

## International Organizations and Holocaust Remembrance: From Europe to the World

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### **Abstract:**

International organizations have increasingly become engaged in developing transnational memory frames for the Holocaust. Based on document analysis and interviews with transnational norm entrepreneurs, this article explores the role and interaction of three organizations: the European Union, the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance and UNESCO. It employs the multi-level governance approach to analyze how Prime Minister Göran Persson and a 'progressive' alliance of Western politicians initially 'uploaded' a Swedish initiative to the EU and the UN system. In the EU, however, East-Central European norm entrepreneurs have increasingly pushed for greater emphasis on Stalinist crimes, which has reinforced the totalitarian paradigm and effectively undermined Holocaust remembrance. In contrast, the battle over the possible link between Holocaust remembrance, collective identity and political legitimacy is absent from the UN system. The UN and UNESCO have transformed the Holocaust into a universal code for the need to protect human rights and democracy.

## **International Organizations and Holocaust Remembrance: From Europe to the World**

Attempts to export norms for remembrance and related practices across borders usually stimulate complex negotiation processes. Such norms and practices are adapted to local circumstances and mnemonic cultures – or their transfer is rejected outright. In the case of Holocaust remembrance in Europe, for example, Timothy Garton Ash (2002) and others (e.g. Novick 2007) have opposed the Europeanization of what they have called the ‘German [national technical ] DIN norm’ for the desirable collective memory of the extermination of European Jewry during the Second World War.

This article traces how international and supranational organizations have constituted important forums for developing transnational memory frames for the Holocaust. Together they have developed into what, in an analogy with political science characterizations of the European Union (EU) (Hooghe & Marks 2001), could be called a loosely connected multi-level governance system for promoting international norms for Holocaust remembrance and education. We explore how in this system, norm entrepreneurs act transnationally in seeking to promote the Europeanization and internationalization of norms for Holocaust remembrance working with networks of survivors and memorial sites, partly transnationally constituted political parties, and national governments.

Based on document analysis and interviews with transnational norm entrepreneurs, the article explores the role and interaction of three organizations at the regional European and international levels: the EU with exclusively European membership on one side and, on the other, the Task Force for International Cooperation on Holocaust Education, Remembrance, and Research (ITF, since 2013 the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA)) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) with global membership. We argue that the fit of Holocaust remembrance with their respective

institutional competences and political agendas at particular points in time largely accounts for these organizations' institutional activism in this field. We also provide initial evidence for institutionalized and network-type informal connections across the different governance levels of Holocaust remembrance. In the next step, we will explore these connections more systematically to map the emerging multi-level governance system more fully.

In the first section, the article traces the attempted internationalization of Holocaust remembrance which culminated in the Declaration of the International Forum on the Holocaust and the introduction of 27 January (the date of the liberation of the death camp Auschwitz) as the International Holocaust Remembrance Day at a conference in Stockholm in late January 2000. This conference and its declaration have also been interpreted as evidence of the Holocaust as a (potential) 'European foundation myth' (Leggewie 2011). Several leading politicians and national governments employed the Stockholm agenda soon afterwards to justify bilateral 'measures' of 14 EU member states against the newly formed Austrian government (Hummer & Pelinka 2002).

The article also highlights the limits of the transnationalization of Holocaust remembrance, however. Negotiation processes about remembrance within the EU have produced lowest common denominator compromises. Exploring the examples of parliamentary resolutions and recent cultural projects like the 'New Narrative for Europe' and the House of European History museum, the second section shows how Holocaust remembrance has become marginalized once more in the EU. This marginalization has mainly been effected by norm entrepreneurs from the new East-Central European member states successfully promoting the totalitarian paradigm with the aim of inserting their memory of Stalinist crimes into EU narratives.

The third section analyzes how the ITF/IHRA and UNESCO have come to construct Holocaust memory in an attempt to transcend regional, political, and religious-cultural

borders by treating it as an example of, and code for crimes against humanity – a generalized notion that connects well with international legal and normative traditions that have shaped the UN system (Singh 2016; Weiss 2015). For UNESCO, Holocaust remembrance and education have become strategies in a broader fight against racism and violence. Crucially, the process of up-loading Holocaust remembrance norms with strong support from EU-based actors created institutional path dependencies in the UN system before new East-Central European member states and actors began to influence the rewriting of EU narratives sometime after 2004.

The last section, finally, draws conclusions about the role of international and supranational organizations in transnational negotiation processes about remembrance. It raises the analytical and normative question whether processes of Europeanization and internationalization could entail that the Holocaust becomes a mere symbol of extreme violence, losing its particularities and dissolving into less distinctive descriptions.

