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'Europeanization of Memory' at the Jasenovac Memorial Museum

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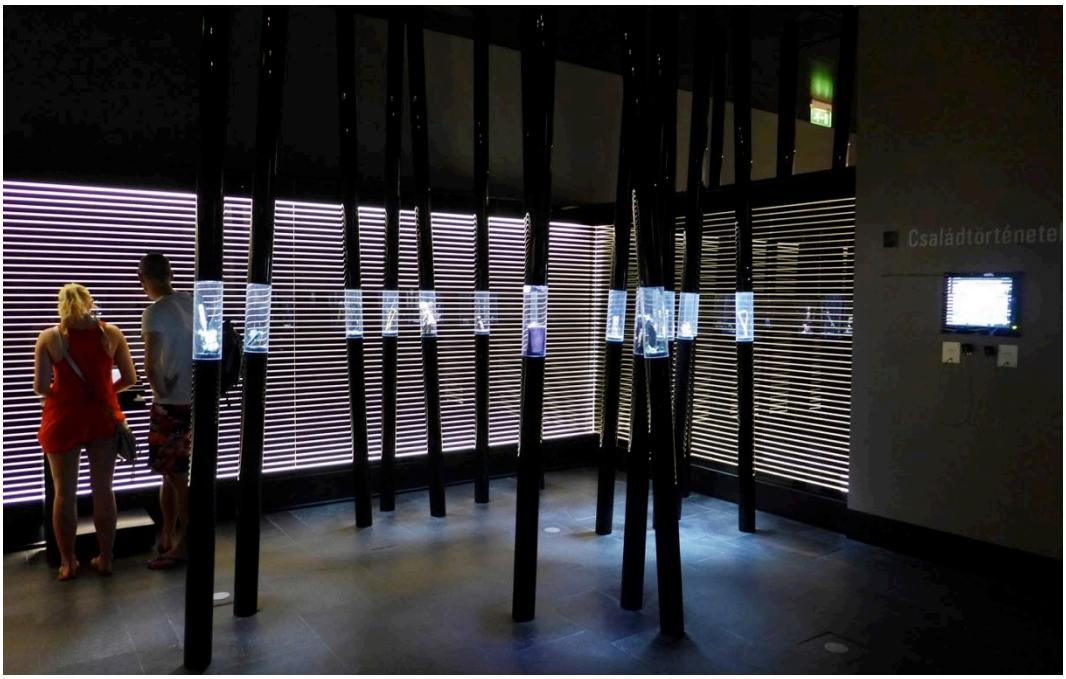
Starting from the premise that post-communist World War II memorial museums show significant similarities, this chapter[1] will consider recent trends in the 'Europeanization of Memory' since 1989. These include the universalization and 'Europeanization of the Holocaust' as a negative founding myth in post-1945 Europe, as well as the Holocaust's difficult place in the new post-communist national narratives of 'Eastern Europe'. The focus here will be on Croatia. In particular, the author will review a post-communist memorial museum – the ultra-modern exhibition at the *Jasenovac Memorial Museum* which opened in 2006. In so doing, I consider whether certain 'European memory standards' have been established. To what extent does the Croatian attempt to confront the World War II past appear as an answer to the 'Europeanization of Memory'? How and to what extent are remembrance policies 'europeanized'? How does this development play out in Croatian public discourse? And finally, what have been the consequences of focusing on individual victims and victimization in European memorial culture and museums?

Jasenovac is the only big museum dealing with contemporary history in today's Croatia.[1] The development of the institution since its opening in 1966 is scrutinized with the help of secondary literature. Public discussions about the exhibition from 2006 are analyzed in the course of a discourse analysis of media coverage about the reopening of the memorial museum which was closed when war began in Croatia in 1991. A third step will be to analyze the textual, visual, and aesthetical level of the exhibition and the guidebook: How are the World War II period, collaboration, resistance, victimhood, and the Holocaust represented at the *Jasenovac Memorial Museum*: How do displays of the Croatian collaborators, the Ustaša, Nazis, and communists relate to each other and thus to the externalization of responsibility vs. self-critical, 'negative memory' of the crimes committed, not suffered by the own collective? What photographs and 3D-objects are used in the exhibition and how?

