

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 Khurbn*), 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 anti-semitic 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.³

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.⁴ The essay does not attempt to offer a comprehensive or a 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.

³See, for example, Michael Shafir, “Conceptualizing Hungarian Negationism in Comparative Perspective: Deflection and Obfuscation,” in Judit Maár, (ed.), *L’Europe à contre-pied: idéologie populiste et extrémisme de droite en Europe centrale et orientale* (Paris: Centre Interuniversitaire d’Études Hongroises et Finlandaises, 2014), pp. 265–310, <http://defendinghistory.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/MICHAEL-SHAFFIR-ON-NEGATIONISM-IN-HUNGARY3.pdf>; Michael Shafir, “Unacademic Academics: Holocaust Deniers and Trivializers in Post-communist Romania,” *Nationalities Papers: The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 42:6 (2014), pp. 942–964; Dovid Katz, “The Baltic Movement to Obfuscate the Holocaust,” in Alex J. Kay and David Stahel, (eds.), *Reconceiving Nazi Criminality: New Debates and Perspectives* (forthcoming); Dovid Katz, “On Three Definitions: Genocide; Holocaust Denial; Holocaust Obfuscation,” in Leonidas Donskis, (ed.), *A Litmus Test Case of Modernity. Examining Modern Sensibilities and the Public Domain in the Baltic States at the Turn of the Century* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009), pp. 259–277, <http://www.defendinghistory.com/2009SeptDovidKatz3Definitions.pdf>. Clemens Heni has claimed that the movement’s intellectual origins are to be found in the 1980s writing of Nolte and his colleagues in Germany; see Clemens Heni, *Antisemitism: A Unique Phenomenon* (Berlin: Edition Critic, 2012), pp. 293–294, 324–389, esp. 313–320.

⁴The 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 rootedness 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.⁵ 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.⁶ Timothy Snyder’s recent book, *Bloodlands*, for instance, sparked considerable scholarly response.⁷

⁵Leonidas Donskis, “Another Word for Uncertainty: Antisemitism in Modern Lithuania,” *NORDEUROPA-forum* 1 (2006), p. 1, pp. 7–26; Clemens Heni, *Antisemitism: A Specific Phenomenon* (Berlin: Edition Critic, 2012), pp. 240–401; Alvin Rosenfeld, *The End of the Holocaust* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011), esp. Location 2803 ff.; Manfred Gerstenfeld, *The Abuse of Holocaust Memory: Distortions and Responses* (Jerusalem: Jerusalem Center for Public Affairs and Anti-Defamation League, 2009); Efraim Zuroff, “Eastern Europe: Antisemitism in the Wake of Holocaust-Related Issues,” *Jewish Political Studies Review* 17:1–2 (Spring, 2005), <http://www.jcpa.org/phas/phas-zuroff-s05.htm>; Robert Rozett, “Diminishing the Holocaust: Scholarly Fodder for a Discourse of Distortion,” *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 6:1 (2012), pp. 53–64; Robert Wistrich, “Lying about the Holocaust,” in Robert Wistrich, (ed.), *A Lethal Obsession: Antisemitism from Antiquity to the Global Jihad* (Random House: New York, 2010), pp. 631–661, 1065–1070.

⁶See, for example, Yehuda Bauer, “Remembering Accurately on International Holocaust Remembrance Day,” *Jerusalem Post*, Jan. 25, 2010, <http://www.jpost.com/Features/In-Thespotlight/Remembering-accurately-on-Intl-Holocaust-Remembrance-Day>; Danny Ben-Moshe, “Saying No to ‘Double Genocide,’” *Jerusalem Post*, Dec. 3, 2012, <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Op-Ed-Contributors/Saying-no-to-double-genocide>; Esther Goldberg Gilbert, “Nazi Crimes Have Been Downgraded in Lithuania,” *Canadian Jewish News*, Oct. 7, 2010, <http://www.defendinghistory.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/2010Oct7EstherGoldberg.pdf>; Dovid Katz, “Understanding ‘Double Genocide’: A Lethal New Threat to Holocaust Memory and Honesty,” *Centre News* 33:2 (Sept., 2011), <http://defendinghistory.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/06/Dovid-Katz-on-Double-Genocide-20111.pdf>. See also the present author’s “‘Genocide Industry’ has Hidden Agenda,” *Irish Times*, May 30, 2009, <http://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/genocide-industry-has-hidden-agenda-1.773794>; “Halting Holocaust Obfuscation,” *Guardian*, Jan. 8, 2010, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/jan/08/holocaust-baltic-lithuania-latvia>; and “Understanding ‘Double Genocide,’” pp. 6–8.

⁷Timothy Snyder, *Bloodlands: Europe Between Hitler and Stalin* (New York: Basic Books, 2010). See the spirited prepublication debate organized by the *Guardian*: Timothy Snyder, “Echoes from the Killing Fields of the East,” *Guardian*, Sept. 28, 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/cifamerica/2010/sep/27/secondworldwar-poland>; Efraim Zuroff, “A Dangerous Nazi-Soviet Equivalence,” *Guardian*, Sept. 29, 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/cifamerica/2010/sep/29/secondworldwar-holocaust>; Dovid Katz, “Why Red is Not Brown in the Baltics,” *Guardian*, Sept. 30, 2010, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/cifamerica/2010/sep/30/baltic-nazi-soviet-snyder>.

Among the critical reviews that take issue with the book’s pivot toward (not full acceptance of) Double Genocide are: Omer Bartov in *Slavic Review*, 2012, pp. 424–428; Dan Diner in *Contemporary European History*, 2012, pp. 125–131; Alexander J. Groth in *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs*, 5:2 (2011), pp. 123–128; Clemens Heni, *Antisemitism: A Specific Phenomenon*, pp. 331–389; Thomas Kühne in *Contemporary European History*, 21:2 (2012), pp. 133–143; Efraim Zuroff in *Haaretz Books Supplement*, May 2011, pp. 1, 4; Kenneth Waltzer in *Holocaust Studies: A Journal of Culture and History* (2011), pp. 188–194; and the present author in *Journal of East European Jewish Affairs* 41:3 (2011), pp. 207–221, <http://defendinghistory.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/12/Dovid-Katzs-review-of-Bloodlands-in-EEJA-Dec-2011.pdf>. Despite their ‘strong language’, somewhat characteristic for such emotive subjects in polemic

The Double Genocide movement's foundational text is the Prague Declaration,⁸ which was signed in June 2008 by a group of mostly right-wing Euro-parliamentarians and political leaders.⁹ 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.¹⁰ But it did not attract mainstream media notice. In the absence of any significant extra-Europarlimentary scrutiny, its organizers

pieces in wider-readership publications, the reviews by Evans and Lazare provide serious and significant contributions to the debate: Richard J. Evans in the *London Review of Books*, Nov. 4, 2010, pp. 21–22, <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v32/n21/richard-j-evans/who-remembers-the-poles>, and Dan Lazare in *Jacobin*, Sept. 2014, <https://www.jacobinmag.com/2014/09/timothy-snyders-lies/>. An internet page that critiques alleged instrumentalization by Eastern European governments in the context of the Double Genocide debate and provides links to related debates and more reviews can be found at: <http://defendinghistory.com/30081/30081>.

