

# MEMORY OF THE PAST AND POLITICS OF THE PRESENT

Prague, 28–29 November 2022

STRATEGYAV21



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 auspices of the Committee on Education, Science, Culture, Human Rights and Petitions of the Senate of the Parliament of the Czech Republic.

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

**Date:** 28–29 November 2022

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

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

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## PROGRAMME

### ••• NOVEMBER 28

12.30–13.00 Registration & coffee

13.00–13.30 Opening

Introductory & welcome speeches

Mateusz CHMURSKI (Centre français de recherche en sciences sociales)

Miloš ŘEZNÍK (Deutsches Historisches Institut Warschau)

Jan RYDEL (European Network Remembrance and Solidarity)

Markus PIEPER (Stiftung Sächsische Gedenkstätten)

Oldřich TŮMA (Institute of Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences)

13.30–15.00 Session 1

Chaired by Mateusz CHMURSKI (CEFRES)

Miloš ŘEZNÍK (German Historical Institute in Warsaw)

- Retrotopical Practices in the Contemporary Politics of History

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

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

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

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

Jan RYDEL (European Network Remembrance and Solidarity & Pedagogical University Krakow)

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

15.00–15.30 Coffee break

15.30–17.00 Session 2

Chaired by Miloš ŘEZNÍK (German Historical Institute in Warsaw)

Mykola BOROVIK (Frankenberg/Sa., 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

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

Bradley REYNOLDS (University of Helsinki)

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

Olev LIIVIK (Estonian Institute of Historical Memory)

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

••• NOVEMBER 29

09.30–11.00 Session 3

Chaired by Markus PIEPER (Saxon Memorial Foundation)

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

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

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

- The German-Russian revisionist consensus over Ukraine, 1918–2022

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

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

Aleksey KAMENSKIKH (Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, Institute for Slavic, Turkic and Circum-Baltic Studies & Perm Memorial)

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

11.00–11.30 Coffee break

11.30–13.00 Session 4

Chaired by Gábor DANYI (European Network Remembrance and Solidarity)

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

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

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

- The Memory of the Don Disaster in Hungarian Documentaries

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

13.00–14.00 Lunch & coffee break

14.00–15.30 Session 5

Chaired by Oldřich TŮMA (ÚSD)

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

- German Ostpolitik Reconsidered?

Gábor DANYI (European Network Remembrance and Solidarity)

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

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

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

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

15.30 Closing

