Genocides in the European politics of History

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The concepts of "genocide" and "crimes against humanity", which crystallised in Western legal and intellectual discourse in the 1960s, have been actively exploited in various domestic political struggles and international relations (the most prominent examples being the Holocaust and the Ukrainian Holodomor), and this has implications for the politics of history. The last 20 years have witnessed significant changes in the European Union's historical politics, both in the EU's enlargement to the East and in the EU's own role in the world. Whereas the narrative that emerged in West Germany in the 1970s and 1980s and was consolidated in the EU in the 1980s and 1990s centred on the Holocaust as an event unique in world history in terms of its scale and consequences, with the wave of EU enlargement in 2004 it was challenged by the new EU members. The latter proposed to treat Nazi and Soviet totalitarianism equally, thus equating the Gulag with the Holocaust. This has made European historical politics more complicated and more susceptible to internal disagreements and misunderstandings between members. The aim of this article is to elaborate on the legal and political exploitation of the concept of 'genocide' in the intellectual discourse of the emerging European Community, and to identify the challenges posed to it by the new geopolitical circumstances, ranging from the collapse of the Soviet Union to the military invasion of Ukraine by Russia in 2022. Finally, the recent challenges posed by post-colonial and human rights discourses are discussed in more detail, disrupting the established politics of European history, even in Germany itself, which has been at the forefront of their formation and global implementation. The conclusion is that, despite attempts to find points of contact and compromise between these different models of memory, a consensus that satisfies everyone is unfortunately not currently possible, and is unlikely to ever be achieved.

Keywords: politics of history, Holocaust, Gulag, decolonisation, human rights.

Introduction

The concept of genocide, which crystallised in Western legal and intellectual discourse in the 1950s, has proved over time to be productive to understand the past, the present, and, unfortunately, the future. Especially in the late 20th and early 21st century genocide studies, focusing mostly on the Holocaust, have expanded both historically and geographically to include earlier eras, new continents and new cases.[1] However, the ever-expanding geographical and thematical field of application of the concept has also highlighted the issues that arise in its legal, political and academic use. Most notably, this has caused the inevitable tension between rigid and inflexible legal definitions of the concept and the multifaceted reality of mass atrocities, which researchers have explored through fields such as criminology, history, anthropology, law, the study of violence, war and armed conflict, propaganda, gender studies and the history of ideas. Moreover, as experts on the subject note, "the legal and political consequences and the benefits that accrued due to 'achieving genocide status' exerted a powerful push towards discussing historical events using a simplistic 'genocide or not' binary mode, a process plagued by political pressures".[2]

However, due to the sensitivity of the subject, genocides and mass crimes have never been, and are still never, only the subject of research that seeks impartiality and objectivity. They are particularly actively exploited in various political contexts and the field of international relations (the Holocaust and the Ukrainian Holodomor being the most prominent examples), which brings us to the question of the usage of this concept in the field of politics of history on the national and international levels.

The last 20 years have seen significant changes in the politics of history in Europe, both as a result of the EU's enlargement to the East and its own changing role in the world[3]. In the 1970s and 1980s, a historical narrative emerged in West Germany and in the 1980s and 1990s it was established at EU level, with the Holocaust at its centre as an event unique in world history in its scale and impact (the so-called Nuremberg Cocon-

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[1]   There is a series of journals devoted exclusively to this topic, such as *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* (launched in 1986), *Genocide Studies and Prevention* (launched in 1994) and *Journal of Genocide Research* (launched in 1999). There are also encyclopaedias, such as Jacques Sémelin's *Encyclopédie en ligne des violences de masse* (2008) and *Violence de masse et Résistance – Réseau de recherche* (2008) (https://www. sciencespo.fr/mass-violence-war-massacre-resistance), or Israel W. Charny's *Encyclopedia of Genocide* (2000), Donald Bloxham's and Anthony Dirk Moses's *The Oxford Handbook of Genocide Studies* (2010) and Jens Meierhenrich's *Genocide: A Reader* (2014).

[2]   Andrea Graziosi and Frank E. Sysyn, "Introduction. Genocide and Mass Categorical Violence", in: *Genocide. The Power and Problems of a Concept*, edited by Andrea Graziosi and Frank E. Sysyn, Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022, p. 3.

[3]   Алексей Миллер, "Введение. Большие перемены. Что нового в политике памяти и в ее изучении?", in: *Политика памяти в современной России и странах Восточной Европы. Акторы, институты, нарративы*, под ред. А. Миллера, Д. Ефременко, Санкт-Петербург: ЕГУ, 2020, с. 8.

sensus)[4]. However, at the beginning of the 21st century, with the wave of EU enlargement in 2004, it was challenged by the new Member States. Post-communist Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries were given a "soft" condition for joining the European Union to consolidate the national commemoration of the Holocaust and ensure the preservation of Jewish heritage, and for some time simulated obedience to these provisions. But it also challenged the national narrative of "two totalitarianisms" and "sacrifice and suffering" that spontaneously emerged in those countries during and just after the collapse of the USSR. It turned into attempts to equate Nazi and Soviet regimes by treating the crimes committed by both of them in the same way, thus equating the Gulag with the Holocaust.[5] These attempts made European historical politics more complicated and more susceptible to internal disagreements and conflicts. In recent years, the politics of the history of the European Union and its Member States have been further complicated by the entry into the field of reflection of post-coloniality and developing a "human rights" discourse. How and why did this situation develop, and with what results?

In light of these important questions, the aim of this article is to analyse the political exploitation of the concept of genocide in the intellectual discourse of the emerging European community. It will outline the challenges posed to it by the new geopolitical context, from the collapse of the Soviet Union to the military invasion of an independent Ukraine by Russia in 2022, and the Israel–Palestinian conflict that started in 2023.

The origins of the European politics of history

One of the first to use the concept of "working through the past" was the Frankfurt School sociologist Theodor Adorno in 1959, when he critically reflected on the causes and consequences of the repressive practices characteristic of dictatorships.[6] The attempt to analyse the experience of "coming to terms with the past" in societies that had been previously dominated by a system of state-organised terror was the main idea behind this work. In the decades since the end of the Second World War, the range of measures developed to deal with the past in Europe has been quite diverse. In societies seeking to overcome authoritarian or totalitarian legacies, the processes of reinterpreting a repressive past may include not only various socio-political, cultural, historical and educational initiatives, but also different legal or administrative mea-

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[4] Michele Battini, *The Missing Italian Nuremberg. Cultural Amnesia and Postwar Politics*, London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007, pp. 115–124.

[5] Kristen Ghodsee, "A Tale of 'Two Totalitarianisms': The Crisis of Capitalism and the Historical Memory of Communism History of the Present", in: *A Journal of Critical History*, 2014, No. 4 (2), pp. 115–142.

