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Historical Memory of the First World War in Russia in 2014-2018

Master's Thesis

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Prague 2021

## Statement

I hereby declare that I have written this diploma thesis solely by myself and I agree with its eventual publication in print or electronic form. All sources and literature have been properly cited. This work has not been used to obtain a different or the same degree.

Prague, June 7th, 2021

Daria Chuprasova

## Abstract

The historical memory of the First World War in Russia was formed under the influence of the Soviet policy of memory. The loss in the war, the collapse of the Russian Empire, the Civil War, the Great Patriotic War led to the fact that the First World War in Russia was called “forgotten” for a long time. In 2014-2018, the whole world celebrated the anniversary of the First World War. The Russian government began to bring the memory of the war back into public discourse, shaping new heroic narratives. Most of the events in 2014-2018 were held in areas close to traditional ones for working with memory: in museums, at exhibitions, in heritage (monuments, memorial plaques). Less attention was paid to war in the broader media space. The most notable non-traditional events include the military-historical festival Times and Epochs and several films related to the First World War, which were filmed during the jubilee years. The results of public opinion polls conducted in 2014 and 2018 show that these events had had a rather low memorial effect. In general, the knowledge of Russians about the First World War remained the same as before the anniversary years.

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## **Introduction**

After the October revolution of 1917 when Bolsheviks rise to power, they decided to stop all military action on the Eastern front. Second All-Russian Congress of the Soviets of Workers' and Soldiers' Deputies signed the Peace Decree and announced the withdrawal of Soviet Russia from the war (Dekrety Sovetskoy vlasti, 1957: 12, 15). The Soviet government referred to all belligerent powers to conclude peace without annexation and contribution. However, the Entente ignored this intake. Then Bolsheviks' government gave an assignment to army commander Nikolay Dukhonin to stop military actions ex parte and to send the note about a truce to the Central Powers (Sovetsko-germanskije otnosheniya..., 1968: 13). Dukhonin abandoned this note, and then he was assigned to home and killed.

The Soviet government concluded a separate peace with German Empire and its allies on December 15, 1917, in Brest-Litovsk. Peace talks started on December 22. On January 9, the Soviet delegation was presented with proposals that provided for significant territorial concessions, so on January 28, 1918, the Soviet delegation broke off negotiations. In response, on February 18, German troops launched an offensive along the entire front line. At the same time, the German-Austrian side tightened the peace conditions.

As a result, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed on March 3. According to the treaty, Russia losses about 1 million square kilometres (including Ukraine) and engages to demobilize army and fleet, pass to Germany all battleships, pay the contribution (in the amount of 6 billion marks) and admit Ukraine's independence.

The conclusion of separate peace and terms of Treaty of Brest-Litovsk touched off the sharp response from the inner and world anti-Bolsheviks opposition (Ksenofontov, 1991: 50). In addition, it escalated the Civil War in Russia. In sum, the agreement did not lead to the end of military actions in Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus. However, it was the critical point for the whole region, which separated the "clash of empires" (1914-1917) and the ensuing "continuum of violence" (Chernev, 2017: 261, 264). The talks themselves were the cradle for

national self-determination conception and then were developed during the Paris Peace Conference (Reynolds, 2011: 173).

Soviet VTsIK (All-Russian Central Executive Committee) cancelled the agreement on November 13, 1918, because of the revolution in Germany (Fel'shtinskij, 1992: 528-530). Despite its short duration, this peace agreement was used as proof of the German Empire and its allies' annexation plans. It was widely covered in historiography (Kaplunovskaya, 1990: 7; Smele, 2006: 205).

For almost a hundred years, the historical memory of the First World War in Russia was formed in a very specific way. The memory of the war was replaced by more significant events for the Soviet state: the Civil War and the Great Patriotic War (World War II). The Soviet memory policy called World War I an "imperialist" war and an "alien" war. This is what led to the fact that in modern Russian historiography, the First World War is usually called the "forgotten" war.

