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## State visits

*Internationalized commemoration of WWII in Russia and Germany*

Commemoration ceremonies in 2004 and 2005 have shown that the internationalization of remembrance of World War II is well underway. However, it takes place within a framework of national memorial cultures. The Russian and the German reactions to the sixtieth anniversary of D-Day in Normandy illustrate that internationalized commemoration has various implications. In Germany, the traditional paradigm, which posits the crimes of National Socialism as the negative reference for every form of politics, is no longer taken for granted. In Russia, meanwhile, the concern is voiced that the internationalization of commemoration could diminish the monumentality of the Soviet sacrifice and the significance of Russia's own contribution to the victory over Nazi Germany.

Until the 1980s, the commemoration of World War II in Europe and the Soviet Union was characterized by its incorporation into the symbolic architecture of the systematic confrontation between East and West. Indeed, it was self-evident that in official ceremonies the commemoration of the victims went together with the memory of the victory over National Socialist Germany. This was especially the case for the Soviet Union, where the memory of "the Great Victory" (*velikaya pobeda*) over fascism served as the central symbol of the moral superiority of the Soviet social order in general, and the Communist Party in particular, and as such was present (at least immediately after 1945) in the attitude of the population.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, the memorial ceremonies of the 1960s to the 1980s always made reference to the systematic confrontation between the East and the West. This was most clearly expressed in the decade-long calls for peace in Europe, which, ostensibly mindful of the victims of World War II, went hand in hand with imputations of aggressive re-armament, each side insisting on peace while sheltering behind missiles. Thus, it was not so much a defeated Nazi Germany that served as the normative point of reference for official commemorative practices, as the relationship between the superpowers, which through commemoration manoeuvred themselves onto the moral high ground.

Since the break-up of the Soviet Union, this rhetoric of demarcation, couched in the commemoration of World War II, has made way for the nuanced, by no means unproblematic, practises of internationalized memory. These reached a climax at the celebrations of the sixtieth anniversary of D-day in Normandy in June 2004, and again in Moscow in May 2005 at the celebrations of the sixtieth anniversary of the end of the war in Europe. These celebrations stand at the provisional end of a historical development, in which the initially cautious, transnational commemoration in Europe and the US consolidated into a symbolic economy which finally also included Russia. At the international level, the European Economic Community, and its successor organizations the

European Community and the European Union, have been the decisive motors for this development.

The political premise underlying the European Economic Community was, by interlocking national resources, to rule out the possibility of war–economies. The idea of the EU is based upon the conclusion drawn from a shared historical experience: there must never again be a war in Europe. This sentiment was expressed by German president Roman Herzog in his speech of 8 May 1995 at the international European commemoration ceremony celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the end of the war. In it, he emphasized that fifty years before, "a window onto Europe had been pushed open". From one side, this could be criticised as the desire to forget. Alternatively, it could be argued that Herzog was expressing little else than the explicit completion of a symbolic and political project of integration, which from the start had implicitly aimed for a shared European memory. The *Bundesrepublik*, which must bear political responsibility for the suffering caused by Nazi Germany, could thus be integrated into the European remembrance ceremony precisely in the name of this responsibility — an opportunity that, with retrospect to international relations, had already implicitly been created via the foundation of the EEC.

It is likely that this opportunity was accelerated through a change in the symbolic economy of western societies between 1950 and 1980. Gradually, triumphalist interpretations of the war's past, particularly the idea of "death in the field" (*Kriegstod*), were unanimously rejected.<sup>2</sup> This rejection united pacifist groups across nations whose borders were becoming, in view of the ever–present threat of atomic annihilation, increasingly irrelevant. Now, "death in the field", far from belonging to the self–evident symbolic accoutrement of these societies, sends them into crises of symbolism. This can be seen from the way war–dead are ashamedly termed "casualties", and how even the death of a single western soldier prompts a crowd of senior statesmen to meet the coffin as it is borne out of the aeroplane. Public opinion cannot indulge enough in condemning suicide attacks carried out by religious extremists as being beyond understanding; less than a century ago, however, such self–sacrificial willing was demanded from soldiers, when during World War I they were urged to fall upon one another in the hundreds of thousands.

The de–legitimization of triumphalist rhetoric in the second half of the twentieth century contributed to a symbolic *rapprochement* between Germany and the former Allies, which was already well underway during the collapse of the Soviet Union. Therefore, it is no surprise that commemorative practises in post–Soviet Russia react to this transnational symbolic context in a fundamentally different way than is the case in Germany.