### **Internationalizing Holocaust Remembrance**

The establishment of the ITF/IHRA in 1998, the origins of the Declaration of the International Forum on the Holocaust and the introduction of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day in 2000 exemplify the role of norm entrepreneurs in attempts in international settings and organizations to internationalize Holocaust remembrance. In June 1997, the Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* shocked its readers with the headline ‘Racists reach the youth’ (Sjöblom 1997). The article pointed out that only two-thirds of Swedish youth – independent

of their ethnic and religious background – believed that the Holocaust had actually happened. (Löw 1998, 2004, 2010; Nilsson 1998; Deland & Westin 2007).

As a result, the social democratic Prime Minister Göran Persson, a former minister of education, initiated a debate in the Swedish parliament on the need for Holocaust education, which resulted in an information campaign entitled ‘Levande historie’ or ‘Living history’ (Allwork 2015). This campaign culminated in 1998 with the publication of the history book *...Om detta må ni berätta (Tell Ye Your Children)* (Bruchfeldt & Levine 1998). The book embeds the presentation of the Holocaust as a historical phenomenon in a broader discussion about the equality of all human beings and the values and benefits of democracy underlining the link between the neglect of human rights and democracy and the threat of war and genocide. Some 1.3 million copies of the book have been distributed free of charge, and it is now also available via the homepage of the LHF (The Living History Forum undated; Karlsson and Zander 2004).

For Persson though, the 1997-8 national campaign was not enough. In his view, international measures and an international organization were needed to promote Holocaust education. For this purpose he drew on a network of ‘progressive’ politicians preoccupied with defining a new normatively constituted world order after the end of the Cold War (Ladrech 2000). In Europe, their search was closely connected with the notion of the EU as a ‘normative power’ which was much debated around the turn of the century (Diez 2005; Manners 2002). Persson contacted US President Bill Clinton and British Prime Minister Tony Blair, and suggested that their countries should join forces and strive to establish international cooperation on Holocaust education (Persson 2006). The first meeting of the newly constituted ITF/IHRA took place in Stockholm on 7 May 1998. The ITF/IHRA’s scope was then expanded to include Holocaust remembrance and research. Representatives of forty-six governments subsequently attended the conference Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust in

January 2000 which marked the breakthrough for the organization as an international norm entrepreneur (Allwork 2015; Plessow 2015; Karlsson & Zander 2004; ITF/IHRA 2000).

The Stockholm Declaration states that ‘The Holocaust (Shoah) fundamentally challenged the foundations of civilization. The unprecedented character of the Holocaust will always hold universal meaning.’ It goes on to commit the signatories to encouraging ‘the study of the Holocaust in all its dimensions’, to promoting ‘education about the Holocaust in our schools (...) and in our communities’, and to commemorating ‘the victims of the Holocaust and to honour those who stood against it’. The signatories also demanded (but did not define more clearly) ‘appropriate forms of Holocaust remembrance’ and introduced the International Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Three further conferences were held between 2001 and 2004 (Fried 2006). These conferences had a broader scope than the Holocaust and focused on combating intolerance (2001), justice and reconciliation (2002), and preventing genocides (2004). Both Kofi Annan, UN Secretary-General, and Javier Solana, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union and its High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, were keynote speakers at the conference held in 2004. Annan announced that he was determined to strengthen the UN’s capacity for action against genocide (Fried 2006, 7). The UN was to shift its focus from reaction to the prevention of genocide. Annan underlined that Holocaust remembrance and education were essential strategies to achieve this aim.

At the start of 2018, the ITF/IHRA as a formally intergovernmental organization comprised 31 member states, eleven observer states, and seven so-called permanent international partners (IHRA undated[a]). It operates as a broad transnational network of norm entrepreneurs. Since its creation it has launched several initiatives that aim at internationalizing standards of Holocaust education, remembrance and research through documents e.g. for teachers which are disseminated online (IHRA undated[b]). The

ITF/IHRA has also compiled memorial databases to show connections between remembrance cultures and the development of memorial sites. It has initiated joint research projects and recommended literature on the Holocaust, thus giving certain books and articles international legitimacy.

The internationalisation of Persson's initiative went hand in hand with its institutionalization in Sweden. In his speech to the Swedish Parliament on 27 January 2000 he announced the date as an official Swedish remembrance day of the Holocaust and the institutionalization of the Living History project as a permanent centre for remembrance, research and discussion. (Persson 2000). In December 2001 the Swedish Parliament formally established The Living History Forum (LHF) as a public body for Holocaust education associated with the Ministry of Culture (Living History Forum undated). In 2009, the LHF published a revised edition of the history book which also includes a chapter on Sweden and the Holocaust (Bruchfeld & Levine 2009). This chapter discusses Sweden – neutral and unoccupied during the Second World War – as a bystander, thus contributing to the more recent evolution of international perspectives on the role of perpetrators and bystanders in the Holocaust. The LHF is also responsible for co-ordinating Sweden's participation in ITF/IHRA (Karlsson & Zander 2004).

