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SLAVIC & EAST EUROPEAN JOURNAL

**FORUM**

**PERPETRATORS,  
COLLABORATORS, AND  
IMPLICATED SUBJECTS**

## FORUM

### PERPETRATORS, COLLABORATORS, AND IMPLICATED SUBJECTS IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

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## INTRODUCTION

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The task of understanding how perpetrators, collaborators, and implicated subjects are portrayed in Central and Eastern European memory cultures has taken on a sorrowful urgency since we began organizing this forum in May 2021.<sup>1</sup> Since the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine intensified on February 24, 2022, the Kremlin-supported glorification, under Vladimir Putin, of certain tropes of heroism against external threats during World War II (Malinova 45) has been instrumentalized to justify the “denazification operation” and “genocide prevention” in Ukraine (Rossoliński-Liebe and Willems 10). Meanwhile, a public discourse of “hidden enemies” and “fifth columns” working to bring down Russia from the inside (Kragh et al. 342–45) corresponds with the “liquidation” of NGOs, such as International Memorial, that work on preserving and disseminating the memory of Soviet repression while making connections to contemporary human rights abuses committed by the Russian state. Thus, we see a new manifestation of Alexander Etkind’s “warped mourning,” as the government actively discourages, even persecutes, attempts to reckon with the country’s history of mass violence, instead choosing to mobilize selective memories of valor and noble suffering to justify a new invasive war and accompanying atrocities in Ukraine. Understanding how and why history and memory are twisted to such ends to ensure widespread popular support for the war in Russia, as well as understanding the motives and actions of those who attempt to tell “dissident” stories of the past, is critical to comprehending this war.

The authors of this forum see the forum as being part of the discussion of the decolonization of Eastern European studies that has been prompted by the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine. As scholars in international relations and in Russian history have started to think about the complicity of their own disciplines in recent decades’ political developments in Russia (Mälksoo,

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1. This forum is part of the project “Translating Memories: The Eastern European Past in the Global Arena,” which has received funding from the European Research Council (ERC) under the European Union’s Horizon 2020 research and innovation program (Grant agreement No 853385).

“Uses of the ‘East,’” “The Postcolonial Moment”; Smith-Peter), there is also the question of what memory studies could have done differently to prevent new war and new mass atrocities against civilians in the region.

The discussion of perpetration and collaboration in Central and Eastern Europe takes two different paths in this forum. The collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of the 1980s and the end of socialist regimes in East-Central Europe initiated a widespread, but convoluted, process of working through both the legacies of socialist regimes and their state terror, but also of the Holocaust in Eastern Europe. While post-Soviet Russia did not break with the Soviet past (Etkind 41), in Central and Eastern Europe, the post-socialist period has been characterized by an anti-communist stance that tends to externalize violence perpetrated by the regimes, albeit to different degrees in different countries, as well as by accompanying narratives of victimhood. The period has also been marked by comparative, and, at times, competitive discourses about Nazism and “communism”<sup>2</sup> that have overshadowed the discussion of local collaboration with these regimes and of participation in the perpetration of genocide and crimes of mass violence. Responding to this difference, the forum discusses, separately, the specific problems of coming to terms with the legacies of Stalinism in Russia and with those of Nazi and Soviet occupation, the Holocaust, and socialist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe and in the Baltic States.

While perpetrators and collaborators in Central and Eastern Europe have been dealt with in different ways in the context of transitional justice (Stan; Pettai and Pettai), and there is a growing number of (comparative) historical studies on perpetration and collaboration in Central and Eastern Europe (Bitunjac and Schoeps; Black et al.), this forum examines how the questions of perpetration, collaboration, and complicity with the Nazis and the Soviets have been raised in various memorial and historical museums and in aesthetic media of memory, such as film.

