LUND UNIVERSITY

Now we should all acknowledge our Holocaust guilt.' Denmark and the Holocaust as European Identity

Bechmann Pedersen, Sune

2008

CFE Working paper series No. 37

"NOW WE SHOULD ALL ACKNOWLEDGE OUR HOLOCAUST GUILT"

DENMARK AND THE HOLOCAUST AS EUROPEAN IDENTITY

Sune Bechmann

Sune Bechmann
Flat 2, 160 Fordwych Road
London NW2 3NY, United Kingdom
Bechmann@gmail.com

CFE Working papers are available at the website of the Centre for European Studies www.cfe.lu.se

CFE Working paper series No. 37

Sune Bechmann is a former research assistant at the Danish Institute for International Studies, department for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. Currently he is in the University College London, School of Slavonic and East European Studies MA programme in history.

Centre for European Studies at Lund University:
Box 201: Phone +46 (0)46-222 88 19
SE-221 00 LUND Fax: +46 (0)46-222 32 11
Sweden E-mail: cfe@cfe.lu.se
CFE Working paper series is published by
Centre for European Studies at Lund University

Editor: Barbara Törnquist-Plewa

ABSTRACT

The subject for this paper is the role of the Holocaust in contemporary European politics of identity. The Council of Europe and the European Parliament have recently adopted resolutions about the Holocaust and most European states are now member of the Holocaust Task Force. In international relations the acknowledgment of the nation's role in the history of the Holocaust has become increasingly important and several academics have suggested that the Holocaust should and will compose the cornerstone identity marker for a future common European identity.

The contemporary institutional practices and institutions promoting the idea of the Holocaust as a uniting factor to the European peoples are analysed in the paper with Denmark as a case. The three subjects of scrutiny are the Danish Jewish Museum, the Auschwitz Remembrance Day and the teaching of Holocaust history in the Danish education system. In addition, political and academic discourse is also studied. The paper concludes that there is currently no influential Danish promulgator of the idea that the Holocaust composes a common European experience that unites the individual Europeans.

Introduction

In 2006 Alfred Pijpers, Senior Researcher at the Netherlands Institute of International Relations, declared: "Now we should all acknowledge our holocaust guilt."[1] Under this headline he notes that it is not a given that the Federal Republic of Germany will forever want to be the main bearer of the historic guilt of the Holocaust. But since Pijpers considers the destruction of the European Jews to be too recent and too immense to be neglected, another official governmental platform of remembrance should take over the burden. The best candidate for this job, Pijpers suggests, is the European Union. This is the case for two reasons, the first one being the European complicity with Nazi crimes, and secondly, the useful building block for an idea of European citizenship and sense of belonging the Holocaust can potentially provide to the European citizens.

Pijpers was not the first to declare Holocaust a common European issue. The European Parliament adopted a resolution on "remembrance of the holocaust, anti-semitism and racism" in 2005 calling "for European citizens to remember and condemn the enormous horror and tragedy of the Holocaust" and for "making Holocaust education and European citizenship standard elements in school curricula throughout the EU".[2] Furthermore, the Council of Europe agreed in 2002 to establish "a 'Day of Remembrance' in member states' schools".[3] Europe, Dan Diner has argued, "seems more and more to be finding a common unifying memory in the events of World War II, and – what is increasingly emerging *a posteriori* as its core event – the Holocaust."[4] In international relations, the Holocaust can today be regarded as a symbol of the ultimate evil from which a state must distance itself and signify its present high moral standards. To exercise a certain degree of self-flagellation through a reappraisal of the role played by the nation in the Holocaust has become a norm in international relations that a state must adopt to be accepted in the attractive 'club' of democracies.[5]

Thus, Dan Diner is right in his description of the unifying aspect of the Holocaust at the highest European political level. But at the level of the people of Europe we have to remember that Europe is still divided by very divergent memories of especially World War II.[6] The economic integration and political integration have so far not spilled over to an integration of identities.[7] The European elites have not (yet) succeeded in generating a genuine feeling of European belonging among the citizens of the European Union,[8] hence demonstrating the discrepancy between norm socialization at the level of the state and identity formation at the level of individuals and groups within a state.

Aim of the paper

Starting from these initial observations, what I examine in this paper is the presence of the idea that Holocaust is a uniting European phenomenon in contemporary Denmark. With its unique history as *the light in the darkness* due to the rescue of the Jews in Denmark in October 1943, to what extent does the idea of shared European guilt clash with the public historical consciousness in Denmark? What role has Holocaust had historically in the collective memory in Denmark and are there tendencies today to acknowledge common European Holocaust guilt?[9] To answer these questions I start out with a brief overview of Denmark during the World War II. Then I analyse the formation of a master narrative of Denmark during the Second World War in 1945 and the relationship herein between Holocaust and the rescue. Master narrative is a concept pragmatically deployed here, with little recognition of its Hegelian origins and implications. Instead I agree with Lyotard's definition: "Master narratives are simply those that hold positions of dominance because some groups have been more effective at institutionalising their tales and imposing them on others."[10] In the following section I demonstrate how the master

narrative has shown a remarkable persistence over time and analyse to what extent it has recently been challenged by new critical research. Finally, I analyse the role of three contemporary *lieux de memoire* that deal with the Holocaust in Denmark seen in the light of how the Holocaust and the remembrance hereof has been politically debated and discuss to what extent they promote the Holocaust as a common European identity marker.

