

РАБОЧИЕ МАТЕРИАЛЫ WORKING PAPERS

МОСКОВСКИЙ ЦЕНТР КАРНЕГИ CARNEGIE MOSCOW CENTER

SAMUEL A. GREENE, EDITOR

ENGAGING HISTORY

THE PROBLEMS & POLITICS OF MEMORY

IN RUSSIA AND THE POST-SOCIALIST SPACE

2
2010

CARNEGIE MOSCOW CENTER

CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE

WORKING PAPERS № 2 • 2010

SAMUEL A. GREENE, EDITOR

ENGAGING HISTORY

THE PROBLEMS & POLITICS OF MEMORY

IN RUSSIA AND THE POST-SOCIALIST SPACE

РАБОЧИЕ МАТЕРИАЛЫ WORKING PAPERS

The Working Papers series was founded in 1999.

No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means without permission in writing from the Carnegie Endowment or the Carnegie Moscow Center.

Carnegie Moscow Center

Russia, 125009 Moscow, Tverskaya ul., 16/2.

Tel: (495) 935-8904

Fax: (495) 935-8906

E-mail: info@carnegie.ru

Internet: <http://www.carnegie.ru>

Electronic versions of all Carnegie Moscow Center publications may be found at: <http://www.carnegie.ru>

The Carnegie Moscow Center is an independent public policy research institution that promotes intellectual collaboration among Russian and international scholars and policy experts and provides analysis on a wide range of political, economic, and social issues. The main vehicles for its work are its publications and seminars.

Working Papers provide the readers with the access to the main current research on Russian and Eurasian domestic and foreign policy. The series includes intermediate results of research or the articles for immediate release. You may send your comments to the e-mail address above.

The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace or the Carnegie Moscow Center.

The publication is distributed free-of-charge.

The publication explores the phenomenon of “historical politics” – the use and misuse of history as a tool of political competition and control – in Russia and the post-socialist space, including Ukraine and Estonia, the history of its development and various strategies for coping with it. Included in the publication are, among other things, translations of articles first published in Russian in *Pro et Contra* and the summary of a seminar on historical politics held in Kazan in March 2010.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Alexander Astrov is assistant professor of international relations and European studies at Central European University in Budapest.

Samuel Greene is deputy director of the Carnegie Moscow Center.

Georgy Kasyanov is chair of the department of contemporary history and politics at the Institute of Ukrainian History of the Ukrainian National Academy of Sciences.

Maria Lipman is a scholar-in-residence and editor-in-chief of *Pro et Contra*, the journal of the Carnegie Moscow Center.

Alexei Miller is a senior fellow at the Institute of Scientific Information for the Social Sciences of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Andrey Ryabov is a scholar-in-residence at the Carnegie Moscow Center and director of the East East: Partnership Beyond Borders Program.

CONTENTS

Foreword	4
Engaging History: The problems and politics of history in Russia (S. Greene, M. Lipman, A. Ryabov)	5
Russia: Power & History (A. Miller)	13
Estonia: The political battle for a place in history (A. Astrov)	26
Ukraine: The Holodomor and nation-building (G. Kasyanov)	37
Historical Politics and its Variations in the Post-Socialist Space (A. Ryabov).....	51
About the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace	54

FOREWORD

Notions of the “end of history,” popular as the 20th century drew to a close, have proved mistaken. Not only has political contestation continued over the very meaning of modernity, but the past has returned to the core of the contemporary debate on the future of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. Russia is no exception. Questions of memory and historiography inform the internal political process within Russia itself and often drive Russia’s relations with its neighbors. The ability of competing political constituencies – whether within one country or across borders – to accept that histories may be shared while remembrances may differ is demonstrably weak. To some extent, this is to be expected: for decades, the entire region was under the sway of a single, dominant historical narrative. That narrative and the state that embodied it have ceased to exist, but the emergence of diversity has been turbulent.

On May 9, 2010, as Russia celebrated the 65th anniversary of victory in World War II, Moscow was adorned with portraits of Stalin. However his role may be evaluated, city officials said, he cannot be erased from history. Others argued that so long as Stalin remains central to the story of victory – the central narrative of contemporary Russian identity – Russia can have no democratic future. Analytically, we must at least consider the possibility that both sides are correct, but that realization need not condemn Russia to an authoritarian future. Rather, deeper understanding and fresh ideas are needed to address the ways in which Russia’s past conditions its future. That is the task of these Working Papers.

Support for the research presented here and the production of these Working Papers was provided by the Oak Foundation and the Open Society Institute.

ENGAGING HISTORY: THE PROBLEMS & POLITICS OF HISTORY IN RUSSIA

SAMUEL GREENE, MARIA LIPMAN & ANDREY RYABOV

Three times in the course of 100 years, Russia changed the world. The first time, in 1917, the Bolshevik Revolution transformed communism from the “specter haunting Europe” into a system of existing governance and a challenge to the capitalist and liberal democratic systems that were beginning to dominate the West. The second time, in 1945, the Soviet Union played the decisive role in defeating Nazi Germany, ending the fascist threat while simultaneously extending Soviet dominance over half of the European continent. And the third time, in 1991, Russia (as distinct from the USSR) dismantled its empire, abandoned its ideological, political and economic challenge to the West, and paved the way for the final unification of Europe.

But as central as Russia has been to world history, all of these events are even more central to Russia’s own development. The transformations of 1917 and 1991, each followed by protracted periods of conflict and upheaval, brought tremendous social strain but also fundamentally altered the notion of what it meant to be Russian and to live in Russia. Subjects of an all-powerful tsar became citizens of a republic and then cogs in a totalitarian machine, only to turn around and once again seek to assert sovereignty over the state. The place of ethnicity and religion in personal and collective identity was repeatedly revised. And throughout it all, the political meaning and empirical content of history became the objects of endless manipulation. By the end of the 20th century, Russians joked that the only thing harder than predicting their future was predicting their past: it kept changing.

All people face an uncertain future, but no nation can consolidate around an uncertain past. In the face of healthy political competition about the way forward, it is shared memories and conceptions of the past that bind political communities together, that give meaning to traditions, values and institutions, that create an emotional attachment to state and territory. That is not to say that history must be promulgated and accepted as dogma: contestation of the past is vital. But nations need broadly accepted landmarks in history, points of reference that frame the discourse about the state and its citizens. Interpretations of the past can and should differ, reflecting the competing value systems that seek to shape the future. But generally accepted national “myths” – the American, French, and Glorious Revolutions, for example, or the narrative of Gandhi – are indispensable.

Modern Russia, alas, has very little to work with in the way of national myths. There is not enough agreement on the meanings of 1917 and 1991, and most of the achievements of the long period before 1917 – say, the victory over Napoleon in 1812 – are too far removed and too closely associated with an archaic monarchy to be relevant to contemporary identity. All that is left is victory in World War II, a shining moment of triumph over unmitigated evil, associated with a regime and a country that no longer exist but still fresh in the memories of Russian citizens, including surviving veterans. There is no narrative more central to today’s Russian identity than the story of the Great Patriotic War.

Building a national identity around the story of victory in World War II, however, is a problematic enterprise. Beyond the obvious desirability of the result and the tremendous heroism required to achieve it, there is little in terms of ideological content in the central “myth” that is of use in construing the future. Indeed, one need not step far from the central narrative in order to run into tremendous ideological battles: take, for example, the character of the Stalinist regime that won the war, or the occupation of Central and Eastern Europe that followed. A clear ideological stance on either of these issues would crucially inform the further development of the state, but no such stance is evident in Russia. Indeed, most Russians are highly averse to ideology per se, after the hyper-ideological world of the Soviet Union. That may be understandable, but the failure to deal with the challenges of history is often cited as an impediment to Russia’s democratic development.

We do not believe that the past is the key obstacle to Russia’s democratization, neither in and of itself, nor due to the lack of a clear evaluation of history. We believe that there is value in ambiguity. Indeed, in a democratic system, with open political competition for the sympathies of voters, the past would inevitably become an object of debate, with various forces proposing their own interpreta-

tions, in line with their policy preferences, and with various common denominators eventually being derived. Messy as it may seem, this is precisely what has happened in Ukraine, with the ongoing debates over *holodomor* and Bandera. But this is not what has happened in Russia. We will look at the Russian discourse in more detail in the next section, but it is worth taking a moment to review how history is politicized in domestic and foreign affairs.

In Russia, an authoritarian regime has emerged that thrives on flexibility. Making use of the public's allergy to ideology, the Kremlin has studiously avoided both ideological debate and ideological imposition: unlike in the Soviet Union, Russian citizens are free to think whatever they like, and even to act on those thoughts. The state has sought only to reinforce those aspects of the central World War II narrative that reinforce its own legitimacy – the abstract glory of victory, the need of a strong hand – while refusing to take a clear stand on the rest. Taking a stand, after all, would require identifying and then defending a position, while simultaneously providing opponents with the opportunity to stake out alternative positions. By refusing to take a stand, the state effectively occupies all of the ground at once, leaving potential opposition with no traction.

If the focus shifts from domestic politics to foreign affairs, the game changes somewhat, but the core values remain the same. The Russian leadership feels compelled to defend the crucial aspects of the World War II narrative from other governments' impingements, even while avoiding direct association with what many outside Russia feel to be the crimes of the past. Thus, Russia defends the Bronze Soldier in Tallinn without defending the occupation, but apologizes for 1956 and 1968 without apologizing for the occupation. Thus, the Kremlin maintains plausible deniability on all fronts.

THE POLITICS OF HISTORY IN CONTEMPORARY RUSSIA

As described above, the official historical discourse in Russia is both exceedingly and deceptively simple. Government officials – and, indeed, the bulk of the mainstream media – make almost no mention of history beyond World War II and the periods immediately preceding and following the war.¹ Within this narrative, attention is drawn to three aspects in particular:

- the abject inhumanity of the enemy;
- the heroism of the Soviet forces (with particular reference to key battles, such as the Siege of Leningrad and the battles of Moscow and Stalingrad);
- the fact of Stalin as *generalissimo*.

The seeming simplicity of this construction, however, is belied by a great degree of internal complexity, reflected not in what the narrative includes, but in what it excludes. Thus:

- the inhumanity of the enemy is portrayed primarily with reference to crimes against the Russian and Soviet peoples, while little or no mention is made of the Holocaust;²
- the role of the Allies is underplayed or ignored, while the war itself is presented as beginning in 1941, not 1939;
- the role of Stalin, both in terms of his internal terror and the occupation he imposed on Eastern Europe (again, both before and after the war), is left without interpretation.

At first glance, this may simply seem like a lack of nuance, a ham-handed attempt at constructing a dominant narrative. But it rather reflects a clear desire by the regime to avoid normative engagement: the triumph of good over evil requires no second thought or evaluation and can be neither contested nor sullied by any guilt by association with Stalin.

One result of this approach – which is transmitted through the state-run media, particularly television, and through schools – has been a skewing of memory. According to a poll conducted by the

1 The state has attempted to draw some attention to the war against Poland in 1612, as commemorated by the Day of National Unity celebrated on Nov. 4. However, most Russians have paid scant attention. Various attempts have also been made on television and in literature to deal with aspects of the Civil War, particularly leaders of the White Army, and the rehabilitation of Tsar Nikolai II and his family, but these have also quickly faded from public view.

2 Not coincidentally, this is also true of most World War II narratives in other post-Soviet countries, in part as a legacy of a Soviet World War II narrative that sought to avoid portraying Jews as particular victims of the Nazis.

Levada Center in the run-up to celebrations of the 65th anniversary of the end of the war, memories of the war itself are still quite fresh: 76% said that close relatives had suffered, primarily through death (50%), injury (33%), or disappearance (16%). When asked to describe the reasons for the start of the war, however, responses are instructive. Thus, Russians do not have an entirely uncritical view of the USSR's role in the war, with more respondents believing that the start of the war was made possible by the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (33%) than by the Munich Agreement on Czechoslovakia (26%). But a tremendous 41% of respondents could not answer the question, reflecting the lack of nuanced consideration and deliberation given to the subject. Moreover, when asked what the key outcome of the war was, 64% responded "the destruction of Hitler's regime," followed by the liberation of Europe from fascist occupation (49%), and the peaceful development of Europe (22%); most telling, however, is that the pollsters failed even to suggest "ending genocide" as an option.

Maintaining this level of abstraction is not an easy task, for two reasons, one domestic and one foreign, but both stemming from the same fact: ignoring history doesn't make it go away. Within Russia itself, the facts of Stalin's rule – the terror, the Gulag, the punishment of entire peoples – remain on the country's physical and emotional landscape, even if views on them differ. While the government can effectively exclude bottom-up initiatives aimed at altering the discourse by, for example, provoking a public debate on Stalin's legacy, it has a harder time dealing with its own agents. Thus, as mentioned before, Moscow will be adorned with portraits of Stalin on the Victory Day celebrations May 9th. The initiative, however, belongs not to the Kremlin – which would just as soon not see the portraits – but to Moscow Mayor Yury Luzhkov, who has often sought to curry favor with veterans and others whose view of Stalin is positive. By not excluding Stalin explicitly, and unwilling to either support or condemn the use of his portrait, the Kremlin opens the door for Luzhkov and others to exploit him, while the backlash hits the Kremlin rather than City Hall.

Internationally, the problem is significantly more difficult. Many of the "places of memory" associated with the World War II narrative are now located outside of Russian territory, creating a dilemma: the same historical "landmarks" have become part of differing and often competing historical narratives. In much of Eastern and Central Europe, including in the Baltic states, Poland and Ukraine, the narrative of World War II is no less central to identity but differs in crucial ways from the Russian discourse. The classic example, again, is of the Bronze Soldier in Tallinn, one of numerous monuments to Soviet liberators throughout the post-Soviet space that, in local discourses, have come to be seen as monuments not to liberators, but to occupiers. These differences of perspective pose an existential threat to the official Russian discourse, to which the Kremlin is obliged to react: a construction in which Soviet forces are good triumphing over evil leaves no room for ambiguity. These same forces may later (say, in 1956 or 1968) be condemned for a different mission, but by the logic of the Kremlin's historical architecture their role in 1945 must be singular and unchallenged. To this end, the government has gone as far as to launch a Commission Against the Falsification of History, although it has not gone as far as to give the Commission any particular substance.

This difficulty with ambiguity may be why, despite repeated high-profile statements by Presidents Yeltsin and Putin acknowledging Soviet culpability in the murder of Polish officers at Katyn, more respondents continue to place blame on the Germans (28%) than on the Soviets (19%), while the majority can formulate no answer at all (53% – even more than the 47% who said they had insufficient knowledge of the incident to begin with). Interestingly, when faced with the question from a different angle – should Russia apologize to Poland for the murders – 47% of respondents said no, "because Germany, and not the USSR, was responsible for the crime."

This phenomenon – in which Russians appear not to remember facts of history that are of importance to others – has been described by some as "absent memory." We will discuss this concept at greater length below, but at this juncture it raises an important question: is public memory conditioned by the official discourse, or is the government bound to follow an ideology deeply ingrained in Russian memory and culture? There is nothing in the evidence to suggest that the discourse is static and that views are immutable. For example, while discussion of World War II continues to underemphasize the role of the Allies, their role is significantly more prominently displayed now than it was in Soviet times, and even than in much of the 1990s. As a result, when asked whether the USSR could have won the war without the Allies, in 57% responded yes (against 30% no) in 2010, compared to 71% yes and 21% no in 1997. If this is any guide, a concerted engagement with historical discourse can bring results.

ENGAGING HISTORY: EXPERIENCES OF CIVIL SOCIETY

It would not be an exaggeration to say that history is at the heart of Russian civil society. Indeed, contemporary Russian civil society began with the discussion of history, when Memorial was established to study and publicize the crimes of the past. Since the days of Perestroika, however, Russia has changed, as has the discourse.

Civil society engagement with history in Russia can be divided broadly into three categories:

- political activism, including organizations such as Memorial, aimed at using history to alter the contemporary political discussion, particularly regarding human rights and rule of law;
- discourse activism, among professional historians, other social scientists, educators, and journalists, seeking to change the way history itself is discussed and manipulated in Russia and, often, elsewhere;
- research activism, among professional archivists and historians, seeking to change the debate by adding new empirical information.

This is not to suggest, however, that the borders between these categories are terribly distinct. Many of the same people and organizations straddle the dividing lines, and there is a significant degree of collaboration on various fronts. Still, these three groupings represent distinct strategies for bringing about change in the field of history in Russia, and it is worth reviewing them as such to discern the relative success or failure of their approaches.

POLITICAL ACTIVISM

MEMORIAL came onto the scene in the late 1980s and became one of Russia's first post-Soviet NGOs, together with the Moscow Helsinki Group. According to its original charter, Memorial's mission is commemoration, collecting archival and other historical information, and disseminating it to a public concerned about the "return of history," operating on the assumption that the only way to prevent a reversion to totalitarianism is to make the crimes of the past clear for all to see. In many ways, Memorial is where civil society engagement with history began, and it remains the most prominent and well respected player in the field.

Memorial was founded by Soviet dissidents, most of whom had been jailed during the 1970s, when they sought to expose Stalinism as an act of civil resistance to the Brezhnev-Andropov regime, but who prior to Gorbachev had no way of disseminating their message. Glasnost changed that, and the group rose to prominence even before the fall of the Soviet Union. In the 1990s, under Boris Yeltsin, Memorial enjoyed the support of the Kremlin and, in 1991, succeeded in pushing through the Law on the Rehabilitation of the Victims of Political Repressions, which exonerated hundreds of thousands of innocent victims. Around the same time, the group erected the Memory Stone at Lubyanka Square, outside the old KGB headquarters, in commemoration of the victims of the secret services.

With the rise of Putin, Memorial's situation changed. Without siding with the Communists, who had always seen Memorial as an adversary, Putin rejected Yeltsin's anti-communist legacy, ideology, and rhetoric. Russia, he showed, would no longer repent or admit guilt, not to its own citizens and not to other nations. That, and suspicion of foreign grantmakers, who provided most of Memorial's funding, deprived the group of the political support of the government, and Memorial gradually became marginalized. This is not to say, however, the Memorial's activities have waned. Current operations include:

- ongoing efforts to identify and document the victims and perpetrators of repression, including physical and electronic publication and dissemination, archival research (which has become more difficult but not impossible), and work with the media (likewise);
- independent research and commemorative work by regional chapters throughout the country, with particular impact in Magadan, Perm, and Ryazan, including organizing libraries and research centers with information on repressions committed locally;
- cooperation with similarly oriented activists and organizations abroad, particularly in Germany, Poland, Ukraine, the Baltic states, Georgia, and Kazakhstan, including major international events, such as the 2008 international conference on Stalinism in Moscow;

- annual commemoration of October 30th (Day of Commemoration of Political Prisoners), including candlelight vigils and name readings at Lubyanka and other sites; and
- a high school contest in oral history, now more than a decade in operation.

While Memorial's achievements in research, publication, commemoration, and outreach are significant, the effect on Russian public opinion and policymaking has been modest at best. The organization's initial stated goal of building a national museum and memorial of Stalin's repressions has never been realized, due to a combination of state resistance and public apathy.

Another initiative in the area of political activism is the **ABSENT MEMORY PROJECT**, conducted by the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, DC. The project, led by Sarah Mendelson and Ted Gerber, defines "absent memory" (as alluded to above) as "the condition where states and societies choose consciously to emphasize and embrace certain aspects of the past while ignoring or distorting those chapters involving grave human rights abuses." Billed as a research project, the initiative brings together activists from Russia with their counterparts from Europe and Latin America to "create a transnational alliance or consortium that engages in joint research" designed to:

- "reveal why absent memory resonates and appeals to specific audiences";
- "recommend how best to overcome absent memory among the public and policy making communities"; and
- "broaden the constituency that recognizes how absent memory negatively affects political development and why it ought to be countered."

Because it is an American-led project, however, the team pursuing it seeks to limit itself to research and a degree of advocacy for its own ideas within a select community of activists. It then works through partnerships, including with Memorial, to turn its findings into action, primarily through "social marketing" campaigns designed to alter the discussion of history. The goal is "a paradigm shift in how absent memory is viewed by populations and policy elites."

DISCOURSE ACTIVISM

The **SMOLNY COLLEGE & INSTITUTE** in St. Petersburg, a liberal arts college with an activist faculty, has long been associated with various forms of historical activism, including the activities of Memorial and the Absent Memory Project described above. However, due to the departure of one of the institute's key figures, Dina Khapaeva, to Helsinki, activities have in recent times been somewhat muted. In particular, Smolny has moved away from direct political activism and more firmly into the realm of discourse activism.

The core idea of Smolny's activities in the area of history can be described as "Memory without Borders": the institute seeks to create a core network of historians, activists, and other interested parties, including students and graduate students, from Russia and throughout the post-communist space, in an Internet-based discussion club and network. Since the fall of the Iron Curtain, in Smolny's view, there have evolved in the region two separate historical discourses: one, conducted by Central and Eastern Europeans and aimed at audiences in the West, that seeks to portray Russia in a uniformly negative light; and another, conducted by Russians and aimed inward (and also at the West), that seeks to portray the Central and Eastern Europeans (and, to an extent, the West) as revisionist. The conflict is compounded by the fact that, even among less conflictual historians, there is little or no direct communication between historians in Russia and its neighbors.

To help remedy the situation, Smolny launched a website, www.politmemo.ru, headlined "Education, Politics, and Memory," designed to serve as a mechanism for sharing research and analysis and eventually as the hub of an international network. Initially, the primary theme of discussion is the feedback loop created by history and mass culture, including literature, cinema, education, and museums.

A similar tack is taken by the **POLITICS OF HISTORY PROJECT**, led by Alexei Miller of the Russian Institute of Social Sciences and the Central European University in Budapest. Bringing together historians and social scientists from Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Estonia, and elsewhere, the project seeks to "find partners across borders who are unhappy with their own politics of history" in order to "create

a space for politically independent historical thought.” A much smaller and more close-knit network than what Smolny is creating, Miller and his partners exchange ideas and research and publish together – often in debates – in independent outlets, including the www.polit.ru website and the Carnegie Moscow Center’s journal, *Pro et Contra*. By focusing on the politics of history – in other words, how politicians use history for their own ends – rather than on the history itself, the network is able to generate a community of interest, even if there are empirical or historiographical disagreements, that allows participants to gain purchase on the phenomenon of the politics of history itself. This in turn leads to a strategy that Miller describes as “Aikido”: “Can we use the energy of the official agenda to create a new agenda?”, including by identifying and exploiting the political opportunity structure. An example is the dilemmas created for the Kremlin by Moscow’s over-reaching regarding the portraits of Stalin: at least temporarily, the government lost control of the discourse, as a firestorm of domestic and international criticism arose.

