



Article

The Use of Genocide in the Formation of State Propaganda: Russian Practice and its Impact on World Peace

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Abstract

The critical threat of the risk of genocide became especially acute in the late twentieth and first third of the twenty-first century and has become a major influence on global security. The study is devoted to the specifics of the genocidal policy of the Russian Federation as part of the concept of the formation of Russian national ideology. The research methodology included analysis and synthesis, systematization, comparison, generalization, and abstraction. The analysis of the rhetoric of Russian officials and publications in the media and mass media allowed us to conclude that the idea of genocide is present, supported by the general national position of the Russian Federation and actively financed by the federal budget. The retransmission of the official ideology in the context of anti-Ukrainian materials contains calls for “restoring historical justice” and “denazification” of Ukrainians. The study examines the system of Russian “denazification” measures, which are accompanied by censorship, ideological pressure, and the destruction of its own political opposition against the background of the functioning of cross-cutting ideas of genocidal policy. The author substantiates the presence of a consistent policy of the Russian Federation towards Ukrainians, which has signs of genocidal intentions. The article proves that genocidal propaganda within the political narrative of the Russian Federation has a suggestive character, which ensures the consistent formation of ideological hatred towards the Ukrainian people in society. The destructive critical consequences of the genocidal ideology of the Russian Federation for the security of global geopolitical development are substantiated.

Keywords: genocide, global security, narrative, national ideology, Ukrainian people.

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Introduction

The definition of “*genocide*” was integrated into widespread use after World War II to refer to the persecution of certain peoples by the Nazis. The UN General Assembly resolution of 1946 states that “*in accordance with international law, genocide is a crime condemned by the civilized world and for which the principal perpetrators and participants are punishable*”. The Holocaust and the genocide in Rwanda, as large-scale tragedies of the twentieth century, unfortunately, were not the last in the evolution of genocide as a tool for the practical expression of the distorted, aggressive ideology of pro-Nazi countries and political circles. Acts of genocide continue to take place in the present day, in the twenty-first century. Moreover, it is now taking on a variety of forms, from small episodes of genocidal violence (terror, murder and rape, expulsion, forced relocation, etc.) to large-scale episodes of violence and mass murder on a regional or national scale (Shaw, 2014).

The issue of the dangerous consequences of genocide ideology as a determinant of the development of a particular society for geopolitical dynamics has become particularly relevant against the background of Russia’s full-scale invasion of Ukraine. The public rhetoric of Putin and other high-ranking officials is filled with elements of genocidal ideology. The worst part is that Russian society successfully perceives and develops this rhetoric. It is very easy to manipulate the consciousness of most of the Russian population, because a characteristic mental feature of Russians is unconditional trust in the government.

According to the research of the Center for Strategic Communications and Information Security (2025), the elements of genocide include public calls for the murder of Ukrainians, their injury, deportation, and “denazification.” Manifestations of violence are thus legitimized through the Russian Federation’s ideological concepts.

This problem is the focus of contemporary public and political figures, as well as media representatives, who join forces to counteract the manipulative political technologies of the Russian Federation. It was the genocide committed by Russia against Ukrainians that became a determining factor in the creation of the anti-Putin coalition (Ramstein), which included more than fifty countries. It represents the significance of the consequences of Russia’s distorted ideology for the global community and the latter’s strong intentions to overcome the manifestations of genocide in a civilized society.

At the same time, the context of the genocide of the Ukrainian people is so tightly integrated into the national ideology of the Russian Federation that it requires a large-scale and targeted impact on its transformation. The issue requires systematic and thorough research in an interdisciplinary context.

The purpose of the article is to analyze the genocidal policy of the Russian Federation as part of the concept of the formation of the Russian national ideology, as well as its consequences for global geopolitical development.

Literature review

The phenomenon of genocide has long attracted the attention of researchers. Verdeja (2010) analyzes the deep essence of the origin, sequence of evolution, and dynamics of mass violence, as well as the determining influence of dehumanizing ideologies and cultural views. At the same time, Babayan (2020) considers the concept of “*cultural genocide*” as a form of criminal activity, an integral component of genocidal policy, which can be an independent crime or part of the pre-genocidal or post-genocidal stage. The author emphasizes the need for proactive prevention and prompt suppression of any of its manifestations.