Denmark and World War II

On April 9th 1940 Denmark was occupied by Germany. The decisive factor for Germany to invade Denmark was to seize airbases necessary for the invasion of Norway. In the preceding years the Danish coalition government formed by Social Democrats and Social Liberals had undertaken a policy of neutrality, well-knowing that keeping up with the German rearmament and eventually defend the flat country against aggressions from the big neighbour would be impossible. After a few skirmishes the Sovereign in Council thus quickly decided to cease fighting the superior German forces. However, a unique constellation was reached, known in international law as *occupatia pacifica*, where Denmark was occupied by German forces, but its neutrality remained intact, the Danish government and royal family stayed in the country and Danish law continued to rule.[11] On the day following the German attack the two main oppositional parties, the Liberals and the Conservatives, were included in a government of national unity. For more than three years this government strived to keep the German influence in Danish affairs at a minimum although the power relationship was evidently asymmetrical. With some important exceptions the Danish democracy, however, remained intact until the summer of 1943. The German authorities officially respected the sovereignty of Denmark, so consequently Danish matters belonged under the auspices of the German Foreign Office, which lead to a more lenient German policy towards Denmark.[12] Until 1943 a vast majority of the population supported the cooperation of the Danish government with the

German occupant. This was demonstrated most clearly in the general elections held in March 1943. The four parties in power obtained 94,5% of the votes cast and the turnout of 89.5% still today remains the largest registered in Denmark.[13]

The occupation was maintained relatively peacefully until 1943. As elsewhere in occupied Europe the resistance gained impetus as the German armies lost ground in North Africa and on the eastern front. In connection with extensive strikes, social unrest and acts of sabotage during the month of August 1943, the occupation regime broke down on August 29th.[14] The government ceased to function and the German occupiers took over. Soon after an operation was launched against the Jews in Denmark on the night between October 1st and 2nd. Additional police had been brought to Copenhagen and freighters with room for thousands were waiting in the harbour of Copenhagen. For reasons that have been subject to endless academic and public discussions ever since, and which it would be too much to go into here, the operations failed and the majority of the 7,000 Jews in Denmark were successfully transported to Sweden.[15] Crucial for the outcome was the highly ambiguous role played by the German state attorney in Denmark, Werner Best. Initially Best incited Hitler to dictate the deportation of the Jews in Denmark, but later he leaked the plans, thus making it possible to organize an escape. A vast array of Danes took part in the hurriedly improvised escape which took the Jews across the sound that separates Denmark from Sweden. Nevertheless, some Jews were rounded up, and about 480 ended in Theresienstadt. Of these 53 died, but the rest were brought back to Denmark and Sweden in the White Busses organized in the final months of the war by Swedish diplomat Folke Bernadotte to have KZ-inmates released and removed to safety. After the end of the war in May 1945, by far the majority of the Jews deported from Denmark returned to Denmark.[16]

Denmark during World War II: The master narrative

The period of German occupation eclipses both the war and the Holocaust when it comes to popular interest. No other period in Danish history is so well researched and continues to attract so overwhelming attention than the five years of occupation. Bryld and Warring argue in their work *The occupation as collective memory* that the extraordinary circumstances of the Danish occupation (the *occupatia pacifica*) have lead to a provincialization of the Danish interest in World War II. The Danish situation was so peculiar that the focus has been on the occupation rather than the war. In the history of the occupation very little refers to the surrounding world. The international perspective is lacking which leads to the absence of the history of persecution and extermination of Jews.[17] This point is important for the understanding of the relation between the rescue of the Jews and the larger Holocaust frame in the collective memory and in the following chapters I elaborate it with examples from Danish witness literature describing experiences with the world of concentration camps.

First some introductory remarks on the narratives of Denmark during World War II are appropriate. Bryld and Warring contend that the narratives of the five years of occupation found in academic history books, school books, exhibitions, novels, memoires, political debates, radio and TV programmes, films, newspapers, cartoons and magazines, remembrance days, monuments and memorial tablets are highly homogeneous. The structures, themes, and values expressed are all strikingly similar, thus it is justified to speak of a master narrative. It was shaped already in the summer of 1945 or even earlier and has been so dominant that all conflicting narratives necessarily had to relate to it in order to become visible. Even when Bryld and Warring published their book in 1998 it still enjoyed hegemonic status.[18]

This dominant narrative is defined by two very clear moments in time. It begins on the day of the occupation, April 9th 1940, and ends with the

liberation, May 5th 1945. In between is the main content, the occupation, with the resistance and the Danish-German conflict as the dominant themes. Resistance is here a double-sided concept representing on one hand the democratically minded national community unaffected by the Nazi ideology and on the other hand the policy of occupation that made possible the illegal fight, by limiting the influence of harsh German criminal law that was the norm in most other occupied countries.[19] Dramaturgically the master narrative strictly follows the classic form of narration first depicted by Aristotle with its seven phases: prelude, presentation of plot, elaboration, point of no return, escalation of conflict, climax, and fade-out. The actors in focus are politicians and members of the resistance movement and the core events that compose the narrative are the acts of sabotage, collection of weapons dropped by allied airplanes, the August 1943 uprising, the rescue of the Jews in October 1943 and the spontaneous general strike in the summer of 1944. In these events the dichotomies of good and evil, love and hatred, life and death creates a sense of a special period saturated with absolute values and resistance carried by an absolute idea unbound by time or place. In brief, the mythical core meaning is to make the supreme sacrifice.[20]

Narrating Holocaust and the rescue of the Jews in Denmark

"In the beginning there was no Holocaust", said Raul Hilberg in 1988 referring to the general silence in the immediate post-war years surrounding the genocide on European Jews.[21] Simply put, Peter Novick has suggested two reasons for this silence. First, Jews only accounted for one fifth of those liberated from concentration camps in Germany,[22] and second, in the immediate post-war period, to refer to for instance a French Jew as a Jew rather than as a Frenchman seemed to be buying into Hitler's racial categorization.[23] These two explanations can clearly be traced in the immediate post-war Danish media that I have researched and which will be demonstrated in the following section. The primary Danish media that published photos from the camps was the tabloid *Billed-Bladet*. Though

today promoting itself as 'Denmark's royal magazine' it was then a magazine with a wider scope that contained photographs and only sparse text. The photos originated primarily from the British and American military information services and stemmed mostly from camps liberated by allied forces such as Bergen-Belsen, Dachau and Mauthausen. In the captions the prisoners were described as political prisoners and patriots defined by nationality. Only rarely did the word 'Jew' appear in the caption, and if it did, a national label had also to be assigned to counter the Nazi category, as this example demonstrates: A photograph of a cross with the Star of David engraved above an open grave is accompanied with the following text: "He was a Jew – was he Russian, Polish, French, or maybe German?"[24] The same applies to the popular photo book *Pictures of the war we did not see* [Krigsbilleder vi ikke saa] published in 1945. It contained photographs taken by the allies that had not preciously been published in Denmark. Out of 110 photographs, four depict Dachau and Mauthausen after the liberation. The dead and the living are all referred to in the caption as 'prisoners'.[25]

