



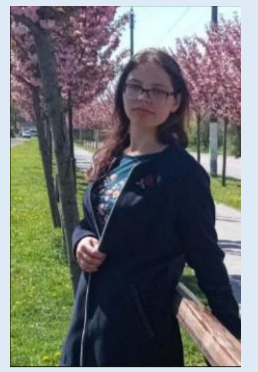
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International Symposium in Mexico "Memory Wars in the Age of (Dis)Information Wars"



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The Second World War as an item of one of the greatest wars of memory in human history

Introduction

Memory is one of the main factors in the formation and support of national identity, and thus the national character of all countries of the world without exception. Given that human society itself is a creation of beings most capable of perception and consciousness, each of which has its own identity, memory plays a crucial role in shaping this society. The remembrance of events that the same society has experienced for generations.

Objectives

The aim of this article is to explore an impact of interpretation meanings of the World War II for society in different countries.

Analysis

One can recall here the concept of inter generational memory, so to speak, generational memory, and with it the concept of generational trauma or rather inter generational one, in our opinion, is a fundamental aspect in the context of the identity of society and the wars of memory, respectively.

To paraphrase Schuller, it is the hard times that build a strong nation and strong people who will create quiet times. Quiet times will breed people and societies that are weak to global challenges [1], and they will use the experience and memory of their ancestors to overcome new difficult times.

The Second World War is one of the greatest tragedies in the memory of mankind, as it took away the most precious thing — human lives. Without getting into the horrific details of the events, it is worth pointing out its consequences for the consciousness, identity, and generational memory of the peoples of the world.

Yet, despite of an official historiography of events, participants, territories where and how the fighting and occupation took place, different states of the world **differ in their interpretation of the meanings and senses** of the Second World War for their particular nation.

Accordingly, the cause and subject of one of the greatest wars of memory is the Second World War.

In the article "Wars of Memory: The History of the OUN and UPA in the Modern Socio-Cultural Context of Ukrainian Historiography" Yana Prymachenko speaking about the wartime legacy of the Second World War describes wars of memory as 'a contest of different collective memories' [2, p. 2], i.e. conflicts between different groups or societies with different views on historical events and their significance. According to this statement, wars of memory stand as one of the elements in the formation of national identity.

For example, in **Ukraine**, the memory of all those who died is commemorated every year on 8 May on the National Day of Remembrance and Reconciliation, as well as the Day of Remembrance and Victory over Nazism in World War II. It is also a

day to commemorate the courage and heroism of the victorious nations, and the media is full of films that raise awareness of the events of the war.

V. Shaykan, speaking about the sources of the wars of memory, identifies the following conflict factors:

- complications in resolving various disputes with neighbouring states;
- serious differences in views on the parties to the Second World War;
- mythologisation and over-heroisation;
- fabrication of events and even romanticisation of the history of the war [3, p. 2].

Speaking about the perception of the Second World War in other countries, for example, a new stage of reflection on **Germany's** own memory agenda can be observed in the German academic discourse. The German historian R. Kozellek proposed the concept of negative memory — "to denote the focus of public memory on state and social crimes of dictatorships, which, according to his definition, preserves in memory the disgusting and undesirable" [4, p. 44].



The idea of the indivisibility of the First and Second World Wars is common in the public discourse of **Great Britain** [4, p. 112]. According to British scholars, the years 1914-1945 should be defined as a time of a holistic global conflict and a single civilisational challenge to both their country and the entire Atlantic community. This attitude is not purely theoretical, as the commemoration takes place on 8 May with special ceremonies and memorial masses with the participation of the royal family at the main war monument in Britain, the Cenotaph in London, and there is a widespread tradition of commemorating veterans of the both wars.

According to this fact, it can be argued that **one of the signs of memory wars** is manifested here: different interpretation of the same events.

As for **Italy**, the historical memory of its population is controversial, and researchers attribute this to the opposite experience of Italians during the Second World War, who participated in different sides of this confrontation. Nevertheless, at the official level, Italy, as a state that

changed its course of development to a parliamentary-republican one in the postwar years and strongly condemned the crimes of the Nazis, has state commemorative dates and commemorative events, such as the Liberation Day (25 April), Holocaust Remembrance Day (27 January), etc.

In the information environment of

the **USSR**, there is a perception that it "actually" won the Second World War as a single country. And this statement is one of the battles in this war of memory.

In the publication "War and Myth. The Unknown Second World War", a team of authors under the general editorship of O. Zinchenko, V. Viatrovych, and M. Mayorov it is discussed the 50 most popular Russian historical narratives about the course of the war.

It is 22nd in this ranking which states: "Western assistance under the Lend-Lease programme has been insignificant". Although the United States provided aid under this programme to 42 countries, including Britain, the USSR, France, China, the countries of the British Commonwealth, etc., and the total amount of the programme was more than \$50 billion in 1941-1945 prices [5, p. 112].

Consequently, we can state that **wars of memory are a subject of discussion and disagreement between states directly involved in a particular significant event**. The positions proclaimed at the official level of states have a significant impact on the formation of public opinion and identity, as well as on the foreign policies of countries around the world.

Sources

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