way into the posters on Lithuania as matters of fact rather than contention – for example, in the poster headlined ‘Different resistance [sic] against the Nazi occupation were formed’, including the one featuring the Nazi puppet prime minister who was reburied with full honors in 2012. There is no mention of his signature on the document ordering some Jewish citizens of his city, Kaunas, to be sent to a death camp, or on a document calling for all the rest of the city’s Jewish citizens to be incarcerated in what came to be known as the Kovno Ghetto. This is the type of ‘heroic resistance fighter’ glorified in the exhibit on totalitarianism sponsored by the European Commission. The Holocaust is nowhere denied. It is rather minimized into a mere detail within the larger rewritten history of totalitarian regimes. There are also calls for Communist wrongdoers to be subjected to a new ‘Nuremberg Tribunal’.

As the permanent Brussels museum project develops, Holocaust historians and other scholars will need to study the course of its unfolding over the current decade (and, of course, its much earlier sources in Holocaust-era Eastern European nationalist circles). The renamed House of European History is scheduled to open soon in the EU’s capital in Belgium. It is a direct
result of the rhetoric of the idea that European unity and peace require a ‘common history’, which has become ‘Euro-speak’ for ‘Everybody has to now agree with the Red-equals-Brown model of the Baltic and other Eastern European states if there is to be unity in Europe [against Russia]’. This was made clear in early 2008, several months before the Prague Declaration’s proclamation, by the right-wing ‘Common Europe – Common History’ group, which used the slogan ‘Never Again’ (typically appropriating terms from Holocaust affairs and studies) to declare that all Europe must have the same opinion, in effect, as the Baltic nationalists. To his great enduring credit, British parliamentarian John Mann, a leading campaigner against antisemitism in Europe, saw through it well before anyone else. He rose in the House of Commons at Westminster to say:

On 22 January, in Tallinn, Estonia, five MEPs from five different countries met to launch a group called Common Europe – Common History. It has the same theme – the need for an equal evaluation of history. It is just a traditional form of prejudice, rewritten in a modern context. In essence, it is trying to equate communism and Judaism as one conspiracy and rewrite history from a nationalist point of view. Those are elected MEPs.68

Double Genocide in Holocaust Studies

The academic field of Holocaust Studies has only begun to confront the new challenges posed to the very core of the historic narrative of the events the field has elucidated so well in its own academic studies, as well as in the publications of academic institutions and museums. Academically speaking, established scholars need to make their voices heard. A number of eminent researchers have bravely opposed the massive political and financial onslaught driving the current revisionism, including Leonidas Donskis, Clemens Heni and Michael Shafir. Among those who have contained the revisionist onslaught on specific countries are Tarik Amar, Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe and Per Anders Rudling with respect to Ukraine; Randolph L. Braham and Michael Shafir on Hungary and Michael Shafir on Romania. Many important articles were brought together in the 2013 edited volume, Bringing the Dark Past to Light: The Reception of the Holocaust in Post-communist Europe, by John Paul Himka and Joanna Michlic.69

It needs to be stressed that Double Genocide (or ‘Equalization’ or ‘Symmetry’ or howsoever it is named), is a vital matter of historic principle, and one with many practical ramifications precisely because of the political and financial support that it enjoys at the governmental level. Double Genocide is emanating from a minority of states in Eastern Europe. But to engage with the topic, not least because of its conscious export internationally, is not to diminish the importance of other Holocaust issues, including an array of antisemitic and non-antisemitic


69John-Paul Himka and Joanna Beata Michlic, (eds.), Bringing the Dark Past to Light: The Reception of the Holocaust in Postcommunist Europe (University of Nebraska Press, 2013). It is regrettable, however, that in some instances, the editors chose contributors who have themselves been on Eastern European government payrolls or state-sponsored PR trips to support the sponsoring government’s construction of the debate per se. In the case of Lithuania, the co-authors of the piece on that nation are themselves both members of the state’s commission on Nazi and Soviet crimes. This serious failure affects very few of the contributions, but can be illustrative of how difficult it is for scholars, even in the West, to remain free of the Eastern European revisionist campaign and its long tentacles. See Michael Shafir’s excellent review in Yad Vashem Studies 42:2 (2015).
origin distortions in many locations, and an obvious overlap with the issue of degrees of local collaboration and participation, which continue to haunt successor populations. Nevertheless, the present essay is consciously limited to one set of issues that is empirically unique.

