Chapter One

The Memory of Politics in Postwar Europe

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Footfalls echo in the memory
Down the passage which we did not take
Towards the door we never opened
Into the rose garden

T. S. Eliot

In April 2005, the College of Cardinals elected a German pope – Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger -- who had been a member of the Hitlerjugend and briefly served in the Wehrmacht. The new pope is very controversial in Europe – for his ultra-conservative religious views, not for his German past. It was widely accepted that he bore no personal responsibility for the crimes of the Nazi era. Just about every youth of his age had been enrolled in the Hitlerjugend, and he had deserted from the German army to return to the seminary. Jewish authorites praised him for playing a key role in his predecessor’s official recognition of the Chruch’s role in fanning anti-Semitism over the ages and his efforts to establish more fraternal relations with the state of Israel and Jewish communities in Europe. As the College of Cardinals was deliberating, Chinese demonstrators, egged on by their government, were throwing stones at the Japanese
embassy in Peking and consulates elsewhere in China, attacking Japanese businesses and generally protesting Japan’s efforts to obtain a permanent seat on the United Nation’s Security Council. The demonstrators, and the Chinese government, were doubly enraged by the nearly simultaneous publication of a Japanese textbook that sought to downplay or discredit the atrocities, including the “Rape of Nanjing,” that Japanese occupation forces had committed in China and elsewhere in Asia. The textbook, like most in Japan, also put a favorable gloss on Japan’s invasions of China and southeast Asia, describing them as acts of anti-colonialism and economically beneficial for those who were occupied.2

The two events in two different regions of the world were closely related, even if diametrically opposed in their symbolic value. The election of a German pope, and one, moreover, who had worn a military uniform, would have been hard to imagine in the absence of a serious effort over the decades of successive German governments to come to terms with the past and accept their responsibility for the horrendous suffering the Nazis inflicted on Europe. The Chinese government was not shy about making this counterfactual argument. Chinese officials praised Germany for acknowledging its Nazi past, paying billions of dollars in reparations to victims or their families and the more forthright approach of its school curriculum. They noted the visits of prime minister Willy Brandt and President Richard Weizsäcker to Auschwitz, and the seemingly heartfelt apologies they had made for Germany’s crimes. If the Japanese had behaved this way, one official said, we would view them and their claims for a Security Council seat differently.3

These events clearly highlight the positive side of Germany’s struggle to overcome its past. But that struggle is far from complete, not only in Germany, where
hate crimes have reached an all-time high in the former east, but in Europe more
generally where the past continues to weigh on the present in unfortunate and unhelpful
ways. In 28 February 2002, Chancellor Gerhard Schröder canceled his visit to Prague to
protest Czech prime minister Milos Zeman’s branding of ethnic Germans, expelled at the
end of World War II, as “Hitler’s fifth column.” The week before, Prime Minister Victor
Orban of Hungary said that neither the Czech Republic nor Slovakia should be admitted
to the European Union until they revoked a 1945 decree stripping ethnic Germans and
Hungarians of their citizenship in retaliation of their support for Nazi Germany. In
September 2004, the Polish parliament unanimously passed a resolution demanding
reparations from Germany.

How should we understand such statements and actions? Are they throwaway
lines intended to placate aging émigré constituencies? Do they reflect something more
sinister: a revival of national assertiveness kindled by still-rankling memories of past
wrongs in which all parties concerned consider themselves the victims? And what about
the undeniable rise of anti-immigrant and anti-foreign sentiment through Europe? Is this
the last gasp of old ethnic antagonisms fueled by the unfreezing of politics in the east and
high unemployment in the west brought about by both the collapse of communism and an
economic downturn? Or does it signal a rebirth of xenophobia, fueled by illegal
immigration, Islamic fundamentalism and opportunistic politicians like Jean-Marie Le
Pen of France, Jörg Haider of Austria and the late Pim Fortuyn of Holland? What do
these events, and the ways in which governments and people respond to them, say about
the emerging identity and politics of the European Union?

There is a growing literature on all of these problems and the response of
European public opinion and governments to them. We do not engage these themes directly, but rather explore the context in which they play out and responses to them develop. Even the most cursory review of European policies about national identity, ethnic conflict, immigrants, anti-democratic politicians and parties indicates the extent to which these issues are refracted through the lenses of the 1930s and World War II. These points of reference appear quite independent of the political views and policy preferences of those involved. To be sure, the widespread appeal to history is at least partly rhetorical and invoked to sell or justify policy preferences reached for other reasons. However, historical references have been so rife and taken for granted that it is not unreasonable to infer that understandings of the past have provided an important frame of reference for judging the meaning of these events and issues, and for formulating responses to them.

Our understanding of the past not only helps us interpret the present; it tells us who we are. Shared experiences and memories, and the values and commitments they create and sustain, provide distinctive identities to individuals and communities. Seminal works on nationalism -- by Hans Kohn, Carleton J. H. Hayes and Karl W. Deutsch -- all maintain that a shared past, whether based on territory, language, religion, history or some combination of them, is the foundation of nationality. Deutsch defined a people as “a community of complementary habits of communication,” and emphasized the ways in which stylized representations of the past shared by this community create a “we feeling” among its members. At least as far back as Herodotus, students of community have recognized the largely mythical nature of the founding sagas of communities, and how these myths and later events have been woven into master narratives to “invent” a people and provide them with a distinctive and uplifting history.
Individual identity appears to be shaped by an analogous process. Ernst Kris and Erik Erikson contend that people construct narratives of their past to shape and justify their lives and their responses to contemporary challenges.\(^9\)

Historians, political scientists, psychologists and psychiatrists have come to recognize that collective and individual memories are social constructions. We discuss this literature later in this introduction. Here, we want to note that both kinds of memories not only run on parallel tracks, but have a dense net of switches connecting them. Historians of collective memory have sought to map such systems in individual countries with regard to specific events (e.g., World Wars I and II and the Holocaust). Political scientists have analyzed the construction of national memory, and psychologists have studied some of the processes that mediate between it and individual memory. One of the most striking findings of this research is the extent to which individual memories are shaped through interactions with other people and reflect and often reinforce, dominant discourses of society. Those discourses and their contents in turn, are generally the creation of elites and counter-elites, who use them to justify themselves and to advance their political, economic and social goals. It is a top down and a bottom up process. Both ways, and at every level, the construction of memory is infused by politics.

This volume explores the politics of memory in postwar Europe with several goals in mind. We want to understand the timing, nature and evolution of debates about the roles that European states played in World War II. This is an important end in itself, but a controlled, comparative analysis also allows us to make more general observations about the process by which political memories emerge, are contested and take root. It
also offers insight into the emergence and content of postwar national identities, as they are based in part on shared constructions of the past. These questions are addressed in seven country case studies -- France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland, Austria, Poland and the Soviet Union-Russia. A final chapter by Claudio Fogu and Wulf Kansteiner uses the findings of the country studies to evaluate the long-standing debate in humanities about the relationship between memory and history.

Memories and the policy lessons they generate or sustain shape our response to the present. They also influence how others see and respond to us, and accordingly have powerful implications that extend beyond national borders. One of the most remarkable and least expected features of postwar Europe has been the ability of former enemies to put aside their past animosity to cooperate in a series of common economic, military, political and cultural projects. The success of these supranational projects has helped to overcome these animosities and forge new identities that extend beyond traditional ethnic and national boundaries.

European cooperation was inspired by visionaries, motivated at the outset by a range of national and common interests and received impetus and support from a powerful third party, the United States. To take root, cooperation needed extensive support beyond the narrow elites who brought these projects into being. Popular support was not merely the result, as some have suggested, of a positive feedback cycle in which the economic benefits of cooperation prompted further efforts at integration. Nor was it primarily the result of institutions that reshaped the interest calculations of actors, although this process was not insignificant. Leaders and the public alike made -- and continue to make -- judgments about the character, goals and reliability of other national
partners. Trust and empathy are critical components of these relationships, just as they are in interpersonal relations. Democratization has been one important pillar of cross-national trust. So too, we contend, was the judgment of leaders and publics about how their putative partners have addressed their pasts. It is hard to imagine that Germany’s neighbors would have bound their economies to a Germany in which the rule of law was threatened by authoritarian political movements, or a leading party was committed to revanchist territorial goals, or even a Germany in which the political and intellectual elite refused to acknowledge the special burden placed on them by the crimes of the Nazi era. Facing up to history and democratization are closely related; several recent studies of postwar Germany argue that the former is an important requirement of the latter. If so, the politics of memory, democratization, relations with neighbors and European integration are all integrally connected and best analyzed as components of a larger interactive system.

Our project is a multi-national and multi-disciplinary collaboration that brings together scholars from Austria, Germany, Italy, Poland, Switzerland, Canada and the United States in the fields of critical and literary studies, history, sociology, political science and psychology. To avoid producing a Tower of Babel, we recognized at the outset the need to develop some kind of common language and set of concepts in terms of which we could all communicate and work. At the same time, we wanted to reap maximum benefit from the cultural and disciplinary diversity of our participants. Early on, we discovered two kinds of tensions that needed addressing. The first was the national focus of case study authors versus the comparative perspective of the authors of the “bookend” chapters. Regardless of their discipline, all seven case study authors are
specialists in the history, politics and culture of a particular country. Their propensity was to describe unique paths of their countries, and account for them with reference largely to idiosyncratic political and cultural attributes of the societies in question. The editors were certainly interested in describing the range of national diversity, but also committed to discovering what experiences and patterns might be more widely shared. We wanted our case study authors to develop a “double vision” that would enable them to describe and interpret national experiences as informed insiders, but to use analytical categories that would facilitate comparisons across cases.