Swedish actors played a crucial role in initiating the ITF/IHRA. Others supported the initiative from the beginning, like Blair and Clinton, and lend the newly established task force political legitimacy (Allwork 2015, 46-52). Appointing Yehuda Bauer as head of the academic committee moreover gave it scholarly legitimacy and access to an important international network. Apart from Argentina, Canada, Israel and the United States, however, as of 2018 all ITF/IHRA members are European countries, and all but three of those (Norway, Serbia, Switzerland) are EU member states. Thus, the EU and its member states heavily dominate the organization.

In fact, within the EU the declamatory internationalization of Holocaust remembrance at the 2000 Stockholm Conference quickly became linked to bilateral ‘measures’ (popularly known as ‘sanctions’) by the 14 other EU member states against the new Austrian government. At the time of the Stockholm Conference, the centre-right Austrian People’s Party was negotiating the formation of a coalition government with the right-wing populist Freedom Party under the leadership of Jörg Haider. With its pan-Germanic origins, its post-war role as a refuge for Austrian Nazis, and Haider’s nationalistic rhetoric directed against immigrants and the supranational EU (Wodak & Pelinka 2009), the Freedom Party was an obvious target for the fight against racism, antisemitism and nationalism which EU member state governments, alongside others, had just proclaimed at Stockholm. The bilateral ‘measures’ proved to be illegal under EU law (Schmahl 2000; Schorkopf 2000), however, and highly divisive in several EU member states. After a report by three ‘Wise men’ appointed to review them, they were duly lifted in September 2000.

The ‘measures’ strongly politicized the larger Stockholm Conference agenda in the EU even before the 2004 Eastern enlargement. During and directly after the conference they were informally prepared by the outgoing social democratic Austrian Chancellor Viktor Klima, António Guterres, President of the Socialist International and Prime Minister of Portugal, which held the rotating European Council presidency at the time, and the German social democratic Chancellor Gerhard Schröder and Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer from the Green Party (Kaiser 2003, 507-9). Fischer in particular propagated the ‘measures’ in the German Bundestag parliament and in a major speech on European union in May 2000 as a symbol of the character of the EU as a ‘community of values’, not an ‘economic club’ (Fischer 2000a; Fischer 2000b).

Thus, the impetus from the Stockholm Conference and the ‘measures’ combined created an astonishing dynamism for the normative Europeanization of Holocaust remembrance in the



EU. Since then, Holocaust remembrance has become not a hard legal, but a soft cultural condition for accession to the EU (Littoz-Monnet 2013). At the same time, the EU only has subsidiary competences in the fields of culture and education (Holthoff 2008). From the beginning therefore, it has had only very limited options for actually supporting activities related to Holocaust remembrance. It has mainly done so in the ‘European Remembrance’ so-called ‘Action’ of the ‘Europe for Citizens’ programme geared towards enhancing civic participation at EU level and strengthening transnational contacts, cooperation and networks (Littoz-Monnet 2012). During the 2007-13 funding period, however, the programme already included a number of projects aimed at fostering remembrance of Stalinist crimes during communist rule in Eastern Europe after 1945. Moreover, as the next section will show, the importance of the Holocaust for promoting a more aligned European memory in the EU has declined once more in recent years as a result of the very active propagation of remembering Stalinist crimes by East-Central European norm entrepreneurs in the wake of the EU’s Eastern enlargement.

### **Totalitarian Paradigm versus Singularity of the Holocaust**

The totalitarian paradigm has its origins in the works of Hannah Arendt (1951). As an explanatory framework for understanding the history of twentieth century Europe, it strongly emphasizes the structural similarities in the regimes of oppression between National Socialist, fascist and authoritarian military dictatorships on one side and Stalinist and communist systems on the other. Its focus on structures of oppression tends to marginalize differences in ideologies, motivations and societal support. The totalitarian paradigm has influenced academic debate about European history and it has left traces in its popular imagination. Since the end of the Cold War, however, and especially since the EU’s 2004 enlargement, East-

Central European norm entrepreneurs have pushed the totalitarian paradigm more consistently once more as a suitable shared frame for understanding twentieth century European history (Mälksoo 2014, 2009). At home it is frequently employed to buttress patriotic master narratives that emphasize victimization under the communist systems and minimize collaboration with Nazi Germany and participation in the Holocaust. These norm entrepreneurs have chiefly utilized two primary European avenues for propagating greater attention to Stalinist crimes in post-war East-Central Europe: debates and resolutions in the European Parliament (EP), and major EP-initiated cultural projects.