The attendance of representatives of state at international commemoration ceremonies plays a major role in the internationalization of commemoration. As is clear from the term "political representative", these politicians not only represent others; they also "stand for something". The seriousness with which this aspect of signification is taken is nowhere better expressed than in the "high art of diplomacy", in which the symbolic value of individual actors regarding their country of origin, their mandate country, and their relations to one another are put on display, and which allows the intentions of national governments to be interpreted. Diplomacy shows that national politicians are part of the transnational symbolic circulation. It is especially at international commemoration ceremonies that this is articulated. How the gestures and words of a political representative are construed depends not only on the

representatives themselves, but also on their ranking in the political–symbolic context of the ceremony (in its "protocol"), and on the importance of the representatives in their home countries.

Commemoration ceremonies are particularly delicate events, because they take place in specific places; Pierre Nora has termed these "*lieux de mémoire*". These are places that, in the commemoration ritual, invoke a symbolic condensation of the past.<sup>3</sup> The invitation of a foreign political representative to a commemoration ceremony engenders a transnational interpretative context, whose interpretability nevertheless must be proved "at the scene", since the memories are pre–reflexively associated with particular places. The "success" of a ceremony — whether, bearing in mind the remembered and the remembering, the specific commemoration is judged to have been "appropriate" — closes in on a point, a "*lieux de mémoire*", specifying the time and the place of the commemoration, and thus bringing the past into the present.

The fundamentally delicate orientation of commemoration ceremonies is the subject of public controversy. The debates about who may invite whom, who may be brought together with whom, and whether the commemoration has been "successful", receive about as much public attention as that which is being commemorated. In commemoration ceremonies, the debate over the proper normative content of the contemporization of the past is conducted at a pragmatic level. The ceremonies are acts both of memory and meta–memory: once an event has been commemorated, every new commemoration is registered as a repetition, a new version, or a departure from the first commemoration. As ritual events with the fundamental claim to reproducibility, remembrance ceremonies are *per se* wrapped up in their own history, never representing solely that which is to be commemorated, but also its previous representations.

Two events form a provisional apotheosis of international ceremonies commemorating the end of World War II: the remembrance of the Allied landing in Normandy on 6 July 1944 (D–Day: the "Day of Decision") in June 2004, and the remembrance ceremony in Moscow on 9 May 2005. The numerous encounters during these ceremonies expose the transnational and symbolic context that forms the basis of the internationalization of remembrance.

### **D–Day with Putin and Schröder — the European perspective**

On 1 May 2004, ten states joined the EU, among them former socialist "brother states" and three former Soviet republics. From the perspective of western European political decision–makers, this particular date made it desirable to increase communication and demonstrations of cooperation with Russia. State visits between Germany, France, and Russia before the D–Day ceremonies in Normandy were therefore part of the peace–making efforts. In April 2004, Schröder and Chirac missed meeting one another in Moscow by a hair's breadth: the German Chancellor visited Putin in the Kremlin on 1 April, while the French prime minister arrived on a lightning visit to Moscow a day later. The latter's visit was interpreted in the European press in three ways.

First, it was noted that Chirac had "returned" Putin's invitation to Moscow by inviting him to the international remembrance celebrations. Second, it was stressed that Chirac, as a foreign representative of the highest seniority, should have been allowed to visit Titov, the military satellite control centre near

Moscow. Third, reference was made to the diplomatic merry-go-round already mentioned: Schröder a day before Chirac, and a day after Chirac the UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. Putin's invitation to Normandy came as part of overt efforts to relax relations between the EU (and by extension the western industrial nations) and Russia, as a report in the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung* illustrates:

Chirac repaid the Kremlin chief's gesture by inviting Putin to the sixtieth anniversary celebrations of the Allied landing in Normandy as a token of the appreciation of the Russian – then still Soviet – effort during World War II. In doing so, Chirac indicated that the decisive turning points in the war were fought in Moscow, Kursk, and Stalingrad. The two heads of state went on to express support for increased international cooperation in the fight against terrorism, and for a mutually satisfactory solution to the issue of the relationship between Moscow and the European Union after the expansion of the EU at the beginning of May.<sup>4</sup>

In the EU, as in Switzerland, the invitation of Putin was portrayed as part of international cooperation, particularly in the area of counter-terrorism. Chirac's gesture of recognition of the Soviet role in World War II provided an indication of the cooperation that now had to be demonstrated in the area of defence. That the former enemy — National Socialist Germany — was not named, revealed that, from the western European perspective, the historical dimension of the World War II commemorations had to make way for present-day political exigencies.