### **Perpetration**

The field of perpetration studies, although rooted in the study of the Holocaust, has grown to cover many atrocities, committed in almost every corner of the globe and under many different ideological covers. Yet, theories and explorations of perpetrators—their identities, motivations, and possible pathologies—are still heavily modeled on examples taken from the Holocaust, both within Germany and beyond. In historical works, Christopher Browning’s “ordinary men” and Jan Gross’s “neighbors” were landmarks in moving the conversation into the realm of rank-and-file perpetration; in the latter case, the indictment of “ordinary” Polish citizens as active perpetrators

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2. We use the quotation marks to draw attention to the affinity of the term with conservative political discourses in Central and Eastern Europe.

of the Holocaust also ignited a national and international controversy, one that is still being played out today. Raul Hilberg's work, which continues to shape conceptualizations of victimhood and perpetration during the Holocaust, importantly recognizes that victims can be complicit in or even actively perpetrate crimes against "their own" people. This is particularly relevant for Eastern Europe as, in Stalin's Russia, perpetrators became victims in successive waves of state terror, and in, Central and Eastern Europe, the victims of one occupying regime became perpetrators of the next. As Lynne Viola has noted in relation to Russia, "discussion of the Soviet perpetrator suggests that the traditional perpetrator-victim binary may obscure as much as it illuminates. [...] And that it largely depends upon defeat in war or radical regime change for perpetrators to be brought to justice calls into question the politics of the terminology" (22). In this forum, contributors question this binary through analyzing portrayals of complex intertwinings of victimhood and perpetration in literature, film, and memorial and museum space.

Key to discussions of and meditations on the nature of perpetration are artistic interventions, especially films and novels that, in recent decades, have turned decisively to the figure of the perpetrator and their motivations (Crownshaw; Knittel). The aim of representing the perpetrator and their perspective and working with different modalities of identification of readers and viewers with the perpetrator in fiction and film is not to absolve perpetrators or to forgive them, but to understand how an individual becomes a perpetrator in historical violence and what we can learn from this (McGlothlin). Susanne Knittel argues for the necessity of "an ethics of discomfort" when it comes to studying and portraying perpetration in a way that truly aims to understand a perpetrator of violence's motivations (379). Violeta Davoliūtė's and Diana Popa's contributions to this forum study precisely the ways in which discourses of perpetration, victimhood, and implication are presented in contemporary artistic products.

In 2015, Sharon Macdonald surmised that, although "the acknowledgment of difficult heritage has become more acceptable and even expected, it has also opened up potentials for representing disturbing pasts in ways that provoke other, more subtle and potentially more ramifying forms of unsettlement" (20). As museums and memorial projects that focus on past victimization across East-Central Europe open or are revamped, many paint the perpetrators and bystanders (if these are addressed at all) as foreign, again externalizing responsibility for mass violence away from the body of the nation (Bird et al. 251–54). Alternatively, they may keep different forms of "silence" on the issues of local perpetration and bystanding, though interventions in art museums, especially, may aim at "unsilencing" (Tali and Astahovska). The "memorial museum," with its tripartite function as a museum, memorial, and source of moral education (Sodaro 162–63), has as much potential to foster further division as to bolster tolerance, as Macdonald predicted. Three contri-

butions in this forum thus focus on the portrayals of perpetrators at memorial museums and sites of memorialization across Eastern and Central Europe: Margaret Comer's analysis of portrayals of victims, perpetrators, and implicated subjects and victims at sites related to Soviet repression in Moscow; Ljiljana Radonić's geographically wide-ranging study of memorial museums across Eastern and Central Europe; and Ene Kõresaar and Kirsti Jõesalu's article on portrayal of Soviet collaborators in three Estonian museums.

### **Implication**

In addition to the focus on perpetration and collaboration, this forum would like to introduce Michael Rothberg's "implicated subject" to the discussion of the legacies of the Holocaust and "communism" in Central and Eastern Europe. Initially developed as an alternative to a rigid binary opposition of victims and perpetrators, his concept addresses those cases of accountability where individuals and groups have "indirectly" (Rothberg 20) contributed to violence. Identifying and prosecuting perpetrators in the contexts of transitional justice helps us to come to terms with direct guilt and responsibility, but it does not help us initiate a debate that is still largely missing in Eastern Europe about more indirect forms of accountability, famously referred to by Tony Judt in his classical essay, where he states:

No matter how many times people proclaim that "they" did it to "us," the fact is that very few people could or did object to Communist power [...] It was in the nature of "real existing Socialism" in Eastern Europe that it enforced the most humiliating, venal kinds of collaboration as a condition of rendering daily life tolerable. [...] It is not for any real or imagined crimes that people feel a sort of shame in having lived in and under communism, it is for their daily lives and infinite tiny compromises. (101–102)

