

TRANSFORMATION OF MEMORY POLICY IN SWEDEN

Abstract. *The consolidation potential of memory policy in Sweden which passed its own way in the process of accepting events of the Second world war is analyzed. The focus is made on memorials, museums and exhibitions which are the important source for commemorating the events of the War and the Holocaust. It is also evidence of importance of these events for the history of Sweden. The article is devoted to the study of memory policy both in Sweden and in Europe which is implemented through museums, exhibitions and monuments. These objects of heritage are open to the public and play an important role in shaping the collective identity.*

In Sweden, there is a very tangible reflection of the changes in the policy of memory in relation with the Second World War in pan-European discourse. At the beginning of the 21st century a large array of publications came out in Europe, in which large groups of the European population were accused of crimes of the occupation regime, and not just individual criminals or institutions. Instead Sweden is characterized by a denial of collective guilt, as well as a model of historical memory of a liberal type. Today the perception of Sweden's role in war is reinterpreted in the country in a new way: not as an innocent observer, but as a country that did nothing to stop the Nazi crimes during the war.

Keywords: *Sweden, memory policy, Second World War, Holocaust, museums, memorials, exhibitions.*

Анотація. *Аналізується консолідуючий потенціал політики пам'яті у Швеції, яка пройшла власний шлях у процесі сприйняття подій Другої війни. Основна увага акцентується на меморіалах, музеях та виставках, що є важливим джерелом для вшанування пам'яті подій війни та Голокосту. Також це є свідченням про вагомість цих подій для історії Швеції. Стаття присвячена вивченню політики пам'яті як у Швеції, так і в Європі, що реалізується завдяки музеям, виставкам та пам'ятникам. Ці об'єкти спадщини відкриті для громадськості та відіграють важливу роль у формуванні колективної ідентичності.*

У Швеції надзвичайно відчутна рефлексія щодо змін політики пам'яті стосовно Другої світової війни загальноєвропейському дискурсу. На початку XXI ст. у країнах Європи вийшов значний масив публікацій, у яких широкі верстви населення європейських країн звинувачуються у злочинах окупаційного режиму, а не лише окремі злочинці або інституції. Натомість для Швеції характерне заперечення колективної провини, а також присутня модель історичної пам'яті ліберального типу. Нині сприйняття ролі Швеції у війні переосмислюється у країні по новому: не як невинного спостерігача, а як країни, яка нічого не зробила для зупинення злочинів нацизму під час війни.

Ключові слова: *Швеція, політика пам'яті, Друга світова війна, Голокост, музеї, меморіали, виставки.*

Аннотация. *Анализируется консолидирующий потенциал политики памяти в Швеции, которая прошла собственный путь в процессе восприятия событий Второй мировой войны. Основное внимание акцентируется на мемориалах, музеях и выставках, что является важным источником для памяти событий войны и Холокоста. Также это является свидетельством о весомости этих событий для истории Швеции. Статья посвящена изучению политики памяти, как в Швеции, так и в Европе, которая реализуется благодаря музеям, выставкам и памятникам. Эти объекты наследия открыты для общественности и играют важную роль в формировании коллективной идентичности.*

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ТРАНСФОРМАЦІЯ ПОЛІТИКИ ПАМ'ЯТІ У ШВЕЦІЇ

В Швеции очень ощутима рефлексия об изменениях политики памяти о Второй мировой войне общеевропейскому дискурсу. В начале XXI века в странах Европы вышел внушительный массив публикаций, в которых широкие слои населения европейских стран обвиняются в преступлениях оккупационного режима, а не только отдельные преступники или учреждения. Но для Швеции характерно отрицание коллективной вины, а также присутствует модель исторической памяти либерального типа. Ныне восприятие роли Швеции в войне переосмысливается в стране по-новому: не как невинного наблюдателя, а как страны, которая ничего не сделала для остановки преступлений нацизма во время войны.
Ключевые слова: Швеция, политика памяти, Вторая мировая война, Холокост, музеи, мемориалы, выставки.

Formulation of the problem. During the Second World War, the fate of the three Scandinavian states developed differently. Sweden has chosen a policy of neutrality; Denmark and Norway have been victims of German aggression. Therefore, every Scandinavian country has its own historical memory of the events of those years, and the end of the war in these countries is mentioned on different days. In Denmark, the Liberation Day is May 5, Norway is May 8, and Sweden did not participate in the war, which does not prevent her from mentioning the liberation of Scandinavia from the Nazis on May 7 during an informal “Peace Day” (Fredsdagen).

Despite the fact that in Sweden during the war military status was introduced, the country did not formally fight, remaining neutral. For the average Swede, the heroes of the Second World War are Count Folke Bernadotte, who removed a lot of prisoners from the concentration camps in Germany, as well as a diplomat Raoul Wallenberg, who saved 100,000 Jews from the death. Swedes are proud to have taken Finnish children of war, Norwegian and Baltic refugees [1].

