The mutual relationship between triumph and trauma is anything but a unique phenomenon in national war histories, although this relationship varies greatly in different contexts. According to Bernhard Giesen, the twin poles of triumph and trauma outline the limits of all collective-national identities. For instance, Guy Beiner points out that the central feature in Ireland’s historical myths is ‘a conflict between traumatic sensitivities of victimhood and triumphalist proclamations of victory’. With regard to Ireland’s context, this friction is principally linked to the relationship between Catholic nationalists and Protestant unionists. Russia is definitely a different case from Ireland, but the Irish relationship between triumph and trauma seems to provide a stimulating backdrop for post-Soviet Russia. I would argue that it is the lack of clear religious, ethnic, or linguistic, rivals in Russia that makes the friction between memories of triumph and loss in Russia particularly intriguing. As Thomas Wolfe writes, in the case of Russian memory of the war, ‘crimes and acts of heroism are embedded in the same historical moment, the same historical process’. These public representations of triumph and trauma are inclined to be framed as a national zero-sum game: one
man’s trauma is another man’s triumph, and any attempt to recognize one’s own national guilt for a rival’s trauma poses a threat to one’s own political sovereignty in the present.

There is a generational challenge as well. Given that, year by year, memories of the war are becoming weaker and part of the nation’s past for those generations who do not have any personal direct memories of the war, its commemoration is increasingly exposed to oblivion. The state-supported commemorative campaign ‘St. George’s Ribbon’, established in 2005, provides an illuminating case in this respect. The main effort of the campaign has been in the production of tens of millions of small ribbons – the most well-known symbol of Russia’s military valour. These ribbons are distributed to citizens free of charge, and citizens are encouraged to display them. Most often they are attached to lapels, handbags, or car antennas, but they can now also be found in all imaginable contexts in the post-Soviet market society, from vodka bottle labels to mobile phone covers. This project, which has been conducted by pro-Kremlin-minded and affiliated youth movements since 2005, has demonstrated how the officially outlined patriotic optimism (set out, for instance, in the State Patriotic Education Programme) results in a supposedly youthful symbolic creativity – a kind of rejuvenated sense of triumph of the Great Patriotic War of the 2000s.

The website ‘In Defense of the St. George’s Ribbon’ is revealing in showing a public response to this patriotic symbolism. This site was established in 2008, and its stated representative is historian Timofei Sheviakov. The site’s response does not follow triumphalist accounts of national pride; rather, it offers a deep condemnation of the official St George’s Ribbon campaign, claiming that it represents the misuse of ‘a centuries-old symbol, incarnated in the Russian soldier’s feats of valor’. Quite revealingly, the website opens with a temporary blank page with a running black text: ‘26 600 000 Soviet persons (sovetskikh liudei) died in the Great Patriotic War…’ The site challenges official memory politics, paraphrasing the slogan ‘I Remember, I Am Proud’ as ‘Do I Remember? Am I Proud?’ The somber opening text is followed by an open appeal ‘to stop the campaign in order to prevent the desecration of the legendary symbol’. The site includes multiple photos and hundreds of reader comments providing examples of such desecration in which the ribbon is displayed in ‘inappropriate’ places. The funereal opening text and the general emotional tenor of the site point to the fact that condemnation of the St George’s Ribbon campaign, with the latter’s youthful production of the post-Soviet national triumph, is framed here by the officially recognized trauma (commemorated in Russia, for instance, within the framework of the Day of Memory and Sorrow on 22 June, marking the beginning of the Great Patriotic War). These reactions open up a space for further discussion on the relationships between modernity, modernization programmes, and national memory in contemporary Russia. How is national culture remembered morally and visually? And who is authorized to conduct this commemoration?

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4 See further the campaign’s official website at http://gl.9may.ru/ (accessed 1 October 2012).
6 This commemorative day was established by President Yeltsin in 1996 but its role has become more visible over the last ten years.
In Part 1 of this article (Issue No. 10, May 2012), we presented some preliminary findings on the dynamics of media representations of the Russian protest movement’s identity as ‘white’ or ‘orange’, together with some initial reflections on the methodological problems involved in handling this kind of data. We take up the discussion here by returning to the question of how we can distinguish spontaneous genuine commentary from the orchestrated and automated digital discourse produced by networks of hired bloggers, and, often, trolls and robots? How can we detect the Russian Internet’s digital ‘dead souls’ (to borrow a phrase used by the creators of the ‘Moscow Comes Back’ Facebook protest group)?

Assessing Authenticity

The two figures on page 7 highlight this problem of assessing the authenticity of digital media data. The figures show the dynamics of the frequency with which particular colours were mentioned in connection with the protests in the Russian blogosphere and mainstream media respectively, in December 2011. The contrast between the two pictures here is stark. Consider, for example, the three main orange spikes on the blogosphere graph (Figure 1). Only one of these three spikes can be made out in the mainstream media graph (Figure 2). The 13 December blogosphere orange spike caused by the scandal over communist party leader Gennadii Ziuganov’s alleged reference to the protests as ‘orange leprosy’ clearly corresponds to the 13-14 December mainstream-media orange spike. But the remaining two blogosphere orange spikes were a puzzle: why were these spikes absent from the mainstream-media graph?