Passing resolutions is an established instrument used by parliaments to instigate legislation or, in this case, to influence public debates. In the EU using this parliamentary tool for memory politics is a more recent phenomenon (Kaiser 2012). The EP's 2005 resolution on 'the remembrance of the Holocaust, anti-semitism and racism' still drew explicitly on the Stockholm Declaration. It underlines that 'the sixtieth anniversary of the liberation of Nazi Germany's death camp at Auschwitz-Birkenau (...) is not only a major occasion for European citizens to remember and condemn the enormous horror and tragedy of the Holocaust, but also for addressing the disturbing rise in anti-semitism, and especially anti-semitic incidents, in Europe ...' (EP 2005). The resolution goes on to demand that the Holocaust must be remembered 'as a warning against genocide of this kind, rooted in contempt for other human beings, hatred, anti-semitism, racism and totalitarianism'. The resolution introduced 27 January as the 'European Holocaust Memorial Day' and encouraged EU member states to promote Holocaust education in schools and at memorial-sites, as a strategy to combat contemporary anti-semitism and racism.

Passed with 553 votes against 44 (European Parliament 2009), the EP's resolution on 'European conscience and totalitarianism' of 2 April 2009 already differs markedly from the 2005 resolution, however. While the Stockholm Declaration highlighted the 'unprecedented

character' of the Holocaust as the base point of new norms of international remembrance, the EP resolution inserts the Holocaust into a larger consensus-oriented narrative of the crimes of totalitarian regimes, effectively downplaying its importance. The EP resolution also led to the institutionalization of 23 August (the day of the signature of the Hitler-Stalin Pact in 1939) as a Europe-wide so-called Remembrance Day 'for victims of all totalitarian and authoritarian regimes' – a form of institutionalization that mirrors the International Holocaust Remembrance Day, but also competes with it in Europe's evolving remembrance culture.

The 2009 resolution refers to the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to the EU's Charter of Fundamental Rights, but not to the Stockholm Declaration. It mentions 'the values of respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law and respect for human rights' – values violated by forms of 'totalitarian rule' in the twentieth century. The resolution also stresses that 'From the perspective of the victims it is immaterial which regime deprived them of their liberty or tortured or murdered them for whatever reason'. In fact, it only mentions the Holocaust towards the end. After stating under point 'G' that 'millions of victims were deported, imprisoned, tortured and murdered by totalitarian and authoritarian regimes (...) in Europe', the resolution adds, coming out of the blue at this point, that 'the uniqueness of the Holocaust must nevertheless [!] be acknowledged' – a phrase that marks a concession to sections of the political Left in the EP who were concerned about protecting the singularity thesis and the place of the Holocaust in European remembrance policies and practices more generally (Neumeyer 2015). As Nazi Germany orchestrated the industrial extermination of European Jews, however, the resolution's strong emphasis on the comparability of the totalitarian regimes and the similarity of their crimes actually undermines the singularity thesis.

Similarly, the earlier emphasis on the Holocaust in German debates, the Swedish initiative, ITF/IHRA policy and the EU's bilateral 'measures' against the Austrian government has also

evaporated in the case of two recent EP-initiated major cultural projects, the ‘New Narrative for Europe’ and the House of European History museum. Originating in EP concerns about the declining EU legitimacy and its apparent lack of a proper cultural foundation, the ‘New Narrative’ project was funded during 2012-14 (Kaiser 2015). The project’s objective was to ‘contribute to raising the interest in the creative sector and to incite European opinion formers to make their voice heard’, thus ‘associating the creative sector and the citizens to revamp the narrative of Europe’ (Andreu-Romeo 2013). Some 20 people from the cultural sphere formed a so-called Cultural Committee. It met bi-monthly and organized three ‘general assemblies’ with larger audiences. The committee eventually submitted the declaration ‘New Narrative for Europe: The Mind and Body of Europe’ (European Commission 2014b) to Commission President José Manuel Barroso and German Chancellor Angela Merkel in Berlin on 1 March 2014.

The European Commission initially believed that it would actually be possible to develop *one* ‘all-encompassing’ narrative to legitimize the EU (European Commission 2014a). Under the impression of sharp internal and external criticism of this hegemonic language, the Commission quickly changed its informal terminology to ‘narratives’ and, in the final version of the declaration, to ‘new narrative’ – still in the singular, but less obviously so without the indefinite article. But what kind of narrative is it? In fact, the committee’s declaration emphasizes generic contemporary norms and values that are hardly embedded in any legitimizing historical narrative. Despite its length of four pages, it only refers to historical events before 1989 in one paragraph of three sentences, lumping together both world wars. The text makes no explicit reference to the Holocaust or perpetrators. Instead, it uses quasi-religious language to claim that Europe ‘damned itself within the concentration camps and the totalitarian systems associated with extreme nationalism, anti-Semitism, the abolition of democracy and rule of law, the sacrifice of individual freedom and the suppression of civil

society'. Through (Western) European integration after 1945, however, Europe's 'soul was restored'. Europeans redeemed themselves with the pacifist forward-looking integration 'project'.

