

REMEMBERING AND FORGETTING IN CONTEMPORARY FRANCE

Napoleon, Slavery, and the French History Wars¹

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On the front cover of Claude Ribbe's *Le Crime de Napoléon* is a photograph of Hitler surrounded by a bevy of generals looking down at the tomb of Napoleon at the Invalides during his visit there after the fall of France in 1940.² The message is clear: the author is thus directly associating Napoleon with Hitler and, as we shall see as Ribbe develops his argument, with the Holocaust. Napoleon, Ribbe claims, is guilty of a "triple crime" against humanity: the reintroduction of slavery in 1802; the deportation and killing of large numbers of Africans (or people of African origin); and the massacre of blacks that took on a "genocidal nature" and that prefigured the policy of racial extermination carried out by the Nazis during the Second World War (12-13). "Le crime est si impardonnable", writes Ribbe, "qu'il a provoqué plus de deux siècles de mensonges. Car les faits sont bien connus des historiens, mais volontairement passés sous silence" (13).

This is certainly not the first time that French colonization has been associated with genocide, and certainly not the first time that Napoleon has been compared to Hitler, the twin pillars upon which this book is founded.³ Ribbe, however, takes the comparison a step further, expressly associating Napoleon, the "first racist dictator in history," a violent "negrophobe" and hater of Jews, not only with Hitler but also with the Holocaust. Without attempting to substantiate his claims, the author argues that Hitler was inspired by Napoleon—"sans le précédent de Napoléon, pas de lois de Nuremberg"—that Napoleon put "negroes" in their place, and that he was the first to "rationally pose the question of how to eliminate in a minimum of time, with a minimum of costs and a minimum of personnel, a maximum number of people declared *scien-*

tifically inferior" (25). And just like Hitler, there were never any written orders; everything was either verbal or implicit (99, 110-11).

Admittedly, "genocide" is a term perhaps used too freely by some historians and contemporary political commentators attempting to get their point across, but in this particular instance the direct association between Hitler, Napoleon and the Holocaust—Ribbe refers, for example, to the "*reich napoléonien*"—is a not so subtle manner of condemning contemporary France and its attitude towards race. For Ribbe's book is also, and perhaps above all, an invective against contemporary French attitudes towards race. France has remained racist because it does not want to recognize its own past, as the descendants of slavery can easily verify by a walk through the streets of Paris. "Au vingt et unième siècle, dans les prestigieux quartiers de Paris où s'alignent encore les anciennes résidences des colons de Saint Domingue, on ne tolère les 'nègres' que pour faire peur à l'entrée des magasins de luxe et les 'négresses' que pour pousser les landaus des enfants 'blancs'" (22-23). To argue that the inferiority of Africans and their instrumentalization are at the basis of the Napoleonic system (34), or that slavery was fundamental in Napoleon's economic and geo-political thinking (45)—both historically inaccurate interpretations—is to argue that contemporary French society is built on those same foundations. Indeed, everything Napoleon did after his ascension to power aimed at not only restoring, but also to developing slavery. It was re-established on his personal initiative; it was the key to his system (87); and it was born of a "racial" vision for France and Europe (95).

The use of historical comparisons is a dubious exercise at the best of times, especially when it is done to impose contemporary moral standards on past events. If one were to compare the Napoleonic wars with a recent historical event then it would perhaps be more appropriate to do so not with Hitler and the Holocaust, but rather with America's war on Japan during the Second World War. Let me explain. American soldiers in their fight against the Japanese in the Pacific between 1942 and 1945 were often racist, American government propaganda was often geared to treating the Japanese foe as subhuman, and some high-ranking American admirals and generals even went so far as to propose the total extermination of the Japanese people.⁴ But America's war in the Pacific was not, for all that, a racial war. Unlike the Germans in Eastern Europe, they did not embrace a racial ideology whose objective *was* the total annihilation of certain peoples based on a perverted notion of which race was "pure" and which was not. A clear distinction, in other words, has to be made between racism and racial ideology. Napoleon may have been racist, and the treatment of the black as foe on Saint Domingue certainly had racist overtones, but he and his French generals were not conducting a racial war based on a racial ideology.