Most puzzling was the huge orange spike of 19 December which dominates the blogosphere graph (Figure 1), but can be made out only extremely weakly on the mainstream-media graph (Figure 2). Here, closer examination showed that a massive 95.7 per cent of this blogosphere spike comprised re-posts of a single text. More than this: closer examination still revealed that almost all of these re-posts were performed using automatic blog generators. In other words, what might be read as an upsurge in grass-roots interest in the ‘orange revolution’ theme was in fact almost entirely manufactured and automated.

Before examining the re-posting process, let’s take a look at the content of the post itself. The post was titled ‘Liberasts [a ‘pun’ on ‘pederasts’] and Russian Nationalists Continue to Fight’, and was accompanied by a Youtube clip showing Boris Nemtsov being hissed off stage at a St Petersburg rally on 18 December. In the post, Nemtsov is described as an ‘orange oppositionist’ (his Solidarity movement does in fact use orange as its signature colour). The main message of the article is clearly anti-liberal. Strikingly, however, the author simultaneously seeks to use the credibility and moral authority of various popular oppositional
figures (such as Boris Akunin, Leonid Parfenov, and Dmitrii Bykov, all of whom are mentioned without any pejorative overtones) in order to discredit the article’s chief target: Boris Nemtsov, and then, in turn, by linking all the oppositional figures together with Nemtsov, to discredit them all by association. In a sense, then, while the article is anti-liberal, arguably, it simultaneously comprises a tacit acknowledgement of the popularity of the protest movement.

While the text is clearly anti-liberal, the author’s position on nationalism appears to have been intentionally left unclear. The author does not openly endorse nationalist positions, but one might read the neutrality of the tone when it comes to the nationalists as an implicit endorsement, especially when compared to the vociferous anti-liberal rhetoric in the article.

A near-identical version of this text was published under a different title in the online newspaper Vzgliad, the creation of Konstantin Rykov (on whom more below). Comparing the two texts can help to illuminate the differences between the two media spaces, and how texts change as they migrate across from one space to the other.

We can start by comparing the headlines under which the article was published. In Vzgliad, the article was published under a title that might be roughly translated as ‘Counting Protest Chickens Before They Hatch: Liberals and Nationalists Continue to Fight for Protesters’. The blog post was titled: ‘Liberasts and Russian Nationalists Continue to Fight’. In the blog version, the neutral ‘liberals’ has been replaced by ‘liberasts’; both references to ‘protest’ and ‘protesters’ have been dropped; and the nationalists have become ‘Russian’. Presumably the purpose here was to sharpen the title and render it more attractive to potential nationalist readers, who comprise a huge number of the blogosphere’s active readers.

There are other small differences. The blogosphere version is more openly aggressive and its allegations slightly stronger in places. On the whole, the Vzgliad version generally employs more subtle discursive strategies, presumably necessitated at least in part by the pressure to avoid blatant hate speech, a pressure which is much weaker in the blogosphere than in the mainstream media.

Because of technical limitations of Yandex, it is not possible to ascertain where the article first appeared, in Vzgliad, or in the blogosphere. Ivan Afinogenov is listed as the author in Vzgliad, but the blog post version is anonymous. For various reasons, it seems more likely on the whole that the blog post was produced first, and was then ‘toned down’ ideologically and rhetorically and tidied up grammatically for publication in Vzgliad.

Bot Blogging

The re-posting of this article appears to have been almost if not entirely automated and performed by so-called ‘bot accounts’. Amongst the first fifty re-posts returned by a Yandex Blogs search for postings of the article on 19 December, we could not find a single ‘real’ living person. Moreover, the ‘life stories’ of all these fifty blog accounts were almost identical. All of them were created between 9 and 25 July 2011. Ever since, they have been characterised by almost identical posting activity: 17 to 20 posts in total (as at April 2012), with near-identical content, and near-identical timing. Their posts attracted almost no comments (other than the occasional obviously automatically generated one); and with rare exceptions, none of the users has any ‘friends’. Several of them use the same generic images as userpics. We stopped counting after fifty, but a quick scan of the remaining blogs suggests that it is likely that there were no real-life bloggers involved here whatsoever.

In this particular case, an extraordinarily high 95.7 percent of the huge orange spike on our graph was generated by bots. We can only speculate as to who organised this, and to what end. Some possible clues are provided by the other posts made by the same ‘family’ of bots. Some of these same bots also took part in re-posting anti-oppositional articles mentioned in Part 1 of this article, such as ‘White Ribbon – Red Blood’ and ‘The Russian Revolution Needs Corpses’, for example. Many of these same bots also re-posted an article by Sergei Kurginian, who certainly has an interest in this kind of online activity. Around the same time, Kurginian was engaged in
recruiting participants for an ‘informational counter-action to the orange plague’ using social networking platforms and Twitter (see the notice posted on his ‘Sut’ Vremeni’ site on 10 December 2011 at http://eot.su/stopcrash1012), and also featured in the Nashi Kremlingate emails as a consultant used to train Nashi members.

