

East European Memory Studies

Welcome to the first edition of our e-newsletter

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Welcome to *East European Memory Studies*, a new initiative designed to foster collaboration in and advance the boundaries of the emerging sub-discipline of East European Memory Studies. This monthly e-newsletter, produced by the collaborative research project 'Memory at War', aims to provide an interdisciplinary and transnational forum for news and events in the field.

We are keen to make contact with scholars working in East European Memory Studies, and welcome contributions to the newsletter. These might take the form of:

- ◆ information on research-in-progress;
- ◆ calls for papers;
- ◆ details on conferences and publications;
- ◆ news of funding and job opportunities in the field.

**TO SUBMIT AN ITEM OR TO
SIGN UP FOR OUR MAILING**

LIST: info@memoryatwar.org

News from 'Memory at War: Cultural Dynamics in Poland, Russia and Ukraine'

Memory at War is a transnational, transdisciplinary collaborative project investigating the cultural dynamics of the 'memory wars' currently raging in Poland, Russia and Ukraine. Employing a collaborative methodology grounded in the analytical and critical practices of the humanities, the project seeks to explore how public memory of twentieth-century traumas mediates the variety of wars in which East European nations develop in post-socialist space.

The University of Cambridge is leading this project, in conjunction with the Universities of Bergen, Helsinki, Tartu and Groningen. The project was launched in 2010 and will run for three years. It is funded by the Humanities in the European Research Area Joint Research Programme.



*Maria Mälksoo (Principal Investigator, Tartu) launches her book, **The Politics of Becoming European: A Study of Polish and Baltic Post-Cold War Security Imaginaries** (Routledge, 2010)*

News from 'Memory at War'

Cambridge

Events

Memory at War was launched in June with a workshop at King's College, Cambridge. The workshop featured a keynote lecture by Professor Jay Winter (Yale); a series of presentations by members of the *Memory at War* project outlining their work plans; and a special panel, 'Katyń: The Site and Events of Memory'. Presentations from the workshop can be accessed online at the project website.

Memory at War runs regular term-time seminars: the **East European Memory Studies Research Group** seminar at CRASSH in Cambridge; and **Europe East and West: Film, History and Mourning**. Speakers so far this term have included:

♦ **Nancy Condee** (Pittsburgh) on Russian memory, contemporary cinema and internal colonisation;

♦ **Harley Balzer** (Georgetown) on the evolution of the memory of the failed August 1991 coup in Russia; and

♦ **Dan Healey** (Swansea) on medicine in gulag memory.

Videos of all three can be found on our website.

Memory at War also organises occasional events on a range of themes. In early November, the Helsinki team will host a symposium on the film *The Soviet Story*; and Cambridge will be host to a symposium on Soviet cinema (details on all events below).

Website

The *Memory at War* website is now up and running: www.memoryatwar.org.

The website includes information on our research and events; video podcasts, articles,

conference papers and other resources.

Blog

The website also includes links to the project's blog: <http://cambridgeculturalmemory.blogspot.com/>

The blog serves as an interactive site for students and scholars with an interest in cultural memory in Eastern Europe. To apply to become a contributor, please email: info@memoryatwar.org.

Teaching

Alexander Etkind and **Harald Wydra** (Cambridge) have been successful in obtaining a Mellon Teaching Fellowship at CRASSH, which will enable them to run a new seminar, 'East European Memory Studies: An Emerging Sub-Discipline' in Lent Term (2011). For more information, visit www.crassh.cam.ac.uk.

Bergen

The Bergen-based research project 'Web Wars: Digital Diasporas and the Language of Memory' has launched its own website. Serving as the project's virtual home, www.web-wars.org will become a place where research results are shared, project news is announced, and conference plans are published. A discussion forum invites readers to share thoughts and ideas related to the project theme: the ongoing memory wars in Russian and Ukrainian social media.

