

Kluffen der Erinnerung

Rußland und Deutschland 60 Jahre nach dem Krieg

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A b s t r a c t s

Harald Welzer

History, memory, and the presence of the past

History and memory are two quite different things. The writing of history is oriented towards facts and the truth, whereas memory always has a concrete connection with identity. Hence remembrance is a matter of coping with the present rather than a search for enlightenment about the past. We are currently witnessing a boom in the literature of memory, because the generation whose formative experiences in their childhood and youth coincided with World War II are now taking stock of their lives. Simultaneously, the politics of memory have become a central political issue. The past is therefore very much alive at the level of feelings, identity, and political orientations. This is not history in its factuality but history as an interpreted past, the meaning of which is oriented towards the perceived requirements of the present.

Aleksandr Boroznjak

Waves of memory in the FRG

Are there any lessons Russia can draw from the way Germany has dealt with its Nazi past? There seem to be good reasons to doubt this. However, this assessment rests to a significant extent on a mistaken, linear conception of the way the process of coming to terms with the past occurred in the FRG. In fact, Germany needed two decades and a new generation before any serious reappraisal of the Nazi regime and its crimes could begin. The acceptance of guilt was always accompanied by contrasting attempts to historicize the Third Reich and to "normalize" Germany's relationship with its own history. Even though civil society showed great commitment in arguing for the recognition of guilt, it seems that a new situation has now arisen after the end of the GDR and with the last exit of the generation which itself experienced the Nazi period. There even seems to be a new historical consciousness in society, one that equates the "two totalitarianisms" and is characterized by a perception that Germany was a victim.

Helmut König

From silence to remembrance: the Shoah and World War II in the political consciousness of the FRG

The Federal Republic of Germany rests on a political-moral foundation constructed out of its disassociation of itself from the Nazi regime and preparedness to take responsibility for the crimes of that regime. However, what seems self-evident today certainly did not come into existence in the period when the West German state was being founded. For twenty years, West German society said nothing about these crimes and sought to exculpate the perpetrators. It perceived itself exclusively as the victim of the war, and asked no questions about the causes of that war. Only in the mid-1960s did the genocide perpetrated against the European Jews and, eventually, the crimes of the Wehrmacht gradually start to become part of public consciousness. It was this development that made it possible for Germany to take the place it occupies today as an equal partner within Europe, and makes it legitimate to remember the German victims of the war as well.

Maria Ferretti

Unreconciled memory: war, Stalinism, and the shadows of patriotism

In Russia, memories of the war are inextricably linked with Stalinism. The struggle against Nazi Germany led to the suppression of freedom in the USSR itself. Liberation and the absence of freedom cannot be separated from one another. Under Stalin, the reduction of memories of the war to their nationalist, patriotic component was the only officially accepted version. This form of memory continues to have its effects today, not just in the way the war is described as patriotic. It blocks our view of the spirit of freedom which motivated the actions of the frontoviki and partisans and also determined those of the allies. The liberation of memory from the fetters of Stalinism is the precondition that has to be fulfilled if the values of freedom that cannot be separated from memories of the war are to be appreciated in Russia as they are in the West.

Lev Gudkov

The fetters of victory: how the war provides Russia with its identity

Victory in the Great Patriotic War is the most important symbol of identification in Russia. It is the only positive source of support for Russian society's self-awareness. In retrospect, the victory is seen to have legitimized the totalitarian Soviet regime. Memories of Stalinist repression fade, and public opinion has an increasingly positive view of Stalin. Even today, any reappraisal of the dark side of victory is taboo. The idea that Russians reveal their "national character" in times of war and emergency has become a norm of symbolic identity. The main function of memories of the war is the legitimation of the centralized and repressive social order. These memories have been incorporated into the general post-totalitarian traditionalization of culture and society under Putin.

Andreas Langenohl

State visits: internationalized commemoration of World War II in Russia and Germany

Ceremonies of commemoration that have taken place in 2004 and 2005 show that the internationalization of remembrance of World War II is in full swing. However, this is happening in the framework of national cultures of memory. Russian and German reactions to the 60th anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy demonstrated that internationalized commemoration has a variety of implications. In Germany, the traditional paradigm according to which Nazi crimes are the negative point of reference for all contemporary politics is no longer taken for granted. In Russia, concern is being expressed that the internationalization of remembrance could detract from the huge scale of Soviet sacrifices and the significance of the Soviet contribution to victory over Nazi Germany.