Other discourse activists operate on a purely domestic level. Thus, the **ASSOCIATION OF HISTORY TEACHERS**, created in 1997, works together with the **STATE PUBLIC HISTORICAL LIBRARY** to create and disseminate curricular materials to improve the instruction of history in Russian schools, working outside the official state system. Working together with various European NGOs and the Council of Europe, the Association emphasizes “poly-cultural” approaches to history, particularly important in Russia, where official school textbooks emphasize Slavic history and stigmatize much of the country’s ethnic minority population. To this end, in addition to producing and disseminating curricular materials, the Association holds an annual conference, offers continuing education courses for teachers, and organizes thematic seminars and workshops.

While the discourse activists described above focus on approach, others focus more on content. Chief among these is **ROSSPEN**, one of Russia’s oldest and most established independent publishing houses. Founded by a group of independent historians in 1991, Rosspen has traditionally concentrated on publishing reference works and historical texts on contemporary Russian political development, as well as on the Soviet period. Together with the **YELTSIN FOUNDATION**, Rosspen has launched a major new project on the History of Stalinism, which is projected to publish 100 monographs by Russian and foreign authors, including analytical works and collections of documents. Its most important work to date is the seven-volume *History of Stalin’s Gulag. 1920s-1950s*, with a foreword by Alexander Solzhenitsyn, published in 2005. It is also working with Miller and the Politics of History Project to publish a collection of their works. Rosspen collaborates with other organizations, including Memorial, to organize conferences, at which its books are presented, and has an unrivaled distribution network to Russian universities, libraries, and civic organizations.

Finally, various Russian media outlets have devoted considerable space and resources to discussions of 20th century history, all from a “liberal” perspective in line with the activists described above. Most prominent among these is **EKHO MOSKVY** radio, which has several ongoing series of on-air discussions, covering the history of the Civil War, World War II, and the Stalin era. The weekly magazine **KOMMERSANT VLAST** publishes interesting historical documents with commentary in each issue. Additionally, the daily newspapers **VEDOMOSTI** and **NOVAYA GAZETA** regularly publish articles on problems of historical memory, in collaboration with the Absent History Project and Memorial, respectively.

RESEARCH ACTIVISM

While political activists try to mobilize history to affect politics, and discourse activists try to mobilize historians to affect the discussion of history itself, research activists seek to provide resources to both groups by injecting “new facts” into the public space. Almost exclusively, research activists in Russia are archivists. Among the first was the **YAKOVLEV ARCHIVE / FOUNDATION FOR DEMOCRACY**. Founded in the early 1990s by Alexander Yakovlev, a Soviet official who rose to prominence under Gorbachev and was a major driver behind Glasnost and Perestroika, the archive and foundation became the major repository for his work after 1996, when Yeltsin nixed plans for the creation of a state-backed institute of national memory. Yakovlev transferred to the archive the various documents he had collected during his time in government, both in the Soviet Union and then in Russia, and afforded the foundation’s staff with access to materials still held in government archives. As a result, the foundation published some 60 volumes of historical documents, with minimal analytical commentary. According to Anatoly Yakovlev, Alexander’s son and an editor of some of the volumes, “The idea was to create a

solid foundation for discussions of the past and debate about the future. We wanted to give people the factual basis for a new history, with an emphasis on the repressions.”

A somewhat different tack was taken by the **SAKHAROV ARCHIVE / SAKHAROV MUSEUM AND PUBLIC CENTER**. Created through a similar mechanism and with a similar mission, the Sakharov archive and museum focus on direct outreach, rather than on publications (though they do publish, as well). Thus, the archive makes documents from Sakharov’s personal collections available to academic researchers, while the museum and public center – including through its website – work with the general public, both to educate them on the Soviet past and to provide assistance to individuals seeking information on relatives who had been repressed.

ANALYSIS & CONCLUSIONS

The cases briefly described above are only the most prominent civil society initiatives engaging with history in Russia, but this has by no means been an exhaustive list. Numerous other local, regional, and national projects are active in the field. Still, some general conclusions can be drawn from what we know at this point. Encouragingly, there is a great diversity of initiative and a richness of methodology: the field of civic engagement with history is lively. Moreover, while more connections can always be made, this particular segment of civil society does not suffer from the atomization that plagues most of Russia’s activist community. Quite to the contrary, historical activists in Russia seem collegial, collaborative, and genuinely interested in what each other are doing.

Those positive notes make the following conclusion all the more troubling: representatives of all of the initiatives described above openly admit that their activities have had little or no impact. Different people chalk that failure up to different factors. Political activists tend to see the hand of the regime, controlling the media, education, and the public space in general, making it impossible for them to get their message out. To an extent, this is certainly true, but not entirely. While the message of Memorial and others is quieter than it once was, it is still entirely audible. Putin, speaking in Butovo and then in Katyn, has repeatedly denounced Stalin, and President Medvedev has even borrowed Memorial’s language for his own rhetoric on the totalitarian past. Moreover, a majority of Russians repudiate Stalin: according to a March 2010 poll by the Levada Center, 58% of Russians believe that Stalin’s repressions were entirely unjustified, and 47% (the largest percent) believed that the most important thing about Stalin’s death was that it ended the terror. Those may not be the sorts of numbers that activists (or the authors of this report) would like to see, but they certainly do not reflect an overwhelmingly positive image of Stalin.

That is not to suggest, however, that fault lies with the capacities of the activists, as discourse and research activists argued. While it is true that most of the initiatives in these areas lacked strong and sustained outreach strategies, it is not clear that even the best and most generously funded strategies would have been effective. One discourse activist, for example, suggested that what was needed was a strategy – not dissimilar to Memorial’s – that would link an understanding of the fact of Stalin’s flouting of even Soviet law to an argument for better rule of law by today’s Russian leaders. Given the polling evidence above, however, it seems unlikely that such an approach would gain traction: Russian citizens already condemn the crimes of the past, but with no political consequence for the present.

Rather, we believe that the core of the challenge lies considerably deeper than the situational dynamics of either the regime or NGOs. The problem gets to the fundamental nature of the relationship between the Russian state and its citizens. In contemporary Russia, institutional contact between state and citizen is reduced to an absolute minimum, almost by mutual agreement. Twenty years removed from a state that regulated every aspect of private and social life – and a system that placed tremendous ideological and administrative costs on the ruling elite – both sides are enjoying their freedom from each other, even if it is an unhappy coexistence. The Russian state does not dictate to citizens what to think, what to read, where to go, where to work, how to live. Russian citizens’ notorious paternalism does not translate into real expectations of the state: citizens fully understand that their rulers do not have their interests at heart. Interaction is thus highly individualized, as a single citizen deals with a single bureaucrat in a single transaction, guided not by law or institution but by relative power. These

transactions are infinitely repeated but are never exactly the same. This is why Russians are apathetic about democratic politics: there is little point in voting for politicians to run institutions that have no perceptible impact on your life. If we are looking for history to have an impact on politics, we must thus remember the nature of the politics with which we are dealing. History cannot be taken out of the context of the present, any more than the present can be assumed to have no history.

The result is the paradox that we observe: Russians fully recognize the horrors of the past, but they believe them to be irrelevant to the present. This is not because they cannot conceive of the causal link or idealize the present. Indeed, the opposite is true: most Russians believe their state to be held hostage to their tragic history and they harbor no illusions about the quality of their governance. History seems irrelevant because politics seems irrelevant, and history cannot become relevant until politics becomes real. Many Russians believe this trap to be inescapable. It is not.

RUSSIA: POWER AND HISTORY³

ALEXEI MILLER

The politics of history is steadily eroding possibilities for public discussion in Russia itself and between Russia and its neighbors.

A number of concepts are used to describe the links between professional historiography, collective memory, and politics. The assortment varies from one country to another,⁴ and this in itself could be the topic of a separate study. The terms commonly encountered in Russia are “politicization of history” and “memory politics.” This article, the second part of which discusses the situation in Russia, is an attempt to define the difference between these two concepts. Of course, this kind of delimitation owes more to convention than anything, and what follows is an attempt to formulate precisely this kind of conventional definition.

The *politicization of history* is essentially something inevitable. It begins at the individual level. In pursuing their research all historians are influenced to a greater or lesser degree by the society around them, their own political views, and their ethnic, religious, and social identification. In a sense, this link is a source of history’s constant development and renewal,⁵ because new times and situations, as well as personal experience, always encourage historians to ask new questions and look for new angles. To the extent to which various groups of historians are influenced similarly by political factors, one can speak of the politicization of history taking place not only at the individual but also at the group level. For example, this is the case regarding the context of national historiography, which has been a defining factor for historians since the time of Leopold von Ranke and in many ways remains so today. We often categorize historians according to their political preferences, which influence their methodological approaches – hence such terms as “liberal historians,” “conservative historians,” “Marxist historians,” etc.

At the same time, awareness that historians are affected in their work by the influence of contemporary circumstances and their own political views is the departure point for creating mechanisms to reduce this influence through reflection and self-control, clear presentation of other points of view, and sensitivity to the criticism of one’s peers. In its study of causes and effects and its assessments of past events and figures, history cannot claim to be an objective science, capable of establishing the “truth.” It is supposed to *strive towards* objectivity and scholarly *research*. Discussion and pluralism of opinions are an integral part of this, not only within the community of professional historians, but also in the presentation of historians’ work to the public. The standards governing history as a professional activity stipulate that arguments must be open for verification, that is, it must be possible to check the sources and criticize the logic and values of the constructs an author uses. Establishing these standards was no easy task for the community of professional historians, and this makes them all the more valuable.

The politicization of history is not limited to the influence that contemporary issues have on professional historians. It is also reflected in a habit of readers to look for views on current issues in historians’ works. Some historians try to fulfill these expectations on the part of their audience, sometimes to the detriment of professional ethics, and this only helps to reinforce this habit.

The politicization of history can also be seen in cases when politicians use “historical” arguments in their presentations. This is a universal practice and something that will probably never be eradicated. However, democratic societies already have significant experience gained from cases when the use

3 This article was originally published in Russian in the August 2009 issue of *Pro et Contra*.

4 It is no surprise to find the biggest range of such terms in Germany. See some of the examples in Jutta Scherrer’s article in this issue of *Pro et Contra*.

5 Here and in what follows, history is understood as being the study and description of the past as a particular professional field, as well as images of the past in the public consciousness.

of historical arguments made politicians easy targets for criticism from both political opponents and professional historians.

Memory politics refers to various social practices and norms related to the way in which collective memory is managed. This covers commemorations (erecting monuments and museums, marking particular past events as significant dates at the national or local level), focusing attention on some historical topics, while keeping silent concerning others or giving them only marginal attention, and paying benefits to veterans of some conflicts but not others.

The state also helps to shape memory politics and historical studies by regulating access to archives, setting standards for history curricula (setting the minimum set of topics and facts that students must cover), and giving funding priority to research and publications on particular subjects. Memory politics is just as inevitable as the politicization of history. All societies, starting from tribal communities, have always developed ways of regulating collective memory. The existence of a parliamentary opposition, as well as independent public and professional groups⁶ defending views that differ from those expounded by the party or group in power at a given moment, usually helps to maintain pluralism in memory politics.

“Places of memory”⁷ established within the framework of memory politics can be “closed,” that is, tied to a particular fixed interpretation of a historical event or figure, or “open” – creating an opportunity for dialogue and various interpretations.⁸

The politics of “forgetting” is an integral part of memory politics. Forgetting can consist of “displacement,” as happens when society tries to stay away from particular, usually recent events perceived as particularly painful or controversial. Examples of this kind of forgetting are the treatment of the Nazi past during the Federal Republic of Germany’s first 15–20 years of existence, France’s treatment of the collaboration issue and the Vichy regime over the same period, and the treatment of the Spanish Civil War after the fall of the Franco regime. As a rule, once a certain amount of time has passed, these subjects usually go from being “forgotten” to drawing a rush of interest from historians.

Forgetting can also be of the “denial” type, when key social forces avoid recognizing and discussing particular shameful or criminal events in the past. This kind of forgetting is evident in Japan, which to this day tries to avoid the subject of Japanese crimes committed during World War II, and in modern Russia, for example, concerning the issue of the behavior of Soviet soldiers in occupied Germany.

There is also an “understanding” type of forgetting, when the focus of public attention shifts away from an event or process *after* efforts at discussion have been made, including the discussion of guilt and responsibility. In modern Germany, where society has consciously confronted the Nazi past, not denying it or passing over it in silence, along with recognition of responsibility, unlike in the past, society has recently become more willing to also bring up the formerly “closed” subject of the German civilian population’s suffering during and after World War II. This is a case when a people’s willingness to address the issues of its guilt and responsibility for the tragedy of World War II opens up in turn the opportunity to address the issue of its own suffering during this war.

Thus, memory politics can be more or less open to influence and dialogue by various public groups and historians and more or less effective in healing the wounds of the past and overcoming internal and interethnic conflicts. But it can also give rise to new conflicts and create a deliberately distorted picture of the past.

The politicization of history and collective memory have long been considered subjects of study. There is a huge body of literature on the subject. Some articles even predict that interest in this area

6 In the Russian context one such organization is Memorial; the influential French association of school history teachers is well-known for the substantial role it has played in this area.

7 In the broader sense this covers not only monuments, museums, memorials, historical preservation sites, and other places linked in one way or another with collective memory, but also events and images of historical figures.

8 Museum exhibits, for example, can reflect just a single interpretation that the exhibit’s organizers deem correct, or they can reflect various approaches to the events in question.

will decline.⁹ But rather than declining, memory politics and the politicization of history seem to be more active than ever today. Moreover, some completely new processes are taking place in this field, which also need to be described and analyzed. I believe a new term is required to define them, and for lack of a better term, I propose “historical politics.” I have borrowed this term from Polish supporters of this new approach to the issues of history and memory. This in itself creates some problems, as my interpretation of historical politics differs in principle from the interpretation offered by its overt and hidden supporters. But as I see it, this term has the great virtue of accurately defining the relations arising between politics, which acts as the noun in this term, and history, which serves only an adjectival function. The term emphasizes that we are dealing here with a *political* phenomenon, which should be studied, above all, as part of politics, and in this sense it differs from the politicization of history and memory politics as interpreted above.

ORIGINS OF THE “HISTORICAL POLITICS” CONCEPT

In 2004, a group of Polish historians declared that Poland must develop and implement its own historical politics. They did not hide the fact that they borrowed the term *polityka historyczna* from the German term *Geschichtspolitik*. The term *Geschichtspolitik* emerged in the FRG in the early 1980s, when newly elected Christian Democrat Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who himself earned a degree in history, decided to use history as a means of cementing his political success. He appointed professional historian Michael Stürmer to be his political adviser and began speaking about the need for a “moral and political turnaround” in Germany. One component of this “turnaround” was to give German patriotism a more positive character, so as to build a patriotic identity not based exclusively on recognition of German guilt for the crimes of the Third Reich. Achieving this goal required adjustments to the approach to the issue of responsibility for Nazi crimes that developed over the 1960s-70s, when social democrats were in power in the FRG, and which was closely associated with them at the political level. Remarks in this new spirit by historians such as Ernst Nolte, Stürmer himself and a number of their allies, led to the famous *Historikerstreit* in 1986–87, the “historians’ quarrel” on the origins of Nazism and the degree of its responsibility for World War II. During this discussion, Kohl and his allies among German historians encountered such fierce resistance that the *Geschichtspolitik* was abandoned before it even had time to really get off the ground. The stubborn and at times even excessive resistance from the overwhelming majority of German historians toward Nolte’s arguments was in large part connected to the fact that they were perceived as being part of historical politics. The notion of *Geschichtspolitik* became solidly established in the German vocabulary as meaning “an interpretation of history based on selective political party motives and attempts to convince the public of this interpretation’s truth.”

Polish supporters of historical politics also spoke of the need to affirm a healthy patriotism with history’s aid and to prevent the “distortion” of Polish history at home and abroad. One could say that they took an honest approach in deciding to borrow the term “historical politics” for their program, which fully fitted the definition given above. The concept became solidly established in Poland, where it has been a subject of intense debate since 2004 and also a subject of analysis, which I have used heavily myself as a basis for my own efforts to analyze this phenomenon.

Action in the spirit of historical politics has become widespread in practically all the Eastern European countries over the last decade. They often borrow the specific forms of its implementation, too, although many supporters of historical politics are unwilling to apply this term to their activities.¹⁰ In their efforts to give historical politics greater legitimacy, supporters like to affirm that there is nothing really new about it, that societies have always acted this way, and that, on the contrary, it is not normal when a country has no clear and energetically implemented historical politics. The main difference between my approach and that of the supporters of historical politics is that I consider the phenomena that have received the name “historical politics” to be something new and different in their essence from the politicization of history and memory politics as described above.

9 G. D. Rosenfeld, “A Looming Crash or a Soft Landing? Forecasting the Future of the Memory ‘Industry’,” *Journal of Modern History* 81, № 1 (March 2009): PP. 122-158.

10 Some elements of historical politics can be found in both Eastern and Western Europe. For more details see Jutta Scherrer’s article in this issue of *Pro et Contra*.

THE NATURE AND MECHANISMS OF HISTORICAL POLITICS

As is often the case with relatively new phenomena, it is not easy to capture and accurately describe historical politics, all the more so as its mechanisms and objectives are usually deliberately concealed. The phenomenon of historical politics is particularly visible in post-communist societies, but this can only be partly explained by heightened public interest in history and the “blank spots” left in it by the legacy of communist censorship. The former regime’s legacy is also important on the level of intellectual habits and instincts, as well as accessible historiographical baggage.

But at the heart of the issue is the fact that what we are dealing with are *post*-communist societies, that is, societies that have freed themselves from previous harsh forms of authoritarian ideological control. We can talk about historical politics in the strict sense of the term only with regard to democratic or at least more or less pluralistic societies that declare recognition of democratic values, including freedom of speech. It is under these conditions, after all, that we see the emergence of competition between various political players, parties, and points of view. In Soviet-type authoritarian regimes, intervention by the authorities in the study of history and memory politics was based on an official premise of ideological monopoly, along with systems of censorship and administrative control over professional historiography. “Dissident” historians were taken to task at party meetings, and those who persisted in their views were forced out of the profession.

All of these mechanisms change in societies claiming democratic foundations. Unlike under the communist system, where the party is the state, the group or party in power at any given moment is not identical to the state. The public arena becomes a pluralistic space, which the authorities cannot claim to control, let alone repress. Schools are also pluralistic, and teachers, while bound to follow educational standards, must have freedom in their selection of textbooks and interpretation of the events and processes studied. Historians must have independence and intellectual freedom in their work. Access to archives must be equal for all and regulated by the law rather than administrative decisions. The group or party in power does not have the right to dictate the content of teaching and research when it comes to allocating state financing for schools and research, because these funds are not the party’s own money but come from the government’s budget, which is funded by taxpayers. The political force in power has no claims to ideological monopoly.

It is these new conditions – variously complied with (or imitated) – that give birth to a new set of practices, with the help of which individual political forces attempt to give particular interpretations of historical events dominant status. In other words, using the state’s administrative and financial resources, the political forces in power carry out the ideological indoctrination of society in the area of historical consciousness and collective memory. The cases in question concern historical events and processes on which there is no consensus in society, and which are subjects of debate.

I think that the key to understanding the phenomenon of historical politics is not so much the question of what is the subject of the propaganda, but of how this is done and what methods are used.

Even if in some cases those organizing modern historical politics would like to return to old Soviet methods and impose a single correct view, they are unable to do this under today’s conditions and are forced to come up with new means of intervening in history and memory politics, along with new strategies for legitimizing this intervention.

What are these new mechanisms? At the institutional level, above all, the most visible example is the emergence of institutes of national remembrance in Poland and Ukraine and institutions with similar functions and organizational principles that have been established in many other countries.

THE POLISH INSTITUTE OF NATIONAL REMEMBRANCE

The Polish Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) employs more than 1,200 people. It has research and publishing divisions and also a special prosecution service. The institute has control over the archives of the communist-era Polish security services, including the power to decide who can receive access to the archives and to which particular materials. Thus, historians working in the IPN are at an advantage. Furthermore, by working at the IPN they receive the status of civil servants with the privileges and also the disciplinary liability that go with it. Their wages are considerably higher than those of historians at the national academy of sciences or universities. The institute's research budget is bigger than the budgets of all other centers studying twentieth-century Polish history combined. The institute's senior staff, above all the director, is part of the political *nomenklatura* and is appointed by the country's political leadership. Since the Kaczynski brothers' Law and Justice Party established its political influence in the IPN, the institute's organizational and legal problems have started to become particularly evident. Respected Polish historian Jerzy Jedlicki put the issue as follows: "The problem is not that an institute was established with the aim of intensifying work on recent history. The problem is that from the moment it was founded, it has been burdened by historical politics, by a politics that has put into just one pair of hands prosecutor's power and power over documents, publishing and funding such as no other institute studying the past has ever had. This power has been given to a single group and has turned the Institute of National Remembrance into a tribunal with the power to pass sentence with no right of appeal and to blacken the names of individuals and entire communities." Jedlicki's colleague, Dariusz Stola, adds what is probably the most important point: "Professor Jedlicki, while justifiably criticizing the Institute of National Remembrance, failed to note the close link between this institute's shortcomings and its state-controlled nature. The IPN is not a research center, but a ministry of memory. My historian colleagues working there are civil servants, and their head is a politician. Scientific institutes – universities, research centers, etc. – function according to different principles and have different evaluation criteria and different mechanisms for protecting their independence... ." ¹¹

The novelty of this kind of institution is first of all how it unites previously separate functions. Control over archives gives the institute's historians not only the right to the "first night," but also the possibility of blocking other researchers' access to documents. This creates many opportunities for manipulation and falsification. Staff members at Ukraine's Institute of National Remembrance also have priority access to the archives of the Ukrainian Security Service, and the institute's deputy director, Volodymyr Vyatrovych, who made his name with a little book on how the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) saved Jews during World War II, is an adviser to the Ukrainian Security Service's director.

Second, the combination of research divisions and investigative bodies turns the IPN into a powerful political weapon that can be used in implementing lustration laws, if a country has them, and controlling the publication of information discrediting political opponents. There have already been numerous examples of this kind in Polish political life and in other countries, too.

Third, these sorts of institutions have far greater opportunities for publishing than do academic and private research centers and even general-interest periodicals.

Finally, the privileged status of these institutions' staff also signifies that their research and publishing activities are under supervision. If any of them start to deviate from the "general line" set by the country's political leadership, they can easily be called to heel. There have been more than enough such instances in the Polish INP's work.