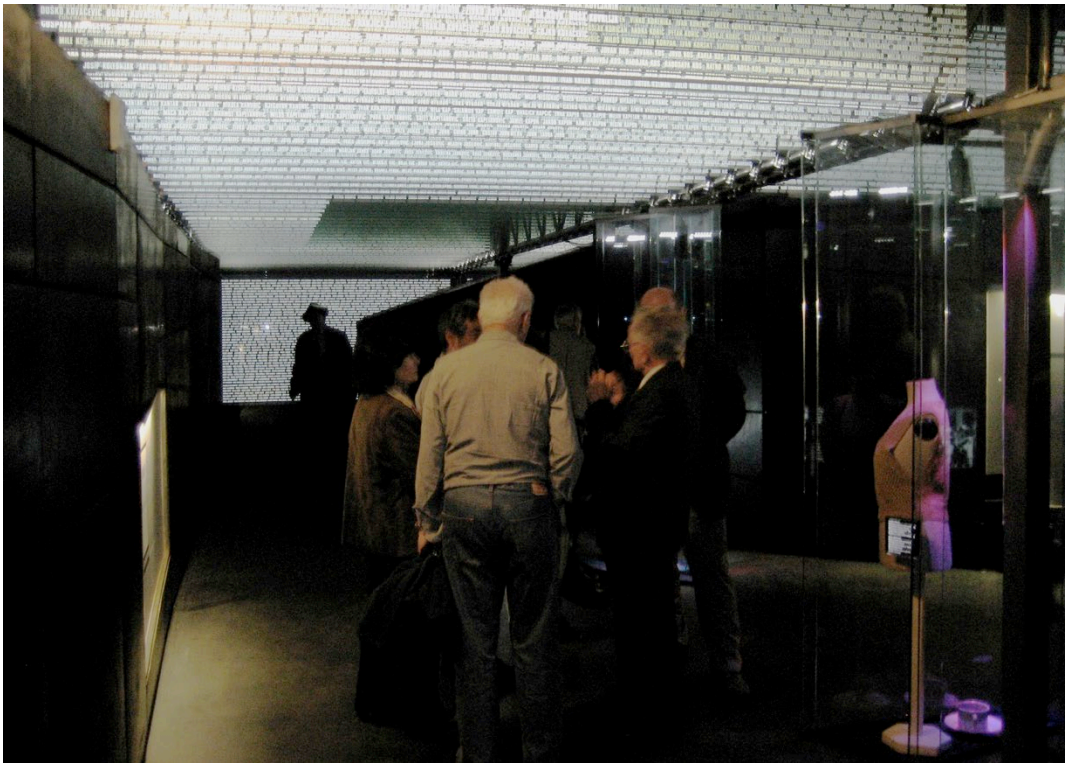
New Holocaust Memorial Museums

When we look at the *Holocaust Memorial Center* in Budapest and the *Jasenovac Memorial Museum* some 100 km southwest of Zagreb, the similarities are striking: Both exhibitions are in a darkened room; and the victims' names are written in white letters on the black background. In the case of Jasenovac, those names can be found not only on the walls, but also hovering on boards above the visitor. The focus of the exhibitions lies on testimonies and the personal belongings of individual victims, exhibited in glass showcases.

[1] The project has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program (GMM – grant agreement No 816784).



Pic. 1: Holocaust Memorial Center, Budapest
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Pic. 2: Jasenovac Memorial Museum, Croatia
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Thus, the same focus on individual victims, their stories and belongings can be observed in both museums. Since the two exhibitions show so many similarities and have both opened in 2006, it is obvious that there seems to be some kind of standards for new European Holocaust memorial museums. The *Holocaust Memorial Center* in Budapest even opened a few weeks before Hungary joined the EU in 2004, although the permanent exhibition had not been ready yet; thus an almost empty building has been opened. Only the "Auschwitz-album" showed photographs taken by German SS-man during the arrival of Hungarian Jews in Auschwitz.[2]

Furthermore, the fact that the homepage of the *Holocaust Memorial Center* in Budapest has been in English even years after the opening and that you had to click on a button to get the Hungarian version, shows that the museum is targeting a completely different audience then the nationalist-revisionist *House of Terror* opened during Victor Orbán's election campaign in 2002 at the center of Budapest[3], where copied black and white single sheets of paper in most of the rooms were all information that was provided in English. It is also unimaginable for the *Jasenovac Memorial Museum* not to have a bilingual exhibition and a bulky catalogue, while for example the *Holocaust Memorial Center* in Oslo provides no written information in English at all, targeting solely domestic audience.

This article argues that the *US Holocaust Memorial Museum* in Washington is *the* role model when it comes to the aesthetics of those museums, while the political 'need' for post-communist countries to provide such memorial museums results from unofficial 'memory standards' that are being established in the course of the 'Europeanization of Memory'.

Europeanization of Memory and Post-Communist Memorial Museums

Corresponding with the post-1989 transformations, the representations of cultural memory, particularly of the traumatic experiences of the twentieth century, became battlefields in the process of reconstructing and renegotiating the past in both post-communist and 'western' European countries. Those "wars on memory"[4] have not only been based on the competition for interpretative authority between different social and political groups within states, but also on the attempts to re-narrate the past as a shared "European history". The 'memory-boom' in the West after the Cold War emphasized the Holocaust as a "negative icon"[5] of the twentieth century. It has become a universal imperative for the respect of human rights in general and a "container"[6] for the memory of different victims and victim groups.

In the EU, this 'universalization of the Holocaust' includes another dimension: the Holocaust has become a "negative European founding myth"[7]. Post-war Europe is understood as a collective that developed shared structures in order to avoid a recurrence of the catastrophe of the Holocaust. In its search for an identity that goes beyond economic and monetary union, this founding myth provides a compelling common narrative that is otherwise lacking. This attempt to retrospectively enhance the Holocaust with some kind of sense, the moral legitimation of the EU as a better Europe ascending from the Holocaust, is problematic in more than one way. The complex events are unhinged out of their historic context in order to create a shared identity. This demands abstracting from the concrete victims and perpetrators as well as from the specific role of Germany and Austria, important allies in the EU, as Levy and Sznaider write: "The Holocaust is no longer about the Jews being exterminated by the Germans. Rather, it is about human beings and the most extreme violation of their human rights."[8] Levy and Sznaider welcome this focus on the individual victim. But this tends to result in blinding out the different contexts in which "a human being" died and thus promotes the problematic tendency to equalize everyone killed in World War II as equally innocent victims – which they address as a slight problem only when it comes to the German victims of bombing and expulsion.[9] This universalization dehistorizes the World War II events in order to make them applicable as a moral lesson[10]: Since 'we, Europeans' have learned from the Holocaust so successfully, it seems necessary to understand victims of today's conflicts, 'the Croats', 'the Bosnians' or 'the Kosovars', as the 'new Jews'.[11] Understanding Germany as the role model for confronting its past successfully thus allows it to use the motto 'Auschwitz never again' for current political aims: formulations like "the ramp of Srebrenica" or "preventing a new Auschwitz in Kosovo" were used in Germany in order to legitimate the NATO-war in Kosovo in 1999 although there was no UN-mandate for it and the reasonability of the bombing is questioned today.

