Memory and Power in Post-War Europe

How has memory – collective and individual – influenced European politics after the Second World War and after 1989 in particular? How has the past been used in domestic struggles for power, and how have ‘historical lessons’ been applied in foreign policy? While there is now a burgeoning field of social and cultural memory studies, mostly focused on commemorations and monuments, this volume is the first to examine the connection between memory and politics directly. It investigates how memory is officially recast, personally reworked and often violently re-instilled after wars, and above all, the ways in which memory shapes present power constellations.

The chapters combine theoretical innovation in their approach to the study of memory with deeply historical, empirically based case studies of major European countries. The point of stressing memory is not to deny that interests shape policy, but, with Max Weber, to analyse the historically and ideologically conditioned formation and legitimation of these interests. The volume concludes with reflections on the ethics of memory, and the politics of truth, justice and forgetting after 1945 and 1989.

This ground-breaking book should be of interest to historians of contemporary Europe, political scientists, sociologists and anyone interested in how the political uses of the past have shaped – and continue to shape – the Europe in which we live now.

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Studies in the Presence of the Past

Edited by

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For as at a great distance of place, that which wee look at, appears dimme, and without distinction of the smaller parts; and as Voyces grow weak, and inarticulate: so also after great distance of time, our imagination of the Past is weak; and wee lose (for example) of Cities wee have seen, many particular Streets; and of Actions, many particular Circumstances. This *decaying sense*, when wee would express the thing itself, (I mean fancy itselfe, we call *Imagination*, as I said before: But when we would express the *decay*, and signifie that the Sense is fading, old, and past, it is called *Memory*. So that *Imagination* and *Memory*, are but one thing . . .

Hobbes, *Leviathan*
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Acknowledgements

The editor wishes to thank the Warden and Fellows of All Souls College, Oxford, for giving permission to hold a conference on 'Memory and Power in Post-War Europe' at All Souls on 26–7 June 1998. Especially warm thanks are due to Sir Julian Bullard and Robert O'Neill as co-directors of the All Souls Foreign Policy Studies Programme for intellectually and financially supporting this project throughout. The college staff and Julie Edwards in particular were unfailingly helpful with logistics. For stimulating comments at the conference, thanks to Erica Benner, Kathy Burk, Richard Crampton, Alex Danchev, Michael Ignatieff, Yuen Foong Khong, Ernest May, Jeffrey K. Olick, Alex Pravda, Peter Pulzer and Gesine Schwan. For useful remarks on the manuscript as a whole, thanks also to a number of anonymous readers. Finally, support from Tony Judt, Jair Kessler and the staff at the Remarque Institute of New York University during the conclusion of the project is very gratefully acknowledged.


At the Soviet War Memorial in Berlin's Treptower Park, residents lay flowers on the 75th anniversary of the surrender of Nazi Germany. Here, too, there is no large-scale event, and instead social distancing and protective masks during the coronavirus pandemic. When Vladimir Putin came to power he took a new tack, unofficially making Victory Day the nation's most important public holiday. From that point, the parade saw ever more soldiers participating, as well as the presentation of the country's most advanced military hardware. World War II memorials around the globe. RAF Bomber Command Memorial in London, UK. The sculpture depicts a Bomber Command crew and is dedicated to the 55,573 Allied aircrew killed in World War II.
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10 Today Europe rummages through drawers of memories, particularly those which contain the traumatic lies of the First World War, the Second World War, fascism and communism.

2 Dubravka Ugresić. The best that can be achieved is to know precisely what [the past] was, and to endure this knowledge, and then to wait and see what comes of knowing and enduring.

The future of the transatlantic relationship is rarely out of the headlines in Europe or North America. Despite the closeness, the relationship faces as it has always done new and familiar challenges. This report offers views on the future of transatlantic relations from scholars who are at the start of their careers, with European and US perspectives on what the future holds in defence, economics, values, and relations with emerging powers.