Establishing museums under the direct patronage of particular political groups is another example of the institutional dimension of historical politics. Political opponents' views are completely ignored in such cases. For example, the Kaczynski brothers gave their backing to the Warsaw Uprising Museum, right-wing Hungarian groups were behind the opening of the House of Terror in Budapest, and former Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko acted as patron for the Museum of Soviet Occupation

11 See: "Co ma państwo do historii," *Gazeta Wyborcza*, June 14, 2008, http://wyborcza.pl/1,76498,5311937,Co_ma_panstwo_do_historii_.html.

and the standard display on the Holodomor in regional museums. Thus, martyrology and the image of the enemy – usually clearly associated with modern political forces inside and outside the country – become the central focus of the historical narrative and the museum displays.¹²

Historical politics is also reflected in legislation when parliaments pass laws cementing particular interpretations of historical events as the only accepted truth. Sometimes the drafts of these laws and even the versions finally passed by the parliaments stipulate criminal penalties for those who dispute these interpretations. This practice is typical not just in Eastern Europe, but also for Western European countries.¹³

IDEOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS

The ideological foundations of historical politics are based on four main premises. First, history and memory are perceived above all as an arena for political struggle against external and internal foes – hence the conclusion that “history is too important to leave to the historians.”¹⁴ This, among other things, implies that historians no longer feel bound by their professional ethics, and so historians, as soldiers on the ideological front, need to be kept under the supervision of more “experienced” and “patriotic” people.¹⁵

Second, the idea that “everyone does it” is used to justify in the public’s eyes clear violations of the principles governing the way science functions in democratic societies. These violations are reflected in direct restrictions on freedom of expression, the sidelining of unwanted views in the media, and changing funding principles. For example, instead of a system of allocating research grants controlled by the scientific community itself, money is allocated to projects that fulfill immediate political needs.

Third, it is taken as self-evident that external enemies are working tirelessly to promote an interpretation of past events that harms the country. Therefore, historians have a duty to unite in resisting this danger, usually by standing up for the opposite point of view: if they say “yes,” we say “no” and vice versa. This undermines the opportunity for dialogue within the country, as all are expected to pledge their allegiance to the declared premises.

The same is true of relations with the outside world. Proponents of historical politics on both sides of the border enter into heated disputes with each other. Since neither side is trying to convince or understand their opponent, these kinds of “discussions” only serve to aggravate the conflict.

Fourth, the supposedly lamentable state of patriotism and the teaching of history in schools is used to justify the need for historical politics. Thus, temporarily sacrificing pluralism in textbooks and concepts is proposed for the sake of ensuring that “children at least know the most important things.”

In reality, public interests are just a pretext, and the real objectives are political and party-based in nature. The “true patriotic” version of history invariably serves the interests of a particular political group. Supporters of historical politics in Poland, for example, have used it to battle their political rivals in order to affirm the Kaczynski brothers’ right to be considered the sole heirs of the Solidarity movement. In Ukraine, Yushchenko’s interpretation of the history of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army

12 As Yevgeny Finkel showed in his article “In Search of Lost Genocide: Historical Politics and International Politics in Post-1989 Eastern Europe and ex-USSR” (currently being prepared for publication), all of the post-communist countries, with the exception of Russia, see their political task as being the presentation of their main national population group as the victim of genocide in the 20th century.

13 I would like to note that the laws on Holocaust denial, often mentioned in this context, call for punishment not for different interpretations, but for denying the fact and scale of the mass murder of European Jews.

14 These are the thoughts of Marek Cichocki, historical politics ideologue and adviser to President Kaczynski. See: R. Stobiecki, “Historians Facing Politics of History. The Case of Poland,” in *Past in the Making: Historical Revisionism in Central Europe after 1989*, ed. M. Kopecek, P. 182 (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2007).

15 It is only natural that there are few supporters of historical politics among qualified and conscientious historians. On the contrary, many historians have been making efforts of late to oppose historical politics because they realize full well the destructive effects it has on professional historiography itself, and its communication with society.

and the famine of 1932-1933 have been used to support him in his battles with the opposition and affirm a vision of the Ukrainian nation that matches his own and that of his political allies. Historical politics is used to help win votes and remove rivals by making use of lustration laws.¹⁶ As a rule, historical politics plays a less important part in foreign politics than on the domestic stage, although its supporters often claim that the reverse is true.

HISTORICAL POLITICS IN RUSSIA

I will not attempt in this article to give a detailed account of the development of historical politics in Russia, particularly since much of the story has taken place behind the scenes and is not yet accessible for analysis. I will try only to show how some events of the last two or three years fit in with the interpretation of historical politics given above.

In April 2008, at a public lecture on historical politics in Poland, Ukraine, and Russia, I attempted to explain the specific features of historical politics and bring it to the public's attention.¹⁷ Noting that historical politics in Russia was developing less intensively than in neighboring countries, I expressed the misgiving that this was only because Russia is always slow to get started. I said on that occasion that if Russia did start actively pursuing historical politics, the consequences would be highly destructive, given the specific nature of Russia's political system. Sadly, these fears have proved correct.

The first signs of a serious shift towards pursuing historical politics emerged in Russia several years ago. It seems from all evidence that the team working on what was called the Filippov textbook – in reality a series of textbooks and teaching aids on twentieth century history – was formed and given its assignment back in 2006. Whatever the case, the group's first product – a manual for teachers on recent Russian history – came out in 2007.¹⁸ This was soon followed by the textbook "History of Russia 1945-2007" and a methodological aid on the 1900-1945 period.¹⁹ The textbook covering this period is due for publication very soon.

How convincing an interpretation of events this textbook gives is not a particularly important issue for this analysis.²⁰ With a wide range of available textbooks, this one has the right to exist, too. Filippov and Danilov take renunciation of the totalitarianism concept as their starting point, but other textbooks also use this concept.²¹

The textbook's authors declare that the main goal of the teaching of history is to cultivate and educate citizens, but there is nothing in the textbook itself to underpin these words. In reality, the only thing Filippov and his co-authors cultivate in their work is patriotism, understood as loyalty not so much to one's country as to the authorities. The authorities' mistakes and failings are mostly put down to the difficult international situation and need for mobilization. Essentially, though addressing

16 Politicians often turn to historical politics when the real political agenda has been emptied of substance and, in their battles for votes, rather than addressing today's real development issues, they turn to interpretations of the past instead.

17 Alexei Miller, "Istoricheskaya politika' v Vostochnoy Evrope: plody vovlechennogo nablyudeniya" (lecture), <http://www.polit.ru/lectures/2008/05/07/miller.html>.

18 A. V. Filippov, *Noveishaya istoriya Rossii. 1945-2006*, teacher's aid (Moscow: Prosveshcheniye, 2007).

19 A. A. Danilov, A. I. Utkin and A. V. Filippov, ed., *Istoriya Rossii, 1945-2007*, textbook for the 11th grade (Moscow: Prosveshcheniye, 2007); *Istoriya Rossii, 1945-2008*, 2nd ed. (Moscow: Prosveshcheniye, 2008); A. A. Danilov, *Istoriya Rossii 1900-1945*, methodology aid for the 11th grade (Moscow: Prosveshcheniye, 2008).

20 For a critical analysis of the textbook, which I agree with on the whole, see M. Borisov, "My vas nauchim Rodinu lyubit (A.V. Filippov, *Noveishaya istoriya Rossii. 1945-2006*)," *Otechestvenniye zapiski* 36, № 4 (2007), <http://www.strana-oz.ru/print.php?type=article&id=1530&numid=38>.

21 See the repeatedly reprinted: N. V. Zagladin, S. I. Kozlenko, S. T. Minakov and Y. A. Petrov, *Istoriya Rossii: XX-nachalo XXI veka*, 8th ed. (Moscow: Russkoye slovo, 2008); A.O. Chubaryan, ed., *Otechestvennaya istoriya XX-nachala XXI veka*, 3rd ed. (Moscow: Prosveshcheniye, 2006); A. A. Levandovsky, Y. A. Shchetinov and S. V. Mironenko, *Istoriya Rossii: XX-nachalo XXI veka* (Moscow: Prosveshcheniye, 2009). Few in the historiography field now associate the concept of "totalitarianism" with the definitions given by K. Friedrich and Z. Brzezinski, which were born of the Cold War era and became its tool. For example, in 2000 publication began of an excellent journal, *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*. Danilov and Filippov therefore deliberately distort reality when they assert that the concept of totalitarianism was "invariably used as a weapon in the Cold War," and "was never a tool for understanding, but it is a weapon in the ideological struggle."

the past, this is the current ruling elite's discourse, which bears a remarkable similarity to the Soviet post-Stalin narrative, only without the communist rhetoric. In other words, excesses and crimes did take place, but they were inevitable in a situation when the country was surrounded by enemies and had to mobilize its forces, and they were redeemed by the successes achieved in modernizing the country, which were crucial to the victory in the Great Patriotic War. There is absolutely nothing new here. Whenever they run out of arguments, the new textbook's authors invariably cite the "the people's view" and memory, pretending not to realize that this collective memory was shaped by decades of concerted effort on the part of Soviet propaganda.

CHOICE OF TEXTBOOKS: THE SEMBLANCE OF PLURALISM

A glance through the textbook sections of Moscow bookstores would give quite the opposite impression of how history is taught in Russia than is really the case. A wide range of textbooks fill the shelves (and while they are not of the highest quality, they are not particularly condemnable, either), but this is just a semblance of pluralism.

Danilov's textbook had a print run of 250,000 (some of the textbooks show a print run of 100,000, and others 150,000, but this corresponds to orders placed at two different printing presses and comes to a total of 250,000). By comparison, other textbooks on the market today have print runs of 10,000, at most 15,000, and in some cases only 5,000. Schools do not buy textbooks in bookstores but are supplied through special distribution centers that send out lists of the books in stock to the schools, whose administrators order from among the items available. Danilov's textbook is always on the lists, but this is not always the case for other textbooks. Even if they order other textbooks, schools have no guarantee that they won't receive Danilov's textbook instead of the textbooks ordered. Schools are supplied through the distribution centers free of charge. If they wish to buy a particular textbook in the stores they are free to do so, but in this case, they would have to dip into their already modest budgets, which have to cover all sorts of maintenance work, too. Few school directors would be willing to spend money on textbooks rather than repairs. They could collect money for the textbooks from students' parents, and many schools do just this, but this is possible only if all the parents agree. It is enough for just one parent to say no, and the whole class will end up with Danilov's textbook. If any of the parents think that the request to pay for an "extra" textbook amounts to putting pressure on them, the school could face serious problems as a result. This could be classified as extortion and the school would risk having to answer a criminal suit. In Moscow and other big cities where parents are financially better off, it is possible to exercise freedom of choice in selecting textbooks, but around the country a system for pumping the schools full of Danilov's textbooks is already well established. Furthermore, according to my information, the education authorities have their ways of putting pressure on those overseeing teaching processes in schools if the schools under their supervision are in no hurry to order "new generation textbooks." And if the national final school exam's history tests are based on the Danilov-Filippov textbooks, this would amount to a guaranteed ultimate victory for the "new generation textbook."

A print run of 250,000 is a political decision. No publishing house would print so many copies at its own risk, acting in accordance with purely commercial logic. The Prosveshcheniye publishing house must have received down payments for the orders and assurances of guaranteed demand for the textbook. Down payments and the use of administrative levers to successfully establish a textbook as the "right one" are examples of historical politics in its purest form.

The final chapter in Filippov's teaching aid is entitled "Sovereign Democracy" (written without quotation marks in the book). This concept is not presented as an element in the ideology of one of Russia's political parties, which it is in reality. Instead, it is treated as an objective description of the political regime in Russia today, which, as the book explains, has ensured the country's successful development over the last 10 years. The Danilov textbook handles it in the same way.²² This is how historian Andrzej Friszke describes a similar situation in Poland: "In the case of a monolithic narrative edited by a center according to its own ideological and political interests, what we are dealing with

22 Filippov, *Noveishaya istoriya Rossii*, P. 421-485; *Istoriya Rossii, 1945-2007*, Ch. 6, especially PP. 328-329.

is indoctrination... Today in Poland we are witnessing indoctrination, brazen indoctrination. A real battle for memory is underway.”²³

Russia has also not been able to avoid the desire to regulate history with the help of legislation – a typical feature of historical politics. The first to speak of the need for a law allowing criminal prosecution of those guilty of expressing “incorrect” views about the history of World War II and the Soviet Union’s part in it was Emergency Situations Minister Sergei Shoigu, also one of the United Russia party leaders, in the winter of 2009. Two draft laws developing these ideas have already been submitted to the State Duma.²⁴

Another example of historical politics in its Russian version is the presidential decree issued by Medvedev in May 2009 on establishing a presidential commission to prevent attempts to falsify history to the detriment of Russia’s interests. The decree drew many negative reactions from professional historians and the general public, but public condemnation soon decreased sharply. Perhaps people simply lost interest in the issue, but it cannot be ruled out that administrative means were used to dampen the criticism. Either case is a bad sign. If the media were ordered to mute opposition to the commission, this means that the authorities do not wish to listen to criticism and are firmly set on bringing historical awareness under political control. If the public loses interest in the issue, assuming that the decree will not have any serious consequences, it is expressing a very naïve attitude.²⁵ The decree has the force of law, and measures to implement it will inevitably follow. The signals sent so far, whether deliberately or by chance, give some indication of just what kinds of measures these might be.

In the summer of 2009, a circular sent out by Academician Valery Tishkov, deputy secretary of the Russian Academy of Sciences’ division of history and philology, came to the attention of the public—apparently inadvertently.²⁶ It proposed that the heads of academic institutions draw up an annotated list of instances of historical and cultural falsification, naming the “individuals and organizations creating and spreading falsification.” The circular did not mention that it was talking about “falsifiers” abroad. The information was supposed to be provided within three days. It is not hard to imagine what kind of Pandora’s box this circular unlocked, opening the road to reviving forgotten practices of denunciation and settling personal scores.²⁷

One can also draw interesting conclusions from the publications of authors who came to the commission’s defense. A more detailed analysis of texts produced by two prominent supporters of historical politics – Pavel Danilin and Alexander Dyukov – will provide a standard portrait of these supporters.

Danilin is the author of the texts on “sovereign democracy” that went into Filippov’s teaching aid and Danilov’s textbook. In the style of Mao’s Red Guards, this is how he responded to opponents of Filippov’s textbook in his Internet blog: “You can sling as much mud and spit as much bile at me as you want, but you will teach children using the books you are given, the books that Russia needs. Either you clear your thick little goateed heads of all the pompous trivialities that fill them, or you clear out of teaching altogether.”²⁸

23 “Co ma państwo do historii,” *Gazeta Wyborcza*, June 14, 2008, http://wyborcza.pl/1,76498,5311937.Co_ma_panstwo_do_historii_.html.

24 See: “Rossii garantirovano proshloye,” *Kommersant* 4143, № 88, (May 20, 2009), <http://www.kommersant.ru/doc.aspx?DocsID=1172771>. In the same article, also see the selection of statements by senior state officials on the need for stricter control over history textbooks and history in general.

25 One can find examples of this kind of innocent attitude in a recent selection of statements by respected historians published on the site “Polit.ru,” <http://www.polit.ru/analytics/2009/08/10/istorija.html>.

26 <http://www.svobodanews.ru/content/article/1766749.html>.

27 The letter’s authors are fully aware of this, to the extent that we can judge from the awkward public explanations that came in response to the circular’s publication. See: A. Y. Petrov (deputy academician-secretary of the Russian Academy of Sciences Division of History and Philology for Organizational Matters), letter “Ob azhiotazhe vokrug pisma Otdeleniya istoriko-filologicheskikh nauk RAN ‘o falsifikatsiyakh istorii,’” <http://www.polit.ru/dossie/2009/07/03/petrov.html>. The directors of academic institutions (not all of them, fortunately) hastened to pass the instructions on to their subordinates, sometimes lamenting their senselessness, but washing their hands with the words that orders from above are not to be questioned.

28 Borisov, “My vas nachim Rodinu lyubit...”

Danilin's text on the new commission is worth quoting generously. He is disarmingly frank in setting forth the ideas pursued by those who support historical politics, and his style also merits attention. He states honestly that "All of this was inevitably going to be an irritant to the professional community, and this reaction was indeed forthcoming." "The professional community of historians voiced strong opposition." Danilin explains this reaction by depicting professional historians as a by-and-large helpless lot who are jealous of the successes of those fighting for historical politics: "It is the amateur rather than professional historians who have now broken into the publishing business, publishing books on a mass scale, which, in their treatment of events during the Stalin years, the Great Patriotic War and the end of the tsarist era, are of a much higher quality than what professionals have managed to produce. These amateurs and enthusiasts are Russia's main asset. It is they who are ready to devote their lives to defending our historical memory and combating falsification. And what response do we see from the official historians? Most often they respond with terrible petty jealousy on the everyday level, and on the academic level they respond by shifting to revisionist positions." Danilin is unhappy with the inclusion in the commission of even the two academic representatives – the directors of the Andrei Sakharov and A. O. Chubaryan academic institutes, and, of course, the "liberal" Nikolai Svanidze.

Danilin's article makes it clear that the main "falsifiers" are to be found within the country, and that merciless war must be waged against them. "The revisionists have reared their heads and are expressing their views in the national media just as was done in Goebbels' time." In Danilin's view, the newly established commission to fight the falsification of history "is not a scientific or academic commission, but a political body pursuing political, not scientific goals."

Danilin regrets that "Isayev and Dyukov" were not included among the commission's members.²⁹ Alexander Dyukov, a young man with a background in history, recently set up a foundation called Historical Memory and began publishing one book after another on controversial historical subjects. Of the two that I have looked through personally, one is about the Ukrainian Insurgent Army's attitude towards Jews and appears to be perfectly reputable on the whole.³⁰ The only surprising thing about it is the large selection of what the book says are previously inaccessible materials from the FSB archives that it offers. Professional historians know just how hard it is to get access to the FSB archives and to new material there.³¹ The title of the second book, in which Dyukov acts as compiler and editor, along with Igor Pykhalov, speaks for itself: "Velikaya obolgannaya voyna – 2. Nam ne za chto kayatsya!" ["The Great Slandered War – 2. We have nothing to apologize for!"].³² I will quote just a few phrases from the introduction, enough to show how well historical politics activists in Russia have mastered the style of the worst examples of this genre produced by some of Russia's neighbors. "Our enemies, both external and internal, are attacking what we hold most sacred – our collective memory of the Great Patriotic War. They seek to strip us of our Great Victory. Taking their line from Goebbels' propaganda, these pseudo-historians instill in us that victory came 'at too high a price,' that it led to the 'enslavement of Eastern Europe,' that Red Army soldiers supposedly 'raped Germany,' and Soviet citizens who lived through German occupation were exiled practically en masse to Siberia. This book is a rebuttal to these slanderers and debunks the foulest and most untruthful myths about the Great Patriotic War spread by Russia's enemies." Here is another quote: "Historian Alexander Dyukov examines the case of Soviet repressions during the war years. The documents from the FSB Central Archives, published here for the first time, show that the Soviet authorities took a very moderate and merciful approach toward those who collaborated with the Nazis."

Dyukov and his foundation, whose funding sources remain a mystery, are representative of the "patriotic amateurs" who, in Danilin's words, have gained a hold in the publishing houses (in publish-

29 Alexei Isayev is a writer specializing in military matters. He became known for his book *Antisuvorov*. He has also published a number of other "counter-propaganda" works. In 2007, he joined the staff of the Russian Defense Ministry's Military History Institute. Another employee of this institute, col. S. N. Kovalyov, who holds a doctorate in history, made a name for himself with the article "Vmysly i falsifikatsii v otsenkakh roli SSSR nakanune i s nachalom Vtoroy mirovoy voyny," which lays the blame for the start of World War II on Poland (See: *Voyenno-istorichesky zhurnal*, № 7, (2008)). I could not find any statements by Isayev on the Commission.

30 A. R. Dyukov, *Vtorostepenny vrug. OUN, UPA i resheniye "yevreiskogo voprosa"* (Moscow: Regnum, 2008).

31 On the difficulties encountered in working with archives see, for example, the publications by historian Nikita Petrov: N. Petrov, "Dostup k gosarkhivam," *Memorial*, № 20 (September-October 2000): PP. 14-17; and "Desyatiletie arkhivnykh reform v Rossii," *Index/Dosje na tsenzuru*, № 14, (2001): PP. 18-33; N. V. Petrov, "Arkhivnaya kontrevolyutsiya," interview by the editors of NLO, *Novoye literaturnoye obozreniye*, № 74, (2005) PP. 375-387.

32 A. Dyukov, ed. & compiler, *Velikaya obolgannaya voyna-2. Nam ne za chto kayatsya!*, collection (Moscow: Yauza, Exmo, 2008).

ing companies such as Evropa, Regnum, and Exmo, for example) and are saving Russian history from defilement, in spite of the helplessness of or even outright betrayal by the professional historians. They will have an important part to play in implementing historical politics, as will be shown later.

Dyukov is more thoughtful and restrained in his comments on the commission than Danilin,³³ but he also expresses regret that “it was not possible to avoid including ‘liberals’ on the commission.” Dyukov hopes, however, that this “will not have any significant impact on the effectiveness of its work.” The quotes from both historical politics activists shed clear light on one of the most important aspects of this policy – the destruction of an opportunity for dialogue in society on historical issues. Such dialogue is the means by which history remains alive in a public forum, but historical politics replaces it with a debate between “patriots and traitors,” in which the “traitors,” ideally, should have their voices silenced.

In the interview quoted above, Dyukov expresses the hope that employees of his Historical Memory center will be included in the working groups set up by the commission. Tishkov’s circular showed that the heads of the Russian Academy of Sciences are also willing to take part in this work. However, foundations such as Dyukov’s Historical Memory show a desire and willingness to take on the main role in helping to carry out historical politics, along with the money that would be allocated to support them in this work.³⁴

This is further evidence of how historical politics is changing the principles underlying the relations between the authorities and science. Up until now, state financing for research work, including research in history, has been distributed through funds operating on the basis of expert evaluations carried out by the scientific community itself. This is the way things should be. But historical research is now in the process of becoming a subcontracting system, with the evaluation of the results being done not by the scientific community but by the political leadership.

Particularly noteworthy is Dyukov’s response to a question on foreign projects similar to the Russian Commission for preventing falsification, and on whether other countries offer experience that Russia could draw on in this field. I quote Dyukov’s answer in full because it gives a clear picture of just what kind of experience Dyukov and his allies think could be put to use in Russia:

First of all, I would name the commission of historians established by the Latvian president in 1998. This commission’s main missions were to provide state officials with arguments for “occupation” rhetoric and to make international presentations on the issue of “crimes against humanity in Latvia during the Soviet and Nazi occupation periods (1940-1991),” with the emphasis placed on the “crimes of Soviet totalitarianism.” At the same time, Latvia also has a government commission on “establishing the number of victims of the Soviet totalitarian communist occupation regime and their mass graves, collecting and summarizing information on repressions and mass deportations and calculating the damage caused to Latvia and its residents,” which is preparing the grounds for making official claims for financial compensation from Russia. ...

