

Censorship by European States views on their past as colonizers


La censure des États européens sur leur passé colonial

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Did European states censor views on their past as colonizers¹? This is the question I want to address here. To that end, I shall exploit a database of the censorship of academic and popular historical views between 1945 and 2014². Before discussing the findings of my research, however, I should briefly explain which states were excluded and in which states no relevant cases of censorship were found.

I shall exclude several types of cases because of limits of category, space and time³. There were *category limits* to begin with. The category I study here is solely composed of *former metropolitan countries*. This principle excluded censorship cases occurring (a) in colonies or metropolitan countries while the colonial relationship was still developing⁴, (b) in former colonies, and (c) in

1. The author acknowledges the support of NWO (The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research) for facilitating this study. The topic was first explored in lectures at the University of Huddersfield (June 2011) and the Centre d'histoire de Sciences Po in Paris (February 2014). In my « Taxonomy of Concepts Related to the Censorship of History », S. MARET (ed.), *Government Secrecy*, Bingley, Emerald, Series *Research in Social Problems and Public Policy*, n° 19, 2011, p. 55, I defined the censorship of history as the systematic *control* over historical facts or opinions and their exchange—often by suppression—imposed by, or with the connivance of the government or other powers. See also my « Censorship Backfires: A Taxonomy of Concepts Related to Censorship », in M. HUFF & A. L. ROTH with Project Censored (ed.), *Censored 2013: Dispatches From the Media Revolution*, New York, Seven Stories Press, 2012, p. 225. My working definition of colonialism is « the enforced political incorporation of other territories into one's own ».

2. Although this database contains thousands of history-related cases in 175 countries, including about issues related to colonialism, it is not complete. See A. DE BAETS, *Censorship of Historical Thought: A World Guide 1945-2000*, Westport CT/London, Greenwood Press, 2002; *IDEM*, *History's Blank Spots: Censorship of Views on the Past Around the World (1945-Present)*, manuscript (forthcoming). An annually growing database (containing data for the period 1995-2014)  available at concernedhistorians.org. All websites mentioned here were last consulted on 1 March 2015.

3. Various issues presently excluded were covered in A. DE BAETS, « Censorship », in T. BENJAMIN (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Western Colonialism since 1450*, Detroit, Macmillan-Thomson Gale, 2007, vol. 1, p. 199-204.

4. Including cases occurring today because the colonial relationship is still present, as, for example, between Britain and the Falklands.

dependent territories that were no colonies⁵. It also excluded censorship cases regarding minorities in metropolitan countries⁶, and, finally, censorship cases related not to colonial but to pre- or postcolonial history. Furthermore, there were *geographical limits*: the censorship had to take place in Europe⁷. Finally, there were *time restrictions*. The database does not cover pre-1945 censorship cases. This means that I do not discuss censorship which occurred in metropolitan countries between 1776 (the independence of the first modern colony, the United States) and 1945 (the first year covered in the database). In short, the survey that follows documents recent, postwar censorship. Within these limits of category, space and time, there were seven former metropolitan countries in Europe for which no empirical data about the post-independence censorship of colonial views were available. The absence of cases for particular states does not imply that no censorship or other inappropriate interventions occurred in those periods or states. It is certainly possible that cases escaped my attention. Various other reasons may also have been at work, however. Let me review some of them. The colonial empires of Denmark, Norway, Sweden, and Austria-Hungary were modest and apparently did not arouse sensitivities to such degree that censorship was needed. Spain was different because it had a large empire once. Its most important colonies, however, became independent in the nineteenth century and, as stated, I have no consistent data on possible censorship before 1945. In Turkey, insofar as my data permit firm conclusions, no discussion about the formerly dependent parts of the Ottoman empire—such as Egypt, for example—took place after 1919, perhaps because Turkey then entered a long inward-looking phase. It should be noted, however, that most of the Ottoman archives were closed for all but a few privileged researchers until 1989. British historian of the Arab world Albert Hourani, for example, was refused permission to work in them in the 1950s, while others such as Ömer Lütfi Barkan and Bernard Lewis were not⁸.

5. For example, Ireland or the non-Hungarian and non-Austrian nationalities in the Habsburg empire.

6. For example, the Armenians or Kurds in Turkey.

7. Although I do not discuss here the censorship of historical views on colonialism in formerly metropolitan countries *outside* Europe, it is still interesting to glance at the situation in some of these countries for comparative purposes. As long as *South Africa* possessed Southwest Africa, the emergence of black nationalism there was a topic liable to be censored, but after the colony's independence as Namibia in 1990 (coinciding with the beginning of the end of Apartheid), this sensitivity disappeared. In the *United States*, as far as I know, no discussion about its former colony the Philippines was censored after the latter's independence in 1946. Likewise, work about *Australia's* mandatory power over New Guinea was not censored after the latter's 1975 independence. In contrast, *Japan* has incessantly struggled with the legacy of its colonization of Korea (1910–1945) and with the sequel of its occupation of most of East- and Southeast Asia during the Pacific War. As is well-known, the censorship of critical views on these historical episodes has repeatedly been at the forefront of attention since 1945, especially in the Japanese history textbooks. Regarding *China*, finally, some regard its occupation of Tibet since 1950 as a form of colonialism. Tibetans were and are not allowed to say that Tibet has ever—let alone, always—been independent and that its annexation by China was not a « peaceful liberation ».

8. N. GALLAGHER (ed.), *Approaches to the History of the Middle East: Interviews with Leading Middle East Historians*, Reading, Ithaca Press, 1994, p. 29. The closure of Ottoman archives, however, blocked research into the historical crimes against Armenian and Kurdish minorities in Turkey itself.

Low frequency of cases

One group of states had a « low incidence of cases », which means that they were characterized by a small set of mutually unrelated censorship cases. Portugal's main colony Brazil became independent in 1822 and, therefore, most of its postcolonial discussions fall outside the reach of the database. British historian Charles Boxer's classic from 1969, *The Portuguese Seaborne Empire (1415-1925)*, banned under the Marcello Caetano dictatorship (1968-1974), was not translated into Portuguese until 1977, that is, until shortly after the independence of Portugal's main African colonies in the wake of the 1974 Carnation Revolution⁹. A few years later, in 1979, the Portuguese television series *Years of the Century*, which included a personal view on the dictatorial period by a left-wing historian (name unknown), was canceled after complaints from the Catholic Church about the first episode. This episode explicitly criticized the support of the Catholic hierarchy for the repression of black nationalists in the former African colonies¹⁰.