Already during the summer and fall of 1945 a plethora of books describing the experience of Nazi-camps were published in Denmark. Most of them were written by former Danish KZ-prisoners or by Danish doctors travelling with the White Busses. This limits the perspective of their testimonies. The Danish prisoners who published their memoires had primarily been in concentration camps such as Neuengamme, Stutthof, Sachsenhausen, Buchenwald, Ravensbrück and Theresienstadt. Some were deported from Denmark in 1943 and earlier, but the bulk of the inmates who later published their testimonials were deported in 1944 and 1945. As Novick points out, as it was late in the war they encountered only a small number of Jews. A good example of the dominant trend in the first generation of Danish witness literature that completely omitted Jews from the Danish camp narrative is that of Johannes Fosmark. Writing in 1945 about his experiences in Sachsenhausen, he was troubled with the question:

"why is the individual inmate imprisoned?" This is his abridged answer: Germans are here because they are social democrats or communists. Bible researchers, Adventists and members of the Confessional Church are here for religious reasons, Norwegians because of their military engagement, Poles because they constitute cheap labour and/or belong to the intelligentsia and thus must be exterminated. Frenchmen have been taken hostages and finally Czech professors and students are deported to Sachsenhausen for a re-educational purpose. In his 20 pages account Jews are not mentioned at all.[26]

Some of the publications touched upon the Danish deportees to Theresienstadt. One of them was written by a young doctor working during the spring of 1945 in Padborg north of the Danish-German border, with the prisoners brought out of Germany. He gave the following account of the Jews he encountered on their return from Theresienstadt:

> "The Jews were under the fatherly guidance of the Chief Rabbi in Copenhagen, Doctor Friediger, who appeared to be in excellent form, vivid and cheerful. In general they were healthy and well, albeit a little lean, and thus not nearly as weak as the political prisoners we had seen so far. In Theresienstadt they had been allowed to live an independent life, even if in captivity, and they were not as the men from Neuengamme subdued by the daily relation to the Germans."[27]

It is true that the Jews deported from Denmark to Theresienstadt benefited greatly from the supplies that they were allowed to receive from Denmark and this was something practically unheard of in the world of concentration camps. Nevertheless, what this passage shows us is that the experiences of the Danish Jews deported to Theresienstadt were not considered to be extraordinarily burdensome, but rather on the contrary compared with the sufferings of the real victims, the political prisoners. In general, the vast literature maintains the general anti-fascist discourse of the 1930s with its dichotomies of good versus evil, and democracy versus fascism.

These insights take us back to the master narrative and the rescue of the Danish Jews. As pointed out by Bryld and Warring and further elaborated with the analysis of post-war witness literature, the destruction of the European Jewry played a minor role in the master narrative. Truly, there was no Holocaust in the early Danish collective memory of the Nazi atrocities. The rescue of the Jews in Denmark was remarkable in a European perspective, but since the conditions framing the situation were not a theme in the master narrative of Denmark during World War II, these events are presented more as a result of the unique Danish resistance than of the unique German occupation policy.[28]

In this context it should be noted that no earlier than the 1960s did the international promotion begin of Denmark as a particularly democratic and courageous *light in the darkness* deserving a place among the Israeli Holocaust remembrance institution Yad Vashem's *Righteous among the Nations*. Yet this perception had however long been affiliated with the rescue in Denmark. It was exactly these values (humanism, courage, democracy) that comprised the core of and were communicated through the master narrative.

Recent challenges to the master narrative

As Bryld and Warring has convincingly demonstrated in their major work about the occupation as collective memory, the master narrative depicted above had hegemonic status until the 1990s when young scholars finally began to question some of the established truths. In 1998 they concluded that the "research and the production of meaning affiliated with it, is in a transitory phase where premises, values, and relevance are being redefined".[29] Many of the critical historical studies that were undertaken in the second half of the 1990s by master and PhD students at Danish universities have since been published in book format. They focus among other things on the Danish refugee policy during the 1930s and 1940s,[30] the

Danish volunteers in *Waffen-SS*,[31] the numerous German refugee children who came to Denmark during the final months of the war and died by the thousands,[32] the illegitimate executions of informers by the resistance movement,[33] Danish businesses that voluntarily made use of forced labour and cooperated with the occupying power,[34] Danish sportsmen competing with Nazi sportsmen hence legitimising the regime,[35] and Danish doctors that cooperated with Nazi doctors.[36]

October 1943 has not escaped this development "unblemished". Among other things, attention has been called to the fact that the image of sheer altruism and heroic idealists must be adjusted with an eye for the host of helpers and motives. Excitement, resistance against the Germans and profit were all motivating factors that played a role for the helpers. It has been pointed out that it was not as dangerous to render help as previously presumed, which is why the image of the heroic efforts at the risk of loosing one's life has been questioned. In addition, a number of factors have been added to the explanation of the success of the rescue beyond the Danish humanism. Firstly, these concern the fact that the German's efforts to capture the Jews and prevent the escape across the strait were characterized by passivity. Secondly, there were relatively few Jews in the country. Thirdly, the distance to Sweden was short, and finally, the neighbouring country was willing to receive the refugees.[37] The monocausal explanation of the rescue of the Jews because of the uniquely democratic spirit of the Danes has consequently been reduced to only a part of the explanation. All things considered, we have a more complex view of the act today as well as of the actors. One thing is, however, the *Stand der Forschung* and the academic corrections of hitherto pristine historical images. How this influences the collective memory of a given historical period is a different matter. One way of studying collective memory is to examine the lieux de memoire such as schoolbooks, museums and remembrance days.[38] Ten years ago Bryld and Warring concluded that "opposite the insecurity of the scientific discourse stands a public presentation of the occupation that is even more black and white than was the case the first 30 years following the war", and a public

presentation that has blown "the achievements and significance of the Resistance out of proportion in grandiose stagings of a desired past."[39] The overwhelming celebrations of the liberation anniversaries in 1985 and 1995, the latest school books and historical exhibitions all remained within the classic structured narrative with the eternal struggle between good and evil at its core.[40] In the following section I will analyse the above mentioned lieux de memoire over the course of the last 10 years and discuss to what extent the Holocaust in these institutions (schools and museums) and institutional practices (remembrance days) are narrated as a relevant European identity marker for Danes today.

