

Elena Baraban

Forget the War: Wartime Subjectivity in Post-Soviet Russian Films

Volume 54 • Numbers 3–4 • September-December 2012

ABSTRACT: This article examines retroactive constructions of the images of Soviet people within post-Soviet Russian films about World War II. The author demonstrates that such images signify a break with the Soviet past rather than its nostalgic or neo-authoritarian replay. The emplotment, characterization, and style of recent films about the war relocate the projected sense of patriotism from a state- and ideologically-bound collective to individual agents who no longer form the family-like unity that used to be promoted by the Soviet discourse of the war. The wartime past these films depict becomes a space of projections that serve the purpose of creating a more pragmatic relationship between contemporary subjects and the Soviet past. Instead of promoting a sense of belonging to a Soviet collective, many recent war films depict the individuals as temporarily bound by a particular task or circumstance, of which surviving the ordeal of war is one of the most important.

Andrea Chandler

Veterans' Rights in the Russian Constitutional Court, 1993–2010

Volume 54 • Numbers 3–4 • September-December 2012

ABSTRACT: Since the Russian Constitution was adopted in 1993, many citizens have submitted complaints of perceived violations of their constitutional rights to the Russian Constitutional Court. The study analyzes final Court decisions on fifty-five complaints initiated by Russian veterans. Many of these cases related to veterans' access to social welfare benefits; the Court rejected most of the cases. Generally speaking, while veterans argued that they were entitled to particular rights as veterans, the Court denied that veterans deserved special rights that were above and beyond the rights of the individual citizen. However, the Court acknowledged the special status of World War II veterans, on the basis of their extraordinary sacrifices. The decisions show a gap between the veterans' perceptions of their rights and the interpretation of those rights. They also demonstrate that although the Court is formally a body for seeking judicial remedies, it is also a discursive arena in the debate over the Russian state's interpretation of the Soviet past.

Julie Hansen

Stalingrad Statues and Stories: War Remembrance in Andreï Makine's *The Earth and Sky of Jacques Dorme*

Volume 54 • Numbers 3–4 • September-December 2012

ABSTRACT: This article examines representations of war remembrance in the francophone Russian writer Andreï Makine's novel *La terre et le ciel de Jacques Dorme* [The Earth and Sky of Jacques Dorme, 2003]. The novel portrays events and experiences of World War II from three temporal perspectives: that of the eponymous French pilot, who flies transports for the Soviets in the Alaska-Siberia air bridge during the war; that of the narrator as a child, who witnesses the construction of Stalingrad monuments and the emergence of the Soviet war cult in the mid-1960s; and that of the adult narrator, who searches for Dorme's remains in post-Soviet Russia and seeks to commemorate the now-forgotten pilot by writing about his life. Makine portrays official monuments and commemoration of the Battle of Stalingrad as attempts on the part of the Soviet state to manipulate the collective memory. By contrast, he depicts individual remembrance as a more authentic alternative to collective commemorative practices. This article interprets Makine's depiction of war remembrance against the background of the Soviet war cult,

showing how the novel privileges individual over collective memory. It argues that Makine represents individual oral and written narratives in particular as an alternative to official histories and public commemoration.

Polly Jones

Between Post-Stalinist Legitimacy and Stalin's Authority: Memories of 1941 from Late Socialism to the Post-Soviet Era

Volume 54 • Numbers 3–4 • September-December 2012

ABSTRACT: This article analyses the ways in which post-Soviet debates over whether and how to remember the defeats of the early period of World War II were shaped by earlier Soviet-era debates over war memory and legitimacy. It argues that the reaction against the Khrushchev thaw in the early Brezhnev era—which eventually gave rise to the quintessentially late socialist “war cult”—initially led to a deep contestation between the state and some of the Soviet intelligentsia, not only regarding the Soviet narrative of 1941, but also over the broader question of whether Soviet public memory could and should accommodate defeats and trauma as well as celebration of victory. Though promptly curtailed by the exercise of party-state authority, this debate quickly resurfaced in *glasnost'*, when debates over the early war once again became a crucible for disputes over broader questions of Soviet memory and its role in legitimating (or re-legitimating) Soviet power. These two debates are then compared with the strikingly similar dynamics of war memory contestation in post-Soviet Russia.

