

## **CECILIE BANKE**

*From Holocaust Memory to Memory of Mass Atrocities: The Politics of Memory in Europe after 2004*

Recently, the issue of how Soviet Communism has been dealt with in post-war Europe has been addressed politically by the Resolution on European conscience and totalitarianism adopted by the European Parliament in April 2009. The resolution makes August 23 a European Remembrance Day honoring the victims of totalitarianism. The resolution was criticized by those who fear that the resolution will eventually lead to neglect of the crimes of National Socialism and particularly the Holocaust (Uhl 2009; Katz 2009; Bauer 2009).

Understanding this controversy requires not only an overview of the historical context, but also of the political implications of policies of memory. As such, exploring the politics of memory that states and international bodies like the European Parliament have developed after mass atrocities, and how these are interrelated with questions of identity, minority questions and human rights, can provide a deeper understanding of how the past works in the present, and also why the history of National Socialism and Soviet Communism in a European context is still intimately linked to current political debates.

This paper will discuss how the inclusion of Soviet Communism in European remembrance affects previous assumptions about 20th century European history. If the mass violence that occurred in Europe from 1931 through 1945 has to be considered as a general process, as argued by Timothy Snyder (*Bloodlands*, 2010), how does this development affect the position of the Holocaust in current European remembrance activities? And how should we then consider the attempts of having memory of other mass atrocities institutionalised on European ground, as is the case with the Armenien genocide?

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