Vladislav Hrynevych

Divided memory: World War II as remembered in Ukraine

As in most East Central European countries, a fundamental reevaluation of the past began after the fall of the communist regime in Ukraine. In Ukraine, though, the interpretation of history is even more controversial. Since the Ukrainian declaration of independence in August 1991, the Great Patriotic War has been at the centre of heated public debates. At stake here is the creation of a new "Ukrainian idea", and so also Ukraine's permanent political location in the East or West of

Europe. World War II therefore remains the central political and mental watershed in Ukrainians' historical memory.

Jörg Echternkamp The “German catastrophe”? Remembering World War II in Germany

After 1945, wartime experiences determined the course of public memories of World War II. After the critical confrontation with the past in the early phase of occupation, most Germans saw themselves predominantly as victims of the war. In the GDR public commemoration took place within a Marxist-Leninist view of history, while struggles over the assessment of the military resistance and of 8 May 1945 show how long it took for changes to come about in culturally coded memory within the pluralist society of the Federal Republic. 60 years after the end of the war debate continues about its historical status, which is a turning point in German history, whenever people have difficulty grasping the connection between liberty and liberation.

Joachim Höslér What is meant by reappraisal of the past? The Great Patriotic War in Soviet and Russian historiography

There have been five phases in scholarship on the history of the Great Patriotic War in the USSR and, since 1991, in Russia. Up to 1953, Stalin decided what could be said and written. Under Khrushchev, it was unclear whether research should follow the ideas put forward in the February 1956 Party Congress speech or the apologetic June 1953 Central Committee resolution. From the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s the history of the war was painted in glowing colours; this was supposed to demonstrate the “superiority of socialism” and was embedded in an iconography of victory which cultivated the myth of a “holy war”. During perestroika the war was the first topic on the historical agenda, the one that aroused most passion, and the most difficult one. Since 1991 it has been the only aspect of Soviet history which remains as a positive, integral component of an affirmative image of that history.

Wolfram Wette Hitler's Wehrmacht: stages of the debate about a myth

Up until 1995, that is to say for over 50 years, Germans (at least those of them who lived in the FRG) had a largely positive image of the role of the Wehrmacht during Nazism and World War II. The general view was that the SS had been responsible for the genocide perpetrated against the Jews and for other crimes, while the Wehrmacht (the regular army) had remained “clean”. This article asks how this myth was able to establish itself as fact, and gives an account of the efforts

that were needed on the part of critical researchers and in public debates before, in the past decade, a more realistic way of looking at the question was able to emerge. It is now widely accepted that the war fought by the Wehrmacht in the Soviet Union was a war of extermination, waged in contravention of international law.

Jörg Ganzenmüller

Secondary theatre of war: the siege of Leningrad as remembered by the Germans

Approximately one million people died as a result of the siege of Leningrad. Unlike Stalingrad, these events were almost absent from German memories over a period of decades. Other narratives dominated. In the Federal Republic, the main narrative was that of the Wehrmacht's clean war, the failure of the Blitzkrieg at Leningrad and the decision to resort to siege warfare, supposedly an "uncontroversial way of waging war". In the GDR the suffering of the population was mentioned, but it was subordinated to the Soviet narrative of heroism. In this way Leningrad became a symbol of the class war between Soviet power and big business. Only rarely was a story told in which the victims were remembered. In recent years the siege of Leningrad has found its place in German collective memory for the first time.

Il'ya Al'tmann

The ban on commemorating the Shoah: the long journey from Soviet taboo to remembrance

Speech is silver, but silence is golden. So it was with Soviet memories of the Holocaust: they lasted just as long as they could be used for the purposes of victory in the war. By the time of the 1948 anti-Jewish trials at the latest, it was impossible to remember the Jews as a special group among the victims of the war. Work on the Black Book about the mass murder of the Jews was stopped. Literature and the cinema began to deal with the issue for the first time during the Thaw. Since perestroika and the disintegration of the USSR, it has become possible to discuss the issue in public. However, it has still not found its rightful place in Russia's culture of remembrance.

Mikhail Ryklin

German on call: from *The Black Book* to *The Young Guard*

During the years 1944-47, the Black Book dealing with the genocide perpetrated against the Jews was compiled under the auspices of the CPSU. The purpose of the book was to document German crimes on Soviet territory and the territory of neighbouring states. Under late Stalinism, though, this documentary record was suddenly considered ideologically harmful. Publication ceased, and as a result the truth about the extermination of millions of Jews was concealed in the USSR. At about the same time, Aleksandr Fadeev was writing *The Young Guard*. This book, with its claim to be semi-documentary, is about the struggle of the *komsomoltsy* against the German occupation. It is instructive to compare these two works' images of the Germans and their interaction with those they fought against, those they destroyed, and those who resisted them. These are two competing projects, one of which was canonized and the other silenced in the totalitarian society.