Ribbe is certainly justified in detailing the gruesome manner in which the repression took place: the use of dogs, the suffocation of slaves on prison boats—called *étouffoirs*—through the use of sulphur dioxide (although Ribbe

inexcusably draws a parallel with the gas chambers and Zyklon B); mass deportations and imprisonment (here too the comparison with concentration camps is made); decapitations, shootings, and mass drownings. Historians estimate that on Saint Domingue, out of an estimated 500,000 slaves in 1789, about one third had perished by 1800.⁵ For Napoleon, however, this was not a question of race as Ribbe is at pains to underline, but rather a question of restoring “law and order” and of suppressing opposition to his regime. To that extent the inhabitants of Saint Domingue were treated in the same manner as Italian or Spanish villagers in revolt, or indeed as French peasants in revolt, that is, without mercy. The “genocide,” as some right-wing historians of the French Revolution refer to it, committed by the revolutionary armies as they swept through the Vendée in revolt—deaths are estimated at between 220-250,000 insurgents and between 100-220,000 republican soldiers, that is, as much as 20 percent of the local population—is an example of how resistance to a centralizing authority was dealt with.⁶ Mass drownings—the *noyades de la Loire*—were first used by French revolutionaries against French men, women and children in the Vendée.

“La Querelle des Mémoires”

The reception of this work in France was for the most part less than favorable. Historians on the left criticized it, not for pointing out the crimes of Napoleon, but for drawing a parallel between his regime and the Third Reich. Those who defend Ribbe, like the “Collectif des Antillais, Guyanais, Réunionnais,” an organization founded to defend the rights of French from the overseas territories, do so on the grounds that this episode in French history has been overlooked, especially by Napoleonic scholars that have had a tendency to portray Napoleon’s regime in a positive light, by focusing on the institutions that he left modern France. Ribbe has attacked an iconic national figure, they explain, and that is why his critics have been so relentless.

Napoleon is no doubt an iconic figure but, as we shall see below, the French nevertheless have an ambivalent attitude towards him, as indeed they often have towards aspects of their past that may have had disastrous consequences on the course of their own national as well as European history. All the same, the French are, generally speaking, aghast at the idea that one could ever question Napoleon’s genius, not to mention his “contribution” to Europe, while comparisons between Napoleon and Hitler (an observation based on my own anecdotal dinner-table conversations in Paris) certainly irk many educated French. The refusal (it would appear) of contemporary French historians to recognize (let alone research) the untold suffering wrought upon the peoples of Europe by the French revolutionary and imperial armies in a war that lasted twenty-two years and resulted in the deaths of approximately four million soldiers—no calculations have been made of the loss of civilians—can be

put down to a natural tendency to not dwell on the negative aspects of the past and to celebrate the positive. Is it not better to commemorate the Code Civil (later the Code Napoleon) rather than the death and suffering wrought by invasion and occupation?

Similar approaches, that is, the desire to obviate the darker sides of national histories, can be found in other countries. In Australia, conservatives use the term the “Black Armband view of history” to underline their belief that left-wing historians overly critical of Australia’s past have tended to dwell on negative aspects that were better left alone.⁷ In the United States, what became known as the History Wars centered on an exhibition held at the Smithsonian Institute to commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the war against Japan.⁸ A veterans’ association, with the help of Republican politicians, objected to the way in which the bombing of Hiroshima was portrayed, and insisted on control of the exhibit. In Japan, the ministry of education refuses to approve textbooks that make any reference to Japanese military atrocities during the Second World War. In France, the focus on those aspects of the past that most French would prefer to forget—the systematic use of torture during the Algerian War of Independence, for example—is referred to as “la remontée du souvenir noir,” while the debate over France’s colonial past in recent times has earned the title “the memory dispute” (*la querelle des mémoires*).⁹ During the presidential election campaign of 2007 the then candidate for the right, Nicolas Sarkozy, declared that the French had to stop “repenting” about the past and accused those with a “moralizing conscience” of re-writing history “dans le seul but de mettre la nation en accusation.”¹⁰ The controversy that surrounded Ribbe’s work, not particularly important in and of itself even though it could be included in the ongoing French History Wars, nevertheless coincided with two other events that marked the French political landscape in 2005: the law introduced governing the teaching of colonial history in French schools; and the November urban riots. The riots in particular brought into sharp focus the public debates surrounding the role of history and memory in French society.