By 2014 (the centenary of the outbreak of the war), various memorial projects began to appear in Russia. They were caused not only by the desire of the nation to regain its past but by a government decree. This was primarily due to the so-called "patriotic turn" and attempts to change the image of Russia in the foreign policy sphere (Nagornaya, n.d.). Very indicative in this matter is the quote of Russian President Vladimir Putin, which was later quoted many times in various articles: "This is the result of the betrayal of the then government. It is obvious, they were afraid of this and did not want to talk about it, so they kept silent [...] The silence was for other reasons. Our country lost, in fact, to the losing side. On the part of the new Bolshevik government, this was an act of national betrayal, and it was afraid to admit it for the sake of party interests" (IZ, 2012).

In 2012, work began on preparations for the celebration of the centenary of the First World War. It was very important to create the image of the so-called "stolen victory", that is, the loss of Russia to defeated Germany.

The most significant memorial event in the jubilee years was the opening of the Monument to the Heroes of the First World War in Moscow. This made it possible to include the First World War in the list of historical events most significant for Russian identity (Kolonitskij, 2017), along with the Patriotic War of 1812 and the Great Patriotic War.

In addition, the policy of restoring family history began to be actively broadcast. Projects have appeared that allow you to learn about the ancestors who fought in the First World War. This was an important step towards restoring the national memory of the First World War. According to a 2014 survey (FOM, 2014), one third of respondents are aware of the involvement of their ancestors in the First World War. However, thanks to open-ended questions, it turns out that respondents either confuse wars or their knowledge of ancestors is severely limited.

The most significant in the memorial sphere in 2014-2018 was the Kaliningrad region. This is the only region of today's Russia where battles took place in 1914-1918. During the jubilee years, restoration of existing monuments and gravestones continued, but new monuments were also opened. It was important for the region to consolidate the memory of the Battle of Gumbinnen (current Gusev, Kaliningrad region) as one of the most important victories of Russia in the First World War.

It should be noted that the process of returning the memory of the First World War in Russia was carried out not only by institutions that traditionally work with history: universities and cultural institutions (museums, libraries). The work was carried out in a wider public space. Here we can pay attention to the historical festival Times and Epochs and films dedicated (or related) to the First World War.

Historian Boris Kolonitskij notes that commemorative events, despite their large number, did not have a positive impact on Russians' knowledge of the First World War (Kolonitskij, 2017).



## **Chapter 1. Methodology and Literature Overview**

### **1.1. Methodology**

This work is divided into three main chapters. In the first core chapter is The Politics of Memory of the First World War in USSR and Russia before 2014 (Introduction in Context), we separately consider Soviet memory and Russian memory of the First World War. This makes it possible to substantiate many of the conclusions drawn from the results of the following chapters. The second core chapter is Historical Memory of the First World War in Russia in 2014-2018 includes the following subsections: Russian Opinion Polls about the First World War 2014 and 2018 (surveys on knowledge of events and characters of the First World War, etc.), Governmental Project “100 Years of WWI” (an official government project dedicated to the centenary of the First World War), Attack of the Dead Men as a Heroic Narrative (formation of the heroic narrative). The third core chapter is Commemoration of the First World War in Russia in 2014-2018 includes the following blocks: Commemoration Events (museums, monuments) and Entertaining Events (festival and movies).

In this work, we will focus mainly on 2014-2018. These are the years of the centenary of the First World War, which is celebrated all over the world, including Russia. The location of the study is the territory of the Russian Federation. In addition, in Chapter 2 (introduction to the context) we will also deal with 1918-2013 as a timeframe and Soviet Russia (until 1922) and the Soviet Union (until 1991) as a location.

In this work, we will deal with the following hypothesis. The historical memory of the First World War in Russia was formed as a result of the vigorous activity of the Soviet policy of memory. In the anniversary years (2014-2018), an attempt was made to “return” the memory of the war to the popular consciousness of Russians and the public sphere.

There are several research questions that we would like to answer in this work. Is First World War still forgotten in Russia? What is the current policy of memory of the First World War in Russia? What events took place in Russia during the anniversary years? What has been done to return the memory of the war to the public consciousness of Russians? Is it possible to return the memory of the war after 100 years of oblivion?

The methodological basis of this study includes the scientific works of Russian and international scientists in the field of memory research, memory policy, and historical politics of Russia. As methods, general and particular methods will be used, including systematic analysis of the phenomena and results studied, induction.