This narrative dissolution of the Holocaust in a broader discourse about totalitarian regimes and crimes in twentieth century Europe is also replicated in the House of European History (HEH) museum that opened in Brussels in May 2017 – although the museum's explicit focus is on Europe's history. The micro-network behind this plan was keen to use the future museum for strengthening the EU's cultural integration and political legitimacy (Kaiser et al. 2014, ch. 3; Pöttering 2010). EP President Hans-Gert Pöttering was quite explicit about this overriding objective. At the inaugural meeting on 3 March 2008 of the Committee of Experts charged with preparing a general plan for the museum, he stated that the 'political discourse of the day [lacks] an historical view, which might help to foster such a sense [of identity]'. His hope was that the HEH could 'give a fresh boost to a spiritual dimension for the EU, focusing heavily on the European integration process.' He added that the HEH should place particular emphasis 'on the values underpinning integration' (Committee of Experts 2008).

In the meantime, however, with the support of the historians in the revamped Academic Committee, the team of curators appointed during 2010-11 has rewritten the original plan considerably for the first permanent exhibition. They have downplayed the Western European (integration) experience and strengthened East-Central European perspectives on twentieth century European history (Kaiser 2017). To some extent, this shift has resulted from personnel policy. During the EP presidency of Jerzy Buzek, a Polish member of the centre-right European People's Party, the Slovene Taja Vovk van Gaal became leader of the team of curators. She had practically no knowledge of, or interest in the experience of Western European integration after 1945, which was after all supposed to be the museum's core focus. When she presented her initial ideas to the team of curators she heavily emphasized the

Stalinist experience in Eastern Europe and the everyday lives of Europeans (Itzel 2012). At the same time, Włodzimierz Borodziej, professor of Modern History at the University of Warsaw and politically close to Buzek's party, took charge of the revamped Academic Committee. East-Central European perspectives on European history became further strengthened through the inclusion of inter alia the nationalist conservative Hungarian curator Mária Schmidt, director of the House of Terror museum in Budapest.

Vovk van Gaal's preference and that of others on her team and the Academic Committee for discussing Stalinism and the fate of Europeans behind the 'Iron Curtain' on a par with National Socialism and the Western European experience is largely reflected in the HEH narrative. The permanent exhibition symmetrically compares the Nazi and Stalinist regimes and their crimes on level 4, which responds to a key demand in East-Central European memory politics and conforms to the EP's more recent remembrance policies as in its 2009 resolution. The permanent exhibition also treats the Holocaust far less prominently than might have been expected in a more traditional Western European setting. Thus, the Academic Committee recommended at an early stage in its deliberations that an 'exhibition with the Shoa and the World Wars at its centre' was 'not being made for the future' (Academic Committee 2011). They also opposed the idea of a separate room or space devoted specifically to the annihilation of European Jews. Instead, the HEH weaves the Holocaust experience loosely into the three sections about the Nazi regime, the Second World War and its memory (Academic Committee 2014).

In the end, just as the EP resolutions on European history have sought to integrate Western and Eastern European experiences and preferences, the HEH narrative also represents a compromise. Despite adopting the totalitarian paradigm and marginalizing the Holocaust in its narrative, it does not cross two red lines of the Stockholm Declaration and associated memory discourses, which – in the words of the nationalist conservative Hungarian museum

director Schmidt (Schmidt 2012) – marked the ‘framework of censorship’ in the Academic Committee. While comparing the National Socialist and Stalinist regimes, the exhibition argues that they were nonetheless ‘not equal’ and ‘very different in their ideological roots and goals’ (Academic Committee 2014). Using a key phrase from the Stockholm Declaration, moreover, the exhibition points out that ‘the industrialized genocide on European Jews organized by the Nazis with bureaucratic precision was without precedence in world history’ (Academic Committee 2014). The permanent exhibition still defends the singularity thesis, although only in respect of the industrial scale of the mass murder.