Holocaust in the contemporary collective memory

Beginning in the realm of museums, a Jewish museum opened in 2004 in Denmark's capital, Copenhagen. The museum enjoys a prominent location in the same building as The Royal Library, opposite of The Danish National Archives and very close to Parliament. Designed by star architect Daniel

Libeskind the Jewish museum attracts many national and international visitors. From the outset, the fact that the Jewish minority in Denmark with only 5-7000 Jews is minuscule lead the board of the museum to choose as the primary target group the non-Jewish Danish audience.[41] Contrary to the countless other Jewish museums that have mushroomed since the millenium,[42] the Danish Jewish Museum decided *not* to be a Holocaust museum.[43] Instead the museum wants to stress "the 400 years of continuous Jewish presence and cultural heritage in Denmark"[44] and its director even contends that the Holocaust did not take place in Denmark. "No Danish Jews died in an extermination camp",[45] said Janne Laursen, director of the museum when interviewed in 2004. "Of course we can discuss if the rescue of the Danish Jews and the fact that some were deported to Theresienstadt is a part of Holocaust, but apart from the unlucky that came to Theresienstadt and the unlucky that were rejected at the border, it's a positive story",[46] Laursen asserted. This positive story is conveyed in one of

two films shown in the museum in which Libeskind is introduced. He says he loves Denmark and that he believes the rescue is a unique story of the Danes being a benevolent nation. "Denmark, for whatever reason, was the only country in Europe that saved the Jews. And it's not by accident, not by a flick of chance. It has to do with people. It has to do with what neighbours thought about their neighbours and it is an example of humanity."[47] This classic narrative is, nevertheless, questioned by the visitors and is a source of some animosity as a study of the exhibition and the audience's perception of it has shown. When entering the exhibition some of the adult visitors are already aware of how recent research has begun to contest the myth of the humane Danes. Furthermore, a majority of the visitors see a stark contrast between the idealized image of the benevolent Danes and the contemporary political situation in Denmark characterized by the right wing government's restrictive policy towards refugees and immigrants. A 28 year old woman thought about the Libeskind interview that "it was embarrassing, because well, we aren't like that anymore."[48] A 38 year old man felt about the Libeskind video that it "jarred on the ear […] because we have a rightwing government and *Danish People's Party* [Dansk Folkeparti], which represent some attitudes that are absolutely not about the love of one's neighbour, but on the contrary about fear and prejudices."[49] A 52 year old woman also noted the contrast with the current situation, but accepted the heroic narrative:

> "In these days when Danes are so xenophobic, I have thought that at least at this point in history, we did something good. Something that can be seen as a little heroic. So that's something I'm proud of."[50]

In conclusion, The Danish Jewish Museum has as its official aim to portray 400 years of continuous Jewish presence in Denmark and the Holocaust is not considered to belong within this narrative. The exhibition with the Libeskind interview film is in line with this purpose, but it unsettles the

visitors that are aware of the mythic elements in the classic narrative of the rescue. The contemporary political atmosphere in Denmark proves, in their opinion, that the heroic picture presented by Libeskind cannot be true. Others accepted the heroic narrative and it causes embarrassment for them to witness the contrast between Danes now and then.

This leads us to the point of the political reactions and the public debates that followed in the slipstream of the recent critical historical research and the remembrance day that emerged out of the discussions. The greatest debacle started shortly after The Stockholm International Forum on Holocaust hosted by the Swedish Government from January 26-28, 2000, at which the then Danish Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen had signed the final declaration stating "we share a commitment to throw light on the still obscured shadows of the Holocaust."[51] A week later, the Icelandic historian Vilhjálmur Örn Vilhjálmsson claimed in his newspaper article, "The greatest myth", that at least 21 Jews were expelled from Denmark to Germany during the war and that most of them ended their lives in an extermination camp.[52] The reaction came immediately. Danish politicians, Danish Jews and The Simon Wiesenthal Centre in Jerusalem called for an official apology from the Prime Minister who replied "we cannot give the victims and their families their lives back, nor can we remove the incredible sufferings people were exposed to then, but we can write the true history about what took place. And we can acknowledge our responsibility that this will never happen again. When this chapter of our history is written the government will, on behalf of the nation, express its attitude – also addressed to the relatives."[53] Nyrup Rasmussen's reaction was welcomed from most sides although some historians were sceptic about the concept of apologizing. In the many letters to the editor that dealt with Vilhjálmsson's findings and Nyrup Rasmussen's reaction, we find again parallels drawn to the contemporary situation. One writes:

> "Also today public servants administer the law unconsciously. Without taking a personal responsibility for the risk of passing a death sentence [when expelling refugees to uncertain conditions in their native countries]."[54]

The debate quieted down after the Prime Minister commissioned the newly established Danish Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies with an in-depth study of Denmark's policy towards refugees in the 1930s and 1940s.

