

The embarrassing centenary: reinterpretation of the 1917 Revolution in the official historical narrative of post-Soviet Russia (1991–2017)

Olga Malinova*

School of Political Science, National Research University Higher School of Economics, Moscow, Russia

(Received 1 August 2017; accepted 17 September 2017)

This article traces the reinterpretation of the Revolution(s) of 1917 in the official historical narrative of post-Soviet Russia. Its construction is an essentially political process, as its discursive hegemony depends on how it fits into the symbolic landscape created by various social actors. The task of reinterpretation of the revolution is complicated by its centrality for two conflicting patterns of memory politics – the critical “working through” the memory of a traumatic and criminal past, and consolidation of the nation/nation-building. There are different coalitions of mnemonic actors behind each of these patterns. The author reveals different strategies of dealing with dilemmas involved in employing these patterns in the 1990s and the 2000s, and argues that until now the Russian incumbent elites have not succeeded in reframing the Russian Revolution as a great, though tragic, episode of the national past. In the context of the centenary commemorated in 2017, the incumbent elite seem to have come back to the idea of “reconciliation and accord” that was coined by Boris Yeltsin’s team in the mid-1990s. However, its integration into the apologetic narrative of “the 1000-year Russian state” totally changes its meaning, as it rejects “working through” the traumatic past.

Keywords: official historical narrative; memory politics; public commemoration; 1917 Revolution; symbolic politics

Introduction

The centenary of the Russian Revolution(s) of 1917 puts this historical event back on the state memory-policy agenda. After canceling the public holiday for 7 November in 2004, celebrated in Soviet times as the Day of the Great October Socialist Revolution, the topic of the Russian Revolution(s) was virtually excluded from the official discourse for almost a decade. But though state officials persistently avoided making public statements on this matter, it never disappeared from public discussions, and some leaders of political parties used the occasions of the jubilee anniversaries to express their interpretations of the role of revolution in Russian history (Malinova 2015, Ch. 2). Certainly, the centenary of the event that was a turning point both in Russian and world history could not go unnoted, and it once again dredges up the problem of reinterpretation of Soviet Russia’s former foundation myth. According to Schöpflin (1997, 33), foundation myths are stories about some historical moments that open for a group a perspective of a particular future. Over its 70 years, the Communist regime had developed a huge symbolic infrastructure to

*Email: omalinova@hse.ru

commemorate the October Revolution as its foundation myth.¹ The centenary of the revolution is a good point to assess the preliminary results of its transformation by the new, post-Soviet regime.

Looking at the official arrangements for the centenary of the Revolution(s) of 1917, one could get the impression that the ruling elite were reluctant to celebrate it. The decree on preparing the commemoration was signed by President Vladimir Putin only in December 2016, less than two months before the centenary of the February Revolution. This short document records some important symbolical choices. First, it names the commemorating event “the revolution of 1917 in Russia,” which sounds deliberately neutral in comparison with other terms presented in the public discourse (“great,” “Russian” (either *rusaskaia* or *rossiaskaia*), “socialist,” “bourgeois,” “democratic,” etc.), and evidently rejects its status as a “great” historical event. It also obscures which revolution should be commemorated – the February Revolution that led to abolition of the autocracy, the October Revolution that put the radical Bolshevik Party into power, or both. Second, the instruction reduces the role of the state to allocating resources. It delegates decisions about the format of commemoration to the Russian Historical Society (RHS) (Instruction 2016). This stands in stark contrast to commemorations of anniversaries of the victory in the Great Patriotic War. Preparation for the 70th anniversary celebrated in 2015 started in 2013 and was led by Putin. The centenary of the Russian Revolution is given an obviously lower symbolic profile.

This is hardly surprising, considering that since the 1990s practically all segments of the Russian political elite have taken a shared negative attitude towards revolutionary traditions (Kalinin 2013; Malinova 2015, 62–68). However, even a modest official commemoration should be based on some semantic formula that prioritizes particular meanings of this historical event and highlights its significance for the present context. Analysis of the discourse of some state officials as well as of the Plan of commemorative events adopted by the RHS (2017) suggests that the chosen formula is “reconciliation and concord” (*primirenje i soglasie*). In the Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly (2016a), Putin mentioned the forthcoming centenary of the Revolution by saying, “we need history’s lessons primarily for *reconciliation* and for strengthening the social, political, and civil *concord* that we have managed to achieve” (author’s emphasis). The idea to construct a Monument to Reconciliation in Crimea, where the last battles of the Civil War took place, fits such an interpretation. The opening of this monument, on the 4th of November 2017, was evidently planned as a central commemoration event (Plan 2017). Ironically, this formula is similar in wording to the one invented in 1996 by Boris Yeltsin’s administration when it was introduced as a new name of the public holiday on the 7th of November. So, having dropped it in 2004, when the Day of Reconciliation and Concord was cancelled, Putin and his fellows came back to the same idea in the context of the centenary commemoration. Since the mid-2000s the incumbent elite made significant efforts to change the symbolic repertoire of the usable past. Some historical events were downplayed, like the October Revolution or the demolition of the Soviet state machine with adoption of the Constitution of 1993, the others were reinterpreted, like the Great Patriotic War². The incumbent elite is rather critical to Yeltsin and his legacy. In this context the choice of the same wording for the official centenary commemoration of the events of 1917 seems remarkable.

Why has Putin’s administration decided to celebrate “reconciliation and concord,” as did Yeltsin’s team before? This article seeks to get answer to this question looking at the issue of commemoration in a broader political context, i.e. considering it as part of a symbolic policy aimed at legitimization of power, identity construction, and mobilization of civic solidarity.

In this article, I reveal the main shifts of reinterpretation of the Revolution(s) of 1917 in the *official historical narrative*, i.e. the meaningful scheme describing the genealogy of the nation/the people and explaining how the past determines the present and future. According to my analysis, a historical narrative can be considered official if it is articulated in texts, official documents, and public practices performed on behalf of the state. Media discourses or school textbooks do not fall into this category, even if they are loyal to the position of the authorities, because they are produced by actors who are not formally empowered to speak on behalf of the state. Of course, they are important mechanisms of domination of the historical narrative articulated by those in power (see more Malinova 2015; Sherlock 2016). But the way they interpret it not necessarily reflects the official position. In any modern society, there are many competing narratives of this kind (Martin 1995; Bell 2003; Wodak and de Cillia 2007), so the development of the official one is an essentially political process. Even if the state has exclusive resources for imposing symbolic violence, the discursive hegemony of the narratives developed by the incumbent elite depends on how they fit into the symbolic landscape created by the efforts of various social actors. It is hardly possible to identify all of “the authors” of the official historical narrative, since many of the choices behind its construction are hidden from the public. However, the configuration of competing discourses as well as some public statements of political actors gives clues for reconstructing a decision-making process. Therefore, to understand the evolution of the official historical scheme, one needs to consider it as a result of political decision-making that takes place in the context of other issues of domestic and foreign policy and involves interaction among various actors.

In the following section, I describe the theoretical framework that underlies my approach. It is based on a social constructivism perspective and develops the theory of symbolic politics as well as some conceptualizations derived from comparative memory studies. After revealing the cultural models of political usage of the past that determine major patterns of memory policy in the Russian context, I consider how the task of reinterpretation of the former foundation myth was solved by the incumbent elites of post-Soviet Russia.