In the 1980s, Italy's colonies became the object of two controversies involving film bans. In 1982, *Lion of the Desert*, a Libyan historical film funded by Muammar al-Gaddafi's government, was banned because, in the words of Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti, it was « damaging to the honor of the [Italian] army ». The film depicted the struggle between Omar al-Mukhtar, a Bedouin leader who led the resistance to the Italian colonization of Libya until he was hanged in 1931, and Rodolfo Graziani, a general who attempted to defeat Mukhtar. It showed Italian war crimes such as the killing of prisoners. The movie was screened on television in 2009 only, during Gaddafi's official visit to Italy¹¹.

In 1989 the state broadcasting company RAI bought the two-hour British documentary *Fascist Legacy* by Ken Kirby, placed it in a vault and never aired it. The first part, *A Promise Fulfilled*, showed Italian war crimes committed in Ethiopia during the Second Italo-Abyssinian War of 1935-1936, including the use of mustard gas by the planes of General Pietro Badoglio, the bombing of Red Cross-operated hospitals, the imprisonment of civilians in concentration camps, and the bloody retaliation after the attempt to kill Graziani in February 1937, in which thousands of civilian inhabitants of Addis Ababa were killed¹². American historian Michael Palumbo, who had acted as a consultant for the documentary, received several death threats, some from former soldiers. The documentary

9. D. JONES (ed.), *Censorship: A World Encyclopedia*, London/Chicago, Fitzroy Dearborn, 2001, p. 278, 1918.

10. *Index on Censorship*, 1979, n° 4, p. 68; D. JONES (ed.), *Censorship: A World Encyclopedia*, op. cit., p. 1917.

For an overview of torture in the Luso-African territories, see AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, *Report on Torture*, London, Duckworth, 1973, p. 162-165.

11. L. CAJANI, « The Memory of Italian Colonialism: From the "Good Italian" to the Ferocious "Poor People's Imperialism" » (congress paper; 12 June 2011); « Lion of the Desert », *Wikipedia* [wikipedia.org/wiki/Lion_of_the_Desert].

12. The second part, *A Pledge Betrayed*, covered the period after the Italian capitulation in 1943 when American and British occupiers delayed the extradition of 1,200 Italian war criminals allowing Italy to cover up the crimes after the war.

circulated privately until a broadcasting company eventually aired large excerpts in 2004¹³.

For decades (until 1994), the military archives did not disclose files on these and other war crimes; historians such as Palumbo, Angelo Del Boca and Filippo Focardi had their research on these crimes obstructed. Finally, in 1996, following a parliamentary question and using the recently disclosed military archives, Minister of Defense and General Domenico Corcione admitted the use of gas in Ethiopia at the time¹⁴.

The case of Russia is best approached by recalling that in the former Soviet Union, research into the nineteenth-century annexation of non-Russian nations by Tsarist Russia, their twentieth-century forced sovietization, and the ensuing resistance and uprisings led to the censorship of scores of non-Russian historians¹⁵. The subject was a dangerous one as the official Soviet view of the Tsarist annexations could fluctuate dramatically. In post-1991 Russia, the theme of annexation and occupation of non-Russian territories did not arouse exacerbated controversy during the first two decades. In 2009-2010, however, a much criticized federal memory law was submitted twice to the Duma (the parliament) with the aim of criminalizing attempts to « rehabilitate Nazism¹⁶ ». It sought (among other things) to punish citizens from the Baltic, Eastern European, or former Soviet states who maintained that they had been « occupied » rather than « liberated » by the Soviet Union. The proposed law won almost universal backing in the Duma but received much criticism because of its overbroad definition of Nazi rehabilitation: it regarded criticism of the Soviet Union and glorification of Nazi Germany as equally culpable. Although supporting the principle of the draft law, the government eventually turned it down because of the vagueness of its terms. In the end, it was not approved. Also in 2009, a so-called Historical Truth Commission was created to oppose the « falsification of history to the detriment of Russia's interests ». Among the historical events which observers labeled as sensitive in this regard were the Soviet annexation of the Baltic countries (1940, 1944-1991) and the sovietization of Eastern Europe after 1945. In a letter to President Dmitry Medvedev, the American Historical Association asked to disband the commission as it contradicted the principle of intellectual freedom. Three years later, in 2012, Medvedev indeed dissolved the commission in one of his last acts as president¹⁷.

13. CAJANI, « The Memory of Italian Colonialism: From the "Good Italian" to the Ferocious "Poor People's Imperialism" », *op. cit.*; R. CARROLL, « Italy's Bloody Secret », *The Guardian*, 25 June 2001; « Fascist Legacy », *Wikipedia* [wikipedia.org/wiki/Fascist_Legacy].

14. R. CARROLL, « Italy's Bloody Secret », *op. cit.*

15. See A. DE BAETS, *Censorship of Historical Thought*, *op. cit.*, p. 523-539.

16. According to the United Nations Human Rights Committee, memory laws are laws that penalize the expression of opinions about historical facts.

17. N. ABDULLAEV, « Commission To Guard Against History », *St Petersburg Times*, 26 May 2009; AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION, « Open Letter to President Dmitrii Medvedev », Washington, 17 June 2009; Article 19, « Proposed Law Attempts To Regulate History and Memory », 1 October 2009; Article 19, *Memorandum on the Russian Draft Federal Law « On Combating the Rehabilitation of Nazism, Nazi Criminals or their Collaborators in the Newly Independent States Created on the Territory of Former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics »*, London, Article 19, 2009; *International Journal of Modern Historians*, www.ijmh.org/tol/207.

In the group with a low frequency of cases, Germany, which lost its colonies after World War I, is the only country where something like a pattern can be discerned. As in the Iberian and Turkish cases, the coverage of interwar controversies on colonial questions is missing here. There is, however, some evidence of controversy in the decade from 1965 to 1975. In 1965, a journalist (name unknown) who attacked the *Koloniallegende*—the emphasis on Germany’s achievements in its colonies without mentioning the violence—on television, received death threats¹⁸. Another person (name unknown) who lived abroad had to cope with censorship threats by the German Foreign Office after pointing out parallels between the genocide of the Herero and the Nama in German Southwest Africa in 1904 and the genocide of Jews and Poles in Europe during World War II¹⁹. And in April 1971, historian Gert Sudholt was denied access to the Archiv des Reichskolonialamtes (Archive of the Imperial Colonial Office) in Potsdam for his research into the German colonial policy in Southwest Africa up to 1904. Even so, Sudholt published an utterly controversial book in 1975, which became the first attempt to deny the genocide against the Herero. The discussion about this genocide also flared up vehemently during the centennial of the event in 2004, but no archival obstruction or censorship attempts were reported then²⁰.