Meanwhile, as Europe moved away from social democratic governments to centre-right governments often in alliances with national populist parties as was the case in Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal and Denmark, it was much less obvious what the lesson drawn from the Holocaust should be.[55] In Denmark, the *Danish People's Party* is well known for its critique of human rights about which the party's number one ideologue Søren Krarup has written extensively.[56] The party with its 10-12 percent of the votes cast at national elections has provided staunch support to the centre-right minority government and thus securing its majority till this very day. Since the government's accession to power in 2001 and its adoption of a restrictive policy on immigration the Danish government has repeatedly been criticized for violating international conventions on human rights.[57] After two years in power, the present government decided to live up to its predecessor's commitment to the Stockholm declaration's 6th paragraph, to commemorate the victims of the Holocaust by establishing an annual Day of Holocaust Remembrance also known as Auschwitz Day. In a Parliamentary debate the *Danish People's Party* announced its opposition: "the Nazi's murder of 6 million Jews [..] is not to be kept holy with cult remembrance days, where school children may have a holiday, and where the state pays for special exorcising remembrance events to the benefit of the ideological self-righteousness."[58] Despite these criticisms, the Auschwitz Day was enacted, but not as a remembrance day dealing solely with the Holocaust as stipulated in the Stockholm declaration. Instead the Danish Auschwitz Day was chosen as a day for remembering Holocaust *and other*

genocides and with as little as € 270,000 available to fund nationwide remembrance activities and special education programmes for high school students. In comparison, the Swedish Living History Forum is a government agency commissioned with the task of arranging the annual Holocaust Remembrance Day and promoting issues relating to tolerance, democracy and human rights with the Holocaust as its point of reference. To this end it was granted annually € 4,200,000 when established in 2001.[59] The limited resources assigned to the remembrance day was a source of great frustration for the former director of the Danish Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies Uffe Østergård, who considered the day to be very important to the formation of common European values.[60]

The final institution to be discussed is the Danish education system fundamental as it is to the formation of identities. The 5th paragraph of the Stockholm declaration reads: "We will promote education about the Holocaust in our schools and universities", but to this very day no recurrent university course exists that deals exclusively with Holocaust at the Danish universities. Danish teachers on every level of the education system enjoy great freedom in structuring their teaching. No mandatory schoolbooks or specific themes existed until 2006, when a canon was introduced for the teaching of history and other subjects in elementary school. The initial canon proposal comprised 29 topics that were to be covered over the course of the nine[61] years of compulsory education. The only topic relating to World War II was the uprising on August 29, 1943. However, in a revision of the canon in spring 2008, the Minister for Education personally had the topic changed to "August uprising and persecution of Jews October 1943", arguing that "Now that Denmark is world famous for the rescue of the Danish Jews it is important that the Danes are also familiar with this story. It is a rather appealing trait of the Danes, and when so many negative things are part of Danish history, I believe this should be included."[62] Two conclusions can be drawn from this. First, the Holocaust is still not included

in the compulsory curricula Danish pupils are exposed to, and second, referring to the rescue as proof of an intrinsic positive character of the Danes is still viable in the political discourse.[63] The latter point is perhaps not so surprising when even the historians who have debunked the myths and criticized the sentimentality still themselves sometimes relapse to the idealization they claim to combat.[64]

Conclusion

To face the darker sides of the national past and re-evaluate one's Holocaust history has become a norm in international relations. However, the European's memories of World War II are sundry and very little hints at a future alignment. To foresee that the Holocaust will become a cornerstone of every European citizen's identity is far-fetched. So far, the neofunctionalist hope that economic integration would in the long run spill-over into integration of identities has yet to be proven in spite of all the good intentions. The nation has remained the crucial reference point for most Europeans to this very day, and as my study shows, there are only limited indications that Danes will adopt the Holocaust experience as a common European identity marker. What I have shown is that the most important institution for identity formation, namely the school system, leaves tremendous freedom to the individual teacher to present what he finds relevant. The only compulsory event to deal with relating to Holocaust is the rescue of the Danish Jews, but how this is done is left for the teacher to decide. Furthermore, an institutional practice that could over time provide pupils and the wider public with a common Holocaust interpretation is the annual Auschwitz Day. However, this institutional practice that deals with both remembrance and educational activities receives so meagre funding that its visibility and out-reach remains limited. Another institution with potential to communicate Holocaust as a common European experience is the Danish Jewish Museum. However, this institution has deliberately chosen to concentrate on 400 years of continuous Jewish presence in Denmark and it claims that the Holocaust

did not take place in Denmark. The latter point is stressed in the video interview with architect Daniel Libeskind that reiterates the classic myth of the Danes as inherently humane and fundamentally better than other Europeans, a myth that also occurs in the discourse of Danish politicians as the canon debate made clear.

To sum up, for the Holocaust to become a provider of some sense of belonging to a greater European community for Danes, the idea must be communicated and institutionalized in the Danish society. As my study has shown, so far very little hint at such a development. No promulgator, be it institutions or individuals, of these ideas are visible in the public sphere today, and no interest are working for it either, as it seems that the political ideological field is dominated by conservative and national elements.

Bibliography

Note that interviews, newspaper articles and electronic sources are listed in the footnotes only.

Andersen, Steen (2005) *De gjorde Danmark større. De multinationale danske entreprenørfirmaer i krise og krig 1919-1947*. København: Lindhardt og Ringhof.

Bak, Sofie Lene (2001) *Jødeaktionen oktober 1943. Forestillinger i offentlig og forskning*. København: Museum Tusculanums Forlag.

Banke, Cecilie Felicia Stokholm (2005) *Demokratiets skyggeside. Flygtninge og menneskerettigheder i Danmark før Holocaust*. Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag.

Bonde, Hans (2006) *Fodbold med fjenden. Dansk idræt under hagekorset*. Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag.

Brudholm, Thomas (2007) "A light in the darkness? Philosophical reflections on historians' assessments of the rescue of the Jews in Denmark in 1943", in Schott, Robin May & Kirsten Klercke (eds.) *Philosophy on the Border*. København: Museum Tusculanum Press.

Bruter, Michael (2003) "Winning Hearts and Minds for Europe. The Impact of News and Symbols on Civic and Cultural European Identity", *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 36, no. 10, 1148-1179.

Bryld, Claus & Anette Warring (1998) *Besættelsestiden som kollektiv erindring. Historie- og traditionsforvaltning af krig og besættelse 1945-1997*. Roskilde: Roskilde Universitetsforlag.

Carlsen, Per Hjald (ed.) (1945) *Krigsbilleder vi ikke saa*. København: Illustrationsforlaget.