The situation presented itself entirely differently with the invitation of Gerhard Schröder, sent out a few weeks before the remembrance ceremony. It represented a renewed attempt to integrate Germany. Ten years before, the German chancellor Helmut Kohl had let it be known to the French president François Mitterrand that he did not wish to be invited to the fiftieth anniversary celebrations, since for him there was no reason to celebrate a battle in which a great many German soldiers had been killed. In this respect, the invitation to Schröder was less mindful of contemporary diplomatic relations, and more of the question of how to commemorate, and how commemoration can be Europeanized.

Given that on 1 May 2004 numerous countries had been admitted into the EU in the name of European unity, it no doubt appeared risky to EU decision-makers not only to commemorate the chaos of war in Europe one month later, but also, because of the historical basis of this event, to do so without one of the most important union members. For this reason, the Allied landing in Normandy had to be thought of in a way that was oriented progressively rather than retrospectively, in other words, in Herzog's sense that the end of the war had opened a "window onto Europe". Thus understood, the Normandy landings signalled, from the perspective of 2004, the beginning of the end of the war and the initiation of the European Union. The landings were suitable for this interpretation because there existed a meta-memory within European commemorative practice. The German Chancellor appeared at a symbolic event that possessed its own historical gravitas, one that already pointed towards Europe.

### **Schröder at D-Day -- the German reception**

The Normandy celebrations were an important subject in the European public arena, and Schröder's participation received a corresponding amount of exposure. Foremost were opinions and judgements reproducing the chancellor's own interpretation of the remembrance ceremony and his participation in it, and less that which was being commemorated. This is a further indication of the degree to which the commemoration of World War II in Europe has itself become the object of memory, or meta-memory.

Schröder made a double-public appearance on 6 June 2004: the first, at the main ceremony of the international remembrance event at Arranches-les-Bains, the second in an article in the *Bild am Sonntag*, in which he linked his appearance in Normandy with Germany's role in Europe. Both texts are marked by meta-memory. In the German tabloid, Schröder talked of the necessity of commemoration, but also wrote that:

Today [...] we Germans [can] think of his date with our heads held high. The Allied victory was not a victory over Germany, but a victory for Germany.<sup>5</sup>

He drew on Richard von Weizsäcker's now canonical speech of 8 May 1985, in which 8 May meant for Germany "not a defeat, but a liberation" – liberation from a "criminal regime" and "Hitlerism", revealing a perspective on Europe that would "finally be united" and which would now "live and celebrate together".

In contrast to this school-masterly undertone, the commemorative speech is marked by a tension that develops between the recognition of the varying war memories in France and Germany and the implications of this, one which takes in the Germans, the French, and all of Europe: "We want a united, free Europe that perceives its responsibilities for peace and justice in its own continent and in the world."<sup>6</sup> The territorial-political responsibility of Europe is extended when the bitter memories of the nations occupied by Nazi Germany are recognized and translated into a European "lesson". Germany is "precisely" the one to deliver it:

Europe has learned its lesson, and it is precisely we Germans who will not suppress it. Europe's citizens and their politicians bear the responsibility that in other places, too, war-mongering, war-crimes, and terrorism are not given a chance.<sup>7</sup>

In Schröder's speech, the Germans feature as the guardians of memory and the lessons of history, a political mission in which the tension between particular memories and general tenets is dissolved.

When compared, the commemorative texts show differing and implicit references to the traditional ways in which World War II has been interpreted in Germany. In the *Bild* article, a *topos* reveals itself that has distinguished the German debate since the end of World War II: that Germany bears responsibility for the crimes of Nazi Germany. The overt justification of the participation in the Normandy celebrations with the former enemy is achieved through a semantic separation of "Hitlerism" and "Germany". The reference to the Weizsäcker speech of 1985 is pressed into service of this justification; it is not, for example, the naming of specific groups of victims, that is taken from the speech, but the notion that, for Germany, 8 May 1945 was a liberation. Schröder's contribution connects with cultural-interpretative continuities that

turn out to be the reverse side of a consensus about the significance of the Nazi dictatorship for the democratic self-understanding of the *Bundesrepublik* that has meanwhile anchored itself in the German political system. It is precisely because this interpretation has become a common good, that it no longer plays a role within politics itself.<sup>8</sup>

The speech, on the other hand, continues a younger tradition of commemorative politics first taken up by Herzog in his speech about the "window onto Europe". This interpretation functions in Schröder's speech as a central hinge: that it is meaningful to overlook the differences in the varying and bitter memories of World War II only in the light of present-day political peace-making and the unification of Europe.