High frequency of cases

The second group contains states with a « high frequency of cases », that is, a not so small set of cases that often can be grouped together into patterns. Despite its vast empire, remarkably few cases of censorship could be reported for the United Kingdom until a sudden escalation in 2009. Before that year, only one censorship case was available, and the most noteworthy thing about it was perhaps that it did not revolve around the most important colony, India²¹, but around Iraq. In 1953 Iraqi-born historian Elie Kedourie was examined at Oxford University about his doctoral dissertation, which questioned Britain’s indulgence

pdf]; A. BLOMFIELD, « Russia Threatens To Bar Europeans Who Deny Red Army “Liberated” Them », *The Guardian*, 13 July 2009; Y. KISELYOV, « When Interpreting History Becomes a Crime », *Moscow Times*, 3 June 2009; N. KOPOSOV, « History and Truth: Russian MPs Appeal to Nuremberg », *University Values, A Bulletin on International Academic Freedom, Autonomy & Responsibility*, June 2010; arsatrisk.nyu.edu/documents/UV_JUNE_2010.pdf]; N. KOPOSOV, « Does Russia Need a Memory Law? », *Open Democracy*, opendemocracy.net/od-russia/nikolai-koposov/does-russia-need-memory-law; 16 June 2010.

18. H. BLEY, « Unerledigte Deutsche Kolonialgeschichte », *Entwicklungspolitische Korrespondenz: Zeitschrift zur Theorie und Praxis der Entwicklungspolitik*, 1977, n° 5-6, p. 5; K. JONASSOHN and K. BJÖRNSON, *Genocide and Gross Human Rights Violations in Comparative Perspective*, New Brunswick/London, Transaction Publishers, 1998, p. 78-79.

19. *Ibid.*

20. W. HILLEBRECHT, « “Certain Uncertainties” or Venturing Progressively into Colonial Apologetics? », *Journal of Namibian Studies*, 2007, p. 79, 87-88; K. JONASSOHN and K. BJÖRNSON, *Genocide and Gross Human Rights Violations in Comparative Perspective*, *op. cit.*, p. 78-79; G. SUDHOLT, *Die deutsche Eingeborenenpolitik in Südwesafrika: Von den Anfängen bis 1904*, Hildesheim, Olms, 1975, p. 9-10, 215.

21. At the eve of independence, many colonial records were burned in Delhi. See C. MILMO, « Revealed: How British Empire’s Dirty Secrets Went up in Smoke in the Colonies », *The Observer*, 29 November 2013; see also D. PATEL, « India’s Archives: How Did Things Get This Bad? », *New York Times*, 22 March 2012.

of Arab nationalism in 1914-1921. He refused to make a number of modifications requested by orientalist Hamilton Gibb and eventually withdrew the dissertation. He never received his degree but the work was published unchanged as *England and the Middle East: The Destruction of the Ottoman Empire, 1914-1921* in 1956. Kedourie became a famous scholar in the field, including as founder-editor of the journal *Middle Eastern Studies*²². Almost four decades later, in 1992, historian Clive Ponting complained that official documents from 1919 describing how British forces were ordered to use gas on Iraqi dissidents, including Kurds, after World War I, although first released in 1969, had been removed from the Public Records Office without explanation²³.

And then came the legal case of 2009. Its subject was the Mau Mau rebellion, an uprising in the early 1950s of members of the Gikuyu, Kenya's largest ethnic group, against British colonial rule in order to obtain land and freedom. During the Emergency period installed by British colonial rule from 1952 to 1960 to cope with this rebellion, many human rights violations were committed in special detention camps and enclosed villages against thousands of Kikuyu prisoners suspected of collaborating with the Mau Mau. Despite frequent accusations, colonial authorities in Kenya and the Colonial Office in London systematically denied wrongdoing for decades. Most colonial civil servants remained silent and the critics among them were bound by confidentiality because they had signed the Official Secrets Act. No independent inquiry was held. In 2009, however, some Mau Mau veterans sued the British government in High Court for the abuses inflicted upon them while held in the special camps. The British government eventually acknowledged that colonial forces had tortured and abused detainees during the rebellion. In June 2013, Foreign Secretary William Hague declared that Britain was to pay out almost twenty million pounds in compensation to more than 5,000 elderly Kenyan victims²⁴.

During the above case, it gradually emerged that the United Kingdom had developed an official policy of massive destruction of records when it decolonized its dependent territories. One of the key documents in what was termed Operation Legacy was a 1961 memo by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Iain Macleod. This memo, discovered during the legal proceedings, contained

22. K. BOYD (ed.), *Encyclopedia of Historians and Historical Writing*, London/Chicago, Fitzroy Dearborn, 1999, p. 637-638; E. KEDOURIE, *England and the Middle East: The Destruction of the Ottoman Empire 1914-1921* (originally 1956), London, Mansell/Boulder, CO, Westview Press, 1987, p. 1-8; S. KEDOURIE, « E. Kedourie: A Tribute », in S. KEDOURIE (ed.), *Elie Kedourie 1926-1992: History, Philosophy, Politics*, London / Portland, OR, Frank Cass, 1998, p. 1.

23. Article 19, *Information, Freedom and Censorship: World Report*, London, Article 19, 1991, p. 333; JONES (ed.), *Censorship: A World Encyclopedia*, op. cit., p. 317; *Index on Censorship*, 1992, n° 6, p. 34; 1995, n° 2, p. 27; 2002, n° 1, p. 26; 2003, n° 4, p. 56.

24. AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, *Report 2013*, London, Amnesty International, 2013, p. 285; *BBC News*, 21 July 2011, 18 April 2012, 17 July 2012, 5 October 2012; C. ELKINS, *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya*, New York, Henry Holt, 2005, p. xi-xvi, 275-310, 371-375, 415-421, 429-431; *The Guardian*, 25 January 2010, 5 May 2013, 6 June 2013; P. MWAURA, « Kenya: If Mau Mau Veterans Lose Compensation Case in London Court, Let the People Pay », *The Nation*, <http://www.nation.com/stories/201106060803.html>, 3 June 2011; *The Times*, 5 April 2011.

instructions to classify colonial papers embarrassing for the British authorities or showing « racial prejudice or religious bias ». This had to be carried out according to unofficial classification categories such as « removal », « destruction » and « transfer to the United Kingdom ». In January 2011, the government was forced to admit that, in line with this memo, thousands of files produced in the colonies had been selected for secret « migration » back to Britain prior to their independence. The files were therefore called « migrated files ». Later in 2011, a vast cache of documents was discovered: it contained more than eight thousand files with official records from thirty-seven former colonies and protectorates, including Aden, Cyprus, Kenya and Malaya, sent to London at decolonization. Apart from the Mau Mau uprising, they covered such controversial episodes as the evacuation of the Chagos Islands and the Malayan Emergency (the 1948-1960 conflict with communist insurgents). Most of this archive was made public, with the exception of « certain » files. The reason for the latter to remain secret was secret itself²⁵.

In Belgium, large-scale crimes against humanity committed in King Leopold II's Congo Free State (1885-1908) aroused strong criticism after 1900 and remained a sensitive subject until well into the 1980s, that is, long after the independence of the Belgian Congo—the successor of the Congo Free State—in 1960²⁶. Beginning in 1975, diplomat Jules Marchal published several books in Dutch and French on these crimes under a pseudonym. For eight years he could not gain access to the archives of the Belgian Ministry of Foreign Affairs²⁷. In another case, retired Lieutenant-General Émile Janssens, chief of staff of the


25. *BBC News*, 21 July 2011, 18 April 2012; *The Guardian*, 18 April 2012, 30 November 2012, 26 April 2013, 5 May 2013; HUMAN RIGHTS WORKING GROUP OF THE INTERNATIONAL COUNCIL ON ARCHIVES, *News of August 2013*, p. 4, and *News of November 2013*, p. 1-2, 6; MWAURA, *op. cit.*; *Observer*, 29 November 2013; *The Times*, 5 April 2011.

26. Twice, in 1895 and 1906-1907, when the possible transfer to Belgium of sovereignty over the Congo Free State (CFS) was discussed, the Belgian King Leopold II gave detailed instructions to destroy or transfer to the royal palace the CFS archives. The massive destruction of 1906-1907 led to a parliamentary question and to protests by the Association of Belgian Archivists and Librarians in 1910 (after Leopold's death). The surviving archives were explored by the German occupying forces in World War I, but subsequently treated carelessly until the late 1940s. In 1959, a year before the independence of the Belgian Congo, the Belgian Royal Academy of Colonial Sciences refused twice to publish papers of its member, historian and missionary Edmond Boelaert, because they contained evidence of abuses committed in the early phases of Congo's colonization. The papers were eventually published long after Congo's independence—and the author's death (in 1966)—in 1988 and 1995 respectively. See *Bulletin de l'Académie royale des sciences coloniales*, 1959, p. 508-511 and p. 844-845; J. STENGERS, « Belgian Historiography Since 1945 », in P. EMMER & H. WESSELING (ed.), *Reappraisals in Overseas History*. The Hague, Leiden University Press, 1979, p. 164-165, 180; M. STORME, « E. P. Edmond Boelaert, m.s.c », *Mededelingen der zittingen van de KAOW*, 1967, p. 170, 192; H. VINCK, personal communication to author, June 1999; C. WINTERS (ed.), *International Dictionary of Anthropologists*, New York/London, Garland, 1991, p. 69-70. Also in 1959, the Belgian Minister of Foreign Affairs Pierre Wigny was informed that British historian Ronald Robinson intended to publish a book on the history of imperialism in Africa. Wigny instructed the Belgian embassies in London and New York to check possibilities to persuade Robinson to contact selected Belgian historians to review the Congo Free State passages of his manuscript. See G. VANTHEMSCHE, « The Historiography of Belgian Colonialism in the Congo », in C. LÉVAI (ed.), *Europe and the World in European Historiography*, Pisa, Edizioni Plus & Pisa University Press, 2006, p. 96, 118-119.

27. A. HOCHSCHILD, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*, New York, Houghton Mifflin, 1998, 296-299; VANTHEMSCHE, « The Historiography of Belgian Colonialism in the Congo », *op. cit.*, p. 96, 103, 118-119.

Force Publique (the army of the Belgian Congo) until 1960 and president of the patriotic committee Pro Belgica, wrote a letter to the Minister of National Education concerning historian and anthropologist Daniel Vangroenweghe in 1986. Janssens accused Vangroenweghe of libeling King Leopold II in his 1985 Dutch-language book *Red Rubber: Leopold II and His Congo* by writing about the crimes committed in the Congo Free State. Janssens also questioned Vangroenweghe's position as a secondary-school history teacher. When members of parliament supporting Pro Belgica asked questions about the affair, the minister established a commission of school inspectors, which concluded that the charges were unfounded. Janssens, however, also wrote to the publisher who translated Vangroenweghe's book into French, as a result of which a publisher's note was printed in the 1986 French-language edition to warn readers of its controversial nature. The publisher asked Vangroenweghe to sign a statement that he would take all responsibility in the eventuality of a lawsuit. Although the French-language edition sold out in a few months, it was not reprinted. Pro Belgica also published rebuttals of Vangroenweghe's « lies ». In the course of the affair, Vangroenweghe was threatened in anonymous letters. His public lectures on the subject were interrupted by former colonials and attended by the secret police²⁸.

In the 1990s, the taboo slowly eroded. By the mid-1990s, Vangroenweghe, for example, had become a member of the Biographical Commission of the Royal Academy for Overseas Sciences with little protest. And when a decade later, in 2004, the Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Royal Palace expressed concern about the historical accuracy of a BBC documentary about the crimes in the Congo Free State, « White King, Red Rubber, Black Death », and pressured the television not to broadcast it, the documentary was still aired, albeit accompanied by contextual comments of historians²⁹.