Tartu

In May 2010, **Maria Mälksoo**, Senior Researcher at the Institute of Government and Politics at the University of Tartu, Estonia, and the principal investigator of the MAW sub-project 'The Power Politics of Memory in Eastern Europe: Securitising the Legacy of Communism in Poland, Russia, and Ukraine' gave an invited talk on the subject at the Estonian President's Academic Advisory Board meeting. This talk was later published in the Estonian foreign policy journal *Diplomaatia* (currently available in Estonian only at [http://www.diplomaatia.ee/index.php?id=242&no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=1145&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=559&cHash=259bb9ca22](http://www.diplomaatia.ee/index.php?id=242&no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=1145&tx_ttnews[backPid]=559&cHash=259bb9ca22)).

In June, Maria gave an invited lecture on her research topic to the doctoral students of the International Research Training Group 'Baltic Borderlands: Shifting Boundaries of Mind and Culture in the Borderlands of the Baltic Sea Region' visiting Tartu from the University of Greifswald, Germany. She also gave a paper, 'Nesting Orientalisms at War: World War II and the Memory War in Eastern Europe' at the *Orientalism at War*

conference held at the Nuffield College, Oxford University, 17-19 June. This paper is due to be published in a volume edited by the conference organisers Tarak Barkawi (Cambridge) and Keith Stanski (Oxford) in the Hurst Publishers & Columbia University Press Critical War Studies series. In August, Maria joined in the discussion on the role of history politics in Estonian-Russian relations with **Matti Jutila**, a MAW project colleague from Helsinki University visiting Tallinn with Helsinki Summer School students.

On 4-5 October, Maria gave a paper 'Memory as Ontological Security: Competing Securitisation of the Soviet Legacy in Eastern Europe' at the Nordic Network of Memory Studies workshop on 'Memory, History, Identity' at the University of Stavanger, Norway. The paper will be published in a conference volume by Lund University in 2011 and will serve as the conceptual platform for the MAW workshop at Tartu at the end of the next year.

DIARY OF EVENTS*In the UK...*

♦ 3 November, 5:00pm: **Dirk Uffelmann** (Passau), 'Divided Memory: Poland's Double Coloniality'; and **Julie Buckler** (Harvard), 'The Material of Culture: Russian Imperial Artifacts Playing Soviet and Post-Soviet Roles' (**East European Memory Studies Research Group seminar**, CRASSH, Cambridge)

♦ 4-5 November: **Memory and Post-War Russian Cinema**: Film Critics on the Front Lines (A Symposium in Honour of Maia Turovskaja) (Cambridge) (see page 6)

♦ 17 November, 5:00pm: **Volodymyr Kulyk** (Ukrainian Academy of Sciences), 'The Role of the Media in (Re)Shaping Historical Memory in Ukraine' (**East European Memory Studies Research Group seminar**, CRASSH, Cambridge)

♦ 23 November: **Europe East and West: Film, History and Mourning**, Cambridge) (details TBA)

♦ 1 December: **Georgiy Kasianov** (Ukrainian Academy of Sciences), 'The Great Famine of 1932-33 and the Holodomor: Memory, History, Identity and State-Building'; and **Meike Wulf** (Maastricht), 'Changing Memory Regimes in Eastern Europe' (**East European Memory Studies Research Group seminar**, CRASSH, Cambridge)

... and beyond

♦ 2-3 November, Memory at War Workshop on the Film *The Soviet Story* (Aleksanteri Institute, University of Helsinki) (see page 8)

More details on all these events can be found at: www.memoryatwar.org

NEW PUBLICATIONS

♦ Matilda Mroz, 'Restless Bodies, Buried Texts: Sikorski, The General, and the archive', *Studies in Eastern European Cinema*, 1:2 (2010)

♦ Harald Wydra, *Communism and the Emergence of Democracy* (Cambridge University Press, 2007; paperback edition to be released December 2010)

♦ Alexander Etkind and Mark Lipovetsky, 'The Salamander's Return: The Soviet Catastrophe and the Post-Soviet Novel', *Russian Studies in Literature* 46:4 (Fall 2010)

MAPPING MEMORY EVENTS IN THE EAST EUROPEAN SPACE OP-ED

Alexander Etkind

Presented to the Memory at War inaugural workshop,
June 2010, King's College, Cambridge



The image shows a protest banner in Poland: ‘The second month is passing [since the Smolensk catastrophe]; is this Poland, or is it Russia already?’. Image source: www.tokfm.pl

This project is a large collective enterprise. While all of us have individual agendas that are connected to the theme of the project, we are making a rare attempt to work together on what we call the emerging discipline of East European Memory Studies. Right now, such a framework does not exist. Borrowing from the rich tradition of European Memory Studies exemplified at this workshop by Jay Winter, we are going to test and adjust its concepts in our field.