This is one of the reasons why the *Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research* aroused so much interest and today (renamed into International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance – IHRA) includes 31 countries, most of them European. The Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust that took place on 27 January 2000, the fifty-fifth anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, for the first time brought together heads of state with renowned experts and survivors from 46 states.[12] Among the resulting declarations was the recommendation that countries introduce a Holocaust Memorial Day on 27 January or another date

connected to the murder of the Jews.[13] By 2010, 34 of the 56 OSCE member states had followed the recommendation. The 'suggestion' that countries join the Holocaust Task Force and implement a Holocaust Memorial Day was the first step towards some kind of 'European standard'.

Yet political pressure can only be found in connection with joining the NATO: A representative of the US State Department stressed in 2003 that the Task Force was "part and parcel of the creation of a community of values in the Euro-Atlantic world. … We have in each of the seven NATO candidate-countries and in Central and Eastern Europe, more broadly, made clear that when you do business in an institution like NATO, you do it by appealing to the cooperation of your friends and allies on the basis of shared goals and values."[14] While not officially applied during the eastern enlargement of the EU in 2004, these 'standards' were internalized by the future member countries – as suggested by the fact that Hungary's Holocaust Memorial Center opened just before the country joined the EU – despite no permanent exhibition having been installed at that point.

Running parallel to the 'Europeanization of the Holocaust' has been a re-narration of history in eastern European countries from 1989 onwards, in particular the invention of a 'golden era' before Communist rule. The narrative of the heroic anti-fascist struggle has been delegitimized along with the communist regimes and the trauma of communist crimes, often evoked using symbols familiar from Holocaust memory (railway tracks, carriages), are placed at the core of memory. A 'divided memory' between 'East' and 'West' has prompted representatives of post-communist states to demand that communist crimes be condemned "to the same extent" as those of the Holocaust. In reaction to these conflicting memories, the European Parliament recommended in 2009 that another memorial day be introduced on 23 August, the date of the Hitler-Stalin pact in 1939, in which the victims of Nazism and Stalinism are commemorated together (the European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism). While the memory of the victims of Stalinism is thereby finally added to the European canon, the victims of both regimes are explicitly equated, raising new problems. The new memorial day is not, in fact, an addition to 27 January, but its antithesis: while the Holocaust Memorial Day concerns the crimes of the own collective, the European Day of Remembrance externalizes responsibility to the Nazis and the Soviets. One's 'own people' are understood as innocent victims of oppression from outside, while participation in the communist regime is denied and externalized. Narratives of Nazi occupation are often used to frame an anti-communist interpretation of history. James Mark showed how (Baltic) occupation museums – representing national narratives – attempted to "contain" "threatening" aspects of the memory of Nazism so that it could not compete with stories of Soviet crimes.[15]

This tension is particularly present in memorial museums that do not only display history, but also include a commemorative aspect since they deal with traumatic events of the recent past. Although the term was developed for museums that were not in situ (first of all the USHMM in Washington and Yad Vashem in Jerusalem), their approach (and the term) is today archetypical for many other museums, also at sites of atrocities. Memorial museums spell an inherent contradiction. While a memorial is seen to be safe in the refuge of history, a history museum is presumed to be concerned with interpretation, contextualization, and critique. "The coalescing of the two suggests that there is an increasing desire to add both a moral framework to the narration of terrible historical events and more in-depth contextual explanations to commemorative acts. That so many recent memorial museums … find themselves instantly politicized itself reflects the uneasy conceptual coexistence of reverent remembrance and critical interpretation."[16] Museums are key-producers of knowledge and history; they display how a society interprets its past, but they are definitely not neutral spaces of knowledge transfer showing how "it" was before. They are rather manifestations of cultural patterns, inclusion and exclusion mechanisms as well as social, ethnic and religious in- and outgroups – contested spaces.[17] Memorial museums are sites where identity is represented, official memory is canonized, and the dominant historical narrative is made visible as the fundament of the present. On the other hand, museums can also challenge the hegemonic national narrative. In both cases, decisions concerning which objects and images should be used, how to organize them, and how to choose a space in which to display them involve aesthetic and ethical issues typically loaded with significance. There is an enormous strain between authenticity and evidence, on the one hand, and the desire to create an emotive, dramatic visitor experience, on the other. Apor and Sarkisova argue that physical objects play a significant role in the relationship of the present to the recent past, which is why the "'touch of the real' makes historical exhibitions so attractive for many variants of the politics of

history and memory. … Many of the museums representing Communism are either the actual result of, or closely connected to, resolutely articulated politics of commemoration."[18]

This discussion about the role of museums as propagators of national identity goes hand in hand with the diagnosis of a change in perspective. What was formulated as a desiderate fifteen years ago[19] now goes without saying that the focus on the victims' perspective has for the most part replaced hero, martyr or resistance narratives.[20] Still, we need to distinguish between the individual approach that aims at displaying "ordinary life before"[21] and empathy without identification on the one hand, and the victim represented as part of a collective, as an emotionalizing symbol for national suffering on the other hand. While the former does not need to conceal the perpetrator and the social context, since memory implies the question of quality and root causes of the atrocities, the latter goes hand in hand with the externalization of responsibility, leading to a "Europe of victims"[22]. 'Europeanization of memory' can therefore mean a mere change in content (by adding some kind of 'invocation of Europe'[23]) or a shift from a narrative of collective suffering to 'negative memory' focusing on the crimes committed by the own collective.