The editors struggled with the issue until they hit upon Tocqueville’s, *Democracy in America* as their model. It is a single country study whose questions derive from a comparative framework. That framework remains implicit, but nevertheless provides a template to help its author distinguish the particular from the general, gives him latitude to explore the idiosyncratic in some detail, and the possibility of composing his analysis as an artful narrative. Inspired by Tocqueville, we began by drawing up a list of research questions. They are based on the premise that postwar elites sought to impose interpretations of their country’s role in World War II that were self-justifying and supportive of their domestic and foreign policy goals. We recognized that the needs of self-justification and policy are not always consistent, and may have posed some difficult choices for some elites in some countries. Nor did we expect elite constructions to be consensual or unchallenged. Members of the governing elite may disagree among themselves, especially in cases where self-justification and more practical political and policy concerns tug in different directions. President François Mitterrand’s self-exculpatory address of 12 September 1994 about his role in World War II, televised to
the French nation, offers a striking example of how long such efforts can continue, and how divisive they can become even within leadership circles.\textsuperscript{12}

Counter-elites and diverse groups in the society will have different needs and interests, and are likely to construct the past in a manner supportive of them. Depending upon the nature of the regime and the broader political culture, proponents of contrasting conceptions of the past may engage in open conflict and seek wider support for their interpretations and agendas. We encouraged our case study authors to identify and track these conflicts, their timing, the arenas in which they played out, how they evolved, the extent to which they were intra-elite or involved the clash of top down versus bottom up perspectives, and to make informed judgments about the reasons behind the patterns they observed. In doing so, they would observe the interaction between history and the politics of history, which in the end determine what history becomes and what becomes history.

The second tension was disciplinary. Here, the important cleavage was not so much between individual fields of study as it was between humanists and social scientists. Humanists value historical description as an important end in its own right, and one that requires a different conception of conceptual sophistication than commonly employed in theory building. They embed arguments in a narrative structure; they are entwined with and grow out of the evidence that is presented. While none of the participant social scientists are of the neo-positivist persuasion, they are nevertheless accustomed to framing problems in the form of hypotheses and propositions, and collecting and organizing data in a manner suitable to their evaluation. Representatives of both traditions worried that humanists who read our book would skim through the
introduction and theoretical conclusion and concentrate on the country studies and the Fogu-Kansteiner chapter on their implications for the study of collective memory. We were also concerned that all but the most dedicated social scientists might read the bookend, theoretical chapters and gloss over, even ignore, the “data” chapters unless they had a special interest in a particular country. After two rounds of workshops and revisions, we believe we have struck a balance that makes country studies and comparative chapters entirely interdependent.

We hit upon another compromise to make these outcomes less likely. This introduction eschews the standard format and language of neo-positivist social science. We advance no propositions, never once use words like independent and dependent variable, covariance, or even testing. Instead, we have conceived of this chapter in the tradition of Verstehen, an approach to social science that bridges more easily to the humanities. We attempt to identify the dimensions and processes in terms of which the European politics of postwar memory might best be understood, and to show its relevance to democratization, relations between neighbors, the formation of collective identity and the emergence of the European Union.

Toward these ends, we begin with a discussion of memory, as it is the cornerstone around which our intellectual edifice is built. In this chapter, and in those that follow, we use memory in a double sense: to refer to what people remember -- or more accurately, what they think they remember -- and to describe efforts by individuals, groups and states to foster or impose memory in the form of interpretations and commemorations of their country’s wartime role and experiences. We then take up the range of roles used by historians to describe the experiences of different European countries between 1939 and
1945. They offer a benchmark against which to assess the role characterizations offered by participants in the postwar debates over that conflict and its meaning. We recognize that many categorizations of roles are possible; victor-loser and perpetrator-victim are two of many possible dimensions along which states might be arrayed. Any role definition, moreover, inevitably collapses a multiplicity of diverse experiences and contradictory understandings into a single, simplified national categorization. Our authors refer to both the range of competing understandings, and dominant national ones, where they exist, in keeping with our focus on national states and the politics of their institutional memory. We describe four dimensions -- they might also be conceived of as tensions -- in terms of which any analysis of the politics of memory must be situated. They are (1) contrasting understandings of what events and time period is being represented or contested; (2) the domestic and international inputs into the construction of memory and identity at all of these levels; (3) purpose and emergence, that is the extent to which dominant discourses are the outcome of purposeful designs or the largely unintended, system level consequences of interactions among a large numbers of agents; and (4) the national “languages” and cultures through which contestations over memory and identity are refracted. We end the chapter with some general observations about the relationship between war and the formation of national forms of memory and identity that pull together some of the most important findings of the country studies.

MEMORY

Memory mediates between the present and the past. It lays the past to rest, or keeps it alive and binds communities together, keeps them from forming or tears them
apart. The starting point for all of our authors is accordingly the analysis of memory. They are interested in its construction, deconstruction and reconstruction. To analyze memory we needed a clear idea of what we mean by the term. Our survey of the literature indicated that memory is studied at three different levels of analysis: institutional, collective and individual. Political scientists and historians are most interested in institutional memory. Collective memory is central to sociological and cultural-historical inquiry. Psychologists and psychiatrists have done the most work on individual memory. This section of the chapter provides an overview of these three conceptions, and explains why we will frame memory primarily, though by no means exclusively, at the institutional level.

Collective memory builds on the pioneering work of Maurice Halbwachs, a French sociologist and student of Durkheim, who, like his mentor, held, in opposition to Bergson and Freud, that individually memory was socially determined. Durkheim and Halbwachs argued that memory was “created” through communications with other members of society, and thus heavily stylized and a reflection of the dominant discourses of society. It helped individuals to find meaning in their lives and to create bonds of solidarity with other people. Collective memory and its ritualization in turn form the core of communities. Halbwachs, Russian psychologist, Lev Vygotsky, and American psychologist F. C. Bartlett emphasized the role of everyday communication in shaping memory, and thus its dependence on language, social discourses and the relationships people have established. Their work represents a sharp challenge to the continuing tradition in psychology to study adult memory as an individual, context-free process.

Research lends increasing support to the framing of memory as a social
phenomenon. On the neurological level, our ability to store, recall and reconfigure verbal and nonverbal stimuli is mediated by patterns that we have learned from our personal and cultural environments.\textsuperscript{15} So too are the language and narratives that we use to describe memory and make it plausible and significant to others. Memory adapts itself to the conventions of the age. In the process, more general memories are typically simplified and condensed in their representation. Their detail is reduced, and aspects of it are emphasized that allow memories to be assimilated to broader narrative schemes.\textsuperscript{16}

“Flashbulb memories” are a case in point. It turns out that recollections of what people were doing when they first received news of Pearl Harbor, the Kennedy assassination or the fall of the Berlin Wall, although reported in exquisite detail, often prove to be inaccurate.\textsuperscript{17} This may be because “flashbulb memories” are not actually established at the time, but only later when the significance of the event for society has been established.\textsuperscript{18} Current events more broadly affect the way in which we remember earlier events. Commemorations of past events lead people to make upward revisions in memories about the event or the individuals involved.\textsuperscript{19} They appear to help people assimilate such events cognitively, and once this happens, they have no further need to ruminate about them. Conversely, when people talk less about an event, they remember it more, dream about it more and feel it more intensely.\textsuperscript{20}

Collective memory is a useful but tantalizingly elusive concept because it is so difficult to operationalize. This has not deterred historians from studying it at the family, professional, generation, ethnic, class, national and regional levels. Recent works tend to focus on catastrophes and their related traumas: slavery, fascism, World War II, the Holocaust and postwar genocides and human rights abuses.\textsuperscript{21} Holocaust memory studies
have become such a cottage industry that a burgeoning secondary literature of “anti-memory” and meta-criticism has emerged. Some critics worry that emphasis on the subjective and socially constructed nature of memory encourages the belief that history itself is the product of unconscious selection biases and socially conditioned interpretation. More sympathetic critics -- among them, Fugu and Kansteiner -- raise methodological concerns. They contend, with some reason, that the connections between collective and individual memory are poorly theorized, that collectivities may respond very differently than individuals to traumas and other life experiences and that the important relationship between memory and identity has been largely neglected.

To its credit, the collective memory approach is the only one of the three that attempts to bridge levels of analysis. Most studies of individual memory not only assume that people are more or less interchangeable, but that their processing of memories and construction of life narratives is independent of culture, class, generation or any other social identification or process. Institutional memory recognizes interaction between institutional and individual memory, and frames it as a top down process: elite constructions of memory shape the memories of groups and individuals. Many discussions of institutional memory treat this process as unproblematic. However, it is notoriously difficult to determine the actual affects of attempts to influence public opinion even in micro cases, as Wulf Kansteiner observes with respect to the German TV series, Holocaust. On a macro level these effects are even harder to assess. There is ample impressionistic evidence of success and failure, often within the same case, and lots of unsubstantiated speculation about the reasons for these alleged effects.