⁸The text of the Prague Declaration is available at: <http://www.praguedeclaration.eu/>.

⁹To this day the signature of Vaclav Havel remains a mystery; see Yitzhak Arad, "The Holocaust in Lithuania, and Its Obfuscation, in Lithuanian Sources," *Defending History*, Dec. 1, 2012, <http://defendinghistory.com/yitzhak-arad-on-the-holocaust-in-lithuania-and-its-obfuscation-in-lithuanian-sources/46252>, penultimate section: "The Prague Declaration of June 2008 and the European Parliament Resolution of April 2009". See also Efraim Zuroff, "Vaclav Havel and the Prague Declaration," *Defending History*, Dec. 26, 2011, <http://defendinghistory.com/vaclav-havel-and-the-prague-declaration-by-efraim-zuroff/27583>. Witnesses to the event in Prague in June 2008 have (off the record) described the remarkable persuasive impact of a prominent right-wing Jewish member of the Lithuanian parliament; the veracity of the claim needs to be studied and is cited here to mark an item for future research.

¹⁰The earliest descriptive academic summary may be Heidemarie Uhl's "Conflicting Cultures of Memory in Europe: New Borders Between East and West?" *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 3:3 (2008), pp. 59–72, <http://www.israelcfr.com/documents/issue9-Uhl.pdf>. The central organization of Lithuanian Holocaust survivors in Israel, the Association of Lithuanian Jews in Israel, issued a protest on its website (also circulated by post), "Prague Declaration; A Distortion of Truth," http://www.lithuanianjews.org.il/HTMLs/article_list4.aspx?C2014=14500&BSP=13973&BSS59=13971. See also (here in chronological order) Dovid Katz, "Will the World Again Remain Silent? The New 'More Clever' and Dangerous Form of Holocaust Denial That is Seriously Considered by — the European Parliament," [In Yiddish] *Algemeiner Zhurnal*, July 25, 2008, pp. 9–10, http://dovidkatz.net/dovid/Lithuania/2008_AgainstRedBrown_I.pdf and http://www.dovidkatz.net/dovid/Lithuania/2008_AgainstRedBrown_II.pdf; Dovid Katz, "Prague's Declaration of Disgrace: A European Attempt to Equate Communism with Nazism will Falsify History," *Jewish*

were able to convince the European Parliament in 2009 to pass a resolution on 'European conscience and totalitarianism', which called for all Europe to observe a joint day of remembrance for Nazi and Soviet victims (23rd August) and to set up a 'Platform of European Conscience and Memory', which continues to lead these efforts, with financing from the EU's taxpayers, from its base in Prague.¹¹

Also in 2009, Eastern European politicians inserted Double Genocide language into the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE's) Vilnius Declaration.¹² A campaign of intellectual resistance was led by the web journal *Defending History*, in cooperation with the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Israel office director, Dr Efraim Zuroff, along with Tel Aviv attorney and author, Joseph Melamed, for many years elected head of the Association of Lithuanian Jews in Israel.¹³ By 2010, various Double Genocide efforts in the European Parliament were occasionally thwarted, notably the attempt to insert Double Genocide language and programs into the Stockholm Programme.¹⁴

But the symmetrical counterblow to 'Prague' came in a 'battle of declarations' in 2012, when the Seventy Years Declaration ('SYD'), drafted by Danny Ben-Moshe and the present author, was signed by 70 European parliamentary figures¹⁵ and presented to the president of the European

Chronicle (London), May 21, 2009, <http://www.thejc.com/comment/comment/prague%E2%80%99s-declaration-disgrace>; Efraim Zuroff, "A Combined Day of Commemoration for the Victims of Nazism and Communism?" *Jerusalem Post*, July 12, 2009, <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Op-Ed-Contributors/A-combined-day-of-commemoration-for-the-victims-of-Nazism-and-communism>; Clemens Heni, "The Prague Declaration, Holocaust Trivialization and Antisemitism," *Wissenschaft und Publizistik als Kritik*, Oct. 26, 2009, <https://clemensheni.wordpress.com/2009/10/26/the-prague-declaration-holocaust-obfuscation-and-antisemitism/>. UK MP John Mann, a renowned campaigner against antisemitism, called the Prague Declaration 'a sinister document' in "Europe Must Focus on Baltic Hate," *Jewish Chronicle*, Oct. 29, 2009, <http://www.thejc.com/comment/comment/21392/europe-must-focus-baltic-hate>. A more extensive (but not exhaustive) chronology of critiques is provided at <http://defendinghistory.com/prague-declaration/opposition>.

¹¹Points 13 and 15, respectively, of the *European Parliament Resolution on European Conscience and Totalitarianism*, Apr. 2, 2009, <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=TA&reference=P6-TA-2009-0213&language=EN&ring=P6-RC-2009-0165>. The website of the Prague Platform is: <http://www.memoryandconscience.eu/>. For critical tracking, see *Defending History's* section on the Platform: <http://defendinghistory.com/category/prague-platform>.

¹²*Vilnius Declaration of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and Resolutions Adopted at the Eighteenth Annual Session*, p. 48, point 3 ('two major totalitarian regimes, Nazi and Stalinist, which brought about genocide') and point 10 ('Europe-wide Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism'), <https://www.oscepa.org/documents/all-documents/annual-sessions/2009-vilnius/declaration-6/261-2009-vilnius-declaration-eng/file>.

¹³Among the media reports: Avi Friedman, "The New Deniers," *Mishpacha*, Aug. 5, 2009, pp. 13–19, <http://defendinghistory.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/01/Avi-Friedman-in-Mishpacha-2009.pdf>; Bernard Dichek, "Lithuania's Deceit," *Jerusalem Report*, Apr. 22, 2013, pp. 12–15, <http://defendinghistory.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/04/Bernard-Dichek-in-JERUSALEM-REPORT-22-April-2013.pdf>; Daniel Brook, "Double Genocide," *Slate*, July 26, 2015, http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/history/2015/07/lithuania_and_nazis_the_country_wants_to_forget_its_collaborationist_past.html. See the section on Joseph Melamed in *Defending History*: <http://defendinghistory.com/category/melamed-joseph>.

¹⁴See Leigh Phillips, "EU Rejects Eastern States' Call to Outlaw Denial of Crimes by Communist Regimes," *Guardian*, Dec. 21, 2010; European Union, "The Stockholm Programme" (2010–2014), <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=URISERV%3Ajl0034>; Dovid Katz, "Does the Road from Prague to Stockholm Go Through Vilnius?" *Defending History*, Dec. 16, 2010, <http://defendinghistory.com/road-prague-stockholm-vilnius/68745>, plus the Dec. 21, 2010 update: "European Commission Says 'No,'" *Defending History*, Dec. 21, 2010, <http://defendinghistory.com/road-prague-stockholm-vilnius/68745#updateof21dec>.

¹⁵For a historian's review of the "battle of the declarations," see Dan Stone, *Goodbye to All That? A History of Europe Since 1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 281.