Additionally, the phenomena that Rothberg calls "complex" and "diachronic" implication are relevant for Central and Eastern European contexts. The former refers to those cases where a people occupy positions "that align one both to histories of victimization and to histories of perpetration" (Rothberg 91), such as the people in the so-called "bloodlands," including the Baltic states, Belarus, Ukraine, and western Russia, where, during World War II, the victims of one occupying regime sometimes became the perpetrators of the next (Snyder 397). The latter, the "diachronic" implication, theorizes the responsibility of subsequent generations for past injustices in their countries and communities (Rothberg 9). What are the forms of diachronic implication of contemporary generations of Central and Eastern Europeans in the twentieth-century past of the region? Even if the ubiquitous stance of the externalization of violence in Central and Eastern Europe had some historical grounding in some countries, what can the latecomers to massive historical injustices here learn from the ways in which violence drew in local communities and made them complicit with it, instead of just collectively identifying with the social groups of "pure victims" in their countries? The question of implication and indirect

responsibility has also gained a new and painful pertinency in the context of the widespread popular support in Russia for its war against Ukraine.

In seeking answers to the questions above by exploring museums and aesthetic media of memory, the forum, in particular the contributions by Kõre-saar and Jõesalu and Popa, adopts Rothberg's focus on subject positions and explores how interactive museums and cinema forge subject positions that are resisted and made difficult to imagine or to adopt by the various Central and Eastern European countries' antagonistic politics of memory. How do certain subject positions enable or restrict our ability to recognize and deal with different forms of violence and conceive of our responsibility and agency in relation to them? Which kinds of positionalities are produced by "prosthetic" (Landsberg) remembering of past violence in different media of cultural memory? How do contemporary interactive museums deal with the question of positionality and agency?

### **Memorial Forms, Models and Templates**

A question widely discussed in Eastern European memory studies in recent years is that of memorial forms, models and templates used to deal with both victimhood and perpetration in the region. The liberalization of the former Eastern bloc overlapped with a particular moment in the development of global memory culture—the transnationalization of Holocaust memory in Europe and elsewhere. The Holocaust formed the foundation for a new "cosmopolitan memory" that reshaped the national and regional memories of various countries in the West and gained the status of a global memory imperative intended to counter genocide and human rights violations in the present (Levy and Sznajder; Huyssen). Daniel Levy and Natan Sznajder argue "that in an age of ideological uncertainty these memories have become a measure for humanist and universalist identifications" (88).

The transnationalization and cosmopolitanization of Holocaust memory put pressure on the new and restored nation states in Central and Eastern Europe to incorporate the Holocaust into the newly shaped national memories of World War II and to deal with local histories of the Holocaust and collaboration with the Nazis. But it also provided cultural memorial forms and models for not only dealing with Holocaust memory, but, implicitly, also for remembering the socialist regimes. In the 1990s, the call to incorporate local complicity in the Holocaust into newly shaped national memories was resisted in many Eastern European countries because there was a feeling that the legacies that needed to be addressed most urgently were those of Stalinism and "communist" crimes (Blacker et al.). EU enlargement gave the Central and Eastern European countries a pan-European platform where they could make their voices heard, but it also turned the call to deal with their local Holocaust histories into a must.

The "cosmopolitan" memory of the Holocaust became a measuring stick by which Central and Eastern European countries and their attitudes both to

victimhood and perpetration were measured (and by which they measured themselves). Scholars like Marek Kucia and Ljiljana Radonić have shown how the pressure to acknowledge and remember the Holocaust as a “condition” of accession to the European Union has reshaped national models of remembering, not just of the Holocaust, but of other narratives of twentieth-century violence and suffering. Lea David asserts, “For Croatia and Serbia, adopting (and adapting) Holocaust memory as part of the human rights regime means being accepted into the moral community of believers in human rights. For both countries, this exchange is associated with anticipated benefits, both material and symbolic” (88).

Concurrently, Oliver Plessow analyzes how the European Commission works with networks of European academics and other stakeholders in the realm of historical memory to conclude that “Even the involvement of transnational European agencies and institutions does not automatically mean that a pan-European agenda is at play. The Commission routinely collaborated with groups of individual and institutional actors who did not necessarily share its focus” (388). This again shows that tension within and between European countries remains over whether the Holocaust is unique or whether the crimes of communist regimes should be considered alongside it. The works in this forum all reflect this tension in one way or another: just in the arena of film, in the film considered in Popa’s article, characters argue over why one would remember the Holocaust instead of “communist” crimes in Romania, while, in Davoliūtė’s article, a recent film manages to paint both a victim and a perpetrator of the Holocaust in that country as victims of “communist” Lithuania.