In February 2005, the ruling conservative party introduced draft legislation stating that high school teachers were to teach the history of colonization in a positive light, especially that concerning North Africa, that is, in terms of the advances brought to the peoples colonized. (Exactly just how teachers were meant to do this was a detail the legislators never bothered with.)¹¹ The Mekachera law, as it was known, named after a former *harki* and the minister delegate for veterans affairs, Hamlaoui Mekachera, was meant to be a means of recognizing the contribution made by all those non-French who had fought on behalf of France in Indochina and North Africa.¹² The law appears to have gone largely unnoticed until the rioting of November 2005, when it suddenly became a political football in the struggle between two right-wing politicians.¹³ On the one hand, President Jacques Chirac established a parliamentary inquiry to “evaluate the actions of parliament in the domains of memory

and history,” while his main rival on the right, and his own minister for the interior, Nicolas Sarkozy, commissioned a study on “law, history and the duty of memory” headed by the controversial lawyer, Arno Klarsfeld.¹⁴

French historians had been slow to react. A number of academics, some of them specializing in colonial history, formed an association called *Liberté pour l'Histoire*, presided by René Rémond, a member of the Académie française. They published a petition in *Le Monde* demanding that the Mekachera law be repealed,¹⁵ arguing that not only was the state interfering with the way in which history was taught by imposing its official version—nothing new in the history of French education and history—but that it was also a kind of rehabilitation of colonization.¹⁶ About 600 historians eventually signed the petition. The association went further, however. It demanded the abrogation of three other laws, one passed in 1990 that punished Holocaust denial (*la loi Gayssot*), one passed in May 2001 (*la loi Taubira-Ayrault*) recognizing slavery as a crime against humanity, and the law (passed in January 2001) that acknowledged the Armenian genocide.¹⁷ This was largely in response to a court action that had been taken out against a young historian, Olivier Pétré-Grenouilleau, author of a hefty tome on slavery, accused of revisionism by the Collectif des Antillais-Guyanais-Réunionnais, of which Ribbe is a member, for arguing that the slave trade could not be associated with the Holocaust because it did not have as its objective the extermination of a race but rather its maximum exploitation.¹⁸ The Collectif was using the Taubira law to argue that Pétré-Grenouilleau was an apologist, and to accuse him of racial defamation. The association for the *Liberté pour l'Histoire* was nevertheless able to exert enough pressure on the government for Chirac to suppress the offending article in the Mekachera law by executive decree in January 2006, and for the Collectif des Antillais-Guyanais-Réunionnais to withdraw its complaint the following month.

Trafalgar but Not Austerlitz

The polemic surrounding the interference of politicians in history teaching, and French historians' reactions to it, raise basic questions about the use of history, how the past is remembered, and how it is commemorated in France. As in other countries where similar debates have taken place, historians in France have been criticized for delving at length into aspects of colonial history, such as the war in Algeria, or episodes in domestic history, such as collaboration during Vichy, that show the French character in a less than flattering light. Prominent historians, such as René Rémond, have entered the fray and attempted to defend the role of the historian in public. History, argues Rémond, has always been used for what he calls collective ends, to inculcate a sentiment of belonging to a political community, to honor the memory of its founders, or to construct a national identity. Rémond is in fact

referring to the ways in which history used to be written and used—"instrumentalized" is the word he uses—in the nineteenth and into the twentieth centuries. Today, however, the "duty to remember" [*devoir de mémoire*] is understood differently.¹⁹ We now expect history to rectify the injustices of the past by paying particular attention to groups that had often been forgotten, but it is now also an "invitation pressante à reconnaître ses fautes et à avouer ses crimes." This too is nevertheless a way of "instrumentalizing" history, of subjecting it to (ideological) ends that have no role in history. The duty of the historian, according to Rémond, is to establish the truth, even more than contributing to a sense of justice (even though the two imperatives do not contradict each other). He is aware that absolute truth is inaccessible—like a line on the horizon that one never reaches and which retreats indefinitely—but that one should nevertheless strive after it.