However, while Herzog paraphrased Europe as a space enabling political manoeuvre, Schröder casts it as a tangible political project, whose aura Germany not only participates in, but also, precisely since it does not "suppress" or "forget", contributes to as a leading player. The memory of the end of the war, from being a self-limiting topic, which in the national context has always been inherent in the politics of the Conservatives as well as those of the Left, can thus be re-written: as a self-empowering *dénouement* within the European context.

In the press, these various and implicit traditions that appear in Schröder's contributions to 6 June 2004 were placed in an explicit context of meta-memory. *The Guardian* wrote that the Chancellor had "drawn a very significant line under the past". *Le Parisien* wrote that Schröder had turned a new page in the history of France and Germany, in that he, unlike his predecessor, had accepted the invitation to Normandy, and had given a speech that was "courageous and unambiguous". The *Corriere della Sera* praised Schröder's performance, which, under the immense pressure of international expectation to combine the memory of the past with the future, had been made "without [Schröder] suppressing his own emotion".<sup>9</sup> These commentaries show that Schröder's participation in the international commemoration ceremony was also compared to Germany's attitude towards its own past until then.

This double appraisal of the appropriateness of the German chancellor's appearance also distinguished the German discussion. With the exceptions of individual politicians from the CDU (Christian Democratic Union) and CSU (Christian Social Union), such as Peter Ramsauer and Norbert Greis, who regretted that Schröder had not visited any German cemetery during his visit,<sup>10</sup> the chancellor's appearance was largely judged to have been appropriate.<sup>11</sup> However, it was not long before criticism came from the Liberal-Left. Gunter Hofmann, head of the Berlin Office of *Die Zeit*, expressed a general unease about the "historicization" of the German past: The chancellor did not sanitize the past, neither did he simply choose the wrong words; however, it is a fact that the "historicization" of our past is proceeding with breathtaking speed – and this under a Red-Green government. But if this is so, then how far does the past lose its constitutive character for the self-understanding of the *Bundesrepublik*?<sup>12</sup> Hofman's unease erupts in the suspicion that German politicians have learned from the past too well, and, for precisely this reason, have been able to break from it. Schröder and Fischer's way of dealing with National Socialism is indeed judged to have been appropriate; however, for that very reason, too appropriate. Desirable as Schröder's appearance may have been, it remained without obligations; a German human rights policy that stubbornly insists on having learned the lessons of "Auschwitz", is, precisely for this reason, blind to the inconsistencies of its own behaviour. The author

concludes with a verbal frown:

Our own past, which ultimately evades comprehension,  
appears to have been tidied up. Strange as this may seem,  
suddenly one catches oneself wishing it were less tidy.

This "one" embodies a German interpretative tradition in which National Socialism appears as the constitutive other of the *Bundesrepublik*. Thomas Herz and Michael Schwab–Trapp have argued that the "root narrative" of the *Bundesrepublik* has a deeply problematic relationship with National Socialism — in formal terms, the postwar German state is National Socialism's legal successor, while simultaneously it sets itself apart from the latter's content.<sup>13</sup> However, it seems to me that this narrative is only related within a specific political spectrum.

The Liberal–Left spectrum has been exemplary in driving forward engagement with National Socialism. In the official anti–fascism of the GDR, National Socialism served as a negative screen onto which to project the regime's own moral–political position. In the Liberal–Left milieu of the FRG, however, the history of National Socialism was less cut and dry; in its incomprehensibility it was almost the objective measure of any type of politics. The West German slogan "*nie wieder*" (never again) was not a self–satisfied remark, as it was in the GDR, but a term for the permanent risk that all kinds of political stance descend into barbarism. In this sense, it distinguishes itself from the Schröderite comment that "a war in Europe is now impossible". The Liberal–Left's unease about the international incorporation of the German commemoration of World War II presents itself as the misgiving that a German "commemoration–lite" is evolving to international acclaim.