Parliament.¹⁶ One of its four sections may be construed as a direct response to ‘Prague’, entailing the following points¹⁷:

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.¹⁸ This was followed by a remarkable media debate between the foreign minister and the then-shadow foreign minister, Vytenis Andriukaitis.¹⁹ The *New York Times* reported on it, albeit with the reporter in Vilnius speaking only to those approved by the government side of the debate.²⁰

¹⁶See European Commission, “Martin Schultz, EP President: Handing over of the Declaration on the Final Solution at the Wannsee Conference,” *European Commission, Audiovisual Services*, <http://ec.europa.eu/avservices/video/shotlist.cfm?ref=82876>; Danny Ben-Moshe, “Saying ‘No’ to Double Genocide,” *Jerusalem Post*, Mar. 12, 2012, <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Op-Ed-Contributors/Saying-no-to-double-genocide>.

¹⁷Text 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>.

¹⁸Lithuanian 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/-13270875831326542156-grup%C4%97s-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-apgail%C4%97tinas.htm> (English translation: <http://defendinghistory.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Lietuvos-rytas-on-Azubaliss-reaction-to-Seventy-Years-Declaration-20-January-2012.pdf>).

¹⁹Foreign Minister Ažubalis followed up with the article, “Honorable V. Andriukaitis: V. Havel was not an Antisemite, and the Tragedy of the Holocaust is Not a Toy in Your Election Game,” <http://www.delfi.lt/news/ringas/politics/aazubalis-gerb-v-andriukaiti-v-havelas-ne-antisemitas-o-holokausto-tragedija-ne-zaislas-jusu-rinkiminiam-sou.d?id=55029753> (English translation: <http://defendinghistory.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Azubalis-attacks-Social-Democrats-on-70YD-3-Feb-2012-Delfi.pdf>). MP Vytenis Povilas Andriukaitis, shadow foreign minister and one of the eight Lithuanian signatories of the Seventy Years Declaration, responded in his “Honorable A. Ažubalis, Did You Pull Such an Understanding of History out of Thin Air?” <http://www.delfi.lt/news/ringas/politics/vandriukaitis-gerbiamas-a-azubali-ar-is-balos-toks-istorijos-supratimas.d?id=55305479> (English translation: <http://defendinghistory.com/lithuanian-parliamentarian-vytenis-andriukaitis-signatory-of-70-years-declaration-replies-to-foreign-ministers-joke-on-the-holocaust/30647>). For a number of local Holocaust survivors, it was surprising that the larger politics were such that foreign Jewish leaders and scholars did not rush to congratulate Dr Andriukaitis. One exception was a former JDC executive who wrote from New York: “JFN’s Andres Spokoyny in New York City Congratulates Vytenis Andriukaitis in Vilnius,” *Defending History*, Feb. 14, 2012, <http://defendinghistory.com/jfns-andres-spokoyny-in-new-york-city-congratulates-vytenis-andriukaitis-in-vilnius/31018>.

²⁰See Roger Cohen, “The Suffering Olympics,” *New York Times*, Jan. 30, 2012. A partial rejoinder in the context of another piece by the same *Times* journalist appeared more than two years later: Dovid Katz,

The result of the 2012 SYD was not to 'defeat' the Prague Declaration, but to recalibrate its status from one of obvious truism 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.²¹ 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

"Reply to a Roger Cohen Opinion Piece on Ukraine and Lithuania," *Defending History*, May 6, 2014, <http://defendinghistory.com/reply-roger-cohen-opinion-piece-ukraine-lithuania/65919>.

²¹The campaign against Dr Yitzhak Arad was launched by a newspaper article (in Lithuanian) by Julius Girdvainis, "The Expert with Blood on his Hands," *Respublika*, Apr. 22, 2006, which conjures quotes from its staff as well as from the Genocide Center and state prosecutor's office (English translation: <http://defendinghistory.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/Original-attack-on-Arad-April-2006-inc.-ANUSAUSKAS.pdf>). A (non-exhaustive) chronology of the anti-Jewish-partisan-veteran campaign is provided in "Blaming the Victims: State Agencies and Other Elites Defame Holocaust Survivors," *Defending History*, <http://defendinghistory.com/blaming-the-victims>.

²²See Shimon Alperovich and Tuvia Jafet, "Open Letter" [to the president of Lithuania and other high officials], June 19, 2008, published on the website of the Association of Lithuanian Jews in Israel, final item at http://www.lithuanianjews.org.il/htmls/article_list4.aspx?C2014=14484&BSP=14481&BSS6=14481,

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 their 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

reposted at: <http://defendinghistory.com/jewish-community-and-union-of-ghettosurvivors-speak-out-on-harassment-of-holocaust-survivors-who-joined-the-resistance/38731>.

²³See Edward Lucas, "Prosecution and Persecution. Lithuania Must Stop Blaming the Victims," *Economist*, Aug. 21, 2008, <http://www.economist.com/node/11958563>; Dana Gloger, "The Holocaust Survivors Facing War Crimes Trials," *Jewish Chronicle*, June 6, 2008, www.defendinghistory.com/2008June6byDanaGloger.pdf; Danielle Singer, "'I have Fought Once, I Can Fight Again.' Lithuania Accuses Elderly Holocaust Survivors of Committing War Crimes During the Second World War," *Jerusalem Post*, May 28, 2008, <http://www.jpost.com/Jewish-World/Jewish-News/I-have-fought-once-I-can-fightagain>. For an extensive chronology see "Blaming the Victims" in *Defending History*, <http://defendinghistory.com/blaming-the-victims>.

²⁴For a variety of cases in recent years, see the section "Collaborators Glorified," *Defending History*, <http://defendinghistory.com/category/collaborators-glorified>.

²⁵See, in *Defending History*, "Estonia," <http://defendinghistory.com/category/estonia>, and "Latvia," <http://defendinghistory.com/category/latvia>.

²⁶In the case of Hungary (unlike the Baltics), such policies have resulted in major foreign Jewish figures protesting, at times by returning honors awarded by the state. The two best-known cases are Elie Wiesel and Randolph Braham. See Associated Press, "Elie Wiesel Returns Hungarian Government Award Over Officials Attending Nazi Sympathizer Ceremony," *CBS News*, June 18, 2012, <http://www.cbsnews.com/news/elie-wiesel-returns-hungarian-government-award-over-officials-attending-nazi-sympathizer-ceremony/>; Dan Bilefsky, "Holocaust Scholar Returns Top Award to Hungary in Protest," *New York Times*, Jan. 27, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/01/28/world/europe/holocaust-scholar-returns-top-award-to-hungary-in-protest.html?_r=0.

²⁷See documentation at "Memorials to Holocaust Collaborators in Public Spaces and State Sponsored Institutions in Lithuania" in *Defending History*, <http://defendinghistory.com/memorials-to-holocaust-collaborators-in-public-spaces-and-state-sponsored-institutions-in-lithuania>, and the section "Collaborators Glorified," <http://defendinghistory.com/category/collaborators-glorified>.