Christensen, Claus Bundgård; Niels Bo Poulsen & Peter Scharff Smith (1998) *Under hagekors og Dannebrog. Danskere i Waffen-SS*. København: Aschehoug.

Christoffersen, Ida; Lise Korsgaard & Stine Thuge (2005) *Et museum i sin tid. Dansk jødisk museum som erindringssted*. Unpublished master dissertation at Roskilde University.

Cole, Tim (2000) *Selling the Holocaust. From Auschwitz to Schindler. How history is bought packaged, and sold*. New York: Routledge.

Diner, Dan (2003) "Restitution and Memory. The Holocaust in Europe Political Cultures", *New German Critique*, vol. 90, 36-44.

Dutceac Segesten, Anamaria (forthcoming 2008) "The Holocaust and International Norm Socialization. The case of Holocaust education in Romania", Lund University Center for European Studies Working paper.

Fosmark, Johannes (1945) "Koncentrationslejrene i Sachsenhausen (Oranienburg) og paa Heinkel flyvemaskinefabrik", in Fosmark, Johannes (ed.) *Danske i tyske koncentrationslejre*. København: Nordisk Forlag.

Grossman, Grace Cohen (2003) *Jewish Museums of the World*. Westport: Hugh Lauter Levin Associates Inc.

Halbwachs, Maurice ([1950] 1992) *On Collective Memory*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

Institut for Menneskerettigheder (2006) *Hvidbog om ægtefællesammenføring i Danmark*.

Karlsson, Klas-Göran (2003) "The Holocaust as a Problem of Historical Culture. Theoretical and analytical challenges", in Karlsson, Klas-Göran & Zander, Ulf (eds.) *Echoes of the Holocaust. Historical cultures in contemporary Europe*. Lund: Nordic Academic Press.

Kirchhoff, Hans & Lone Rünitz (2007) *Udsendt til Tyskland. Dansk flygtningepolitik under besættelsen*. Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag.

Kirchhoff, Hans (2005) *Et menneske uden pas er ikke noget menneske. Danmark i den internationale flygtningepolitik 1933-1939*. Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag.

Kjerulf-Jensen, Kaj (1945) "Karantænestationen i Padborg", in Kjerulf-Jensen, Kaj & Ernst Trier Mørch (eds.) *Saadan kom de hjem fra tyske Koncentrationslejre*. København.

Klein, Kerwin Lee (1995) "In search of narrative mastery. Postmodernism and the people without history", *History and Theory*, vol. 34, no. 4, 275-98.

Krarup, Søren (2000) *Dansen om menneskerettighederne*. København: Gyldendal.

Kreth, Rasmus & Michael Mogensen (1995) *Flugten til Sverige. Aktionen mod de danske jøder oktober 1943*. København: Gyldendal.

Leggewie, Claus (2008) "A Tour of the Battleground. The Seven Circles of Pan-European Memory", *Social Research*, vol. 75, no. 1, 217-234.

Lidegaard, Bo (2003) "Overleveren", vol. 4 in Due-Nielsen, Carsten; Ole Feldbæk & Nikolaj Petersen (eds.) *Dansk Udenrigspolitiks Historie*, København: Gyldendal Leksikon.

Lund, Joachim (2005) *Hitlers spisekammer. Danmark og den europæiske nyordning 1940-43*. København: Gyldendal.

Lylloff, Kirsten (1999) "Kan lægeløftet gradbøjes? Dødsfald blandt og lægehjælp til de tyske flygtninge i Danmark 1945", vol. 99, no.1, 33-67.

Nora, Pierre (1996) "Conflicts and Divisions", vol. 1 in Nora, Pierre (ed.) *Realms of Memory. Rethinking the French past*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Novick, Peter (2000) *The Holocaust and Collective Memory*, London: Bloomsbury.

Pijpers, Alfred (2006) "Now we should all acknowledge our holocaust guilt", *Europe's World*, autumn 2006, 124-127.

Probst, Lothar (2003) "Founding Myths in Europe and the Role of the Holocaust", *New German Critique*, vol. 90, 45-58.

Rubin, Lindsey (2004) "Love's Refugees. The effects of stringent Danish immigration policies on Danes and their non-Danish spouses", *Connecticut Journal of International Law*, vol. 20, 319-341.

Rünitz, Lone (2000) *Danmark og de jødiske flygtninge 1933-1945. En bog om flygtninge og menneskerettigheder*. København: Museum Tusculanums Forlag.

Rünitz, Lone (2005) *Af hensyn til konsekvenserne. Danmark og flygtningespørgsmålet 1933-1940*. Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag.

Rüsen, Jörn (2004) "Interpreting the Holocaust. Some theoretical issues", in Karlsson, Klas-Göran & Zander, Ulf (eds.) *Holocaust Heritage. Inquiries into European historical culture*. Malmö: Sekel.

Sode-Madsen, Hans (ed.) (2003) *I Hitler-Tysklands skygge. Dramaet om de danske jøder 1933-1945*. København: Aschehoug.

Sode-Madsen, Hans (2005) *Reddet fra Hitlers helvede. Danmark og de hvide busser* 1941-45. København: Aschehoug.

Sørensen, Nils Arne (2005) "Narrating the Second World War in Denmark since 1945", *Contemporary European History*, vol. 14, no. 3, 295-315.

Tjørnelund, Henning (2007) *Medicin uden grænser. Statens Serum Institut under besættelsen*. Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag.

Vilhjálmsson, Vilhjálmur Örn (2005) *Medaljens bagside. Jødiske flygtningeskæbner i Danmark 1933-1945*. København: Forlaget Vandkunsten.

Østergård, Uffe (2002) "Holocaust, Genocide and European Values", in Jensen, Steven L. B. (ed.) *Genocide: Cases, compararisons and*

contemporary debates. København: The Danish Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

Østergård, Uffe (2004) "Auschwitz og Europæiske værdier", in Brudholm, Thomas & Martin Mennecke (eds.) *Erindringens fremtid. Auschwitz-dag i Danmark*. København: Lindhardt og Ringhof.

