

# The formation and transformation of historical memory of the Second World War in the West and East Slavic states

- non occupé pendant la seconde guerre mondiale
- occupés par l'Allemagne
- occupés par l'Allemagne et l'URSS
- occupés par l'URSS, l'Allemagne et l'URSS



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# The Second World War and its chronology for Slavic States

- Czechoslovakia (occupied and divided on 14 March 1939 – 11 May 1945)
- Poland (1 September 1939 – 8 May 1945)
- Slovak Republic (1 September 1939 – 8 May 1945)
- Soviet Union (17 September 1939 22 June 1941 – 2 September 1945)
- Belarus, Ukraine (as a part of the USSR) (17 September 1939 – 9 May 1945)

- What is historical memory?
- Chronology of memory formation phases of the World War II (in the example of the USSR and Russia) *Formation of the historical memory about the war in the period of socialism*
- Peculiarities of the development of the memory about the Second World War in Belarus - *The memory about the war as an instrument for the formation of new identities in post-socialist period*
- Memory about the War in the Western and Eastern Slavs - similarities and differences
- Game on the recognition of cases of different models of historical memory
- Final conclusions

# What is historical memory as an issue of the public history and historical politics?

- **Historical memory** as based on emotional representations of the image of the past, which is reproduced at all social levels, and broadcasted via the main communication channels (family traditions, social institutions, education, media, historical politics, popular culture).
- The result of the historical memory operating is not knowledge, but cultural/historical identity - confidence in the correct interpretation of historical events that have an impact on the present.
- The division in the perception of the Second World War heritage was laid during the Cold War.
- In the newly created states or countries that became independent after the collapse of communism, a new stage of dogmatization of the past, built on the level of **state policy**, began.
- Public sector structures are capable for **reflexive work** with historical memory taking into account individual experience, which may be different from the conventional.
- Maurice Halbwachs. *La Mémoire collective* (1950) Jan & Aleida Assmann
- *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

# Memory about the War in the Soviet Union (by Irina Tscherbakova)

- 1945-1955
- Soviet power constructs its image of the war, or rather, the victory, the main organizer and creator of which was Stalin. This image was reinforced by created during the war propagandistic myths about the heroes who sacrificed themselves for the victory.
- Exclusion from the official memory the mentions about Holocaust, prisoners of war, Ostarbeiters, camp prisoners, the population of the occupied territories, some national, social groups, women.
- <http://urokiistorii.ru/current/dates/3222>



# Khrushchev Thaw (1953-1964)

- Some shift from the Victory to the suffering and the tragedy of the people in the war, the emergence of stories in the genre of "trench truth"
- Attempts to immortalize the memory of the victims of the Jews

# Brezhnev era - "The celebration with tears in the eyes" (1965-1982)



- Restoration of the Victory Day celebrations in 1965
- The massive construction of the memory of the war
- The propaganda of the dominant contribution to the victory from the side of the USSR
- Hiding statistics about the losses and repressions, the initial period of the war is almost not disputable.
- Ritualization and sanctification of commemorative practices (parades, a minute of silence, the meeting with the veterans)

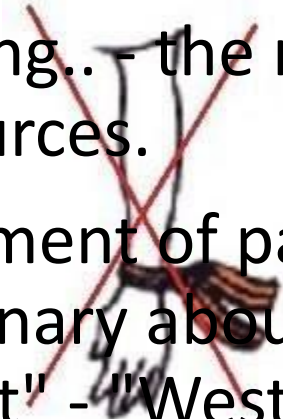
# Perestroika changes in commemorative practices.

- An open public debate about the hidden and unpleasant plots of the war (repression, the victims, the causes of injuries and losses)
- Criticism of Soviet foreign policy before the war (the division of spheres of influence in Central Europe with the Nazi Germany)
- The insult of feelings of veterans and the representatives of older generations, who bore all the hardships of war.



# The redesign of Soviet memory practices after 1995.

- May 9, 1995 - The return of the Parade to Red Square
- The memory of the war is included in the creation of a new positive image of the Soviet past.
- The living witnesses of the war are leaving.. - the memory about the war is broadcast by media sources.
- The memory about the war as an instrument of patriotic education and provoking new conflict binary about identities ("winners" - "occupants", "East" - "West", "Patriots" - "Collaborants").