Communist rule in Eastern Europe offers a good illustration of several of these
problems. Germans who grew up in the East and the West have strikingly different understandings of Germany’s role in World War II and the German past more generally. Public opinion polls indicate that a significant percentage of East Germans believe that their country fought in World War II on the Soviet side! When paired by cohort, they also have different historical memories. Some analysts point to these differences to help explain the greater hostility in the former East Germany towards Jews and immigrants. The German case, and Eastern Europe as a whole, can be read as strong evidence for both the success and failure of institutional efforts at socialization. Several generations of extensive indoctrination in schools, the media and through commemorations and monuments failed to eradicate individual and group memories at odds with the official view. These alternate memories, and the proscribed interpretations of history they sustain, survived in the niches of the impoverished civil society. Such memories were more readily sustained in Poland than most of the rest of Eastern Europe because of the semi-independent role of the Catholic Church. Even in the absence of such institutions, memories can survive and be reinforced when dissidents learn how to exploit official discourses for their own ends. In the Soviet Union, historians, social scientists, writers, and artists of all kind wrote fiction and non-fiction, or created works of representational or performing art that superficially reproduced, even appeared to reaffirm, the official discourse and its associated interpretations, while actually subverting them in subtle ways. Readers, viewers and audiences became increasingly sophisticated in their ability to pick up these cues and read, so to speak, between the lines. In the last decade of the Soviet Union, the practice of “double discourse” became increasingly open, with social scientists sometimes able to criticize existing assumptions or policies provided
they opened and closed their books and articles with appropriate genuflections to the Marxist canon.

*Individual memory* lies at the other end of the spectrum. It is what individual people remember -- or think they remember -- about their pasts. “Flashbulb memories,” in which involve recall of shocking events along with considerable details of one’s personal circumstances at the time the news was received, feature prominently in this connection. Individual memories are richly documented in memoirs, autobiographies and interviews, some of them recorded visually as well as orally. It may be considered the only authentic kind of memory, and is certainly regarded as such by most people. We all tend to measure the accuracy of other accounts of the past, especially second hand ones, against the benchmark of what we ourselves remember -- with the bedrock belief that our memories are correct. This is a dubious assumption. Studies of “flashbulb memories,” witnesses at crime scenes, autobiographies and laboratory experiments indicate that first-hand accounts are notoriously unreliable. The problem of recall aside, narratives of the past are not static, but evolve and may change with each retelling. Psychologists have discovered multiple “remembered selves,” whose evocation depends on the nature of the trigger and the social milieu in which the person is situated at the time.³⁰

Experience is a highly selective representation of stimuli, internal and external. And memory is an abstract recording and reordering of some these experiences. Individual memory can misrepresent experience in three fundamental ways. We experience only part of the stimuli to which we are subjected, remember only a fraction of those experiences, and a sharply declining fraction of them over time. Memory is
highly selective. There are distinct biases in what we remember, or choose to remember. Nor do we necessarily recall events accurately (whatever that is) or in proper sequence. Studies of individual memory suggest diverse psychological reasons for biased and inaccurate representation. Some of these causes are rooted in more general theories of human needs, and we offer brief descriptions of two theories that strike us as germane to our goal of relating individual memory to broader social and political processes. Psychologists find it useful to distinguish among episodic memory (recall of a past event), autobiographical memory (a recalled event that seems to play an important part in a person’s life) and life narratives, which incorporate a series of autobiographical memories and are important means of defining the self. Extensive research on the subjective nature of all three kinds of memory has led some psychologists to question the utility, and even the epistemological status, of “original events.” Derek Edwards and Jonathan Potter suggest that reality is not something that can be used to validate memories, but rather, something that is established by memories. This post-modern approach to memory dovetails nicely with historical research on collective memory, but remains highly controversial in the field.

Much of Freudian psychiatry revolves around the problem of trauma. This focus has encouraged practitioners to conceptualize the narratives that people construct about themselves as motivated in the first instance by their need to suppress recall of painful experiences. In support of this interpretation, they point to the seamless, stylized and quasi-fictional nature of so many life narratives, their propensity to break down in the course of analysis and the emergence of alternative narratives once traumas have been confronted. Healthy people change their narratives as they mature and face new
challenges. Ernst Kris contends that narratives evolve to help people shape and justify responses to these challenges. World War II was undeniably a traumatic event for millions of people, many of them still in the formative stages of their lives, and it is a reasonable supposition that the literature on trauma and memory might be of some use in understanding individual responses, and possibly, collective ones as well.33

Drawing again on Freud, psychiatrists have approached the study of memory in terms of an assumed need by people to justify their lives to themselves. Erik Erikson contends that we go through a life cycle.34 Between the ages of twelve and nineteen, from adolescence to early adulthood, we work toward developing a single, integrated identity and personality. Memories from these ages are the most important, and there is overwhelming evidence that we can recall more personal and political memories from ages 12-19 than from any other period in our lives.35 Beginning at about twenty, we confront the next challenge: developing close friendships and intimate relationships. Around the age of forty, we begin to look back on their lives to find meaning and validate our life choices.36 This may be one explanation for the widely documented phenomenon of a profusion of commemorations of dramatic and traumatic events twenty-five years after they have occurred.37 We should also recognize that people who have reached this age often have the wealth, political clout and leisure to indulge in commemoration.38 There is some evidence that we rewrite our personal histories to make ourselves more important actors or to justify our political and personal choices. This may involve the use of counterfactuals to place ourselves at the center of decisions in which we took no part, and where we allege to have urged courses of action that, in retrospect we contend would have been more successful that the course of action actually adopted.39
*Institutional memory* describes efforts by political elites, their supporters and opponents, to construct meanings of the past and propagate them more widely or impose on other members of society. The French Revolution may offer the paradigmatic modern case of this process. For supporters, it was a revolution in the best sense of the term, a defining moment for France and redefinition of the purpose of government everywhere in an effort to enable human beings to realize their full potential. Opponents, then and now, have portrayed it as a revolt against the best traditions of France that led to anarchy and dictatorship and left few, if any, enduring, positive results. At least until the Fifth Republic, the principal cleavage in France was between those who traced their lineage to the Revolution of 1789 and those who were united by their rejection of it and the Enlightenment. Pro-Revolution political forces successfully used their control over education, public holidays and official commemoration since 1870 -- the Vichy interregnum aside -- to propagate their point of view. In a wider sense, the French Revolution remains a contested symbol of the Enlightenment among intellectuals in all countries.

The French case is a veritable laboratory of contestation that illustrates how groups with different political agendas use every means at their disposal to propagate their interpretations of the past and limit the ability of their opponents to do so. Recent heated debates over school curricula, in which many French schoolteachers opposed the teaching of world history on the grounds that it diminished the importance of the French Revolution, indicates how insecure the seemingly victorious pro-Revolution forces feel. Controversy over how to understand more recent events -- the Vichy regime and the war in Algeria -- is even more intense, and not unrelated to older struggles -- as Joe Golsan’s
chapter convincingly demonstrates.

The contestation of historical memory is visible and relatively easy to study in France because it is an open society -- in contrast to the former Soviet Union, Castro’s Cuba or North Korea. In these and other authoritarian regimes, quasi-public debates about the past usually take place during leadership struggles, and are followed by efforts of the victors to impose interpretations of the past that are supportive of themselves and their goals. Nikita Khrushchev’s famous 1956 assault on Stalin and the “cult of personality,” is a well-known example. In George Orwell’s 1984, Big Brother and his propagandists (Big Brother may have been just another of their creations) frequently rewrote the past to make it consistent with Oceania’s ever shifting alliances. The hero of the novel is an isolated, free-thinking man who comes to realize that state pronouncements bear little, if any, relationship to the truth. He is ultimately discovered by the thought police and sent away for “reeducation.” Orwell suggests that totalitarian regimes can successfully manipulate their citizens’ understanding of the present and past. The history of self-styled communist regimes indicates that mind control is far more difficult to achieve than he surmised. Even in the absence of a functioning civil society, East Europeans, especially in Poland, where the Church remained robust, kept alive alternative conceptions of history that fueled political opposition and ultimately emerged triumphant in 1989. Early on in the Cold War, Czeslaw Milosz described the concept of *Ketman*, and how it allowed East Europeans to develop inner lives rooted in alternate conceptions of history while showing outward compliance to communism.

A decade of post-Communist history in Eastern Europe suggests that communist regimes nevertheless succeeded in shaping the understanding of the past of several
generations of their citizens in important ways. This is particularly notable with respect to World War II and the Holocaust. If World War II was caused by monopoly capitalism, East German workers could consider themselves its victims instead of its perpetrators. If all the Jews murdered in the East were identified only as citizens of their home countries, and the War’s victims toted up by nationality, the Holocaust could be made a non-event and Eastern Europeans freed of any need to consider their share of responsibility for genocide. Our chapters on Germany, Poland and the Soviet Union-Russia indicate the existence of such conspiracies of silence about the Jews continued into the post-communist era, but are now increasingly being confronted.