Jasenovac in the Yugoslav era

The Ustaša-regime had come to power with the asset stripping of Kingdom Yugoslavia in April 1941. A special challenge was the question of how to deal with the mass murder committed by the Ustaša, who had begun operating death camps already in summer the same year – a rare example of a collaborationist regime that had operated death camps on its own beside the Third Reich. In contrast to Romania these camps had existed within the borders of Croatia. The largest of them was Jasenovac, a working and death camp complex, where almost 100.000 people had been killed – around half of them Serbs, as well as Jews, Roma and Croatian political detainees.[24] The Ustaša blew up the concentration camp before the end of the war, and what traces remained were removed after May 1945.

After the war, deserving partisans were privileged in society and politics, while relatives of "traitors to the people" had a very different standing and their memories were absolutely taboo, but the Holocaust and the mass murder of Serbs and Roma by the Ustaša were also treated as minor matters, although locally based survivor groups who found themselves united in their common need to mourn the dead and to obtain official acknowledgement of their suffering created a space not only for individual but also for group remembrance.[25] Although most monuments were dedicated to the "heroic people's liberation struggle" and the "victims of Fascism" in general, some memorials on the local level mourned specific incidents motivated by ethnic hatred such as the memorial building created in memory of the Serbs murdered by the Ustaša in the orthodox church of Glina in 1941.[26]

There was no memorial in Jasenovac until in 1966, Bogdan Bogdanović's giant flower monument was inaugurated, and a memorial museum opened two years later. In the memorial area the locations of the camp buildings were marked by hollows in the ground and the graves and torture sites by shallow cones of packed earth. The abstract flower symbol that opens toward the sky stands for hope and the future. It does not accuse anyone nor does it categorize the victims ethnically, as the architect put it. In Tito's Yugoslavia, Jasenovac on the one hand remained an ambivalent lieu de mémoire, since it was taboo to assert that only Croat Ustaša had committed crimes there, while Serbs, Jews, and Roma had been the largest victim groups. On the other hand, it became a central site of memory for victims "of all Yugoslav nations," a site with tourist infrastructure, souvenirs (postcards, pins, or key ring pendants), and other forms of kitsch.[27] In the postwar decades, the Communist Party had successfully established the narrative of "supranational" partisans from all Yugoslav nations.



Pic. 3: Jasenovac Memorial
© Ljiljana Radonić

During the 1960s, however, controversies between Serbian and Croatian historians about each nation's "share" in the war, the victory, and in collaboration with the Germans and Italians, brought an end to the "brotherhood and unity" narrative.[28] In 1963, Velimir Terzić from the Institute for Military History in Belgrade fueled the conflict by claiming that all of the Croatian people had been on the side of the Ustaša.[29] Interestingly enough, on the Croatian side, it was the later president Franjo Tuđman himself who contributed to this radicalization, first as a World War II historian in Belgrade and later as director of the *Institute for the History of the Workers' Movement* in Zagreb. Tuđman fought against the accusation of Croat "genocidality" coming from nationalist Serbians and started rightly criticizing the official numbers of 700,000 Jasenovac victims as too high, but he later ended up asserting figures that were far too low, thus playing down Ustaša crimes. Due to his statements on World War II, he lost his job in 1967, and was banned from the Communist Party.

Those conflicting World War II memories became an element of political mobilization in the late 1980s. While a Belgrade-based statistician and a Croatian demographer came to the basically same conclusions about the victim numbers[30], Serbian nationalists placed the numbers at over a million and perpetuated the idea of "Croatian genocidality". Tuđman on the other hand reduced the number to 30,000–40,000 victims and claimed that Jews were on top of the prisoners' hierarchy, so "some of the Jewish incumbents of the camp were also armed and even participated in the killings".[31] The museum at the site of the former Jasenovac concentration camp was closed due to the war since 1991, but Jasenovac was the key symbol in the Serbo-Croatian "war on memory" since the late 1980s.

Jasenovac in independent Croatia

The break-up of Yugoslavia coincided with a break with both the anti-fascist narrative and its narrow dogma concerning World War II. Instead of a democratic frameset for historiography, each nation developed its own victim-narration according to its national myths. Thus, Croatia was not at all adopting to the 'Europeanization of Memory' in this phase. After the country gained its independence in 1990, just like other post-communist states Croatia referred to the pre-communist period as a 'golden era'. The Nazi puppet "Independent State of Croatia" (Nezavisna Država Hrvatska – NDH) was seen as a "milestone on the way the Croatia's independence", as its president, Franjo Tuđman, put it. He wanted to reconcile Ustaša and Partisans instead: According to him they had both fought for the same goal during World War II, albeit in different ways – the Croatian cause.[32] In connection with this idea, the Jasenovac memorial area played a great symbolic role: referring to the Spanish General Francisco Franco's example, Tuđman suggested bringing the bones of the Ustaša and of soldiers of the NDH ("Domobrani") killed by the partisans near Bleiburg in Mai 1945 to a "national memorial"

Jasenovac.[33] This was the first approach to exhibiting victim stories in Jasenovac after Croatia's independence, but Tuđman had to drop these plans following international criticism.[34] That his idea could not be established despite Croatia's political isolation in the late 1990s, could be understood as evidence of the fact that Croatia was too close to the center of the "Europeanization of the Holocaust" for such a revisionist plan.