[6] Theodor W. Adorno, *Critical Models: Interventions and Catchwords*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2005, pp. 89–103.

sures, better known as transitional justice measures.[7] Transitional justice is generally understood as a range of legal mechanisms through which countries seeking to build their social and political life on new democratic and legal foundations attempt to punish those responsible for crimes and to respond to systematic human rights violations by previous regimes.[8]

As we know, the first significant experience of transitional justice in modern history was the large-scale denazification programme carried out in post-war Germany by the allies of the anti-Hitler coalition. Initiated and launched by the Allied powers – primarily the USA – the denazification included: the liquidation of the Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei [National Socialist German Workers' Party]; the liquidation of all other Nazi, Nazi-related or subordinate organisations; the filtration of German officials and civil servants, and archive checks; the setting of five levels of sanctions against Nazis; work restrictions for exposed party activists and the purging of social institutions of Nazi ideology.[9] All laws passed during the Nazi period to consolidate the regime, including racial laws, were repealed. Courts at all levels were closed, reopened only after filtration of law enforcement personnel. The education system at all levels was also denazificated. A ban on hiring ex-Nazis for senior positions in any commercial structure was introduced. The Americans made sure that the denazification they started was carried out in all four occupation zones. However, since the German public did not look favourably on American initiatives in the field of denazification, the German authorities in charge applied lighter penalties or assessments. This, as well as the nominal punishments for the real Nazis and the real punishments for the nominal supporters of Hitlerism, effectively discredited the whole process in the eyes of German society. The internal strife between the Allies and the outbreak of the Cold War made the denazification process increasingly ineffective, and the rush was on to complete the process by 1948–1949. In reality, post-war denazification of Germany was rather superficial. Most Germans confined themselves to condemning Adolf Hitler's regime and his henchmen, without feeling in any way involved in the crimes he committed (similarly, post-war French historical politics avoided recalling the Vichy regime and complicity with the Nazis to maximise the ranks of the anti-Nazi resistance).[10] This situation led some German intellectuals to criticise the moral climate

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[7]   Ruti G. Teitel, *Transitional Justice*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2000.

[8]   Ruti G. Teitel, *Globalizing Transitional Justice. Contemporary Essays*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013, p. xii.

[9]   Евгения Лезина, *XX век: проработка прошлого. Практики переходного правосудия и политика памяти в бывших диктатурах, Германия, Россия, страны Центральной и Восточной Европы*, Москва: НЛО, 2023, с. 32–160; Francis Graham-Dixon, *The Allied Occupation of Germany: The Refugee Crisis, Denazification and the Path to Reconstruction*, London: I. B. Tauris, 2013; Mikkel Dack, *Everyday Denazification in Postwar Germany: The Fragebogen and Political Screening during the Allied Occupation*, Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2023.

[10]   Henry Rousseau, *Le syndrome de Vichy de 1944 a nos jours*, Paris: Seuil, 1990.

in the country. Karl Jaspers,[11] and later Theodor Adorno,[12] began to raise the question of collective "German guilt" – i. e. to demand responsibility not only from specific war criminals, but also from the whole nation. The emergence and consolidation of the topics of National Socialism and the Holocaust as the dominant narrative in the political field of German history, pointed out that this process was by no means homogeneous or always smooth.[13] While the Soviet satellite, the GDR, created and consolidated the myth of the "anti-fascist" state, the GFR had come a long way from ignoring the subject of the Jewish genocide and the German public's responsibility for it in the first decade of the post-war period. The concern was more about survival and economic recovery through the disputes between representatives of different ideological camps, in which historians and publicists played perhaps the most important role in the 1960s and 1970s to make National Socialism a cornerstone of German historical consciousness. In the context of the events of 1968 when, in the wake of the left-wing and anti-fascist social debates and the unrest they inspired, there was an intensive effort to reshape and heal German identity based on collective guilt, repentance and reparations to victims. The "overcoming history" programme was launched by the German Social Democrat Chancellor Willy Brandt, whose famous kneeling in the Warsaw Jewish ghetto on 7 December 1970 in front of the ghetto uprising monument became a widely publicised media event. The programme covered all fields of life, from education to the culture of remembrance, and was a major injection of energy and intellectual and financial resources. It was at this time that the foundations were laid for a number of postulates that would later become unquestionable, and which would quickly spread throughout Europe and the world. The first is that the Holocaust is a unique phenomenon in human history, unparalleled and unmatched by any other ethnic cleansing or genocide of the past or future. Secondly, the National Socialist period has had such a negative impact on the German identity and self-understanding that it must be reshaped by adopting the concept of post-nationalism. Jürgen Habermas has called this "constitutional patriotism"[14] which, following the example of the USA or France and abandoning ethnic definitions, would be based on the universal values of freedom, human rights and democracy. There were also attempts to rewrite German history from a post-

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[11] Karl Jaspers, *The Question of German Guilt,* New York: Fordham University Press, 2001, pp. 55–74. In this book, published in 1946, the German philosopher and psychiatrist sought to help Germans who were perplexed by the aftermath of the Second World War and the Holocaust to answer the questions: "How could it have happened that we took part in it? … If I didn't kill anyone, am I guilty of what happened to the Jews?" and so on. Jaspers, in an attempt to avoid what he calls "the flat chatter of guilt", distinguished between four forms of guilt: criminal, political, moral and metaphysical.

[12] Теодор Адорно, "Что означает «проработка прошлого»", in: *Неприкосновенный запас*, 2005, №. 40–41, с. 36–46.

[13] Stefan Berger, Christoph Conrad, *The Past as History: National Identity and Historical Consciousness in Modern Europe*, ser: Writing the Nation, London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2015, pp. 321–322.

[14] Jan-Werner Müller, Kim Lane Scheppele, "Constitutional Patriotism: An Introduction", in: *International Journal of Constitutional Law*, 2007, No. 6, pp. 67–71.

national perspective, emphasising the process of Westernisation that had supposedly been going on since the 13th century.[15] After the merger of East and West Germany in 1990 these tendencies were reinforced, although there were some tentative attempts to go beyond the new ideological taboos, reminding the public that Germans themselves had been the victims – at least some of them – of the Nazis. The reshaping of German historical memory and collective identity, as well as the process of European unification that began in 1950, were seen as a cure for the relapse of German nationalism and militarism. In the long run, the European politics of history took on the characteristics of an unquestioned canon or catechism.[16] This is similar in expression to the politics of history developed on the other side of Europe in Russia, which is also dominated by the unquestioned narrative of the "Great Victory against Nazism", "fascism as the absolute evil" and the "Greatest Sacrifice of Soviet People". Thus, despite the obvious qualitative differences, the politics of Western and Russian history shared a remarkable common feature: the tendency of memory narratives to use top-level rhetorical figures (superlatives) – what could be called a superlative memory politics.