### **The Russian reception of international remembrance ceremonies**

In Russia, Schröder's visit to Normandy was commented upon sympathetically. The *Izvestiya* regretted that Kohl had not taken part in the commemorative ceremonies in 1995; had that been the case, it said, the peace signals would have no doubt been stronger.<sup>14</sup> The press office of the Russian foreign ministry let it be known that Schröder's participation had been welcomed by Putin, who at a meeting with the German chancellor allegedly emphasized that:

According to Russian veterans, the first to join the Russian troops in the war against the Fascists were the German Anti–Fascists. Russia's head of state emphasized that, while neither country would forget history, the present generation in Russia and in Germany bore no responsibility for events, and that their rights [should not be] reduced.<sup>15</sup>

These conciliatory words corresponded to the no less conciliatory gesture of 8 July 2004 of inviting Schröder to the central remembrance ceremony of the end of World War II in Moscow in May 2005. The internationalization of commemoration will nevertheless be moved closer to the events being remembered than in Germany. The abstraction, so typical in the western European media, of historical events, which are at best described summarily, contrasts markedly with the concreteness of the Russian media. This is illustrated, for example, by a report on the website *russland.de* about the Paris exhibition "Joint Victory", organized by the press agency RIA Novosti, which opened shortly before the remembrance ceremony in Normandy. In it, the French contribution to the victory is described as such:

The warlike French are represented in the exhibition by pictures of aircrew of the legendary Normandy–Nieman Squadron, which can be proud of having shot down 273 German aircraft.<sup>16</sup>

What appears to a western European reader to be, for a war memorial, inappropriately specific, indicates the existence of an interpretative tradition from the Soviet "Great Victory" in the Russian discursive context of the 1990s. Exemplary of this is a contribution in the *Literaturnaya gazeta* of December 2004 by Anatolij Utkin, the director of the Institute for American Studies of the Russian Academy of Science. This article presents a furious reaction to the appeal from some members of the European Parliament for international politicians to stay away from the celebrations in Moscow in May 2005.

Afterall [they say], the Germans are no longer the same, and there was cruelty on both sides of the front; let's forget all those who wear the medals of 9 May — so many years have passed since. What right have these people to demand that the unforgettable be forgotten?! It was we, our country, who on two occasions in the last century rescued them!<sup>17</sup>

Numerous historical facts, but also the central commemorative symbols of the "Great Patriotic War" in the Soviet Union and Russia, align themselves with this charge:<sup>18</sup> those who blocked enemy gun slits with their chests; those who, loaded with grenades, threw themselves under enemy tanks; or Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya, the school girl hung to death by SS henchmen. Ultimately, Utkin argued, the initiative of the European parliamentarians was proof of the calculated historical amnesia of "the West", which for a long time had been trying to denigrate the Russian–Soviet contribution to the victory over Nazi Germany — attempts which had also led to the Cold War.

The article, which had the title "Our Victory is Ours to Defend!", presents an argument that has been underway in Russia for the last decade, but which peaked in the first half of the 1990s. At the time, the commemorative *topoi* presented in the article were brought into the public debate by those attempting to defend the levelling of the historical significance of "The Great Victor".

The debate had broken out against the background of the dispute over the significance of Stalin for the outcome of "the Great Patriotic War". Anti–Soviet intellectuals argued, on the basis of new insights from Russian historians, that Stalin and the KpdSU had waged a "maladministered war" (*bezdarnaya voyna*), in which the number of deaths had been unnecessarily high.<sup>19</sup> Some had even gone so far as to say that Hitler's invasion of the Soviet Union pre–empted (consciously or unconsciously) a preventative attack by Stalin on Germany.<sup>20</sup> This reinterpretation sparked off massive protests, not because it was a deliberate relativization of the historical significance of the Great Victory, but because it questioned the sense of the monumental sacrifice brought by the population in achieving this victory.<sup>21</sup>

During the 1990s, the debate between these positions occasionally took the form of an ideological stumbling block, in that, by accusing the other of treason, each camp disputed the other's right to make their views public. The anti–Soviet intellectuals were accused of denigrating, with the West's endorsement, the service of the Russian people, while the defenders of the orthodox interpretation of the war were accused of keeping these same people in the dark about Stalin's crimes.<sup>22</sup>