For all of its uncertainties, institutional memory nevertheless remains the most appropriate level of analysis for our study. We are interested in the *politics of memory*, and that is played out in the first instance in the political arena. Most psychological approaches, whether at the level of individual, group or society, are remarkably context free. Political explanations start from the opposite premise; they assume that context is the most important factor shaping the responses of societies, groups and perhaps, even individuals. In its strongest formulation, the political approach makes the Gramscian assumption that discourses shape the way people think and express themselves and determine the boundaries of what is acceptable — and that leaders shape and control these discourses. Michel Foucault suggests that we conceptualize history as a series of archeological strata, each of which constitutes a different “discursive formation” or set of rules for thinking and speaking about the world. These strata have sharply defined boundaries, testifying to the “ruptures” that mark sudden shifts in political and social discourses.
All the contributors to this volume feel more comfortable with a weaker form of the political approach that relaxes its two core assumptions. We accept the premise that just like discourses, institutionalized forms of memory are important, but not all controlling, and that leaders exercise at best only imperfect control over them. We reject the notion that institutional memories -- and the interpretations of the past they enable and sustain -- are effective mental shackles. Human imagination, spurred on by appropriate political and social incentives, can devise new ways of thinking and framing problems and languages appropriate to them. Memories and the interpretations of history they support were not so easily controlled in the age of print and *samizdat*, and it is presumably even more difficult to do this now in a digital world with widespread access to the world wide web. In contrast to the sharp breaks assumed by scholars such as Michel Foucault, our country studies suggest that changes in discourse are more often gradual. There are usually multiple memorial discourses in existence at any one time, and they reveal varying degrees of co-existence and conflict with one another. And there is variation within as well as across discourses. Any one discourse, moreover, can sustain more than one understanding the past, and even when hegemonic discourses prevail, as in the former Soviet Union, opponents, we have argued, may be able to gnaw away at them from within. Following the weaker form of the political approach, our country study authors have looked for conflicts about institutionalized memories and their associated readings of history and commemorations of the past as a mans of identifying and tracking larger conflicts in society. Their analyses confirm that institutionalized memories are not all-determining, and their creators and proponents may become just as constrained by them as those on whom they are foisted.
Such constraints operate at both the political and cognitive levels. In Germany, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), its Bavarian ally, the Christian Social Union (CSU), and the Social Democratic Party (SPD) all fostered a nationalist discourse to attract the votes of German expellees (*Vertriebenen*) from the east. They refused to renounce Germany’s claim to the lost territories, sponsored maps that described the DDR as “central Germany” and showed the pre-war, or even pre-1914 borders in the east. Konrad Adenauer, the Federal Republic of Germany’s (FRG) first prime minister, also envisaged this discourse and the commemorations and rituals that accompanied it as a means of integrating those expelled from these territories into the still fragile West German democratic order.

Subsequent generations of CDU politicians took the postwar nationalistic discourse at face value and were unable to find more productive ways of dealing with the DDR in the 1960s after the Berlin Wall went up or a decade later when the Cold War entered a new, less intense phase. Social Democrats (SPD) Willy Brandt and Egon Bahr crafted the innovative and conciliatory strategy of *Ostpolitik*, something their conservative opponents found difficult even to imagine. And those who could, were initially reluctant to espouse policies at odds with the discourse for fear of the political price they would pay. In the Gorbachev era, the West German left became the victim of this discourse. Throughout the 1980s the political and cultural representatives of the German left, following the lead of Jürgen Habermas, espoused a post-conventional identity based on the democratic principles of the constitutions and devoid of any nationalistic elements. They convinced themselves that West Germans had largely embraced this formulation. Left-wing politician and intellectuals were unprepared and
blind-sided by the outpouring of nationalist and pro-unification sentiment following the breach of the Berlin Wall.

**ROLES AND IDENTITIES**

Role definitions are central pillars of identity, and identity and memory are mutually constitutive. Understandings of roles help shape identities just as identities shape roles. A rationalist might suppose -- but our case studies do not support the contention -- that those in the unquestioned role of victor would have the least need to remake their national identities in the aftermath of war, although they might celebrate and commemorate that victory in ways to reinforce or strengthen their identities. Losers, by contrast, are likely to be governed by new regimes, put in power through the ballot box, revolution or the bayonets of victors. Such regimes may have strong political incentives to distance themselves from their predecessors to legitimate themselves in the eyes of their compatriots and neighbors. It is likely that they will have to placate victors and neighbors to regain their trust, gain readmission into the international community or escape from onerous obligations and restrictions. The Napoleonic Wars and World War I offer support for these propositions. In the aftermath of Napoleon’s defeat, the Bourbons, restored to the throne by allied bayonets, made strenuous efforts to revitalize pre-revolutionary values and conceptions of citizenship. Two of the victorious allies -- Prussia and Austria-Hungary -- had reluctantly introduced reforms to mobilize popular support for their war against France. They repudiated most of these reforms in the aftermath of victory, and did their best to reaffirm and strengthen traditional identities and political arrangements.
During and after World War I, all of the principal losers -- Germany, Austria-Hungary and the Ottoman and Russian Empires -- lost empires or significant territory, underwent regime changes and struggled to create postwar identities. Under the leadership of Kemal Ataturk, Turkey made a reasonably successful transition from multi-ethnic empire to secular, national state. The Soviet Union attempted to substitute class for national identities with somewhat less success, and to legitimize itself as the leader of proletarian internationalism. Newly created republics in Germany and Austria tried, unsuccessfully in the long run, to legitimize themselves and new understandings of the national community in the face of considerable domestic opposition from both extremes of the political spectrum.

The actors in all these struggles mobilized history as a weapon, and the interwar period witnessed intense and unresolved debates about who had been responsible for war and defeat, and what kinds of historical commemorations and symbols were acceptable. In Germany, the new national flag was anathema to conservative nationalists. Historical controversy over responsibility for the outbreak of war -- the *Kriegsschuldfrage* -- was a central feature of international relations of the interwar period. At Versailles, the allies had justified reparations on the grounds of German responsibility for the War. The socialist government in Berlin, supported in this instance by conservatives, made the case for German innocence, and embarked upon the extensive (and very selectively edited) publication of diplomatic documents in support of its contention. The principal victors -- France, Britain and the United States -- were under no such pressures to redefine themselves -- only to defend their allegations of German responsibility through publications from their own archives. Four years of costly war, and the Great Depression
a decade later, exacerbated internal conflicts in victor nations, and became sufficiently acute in the case of France, to call into question the primacy of national over class identities. Among the losers and victors alike, unresolved issues about the past and its representation became sources of deep internal division and a major contributing cause of World War II.

With regard to our two “propositions,” World War II is a more anomalous case. Our case studies suggest that among the three principal European losers -- Germany, Austria and Italy -- only Germany undertook anything approaching a soul-searching confrontation with its past. And that reckoning, as the chapter by Wulf Kansteiner indicates, began only after a decade of near denial. Austria offers a sharp contrast to Germany; Heidemarie Uhl’s chapter indicates that the primary problem for many Austrians still remains coming to terms with the consequences of World War I. Japan, the other great loser of the war, gives the outward appearance of sustaining its official and unofficial policies of denial into the sixth postwar decade. Recent literature and pronouncements about the Nanjing Massacre, school texts and “comfort women” offer support for this contention. Among the three principal victors, two of them (the United Kingdom and the United States), as expected, reveled in this role.

The Soviet Union stood alone among the victors of World War II -- and those of World War I and the Napoleonic Wars -- in its efforts to use the war to restructure its identity. This began during World War II when communist officials urged the Soviet people to repel the German invasion in the name of Holy Mother Russia. Thomas Wolfe reports that the shift from communism to nationalism as the basis for identity and sacrifice was maintained throughout the war and the entire Soviet era. It survived
Khrushchev’s attack on Stalin and the cult of personality, the purge of Marshal Georgiy Zhukov and efforts to revitalize the Communist party. If anything, emphasis on the war and the sacrifice it entailed was strengthened during the Brezhnev era to placate the military establishment and compensate for the failure of the Soviet economy to compete with the West. By the 1980s, “The Great Patriotic War” may have become the principal prop of legitimacy for the Soviet regime. However, its utility declined sharply as the wartime generation aged, retired and died off.

World War II presents us with the phenomenon of “in-between” countries with respect to roles. France, Italy, Austria and Yugoslavia encapsulated multiple roles (e.g., loser, occupied country, collaborator, resistor, victor), some of them simultaneously. Occupation exacerbated class and ideological divisions as some groups in these countries collaborated actively with the Nazis while others resisted in underground and partisan movements. In France, the cleavage was primarily class-based. In Italy, class was also important but somewhat blurred by ideologies that cut across class lines. In Yugoslavia, cleavage was almost entirely along ethnic lines, although Tito’s Serb-dominated communist partisans claimed to act in the name of all Yugoslavs and Tito himself was a Croat. By virtue of their wartime division, one would expect all three countries to have a more difficult time in coming to terms with the past and healing, or learning to live, with its still festering wounds. The chapters of Joe Golsan and Claudio Fogu suggest that this task was somewhat eased in France and Italy by the efforts of postwar politicians to wrap themselves in the mantle of the resistance. As many of these claims were questionable, something resembling a tacit conspiracy developed between major forces on the right and left to tip toe quietly around the past. It was only decades later that wartime issues
became prominent, and in quite different contexts in both countries. Yugoslavia too managed to suspend reckoning with the past for many decades, but for different reasons. Tito’s partisans emerged victorious from the Yugoslav civil war and the war against the Germans, and found themselves in the difficult position of consolidating their rule while being on the front lines of the Cold War. Tito had strong incentives to downplay past differences, and his regime set about propagating the myth of multi-ethnic resistance to foreign invaders. After his death in 1980, this myth was challenged more openly and ethnic tensions became correspondingly more acute. When the Cold War ended, ethnic divisions were exploited by former communists seeking to legitimize themselves under the banner of nationalism and quickly led to succession and a brutal civil war.

All occupied countries suffered terribly in wartime, but some of them, like Holland, Belgium and Denmark, had less problematic political histories. Like all occupied countries, they had their local collaborators, some of whom went off to fight on the Eastern Front, and had mixed records in protecting Jewish citizens and Jewish refugees who sought their protection. Our case studies of both France and Italy touch on some of the problems of occupation, but they were occupied for only part of the war. For these reasons, Poland, the European country occupied for the longest period of time, is a telling case. The German invasion of Poland on 1 September 1939 began World War II in Europe, and Poland was occupied for more than five years. For almost two of those years --- from Soviet intervention in Poland on 17 September 1939 to the German invasion of the Soviet Union on 21 June 1941 -- Soviet forces occupied the eastern third of Poland. The Red Army returned in 1944, and for most Poles, its reentry constituted another occupation. Poles consider their country the greatest victim of the war, and are
proud of their role as resistor, first to the German and Soviet invasions, and subsequently as partisans or participants in the heroic but ultimately unsuccessful Warsaw uprising that began in August 1944. Many Poles went into exile and fought the Germans as members of the British or Soviet forces. But there is a darker side to Polish wartime history: a mixed record with regard to its Jewish citizens (that continued well after 1945), internecine warfare among partisan groups of different ethnic background and ethnic cleansing of Ukrainians in disputed territories. History is written by the victor, and postwar Polish history reflected the Soviet version of events. Any collective and official reckoning with the past could only begin in 1989, and Annamaria Orla-Bukowska argues in her chapter that Polish willingness to face the complexity of the past is now underway and critical to the consolidation of liberal democracy.