To this extent, the practice of memory, even if it has led to substantial progress in historical knowledge, is not particularly satisfying. One of the objections that Rémond raises is that memory tends to focus on the dark pages of the past. He is not suggesting that they should remain hidden, or that past mistakes and crimes should not be brought to light, but that this approach imposes "une vision criminaliste" that is not without consequences for the way in which we view humanity. Rémond does not go so far as to call the focus on memory a falsification of history, but he does believe it to be a distortion that gives a false image of our time. The work of the historian is not to isolate or privilege a particular event, a criticism that he directs at memory, but to place it in context. Rémond and others like him are essentially arguing that the recognition of histories marginal to the grand traditional narrative have undermined confidence in France's own identity. The two phenomena are interrelated and may in part help explain the state's reluctance, for example, to celebrate Napoleon during the various bicentenaries that have come and passed.

A good example of this is the kerfuffle surrounding the bicentenary of the battle of Austerlitz. A pan-European re-enactment of the battle was planned for 3 December 2005 (the actual battle took place on 2 December) attracting about 4,000 participants, military history enthusiasts decked out in various uniforms of the period, who were watched by about 30,000 spectators as they went through their paces on the snow-covered fields outside the village of Tvarožná, about 15 kilometers east of Brno in the Czech Republic. The re-enactment was not attended by any representatives of the French (or any other) government. No official explanation was given, although some journalists made the connection between the refusal on the part of the French to participate in the celebrations, the appearance of Ribbe's book, and the recent urban riots.²⁰ The only concession made by the French government occurred when the Minister of defense, Michèle Alliot-Marie, made an appearance at a dinner in the Czech Republic organized by the Fondation Charles de Gaulle. She did not, however, attend the reconstruction planned for the next day.

Similarly, a ceremony held on 2 December beneath the column at the Place Vendôme, erected by Napoleon in 1810 to commemorate Austerlitz, was noticeable by the lack of high-ranking government officials, although it is reported that the prime minister, Dominique de Villepin, himself the author of a work on Napoleon and the Hundred Days, hesitated before deciding not to attend.²¹ The only government minister to attend, a decision apparently made at the last minute, was Pascal Clément, minister for Justice, whose office just happens to be across the road from the column. That nocturnal ceremony was largely a military affair, and was organised by the Comité Vendôme de la Saint-Cyrienne. The students of Saint-Cyr seem to have co-opted the space in the last few years, making 2 December their day by celebrating the first time one of their kind was killed in battle. But they are also clearly drawing on French military and republican tradition by celebrating both a great victory and the “valeurs défendues par la république en Europe et dans le monde depuis 1789,” that is, the triptych of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity.²²

Pierre Nora described the failure of the French to commemorate Austerlitz as having touched “le fond de la honte et le fond du ridicule.”²³ The fact that the re-enactment of the battle drew people from all over the world meant that Napoleon had become part of the European patrimony and had entered the European imagination. Nora is by no means a Napoleonic zealot, but he nevertheless professes outrage at the state’s inability to place Austerlitz on the same level as Valmy or Verdun, ironically bating the French president by suggesting that since he is bent on pleasing everyone, why not take Napoleon out of the Invalides, hand him back to Corsica, and put in his place a “tomb of the unknown slave,” an evident dig at what he believes to be the French government’s pandering to negative public opinion following the Ribbe controversy.

It is not the first time that a Republican government has distanced itself from things Napoleonic. If the Third Republic was inclined to dabble in the cult of Napoleon, this was not the case for the Fourth or the Fifth Republic. The problem was that the association between General de Gaulle and Napoleon was problematic: given de Gaulle’s military background he could readily be accused of warmongering and Bonapartism.²⁴ The Socialist government under Mitterrand, on the other hand, was inclined to use Napoleon for its own political ends when, in arguing the case for European integration, it came up with the slogan, “Napoleon would have voted for Maastricht.”²⁵ The Chirac government’s disassociation with Napoleon was a little more difficult to grasp, especially since Chirac seemed to have been more than happy to help the British celebrate the two hundredth anniversary of the battle of Trafalgar by sending six naval vessels to participate in the commemorations, including the aircraft carrier, Charles de Gaulle. Chirac attended the ceremony, presided over by Queen Elizabeth and the British prime minister, Tony Blair. Britain, it would appear, has no difficulty celebrating its past military glories, even if the nature of the celebrations was so diverse that it remains unclear what exactly Britain was commemorating. Given this, and the readiness of other French

governments to recuperate aspects of the Napoleonic legend for their own political purposes, why has there been no attempt by conservatives to revive the Bonapartist myth for its own ends?

