

Andrzej Janicki

The Memory of the Second World War in the Contemporary Russian Historical Discourse

The present dissertation is divided into two parts. The first of them contains two chapters. The initial chapter entitled “Memory or Memories?” focuses on methodological and terminological issues. It indicates possible solutions of questions such as: proper selection of primary sources or main characteristics of the contemporary Russian historical discourse. The author also tries to indicate the specific use of the term “historical memory” in the particular Russian context. This chapter introduces also the works of the American psychologist representing Washington University in St. Louis – James V. Wertsch. They are treated as the main methodological point of reference in the following analysis of the source material.

The second chapter entitled “Limits of Memory” consists of two subsections describing two issues respectively. The subsection entitled “The Genetic Aspect” contains an in-depth discussion on the process of shaping of historical discourse and memory of the Second World War in the Soviet Union up to the year 1991. The main focus of this subsection is on the last years of existence of the Soviet Union.

The next subsection entitled “The Structural Aspect” concerns the formal, legal and institutional limits of functioning of the contemporary Russian historical discourse after the fall of the Soviet Union. In principle, it contains an elaboration of several legal and institutional instruments like, for example, the federal law of the Russian Federation “On Immortalization of the Victory of the Soviet Nation in the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945” or The Presidential Commission of the Russian Federation to Counter Attempts to Falsify History to the Detriment of Russia's Interests.

The second part of the dissertation encompasses the analysis of selected “textual resources” establishing the contemporary Russian memory of the Second World War. This part consists of two chapters describing – respectively – an official and an unofficial vision of the memory.

The third chapter entitled “The Mainstream Memory” starts with the subsection “The Second World War in the Contemporary Russian History Textbooks for Classes 9-11” discussing selected school textbooks approved by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation.

The second subsection of this chapter entitled “The Memory of the Second World War in Presentations of Participants of Selected Scientific Conferences” contains an elaboration of various approaches towards the topic of the memory that may be treated as a representative sample of lectures chosen from selected conferences of professional historians.

In the third subsection entitled “The Discourse of the Memory of the War in View of Selected Russian Historians”, the author focuses on various discourses of the memory of the Second World War developed by Russian historical writers such as: Mahmut Garyeyev, Oleg Rzheshvsky, Natalya Narochnitskaya, Vladimir Medinsky and Aleksey Isayev.

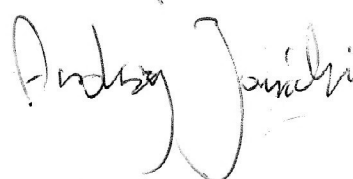
Finally, the last subsection entitled “The Journal *Voyenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal* as a Battlefield for Memory of the Second World War” describes selected visions of the memory of the war propagated by authors of articles published in the edition of the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation “*Voyenno-Istoricheskiy Zhurnal*”.

The last chapter of the dissertation entitled “The Periphery of Memory” is dedicated to various articulations of the memory of the Second World War that are devoid of an official status.

The first subsection of this chapter entitled “The Memory of the Second World War between Pop Culture and Neo-Stalinism” focuses on the recent phenomena of new genres of popular historical literature shaping various areas

of the contemporary historical discourse. Several books written by Yuriy Mukhin are presented as one of the best examples of this phenomenon.

The final subsection of the last chapter entitled “Against the Official Memory of the War” contains selected examples of new visions of the memory propagated by authors such as Viktor Suvorov, Boris Sokolov, Vladimir Beshanov or Mark Solonin. One part of this subsection is also dedicated to a series of books edited by Dmitriy Khmel'nitsky.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andrey Janich". The signature is written in a cursive, somewhat stylized font. The first name "Andrey" is written in a smaller, more compact script, while the last name "Janich" is written in a larger, more flowing script with a prominent loop at the end.