So, the most important consequence of German denazification was the clear and un-ambiguous administrative, legal and political evaluation of the Nazi regime. It was wel-comed by the general public. In the long term, the denazification of German identity and public space was also carried out, the reshaping of German self-consciousness was made, and the German sense of collective guilt and responsibility was consolidated. The denazi-fication of Germany was the precursor and model for all the transitional justice measures that were subsequently implemented later in various countries around the world.[17] Thus, the origins of the Western model of the politics of history lie in the Nuremberg Trials of 1946, where Nazism was condemned by the International Military Tribunal as an anti-hu-man ideology that led to extremely serious crimes against humanity.[18] Since then, some countries – especially those with fascist or pro-fascist regimes before 1945 – have also in-troduced norms condemning fascism and banning fascist parties, movements and sym-bols into their legislation.

The long-standing and consistent German work on the politics of history, known as *Vergangenheitsbew*ältigung (overcoming the past) and *Aufarbeitung der Vergangenheit* (working through the past), has come to be seen as exemplary in other European countries. This has become particularly relevant in a period when the socialist regimes

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[15]   Heinrich A. Winkler, *Germany: The Long Road West:* Vol. 2: 1933–1990, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

[16]   Anthony D. Moses, "The German Catechism", in: *Geschichte der Gegenwart*, <https://geschichtedergegenwart.ch/the-german-catechism/>, [2021-05-23].

[17]   *Encyclopedia of Transitional Justice*, edited by Lavina Stan and Nadya Nedelsky, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015, Vol. I, II, III.

[18]   Frederick Taylor, *Exorcising Hitler. The Occupation and Denazification of Germany,* London: Bloomsbury, 2013.

in Eastern Europe collapsed, followed by the USSR. The 1980s saw the demise of most of Latin America's military dictatorships and the rigidly authoritarian governments of East Asia. In 1994, the apartheid regime in South Africa came to an end. All these events, as well as the Yugoslavia crisis of the 1990s, generated an important inquiry into "reckoning with the past", the history of human rights violations and other crimes of dictatorial regimes, and the question of compensation for the victims of these crimes. A growing number of influential international NGOs have been involved in this work, making the topic of "accounting for the past" an important part of world politics. The ideological confrontation of the Cold War was over and the issue of human rights came to the forefront of international relations, which gradually took on the characteristics of an ideology. It was not only a combination of moral imperatives ("never again") but also of expectations for a successful future for societies. The Europeanisation of memory, seen primarily as a discovery of the guilt of European societies for the crimes of the Holocaust and a quest for repentance,[19] led to a cosmopolitan politics of history concerned with the introduction of a "critical patriotism". This emphasised not the glorious, but rather the disgraceful episodes of the national past, and which intersected with the local narrative of "struggles and sufferings" that had dominated in the CEE up to that time. On the other hand, the adepts of cosmopolitan memory were convinced of the need to create supranational historical narratives that transcended the traditional inter-ethnic conflicts and animosities, which eventually led to the implementation of joint history textbook writing and other similar academic or educational projects.[20]

This cosmopolitan relationship to 20th century European history, enshrined at the top of EU politics, is still regarded in many places as a normative and universal "cure for evil".[21] This obscures, marginalises or denies alternative views, favouring the "right" evaluations of the past while condemning the "wrong". Paradoxically, it first took root in the democracies and countries of Western Europe where there is civil society, freedom of speech and diversity of opinion. However, this internal contradiction was immediately covered up by the belief that the moral aspects of the management of the past were more important than the political ones, which were considered irrelevant in this case. Although the term "politics of memory" (*Geschichtspolitik*), coined at the German *Historikerstreit* (Historians' Dispute) in 1986–1987, initially had a negative connotation,[22] it has increasingly come to be associated with democratisation efforts in post-authoritarian societies as geopolitical

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[19] Алейда Ассман, *Длинная тень прошлого: Мемориальная культура и историческая политика,* Москва: НЛО, 2014; Ljiljana Radonić, "Post-Communist Invocation of Europe: Memorial Museums' Narratives and the Europeanization of Memory", *National Identities,* 2017, No. 19 (2), pp. 269–288.

[20] Ana Bull, Hans Hansen, "On Agonistic Memory", in: *Memory Studies*, 2016, No. 9 (4), pp. 390–404.

[21] Tzvetan Todorov, "Memory as a Remedy for Evil", in: *Journal of International Criminal Justice*, 2009, No. 7 (3), pp. 447–462.

[22] Алексей Миллер, "Введение. Большие перемены...", с. 10.

circumstances have changed. Collective memory was considered to be the domain of the implementation of liberal democratic civil values. Conflicts arising from different interpretations of the past were expected to be a temporary condition, which should eventually lead to a balanced position in the creation of a common, mutually satisfactory narrative to overcome the injustices and grievances of the past. A plethora of international institutions and instruments, both governmental and societal, have been created to explore, assess and overcome the totalitarian past of European nations. Their main objective has been to turn the atrocities of the past into a tool for peace in the present and in the future.[23] Soon, the confrontation of this admittedly idealistic and rather naïve approach with the national historical policies of the CEE countries in the context of EU enlargement exposed its shortcomings. This conflict remained rather latent, as the countries of the post-socialist and post-Soviet region imitated the adoption of the Western cosmopolitan canon of history as a "common European value" in the hope of a quicker accession to the EU.[24] But as time went on, misunderstandings between old and new EU Member States increased.

Debates on "two totalitarianisms"

The Hungarian scholar Máté Zombory argues that EU enlargement has encouraged the CEE candidate countries to respond to the demand for recognition of the uniqueness of the Holocaust in the field of political power, but also to try to equate it with the memory of communism.[25] This also meant a similar effort to universalise and criminalise their assessments, arguing that all victims of totalitarianisms deserve to be treated equally, regardless of the cause of their suffering. This was of course not limited to the Gulag, but included national-level crimes against humanity, such as the Ukrainian Holodomor of 1932–1933 and the Kazakh famine of 1928–1934 (*Asharshylyk*), which was known as the "Great Evil". The initiatives of CEE countries to bring the two totalitarian regimes into line, not only at national level but also at EU level, have therefore provoked resentment from both influential Jewish organisations and Russia.[26] According to the Ukrainian historian Georgiy Kasyanov, a paradoxical situation has arisen: on the one hand, the turn to history and memory, which is necessary for self-assertion, has led to the restoration of cultural/ethnic nationalism, exemplified in the 19th and 21st centuries. On the other hand,

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[23] Aleida Assmann, Linda Shortt, "Memory and Political Change: Introduction", in: *Memory and Political Change*, edited by Aleida Assmann, Linda Shortt, London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012, p. 1.