Description of the theoretical framework

After the collapse of the USSR, Russia, as well as the other new independent states in the region, faced the problem of constructing historical narratives that could support the new macro-political/national identity. It supposed reinterpretation of the historical events that were key moments of the former Soviet narrative, as well as “nomination” for political usage of some new events and figures and development of new connections among major episodes of Russian history. The February and October Revolutions of 1917 had to be somehow integrated into the changing narrative.

Since the late 1980s, the national past was a subject of fierce debates (Smith 2002; Meridale 2003; Sherlock 2007; Kopusov 2011). An elaboration of the official narrative is unavoidably a matter of choosing among competing interpretations presented in the public discourse, making it part of the field of symbolic politics. My understanding of the term follows Pierre Bourdieu, who considers the production of meanings and the struggle for legitimacy of one’s vision as an integral part of politics (Bourdieu 1992). In this logic, *symbolic politics* can be understood as the set of public activities aimed at production and maintenance of certain modes of interpretation of social reality and the struggle for their domination. It should be considered not a counterpart of “real” politics, but rather a specific aspect. There are no well-integrated theories of symbolic politics. After its launching by Murray Edelman in the 1960s (1964, 1971), this concept has got some further development

within the discipline of political science (Kertzer 1988, Brysk 1995) though not as a direct continuation of Edelman's ideas. However, there is a set of more or less elaborated concepts and analytic tools for a study of public interactions of social actors seeking to maintain particular interpretations of social reality. Some of them were applied also to the Russian case (e.g. the analysis of the Soviet metanarrative and its dissolution by Graeme Gill (2011, 2013), the study of historical mythmaking in post-Soviet Russia by Kathleen Smith (2002)).

Given that shared ideas about a collective past play an important role in modern societies, one of the most remarkable and well-studied dimensions of symbolic politics, as described above, is *memory politics*.³ By this term, I mean the public activity of various social actors aimed at propagation of particular visions of the collective past and development of *the memory infrastructure* that supports such visions (established public rituals, holidays and festivals, monuments, museums, toponymy of public places, etc.).

The state is not the only actor on the field of symbolic politics, but it holds a privileged position, as it can support its interpretations of the social reality by powerful allocation of resources (for example, the education system), legal categorization (as in matters of citizenship), attaching a special status to particular symbols (public holidays, official symbols, government awards, etc.), speaking for the political community in the international arena, etc. As a consequence, the public rhetoric and symbolic gestures of official actors who speak "in the name of the state" gain a special significance and become an important frame of reference for the other participants of public discourse. It should be mentioned that the official symbolic policy may be inconsistent and quite often is context-driven. Those who speak "in the name of the state" do not always rely upon systematic interpretations of social reality and inevitably react to current conflicts. In spite of the exclusive resources at the disposal of the state, the dominance of its preferred interpretations is not predetermined; even in totalitarian and authoritarian societies, where certain normative principles are imposed by force, some opportunities for escape still remain in the form of "double thinking."

My analysis is focused on the incumbent political elites as actors who not only promote a particular interpretation of a collective past that serves their political interests but also depend on the available repertoire of the usable past in legitimizing their power. The results of their activity in this field depend on how it fits the existing repertoire of symbols, myths, and images developed by various social actors, present and past.

A high degree of tension about reinterpretation of the historical past in the Russian public discourse throughout the post-Soviet period might be explained not only by evident ideological discrepancy but also by the existence of two conflicting models of memory politics (Malinova 2016).

On the one hand, there is an ongoing reconsideration of the traumatic past focused on the political repressions of the Soviet regime, the Civil War, ethnic deportations, and the negative aspects of the Soviet regime, in general. It started in the late 1980s with revealing "the blind spots" of Russian history – the facts, figures, and aspects of the national past that had been concealed for ideological reasons (Sherlock 2007; Wertsch 2008). The public discussions about the negative aspects of the Soviet regime evidently contributed to its delegitimization and collapse (Gill 2011). This kind of memory politics fits the model of *Vergangenheitsaufarbeitung* – critical reconsideration of history focused on the ideas of recognition of the moral guilt and commemoration of victims.

On the other hand, the new Russian state faces the problem of identity construction that falls into a pattern typical for nation-building. This kind of memory politics is subjected to development of a historical narrative shaping images of the national "self" and its "others" (Cruz 2000; Coakley 2007; Heisler 2008).

These patterns of memory politics have different logics that were well-described by Assmann (2006 [2014]). The memory politics of critical “working through” seeks to compensate the “asymmetry of memory” of the victims, to denounce the executioners, and to recognize the collective moral guilt for past disaster. In case of success, it might result in merging competing stories of the different “sides” of a historical process into a “reconciling” metanarrative of a higher level. But this is not guaranteed. Meanwhile, this kind of memory politics separates rather than unites a society. According to Assmann, trauma “does not mobilize or consolidate but disturbs and even destroys the identity” (2014 [2006], 69). By contrast, nation-building memory politics seeks to mobilize solidarity around a positive image of “us;” typically, it focuses on historical events and figures that could be interpreted in terms of glory, heroism, and recognized cultural accomplishments. These patterns of memory politics rely on different symbolic resources (though quite often they narrate the same historical events) and suggest different political strategies. In Russia, they coexist, being supported by different coalitions of actors. This makes the construction of the official historical narrative a particularly complicated political task.

Reinterpretation of the October Revolution of 1917 is essential for both patterns of memory politics. On the one hand, it was a starting point of the “Russian tragedy” in the twentieth century, the “ultimate cause” of the red and the white terror, the Civil War, political repressions, and the “Soviet economic modernization” that came with a high cost. On the other hand, as a foundation myth of the USSR, the October Revolution was a pillar of Soviet identity, a matter of collective pride that could not be easily discarded.

During the decades after the collapse of the USSR, the Russian incumbent elites faced this dilemma in different ways. In the following sections, I trace the evolution of interpretation of the events of 1917 in the official historical narrative and discuss the problems that the incumbent elite have encountered in dealing with the centennial of the Revolution.

The foundation myth of Soviet Russia in the symbolic battles of the 1990s

The first Russian president, Boris Yeltsin, legitimized his political course by a historical narrative that sought to merge the two models described above. He and his team relied on a discourse about “the crimes of the Soviet regime” to establish the narrative that emphasized the contrast between the “new” and “old” Russia. Post-Soviet Russia was represented as a European country building democracy and a market economy, in contrast to the “totalitarian” USSR or “autocratic” Romanov empire. The interpretation of the national past was clearly put to the task of legitimizing a radical transformation of the Soviet “totalitarian” order. The post-Soviet transition was presented as a radical change of the country’s historical trajectory. Based on grand-narratives inherited from the Cold War discourses, the incumbent elite represented the transition from the Soviet regime in terms of rough historicist schemes that urged total rejection of Soviet principles. It allowed the discourse of a critical “working through” of the “criminal” Soviet past into the narrative about a birth of the “new,” democratic Russia. But Yeltsin’s historical narrative gave a weak basis for the new national identity, as it was unable to anchor the positive image of its bearers in a collective past.

