

Aleksei Mikhailov, Petrozavodsk State University
(Petrozavodsk, Russia).

The Stockholm Conference 2000 and the issue of academic and political re-thinking of Holocaust in Sweden in 1990s-2000s.

Script of a report.

Good morning. My name's Aleksei Mikhailov, I live in the Republic of Karelia. I am in my Master studies degree of International Relations at Petrozavodsk State University right now. I am honored to present you the results of my research. My research focuses on the Stockholm Conference of 2000 and the issue of academic and political re-thinking of the Holocaust in Sweden in 1990s-2000s.

My research is on Swedish international politics and it came to my attention that Sweden was blamed for its indirect support for the Nazi regime during WWII. It was thus interesting to learn about Sweden's contemporary attitude towards the Holocaust.

First, I realized that the Holocaust had two sides in Swedish memorialization policy. Swedish historians and society find it difficult to define the place of their country in Holocaust history. The main problem is the bystander position of Sweden during the WW II. Usually, historians tend to condemn this position from the moral point of view rather than analyze it. Much however targets the attitude of some officials or businessmen, rather than the state's position towards the Nazi regime? On the other hand, the ability of Sweden to manoeuvre allowed to save the lives of a dozen thousand Jewish people, while there was also an economic support to Nazi Germany.

At the turn of the 21st century debates about the issue persisted within society. There was a question about holding to account former Nazi criminals in Sweden. There was an increase in neo-Nazi and anti-Semitism sentiments. There were doubts among youngsters about the historical reality of the Holocaust.

The government of Sweden assisted in the publishing of the book 'Tell Ye Your Children' book, which was a turning point in Holocaust memorialization and educational policies. The Swedish educational 'Forum for the Living History' supported its translation into 17 European languages.

Initiatives from Swedish, British and American government offices led to the Stockholm Conference. There were several important tasks. The first was education itself. The second was an international evaluation of the Holocaust in learning lessons for the future. The third was the overcoming a 'Swedish guilt' complex through the country's engagement in European Holocaust memorialization policy.

Definitely, each country has its own history and own path. However, as far as we're concerned, it's impossible to be out of our history. The Stockholm Conference 2000 had the power to initiate Holocaust research, education and studies in Russia. That was the beginning of active educational and memorialization activities, as well as a continuous interaction of the memorial and educational centers with teachers, schools and university students. There are educational seminars and conferences. Some of them were organized together with Swedish colleagues.

The case of Sweden shows us how complicated it is to re-think ties with the Holocaust. The initiation of the re-thinking process resulted in politicians and senior researchers meeting at the Stockholm Conference in 2000. Thus, it has been possible to initiate continuous educational and academic meetings and exchanges, which are still important for all of us.

Thank you!