This is a much more difficult question to answer and in part has to do with the combination of the undue attention Ribbe's book received in the French press, the urban riots, the debate about the role of history and France's colonial past. But that is only part of the story. Commemorations, after all, take many years to prepare, which suggests that the unwillingness to celebrate the Empire is structural rather than linked to specific events. The preceding year, for example, the state was just as reluctant to celebrate the foundation of the Empire, even if there was an exhibition at the Louvre dedicated to the coronation, an amateur re-enactment of the coronation at Ajaccio, Corsica, and a concert of the coronation music (by Giovanni Paisiello) at the Church of the Madeleine (2 December 2004) in the presence of 1,200 invited guests, including many of the surviving descendants of the imperial nobility.²⁶ It did, however, celebrate the bicentenary of the Legion of Honor, which suggests that the state has been very selective about what it chooses to commemorate, and has more to do with contemporary expectations than with the past events.²⁷ The reluctance to celebrate the Empire cannot be explained by the fact that France is a republic and that as a republic it has no business doing so. It was President Mitterrand who, in 1985, established the *Délégation aux célébrations nationales* (National Festivities Bureau) that commemorated, two years later, the one thousand year anniversary of Hugues Capet, and in 1996 the anniversary of Clovis, founder of the Merovingian dynasty. That very same Bureau was responsible for the celebrations surrounding the bicentenary of the French Revolution. All of these celebrations, which met with popular success and which are part of what Pierre Nora refers to as the "age of commemoration," were positive re-evaluations of the past and lent weight to the idea that there was a truly "national past."²⁸ It is worth noting, however, that it is the Republic, incorporating both the Left and the Right, that has tried to tie these various past identities into a national synthesis.²⁹

That is no doubt why the public witnessed, during the 2007 campaign for the French presidential elections, candidates identifying with particular past historical figures, most of them royalist. François Bayrou, understandably perhaps, adopted Henry IV, a customary model of centrist politics in France.³⁰ Jean-Marie Le Pen once again resurrected the ghost of Joan of Arc, but so too did the Socialist candidate, Ségolène Royal, who attempted to harness Joan in favor of the Left—indeed she was often referred to as a modern-day Joan of Arc in the press, both foreign and French. But, more in keeping with the Socialist tradition, she also stressed the importance of the Marseillaise and the French national flag, thereby clearly associating the Socialist party with Republican symbols and values. Nicolas Sarkozy, who went on to win the elections in May 2007, cast his historical net wide, making reference to French royalist figures, such as Saint Louis and Henry IV, as well as traditional leftist

icons, such as Lazare Carnot, Léon Blum and Jean Jaurès.³¹ More quizzically, he also evoked a certain number of American themes by making references to Martin Luther King. Moreover, Royal's declarations on the Marseillaise provoked a response from Sarkozy that led to a somewhat superficial debate about French national identity.

One can clearly see from this that "national identity" and historical characters can and often do become footballs on the political playing field. To some extent, the debate over identity, and indeed over Napoleon and Austerlitz, is about what is remembered and what is forgotten, and in the process it has inadvertently become a skirmish in the cultural wars fought over French identity. It is certainly not the first time that the French past has been contested.³² If republican governments are happy to celebrate past monarchies, but not the Empire, the answer, I would suggest, lies in the significance of Austerlitz and of the place of Napoleon in French history. The commemoration at Austerlitz was organized by a diverse group of Napoleonic clubs whose members are mostly made up of military enthusiasts. The re-enactment of the battle was at heart hagiographic; it was play-acting as commemoration, a bloodless parody of the reality. The thousands who attended were probably more interested in perpetuating romantic notions of a glorified military past than on reflecting on the historical implications of what had taken place.³³ That in itself is indicative of the place of Napoleon in French history. Overshadowed by the Revolution, studies on the Empire have never been as highly regarded as research into other historical periods, not only in France but also in the English-speaking world. Despite the recent upsurge in regional studies on this period,³⁴ and despite the increasing interest in biography, English-speaking university historians have largely ignored Napoleon as biographical subject.³⁵ The last two scholarly biographies written in English by academics are over forty and fifty years old.³⁶ As a consequence, historians outside of the Academy have filled the void, satisfying a demand in the general reading public, but often perpetuating many of the myths that Napoleon himself did so much to create in his own lifetime.³⁷