One aim of this project is to triangulate national memories. In designing the project, we felt that three countries, Poland, Russia, and Ukraine, share some essential dimensions of post-socialist nation-building which is also, to an extent that we will investigate, memory-building. However, this work is not a comparative but rather an interactive study. In other words, we are not comparing the three cultures; rather, we are interested in monitoring their interactions, their dialogues and trialogues or, to stay with the military metaphor, those attacks, counter-attacks, and positional defenses that these countries develop against one another, sometimes alone and sometimes in a coalition against the third.

In order to represent this process, which is by nature continuous, we introduce the concept of the *memory event*, a re-discovery of the past that creates a rupture with its accepted cultural meaning. Memory events are

secondary to the historical events that they interpret, usually taking place many years or decades later. Sometimes, a memory event attains the significance of an historical event, therefore blurring the distinction between the two. But there are also a number of differences. History events – wars, revolutions, murders, discoveries, and so on – happen in the present and look to the future. Memory events happen in the present and look to the past. Their cultural genres are many: funerals, repasts, celebrations, revelations, historical debates, museum openings, geographical namings or rather, renamings, erections or destructions of monuments, particular kinds of court proceedings, media sensations, political decisions, archival findings, school textbooks, films, novels, exhibitions, websites, and public rituals. Historical events tend to be singular while memory events rarely or never are. They repeat themselves in new, creative but recognisable forms, which circulate in the cultural space and reverberate in time, producing peculiar patterns that are the objects of our study.

Original to our project, the concept of the memory event builds upon two conceptual sources, Alain Badiou’s ‘event’ and Pierre Nora’s ‘site of memory.’ In contrast to Nora’s sites of memory, memory events are defined temporally, as moments of the transformation of the public sphere, rather than spatially, as fixed locations on national territory. While sites of memory simulate eternity,

memory events produce volatile effects that generate secondary waves and aftershocks, and eventually crystallise in common cultural symbols. In Badiou's philosophy, events are juxtaposed with situations. Arising sporadically from situations, events are explosive; they transform situations and shape new ones. In this project, we assert that cultural memory evolves in a series of explosive events and is in turn shaped by these events. Some memory events occur at sites of memory, such as the Mausoleum. Other events are dispersed over a huge cultural space, occurring in the mass media, film, or on the internet. Memory events have a multimedia nature. They are signifiers and they develop syntagmatic relations among themselves that are independent of the signified historical events. They have their own dynamics, which have little to do with the actual character of the signified historical events.

Memory events are simultaneously acts *and* products of memory. They have a tendency to serial repetition, but the character of this repetition variegates. They always have their authors and agents – initiators or even enthusiasts of memory – who lead the production of these collective events in the same way as film directors make their films. There are also promoters of memory and there are, no doubt, its censors and foes. As multimedia products, memory events feature a permanent interaction between their 'hardware' (sites, monuments, etc.) and their 'software' (historical, literary, and other texts). Like a computer that depends on the interaction between its hardware and software, cultural memory is dependent on the balance between sites and events, monuments and

texts, traces of the past and stories about it. But there is also a third component of memory events, which I call the ghostware. In order to render horrifying pasts that resist representation, memory takes non-representational forms. The silence that Jay Winter spoke of at this workshop is one type of non-representational memory; ghosts, monsters and similar fantasies, is another.

Memory events are often initiated by private persons, but the events belong to the public sphere. There are two empirical questions that are connected to this speculation. First, is the sphere of national memory similar to or different from what Jurgen Habermas described as the public sphere? Another empirical question is, if we allow that cultural memory is a kind of public sphere, is it a national or transnational one? In a recent essay, the American philosopher Nancy Frazer gives a skeptical account of the development of the transnational public sphere, which does not match the Habermasian criteria of legitimacy and efficacy. A solution could be found in dissecting the public sphere into sectors, such as the sphere of memory, or event themes, such as the memory of the Katyń massacre. As we will see at tomorrow's panel session on Katyń, such memory events approach the normative idea of the transnational public sphere.