Then there were neutrals. Like occupied countries, they accommodated themselves in quite different ways to the initial success of German arms. Franco’s Spain was deeply indebted to Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany for military support during the Spanish Civil War, and was wooed by Hitler after his conquest of France. Franco opted for neutrality, allowed his country to become a safe haven for Jews and other refugees, and moved closer to the allies as the tide of war shifted. Ireland and Sweden were neutrals who provided valuable commodities (agricultural produce and iron) to Britain and Germany, respectively. Switzerland, the case we have chosen to include, was neutral in both world wars, and avoided occupation although it was surrounded by Germany, its Italian ally, and Vichy and occupied France. As Regula Ludi shows, the Swiss made neutrality a pillar of their national identity, and the dominant, but not unchallenged, view of Swiss wartime history was that neutrality allowed the country to avoid invasion and,
through the Red Cross, to alleviate suffering in occupied countries. In the last decade, controversy about Switzerland’s financial and economic relations with Nazi Germany, response to Jews seeking refuge and the postwar failure of its banks to safeguard and leave untouched funds deposited by Hitler’s victims has garnered headlines in Switzerland and abroad. The chapter by Regula Ludi analyzes this controversy, situates it in the debate previously underway in Switzerland about the country’s wartime role and examines its implications for Swiss democracy and relations with other countries.

We can draw three preliminary conclusions on the basis of the preceding discussion. First, as suspected, contestations about memory revolve around definitions of wartime roles. The role descriptions offered by dominant elites in many countries in the early postwar period are often strikingly at odds with their depictions by historians. And the initial across-the-board response of postwar elites everywhere was to portray their countries and citizens as victims. This was true of Germany (East and West), the Soviet Union and Italy, the countries generally held responsible for the war. Countries with a record of collaboration, like France and Hungary, emphasized the role of their resistance movements. In France, Yugoslavia, Norway and Poland, resistance became the principal frame of reference for wartime histories, commemoration and public memory. Neutrals stressed their work on behalf of victims and the constraints under which they operated. Everyone blamed the Germans for the Holocaust, the Germans blamed the Nazis and the Nazis blamed Hitler. Second, most countries and their intellectuals propagated narrowly self-serving interpretations and memories of their past. More than half a century has elapsed since the end of World War II, and almost every country has undergone some kind of wrenching public debate about its role(s) in that
conflict and the atrocities for which its government or nationals were responsible. In some countries, controversy surfaced early on, in others it took decades. Our chapters indicate that the catalysts for these debates were diverse, as were the fora where they took place. In some countries, outside events, like the Eichmann trial, stimulated national debate and introspection; in others, internal developments, such as controversial memoirs, television series and court cases, were responsible. The ensuing debates varied in their intensity and the extent to which they involved political and intellectual elites and caught the attention of the wider public. Intellectuals were in every case the prime movers in these debates, and if they were not members of younger post-war generations – a question to which we will return – their support came overwhelmingly from younger people. The incentive for change and reformulation of memory was bottom up in the sense that it originated with people who were for the most part far from the levers of political power. It was nevertheless largely intra-elite, as the professors, artists, journalists, playwrights, filmmakers and students who were the catalysts or supporters of efforts to revisit and rewrite history were educated, comparatively well-off and well-endowed with resources.

Lastly, our case studies indicate that all these debates were shaped by postwar concerns, played into national politics in generally different ways and had varied and often unpredictable longer term consequences. These chapters explore the reasons for this variance and their political consequences.

DIMENSIONS

What is the Past? Our book starts with the end of World War II on the reasonable
assumption that for most, if not all, participants, and many neutrals, the postwar period was seen as the beginning of a new era, and one, moreover, whose domestic and international stability depended on coming to terms with the past, or at least suppressing some of the acute conflicts to which it had given rise. That past, of course, means different things to different peoples and nations. For Germans, Italians and Austrians, the War is only the last and most horrifying stage of a troubling past. In Germany, the relevant past was the twelve years of the Nazi era, from January 1933 to May 1945. To what extent had German history followed a special path (Sonderweg)? Was the Nazi period an expression of previous German developments or a radical departure from them? Debate also centers on responsibility for the War and the need to make moral and material amends (Wiedergutmachung). Italians in turn speak of the ventennio nero, the two decades of fascist rule from 1922 to 1943. Like the Germans, they differ among themselves about the extent to which fascism was the natural outgrowth of earlier political, economic, social and intellectual developments, or an aberration – an unfortunate “parenthesis” in the words of Benedetto Croce.

For many countries, the troubling part of the past was largely coterminous with the War. In Poland, it began with the German invasion of 1939, although it did not end with “liberation” by the Red Army in 1944-45. France and Britain declared war in response, but were not seriously engaged militarily until the German invasion of Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium and France in the spring of 1940. All these countries, except for Britain were occupied, as was most of Eastern Europe, the Balkans and the western regions of the Soviet Union. Citizens in these lands had to make some accommodation with their occupiers or risk their lives in diverse forms of resistance.
Most Jews had no choices, although a minority survived through flight, joining the resistance, going into hiding or passing as Christians. In many occupied countries, the War exacerbated existing political and ethnic cleavages, and all the more so when they led opposing groups to make different choices about resistance and collaboration. This pattern was most evident in Yugoslavia where Croats and Serbs fought each other, the former in quasi-alliance with the Wehrmacht. In France, many on the right supported the Vichy regime, while the left became the backbone of the resistance. This conflict never escalated into a civil war, in part because the resistance also attracted many non-communists, while the Gaullist opposition in exile drew support from across the political spectrum. In Yugoslavia and France --and almost everywhere else to some degree-- postwar governments and peoples had to find ways of leaving these conflicts behind. The construction of memory was an important tool toward this end. It could be used to resolve, or ease these conflicts, by openly confronting the past, but was more often employed to sweep it under the rug where it remained ominously present but blessedly out of sight.

Although Austria belongs with Germany and Italy, and arguably, the Soviet Union, in the category of perpetrator, Austrians successfully portrayed themselves as an occupied country and victim of the Nazis. They did this with the complicity and assistance of the United States, keen to enlist Austrian opinion on its side of the Cold War. According to Heidemarie Uhl, the decisive historical event for postwar generations was not World War II, but the collapse of the Austrian Empire in 1918. It is only recently that the order of priority is in the process of being reversed.

Pre-War history did not begin in 1939, 1933 or even 1922; of necessity, attempts
to understand World War II and the events that led up to it must reach further back into the past. In Germany and Italy, debates about their Nazi and fascist pasts problematized their respective periods of unification and ultimately led to unseating of triumphalist interpretations by more critical revisionist ones. Fogu observes that the Great War was absolutely central to how Europeans framed the problem of the past because it established a high degree of generational consciousness. “Generational-synchronic” identities not only competed with “historical-diachronic” ones, they encouraged successive generations -- including postwar ones -- to perceive “events” as historic and to organize them in epochs bounded by watersheds. History became increasingly generational, but the mode of constructing history this way freely crossed generational lines. Our contributors suggest that the generational framework of history was most pronounced in Western Europe -- although generations were almost everywhere important in determining what made it on to the historical agenda and how it was understood.

The politics of memory functioned somewhat differently in the east. In Poland, Annamaria Orla-Bukowska finds little evidence of “generational history” or of any sharp generational divides. The Polish experience is characterized by a certain unity across generations that derives from a common understanding of Poland and Poles as martyrs, and a related effort to understand Poland’s experience in World War II as an extension of earlier partitions of Poland and unsuccessful rebellions to restore unity and independence. In the Soviet Union, Tom Wolfe finds the sense of the past was shaped more by Marxist discourse, which conceived of time and its significance in different ways. It was also less tolerant of “blank spots,” historical discontinuities and ambiguities, which significantly
influenced how the past was understood, not only in the Soviet Union, but also in post-Soviet Russia. This may explain, Wolfe suggests, why neither the Soviet Union nor Russia has experienced any trials of war criminals, no “blockbuster” revisionist histories about the war, television series or Historikerstreit that challenged conventional understandings and engaged the public in rethinking their country’s wartime experiences and their relevance to contemporary politics. 

*Domestic vs. international:* The politics of memory takes place primarily within countries, and we have accordingly organized this volume around country studies. Although each case is idiosyncratic, the politics of memory is shaped by political and psychological processes that to some extent transcend national and cultural boundaries. One national experience sheds light on another, and collectively, they tell us something about the underlying processes that are at work.

Comparison is essential for a second, historically substantive reason. States are not hermetically sealed units, but permeable to varying degrees to developments that take place outside their borders. Wulf Kansteiner tells us that Germany’s public engagement with the Holocaust was jump started by the trial of Adolph Eichmann in Jerusalem in 1961. The American miniseries *Holocaust*, produced in 1978, and Claude Lanzmann’s nine-and-a-half hour documentary, *Shoah*, produced in 1985, played on movie and TV screens across Europe where they had profound effects. *Holocaust* was featured on Austrian state television in March 1979, and accompanied by intensive media coverage of the “Final Solution” and Austria’s role in bringing it about. For the first time, Hediemarie Uhl notes, “icons of destruction” lodged themselves in the Austrian consciousness and encouraged a series of cultural and political projects that had broad
public appeal and encouraged more openness about the past. Annamaria Orla-Bukowska attributes similar effects in Poland to the showing of the Lanzmann documentary.