In the official discourse of the 1990s, the Soviet myth about the October Revolution was subverted rather than restructured. The assessment of the event was changed from positive to negative.⁴ It continued to be considered a turning point, but toward “catastrophe” rather than toward a bright Communist future. The reforms that started soon after the collapse of the USSR, in 1992, were presented as a return to the democratic project that was interrupted

by the October Revolution. As Yeltsin explained in his Address to the Federal Assembly in 1996:

Tsarist Russia, being overwhelmed by the burden of its own historical problems, could not get to that road [of democracy]. The depth of social conflict and the absence of democratic traditions predetermined the radicalism of the Russian revolutionary process, its impetuous failure (*stremitel'nyi sryy*) from February to October. This destructive radicalism – “to the very ground, and then”⁵ – explains the fact of loss of many former achievements in the sphere of culture, economics, law, public development in the course of breaking with the old order. (Yeltsin 1996)

The February Revolution of 1917 was now considered the highest point of Russia's movement along “the normal,” or “European,” path. However, there were no efforts to change the established memory infrastructure to commemorate this episode of “the Russian revolutionary process.” As in the Soviet era, the focus of the official discourse was on the October, not the February, Revolution. Until 2004, 7 November remained a public holiday, although there never were any official commemorations of the October Revolution by the Yeltsin administration.

The critical approach to the October Revolution and pre-revolution history became especially salient in presidential elections in the mid-1990s. Yeltsin's proponents invoked the horrors of the revolution as they tried to represent the choice between the incumbent and his main opponent, Communist candidate Gennady Ziuganov. According to Nikolai Egorov, the head of the presidential administration:

The forthcoming election will be not a matter of choice between the good and the bad programs of the candidates. We shall have to choose again between a continuation of the democratic reforms and a turn back. But there is no way back, there is a downfall behind. Russia will not get through *one more destructive revolution*. (author's emphasis) (Egorov 1996)

This argument echoes the words of St. Petersburg Mayor Anatolii Sobchak: “After all Russia has suffered during the past century, it definitely will not endure one more dictator, *one more revolution* that could become the most bloody in its history” (author's emphasis) (1996).

Even after Yeltsin had won the elections, the most persistent opponents of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation continued to draw the situation in terms of “the 100-year-long civil war,” blaming contemporary “Bolsheviks” for escalation of aggression. On the eve of the 59th anniversary of the October Revolution, Alexander Yakovlev, a prominent Soviet leader of the perestroika period, published an article in which he argued that “Russia's movement to triumph of freedom can be interrupted any day if we do not proclaim illegal the misanthropic Bolshevik ideology” (1996).

But official symbolic politics turned in a different direction. Soon after his reelection, Yeltsin declared a search for “national consensus.” Even if this declaration never met its end, it wrought some changes in the official memory policy. On 7 November 1996, a year before the 80th anniversary of the October Revolution, Yeltsin officially reinterpreted the meaning of this day, decreeing it “the Day of Reconciliation and Concord.” But nothing changed: no new rituals of commemoration were elaborated, and on the 80th anniversary of the October Revolution, there was no official program of celebration at the federal level.

Reinterpretation of the October Revolution as “a catastrophe” radically transformed its established meanings: the historical event that used to be considered in terms of “national glory” became represented as “collective trauma.” Such a semantic turn seemed rather problematic. To succeed, it would have needed the support of a decisive change in commemorative practices. According to the logic of “collective trauma,” focus should shift from glorification of “the heroes” (who now were not considered heroes) to commemoration

of “the victims” and punishment of “the executioners” (some of whom later also became “the victims” of political repressions). However, there were no consistent efforts to create an appropriate memory infrastructure for the new narrative. According to Kathleen Smith’s study, after the defeat of the August 1991 coup, several Russian cities’ memorials to the heroes of the revolution were destroyed and some public places that commemorated their names were renamed. There were some local initiatives concerning the new rituals of commemoration of 7 November. But they got no support from the federal authorities (2002, 81–83). So the radical reinterpretation of the foundation myth of Soviet Russia articulated by Yeltsin and his team actually was not put forward consistently enough.

At the same time, the reinterpretation of the Revolution met with influential counter-discourse from the left. In the beginning of the 1990s, the Communists significantly renewed their ideology by combining a leftist criticism of “capitalist” market reforms with the nationalist defense of traditional and “patriotic” values. The meaning of the October Revolution as a foundation myth of Soviet Russia was reframed as “a symbol of loss.” The fact that 7 November remained a public holiday until 2004 allowed “the Popular-Patriotic Opposition” (the name of the political bloc led by the Communists) to develop new rituals of commemoration that were colored by post-Soviet nostalgia. Their efforts were facilitated by availability of a significant part of the memory infrastructure created by the Soviet regime.

The collapse of the USSR gave new overtones to “the Popular-Patriotic Opposition” story about the events of 1917. For example, in 1994, Gennady Ziuganov, then the chair of the Presidium of the Central Executive Committee of the Communist Party, and later its long-standing leader, represented the October Revolution as an episode in a centuries-long opposition between Russia and the West. He wrote: “The preconditions of the Russian Revolution matured for a long time. They equally were a result of mistakes of the Russian government and the harmful influence of Western civilization.” But “the hopes of the West to cut down its major geopolitical enemy turned out to be in vain” when “the revolution did not destroy the Russian state but renewed and strengthened it” (Ziuganov 1994, 143–144).

In the renewed Communist narrative, the October Revolution had lost its heroic connotations and become an episode of a centuries-long struggle with the West. But at the same time, it morphed from an event demarcating “before” and “after” to a moment of culmination of the national spirit. According to Ziuganov, “Soviet power ... inherited from historical Russia both its moral ideals and its experience of building a great powerful state,” which spurred its rise in the twentieth century (Ziuganov 1994, 144). Thus, typically nationalist constructions were added to the traditional Marxist way of reasoning.

In the discourse of the Communist and Patriotic opposition, the meaning of the October Revolution also was transformed, but less radically. It allowed for the use of a significant part of the former symbolic repertoire: the Revolution was considered in terms of causal links with Soviet modernization, the victory over Nazi Germany, great power status, the Soviet system of social redistribution, and other elements that were learned from the Soviet historical narrative. Even if the Communists lacked the power to make symbolic investments in further developing the relevant memory infrastructure, the availability of the symbolic resources inherited from the old regime gave them a certain advantage over the incumbent elite. As soon as they had significant electoral support and could exploit their nostalgic narrative to great advantage, Yeltsin’s idea of “reconciliation and concord” became highly problematic, even if it had been supported by appropriate changes in public rituals and commemorative practices. But it was not.