In 1990, independent Croatia formally anchored anti-Fascism in the new constitution. Still all other elements of politics of the past indicated that the idea of a Croatian state was only conceivable in combination with historical revisionism concerning the character of the Independent State of Croatia (NDH) from the period 1941–1945. At the first congress of the "Croatian Democratic Union" (HDZ) in February 1990 Tuđman claimed that the NDH was "not only a 'quisling creation' or a 'Fascist crime', but also an expression of the Croatian nation's historic desire for an independent homeland."[35] While some streets were named after famous Ustaša, most streets which had formerly commemorated the victories of the Partisan struggle and the "victims of Fascism" have been renamed. Almost 3.000 memorials were removed, destroyed, or vandalized without anyone being punished for it.[36] This reinvention of history included emphasizing cultural achievements of this so-called independent state and perceiving it as something different from the Ustaša regime, which makes about as much sense as making a distinction between the Nazis and the Third Reich.[37]

After Tuđman's death at the end of 1999, a coalition under the leadership of the social democrats won the elections. During the process of democratization, especially the cutting back of the competences of the president and the introduction of efficient checks and balances, the manner in which the past was dealt with in Croatia also changed. In 2003 the former Tuđman-party, the HDZ, again won the elections. Prime Minister Ivo Sanader, who resigned in 2009, was known as a Europe-oriented statesman who broke with the revisionist ideas of his predecessor. At the 2005 commemoration at the KZ Jasenovac Memorial he emphasized contemporary that "anti-fascist victory over fascism and National Socialism was the victory of those values woven into modern Europe and modern Croatia"[38], but added that the 'Homeland War' (1991-1995) also was fought against a type of fascism. During a 2005 visit to Yad Vashem, he similarly argued that during the 1990s war the Croats were also victims of the same kind of evil as Nazism and Fascism, and that no one knew better than the Croats what it meant to be a victim of aggression and crime. The *Holocaust History Museum* further inspired Sanader to think about a Museum of the Homeland War, as he told journalists after his visit.[39] What makes the episode so telling is that these statements were not followed by any protests. This shift away from historical revisionism, which minimizes the victims of the Ustaša-state in the Tuđman-era, to a new view that recognizes the Holocaust but presents Croats as victims of Fascism, this time of "Serbian Fascism", can be understood as adapting to the 'Europeanization of Memory', at the same time demonstrating the problematic dimension of this European development.

Furthermore, during the annually commemorations in Jasenovac Sanader and his colleagues keep condemning "both totalitarianisms", the "red and the black one" like a kind of mantra, not reflecting that it had been the partisans, who had liberated Jasenovac in 1945.[40] This formulation obviously corresponds with European standards perfectly, as the aforementioned introduction of the 23rd of August as a Memorial Day for both victims of Nazism and Stalinism shows. Totalitarianism is even mentioned in a short Sanader quotation in the Ten year anniversary book of the Holocaust Task Force: „Democracy's victory over totalitarianism is the victory of the values embedded in modern Europe and modern Croatia."[41]

The new Jasenovac Memorial Museum

The new exhibition at the state-funded Jasenovac Memorial Museum opened at the end of 2006. The main publication[42] of the museum is more of an edited volume than a guide book. Furthermore, there is not a single scholarly text about the new exhibition in English or German (except previous works of the author of this paper)[43]. For those two reasons, this part of the analysis will also integrate the concept of the exhibition presented by the director in newspapers as well as debates about the exhibition in the press. The discussion on what is European about the Jasenovac museum does not primarily focus on the content of the exhibition, but rather on its aesthetic and formal approach. To put

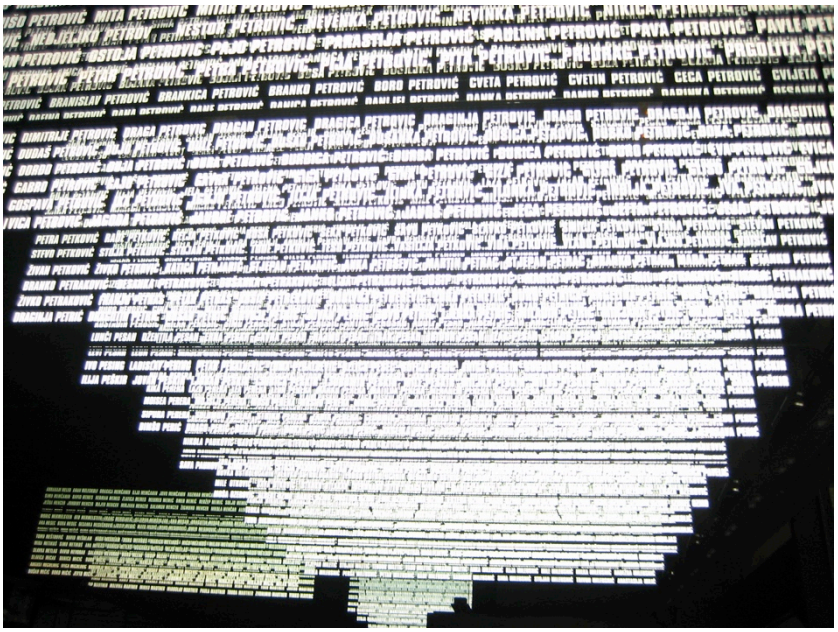
it bluntly, the museum is understood as a "dray-horse towards Europe" because its core narrative is that it acknowledges the individual victim's story.