Not all outside influences were regarded as benign by public opinion. Heidemarie Uhl describes the strong defensive reaction of Austrians to revelations about President Kurt Waldheim’s activities during World War II. According to Regula Ludi, the debate about Switzerland’s role in World War II was already underway prior to American pressure on the country and its banks to conduct an honest accounting of the assets of depositors who had perished in the Holocaust. Outside pressure nevertheless publicized and influenced the course of that debate. Poland experienced something similar. Carmelite construction of a convent at Auschwitz in 1986 provoked protests from Israel and Jewish communities around the world and put the “Jewish Question,” and by extension, the complexities of Poland’s wartime experience, on the public agenda. Both countries greeted foreign allegations and pressure with incomprehension and anger. In Switzerland, this was because they clashed with the national self-image of the Swiss as benign humanitarians who had used their wartime neutrality to help others. In Poland, it was because they reinforced the self-image of Poles as martyrs; once again the world was ignoring their wounds and betraying them in the interests of others.

In a more diffuse but nevertheless significant way, international developments that had nothing to do with the politics of memory shaped the context of those politics throughout Europe. In this connection, the Cold War was critical. It froze the possibility of bottom-up politics in the East, and led Soviet-sponsored regimes to impose Soviet-dictated constructions of World War II. In East Germany, as noted, it provided a convenient mechanism for Germans, even those who were privately anti-communist,
avoid their past. In Austria, it had the same effect. Wrapped in the mantle of victimhood, a role definition propagated by Austrian leaders and encouraged by Washington as part of its Cold War political strategy, the Austrians had little incentive to engage in the kind of painful introspection that occurred across the border in the Federal Republic. Although Austria is the most extreme case, the Cold War provided a cover for other Western countries to shelve uncomfortable discussion of the past. By contrast, the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the Soviet Union served as catalysts for a reconsideration of wartime issues, east and west. Even in Switzerland, Regula Ludi informs us, these events shattered the framework of national identity and made a reassessment of collective memory inescapable. So too has the desire of so many ex-communist countries to join the European Union. It required them to demonstrate their commitment to democracy, and in doing so, to become more open in confronting their respective pasts.

External influences can be conceptualized as international, transnational and cross-national. International describes the actions and interventions of other states, as in the several examples cited above. Transnational characterizes the efforts of non-governmental organizations, organized religion and professional groups, like historians and political scientists. Cross-national describes more diffuse interactions, among them the conversations and experiences of citizens who travel abroad, exposure to interpretations of the past or debates about the past through foreign media -- always significant among neighbors who share a common language, and now increasingly common given the growth of English as the lingua franca of Europe. Our authors do their best to track these influences and to distinguish among them.
Purpose and emergence: The politics of memory describes a process that involves large numbers of actors, some of them private individuals and some government officials. They have access to a wide range of resources, and mobilize them to achieve goals that may be discrete or quite diffuse. They act in a political and cultural setting where other influences, many of them unpredictable or unforeseen, help shape the consequences of their behavior and the ways in which debates evolve. Such a complex and open-ended process may produce short- and long-term outcomes at odds with the expectations of key actors. We have already examined one example of this phenomenon: efforts in the FRG to foster a particular view of the past to win the support of Germans expelled from lost territories which established a cognitive framework that had profound and unanticipated implications for future policy toward the German Democratic Republic. Joe Golsan offers us a second example in General de Gaulle’s post-liberation decision to remain silent about the role of Vichy and to nationalize the resistance. Because the Free French forces were an insufficient political basis for a postwar regime, de Gaulle decided to promote a generous, collective vision of France’s struggle for liberation. It was a politically expedient move, and one that abetted national recovery by encouraging French people to form a positive image of themselves. The myth of the “national resistance” was reaffirmed in 1958 after de Gaulle’s return to power, and again in 1964, with the transfer of resistance martyr Jean Moulin’s ashes to the Pantheon. Given the myth’s psychological and political utility, efforts to challenge it and reexamine the past appeared unpatriotic, and post-Gaullist forgetting took on a long life of its own.

Choices open and foreclose other choices in the future, or at least make some paths easier or more difficult to tread. In a world of open systems and imperfect
information, it is never possible to do more than make educated guesses about the consequences of one’s actions. The politics of memory is thus unpredictable and path dependent, themes that feature prominently in the country studies.

Language and culture: The construction of the past, and its contestation, are political processes that take place in a broader linguistic and cultural setting. That setting can make contestation more or less likely, determine the domains in which it occurs, the form it takes and the kinds of people and groups who participate. In some countries -- Germany and Italy, for example -- the elite press is both widely read and gives serious and sustained coverage to historical debates, facilitating a sophisticated discussion of controversial issues beyond a narrow circle of intellectuals. Elite media can nevertheless engage in conspiracies of silence to keep questions out of the public eye, as it did in France for decades over the country=s wartime treatment of its Jewish residents and citizens. Or, as Claudio Fugu tells us, foreign media can propagate a falsely benign image of a people, as it did with the “Brava gente” depiction of Italians. It effectively discouraged a thorough investigation of the criminal and dark side of that country’s past.

There are many reasons why the Federal Republic has gone further than its neighbors in confronting its past. One of them, Wulf Kansteiner suggests, is a long-standing cultural practice of using the past as a resource to frame thought about the present. This goes back at least as far as the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when German idealists and romantics (e.g., Hölderlin, Schelling, Hegel) sought to use their admittedly highly stylized understanding of ancient Greece as a model for contemporary ethics, aesthetics and politics. Debates about Wilhelminian Germany and Germany’s “special path” of historical development were a critical component of
political debates during the Weimar era. Postwar debate about the Nazi period and the Holocaust, as part of a continuing effort to come to terms with the past (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*) continues this pattern. In Italy, by contrast, there is no equivalent tradition of coming to terms with the past. Italian culture is characterized by the recurrent appropriation and transfiguration of long-standing metaphors, tropes and discursive structures to frame discussion of the present. Italians, Fogu contends, are drawn to metaphors and respond to new challenges by transforming old vocabularies to reframe the past. Italian historical culture can be read as a succession of metaphors and discourses, encouraging epochal analogies rather than cross-epochal comparisons.

As these examples make clear, each country’s language and culture is more than a setting in which contestations of the past take place. Our authors suggest that they are key to understanding the often idiosyncratic ways in which the past has been constructed and contested in their respective countries. They further recognize that cultural forms are to some degree malleable. Heidemarie Uhl informs us that critical journalism, never an Austrian tradition, emerged in the 1970s and contributed, along with increasing confidence by Austrians in their identity, to a new willingness to confront the past.

**MEMORY, IDENTITY, WAR**

The concepts of identity and memory pervade this chapter, and we have struggled to relate them to each other and to contestations about national roles in World War II. One of the problems that makes these relationships so difficult to capture analytically is that identity and memory reside at multiple levels. People also have multiple identities, and some of them (e.g., as members of families, professions, regions, nationalities, ethnic
groups and religions) are collective. These social, professional, political and cultural groups have identities in turn, making the representation of identity something like a set of Russian matruska dolls, where bigger dolls have smaller ones nested within them.

Memory is equally layered; it resides at three levels at which it resides, and memory at each level is not isolated from the other, but interactive. These levels of memory may be reinforcing or sharply conflicting, and this synergy or conflict can be played out at both conscious and unconscious levels. Our project focuses primarily, but not exclusively, on institutional memory given the nature of the problem we are examining. We recognize, as do our authors, that this level of analysis offers at best an incomplete explanation for the politics of memory, and for this reason, the country chapters dip into collective and individual memories. We must ultimately find more systematic ways of integrating studies of memory across levels of analysis and relating them to identities at these same levels. Drawing on the findings of the country studies, the concluding chapter by Claudio Fogu and Wulf Kansteiner, critically examines existing approaches and offers a number of thoughtful suggestions in this regard.

Complexity and layering notwithstanding, the country studies suggest some provisional observations about the substantive relationship between memory and identity, and between both of them and the War in general. Perhaps the most important of these is the seeming primacy of identity. In many of the countries, the need to build or sustain a national identity, for psychological as well as political reasons, has been a powerful drive. It has shaped and repressed memory, history, and their representations, to suit its needs. Political authorities, often with the support of public opinion, have ignored, isolated, ridiculed and even punished individuals or groups who have questioned key features of
the national myth, voiced memories, raised memorials or produced histories, exhibits, documentaries, plays or novels that questioned representations of the past on which these myths are based. Only when people begin to feel more secure about their national identities, are they willing to look more openly at their pasts and even to question the historical interpretations and other representations that sustain them.

A robust national identity is only one component of internal security, just as internal security is only one component of security. The latter also includes foreign security, which may find expression in bloc solidarity, as it did on both sides of the Cold War divide. As people feel less threatened by past and present enemies, domestic or foreign, they feel more secure. In Western Europe, declining perceptions of threat have had numerous causes, among them, the presence of American military power, decades of unrivalled economic growth and the “domestication” of West Germany in a Western Europe whose states and peoples are increasingly bound together by a dense network of political, economic and cultural institutions. More recently, the end of the Cold War, German unification, breakup of the Soviet Union, the extension of democratic forms of government to the east and entry of most of these countries into NATO and the EU have further eased perceptions of threat. However, ethnic wars in the former Yugoslavia, illegal immigration and the more recent threat of Islamic terrorism have given rise to new fears, and continuing ethnic conflicts in places like Spain and Northern Ireland sustain old ones. So identity and memory, which have done so much to shape the politics of postwar Europe, have been equally influenced by its politics.