The Holocaust’s “primacy” in European memory also means that many memory actors, artists, and politicians in post-Soviet and post-communist countries attempt to make sense of their suffering under communist regimes by characterizing these experiences in terms of Holocaust imagery, language, and memorial forms. In Radonić’s words, “Holocaust musealization, aesthetics and individualization of the victim are understood as such strong universal symbols that they are copied—or indignantly refused—even by those actors who want to contain the memory of the Holocaust in order to put their own victims and collective suffering to the fore” (284). In a related vein, Eneken Laanes has conceptualized the existence of “born translated” memories of victimhood that are articulated using transcultural memorial forms with the intent to popularize peripheral national histories and make them understandable to global audiences.

### **Russia and the Legacies of the Soviet Union**

The issue of commemoration and memory of Soviet repression within Russia differs from the memorial situations in the other countries examined in this forum as Russia did not decisively break with the Soviet past, in particular with Soviet memory of the Great Patriotic War. Before the dissolution of the



Soviet Union, civil society groups such as International Memorial had begun, from the mid-1980s, to help people track down the fates of repressed family members, organize support for survivors of the Gulag, and collect archival and historical evidence of Soviet repression. These groups, as well as some similarly motivated individuals, remained active after the USSR's collapse, collecting oral histories from survivors, identifying and sometimes excavating mass graves of victims of Soviet repression, holding memorial and educational programs, and advocating for the memory of repression to never be forgotten. As President of the Russian Federation, Dmitrii Medvedev made some public statements condemning Soviet violence and terror and supported several initiatives that were meant to reckon with and memorialize the repression (Sherlock 49–50).

However, these plans did not come to fruition, with focus instead being placed on glorifying the “heroic” memory of the Great Patriotic War (Khapava; Malinova; see Comer, this forum, for an exploration of how this memory discourse has been used to bolster support for the war in Ukraine). Since Putin's resumption of the presidency, the Kremlin's attitude towards Soviet repression has been marked by a periodic focus on victims and a complete lack of dialogue around perpetration, complicity, or implication. This attitude was on full display at the October 2018 opening of the Wall of Sorrow memorial in Moscow, during which Putin mourned the victims of Soviet repression but actively discouraged holding perpetrators accountable because an attempt to “settle scores” might lead to societal unrest (President of Russia). It is also critical to remember that there has never been a “Russian Nuremberg”; the 1992 attempt to put the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) on trial failed. In the words of Sergey Toymentsev, “Russia's legal failure to reckon with the Soviet past [...] has thus resulted in the disjunctive conjunction of diametrically opposed accounts of Soviet history in post-Soviet collective memory” (311).

The leading NGOs, such as International Memorial, that protected the rights and memories of victims of Soviet repression often worked to combat contemporary human rights abuses allegedly carried out by the Russian state. The efforts by the state to hamper or even criminalize International Memorial culminated in its legal “liquidation,” upheld after appeal in April 2022; these persecuting efforts speak to this very intertwinement of past and present regimes and abuses of power. They also powerfully prove that past injustices, if not addressed and memorialized, often “haunt” the present and future in myriad ways.

Again, the question of memorial forms and models is critical to Russia's dealing with its past of state terror. The German model of the perpetrator nation's repentance for mass crimes against humanity has been seen both within academia and in politics worldwide as something that can and should be emulated. It has reigned as the international “standard” by which other

attempts to deal with the legacies of past violence are judged. For example, Susan Neiman's recent book, *Learning from the Germans: Race and the Memory of Evil*, was heavily debated in the American popular press, having been widely understood as a suggestion regarding how the United States "should" deal with the legacy of slavery (regardless of Neiman's actual intentions for the work). This "German model" of a perpetrator nation taking public responsibility, building memorials and museums, and paying reparations (among other direct or symbolic actions) underlies the philosophy of many organizations that aim to protect the memories of Holocaust victims for posterity. But the use of this model has been criticized when it is exported wholesale to other countries with other histories of mass violence and repression: for example, Mischa Gabowitsch asserts, "For lack of real familiarity with post-war West German history, German atonement, seen through Russian eyes, has sometimes resembled a proxy battlefield for debates about Russia" (268–69).