If in Belgium the first stages of colonialism proved the most delicate, in the Netherlands  were its final stages³⁰. The 1984 publication of a volume in the official war history, *Kingdom of the Netherlands in World War II*, dealing with the Dutch East Indies and the later Indonesia, led to a protracted lawsuit. The petitioners—organized in a Committee for the Historical Rehabilitation of the Dutch East Indies—were representatives of part of the community of those who formerly lived in the East Indies. They accused the official historian, Loe de Jong, of portray-

28. D. VANGROENWEGHE, *Rood rubber: Leopold II en zijn Kongo*, Brussels, Elsevier, 1985; A. Louwagie, *Rubber zonder kleur (Wat Van Groenweghe verzwegen)*, Brussels, André Louwagie, 1986; VANTHEMSCHÉ, « The Historiography of Belgian Colonialism in the Congo », *op. cit.*, p. 103-104; B. VERHAEGEN, « Les Violences coloniales au Congo Belge », *Cahiers d'actualité sociale*, March 1987, p. 3, 6. See also *Humo*, 14 March 1985, p. 47-54 (interview with Vangroenweghe); Janssens's public accusations and author's reply in *Brugsch Handelsblad*, 24 and 31 May 1985; publisher's note in French edition; copies of two 1996 letters by Janssens, 17 March to the minister, 7 April to Omer Marchal, director of Didier Hatier Éditions in Brussels; copy of letter by Vangroenweghe to two school inspectors, 10 June 1986; personal communications of Vangroenweghe to author, December 1996, January 1997.

29. P. BELIËN, « Why Belgium Is Denouncing a BBC Documentary about the History of the Congo », *Wall Street Journal*, 8 April 2004.

30. See also A. DE BAETS, « Censorship of History in France and the Netherlands (1945-2014): A Survey », *Deshima, revue d'histoire globale des pays du Nord*, n° 8, 2014, p. 245-270.

ing too negatively the role of the colonial administration. They also objected to passages about war crimes committed by Dutch troops against Indonesian nationalists from 1945 to 1949 and asked the state to commission « a less prejudiced historian » to rewrite the history of colonial relations³¹. The suit was finally decided in De Jong's favor in April 1990. Meanwhile, the 1987 manuscript of De Jong's next volume, again about Dutch-Indonesian relations from 1945 to 1949, was leaked to the press by two military reviewers and evoked new protests from veterans because it contained a forty-six-page section entitled « War Crimes ». Some veterans demanded non-publication of that part, others sued De Jong for libel or published denials of his claims. The defamation case, including the demand for non-publication, was dismissed in 1988, chiefly because the judge ruled that the controversial statements were made in a manuscript, not a published book. When the volume was finally published, the title of the provocative section was changed into « Excesses³² ».

A few years later, Dutch war veterans sued novelist Graa Boomsma because in an interview about his novel *The Last Typhoon* he had said that the behavior of the Dutch military in Indonesia in 1945-1949 had sometimes been comparable to the behavior of SS soldiers during World War II. The case was eventually dismissed³³.

In 1999, at the request of the Dutch parliament, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs commissioned historian Pieter Drooglever to write a study about the decolonization of Papua New Guinea. In the resulting Dutch-language book, published as *An Act of Free Choice: The Papuas of Western New Guinea and the Limits of Self-Determination* in 2005, Drooglever was critical about Indonesia: he described how in 1969 Indonesia had manipulated a referendum on self-determination (« the act of free choice ») held among the Papua population in the former Dutch New Guinea and how it had managed to transform the referendum results into unanimous support for incorporation of the region into Indonesia. He also noted

31. The wars of 1945-1949 between Indonesia and the Netherlands are still commonly called « police actions » in the Netherlands despite the fact that Indonesia had been independent since 1945, that the army was involved in the crimes and that the number of casualties is estimated at over 100,000.

32. R. BOEKHOLT, *De staat, dr. L. de Jong en Indië: Het proces van het Comité Geschiedkundig Eerherstel Nederlands-Indië tegen de Staat der Nederlanden over deel 11A van « Het koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog »*, 29 maart 1986-10 april 1990, Den Haag, Moesson, 1992, p. 209-214, 286-290, 369-375; L. DE JONG, *Het Koninkrijk der Nederlanden in de Tweede Wereldoorlog*, The Hague/Leiden, SDU, vol. 12b, 1988, p. 1011-1012, 1059-1060; vol. 13, 1988, p. 73; vol. 14, 1991, p. 762, 900-918, 931, 937-941, 985-987; M. PAM, *De onderzoekers van de oorlog: Het Rijksinstituut voor Oorlogsdocumentatie en het werk van dr. L. de Jong*, The Hague, SDU, 1989, p. 81-86; P. ROMIJN, « Fifty Years Later: Historical Studies of the Netherlands and the Second World War », in N. VAN SAS & E. WITTE (ed.), *Historical Research in the Low Countries*, The Hague, Nederlands Historisch Genootschap, 1992, p. 102-103; S. SCAGLIOLA, *Last van de oorlog: De Nederlandse oorlogsmisdaden in Indonesië en hun verwerking*, Amsterdam, Balans, 2002, p. 110-112, 124-129, 221-240, 322-352.

33. L. DOYLE, « Colonial Atrocities Explode Myth of Dutch Tolerance », *Independent on Sunday*, 29 May 1994; *Index on Censorship*, 1994, n° 3, p. 179; 1994, n° 4-5, p. 245; 1995, n° 2, p. 181; INTERNATIONAL PEN WRITERS IN PRISON COMMITTEE, *Ifex Alert*, 13 January 1995; *NRC-Handelsblad*, 20 and 26 May 1994; *Volkskrant*, 11 February 1995. For the legal cases, including appeals, see « Zaak-Boomsma », *Mediaforum*, 1994, n° 7-8, p. B66 and 1995, n° 3, p. B36-37; « Zaak-Schaafsma », *Mediaforum*, 1994, n° 7-8, p. B67, and 1995, n° 3, p. B37-38. Also at [concernedhistorians.org/le/225.pdf] and [concernedhistorians.org/le/226.pdf].

that, despite vague concessions from the Dutch during the period 1963-1969 to grant self-determination to the Papuas, the Netherlands and the United Nations did not protest against this manipulation. The book was seen as fomenting separatism and lending support to Papuan independence claims. When it was published, Dutch Minister of Foreign Affairs Ben Bot refused to receive it publicly in order not to harm Dutch-Indonesian relations. Indonesia itself had forbidden entry to Drooglever in 2003 in order to frustrate his project. He was also refused entry to the country after the publication of his book³⁴. All in all, this was a case in which the censorship attempt came from the former colony rather than from the former mother country.