Richard Chaim Schneider

The rituals of Germany's process of coming to terms with the past
The return of the dead Jews and the disappearance of the living Jews: an analytic-polemical experiment

The Holocaust is ever-present in everyday German political life, as long as remembrance of it does not cost anything more than money for prestigious monuments. However, if it is a matter of showing some courage and objecting to the transformation of the Jews into extras in empty rituals of commemoration or even to the new political utility of slogans tinged with antisemitism, the flow of unctuous words dries up. What makes matters worse is that as the Germans increasingly see themselves once again as victims of World War II, so the actually existing Jews in Germany are coming to be seen as troublemakers, people whose very presence makes it difficult for the Germans to assert what they see as their right to be the sole interpreters of the 1939-45 period.

Ol'ga Nikonova

The big silence: women in the war

They came, saw, and conquered – and were forgotten. Some 800,000 women saw active service on the Soviet side. They were either conscripted or joined up as volunteers in an army that was unprepared for women. They fought on equal terms with the men, which contradicted the later myth of the wife waiting at home.

They also remembered things that did not fit in with the official account of the history of the war, and so became a disruptive factor in official memories.

Franka Maubach

The female Wehrmacht auxiliary: a paradigmatic figure of the last days of the war

The figure of the female anti-aircraft auxiliary is frequently used in public discussions among people interested in history in order to paint a concise picture summing up the specific features of the end of the war in 1944-45. Women forced into a final, senseless military action symbolize, by virtue of their hybrid civilian-military status, the totalization of war and represent defeat. The memories of these auxiliaries treat the end of the war as an extra-historical state and are variations on the intellectual theme of *posthistoire*. The auxiliaries satirize this apocalyptic experience and stubbornly unmask it, and as they do this their memories of military action and of the odysseys that took them home also open up a way back from the last days of the war into history.

Beate Fieseler

The suffering of the victors: invalids of the Great Patriotic War

Up until now, Russian historical scholarship has barely touched on the question of the social legacy of the Great Patriotic War. Newly accessible archive material shows that those disabled in the war were subjected to a strict state mobilization policy, which forced them back into working life even though retraining opportunities were unsatisfactory and medical supplies inadequate. Although the figures for professional reintegration were impressive, this reintegration was for many people associated with downward mobility in professional and social terms.

Boris Dubin

The war as a golden age: remembrance as longing for the Brezhnev era

During the 1990s, victory in the Great Patriotic War became the central symbol of collective memory. However, this is not really a matter of remembering the war; what is actually involved is a longing for the Brezhnev era. This was the period in which the image of a heroic war without any suffering was created, and after a decade of social decline this era is now being seen as a golden age of material prosperity and national glory. Today, a new generation is seizing upon this image and adapting it to its own current needs. Like the old representation of the war in collec-

tive memory, the new form of remembrance is based on great power fantasies, social passivity, and isolationism, which are the ingredients of authoritarian regimes.

Il'ya Kukul'in

The regulation of pain:

coping with traumatic experiences in Soviet war literature

The history of literature's treatment of the war is a history of the repression of the existential distress caused by the borderline experience of war. The description of emotional and physical suffering, which was made impossible by censorship in the 1930s, became possible as a result of the war and was incorporated, step by step, into literature. Literature that had been passed by the censor but was still unofficial attempted to address the trauma of war as a subject in its own right. At the same time, the official literature of the Brezhnev era wove a new Soviet legitimization myth out of the painful experiences of the war generation. The only literature that expressed a state of existential insecurity and so undermined Soviet identity had no chance of being published. The war literature of the 1990s took up the subject-matter and aesthetics of these works.

Klaus Städtke

Life and Fate: in memory of Vasily Grossman's novel

2005 is the 100th anniversary of the birth of Vasily Grossman. It took 28 years for his novel *Life and Fate* to reach its readers. Despite the liberalization of Soviet cultural policy during the Thaw period from 1956 to the beginning of the 1960s, no suggestion of any similarities between the Stalinist and Nazi systems, or thoughts about the absolute value of individual freedom, could be tolerated. 60 years after the defeat of Nazi Germany, these ideas are topical once again.