Markku Kangaspuro and Jussi Lassila

Naming the War and Framing the Nation in Russian Public Discussion

Volume 54 • Numbers 3–4 • September-December 2012

ABSTRACT: Fundamental changes in Europe's political map following the end of the Cold War have led to a new competition of hegemonic interpretations of history and national memory. In particular this has happened in the former socialist Eastern European countries (notably in the Baltic States, Poland, and Western Ukraine) where there has been a big demand to establish a new state identity distancing these countries from the socialist past. For the Russian socio-cultural and political environment the given identity political demand has created a challenging terrain in which symbolic, and irrevocably political, resources for national identity are forced to be calibrated in line with domestic and foreign policy concerns. In this regard, the public usage of “The Great Patriotic War” and its ramifications has been the most notable manifestation, which exhibits the political significance of history in these identity debates. In order to grasp the manifestations of this significance, this article examines the uses of the terms “The Great Patriotic War” (*Velikaia Otechestvennaia voina*, VOV) and “The Second World War” (*Vtoraia mirovaia voina*, VMV) in the Russian mainstream media over the course of the last ten years. For this purpose the Integrum databases (Russian-language media corpus of more than 400 million documents) provide a productive tool for specified queries related to VOV and VMV allowing the examination of major themes that these two terms activate in the Russian public discourse. We argue that whereas the VOV signifies the “inner” canonized framework for discussing the war within society, it is the VMV which figures as VOV's counterpoint in terms of activating “outer” frameworks for the war's public discussion. In relation to the broader identity political context, the study expands the question of how the era of the Second World War is treated in Russia, and the potential limits of this discussion.

Gelinada Grinchenko

The Ostarbeiter of Nazi Germany in Soviet and Post-Soviet Ukrainian Historical Memory

Volume 54 • Numbers 3–4 • September-December 2012

ABSTRACT: This article considers the following questions: how and with the aid of which resources was the memory of forced labour during World War II constructed and recreated in the public space of Soviet and post-Soviet Ukraine? How has the perception of the place of forced labourers in the general pantheon of war participants changed? And what kinds of transformations took place in the meaningful emphases and symbolic accretion of images associated with this group of people? The initial focus is on the Soviet version of this memory because some correction must be made to the theory that was formulated in the early 1990s and which gradually acquired normative significance in post-Soviet (including Ukrainian) journalism and scholarly literature: namely, that the history, creativity, and memory of this population group were “forgotten” in the official Soviet version of the war.

John-Paul Himka

Ukrainian Memories of the Holocaust: The Destruction of Jews as Reflected in Memoirs Collected in 1947

Volume 54 • Numbers 3–4 • September-December 2012

ABSTRACT: In 1947 the Oseredok Ukrainian Cultural and Education Centre in Winnipeg held a memoir contest. Sixty-four memoirs were submitted, and most of them are still preserved in Oseredok’s archives. All extant submissions were examined in order to determine what they had to say about the Holocaust. Altogether twenty-five memoirs concerned World War II, and of these fourteen made at least some mention of the Holocaust. This body of memoirs is the earliest collection of Ukrainian memoirs of World War II that I am aware of, the closest in time to the events of the Holocaust. Already then, however, Ukrainians had become quite defensive about their behaviour towards the Jews; this perhaps explains why close to half the memoirs about the war omitted the fate of the Jews altogether and why the memoirs that do mention the Holocaust say almost nothing about Ukrainian involvement. The memoirists did, however, reproduce the image of Jews as agents of communism, particularly active in the organs of repression. The majority of the 1947 memoirs nonetheless indicated horror at and disapproval of the murder of the Jews by the Germans. Perhaps characteristically, the account expressing the strongest such feelings was written by an older man from outside Western Ukraine. Conversely, the most outright expression of lack of sympathy with the Jews came from a man twelve years younger and from Galicia. Although the latter felt pity for some individual Jews he knew and gave them alms, he expressly stated that he had no sympathy with them as a group, as “a nation that had done so much evil to my nation.” Perhaps this is a case that corresponds to the phenomenon noted by Jan Gross in *Fear*, that individuals hate whom they have injured: this memoirist served in the civil administration.