There are two main reasons why the vaunted German model has fallen short in Russia. The first is that, while, in Holocaust memory, the identities of both perpetrators and victims are widely agreed upon, there is not such a consensus on who "counts" as a perpetrator or victim of Soviet repression in Russia. Particularly in the Great Terror of 1936–38, victims, as a general group, did not hold any national, ethnic, or religious attributes in common; mainly, they were arrested and convicted, often under Article 58, for alleged political, anti-Soviet activity. At different times in its history, especially under Joseph Stalin's leadership, the NKVD singled out different ethnic groups to be targeted for arrest, deportation, forced labor, or killing. However, when we consider Soviet repression as a whole, the sheer heterogeneity of victims' identities means that it has been and remains difficult for victims and their descendants to construct a group identity as victims; nothing holds them together except for their experience of victimization and oppression. The same holds true for the category of perpetrators: beyond being people who were employed by the NKVD (or collaborated with them as informants or denouncers), there is no characteristic to hold this category of disparate people together. This also makes memory discourse around perpetration difficult; as the article by Comer shows, this lack of a conceptual group identity for perpetrators means that there is little agreement about who "counts" as a perpetrator, bystander, or implicated subject across various memory and heritage groups and organizations in contemporary Russia.

A second difficulty that compounds this lack of consensus on perpetration is the phenomenon in which many perpetrators of one "wave" of Soviet repression became victims of a later wave. This happened from the very top of leadership—three successive heads of the NKVD were later killed by their own organization—to rank-and-file membership. As many works in this forum show, there is a real need for models that take into account the fact that a group or individual can be a victim of one regime of oppression but a per-

petrator of another (or even the very same one), while also recognizing that people born long after a regime of violence has ended can benefit from the legacies of that violence. Only in this way can the true costs and repercussions of violence be evaluated and combated.

### **Eastern and Central Europe and the Baltic States**

The specificity of the discussions of perpetration and collaboration in Eastern and Central Europe and the Baltic states, as already stated, is the entanglement of memories of Nazism and “communism” and the accompanying comparative and competitive discourses around them. While these have been widely discussed in the scholarship, there is, however, no consensus on how exactly to understand and evaluate this tangle. Some scholars conceive of it as an attempt to seek recognition for the particular historical legacies of World War II and Socialist regimes in Eastern Europe by using the Holocaust as a template and by putting their demands in universalist terms as an attempt to construct a common European memory of its totalitarianisms (Mälksoo, “Memory Politics”; “Criminalising Communism”). The others condemn it unequivocally as a “memory appropriation” (Subotić 9), wherein the emerging Holocaust memory in Eastern Europe is understood, not only as an opportunistic result of international pressure related to EU accession, but also as something that is exclusively made use of in order to remember “communist” crimes. In an utterly bleak and undifferentiated view, Jelena Subotić links the appropriation of the Holocaust to the obfuscation of the memory of anti-fascist resistance and the contemporary rise of neo-Nazism in Central and Eastern Europe.

Another point of debate has been the “securitization” of memory (Mälksoo, “Memory Must Be Defended”), the treatment of questions of the past as questions of ontological security of the states and their identities in the context of antagonistic politics of memory between Russia, on the one hand, and Central and Eastern Europe, on the other. This has hindered the discussion of questions of perpetration and collaboration in CEE and, in general, the development of a more agonistic (Cento Bull and Hansen) politics of memory for coming to terms with local difficult pasts for the sake of less violent futures. This securitization of memory has been reignited since February 24, 2022: the Baltic states, perceiving a connection between twentieth-century Soviet violence and contemporary Russian violence, have moved to minimize or erase manifestations of Soviet memory in public space, fearing their use in “provocations” by supporters of Russia. In Estonia, weeks of heated public debate accompanied the process of removing a replica Soviet tank, which had served as a war memorial, from the city of Narva to a war museum near Tallinn, and hundreds of “red monuments” have been removed or are slated for it in the near future.

What strikes one as characteristic of these theorizations of the entangled memories of the Holocaust and Stalinism or “communism” and their securitization is that they fail to register the differences between specific Central

and Eastern European countries. These often, even if not always, reflect each country's unique histories of the Holocaust and also Socialist regimes. While, on the level of official politics of memory, the narratives of victimhood loom large, museum culture offers a more fractured picture of the steps that have been made in Central and Eastern Europe in dealing with collaboration and perpetration. For example, even if political developments in Poland in the last decade have led to more securitization of memory through the "memory laws" (Belavusau), these laws have not stopped the large-scale social and cultural process, initiated by Jan Gross's *Neighbors* in 2001, of coming to terms with Polish collaboration in the Holocaust. Similarly, even if, in the beginning of the post-socialist turn, memorial museums in Central and Eastern Europe saw themselves as the promoters of new national narratives and their politics of memory, many of them have moved towards a new understanding of themselves as promoters of human rights and civic education that presupposes a more transnational and agonistic view of the past and an extensive dealing with the negative memory of the nations in which they are located.