However, if there was something common in the attitudes of the Russian political elites toward the historical past, it was a negative perception of the Revolution (Kalinin 2013; Malinova 2015, 62–68). This concept was strongly associated with violence and inadmissible social engineering. Remarkably, in the 1990s, there was a symbolic struggle for nonrevolutionary framing of the post-Soviet transformations. The incumbent elite insisted that their policy fell under the rubric of peaceful reforms, not violent revolution. For example, during the electoral campaign to the State Duma in 1995, Yegor Gaidar argued:

Liberals, democrats never need great upheaval (*velikie potriaseniia*). Upheaval is a rich medium for tricksters (*avant'uristy*). But if in 1989–1991 the Democrats avoided using such words, they were not sincere. The outdated system should be broken. Our task was to change it peacefully, by evolution, not by revolution. (Gaidar 1995)

By the same token, “the Popular-Patriotic Opposition” criticized the Gaidar government’s reforms, arguing that:

Reforms differ from revolutions by being conducted by general concord, in the context of civic peace, stability, and order. [...] When society conducts reforms, everybody loses, but also gets something; during revolution, on the contrary, some people gain while others lose. (Rossiia segodnia 1994, 44)

Hence the ruling elite and opposition were at one in their dislike of the very idea of “revolution.” Of course, it never prevented them from using this concept to criticize one another. However, this partly explains why Putin’s program of “stabilization” received wide support. The broad majority of the Russian political class would subscribe to his thesis: “Russia has exhausted its limit for political and socio-economic shocks, cataclysms, and radical transformations. Only fanatics and political forces who are indifferent to Russia and its people could call for the next revolution” (1999).

Marginalization of the memory of the revolution in the 2000s

By the beginning of the 2000s, an influential coalition of political actors wanted to exchange Yeltsin’s critical approach to the national past for a more complimentary, even if less consistent, one. It included not only people from the left-patriotic wing but also the statist who were not sympathetic to the Soviet regime but held that the state should make efforts to improve its citizens’ collective self-esteem. Putin turned to be ready to meet this request. Since he had not taken a particular side in the symbolic conflicts of the 1990s, he could stimulate “reconciliation and concord” by appealing to values and symbols of the Soviet past. The first and the most remarkable step in this direction was the law on official state symbols adopted in December 2000. It established the tricolor state flag, which appealed to the legacy of the Romanov empire and was actively used by “the democratic forces” during the “putsch” in August 1991, the state anthem based on the “old” melody of the Soviet anthem, and the red banner with the hammer and sickle – the symbol of victory in the Great Patriotic War – for the Russian armed forces.

The novelty of Putin’s approach, however, was in more than a selective “rehabilitation” of Soviet symbols. It gradually evolved toward a decisive change of the main idea of the official historical narrative⁶: the principle of the opposition between “the old” and “the new Russia” was replaced by the idea of great-power status [*derzhavnost'*] extended to the whole “1000-year history” of Russia. The new official discourse presented the Russian state (regardless of evaluation of its actual policy in different periods) as the central element of national identity.

The idea of “the strong state” as the basis of past and future greatness of Russia was first expressed clearly in the President’s Address to the Federal Assembly in 2003 when Putin called “maintaining a state spread over such a vast territory and preserving a unique community of peoples while keeping up a strong presence on the international stage” “a truly historical feat” of the Russian people (2003).

The shift toward the idea of the “1000-year Russian state” meant a reassessment of the collapse of the USSR (which at the same time was the “foundation act” of the new Russia) and of the Soviet legacy in general. The most important official statement on that matter came in 2005 when Putin called the collapse of the USSR “the major geopolitical disaster of the century” (2005). This sharply contrasted with Yeltsin’s efforts to present the collapse of the USSR as consistent with “objective” laws of history, hence as a “progressive,” if painful, event. But as soon as the ideas of “the great power” and “the 1000-year-old Russian state” were put in the center of the official narrative, Yeltsin’s interpretation was replaced by the concept of contingent “catastrophe,” caused by the actions of “bad” politicians.

The Soviet legacy, however, was “rehabilitated” in the official symbolic policy in a modified form, with its most dubious aspects minimized. Putin’s speeches contained many critical statements about Soviet practices; “rehabilitation” of the Soviet symbols in no way meant a total apology for the Communist regime. The main aspect of the cherished legacy was the idea of the “great” powerful state that overcame many difficulties, succeeded in (albeit imperfect) modernization and became a leading player in world politics. It made the Great Patriotic War the most usable element of the symbolic repertoire provided by the national history. Totalitarian features such as state violence and political repressions were bracketed out of this picture. As a result, the official narrative focused on glorification of the Russian nation, and issues that fit into the pattern of critical “working though” the traumatic and criminal past became marginal. This does not mean that they were absolutely eliminated from the discourse and commemorative practices of high state officials. Putin addressed them occasionally, reacting to the activity of other mnemonic actors like the Russian Orthodox Church who is rather devoted to commemoration of the victims of the Communist regime persecuted for their religious beliefs (Torbakov 2014)⁷. In 2015 the coalition of “the establishment figures” like Sergei Karaganov, the anti-Stalinists from the Memorial Center of the History of Political Repression and the Liberals from “Yabloko” Party pushed the adoption by the Government the Conception of the State Policy on Commemorating the Memory of Victims of Political Repression and construction of the Memorial to the victims of political repression in Moscow (Sherlock 2016). But Putin never made this issue a part of his own story about “the thousand years long Russian state”⁸. The focus on “the positive aspects” of the national past and unwillingness to discuss the most “problematic” ones made the official narrative rather fragmented and eclectic.

Theoretically, these changes in the symbolic policy course were consistent with a reintegration of the October Revolution into the official historical narrative as a great, if tragic, event. Along with the other elements of the Soviet past, it could be “re-described [...] by means of the patriotic language of common legacy” (Kalinin 2011, 159). There was no shortage of such interpretations in political and media discourse of the 2000s (Malinova 2015, 68–84). The October Revolution gave an impetus to a new wave of modernization in the USSR and to social welfare transformations all over the world. It was connected with Russia’s achievements in the twentieth century that was an important part of the new “apologetic” historical narrative. However, the choice was made for the symbolic depreciation of the former foundation myth of the Soviet Russia. In 2004, the most controversial public holiday – the anniversary of the October Revolution on 7 November – was

abolished by federal law (it remained on the list of festive days as the Day of the October Revolution and Day of the 7 November 1941 Parade on Red Square, but ceased to be a day off). It was “substituted” by the Unity Day of Russia scheduled for 4 November. The renaming of the holiday in 1996 facilitated this change: formally it was not that the Day of the October Revolution was abolished, but that a holiday devoted to people’s unity got a more appropriate date. The change was initiated by the Interreligious Council in Russia that represents so-called traditional confessions. As Metropolitan Kirill, at that time the Moscow Patriarchate’s head of foreign church relations, argued:

We did not come with an initiative of cancelling commemoration of 7 November. We put forward the initiative to make 4 November the Day of Reconciliation and Concord, as far as the 7 November, because of the historical events that took place on that day, could not be the Day of Reconciliation and Concord. (Mitropolit Kirill 2004)

So the holiday was changed to commemorate the popular uprising that expelled Polish occupation forces from Moscow in November 1612. It was supposed to symbolize the unity of people from different social classes who united to preserve Russian statehood⁹.

Why in the mid-2000s was the symbol of the Russian Revolution marginalized rather than reinterpreted to be included to the new official narrative? There are several possible explanations. The first is the Russian establishment’s negative attitude toward the “Revolution.” In mid-2000s it was strengthened by the fear of the colored revolution, similar to that in the neighbor countries. Besides, the symbolism of the events of 1917 obviously clashes with the major idea of “stability” that inspired Putin’s official historical narrative. The second explanation is that the unwillingness of the incumbent elite of the 2000s to get involved in discussions about the traumatic and criminal elements of the Soviet past made it easier to discard the October Revolution from the official discourse than to reframe it. The weakening of the left opposition in the 2000s facilitated this decision. Finally, the personal bias of Putin, who since early in his career as a public politician expressed a negative attitude to the revolutionary aspect of the Soviet experience, also could play a role.