Analysis of previous studies and publications. By the mid-1990s, a significant number of publications on the Second World War and the Holocaust appeared. The first major study on this subject was carried out outside Sweden by American scholar Steven Koblik in the late 1980s [2]. Publications made by Swedish scholars appeared a few years after the book by S. Koblik. One of such works was a book by a Swedish journalist Maria-Pia Boëthius, she questioned in this book the thesis of official historiography that the only way to save Sweden from the war was to recognize by it German demands. She also argued that after the war on the collective memory of the Swedes, information on the economic cooperation of Sweden with Germany during the war gradually disappeared [3]. This position of the author was sufficiently substantiated, since in the 1990’s there was no public discussion of this issue.

In 1996, an American scientist Paul E. Levine published in Sweden a book “From Indifference to Activism. Swedish Diplomacy and the Holocaust 1938-1944”. In his work, P.E. Levine analyzes the Holocaust in Sweden — from inactivity that lasted until 1942, and to various rescue missions [4].

The purpose of the article is to study the peculiarities of the formation and implementation of the memory policy in Sweden. The focus was on Stockholm, the capital has the largest number of memorials and exhibitions.

Main results of the study. At the same time, with a wave of publications in Sweden, there was a surge of conferences (for example, “Military Experience, Identity and National Identity”, 1995) [5, p. 251], the opening of state-funded memorials, exhibitions and research projects devoted to the Second World War and the Holocaust. This can be called the 2000 project “Sweden’s Relations with Nazism, Nazi Germany and the Holocaust”, which was initiated by the Swedish Research

Council on the initiative of the Swedish Government [6]. In 2003, an accompanying book with a similar name was published. It sparked light on Nazi and anti-fascist movements in Sweden during the war, as well as economic dependence and relations with Nazi Germany [7].

In 2000, the Stockholm International Conference, initiated by Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson, was held. In his opening remarks, he apologized on behalf of Sweden for her policies during the war, which helped the Nazis to continue the war and indirectly promoted the Holocaust. This was the first official speech in which it was recognized that Sweden did not stand by the side of the war, but even despite the absence of hostilities, contributed to the war [8]. Also the Declaration of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) was adopted at the Conference [9], an intergovernmental organization that takes care of preserving the memory of the Holocaust and providing information on it. IHRA consists of Member States, observer states, accession candidate countries and partners.

Also, Göran Persson in 1997 became the initiator of the project in the form of the “Living History” forum (Forum för levande historia) [10]. One of the results of the forum was the publication and distribution of the book “Tell Ye Your Children” in 1998. The supplementary version of the book, in particular the section on Sweden and the Holocaust, was reissued in 2012. The book gives an overview of the history of anti-Semitism in Sweden, in particular, background information on the life of Jews in Sweden and racial theories in the 1920’s and 1930’s [11]. Since 2003, the “Living History” forum has become a project of the Swedish Ministry of Culture.

Another manifestation of the policy of memory is the celebration and festivities, which form the basis of collective memories and national identities. Choosing what to keep in mind can be done by the authorities or a group of people who have a direct connection to a memorable event. An example for the latter is the Holocaust Memorial (Minnesmonumentet över Förintelsens offer) [12] in Stockholm, the creation of which was initiated by the members of the Jewish community, which was implemented with the help of the Swedish authorities (was opened in 1998 by King of Sweden, Carl XVI Gustaf).

The Holocaust Memorial consists of 56 tables, in which the names of persons who died during the Holocaust or soon after they were brought to Sweden were written. Below the names of the victims are listed the names of all concentration camps and death camps, starting with Auschwitz.

The main reasons for the construction and opening of this memorial, in the first place, were that the Swedish Jews did not have a real place to commemorate and mourn on the Jewish Remembrance Days (Yahrzeit). The memorial is opened not only for members of the Jewish community in Stockholm but for the general public, indicating that this is not only part of Jewish memory, but also of the Swedish community as a whole. That is, the Holocaust Memorial is a part of the collective memory of Swedish Jews and Swedish society as a whole [13].

An important part of the memory policy of Sweden is museums and exhibitions devoted to the Second World War and the Holocaust. One of the oldest Jewish museums in Europe is the Jewish Museum (Judiska Museet) [14] in Stockholm, which was opened in 1987. The Jewish Museum presents exhibitions that focus not only on Jewish life but also on the Holocaust and the life path of Raoul Wallenberg (a Swedish diplomat who saved the lives of tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews during

the Holocaust). The first exhibition in Sweden dedicated to the memory of R. Wallenberg was called “Raoul Wallenberg. One man who make a difference” [15] and was shown in a museum. It was open to the public for almost a year from January 25 to December 30, 2004. All materials presented at the exhibition were originals were given to the museum by Wallenberg’s sister Nina Lagergren. Currently, the exhibition in the Jewish Museum is not shown, only a few items are presented in the context of the exhibition on Jewish history and the Holocaust.