Jones (2016) analyzes the impact of imperialism, social change, and war as factors in the development of genocide. The author focuses research efforts on the need to preserve historical memory, develop initiatives to establish truth and justice, and develop effective prevention and intervention strategies. Alvarez (2008) further argues that despite the decision of the authorities to pursue genocidal policies based on political, economic, and social interests, the motivation for the phenomenon is shaped and legitimized by various ideologies that justify the mass murder of the targeted group of victims. Finally, Keppy et al. (2016) focus on reducing manifestations of hatred and supporting them in political circles to defend particular interests of groups of people, countries, or nations.

Regarding the Russian genocidal ideology, Stanley (2022) calls it the most overt example of genocide in history. The author sees the “*denazification*” of Ukraine as the purest expression of Russian identity, which is best manifested in acts of cruel and violent revenge.

The topical issue of genocide as a tool for shaping the national ideology of the aggressor country is part of the research of many contemporary authors. Publications by Baginskyi & Linichenko (2023), Hryshchuk (2023), Ilnytskyi et al. (2022), and Koropatnyk (2017) are devoted to the issue. The researchers substantiated ways to overcome the destructive influence of Russian propaganda by attracting available public and state resources to counter disinformation. In continuation, Babichev (2024), Bevz (2022), and Zhytariuk (2018) propose to use mechanisms for participation in international projects to inform the global community about the true intentions of Russian aggression and Russia’s manipulative political technology.

Azarov et al. (2023) and Etkind (2023) emphasize the importance of the policy of deconstructing the imposed Russian historical interpretations, incorporating the true Ukrainian history into the current European socio-cultural space, and forming and integrating a pan-European strategy for the representation of historical facts.

The issue has been developed in the works of Dovgy et al. (2023), Bondarenko et al. (2022), and Chmyr et al. (2023). The authors investigated the issue of democratic legitimacy of modern states and their public authorities, determined the key factors of the “*legitimacy crisis*”: among them, socio-economic inefficiency of public administration systems, growing social inequality, institutional corruption, and the phenomena of manipulating public opinion.

Lashchenko (2020), Lozko (2023), and Tkachenko (2023) argue that the true goal of Russian aggression in Ukraine is the destruction of the Ukrainian nation as an obstacle to the restoration of the Russian Empire. The scholars emphasize that Russia’s modern genocidal ideology serves as a tool for exacerbating and prolonging the “*Ukrainian*” issue.

Among the important developments in this area is the Center for Strategic Communications and Information Security project entitled “*Genocidal Rhetoric of the Russian Regime*”. It examined the main legal acts that provide for discriminatory norms against the Ukrainian people, which form the basis for the practical implementation of genocide. Also, an important contribution was made by O. Romaniuk, head of the NGO “*Institute of Mass Information*”, in the framework of the author’s column on Twitter “*Genocidal rhetoric: rethinking and punishment*” (2024).

Among the significant scientific studies within the framework of the problem under study are publications by Grod (2024), Ioffe (2023), Knott (2023), Pylypiv та ін. (2025), Rossoliński-Liebe & Willems (2022). At the same time, this issue requires expanded analysis, which will serve as a basis for the formation and integration of effective mechanisms to counter Russian national ideology, which is based on genocidal intentions towards Ukrainian statehood.

Contemporary scholars examine the media as a risk factor for genocide (Albader, 2025), investigate the relationship between genocide and propaganda (Bartrop, 2025; Ozuna, 2025), and analyze genocidal discourses targeting Ukrainians under Putin’s regime (Laryš, 2025; Welch, 2025). They also highlight the need to strengthen media and information literacy and critical thinking skills in the digital age (Novitskyi et al., 2025).

Materials and methods

The study focuses on the propaganda of genocide within the political narrative of the Russian Federation, which ensures the consistent formation of ideological hatred of the Ukrainian people in society. Considerable attention is paid to the destructive critical consequences of the genocidal ideology of the Russian Federation for the security of global geopolitical development.

The study is based on a systematic and comprehensive analysis of scientific publications and sectoral statistical information. Relevant primary sources from publications indexed in leading scientometric databases were used. The works considered were primarily published in the time interval of 2020-2025. The keywords used for the search were “*genocide, national ideology, rhetoric, narrative, statements, Ukrainian people, global security.*” Limitations of the study include the lack of access to complete and up-to-date statistical data.