Volker Hage

Buried feelings:

how German writers coped with the allied bombing

Did German literature ignore, for over fifty years, the destruction of German cities by allied bombers in World War II? It is true that there is no major German novel of the postwar period which deals with these events. During the East-West conflict, the reverberations of these bombs were drowned out by the anticipated explosion of "the bomb". However, the experience of war was never absent from the works of all those authors who had lived through the bombing as children in air-raid shelters. The issue only became topical once again when bombs began to fall once more in

Europe, this time on Yugoslavian cities. The war over Kosovo and the debate about W.G. Sebald's argument that discussion of the allied bombing had been taboo made people look more closely at the question. But even if more material is now being published about the bombing and the debate is more open, no serious German author has given a different answer to the question of war guilt.

Dorothea Redepenning Ricorda cosa ti hanno fatto in Auschwitz: music against war and violence

In European musical history, there was for a long time a consensus about how lamentation and sadness should sound. After the millions of deaths and the scale of the destruction that resulted from Nazi policies and World War II, Western composers started to use a different musical language: atonality and twelve-tone music. They see this language as having more integrity, because it was considered "degenerate" by the Nazis. In the works of Luigi Dallapiccola, Arnold Schönberg, Karl Amadeus Hartmann, and Luigi Nono, as well as those of Dmitri Shostakovich, who composed in a different way, one can hear how music functions to store memories and becomes a place of individual, collective, and transnational memory.

Hanno Loewy Holokaust at full moon: comments on a ZDF documentary from the perspective of the theory of genre

The history department of ZDF (the second German public service TV station), headed by Guido Knopp, produces documentaries on the Nazi period and World War II which are very popular with viewers. The producers of the series *Holokaust*, on the history of the destruction of the European Jews, made unprecedented efforts in putting the programmes together. The result is a carefully researched historical documentary. But *Holokaust* is principally a drama, a highly synthetic and homogenized history which follows a clearly delineated plot. Even though the historical details are correct, the material used is unconditionally subordinated to this plot. *Holokaust* is supposed to tell a tragic story, or at least to contain whatever "tragic" elements can be part of a horror film: stories about people caught up in events, people who are innocent and guilty at the same time, dogged by fate, seduced or traumatized by a demon who has made monsters out of human beings. The price paid for this is that the perpetrators can no longer be distinguished from their victims.

Neya Zorkaya

The cinema in wartime: visualizations between 1941 and 1945

The cinema mirrors reality. Soviet films made between 1941 and 1945 were for many years interpreted as agitprop and pure propaganda. This is a misinterpretation. In fact, the cinematographically reflected dynamics and visual language of this period anticipated the cinema of the Thaw, the period of new departures in the early 1960s. These wartime films break with the monolithic aesthetic system of Soviet cinema under Stalinism. Directly influenced by the reality of war, a different cinema came into being. Tears, suffering, fear, and degradation are present in these films. The war gave art greater freedom – a tragic paradox of this period.

Isabelle de Keghel

Unusual perspectives: World War II in recent Russian films

On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of victory in the Great Patriotic War, the heroic discourse is dominant in Russia. Alongside this discourse, however, one can observe other, astonishingly complex views of the war. This article draws attention to these perspectives, of which there is very little awareness in the West, by looking at some recent Russian films. The main focus is on Dmitrii Meskhiev's award-winning film *Svoi* (Our People).

Natal'ya Konradova and Anna Ryleva

Heroes and victims: memorials in Russia and Germany

Memorials provide information about collective memory and images of national history. Privately erected memorials preserve the memory of relatives. Those built by the state, which employ a stereotyped language, have additional functions. Since ancient times they have served to glorify the state, to consolidate power, and to create a feeling of community. Memorials to the Great Patriotic War in Russia show how commemorative practices have changed. In the post-war period emphasis was placed on the commemoration of individual victims, and after this came an etatiste period characterized by standardization, ideologization, and heroization. Today the traditional and new forms and statements can be seen alongside one another; pathos and heroic gestures exist side by side with quiet remembrance and the accentuation of the victims. A comparative glance at the practice of commemoration and policy on memorials in Germany shows that after the Third Reich there was a long period of amnesia. Today it is the victims who are the primary subjects of commemoration

Natal'ya Danilova

Continuity and change: memorials to the war in Afghanistan

Commemoration of the war in Afghanistan has taken its place alongside memories of World War II in Russia's public space. Hundreds of memorials to those who died there make it possible to observe changes in the culture of memory. One can distinguish three types of monument. Memorials erected by veterans with an awareness of having been sent to Afghanistan and betrayed by the state are free from any state or national symbolism. The use of form emphasizes mourning for fallen comrades. The second type are memorials with a religious motif, which stress the element of repentance. Simultaneously, they reflect the patriotic turn and the change in the position of the Russian Orthodox church since the mid-1990s. The third field of interpretation is occupied by memorials which reproduce the traditional Soviet form of remembrance. Monumental and heavily symbolic, they establish a link between the Great Patriotic War and death in Afghanistan.