# Ideologema "Great Patriotic War" in the BSSR:

- translation of general Soviet official myth
- memory formation based on the idea of "partisan republic" (1960s - generations of veterans and partisans coming to power)
- The "myth of the guerrilla" (Michael Urban, 1986): The successful combination of the Soviet version of the official memory of the war and its "national" component.



# Independent Belarusian state, Republic of Belarus (1991). War in the concepts of the national identity:

- Nationalist concept: Belarusian national movement operated in the collaboration with the Nazis. After the liberation of Belarus by Soviet troops (1944), its representatives have emigrated to the West, linking historical characters of the Belarusian national liberation and accusations of collaboration.
- The official concept - contribution of Belarus to the victory is huge. Belarus suffered the greatest losses in percentage terms (from a quarter to a third of the population). The collaborators are betrayers of Belarusian nation. Belarus has been historically threatened by the West. Liberation of Belarus was the beginning of construction of modern Belarus, developed and industrial.
- The war had a decisive significance to erase all pre-war attempts to create national, not-soviet identity.

# Belarusian Great Patriotic War Museum (since 1944)



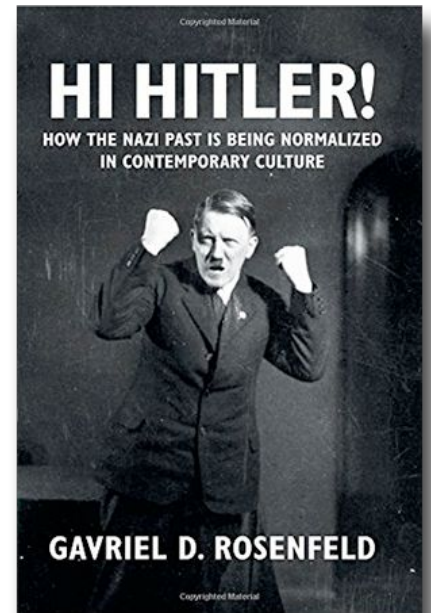
# 1. The end of the war - the beginning of the contemporary period of history

- Total character of the influence of the war and post-war settlement on the fate of each family
- The scale of the postwar migrations
- End of the War - the beginning/(recovery) of the of the socialist period
- Winning the War - the main moral achievement of the whole nation
- Liberation 1944/45 - as a cornerstone of the historical legitimacy of new-born in 1990s nation-states (Belarus, Slovakia).



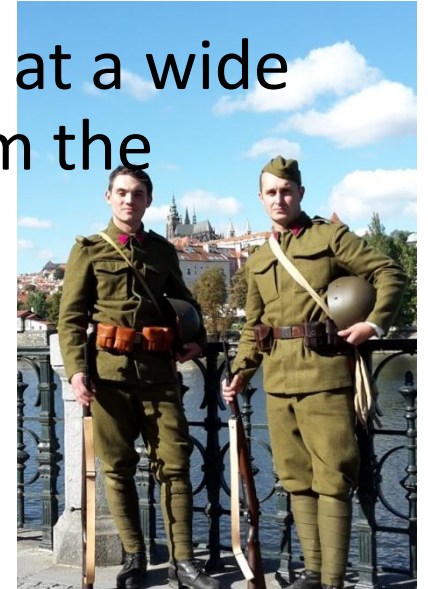
## 2. War and the memory of it as a defining subject of public speech.

- "As an online discussion grows longer, the probability of a comparison involving Nazism or Hitler approaches 1" (Mike Godwin's rule of Nazi analogies, 1990) – Social media dimension.
- Media popularity of historical personalities (Hitler, Stalin)  
Gavriel D. Rosenfeld. *Hi Hitler! How the Nazi Past Is Being Normalized in Contemporary Culture* (2015)
- Bans on Nazi symbols and rehabilitation of Nazism (Russia (2014), Belarus (in plans)) / Bans on the denial of the Holocaust (Czech Republic, Poland, Germany, Austria, Russia (2014)).