Øvig Knudsen, Peter (2001) *Efter drabet. Beretninger om modstandskampens likvideringer*. København: Gyldendal.

---

1 Pijpers, Alfred (2006) "Now we should all acknowledge our holocaust guilt", *Europe's World*, autumn 2006, 124-127.

2 European Parliament resolution on remembrance of the Holocaust, anti-semitism and racism (January 27, 2005). http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do;jsessionid=4D1AFFBEB843381ACDD6B623C2921FCB.node2?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2005-0018+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN, July 18, 2008.

3 Declaration by the European Ministers of Education (October 18, 2002). http://www.coe.int/t/e/cultural_co-operation/education/remembrance/Declaration.asp#TopOfPage, July 17, 2008.

4 Diner, Dan (2003) "Restitution and Memory. The Holocaust in Europe Political Cultures", *New German Critique*, vol. 90, 36-44, p. 36.

5 Dutceac Segesten, Anamaria (forthcoming 2008) "The Holocaust and International Norm Socialization. The case of Holocaust education in Romania", Lund University Center for European Studies Working paper.

6 Leggewie, Claus (2008) "A Tour of the Battleground. The Seven Circles of Pan-European Memory", *Social Research*, vol. 75, no. 1, 217-234, p. 220.

7 Probst, Lothar (2003) "Founding Myths in Europe and the Role of the Holocaust", *New German Critique*, vol. 90, 45-58, p. 51.

8 See for instance Bruter, Michael (2003) "Winning Hearts and Minds for Europe. The Impact of News and Symbols on Civic and Cultural European Identity", *Comparative Political Studies*, vol. 36, no. 10, 1148-1179.

9 In this paper I draw on the theoretical framework elaborated in the research project *The Holocaust and European Historical Culture* lead by Prof. Klas-Göran Karlsson at Lund University. For extensive discussions of historical consciousness and collective memory, see Karlsson, Klas-Göran (2003) "The Holocaust as a Problem of Historical Culture. Theoretical and analytical challenges", in Karlsson, Klas-Göran & Zander, Ulf (eds.) *Echoes of the Holocaust. bHistorical cultures in contemporary Europe*. Lund: Nordic Academic Press; Rüsen, Jörn (2004) "Interpreting the Holocaust. Some theoretical issues", in Karlsson, Klas-Göran & Zander, Ulf (eds.) *Holocaust Heritage. Inquiries into European historical culture*. Malmö: Sekel.

10 Klein, Kerwin Lee (1995) "In search of narrative mastery. Postmodernism and the people without history", *History and Theory*, vol. 34, no. 4, 275-98, p. 297.
11 Lidegaard, Bo (2003) "Overleveren", vol. 4 in Due-Nielsen, Carsten; Ole Feldbæk & Nikolaj Petersen (eds.) *Dansk Udenrigspolitiks Historie*, København: Gyldendal Leksikon.
12 Lidegaard, p. 400-404.
13 Sørensen, Nils Arne (2005) "Narrating the Second World War in Denmark since 1945", *Contemporary European History*, vol. 14, no. 3, 295-315, p. 296-297.
14 Sørensen, p. 297.
15 Two good introductions to the rich academic debates are: Bak, Sofie Lene (2001) *Jødeaktionen oktober 1943. Forestillinger i offentlig og forskning*. København: Museum Tusculanums Forlag; Sode-Madsen, Hans (ed.) (2003) *I Hitler-Tysklands skygge. Dramaet om de danske jøder 1933-1945*. København: Aschehoug.
16 Sode-Madsen, Hans (2005) *Reddet fra Hitlers helvede. Danmark og de hvide busser* 1941-45. København: Aschehoug.
17 Bryld, Claus & Anette Warring (1998) *Besættelsestiden som kollektiv erindring. Historie- og traditionsforvaltning af krig og besættelse 1945-1997*. Roskilde: Roskilde Universitetsforlag, p. 42.
18 Bryld & Warring 1998, p. 55.
19 Bryld & Warring 1998, p. 65.
20 Bryld & Warring 1998, p. 69.
21 Cole, Tim (2000) *Selling the Holocaust. From Auschwitz to Schindler. How history is bought packaged, and sold*. New York: Routledge, p. 7.
22 Novick, Peter (2000) *The Holocaust and Collective Memory*, London: Bloomsbury, p. 65.
23 Novick, p. 295.
24 Billed-Bladet (1945) vol. 29, July 17, p. 10-11.
25 Carlsen, Per Hjald (ed.) (1945) *Krigsbilleder vi ikke saa*. København: Illustrationsforlaget, unpag.
26 Fosmark, Johannes (1945) "Koncentrationslejrene i Sachsenhausen (Oranienburg) og paa Heinkel flyvemaskinefabrik", in Fosmark, Johannes (ed.) *Danske i tyske koncentrationslejre*. København: Nordisk Forlag, p. 58-59.
27 Kjerulf-Jensen, Kaj (1945) "Karantænestationen i Padborg", in Kjerulf-Jensen, Kaj & Ernst Trier Mørch (eds.) *Saadan kom de hjem fra tyske Koncentrationslejre.* København, p. 55.
28 Bak 2001; Rünitz, Lone (2000) *Danmark og de jødiske flygtninge 1933-1945. En bog om flygtninge og menneskerettigheder*. København: Museum Tusculanums Forlag.
29 Bryld & Warring 1998, p. 384.
30 Banke, Cecilie Felicia Stokholm (2005) *Demokratiets skyggeside. Flygtninge og menneskerettigheder i Danmark før Holocaust*. Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag; Rünitz, Lone (2005) *Af hensyn til konsekvenserne. Danmark og flygtningespørgsmålet*

1933-1940. Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag; Kirchhoff, Hans (2005) *Et menneske uden pas er ikke noget menneske. Danmark i den internationale flygtningepolitik 1933-1939*. Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag; Kirchhoff, Hans & Lone Rünitz (2007) *Udsendt til Tyskland. Dansk flygtningepolitik under besættelsen*. Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag; Vilhjálmsson, Vilhjálmur Örn (2005) *Medaljens bagside. Jødiske flygtningeskæbner i Danmark 1933-1945*. København: Forlaget Vandkunsten.