Revisionism as conscious historic construct, political policy and budgetary beneficiary is wholly different from even the greatest local angst at revelation of painful events. For contrast, in the most obvious non-Double Genocide state in the region, Poland, there have certainly been painful episodes, the most widely known being Jedwabne and the heroic work of Jan Gross and others. Poland, in its interbellum borders, was home to the largest prewar Jewish population in the region, and Jedwabne was an example of locals’ mass murder of their neighbors. But Poland is not a driver of Double Genocide.70 Poland, brutally invaded by the Nazis at the start of September 1939, is not interested in investing in a revisionism that would view the Nazis and their local supporters as ‘anti-Soviet national heroes’. The truly magnificent new Polin Museum of the History of Polish Jews is able to deal with the Holocaust straightforwardly, without the kind of massive opposition by political and media elites that an analogous museum in locations invaded by the Nazis in 1941 would attract. That is in the first instance because the history itself was so different in those places; instead of facing their histories, certain political elites in the Baltics and Ukraine have opted to invest in, and export, a cleverly revised would-be history, one that rides smoothly on the crest of NATO–Russia animosity. In the case of the Czech Republic, Hungary and other states, Double Genocide may be attractive for the far right, but less so for the mainstream. The ‘Prague center’ was chosen for tactical reasons by the movement’s founders from the Baltics, as pointed out by Yitzhak Arad.71

Within Eastern Europe, a rough scale of Double Genocide can be constructed based on the year proposed or enacted, as well as the prison term threatened by various states’ laws, passed in recent years, for those who would question the national narrative on genocide as it relates to Nazi and Soviet crimes. The ‘need’ for a law including punishment in order to establish the equality of Nazi and Soviet crimes was mooted in the Lithuanian parliament in 2009, but passed a year later, in 2010, with a maximum of two years’ imprisonment, after the newly elected Fidesz party passed a similar law designating a maximum punishment of three years, shortly after coming to power in Hungary that year. Estonia’s 2012 law legally shields from challenge the status of that nation’s Waffen-SS as national heroes of freedom. But a 2014 law in Latvia maxes out at 5 years of jail time, and Ukraine’s 2015 law imposes a punishment of 10 years.72 One of the most telling

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70 Disturbing and indefensible as the Holocaust distortions initiated in 2016 by Poland’s newly elected right-wing government were, they have been focused on revising local history to the tune of Polish ultra-nationalism (and antisemitism), not in the interests of the Double Genocide paradigm that mitigates Nazi genocide and makes heroes of Nazi accomplices who were ‘anti-Soviet’. Moreover, in marked contrast to the ongoing political manipulation of Western and Jewish reactions to events in the Baltics and Ukraine, Polish officials’ pronouncements were rapidly met with a rapid and impressive international statement of protest by scholars. See “An Open Letter from Scholars of Polish-Jewish History in Reaction to Statements by Polish Officials about Crimes in Jedwabne and Kielce,” Virtual Shtetl, Aug. 1, 2016, http://www.sztetl.org.pl/en/cms/news/5309,an-open-letter-from-scholars-of-polish-jewish-history-in-reaction-to-statements-by-polish-officials-about-crimes-in-jedwabne-and-kielce/.


72 For reports on these new laws, in chronological order, see e.g. for:


explanations of the true purpose of such laws was published in Lithuania in 2009 and, retrospectively speaking, serves as a superbly succinct explanation for them all:

In the Lithuanian legal system, acts regarding the crimes of Soviet genocide, i.e., their denial or justification, are not criminalized, and, experts say, this is an obstacle in attempting to equate the crimes of Soviet genocide with the Nazi genocide.73