²⁸For a chronology of media coverage and commentary, see "1941 Nazi Puppet Prime Minister Reburied with Full Honors," *Defending History*, Dec. 31, 2012, <http://defendinghistory.com/new/34584>. To their huge credit, two members of Lithuania's Parliament, Vytenis Povilas Andriukaitis and Algirdas Sysas, challenged Prime Minister Andrius Kubilius and Foreign Minister Audronius Ažubalis on the floor of the Lithuanian Parliament in a dramatic exchange. See "Statement in the Lithuanian Parliament by MPs Vytenis Andriukaitis and Algirdas Sysas," *Defending History*, May 19, 2012, <http://defendinghistory.com/statement-read-in-the-lithuanian-parliament-by-mps-vytenis-andriukaitis-and-algirdas-syas/35753>; "Dramatic Confrontation on the Floor of the Lithuanian Parliament," *Defending History*, May 20, 2012, <http://defendinghistory.com/dramatic-confrontation-on-the-floor-of-the-lithuanian-parliament/35827>.

followers were responsible for hundreds of thousands of murders of Jews and Poles.²⁹ 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.³⁰ 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 ...³¹

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’.³² A further sub-corollary is the minimization of voluntary local participation in the actual killing in the period after German rule was firmly established.

²⁹See Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, *Stepan Bandera: The Life and Afterlife of a Ukrainian Nationalist: Fascism, Genocide, and Cult* (Stuttgart: ibidem-Verlag, 2014). Despite the volume’s seminal importance, and the extraordinary newsworthiness of disputes concerning Ukraine in the time since its publication, it has been largely ignored in the mainstream media’s book review sections in consequence of the wishes of some major forces in the West to downplay pro-fascist manifestations of post-Maidan Ukraine’s government. For a non-exhaustive, illustrative bibliography see Dovid Katz, “Select Bibliography: Media on Ukraine’s Holocaust Issues (2014–2015),” *Defending History*, July 23, 2015, <http://defendinghistory.com/ukraine-issues-in-early-2014/63714>. For a selection of Rossoliński-Liebe’s excellent academic work, see his page on Academia.edu: <https://fu-berlin.academia.edu/GrzegorzRossolinskiLiebe>.

³⁰“Kiev Renames Major Street after Nazi Collaborator,” *European Jewish Congress*, July 8, 2016, <http://www.eurojewcong.org/ukraine/15373-kiev-renames-major-street-after-nazi-collaborator.html>; “Kiev Renames Major Street to Honor Russian [sic] Nazi Collaborator,” *Times of Israel*, July 7, 2016, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/kiev-renames-major-street-to-honor-russian-nazi-collaborator/>.

³¹Bernardas Gailius, “Lithuanian Experience of the Soviet Genocide Investigation: Problematic Cases and General Conclusions,” <http://defendinghistory.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Holocaust-Envy-page-from-Genocide-Centers-website.pdf>.

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.³³ 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.³⁴

Occupation Regimes (the “Red-Brown Commission”) for a 2012 documentary film. “Executive Director of ‘Red-Brown Commission’ Doubts Lithuanian Jews were Killed ‘on a Racial Basis’ Before Arrival of German Forces in 1941,” *Defending History*, August 16, 2012, <http://defendinghistory.com/executive-director-of-red-brown-commission-questions-whether-lithuanian-jews-were-killed-on-a-racial-basis-before-arrival-of-german-forces/39766>.

³³See Dovid Katz, “Why is the US Silent on ‘Double Genocide’?” *Guardian*, December 21, 2010, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/cifamerica/2010/dec/21/double-genocide-baltic-us-europe>, in part superseded in Dovid Katz, “The Neocons and Holocaust Revisionism in Eastern Europe” (part 2), *Jewish Currents*, July 26, 2014, <http://jewishcurrents.org/neocons-holocaust-revisionism-eastern-europe-continued-30677>. See also *Defending History*’s bibliography in “Background Reading on the Shift in US Foreign Policy on Holocaust Denial from c. 2009,” <http://defendinghistory.com/background-reading-on-the-shift-in-us-foreign-policy-on-holocaust-denial-from-c-2010/48135>, and section on State Department matters: <http://defendinghistory.com/category/us-state-dept-manipulated>.

This shift toward defense of Baltic policy extended also to instances of antisemitism per se; cf. Efraim Zuroff, “The Threat of Baltic Ultrarationalism,” *Guardian*, April 3, 2010, <http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2010/apr/03/baltic-far-right-eu>.

³⁴The 2015 Ukraine law received considerable coverage and criticism in a few major Western publications. See, for example, Josh Cohen, “Dear Ukraine: Please Don’t Shoot Yourself in the Foot: A controversial new law sends the wrong signals about the past and threatens free speech,” *Foreign Policy*, April 27, 2015, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/04/27/dear-ukraine-please-dont-shoot-yourself-in-the-foot-nationalists-russia-bandera-rada/>; Jochen Hellbeck, “Ukraine Makes Amnesia the Law of the Land,” *New Republic*, May 21, 2015, <https://newrepublic.com/article/121880/new-laws-ukraine-make-it-illegal-bring-its-ugly-past>; Lily Hyde, “Ukraine to Rewrite History with Controversial ‘Decommunization’ Laws,” *Guardian*, April 20, 2015, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/20/ukraine-decommunisation-law-soviet>; Jared McBride, “How Ukraine’s New Memory Commissar is Controlling the Nation’s Past,” *The Nation*, August 13, 2015, <https://www.thenation.com/article/how-ukraines-new-memory-commissar-is-controlling-the-nations-past/>.

There has also been determined coverage by a modest number of critics of the ongoing history distortion and ongoing national empowerment of the antisemitic far right. See Tarik Cyril Amar and Per Anders Rudling, “Why the Revival of Nationalist Myths in Ukraine Should Alarm Us,” *HNN (History News Network)*, May 19, 2014, <http://historynewsnetwork.org/article/155618>; Tarik Cyril Amar, Omer Bartov, and Per Anders Rudling, “Supporting Ukraine Means Opposing Antisemitic Nationalism Now, Not Later,” *Tablet*, March 24, 2014, <http://www.tabletmag.com/jewish-news-and-politics/166945/no-time-to-waste-in-ukraine>; Dovid Katz, “Getting it Wrong on Ukraine,” *Times of Israel*, June 10, 2014, <http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/the-tarnished-hukraine/>; Dovid Katz, “Ukraine — Bonanza for Upgraded Holocaust Denial,” *Times of Israel*, Nov. 28, 2014, <http://blogs.timesofisrael.com/ukraine-bonanza-for-upgraded-holocaust-denial/>; Dovid Katz, “The Hushed-Up Hitler Factor in Ukraine,” *Consortiumnews.com*, Aug. 16, 2014, <https://consortiumnews.com/2014/08/16/the-hushed-up-hitler-factor-in-ukraine/>. For additional sources, see “Select Bibliography” in *Defending History*, <http://defendinghistory.com/ukraine-issues-in-early-2014/63714>.

The US State Department has invested extensively in a 'Jewish public relations' effort to mask the unfolding events.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.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).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.³⁸ Then, in 2011, when Lithuanian prosecutors arranged for Interpol to disturb Holocaust survivor Joseph

In the case of EU member states, however, reports and criticism of the laws effectively criminalizing the Western (and Jewish) narrative of the Holocaust have rarely appeared in mainstream Western media, but reports and critiques appeared in more local publications, for example, Leonidas Donskis, "Concept Inflation and the Criminalization of Debate," *Jerusalem of Lithuania*, Oct.–Dec. 2008 (online at: <http://www.holocaustinthebaltics.com/2008OctDecDonskisCriminalizationofDebate.PDF>); Dovid Katz, "Red-Brown Bill with Two Years of Jailtime for Disagreeing with Government's Position is Signed into Law," *Defending History*, June 29, 2010, <http://defendinghistory.com/red-brown-bill-with-two-years-of-jailtime-for-disagreeing-with-governments-position-is-signed-into-law/843>; "Latvia's Saeima Approves Criminal Liability for Gross Derogation of Crimes Perpetrated by Soviet Union or Nazi Germany," *Baltic Course*, May 15, 2014, <http://www.baltic-course.com/eng/legislation/?doc=91593>.