Thus, in the past ten years Europe has become a ‘battlefield’ (Leggewie 2011) for memory politics and different and partly competing remembrance priorities. In East-Central Europe as elsewhere, actual memory of the past including the Holocaust is fragmented and divided (Assmann 2013; Uhl 2009). Actors on the political centre-right and nationalist Right in East-Central Europe – especially in Poland – have invested much time and resources lately, however, to influence what they regard as Western European dominated narratives of the past, to incorporate their own stories of collective victimization under communist rule during the Cold War more fully. Their demands for greater attention being paid to Stalinist crimes have effectively undermined Holocaust remembrance, at least in the form originally envisaged by the dominant ‘progressive’ political alliance at the time of the 2000 Stockholm Declaration. More recent political developments like the refugee crisis may well induce a further weakening of the narrative focus on the Holocaust and could strengthen nationalist narratives in countries like Poland and Hungary, for example, . In contrast, focussing on education rather than politically charged discourse and prestigious cultural projects as in the EU seems to have facilitated the internationalization of Holocaust remembrance in the context of the UN system and its specialized agency UNESCO.

## **Holocaust Education as a Global Norm for Securing Peace?**

The preamble to UNESCO's constitution states that 'since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed' (UNESCO 1945). Since its formation as a specialized UN agency in 1945-6, UNESCO has sought to 'ensure peace and security' through numerous educational, scientific, cultural and informational projects. UNESCO's Education for International Understanding Initiative (1974) aimed to establish global standards for history textbooks based on the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Reich & Pivovarov 1994). The UNESCO projects reflect a strong belief in the transformative power of education, where people should learn to welcome difference and diversity on the basis of respect and tolerance. Nevertheless, the Holocaust did not become a major focus for either the UN or UNESCO until after 2000, when Persson and the ITF/IHRA began lobbying the UN system to engage in Holocaust remembrance.

Today UNESCO offers online resources for Holocaust education (as part of the human rights educational initiative) because 'teaching about the history of the Holocaust is fundamental to establishing respect for human rights, basic freedoms and the values of tolerance and mutual respect' (UNESCO undated). Thus, Holocaust remembrance and education has become embedded in UNESCO's concept of education as peace-keeping. UN member states are encouraged 'to develop educational programmes that transmit the memory of the Holocaust to future generations so as to prevent genocide from occurring again' (UNESCO undated).

UNESCO's mission is part of wider UN action on Holocaust remembrance. In his speech at the fourth ITF/IHRA conference in Stockholm in 2004, Annan announced increased UN preventive actions against genocide and stressed the learning effect of Holocaust education (Fried 2006, 7). In an attempt to globalize the aims and values of the 2000 Stockholm



Declaration the UN General Assembly adopted Resolution 60/7 on Holocaust remembrance by consensus, without taking a vote, on 1 November 2005 (UN General Assembly 2005a). Iran though publicly disassociated itself from this consensus. In the same year the Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad repeatedly denied that the Holocaust had happened. He also called for Israel to be wiped off the map (see Litvak & Webman 2011).

Following the ITF/IHRA example, the UN designated 27 January as ‘an annual International Day of Commemoration in memory of the victims of the Holocaust’. Moreover, the General Assembly urged the member states to develop related educational programmes. The resolution explicitly commended the work of the ITF/IHRA as exemplary for how such programmes should be developed, thus providing it and the Stockholm Declaration with additional legitimacy. The UN resolution resulted in the establishment of The Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme with its motto ‘Remembrance and Beyond’ (UN General Assembly 2005b). This programme seeks to disseminate knowledge about the Holocaust to ‘mobilize civil society for Holocaust remembrance and education, in order to help prevent future acts of genocide’ (Ibid.). The Outreach Programme cooperates closely with the ITF/IHRA in promoting Holocaust remembrance and education. The UN’s Department of Public Information’s Holocaust Programme is a permanent observer at the plenary meetings of the ITF/IHRA. It also participates in its Educational Working Group, as well as in the two sub-committees on Holocaust and Other Genocides and Holocaust Remembrance Days. The close institutionalized cooperation between the UN and the ITF/IHRA indicates how actors and networks engage in the multi-level ‘up-loading’ and ‘down-loading’ of what the Stockholm Declaration called ‘appropriate forms’ of Holocaust remembrance and education.

Six months after resolution 60/7 the UN entered the debate on Holocaust denial, clearly motivated by the Iranian anti-Holocaust and anti-Israel hate campaign. On 26 January 2007

the General Assembly consensually adopted Resolution 61/255 condemning Holocaust denial (UN General Assembly 2007) not least as a factor that can increase the risk of future genocides. Thus, the two UN resolutions adopted the main principles of the Stockholm Declaration for the global level and institutionalized them in one of the UN's Outreach Programmes. Crucially, the up-loading of the Stockholm Declaration's principles took effect before the new East-Central European states and actors successfully modified the singularity thesis through the new emphasis on the totalitarian experience in EP resolutions and projects. So far, moreover, the same East-Central European actors have not felt the need to lobby for the recognition of the importance of Stalinist crimes outside of the immediately relevant and highly politicized EU context.