The question today is another one: why are more Holocaust scholars, university departments, research institutions and museums not standing up to Double Genocide revisionism, starting with the Prague Declaration? The lag has a number of possible explanations. First, the challenge is not usually couched in the overt antisemitic terms of the last century’s ‘straight denial’. On the contrary, Double Genocide is often artfully joined up intricately with Holocaust Studies per se, and non-Eastern European scholars and educators are given the message that criticism will ‘hurt Holocaust Studies in Eastern Europe’. In Lithuania, the country that gives more financial and political support to Double Genocide than any other, it is often combined with – or masked by, depending on one’s point of view – an array of lavish events and institutions dedicated to Jewish culture, Yiddish or the Holocaust itself. In Vilnius, there are a number of ‘Jewish institutions’ whose Double Genocide agenda is helped along efficiently by embedding in Jewish topics, causes and well-financed, professionally constructed events.74 But that is not to claim that all, most, or even any great percentage of events celebrating or commemorating Jewish culture there, or anywhere in the region, are a cover for Holocaust revisionism. That is decidedly not the case. It is true, however, that some events in Eastern Europe, and a handful of state-subsidized institutions, have pursued the dual agenda of Jewish commemoration and Baltic history revisionism. The state’s arsenal includes awards, medals, and junkets for pliant foreign personalities deemed to be important in the effort.75


Double Genocide in Jewish and Holocaust museums

Quite disconcertingly, Double Genocide revisionism can come through the proverbial back door even to Jewish and Holocaust-focused museums. In one case in Ukraine, a Jewish museum in Dnipropetrovsk was found to be covering up the Holocaust participation of a notorious fascist organization.\textsuperscript{70} In Riga, the modest, but excellent Jewish museum housed on one floor of the central Jewish community building recently ‘lost’ the panels on local participation that had been meticulously prepared by the late Meyer Meller (Meijers Melers). In Vilnius, the straightforward Western narrative finds expression only in the so-called Green House, a component of the non-contiguous, multi-building Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum of Lithuania. Officially called the ‘Holocaust exposition’, it would not be encountered by a local student or foreign tourist who is not actively looking for it. A small wooden cabin out of sight of the street on which it is located, its intellectual integrity has for decades been guarded steadfastly by one scholar, Rachel Kostanian, whose authority and position have repeatedly been challenged over the years.\textsuperscript{77}

Disturbingly, in the state Jewish museum’s main building, a large and sympathetically restored building on a handsome avenue, one finds a different narrative. It is known mostly by its second name, the Tolerance Center, and features many excellent exhibits and events, both locally and internationally sourced. Its Holocaust section is slightly awkward to find, however, well away from the many exhibit on a kind of mezzanine. As noted previously, the city-center Museum of Genocide Victims dedicates the first large main-floor hall that visitors enter to the fiction that the LAF ‘rebellion’ in June of 1941 drove out the Soviet army, without mentioning that their actual ‘accomplishment’ in the final week of June 1941 was the murder of thousands of Jews. How does the state Jewish museum deal with this conundrum? With a kind of unabashed apologetic diplomatic compromise, as if the Holocaust is a chapter of history that lends itself to twenty-first-century diplomatic compromises. The museum tells us, ‘The first killings of Jews have been performed in the context of the war chaos, the anti-Soviet rebellion, the withdrawal of the Red Army and rapid attack of the German army’. This is followed by a rather incredible sentence, which whitewashes the very Nazi-puppet ‘provisional government’ that collaborated from the start with the annihilation of thousands of Jews in Kaunas and elsewhere. Apparently the whitewash is based on a certain request from the provisional government for executions of Jews to be conducted away from city centers, something that hardly reflects the overall policy or course of unfolding events: ‘The occupational authorities continue to execute their plans without taking into account the resolutions of the Lithuanian government’.


One of the more worrisome developments to date is the apparent occasional cooperation of the political department of Yad Vashem with Lithuanian authorities for whom even details of the local Holocaust narrative can be conceived as issues of national security vis-à-vis the current effort to enmesh Holocaust history in twenty-first-century East–West politics and the New Cold War. In 2011, Yad Vashem agreed to participate in a conference in the Lithuanian Parliament honoring the local perpetrators. While its representatives would no doubt have spoken up with moral clarity at the event, its very participation was widely taken as legitimization of a conference held in a national parliament, convened to honor Holocaust collaborators and perpetrators. After protests, participation was withdrawn at the last minute.78