As we see here, memory events are necessarily intertextual. Subsequent events refer to previous ones and all of them refer to the foundational event in the series. The serial nature of memory events blurs the intuitive distinction between acts

and products of memory. As acts, memory events can be described as performatives; they change how people remember, imagine, and talk about the past. If so, we can apply to memory events some ideas from Habermas' theory of communicative action. In my adjusted version, the power of a memory event depends on its validity claims, i.e. whether the community perceives it as a true description of history; on its originality claims, i.e. whether the community perceives it as new and different from the accepted version of the past; and on its identity claims, i.e. whether the community perceives the changing vision of the past as central to its identity. The last aspect is of course the most problematic, but we will have the opportunity to debate these ideas.

MORE: For more presentations from the Memory at War June 2010 workshop, visit our website: www.memoryatwar.org.

MEMORY AND POST-WAR RUSSIAN CINEMA: FILM CRITICS ON THE FRONT LINES

A symposium in honour of Maia Turovskaia

4-5 November 2010, Cambridge



Forthcoming event

Maia Turovskaia in the UK

The distinguished Russian film critic **Maia Turovskaia** will be in Sheffield and Cambridge, 30 October-5 November. On this occasion film scholars from across the UK will gather in Cambridge on 4-5 November to celebrate the ongoing influence of Turovskaia's work and the filmmakers most central to her critical practice, at a symposium organised in her honour: *Memory and Post-War Russian Cinema: Film Critics on the Front Lines*.

In addition to Turovskaia, confirmed participants include Philip Cavendish, Jenny Chamarette, Ian Christie, Julian Graffy, Jeremy Hicks, Susan Larsen, Matilda Mroz, and Emma Widdis. A programme is below. The conference is sponsored jointly by the Department of Slavonic Studies, the Memory at War project, Trinity College, and Fitzwilliam College.

The role and evolution of Soviet film criticism during the long Thaw (1954-68) has received little critical attention. Yet the official Soviet film press, and the generation of young film critics who wrote in the late 1950s and 1960s, provide a revealing index of a culture in flux -- the evolution of new cinematic codes and critical discourses, encounters with Western filmmakers and film practices, and a re-evaluation of Soviet film history.

One of the two or three most important critics of her generation, Maia Turovskaia played a key role in all these transformations. An observant analyst of both Soviet and Western film practices, Turovskaia championed the work of her embattled contemporaries, most notably Marlen Khutsiev and Andrei Tarkovskii, and introduced Soviet readers to the work of -- among others -- Michelangelo Antonioni, Susan Sontag, and feminist film critics. She has also scripted or co-scripted several documentaries, chief among the groundbreaking *Ordinary Fascism* (1965), and curated a wide range of film programmes and exhibitions on Soviet cinema, particularly that of the Stalin era. Originally trained as a theatre critic and dramaturg, Turovskaia has also written extensively about innovations in Soviet and West European stage history, with a particular interest in Chekhov and Brecht.

Attendance and refreshments (coffee, lunch and tea) on 5 November will be free, but it is important that all participants register if they wish to attend, by contacting slavon@hermes.cam.ac.uk.

We will book rooms at very good rates for anyone who wishes to stay on the Thursday night preceding the symposium (when Turovskaia will present a short film programme and introduce a screening of Marlen Khutsiev's *July Rain* [1966]). Some funding may be available to support graduate student travel and accommodation; please ask about this on application.



MEMORY & POST-WAR RUSSIAN CINEMA

4-5 November 2010

PROGRAMME

ENQUIRIES:

slavon@hermes.cam.ac.uk

Thursday 4 November Film screenings

◆ 3:00pm: 'SovAM: Hollywood in Moscow (the 1930s)'. Screening of a short film by Maia Turovskaia and Vladimir Papernyi. Introduction and comments by Maia Turovskaia (in Russian with consecutive translation)
Winstanley Theatre,
Trinity College

◆ 7:30pm: Screening of *July Rain* (*Iul'skii dozhd'*, 1966, dir. Marlen Khutsiev; subtitled in English), introduced by Maia Turovskaia
Gordon Cameron Theatre,
Fitzwilliam College