In 1993, the Estonian parliament established a state commission to investigate the repressive policies of the occupation forces. The commission was tasked with preparing a “White Paper on losses borne by the Estonian people by the occupation forces.” This White Paper came out in 2003 and served as the basis for a large-scale anti-Russian propaganda campaign and also for demands that Russia “pay compensation for the damage inflicted by the occupation.” Estonia also established a presidential commission – the Estonian International Commission for Investigation of Crimes against Humanity. After the Commission completed its work at the start of 2009 there was talk of possibly transforming it into the basis for an Estonian institute of national remembrance. ...

33 Alexander Dyukov, “Boyatsya deyatelnosti Komissii po borbe s falsifikatsiyey istorii mogut tolko te, kto etu istoriyu falsifitsiruyut,” interview for the portal Liberty.ru/Svobodny mir, <http://www.liberty.ru/Themes/Aleksandr-Dyukov-Boyatsya-deyatelnosti-Komissii-po-bor-be-s-fal-sifikaciej-istorii-mogut-tol-ko-te-kto-etu-istoriyu-fal-sificiruyut>.

34 “Our foundation is one of the main organizations in the country working on the issue of combating the falsification of history today,” Dyukov states. See: Dyukov, “Boyatsya deyatelnosti Komissii.”

Institutes of national remembrance are very specific historical/ideological state-funded organizations operating in Eastern European countries. The first of these institutes was the Polish Institute of National Remembrance, established by the Polish parliament in 1998. ...

Lithuania established a similar institute in the 1990s – the Genocide and Resistance Center. Legally, the center is a department of the country's cabinet of ministers, and its director is approved by the Lithuanian parliament based on the prime minister's nomination. Just as in its Polish counterpart, the Lithuanian center also has a special investigations department. ...

Ukraine set up its Institute of National Remembrance in May 2006. It cooperates with "special historians" from the Ukrainian Security Service in its work on rewriting history, and with the Ukraine 3000 Foundation, headed by the Ukrainian president's wife, Yekaterina Yushchenko. It is worth noting that the Ukrainian institute recently stated publicly that it cannot work with Russian historians for ideological reasons. The institute's heads are unhappy with the fact that Russian historians see the famine of the 1930s as a common tragedy rather than the tragedy of the Ukrainian people alone. ...

All [of these organizations] are financed from the state budget and have serious potential.

Essentially, what Dyukov says is true – the Commission on preventing the falsification of history is just as much an instrument of historical politics as are the institutions in neighboring countries that he describes in his response. All that remains is to note a few clear differences between the organization and functions of the Russian commission and, say, the Polish INP and explain their causes. First of all, unlike in Poland, today's Russian security services continue the legacy of their Soviet predecessors. As a result, the KGB archives in Russia were never taken out from under the security services' control. This is partly true of the situation in Ukraine, as well, where the local INP is under the Ukrainian Security Service's patronage and receives necessary documents from its archives. This means that neither in Russia nor in Ukraine can lustration laws be passed (within the limits of common sense).

The experience of Poland and other countries where such laws exist shows that lustration creates numerous opportunities for those in power at a given moment to settle scores with political opponents. The fact that security services' archives were removed from government control in the wake of the communist regimes' collapse is no hindrance to this practice. The Russian and Ukrainian security service archives cannot serve as justification for carrying out lustration, because it would be impossible to rely on their authenticity and completeness.

The makeup of Russia's Commission for preventing falsification, which includes several representatives of the security services, sends a clear signal that when it comes to giving access to security service archives, the emphasis is on maintaining the status quo, under which the law stating that documents must be declassified after a thirty-year period is simply not being implemented. The law in question stipulates that all documents must be automatically declassified after the thirty-year period is up, and researchers must be given access to them. Only on the basis of special decisions can some documents remain confidential. But in practice, each document is declassified only by special ministerial commissions. This practice will continue and access to documents will be opened only to selected researchers working "to order." It is possible that ministerial archivists will simply put together selections of documents or even just excerpts from them on the relevant topics for the use of these privileged users. All of this is completely contrary to the rules of scientific method, as they exclude the possibility of independent searches in archives and verification of documents' authenticity and completeness. Examples of this can be found in the activities of the Ukrainian and even the Polish Institutes of National Remembrance.

Second, in the Russian scenario a decision has clearly been made to disperse research and publishing functions among a number of centers and institutions. In both cases, the emphasis is not on academic but on political technology organizations.³⁵

35 As is often the case, no cloud is without a silver lining, for this gives the scientific organizations themselves a greater chance to save face and their reputation.

Thus, all of the main elements of historical politics can be easily found in Russian practices during the last two years. First, there is an obvious attempt to establish a single history textbook for schools, representing the authorized government view. Second, special politically engaged organizations are being set up with the combined missions of organizing historical research, and controlling archives and publishing activity. Third, there are attempts to regulate historical interpretation through legislative means. Finally, the typical methods of historical politics are being used to legitimize and give an ideological basis to the practices listed above. As in most of the neighboring countries, the sharp end of historical politics is pointed inside the country. After all, if historical politics as practiced by Russia's neighbors arouses – and justifiably so – contempt and indignation in Russia, those organizing and inspiring Russia's own historical politics can hardly expect that the fruits of their own labors will meet a different reception abroad.

By following its neighbors down the road of historical politics, Russia is only reinforcing the atmosphere of “a dialogue of the deaf,” which has gradually closed in around all discussion of recent history. “Mirror” responses, when each time one side says “yes,” the other side always answers “no,” are not always an effective means of combating other countries' historical politics. All of Russia's neighbors have quite a few historians and public figures expressing firm criticism of their own governments' historical politics. The reasonable and dignified way to resist neighbors' historical politics is not to respond in kind, but to build up dialogue with the opponents of historical politics in all of these countries. There are people doing just this in Russia, and they will continue this work.³⁶ But Russia's historical politics is not making their task any easier.

What's more, historical politics could have a more destructive effect in Russia than in other countries. This is because the weaker the pluralistic and democratic foundations of the country, the fewer possibilities society and professional historians have for opposing historical politics. Proponents of historical politics seek proof that the crisis of history requires urgent – and dogmatic – intervention. But this is not true. History as a science was developing quite well in post-Soviet Russia, especially considering the enormous material difficulties that everyone faced, including historians, teachers, and researchers alike. Russia's historians made much progress in closing the methodological gap and establishing contact with foreign scholars. The existence of various points of view started to become the norm in the academic community, and professional historians, as well as those with a passion for history, gradually began to get used to the idea of engaging in dialogue with supporters of different views. All of these accomplishments will be in serious danger if political intervention in history continues at the pace and in the direction it has taken over the last two to three years. Russia has demonstrated on enough occasions in the past that it can take ideas and methods borrowed from abroad to absurd levels.

36 For an example of this kind of work, see the dialogues between Alexei Miller and Georgy Kasyanov: *Rossiia-Ukraina: kak pishetsya istoriya* on Polit.ru: Part 1. “Golodomor,” <http://www.polit.ru/analytics/2009/03/10/golodomor.html>; Part 2. “Vtoraya mirovaya voyna,” <http://www.polit.ru/analytics/2009/04/02/historia.html>; Part 3. “Ot Khmel'nitskogo do Mazepy,” <http://www.polit.ru/analytics/2009/04/21/ukr.html>; Part 4. “Mezhdu Grazhdanskoy i Vtoroy mirovoy,” <http://www.polit.ru/analytics/2009/06/18/ukr.html>; Part 5. “Pervaya mirovaya,” <http://www.polit.ru/analytics/2009/07/02/worldwar.html>.

ESTONIA: THE POLITICAL BATTLE FOR A PLACE IN HISTORY³⁷

ALEXANDER ASTROV

The intensifying efforts to carry out historical policy in Estonia have their roots in an “ontological crisis,” caused in part by the country’s successful accession to the EU and NATO.

During Estonia’s “singing revolution” in the 1980s, Mart Laar, who subsequently headed the country’s government, used the slogan “Give the people their history back!” This call became an important part of politics in post-restitution Estonia, and there has been plenty of discussion of the matter.³⁸ The start of the new century brought with it an upsurge in historical politics. By this I mean not only that debate on the subject became more heated or more frequent, but that there has been a clear shift of emphasis. Previously, in using history for political purposes, the main focus was on events during the inter-war period or the communist past of particular members of the political elite. But now, the emphasis is shifting increasingly to the concepts of “totalitarianism,” “genocide,” and “crimes against humanity.” This shift in emphasis makes it possible for us to speak of an intensification in historical politics, because “totalitarianism” and the crimes that went with it are increasingly frequently interpreted not as historical events that can be viewed and assessed in different ways, but as an unshakeable cornerstone in global political history. Seen as “the measure of all political things,” the totalitarian experience is placed outside the framework of legitimate pluralism.

This “fundamentalization” of totalitarianism makes it easier for the state to act against “the rewriting of history,” as is happening in Russia, and at the same time, it contributes to reshaping the modern political discourse, opening up new opportunities for small countries to play a more active part in it, stepping beyond the traditional role that made them little more than the objects of the “great powers” political activity. This article concentrates specifically on this reshaping. In other words, for the communities that Hegel in his time called “peoples without history,”³⁹ historical politics are becoming an instrument in their political struggle to find their place in the long process of history.

I want to distance myself right from the start from some interpretations that at first glance seem to follow the same line. One such interpretation is that recently advanced by Russian historical politics activist Alexander Dyukov: “After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Estonia, like the other Baltic states, found itself faced with the need to build a new national identity, a non-Soviet identity, that would correspond to the new parameters set by independence, anti-Russian ambitions and so on. Estonia is a fine country, of course, but it has little past experience with independent statehood and, unfortunately, no national heroes other than the members of police battalions and the Estonian Waffen-SS Legion, who fought against the Soviet Union. Therefore, it is now attempting to glorify these figures and turn them into new national heroes.”⁴⁰

The passage cited corresponds closely to the views of Russian journalist Galina Sapozhnikova, who has worked for many years in Estonia. As Sapozhnikova sees it, the change in Estonia’s official rhetoric

37 This article was originally published in Russian in the August 2009 issue of *Pro et Contra*.

38 The interpretation of Estonia’s independence as something restored after the Soviet collapse (hence the term “restitution” – the restoration of Estonian statehood) was the result of intense political debate and historical reflection. In its dealings with the outside world, Estonia presented a more or less united front, but within the country, as it fought and won its independence once again, the question of which version of history should be returned to the people became one of the key issues in the “singing revolution.”

39 On how the system of international relations and political systems in general are structured by means of placing some elements outside their bounds, be they “peoples without history,” “rogue nations,” “stateless persons,” or “lumpenproletariat,” see, for example: G. Simpson, *Great Powers and Outlaw States: Unequal Sovereignities in the International Order* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2004); E. Laclau, *On Populist Reason* (London: Verso, 2005).

40 Y. Kapov, “Rossiiski istorik nadeetsya na diskussiyu s estonskimi kollegami,” *Tallinn DELFI*, March 28, 2009.

came practically overnight, after the country had joined the European Union.⁴¹ The implication is that, now that Estonia feels protected from its eastern neighbor, members of its political elite have finally started fully expressing the ingrained old phobias they had previously kept well hidden.

At first glance, there seems to be some logic in this approach. The clearest evidence comes from the monument to Estonians who fought in World War II in Waffen-SS units, erected in the summer of 2004, and from the article by prominent journalist Kaarel Tarand, published a week before Estonia officially joined the EU. In this article, published in one of Estonia's main dailies, *Eesti Päevaleht*, Tarand states openly that what would have been unthinkable immediately after the restoration of independence had now become possible: All "foreigners" unhappy with the country's integration politics could be rounded up and placed in some small camp on the border with Russia.⁴²

But if we take a closer look at these two examples and place them in the proper context, we see that this is not a case of concerted effort to realize longstanding hopes. Rather, the opposite is true: Estonia's successful accession to NATO and the EU gave birth to an increasing sense of uncertainty, and this feeling ultimately led to a succession of internal political crises, to which the "anti-totalitarian" rhetoric attempts to provide a response. What we need to understand is why this became the particular response, and why it spills into the foreign policy field.

This article advances the hypothesis that for more than a decade after regaining independence, Estonia's public life was governed primarily by parameters defined in large part by a foreign policy vision set in the early 1990s. The desire to join NATO and the EU and the high degree of consensus on these issues among the country's political elite squeezed sensitive and potentially conflict-provoking circumstances into the background and kept them out of public debate. At the same time, with the goal of pursuing trans-Atlantic integration as rapidly as possible, key developmental issues were settled by a small community of technocratic experts, grouped around the executive authorities in general and the Foreign Ministry in particular.⁴³

After Estonia joined first NATO and then the EU, Estonian society found itself facing a new and unfamiliar situation. The common consolidated narrative that had dominated public life for so many years now suddenly lost its relevance overnight. What's more, the lack of public institutions that could become a forum for discussing sensitive issues became suddenly apparent. It was precisely at this moment that the media began talking more and more often about the need for a new national goal, while among politicians the idea of concluding a formal "social contract" became increasingly popular.

The situation that emerged in Estonian society over 2004-2007 could be described as one of "ontological anxiety."⁴⁴ The essential meaning of this term is that in an uncertain environment that threatens not so much the subject's physical survival as its identity, the subject often chooses to play a familiar social role, even if this poses clear risks. At least these risks are known and clear, which makes them seem preferential to uncertainty.⁴⁵ At times of sudden change in the world order, countries usually show a preference for familiar conflicts rather than trying to adopt new and untested behavioral models.⁴⁶

However, for small countries this exit strategy from the state of ontological crisis is not always possible. The risks associated with pursuing a strategy of "political realism," based exclusively on objective national interests and sometimes declared an extra-historical constant in the world order,

41 R. Troshkina, "Obratny kod: razgovor s vragom naroda," *Riga Subbota* May 14, 2009.

42 K. Tarand, "Eesti keel on venelastele parim," *Eesti Päevaleht*, April 24, 2004.

43 See: K. Raik, "Bureaucratisation or Strengthening of the Political? Estonian Institutions and Integration into the European Union," *Cooperation and Conflict*, 37, № 2 (2002): PP. 137-156; Raik, "EU Accession of Central and Eastern European Countries: Democracy and Integration as Conflicting Logics," *East European Politics and Societies*, 18, № 4 (2004): PP. 567-594.

44 The term was proposed by Anthony Giddens. See: A. Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity* (N. Y.: Polity Press, 1991).

45 In some social contexts, for example, a woman suffering domestic violence might see the constant abuse as the lesser evil compared to the status of "abandoned wife."

46 J. Mitzen, "Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma," *European Journal of International Relations*, 12, № 3 (2006): PP. 341-370.

can be unacceptably high. To a large extent, this is because this kind of “political realism” cannot guarantee reliable support from the big powers, which within the framework of this international affairs paradigm are guided solely by their own interests. The small Central and Eastern European countries’ experience of taking part in post-cold war international politics, which seemed successful, was determined by the possibility of appealing not to the interests but to the sense of identity of the powerful Western powers. Given that these small countries had to resolve the issue of their own identities in order to be able to formulate their interests, they successfully used the discourse of trans-Atlantic solidarity with the goal of reining in the great powers’ selfish ambitions.⁴⁷

The start of the war in Iraq and the resulting split within the trans-Atlantic community put an end to this strategy, however (and the small countries also played their part in these events). In the new situation, which coincided with the start of the ontological crisis in their domestic politics, the small countries found themselves facing the differences in opinion between the US and their powerful allies in Western Europe over the American invasion of Iraq.⁴⁸ The small countries had to find a way to avoid having to make a clear choice between America and Europe at any cost, as this would have put an end to the idea of the liberal trans-Atlantic community and would have deprived the “junior partners” of the main instrument they used to hold back selfish interests on both sides. Resolving this problem was complicated by Donald Rumsfeld’s proposed division of Europe into “old” and “new,” and also by Russian foreign policy efforts emphasizing bilateral relations with the major powers at the expense of multilateral cooperation.

Thus, as the new century began, in both their domestic and foreign policies the small Central and Eastern European countries found themselves in need of a new discourse concerning unity and a community in which their membership would be guaranteed. In Estonia, the country’s foreign policy elite was better prepared than other groups to articulate this discourse (or at least develop it). In 2003, before Estonia formally joined the EU, one of the indisputable leaders of this foreign policy elite, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who held no office at that time, harshly criticized both Rumsfeld and the joint letter published by Jacques Derrida and Jürgen Habermas. In his opinion, the anti-Americanism of these two placed Europe at risk of making a colossal mistake.⁴⁹

The transition from criticizing various “fomenters of division” to forming a positive program took time. The first serious document of this sort appeared about a year after the Derrida-Habermas letter was published. It is interesting to note that two American senators were among its initiators – John McCain and Joseph Biden, who at that time formed a united front against Bush’s foreign policy course. Vaclav Havel was also among the initiators, as was Carl Bildt, one of the leading European supporters of the Trans-Atlantic alliance and someone who played a major role in helping to shape Estonia’s post-restitution identity. Estonia was represented in the initiative by Ilves again, only this time in his capacity as a member of the European Parliament. The document, also known as the “letter of the 115,” was a response to the tragic Beslan hostage situation, but for the most part it presented a critical analysis of Russian politics.

The signatories also included well-known French essayist Andre Glucksmann, one of the founders of the “new philosophers” group. In my opinion, this group’s interpretation of totalitarianism and their view of international events based on this interpretation have played a substantial part in the above-mentioned shift of emphasis in Estonian historical politics.

47 F. Schimmelfennig, “The Community Trap: Liberal Norms, Rhetorical Action, and the Eastern Enlargement of the European Union,” *International Organization*, 55, № 1 (2001): PP. 47-80. In this context “identity” is defined as the social role assigned to the subject within the world order. After the end of the Cold War, the identity of Western countries took shape for the most part around liberal values, to which the small countries of Central and Eastern Europe also appealed in their attempts to convince their Western partners of the secondary nature and even ethical unacceptability of traditional interests such as protecting domestic markets from a flood of cheap labor from the East, or maintaining partnership relations with Russia at the cost of limiting NATO’s expansion.

48 The starkest expression of this conflict was the statement from the so-called “Vilnius Ten,” new NATO members supporting the intervention in Iraq, while France and Germany were actively opposing the idea of intervention in the UN.

49 T. H. Ilves, “Taassünni ajalooline valu,” *Eesti Päevaleht*, July 17, 2003. The letter by Derrida and Habermas, which was quite unexpected, given the longstanding philosophical differences between them, was published simultaneously in France and Germany. The essence of its message was that some methods used to “promote democracy” were in fact a threat to democracy. See: J. Derrida and J. Habermas, “Unsere Erneuerung. Nach dem Krieg: Die Wiedergeburt Europas,” *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, May 31, 2003; Derrida and Habermas, “Europe: plaidoyer pour une politique extérieure commune,” *Libération*, May 31, 2003.

A closer look at how and why the “new philosophers” define totalitarianism as they do reveals that the above-quoted view taken by Dyukov, for example, looks unjustifiably selfish. Estonian politicians are deliberately rewriting history, but Russia is the least of their interests in this endeavor.⁵⁰ As on the economic front, the main interests for Estonian historical politics are in the West, where what Glucksmann describes as a confrontation of the “West against the West” is unfolding.⁵¹ For Estonia what this means, among other things, is going beyond the bounds of the earlier historical politics discourse on the “historians’ quarrel,” which in its time contributed much to defining the parameters for restoring independence.

THE “HISTORIANS’ QUARREL”

The term “historians’ quarrel,” or *Historikerstreit*, originally signified the polemic on Germans’ attitudes towards their own history and identity in general, and the Holocaust in particular. This dispute unfolded during the last years of the Cold War. Right-wing Germans saw the Holocaust as Germany’s forced response to what were equally murderous repressions carried out by Stalin, while left-wing Germans said the Holocaust was a uniquely inhuman Nazi crime with its roots in Germany’s specific development path. Politically, the *Historikerstreit* ended in victory for the left.⁵² This not only strengthened the post-war consensus in Germany itself but in many ways also helped shape views of history at the general European level as the EU began its expansion.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, debates similar to the *Historikerstreit* flared up one after another all around Central and Eastern Europe. The EU set a tacit condition: countries taking part in the EU integration process had to accept not so much a specific European consensus on history, as to agree to create a common area for communication. This space was to be divided in “private” and “public” sectors. Prospective EU members were to create a common European public forum on the basis of consensus, leaving outside this framework the more controversial issues of their “private” identity, which were often not discussed at all.

For the “old” EU members this confirmed at a new level the principle of non-intervention in their domestic affairs, but the situation looked rather different to the candidate members. Many of them were still only starting to build their internal public sphere, including clarifying their relations with the past. In the case of these Central and Eastern European countries, these relations were seldom a purely internal affair of individual countries, and the EU thus attempted to regulate this process, especially in cases involving border disputes or the status of ethnic minorities.

In Estonia’s case, external regulation involved the presence of an OSCE mission, with a mandate concerning interethnic relations within the country and settling the border dispute with Russia. As Estonia’s accession to the EU and NATO moved to the practical level, requiring the country to implement measures in accordance with a strict timetable set from outside, relations with Russia and the Russian population in Estonia itself shifted more and more from being part of public debate and legislative initiatives to being part of routine administrative decisions.

The EU and NATO did not put direct pressure on Estonia, rather, Estonian politicians understood the sometimes tacit rules they were expected to follow in order to achieve their main political goal of joining these two international organizations. Former Estonian foreign minister, Trivimi Velliste, summed up this position very precisely. Velliste, who actively opposed the amendments to the law on language that international organizations were insisting Estonia pass as it prepared to join the EU, finally accepted its passage. Setting out his position in the parliament, he said that this was a “conflict

50 See: Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, “We Want to Re-Write History,” Interview in *Spiegel Online*, June 26, 2007.