Yad Vashem’s 2012 decision to rejoin the Lithuanian government’s ‘Red–Brown Commission’ despite the fact that the commission’s founding member Dr Yitzhak Arad had (and has) not yet received any apology from the state’s leaders for being accused of war crimes (because he survived by joining the anti-Nazi Soviet partisans), was met with impassioned public protest from the last organization of Lithuanian Holocaust survivors in Israel.79 When Dr Arad, a hero of Israel’s War of Independence, who had ably served Yad Vashem as its director for over two decades, wrote his paper exposing Lithuanian Holocaust obfuscation in 2012, he reported that it was turned down by Yad Vashem, and he proceeded to publish an English version elsewhere.80 When the government’s commission launched a harsh personal attack on a local Vilna-born Holocaust survivor, Professor Pinchos Fridberg, calling him a ‘liar’ on its website in 2013 (for having corrected an error in a talk at a conference by one of the commission’s officials), Yad Vashem failed to side with the maligned survivor, eliciting a protest in Jerusalem

80 Arad, “The Holocaust in Lithuania” (see note 9).
Report from a professor in Australia who produced a documentary film on the Lithuanian issues.\(^{81}\)

But these debates with Yad Vashem policy on Baltic and Eastern European Holocaust revisionism pale in comparison with a heartfelt complaint voiced by the last Lithuanian Holocaust survivors in Tel Aviv.\(^{82}\) In a series of taped interviews, they claimed that Yad Vashem had ‘adjusted’ its own Jerusalem exhibits on the Lithuanian Holocaust during the last major overhaul of the museum to bring the narrative closer to that desired by the Lithuanian government’s historical institutions. Our own visit tended to corroborate their fears.\(^{83}\) Correct or incorrect, the survivors’ view is ipso facto a statement that things have reached a worrying stage.

The world’s major Holocaust museums are among the last lines of defense of the narrative of the Holocaust as the twenty-first century moves onward. They must be wholly free of political influences and foreign ministries’ needs. At this moment in time, the threat to museums’ integrity, whether in legitimizing revisionism abroad or in their exhibits at home, whether in Eastern Europe or anywhere else, generally emanates from one of two kinds of political pressure. In the West, it is the pressure of some Eastern European allies, politically desirous of turning the Russians into another historic Hitler within the theoretical framework of World War II history, as well as clearing the way for glorification of local collaborators. In Israel, it is the diplomatic need for a set of allies in the EU and NATO whose ‘modest request’ is a mere adjustment to some history.

At the end of the day, it is entirely natural, both intellectually and temperamentally, that academics seek to remain aloof from polarizing polemics and the irksome fray of politics, media and international relations. But in the spirit of Ecclesiastes, it is vital to remember that there is unto everything a time.\(^{84}\) The Holocaust is increasingly being written out of history by major politicians and serious academics via an interlocking series of historical misrepresentations that connect into an alluring theoretical model, shrewder by a mile than the last century’s crude denial. This is often underwritten by state budgets and fostered by growing Western geopolitical, Jewish Eastern Europe nostalgic and Israeli interests. Still, it remains tempting for certain academics to dub their colleagues who do speak out as ‘Activists’ and head for the proverbial...
hills. A state-sponsored culture, buttressed by a series of anti-free-speech laws little understood in the West, has been established, which intimidates people in Eastern Europe from disagreeing with government authorities on Holocaust issues, lest they be called Putinists or Russian agents, all the more so in these times of heightened East–West tensions.

Double Genocide is not the same as a sum total of myriad local Eastern European (and indeed other) forms of Holocaust obfuscation, diminution and nationalist-minded revisionism that will often be challenged on a case-by-case basis. It is a potent and coherent political and intellectual movement, into which millions of euros have been poured, not least to impact influential Western and Jewish fellow travelers, including academics. It has already become enmeshed in American, NATO and Israeli foreign policy, and in various personal and institutional opportunities. It is a movement that threatens to infest Holocaust studies per se and the very educational achievements that took decades of dedicated work to realize, especially in museums and exhibits. This is underway at the juncture in history when the last survivors are going the way of the earth. Their progeny naturally place growing emphasis on their commemoration, and on cultural heritage and roots. But defending what had been the known history only a few short years ago against a massive onslaught is now a high priority for scholars of the Holocaust. Whether it is the manipulated history-writing of Eastern European ultranationalists or the ‘adjustment’ of museums and exhibits, a vigilant and undaunted academic pen is the order of the day.

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