Napoleon, in other words, does not hold the same place in French history as does, for example, Nelson in British history.³⁸ To a lesser extent, this is about what defines France, about what it is and how it wants to be perceived. It is obvious that the political elite in France does not want to be associated with a man and a period in history characterized by unbridled military conquest. This is perhaps one of the reasons why Chirac thought it inappropriate to celebrate Napoleon, and why he did not so much as deign enter into the debate, maintaining a diplomatic silence on the subject. More needs to be done on the politics of commemoration, but it perhaps goes some way to explaining why the French president was prepared to celebrate Trafalgar but not Austerlitz: Austerlitz was not as decisive a moment in French history as Trafalgar was in British history. It was a decisive moment in Napoleon's history, but that is not the same thing. To paraphrase Napoleon's infamous for-

eign minister, Charles-Maurice de Talleyrand, attempting to explain to the allies why France should not be punished for the return of Napoleon from Elba in 1814, Napoleon is not France. If the English might conceivably be justified in remembering Trafalgar as a key moment in their struggle against the tyrant Napoleon, one could also see the Blair government's involvement as an attempt to politically recuperate Nelson, one of the most lionized figures in popular British history, and thereby bolster his government's declining popularity. The modern day parallel between the French taking part in celebrations to mark Trafalgar but not Austerlitz might conceivably be found in the German government participating in the 50th and 60th anniversaries of the D-Day landings. That symbol was about celebrating the defeat of Nazism as much as it was about the place of Germany in contemporary Europe. In the new Europe, it would be a little incongruous for the French to celebrate a war-mongering despot. Despite recent interpretations of Napoleon's empire as an attempt to construct a precursor of the European Union, debates about the nature of the Empire, and some excellent studies into the regional impact of the Empire, the conclusion one can still draw is that Napoleon's empire was largely exploitative.

For generations, history in the classroom was used as a tool to integrate all those on French soil into an all encompassing French cultural identity. The assumption was that the children of migrants would also come to identify with France and indeed that the French education system would refashion them into little French boys and girls. The urban riots of November 2005 are a stark reminder that some (although by no means all) of the children of black African and North African immigrants have not only not accepted this policy of acculturation, but that they have rejected it.³⁹ It raises all sorts of unanswered questions about what it is to be French and what is France's cultural identity that will no doubt continue to be debated for many years to come. What is certain, however, is that a France symbolized by men like Napoleon and battles like Austerlitz no longer makes any sense.