³⁵See relevant references in note 33; Efraim Zuroff, "Pardoning Nazism, in the Name of Lithuanian-Jewish Relations," *Times of Israel*, Oct. 14, 2012, <http://www.timesofisrael.com/pardoning-nazism-in-the-name-of-lithuanian-jewish-relations/>, and Dovid Katz, "Just About Yiddish? The Real Story Behind This Week's Yivo Banquet in New York," *Algemeiner.com*, Dec. 16, 2014, <http://www.algemeiner.com/2014/12/16/just-about-yiddish-the-real-story-behind-this-week%E2%80%99s-yivo-banquet-in-new-york/>.

³⁶See Barry Rubin, "Unfinished Business and Unexploited Opportunities: Central and Eastern Europe, Jews, and the Jewish State," *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 4:2 (2010), pp. 37–47, <http://israelcfr.com/documents/4-2-5-BarryRubin.pdf>; Laurence Weinbaum, (ed.), "On Barry Rubin's 'Unfinished Business and Unexploited Opportunities: Central and Eastern Europe, Jews, and the Jewish State,'" *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* 4:3 (2010), pp. 187–194, <http://defendinghistory.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/2010IsraelJournalofForeignAffairs.pdf>.

³⁷For a non-exhaustive listing of debates involving Israel and Lithuanian (or Baltic/Eastern European) Holocaust policies, organized by topic and year, see Dovid Katz, "Israel Chronicle," *Defending History*, <http://defendinghistory.com/israel-debates/43340>. See also *Defending History's* "Israel" section: <http://defendinghistory.com/category/israel>.

³⁸See "Dr. Rachel Margolis Honored in Tel Aviv's Leivick House," *Leyvick House: The Israeli Center for Yiddish Culture*, June 2009, <http://www.leyvik.org.il/articles77.aspx>; "Tel Aviv's Leivick House Releases 2009 Video of Ambassador Chen Ivri Apter," *Defending History*, Oct. 20, 2012, <http://defendinghistory.com/tel-avivs-leivick-house-releases-2009-video-of-ambassador-chen-ivri-apter/44176>.

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.³⁹

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.⁴⁰ 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.⁴¹

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

³⁹See above-cited "Israel Chronicle" page in *Defending History*: <http://defendinghistory.com/israel-debates/43340>; Efraim Zuroff, "A Threat Too Serious to Ignore," *Jerusalem Post*, Sept. 4, 2013, <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Op-Ed-Contributors/A-threat-too-serious-to-ignore-309270>; Dovid Katz, "UNESCO Vote Reveals Lithuanian Duplicity," *Jerusalem Post*, Nov. 2, 2011, <http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Op-Ed-Contributors/UNESCO-vote-reveals-Lithuanian-duplicity>.

⁴⁰One example is American author Ellen Cassedy'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=pxjJ0DvqJP8&feature=youtu.be>.

⁴¹Although 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 symbolologically 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



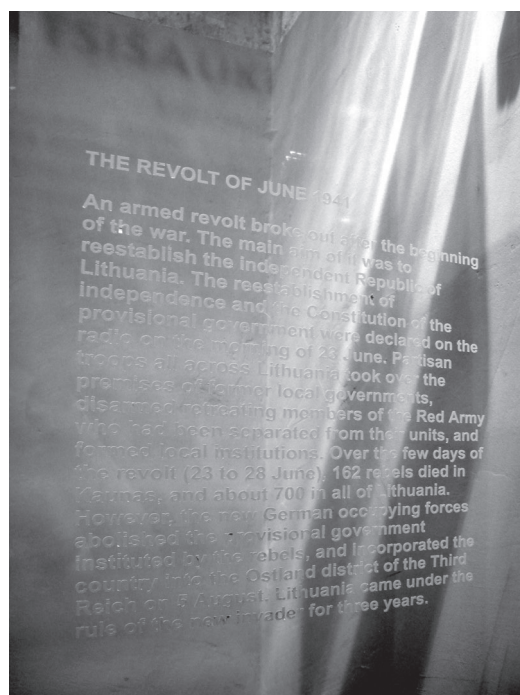
Photo by Erik Peinar (courtesy Leena Hietanen)

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

⁴²See Leena Hietanen, "President of Germany Hails Baltic Double Genocide Revisionism," *Defending History*, July 11, 2013, <http://defendinghistory.com/president-of-germany-hails-baltic-double-genocide-revisionism/56154>. President Gauck, a native of the former East Germany, is himself a signatory of the Prague Declaration. For a critique, inter alia, of his Holocaust positions, see Clemens Heni, (ed.), *Ein Super-GAUck: Politische Kultur im neuen Deutschland* (Berlin: Edition Critic, 2012). He is very rarely asked publicly about his signature on the Prague Declaration, and in some of the known cases, the question has not made it into media reports. See, for example, a note on Miriam Magall's question in "A Question in Berlin about President Gauck's Signature on the Prague Declaration," *Defending History*, Dec. 20, 2013, <http://defendinghistory.com/germanys-president-gauck-is-questioned-on-his-prague-declaration-signature-at-press-conference/61824>.

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.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.⁴⁴

The 'mother' of Double Genocide museums within the EU, however, is the Museum of Genocide Victims in central Vilnius, which was founded in 1992.⁴⁵ 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.



⁴³For a critique of the longstanding museum prior to the present renovations, see Roland Binet, "On the 'Occupation Museum' in Riga," *Defending History*, Oct. 25, 2010, <http://defendinghistory.com/on-the-occupation-museum-in-riga/41517>. See also Roland Binet, "La Maison de l'histoire européenne soutenue par un musée controversé," *Le Monde*, Nov. 24, 2010, http://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2010/11/24/la-maison-de-l-histoire-europeenne-soutenue-par-un-musee-controverse_1440626_3232.html.

⁴⁴See the museum website (okupacijasmuzejs.lv) photo gallery of the opening of this 'temporary' version of the 'permanent exhibit', <http://okupacijasmuzejs.lv/en/foto-galerijas/pagaidu-ekspozicijas-atklasana-raina-bulvari-7>.