Aleksej Levinson

Just wars: war and land as ethical categories

The verdict of Russian public opinion is that the Great Patriotic War was a just war. All other wars of the 20th century, including those fought in Afghanistan and Chechnya, are considered unjust. What is being expressed here is not just the idea that a defensive war is a priori more legitimate, but also the fact that when the Russian population makes such judgements it is heavily influenced by considerations of territoriality. This is an imperial tradition of thought. Space is the most important resource of an empire, and war is considered justified when it is fought over space and continues the "gathering of land".

Pavel Polyan

Victory according to plan:

the *Pobeda* organizing committee and its consequences

The 60th anniversary of victory in the war is a challenge which is being met by the bureaucracy. In 2000 President Putin issued a decree setting up the *Pobeda* (Victory) organizing committee. The makeup of the committee, its work, and the results reflect the reality that has come into being in Russia during recent years. In some of the conflicts that have arisen and decisions taken one can sense the spirit of the Supreme Political Department of the Red Army.

Georgii Ramazashvili

Keeping history clean as a profession: the Central Archive of the Ministry of Defence

History is power. Whoever is in charge of the key to the archives, without which no history can be written, decides who has access to this power. In Russia, the Ministry of Defence is one of the keepers of the Grail of the history of the Great Patriotic War. There is a law on access to archives, but this is a matter of indifference to the Central Archive of the Ministry of Defence. The behaviour of the archive's employees towards historians verges on sabotage, sabotage of attempts to find out what really happened during the years 1941-45. It therefore comes as no surprise that 60 years after the end of the war, myths about it continue to flourish and there is little historians can do about this.

Irina Shcherbakova

The map of memory: young people report on the war

In 1999 Memorial announced a historical competition for high school students. So far 15,000 entries have been submitted, and the Great Patriotic War plays an important role. As a rule the contributions written by these young people describe the typical biography of a peasant family: young peasants were called up, left home to do their duty, managed to write one or two awkward letters home, and died in battle. Memories of the war are those of these young people's grandmothers and great-grandmothers. The stories they have written down paint a unique picture of everyday life behind the front line. They also show that there are regional and ethnic differences in the memories recorded. Some associated the war with occupation, for others it meant deportation, and for others it was a matter of evacuation. Every different form provides an incentive for reflection, memory, and thinking about the past.

Irina Pruss

Grandmothers and grandchildren: another perspective on Soviet history

In the official history of the USSR, there was no place for the suffering, humiliation and violence people had to endure. In the perestroika period the manipulated image of history began to change, but old stereotypes remain in place today. A historical competition organized by Memorial has revealed another view of Soviet history. Young people have been writing down what their grandparents and other contemporary witnesses of events have reported. This is the history of ordinary people, of those who witnessed collectivization, repression, and the Great Patriotic War. As depicted by

ordinary soldiers, the war acquires a human scale. Out of these thousands of narratives and essays, a special kind of collective memory is coming into being.

Zhanna Kormina and Sergei Shtyrkov

No-one and nothing is forgotten: the occupation as oral history

By using the resources of oral history, we can obtain insights into everyday life during the war which diverge from the grand narratives canonized by the state. People from a village in the Pskov region have related their experiences under German occupation, and have recalled the role of the partisans and a mass execution. What they remember refers to individual cases. Moral evaluations of what was seen and experienced are made on this basis alone. In this way the stereotypes, normative judgements, and dichotomies such as friend/enemy and good/evil with which we are familiar from the grand narratives begin to crumble. Relating what one has experienced makes it possible for local communities of memory to come into being, and these draw their identities from history.

Gabriele Freitag

Forced labour under Nazism, 60 years on: the work of the Foundation for Memory, Responsibility, and the Future

Even though hardly any attention was paid for decades to the fate of former forced labourers under Nazism, in 2000 funds provided by the government and German industry were used to set up the Foundation for Memory, Responsibility, and the Future. The goals of the foundation are to give expression to Germany's political and moral responsibility for the victims, and to make payments to individuals. 1.6 million people have so far received a total of 4,154 billion euros.