Another affair, this time about the Dutch decolonization policy in the Caribbean between 1940 and 2000, came up in late 2000. The imminent publication of a three-volume official history on the subject was postponed. The authors, Gert Oostindie and Inge Klinkers, had signed a form which granted prepublication approval to the Interior Ministry, which had commissioned the study. The ministry objected against the fact that they had quoted too abundantly from the post-1975 Council of Ministers minutes and other records from the Prime Minister's Office and the ministry itself. After long deliberations, the authors had to delete certain data—particularly those concerning the personal policy views of politicians and civil servants—before the volumes could be published in mid-2001. The authors maintained that the deletions had not affected their analyses or conclusions³⁵.

As in the Netherlands, the last stages of colonialism attracted most attention in France, particularly the decolonization war in Algeria between 1954 and 1962³⁶. Three questions would stir up emotional debates for decades: the massacre following a demonstration by Algerians in favor of independence in Paris on 17 October 1961; the use of torture by the French during the decolonization war (which became the object of an anti-torture campaign in France in the late 1950s); and the question of the colonial archives.

The first issue quickly popped up. *Octobre à Paris*, a 1962 film by Jacques Panijel about the 1961 events, was banned for ten years. In the film, survivors of the massacre were interviewed. Among the documents of France Presse which were made available for researching the film, the file on October 1961 was missing³⁷.

34. P. DROOGLEVER, « Een paar bedenkingen », *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 122, 2007, p. 91-104; personal communication of Drooglever to author, August 2007; H. MEIJER, « "Geschiedenis is nu eenmaal altijd politiek": De studie-Drooglever als symptoom van de moeizame omgang van Nederland met het koloniaal verleden en de complexe relatie met Indonesië », *Bijdragen en mededelingen betreffende de geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 122, 2007, p. 72-90; *NRC Handelsblad*, 15 and 16 November 2005.

35. G. OOSTINDIE & I. KLINKERS, *Knellende koninkrijksbanden: Het Nederlandse dekolonisatiebeleid in de Caraïben, 1940-2000*, vol. 1, 1940-1954, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, 2001, p. 9-11, 23; *NRC Handelsblad*, 16 June 2001.




36. See also A. DE BAETS, « Censorship of History in France and the Netherlands », *op. cit.*



37. L. PASSERINI, « Memories between Silence and Oblivion », in K. HODGKIN & S. RADSTONE (ed.), *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory*, London/New York, Routledge, 2003, p. 243.

Thirty years later, in 1996, an issue of the Algerian daily *Liberté* was seized by the French police because it included an article commemorating the anniversary of the October 1961 demonstration. The article had mentioned a death toll and the disappearance of as many as two hundred people instead of the official tally of three deaths and sixty-four injured. Not much later, in 1998, Maurice Papon, the chief of the Paris police at the time of the 1961 bloodbath, sued historian Jean-Luc Einaudi for libel because the latter had written in the newspaper *Le Monde* that the 1961 events constituted a « massacre perpetrated by the police on Papon's orders ». In addition, Einaudi had denounced the removal or destruction of several relevant archives. In 1999, the court ruled that Einaudi's statement had been defamatory. Damages were not awarded, however, because the court also maintained that Einaudi's method had been sufficiently careful. The affair had two important results. During the trial, the deputy prosecutor accepted that the 1961 events constituted a « massacre ». This marked the end of official silence on the events. And in the same year the National Assembly officially acknowledged that France had fought a « war » rather than « an order-keeping operation » against Algerian nationalists from 1954 to 1962. In October 2012, President François Hollande attended a commemoration of the massacre, thereby officially recognizing it³⁸.

The issue of torture also quickly emerged³⁹. In 1966, Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers*, a film about the decolonization war, touched this raw nerve. Shot on location in Algiers in 1965 with the assistance of the Algerian government, it gave a sympathetic account of the Algerian liberation struggle and criticized the use of torture by the French colonial authorities. It was banned for five years in France; the film's eventual release was delayed because cinema managers were intimidated. The film was also banned in the United Kingdom (including Hong Kong) and several other countries⁴⁰.

In the second volume of his memoirs, *Le Trouble et la lumière 1955-1998* (1998), Pierre Vidal-Naquet, a historian who had played a leading role in the anti-torture campaign of the 1950s, stated twice that Jean-Marie Le Pen, leader of the extreme-right Front National, had been a torturer during the war in Algeria. In so

38.  had been an early case in 1960, when the Audin Committee (campaigning in the case of the disappearance and death after imprisonment and torture of French communist Maurice Audin in French Algeria in June 1957) sued the journal *La Voix du Nord* in Lille for defamation. In 1959, the committee had published an article about Audin in *Libération* and some other newspapers. In a reaction published in 1960, journalist Georges Ras charged in the *Voix du Nord*, a conservative newspaper in Lille,  the Audin Committee had no proof for its allegations and deliberately deceived the public. In May 1960,  the court in Lille first acquitted the newspaper, but after appeal, in January 1970, it was fined for the symbolic amount of 100 French francs.

39. AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL, *Report 2001*, London, Amnesty International, 2001, p. 21-22, 103; B.  CHE, « The State, the Historians and the Algerian War in French Memory, 1991-2004 », in H. JONES, K.  BERG & N. RANDERAAD (ed.), *Contemporary History on Trial: Europe Since 1989 and the Role of the Expert Historian*, Manchester/New York, Manchester University Press, 2007, p. 164-165, 168; S. COMBE, *Archives interdites: L'Histoire confisquée*, second edition, Paris, La Découverte, 2001, p. xvii-xxiii; *Index on Censorship*, 1997, n° 1, p. 113; 1999, n° 5, p. 130; 2001, n° 1, p. 80-86; *Le Monde*, 25 October 1997, 20 May 1998, 19 June 1998, 11 September 1998, 5 and 6 and 8 and 13 and 15 and 24 and 27 February 1999, 29 March 1999.