51 A. Glucksmann, *Ouest contre ouest* (Paris: Plon, 2003).

52 The debate continued a lot longer as far as history proper was concerned. One of the most interesting documents to come out of the debate was the correspondence between Francois Furet and Ernst Nolte, which, to use Nolte’s words, carried the imprint of a “Western civil war.” See: F. Furet and E. Nolte, *Fascisme et Communisme: échange épistolaire avec l’historien allemand Ernst Nolte prolongeant la Historikerstreit* (Paris: Plon, 1998).

between Estonia's experience and the experience of the international community, which developed in a different historical context."⁵³

Subsequent events showed that the real problem was that by the time these words were spoken this conflict between Estonia's experience and that of the "old Europe," which had "developed in a different historical context," concerned not just attitudes toward history and national identity, but also the procedures already established over the years since the restoration of independence, and by which these attitudes were shaped and clarified. In the "old" Europe, the new consensus emerged out of long, intensive, and – most importantly – open debate such as the *Historikerstreit*, but the public sphere in Estonia underwent a two-fold depoliticization. Issues at the foundations of national identity were squeezed out of public life and into the technocratic administration on one hand, and into the realm of security politics on the other.

This whole trend culminated in the Lihula crisis in 2004. A monument to Estonians who died fighting on the German side in World War II was raised in the little town of Lihula in August 2004. The crisis was caused not by the monument's erection, however, but by its dismantlement, carried out under cover of darkness less than two weeks later without any public discussion. The prime minister at that time, speaking after the monument was taken down, said that the government was acting out of national security considerations. By this he meant the negative reaction that influential allies of Estonia, above all the US, might have in response to a monument depicting soldiers in Nazi uniforms. But these explanations, and the circumstances under which the monument was dismantled, only aggravated the public mood and helped to bring about the government's resignation.

The Lihula crisis revealed not so much the weaknesses of a recently popular government as the crisis of the public sphere. The executive authorities had only two instruments at their disposal: demolition equipment and the demands of foreign politics as a pretext. The public was unhappy with the whole situation, no matter what their attitude to the dismantled monument itself.⁵⁴ Indignation over the way the monument was dealt with united people from opposite ends of Estonian society. The views of one group were summed up in the letters *JOKK*, meaning "all legally correct." They insisted that ethical demands that went beyond the limits of formal legal provisions had no place in political life. The other group's views were summed up in the words *Kommarid ahju!*, which could be translated as "throw the Commies in the fire." This group deliberately tried to stoke up public opinion, demanding the resignation of former communist party officials holding positions of power.

Prominent Estonian public figures described the ethical crisis that hit society as a process of "decivilization" or "delegitimization," and noted that it had its roots in Estonians' attitudes towards their own history. They said that history loosens its grip on us only when we pluck up the courage to look it in the eyes, something that in Estonia's case required recognition of all the ambiguities present in the Soviet period and the cooperation with the Nazis. Otherwise, monuments like those in Lihula and Tallinn would remain a bone of contention.

In reality, however, the Estonian right wing usurped the historical debate. Right wing politicians began making active use of history during the debate in 2005 about whether or not President Arnold Ruutel should go to Moscow during the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the end of the Great Patriotic War and the subsequent debates on a border agreement with Russia. The most radical Estonian nationalists became more active during this time. In April 2005, they established the Estonian Nationalist Movement, whose activists published a letter demanding the immediate dismantlement of the monument to the Soviet soldier at Tonismagi. The letter expressed doubt that a government controlled "by Washington, Brussels, Tel Aviv and Moscow" would be capable of taking such a step. The movement expanded its list of favorite targets to included not only former communists in the Estonian state administration and the monument at Tonismagi, but also the EU and the integration politics the country was implementing.

53 The debated amendments, recommended by international organizations, were aimed at changing the legislation restricting the use of foreign languages (which included Russian) not only in state institutions, but also in private business, for example. There were also a number of specific language restrictions with regard to participation in municipal elections.

54 See: K. Brüggemann and A. Kasekamp, "The Politics of History and the 'War of Monuments' in Estonia," *Nationalities Papers*, 36, № 3 (2008): PP. 425-448.

Thus, when activists from the Estonian Nationalist Movement turned up amongst the main participants in the events at Tonismagi in May 2006, the government at the time felt no sympathy toward them whatsoever. Then prime minister Ansip's statements that he "did not wish to speak with marginal elements" and "would not allow a self-styled group to control part of Estonian territory," which were a key factor in the conflict's subsequent escalation, applied equally to the Estonian nationalists and the Russian activists.⁵⁵

The only prominent Estonian politician who declared himself ready to meet openly with the activists from Night Watch was Mart Laar, who set one condition: the meeting must discuss history, not politics. This approach reflected the position that continues to dominate in Estonian society today: political problems between the country's ethnic Estonian and Russian-speaking communities are rooted in different interpretations of history. This approach treats history as a set of objective facts that can be discussed in an impartial fashion. Politics as a whole come down to the question formulated by respected Estonian political commentator Enn Soosar: "Is it even possible in general to cultivate loyal citizens of the Republic of Estonia from the tens of thousands who believe Russian propaganda more than historical facts and documents, and if so, how?"⁵⁶

However, there is also another view, based on a more complex relationship between history and politics, and thus implying a different historical politics. This view was very well formulated by Juri Luik, who at various times held the post of foreign minister, defense minister, and ambassador to the US and NATO.⁵⁷

THE NEED FOR A NEW DISCOURSE

Luik's position, which he set out in his article in the February 2008 issue of *Diplomaatia*, differs markedly from other works on the subject. In 2008, Estonia celebrated the anniversary of the independence it obtained in 1918. The issue of *Diplomaatia* was one of the first events to commemorate this anniversary, although the issue looked very similar to this publication's previous issues, with a standard lineup of names discussing long-since routine subjects such as the legal aspects of the loss of independence at the end of the 1930s, and the conditions that brought about its restoration at the start of the 1990s. There was nothing original about the issue's *leitmotif*, namely, that what distinguishes Estonia above all in world history and international affairs is its small size and the ensuing need to learn to draw on resources other than those in the arsenals of the "great powers." The February 2008 issue of *Diplomaatia* dealt with the most important of these resources – international law.

Unlike his fellow authors, Luik distanced himself from legalist rhetoric right from the outset. He noted that people often spoke about Estonia's rights as a member of the international community, when what they really should be talking about are obligations. Reflecting on the specific obligations of countries liberated from the communist yoke, Luik said that it really is important to learn lessons from the past, but in this case the past is only indirectly connected to history. It is something purely practical, and this practical aspect is conceptually separate from the legal aspect. The article examines what precedes law and creates the conditions for laws to be able to function: politics.

Luik's main argument can be summed up as follows. The 17 years that have passed since the fall of communism in Central and Eastern Europe are not an excuse for forgetting communism's crimes. On the contrary, over this time many countries in the region have succeeded in building legal institutions of their own that are sufficiently strong to be able finally to start investigating these crimes. These investigations have nothing to do with "rewriting history" or calling into question the Nuremberg

55 For more on this see: A. Astrov, *Samochinnoye soobshchestvo: politika menshinstvo ili malaya politika?* (Tallinn: Tallinn University Publishing House, 2007).

56 E. Soosar, "Muulaste lõimumise rajad," *Postimees*, October 22, 2007.

57 J. Luik, "Meie kohustus," *Diplomaatia*, No 54 (February 2008).

Tribunal's judgments, but on the contrary, are about acting in accordance with the letter and the spirit of these same judgments, where what are defined as "crimes against humanity" are concerned. The task is not to revise these definitions or the facts on which they are based, but to ensure their strict application, only now to different acts, qualified as "crimes of communism" in the 1997 *Black Book of Communism*, a publication that met with very mixed reactions throughout Europe.⁵⁸

At first glance, the reference to a book that was the subject of much debate in its time looks like the weak spot in Luik's arguments. But a closer look at the article reveals that Luik is not ready to give his unconditional support to everything the Black Book says. In particular, the Black Book's editor, Stephane Courtois, rightly or wrongly, was accused of anti-Semitism for asserting that today's meaning of the word Holocaust is the result of efforts by "international Jewish organizations." Luik, on the contrary, holds these organizations up as an example. If Luik's article looks back to the past at all, it is above all in its suggestion that there are lessons to be learned from the way Jewish NGOs have organized their work. The main thing, in Luik's view, is the way these organizations have put concerted effort into forming an international political consensus through concrete, clearly formulated, and effectively implemented initiatives.

Forming a consensus on the question of communism's crimes is the most important task facing the post-communist societies as Luik sees it. He is firm on the point that institutions established for this task, whether national or international, should not have legal powers. Their job is above all to initiate broad public debate on events well known to historians. It is not alternative historical or legal investigations that are needed, but a new public forum – and this is the main thrust of the proposed politics.

Luik concludes his article by explaining the importance of establishing this new public forum. The post-communist societies "will start functioning normally only when their pain is openly discussed and universally recognized." Countries "going through difficulties are at greater risk of falling victim to illusions about an ideal society." Young people wearing T-shirts with Che Guevara's portrait are evidence that these sorts of illusions remain popular to this day. "Only a new international consensus will help us to avoid these dangers."

This statement is interesting from several points of view. First, almost four years after Estonia joined the EU, it is admitting that it does have "difficulties in its social development." The article says that Estonian society, like many other societies in Central and Eastern Europe, cannot be said to be functioning normally. This kind of statement is common enough in practically any country's routine internal discourse, but in this particular case it strikes an obviously discordant note with the general celebratory tone of the anniversary events of which it was a part. It contrasts even more strongly with Estonia's usual manner of discussing international problems, which generally looks more like a report by respected government experts on results achieved.

Meanwhile, no sooner was the article published than it became all but obligatory to make approving reference to it in any even vaguely serious public discussion. This is indirect evidence in favor of the argument we presented at the beginning, namely, that the intensification of Estonia's historical politics has resulted not from the state consolidating its position after joining the EU and NATO, but instead has its roots in an "ontological crisis," caused in part by the successful completion of this foreign policy project.

But why does Luik think that the strategy for overcoming this crisis should be based on historical politics, and particularly on politics aimed almost exclusively at overcoming the communist past? If he sees the chief danger as coming from tempting dreams about an ideal society, he would surely have to admit that the idea of restitution – the restoration in an Estonia freed from the Soviet Union of the idealized nation state of the inter-war period – was just such a dream. This is all the more true as such recognition required no titanic efforts at forming a new international consensus and, on the contrary, would be supported by the European consensus on the costs of nation states as such that emerged after World War II, in particular as a result of the *Historikerstreit*.

58 S. Courtois, ed., *Le Livre noir du communisme: Crimes, terreur, répression* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 2000). The main debate is about whether to agree with some of the collection's authors that the crimes of communism are the same sort of thing as the crimes of Nazism. An intense debate on this subject has been going on for many years in the West now.

The problem, it seems, is in the absence of *any sort* of international consensus, whether purely European or trans-Atlantic. This is the main thing motivating Luik's words and countless similar statements in Central and Eastern Europe and far beyond. Further evidence of this conclusion comes in the fact that Habermas, whose "civic patriotism" was seen at one point as Europe's response to the issues raised during the *Historikerstreit*, now found himself at the very center of trans-Atlantic differences, the roots of which went back long before communism's collapse and had their origins during the Cold War's peak – the period of social upheavals that marked the late 1960s-early 1970s.

The internal tension present in Luik's article also points to this. On one hand, drawing a consistent line between purely political issues and other matters, he stresses that the Holocaust's current status was not and could not be predetermined solely by the Nuremberg Tribunal's legal verdicts and historians' professional research, but it was the product of a long and intense political struggle. As Luik explained it, this struggle reached its goal only in the 1960s, when, after going through an initial urge to put the tragedy of the two world wars behind them, people began wanting once more to assess and reflect on their own past. This new desire did not just come out of nowhere, but was fueled by the efforts of a radically-inclined young generation. Yet, at the same time, Luik is clearly preoccupied by today's young people's predilection for T-shirts with portraits of Che Guevara.

Perhaps this tension arises because the "young people" who worry Luik so much are not as abstract and anonymous as it might seem at first glance. Che's fans included a certain young medical student, Bernard Kouchner, who wrote his thesis on "Dr. Ernesto Che Guevara." In 2007, not long before Luik's article came out, this same Kouchner became French foreign minister. Numerous works on the 1960s cite his name together with not only the names of figures familiar on the European scene such as Joschka Fischer and Daniel Cohn-Bendit, but also names such as Bill Ayers, founder of the radical American organization *Weather Underground*, to which some attempted to link Barack Obama's name during the 2008 presidential election campaign.⁵⁹

Of course, these names and associations in and of themselves cannot explain why Luik is so preoccupied with the issue of forming a new international consensus. But there is no denying that these names symbolize concrete changes in global politics, especially the changes associated with the arrival of the "60s generation" on the political stage. By the time members of this generation began to reach positions of power they had behind them the experience of more than one ontological crisis, including that associated with revealing communism's crimes.

According to Paul Berman, American fellow traveler of the "new" European leftists, for future politicians such as Fischer and Kouchner, the big question not just in politics but in the matter of identity in general was the choice between collaboration and resistance.⁶⁰ But after the various controversies of the 1960s died down, it became ever harder to make this choice. By the mid-1970s, in large part under the influence of Alexander Solzhenitsyn's works, a group of "new philosophers" began to emerge in France, whose members included intellectuals who, like Courtois, editor of the "Black Book," had once belonged to radical Maoist groups. Now they took up the fight against "totalitarianism" as the answer to the questions brought on by the latest crises.

The "new philosophers" define totalitarianism as an "absolute evil" and indisputable historical fact, with the ever-present link between totalitarianism and genocide as proof. Resisting this indisputable evil is the basis for a choice between collaboration and resistance. The absolute nature of this evil makes it possible not only to protect identity from fits of "ontological anxiety," but also to establish a position with respect to several influential political forces at once, namely anti-Americanism, Islamic fundamentalism, and "European nihilism," which indirectly plays into the hands of all manner of tyrants. In the words of Glucksmann, one of the group's founders, the world is divided into those for

59 One should note that the Estonian political elite was very cautious about Obama's emergence on the U.S. political stage. During the presidential campaign most Estonian politicians did not hide the fact that they would rather see McCain in the White House. None of the Estonian newspapers paid any real attention to Obama's campaign speech in Berlin, or to his speeches in Cairo and Moscow after his election. But the Center for Strategic Studies at Estonia's Defense Ministry was one of the organizers of a letter from former Central and Eastern European politicians, expressing concern over the possible weakening of NATO's role in the region and trans-Atlantic ties in general. See: *The New York Times*, July 20, 2009.

60 See: P. Berman, *Power and the Idealists: Or, the Passion of Joschka Fischer, and Its Aftermath* (N.Y.: W.W. Norton, 2007).

whom “only pure symbols of belief exist, but not facts,” and those for whom “free discussion aimed at separating fact from fiction has meaning; for whom politics, science and the force of judgment are based on facts that do not depend on disputed or acquired passions.”⁶¹ From the point of view of the “new philosophers,” totalitarianism in all its various forms is one such fact.

But, while talking of the importance of indisputable facts, the “new philosophers” have a very specific rival in mind: political realism. Berman sums up this hostility very well: “Realism never stands up to genocide. Modern genocide always take place on the outskirts of great events and never at the epicenter, but political realism is busy calculating power at the center, busy calculating Great History, to use the expression of Alain Finkielkraut (another founder of the ‘new philosophers’). Genocide attacks the weak, while realism protects the strong.”⁶²

As a result, a new European identity is also being formed on the edges of the European political stage, “on the winds blowing between Tbilisi and Kiev,” to use Glucksmann’s words. It is taking shape despite the “anti-liberalism, anti-Americanism, and fears of immigrants from the south, and especially from the east.”⁶³ It is therefore not surprising that no sooner did the Russian-Georgian war break out in 2008, than Glucksmann and his colleague Bernard-Henri Levy, without even waiting to clarify exactly what was happening in the Caucasus, rushed to the defense of Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, eager to take his side against not only “Russian imperialism” but also against the “realism” of such US political veterans as Schultz and Kissinger. It is also not surprising that their attack on “cold realism” was taken up on the pages of *Die Welt* by the leaders of Estonia’s Fatherland Union, Mart Laar and Andres Herkel.⁶⁴

We are not talking about word for word borrowing, but the “new philosophers” conceptual language was well suited to the Estonian politicians going through an identity crisis. After all, the people who developed this language were in a similar situation. For Glucksmann, Levy and Finkielkraut this was the crisis of overcoming their own Maoist past, while for the Estonian politicians it was a reaction to the divisions within the trans-Atlantic community. In both cases, however, there was a need to build a solid new foundation for a group identity. Rethinking totalitarianism was well-suited to this task, as an attribute of big collectivist projects, Great History and a great-power mindset, and also as an unforeseen but inevitably tragic consequence of what Luik called the dreams of an ideal society. This understanding of totalitarianism made it possible to justify the US foreign policy that was arousing increasing discontent in “old Europe,” and at the same time made it possible to keep a distance from the American “neocons,” whose views in one way or another were tainted with the ideas underlying “realism.” As Glucksmann put it, the “new philosophers,” with their specific interpretation of history, offered small Central and Eastern European countries their own way into world politics (and history), an entranceway for “all of the ‘small fry’ to which the ‘realists’ have never given a second thought.”⁶⁵

One cannot help but notice the similarities between the ideas of the “new philosophers” and a recent speech by Estonian President Ilves at Turku University. Like Luik in his article, Ilves spoke of the possibility (and need) to build new identities based on consensus, rather than accepting, as in the past, identities “forced upon us by history and by others,”⁶⁶ who now, like Hegel’s “peoples with no history,” find themselves playing the part of “peoples without democracy” and thus also end up outside history.⁶⁷

61 A. Glucksmann, “Mohammed und die Gaskammern,” *Die Welt*, March 6, 2006.

62 Berman, *Power and the Idealists*, P. 84.

63 A. Glucksmann, “Das Land der Europa-Nihilisten,” *Die Welt*, June 1, 2005.

64 A. Herkel and M. Laar, “Russland ausschließen!,” *Die Welt*, September 14, 2008.

65 A. Glucksmann, “Beslán, la moral y la política,” *El País*, June 15, 2009.

66 T. H. Ilves, “Kes me oleme? Kus me oleme?: Rahvuslik identiteet ja vaimne geograafia,” *Akadeemia*, № 6 (2009): PP. 1067-1074.

67 The idea of democracy as part of an essentially eschatological historical process was expressed most clearly in another speech by Ilves that caused a few ripples, given this time at a forum of Finno-Ugric peoples in Khanty-Mansiysk. For lack of space to go into the details, I note only that Ilves’ speech in Turku repeats this speech’s main ideas almost word for word.

In his speech, unconsciously it seems, Ilves repeated his criticism of Habermas made six years earlier and reproduced not only Habermas' idea of a constructed "civic patriotism," but also Durkheim's division of societies into "traditional" and "industrial" that lies at its foundation. This essentially one-dimensional and eschatological model of history enables Habermas to give specific historical content to the abstract Kantian criticism of "traditional" metaphysical consciousness: the "will to reason" takes on a concrete incarnation in the modernization process, which Kant could only foresee, but which we, in Habermas' view, must now complete. This in its turn requires us to abandon all forms of "fundamentalism." At the same time, being a theoretical model, Habermas' construction avoids the need to heed the specific historical diversity of the various traditionalist communities within Europe (or those attempting to preserve their traditionalism). Like any model, it assumes that "in principle, we already know all there is to know about religious Muslims in Europe even without having any contact with the real concerns and aspirations of individual communities, each of which at times enters democratic society along its own historic trajectory."⁶⁸ In the case of the "new philosophers," this model serves to justify "self-complacent secularism, which is just as much hostage to absolute truths as the most 'fundamentalist' of Muslim discourses."⁶⁹

But Estonian historical politics needs certainty in order to draw a clear line between what is democratic and undemocratic and create the support it needs for political action. This position's internal fundamentalism was presented clearly in an article by European Parliament member Tunne Kelam on relations between the EU and Russia: "United Europe's mission should be to speak the truth, set limits and make it clear that our principles and values are not subject to negotiation."⁷⁰

Kelam presents his vision of relations between the EU and Russia as "realpolitik," citing Churchill, who saw the key to the Russian enigma in Russia's national interests. But the principles and values that Kelam describes as not open for discussion clearly have as much to do with "realpolitik" as Russia's national interests as understood by Churchill did with Estonia's independence after World War II. Taking Russia's national interests into account ran counter to Estonia's independence, which was thus sacrificed. But I would not hasten to accuse Kelam of ignorance. Like any experienced practitioner he works with what he has at hand, not concerning himself overly with the academic irreproachability of his arguments. What he has is a clear shift in emphasis in European-Russian relations towards "realpolitik" since the Russian-Georgian war. Instead of trying to swim against the shifting European tide, he is trying to channel it in the right direction, looking to the "new philosophers'" discourse for support in this endeavor. With enough skill and perseverance even the smallest countries can find themselves allies, as we can see by concluding with a comparison of the discourses of the "new philosophers" and the *Historikerstreit*.

THE "SMALL FRY" POLICY

The political outcome of Estonia's "historians' quarrel" was a temporary freeze of the potentially confrontational polemic on the essence (and possible comparison) of two past totalitarian regimes – a past that is of immense importance for shaping Estonia's identity as a country. The practical justification for suspending this debate was the idea of European stability, perceived as bound up with the existence of a trans-Atlantic consensus and with a course set on friendly Western support for Russia's reforms. The start of the new century shook both of these foreign policy pillars to a certain extent, and Estonian domestic politics ended up in a state of crisis. Thus, the need arose for a new consolidating discourse tailored to fit both domestic politics and foreign policy priorities, which, as President Ilves said in one of his interviews, "we will translate until such time as we write our own."⁷¹ There were more than enough examples that could serve as models. There was, for example, the correspondence between Francois Furet and Ernst Nolte (see note 52), or the numerous publications by Robert Kagan, who

68 H. Henkel, "'The Journalists of Jyllands-Posten Are a Bunch of Reactionary Provocateurs': The Danish Cartoon Controversy and the Self-Image of Europe," *Radical Philosophy*, Iss. 137 (May/June 2006).

69 Ibid.

70 T. Kelam, "An EU *Realpolitik* to Unravel the Riddle of Unruly Russia," *Europe's World*, № 11 (Spring 2009).

71 T. H. Ilves, "Kuni me ise ei kirjuta, peame tõlkima," *Sirp*, Jan. 26, 2007.

is close to the neocons. One of these publications served as the foundation for an international conference held in Tallinn.⁷² But if European comparative analysis of the two totalitarian regimes with its conservative criticism of the “new times” could not serve as a source of the sought-after certainty, American neo-conservatism came dangerously close to the “realist” fixation with Great History and its powerful actors.