Our sample of seven countries indicates that problematic identities have diverse causes. Italy and Germany are unusual in Western Europe because of their late
unification. National identity preceded national unity, and to some degree remained
distinct, perhaps even aloof from, identification with the state. In Italy, the latter problem
was due to the problematic nature of the Italian state, under both Mussolini and the ever-
shifting coalitions and short-lived governments that characterized the postwar Republic.
Many postwar Italians have been downright scornful of their national government and
sought refuge from it above and below: by supporting the European project and flaunting
regional and local identities. To the extent they identified as Italians, it was with a benign
image of a people made distinctive by their values and way of life. Claudio Fogu
describes the unifying self-image of Italians as good people (brava gente) motivated by
individual and collective desires to make a good impression (fare bella figura). This
image was ceaselessly propagated by the media -- and by Italy’s liberators and many ex-
victims of fascism – and became deeply embedded in Italian consciousness and
memories. Not incidentally, it allowed Italians to distance themselves from and deny
responsibility for the imperialism, anti-Semitism and brutality of the Mussolini era.

Germany was special in the second sense of being a divided nation. Although the
FRG was significantly larger in territory and population than the German Democratic
Republic, and claimed to be the successor state to the former Reich, it was still something
of a rump state in competition for decades with its eastern counterpart. Both claimed to
be the true representative of the German people. Germans were encouraged by leaders of
both their political units to develop a state-based identity in addition to their pre-existing
national one. These latter identities remained fragile, and authorities on both sides of the
German border sought to buttress them through manipulation of the German past. After
forty years of division, half of it as the hottest battle ground of the Cold War, the terrain
of memory came to resemble nothing less than a battlefield crisscrossed by deeply dug trenches and scarred by the detritus of unsuccessful offensives by the two sides. Not surprisingly, Germans, like Italians, became major supporters of European integration -- with important differences. For Italians, it was more a strategy, designed in part to limit and circumvent the power of their national government. For Germans, the appeal was at least as much the identity it conferred; it enabled them to transcend, at least in part, their Germanness by building a new, shared identity with former enemies that would also make their identification as Germans more acceptable to themselves and their neighbors.

Austria’s situation was also unique. It was one of two rump states of a former empire, Hungary being the other. Unlike the two Germanys, there was little antagonism between the two states or peoples in the postwar period -- in contrast to their intense conflict in the waning decades of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the post World War I Austrian civil war, and in the period leading up to and after the Anschluss. For much of the Cold War Austria was neutral and Hungary the most economically innovative member of COMECON; they envisaged themselves as a bridge between East and West. Austrians were nevertheless more closely linked to Germany by language and culture (or at least, to Bavarians), and most had welcomed unification with Germany in 1938. Postwar Austrians faced a triple challenge to their identity: division – the country was divided into American and Soviet zones of occupation until 1955; the need to discover and define who they were in the absence of their former empire; and to do this while distancing themselves from Germany, past and present.\(^{52}\) Like the Italians, many Austrians sought refuge in a benign cultural image, in this instance of a happy, largely rural people distinguished by local costumes and customs. The bitter memories they
dwelled on, were not the Nazi years, but the destruction of the “two hearts” of Vienna -- the State Opera and St. Stefan’s Cathedral -- destroyed respectively by allied bombs and the artillery of retreating S.S. units. Not surprisingly, Austrian reconstruction of the past played fast and loose with what many non-Austrians considered the “facts” of the case.

Initial efforts by Europeans to avoid addressing a threatening past, and one at odds with the general thrust of postwar identity construction, led to the adoption of a range of common strategies. The most widespread of these was what we might call quarantine. This consisted of marking off the war, the fascist period, the era of collaboration, or whatever events were troubling, as a special epoch that was described as something extraordinary and not part of the “normal” trajectory of the nation. This strategy was first embraced by conservative Germans but quickly adopted by French and Italians. Joe Golsan describes how the years between 1940 and 1944 came to be considered “les années noires” (the dark years), and the Vichy regime an anomaly or aberration. In Austria, the Nazi era was described as the Austrian “Nocturno,” and all evil doing was blamed on Hitler and “his” Nazis. Austrians ignored the warm welcome Hitler had received when he marched into Vienna and the continuing support for Anschluss and the Nazi regime by Austrians until almost the bitter end.

A related strategy was denial of any national responsibility for the Holocaust. This was widespread throughout Europe, with the Federal Republic of Germany being the most important exception. Other exceptions were Denmark and Bulgaria, who could legitimately claim to have protected their Jewish communities, neutrals like Sweden and Spain, who took in Jews during and after the War, and Great Britain, which was never occupied. Despite official acknowledgment of responsibility for the Holocaust and with
it, acceptance of the need to pay reparations, the West German public did not begin to confront this part of their past until the late 1960s. In East Germany, this never occurred. In France, many of those responsible for the deportation of one-third of the country’s Jews were protected by the highest authorities. In Austria, the returning trickle of Jews was not welcomed and their appearance in newsreels, according to Heidemarie Uhl, provoked anti-Semitic outbursts in theaters, including cries of “gas them.” Hostility to Jews was also marked in Poland, the site of the largest number of German death camps, and along with the Soviet Union, one of the two countries with the largest prewar Jewish populations. Jews were murdered in Poland after the War was over, and many more expelled, or hounded to leave, not only in the immediate postwar years, but again in 1968. Our book is about the politics of postwar memory, not about the Holocaust. Nevertheless, one of the more interesting -- and revealing -- features about national debates is how the destruction of European Jewry is -- or is not -- addressed.

A third common strategy was to downplay collaboration and emphasize resistance, and when possible, portraying the latter as a national effort. We have already discussed France in this regard. In Italy, where national resistance also became a national myth, it intersected nicely with Italian treatments of the Holocaust, which stressed the role of Italian soldiers, guerrillas and ordinary civilians in saving Jews. The Jewish communities in both countries, presumably out of feelings of vulnerability, more or less went along with this narrative. In Poland, resistance was central to the Polish identity, but the Warsaw Uprising of 1944 was neither officially commemorated nor featured in the educational curriculum as long as the communists were in power. The 1943 Warsaw ghetto uprising fared better because it concerned atrocities committed by the Germans.
In Austria, the resistance was emphasized in the early postwar years but then shelved. In the Soviet Union, according to Tom Wolfe, a more ambiguous and contentious narrative emerged about the role of soldiers and civilians caught behind enemy lines.

Change came about when governments and peoples felt secure enough to allow national myths to be challenged or more contentious discourses about the past to emerge. As we have seen, outside pressure sometimes served as a catalyst, but we should not overvalue its effects. In the FRG, it was important at outset, but West Germany was a special case as it was making the transition from occupied country to independent state. Wulf Kansteiner suggests that German willingness to accept responsibility for the Holocaust and pay reparations to Israel and individual survivors was also internally motivated; it was part of conscious strategy by the Adenauer government to gain legitimacy and support for the new West German state. In Austria and Poland, outside pressure was fiercely resisted. Heidemarie Uhl and Annamaria Orla-Bukowska recounts the hostility provoked by American censure of Austrian President Kurt Waldheim and continuing criticism by Jews from many countries of the narrative that portrayed Auschwitz as a place of Polish suffering while relegating Birkenau and Jewish extermination to the sidelines. In Switzerland, Regula Ludi describes similar hostility to American pressure on Switzerland and its banks to do a fair accounting of the money deposited by Jews who were murdered during the war and to repay it with interest to surviving members of their families. Despite a hostile reaction throughout most of Switzerland, including the elite press, American pressure was largely effective, and led to agreements with the banks. Part of the reason for this, Ludi suggests, is that historians and the Swiss media had already begun to problematize the country’s wartime role,
including its less than welcoming response to Jews seeking refuge. The Swiss case is interesting because it suggests that pressure is most effective when it comes after national populations have already begun to look into some of the darker corners of their past.

Almost all of our authors tell us that change is related to demography. The wartime generation appears to have had a very different set of political and psychological needs than the generations that followed. Those needs, as we have seen, more or less precluded any honest discussion of their country’s wartime role and activities by a majority of its population. There were groups and individuals who favored, even pushed, for such a debate, but they were marginalized, even punished judicially in some instances. Subsequent generations confronted different sets of problems, and as Erikson suggests, used history as a resource to confront them. This often involved showcasing a different set of issues and developing different interpretations about them. In Germany, where generational cohorts are an accepted tool of analysis, scholars and journalists have long been struck by the shift in interest and understandings of the war associated with the generation of the 1960s -- many of whom were the sons and daughters of veterans or had lost a parent in the War. They had no memories of the Nazi era, were the first beneficiaries of growing German affluence, and for both reasons, had strong incentives to rebel against their parents and the generational values and beliefs they shared. The 1960s witnessed a youth rebellion on many fronts, and attempts to foster a more honest discussion of the past were by no means the most dramatic. Such efforts held out the prospect of considerable hedonic gain. It was not only an issue on which their parents were vulnerable, but by publicly condemning and distancing themselves from the Nazi past, they might gain acceptance for themselves and their country from their European
peers and neighbors.