⁴⁵The museum's web page, part of the Genocide Center's website, is at: <http://genocid.lt/muziejus/>. For more information see the *Museums of Lithuania* website: http://www.muziejai.lt/vilnius/genocido_auku_muziejus.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.⁴⁶ 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.⁴⁷

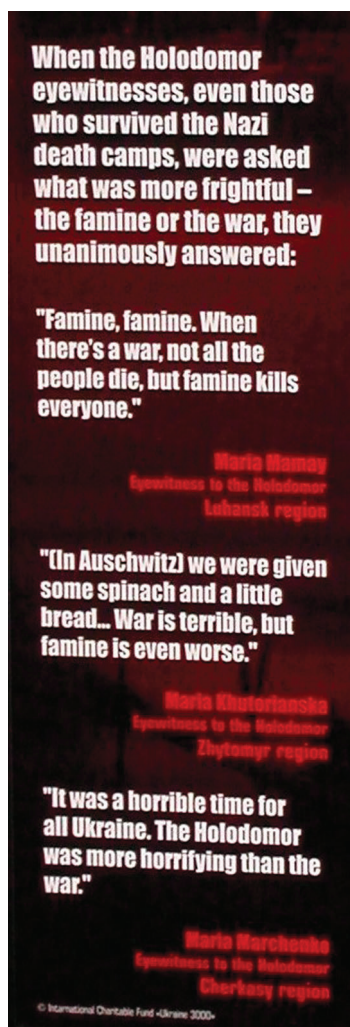
In the Genocide Museum’s main hallway stands a large ‘comparison chart’ (see image below) aimed to equalize Nazi and Soviet in a classic museum representation of the curious phenomenon of Holocaust envy.

Lietuvos gyventojų netektys okupacijų metais		Losses during the occupation
Sovietų okupacijos metais During the Soviet occupation 1940 06 15 – 1941 06 22; 1944–1990		
Sulimta, įkalinta, tardyta Arrested, interrogated, imprisoned	~ 200 000	
Ištremta Deported	~ 132 000	
Lageriuose ir kalėjimuose žuvo Prisoners who died	000–25 000	
Tremtyje žuvo Died in deportation	~ 28 000	
Žuvo partizanų ir jų rėmėjų Partisans and their supporters killed	~ 210 000	
Nacių Vokietijos okupacijos metais During the Nazi German occupation 1941 06 22–1944 07		
Įkalinta, išvežta į koncentracijos stovyklas Imprisoned and deported to concentration camps	~ 29 500	
Nužudyta (iš jų – apie 200 tūkst. žydų) Killed (including about 200, 000 Jews)	~ 240 000	
Išvežta priverstiniais darbais į Vokietiją Deported to Germany for forced labour	~ 60 000	

⁴⁶By 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.

⁴⁷See, for example, Yitzhak Arad, *The Holocaust in the Soviet Union* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press and Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2014), pp. 88–95; David Bankier, *Expulsion and Extermination: Holocaust Testimonials from Provincial Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Yad Vashem, 2011); Konrad Kwiet, “The Onset of the Holocaust: The Massacre of the Jews in Lithuania in June 1941,” in Andrew Bonnell, Gregory Munro, and Martin Travers, (eds.), *Power, Conscience, and Opposition. Essays in German History in Honour of John A. Moses* (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), pp. 107–121, esp. pp. 111–112; Karen Sutton, *The Massacre of the Jews of Lithuania* (Jerusalem: Keter, 2008), pp. 97–156.

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

⁴⁸Of the many critiques over the years, one that had particular resonance was Jonathan Steele, "In the Jerusalem of the North, the Jewish Story is Forgotten," *Guardian*, June 20, 2008, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2008/jun/20/secondworldwar>. See also: "The Museum of Genocide Victims," text by Dovid Katz, photos by Richard Schofield, *Defending History*, Aug. 1, 2010, <http://defendinghistory.com/genocide-museum-in-vilnius/45534>.

the prime minister).⁴⁹ 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 Jenkelkė* 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

⁴⁹“The New *Holocaust* Room in a *Basement Cubicle* of the *Genocide* Museum in Vilnius,” text by Dovid Katz, photos by Richard Schofield, *Defending History*, Nov. 21, 2011, <http://defendinghistory.com/genocide-museum-new-holocaust-room-in-the-basement>.



Photo by Richard Schofield



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 lopsided 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.⁵⁰

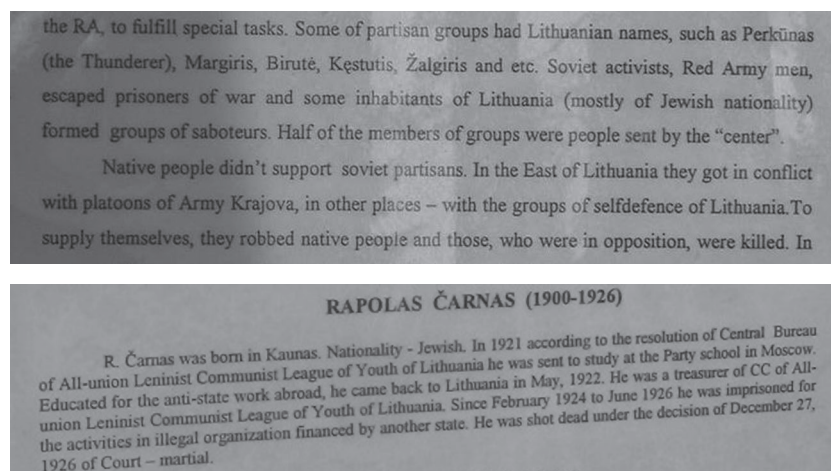
Whether this museum – or any museum – succeeds in ‘capturing’ the viewer regarding the Holocaust in the context of ‘genocide victims’ depends largely on visitors’ background knowledge. A

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.⁵¹ 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 2016.⁵²

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.⁵³ 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.⁵⁴ 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.⁵⁵ It prominently features the following photograph:

⁵¹ Steele, "In the Jerusalem of the North."

⁵² Sarah Khan, "36 Hours in Vilnius, Lithuania," *New York Times*, July 8, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/07/12/travel/what-to-do-in-36-hours-in-vilnius-lithuania.html?_r=0; Jonathan Rome, "The Old World Charm and New World Feel, of Vilnius, Lithuania," *San Francisco Examiner*, May 22, 2016. Replies appeared in the media watch section of *Defending History*: <http://defendinghistory.com/double-genocide-discourse-now-standard-for-the-new-york-times/75642> and <http://defendinghistory.com/san-francisco-examiner-bamboozled/81565>.

⁵³ Its website is www.grutoparkas.lt. For our critique, see Dovid Katz (with photos by Richard Schofield), "Gruto Parkas, the Fun Park near Druskininkai," *Defending History*, Sept. 1, 2010, <http://defendinghistory.com/gruto-parkas-near-druskininkai/45588>.

⁵⁴ See above, notes 29–30.

⁵⁵ See John-Paul Himka, "The Lontsky Street Prison Memorial Museum. An Example of Post-Communist Holocaust Negationism," in Klas-Göran Karlsson, Johan Stenfeldt, and Ulf Zander, (eds.), *Perspectives on the Entangled History of Communism and Nazism* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2015), pp. 137–166.