31 Christensen, Claus Bundgård; Niels Bo Poulsen & Peter Scharff Smith (1998) *Under hagekors og Dannebrog. Danskere i Waffen-SS*. København: Aschehoug.

32 Lylloff, Kirsten (1999) "Kan lægeløftet gradbøjes? Dødsfald blandt og lægehjælp til de tyske flygtninge i Danmark 1945", vol. 99, no.1, 33-67.

33 Øvig Knudsen, Peter (2001) *Efter drabet. Beretninger om modstandskampens likvideringer*. København: Gyldendal.

34 Andersen, Steen (2005) *De gjorde Danmark større. De multinationale danske entreprenørfirmaer i krise og krig 1919-1947*. København: Lindhardt og Ringhof; Lund, Joachim (2005) *Hitlers spisekammer. Danmark og den europæiske nyordning 1940-43*. København: Gyldendal.

35 Bonde, Hans (2006) *Fodbold med fjenden. Dansk idræt under hagekorset*. Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag.

36 Tjørnelund, Henning (2007) *Medicin uden grænser. Statens Serum Institut under besættelsen*. Odense: Syddansk Universitetsforlag.

37 Kreth, Rasmus & Michael Mogensen (1995) *Flugten til Sverige. Aktionen mod de danske jøder oktober 1943*. København: Gyldendal; Bak 2001.

38 Halbwachs, Maurice ([1950] 1992) *On Collective Memory*. Chicago: Chicago University Press; Nora, Pierre (1996) "Conflicts and Divisions", vol. 1 in Nora, Pierre (ed.) *Realms of Memory. Rethinking the French past*. New York: Columbia University Press.

39 Bryld & Warring 1998, p. 384-385.

40 Bryld & Warring 1998, p. 385, 423, 441.

41 Christoffersen, Ida; Lise Korsgaard & Stine Thuge (2005) *Et museum i sin tid. Dansk jødisk museum som erindringssted*. Unpublished master dissertation at Roskilde University, appendix 2, p. 6.

42 In for instance Amsterdam, Athens, Brussels, London, Munich, Sarajevo, Stockholm, Venice, and Vilnius, cf. Grossman, Grace Cohen (2003) *Jewish Museums of the World*. Westport: Hugh Lauter Levin Associates Inc. It deserves mention that the *Museum of the history of Polish* Jews under construction in Warsaw is not a Holocaust museum, but likewise stresses the long history of Jews in Poland. Holocaust is not even mentioned in the statute of the museum.
http://www.jewishmuseum.org.pl/articles.php?miId=205&lang=en, August 28, 2008.

43 Christoffersen, Korsgaard & Thuge 2005, appendix 2, p. 4.

44 Homepage of the Danish Jewish Museum, http://www.jewmus.dk/udstilling.asp, July 18, 2008; Christoffersen, Korsgaard & Thuge 2005, appendix 2, p. 5.

45 Christoffersen, Korsgaard & Thuge 2005, appendix 2, p. 11.

46 Christoffersen, Korsgaard & Thuge 2005, appendix 2, p. 4-5.

47 Christoffersen, Korsgaard & Thuge 2005, p. 66.
48 Christoffersen, Korsgaard & Thuge 2005, appendix 5, p. 52.
49 Christoffersen, Korsgaard & Thuge 2005, appendix 5, p. 39.
50 Christoffersen, Korsgaard & Thuge 2005, appendix 5, p. 56.
51 Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust, 26-28 January 2000. http://www.holocausttaskforce.org/about/index.php?content=stockholm/, July 17, 2008.
52 Vilhjálmsson, Vilhjálmur Örn (2000) "Den største myte", *Berlingske Tidende*, February 6.
53 *Berlingske Tidende* (2000) "Nyrup vil undersøge jødeskæbner", February 7.
54 *Berlingske Tidende* (2000) "Læren fra fortiden", February 7. See also *Information* (2000) "Den skamløse skam", February 8, and *Berlingske Tidende* (2000) "Dom efter tilfældige arkivstudier", February 9.
55 Østergård, Uffe (2004) "Auschwitz og Europæiske værdier", in Brudholm, Thomas & Martin Mennecke (eds.) *Erindringens fremtid. Auschwitz-dag i Danmark*. København: Lindhardt og Ringhof, p. 197.
56 See for instance Krarup, Søren (2000) *Dansen om menneskerettighederne*. København: Gyldendal.
57 Rubin, Lindsey (2004) "Love's Refugees. The effects of stringent Danish immigration policies on Danes and their non-Danish spouses", *Connecticut Journal of International Law*, vol. 20, 319-34, p. 336-337; Institut for Menneskerettigheder (2006) *Hvidbog om ægtefællesammenføring i Danmark*, p. 5-6.
58 Brudholm & Mennecke 2004, appendix, p. 255.
59 Østergård, Uffe (2002) *Holocaust- eller Auschwitz-mindedag*. http://diis.dk/sw12916.asp, July 17, 2008.
60 Østergård, Uffe (2002) "Holocaust, Genocide and European Values", in Jensen, Steven L. B. (ed.) *Genocide: Cases, compararisons and contemporary debates*. København: The Danish Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies.
61 From summer 2009 the compulsory education in Denmark will be extended to ten years.
62 Minster for Education Bertel Haarder in an interview to the daily *Berlingske Tidende*, April 14, 2008.
63 And it is also the case in international settings. For instance, Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen in a talk with American journalists mentioned Denmark's protection of Jews during World War II as an example of the Danes' long history of tolerance of other religions and lifestyles, *Washington Post*, March 29, 2002
64 Brudholm, Thomas (2007) "A light in the darkness? Philosophical reflections on historians' assessments of the rescue of the Jews in Denmark in 1943", in Schott, Robin May & Kirsten Klercke (eds.) *Philosophy on the Border*. København: Museum Tusculanum Press, p. 196.