Friday 5 November Memory and Post-War Russian Cinema:

A symposium in honour of Maia Turovskaia

Winstanley Theatre,
Trinity College

◆ 9:30am: Introduction: Ian Christie

◆ 10:00am: **Film Criticism and Film Practice during the Thaw:** Emma Widdis, Alexander Etkind, and Philip Cavendish on Iutkevich's *Lace*, Kozintsev's *Hamlet*, and Shepitko's *Wings*

◆ 11:15am: Tea and coffee

◆ 11:30am: Roundtable and group discussion of *July Rain* (*Iul'skii dozhd'*, 1966, dir. Marlen Khutsiev) with Jenny Chamarette, Susan Larsen, Maia Turovskaia

◆ 12:45pm: Light lunch

◆ 2:00pm: Moderated discussion with Maia Turovskaia (in Russian, with consecutive translation)

◆ 3:30pm: Tea and coffee

◆ 3:45pm: **The Legacy of Thaw-era Film Criticism and Film Practice:** Matilda Mroz, Julian Graffy, and Jeremy Hicks on Tarkovsky's *Mirror*, Sokurov's *Days of Eclipse*, and Romm's *Ordinary Fascism*

◆ 5:00pm: Closing remarks: Julian Graffy

Participants are warmly invited to stay on for the **Third Annual Cambridge Festival of Ukrainian Film, which commences Friday evening, 7:00pm, at Cambridge Arts Picturehouse. Films are in Ukrainian and Russian with English subtitles. Admission is free with registration at www.CambridgeUkrainianStudies.org**



HELSINKI SYMPOSIUM 'THE SOVIET STORY'

2-3 November 2010

Helsinki event **The Soviet Story**

On 2-3 November the Helsinki *Memory at War* team is hosting a workshop on *The Soviet Story*, a documentary film directed by Latvian Edvīns Šnore in 2008 and financially supported by the conservative Union for Europe of Nations group of the European Parliament. An exceptionally partisan and anti-Soviet film, *The Soviet Story* has acted as an important stimulus in the recent and ongoing 'history wars' between Russia and the former Soviet republics and 'satellites' – Ukraine, the Baltic States (especially Latvia and Estonia), Georgia, and Poland.

The Soviet Story figures as an illuminating response to the Russian film *Nazism Baltic-Style* (*Natsizm po-pribaltiiski*) produced in 2005. In both films, the film's villains are articulated with the Holocaust, as a shared symbol of evil: in *Nazism Baltic-Style*, links are drawn to the qualities of those Estonians and Latvians who collaborated with Nazi Germany; in *The Soviet Story*, the 'class struggle' of the Soviet totalitarian system is treated as

analogous with Nazi-Germany's systematic destruction of Jews.

The Helsinki two-day symposium is dedicated to these films, which provide insights into the history, identity, and memory political debates raging in Eastern Europe. Both films reveal national-patriotic contributions, not only in terms of partisan and propagandistic views, but especially in terms of framing supposedly common 'Europeanness' from particular state-national standpoints.

The workshop will be opened by **Markku Kangaspuro** (Helsinki), followed by screenings and discussion of *The Soviet Story* and *Nazism Baltic-Style*.

The workshop programme includes:

♦ **Olga Malinova** (Russian Academy of Sciences), 'Politics of History and the Problem of Construction of National Identity in Post-Soviet Russia';

♦ **Jussi Lassila** (Helsinki), 'Counter-discourses for "The Soviet Story": Narrating the Soviet Past, the

Russian Present, and the European Future in the Russian Media';

♦ **Julie Fedor** (Cambridge), 'Counter-propaganda Strategies in Russia';

♦ **Matti Jutila** (Helsinki), 'Ideology of Racial Extermination? Representations of Marxist Ethnopolitics in "The Soviet Story"';

♦ **Maria Mälksoo** (Tartu), 'The Soviet Story and the Latvian Style of Coming to Terms with the Past';

♦ **Markku Kangaspuro** (Helsinki), 'The Soviet Story and Narration of the Lost Karelia';

♦ **Irina Ochirova** (Chemnitz), 'Russia's Soft Power';

♦ **Alexey Golubev** (Petrozavodsk), 'Finlandization: Evolution of Political Metaphor and Concept'.