40. *Index on Censorship*, 1981, n° 4, p. 24; D. JONES (ed.), *Censorship: A World Encyclopedia, op. cit.*, p. 39-40, 808, 1903-1904.

doing, Vidal-Naquet only repeated an allegation he had already made decades before in his book *Torture: Cancer of Democracy* (1963). But in 1999, Le Pen sued Vidal-Naquet for defamation. The verdict was similar as in the Einaudi case: the judge called Vidal-Naquet's statements defamatory but acquitted him because he had acted in good faith and within the context of a legitimate debate. In 1957 and 1962, Le Pen had publicly acknowledged having practiced torture in Algeria in 1957, but later, in 1974, he had denied it. The judge reasoned that Le Pen could not feel insulted for actions about which he had once prided himself⁴¹.

In 2001, Louise Ighilahriz and Henri Pouillot sued General Maurice Schmitt in defamation because the latter had doubted on television the veracity of their testimonies about the Algerian war; they won the case⁴². As late as 2009, the European Court of Human Rights held unanimously that France had violated the freedom of expression of Olivier Orban and Xavier de Bartillat. Both authors had been convicted in France in 2002 for « publicly defending war crimes » in their bestselling book *Special Services: Algeria 1955-57* (2001) because they had described the views of General Paul Aussaresses, a former member of the Special Services who had defended the use of torture and summary executions carried out during the decolonization war⁴³.

The third issue was documentation. The 1962 Evian treaty that resulted in Algeria's independence did not include a statement on the destiny of the colonial archives or the return of official documents removed by the French between 1830 (the start of their colonial rule) and 1962. Nevertheless, these items became disputed over time. On the fiftieth anniversary of independence, in July 2012, Algeria declined a French proposal that it would get access to copies of the disputed archival items on condition that it abandoned its ownership claim to them. France argued that since the archives were collected by French officials when Algeria was part of France, it was the legitimate owner, whereas Algeria retorted that French rule was imposed against its will and that documents originated on Algerian soil were Algerian property⁴⁴.

Algeria was the main focus of attention, but not the only one. In 1976, the French government tried to prevent the distribution in its ex-colonies of Jean Guillebaud's *Les Confettis de l'empire*, a book about a dozen smaller French overseas possessions in the final years of colonialism. The government asked booksellers

41. R. BRANCHE, « The State, the Historians and the Algerian War in French Memory, 1991-2004 » *op. cit.*, p. 164; *Le Monde*, 15 September 1999. Others also initiated libel proceedings, such as Jacques Soustelle who in 1967 sued three authors and their publisher René Julliard for the way in which he was portrayed in their book *Histoire de l'Organisation de l'armée secrète*. The authors were acquitted.

42. R. BRANCHE, « The State, the Historians and the Algerian War in French Memory, 1991-2004 », *op. cit.*, p. 166.

43. R. BRANCHE, « The State, the Historians and the Algerian War in French Memory, 1991-2004 », *op. cit.*, p. 165-166; COUR EUROPÉENNE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME, *Affaire Orban et autres c. France*, 15 January 2009; [concernedhistorians.org/le/183.pdf].

44. « Controversy between Algeria and France over Archives », 6 July 2012; [docexblog.com/2012/07/controversy-between-algeria-and-france.html] [link unstable]; D. GORDON, *Self-determination and History in the Third World*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1971, p. 159; C. LOWE, « Algeria, France Tussle over Archives 50 Years after Split », Reuters, 4 July 2012.

in the ex-colonies not to display the book in their windows and some governors and commissioners bought all available copies. The book was eventually not banned, but the censorship attempt generated extra publicity⁴⁵. *Camp Thiaroye*, an Algerian film about the brutal French suppression of dissidence by Senegalese soldiers in 1944, was called « inaccurate » and banned in France and Senegal⁴⁶.

Just as torture in colonial Algeria regularly stirred up emotions, so did other crimes. In 1991, Georges Boudarel, a historian of Southeast Asian history working at the University of Paris-VII, was publicly accused of crimes against humanity, committed while he lived in French Vietnam in the early 1950s. Several hundred demonstrators in Paris asked Minister of Education Lionel Jospin to dismiss him, but the minister refused. The university defended Boudarel's position and provided some physical protection against violent attacks. A philosophy and history teacher in Saigon from 1946 acting as a representative of the French Communist Party in Indochina, Boudarel had defected to the Vietminh and arrived in North Vietnam in 1952. For over a year, he fulfilled the function of political instructor in a prison camp there. Responsible for the re-education of French prisoners, he allegedly subjected them to moral and psychological torture. At the time, he was sentenced to death in France for insubordination and desertion. He stayed in Vietnam as an exile until 1964 and subsequently went to Prague. Following the 1966 general amnesty for colonial crimes in France, he returned to Paris. He reportedly never denied or concealed the events of November 1952-January 1954. A few months after the protests against him had started, he was effectively charged with crimes against humanity but the court rejected them because of the amnesty law. The Cour de Cassation confirmed this judgment in 1993. Meanwhile, in 1992, Boudarel himself had sued for defamation the former inmates of the camp where he served, but this case was eventually dismissed. As late as 2003, the European Court of Human Rights declared inadmissible an application of the Association nationale des anciens prisonniers internés déportés d'Indochine (ANAPI; National Association of Former Prisoners Deported from Indochina) regarding the Boudarel case for procedural reasons. Boudarel died nine months later⁴⁷.

In another legal case from 2005, the Collectif DOM des Antillais-Guyanais-Réunionnais sued historian Olivier Pétré-Grenouillau in Paris because he had allegedly denied that the slave trade was a crime against humanity in an interview—whereas the 2001 Taubira law had given it that status. In the interview, however, Pétré-Grenouillau had denied that the slave trade was a genocide, not that it was a crime against humanity: the European slave traders' intent, he (correctly) argued, was not to destroy the slaves but to exploit them as cheap labor. Observers thought that the real motive behind the accusation was Pétré-Grenouillau's 2004 book *Les Traîtes*

45. P. CALVOCORESSI, *Freedom to Publish*, Stockholm, International Publishers Association, 1980, p. 98-99; *Index on Censorship*, 1979, n° 6, p. 44.

46. J. BLACK, *Using History*, London, Hodder Arnold, 2005, p. 31.

47. COUR EUROPÉENNE DES DROITS DE L'HOMME, *Affaire Sobanski c. France*, 20 March 2003; www.ernedhistorians.org/le/163.pdf; *Le Monde*, 14, 19, 20 and 22 March 1991, 16 and 17 September 1991, 3 April 1993.

négrières: Essai d'histoire globale [The Black-Slave Trade: Essay in Global History], which viewed the slave trade as a phenomenon of thirteen centuries on five continents, of which the European slave trade (1500-1900) was but one part (albeit an important one). The charges were dropped in 2006⁴⁸.