The analysis of speeches, publications, and media materials was conducted according to specific selection criteria, including spatial and temporal indicators and the information’s reliability level. The sample size comprises approximately 50 representative publications from recent years. The data collection and processing procedure included several key stages: identification of data sources, selection of collection methods, processing of the collected information, and ensuring information security. The time frame of the analyzed statements covers the period of escalation of relations between Russia and Ukraine, from 2014 to the present.

The materials for the study were also publications and public speeches of high-ranking officials of the Russian Federation, as well as their posts on social networks (their own Telegram channel and Twitter page). The materials of the Telegram channel “*Chronicles of Russian Nazism*” were used, which contains genocidal statements by Russian propagandists and officials.

The research methodology included analysis, synthesis, systematization, comparison, generalization, and abstraction. These methods made it possible to summarize scientific, theoretical, and research data, determine cause and effect relationships, define the main criteria and definitions, determine the most influential factors within the process under study, formulate generalized conclusions, and develop appropriate recommendations.

Results

The rhetoric of the Russian Federation in the media and speeches by high-ranking officials is imbued with the idea of not recognizing the national identity of Ukrainians. The purpose of denying the right of Ukrainians to their own state and identity, statements about the artificiality of the Ukrainian language, and the distortion

of historical narratives in the context of imperial ideology is to justify the genocide of Ukrainians during the Russian-Ukrainian war and to focus on the destruction of Ukrainian statehood.

When studying the peculiarities of the ideas of genocide as a tool for the formation of national Russian ideology, it is necessary to rely on the provisions of the UN Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide (1948). Genocidal rhetoric involves direct calls for murder, the sacralization of crimes, and the justification of acts that contain signs of the crime of genocide. The narrative plays an important role, which often does not correspond to reality, distorts it, and leads to a distorted perception of reality (Malkova et al., 2020). The phenomenon of genocide has a particular stage (Fig. 1), which assimilates different spheres of human life, rights, and interests.

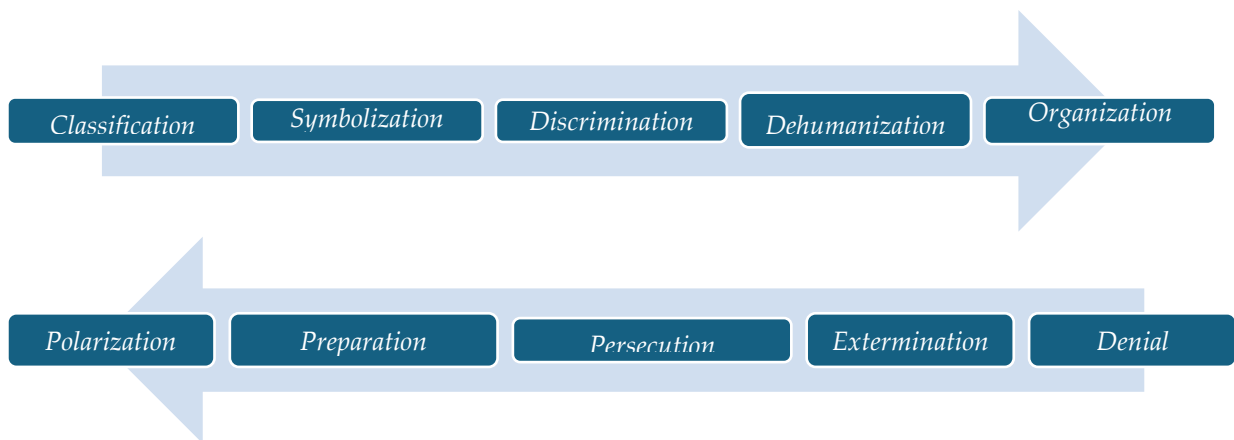


Figure 1. Stages of the evolution of the genocide phenomenon

Source - created by the author based on (Mishra, 2024)

The conceptual basis of Russia's historical and ideological rhetoric is the narrative of "*fraternal peoples*" as components of a single Russian people. An analysis of numerous speeches by Russian officials suggests that the basis of the ideology of modern Russia is the identification of the Russian Empire, the Soviet Union, and the Russian Federation, with the corresponding geographical zoning. In Putin's rhetoric, we observe massive facts of appropriation of the history of Ukraine to the history of the Russian Federation (Lashchenko, 2020). At the same time, the dictator calls the actions of the Russian military in Ukraine "*efforts to end the war.*"

The analysis of this discourse allows us to summarize that high-ranking Russian officials categorically deny Ukrainian statehood and national identity. At the same time, such statements serve as the basis for justifying Russia's aggression against Ukraine - the return of historical lands, the restoration of justice, and the confrontation

of Ukrainian statehood aspirations with the “speculations” of Western elites. At the same time, ideologues of the racist worldview emphasize the “artificiality” of the Ukrainian language and identity. At the same time, society is forming an idea of the Russian language as a successor to the written Church Slavonic language of Ancient Rus. In contrast, the formation of the Ukrainian language is determined, according to Russian ideologues, by Polish influence (Ioffe, 2023).