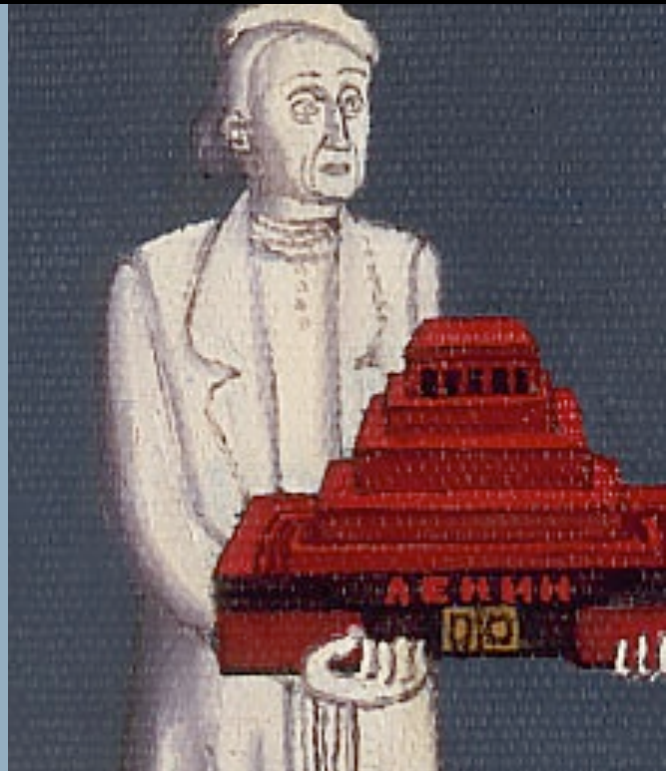
ENQUIRIES: Jussi Lassila (jussi.lassila@helsinki.fi) or Matti Jutila (matti.jutila@helsinki.fi)

DIGEST OF CURRENT MEMORY EVENTS POLAND, RUSSIA, UKRAINE

A monthly selection of regional events

For more, visit our blog: [http://
cambridgeculturalmemory.blogspot.com](http://cambridgeculturalmemory.blogspot.com)

Image by Grisha Bruskin (<http://grishabruskin.com/>)



Poland

Smolensk fall-out

The fall-out from the Smolensk catastrophe that killed President Lech Kaczyński and other leading figures in Polish political life has continued throughout the summer. Much attention has been focussed on the crash investigation being carried out by the Russian government. Many supporters of the late President and the conservative Law and Justice Party that he represented view the investigation with suspicion, and are pressing for greater Polish involvement, or indeed a separate Polish investigation. Conspiracy theories are rife among this section of the Polish public and political establishment. Others warn against the dangers of wild speculation regarding the reasons for the crash. A recent report in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, Poland's leading progressive newspaper, argues that the crash was tragic but typical of this kind of accident (Gierasimov, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 11 October 2010).

Despite the stance taken by *Wyborcza*, the crash investigation is far more than a matter of establishing the technical or human failures that led to the accident: it is closely wound up in Polish historical politics. Those who suspect foul play are those who supported President Kaczyński's aggressive stance towards Russia, which was based to a large degree in an emphasis on the Polish history of conflict and oppression at the hands of Russia and the Soviet Union. The catastrophe, given the historically resonant name of Katyń-2, has cast the original Katyń massacre in a new light, galvanising its already prominent role in Polish cultural

memory. This re-activation of the memory of the tragedy in the present has implications for present political relations with Russia.

The recent political climate, however, has marginally favoured the more cautious approach of the liberal Polish public and the centre-left party Civic Platform, whose presidential candidate, Bronisław Komorowski, won a close fought election with Jarosław Kaczyński, the brother of the late president. Foreign minister Radosław Sikorski has recently warned against aggressive rhetoric towards Russia, encouraging a measured and open approach (*Wiadomości*, 16 October 2010).

