

**The Hitler-Stalin Pact of 1939 in European History, Memory,
and International Law. With a case study on Romania**
(Abstract)

Dietmar MÜLLER*
Stefan TROEBST**

Keywords: Hitler-Stalin Pact, politics of history, European memory culture, international law, Romanian post-communist anti-communism.

The non-aggression pact and secret additional protocol from 23 August 1939 is among the historical events of the twentieth century that had the furthest-reaching consequences in terms of politics, ideology and the culture of remembrance. No other bilateral treaty so deeply influenced the fate of more states, nations and minority groups in Europe, primarily in East Central Europe, than the Hitler-Stalin Pact. The date 23 August 1939, when Europe was divided into one National Socialist and one Soviet half in the state politics of history and in the culture of remembrance of the public and civil society, is virtually absent in Western Europe and the US. In East Central Europe, particularly in those states which were directly affected by the Pact and which found themselves on the eastern side of the Iron Curtain after 1945, the liberation from Nazi Germany is often interpreted as a replacement of the brown dictatorship by the red.

The text starts with an overview of trends and topics in the international historiography on the Hitler-Stalin Pact, continues with a reflection on the spatially differentiated naming of the pact, which leads to a discussion of the pact's different role as a *lieux de mémoire* in the US and Western Europe, in East Central and Eastern Europe. The international law dimension of the pact is discussed in the context of recent events, like the annexation of the Crimea.

The case study on Romania is based on the complicated and changing alliances of the country in World War II, but focuses more on the Hitler-Stalin Pact in Romanian politics of memory and culture of remembrance. Until recently, the pact was interpreted and remembered as a symbol of Romania's historical victimization, while the participation of Romania under Marshall Ion Antonescu in World War II was seen as a just case.

* Dr., Geisteswissenschaftliche Zentrum Geschichte und Kultur Ostmitteleuropas (GWZO),
Universitatea din Leipzig; muellerd@uni-leipzig.de

** Dr., profesor, Geisteswissenschaftliche Zentrum Geschichte und Kultur Ostmitteleuropas (GWZO),
Universitatea din Leipzig; troebst@uni-leipzig.de