[24] Ivan Krastev, Stephen Holmes, "Explaining Eastern Europe: Imitation and its Discontents", in: *Journal of Democracy*, 2018, No. 29 (3), pp. 117–128.

[25] Máté Zombory, "The Birth of the Memory of Communism: Memorial Museums in Europe", in: *Nationalities Papers*, 2017, No. 45 (6), pp. 1028–1046.

[26] Laure Neumayer, *The Criminalization of Communism in the European Political Space after the Cold War*, London: Routledge, 2018.

"Europeanisation", following the EU model, implied the neutralisation of the cultural and political forms that threatened ethno-nationalism. After 1990, the main stimulus was a "return to the roots" and the restoration of national consciousness. After 2000, a certain defensive function was added, linked to the desire to defend cultural identity within the EU framework, especially in the face of the voluntary surrender of part of sovereignty. At the same time, it was to demonstrate the equivalence of their historical experience, unknown to Western Europe – above all, of course, in terms of experiences of suffering and loss. In both cases, the legacy of communism became the common theme of historical politics.[27] It has been used to justify both its "special historical role" and its "development problems", as well as to consolidate the fight against Russian neo-imperialism. Seeking a compromise, in 2006 the European Parliament adopted "Resolution 1481 on the crimes of totalitarian communist regimes", calling on the Council of Europe to formally condemn them. The Russian delegates (with the exception of Vladimir Zhirinovsky) did not sign this resolution. In 2009, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) adopted a resolution in Vilnius entitled "Uniting a divided Europe: Protecting human rights and civil liberties in the 21st century in the OSCE region". This condemns the crimes of the Stalinist and Nazi regimes and calls for the day of the signing of the Molotov– Ribbentrop Pact to be designated as a day of remembrance of the victims of Nazism and Stalinism. This resolution has also been strongly criticised by Russian diplomats.[28]

The efforts of CEE intellectuals to draw the attention of Western Europeans to the crimes of communism have inevitably clashed with the EU's already strongly entrenched "German model" politics of history and culture of remembrance. However, they have – at least for a while – succeeded in implementing some significant initiatives in this area. In 2006, ETPA Resolution 1481 was adopted, which stated that, unfortunately

> The collapse of totalitarian communist regimes in Central and Eastern Europe has not always been accompanied by an international investigation into their crimes. Moreover, the authors of these crimes have not been brought to justice by the international community, as in the case of the horrific crimes of National Socialism (Nazism). Thus, public awareness of the crimes committed by totalitarian communist regimes remained low. In some countries, communist parties are legal and active, even if in some cases they have not dissociated themselves from the past crimes of totalitarian communist regimes. The Assembly is convinced that knowledge of history is one of the prerequisites for avoiding similar crimes in the future.[29]

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[27]   Георгий Касьянов, *Украина и соседи. Историческая политика 1987–2018*, Москва: НЛО, 2019, с. 85–86; Georgiy Kasianov, "Challenges of Antagonistic Memory: Scholars versus Politics and War", in: *Memory Studies*, 2022, No. 15 (6), pp. 1295–1298.

[28]   "ESBO Vilniuje pasmerkė ir stalinizmą, ir nacizmą", in: *Vz.lt*, <https://www.vz.lt/archive/straipsnis/2009/07/03/ ESBO_Vilniuje_pasmerke_ir_stalinizma_ir_nacizma2/>, [2009-07-03].

[29]   Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly, Resolution No. 1481 (2006), in: *Need for International Condemnation of Crimes of Totalitarian Communist Regimes*, in: <https://pace.coe.int/en/files/17403/html>, [2024-05-23].

This resolution has become a solid argument in political struggles within countries, especially as regards the politics of history, because it mentions the former communist parties and even envisages the creation of some kind of "international organisations" to investigate and denounce these crimes. More importantly, it equated Nazi and communist crimes, perhaps for the first time in such a straightforward organisation at this level.[30] It is easy to surmise that this equation was based on integrative intentions.

While the traumas of the CEE were acknowledged and honoured at a pan-European level and became part of its historical policy, the Western European model of the Holocaust as the greatest crime of humanity was introduced in the CEE. It was to replace the essentially anti-Semitic Stalinist model that had been long established there, where the death camps were not sites of Jewish genocide, but of war crimes against the *Soviet civilian population*.[31] In 2007, the European Parliament debated on the single European law on the prosecution of the denial or trivialisation of genocide and crimes against humanity. The representatives of the Baltic states demanded that a clause on the criminalisation of the denial of the crimes of the communist regimes be included in the law, but they were refused.[32] In 2008 some 40 politicians, public figures, researchers and lawyers drafted a collective text entitled "Crimes Committed by Totalitarian Regimes".[33] It served as a basis for further juxtaposition between the two totalitarian regimes of the 20th century, and was certainly also instrumental in the drafting of the 2008 Prague Declaration on European Conscience and Communism.[34] This draws attention to the fact that Europe still does not know enough about the crimes of communist regimes and does not realise the extent of their crimes; this lack of knowledge is the cause of certain distortions and misunderstandings of Europe's memories and historical policy. For example, the Czech Republic has legally equated Nazi, fascist and communist ideologies as crimes against humanity, but the country has an unreformed and not even renamed Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia. This has members in its national

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[30]   "This comparison was pioneered by Hannah Arendt in 1951", in: *The Origins of Totalitarianism. The Black Book of Communism*, compiled in 1997 by French historians led by Stephane Courtois and subsequently translated into many languages. It provides a general overview of the communist terror perpetrated on different continents and at different times, and gives an estimate of its victims (around 100 million), many times the number of victims of other dictatorships. The book has been heavily criticised for trying to cover up the specificity of Nazism and Communism with dry figures.

[31]   For more, see: Zigmas Vitkus, *Atminties miškas. Paneriai istorijoje, kultūroje ir politikoje*, Vilnius: Lapas, 2022.

[32]   Arfon Rees, "Managing the History of the Past in the Former Communist States", in: *A European Memory? Contested Histories and Politics of Remembrance*, edited by Małgorzata Pakier, Bo Stråth, New York, Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010, p. 231.

[33]   *Crimes Committed by Totalitarian Regimes. Reports and Proceedings of the 8 April European Public Hearing Organized by the Slovenian Presidency of the Council of the European Union (January–June 2008) and the European Commission* (edited by Peter Jambrek), Ljubljana, 2008.