Another figure who would appear to be connected to both these ‘artificial’ orange blogosphere spikes is Russian internet producer Konstantin Rykov. A former United Russia MP, Rykov is the founder of both the online newspapers in question: Dni.ru and Vzgliad. He is also the creator of the pro-Putin websites Zaputina.ru and Russia.ru. In recent years, Rykov has been at the centre of a series of scandals over the use of ‘black PR’ and political technologies on the Internet. In 2006, LiveJournal closed down Rykov’s blog after Rykov offered to pay other bloggers to promote his posts. In February 2012, LiveJournal owner Anton Nosik accused Rykov of dealing in black PR and political technologies in support of Nashi (Vkontakte 2012). Rykov, Nosik has said, is an ‘internet-killer’ – a 21st-century version of the ‘TV-killers’ that pollute the online information sphere to the point where conversation becomes impossible. Thus, for example, one of the leaked documents, a monthly report on activities in this area for January 2012 sent by Nashi activist Yarosh to the head of the Russian Federal Agency for Youth Affairs’ Directorate Youth Policy, notes that the aim of campaigns involving paid comments on online news articles was ‘to create a climate in comments which will force the publication to close down the comments service as such’ (cited avmalgin 2012).

Meanwhile, LiveJournal, on the one hand, and the opposition movement, on the other, have also been evolving in response to these incursions. LiveJournal has introduced various measures aimed at eradicating bots, prompting one pro-Kremlin online activist to comment to his handler in October last year, ‘they’ve started to ban bots [on LiveJournal], so far somehow selectively, we’re not losing much here, we’ll simply renew the bots, but it’s an unpleasant tendency’ (‘Boty i Kostia’ 2012). Meanwhile, oppositional activity has largely been migrating to SNS and microblogs such as Facebook, Vkontakte and Twitter, all of which have become important platforms for oppositional discussion and mobilisation. Lately, LiveJournal has been giving way to Twitter, Vkontakte and Facebook in particular in Russia. Vkontakte and Facebook are more difficult to monitor (and to manipulate) (see Karimova 2012). This would appear to be a significant shift in what Rogers has called ‘online media hierarchies of credibility’ (see Rogers 2009); indeed, various commentators in Russia have long been asserting that LiveJournal was becoming exhausted and losing its credibility (see Podporina 2007).

Measuring Influence

One of the measures taken by LiveJournal to counteract bot accounts provides a tool that may help to solve the second research problem we have identified here: the problem of measuring influence in the blogosphere. In
February 2012, LiveJournal launched a new ‘social capital’ ranking system, one of the primary aims of which was the ‘differentiate real people from bot accounts’. This new ranking system attempts to rate a user’s ‘karma’ (‘Livejournal’ 2011). Whereas the old system had been based simply on the number of users signing up to a particular blog, in the new system a user’s ranking is based on ‘not only on the number of users who have added the journal or community to their Friends list, but also on their behaviour throughout the site: how old and active their own journals are, do they leave comments in other journals and communities, how often they log in, and many other factors that differentiate real people from bot accounts’ (LJ FAQ 359). The bots generating our big orange spike obviously have no ‘social capital’. Significantly, this system seems to have been introduced only for LiveJournal’s Cyrillic service, presumably reflecting the particularly large scale of the problem in the Cyrillic segment of the Internet (LJ FAQ 339). This ranking system, when used in combination with other tools offered by LiveJournal such as user ranking both by number of page-views and by authority (social capital) ranking, provides a useful instrument for researchers of online media. It is not much help, however, when it comes to assessing the influence and significance in the case of automated bot posts. For obvious reasons, our bots are do not feature in any LiveJournal’s league tables of influential bloggers.

A few tentative conclusions: First, on their own, quantitative results are very limited in what they can tell us. We need to conduct a semantic analysis of the actual content before we can draw any conclusions about the negative or positive contexts and connotations of these posts. (For a discussion of some of the related problems when it comes to the Russian blogosphere, see Kontorovich et al 2011).

Second, as Kathy E. Gill points out, simply counting blogs and links is not a satisfactory method for measuring influence in the blogosphere, since it treats all blogs and links as equal (Gill 2004). Sheer number of posts does not necessarily correlate, for example, with number of readers.

This is linked to the third problem, arguably one that is especially important for post-Soviet online media: assessing the authenticity of digital media sources. While search engines are constantly working on improving their ability to detect and filter out spam and repetition, their opponents are working with equal diligence and inventiveness to find new ways to fool the search engines and distort search results, whether for commercial and/or political purposes, and to invent ever more sophisticated and undetectable bots. Certainly, as our bot spike example shows, the statistical data for online media needs to be handled with great care.

We are grateful to Rolf Fredheim for his comments on an earlier draft of this article.