This line of argument re-appears in Utkin's article, only that, in place of the critics within the Russian ranks, there now appears "the West". The article's articulation of the injury to collective memory incurred by the former Allied forces assimilates the outrage that had been triggered off in 1994, when Russia was denied an invitation to the fiftieth anniversary celebrations of the Normandy landings. This had caused many Russian intellectuals and historians to suspect that the former Allies were trying to create the impression that, "the battle of Stalingrad, which has become a symbol of the beginning of the strategic defeat of Germany, never happened, nor the many other battles on the Russian-German front, which also led to a fundamental shift in the course of the war."<sup>23</sup>

Though Utkin's article may not be representative, it probably delineates a symbolic boundary that, from the Russian viewpoint, may not be transgressed: the internationalization of commemoration must recognize a certain interpretation of the victory. The friendly response to Schröder's participation in the Normandy celebrations and his invitation to Moscow are only apparently contradictory to this interpretation. In fact, from the Russian perspective, German politicians and other representatives of state represent only peripheral figures in the commemoration of the Great Patriotic War. The important points of reference are far more the former Allies, whom Russia demands acknowledge the decisive contribution of the Soviet Union, and by extension Russia, to the joint attainment of victory.

The detailed and heavily metaphorical portrayal of the self-sacrificing struggle of the Soviet-Russian people in the victory over Nazi Germany stands in this context. The victims command a respect from later generations that cannot, as Schröder implied in his speech of 6 June in relation to those killed at the Normandy landings, be paid in full by the acknowledgement of differences in memory. Rather, it is a respect that demands that the victims' contribution to history is acknowledged both unambiguously and "once and for all" (*navzgeda*). In Russia, the commemoration of war is indeed far from triumphalist rhetoric and the glorification of "death in the field"; however, this death is, unlike in Europe, remembered in its monumentality, and not dissolved in a game of intelligible heterogeneity.

## Conclusion

One might ask oneself whether it is a legitimate undertaking at all to relate the changes in the forms of commemoration of World War II in Russia and Germany, so obviously irreconcilable are they. On one hand, there is the nation-state that is the legal successor of the Nazi dictatorship, which for many years has been included in western structures, and which, precisely through this inclusion, increasingly sees itself as being called upon to confront its own macro-criminal past, not only in the war, but also, and most importantly, in the Holocaust. On the other hand, there is the multicultural hulk of a former empire, which sees the commemoration of World War II as threatening to that of the Great Patriotic War, against which the meaning of every form of commemoration must be measured. How should one compare the memories of the descendants of "the nation of perpetrators" (Rheinhard Kosselleck) with those of the descendants of the "victorious people" (*narod-pobeditel* – Aleksandr Panarin)?<sup>24</sup> It is precisely the incomparability and particularity of commemorative forms that are forced into relation with one another through international commemoration ceremonies: in the future they will have to be compared, if an international commemoration of World War II and the "Great Patriotic War" is to remain possible. Through this

remembrance, which includes state visits by politicians, there arise not only translation problems between national and international commemoration — the practices of commemoration that have existed up to now will also, in hindsight, become problematic.

In this respect, Germany and Russia can be compared. In the German public arena, the task of commemoration aligns with the liberal–left tradition of interpretation that places the victims of Nazi Germany and the historical incomprehensibility of their fate in a position of central importance. This becomes problematic through a retrospective, internationally sanctioned interpretation, according to which the victims are measured against a basically desirable present–day situation, in which the former perpetrators and the former victors are united. Thus, the difference between victim and perpetrator, upon which the commemorative practise of the *Bundesrepublik* feeds — from the argument about who the real victims were and who the real perpetrators, to the modernization of the concept of perpetrator by the replacement of "guilt" with "responsibility" — becomes visible. In Normandy, Schröder re–coded the victors as saviours, and thus the perpetrators not as the defeated, nor even the victims, but as the saved.

The Soviet–Russian culture of interpretation of the Great Patriotic War was from the beginning also hybrid and protean, and was also nevertheless based upon central differentiation: that between the victorious and the defeated. Victorious were the people and the party, defeated were the Germans and European fascism. Immediately after the end of the war, the Soviet Union was a "Society of Faith and Hope" for peace after victory over the barbarism of National Socialist Germany.<sup>25</sup> In the conflict between the East and West since Brezhnev, "the saved" have taken the place of "the defeated" in the official commemoration of the war. Their having been saved justified Soviet hegemony in central eastern Europe.