[34]   Prague Declaration on European Conscience and Communism, in: <https://www.praguedeclaration.eu/>, [2023-02-12].

parliament, in regional governments and even in the European Parliament, because the law on lustration did not prohibit the communist leaders from contesting the democratic elections.[35] The signatories of the Prague Declaration also demanded "to recognise that many of the crimes committed in the name of communism should be treated as crimes against humanity, thus warning future generations, just as the Nazi crimes were judged by the Nuremberg Tribunal".[36] They also believe that "it is necessary to formulate a common approach to the crimes of totalitarian regimes, including communist regimes, and to broaden the knowledge of communist crimes throughout Europe in order to clearly define a common approach to them".[37] Two other important statements of the Prague Declaration included the demand to recognise communism as an inseparable and terrible part of Europe's common history, and to acknowledge the responsibility of the whole of Europe for the crimes of communism.

The dual process of EU and NATO enlargement to the East was ideologically based on redressing the historical injustices suffered by the Soviet-occupied CEE after the war.[38] However, the new EU Member States have been quick to point out that, compared to the one-sided treatment of Nazism, the crimes of communism have yet to receive their due historical, moral, political and legal weight. So the resentment of misunderstanding, of not being heard and of not being recognised began to build up, because the West had given these countries up in the post-war period, first to Hitler and then to Stalin. The declaration was intended to bring about a solidarity of European attitudes towards the crimes committed by the totalitarian regimes of the 20th century. However, more than a decade after it was signed, there is still no legal and political consensus in either Europe or Russia on how to approach the crimes of communism, similar to the non-negotiable position on Nazism. The provisions of the Prague Declaration have remained largely unimplemented. The disagreement is not only over the obvious facts – the recognition of the Armenian or Ukrainian genocides (which are only recognised by the national parliaments of some EU countries), the Stalinist repression of the Russian and other peoples (such as the Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Crimean Tatars and Chechens) – but even over the one-dimensional treatment of communism as a totalitarian ideology.[39] On the contrary, the Western public sphere is still dominated by texts and statements that

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[35] "Ar Prahos deklaracija pabudins Europos sąžinę?", in: *Kultūros barai*, 2013, Nr. 3, p. 59.

[36] Prague Declaration on European Conscience and Communism, in: <https://www.praguedeclaration.eu/>

[37] *Ibid.*

[38] Maria Mälksoo, "The Memory Politics of Becoming European: The East European Subalterns and the Collective Memory of Europe", in: *European Journal of International Relations*, 2009, No. 15 (4), p. 662.

[39] „Ar Prahos deklaracija pabudins Europos sąžinę?", in: *Kultūros barai*, 2013, Nr. 3, p. 59–63.

the Ukrainian Holodomor or the Stalinist Gulag cannot be equated with the Holocaust.[40] Thus – as already mentioned – the CEE, with its experience of both totalitarian regimes, becomes a kind of "buffer zone of memory", a hindrance to the merging of the narratives of the Holocaust and of the "Great Victory over Fascism". This offers a fundamentally different perspective on the interpretation and evaluation of the past, a national perspective that emphasises the need to preserve the memory of the resistance to the two totalitarian regimes. However, perhaps the most important achievement of the Prague Declaration was that the 2011 summit of the prime ministers of the Visegrád Group in Prague established the European Platform for Memory and Conscience, (hereafter "Platform") which is intended to "support cooperation between national research institutes specialising in the history of totalitarianism".[41] As of 2024, the Platform consists of a network of 72 governmental and non-governmental organisations from 24 European and North American countries. The organisation is mainly involved in educational activities and international travelling exhibitions,[42] but its efforts to set up an international judicial body to investigate and prosecute communist crimes have not yet succeeded. This may be due to the fact that some of the attitudes mirroring those of the Prague Declaration and Platform towards Nazi crimes have aroused considerable indignation among influential Jewish organisations. For example, representatives of the Simon Wiesenthal Center even saw in the common European commemoration of the Molotov–Ribbentrop Agreement Day as a commemoration of the crimes of the communist regimes the aim of obscuring, if not abandoning, the commemoration of the Holocaust victims.[43] The much-criticised title of the Museum of Genocide Victims in Vilnius,[44] which has been described as ignoring the Holocaust and perpetuating the theory of a "double genocide"[45] (it is surprising that the authors of these statements did not see an internal contradiction), ended up changing its name to the "Museum of the Occupations and Freedom Fights".[46]

The idea and programme of equating Nazi and Soviet crimes eventually stalled due to the resistance experienced. It turned into ritualistic mentions of the issue at various international political and academic events and new declarations, which unfortunately had little practical significance[47]. In the opinion of the Czech intellectual Ladislav Cabada, "Communism will only be equated with the other totalitarian regimes that ruled Europe

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[40] Charles S. Maier, "Hot Memory ...Cold Memory. On the Political Half-Life of Fascist and Communist Memory", in: *Projectsindycate.org*, <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/hot-memory-cold-memory--the-political-half-life-of-fascism-and-communism>, [2001-09-21].

[45] Rod Nordland, "Where the Genocide Museum Is (Mostly) Mum on the Fate of Jews", in: <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/30/world/europe/lithuania-genocide-museum-jews.html>, [2023-10-12].

[46] BNS, „Genocido aukų muziejus turi naują pavadinimą", in: Lrt.lt, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/lietuvoje/2/209866/genocido-auku-muziejus-turi-nauja-pavadinima>, [2022-12-09].

[47] See, for example, the European Parliament Resolution of 2 April 2009 on "European conscience and totalitarianism".

in the twentieth century when generations change".[48] This hope, however, seems illusory. Nevertheless, the Platform's activities can be seen as positive. According to Kasyanov, its emergence has legitimised the idea of equating Communism and Nazism at EU level, and has allowed the CEE countries – newcomers to the EU – to present themselves as victims of both totalitarian regimes, or "double victims". This may explain their socio-economic underdevelopment and their difficulties with Euro-integration.[49] For a while, it even seemed that the CEE model of historical politics – focusing on the sufferings and struggles of their own people and the existential threats they suffered under the communist regimes – would come to dominate over the Western European model of focusing on their own guilt and responsibility. However, this fragile consensus was short-lived and insignificant. Efforts by CEE MEPs to achieve a common European ban on the use of communist symbols, in analogy with Nazi symbols, were twice rejected – in 2005 and 2013. Efforts to introduce into European law a provision on penalties for denying or trivialising the crimes of communism also failed. The latter was never officially condemned by the international community while communist ideas, which were on the rise in Western Europe after the war, have remained there to this day, thanks in particular to the academia and public influence of left-wing intellectuals. On the other hand, the condition for Euro-integration – the introduction of the Western European model of historical politics in the CEE – not only clashed with the narrative of the "struggles and sufferings" of one's own nation, but also led to accusations against some national heroes of collaborating with the Nazis.[50] Or, on the contrary, of having participated in the "construction of communism" and the CEE countries responded to this challenge with a search for their "own" genocides and a "race for victims".[51]

In the opinion of Alexei Miller, a scholar of the region's politics of history, the 2004 wave of EU enlargement diluted the cosmopolitan discourse as the only possible and correct one, by raising the concept of "two totalitarianisms".[52] This assessment cannot be accepted without reservations, since the 2019–2020 period has seen the intensification of the "memory wars" in the region, in which – at least in the case of Lithuania – local elites and the mainstream media have clearly adopted a pro-cosmopolitan stance. This would rather indicate the opposite, but Miller is right to offer a reasoned critique of the cosmopolitan

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[48] "Ar Prahos deklaracija pabudins Europos sąžinę?", in: *Kultūros barai*, 2013, Nr. 3, p. 59.