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Notes

1. I would like to thank Herrick Chapman, Saliha Belmessous and H  l  ne Jaccomard for their comments on drafts of this essay.
2. Claude Ribbe, *La Crime de Napol  on* (Paris: Priv  , 2005).
3. A recent and more serious example of the latter was made by the Napoleon biographer, Steven Englund, "Si l'habit ne sied pas... La comparaison Napol  on-Hitler au rebut," *Revue des Deux Mondes* (April 2005), reprinted as "Napoleon and Hitler," in *The Journal of the Historical Society* 6 (2006): 151-69.
4. See James Weingartner, "Comparisons between the German War against the Soviet Union and the American War against Japan, 1941-1945," *The Historian* 58 (1996): 557-74.
5. Jack R. Censer and Lynn Hunt, *Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: Exploring the French Revolution* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001), 117, 126.
6. Jean-Cl  ment Martin, *La Vend  e et la France* (Paris: Seuil, 1986), 315-16. Historians such as Pierre Chaunu and Reynald Secher and the conservative deputy, Philippe de Villiers, have denounced what they call the "g  nocide vend  en."
7. The term was coined by Geoffrey Blainey in a 1993 lecture that was subsequently published in a political journal with distinct right-wing leanings: Geoffrey Blainey, "Drawing Up a Balance Sheet of Our History," *Quadrant* 37 (July-August 1993): 10-15. The history wars in Australia in a broader context are analyzed in Stuart MacIntyre and Anna Clark, *The History Wars* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2003).
8. The controversy can be followed in Richard Kohn, "History and the Culture Wars: The Case of the Smithsonian Institution's Enola Gay Exhibit," *Journal of American History* 82 (1995): 1036-63; Michael J. Hogan, "The Enola Gay Controversy: History, Memory and the Politics of Presentation," in *Hiroshima in History and Memory*, ed. Michael J. Hogan (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 200-32; Edward Linenthal and Tom Engelhardt, eds., *History Wars: The Enola Gay and Other Battles for the American Past* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1996); and the special issue of the *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 27, 2 (1995).
9. Pierre Nora, "L'av  nement mondial de la m  moire," *Transit—Europ  ische Revue* 22 (2002).
10. Speech delivered at Caen on 9 March 2007. <http://www.u-m-p.org/propositions/index.php?id=repentance>.
11. The actual article reads, "Les programmes scolaires reconnaissent en particulier le r  le positif de la pr  sence fran  aise outre-mer, notamment en Afrique du Nord, et accordent    l'histoire et aux sacrifices des combattants de l'arm  e fran  aise issus de ces territoires la place   minente    laquelle ils ont droit." On the context leading to this law and the reactions it elicited see Robert Aldrich, "Colonial Past, Post-Colonial Present: History Wars French-Style," *History Australia* 3 (2006): 14.1-14.10.
12. *Harki* is the term used to describe Algerian Muslims who had fought for France during the Algerian war.
13. Chris J. Bickerton, "France's History Wars," *Le Monde diplomatique* (February 2006).
14. See the article by Christophe Barbier and Eric Mandonnet, "Le mal de la repentance," *L'Express*, 15 December 2005. Arno Klarsfeld is a lawyer attached to the association Fils et Filles de D  port  s Juifs de France. As such he participated in the trails of Paul Touvier and Maurice Papon. He later became an Israeli citizen where he took up duties as a border guard. He had come out publicly defending the war in Iraq.
15. The petition, published on 12 December 2005, was initially signed by nineteen historians: Jean-Pierre Az  ma, Elisabeth Badinter, Jean-Jacques Becker, Fran  oise Chandernagor, Alain Decaux, Marc Ferro, Jacques Julliard, Jean Leclant, Pierre