Another concept of the Russian Federation’s anti-Ukrainian genocidal rhetoric is the call for “denazification,” that is, the fight against supporters of Ukrainian statehood and independence. The definition of “denazification” in this case is identified with the concept of “de-Ukrainization”. The definition of representatives of the Ukrainian nation as representatives of a criminal ideology through deliberate confusion of concepts is positioned as a component of the strategic policy of dehumanizing the Ukrainian people in the political discourse of the Russian Federation, and the implementation of these norms in the national ideological map.

The primary purpose of this process of dehumanization of the Ukrainian people is seen as a practical justification for the physical destruction of Ukrainians, a justification of criminal actions of the Russian military, and optimization of the Russian society’s perception of information about the atrocities committed by Russians against Ukrainians. Systematic promotion of ideas about the physical extermination of “dangerous” Ukrainians and the forced transformation of national identity in a pro-Russian direction. Statements by Putin, Medvedev, and other Russian officials in this context can be defined as direct calls for ethnocide and genocide of the Ukrainian nation.

Today’s problem is seen in the growing dominance of public opinion management, which forms new algorithms for perceiving and analyzing information flows. The global network, as an integrated communication environment, currently provides a unique variety of ways to achieve the promotion of certain concepts in the target audience, which serve as a tool for understanding, engaging, supporting, and influencing the behavioral reactions of society and its development trends. In general, the Internet is characterized by a mechanism like the actions of a crowd, which means that properly directed and quickly disseminated information can be implemented using the potential of various psychotechnologies, which creates favorable conditions for independent dissemination of messages with a particular political context.

The level of society’s convergence to political manipulation with the help of artificial neural networks depends on situational factors caused by a specific information and communication situation and on extra-situational factors, stable psychological characteristics, and individual peculiarities that determine the

possibility of manipulation (critical thinking, suggestibility, negativism, distrust, etc.). In political manipulation, artificial neural networks create a particular space of interaction. At the same time, any events within this space are organized, initiated, and directed by someone, and then subjected to appropriate monitoring.

In the context of politics, this interaction space covers the entire country and may even go beyond its borders. Here, targeted information and psychological pressure are realized, signifying political manipulation. Integrating social projects to create information and communication flows aimed at perceiving information without adequate comprehension is becoming commonplace. Political technologies, which are actively used in the functioning of the state media, relay the official ideological position of the Russian Federation to the masses, developing ideas to rationalize war crimes and violations of generally accepted human rights. Some journalists emphasize the need to destroy the Ukrainian state and to oust the Ukrainian language from the media and education.

Thus, in the rhetoric of Russian propagandists, the idea of fighting neo-Nazism in Ukraine under occupation control is clear. The idea of genocide implies ideological repression, “re-education” of the population, censorship, widespread “de-Ukrainization,” mass repression, and ethnic cleansing.

The statements of Russian media representatives and high-ranking Russian officials about the Ukrainian nation are filled with ideas of neo-Nazism of Ukrainians, which the ideology sees as a solution to “denazification,” i.e., extermination. Kiselyov and Gubarev, leading Russian ideologues, define Ukrainians as Russian people who need to be either “cured” or killed. They consider calls for the physical destruction of members of the Ukrainian nation to be necessary, even in relation to Ukrainian children.

The crimes committed by Russians during the full-scale aggression fall under the articles of the 1948 Genocide Convention, and Ukraine is working to bring Russian criminals to justice for the genocide of the Ukrainian people. Article III of the 1948 Convention provides for punishment for the following acts: genocide; conspiracy to commit genocide; direct and public incitement to commit genocide; attempt to commit genocide; and complicity in genocide.