[49] Георгий Касьянов, *Украина и соседи. Историческая политика 1987–2018 г.*, Москва: НЛО, 2019, c. 98.

[50] Rasa Čepaitienė, "Controversies of the Memory of the Second World War in Lithuania: Between Cosmopolitan and Nationalist Approaches", in: *Wojna i Pamięć. Czasopismo Muzeum II Wojny Światowej w Gdańsku*, 2023, No. 5, pp. 43–68.

[51] Evgeny Finkel, "In Search of Lost Genocide: Historical Policy and International Politics in Post-1989 Eastern Europe", in: *Global Society*, 2010, No. 24 (1), pp. 51–70.

[52] Алексей Миллер, „Введение. Что нового в политике памяти и в ее изучении?", in: *Политика памяти в современной России и странах Восточной Европы. Акторы, институты, нарративы: коллективная монография,* под ред. А. И. Миллера, Д. В. Ефременко, Санкт-Петербург: ЕГУ, 2020, с. 10.

approach to the past, although he was himself a proponent of it until recently.[53] The emergence of an alternative view of the phenomenon of the politics of history, which no longer demonises the political use of history, has given significant new connotations. It has come to see the politics of history as an integral part of a general politics, used in both domestic and foreign contexts.[54] In this way, the cosmopolitan view's claims to apoliticality – denying or ignoring the often mutually irreconcilable political interests of the different actors in the field of collective memory – proved not only inadequate but also unfair, as they were themselves determined by certain a priori ideological attitudes. According to another scholar of the regional politics of history, Nikolay Koposov, "The specificity of the politics of contemporary history is essentially linked to two features of contemporary memory. It is about the criminalisation and victimisation of the past, i.e. the prevailing view of history as a chain of crimes and the desire of human communities to identify with their victims".[55] The paradigm of such a relationship with the past has been shaped mainly around the memory of the Holocaust, but not only this. As scholars have noted, the tendency to instrumentalise the recent past, or to moralise and historicise contemporary politics, is common to all post-socialist and post-Soviet states.[56] They are also characterised by a tendency towards symbolic "necrophilia" – a focus on the burial or reburial of the bodies of politically significant figures.[57] On the other hand, countries also compete on the number of victims of totalitarianism,[58] and some of them – notably Ukraine, Lithuania, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan – even tend to treat these crimes as genocides, which has implications for both their domestic and foreign policies.[59] A prime example in this context is Russia, which, by adopting Article 354.1 of the Criminal Code "On the Rehabilitation of Nazism", which is essentially based on the criminalisation of Holocaust denial, has acquired a political instrument to prosecute interpretations of the past that do not suit Putin's regime. That spread "deliberately false information about the activities of the USSR during the Second World War, and the veterans of the Great Patriotic War". Russia also has a federal law 'On combating the rehabilitation of Nazism and the

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[53] *Ibid.*, pp. 7–12.

[54] Interview with Alexei Miller in Kiev, 17 July 2013.

[55] Николай Копосов, *Память строгого режима. История и политика России*, Москва: НЛО, 2011, с. 52–53.

[56] George Schopflin, "Identities, Politics and Post-Communism in Central Europe", in: *Nations and Nationalism*, 2003, No. 9 (4), p. 488.

[57] Katherine Verdery, *The Political Lives of Dead Bodies: Reburial and Postsocialist Change. The Harriman Lectures*, New York: Columbia University Press, 1999.

[58] Wilfried Jilge, Stefan Troebst, "Divided Historical Cultures? World War II and Historic Memory in Soviet and Post-Soviet Ukraine", in: *Jahrücher fur Geschichte Osteuropas*, 2006, No. 54 (1), pp. 1–2; Wilfred Jilge, "The Politics of History and the Second World War in Post-Communist Ukraine (1986/1991–2004/2005)", in: *Jahrücher fur Geschichte Osteuropas*, 2006, No. 54 (1), pp. 50–81.

[59] Evgeny Finkel, "In Search of Lost Genocide: Historical Policy and International Politics in Post-1989 Eastern Europe", in: *Global Society*, 2010, No. 24 (1), pp. 51–70.

glorification of Nazi criminals and their accomplices', which not only helps to regime to persecute or silence its critics, but also serves as an excuse to accuse the Baltic States and Ukraine of allegedly reviving Nazism. This eventually led to a large-scale military aggression against Ukraine under the pretext of its "de-Nazification".

New challenges to European politics of history

In recent years, other political and intellectual environments have begun to threaten the "Nuremberg Consensus". Although authors such as H. Arendt and others have written about it in the past, the relationship between colonialism and the Holocaust has come under intense scrutiny in the framework of postcolonial studies. So the topics of colonialism and Holocaust remembrance have come under intense scrutiny. In 2020–2021 a fierce debate, soon to be referred to as *Historikerstreit 2.0*, unfolded in Germany, comparing it to the famous controversy of 1986–1987. At the beginning of 2020 Joseph-Achille Mbembe, a Cameroonian historian and philosopher living in South Africa and invited to Germany to publicly speak, was accused there of expressing "anti-Semitic criticism of Israel". In his books and public speeches Mbembe, comparing apartheid in South Africa and the situation in the Gaza Strip.[60] allegedly relativised the Holocaust and "spread extremist disinformation",[61] which drew the ire of some German politicians who attempted to cancel him. But many prominent German intellectuals defended Mbembe, pointing out that Germans are trying to teach a native of their former colony, Cameroon, how to talk about genocide and the Holocaust.