In Ukraine, the securitization of the memory of Nazi occupation and collaboration has, at times, become an almost-literal weapon, as Russia instrumentalizes the fact that some Ukrainian nationalist groups collaborated with the Nazis and perpetrated atrocities against civilians, notably Jews and Poles, in order to justify the current war (Rossoliński-Liebe and Willems). However, the issue of whether and how to reckon with that past, in tandem with whether and how to reckon with the "communist" past, has been actively debated in Ukraine for many years, with myriad changing government policies and shifts in public opinion (Myshlovska), as well as concurrent, contested, and dissonant changes to public memory spaces such as urban architecture (Vlasenko and Ryan) and street names (Gnatiuk). As already mentioned, the Russian war of aggression in Ukraine has understandably strengthened the widespread anti-communist stance in Central and Eastern European countries. It will most probably also lead to a serious shift in Holocaust memory in Europe, as Russia, with its use of the rhetoric of denazification, has discredited itself forever as the former ally of the anti-fascist coalition in World War II. It remains to be seen how to continue pushing towards a serious reckoning with local legacies of collaboration and complicity in Central and Eastern Europe in this new political context.

### **The Articles**

Due to its limited scope, this forum is not able to do justice to all the different countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the case studies it offers are tuned to local specificities in coming to terms with collaboration and perpetration with Nazism and "communism." Comer's article considers the figure of Rothberg's "implicated subject" as it relates to the post-Soviet legacy of Soviet repression within Russia. Drawing on case studies from Comer's heritage studies research at memory sites related to Soviet repression across

Moscow, the article advances the idea of a new figure, the “implicated victim,” who was both a perpetrator and victim of the same regime of repression. Since this was a common experience for many perpetrators of Soviet repression within Russia, the category allows us to view such experiences and actions through a more nuanced lens and, hopefully, allow for a more fine-grained understanding of how and why people become actors and/or subjects in systems of repression. However, theorizing why or why not this figure is present at different sites and in official memorial discourses can also help clarify the link between an official unwillingness to reckon with Russian perpetration of Soviet crimes and public willingness to support present-day atrocities, most notably in Ukraine. It will also help scholars in other post-repression societies where categories of actors are and were similarly “blurred” to better analyze and understand these historical phenomena and their legacies. Thus, the figure of the implicated victim may be useful for many actors to recognize their dual roles in such processes and take steps to build a more equal and equitable world.

Radonić’s comparative study of museums in Hungary, Croatia, Slovakia, Latvia, and Lithuania argues that the way in which these museums deal with the questions of perpetration and collaboration is largely dependent on the role they play in each nation’s negotiation of the pressures of European politics of memory—mostly the transnational memory of the Holocaust—or their position vis-a-vis the newly rewritten historical narratives of victimhood of communist crimes. Radonić also shows how local perpetration on the level of individuals or small social groups can be recognized with or without condemning the political body responsible for collaborating with the Nazis, depending on whether that body is needed to legitimize the post-socialist state or not. A further point that is raised in her article is that coming to terms with perpetration in Eastern Europe is not a teleological progress that cannot be turned back, as the two cases in Viktor Orbán’s contemporary Hungary show.

While Radonić offers a comparative view of museum cultures, Kõresaar and Jõesalu’s contribution zooms in on a single country and explores the negotiation of collaboration and complicity with the Soviet regime in post-Soviet Estonian cultural history museums. Due to the comparatively small number (but extremely high percentage) of Holocaust victims in Estonia and the very strong post-Soviet politics of memory’s anti-communist stance, collaboration with the Soviets has been even more difficult to accept and remember in Estonia than local collaboration with the Nazis. The widespread popular discourse about “resistance” to the Soviet regime has further prevented a broader discussion about adaptation and complicity with the late socialist state and its perpetuation. Against the backdrop of this fractured and incoherent manifestation of complicity and collaboration in the politics of memory and public discourse, Kõresaar and Jõesalu’s article explores the Soviet regime’s representation in three Estonian cultural history museums. By focus-

ing on different subject positions and the evaluations of each offered by the museums, in particular the figure of the collective farm manager, they show how museums try to negotiate questions of resistance *vs* complicity that have emerged in post-Soviet public discourse. All in all, they argue that, even if museums are heavily impacted by the lack of coherent discourse about complicity and collaboration with the Soviet regime in Estonia, some museums deliberately create alternative subject positions to those of a victim or a dissident to the Soviet regime. These positions are available in the official discourse and hence move towards more agonistic approaches to the issue, independent of the prevailing antagonistic politics of memory.