Polish society has seen a split in the wake of the catastrophe. On the one hand are those turning to a reinvigorated patriotism, determined to guard the memory of those killed at Katyń, which includes both the original victims of the massacre and the victims of the air crash. On the other are those who see this as a romanticised, xenophobic and backward-looking vision of Polish identity, and prefer a more outward-looking, progressive vision. This split found a dramatic focal point in the makeshift cross erected by Polish scouts outside the Presidential Palace in Warsaw shortly after the tragedy. Those who erected the cross did so in order to commemorate the tragedy in a prominent location in Central Warsaw, yet others saw the cross as an illegitimate expression the political views of a minority. They also objected to the overtly religious nature of the makeshift monument that had been placed in an ostensibly secular public space. The authorities eventually removed the cross, but only after lengthy and heated public debates and dramatic scenes of confrontation between

protesters and police (Leszczyński, *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 3 August 2010). President Komorowski has attempted to defuse the conflict, and recently announced that a compromise has been reached with the church to house the cross in the church of St Anne in central Warsaw.

The reverberations from the cross saga continue, however. In Ossów, a small town near Warsaw, a recently erected monument on the site of the graves of Red Army soldiers was repeatedly vandalised in August and September. On the second occasion the official opening of the monument, which was to be attended by the Russian Ambassador, had to be cancelled at the last minute after the words 'Broniek [Komorowski] – we will never forgive the removal of the cross' and 'Katyń-1940' were painted on it.

In a recent interview with Italian newspaper *Corriere della Sera* President Komorowski claimed that Poland was 'returning to normality' after the controversy over the cross (*Wiadomości*, 16 October 2010). He also emphasised 'deepening unity' with Russia. The Ossów incident shows, however, that the memory war within Poland is far from over. While tensions continue to simmer, the draft version of the report on the crash is being handed to the Polish side for consultation in mid-October, and has already been the focus of more heated speculation. These factors will ensure that the Katyń memory events will be at the centre of Polish political life for the foreseeable future. This is bound to become particularly acute in the run-up to the forthcoming parliamentary elections.

Uilleam Blacker

Ukraine New trends under Yanukovich

Memory conflicts have also been rumbling in Ukraine over the summer. The new regime, led by President Viktor Yanukovich, has already begun to impose itself on historical politics and memory practice, reversing many of the trends set by Viktor Yushchenko during his time in office.

The first controversial question concerns the revision of the official view of the *holodomor* – the artificial famine that killed millions of Ukrainians in the 1930s. Yushchenko had the famine classified as genocide in Ukrainian law, and forcibly campaigned for the same recognition on the global stage. Under Yanukovich, a process has already begun to re-class the *holodomor* as famine. The new administration has set about reforming the Institute of

National Memory, which was set up in 2006 by Viktor Yushchenko with the aim of redressing perceived falsifications of Ukrainian history, with the *holodomor* as its primary focus. The new head of the Institute, Valerii Soldatenko, a self-defined communist, has already given interviews in which he downplays the culpability of the Soviet Stalinist regime for the famine (RFE/RL, 29 July 2010).

This reorientation is reflected in new history text books that are being prepared for Ukrainian schoolchildren. According to *Ukrains'ka Pravda*, the new versions of existing textbooks no longer refer to the famine as 'artificial', and contain a number of other amendments. Notable also is the omission of material concerning the Orange Revolution of 2004, in the context of which current President Yanukovich was implicated in falsification of election results (Kapluk, *Ukrains'ka pravda*, 26 August 2010).

The memory politics of the Yanukovich administration have also manifested themselves in an increased attention to scholars on the part of the police and secret services. In the most recent incident, on 9 September historian Ruslan Zabilyi was detained in Kyiv by the Ukrainian secret services, had his materials confiscated and may be charged, according to some reports, with attempting to pass state secrets to a foreigner. Zabilyi worked for a museum in Lviv that had been preparing an exhibition on the Soviet occupation of Ukraine. The confiscated materials concerned this exhibition. The museum has subsequently been taken under the control of the Institute of National Memory. Zabilyi's arrest sparked protests in Kyiv and an open letter from leading historians from around the world that warned of 'a reversion to regrettable and dangerous practices of the totalitarian past' (*Current Politics in Ukraine*, 15 September 2010).