2017: “the October coup” or “the great Russian revolution”?

Cancellation of 7 November as a public holiday in 2004 allowed the Russian Revolution to be left out of the official discourse for almost a decade. However, the inexorable course of jubilee commemorations has brought it back. In 2014, at his meeting with designers of a new concept for a school textbook on Russian history, Putin agreed that the centenary of the February and October Revolutions are “dates of great national significance [...] regardless of how we assess them.” He admitted that “we should consider [...] what events should be organized on a national level” (Putin 2014a).

“Considering” the program of the commemoration was not an easy task. As mentioned, the official decree signed by Putin in December 2016 delegated all arrangements to the Russian Historical Society and used the neutral formulation “the revolution of 1917 in Russia” (Instruction 2016). This was a remarkable choice, given that there were several alternatives proposed by actors who were more or less close to the circle of decision-makers (Gajos 2017).

The first was the interpretation of the events of 1917 as “the October coup.” It was in a sense endorsed by Putin, who repeatedly expressed uncertainty about “what we are going to mark” in 2017 – “the 100th anniversary of [...] the Great October Socialist Revolution” or of “the October coup” (Putin 2014b). Judging by his numerous remarks, Putin himself is close to the latter interpretation, which is consistent with the narrative focused on

“maintaining” the “1000-year” great Russian state. If so, the Russian Revolution is hardly a matter of a festive commemoration; rather it should be considered an annoying failure that was corrected by the course of subsequent events like consolidation of the USSR and the victory in the Great Patriotic War. However, because this interpretation is not universally accepted¹⁰, for the authorities seeking public “concord,” it would be too risky to insist on it.

The second alternative was proposed by a working group tasked with developing the foundations of teaching history in secondary schools. This group was created at the initiative of Putin, who in 2013 put forward a task of elaboration of “common history textbooks for Russian secondary schools [...] but built into a single concept and following a single logic of continuous Russian history” (Meeting 2013). The working group, which includes state officials, historians, several teachers, and other specialists, has produced not “a common history textbook” but the conception that later became a template for several new textbooks. In a search of “proper interpretations” of these as well as some other controversial historical events, the working group coined the formula “the Great Russian Revolution of 1917–1921” (Kontseptsia 2013, 39), which proposed the interpretation of 1917 as a great event of global history comparable to the French Revolution. In spite of many objections, at some moment, this formula seemed a plausible basis for forthcoming centenary commemoration. On the one hand, it fits the eclectic principle of the official narrative insofar as it combines historical episodes with radically different social and political meanings in a single semantic construction of “the Great Revolution.” Thus, it provides a convenient framing for commemoration of the Revolution as a historical event of global significance, which is important for any nation-building project. On the other hand, to a certain extent, it corresponds to the pattern of a critical “working through” the traumatic and criminal past in recognizing the tragic aspects of the Revolution. Therefore, it could help unite the mnemonic actors with different agendas behind a joint commemorative process. In spite of its evident advantages, however, the formula of “the Great Russian Revolution of 1917–1921” was not approved as the principle of the centenary commemoration. One reason might be decision-makers’ desire to make the commemorative process as short as possible instead of extending it for four years. However, the idea to combine the February and October revolutions under common umbrella of “the revolution of 1917 in Russia” probably goes back to this proposal.

A third alternative was proposed by the Minister of Culture Vladimir Medinskii. In May 2015 at a special roundtable organized by the Russian Society for Military History, he announced “The Five Principles for the unified platform of national conciliation.” Medinskii put forward the principle of continuity among different periods of Russian history. He qualified the split that resulted from “the events of 1917 and the Civil War” as “a tragedy” and called for paying equal “respect” to the memory of “the Reds” and “the Whites.” According to the Minister of Culture:

We should not permanently consider our ancestors definitely right or wrong because each side understood in its own way how to bring some prosperity to their country. Both the “Reds” and the “Whites” were driven by patriotism. (Platforma 2015)

Medinskii’s idea of celebrating the centenary of the Revolution under the motto of “reconciliation” presumed a rejection of the critical “working through” of the traumatic and criminal past. The principle “they all were patriots” perfectly fits the complimentary/eclectic narrative, which seeks to blur the conflicts of Russian history, representing them as episodes of development of “a great state,” loyalty to which is declared the most important virtue of the citizens. According to this logic, the Revolution (in this context, no matter

which one) should be commemorated as a tragic conflict of Red and White “patriots” who could not come to an agreement. To support this interpretation, Medinskii endorsed the idea of the Chair of the International Committee of The Russian compatriots Nikita Lobanov-Rostovsky to construct the Monument to Reconciliation in “returning to the native harbor” Crimea, where the Civil War ended (Platforma 2015).

This “patriotic” reinterpretation resonated with a general “securitization” of Russian politics, i.e. a tendency to consider a broad range of public issues as challenging the security of the state and society. It reflects a fear of a “colored revolution” against Putin’s regime inspired from abroad. Medinskii didactically blamed the idea of involvement of foreign actors in the domestic political struggle (which hinted at the alleged foreign support of the anti-Putin opposition) and condemned “the ideology of revolutionary terror” (Platforma 2015).

A slightly different semiofficial narrative was proposed by Sergei Lavrov, the Minister of Foreign Affairs. In March 2016, he published the article “Russia’s Foreign Policy in a Historical Perspective,” in which he addressed the issue of the centenary of 1917. He also did his best to securitize the forthcoming commemoration, pointing to intrigues of those, “particularly in the West,” who “would like to use this occasion for new information attacks on Russia and to portray the 1917 Revolution as some barbaric coup” (Lavrov 2016). Rejecting the anticipated criticism, he argued for “a balanced and unbiased assessment” of the events of 1917 and presented them as “a major event that affected world history in many controversial ways.” Lavrov sought to “normalize” the Russian Revolution by equating it with revolutions in other countries. He recognized that it was “the biggest tragedy for our people,” but emphasized that “all the other revolutions were equally tragic.” Unlike Medinskii, Lavrov did not focus on “patriotism” of the Reds and the Whites; however, he also wrote about “continuity of Russian history, which cannot be edited to delete some of its periods,” and pointed to “the importance of combining all the positive trends developed by our people” (Lavrov 2016). Hence, both conceptions were based on the complimentary/eclectic approach. It might be said that the first one was designed for domestic use, while the second was intended for memory politics in international arenas. If Medinskii called for using the centenary of the Revolution for demonstration of “reconciliation and concord,” Lavrov proposed to consider it as a “great” though “tragic” event important for Russia’s status in the contemporary world.