In the preface of the museum's publication, the Croatian Minster of Culture stresses that the Jasenovac Memorial Site with its "specific architecture of the exhibition" (which alludes to the fact that is looks like 'other' Holocaust memorial museums) is "part of European cultural heritage" and symbolizes a site seeking memory and encourages learning about the history of a nation "that has actually always communicated with the world and Europe."[44] Nataša Jovičić, the director appointed by the minister of culture, stresses that "we want to be part of the modern European education and museum system and follow the framework we get from the institutions dealing with these topics."[45] There is again no indication of external political pressure; the need to design a 'European' exhibition seems internalized. It had been conceptualized together with international experts in order to be "internationally recognizable and in the context of international standards"[46]. Yet these experts only came from institutions concerned with the Holocaust like the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Anne-Frank-House or Yad Vashem. The Croatian curators did not orient themselves toward memorial museums at the sites of former concentration camps in Germany or the Generalgouvernement in today's Poland, which try to show the complex character and daily routine of a concentration camp, but on other institutions. "Like at the Anne Frank House" Jovičić wants to "tell a tragic life story with the help of a few objects"[47]. Of course it is understandable that the current focus on individual victims' stories is dominant at the Anne-Frank-House or the "Ort der Information" under the Memorial to the murdered Jews of Europe in Berlin. In Jasenovac however, a hypermodern exhibition also uses new media in order to spotlight only individual victims' stories: "Even more thoroughly than the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington and the Anne Frank House in the Netherlands the director of the Jasenovac Memorial, the art historian Nataša Jovičić, decided to devote the whole new museum exhibition (in preparation) to the victims"[48]. Referring directly to the "illustration of the executioner and the victim in world museology", she did not plan to show anonymous corpses and deadly weapons as it was done before in the communist era exhibitions, but rather to make Jasenovac a "site of life" and an affirmative message. Jovičić bonds together the legitimate criticism of the shock-aesthetic on the one hand and trying to make sense of the events by "sending a message of light to the site of crime"[49] on the other hand.

While reactionary opinions were predominantly seen as an obstacle for striving towards Europe[50], a prominent columnist hinted at an instrumental understanding of approaching the past. On the occasion of Prime Minister Ivo Sanader's visit to Jasenovac in 2005, Branko Mijić wrote: "If this rhetoric would have emerged earlier and been perpetuated longer, our image in the world would have been way more positive. This would also have disburdened our entry into the European community."[51] Two months later, Mijić continued on the occasion of Sanader's visit to Israel by writing, "After years of mistrust and suspicion … it is certainly a big issue to make a relatively small, but terribly (strašno) influential country like Israel take sides with us. An enemy less and a partner more is a big success, especially since our future depends on the mercy of the powerful in more than one way."[52] This instrumental argumentation with an anti-Semitic tendency towards conspiracy theory shows that advocating Europeaness is by no means the same as internalized 'negative memory' of the crimes committed by the own collective. On the contrary, one critic of this nationalist discourse explicitly called for the ruling party to stop using the memory of the Jasenovac victims as a "dray-horse towards Europe", since this does not "bring about Europe, reverence or the truth"[53]. At this point it becomes clear that this process is neither a result of pressure from "terribly" influential and powerful countries, nor "internalization" of European norms in a psychoanalytic sense of the word, but rather a political strategy critically observed by liberal parts of society that are still skeptical toward any kind of memory politics coming from the HDZ.

The exhibition itself is situated in a dark hall that highlights the names of the victims written in white letters on glass boards hovering above the heads of the visitors. There are several other elements quite common in memorial museums today: „Like at the Jewish Museum in Berlin or at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, in this new architectonic design at the Jasenovac museum stemming from the architect Helena Paver-Njirić the walls are sloping with gaps, sharp edges, unfunctional and unforseeable architectonic solutions that leave the impression of uneasyness, invertedness and interuption."[54] Since the core narrative is to allow "space for the individual victims to speak, so that their dignity is experienced"[55], the names of the victims, the survivors' interviews

and belongings of the victims[56] dominate the exhibition. The broadsheet publication contains 221 photographs, most of them portraits of victims, pictures of them before the war and from inside the camp. Roma are the only ones who are represented with only four pictures, all of them solely from inside the camp, none from their lives before. There are also some photographs of victims' remainders, while one fourth of the photographs shows sketches of Bogdanović's flower monument that points into the sky, which makes clear how central his concept of a positive, future-oriented memory is.



Pic. 4: Names of the victims hovering over the visitors' heads
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In a long public dispute about the concept, critics faulted it for not clearly showing who the perpetrators were, which nation had the biggest losses and how people were killed in Jasenovac, the "manufacture of death"[57]. As a result, some brute killing instruments, knives and mallets, were added as well as the nationality and age of the victims in order to show that not only political prisoners were killed there, as it was often claimed during the 1990s. Since the director understands the memorial primarily as a "modern and dynamic human rights center"[58], the educational center presents "topics such as the Holocaust"[59] as a moral lesson. By making "aware of the consequences of denying human dignity" in order to "teach non-violence, democracy and human rights", as it is written on its website, it reproduces the dominant dehistorized understanding of it in a way that it could be portrayed anywhere else outside the camp area. Although there is a map of nine Jasenovac execution sites in the larger area, the exhibition does not integrate or address the historical site of the main concentration camp complex around it in any way. This last point was the only one implicitly criticized by one of the often mentioned 'international experts'. The director of the *US Holocaust Memorial Museum* in Washington, Diane Saltzman, said that space was very limited in the museum and that due to the destruction of the camp site in 1945 it would be important that the planned "memorial path" through the area of the former camp would not only include descriptions, but also photographs of buildings and sites[60] – but this path has not been installed until today.

The exhibition clearly acknowledges that "Jews, Roma and Serbs" were deported to Jasenovac in mass transports and were often liquidated immediately after that. Still, one of the first exhibition panels shows Hitler and Pavelić, informing us that during Pavelićs first visit in June 1941, Hitler gave him "full support" for the policy of genocide against the Serbian population. It is emphasized that the extermination of the Croatian Jews must be seen in the broader context of the Holocaust, which is obviously true. But it also seems very important to emphasize that the mass murdering of Serbs must be seen in this context as well, while the issue is not broached that almost all other death camps were operated by Nazis, not by their local collaborators. Also, an anti-Semitic Ustaša poster is shown and the exhibit tries to argue against anti-Semitism[61], while there is no such approach when it comes to hatred of Serbs or Roma. There is an emphasis on the Holocaust, primarily in the aesthetics of the

museum (focus on testimonies, belongings and names of the victims in a dark room) that reminds us very strongly of the US Holocaust Memorial Museums in Washington as the role model.