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This article is part of a larger, micro-historical study that the Memory at War team is conducting on the use of 'memory models' in the Russian protest movement.
As the Wehrmacht army entered Ukraine, Maj. Alexander Maiboroda grabbed the last truck in the column of fleeing people. Into its open luggage compartment he helped his Jewish wife, Ethel, and their three small children. With tanks following them, Ethel held tight onto her youngest, Zina, born in the spring of 1939. She knew that her children might have been taking their last breaths.

But the army was in a good mood the day it crossed the Ukrainian border, and did not seek to kill the unarmed families just yet. Or maybe it did fire, but the shots missed that last vehicle. Or maybe, somewhere among the soldiers, someone’s heart skipped a beat in the right direction. I’ve heard both of the first versions; the third is my own. Ethel and the children made it through the war. Zina grew up and became Zinaida Alexandrovna, my grandmother.

This account is about Drobitsky Yar, a ravine near our hometown of Kharkov (Kharkiv), where she could have been slain, but wasn’t. An evacuation to Siberia saved her life. By various accounts, between 16 000 and 30 000 human beings were shot here, on the city outskirts, in December 1941. Most of them were Jews; others were prisoners of war, resistance fighters, and the mentally ill. A memorial complex now stands here to commemorate them.

1941. Today, Babi Yar is marked by a minimalistic sculpture of a menorah and, nearby, a monument to the children killed there. Meanwhile, all around the park, the busy city leads its usual hectic life. It incorporated what had once been its outskirts.

This process never took place at Drobitsky Yar. It isn’t widely known, either internationally or domestically. Even taxi drivers have trouble finding it. To reach the place where thousands lie murdered, one must step slightly beyond the Ring road circling Kharkov. The city stays behind, and only the wind stirs in the silent green plains above the mass graves.

**The history**

Kharkov was occupied in October 1941. A census was held several weeks later to identify the Jewish inhabitants of the city. And on 14 December, they were given two days to relocate to factory barracks in an area known as KhTZ. The penalty for failure to move within the given timeframe was death.

That week the temperature dropped below -15 °C. For three days (14-16 December) a river of families, totalling at least 16 000 persons, flowed along frozen white streets to the designated location on the outskirts. Fearing the worst, some mothers dropped their babies into the snow for the remaining population to find. The workers’ barracks were designed to hold 70-80 people each, but when the families arrived, these numbers hit 700-800. Generally, ghettos were not set up in East Ukraine; Kharkov was one of the few cities where one did exist—albeit for less than a month.

After the move was completed, the people were taken to the nearby Drobitsky Yar, where mass graves had been prepared. A single trip from the ghetto ended the lives of up to 300 persons. Accounts of the contemporaries contain bloodcurdling descriptions: after each execution, the ground of Drobitsky Yar moaned and moved for days. Some locals crawled around these pits of hell, reaching for the rare survivors who emerged from the blood-soaked earth. This image is invoked by Yevgeny Yevtushenko in his 1987 poem “The Apple Trees of Drobitsky”.

The setting

Drobitsky Yar is unlike its better known counterpart, Babi Yar, the ravine in the Ukrainian capital of Kiev (Kyiv) that swallowed over 33 000 Jews in September 1941. Today, Babi Yar is marked by a minimalistic sculpture of a menorah and, nearby, a monument to the children killed there. Meanwhile, all around the park, the busy city leads its usual hectic life. It incorporated what had once been its outskirts.
The memorial

Today, nine mass graves have been identified at Drobitsky Yar, marked by simple signs like “Burial Site 3”. The first commemorating obelisk was set up in the 1950s. The bigger memorial complex is comprised of several key points spread over nine hectares of land. Its idea was proposed half-a-century after the tragedy, in 1991, when a foundational stone was laid. The construction was blessed in 1994 by a Rabbi and an Orthodox priest. It halted shortly afterwards due to a lack of funds, reflecting the turbulent 1990s, and restarted again in 2000. The memorial was officially opened in December 2002, sixty-one years after the Kharkov Jews were given two days to move to KhTZ. In 2005, a Mourning Hall was opened here.

At the entrance to Drobitsky Yar, a black sign announces that one has arrived to a Place of Bloody Terror.

Nearby, a black stone summarizes the story in three languages: Ukrainian, Hebrew and English.

Walking past these signs and up some steps symbolizing Mount Sinai, one arrives at a broken and twisted rendering of a menorah. It is styled into burnt wood to convey the wasted lives it commemorates. A sign says: “Here the dead teach the living” – in three languages: Latin, Ukrainian and Hebrew.

From the menorah, the view over the valley is open and beautiful. Glancing along a curving road, one can catch a glimpse of another part of the memorial complex – a white, candle-like structure, barely visible against the glow of the sky. This road is the route thousands of people covered on their last day in 1941.

This furthest part of the memorial is styled after the dome of the sky, a synagogue, and a candle, combined. A menorah and a Star of David rise over an open book, which repeats “Thou shalt not kill” in ten languages.

Under the dome, in the Mourning Hall, a black Cup of Sorrow is filled with small colourful lights that flicker on and off, symbolizing souls born and extinguished. The Cup’s reflective effects are designed to make it appear bottomless, alluding to endless suffering. All around it, names of over 4,300 known victims cover the dimly lit walls.