Russian ideologues argue that the national self-identification of Ukrainians is not the norm, but an aberration, as is the desire of Ukrainians for their own statehood, development of their own language and culture. The formation and perpetuation of a distorted view of Ukrainians is aimed at deliberate dehumanization to justify mass crimes. In general, the analysis of the anti-Ukrainian narrative in the political discourse and state media of the Russian Federation defines Ukraine as an artificial state entity

and Ukrainian lands as historically Russian territories. At the same time, in the Russian national ideological paradigm, the Ukrainian nation, language, and culture do not exist as such; the bearers of Ukrainian identity are “Nazis”, and Russia should transform Ukraine at its own discretion through harsh measures.

A specific interaction space is created in the process of political manipulation through the media. At the same time, events within this space are organized, initiated, and directed by someone, and then subjected to appropriate control. In the context of politics, this interaction space occupies the entire country, and may even go beyond its borders, creating new threats to the geopolitical balance. The dynamics of the development of modern global society are determined by the Russian-Ukrainian war, and this requires a response in the international legal field.

Scientific positions on the study of the practice of genocide show that emotional elements, often irrational, are an integral part of all processes of genocidal policy, serving as a means of justifying violent actions. Belief systems or ideologies are significant in providing non-intellectual elements of genocidal policies. That is, despite the primary motivation of the authorities to pursue genocidal policies based on prioritized political or socio-economic interests, it is the ideological basis that provides the necessary justification for large-scale killings, persecution, and abuse (Alvarez, 2008).

The manifestations of genocide in the twenty-first century did not appear out of nowhere; they have an evolutionary nature, which was manifested in the development of Russian-Ukrainian relations over the past century, with periodic outbursts of genocidal manifestations. Russia’s deliberate pro-Nazi policy has long been aimed at suppressing Ukrainian nationalism and opposing manifestations of independence. In general, the ideology of the current genocide has its roots in Soviet Russia as a relic of imperial Russia’s attitude towards Ukraine, the essence of which has been transformed into the current relationship between the two countries (Fox, 2021).

Repression of elites and intellectuals, deportation and “*resettlement*” of Russians or representatives of other enslaved nations, famine, and mass murder are the methods by which Russia committed genocide to build its empire. The ideology of the “*Russian world*” has become Russia’s national idea under Putin and consists of creating a civilization where people speak and think in Russian, share historical memories and visions of the future with Moscow, value Russian culture, and fear Russian weapons (Kurganska & Hrynko, 2023; Bondarenko et al., 2022).

Examples of the implications of Russian genocide practices in terms of their impact on global security dynamics show that genocide is positioned internationally

as a “*crime of crimes*” in both the legal and moral context (Gallaher, 2010, 2013). It is from this point of view that genocide can be seen as a threat to the international order, as it undermines the legitimate authority of both the UN (which is the cornerstone of international legitimacy) and the UN Security Council (which performs the function of stabilization in international relations) more than any other crime. In this context, it is hoped that by understanding the relationship of the crime of genocide to international legitimacy and its crisis after the Cold War, a more informed understanding of genocide can be gained. At the same time, this problem has not been given priority in developing global foreign policy. Policymakers do not fully realize the threat of genocide to national and global interests on a par with nuclear proliferation and drug trafficking. The ability to prevent and stop the manifestations of genocidal ideology significantly increases international geopolitical stability, which should serve as a guideline for improving the international legal framework.

Discussion

The issue of genocidal threats against Ukrainians by the Russian Federation and the global consequences of the genocidal narrative in Russian ideology forms the range of scientific interests of modern scholars, stimulating them to active discourse. Studies by Kostiv (2024) and Schabas (2022) demonstrate that the distortion of Russian national ideology in the genocidal context can have far-reaching consequences, significantly affecting the geopolitical situation on a global scale. It should be added that the manifestations of genocide in the rhetoric of Russian officials and media publications clearly represent both entrenched public sentiment and trends in the formation of national ideology among modern Russian youth. That is why active international support is so important to minimize the manifestations of the genocidal narrative of the Russian Federation and identify the potential intentions of the aggressor.

The studies by Mankoff (2022) and Marchuk & Wanigasuriya (2023), which focus on the specifics of violations by Russia during the Russian-Ukrainian war, especially in the combat zone, highlight the risks of the destructive impact of genocide ideology on the context of Russia’s “*operation*” in Ukraine. Analyzing scientists’ conclusions, it is worth noting that the proposed concept of preventing genocide is complicated by the inaccessibility of international supervisory organizations for the observance of the legal norms of warfare to the actual locations of military invasion. Several crimes remain undocumented and unidentified, which complicates the process of bringing the Russian Federation to justice for genocide in the international legal field.