Thus, on the eve of the centenary year, there were several possible formulas for the main idea of commemoration: (1) “the October coup,” i.e. a historical accident that does not deserve celebration; (2) “the Great Russian Revolution, 1917–1922” as a complex and ambiguous historical process that included many episodes to be commemorated; (3) “reconciliation and concord” based on recognition of both the Whites and the Reds as “patriot;” and (4) “the great even if tragic” event of both Russian and global history (with the perspective of international memory politics). As mentioned in the beginning of this article, the choice evidently has fallen on a modest commemoration program with focus on “reconciliation and concord.” The phrase about “reconciliation” and “concord that we have managed to achieve” in Putin’s Address to the Federal Assembly in December 2016 has fixed a choice of the official formula of commemoration (Putin 2016a). But is “reconciliation” between “the Reds” and “the Whites” still relevant? In a literal sense, for the third-fourth generation of their descendants it is hardly that important. But the Revolution is essentially connected to the discussions about the Russian history in the twentieth century which are central for the current ideological battles. So, “reconciliation and concord” should mitigate passions about the national past that still divide the Russian society. The same intention had Yeltsin and his fellows in 1996.

Does this mean that after 20 years the incumbent elite have come to the same conception of the Russian Revolution? In spite of the verbal similarity, Putin's "reconciliation and concord" is not identical to Yeltsin's formula. Though in the mid-1990s the ruling elite elaborated this formula to try to stabilize the status quo, a "concord" was supposed to be achieved on the basis of the critical historical narrative that integrated the perspective of the victims of the Soviet regime. If the formal renaming of the holiday had been followed by real efforts to change the infrastructure of memory about the Revolution(s) of 1917, in the long run it might have led to "working through" the trauma and integration of the "opposite visions of events into the general higher-level context" (Assmann 2006 [2014], 73) as far as it gave a way for their discussion. However, neither the ruling elite nor the opposition were actually ready to move in this direction.

In 2017, "the concord" is to be achieved on the basis of the complimentary narrative, focused on "positive trends" and neglecting the traumatic, ethically dubious, and criminal aspects of the collective past. As Ilia Kalinin recently remarked, "The official frame of the commemorated jubilee is destined to block the road" for the ghost of revolution, "to prevent it from becoming a part of a usable historical horizon that creates public cleavages" (2017, 14). In the current context, the incumbent elite is more concerned about "the ghost" of the colored revolution of anti-Putin opposition than about that of revolt against social injustice. It seeks to mitigate public passions about the commemoration of the Russian Revolution with "patriotic" rhetoric that stigmatizes the dissenters as contestants of national unity. Putin's statement at his annual news conference seems to confirm this suggestion:

I am against endlessly blowing up these issues. There is nothing wrong with the fact that this discussion is unfolding [...]. However, as we recall the events of 1917, as we are to observe the centennial of the revolutionary events next year, in 2017, we should move toward reconciliation, rapprochement, not toward division, not toward inflaming passions. (Putin 2016b)

So the commemoration is designed as a triumph of the "concord that we have managed to achieve" (Putin 2016a). In this perspective, it seems natural to make the main point of the official commemoration the opening ceremony of the Monument to Reconciliation in Crimea on 4 November. This connects the embarrassing centenary with the recent symbol of public "concord" – the return of Crimea to its "native harbor," which in 2013 produced a solid wave of "patriotic" support for Putin's regime. However, this plan has met with some unexpected obstacles. First, it proved impossible to install the Monument to Reconciliation in Kerch because the place that was originally designed for it is currently in the zone of construction of the bridge across the Kerch channel. So, it was decided to move the Monument to Sevastopol which caused a protest from some local veteran and public organizations who raised objections against the idea of "reconciliation" with "the Whites" (V Sevastopole proshli pikety protiv 2017). The fact that construction of the memorial started without the proper consultations with the residents have been contested in court (Pamiatnik Primireniya ne smog primirit' storony v sude 2017). Even if the protestors lose the case, and the memorial will be installed, the trial that has started in a month before the expected opening of the memorial evidently signals about the failure of the idea of "reconciliation and concord".

Conclusion

The centenary of the Russian Revolution, celebrated in 2017, is a good point to assess the preliminary results of reinterpretation of the foundation myth of Soviet Russia as a part of

the new official historical narrative. This process should be understood as a part of a symbolic policy aimed at legitimization of power and collective identity construction in a changing context. Given that any modern society has competing visions of the national past, success of the historical narrative articulated on behalf of the state depends on how it fits into this socially constructed symbolic landscape. In the case of the Revolution, the task was complicated by its centrality for two conflicting patterns of memory politics equally urgent for post-Soviet Russia – the critical “working through” a traumatic memory of ethically dubious and criminal past, and consolidation of the nation/nation-building. With different coalitions of mnemonic actors behind each of these patterns, the reinterpretation of the Revolution was often perceived as a zero-sum game.

The approaches of the incumbent elites to solving dilemmas entangled with a reinterpretation of the Russian Revolution changed over time. In the early 1990s, Yeltsin and his team tried to include the Revolution in a critical narrative constructing the image of the “new,” democratic Russia by contrast to the “old” – the Soviet, but also the imperial – one. They represented the February Revolution as a milestone of Russia’s development along “a normal,” European path and the October Revolution as “the tragic failure” and “the catastrophe.” This narrative could well integrate the approach of “working through” traumatic memory. But being critical toward most of Russian history, it was a weak basis for a new national identity. As a result, it could not compete with the counter-narrative developed by the Communists and their allies (“the Popular-Patriotic Opposition”). In 1996, a year before the 80th anniversary of the Revolution, the ruling elite coined a new formula for its commemoration by renaming the holiday of 7 November as the Day of Reconciliation and Concord. However, this decision was not supported by inventing new symbols and rituals.

In the 2000s, the choice was made for the complimentary approach to the collective past, which resulted in an eclectic selection of historical episodes that allowed politicians to focus on “the positive trends” (Lavrov 2016) and to marginalize topics connected to “trauma and crime.” Theoretically, it allowed the integration of the Revolution into the new apologetic/eclectic official narrative as a great though the tragic event of Russian and world history. The fact that it never took place might be explained by common dislike of the very idea of a revolution shared by the Russian elite (and by Putin), as well as by the unwillingness of the ruling elite to countenance a critical “working through” of the traumatic and criminal past. In this context, discarding the issue seemed an easier solution than entering into discussions about reinterpretation. With the 2004 cancellation of the 7 November public holiday, the Russian Revolution was for almost a decade virtually excluded from the official discourse.

The centenary of the Revolution(s) of 1917 puts the issue of its reinterpretation back on the state memory-policy agenda. After a couple of years of discussions about the meaning of the forthcoming commemoration, Putin’s administration seems to have chosen the formula of “reconciliation and consent,” similar in wording to the one invented in 1996. However, being integrated into the apologetic narrative of “the 1000-year Russian state,” it takes on a different meaning, as now it focuses not on “working-off” the traumatic past to achieve a broader perspective but on celebrating “the concord that we have managed to achieve” (Putin 2016a) at the expense of forgetting the historical aspects that could “divide” and “inflamm passions” (Putin 2016b). The authorities, however, will hardly be able to control the commemorative discourse totally, and it is easy to guess that the centenary jubilee year will bring a new wave of fierce public debates about the historical meaning of the Russian Revolution.

Acknowledgements

The author is grateful to the anonymous reviewers for useful comments and suggestions. She also thanks Kathleen E. Smith for her attentive reading of the draft and highly important feedback.