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.⁵⁶

⁵⁶See Per Anders Rudling, "Ukrainian Ultrationalists Sponsor Lecture Tour Across North American Universities," *Defending History*, Oct. 12, 2012, <http://defendinghistory.com/ukrainian-ultranationalists-sponsor-lecture-tour-across-north-american-universities-by-per-anders-rudling/43718>. For a summary of events and links to further sources in the episode, see "Ukrainian Holocaust Revisionists Woo Canada, Exposed by Historian from Lund, Sweden," *Defending History*, Nov. 1, 2012, <http://defendinghistory.com/ukrainian-holocaust-revisionists-woo-canada-exposed-by-historian-from-lund-sweden/51623>. For

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.⁵⁷ A major campaign of opposition was led by the prominent scholar, Catherine Chatterley.⁵⁸ 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.⁵⁹

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.⁶⁰ 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.⁶¹ After its 2012 debut in Bratislava, Slovakia, it appeared, from 2012 to 2016, in Belgium, Canada, the Czech Republic, Germany, Ireland, Lithuania, Netherlands, Romania, Ukraine, as well as in

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

⁵⁷See Karyn Ball and Per Anders Rudling, "The Underbelly of Canadian Multiculturalism: Holocaust Obfuscation and Envy in the Debate about the Canadian Museum for Human Rights," *Holocaust Studies: A Journal of Culture and History* 20:3 (Winter, 2014), pp. 33–80.

⁵⁸See Catherine D. Chatterley, "Canada's Struggle with Holocaust Memorialization: The War Museum Controversy, Ethnic Identity Politics, and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights," *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 29:2 (Fall, 2015), pp. 189–211; Catherine D. Chatterley, "The War Against the Holocaust," *Winnipeg Free Press*, Apr. 2, 2011, <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/analysis/the-war-against-the-holocaust-119110699.html>.

⁵⁹See, for example, Grzegorz Rossoliński-Liebe, "Celebrating Fascism and War Criminality in Edmonton. The Political Myth and Cult of Stepan Bandera in Multicultural Canada," *Kakanien Revisited* 12 (2010), pp. 1–16, https://www.academia.edu/401300/Celebrating_Fascism_and_War_Criminality_in_Edmonton._The_Political_Myth_and_Cult_of_Stepan_Bandera_in_Multicultural_Canada; Per Anders Rudling, "Multiculturalism, Memory, and Ritualization: Ukrainian Nationalist Monuments in Edmonton, Alberta," *Nationalities Papers* 39:5 (Sept., 2011), pp. 733–768.

⁶⁰See 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>.

⁶¹See the Platform website's announcement of the launch of the exhibition "Totalitarianism in Europe": "Totalitarianism in Europe – International Exhibition Opening in Bratislava, Slovakia," *Platform of European Memory and Conscience*, Sept. 6, 2012, <http://www.memoryandconscience.eu/2012/09/06/totalitarianism-in-europe-an-international-travelling-exhibition/>.

New York City and Washington.⁶² 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'*.⁶³ The other is the accompanying textbook, *Lest We Forget. Memory of Totalitarianism in Europe*.⁶⁴ 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.⁶⁵

There have also been efforts to inject the Double Genocide concept into existing museums. One incident that attracted some attention concerned Brussels' Parliamentarium Museum, which is attached to the European Parliament itself.⁶⁶ 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.⁶⁷ It is a direct

⁶²"Presentations of the International Travelling Exhibition 'Totalitarianism in Europe,'" *Platform of European Memory and Conscience*, Nov. 17, 2013, <http://www.memoryandconscience.eu/2013/11/17/presentations-of-the-international-travelling-exhibition-totalitarianism-in-europe/>.

⁶³*Catalogue of the International Travelling Exhibition "Totalitarianism in Europe"* (Brussels: European Commission, Europe for Citizens Programme, 2013).

⁶⁴Gillian Purves, (ed.), *Lest We Forget. Memory of Totalitarianism in Europe. A Reader for Older Secondary School Students Anywhere in Europe* (Prague: Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes, 2013).

⁶⁵Cited in Geoff Vasil's review of the exhibition, "Inclusion and Occlusion," *Defending History*, Sept. 25, 2013, <http://defendinghistory.com/inclusion-and-occlusion/59470>.

⁶⁶See "Double Genocide MEPs Sneak Revisionism into Parliamentarium Museum," *Defending History*, Mar. 20, 2014, <http://defendinghistory.com/double-genocide-meps-sneak-revisionism-parliamentarium-museum/64859>.

⁶⁷See the European Parliament website's page on the House of European History in Brussels: <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/visiting/en/visits/historyhouse.html>. For some of the controversy engendered, see Chris Doidge, "Does Europe Need a £44 Million History Museum," *BBC NEWS*, Feb. 12, 2013, <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-21383375>; James Panichi, "House of European History Gets Cash and a

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

Lot of Flak,” *Politico.eu*, Dec. 30, 2015, <http://www.politico.eu/article/house-of-european-history-gets-cash-and-a-lot-of-flak/>. For the earlier full-blown plan for a ‘red-brown’ museum on the Baltic model of the ‘Genocide Museum’, see, for example, Renata Goldirova, “Czech Republic Seeks EU Institute on Totalitarianism,” *EUObserver*, Sept. 19, 2008, <https://euobserver.com/institutional/26773>.

⁶⁸ John Mann, speech in the House of Commons on Jan. 31, 2008, transcribed in *Parliament.UK* for Jan. 31, 2008, column 509, <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200708/cmhansrd/cm080131/debtext/80131-0010.htm>.

⁶⁹ John-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

⁷⁰Disturbing 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-state-ments-by-polish-officials-about-crimes-in-jedwabne-and-kielce-/>.

⁷¹See section 12 of Arad, "The Holocaust in Lithuania, <http://defendinghistory.com/yitzhak-arad-on-the-holocaust-in-lithuania-and-its-obfuscation-in-lithuanian-sources/46252#rewritingofhistory>.

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

- (1) Hungary: "Fidesz to Amend Holocaust Denial Law," May 18, 2010, *Politics.Hu*, <http://www.politics.hu/20100518/fidesz-to-amend-holocaust-denial-law/>;
- (2) Lithuania: "Amendment to Criminal Code Article 95, Addition of Article 1702 and Addition to Code Appendix [in Lithuanian], Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania, June 15, 2010, http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=375951 (in English translation: http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=375951).

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

holocaustinthebaltics.com/2010June29Red-BrownLawPassedBy%20Seimas.pdf); see also Jewish community's response: Milan Cheroniski, "History: Education or Modern Politics?," *Jerusalem of Lithuania*, 155–156, April–June 2010, pp. 2, 6, <http://holocaustinthebaltics.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/2010CheroniskiOnCriminalizationOfUniqueHolocaust.pdf>;

- (3) Estonia: Per Anders Rudling, "The Waffen-SS as Freedom Fighters," *Algemeiner Journal*, Jan. 21, 2012, <http://www.algemeiner.com/2012/01/31/the-waffen-ss-as-freedom-fighters/>; Leena Hietanen and Petri Krohn, "Estonia's 2012 Valentine's Day Law," *Defending History*, 26 May 2012, <http://defendinghistory.com/estonias-2012-valentines-day-law/36263>;

- (4) Latvia: "Latvian Saeima Approves Criminal Liability" (see note 34).

- (5) Ukraine: "New Laws in Ukraine Potential Threat to Free Expression and Free Media, OSCE Representative Says," *OSCE*, May 18, 2015, <http://www.osce.org/fom/158581>.