Kumankov (2023) and Mälksoo (2023) focus on the study of the most apparent manifestations of the genocidal policy against Ukrainians, forming a firm conviction in the systematic and gradual distortion of the national ideology of Russia, and the implementation of persistent hatred of everything Ukrainian in the masses. The authors' position seems correct concerning current challenges, where the direct impact of military operations is reinforced by information disinformation, which accelerates and deepens the negative manifestations of Russian aggression.

Muelrath (2024) and Pylypenko (2023) conduct a comparative analysis of Russia's policy towards Ukraine and other countries that potentially prevent Russia from restoring the "*Russian Empire*" and conclude that during information aggression, the national information space becomes a key strategic object. The basis of Russia's information and psychological operations against Ukraine is the ideology of racism, which is positioned as one of the most dangerous challenges for the global community and, at the same time, is the leading state ideology in today's Russia. As a symbiosis of the key principles of Stalinism and fascism, the ideology fully justifies Russia's aggressive geopolitics (Shaw, 2023). It is worth noting that this situation requires the formation and integration of systemic international legal mechanisms to ensure the implementation of a set of economic, political, and legal sanctions in the context of the Russian Federation. In addition to financial sanctions, it is necessary to implement large-scale anti-propaganda campaigns to counter Russian fake propaganda: disclosure of false ideas, strengthening of information security, international support for independent media, and effective policy towards historical memory.

McKee et al. (2022) note that countering the genocidal narrative of the national Russian ideology requires a systematic approach that includes the areas of mass education and media literacy, promoting critical thinking and information hygiene among the population, and stimulating the development of national identity and patriotism. It is worth noting that national resilience is not determined by the strength of hostile propaganda and ideology, but by the ability to resist their destructive manifestations in unity, strengthening authentic historical narratives and representation in the international environment as an independent and full-fledged national state formation.

While the new diplomacy has expanded the boundaries of humanitarian sensitivity in the context of genocide stigmatization, the symbolism of the Holocaust does not allow us to fully perceive the threats of the current ideology of the Russian Federation towards Ukrainians (Moses, 2023). Genocide is positioned as the most serious international crime, the commission of which is the basis for both the international legal responsibility of entire states and the criminal liability of

individuals. The integration of effective mechanisms of prosecution for genocide is very slow.

At the same time, in practice, international law only provides for international criminal liability of individuals for committing genocide. It significantly narrows the scope of the international legal framework and reduces its effectiveness in preventing this crime. Obviously, the international crime of genocide is not possible without the direct participation of at least one state. At the same time, this is not a violation of the contractual balance between the rights and obligations of individual parties, but rather the general obligations of all parties to the Genocide Convention.

Conclusion

An analysis of the peculiarities of the narrative of the genocide of the Ukrainian people in Russian national ideology leads to the conclusion that the rhetoric of contemporary Russian political discourse and the media space are imbued with ideas about denying the right of Ukrainians to their own state and identity, statements about the artificiality of the Ukrainian language, and distortion of historical narratives in the context of imperial ideology. Such statements are a justification for the genocide of Ukrainians during the Russian-Ukrainian war and a form of propaganda for the destruction of Ukrainian statehood. In general, the modern Russian genocidal ideology serves as a tool for exacerbating the “Ukrainian” issue.

The systematic manifestation of genocidal intentions in publications and media, as well as in speeches by high-ranking Russian officials, testifies to Russia’s consistent policy towards the Ukrainian nation and statehood, as well as to the purposeful vectoring of national ideology as a symbiosis of Stalinism and fascism. Given the potentially destructive impact of the genocidal ideology of the Russian Federation on the geopolitical situation, the deconstruction of the imposed Russian historical interpretations, and the formation and integration of a pan-European strategy for the representation of historical facts of the development of Ukrainian statehood are topical issues of the day.

Among the general conclusions and clear recommendations for national and international levels, it is worth highlighting preventive educational activities on media literacy, which involve developing critical thinking among the population, identifying manipulation techniques, developing fact-checking skills, and raising awareness of the most common human rights violations. It appears that measures to counter genocide propaganda should be comprehensive and adequately resourced.

The development of the topic in further research is seen in comparative studies of the genocidal rhetoric of the Russian Federation in the context of other states, particularly the Baltic states.

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Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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