In a small office nearby, walls display the photographs brought by visitors. One of the entries in the guestbook is: “Lord! Teach me what I should do to ensure that this never happens again”. Nearby lies a letter from German visitors to the memorial. It asks forgiveness in several languages. On one of the office shelves, bullets discovered in the area stand against a notebook entitled “Towards Memory”.

The strangest thing about being out there, past the last city buildings, is the openness, the silence, the lack of urban energy, which make Drobitsky Yar seem untouched by time. It’s as if the years have rolled by, and the bodies are silent. But the wind whispering among the trees – an eternal, tireless witness – is still the same one.

Please see the author’s blog at http://memoryidentity.wordpress.com for more details and photographs. Thanks are due to Tatyana Bezzubkina from the Drobitsky Yar memorial office.
Events in Cambridge

EAST EUROPEAN MEMORY STUDIES RESEARCH GROUP SEMINAR
CRASSH, Cambridge. All seminars begin at 5pm (unless indicated).

+ 31 October at 5:15pm:
**Amir Weiner (Stanford University):** ‘Total War: The Soviet Union and the Eastern Front in a Comparative Framework - On the Road to Hell: Sovereignty Reconfigured’

Event held in conjunction with the Lees Knowles Lecture Series, Trinity College, at Mill Lane Lecture Rooms

+ 28 November: **Stephen Anthony Smith (Oxford University):** ‘Miraculous Icons in Stalin’s Russia’

EUROPE EAST AND WEST: FILM, HISTORY AND MOURNING

+ 19 November at 5pm: **Lars Kristensen (University of Central Lancashire) will present** “Wanna Be in the New York Times?”: Epic History and War City as Global Cinema’ - a discussion of Battle of Warsaw (dir. Jerzy Hoffman, 2011)

Recent Publications


The international research project
‘Disturbing Pasts: Memories, Controversies and Creativity’
announces its forthcoming conference at the Museum of Ethnology, Vienna, 20-22 November 2012

The project is designed to initiate new relationships and exchanges among the academic, policy, curating and artistic communities.

**Supported by the European Science Foundation (Humanities in the European Research Area, HERA).**

Traumatic pasts have complex and often dramatic influences on the present. The conference will explore creative engagements with controversial pasts in art practice, curating and museums, establishing a dialogue among diverse participants.

Read more about our theme and aims on the project website: [www.open.ac.uk/Arts/disturbing-pasts/](http://www.open.ac.uk/Arts/disturbing-pasts/)

‘Disturbing Pasts’ will publish its scholarly and creative work in a special issue of the *Open Arts Journal* ([www.openartsjournal.org](http://www.openartsjournal.org)), and the conference will generate audio-visual material for the *Open Arts Archive* ([www.openartsarchive.org](http://www.openartsarchive.org)).

Project Leader: Dr Leon Wainwright,
Lecturer in Art History, The Open University, UK

*Entrance to the conference is free, but places are limited. Please reserve in advance by writing to: Julia Binter, Julia.Binter@ethno-museum.ac.at*
An international symposium co-organised by the Helsinki Memory at War project and the Helsinki CRIM Project (Constructing Russian Identity in the Media: Between the History of WWII and Future Europeanness).

After opening remarks by conference organiser Markku Kangaspuro (University of Helsinki), Tatiana Voronina (European University at St Petersburg) opened with a paper that traced the connections and commonalities between Soviet fiction and Soviet historiography, using the literature on the siege of Leningrad as a case study. She argued that Soviet historians writing on this theme were influenced by and drew upon literary conventions from socialist realist novels, adapting key tropes and devices in their work, such that, for example, the ‘Soviet nation’ played the role of the positive hero. Voronina illustrated her case with a detailed analysis of two popular Soviet accounts of the siege: Dmitrii Pavlov’s *Leningrad in the Siege* (1958) and *The Unsubdued of Leningrad* (1968).

Philipp Chapkovski (European University Institute, Florence, and European University at St Petersburg) provided an introduction to his new research project, which investigates the growing popularity of neo-Stalinist literature in Russia. The project sets out to find the roots and the consequences of this popularity via an analysis of the texts, their audience, and the infrastructure that delivers their message, from publishing houses to distributors and bookstores. This presentation focused on the discursive patterns that could be made out in neo-Stalinist books. Generally speaking, the authors object to the liberal agenda on the Soviet past, challenging the relevant
accounts of the Katyn massacre, the Great Terror, the late Stalinist anti-Semitic campaigns, and so on. The explanatory models deployed are a complex combination of denial, blaming the victim, and the concept of ‘sacrifice’. Closely related to Holocaust deniers both in methods and intentions, the Russian neo-Stalinists also draw upon the techniques of counter-factual history. Chapkovski argued that the phenomenon of neo-Stalinism could be explained in terms of phantom pains following the collapse of the Soviet empire, and the drive to find the fatal turning point back in time, where the fatal error was made. This point is often found either on the day of Stalin’s death, or of the 20th Party Congress, since which ‘our life has become more and more senseless, dirtier and dirtier’, as one neo-Stalinist writes.