Funding

This work was supported by the Academic Fund Program at the National Research University Higher School of Economics (HSE) in 2017-2018 [Grant No. 17-01-0034] and by the Russian Academic Excellence Project “5-100”.

Notes

1. There is a rich research literature about construction of the myth of the October Revolution in the USSR (Heer 1971; Corney 1998; Petrone 2000; Sherlock 2007; Rolf 2013; Kuposov 2011; Tikhonov 2017; Torbakov, forthcoming).
2. In the 1990s the victory over Nazism was represented as a heroic feat of the people that was achieved not due to the Communist regime, but in spite of the Stalinist repressions. In the 2000s it became a story of triumph focused on the idea of Russia as a great power (see Malinova 2017).
3. This kind of social and political interaction is studied under various labels, such as politics of the past (Art 2006; Heisler 2008), politics of memory (Shevel 2011; Bernhard and Kubik 2014), politics of history (Torbakov 2011), memory games (Mink and Neumayer 2013), political uses of the past (Zakošek 2007), memory politics (Mälksoo 2009), etc.
4. For more detailed analysis of competing discourses about the Revolution in the 1990s, see Malinova (2015, 36–56).
5. This is a quotation from “The Internationale,” the anthem of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.
6. My analysis of Putin’s speeches reveals that evolution was actually gradual and took place around 2002–2003. In his talk on Constitution Day in December 2002, Putin argued, “For more than 10 years we have habitually said the words ‘the new Russia.’ But if we think carefully, we are saying it about a country with a 1000-year history ...” Praising “Yeltsin’s” constitution, Putin then turned to the narrative about “the new Russia” by saying, “We are talking about a country in which democracy and freedom of speech was gained through much suffering of the state and society” (Putin 2002). But five months later in his Address to the Federal Assembly, Putin made his famous statement about “maintaining a state spread over such a vast territory” and “keeping up a strong presence on the international stage” as a “truly historical feat” of the Russian people (Putin 2003).
7. In 2007, on the 70th anniversary of the Big Terror, Putin and Patriarch Alexij II visited the commemorative place in Butovo where mass execution took place in 1937 (without giving speeches). In May 2017 he participated in consecration of the church devoted to the “new martyrs” (*novomucheniki*) at Sretensky monastery in Moscow. The ceremony was a part of ROC’s commemoration program for the centenary of the revolution.
8. During his presidency Dmitry Medvedev backed out of this rule several times. He addressed the issue of political repression in his programmatic article “Vperiod, Rossia”, in the videoblog published on the Day of commemoration of the victims of political repression in 2009, and in the interview for “Izvestia” before the 65th anniversary of the Victory over Nazi Germany in 1917. But he never did this in the official public speeches (Malinova 2015, 171–173).
9. The substitution was not very successful. The new holiday has not become popular and was instead appropriated by nationalists and right-wing extremists (Zuev 2013). Since 2012 the incumbent elite did its best to marginalize their major initiative – the Russian March, and to develop its own symbolic repertoire of the holiday. The idea to open the Monument to Reconciliation in Kerch on the 4th of November probably points in this direction.
10. According to the recent survey of Levada-Center 10 percent of respondents share the opinion that “the October Revolution played very positive role in the Russian history”, 38 percent held that it was “rather positive”, 25 percent said that it was “rather negative”, 6 – “extremely negative”, and 21 percent found it difficult to answer (Oktiabr’skaia revoliutsia 2017). So, for almost half of the Russians the revolution is still “the great” historical event.

References

- Art, David. 2006. *The Politics of the Nazi Past in Germany and Austria*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Assmann, Aleida. 2006 [2014]. *Dlinnaia ten' proshlogo. Memorial'naia kul'tura i istoricheskaia politika*. Translated from German by Boris Khlebnikov. Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie. [Assmann, Aleida. 2006. *Der Lange Schatten der Vergangenheit. Erinnerungskultur und Geschichtspolitik*. Munich: Verlag C.H.Beck].
- Bell, Duncan S.A. 2003. "Mythscapes: Memory, Mythology and National Identity." *British Journal of Sociology* 54 (1): 63–81.
- Bernhard, Michael, and Jan Kubik. 2014. *Twenty Years After Communism: The Politics of Memory and Commemoration*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre. 1992. *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Brysk, Alison. 1995. "'Hearts and Minds': Bringing Symbolic Politics Back In." *Polity* 27 (4): 559–585.
- Coakley, John. 2007. "Mobilizing the Past: Nationalist Images of History." *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 10 (4): 531–560.
- Corney, Frederick C. 1998. "Rethinking a Great Event: The October Revolution as Memory Project." *Social Science History* 22 (4): 389–414.
- Cruz, Consuelo. 2000. "Identity and Persuasion: How Nations Remember Their Pasts and Make Their Futures." *World Politics* 52 (2): 275–312.
- Edelman, Murray. 1964. *The Symbolic Uses of Politics*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.
- Edelman, Murray. 1971. *Politics as Symbolic Action. Mass Arousal and Quiescence*. Chicago: Markham.
- Egorov, Nikolai. 1996. "Iun'skie vybory: za stabil'nost', za potriaseniia?" *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, March 20.
- Gaidar, Yegor T. 1995. "Ot vyborov nel'zia uiti ili spriatat'sia. Ikh nado vyigrat'." *Izvestia*, April 7.
- Gajos, Bartłomiej. 2017. "Pereosmyslaia revoliutsiui: stoletnii iubilei revoliutsii 1917 goda." *Intersection*, March 9. <http://intersectionproject.eu/ru/article/politics/pereosmyslyaya-revolyciyyu-stoletniy-yubilei-revolyciyy-1917-goda>.
- Gill, Graeme. 2011. *Symbols and Legitimacy in Soviet Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gill, Graeme. 2013. *Symbolism and Regime Change: Russia*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Heer, Nancy Whittier. 1971. *Politics and History in the Soviet Union*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Heisler, Martin O. 2008. "Challenged Histories and Collective Self-Concepts: Politics in History, Memory, and Time." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 617: 199–211.
- Instruction on preparing and holding events to mark the 100th anniversary of the 1917 Revolution in Russia. Signed by President V. Putin on December 19, 2016. <http://en.kremlin.ru/acts/news/53503>.
- Kalinin, Ilya. 2011. "Nostalgic Modernization: The Soviet Past as 'Historical Horizon'." *Slavonica* 17 (2): 156–166.
- Kalinin, Ilya. 2013. "Antirevoliutsionnyi ekzortcizm." *Neprikosnovennyi zapas* 91 (5): 130–138.
- Kalinin, Ilya. 2017. "Prizrak iubileia." *Neprikosnovennyi zapas* 111 (1): 11–20.
- Kertzer, David I. 1988. *Ritual, Politics, and Power*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Kontsepsiia novogo uchebno-metodicheskogo kompleksa po otechestvennoi istorii*. 2013. <https://www.kommersant.ru/docs/2013/standart.pdf>.
- Koposov, Nikolai E. 2011. *Pamiat' strogogo rezhima. Istoria i politika v Rossii*. [The High Security Memory. History and Politics in Russia]. Moscow: Novoe literaturnoe obozrenie.
- Lavrov, Sergei. 2016. "Russia's Foreign Policy in a Historical Perspective." *Russia in Global Affairs* 2. <http://eng.globalaffairs.ru/number/Russias-Foreign-Policy-in-a-Historical-Perspective-18067>.
- Malinova, Olga. 2015. *Aktual'noe proshloe: Simvolicheskaia politika vlastviuvshei elity i dilemmy rossiiskoi identichnosti*. Moscow: Politicheskaya entsiklopedia.
- Malinova, Olga. 2016. "Ofitsial'nyi istoricheskii narrative kak element politiki identichnosti v Rossii: ot 1990kh k 2010m godam." *Polis. Politicheskie isledovaniia* 6: 139–158.
- Malinova, Olga. 2017. "Political Uses of the Great Patriotic War in Post-Soviet Russia from Yeltsin to Putin." In *War and Memory in Russia, Ukraine and Belarus*, edited by Julie Fedor, Markku Kangaspuro, Jussi Lassila, and Tatiana Zhurzhenko, 43–70. Palgrave Macmillan.
- Mälksoo, Maria. 2009. "The Memory Politics of Becoming European: The East European Subalterns and the Collective Memory of Europe." *European Journal of International Relations* 15 (4): 653–680.