Army Museum (Armémuseum in Stockholm) [16] with the exhibition “War and Peace in the twentieth century”, which includes the exposition “The Raoul Wallenberg Room” is one of the important elements in shaping the politics of memory in Sweden. One of the permanent exhibitions “War and Peace in the twentieth century” was opened in 2014 and “The Raoul Wallenberg Room” was left by the former temporary exhibition about heroes.

The exhibition “War and Peace in the twentieth century” (Krig och fred 1900-talet) [17] covers the period from the First World War to the Cold War. “The Raoul Wallenberg Room” (Raoul Wallenbergs rum) [18] is a real reconstruction of his office in Budapest. It contains original personal belongings of R. Wallenberg (for example, his passport and medals). Wallenberg’s room is closely connected with another museum room, which was added in 2012 and is called “Auditorium”. In the room there are pictures of Sweden and Hungary during the war and the Holocaust — pictures from Hungary show the country in ruins, while reflecting the image of Sweden unchanged cities and landscapes of the country.

Exhibitions of the Army Museum are an important source for commemorating the events of the Second World War and the Holocaust, although they are quite new. By comparing the scale of the museum’s exhibitions, it can be noted that Second World War and Holocaust exhibitions have been given more attention than the First World War and the Cold War, which indicates the greater importance of these events for the history of Sweden. The original exhibits presented at “The Raoul Wallenberg Room” represent not only Swedish history, but also create pan-European, through items from Hungary and Germany.

One of the largest museums in Sweden is the Swedish History Museum (Historiska museet) [19]. The exhibition “The History of Sweden” (Sveriges Historia) [20] is presented by several halls, which are interconnected and devoted to a certain century of Swedish history. It actually began as a great project and was initiated by history professor Dick Harrisson. The hall representing the XX century is called the “House of Peoples” (Folkhemmet) and symbolizes typical contemporary Swedish apartments, through its windows one can look at the surrounding world.

It should be noted that originally the Museum specialized mainly in archeological exhibitions and did not have expositions which would represent the history of the twentieth century. All exhibits for this period — photographs, newspaper articles, etc. — were private donations from the curator of the Museum Lena Heijl and other staff. One of the central details of the design of the room is the large orange wall, which shows evidences of the most horrific places and historical events of the XX century, such as Treblinka and Hanoi (for parallels with historical processes in other parts of the world) — this symbolizes how the Swedes looked at the world without taking an active part in these events [21].

Unlike the two previous exhibitions presented at the Jewish Museum and the Army Museum, the exhibition “The History of Sweden” of the Swedish History Museum does not focus exclusively on the period of the Second World War and the Holocaust. It focuses on the general history of Sweden, but since both events have played a significant role in the life of the Swedes of that time, they deserve to be part of the exhibition. Another feature of this exhibition is that it has the character of representing knowledge, and not perception through feelings. The exhibition is not focused on special events or groups of people, but on the history of the country as a whole. The visitor is not able to identify a person or group. This approach contrasts sharply with the exhibition of the Army Museum and with the exhibition in the Jewish Museum: both exhibitions focus either on the life of an individual (R. Wallenberg), or on the destiny of a group of people (Swedes and European Jews). Therefore, it's easier for visitors to find an emotional connection with historical processes than at an exhibition in a historic museum.

Conclusions. The memory policy in Sweden is represented through historiographic intelligence, memorials and exhibitions devoted to the events of the Second World War and the Holocaust. The first publications devoted to this topic appeared in the late 1990's of the XX century. A proof of political and national interest to the study of this topic is the ongoing holding of research conferences and forums often funded by the Swedish government. Since the mid-1990s, a series of activities have been undertaken to preserve the memory of the Holocaust by opening monuments and new museum exhibitions. It should be noted that the first initiatives, such as the opening of the Jewish Museum in 1987 and the creation of the Holocaust Memorial in Stockholm in 1996, arose as a result of proposals from the Jewish community. The initiatives were supported and funded by the Swedish government.

Sweden, thanks to its history, has a special view of the war and the Holocaust. Since the 1990s, the dominant position regarding a neutral state that has been able to remain outside the military conflicts of the Second World War has been questioned. Today, the perception of Sweden's role in the war is reinterpreted in the country in a new way: not as an innocent observer, but as a country that did nothing to stop the Nazi crimes during the war.

It can be argued that Sweden has gone its own way in shaping the policy of memory for the events of the war and the Holocaust. Celebrations and recognition of both events began later in comparison with other European countries and, even Scandinavians, due to the role of the “observer country” in a war that Sweden saw for a long time.

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