Tom Wolfe also tells a story with general implications. The crucible of war was a dominant cultural icon and prop for the Soviet regime through the 1960s. Soviet treatment of the war emphasized the suffering of the Soviet people and treated the War as part of the continuous revolutionary heritage that had begun in 1918. The former generated affect that could be translated into political support, and the latter provided a framework for a common identity transcending national differences. The centrality of the war experience weakened in subsequent decades, and precipitously so in the late 1980s. Glasnost and downgrading of the war experience – natural bed fellows, so to speak -- created space for other groups, including dissidents, to articulate new relationships to the past that helped them define who they were and justify their political agendas. Like Kansteiner, Wolf distinguishes between the generation that experienced the war and those that came later. Unlike Germany, it was not the first postwar generation that was politically important. In the Soviet Union, its members tended to take seriously the party’s claim that the war was an integral part of the revolutionary legacy, and that to understand it this way confirmed one’s Soviet identity. The break came with the second postwar generation: those born after 1960, and coming of age in the late 1970s and 1980s. For them the war was “twice removed,” and they perceived narratives propagated about it by their parents, grandparents and the media as naïve and self-serving. In large numbers, they rejected the party’s claim that victory validated its rule and the socialist system.

Almost across the board, films, plays and television series were catalysts for revisiting the past. In Germany, Austria and Poland we have already noted the
importance of the documentary *Shoah* and the mini-series *Holocaust*. In Austria, Thomas Bernhard’s controversial and widely publicized play, *Heldenplatz*, accomplished the same end. It was performed in Vienna in 1988 on the fiftieth anniversary of the *Anschluss*, and depicted the humiliation of Jewish citizens in the streets of the city in the aftermath of the Nazi takeover and the amusement in provided for their some of their neighbors. In Italy, beginning in the 1970s, a wave of now famous directors -- Federico Fellini, Lina Wertmuller, Bernardo Bertolucci and Pier Paolo Pasolini -- introduced new layers of complexity in the representation of Fascism and suggested certain continuities between fascism and postwar regimes. In the mid-1970s, television began to treat these themes and soon became the dominant medium for transforming Italian understandings of the past, while at the same time using these understandings to problematize the present. In France, *Le Chagrin et la pitié* (The Sorrow and the Pity), completed in 1969, but not shown in France until April 1971, exposed the Gaullist myth (France united in its resistance) and offered an alternative narrative (France united in its cowardice) in its place. Beginning in the early 1980s, a spate of films appeared about the “dark years, ”including *Shoah* (1985), *Au revoir les enfants* (1987), *Une affaire de femmes* (1988), *Docteur Petiot* (1990), and *Hotel Terminus* (1993). Supplemented by new critical histories, they had a significant impact upon French opinion.

In Western Europe, films, plays and novels are commercial ventures, independent of government control, which may be why they spearheaded the challenge of national myths. In some countries, this was still an uphill battle. The *Sorrow and the Pity*, a French film, played in the FRG, Switzerland, the Netherlands and the United States before it could be released in France, where negotiations with French television dragged
on interminably, and constituted what its director, Marcel Ophuls, called “censorship through inertia.” Television and the mainstream press were even more cautious, perhaps because the former is often owned or regulated by the government, and the latter, in some countries, mouthpieces for political parties. A notable exception was Austrian state television’s decision to show *Holocaust* in 1979. In the eastern bloc, with the possible exception of Poland, where *Holocaust* was shown on television, government controlled media struggled to maintain traditional myths and meanings of the War.

It goes without saying that the collapse of communism was a precondition for meaningful change in the east. However, regime change, and with it, the beginnings of freedom of expression, by no means led automatically to serious efforts to rethink the past. Progress in this regard has been uneven. In almost every country, at least one political party has attempted to situate itself within the national tradition and lay claim to be its truest representative. These parties propagate narrow, nationalist readings of the past and strenuously oppose more open discussions in the media and schools. There are also bright spots. In post-Soviet Russia, Tom Wolfe tells us that the appeal of liberal reformers derives at least in part from their lack of connection with any Soviet or Russian past.

The signs of change -- east and west -- have much in common. Two of their distinguishing features are attempts to (1) incorporate “dark” periods of history, formerly blocked off and even repressed as anomalous into the national history and consciousness; and (2) confront the Holocaust and, more generally, the pre-war, wartime and postwar treatment of Jews and other persecuted minorities in one’s country. These challenges are not the same, but they are connected, as recent developments in France illustrate. In
1998, France’s highest court handed down a controversial decision that for the first time acknowledged responsible for the crimes of Vichy. The judges made the French government responsible for half the damages that Maurice Papon was ordered to pay the Jewish community because he was acting in his capacity as a French official when he ordered the roundup of Jews in the Bordeaux region. Papon was nevertheless released from prison in September 2002, when the court ruled that he was too old and ill to serve his sentence. These two streams of “non-history” are also coming together in the east. In May 2001, leaders of the Polish Catholic Church, led by Cardinal Jozef Glemp and one hundred bishops, recognized that Poles were not only victims but also perpetrators. In a well-publicized ceremony they apologized for Polish participation in the 1941 massacre of hundreds of Jews in a northeastern town of Jedwabne, and for similar acts elsewhere in the country.

The politics of memory in postwar Europe has an obvious starting point --1945 -- some critical turning points -- among them, 1968, 1979, 1991 -- but no end point. There are undeniably distorted constructions of World War II and the events leading up to it. They need to be confronted, discredited and replaced. But there is no objective truth or reading of the past to take their place. Nor do the same aspects of the past have enduring relevance; they change as a function of contemporary problems and needs. For both reasons, the politics of memory will be a salient feature of the European landscape for many decades to come.
Notes


Memory in Germany,” forthcoming in the Journal of Central European History.


16. Gordon Allport and Leo Postman, Psychology of Rumor (New York: H. Holt, 1997);


24. An exception is Jan Assmann, “Collective Memory and Cultural Identity,” New German Critique 65 (1995): 125-133, and Das kulturelle Gedächtnis: Schrift, Erinnerung and politische Identität in den frühen Hochkulturen (Munich: Beck, 1999), who contrasts everyday communications, which are strongly influenced by contemporary memory of the events in question and have a life span of 80-100 years, with cultural memory. The latter consist of the corpus of texts, images and rituals specific to a society and whose stabilization -- and here, historians play an important tole -- serves to maintain a society’s self-image.

25. Kansteiner, Postmodern Historicism.

26. These comparisons are complicated by the existence of other key differences -- most notably, economic -- between the territories and populations of the former East and West.

27. Lévesque, The Enigma of 1989; Thomas, The Helsinki Effect, chs. 5-7, on how Helsinki and then Gorbachev created conditions under which civil society could be resurrected and mobilized for political purposes.

28. For evidence of how this worked in the Soviet bureaucracy and institutes, see Matthew Evangelista, Unarmed Forces: The Transnational Movement to End the Cold War (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1999); Robert D. English, Russia and the Idea of
the West: Gorbachev, Intellectuals and the End of the Cold War (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000).


M.A. Conway, *Autobiographical Memory: An Introduction* (Buckingham: Open
University Press, 1990); M.A. Conway and D.C. Rubin, “The Structure of
Autobiography Memory,” in A.E. Collins, S.E. Gathercole, M.A. Conway and P.E.M.
Morris, eds., *Theories of Memory* (Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1993), 103-37; D.C.
Rubin, S.E. Wetzler and R.D. Nebes, “Autobiographical Across the Lifespan,” in D.C.


37. James W. Pennebaker and Becky L. Banasik, “On the Creation and Maintenance of
Collective Memories: History as Social Psychology,” in James W. Pennebaker, Dario
Paez and Bernard Rimé, *Collective Memory of Political Events: Social Psychological
Perspectives* (Mahwah, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1997), 3-20, on memories and
commemorations of the King and Kennedy assassinations; W. Adams, “War Stories:
Movies, Memory, and the Vietnam War,” *Comparative Social Research* 11 (1989): 165-
89. The trauma hypothesis would suggest that such commemorations indicate that after
twenty-five years people are prepared to confront an event in a way they were not
previously.

Memories.”


46. On the denial period, see Margaret and Alexander Mitscherlich, *The Inability to Mourn* (New York: Grove, 1975), and more recently, Robert O. Moeller, “War Stories:


48. Their commemorations of VE and VJ Day are uncontroversial, and their film industries and publishers continue to produce a stream of movies and books about the war, few of which attempt to problematize anything other than personal experiences of combatants. As the political reaction to the Enola Gay exhibit at the National Aerospace Museum made very clear, the wartime generation and their political backers will not tolerate any tampering of the official and flattering image of America’s role in World War II as selfless liberator. One telling sign of the need to hold on to this image is the way in which American portrayal of the War changed to accommodate the civil rights movement. Sometime in the late 1960s, comic books that featured war stories introduced the historical anachronism of integrated World War II platoons. More recently, films and television documentaries have dealt more honestly with the problem of prejudice. They have showcased the accomplishments -- and struggles against prejudice -- of Japanese-American soldiers and African-American aviators in the European Theater of Operations. The plight of non-combatant Japanese-Americans in internment camps has also received considerable attention, and a belated official apology from the government. All of this
suggests that the commitment to civil rights trumps the otherwise still powerful need to maintain a pristine image of America’s role in World War II, and that the on-going revision of racial relations in wartime -- in parallel with similar revisions of the history of baseball and American music -- has, and is being used to foster and strengthen that commitment.

49. An obvious exception is the Soviet Union and Marxist historians, east and west, who portrayed it as a victim in support of the Soviet line that the capitalist states bore total responsibility for the war.


52 In 1956, the first survey of Austrians about their identity revealed that 49 percent of Austrians considered themselves a distinct people, while 46 percent considered themselves Germans. See reference 16 in Uhl’s chapter.