### 3. Commercialization of the memory of the war and its new rebirth in the media.

- - Filming blockbusters, militants, TV serials aimed at a wide audience, while the theme of war disappears from the scope of the author's non-commercial cinema.
- Sale of related artifacts of war (medals, posters, emblematic decorations).
- Historical reconstruction shows - *week-end recreation infrastructure* (the Stalin's Line (2005), the Beneš's Line)







**О ЛИНИИ СТАЛИНА**

## «Линия Сталина» как система УРов



- Посещение комплекса
- Стрельба из охолощённого оружия
- Катание на технике
- Корпоративный отдых
- Детская площадка
- Стрельба из боевого оружия
- Кемпинг
- Техника в аренду
- Обзорные полёты на вертолёте МИ-2
- Аудиогид izi.TRAVEL
- Игры и квесты для детей
- Лазертаг

**О ЛИНИИ СТАЛИНА**

- СХЕМА КОМПЛЕКСА →
- «ЛИНИЯ СТАЛИНА» КАК СИСТЕМА УРОВ →
- СХЕМА МИНСКОГО УРА →

## 4. Attempts to historicize the war - the creation of an all-out maximally-detailed view of the past. With the aim of no one was forgotten.

- Searching teams, the search for the remains of fallen soldiers.
- Creation of archives of oral history.
- Creation of memorial monuments maps.
- Detailed (human) history of the city in the war (every street, every house, every victim), war-city anthropology studies.



# 5. Selectivity and silencing / forgetting of certain aspects of the war

For Belarus:

- The outbreak of war in 1939 and the fate of Western Belarus (its accelerated Sovietization (collectivization, etc.) before and after the war)
- Holocaust (Death of "civil Soviet citizens", not Jews) and the Belarusian context
- The problem of collaboration
- The problem of Belarusian nationalism
- The difficulties of the interpretation of individual experience in the guerrilla movement, which differs from the official version of history-Soviet guerrilla movement (including the actions of national and anti-sovietic partisan movements)

# For Russia:

- Allied relations with Germany on the eve of the war
- The problem is unpreparedness of the USSR to the war and the disastrous defeat at its early periods
- The victory at the cost of enormous human casualties (military and civilian)
- Violence of Soviet soldiers abroad
- Establishing pro-Soviet regimes in Central Europe immediately after their liberation.

# For Czech Republic:

- The equivalence of discourses about the war and the period of socialism (Two "totalities")
- The criticism of the pro-Soviet resistance movement (Julius Fučík)
- The lack of consensus in society about the forced mass deportation of the Germans after the war.

# For Slovakia:

- The complexity of the recognition of the fact that in the initial stages of the war Slovak state - was a faithful ally of Hitler
- Participation of former functionaries of the pro-fascist parties in the anti-fascist uprising in 1944 and the subsequent communist building.
- Difficulties reconciliation between the Slovaks and the Hungarians.

# For Ukraine (controversial plots for public memory)

- The problem of collaboration, the Holocaust, and the nationalist-oriented guerrilla movement (Bandera)
- The problem of mutual genocide in the Polish-Ukrainian borderlands - in Galicia and Volyn
- Technogenous catastrophes which have occurred during the Soviet retreat in 1941 (mining houses in Kiev, undermining the Dnieper)

# For Poland (controversial plots for public memory)

- Collapse of the Poland in 1939.
- Holocaust on Polish lands in the context of the pre-war and post-war anti-Semitism
- Clashes between national (Armia Krajowa) and pro-soviet (Armia Ludowa) insurgents
- The failure of Warsaw uprising (1944)
- Soviet troops entering Poland: occupation or liberation?



# 6. The reproducibility of the traumatic experience of war in contemporary memory

- Sufferings, losses, and heroic contribution to the victory - the main values of the late Soviet discourse (*Nancy Ries. Russian Talk, Culture and Conversation during Perestroika 1997*)
- Fixation and belletrization of traumatic experience (*Svetlana Aleksievich*)
- Cultivation of important for the development of identities injuries (Munich Agreement 1938 (Czech Republic), Katyn shooting 1940 (Poland), 22 June 1941 (Russia), Khatyn (Belarus), Warsaw Uprising 1944, Slovak national uprising 1944)
- Cultivation of injury determines the attitude to other countries and nations.