The very prominent attempted escape of 600 male inmates a few days before the liquidation of the camp in April 1945 is addressed without making a heroic narrative out of it. The camp itself is characterized as a forced labor and death camp in which "genocide and Holocaust (Shoa)" were committed. In the exhibition, the perpetrators are named as "Ustaša authorities", "Ustaša movement", "Ustaša in power" or "Pavelić and his collaborators", but this is only done rarely and predominantly not in the sections dealing with mass murder. The reactivation of the concept of the enemy from World War II in the war of the 1990s transforms the memory of Jasenovac into one part of the deadly story of the Yugoslav wars. So there is a whole text panel about the perpetual debates concerning the number of victims in Jasenovac. The old official number of 700.000 victims from Yugoslav times is criticized as political instrumentalization of Jasenovac as well as the number of 30.000–40.000 victims provided "after 1990 and Croatia's independence" although president Tuđman, who provided that estimation, is not mentioned by name. The museum's strategy against such manipulations was and is to identify as many victims as possible by name (83.145 victims until today).[62]

The museum's publication consists of chapters on the "Independent State of Croatia", the concentration camp and the destinies of each victim group written by a renowned expert. The second largest victim group, the Roma, is only mentioned once outside of the chapter dedicated to them, solely stating that "Roma almost completely vanished".[63]. The Roma chapter differs from the others significantly since it addresses questions like where the name Roma comes from and when they came to the Balkans. It also raises the "fact" that Roma women "still wear colorful clothes" and that as a "people of freedom and unlimited travel"[64], they must have suffered the most from the imprisonment.[65] Since Lengel-Krizman authored the serious monograph on the Roma genocide in Jasenovac[66], which she also sums up insightfully in the chapter, one may assume that those "outliers" can be explained by some kind of weird pedagogical idea that ended up very close to racist cliché. Furthermore, while the texts on Serb and Jewish victims include plenty of testimonies, there are none from Roma here, since "the testimonies of the seldom survivors are so drastic that we might or might not accept them as truthful and authentic".[67]. Dealing with the Roma is obviously considered part of "being European", but the memory of the Porajmos is not internalized as part of national history. 'They' are clearly not part of the collective and the museum actually has no strategy on how to put Roma in relation to the other groups.

The question of the behavior and opinion of the society is mentioned in the volume by stating that society "had to go through a full Ustašization".[68] According to Jakovina, many citizens were unsatisfied with Pavelić and the functioning of the government, "but not necessarily by the fact that an own state had been created."[69] The independence of the "Independent State of Croatia" is clearly denied in the exhibition, claiming that it was neither independent, nor a state, nor a Croatian state, which is in contrast to the dominant discourse in Croatia in the 1990s. There is a whole subchapter in the publication questioning the idea that the state had really been an independent one.[70] The question of cultural achievements of the NDH – a very popular topic in the discourse of the 1990s – is addressed in a non-romanticized context of censorship, "forbidden writers", propaganda and Ustašization.[71] The partisan movement is – when mentioned in the exhibition – characterized as "strong" since it was "the only one who fought against the Axis Powers". It is also depicted as dominated by communists, since the members of the Croatian Peasants Party and simple soldiers "could not been motivated to join them in order to change the relations".[72]

The book on Jasenovac presents several particular narratives. To put it bluntly, the Serb writes about the Serbian victims, the Jew about the Jewish, and the Croat about the Croats (while the text on Roma argues that "they" cannot write about their own suffering). The Croatian museum applies the individual approach also in its scholarly publication when every victim group (except the Roma) can speak for itself. This "trendy" focus on the victims' narratives avoids a canonized interpretation of the unique question of why "we" were the only ones operating a death camp 100 km away from the capital. So whether the question of why appears beside the what happened is left for the scholars representing the victim groups to decide. Thus Drago Roksandić deals with the question why the Ustaša considered "the Serbs" guilty for all wrongs in Croatian history from the 15th century onwards, but he immediately concludes that no one has systematically dealt with Ustaša ideology regarding

Serbs. He describes the ideology as contradictory since they wanted to forcefully baptize Serbs in certain regions and at the same time claimed that "paleo-balcan" Serbs had no ethnical connection with Croats.[73] Another consequence of the plural, but "ethnic" structure of the volume is that the fates of women, children, but also homosexuals and prostitutes – called "persons calling down ignoble (nečasne) jobs", "persons with homosexual affections (sklonosti)", and "roamers"[74] are never systematically analyzed, but only mentioned along the way. Since the exhibition avoids to deal with the perpetrators and focuses so strongly on the individual victim, the severe critique of the Croatian historian Salmon Jazbec is understandable, but I do not agree that the exhibition can be understood as a result of "classical revisionism" or should be put under the authority of the international community or the UNESCO as he demands it.[75]

Conclusion

When we return to the pictures of the memorial museums in Budapest and Jasenovac, we can now say the following: 1) there obviously exist some kind of European memory standards, since those two museums are constructed following the same principals. 2) The standards for establishing such museums are definitely developed further to the west, the US being the aesthetic role model. Thus while Hungary and Croatia are not the center of this Europeanization, neither do they constitute the periphery, since in contrast to countries like Bulgaria, Rumania and Western Ukraine, there at least exist state-funded memorial museums. In short, it is not membership in the EU that determines the distance from the center. 3) It is problematic that the two museums are so similar: Jasenovac is not or is at least not supposed to be a Holocaust Memorial Museum since Serbs were the main victim group there. It thus should be regarded as a consequence of the 'universalization of the Holocaust' that such a dehistorized memorial concentrating on the individual victim (while alluding first of all to symbols from Shoa memory) is practicable at the site of a concentration camp in general, and this concentration camp – one of the rare examples for a death camp in Europe (in existence for four years) not operated by the Third Reich and where Serbs were the largest victim group – in particular.