- Milza, Pierre Nora, Mona Ozouf, Jean-Claude Perrot, Antoine Prost, René Rémond, Maurice Vaisse, Jean-Pierre Vernant, Paul Veyne, Pierre Vidal-Naquet et Michel Winock. It can be viewed at a number of websites, including www.histoire.presse.fr/, which also has a number of articles relating to history and memory that might be of interest to the reader, along with the texts of the laws called "Gayssot" (13 July 1990), "Taubira" (21 May 2001), "Mekachera" (23 February 2005), and the law recognizing the Armenian genocide (29 January 2001).
16. A number of articles on this subject have been published under the title "Les Mémoires, la loi et les historiens" by Éditions Complexe, under the rubric "Tribunes et débats": <http://www.editionscomplexe.com>. They are also to be found in Thomas Ferenczi, ed., *Devoir de mémoire, droit à l'oubli?* (Brussels: Complexe, 2002).
 17. It received public support from the Association des professeurs d'histoire et de géographie (*Historiens et géographes* 392 [October 2005] and 393 [February 2006]); and from the magazine, *L'Histoire* 306 (February 2006). This in turn elicited a response from a number of other historians, writers, and jurists who launched their own petition; they argued it would be imprudent to confound a law that delineated the teaching of history in a particular way with laws designed to punish Holocaust denial and racism. Unlike the Mekachera law, the other laws had nothing to do with historical research or liberty of expression. *Ne mélangeons pas tout*, published in the newspaper *20 minutes* (13 December 2005).
 18. Olivier Pétré-Grenouilleau, *Les Traités négrières: Essai d'histoire globale* (Paris: Gallimard, 2004). Jacques Julliard, *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 8 December 2005. It was an article in *Le Journal du Dimanche* (12 juin 2005) written by Olivier Pétré-Grenouilleau that offended the Collectif.
 19. See René Rémond, "Devoir de mémoire, droit à l'oubli?" on the Éditions Complexe website.
 20. Pierre Nora, "Plaidoyer pour les 'indigènes' d'Austerlitz," *Le Monde*, 12 December 2005; for the BBC see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/4491668.stm>.
 21. Benoît Hopquin, "Ni Chirac ni Villepin ne commémorent Napoléon, accusé d'esclavagisme," *Le Monde*, 30 November 2005.
 22. See the media release on the Ministry of Defense website: http://www.defense.gouv.fr/sites/terre/portal_repository/969544505_0002/fichier/getData.
 23. Nora, "Plaidoyer pour les 'indigènes' d'Austerlitz."
 24. Robert Gildea, *The Past in French History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), 89-111.
 25. Cited in Gildea, *The Past in French History*, 110.
 26. For the exhibition at the Louvre see Thierry Lentz, ed., *Le Sacre de Napoléon* (Paris: Nouveau Monde, 2003).
 27. See Olivier Ihl, "The Market of Honors: On the Bicentenary of the Legion of Honor," *French Politics, Culture & Society* 24 (2006): 8-26.
 28. Nora, "L'avènement mondial."
 29. Pierre Nora, "Le nationalisme nous a caché la nation," *Le Monde*, 17 March 2007.
 30. David A. Bell, "François Bayrou Will Elect the Next French President," *The New Republic*, 28 April 2007. Bayrou is the author of a slim biography on Henry IV: *Henry IV* (Paris: Perrin, 1998).
 31. See his acceptance of the UMP's investiture on 14 January 2007, published in *Le Figaro*, <http://www.lefigaro.fr/medias/pdf/Discourscongr14janv19.pdf>.
 32. See Herman Lebovics, "Creating the Authentic France: Struggles over French Identity in the First Half of the Twentieth Century," in *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity*, ed. John R. Gillis (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 239-57.
 33. The official website of the organizers, <http://www.austerlitz.org/en/>, will give the reader an idea of the kind of people involved.

34. They include Michael Broers, *Napoleonic Imperialism and the Savoyard Monarchy, 1773-1821: State Building in Piedmont* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1997); Gavin Daly, *Inside Napoleonic France: State and Society in Rouen, 1800-1815* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2001); Michael Rowe, *From Reich to State: The Rhineland in the Revolutionary Age, 1780-1830* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Katherine Aaslestad, *Place and Politics: Local Identity, Civic Culture, and German Nationalism in North Germany during the Revolutionary Era* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); Robert Beachy, *Soul of Commerce: Credit, Property, and Politics in Leipzig, 1750-1840* (Leiden: Brill, 2005); John A. Davis, *Naples and Napoleon: Southern Italy and the European Revolutions, 1780-1860* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006).
35. Nathalie Petiteau, *Napoléon, de la mythologie à l'histoire* (Paris: Seuil, 1999), 11.
36. Apart from my own *Napoleon: The Path to Power, 1769-1799* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007), they are Felix Markham, *Napoleon* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1963); James M. Thompson, *Napoleon Bonaparte* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1951). One should also include Jean Tulard, *Napoléon, ou le mythe du sauveur* (Paris: Fayard, 1977); Geoffrey Ellis, *Napoleon* (London: Longman, 1997); and Luigi Mascilli Migliorini, *Napoleone* (Roma: Salerno, 2001), but they are more histories of the period than biographies.
37. Examples include Frank McLynn, *Napoleon* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1997); Alan Schom, *Napoleon Bonaparte* (New York, NY: HarperCollins, 1997); Robert Asprey, *The Rise and Fall of Napoleon Bonaparte*, 2 vols. (London: Little, Brown and Co., 2000 and 2001). Steven Englund's *Napoleon. A Political Life* (New York: Scribner, 2004), is an exception to the rule. Englund is an independent scholar who publishes in academic journals.
38. See John M. MacKenzie, "Nelson Goes Global: The Nelson Myth in Britain and Beyond," in *Admiral Lord Nelson. Context and Legacy*, ed. David Cannadine (Houndsmill: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 144-65.
39. On this complicated issue of integration and identity among migrant youth see *French Politics, Culture & Society* 24, 3 (Winter 2006).

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