# World War II casualties (Slavic States)

Country	Total population 1.1.1939	Total deaths	Deaths as % of 1939 population
Belarus	9050000	2290000	25,3%
Russia	110100000	13950000	12,7%
Ukraine	41340000	6850000	16,3%
Czechoslovakia (in postwar 1945-1992 borders)	14612000	340,000 to 355,000	2,33 - 2,43%
Poland (within 1939 borders)	34849000	6000000	17,22%

# 7. Calendar cyclicity of historical memory functioning

- June 22 - 9 May in post-Soviet states,
- 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, 75+ anniversaries of the key events (permanent 5 years cycle).
- Dynamics of key memorable dates since 1989:

- Belarus
  - July 3 - Liberation of Belarus (1996)
- Slovak Republic
  - August 29 - Day of the Slovak National Uprising (abolished in the Czech Republic)
- Czech Republic
  - May, 8 - Victory Day (May, 9 in 1947-1991).
  - May 5 - Day of the Prague Uprising (ceased to be a national holiday in the Czech Republic)
  - June 10 - Day of the destruction of Lidice (2006)
- Poland

## 8. The post-war geopolitical order and preservation of post-war borders in front of new challenges in 2010s

- Historical memory - as a weapon of ideological wars with neighboring nations.
- Disintegrating role of historical memory of the war in contemporary Russia.

# Creating the installation of the concentration camp in the city square.



“Immortal regiment” - the march with the portraits of the war veterans.



# Films about the eviction of the Germans



# Creating a computer /browser game on a WWII topic.



Введите запрос



The Nazis came to our apartment.





Films about the annihilation of the civilians.



# Singing wartime songs by pop stars



# Special School course “History of the Great Patriotic War”



# Staging the liberation from the Germans by US troops



# Comics about the war



Soviet tank painted in pink color



Main non-religious holiday is directly related to the events of war



Slogan "Thanks grandpa for the Victory!"





# The Stickers for auto “To Berlin!”



# Reality-show "The holidays in occupation"



# 75117 videos named “Victory day”

The image shows a screenshot of the Rutube website's search results page. The search bar at the top contains the text "Поиск" and "день победы". The results are displayed in a grid of four video thumbnails. The left sidebar contains navigation options such as "Моя Старонка", "Навіны", "Паведамленьні", "Сябры", "Суполкі", "Фатаздымкі", "Аўдыёзапісы", "Відэазапісы", "Гульні", "Закладкі", "Дакумэнты", "Плзень 2016", and "Last".