The “new philosophers” deliberately positioned themselves as the American neo-conservatives’ European partners, ready to rely on the support of American power, but looking to the lessons of European history, which for them mainly involved totalitarianism, in resolving political tasks. However, their interpretation of totalitarianism left no place for following Habermas in the other part of his analysis – the part where the end of the Cold War not only provided an opportunity to overcome the totalitarian past, but also was a harbinger of the “possible downfall of another regime, anonymously ensconced on the global market... and, it seems, already unable to control growing unemployment and homelessness, not to mention the growing inequality between the rich countries and the rest of the world.” As Alain Badiou wrote, this kind of philosophical position excluded the possibility of “uniting people around the positive idea of Good,” because an ethical consensus based on an *a priori* definition of Evil implies that “any collective revolutionary project...will turn into a totalitarian nightmare.”⁷³

But in Estonia’s case, all of these theoretical disadvantages could be more than compensated for by the practical advantages of the “small fry politics.” Attempting to rebuild the lost international consensus around such politics was enough to turn them into an effective foreign policy tool to be used against the interests of those who, in Luik’s words, “accuse us of destroying the consensus by establishing our own parallel universe.” In this particular case, these words refer not only to attitudes towards totalitarianism. The way the world order is organized, all of these “small fry” countries have almost always been part of a parallel universe, beyond the bounds of the Great History created by the great powers. At the same time, there is no doubt that among those embracing this anti-totalitarian version of historical politics today are quite a few people simply wishing to settle scores with specific countries, above all Russia, or to use anti-totalitarianism as a foreign policy instrument that can win them support from other great powers, above all the US. They are making their voices heard ever more frequently and ever louder, including in Estonia. But my task was to draw attention to an element in the Estonian intellectual discourse that is far more serious and at the same much less visible from the outside, namely, the use of historical politics as an instrument in the political struggle for a place in history itself.

72 R. Kagan, *The Return of History and the End of Dreams* (N.Y.: Knopf, 2008). (For the translation of his article “End of Dreams, Return of History,” which served as the basis for this book, see *Pro et Contra*, 11, № 6 [2007]. –Editor’s note).

73 A. Badiou, *L'éthique: Essai sur la conscience du Mal* (Paris: Nous, 2003). One of the most prominent philosophers today, Badiou was personally well acquainted with Glucksmann and Levy back in the days of their Maoist activism together.

UKRAINE: THE *HOLODOMOR* AND NATION-BUILDING⁷⁴

GEORGY KASYANOV

Ukraine's historical policy pursued the goal of turning the 1932-33 famine into one of the founding symbols of the national historical myth.

Since the transition from the “old order” to the era of nation states, history has always played an important part in forming identity, in civic education and, of course, in indoctrination, as well. Although it was not a nation state, the Soviet Union also made active use of history in order to establish ideological conformity. Therefore, it is no surprise to see that history came to play such a key part in the ideological and political battles of the second half of the 1980s, which ultimately discredited the official version of history and the political groups attempting to defend it. This was followed by the “sovereignization” and later the “nationalization” of the history of the Soviet Union’s constituent republics. This process of separating “one’s own” history from the previously shared culture and history played an important part in obtaining political sovereignty and cultural/political emancipation.

In Ukraine, the first of the “battles for history” unfolded in 1986-1989. This was a battle between activists from the various democratic movements challenging the Soviet and Ukrainian communist parties’ ideological and political monopoly on one side, and the state and party *nomenklatura* on the other. Similar battles were unfolding practically everywhere throughout the Soviet republics. The battles started by criticizing and condemning the “administrative-command” system, Stalinism, totalitarianism, and so on, and as these debates unfolded it turned out that the republics’ own history was also being subjected to repression. Debate began on the “blank spots” – the historical events and circumstances that had been deliberately covered up or made taboo, above all names and facts linked to national movements and/or their suppression. The all but complete absence of national history in the education system and academic world also soon became the subject of debate.

Ukrainian history was taught as “history of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic” and was part of the general “history of the Soviet Union” taught in schools, though focused more on history’s geographical/cultural aspect. In universities one could study Ukrainian history in history departments only, and the content of what was taught duplicated the corresponding sections of the courses on the history of the USSR and the history of the Soviet Communist Party. Thus it was that all of Ukrainian history became a “blank spot,” not just because of its fragmentary nature and the existence of taboo names and topics, but also because of its secondary status in relation to general Soviet history. Nationalization of history in Ukraine thus followed two directions: restoring the rights of Ukraine’s own history, and giving it substance in the form of topics and issues that not long before had been banned and for the discussion of which one faced punishment. Professional historiography found itself trying to “catch up” in this process, which was led primarily by writers, publicists, members of the technical intelligentsia, and activists from various informal public organizations.

In 1987-1991, history became increasingly prominent in public debates and politics. At first, the revision of history was seen as a possible means of helping to give socialism “a human face,” but by the late 1980s-early 1990s there was a sharp change in attitudes towards the revision of history in the context of forming a separate historical and cultural identity in what is today’s Ukraine. This stage saw the formation of a union of national democratic forces, seeking to gain sovereignty over Ukrainian culture, history, language, and territory from the “sovereign communists” of the Ukrainian Communist Party, who were attempting to expand their own powers at the expense of central authority from Moscow.

This movement reached its zenith in 1990, when history came out onto the streets and entered the offices of power. Among the more memorable events of that time were the summer festival of Cossack glory, which attracted hundreds of thousands of people from around Ukraine on the island of Gortitsa, and the “monument war” in Western Ukraine. Local councils in western parts of the country gave the

74 This article was originally published in Russian in the August 2009 issue of *Pro et Contra*.

order to dismantle statues of Lenin, and in their place arose monuments and memorials to soldiers of the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) and figures in the nationalist movement. In January 1990, on the anniversary of the reunification of the two Ukrainian states (the People's Republic of Ukraine and the Western Ukrainian People's Republic) on January 22, 1919 a human chain was organized linking Kiev to Lvov. In July that same year, a week after the Ukrainian Supreme Soviet passed the Declaration of Sovereignty, the politburo of the central committee of the Ukrainian communist party approved a program for developing historical research and teaching history in Ukraine. This amounted in essence to a roadmap for taking over the sovereignty of the republic's history.

THE NATIONAL NARRATIVE: THE REBIRTH

The main subjects that would play a key part in nationalizing history emerged at that time: the history of Ukrainian statehood (with particular emphasis on the times of Bogdan Khmelnytsky and his successors, and also the 1917-1920 period of statehood); the reassessment of the Soviet period; the history of Stalinism (above all the repressions and the famine of 1932-33); the history of World War II, and the history of the nationalist movement and the UPA. These subjects became central in Ukraine's historical politics and in policy in general. Before 1991, these topics were the subject of ideological confrontation between Soviet party bosses and the national democrats, who had tacit support from among the "sovereign communists," but after independence the situation changed, becoming at once simpler in some ways and more complicated in others.

The nationalization of history formed the foundation of school and university history programs – presented as a "millennium" of the Ukrainian nation's struggle for survival and independence. The didactic history of Ukraine became part of the system of civic education and earned a corresponding place in state historical politics, implemented through the Education Ministry and to some extent through central agencies responsible for culture and the media. The foundations of this didactic history were laid by historians with little connection to teaching. The authors of the first school textbook on Ukrainian history, commissioned by the Education Ministry, were academics who had devoted their careers to carrying out the Soviet state's ideological orders. The new Ukraine did not set out its ideological requirements, but the book's authors understood themselves what was expected of them and what kind of content their labor was supposed to produce. The version of national history they came up with was a classic example of nineteenth century-style national narrative. The public and political rehabilitation of prominent figures of the past at the turn of the 1980s-1990s, such as Mikhail Grushevsky, the founder of this narrative, made their task easier and made it seem absolutely natural to turn to these models for knowledge and explanation. The conceptual system Grushevsky offered was declared the only correct approach and became the guideline for contemporary historians in their work. At the same time, previously banned works by Ukrainian historians in the diaspora began circulating freely. These works in general also fit into Grushevsky's framework, but their newly rehabilitated status gave them greater intellectual weight and they were perceived as examples of "authentic" history.

The Ukrainian ruling elite followed a "soft" line in historical politics in the 1990s; neither the introduction of prescribed "national" texts in schools, nor the formation of a new national pantheon aroused stormy debate. The selection of historical figures adorning the new national currency (the hryvnia), introduced in 1996, was approved without objections from the public, politicians, or bureaucracy. Regional differences in the way history was interpreted and taught were not particularly emphasized in any way.

Although the "nationalization" of history was for the most part conflict-free in Ukraine, some aspects of this process did arouse public debate. This concerns three issues in particular:

- Reassessing the Soviet myth about the Great Patriotic War, accompanied by attempts to "rehabilitate"⁷⁵ the nationalist movement of the 1930s-1940s and complement the

⁷⁵ Rehabilitation is a multi-layered term that covers judicial rehabilitation of repressed nationalist movement activists, as well as historical rehabilitation, in other words, new forms of presenting the nationalist movement's history as a struggle for an independent Ukraine, the moral rehabilitation of nationalist movement figures as heroes, overturning Soviet-era stereotypes, and attempts to give UPA veterans equal status with veterans of the Great Patriotic War.

national historical myth with events, figures and organizations, which during the Soviet years were demonized by the official historical politics and subjected to harsh ideological persecution (the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists [OUN] and UPA);

- Reassessing the history of the Soviet period, especially the 1920s-30s, and the “de-Sovietization” of history and the teaching of history;
- Selecting significant historical myths and symbols called upon to consolidate the public consensus on the past and stake Ukraine’s historical markers in the public consciousness and on the international stage (the issues that aroused the biggest debate here were the history of the Cossacks and the Holodomor).

Conflicts arose in cases when historical events became the subject of political battles. Right up until 2000, the political left held numerical supremacy in the Ukrainian parliament, and the resulting political debates constantly turned to history for arguments. Members of the national democratic opposition played up the theme of the “totalitarian past,” presenting the current left wing and part of the ruling elite as the political heirs of Lenin and Stalin and blaming them for Ukraine’s problems both past and present. In most cases appeals to the “lessons of history” coincided with political or election campaign crises. The left wing, for its part, actively refuted attempts to lay the blame on them for totalitarian crimes and protested vigorously against attempts to “blacken the past” and “rehabilitate nationalism.” In the 1990s, however, these debates stayed mostly on the sidelines of mainstream political life and primarily served as just an additional argument in battles for power and property.

The situation changed over the first decade of the new century. First, the circle of political forces appealing in one way or another to the past expanded. Most symptomatic of this change was that even the Party of the Regions, which essentially represented big business and had previously never placed much importance on ideology, started to participate in debates on the politics of history. Second, the politics of history took on a clear regional dimension, with southeastern Ukraine and the Crimea opposing the official state line, especially when it came to replacing Soviet historical myths with nationalist ones. Third, the politics of history began to provoke not only internal political debates, but also foreign policy conflicts.

The first serious signal came with the fierce debates on the Ukrainian-Polish conflict in Volhynia in 1943-1944. The nature and content of these discussions⁷⁶ and their involvement of Ukraine’s and Poland’s parliaments and presidents pointed to a new trend in the politics of history – internationalization. A few years later, Ukraine entered into a protracted conflict with Russia on reassessing the past. Many other countries and international organizations, from the UN and UNESCO to the European Parliament, found themselves directly or indirectly drawn into this conflict. This trend was actually part of a global tendency: conflicts over the past were going on among Japan, China, and Korea, between India and Pakistan, among Russia, the Baltic countries, and Poland, among Central Asian countries and countries in the Trans-Caucasus region, and also in the European Union, including debates on state intervention in historical research and the freedom of speech issues that resulted. This is only a partial list of topics, showing how history has become part of international politics.

THE HOLODOMOR AS A FACTOR IN DOMESTIC POLITICS

The subject of the 1932-33 famine emerged in Ukraine’s socio-political discourse in the mid-1980s as part of the general criticism of the Soviet past.

The Holodomor discourse is a set of stereotyped perceptions regarding the famine of 1932-33, shaped by consciously targeted and spontaneous actions by writers, politicians, public figures, and scholars. In essence, an act of genocide was committed against the Ukrainian people in 1932-33. This took the form of a famine planned and carried out by the ruling group in Moscow, with Stalin at their

⁷⁶ For more details see: G. Kasianov, “The Burden of the Past: The Ukrainian-Polish Conflict of 1943-44 in Contemporary Public, Academic and Political Debates in Ukraine and Poland,” *Innovations* 19, № 3/4 (2006).

head, in order to destroy the Ukrainian people's ability to resist the communist regime. The main target of this organized famine was the individualistic and freedom-loving Ukrainian peasantry. By destroying the peasantry, the Moscow regime "broke the nation's back." There are various variations on this theme. A more radical interpretation has it that the famine was planned in advance. Another holds that it was caused by attempts to reorganize individual farm holdings into collective farms, with the regime then using this policy to their advantage in order to force the peasantry into submission. Unrealistic grain production targets and grain requisitioning, confiscation of private produce supplies from the peasantry, and blockades of famine-struck regions were the instruments of choice used to organize the famine. The most scholarly variation on the classic Holodomor discourse is presented in the work of Stanislav Kulchitsky – "Pochemu on nas unichtozhal?" (Kiev, 2007). A wave of repressions against the national intelligentsia was unleashed in parallel to the destruction of the peasantry, thus "beheading" the nation. The famine killed between seven and ten million people (former President Viktor Yushchenko and his supporters love to quote this figure, although scholars taking a more moderate line put the figure at 3.5 million). The famine dealt the Ukrainian nation and its genetic potential a blow from which it has not recovered to this day. Many of the problems hampering the building of a successful new Ukraine are the result of the Soviet totalitarian regime's policy towards the Ukrainian nation, and the Holodomor is probably its biggest crime of all. The Holodomor was the greatest tragedy to befall the Ukrainian people in the twentieth century, and it is a tragedy of global scale, no less significant than the Holocaust.

Politicians were quick to seize on the political/ideological and mobilization potential this subject offered. During Leonid Kravchuk's presidency (1991-1994), he and his entourage were quick to master the rhetoric of the "totalitarian past" in general and the 1932-33 famine in particular. For Kravchuk, who, like a large part of the national democratic establishment, had been part of the communist party *nomenklatura* in Soviet Ukraine, condemning "totalitarian crimes" became an important aspect of political legitimization: an attempt to separate himself from the Soviet past and avoid possible responsibility for the communist regime's crimes. In addition to former dissidents, those calling for a "Nuremberg trial against communism" included quite a few members of the literary elite, who had prospered under the old regime and were doing well establishing a cozy spot for themselves in the new one. Condemnation of "totalitarianism" in this environment had particular ideological significance, in that if "totalitarianism" was the Ukrainian people's enemy, then the problems that the country encountered in its nation-building and restoration efforts could be blamed on the past. The 1932-33 famine fit perfectly into the accusatory/justifying approach that explained current difficulties as arising from disadvantageous historical circumstances.

Leonid Kuchma, who was president from 1994-2004, showed little interest in the problems of the Soviet past. He paid attention to these issues only during flare-ups in political battles. Kuchma's main commemorative decrees on the 1932-33 famine coincide with intense political conflicts: the parliamentary elections and preparations for the presidential campaign in 1998; parliamentary elections and the anti-Kuchma "Arise, Ukraine!" demonstrations in 2002; and the attempt by the pro-presidential majority in the parliament to snatch the initiative from the opposition by actively calling for the recognition of the 1932-33 famine as an act of genocide as the presidential election drew near in 2003.

Only when Viktor Yushchenko came to power did the ideological motifs come to the fore. Yushchenko used historical politics as an ideological foundation for nation-building and placed the 1932-33 famine at the center of these politics. In this case, too, the appeal to the past was linked to present political circumstances. Yushchenko's emphasis on the 1932-33 famine coincided with a flare-up in the battles over redistributing power in 2006-2008. Another reason for the intensification of historical politics under Yushchenko was the calculation that a nationally-oriented policy, with historical politics as a component, could become a source of "moral healing" for society and help to restore Ukraine's moral and political unity. Part of the president's entourage (the right wing, the remaining national democrats, and some of the émigré community) shared this view.

The first official response from the newly independent Ukrainian state to the famine issue was an order from prime minister Vitold Fokin of August 26, 1992, on financing the Bells of Peace memorial center in Lubna in the Poltava Region. The order was not carried out in full as far as allocating funds was concerned, but a mound was erected and a huge bell with a cross was raised on top.

In 1993, on the 60th anniversary of the 1932-33 tragedy, debates on the commemoration events broke out among the political elite. President Kravchuk spoke in favor of organizing commemorations at the state level. He was pushed in this direction in large part by cultural figures from the national democratic camp in his close entourage.⁷⁷ It was also thanks to them that their supporters among prominent members of the Ukrainian émigré community got “the right to vote” and were allowed to weigh in morally on some cultural policy issues in Ukraine.⁷⁸ Kravchuk found himself in a difficult position: he had to show loyalty to the national democratic entourage, thus showing his “progressive” approach to nation-building and condemning the “crimes of the totalitarian regime,” of which he was himself a product, while at the same time refraining from being too radical in his actions and statements, so as not to cause conflict with the powerful “left wing” lobby in parliament.

On February 19, 1993, Kravchuk issued a decree marking the start of a new historical politics in independent Ukraine. Its title – “On Events Related to the 60th Anniversary of the Holodomor in Ukraine”⁷⁹ – used the ideologically-charged term “Holodomor,” which had gone from being a literary metaphor to becoming a scientific, political, and even legal category. The use of the word “Holodomor” in the decree “legalized” not only the term itself, but also the associated perception and interpretation of the 1932-33 famine, which now became official. This word contained “codified” information on the causes and consequences of the tragedy and set the limits of its interpretation. Furthermore, the decree became the first attempt to “internationalize” the issue of the 1932-33 famine. Ukraine’s foreign ministry was instructed to send a proposal to UNESCO asking this organization to mention this tragedy in its calendar. The decree invited 13 members of the Ukrainian émigré community from the West and the CIS countries, who headed the biggest Ukrainian public organizations abroad, to be part of the Day of Mourning organizing committee. The committee also included two foreigners, who, with the émigré community’s support, produced the classic “academic” version of the 1932-33 famine – American James Mace and Englishman Robert Conquest.

The decree did not contain political and ideological wording. In it Kravchuk attempted to “weave a course between the rain drops.” But the national democrats in his entourage were clearly trying to escalate the situation. As part of the program of official events they proposed organizing a People’s Court (tribunal), reviewing the organizers of the Holodomor,⁸⁰ and also a large-scale stage presentation, for which the organizers called on Ukraine’s best directors to take part.

In the summer of 1993, the Association of Researchers on the 1932-33 Genocide in Ukraine, proposed the idea of setting up a temporary investigative commission in the Verkhovna Rada to investigate the 1932-33 famine. As the authors of the proposal saw it, this commission would “be able to qualify the Holodomor, based on documents in academic circulation, as a crime against the Ukrainian people and an act of direct genocide that undermined the Ukrainian people’s gene pool and spiritual and cultural potential.”⁸¹ The association, which reflected in large part the views of former dissident and founder of the right-wing Ukrainian Republican Party, Levko Lukyanenko, proposed that the “case” be sent to the International Court in the Hague.

The Organizing Committee’s chairman, deputy prime minister Mykola Zhulinsky, then proposed holding hearings on the 1932-33 famine in parliament, but the left-wing majority in the Verkhovna Rada made it impossible at that time to debate the past in terms of “the communist regime’s crimes.”

77 They include: Mykola Zhulinsky, who in 1993 was deputy prime minister responsible for humanitarian issues; Ivan Dzyuba, minister of culture; Dmytro Pavlychko, chairman of the Verkhovna Rada Commission on Foreign Affairs; and Ivan Drach, chairman of the Council of the Society for Ties with Ukrainians Abroad. See: Decree of the President of Ukraine, “Pro zakhodi u зв’язku z 60-mi rokivnami holodomoru v Ukraini,” *Golos Ukraini*, March 20, 1993.

78 A look at the composition of the organizations whose representatives joined the organizing committee on preparing the events for the 60th anniversary of the Holodomor gives an idea of their influence on how things developed: *Український Конгресовий Комітет Америки*, *Українська народна допомога* (US), *Конгрес українців Канади*, *Світовий конгрес вільних українців* (Canada), *Українська народна рада* (US), *Спілка українських організацій Австралії*.

79 Decree of the President of Ukraine of February 19, 1993, “Про заходи у зв’язку з 60-ми роковинами голодомору в Україні,” www.zakon.rada.gov.ua. Site visited on July 20, 2003.

80 The group preparing the tribunal included members of the former nomenklatura who had successfully integrated into the new post-communist elite. They included prominent public figures and writers from the national democratic camp such as I. Drach, P. Movchan, and V. Yavorivsky.

81 Пропозиції щодо вшанування 60-х роковин голодомору в Україні, author’s archive.

The first state-sanctioned mass commemoration of the 1932-33 famine thus ended in compromise. The People's Tribunal and staged re-enactment did not happen, but in September 1993 President Kravchuk took part in an international conference in Kiev – The 1932-33 Holodomor in Ukraine: causes and consequences – at which he stated that the Holodomor was a planned act of genocide. In his opening remarks at the event, Kravchuk said, “I fully agree that this was a planned act, that this was genocide carried out against one’s own people. But I would not stop there. This was genocide against one’s own people, but carried out in accordance with orders coming from a different center.”⁸² The former dissidents and members of the émigré community preferred not to recall that only recently Kravchuk had zealously opposed their “nationalist thinking” on the famine.⁸³

The conference in Kiev gives an idea of how politicized the subject of the 1932-33 famine had become. Speakers at the event, at which the voices of public activists and politicians rang out louder than those of scholars, mentioned the 1932-33 famine in contexts as diverse as Ukraine’s nuclear status, the carving up of the Soviet Union’s assets, and the status of Sevastopol and the Crimea.

THE 1932-33 FAMINE AS THE FOUNDATION OF THE NATIONAL MYTH

Ukraine’s historical politics aimed to turn the 1932-33 famine into one of the founding symbols of the national historical myth. In 1993, the departure point of this policy, the senior state officials gave the order to organize measures that subsequently became regular commemorative events throughout the country. In this respect one could say there was a certain convergence between state and public practice. Religious processions, memorial services and the raising of crosses on the graves of famine victims had all happened earlier in various places, but rather than happening under the state authorities’ initiative, they were organized by public groups that could be characterized as a cultural opposition to the state. Now, however, the state gave its blessing to these events and, what’s more, promised that conferences, exhibitions, publication of books, and photo exhibitions on the famine would receive funding from the budget. True, as far as funding was concerned, this turned out to be mostly empty words. During the severe social and economic crisis and the large scale redistribution of assets of the 1990s, it was the émigré community that often funded historical politics, above all the formation of the desired interpretation of the 1932-33 famine.⁸⁴

The first national commemorative event was organized in 1993 in response to an order from Kuchma’s government and consisted of lowering the national flag in all state institutions throughout the country for four hours on September 10.⁸⁵ Some researchers describe historical politics during the Kuchma period as “an amnesia project,”⁸⁶ but this view is mistaken. It is true that the technocrat Kuchma’s arrival in power pushed ideology onto the back burner of state policy, but the struggle for power and its redistribution required an ideological foundation. One could say that historical politics became more “pragmatic” during the Kuchma period. This is amply illustrated by the interpretation of the 1932-33 famine that was prevalent at this time.