However, assessing the effects of the 'Europeanization of the Holocaust' as ambivalent also means seeing its positive effects, especially in the post-communist states. Once Hungary had a *Holocaust Memorial Center*, even though its permanent exhibition opened only years later it still facilitated educational programs and opposed the revisionist narrative offered at the *House of Terror* in the centre of Budapest, where Nazi collaborators and communists are treated equally. In order to meet these unofficial European standards, Croatia also opened an exhibition in which the majority of victims' names is literally hovering on glass boards above the heads of visitors. The country also joined the ITF in 2005, which is more than other former Yugoslav successor-states have achieved.

In order to facilitate its integration into the European (memory) community, Croatia had to confront its past more critically than its neighbor states both because of its role in World War II and the revisionist Tuđman-era. Still, the visitor of the Jasenovac exhibition is invited to identify with the victims, while the perpetrators are mentioned basically only at the computer working places and on the website of the museum The 'universalization' and 'Europeanization' of the Holocaust obviously enable new victim-narratives – even when it comes to an *in situ* site like Jasenovac where one could assume that the historical site obliges to deal with all difficult aspects of the historical camp – compatible with these 'European standards'. And when prime minister Sanader identified "the Croats" as the new Jews of the 'Homeland War' in 1990s, this corresponded with the often cited "ramp of Srebrenica' or the program of "preventing a new Auschwitz in Kosovo" and was not seen as a lack of 'negative memory' and a victim-perpetrator-reversal. So, finally, if the often invoked 'international community' would stop recycling images from World War II and rather condemn each of the crimes for what it was, this would certainly aid confronting the recent past of the wars in the 1990s. Otherwise, the impulse to identify the victims of different crimes, however horrible, with the Jews, will always retain the bitter aftertaste of what Theodor W. Adorno called "Schuld- und Erinnerungsabwehr" – a pathological defense of guilt and memory.[76]

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[1] In 2015, the Memorial Centre Lipa Remembers opened, dedicated to the inhabitants of the Lipa village burnt down by the Nazis in 1944.
[2] Thus, the collaboration of the Hungarian society, especially the execution of the deportation by Hungarian police men, did not play a role here. Gerhard Seewann and Éva Kovács, "Halbherzige Vergangenheitsbewältigung, konkurrenzfähige Erinnerungspolitik – Die Shoa in der ungarischen Erinnerungskultur", *"Transformationen" der Erinnerungskulturen in Europa nach 1989*, ed. Bernd Faulenbach and Franz-Josef Jelich (Essen, 2006), p. 199.
[3] Krisztian Ungváry, "Der Umgang mit der kommunistischen Vergangenheit in der heutigen ungarischen Erinnerungskultur", *"Transformationen" der Erinnerungskulturen in Europa nach 1989*, ed. Bernd Faulenbach and Franz-Josef Jelich (Essen, 2006), p. 211.
[4] Harald Welzer (ed.), *Der Krieg der Erinnerung. Holocaust, Kollaboration und Widerstand im europäischen Gedächtnis* (Frankfurt, 2007).
[5] Dan Diner, *Gegenläufige Gedächtnisse. Über Geltung und Wirkung des Holocaust* (Göttingen, 2007), p. 7.
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[15] Mark, *The unfinished revolution*, pp. 93–125.
[16] Paul Williams, *Memorial Museums. The Global Rush to Commemorate Atrocities*, (Oxford, 2007) p. 8.
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[57] *Novi list*, 24 January 2006.
[58] *Vjesnik*, 27 February 2004.
[59] "Education centre", http://www.jusp-jasenovac.hr/Default.aspx?sid=6609; Nataša Jovičić, "Žrtva je pojedinac", *Spomen područje Jasenovac*, ed. Benčić Rimay 2006, p. 10.
[60] *Vjesnik*, 2 December 2006.
[61] Against all expertise from the theory of anti-Semitism, the authors of the exhibition try to fight the idea of destructive Jews by pointing out that this Ustaša and Nazi propaganda is disproved by the fact that architects and builders of Jewish origin have constructed many important buildings in Zagreb during the first four decades of the 20th century. As the snake full of stars of David indicates however, anti-Semitism is not about criticizing Jewish unproductiveness, but imagining them as the "Gegenvolk" that will destroy us, if we do not destroy them first.
[62] 39.570 men, 23.474 women and 20.101 children under the age of 14 were killed in the Jasenovac concentration camp, 47.627 of them Serbs, 16.173 Roma, 13.116 Jews, 4.255 Croats, 1.128 Muslims and several hundred from 15 other countries – 1942 being by far the most fatal year for all three victim groups of racist persecution and 1945 for Croats and Muslims. "List of individual victims of Jasenovac concentration camp", http://www.jusp-jasenovac.hr/Default.aspx?sid=6711.
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[64] Narcisa Lengel-Krizman, "Genocid nad Romima – Jasenovac 1942", *Spomen područje Jasenovac*, ed. by Benčić Rimay 2006, p. 170.

[65] Ibid., p. 158.
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[67] Ibid., p. 170.
[68] Jakovina, "Nezavisna Država Hrvatska", p. 28.
[69] Ibid., p. 34.
[70] Ibid., p. 27.
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