Відэазапісы 75117

Поиск день победы

**Лев Лещенко и Comedy Club - День По...**  
Comedy Club  
65 707 праглядаў · год таму  
3:32

**День Победы**  
Первый канал  
15 295 праглядаў · год таму  
3:55

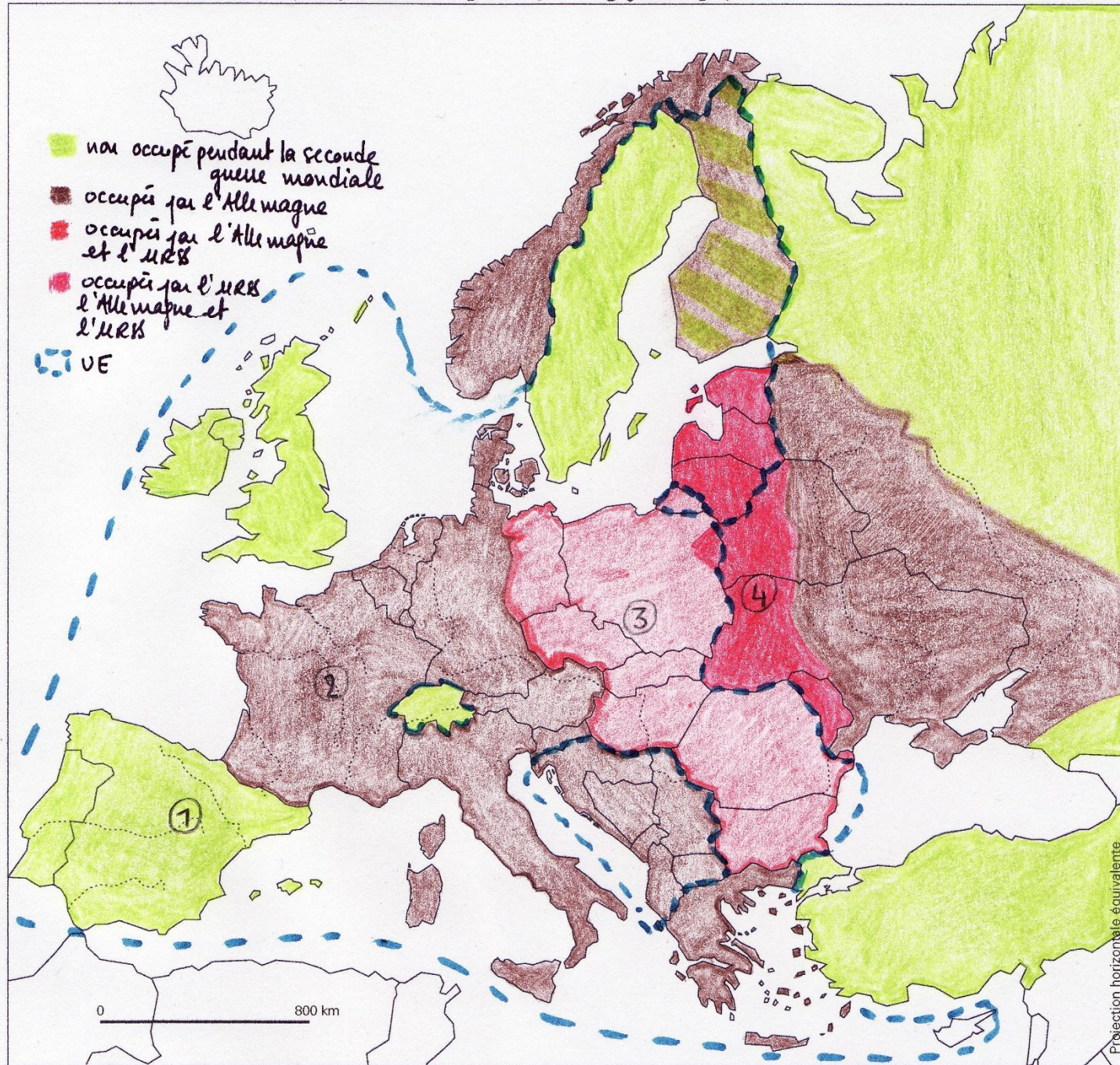
**Что такое День Победы?**  
Меньше Трёх  
1:05

**День Победы 9 мая 1945 года**  
Православный журнал "Фома"  
3:57

# Final considerations: what drives and determines the formation of the historical memory of the war in various Slavic countries?

- 1. The memory about the war has a number of layers, layers, intensity of which is different for every country (socialistic, post-socialistic, state ideological, historian, media-communicative, toponimical, anthropological, family). But it could be divided into two approaches: *post-sovietic* traditions and the European culture of memory.
- 2. Diverted ethnic situation on the Slavic lands could not preserve all the layers of memory of World War II as a result of ethnic migrations, the state national politics and ideology.

# 4 ZONES MEMORIELLES EN EUROPE?





# Final considerations

- 3. Eastern (post-Soviet) model of historical memory is aimed at the harmonization and redesign of the Soviet concept of the War. Nevertheless, such an approach is disintegrating and conflictual for society, because the memory of the war is not only shaped by official media, but also is discussed by public institutions.
- 4. For the Western model, which Western Slavs tried to apply, in general, the appeal to the individual traumatic experience (as a part of a collective experience) is more important. The discussions and reflexion allows to create a certain solidarity which promotes national-oriented myths about the War.

- 5. Cultural memory about the war in Eastern Europe is broadcast with a wide range of tools. Among them - the preservation of the War-related place names in the cities, a large scale of war-related programs and movies on television content (8-10% on ordinary days), social discussions on topics of war and binarity "Russian" - "Western" in the Internet communities.



Thank you for your attention!