- Martin, Dennis-Constant. 1995. "The Choices of Identity." *Social Identities* 1 (1): 5–20.
- Meeting of Council for Interethnic Relations. 2013. February 19. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/17536>.
- Merridale, Catherine. 2003. "Redesigning History in Contemporary Russia." *Journal of Contemporary History* 38 (1): 13–28.
- Mink, Georges, and Laura Neumayer, eds. 2013. *History, Memory and Politics in Central and Eastern Europe: Memory Games*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- "Mitropolit Kirill schitaet dukhovnoi, a ne politicheskoi initsiativu otmechat' Den' soglasiia i primireniiia 4 noiabria." 2004. *Pravoslavnoe informatsionnoe agentstvo "Russkaia liniia"* October 28. <http://rusk.ru/st.php?idar=712217>.
- Oktiabr'skaia revoliutsiia. 2017. Website of Levada-Center. Press report. April, 4. <https://www.levada.ru/2017/04/05/oktyabrskaya-revolutsiia-2/>.
- Pamiatnik Primirenija ne smog primirit' storony v sude. 2017. <http://ruinform.com/page/pamjatnik-primirenija-ne-smog-primirit-storony-v-sude>.
- Petrone, Karen. 2000. *Life Has Become More Joyous, Comrades: Celebrations in the Time of Stalin*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Plan osnovnykh meropriatii, sviazannykh so 100-letiem revoliutsii 1917 goda v Rossii. 2017. [Plan of major actions connected with a commemoration of centenary of the revolution of 1917 in Russia]. <http://rushistory.org/images/documents/plan100letrevolution.pdf>.
- "Platforma natsional'nogo primirenia Rossii." 2015. Lenta.ru, March 20. <https://lenta.ru/articles/2015/05/20/medinskyvoice/>.
- Putin, Vladimir. 1999. "Rossia na rubezhe tysiachetii." *Nezavisimaia gazeta*, December 30. http://www.ng.ru/politics/1999-12-30/4_millennium.html.
- Putin, Vladimir. 2002. "Address at a gala reception on Constitution Day." December 12. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24273>.
- Putin, Vladimir. 2003. "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation," May 16. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/21998>.
- Putin, Vladimir. 2005. "Annual Address to the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation," April 25. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/22931>.
- Putin, Vladimir. 2014a. "Meeting with designers of a new concept for a school textbook on Russian history." <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20071>.
- Putin, Vladimir. 2014b. "Meeting with young academics and history teachers." <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/46951>.
- Putin, Vladimir. 2016a. "Presidential Address to the Federal Assembly." December 1. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/messages/53379>.
- Putin, Vladimir. 2016b. "Vladimir Putin's Annual News Conference." December 23. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/53573>.
- Rolf, Malte. 2013. *Soviet Mass Festivals, 1917-1991*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.
- "Rossia segodnia: real'nyi shans." 1994. *Obozrevatel' – Observer*. No. 21–24: 29–479.
- Schöpflin, George. 1997. "The Functions of Myth and a Taxonomy of Myths." In *Myths and Nationhood*, edited by Geoffrey Hosking, and George Schöpflin, 19–35. New York: Routledge.
- Sherlock, Thomas. 2007. *Historical Narratives in the Soviet Union and Post-Soviet Russia: Destroying the Settled Past, Creating an Uncertain Future*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Sherlock, Thomas. 2016. "Russian politics and the Soviet past: Reassessing Stalin and Stalinism under Vladimir Putin." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 49: 45–59.
- Shevel, Oxana. 2011. "The Politics of Memory in a Divided Society: A Comparison of Post-Franco Spain and Post-Soviet Ukraine." *Slavic Review* 70 (1): 137–164.
- Smith, Kathleen E. 2002. *Mythmaking in the New Russia. Politics and Memory During the Yeltsin Era*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Sobchak, Anatolii. 1996. "My nachinali reformy, ne rasschityvaia na aplodismenty," *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, May 22.
- Tikhonov, Vitalii. 2017. "Revoliutsiia 1917g. v kommémorativnykh praktikakh i istoricheskoi politike sovetiskoi epokhi." *Rossiiskaia istoriia* 2: 92–112.
- Torbakov, Igor. 2011. "History, Memory and National Identity: Understanding the Politics of History and Memory Wars in Post-Soviet Lands." *Demokratizatsiia* 19 (3): 209–232.
- Torbakov, Igor. 2014. "The Russian Orthodox Church and Contestations over History in Contemporary Russia." *Demokratizatsiia* 22 (1): 145–170.

- V Sevastopole proshli pikety protiv "Pamiatnika primirenija", posviaschennogo grazhdanskoi voine." 2017. 19.06. <http://www.rosbalt.ru/russia/2017/06/19/1624140.html>.
- Wertsch, James V. 2008. "Blank Spots in Collective Memory: A Case Study of Russia." *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 617: 58–71.
- Wodak, Ruth, and Rudolf de Cillia. 2007. "Commemorating the Past: The Discursive Construction of Official Narratives About the 'Rebirth of the Second Austrian Republic'." *Discourse & Communication* 1 (3): 337–363.
- Yakovlev, Alexander. 1996. "Esli bolshevism ne sdaetsia." *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, October 10.
- Yeltsin, Boris. 1996. Poslanie Prezidenta Rossii Borisa Yeltsina Federal'nomu Sobraniuu Rossiiskoi Federatsii "Rossiia za kotoruiu my v otvete." http://www.intelros.ru/2007/02/05/poslanie_prezidenta_rossii_borisa_elcina_federalnomu_sobraniju_rf_rossija_za_kotoruju_my_v_otvete_1996_god.html.
- Zakošek, Nenad. 2007. "The Heavy Burden of History: Political Uses of the Past in the Yugoslav Successor States." *Politička misao* 44 (5): 29–43.
- Ziuganov, Gennady A. 1994. "Vzgliad za gorizont." *Obozrevatel' – Observer*. 18: 139–156.
- Zuev, Denis. 2013. "The Russian March. Investigating the Symbolic Dimension of Political Performance in Modern Russia." *Europe – Asia Studies* 65 (1): 102–126.