82 L. Kravchuk, President of Ukraine, Ми не маємо права знехтувати уроками минулого!, Голодомор 1932-1933 рр. в Україні: причини і наслідки. Міжнародна наукова конференція. Київ, 9-10 вересня 1993 р. Матеріали. Київ, 1995. С. 10.

83 Ten years earlier, on the 50th anniversary of the 1932-33 famine, Kravchuk, as head of the Ukrainian Communist Party Central Committee’s Propaganda and Agitation Department, was actively involved in counter-propaganda measures directed against the “anti-Soviet campaign unleashed in the West over the so-called ‘50th anniversary of the manmade famine in Ukraine.’”

84 To give just two of the most illustrative examples, more than a dozen books prepared by the Association of Researchers of the 1932-33 Famine and Genocide in Ukraine were published with money from M. Kots, a Ukrainian businessman in the US. O. Yanchuk’s film, “The 1933 Famine,” which was shown on December 1, 1991, the day of the referendum on Ukraine’s independence, was made using money donated by the Ukrainian emigrant community.

85 Кабінет міністрів України. Постанова від 10 вересня 1993 р. № 718 “Про вшанування пам’яті жертв голодомору в Україні у 1932-1933 роках,” www.zakon.rada.gov.ua.

86 This same view was shared by some researchers and publicists. See: G. Grabovych. “Україна: підсумки століття,” *Критика* № 11 (1999).; М. Ryabchuk, “Потьомкінський ювілей, або ще раз про амністію, амнезію та ‘спадкоємність’ посткомуністичної влади в Україні,” *Сучасність* № 3 (2004).; S. Kulchitsky, Демографічні наслідки голоду геноциду-геноциду 1933 р. в Україні // Геноцид українського народу: історична пам’ять та політико-правова оцінка. Міжнародна науково-теоретична конференція. Київ, 25 листопада 2000 р. Матеріали. С. 8.

It was during Kuchma's time in office that presidential and government bodies began taking real steps to give the 1932-33 famine ideological, state, and public legitimacy as the central event in Ukraine's twentieth century national history.

In October 1998, on the 65th anniversary of the famine,⁸⁷ the government gave instructions to hold what had by then become the standard set of commemorative events. In a separate decree the president set an official commemoration date – the Day of Remembrance for the Victims of the Holodomor⁸⁸ – to be marked on the last Saturday of November every year. Kuchma later changed the decree's wording, extending the symbolic scope of the commemoration and renaming the date the Day of Remembrance for the Victims of the Holodomor and Political Repression.

Kuchma issued another commemorative decree – “On Events to Mark the 70th Anniversary of the Holodomor in Ukraine”⁸⁹ – in February, 2002, a year of parliamentary elections, which most observers and participants saw as a test run for the presidential election. The decree's title showed that the word “Holodomor” had become well and truly established in official state terminology by this time. One of the decree's objectives was to snatch the initiative from the parliamentary opposition that was in the process of formation. At the end of that same year, Kuchma issued an order to build a memorial to the victims of the Holodomor and political repression in Kiev. This order was not actually carried out during his presidency. Other “ideological” decrees that he issued, including some on issues related to memory policy, met with little enthusiasm at the local level and were frequently simply ignored.

In 2003 among the political elite there was a sudden rise of interest in the famine. The 70th anniversary of the tragedy coincided with the escalation of the domestic political confrontation, provoked by the upcoming presidential election and Kuchma's attempts to push through political reforms and expand presidential powers to the detriment of parliament. 2003 also marked the anniversary of another date – the Ukrainian-Polish conflict in Volhynia (1943-44), also known as the Volhynia massacre.⁹⁰ Finally, 2003 was the Year of Russia in Ukraine, and this gave the political debates on the 1932-33 famine a particularly sensitive edge, as part of the political class presented Russia as Ukraine's eternal oppressor.

The anniversary of the 1932-33 famine became a hot topic in political debates. The opposition, patched together out of different groups united only in their determination to stop Kuchma from creating a super-presidential power system, fell apart after the center-right parties in the Our Ukraine bloc, headed by Yushchenko, proposed holding special parliamentary hearings on the 1932-33 famine. Our Ukraine's temporary allies, the communists, categorically opposed this idea. But with Kuchma's approval the parliamentary factions under his control gave the proposal their support, although these factions, which represented big business, were little interested in issues of historical politics as such.

The parliamentary hearings, which took place in February 2003 at the initiative of the national democrats, became the forum for all manner of clichés on the “crimes of totalitarianism.” The national democrats and their allies from the right-wing parties heaped the usual invective on the “criminal totalitarian regime” and seized the opportunity to fire criticism at the current regime, too, which they also considered to be criminal. The communists, who had so doggedly opposed accepting any responsibility for the crimes of their predecessors, were happy to join in the criticism of the current “anti-people regime.”

All of the speakers tried in one way or another to give the Holodomor modern relevance by making reference to contemporary issues.

87 Кабінет міністрів України. Постанова від 26 жовтня 1988 р. № 1696 “Про 65-ті роковини голодомору в Україні,” www.zakon.rada.gov.ua.

88 Decree of the President of Ukraine, “Про встановлення Дня пам'яті жертв голодоморів,” від 26.11.1998 №1310/98, www.zakon.rada.gov.ua. Site last visited on March 31, 2008.

89 Decree of the President of Ukraine, “Про заходи у зв'язку з 70-ми роковинами голодомору в Україні,” *Урядовий кур'єр*, March 29, 2002.

90 Serious debate flared up in Ukraine and Poland, with each accusing the other of not wanting to recognize the “historical truth.” Right-wing radical and nationalist groups further fanned these flames on both sides. Kuchma, together with his Polish counterpart, Alexander Kwasniewski, tried to play peacemaker.

State officials linked current difficulties to past traumas. Deputy prime minister Dmitry Tabachnik even said that the “hungry tribulations of 1933 are not the historical past but are one of the twentieth century’s great social and demographic catastrophes and a still raw moral and psychological wound that continues to torture the memories of its witnesses with searing pain. The socio-physiological sense of fear born out of mass repression and famine lives on in the consciousness of many generations. It has entered the nation’s genes and acts as a serious hindrance in our society’s democratization.”⁹¹

The state officials followed the national democrats and right wing forces’ lead in saying that in their opinion the Holodomor destroyed the flower of the nation and dealt a crushing blow to the Ukrainian people, undermining its gene pool.

The left gave new relevance to the 1932-33 famine in its own way. Communist leader Pyotr Simonenko declared that genocide is taking place here and now, and that there is no sense looking for it in the past. “I appeal from this tribune to those in power with the proposal and demand to stop lying about the Soviet past and answer instead for the criminal policy they are carrying out today – a policy of genocide,”⁹² he declared.

Three months later, in accordance with the recommendations that came out of the parliamentary hearings, the Verkhovna Rada held a special session on the 1932-33 famine. In the space of a few minutes, the parliament (without the participation of the communists, who ignored the session), passed an appeal to the nation by a legitimate majority of 226 votes, stating that the 1932-33 famine was designated an act of genocide against the Ukrainian people. “We believe,” it stated, “that in independent Ukraine the state authorities must make public the terrible truth about those years, because the 1932-33 famine was deliberately organized by Stalin’s regime and must be publicly condemned by Ukrainian society and the international community as one of the biggest acts of genocide in human history in terms of the number of victims.”⁹³

From this moment on the word “genocide,” used in relation to the 1932-33 famine, became part of the state authorities’ language at the presidential, executive and legislative levels. In 2003, the first attempt was made to have the UN recognize the 1932-33 famine as an act of genocide.

THE 1932-33 FAMINE AFTER THE ORANGE REVOLUTION: TRANSFORMATION INTO A POLITICAL INSTRUMENT

Reference to the tragic past was an inherent part of President Yushchenko’s political statements. He mentioned the famine in his presidential inauguration speech in January 2005, during his first visits to the European Parliament, and at a joint session of the U.S. Congress.⁹⁴

91 Парламентські слухання “Щодо вшанування пам’яті жертв голодомору 1932–1933 років,” 12 лютого 2003 року.

92 Ibid.

93 Звернення до Українського народу учасників спеціального засідання Верховної Ради України щодо вшанування пам’яті жертв голодомору 1932-1933 років, <http://zakon.rada.gov.ua/cgi-bin/laws/main.cgi?nreg=789%2D15>. Site visited October 20, 2007.

94 Yushchenko’s truly unprecedented efforts in the area of historical politics and memory policy brought him under increasing fire from political opponents and even some of his allies. His particular approach to the ideological component of historical politics is usually explained in two ways: personal moral and ethical motives, and practical motives (using historical politics as a way to boost his personal prestige and paint his political opponents in a negative light). Ukrainian writer M. Riabchuk sees the moral and ethical motives as dominating, while Canadian political analyst D. Arel takes the second view. See: M. Riabchuk, “Holodomor: The Politics of Memory and Political Infighting in Contemporary Ukraine,” *Harriman Review* 16, № 2 (2008); S. Bilenky, “Конференція про Голодомор в Торонто,” www.utoronto.ca/jacyk/Holod%20ukr.doc. Site visited on February 25, 2009. A review of Yushchenko’s numerous interviews and speeches on the 1932-33 famine suggests that he is indeed motivated by moral and ethical concerns and has been deeply influenced by the tragedy. But at the same time, there is no ignoring the fact that during 2006-2008 his interest in turning the issue of the famine into a tool always coincided with flare-ups in domestic political battles. Examples include using administrative/bureaucratic resources on a mass scale to organize the commemoration campaign of 2006-2008; totally rejecting, sometimes quite aggressively, other views on the 1932-33 famine; ignoring scientific data on the number of victims; attempting to introduce administrative and criminal penalties for “denying the Holodomor and the Holocaust”; and completely ignoring Kiev’s historical landscape in choosing a site for a memorial to the 1932-33 tragedy.

Shortly after his inauguration, Yushchenko, like his predecessor, issued a commemorative decree – “On Additional Measures to Immortalize the Memory of the Victims of Political Repression and Famines in Ukraine.” This was followed by a whole series of presidential orders and instructions on historical politics, most of which concerned policy regarding the Holodomor.

At this same time, Yushchenko instructed the government to establish the Institute of National Remembrance⁹⁵ and to launch a state-sponsored campaign of remembrance to mark the 75th anniversary of the famine. A government organizing committee was established,⁹⁶ although the political crisis that followed the parliamentary elections of 2006 prevented it from getting its activities off the ground. Yushchenko also instructed the Ukrainian foreign ministry to step up work “to convince the international community to recognize the 1932-33 Holodomor in Ukraine as an act of genocide against the Ukrainian people and one of the greatest tragedies in human history.”⁹⁷

Meanwhile, Yushchenko received a letter from the “scientific community” (which included parliamentary deputies, politicians, and émigré community members), asking him to set separate dates for remembering the victims of the famines⁹⁸ and the victims of political repressions, because, the authors said, in many cases the torturers themselves also ended up being among the victims of political repressions.⁹⁹ With this proposal to separate the two groups, the “scientific community” supported Yushchenko in his goal to turn the Holodomor into a national historical symbol and special symbolic marker for the nation. Further public support came in the form of a public appeal to the president from the participants in a round table – The 1932-33 Holodomor – Genocide in Ukraine – organized by the presidential secretariat together with the Institute of National Remembrance. The appeal was in keeping with the rhetoric of the Holodomor discourse, and its authors used current political considerations to give their proposals a topical flavor.

They called the 1932-33 tragedy “the peak of a protracted struggle by the Soviet totalitarian regime against the Ukrainian people’s liberation movement, and particularly against the Ukrainian peasantry.” In their words, recognizing the famine as an act of genocide was “the unquestionable duty of today’s Ukrainian politicians, above all the deputies of the Verkhovna Rada.” This task was to be carried out “above all by the politicians and political forces representing Ukrainian regions particularly hard-hit by the Great Famine of 1932-33 (the east, south and center of the country).”¹⁰⁰ This “political geography” signified that deputies from the Party of the Regions, which was hostile to Yushchenko, and their allies, the communists and socialists, were the ones tasked with fighting for recognition of the famine as genocide.

Another presidential draft law – “On the Holodomor of 1932-1933” – or rather, three of its six articles, opened a new page in Ukraine’s historical politics. Article one of the draft law qualified “the Holodomor of 1932-33 in Ukraine as an act of genocide against the Ukrainian nation”; article two banned “denial of the Holodomor”; and article six stipulated “administrative penalties for public

95 Establishing the institute proved a rather tortuous process. There was neither a clear concept, nor a clear understanding of what its future functions would be. Following the example of Poland, which established an Institute of National Remembrance in 1998, had no chance of success because of the initiators’ organizational weakness and because of differences between the initiators and those tasked with implementing the plans. (Along with government representatives and scholars, representatives of public organizations with a direct interest in establishing such an institute, but unable to agree among themselves, also took part in the discussions on the project. These organizations included Memorial, the Society of Victims of Political Repression and Political Prisoners, and the Association of Famine Researchers.) The institute was finally set up in May 2006, but to this day has problems with personnel and with its development strategy. The institute’s webpage is: <http://www.memory.gov.ua>.

96 Decree of the President of Ukraine, “Про вшанування жертв та постраждалих від голодоморів в Україні,” www.zakon.rada.gov.ua/cgi-bin/laws/main.cgi?nreg=1544%2F2005. Site visited on November 29, 2006.

97 Decree of the President of Ukraine, від 12 жовтня 2006 р. “Про відзначення у 2006 році Дня пам’яті жертв голодоморів та політичних репресій,” www.zakon.rada.gov.ua/cgi-bin/laws/main.cgi?nreg=868%2F2006.

98 The use of the word “holodomor” in the plural originated in the Ukrainian emigrant community and expressed the idea of a linked series of three famine periods: 1921-1922, 1932-1933 and 1946-1947.

99 Звернення наукової громадськості до Президента України Віктора Ющенка про запровадження постійної календарної дати вшанування пам’яті жертв Голодомору 1932-1933 рр. в Україні, www.prezident.gov.ua/content/p_150_23.html. Site visited on November 29, 2006.

100 Звернення учасників круглого столу “Голодомор 1932-1933 років – геноцид в Україні,” www.prezident.gov.ua/content/p_150_5.html. Intrigued by the presence of certain names among the document’s signatories, I asked these supposed signatories to comment, and discovered that not only did they not sign the document, but never even saw the text.

denial of the 1932-33 Holodomor in Ukraine.”¹⁰¹ By this time, not even the most hardcore left wingers denied the 1932-33 famine, the event was included in all school and university history courses, and national commemoration dates and rituals had already been established. Yushchenko’s initiative seemed to pursue the aim of provoking the opposition into speaking out against the decree, and then using this to discredit it. It was precisely in 2006 that a bitter struggle unfolded between the president and the opposition, which held the majority in the Verkhovna Rada, and Viktor Yanukovych’s government, which was formed by this same opposition.

HISTORICAL POLITICS AND POLITICAL CRISIS

Yushchenko’s plan worked: the draft law drew the ire of his opponents. The Party of the Regions proposed its own draft law – without the items on genocide and administrative penalties. The fierce debates on Yushchenko’s draft in the parliament turned into a furious exchange of political accusations. It seemed the opposing camps had quite forgotten that the subject under discussion was the remembrance of innocent victims. The pro-presidential faction (Our Ukraine) and its allies (the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc) continued their assertions that Ukraine’s current difficulties were a result of the famines and political repressions of the past and called the draft law’s opponents amoral. Their opponents – not without reason – accused the president and his allies of using the famine issue for political purposes. The socialists’ leader, parliamentary speaker Alexander Moroz, saw in Yushchenko’s draft law an attempt to establish a dictatorship in Ukraine, and the communists declared that Yushchenko’s initiative would provoke “a chain reaction of resistance,” violated the constitution, and would strain relations with Russia. They seized the opportunity to call for Yushchenko’s impeachment.¹⁰²

The result was that both draft laws – the presidential one and the alternative version – failed. A compromise was reached and the law was passed with the support of Our Ukraine, the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc and the socialists. The Holodomor was still defined as an act of genocide, but mention was made of “other peoples of the USSR” as victims of famine, and the clause on administrative penalties for denying the Holodomor was removed and replaced with a different clause, stating that “public denial of the 1932-33 Holodomor is considered an insult to the memory of the millions of victims of the Holodomor and an insult to Ukraine’s dignity, and it is against the law.”¹⁰³

The adoption of this compromise law did not mean that the battle was over, however. Deputies from Our Ukraine and the Yulia Tymoshenko Bloc soon renewed their attempts to introduce criminal penalties for denying the Holodomor.¹⁰⁴ Yushchenko himself submitted a new law on the matter in March 2007. His draft law was entitled “On Amendments to the Ukrainian Criminal and Criminal-Procedural Codes (concerning penalties for denying the Holodomor).” What was new about this document was that, unlike previous draft laws, it made reference to the Holocaust and proposed introducing criminal penalties for “denying the 1932-33 Holodomor as an act of genocide against the Ukrainian people and the Holocaust as an act of genocide against the Jewish people.”¹⁰⁵ The proposed penalty was a fine of between 100 and 300 times the gross minimum wage or up to two years of imprisonment.¹⁰⁶ In the case of repeat offenders or civil servants, the penalty could result in up to four years of imprisonment.¹⁰⁷ What the draft law sought was to amend Article 442 of Ukraine’s Criminal Code, which

101 Президент України вніс на розгляд парламенту Закон України “Про Голодомор 1932-1933 років в Україні,” www.president.gov.ua/news/data/print/11457.html.

102 www.ukrainianworldcongress.org/holodomor/Ukraine/Plenary-meeting28.11.06.pdf.

103 Закон України “Про Голодомор 1932-1933 років в Україні,” <http://zakon1.rada.gov.ua/cgi-bin/laws/main.cgi>.

104 http://gska2.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb_n/webproc4_1?id=&pf3511=29140. Site visited on October 20, 2007.

105 Пояснювальна записка до проекту Закону України “Про внесення змін до Кримінального та Кримінально-процесуального кодексів України,” С. 2, Author’s archive. The document was copied from the Ukrainian Verkhovna Rada’s official site: www.gska2.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb_n?webproc4_1?id=&pf3511=29881 in October 2007, but this document is no longer accessible.

106 This represented a sum of from 1,700 to 5,100 hryvnia, or around \$340-\$1,020.

107 Пояснювальна записка до проекту Закону України, “Про внесення змін до Кримінального та Кримінально-процесуального кодексів України.” С. 2.

covered the crime of genocide and was for the most part simply copied from the UN convention of 1948 on preventing crimes of genocide.

Formally speaking, the draft law aimed to give concrete form to the provisions of the previous 2006 law. But at the same time it could also serve as a warning (through its provision on civil servants) to the regional authorities in the south and east of the country, who showed little enthusiasm for carrying out presidential orders on preparing for the 75th anniversary of the tragedy. Whatever the case, the draft law represented an attempt to criminalize denial of not just the fact, but also the *interpretation* of these tragic events of the past. The draft law's reference to the Holocaust and to Holocaust denial laws in European countries seemed to be an attempt to make Yushchenko's initiative look more convincing¹⁰⁸ in the eyes of his opponents and in the West.

The explanatory memorandum attached to the draft law stated that the "adoption of this law will help to consolidate the Ukrainian people and citizens of all ethnic groups around the idea of a society that rejects all forms of violence, and affirms respect for life and for civic rights and freedoms, and will help to strengthen interethnic harmony and civic peace in Ukraine."¹⁰⁹ The document did not explain exactly how criminal prosecution of an "incorrect" interpretation of the Holodomor and the Holocaust would help to achieve these goals. In this respect it is worth noting the sociological data and attached commentaries published on the president's website: "The Holodomor was greatest in scale in the regions where the anti-crisis coalition's voter support is strongest.¹¹⁰ But because they are poorly informed and due to the effects of Soviet propaganda and the coalition leaders' ambiguous position, the people in these regions do not fully understand the real consequences of this tragedy. Surveys show that only 40 percent of respondents in the eastern regions (of those who gave a clear answer) agree that the Verkhovna Rada should recognize in law that the 1932-33 Holodomor was an act of genocide against the Ukrainian people. In the southern regions this figure is 64 percent, but this, too, is lower than the average in Ukraine (71.4 percent)."¹¹¹

As was to be expected, the presidential initiative set off a storm of protest from the opposition and was met with disapproval or incomprehension by part of the intelligentsia. The Verkhovna Rada's chief scientific-expertise administration noted in its conclusions that the draft law proposed criminalizing acts that are a "form of expression of particular views and convictions," which, according to the constitution, can be subjected to restriction only in clearly defined circumstances that do not apply to the presidential draft law.¹¹²

There was no chance of getting the Verkhovna Rada to pass the law. On April 1, Yushchenko dissolved the parliament (and did so another three times over the next six months), accusing the anti-crisis coalition of attempting to usurp power.

The draft law became the object of active political bargaining with the anti-crisis coalition and was included in a "political compromise" package that also contained proposed amendments to the constitution and laws on the opposition.¹¹³ At the height of the political crisis (at one point there were

108 "Holocaust denial" is not the most accurate term if we are talking about laws. A number of EU countries and the European Union itself have laws aimed at preventing public justification of Nazism and the trivialization and banalization of its crimes, public denial or justification of specific cases of genocide and crimes against humanity, propaganda of race-based hatred, and the crimes of communism. "Denial of the Holocaust" is present in these laws (but not in all of them) as a particular case. Such laws have recently attracted increasing criticism from liberal public opinion, which asserts that they impinge on freedom of speech and freedom of the press. One interesting example of scientific criticism of this kind of legislation and the difficulties in using the appropriate terminology can be found in: R. M. Hayden, "Genocide Denial: Laws as Secular Heresy: A Critical Analysis with Reference to Bosnia," *Slavic Review* 67, № 2 (Summer 2008): PP. 384-407.

109 Пояснювальна записка до проекту Закону України "Про внесення змін до Кримінального та Кримінально-процесуального кодексів України."

110 The "anti-crisis coalition" was the self-given name of a coalition made up of the Party of the Regions, the communists and the socialists, formed in June 2006. As the majority group in parliament, it formed the government, and its conflict with the president became the main theme of the country's political life.