UNESCO has closely related to developments in the wider UN system. In 2007 it adopted a resolution on Holocaust remembrance (UNESCO 2007). This resolution requested the UNESCO Director General to consult with the UN Secretary-General about the UN Outreach Programme in order to explore what role UNESCO could play in promoting Holocaust remembrance. As the UN's specialized agency for education UNESCO highlights the transformative power of education in the wider German sense of *Bildung*. Education is seen as a fundamental part of active citizenship and sustainable development. Education should not only transmit cognitive knowledge about the past, but also promote skills, values and attitudes. The Holocaust due to its normative power is presented as a key event for teaching about and preventing future genocides and mass atrocities and for raising awareness of the need for democracy and human rights. Following the 2007 resolution, UNESCO created its own programme entitled 'Education for Holocaust Remembrance'. According to the UN, the two programmes complement each other: 'while the Holocaust and the United Nations Outreach Programme aims to mobilize civil society for Holocaust and education in order to prevent future acts of genocide, UNESCO seeks to promote Holocaust remembrance through

education' (UN undated). In reality, however, the profile of the two programmes is very similar. Both see Holocaust remembrance and education as strategies to prevent genocides and promote democracy and human rights. UNESCO has incorporated its Holocaust education into intercultural education and human rights training to facilitate learning from the past. Its key idea is that increased knowledge about the Holocaust will prevent future genocides. According to this view, the Holocaust is a 'universal issue' and contains the 'characteristics that appear in other genocides (...) e.g. a specific victim group or groups, mass violence against that group, and deprivation of the essentials for human existence' (UNESCO 2013, 7). According to UNESCO, two dimensions explain the singularity of the Holocaust: first, the intended extermination of all Jews; and second, the absence of 'a pragmatic purpose' in the form of an economic, political or military motive, as the Holocaust was exclusively motivated by racism (UNESCO 2013, 7).

Despite the emphasis on the singularity of the Holocaust, UNESCO transforms Holocaust remembrance into a tool for peace and intercultural understanding. According to UNESCO's guidelines, Holocaust education goes beyond disseminating 'factual' historical knowledge of the Holocaust. The instructions underline the importance of discussing the responsibility of individuals and public institutions, the danger of not speaking up against injustice, the roots of prejudice and racism, and the dangers of modern technology – that is, 'lessons of the past (Holocaust)' which offer a moral framework for the future and may help prevent genocide and injustice from happening again (UNESCO 2013, 7).

'Education for Holocaust Remembrance' has resulted in two studies that reflect UNESCO's long-term attempt to develop standards for history and education on a global level. First, international assessments on education by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe, the EU-funded Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA), the Institute of Education of the University of London, the ITF/IHRA and the

UNESCO carried out between 2005 and 2009, revealed that teaching about the Holocaust in terms of structure, quantity, and content differs greatly across and within countries (UNESCO 2015). For that reason in 2012, UNESCO launched a research project on the Holocaust in curricula worldwide in cooperation with the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research in Brunswick, Germany (UNESCO 2015, 3). The project report identifies ‘domestication’ as a key global trend (UNESCO 2015, 13, 76f.): national educational institutions tend to emphasize the local significance of the Holocaust and appropriate it for a local, regional or national historical framework to make it easier for citizens to relate to it – findings that plainly contradict Natan Sznajder and Daniel Levy’s notion of the evolution of ‘global memory’ or a ‘cosmopolitan culture of memory’ (Sznajder & Levy 2005).

In the same year that it launched this study, UNESCO also sought to contribute to the development of global standards by organizing an international expert meeting on ‘Holocaust Education in a Global Context’. It took place in Paris in 2012 and was organized in partnership with the German foundation Topography of Terror. A wide range of Holocaust and genocide educators and historians from several countries participated. According to Irina Bokova, the Director-General of UNESCO, teaching and learning about the Holocaust was necessary ‘to raise awareness about a shared history, to promote human rights everywhere and eliminate all forms of discrimination and violence’. The conference results were compiled in a free online publication (Fracapane & Hass 2014). While the book discusses various approaches to teaching the Holocaust, it still suggests from a normative perspective what may be better or worse ways of doing so. The publication also incorporates recommendations by the ITF/IHRA on how genocide education can be taught in comparative perspective (Fracapane & Hass 2014, 101f.). Karel Fracapane, one of the editors, had in fact worked for the ITF/IHRA from 2003 to 2007 – an example of the close links between the two

organizations, in addition to UNESCO's official status as permanent international partner of the ITF/IHRA.