This association of the "victors" and the "saved" was, at the end of the Soviet Union, challenged by a third differentiation: that between perpetrators and victims. Suddenly, anti–Soviet intellectuals interpreted both the victors and the saved as victims of the Soviet regime. The extent of the shock this challenge delivered to the post–Soviet culture of interpretation can be gauged by the fact that the lines of conflict it caused are still present. As Utkins's article demonstrates, the terms of the debate are currently playing a role in criticism of the internationalization of the commemoration of the Great Patriotic War: the criticism of the nullification of the moral status as victor, one based on the sacrifice made by the Soviet people.

In Germany and in Russia, there are tendencies to problematize the new, international embedding of commemoration. These include the call to integrate existing interpretations into a new framework: the memory of a form of commemoration that smoothes over the conflict between memory and meta–memory. Here, Germany has it easier than Russia in terms of international inclusion: the perspective is one of incorporation into existing commemoration ceremonies, which are then re–interpreted into joint, progressively–oriented projects. Nevertheless, many see in this a danger. It cannot be ruled out that the embedding of German commemorative practice in an international context will lead to the further domestication of the Liberal–Left commemoration paradigm. This paradigm, at whose heart lies the insistence that responsibility for the consequences of the German macro–crimes must be the measure of all German politics, is being weakened by the unanimous, and therefore politically inconsequential, consensus that

Auschwitz is "somehow" important for Germany.

Russia, conversely, sees it necessary to assert itself within the framework of international remembrance ceremonies. The straightforward incorporation of Russia into the existing international commemorative context is rejected on the normative basis of the traditional commemoration of the Great Patriotic War, since incorporation would amount to the symbolic relegation of the Soviet Union's and Russia's service to history. From this perspective, the internationalization of commemoration leads to the extension of the commemorating public, which must agree to a particular interpretation of the war and the Great Victory — one that cannot be relativized. The problem is no longer one of anti-Soviet criticism within Russia itself. Now, the Great Victory must be defended against practically the entire world — with the exception, as irony would have it, of Germany, which does not represent a central reference point in post-Soviet commemoration culture. Such a disappointment-prone expectation on the international (western) public means that frustrations that have emanated from — and will continue to emanate from — international remembrance ceremonies are pre-programmed.

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- <sup>1</sup> Elena Zubkova, "Obshchestvo, vyshedshee iz voyny: Russkie i nemcy v 1945 godu" [A Society Just Out of War: Russians and Germans in 1945], *Otechestvennaya istoriya* [Russian History], 3/1995, 90–100.
- <sup>2</sup> See George L. Mosse, *Fallen Soldiers: Reshaping the Memory of the World Wars*, New York and Oxford 1990.
- <sup>3</sup> Pierre Nora (ed.), *Les lieux de mémoire*, 3 vols., Paris 1985, 1986, 1992.
- <sup>4</sup> "Russisch-französische Freundschaftsgesten. Einladung für Putin zu den D-Day-Feiern", *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 5 Apr. 2004.
- <sup>5</sup> Gerhard Schröder, "Warum das freie Deutschland heute gemeinsam mit den Alliierten der Landung in der Normandie gedenkt", *Bild am Sonntag*, 6 Jun. 2004.
- <sup>6</sup> [www.germany-info.org/relaunch/info/publications/d\\_nachrichten/2004/0406077pol1.html](http://www.germany-info.org/relaunch/info/publications/d_nachrichten/2004/0406077pol1.html)  
[www.fr-aktuell.de/uebersicht/alle\\_dossiers/zeitgeschichte/60\\_jahre\\_d\\_day/?cnt=449471](http://www.fr-aktuell.de/uebersicht/alle_dossiers/zeitgeschichte/60_jahre_d_day/?cnt=449471).
- <sup>7</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>8</sup> See Andreas Langenohl, "In der PR-Abteilung der Deutschland-AG? Über den Entschädigungsfonds für NS-Zwangsarbeiter", in H. Willems (ed.), *Die Gesellschaft der Werbung*, Opladen 2002, 301–322.
- <sup>9</sup> See the selection of international press echoes at [www.newscontent.de/archive/00001160.html](http://www.newscontent.de/archive/00001160.html).
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