Gelinada Grinchenko (V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University) examined the post-Soviet usage and re-construction of the memory of the suffering of Ukrainian Ostarabeiter. She challenged the prevailing view on this memory, which emerged in the Ukraine in early 1990s and has since gradually acquired normative status in post-Soviet journalism and scholarly literature, namely: that the memory and suffering of this group of victims was ‘expunged’ from the official Soviet version of the war and hence ‘forgotten’. In fact, Grinchenko argued, the memory of forced labour in Nazi Germany was present in official discourse throughout the Soviet period as a representative (albeit peripheral) topic. Moreover, the Soviet image of the suffering Ostarabeiter has a great deal in common with its re-constituted post-Soviet versions, in terms of form, semantic content, and the means by which these images have been disseminated and exploited in public space.

Aleksandr Antoshchenko (Petrozavodsk State University) presented the results of a collaborative research project on the semiotics of Great Patriotic War monuments in Karelia, carried out under his supervision. He traced the evolution of Karelian sites of war memory from the 1960s through to the present, describing the way in which cemeteries were displaced as key sites of commemoration by the official campaign to build state war memorials and monuments. These official sites become ‘ritual sites’ for the celebration of the Victory and the creation of a shared understanding of the War’s significance. As a result, the state transformed the memory of a generation of war veterans to meet the needs of government, with a view to creating a shared intergenerational war memory for broader Soviet society. His paper also discussed the transformations of the 1990s and beyond, including the appearance of new actors such as the Russian Orthodox Church in the space of war memory, bringing new practices and creating new sites of memory. He focused in particular on the changing attitudes towards German prisoner-of-war graves and memorials in the region.

In her presentation, Zuzanna Bogumił (Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Education, Warsaw) asked why it was the case that the end of the Cold War and the systemic transformations in Eastern Europe had not led to the creation of a new language of commemoration for the twentieth-century pasts, and why so many contemporary memory projects in the region were of a religious nature. She concentrated on theoretical aspects of the religious dimensions of memory, and applied Pierre Bourdieu’s concept of the field to show that the emergence of various fields of cultural production have not meant the reduction of religion to religious capital within the
field of religion. In Eastern Europe, religion has survived ‘beyond society’s memory’, in doxa. This means that Pierre Nora’s *milieux de mémoire* still exist in this part of Europe, where religion still determines the shape that memory takes. Examining several (primarily Polish) memory projects dedicated to memory of WWII and of Soviet repressions, she argued that both sets of events are perceived as comparable to the reality experienced by the early Christians, such that the related *milieux de mémoire* are saturated with new, powerful content.

**Olga Malinova** (Russian Academy of Sciences) discussed the political uses of the narratives of the Great Patriotic War in post-Soviet Russia, from the 1990s to the 2010s. She outlined the difficulties impeding identity-construction when it comes to handling difficult aspects of the past, such that even twenty years after the collapse of the USSR, narratives of the past continue to provoke ongoing controversy. She presented her findings on the shifting dynamic of representations of the War in the rhetoric of Russian state officials, revealing the links between history politics and major shifts in domestic and foreign policy. She argued that due to a series of choices on the part of the ruling Russian political elite, the spectrum of symbolic historical events that could be used as pillars of a new Russian identity had been narrowed, with the myth of the Great Patriotic War becoming a key focal point of the post-Soviet Russian identity, and playing an important role (from the mid-2000s) in Russian ‘foreign’ symbolic policy.

*To be continued in next issue.*

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**Golgotha of the East, Jedwabne; image by Zuzanna Bogumił**
Further Recent Events

**3-5 July:** ‘The Future of Memory’ (University of Konstanz), with talks by Jay Winter, Aleida Assmann, Andrew Hoskins, Alexander Etkind and others.

**24-26 September:** ‘Decadence or Renaissance? Russian Literature since 1991’ (University of Oxford), with talks by Oliver Ready, Mark Lipovetsky, Uilleam Blacker, Vladimir Sharov, Alexander Etkind, and others.
Memories and Wars

Keynote Address by Alexander Etkind
Professor, King’s College, University of Cambridge

9:00 – 9:10, Welcome and Introduction
• Michael Finke, Department of Slavic Languages & Literatures

9:10 – 11:10, Chair: Mark Steinberg
• George Gasya: “Bruno Schultz & the Polish Borderlands”
• Lilya Kaganovsky: “Postmemory, Counter-memory: Soviet Cinema of the 1960s”
• Brett Kaplan: “Sekaid’s Memory”
• Robert Tieney: “Japanese Annnesia about War & Empire”

11:20 – 12:20, Chair: Valeria Sobol
• William Brewer: “Memory Errors (Lab & Ecological Studies)”
• Kristen Ehrenberger & Patrick Watson: “The Concept of Memory from the Perspectives of History & Neuroscience”

1:45-3:15, Chair: Eugene Avrutin
• James Wertsch: “Russian & American Habits of Thought & World War II”
• Carl Nickel: “Karl Kraus’s Silence about World War I”
• Jean-Philippe Mathy: “The Memory Wars in France”