The historical politics of the Yanukovich administration represent a rupture in contemporary Ukraine's cultural memory narratives. The approach of Yushchenko to history and memory, which combined at times combative patriotism with a reorientation towards the West, has been replaced by a focus on memory with its roots in the east of Ukraine, and which leans towards a more positive assessment of the Soviet era and Ukraine's historical association with Russia. Leading historian Timothy Snyder argues in a recent blog post that while Yushchenko attempted to mould national history to his own, nationalistic vision, his period in office was characterised by a relatively pluralistic historical discourse (Snyder, *New York Review of Books* Blog, 21 September 2010). This, according to Snyder, seems to be changing under Yanukovich. Yanukovich's election is thus proving to be a memory event of powerful significance in

itself – not only does it imply a radical re-orientation of the official view of history; its practices themselves contain echoes of the country's past traumas.

Uilleam Blacker

Russia

Moscow memory sites in flux

Moscow Mayor Luzhkov's fall has served as the opportunity for a renewed campaign for changes to Moscow's Soviet-era toponymy, spearheaded by Vladimir Medinskii. Medinskii, popular historian, 'United Russia' Gosduma deputy, MGIMO professor, and frequent media commentator, is also the most recent addition to the presidential Commission for Counteracting Attempts at Falsification of History Detrimental to Russia's Interest. This is his first major public initiative since being appointed to the Commission in late September.

On 22 October, Medinskii addressed parliament calling for all Moscow sites named after Petr Voikov (the revolutionary best known for his involvement in the murder of the tsar and his family) to be renamed. Medinskii said this should be done with a view to 'erasing the name of the sadist and murderer from the map of Moscow' (Medinskii, *Ekho Moskvy* blog, 22 October 2010). Medinskii has stated clearly that the rationale behind this initiative is the moral imperative to condemn the Red Terror that followed the Bolshevik take-over -- another sign that a kind of paradigm shift in the official line on the Soviet past is underway.

These developments have gone along with a revival of the old debates over what to do with Lenin's body, and whether the red stars above the Kremlin should be removed (Yampol'skaia, *Izvestiia*, 19 October 2010). Yet this latest campaign for the restoration of memory sometimes seems to suffer from amnesia. In many ways this is a re-run of the toponymic revolution of the late 1980s-early 1990s; but the official media commentary on the current campaign tends to elide this first wave, and to treat the latest initiatives almost as though they were the first of their kind.

Medinskii won parliament's approval for his proposal, and the Gosduma Committee for Culture has been tasked with lobbying the new mayor, Sergei Sobianin, on this issue. The initiative has been welcomed by groups along a wide political spectrum, including the 'Vozvrashchenie' Foundation for the Support of Historical Traditions (created 2006) which has been campaigning on this issue for some time (see <http://vozvr.ru>), and of which Medinskii is a member, and the 'Memorial' Society.

Medinskii would appear to embody the new official position on the Soviet past, where explicit condemnation of Soviet state terror sits alongside a marked scorn for anti-Soviet histories produced in the '1990s' paradigm, emphasising repentance. Now, the main thrust is instead aimed at restoring dignity and reclaiming the past as a source of national pride. Medinskii is also the author of a series of best-selling history books aimed at debunking 'black myths' about Russian history. The latest volume of his book series *Myths about Russia* is titled *Skeletons from the Closet of Russian History*. Here again, the message is somewhat mixed. The tone of the book's promotional materials is typical:

No other country in the world has such a quantity of 'skeletons in the closet'; rich Russian history has stored up a sea of mysteries for those who take a sceptical attitude towards their native country. We are forced to disappoint the sceptics: our history is such that we have the right to take pride in it.

In a recent interview with *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, Medinskii said that the skeletons in Russia's historical closet were 'dead flesh [*mertvechina*], dangerously stuffing heads with lies and nonsense. The degree of junk which is preserved in our attic, as Sherlock Holmes said, tapping himself on the head, is so colossal that it's surprising we still remember our own names. A faulty view of one's own history is more harmful than an absence of knowledge about it. But in our country, the absence of knowledge is overlaid onto faulty knowledge'. Medinskii also said that the most recent Russian past was filled with skeletons, 'but they haven't rotted yet, and if one starts opening the doors and airing out [the closet], then such a stench will be released that for the moment it's safer to keep them hermetically sealed, so as not to be poisoned by these gases' (Kaftan, *Komsomol'skaia pravda*, 10 September 2010).

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