Two articles on the cultural representations of perpetration in film focus on Holocaust memory in post-socialist Lithuania and Romania, respectively, and highlight how the memory of local collaboration in the Holocaust is in both contexts entangled with the memory of “communism” and the memory of the Holocaust in the Soviet/socialist period. Davoliūtė looks at two very recent feature films, *Purple Mist* (2019) and *Isaac* (2019), which represent the very first attempts to deal with Lithuanian collaboration in the Holocaust in a cinematic medium, which has so far produced mostly narratives of heroic Lithuanian resistance and suffering at the hands of the Soviets. The two films, even if made by native Lithuanian film makers, partially also represent the return of the Holocaust’s diasporic memory in its Cold War version, as both films are based on literary texts written during the Cold War in the United States. But, as Davoliūtė demonstrates, despite the fact that the texts chosen for adaptation add authenticity to the films, afford the perspective of the Jewish victim, and highlight the intimate nature of the genocide (particularly in the case of *Purple Mist*), in their reworking through a Cold War filter, the films tend to represent the Holocaust as a foil for the memory of Soviet repressions. By drawing on Erin McGlothlin’s discussion of the different modes of engaging with the perpetrator’s perspective in aesthetic media of memory, Davoliūtė carefully traces the sometimes problematic identificatory procedures the viewers of the films are potentially enmeshed in.

Finally, Popa’s contribution on Radu Jude’s feature film, “*I Do Not Care if We Go Down in History as Barbarians*” (2018), explores Holocaust memory’s absence and exclusionary and marginalizing implications of the dominating anti-communist politics of memory in post-socialist Romania. Popa argues that, even though Romania officially accepted co-responsibility for the Holocaust in Romania and in the territories under its control during World War II in 2004, the Holocaust has not entered the popular memory culture, and the ethnic nationalist politics of memory of anti-communism continue to fuel antisemitism and antigypsyism in contemporary Romania. As the backdrop of such a public memory, which equals amnesia, Popa focuses on Brechtian and French modernist experimental cinematic techniques deployed in Radu Jude’s *Barbarians* to show how the film puts its viewers in the posi-

tion of an implicated subject who cannot but engage with their responsibility for the legacies of past violence and their ramifications in the present. Some of the techniques the film uses to stage the spectacle of historical violence might strike us as didactic or provocative, but, as Popa argues, the self-reflective use of these techniques, in particular the *mise-en-abyme*, serves to draw in the contemporary viewer so that they recognize their implication in the Holocaust in Romania's legacies and the exclusionary antisemitic and anti-gypsyist consequences of contemporary anti-communist politics of memory.

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#### ABSTRACT

The collapse of the Soviet Union at the end of the 1980s and the end of socialist regimes in Eastern and Central Europe initiated a widespread, but convoluted, process of working through both the legacies of the Holocaust in Eastern Europe and those of Stalinism and state terror in the region. While post-Soviet Russia did not break decisively with the Soviet past, in Central and Eastern Europe, the post-socialist period has been characterized on the political level by narratives of victimhood about World War II and the socialist past and by the comparative, and, at times, competitive discourses about Nazism and "communism" that have overshadowed discussion of local collaboration with these regimes and of participation in the perpetration of genocide and the crimes of mass violence. EU enlargement mandated a reckoning with legacies of Holocaust violence, but it also gave Central and Eastern European countries a pan-European platform where they could make their voices heard.

While the perpetrators and collaborators have been dealt with in different ways in the context of transitional justice, and there is a growing number of (comparative) historical studies on perpetration and collaboration in Central and Eastern Europe, this forum examines how the questions of perpetration, collaboration and complicity with the Nazis and the Soviets have been raised in various memorial and historical museums and in aesthetic media of memory, such as film. We especially consider how these patterns of reckoning and memorialization (or lack thereof) have shaped and impacted the current war in Ukraine.