3:25-4:25, Chair: Maria Todorova
• Judith Pistor: “Hagiography as Memory: Commemorating World War II Religious War Crimes in Bosnia”
• Donna Buchanan: “Carol of ‘The Bells’! Bulgaria’s ‘Banner of Peace’ Monument as Catalyst for Postsocialist Mythology, Nostalgia, & Debate”

4:30-5:45, Keynote Address
• Alexander Etkind: “Warped Mourning: Ambiguities of Memory Beyond the Holocaust”

Alexander Etkind is the principal investigator of the interdisciplinary Memory at War project (see: www.memoryatwar.org). He is author of the books Warped Mourning: Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied (Stanford, forthcoming); Internal Colonization: Russia’s Imperial Experience (2011); Eros of the Impossible: The History of Psychoanalysis in Russia (1996); and several other titles in Russian. He holds PhDs in both Psychology (Bekhterev Institute, Leningrad) and Slavonic Literatures (University of Helsinki).

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Civil Cold Wars are driven by the permanent struggle between history and politics: the conflict between history as scholarship, and ‘history politics’, that is, the art of the possible and the acceptable in the world of historical empirical facts. I use the term ‘Historiomor’ as a label for what happens when such conflicts end in the victory of politics. National memory institutes, the model that has taken root in Eastern Europe, are a terrible thing in the hands of the state. The structures that have been instituted in Poland and Ukraine, and the now disbanded Anti-Falsification Commission in Russia -- all of these are the heirs of GLAVPUR (the Chief Ideological Directorate of the Soviet Army and Military-Naval Fleet), and all are the creations of Historiomor.

In my paper, I examined post-war Soviet historical processes, focusing primarily on events linked to the scholarly and artistic discussions of the Second World War in the USSR and post-Soviet Russia, and specifically on GLAVPUR: a unique and crucial organization, a key player on the battlefield for historical memory in the Soviet Union and the real ‘star’ of the Soviet ideological front. Organisationally GLAVPUR was made up of directorates (eg, for propaganda and agitation, organizational-party work, personnel) and departments (eg for Komsomol work, military-sociological research, etc). The head of GLAVPUR was traditionally considered the unofficial deputy head of the Defence Ministry, and also, from 1924 through to September 1990, enjoyed powers equivalent to that of a party Central Committee section! In other words, this was not so much an instrument or an infrastructure as a brain – simultaneously both inventor and commissioner of the whole propaganda ‘music’ of the Soviet Union.

The topic of the Great Patriotic War served as an excellent testing ground, both for the general line of the country’s ideological course, and for the nuances of its oscillations. A distinctive kind of puritanism or glavpur-itanism was characteristic of Soviet publications about the war. Its features included dogmatism; a refusal to admit questioning or doubt; tight linkages to major jubilee dates; a clannish mentality amongst its staff; narrowness of source base; a tendency to restrict archival access; lack of a scholarly apparatus; and, often, scholarly bad faith, even up to the point of falsifying data in order to achieve the desired result.

Each individual Soviet and post-Soviet leader put his own stamp on the official memory of the War. At first it seemed as though President Medvedev would be the exception here, since his history policies merely conformed to the frameworks laid down during Putin’s presidency. It must be said, however, that the Anti-Falsification Commission (established in May 2009) was a significant new development under Medvedev, noteworthy for its cynicism, its stupidity, and its large scale, aiming as
it did at instrumentalising history for foreign policy ends.

The main traditions linked to Soviet-Russian historiographical and propaganda traditions can be summarized as follows. Most important is the emphasis on creating an idyllic historical past comprised of unceasing Russian military victories, unbroken historical continuity, and hence the irreproachability of the Russian state, whether past, present or future. The notions of crimes committed by the state and of the state’s obligation to acknowledge these, and especially the need for historical repentance on the part of the Russian state, are all extremely unpopular concepts in Russia. The acknowledgement of any historical event that serves to portray the state in a negative light, from the existence of secret protocols to a treaty concluded with the enemy, to the rape and murder of a Chechen girl by a Russian officer, is made only in the face of strong resistance and only when concealment and suppression are no longer possible. The first, organic and almost instinctive reaction is to cover the traces. Acknowledgement is squeezed out only under extreme pressure, at the last minute, never completely, and only in small portions. Where possible, such acknowledgements are made without formal apologies and without taking account of their logical consequences. All these features reflect a general underlying pull towards forgetting.

History, this ‘powderkeg’, as the poet Osip Mandelstam called it, is constantly at risk not only of exploding, but also of being placed under guard, encircled or even drowned or buried. But the truth of Russian history does not belong to the state. It is impossible to keep history locked away in the archives by force. This powderkeg has always already exploded, and the truth can never be kept completely secret.

