

MEMORY OF THE PAST AND POLITICS OF THE PRESENT

Prague, 28–29 November 2022

STRATEGYAV21

Venue: Goethe-Institut Prague (Masarykovo nábřeží 32, Praha 1)

Date: 28–29 November 2022 (November 28 from 1 pm)

Partners: Centre français de recherche en sciences sociales, Deutsches Historisches Institut
Warschau, European Network Remembrance and Solidarity, Stiftung Sächsische Gedenkstätten

Organizer: Institute of Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences within the
Strategy AV21

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The past has traditionally been one of the interpretation frameworks which are used to analyse and explain present events. It surely applies to the Russian aggression against the Ukraine. Finding analogies in the past is not difficult at all. Indeed, the use of idiosyncratic interpretations of history as demonstrated by Putin or Lavrov in their effort to justify the war against the Ukraine is strongly reminiscent of the argumentation used by Hitler, Ribbentrop or Molotov against Czechoslovakia and Poland in 1938 and 1939.

In the case of the invasion against the Ukraine, however, it is also appropriate to analyse to what extent the historical memory affects current politics, i.e. whether and how much it influences reactions of various European states to the Russian aggression against the Ukraine. For example: is Germany's restrained policy indeed influenced by the German memory of WWII and feelings of guilt for the crimes committed in the territory of Russia? Or how is it possible that trenches dug by the historical memory (and its different interpretations) could be overcome, as in the case of Poland and the Ukraine? Does it hold true that the memory of Communism (and the Soviet Union's role in its installation and upholding in different countries) strengthens anti-Russian and pro-Ukrainian position in the case of the Baltic countries, Poland, Czech Republic (and, in fact, also of Finland)? But – if it is really the case – why doesn't the historical memory play a similar role in Hungary? And where does Slovakia stand in this respect?



Looking for answers to questions of this type and examining similar situations in which historical memory was affecting current politics will be the topic of an international conference organized within the Strategy AV21 in cooperation with a number of partners from abroad.

The tragic war in the Ukraine casts a very sharp light on issues of memory and politics, and is an opportunity to examine them almost online. It is unquestionably a European issue, an issue of European history, of European memory, which is why it dovetails nicely with the context of the Czech presidency of the European Union.

The event is being held under the patronage of the Committee on Education, Science, Culture, Human Rights and Petitions of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic and with the support of the program Anatomy of European Society within the Strategy AV21.

Presenters & presentation titles

Mykola BOROVYK (Frankenberg, Sachsenburg Concentration Camp Memorial Project)

- (Un)expected War and (Un)mastered Past: Politics of Memory in German-Ukrainian Relations in the Face of Russian Aggression against Ukraine

Marie ČERNÁ (Czech Academy of Sciences, Institute of Contemporary History)

- The Utilisation of Historical Memory in the Contemporary Czech Pro-Russian Activism

Gábor DANYI (European Network Remembrance and Solidarity)

- And History Has Yet to Repeat Itself: Russia's War in Ukraine and the 1956 Hungarian Revolution

Vera DUBINA (University of Bremen, Research Centre for East European Studies)

- From Memory Laws to Memory Wars: Abuse of History in Contemporary Russia

Frank GRELKA (European University Viadrina, Center for Interdisciplinary Polish Studies)

- Ukraine's Role in the Struggle for Recognition in German-Russian Relations, 1918–2022

Luba JURGENSON (CNRS/Sorbonne University & Memorial-France)

- Memory Studies in the Face of War: What Memory for the Future Past of the Invaded Ukraine?

Aleksey KAMENSKIKH (University of Bremen, Research Centre for East European Studies & Perm Memorial)

- The Language of the 'Great Patriotic War' as the Substitution: 2014–2022

Valeria KORABLYOVA (Charles University, Institute of International Studies)

- Disentangling from the Past: Politics of the Future as a Vehicle for Ukrainian Resistance to Russian Aggression

Martin KRATOCHVÍL (STEM Institute for Empirical Research)

- Czech Opinion on Foreign Countries over the Last Three Decades and Czechs' Perception of Russian War against Ukraine

Petra KUCHYŇKOVÁ (Masaryk University, International Institute of Political Science)

- Russia in Czech Political Discourse: De/securitization of Russia in the Discourse of Czech Presidents Václav Havel, Václav Klaus and Miloš Zeman



Olev LIIVIK (Estonian Institute of Historical Memory)

- Estonian Perception of Russia and Ethnic Russians: From the History to the Present Day

Juraj MARUŠIAK (Slovak Academy of Sciences, Institute of Political Science)

- Russia in the Collective Memory of Post-Communist Slovakia in the Context of Its Aggression against Ukraine

Burkhard OLSCHOWSKY (Federal Institute for Culture and History of the Germans in Eastern Europe)

- German Ostpolitik Reconsidered?

Martin PEKÁR – Silvia RUČINSKÁ (Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Košice)

- Misinterpretation vs. Disinformation: Historical Events and the Performance of Public Policy in Slovakia

Bradley REYNOLDS (University of Helsinki)

- Finnish Memory Politics and NATO Accession: Which Russia to Remember?

Miloš ŘEZNÍK (German Historical Institute in Warsaw)

- Retrotopical Practices in the Contemporary Politics of History

Peter RUGGENTHALER (Ludwig Boltzmann Institute for Research on War Consequences)

- Reflections on the Russian Aggression in Ukraine from an Austrian Perspective

Jan RYDEL (European Network Remembrance and Solidarity)

- Poland and Ukraine: Comments on Historical Premises of Mutual Relations

Réka SARKÖZY (National Széchényi Library, 1956 Institute – Oral History Archive)

- The Memory of the Don Disaster in Hungarian Documentaries

David SVOBODA (Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes)

- From Sichynsky to Azov: Ukrainian Political Radicalism in Czech Public Stereotypes of the 20th and 21st Century