Olesya Khromeychuk

The Shaping of “Historical Truth”: Construction and Reconstruction of the Memory and Narrative of the Waffen SS “Galicia” Division

Volume 54 • Numbers 3–4 • September-December 2012

ABSTRACT: This paper looks at how the memory and, subsequently, narratives of the Waffen SS “Galicia,” later known as the 1st Ukrainian Division of the Ukrainian National Army, are being (re)constructed and presented to a wider audience by scholars, politicians, and World War II veterans. The narratives and political framings of the “Galicia” Division tend to divide into two

dichotomous approaches, each presenting itself as “historical truth.” On the one hand, the ex-members are often portrayed as traitors, opportunists, and war criminals. On the other, ex-“Galicians” are seen as those who arguably chose “the lesser of two evils” and joined the German Army in order to defend their motherland against the Soviet invasion and build a nucleus for the Ukrainian army. Rather than follow the well-trodden paths of attempting to justify or condemn the Division’s actions, this paper analyzes how the interpretations of the Division’s identity are presented in contemporary debates, addressing at the same time the concept of memory. It offers a discussion of the political framing of history in contemporary Ukraine and of the challenges that Ukrainian historiography faces with regard to the question of World War II in general and the “Galicia” Division in particular. In this way the paper seeks to contribute to an understanding of the institutionalization of memory and the shaping of national identity through existing and newly emerged narratives about World War II in contemporary Ukraine.

Eleonora Narvselius

The “Bandera Debate”: The Contentious Legacy of World War II and Liberalization of Collective Memory in Western Ukraine

Volume 54 • Numbers 3–4 • September-December 2012

ABSTRACT: This article explores the core propositions articulated by several public actors in the so-called Bandera debate, i.e., discussions about the usable past and legacy of the wartime Ukrainian nationalist insurgency and its central symbolic figure, Stepan Bandera. In Western Ukraine, popular historical imagery as well as intellectual polemics about the “Ukrainization” of World War II challenged both the Soviet myth of the Great Patriotic War and the European model of politics of regret. Correspondingly, one of the main ideas conveyed during the Bandera debate in Western Ukraine was the necessity of liberalization of the national politics of memory, i.e., the process of opening the political discourses and public debate to the circulation of diverse voices and narratives concerning the national past, a circulation unrestrained by political pressure. Generally, however, wartime events and figures continue to be presented in line with dichotomous national discourses. As the example of a chain of restaurants exploiting the theme of World War II demonstrates, one-dimensional interpretations of the contentious past suggested to the public by the actors involved in the commercialization of historical knowledge may have far-reaching, unpredictable implications. This is especially true in post-Orange Western Ukraine where politics—including the politics of memory—is increasingly determined by ultra-right forces such as VO Svoboda.

Mykola Soroka

Contested Memories About World War II in Ukrainian Literary Discourse: Soviet Versus Émigré

Volume 54 • Numbers 3–4 • September-December 2012

ABSTRACT: This paper examines contrasting memories of Soviet and émigré discourses in Ukrainian literature. The Soviet discourse tended to sanitize the war experience, exploiting the concept of the Great Patriotic War, along the ideological lines of the socialist realist style in literature, with a designated set of topics and characteristics to glorify this war, including the leading role of the Communist party, and Soviet messianism. Despite some periods of liberalization, this model remained under the tight control of the Moscow centre and was reinforced after Brezhnev’s re-introduction of Victory Day. Presenting an alternative voice, the émigré discourse is shown as a more vibrant one, which found itself on a mission to undermine the mono-centric nature of the imperial discourse and record the complex truth about the war.

Being a deliberate attempt to battle for its own representation, the émigré discourse, though with its own biases, addressed all those issues ignored in Soviet literature, including the critical attitude of Ukrainians to the Soviet regime and the war, the portrayal of the resistance movement, and the presentation of World War II as a tragedy for the Ukrainian nation, caught between fascism and Bolshevism.