A real discussion and resolution of the historical-political issues of past and present cannot be achieved unilaterally or even bilaterally. A broad international basis is required here. One possible solution would be the creation of an authoritative International Historical Arbitration Tribunal, along the lines of the courts currently existing at the Hague and in Strasbourg. Existing under the dual patronage of the UN and, say, an International Association of Historians, it would need to have an apparatus capable of mobilizing at short notice expert groups on diverse historical problems. Those applying to the court with serious doubts regarding the veracity of particular historical facts would need to be prepared to outline a detailed, clearly argued and well-supported justification for their doubts. The court would then examine the case and prepare authoritative scholarly conclusions. There are precedents for the provision of this kind of historical expertise, for example, as part of the struggle for compensation for victims of Nazi forced labour schemes. This tribunal’s findings would not have juridical force, of course; but they might be used as part of subsequent related court cases.

Pavel Polian (Nerler) is a geographer, historian and literary scholar. He is the author of Against Their Will: The History and Geography of Forced Migrations in the USSR (Budapest: Central European University Press, 2004). He is also a leading expert on the life and work of Osip Mandelstam, Chairman of the Mandelstam Society, and editor of his collected works. His documentary book Slovo i delo Osipa Mandelstama was published in 2010 and his Osip Mandelstam i Amerika in 2012.
The previously little known tsarist Prime Minister Petr Stolypin (1862-1911) is now a household name. In Pierre Nora’s terms, ‘Stolypin’ is definitely a ‘site of memory’, but it is also a contentious site with various self-appointed custodians failing to coordinate their efforts. What can Stolypin tell us about Russia’s relationship to its past?

The focus of public attention on Stolypin in post-Soviet Russia can be explained by Stolypin’s perceived versatility. The Stolypin paradigm consists of three major components: (1) Stolypin was a great reformer; (2) he was the hangman of the revolution of 1905-1907; and (3) he was a patriot-martyr, assassinated by a lone-wolf terrorist, who was likely a double agent of the state secret police of which Stolypin himself was in charge.

Stolypin’s name resurfaced in a major way in the course of the Name of Russia (Imia Rossiia) competition in May-December 2008, pioneered by the government-sponsored TV channel ‘Rossia’. While very few were surprised to see Alexander Nevsky and Joseph Stalin among the top three finalists, the fact that Petr Stolypin came second did puzzle some historians. I suggest that the Georgian-Russian conflict of August 2008 and the unfolding world economic crisis provided the socio-historic and cultural frame for the final stages of voting in September and were equally crucial in December of 2008, when the winners were announced. As insignificant as this conflict might appear in the ‘grand’ scheme of things, its ‘timely’ coinciding with the unfolding of the world economic crisis turned out to be a much needed signifier of Putin’s accomplishments. I submit that in the course of the contest Stolypin’s biography was modified and expanded to meet the needs of those voters who might have wanted to cast their vote for Putin, as well as to legitimize and solidify his appointment as prime minister.

From the vantage point of the 21st century, it was fitting to insist that it was not Stolypin’s attempted reforms that led to the revolution, but, on the contrary, it was his tragic death and, therefore, his failure to accomplish his grand plans that led to uncontrolled unrest, terrorism, and, ultimately, the Bolshevik revolution. Had Stolypin lived in the 1910s and 1920s, the wars and revolutions wouldn’t have taken place. In other words, one doesn’t need to continue with the painful re-integration of the traumatizing events such as the Civil War and Stalinist Terror (the events that continue to resist integration) into contemporary historical narratives. Instead one can treat them as accidental and/or can transfer the blame for Russia sliding into the dark ages of Stalinism to Stolypin’s self-appointed murderer Dmitrii Bogrov and a small group of pro-revolutionary intellectuals. By the same token, Putin had to stay in power to complete whatever reforms he had been unable to complete.
The results of the Name of Russia project were two-fold: 1) Stolypin’s name and his mythologized persona received greater public recognition, and 2) the project forged a link between the ‘good’ tsarist Prime Minister Stolypin and the then Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. It is this amalgamation of the popular and state-sponsored Stolypins that defines the ways in which Stolypin’s legacy is being appropriated today.

How good is, in fact, ‘Stolypin’ for Putin and for Russia in general? It seems that, as never before, Russia has reached a stage when the concepts of social self, honour, and civic duty require a re-examination. What all those who write and make bio-pics about Stolypin agree on absolutely is that Stolypin was an honourable man, a man of high integrity. When Putin compares himself to Stolypin, what does it actually mean? Will he start acting like Stolypin? Does it mean that people should be prepared to see his future deeds differently after comparing them to those of Stolypin? Should his supporters and critics be concerned about the consequences of this association? While Putin agrees to follow Stolypin’s example, this impersonation might benefit all the sides involved on the current Russian political scene. This, in a way, is similar to Charles Cooley’s famous concept of ‘looking glass self’, which implies that people shape themselves in accordance with what they think other people think about them. As Russian people like to say – History will show (istoriia pokazhet).

To conclude, the Stolypin cultural construct offers Russian people a much-needed screen onto which to project Putin’s failures and ambitions. And his enemies’ fears as well.

Galina Rylkova is Associate Professor of Russian and Slavic Studies at the University of Florida. She is the author of The Archaeology of Anxiety: The Russian Silver Age and Its Legacy (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2007).