The strong connection between the LHF, ITF/IHRA and UNESCO highlights how promoting international norms for Holocaust remembrance and education has taken place in a governance system that at least loosely connects norm entrepreneurs across multiple levels from the national to the European and global. The institutionalization of the LHF as the 'Swedish answer' to the Stockholm Declaration created strong potential for shaping the ITF/IHRA in the first years of its existence. As the ITF/IHRA grew larger and developed a more explicit organizational structure with the establishment of a permanent office in Berlin in 2008, the influence of the LHF diminished (Fried 2016). Eva Fried, who has been with the LHF since its inception, has acted as a key individual norm entrepreneur linking the two organizations. She has been simultaneously the LHF's coordinator for international affairs and Sweden's main representative in the ITF/IHRA.

'Up-loading' the LHF and ITF/IHRA agenda to UNESCO turned out to fit well with this organization's traditional task of developing international standards for teaching history to 'ensure peace and security'. UNESCO could easily incorporate the principles of the Stockholm Declaration into its well-established programme of training in human rights and intercultural understanding. Moreover, cooperation with the ITF/IHRA has been facilitated as this organization has expanded its own focus during the last ten years to include genocide remembrance and education more generally.

## **Conclusion**

International and supranational organizations have played a greater role as norm entrepreneurs in fostering Holocaust remembrance and education since the 2000 Stockholm Declaration. This article has identified a number of individual and collective actors who have triggered and reinforced associated processes of Europeanization and internationalization of Holocaust remembrance policies and practices. Thus, the origins of the ITF/IHRA go back to the personal concerns of Prime Minister Göran Persson about the lack of knowledge about the Holocaust and the growth of neo-Nazi groups in Sweden. The institutionalization of the ITF/IHRA was then driven by a transnational political alliance of 'progressive' political leaders. The Swedish government subsequently played a key role in up-loading the European-dominated ITF/IHRA patterns of Holocaust remembrance and education to the global UN and UNESCO level.

In the case of the EU, however, the strong initial support for the Stockholm Declaration and its underlying claim about the singularity of the Holocaust has been undermined by the progressive integration of the totalitarian paradigm promoted by actors from the new East-Central European member states after 2004, into the narratives about the European past. As a result, EP resolutions and several larger cultural projects have effectively downplayed the importance of the Holocaust for some form of more aligned European memory. Crucially, emphasis in the EU is on Holocaust remembrance as part of broader attempts to create a more meaningful regional European identity which could foster the EU's cultural legitimacy in times of crisis. The resulting negotiating processes have become highly politicized and necessitate more consensual narratives that integrate, in particular, diverging Western and Eastern European experiences.

This politicized battle over the possible link between Holocaust remembrance, collective identity and political legitimacy is completely absent in the case of the UN system and the UNESCO, however, which also focus as much on education as on remembrance. The notion

of lessons to be learned from the Holocaust fits well with the UN system's institutional identity as a promoter of human rights, intercultural understanding and non-violent conflict resolutions – a broader mission that can to some extent override virulent political conflict such as between Iran and Israel. Unlike Europe, where the Holocaust actually took place, and the present-day EU, moreover, the UN and UNESCO focus heavily on going *beyond* Holocaust remembrance and education. They transform the historical event into a universal argument for the need to protect human rights and democracy, which helps to de-politicize the issue. To what extent the UN and UNESCO resolutions and programmes actually have significant impact on the ground, especially in countries that are not democratic or see Israel as an enemy, or both, is of course a different matter and beyond the scope of this article.

This article has provided initial evidence of the role of individual and collective actors and their networks who have attempted to shape, and are currently shaping, how the Holocaust is commemorated and taught. This evidence includes the institutionalized cooperation between UNESCO and the ITF/IHRA and the activism of individual norm entrepreneurs like Persson, Fracapane and Fried. More research is needed into how international and supranational organizations like the EU, the ITF/IHRA, the UN and UNESCO interact with each other and with memorial sites like Yad Vashem, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum and the House of the Wannsee Conference, for example. Such research will allow mapping these networks and the relational ties among norm entrepreneurs in their attempts to promote global norms for Holocaust education and remembrance. It has already become clear, however, that the multi-level governance approach can usefully be employed to explore conflicts over the notion of the singularity of the Holocaust and the totalitarian paradigm as they take place on and across the national, European regional and international levels involving multiple actors and networks.

International and supranational organizations have in any case contributed significantly since 2000 to transforming the Holocaust into a symbol of extreme violence and atrocities against human beings. This transformation may well raise wider analytical and normative issues, however. Does the adaption of the Holocaust as a moral lesson from the past help preserve or erase the historical event from memory by dislocating it from time and space? Taking the Holocaust as a global symbol of the importance of human rights may foster its remembrance, and that of victims. At the same time, it could entail the danger of suppressing or forgetting the unique pattern of a specific historical event that affected millions of individual human beings.



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