111 Визнання голодомору 1932–1933 років актом геноциду Українського народу, Official website of the Ukrainian President, http://www.prezident.gov.ua/content/p_150_18.html. Site visited on October 31, 2007.

112 Висновок на проект Закону України, "Про внесення змін до Кримінального та Кримінально-процесуального кодексів України," С. 1-2.

113 "Ющенко презавантажив матрицю," *Українська правда*, April 25, 2007, <http://www.pravda.com.ua/news/2007/4/25/58014.htm>. The article contains a photocopy of the text of the "political compromise package."

even clashes between law enforcement and security personnel) the president found the time to sign a decree on separating the two commemoration dates: victims of political repression would be remembered on the third Sunday in May, and the last Saturday in November would now be marked as a day of remembrance for victims of the famines alone.¹¹⁴

After the special parliamentary election in October 2007, when there seemed to be a possibility of forming a pro-presidential majority in the parliament, Yushchenko declared his intention to submit his draft law for voting. He did this in December, and a month later the draft law was duplicated by a proposal from two deputies from the pro-presidential Our Ukraine – People’s Defense faction. The deputies limited themselves to an expression of the intent to punish those who denied the Holodomor by detaining them up to six months or imprisoning them for up to three years.¹¹⁵

THE CAMPAIGN IN UKRAINE AND BEYOND: THE FAMINE AS A MAJOR HUMANITARIAN DISASTER

At the same time, under Yushchenko’s leadership (he personally headed the organizing committee he set up), an ideological and political campaign was launched to raise awareness of the 1932-33 famine as the twentieth century’s greatest humanitarian disaster, surpassing in scale all other cases of genocide, including the Holocaust. The 1930s famine was thus transformed into a mobilizing symbol of national history. The campaign, which was carried out under the slogan “Ukraine remembers; the world recognizes,” reached a peak in November 2008, on the 75th anniversary of the 1932-33 famine. It pursued two main avenues of activity – on the domestic political front and on the international stage. A series of commemorative events were organized in Ukraine itself, combining the efforts of state officials directly subordinate to the president at all levels and the Ukrainian Security Service, as well as thousands of volunteers, who sincerely wanted to honor the famine victims’ memory, professional researchers and amateur local historians, and tens of thousands of “mobilized” teachers, students, librarians, museum workers, schoolchildren and journalists. Ukrainian diplomats abroad carried out their own campaign for foreign recognition of the 1932-33 famine as an act of genocide against the Ukrainian people.

One of the campaign’s main activities was to create a national Book of Memory, in which the names of all those who perished in the 1932-33 famine were written. Tens of thousands of people from throughout Ukraine took part in this grandiose project, even in regions that had been unaffected by the famine, but where eyewitnesses of the events of those years live today. Under the aegis of regional and local authorities, coordinating groups were set up to gather information on the 1932-33 famine victims. These headquarters coordinated the work of hundreds of local groups gathering information at the local level, above all in the countryside. The local groups were composed of teachers, students, schoolchildren, librarians, museum workers, local historians, club managers, etc. They identified eyewitnesses to the famine, interviewed them and worked with the civil registration archives. By November 2008, 18 regional volumes and one national volume of the Book of Memory were ready, containing information on more than 800,000 famine victims.

A whole series of mass events were organized at the same time (“Light a candle,” “The Inextinguishable Candle,” and so on¹¹⁶), as were memorial meetings and concerts, art and literature

114 Decree of the President of Ukraine, “Про заходу у зв’язку з 70-ми роковинами Великого терору – масових політичних репресій 1937-1938 років від 21.05.2007,” www.zakon.rada.gov.ua. Site visited on March 31, 2008.

115 http://gska2.rada.gov.ua/pls/zweb_n/webproc4_1?id=&pf3511=31473. Site visited on January 24, 2008.

116 “Light a candle” was an annual event planned to take place nationwide. It was held for the first time in 2003. On the Day of Remembrance of the 1932-33 Famine Victims (the last Saturday in November every year), all who wished to do so could place a lighted candle in their window. The “Inextinguishable candle” involved using a bundle of wheat-shaped sheaves approximately 1.5 metres high and weighing around 200 kg, made of the best quality beeswax, gathered from all of the regions in Ukraine. It was passed from one country to another throughout 2008 (33 countries took part – their number was supposed to coincide with the tragedy’s date.) Upon the candle’s arrival in each country, memorial services and meetings took place. By autumn 2008, this symbol had travelled across all of Ukraine’s regions, as well. The “inextinguishable candle” ended its journey at the Remembrance Memorial, which opened in November 2008 in Kiev and became one of the memorial’s first exhibits. “33 Minutes” was a public event held from June to November 2008. In public places (on squares or around surviving monuments or symbols honouring “figures of the totalitarian regime”) every weekend, for 33 minutes at a time, the names of those who died in the 1932-33 famine were read out loud.

competitions, school essay competitions, wreath-laying ceremonies. Schools conducted remembrance lessons; museums, schools, and libraries organized exhibitions; crosses, memorials, and mourning mounds were erected; guelder roses were planted and memorial centers were built.¹¹⁷

The state, through a budget-financed competition for publishers and authors, made money available for the publication of research into the 1932-33 famine. But this did not produce the expected flood of publications, as there turned out to be not too many historians ready to answer the call to “provide a truthful assessment of the past tragedy.”¹¹⁸

Finally, the distinguishing feature of the 2007-2008 campaign was the president’s and foreign ministry’s activeness on the international front: they sought to obtain the international community’s recognition of the 1932-33 famine as genocide against the Ukrainian people. Yushchenko personally headed the international committee in remembrance of the 75th anniversary of the famine, whose members included representatives of the largest Ukrainian émigré community organizations (in the past, such bodies had usually been headed by a deputy prime minister responsible for humanitarian issues.) In practically all of the triumphant speeches he made abroad (in the U.S. Congress, European Parliament, and so on) in 2005, when he was hailed as the leader of the democratic “Orange Revolution,” Yushchenko always made sure to mention the 1932-33 famine.

Meeting with the heads of the most influential organizations, Yushchenko would ask them to help to raise international awareness about the famine and help get it recognized as genocide. The Ukrainian Foreign Ministry set up a permanent working group to draft position papers and coordinate the efforts of Ukrainian embassies to spread knowledge about the Holodomor. This group and the heads of Ukrainian representative offices worked closely with local émigré community organizations. Their lobbying efforts were instrumental in getting the legislative bodies of countries such as the US, Canada, and Australia to recognize the famine as an act of genocide. The parliaments of 13 countries overall passed similar resolutions. International organizations, in particular the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, the European Parliament, and UNESCO, also approved special documents on the famine in Ukraine, although, despite the efforts of Ukraine’s diplomats, none of them contained the word “genocide.”

Ukraine’s main opponent in this campaign was Russia. The Kremlin saw Ukraine’s 2007-2008 campaign as coming down to the formula: “genocide of Ukrainians organized by Bolshevik Moscow,” even though the words actually used were different. Russia’s leaders saw recognition of the famine as an act of genocide as a blow to Russia’s international prestige. Starting in the spring of 2007, the UN, UNESCO, and the OSCE witnessed a fierce behind-the-scenes battle, accompanied by strong-worded statements from both countries’ foreign ministries. Formally, victory went to the more aggressive and mobile Russian diplomats, but the two sides could equally share the moral blow that this dance on the graves of the dead dealt to their images. It is worth noting the presence of a third player in these diplomatic battles – Israel. The few statements from Israeli diplomats clearly indicate that the Holocaust was the twentieth century’s principal act of genocide, and so the Holodomor can be recognized as a great tragedy, a crime against humanity (as the European Parliament qualified it), or whatever else, but not genocide.

117 In 2007, parliamentary deputies led by Yushchenko planted more than 200 guelder rose bushes on the banks of the Dnieper not far from the Kievo-Pechersky Monastery. In November 2008, the Remembrance Memorial was opened on the same site, the central element of which was a chapel in the form of a candle 26 meters high.

118 The central figure in the Holodomor’s historiography was Stanislav Kulchitsky, mentioned above, who began working on this subject in the mid-1980s. His numerous works, published in Ukraine and abroad, are viewed by scholars as expounding on the official state position on the Holodomor. This view is only partially true: although he supports the “genocide” interpretation of the Holodomor, Kulchitsky does not share the more radical position of Yushchenko and part of the Ukrainian emigrant community. In his current interpretation, the genocide was directed not against ethnic Ukrainians, but against the “citizens of the Ukrainian state,” and the number of victims in his calculations differs considerably from the figures that Yushchenko cites.

CONCLUSION

Independent Ukraine's historical politics followed the practices typical of post-communist societies in its development. Similar processes can be observed in all of the former Soviet republics and countries of the former socialist bloc. As in Ukraine, civic identity in these new countries is built on the principle of cultural and/or ethnic exclusiveness of the "titular" ethnic group, the uniqueness of its accomplishments and sufferings – especially its sufferings – and a tendency to explain current difficulties by searching for causes in the past and outside the ethnic group in question. All of these countries use history as an argument in political debates and in settling differences with neighboring countries, especially with Russia, as the legal successor to the USSR. This policy is carried out everywhere under the aegis of the state and proclaims the goal of consolidating national unity and developing civic awareness, but it always leads to conflict both at home and in international relations. Professional historians are inevitably drawn into historical politics, and this always leads to conflict between state officials, used to dictating the "right" view of history to historians, and the professional community.

HISTORICAL POLITICS AND ITS VARIATIONS IN THE POST-SOCIALIST SPACE

ANDREY RYABOV

Summary of a seminar in Kazan, Russia, March 5-6, 2010¹¹⁹

Participating: Alexander Astrov, Yitzhak Brudny, Ludmila Coadă, Alfiya Galyamova, Marat Gibatdinov, Samuel Greene, Rafael Khakimov, Alexei Miller, Jadwiga Rogoża, Andrey Ryabov, Valters Ščerbinskis, and Jutta Scherrer.

Historical politics has become an increasingly visible phenomenon in public and political life in the post-Soviet countries over recent years. The difficulties in forming and developing new nation-states in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, as well as the difficulties societies have encountered after restoring their national sovereignty, have helped to spark a new wave of interest in modern history in these countries and societies. The first such wave rose as the socialist era was on the wane and played an important part in shaping national identity in countries in the process of freeing themselves from the dictates of communist ideology. This first wave continued roughly to the mid-1990s, when a new agenda emerged, determined by the realities of post-socialist public life.

The emergence of “historical politics” in these countries resulted not just from public opinion’s attempts to find the roots of modern problems in recent national history. Interest in history transforms into politics through the efforts of various public and political groups or parties seeking for various reasons to use the current situation and create a national historical narrative, which they use as a tool in their struggles against domestic political rivals, and as a means of pursuing their foreign policy goals.

Historical politics emerges as a phenomenon when various groups with an interest in making use of state power and administrative potential become involved. It is at this point that it becomes political in nature, going a long way beyond the widespread practice of politicizing history that we observe from various groups and political regimes. Historical politics emerges only in a pluralistic (though not necessarily fully democratic) system that has public competition between various actors. Unlike in totalitarian regimes, historical politics does not claim to set future policy or explain the future. At the political level, its aim is limited to legitimizing the regime, the claims to power of this or that group or party, and their domestic and foreign policy course.

Historical politics covers a broad range of activities that have in common the aim of forming and cementing in the public consciousness regulated dogmatic interpretations of national history protected from critical analysis and revision. To achieve this goal, public funds are used to build national memory institutes that use their exclusive access to previously closed archives to carry out extensive research, publishing, and informational and propaganda work. The state authorities set commemorative dates and open museums and monuments designed to illustrate to the required groups the interpretation of historical events that the ruling circles want to propagate, and make active use of national television to promote these interpretations in the public consciousness. Historical politics pays particular attention to forming demand among these groups for the required images of the past that presuppose a strictly set definition of national history and are used to teach history in schools and write textbooks. Using the instruments at its disposal the state can influence the choice of subjects for historical research. As a rule, priority goes to studying events in national history, mostly in the twentieth century, that were kept under a blanket of silence during the socialist period under pressure from the official communist ideology or had their essence distorted in the interests of the ruling regimes at that time. It is no coincidence that in the post-socialist countries (with the exception of Russia,

119 This seminar was made possible by the support of the East East: Partnership Beyond Borders Program of the Open Society Institute.

which still shows interest in supranational historical development trends) around 60-70% of research is devoted to national history. This narrows the historical retrospective vision as part of a global process and to a degree also impedes a more objective and global understanding of national history. At the same time, historical politics as an activity aimed at forming specific images in the minds of the “mass consumer” does not mean renouncing or banning debate within the professional community of historians. It seeks, rather, to draw a dividing line between “history for the masses” and history for a narrow circle of professionals and intellectuals.

Historical politics in all countries has a rigid ideological base. Its supporters in various countries use pretty much the same arguments, saying that this policy is necessary if only because “everyone is doing it,” and that “the enemy is not sitting idle,” but is plotting new attacks “against us,” and meanwhile, “our historical and patriotic education are in a lamentable state.” According to this logic, there can be no critical attitude with regard to one’s own history, and no pluralism in the way it is taught in schools and the form it takes in the general public’s historical consciousness.

Historical politics excludes the presence of alternative interpretations. It follows a single logic and is therefore possible only in conditions when the space for dialogue has broken down in society. In this situation there are practically no possibilities for opposing the interpretation set by historical politics with rational arguments. Alternative structures and dialogue channels must be established for discussion to proceed.

The domination of rigid interpretations of historical events with no possibility of alternative interpretations turns historical politics into a source of conflict when different countries’ narratives of national history come into confrontation with each other. In other words, historical politics in one country can be opposed only by historical politics in another. One example of this is the way the Ukrainian Insurgent Army’s (UPA) activities are seen in Poland on the one hand, and in Ukraine during Viktor Yushchenko’s presidency on the other. Similar conflicts can be seen between Israel and the Baltic states over specific episodes concerning Soviet partisans’ activities in these countries during the Nazi occupation, and local people’s involvement in Hitler’s policy of genocide against the Jews during this time.

Historical politics is a phenomenon that arises in societies undergoing complex internal political and ideological transformation. In the Federal Republic of Germany, for example, historical politics emerged out of the ruling elite’s efforts to overcome the Nazi past. In France, the “policy of memory” had other roots and emerged after the country’s liberation from Nazi occupation, when French society needed to create a new foundation for national unity. The Gaullists proposed the idea of the French Resistance, which placed the image of the nation at its center and defined the content of the country’s historical politics for many years. In Israel two vectors – Mossad as a symbol of the Jewish people’s strength and military prowess, and the Holocaust as the people’s tragedy in World War II – defined the ideological foundations of the country’s statehood. Some elements of historical politics remain in place in these and other Western countries even after the deep political and ideological divisions that gave birth to this policy in the first place have been overcome. But the main reason preventing historical politics from re-emerging as a significant social and political phenomenon in Western societies is that nationalism in these countries, unlike in Eastern Europe, has no need of the state to support it.

Historical politics in the post-socialist countries has focused primarily on the struggle for independence from the Soviet Union and the struggle by the peoples of socialist satellite states against the communist regimes there (Poland, the Baltic states, Ukraine under President Yushchenko), or on the search for a national identity (Moldova). Divisions along ethnic lines (the Baltic states), regional lines (Ukraine), and divided perceptions of national identity among different groups in society (Moldova) create fertile soil for the emergence of historical politics. The competing groups each have their own information and meaning space.

Some assessments conclude that the Baltic states’ historical politics, which has focused on concepts such as “totalitarianism,” “occupation,” and “genocide,” is aimed not so much at addressing problems in relations with Russia as at standing up for national interests within the West, which is internally divided and has no common system of criteria. Historical politics that gives these countries the status

of victims of totalitarianism enables them to achieve their objectives on the international stage, making use of the Euro-Atlantic institutions.

For a long time, historical politics in Russia did little more than react to developments in the other post-socialist countries, in which numerous events from World War II and the pre-war years became an integral part of the public discourse. But Russia's authorities later came to see a need for their own historical narrative, using the Soviet victory in the Great Patriotic War as a central pillar around which to consolidate the nation (no other event could possibly play such a role). And so they began to carry out an active historical politics campaign that inevitably clashed with the historical narrative coming from other post-socialist countries.

Another task of Russia's historical politics was to strengthen the unity of a multiethnic country as the federal authorities understood it. In this approach the history of the various individual ethnic groups, aside from the Russians, were given fragmentary and selective treatment in school textbooks so as not to violate the common doctrine for the country's historical development officially approved at the federal level. Multiculturalism and the independent role of different civilizations in Russia's history were perceived as factors that could contribute to splitting the country. One result of this approach is that interpretations of the history of some of the country's constituent republics are so one-sided that textbooks and academic works have reduced or completely ignored the role of the non-titular ethnic groups in these republics.

This selective approach to the way school textbooks cover the history of particular peoples among Russia's ethnic groups does not help to strengthen the country's unity but, on the contrary, leads to increasing mistrust and ultimately to the emergence of tension in interethnic relations. Unfortunately, modern Russian law, which places responsibility for deciding how the history of the republics within Russia is taught on the schools themselves, objectively creates obstacles for studying regional history and the history of individual peoples, thus leaving the way open for the emergence of one-sided unilateral interpretations.

Analysis of historical politics in the post-socialist countries shows that despite the differences between these countries, there are also common problems in promoting an unbiased and multifaceted attitude towards history in the public consciousness. These problems definitely require separate examination, as do the possible solutions available. One of the problems is how to deal with the "forgetfulness" of the public with respect to particular episodes in national history in cases when this forgetfulness is the result of ignorance or deliberate silence with the aim of avoiding ideological and political conflicts. Another task is to find ways and methods to create the infrastructure for public discussion of historical issues. It is clear that professional historians' possibilities for organizing such discussions are limited. Also needed are influential media able to offer their possibilities for publishing documents, organizing professional discussions, and presenting various points of view. And museums, too, are essential in order to give objective presentations of controversial events from different points of view.

ABOUT THE CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace is a private, nonprofit, nonpartisan organization with headquarters in Washington D.C. The Endowment was created in 1910 by prominent entrepreneur and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie to provide independent analysis on a wide array of public policy issues.

More than fifteen years ago, the Endowment launched the Carnegie Moscow Center to help develop a tradition of public policy analysis in the states of the former Soviet Union and improve relations between Russia and the United States. It thereby pioneered the idea that in today's world a think tank whose mission is to contribute to global security, stability, and prosperity requires a permanent international presence and a multinational outlook at the core of its operations.

In 2007, the Carnegie Endowment announced its New Vision as the first multinational and ultimately global think tank, adding operations in Beijing, Beirut, and Brussels to its existing offices in Moscow and Washington. As in Moscow and Washington in the past, the defining characteristics of the global Carnegie institution will continue to be political independence, first rate scholarship combined with high level experience in government and other sectors, sustained, first hand, expert collaboration across borders, and unrelenting focus on constructively affecting real world outcomes. There is a clear demand for such an organization in today's world, with its ever increasing interdependence and the interlinked nature of global issues.

Through research, publishing and discussions, the Endowment associates – in Washington, Moscow, Beijing, Beirut, and Brussels – shape fresh policy approaches. Their interests span geographic regions and the relations among governments, business, international organizations, and civil society, focusing on the economic, political, and technological forces driving global change. The Endowment uses its experience of research and discussion at the Carnegie Moscow Center as a model to develop its transformation into the first international research network.

CARNEGIE ENDOWMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL PEACE
1779 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20036, USA
Tel.: +1 (202) 483-7600; Fax: +1 (202) 483-1840
E-mail: info@CarnegieEndowment.org
<http://www.carnegieendowment.org>

CARNEGIE MOSCOW CENTER
16/2 Tverskaya, Moscow, 125009, Russia
Tel.: +7 (495) 935-8904; Fax: +7 (495) 935-8906
E-mail: info@carnegie.ru
<http://www.carnegie.ru>

CARNEGIE MOSCOW CENTER HAS PUBLISHED WORKING PAPERS:

2010

Issue 1. *Alexey Malashenko.* Building Relations with the Muslim World (in Russian).

2009

Issue 1. *Anna Bessonova.* Oil Production in Russia: State Policy and Prospects for Innovation (in Russian).

2008

Issue 1. *Alexey Malashenko.* Iranian Domestic Politics (in Russian).

Issue 2. *Nina Poussenkova, Anna Bessonova.* Ups and Downs of the Russian Downstream.

Issue 3. *Alexey Malashenko.* Russia and the Muslim World.

Issue 4. *Andrey Ryabov.* Revival of “Feudal” Archaism in Modern Russia: Practice and Ideas (in Russian).

2007

Issue 1. What will Happen in Turkmenistan? Round Table of the Religion, Society and Security Program held on January 23, 2007 at the Carnegie Moscow Center.

Issue 2. *Marrack Goulding.* The United Nations: Leadership, Reforms and Peacebuilding.

2005

Issue 1. *Martha Olcott.* Vladimir Putin and Russia’s Energy Policy (in Russian).

Issue 2. Civil Society: Economic and Political Approaches (in Russian).

Issue 3. Civil Society and Political Processes in Regions (in Russian).

Issue 4. *Vladimir Milov, Ivan Selivakhin.* Energy policy problems (in Russian).

Issue 5. *Zhao Huasheng.* China, Central Asia and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (in Russian).

Issue 6. *Anna Bessonova.* WTO Requirements and the Russian Legislation Compliance (in Russian).

2004

Issue 1. *Vasily Mikhayev.* The East Asian Community: The China Factor and its Implications for Russia (in Russian).

Issue 2. *Alexey Malashenko.* How Real is the So-Called Islamic Threat? (in Russian).

Issue 3. *Ahmed Ahmedov, Evgenia Bessonova, Elena Grishina, Irina Denisova, Denis Nekipelov, Ivan Cherkashin.* WTO Entry and the Labor Market in Russia (in Russian).

Issue 4. *Ksenia Yudaeva.* What Are Russian Enterprises Expecting from the WTO: Survey Results (in Russian).

Issue 5. *Konstantin Kozlov, Denis Sokolov, Ksenia Yudaeva.* Innovative Activity Among Russian Enterprises (in Russian).

Issue 6. *Vasily Mikhayev, Vladimir Yakubovsky, Yakov Berger, Galina Belokurova.* Northeast Asia: Energy Security Strategies (in Russian).

Issue 7. *Andrei Shleifer, Daniel Treisman.* A Normal Country (in Russian).

Issue 8. *Anatoly Shiryayev.* Concept for Reforming Military Education: Organization and Methods (in Russian).

Issue 9. Impact of Russian Interest Groups on Russian Policy Toward Belarus (in Russian).

Issue 10. *Roy Allison.* Central Asia and the South Caucasus: Regional Cooperation and the Russian Policy Factor (in Russian).