Another clear manifestation of a national debate about colonialism took place around the same time. In April 2005, more than a thousand history teachers and other historians, writers and intellectuals signed a petition demanding the repeal of a new law requiring school history teachers to stress the « positive aspects » of the French overseas presence. The signatories maintained that this measure imposed an official version of history, obliterating the suffering caused by the French empire. Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika commented that the law « was a sign of mental blindness bordering on negationism and revisionism ». As a result, Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin declared that politicians should not determine the contents of history teaching. In 2006, the controversial law was repealed by presidential decree⁴⁹.


Conclusion

Censorship about past colonialism took place in some European states, while in others it did not, but it is very difficult to explain why. Several factors probably account for this discrepancy, most likely in combination. The historical importance of the colonial empire in terms of political and economic benefits for the mother country, the « embarrassment factor » of colonial crimes (depending to a certain extent on the disclosure of the records still available), the presence of migrants from the former colonies, the strength of postcolonial democracy—these are all factors with a censorship potential.

Likewise, it is hard to explain why the censorship attempts occurred when they did. Censorship attempts, when they occurred, were undertaken at very diverse moments: they could arise immediately after independence of the colony and fade away after some years, they could continue for decades, or, with amazing frequency, they could suddenly pop up several decades after independence of the colony. There were recent affairs and scandals in most of the major formerly colonizing countries—with the fierce debates about proposed memory laws in Russia and France and the « migrated archives » affair in the United Kingdom as prime examples. These show that the colonial past has a strong and lasting scandal potential so as to make censorship attempts attractive until many years after the fact.

48. In December 2005, 19 historians, including Pierre Nora (Pétre-Grenouillau's publisher with Gallimard), signed a petition in support of Pétre-Grenouillau and in protest against the increasing judicialization of history in France. They founded the association, *Liberté pour l'histoire*, with the aim of abolishing all French memory laws. The petition was eventually signed by more than 550 historians. For the affair, see, among others, *Libération*, 30 November 2005, 8 June 2006, 10 August 2006; R. RÉMOND, *Quand l'État se mêle de l'Histoire*, Paris, Stock, 2006, p. 8, 38-40, 94-95.

49. *Le Figaro*, 14 December 2005; *The Guardian*, 15 April 2005; *Index on Censorship*, 2006, n° 3, p. 5; *Libération*, 13 December 2005; *NRC Handelsblad*, 18 December 2012, p. 11.


In most states, the censors belonged to the executive branch of government, but parliaments, courts of law and unofficial interest groups were also important players. They used a wide array of tools: memory laws (Russia, France); archival obstruction (Britain, Germany, Belgium, France) and archival destruction (Britain, Belgium, France); court cases (often for charges of defamation, most notably in the Netherlands and France); pressure on television programs (Portugal, Belgium); bans or ban attempts of films (Italy, France), newspapers (France), and books (Portugal, Belgium, France); pressure on superiors (Belgium); and, in some cases, threats of dismissal (Belgium, France), and threats of violence and death threats (Italy, Germany, France). Remarkably, the field of history education stayed relatively aloof from  controversies. In contrast to Japan or Australia, conflicts about the teaching of history in Europe, however prolific, appeared to relate rarely to the former colonies, except at one moment in Belgium (the attempt to dismiss a secondary-school teacher) and France (the 2005 law on the « positive aspects » of the French overseas presence).

Surprisingly, the censorship attempts were related not to all of the former colonies but only to some of them and the selected colonies were sometimes not the obvious candidates: the African colonies in the case of Portugal (but not Brazil which had become independent in 1822); Iraq and Kenya in the case of Britain (but not India); Southwest Africa in the case of Germany (but not East Africa); the Congo Free State (but less so the Belgian Congo and not Rwanda and Urundi) in the case of Belgium.







In some states, colonialism in general was at stake, in others, like Belgium, it was the conquest of the colony, in still others, like Britain, the Netherlands and France, it was the final phase of colonialism which was the most controversial. Usually, the problematic part of the colonial past was related to three types of events: firstly, crimes which we would call today genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes, including slavery and torture; secondly, discrimination and exploitation of the labor of the colonized; and, finally, resistance of the colonized to annexation and incorporation and the latter's acts of nationalism, which threw doubt on the blessings of the colonizers and accentuated the historical agency of the colonized in the process.

Colonialism was a totalitarian enterprise, in which the colonial state preached enlightened forms of colonialism while usually ruling with an iron fist and white-washing or justifying colonial violence with a story of triumph and civilization⁵⁰. After the colonies were relinquished, colonial violence came to be seen by most former colonizers as adversely affecting the democratic legitimation of power and the construction of a national identity, in short, as a source of shame. Often, the reaction to this shame provoked by colonial violence was silence and censorship rather than open debate.



50. See, e.g., M. FERRO (ed.), *Le Livre noir du colonialisme, xv^e-xx^e siècle: De l'Extermination à la repentance*, Paris, Robert Laffont, 2003.

But this does not make a fundamental problem of democracy go away. If states want to be democratic, they have to draw legitimacy not only from presenting themselves as the continuation of earlier democratic episodes but also from proving that they broke enduringly with earlier dictatorial episodes in their own history like colonial experiences. From my overview, however, it became clear that this was often not the case, especially, it seems, during the first decades after independence, when shame and embarrassment often inspired, if not imposed, silence and lack of debate⁵¹. A delayed debate about the colonies may be an indicator of historical trauma. Silence and censorship about the colonial past clearly signal that even consolidated democracies find it hard to comply with one essential precondition of a sound democracy, that is, with responsibly dealing with their violent past by means of an ongoing public debate. Democratic states should be aware of this when they criticize other countries for similar shortcomings and look their own violent past frankly in the eye. 

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51. This is exactly what many observers have noted regarding the Holocaust: a pervasive silence about the Holocaust installed itself until at least the late 1950s.

- PASSERINI L., « Memories between Silence and Oblivion », in K. HODGKIN & S. RADSTONE (ed.), *Contested Pasts: The Politics of Memory*, London/New York, Routledge, 2003. 
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