⁷³Baltic News Service, "Placing the Equals Sign Between Communism and Nazism," [In Lithuanian] *Delfi.lt*, Mar. 19, 2009, <http://www.delfi.lt/archive/article.php?id=21075147> (English translation: <http://www.holocaustinthebaltics.com/2009March19RedEqualsBrownRationaleForCriminalization.pdf>). See also: Justinas Žilinskas, "Introduction of 'Crime of Denial' in the Lithuanian Criminal Law and First Instances of its Application," *Jurisprudencija* 19:1 (2012), pp. 315–329, https://www.mruni.eu/upload/iblock/205/017_zilinskas.pdf.

⁷⁴See, for example, *Defending History*'s sections on events that serve the cause: <http://defendinghistory.com/category/jewish-events-as-cover>; the Jewish Public Library: <http://defendinghistory.com/category/vilnius-jewish-public-library-2>; the Vilnius Yiddish Institute: <http://defendinghistory.com/category/vilnius-yiddish-institute>; and the Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania: <http://defendinghistory.com/category/the-red-brown-commission>.

⁷⁵See, for example, "When Government Honors are Part of a Plan to Rewrite History," *Defending History*, <http://defendinghistory.com/when-a-picture-tells-a-story>.

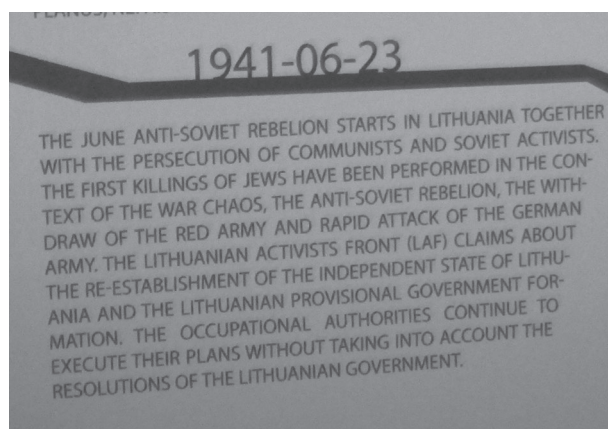
Double Genocide in Jewish and Holocaust museums

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.⁷⁶ 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 straight-forward 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.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 withdraw[al] 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’.

⁷⁶See the report and translation of a local report in *Defending History*, Nov. 1, 2012, <http://defendinghistory.com/jewish-center-in-ukraine-apparently-duped-into-honoring-a-nazi-collaborationist-organization/44886>.

⁷⁷See the website of the Vilna Gaon Jewish State Museum: <http://www.jmuseum.lt/index.aspx?Lang=EN>, where the ‘Holocaust Exposition’ is the second of four ‘exposition sites’ enumerated on the home page. For the outside world, however, the Green House is the ‘island of Jewish honesty’ defended over the years by its stalwart former director Rachel Kostanian, who is now semi-retired. See Esther Goldberg Gilbert, “Historian Whose Task is Remembrance of the Holocaust,” *Canadian Jewish News*, Sept. 8, 2010, <http://holocaustinthebaltics.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/10/20108SeptGGoldergOnKostanian.pdf>; Esther Goldberg Gilbert, “Nazi Crimes Have Been Downgraded” (see note 6), where ‘investigations’ into Ms Kostanian are reported; “Green House” in *Defending History*: <http://defendinghistory.com/the-green-house/45540>; “Green House Reopens in Vilnius; Kostanian is the Star,” *Defending History*, Oct. 19, 2010, <http://defendinghistory.com/green-house-reopens-in-vilnius-kostanian-is-the-star/4213>. On one occasion, when Kostanian was threatened with dismissal, the late Sir Martin Gilbert intervened to save her position.



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*

⁷⁸See "Yad Vashem, in Jolt to Holocaust Survivors, Joining Revisionist Holocaust Conference in the Lithuanian Parliament," *Defending History*, June 7, 2011, <http://defendinghistory.com/yad-vashem-slated-to-join-red-brown-conference-in-lithuanian-parliament/16860>.

⁷⁹See Joseph Melamed, "English Text of Joseph Melamed's Letter to Yad Vashem," *Defending History*, Sept. 3, 2012, <http://defendinghistory.com/english-text-of-joseph-melameds-letter-to-yad-vashem/40838>; also, "Joseph Melamed, Head of Lithuanian Holocaust Survivors' Association, Released Letter to Director of Yad Vashem" [image of the original Hebrew letter], *Defending History*, Sept. 3, 2012, <http://defendinghistory.com/joseph-melamed-head-of-lithuanian-holocaust-survivors-association-releases-letter-to-director-of-yad-vashem/40818>. In addition, the survivors' association issued an institutional public statement to Yad Vashem, see "Holocaust Survivors, Based in Tel Aviv, Issue Statement on Renewal of the Red–Brown Commission," *Defending History*, Sept. 3, 2012, <http://defendinghistory.com/last-active-group-of-lithuanian-holocaust-survivors-based-in-tel-aviv-speaks-out-on-renewal-of-the-red-brown-commission/40785>.

⁸⁰Arad, "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

⁸¹Danny Ben-Moshe, “Yad Vashem and the Two Genocides. East European Politics is Rewriting the History of the Holocaust and Threatening Yad Vashem’s Mission of Remembering,” *Jerusalem Report*, Aug. 26, 2013, <http://defendinghistory.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Danny-Ben-Moshe-in-Jerusalem-Report-26-August-2013.pdf>; see also the reply: Dina Porat, “Yad Vashem and the Holocaust in Lithuania,” *Jerusalem Report*, Sept. 15, 2013, <http://www.jpost.com/Jerusalem-Report/Jewish-World/Yad-Vashem-and-the-Holocaust-in-Lithuania-326158>.

Professor Ben-Moshe’s film is *Rewriting History*: <http://identity-films.com/films/rewriting-history/> and www.rewriting-history.org. For international reviews of the film in 2012 and 2013, see “Reviews and Coverage of the Documentary Film *Rewriting History*” in *Defending History*: <http://defendinghistory.com/reviews-and-coverage-of-the-documentary-film-rewriting-history>.

⁸²The present author conducted taped interviews (in Yiddish) with Joseph Melamed, Uri Chanoch, and other survivors in Tel Aviv late June of 2009.

⁸³See Dovid Katz, “June 2009 Correspondence with Yad Vashem,” *Defending History*, Sept. 3, 2012, <http://defendinghistory.com/june-2009-correspondence-with-yad-vashem/40734>, which includes a number of photographs of some controversial parts of Yad Vashem’s Lithuania section; David Goshen, “Yad Vashem’s Exhibit on the Holocaust in Lithuania,” *Defending History*, Dec. 1, 2011, <http://defendinghistory.com/yad-vashems-exhibit-on-the-holocaust-in-lithuania/25988>. For other critical reactions to Yad Vashem’s Lithuania policies, see the *Defending History* section “Yad Vashem Manipulated?”: <http://defendinghistory.com/category/political-pressure-on-yad-vashem>.

⁸⁴The works of the late Leonidas Donskis on the subjects covered herein will live on as classic examples of the synthesis of moral courage and intellectual rigor. A number of them can be accessed via links on the page “Leonidas Donskis (1962—2016),” *Defending History*, <http://defendinghistory.com/leonidas-donskis-1962-2016-his-writings-in-defendinghistory-com/84112>.

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.

Disclosure statement

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