

# A b s t r a c t s

## Faces of Remembrance Politics of Memory in Eastern Europe

Robert Traba  
(Non-)return

Poland, 1945: Event and remembrance

Polish society has not processed the trauma of the war. As a result, emotions spill over into bitter conflicts when it comes to history and remembrance. The year of 1945 stands for the return from the horrors of war. However, society was marked by poverty, disintegration and atomisation for years to come. Institutions had fallen apart, the social order and the system of values were shattered. The only experience that bound people together was a sense of Polishness defined along pre-war lines. However, countless Poles had lost their homes in the east of the country, while others were forcibly repatriated to the western territories, which were referred to as the "Recovered Territories". And among those few Polish Jews who had managed to survive the Holocaust, some were confronted with the experience of being unwelcome guests in their own houses, which their Polish neighbours had made their home. In reality, there is no such thing as a "return" of the Poles. Trauma and taboos have settled like sediment in Polish society. They demand to be examined and processed.

Mischa Gabowitsch  
Russia's Arlington?

The Federal Military Memorial Cemetery near Moscow

In June 2013, Russia's first national cemetery was opened on the edge of Moscow. The draft plans from 2003 envisaged a park-like landscape cemetery which adopted elements of the Arlington National Cemetery in the United States. However, the results of the competition were quietly overturned. Instead of the space designed by the architects for quiet mourning and funerals for all ranks, sculptors created a cemetery in the Soviet monumental style for heroes and generals. The Ministry of Defence, which played a decisive role in the process, had no interest in breaking with tradition. The new cemetery pays homage to a pan-historical militarism in which the history of Russia is portrayed as a series of heroic victories.

## Julie Fedor Russia's "Immortal Regiment"

### The state, society and the mobilisation of the dead

On 9 May 2015, millions of people in Russia marched through the streets carrying enlarged photos of former Red Army soldiers. The "Immortal Regiment" march, which has now become an annual event, is more than just a new form of remembrance of the Great Patriotic War. It is a succinct reminder of several key issues facing Russian society today. The idea for the march came from within society, with the loosely coordinated initiatives aiming to offer relatives an opportunity to express their grief for those they had lost. However, the state recognised the potential of such an event and exploited it to its own benefit. Private remembrance is now used to oil the wheels of the regime. Trauma is converted into triumph, and grief into aggression. This social movement, the authenticity of which has now become a mere simulation, serves to legitimise the Putin regime and its policy of violence in the post-Soviet space.

## Anti-Semitism as fact and stereotype Jews in Ukraine: an interview with Josef Zisels

Since Ukraine gained independence, the Jewish population in the country has experienced a period of profound change. "Soviet Jews", whose identity was to a great extent defined by the state's and society's anti-Semitism, initially became "Jews from Ukraine", who led a kind of insular existence, and then "Ukrainian Jews". The latter combine a vivid awareness of the Jewish religion, culture and tradition with unconditional loyalty to an independent, democratic Ukraine. Today, the anti-Semitism that was so prevalent in the Soviet Union no longer plays a role in Ukraine. Anti-Semitic attitudes as part of a xenophobic worldview can be found among right-wing radical forces, although their influence overall is limited. They are counteracted by education measures and the level of commitment that the younger generation of Ukrainian Jews feel towards their country.

## Vladislav Inozemtsev Ukrainian curse, Siberian blessing Russia's regionalism and its colonial origins

The breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991 is strongly reminiscent of the disintegration of the European colonial empires. Many of the problems that Russia faces today are related to the country's colonial past: the loss of territories conquered during the 19th century, the precarious state of the few remaining dependencies, and the explosive population and administrative structure in the Russian Federation. The greatest challenges lie in the North Caucasus and in Russia's relationship with Siberia and Ukraine. For Russia, the latter is both a break-away colony and a former centre of colonisation. The economic significance of Siberia, meanwhile, is reflected neither in the living standards of the local population, nor in the political importance of the region. Russia's future will be decided by developments in the socio-economic conditions in Siberia.

Hannes Adomeit

At an all-time low

USA-Russia relations under Trump and Putin

At the beginning of his period in office, Donald Trump announced the start of better relations with Russia. Similar intentions had also been expressed by several US presidents – but without result. Hopes in Moscow that Trump might be prepared to agree to Putin's demands to the disadvantage of the EU have proven groundless. While Russia may benefit from the chaos surrounding domestic policy in the US and from Trump's erratic foreign policy, there is no indication that the structural conflict between the US and Russia can be resolved. Moscow also continues to pursue its anti-western confrontation course.

Matthias Dembinski, Hans-Joachim Spanger

Obligatory détente

A response to the critics of Plural Peace

From the fierce criticism to which our "Guidelines for a new Russia policy" have been subjected, it is clear that opinions differ when it comes to Russia. Yet the security policy conflict between Russia and the West remains so dangerous that we are being forced to find ways of de-escalating it. As was the case during the period of détente, the first step is to acknowledge the regulatory differences with Russia instead of denying their existence. This entails strengthening constitutive standards of international law rather than putting them up for negotiation. Instead of exporting democracy, we should trust in the impact of a positive model; instead of organising security against one another in the conflict zone between Russia and the EU, we should regulate it through mutual agreement and cultivate economic and humanitarian relations.

Kerstin Pezoldt, Tatiana A. Loukicheva, Irina V. Vorobeva

Russia's middle class in crisis

Shopping and consumption trends in flux

The economic crisis is threatening the existence of the relatively young middle class in Russia, bringing a loss of income and even jobs. The middle class, which used to be considered one of the guarantees of economic growth in Russia, is shrinking. The deterioration in levels of income is reflected, among other things, in changes in shopping and consumption trends. As a result, businesses from Russia and abroad are being forced to adapt to the new conditions.

Alfred Sproede

The revolution epic, salvation folklore and the literary deconstruction of Utopia

Notes on Andrei Platonov's novel *Chevengur*

In his novel *Chevengur*, Andrei Platonov explores the crisis of revolutionary expectation. He takes sides with the revolutionaries and defends their eccentric world and uncensored language against 'progressive' historical philosophy. In the half-shadows of dialogue and free indirect speech, he questions revolutionary force and dogmatic forms of Utopia. *Chevengur* confronts the Great Tomorrow with medieval legends about Alexander the Great and his plans for global conquest. The novel's characters act against the background of stories about the hubris of world rulers. Platonov also uses the Alexander legend to create an epic model which is able to withstand the crisis of the novel form after 1917. The title of the novel, "*Chevengur*", ultimately also refers to Central Asian Alexander folklore.