According to the Nuremberg Consensus in Germany, and in general European memory culture, the conversation about genocide must begin with the Holocaust; only dictatorial regimes from Hitler to Milošević can commit or attempt genocide. For Africans, the first genocide committed by the Germans occurred when – in response to the Herero and Nama uprising in German South West Africa (present-day Namibia) – the Germans exterminated 80 per cent of the Herero people and 50 per cent of the Nama people between 1904 and 1908.[62] Ideas about the connection between Nazi genocidal practices and the colonial experience have long been articulated in academia, but have remained marginalised in the European memorial space. In the early 2020s, discussions around this thesis intensified, especially in Germany, where attempts were made – characteristic of German memorial culture – to rigidly discipline or criminalise those who deviated from

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[60] Ulrike Capdepón, Anthony D. Moses, "Forum: The Achille Mbembe Controversy and the German Debate about Antisemitism, Israel, and the Holocaust. Introduction", in: *Journal of Genocide Research*, 2021, No. 23 (3), pp. 371–373; Michael Rothberg, "Lived Multidirectionality: 'Historikerstreit 2.0' and the Politics of Holocaust Memory", in: *Memory Studies*, 2022, No. 15 (6), pp. 1316–1329.

[61] Sabine Peschel, "Why Achille Mbembe was accused of anti-Semitism", in: *Deutsche Welle*, <https://www.dw.com/en/why-achille-mbembe-was-accused-of-anti-semitism/a-53293797>, [2024-07-11].

[62] Matthias Häussler, *The Herero Genocide. War, Emotion, and Extreme Violence in Colonial Namibia*, New York: Berghahn Books, 2021.

the catechism.[63] Thus "the case of Mbembe" is one of the examples of intensification of the mnemonic conflict in Germany itself because new voices belonging to the descendants of imigrants who learned here and who are often German citizens are entering the discussion of German memory. They bring a different tradition and a different history, and yet they are already part of German society and, as a consequence, feel entitled to challenge from within.[64] One of them, Mohammed Amjahid, who was born in 1988 and studied political science in Berlin, added to the famous and untranslatable *Vergangenheitsbewältigung,* the new sarcastic concept of *Erinnerungsüberlegenheit*, i.e. "memorial superiority", referred to the poorly camouflaged German claim to be the world's model for working through the past.[65] The questioning of this model has also been prompted by the Hamas war against Israel, which began on 7 October 2023, and which has led world public opinion to criticise the Israeli army's actions against Palestinian civilians as genocide in an increasingly fierce manner, despite the typical fear of being accused of anti-Semitism in such cases. And so, in 2024, the clash of approaches to the topic of genocide unfolded in the course of South Africa's lawsuit against Israel in the UN Court of Justice for its actions in Gaza. The court's decision, which found a high probability of Israeli culpability for genocide, showed that a Holocaust-centred narrative that immunises Israel from genocide charges is no longer universally accepted, even in Europe. Of course, Germany is still trying to defend this narrative as the dominant one, but it is becoming increasingly difficult to do so.

Another aspect of the contemporary politics of memory has also received critical attention – the linking of the topic of reckoning with the past and remembering victims of crimes against humanity to the contemporary human rights ideology. In 2020, Irish researcher Lea David devoted a book with the striking title "The Past Will Not Heal Us: The Dangers of Mandating Memory in the Name of Human Rights" to analysing how the approach to memory policy, which she calls "moral remembering", was formed and how effective it is.[66] In particular, David presents a number of arguments in support of the claim that "moral remembering" is not only ineffective, but can also lead to negative consequences. The standards of "moral remembering" presuppose an appeal to a *particular* past, that is, strictly limited in time and represented by a single narrative. This approach naturally follows from the desire to unambiguously divide the participants of

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[63] Anthony D. Moses, "The German Catechism", in: *Geschichte der Gegenwart*, 23-05-2021, in: <https://geschicht-edergegenwart.ch/the-german-catechism/>, [2024-09-11].

[64] Michael Rothberg, "Lived Multidirectionality: 'Historikerstreit 2.0' and the Politics of Holocaust Memory", in: *Memory Studies*, 2022, No. 15 (6), pp. 1316–1329.

[65] Mohammed Amjahid, "Die deutsche Erinnerungsüberlegenheit", in: *Der Spiegel*, 06-03-2021, <https://www.spie-gel.de/kultur/holocaust-gedenken-die-deutsche-erinnerungsueberlegenheit-a-056d10a7-2b3c-4383-804e-c2130e d6581d>, [2024-09-11].

[66] Lea David, *The Past Can't Heal Us: The Dangers of Mandating Memory in the Name of Human Rights*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.

dramatic events into victims, perpetrators and observers (sometimes including heroes). In national conflicts however, such a division is most often difficult, since representatives of the group labelled as victims become perpetrators in other circumstances, and *vice versa* as described by Timothy Snyder in his well-known work *Bloodlands. Europe between Hitler and Stalin*. The aspiration of all sides in ethnic conflicts to present themselves in the past as victims of genocide clearly demonstrates this mechanism, because it proceeds from the postulate that there can be no questions or claims against a victim of genocide. For the same reason, the claimed division into victims and perpetrators perpetuates ethnic confrontation as in the case of the long-running Armenian–Azerbaijani conflict, where both sides accuse the other of genocide and create new forms and mechanisms of inequality. David also demonstrates that the standards of "moral remembering" imposed by international organisations firstly, often do not take into account local specifics and do not consider other possible approaches. Secondly, they lead to the imitation of such an approach on the part of national authorities, who seek (and find) opportunities to preserve in the pantheon of national heroes those who committed crimes against humanity.

David's book, which strongly criticises the liberal-globalist normative approach to politics of history, is already receiving a wide and very positive response.[67] Attempts to impose and standardise "moral remembering" on a global scale not only fail to produce the intended result of affirming democracy and human rights, but often have the opposite effect of distorting historical truth and censoring freedom of opinion and speech.

Conclusions

The historical politics of post-war Western Europe (especially the GFR) or "the Nuremberg Cconsensus" has been shaped by the consequences of both world wars and by attempts to forestall possible future military conflicts on the old continent. A reunifying Europe was looking for a moral foundation from which to build a European community of perpetual peace, international harmony and economic prosperity. Europe's greatest tragedy of the 20th century, the Holocaust, became a lesson and a transcendence in the pursuit of these goals. The narrative of European "collective guilt and responsibility" that it built upon eventually expanded to include those parts of the Western world, such as the United States, that were not directly involved in this history. This – as well as the tendencies to emphasise victims and criminalise the denial of crimes against them that have crystallised over time – can be seen to have had a significant impact on the other ethnic groups to begin to treat their historical persecution as a genocide and mass crimes against humanity. Reparations and repentance are demanded for this, including from

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[67]   Book Debate on Lea David's "The Past Can't Heal Us: The Dangers of Mandating Memory in the Name of Human Rights", H-Diplo, 2021, in: *ISS Forum*, URL: <https://issforum.org/roundtables/PDF/Roundtable-XXIII-7.pdf>, [2024-09-11].

the perpetrators' descendants, and the lines of harm and responsibility are increasingly blurred. These trends boiled over into anti-racist protests in the USA and elsewhere in 2018–2020 though the Black Lives Matter movement, which has emerged as a rival to the already established Holocaust narrative.

On the other hand, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, nations under Soviet influence regained the right to remember and commemorate the victims of Stalin's repressions. This effectively subsumed the legal assessment of their suffering under the category of genocide, much to the chagrin of supporters of "Nuremberg Consensus" in European institutions and influential Jewish organisations. The rivalry between the Holocaust and the Gulag as genocides has been a recurring theme in various Euro-integration contexts, especially when EU newcomers from Eastern Europe have tried to assimilate their own dictatorial past and experience to the Jewish genocide. As a result, despite some reverences for the post-communist countries of Eastern Europe and public declarations condemning the crimes of communism, the Eastern Europeans have not been able to dislodge the established narrative. However, recent events in Ukraine, where the invading Russian army has been committing genocidal acts since February 2022, and the outbreak of the Israeli–Hamas war in Palestine – make it necessary to look for a way out of this impasse. This includes trying to overcome the stereotypes and taboos that have been built up over decades.

Meanwhile, Russia defends the main features of the Nuremberg Consensus in the domestic and international arena to the last,[68] but its memory of the war is also undergoing significant changes. While the previous approach was mainly focused on the heroism of the victors, now the theme of suffering and sacrifice is playing an increasingly important role. In 2023 there were reports that a law was being prepared to establish a Day of Remembrance of the Soviet Victims of the Genocide, which should symbolically record the new trend. In February 2024 a number of politicians, historians and lawyers from the Baltic states were put on the wanted list by the Russian Interior Ministry for "desecration of historical memory" – participation in the destruction of monuments to Soviet soldiers who died in the Second World War.[69]

However, the politics of memory has become an arena of irreconcilable confrontation not only between Russia and the West, but also between the West and the postcolonial Global South and within Western societies themselves (the BLM movement in the US and the UK, or the controversy over the recognition of the Gulag or Holodomor as geno-

[68] Алексей Миллер, "Новейшая история: краткий курс", in: *Россия в глобальной политике*, 2023, т. 21, №. 2, с. 88–103; Алексей Миллер, "Устои «глобальной» мемориальной культуры под вопросом", in: *Россия в глобальной политике*. 2024, т. 22, № 3, с. 68–81.

[69] "Каллас, объявили в розыск за «надругательство над исторической памятью»", in: *Интерфакс*, 13/02/2024, <https://www.interfax.ru/world/945828>; "Rusija paskelbė 29 Lietuvos politikų, istorikų ir teisininkų paiešką – kaltina priešiškais veiksmais", in: *lrt.lt*, 2024-02-13, <https://www.lrt.lt/naujienos/pasaulyje/6/2194592/rusija-paskelbe-29-lietuvos-politiku-istoriku-ir-teisininku-paieska-kaltina-priesiskais-veiksmais> [2024-09-11].

cides in the CEE) . No one dares to predict how things will turn out in the field of politics of history, which often has genocide at its epicentre. Today, the three main pillars of "global" memory – the Nuremberg Consensus in the memory of the Second World War, the memory of the Holocaust as a unique and incomparable atrocity, and the standards of "moral remembering" of crimes against humanity and human rights violations – are not only being questioned, but are losing moral legitimacy. This becomes especially relevant in the context of the growing antagonism between various – global, national and local – mnemonic actors and institutions with the tendency to securitise memory, and the attempts to cleanse the national media space of "dangerous external influences". This leads to the stigmatisation and "abolition" of political opponents, and the rigid linking of memory politics to identity politics, which is increasingly based on the motive of remembering the victimisation of one's own community. Thus, despite attempts to find points of contact and compromises between these different memory models, it is unfortunate that a satisfactory consensus cannot be reached at the moment, and is unlikely to ever be reached.

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Rasa Čepaitienė

Genocidų tema europinėje istorijos politikoje

Santrauka

XX a. penktajame dešimtmetyje Vakarų teisiniame ir intelektualiniame diskursuose išsikristaliza-vusios „genocido" ir „nusikaltimų žmoniškumui" sąvokos aktyviai išnaudojamos įvairiose vidaus politinėse kovose ir tarptautiniuose santykiuose (ryškiausi pavyzdžiai – Holokaustas ir ukrainiečių Holodomoras), o tai susiję ir su istorijos politikos sritimi. Per pastaruosius dvidešimt metų Europo-je Sąjungos istorijos politikoje radosi reikšmingų pokyčių, nulemtų ir ES plėtros į Rytus, ir pačios ES vaidmens pasaulyje kaitos. Jeigu XX a. septintajame–aštuntajame dešimtmečiais Vakarų Vokietijoje susiformavęs ir devintajame–dešimtajame dešimtmečiais ES mastu buvo įtvirtintas naratyvas, ku-rio centre atsidūrė Holokaustas, kaip savo masteliu ir padariniais unikalus pasaulio istorijoje įvykis, tai su 2004 m. ES plėtros banga jis sulaukė iššūkio iš naujųjų Sąjungos narių. Pastarieji pasiūlė vie-nodai traktuoti nacių ir sovietų totalitarizmus, lygiai vertinant ir pirmųjų, ir antrųjų padarytus nusi-kaltimus, taigi Gulagą prilyginti Holokaustui. Tai Europos istorijos politiką pavertė komplikuotesne ir paveikesne narių vidaus nesutarimams bei nesusikalbėjimui. Straipsnio tikslas – išsamiau aptarti „genocido" sąvokos teisinį ir politinį išnaudojimą besiformuojančios Europos bendrijos intelektuali-niame diskurse, susijusiame su istorijos politikos esminiais postulatais. Taip pat apibrėžti iššūkius, kuriuos jam meta naujos geopolitinės aplinkybės, pradedant Sovietų Sąjungos žlugimu ir baigiant Ru-sijos 2022 m. pradėta karine invazija į Ukrainą. Galiausiai išsamiau aptariami naujausi iššūkiai, susiję su postkolonijiniu ir žmogaus teisių diskursais, griaunantys nusistovėjusias europinės istorijos poli-tikos nuostatas net ir pačioje Vokietijoje, kuri buvo jų formavimo ir globalaus diegimo lyderė. Daroma išvada, kad, nepaisant mėginimų rasti sąlyčio taškų ir kompromisų tarp šių skirtingų atminčių mode-lių, deja, pasiekti visus tenkinančio konsensuso šiuo metu nepavyksta ir vargu ar kada nors pavyks.

Reikšminiai žodžiai: istorijos politika, Holokaustas, Gulagas, žmogaus teisės.