When we research historical memory, we deal with sources of historical memory formation, also about military history, include oral tradition, fiction, scientific literature, cinematography, media, arts, social media content. These sources have a significant impact on mass historical perceptions that reflect the historical consciousness of the population (Rostovcev, Sosnickij, 2014: 112, 117-118).

The key term in this work is historical memory. Historical memory is formed in different forms, representing a set of elements of the so-called “culture of memory”. For our research, the following forms of memory representation are most relevant. The forms of the culture of memory and the ways of its manifestation, testifying to the state of historical memory, are:

1. Professional historiography. Several researchers consider professional historians to be competent carriers of historical memory (noncommunicative) (Bulygina, 2010: 7-8).

2. Commemorations, memorial events. The maintenance and management of historical memory is a function of the “institutes of memory”. As an institute of memory, we can mention the education system, the entertainment industry,

museums, memorials, journalism, etc. (Zhukov, 2013: 12-14). Here, one can also single out the sites of memory of Pierre Nora, which are symbolic images of historical memory that are of direct importance to the nation. This includes memorable events, holidays, people, places, songs, phrases, etc.

In these two forms (professional historiography and commemoration) the culture of society's memory can be revealed. It includes the creation, use, and experience of the society of its past.

Historical memory is sometimes completely associated with the concept of “politics of memory”, understanding it in this case as a political project (Repina, 2011: 196). Remembrance politics maintain society's perceptions and attitudes towards the past using various forms of memory culture. However, some forms of the culture of memory can function independently of the forms offered by the politics of memory, and then resist or be integrated into its strategy.

The historiographic basis of the research will be presented in the next subchapter, so here we will focus on the sources of the research. Here we deal with the scientific literature, both Russian and international. In this regard, it is also important to note the growing interest in the theme of the First World War (and its memory) in connection with the centenary. In addition, it is important to pay attention to modern periodicals. Periodicals widely cover events in the field of perpetuating memory. The importance of these sources is that they most fully embody people's ideas about the event and broadcast them widely. The sources here are the free newspaper *Metro* and regional publications covering the memorial events in the anniversary years.

The main difficulty in researching this topic is the fragmentation of information. There is no general base or list of monuments erected in anniversary years or commemoration events. Such a database will have to be assembled from scratch for this study to be carried out.

## 1.2. Literature Overview

### 1.2.1. Memory Studies

First of all, when we are talking about Memory studies, we should mention the theoreticians of the first (the 1920s-1930s) and the second wave (so-called memory boom of the 1980s-1990s). French philosopher and sociologist Maurice Halbwachs is considered the “father” of memory studies. The most important work (for this thesis) is *On Collective Memory* (2020), which was published in 1950, after the death of the author. In this book, we are mostly interested in terms “collective memory”, “historical memory”, and the general differences between memory and history.

Among the researchers of the second wave of Memory studies, several of the most significant names can be distinguished. The French historian Pierre Nora is the author of the new term “cites of memory” (memory spaces, lieu de mémoire). He is an author of the idea (described in the article *Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Mémoire*, (1989)) and an editor of the monumental work *Lieux de Mémoire* (1984-1992), published in three volumes in 1984, 1986, and 1992. This work collects articles written by different French historians. The articles relate to French history and its most important historical symbols (e.g. persons, songs, buildings, and so on). In 1999-2010, the work was partly translated into English under the title *Rethinking France* (2001).

Separately, we can highlight the works of Jan and Aleida Assmann. Despite the fact they are both working in a field of collective memory, their research interests are divided. Jan Assmann is an author of many works in the field of Egyptology, history of culture and religion. We should mention his article *Collective Memory and Cultural Identity* (1995) and book *Cultural Memory and Early Civilization: Writing, Remembrance, and Political Imagination* (2011). In his works (with his wife Aleida Assmann) Jan Assmann deals with the theory of cultural and communicative memory.

In her turn, Aleida Assmann works with German collective memory after 1945, theory of memory, trauma, and historical oblivion. She is an author of many works, and some of them are following: *Four Formats of Memory: From Individual to Collective Constructions of the Past* (2004), *Re-Framing Memory: Between Individual and Collective Forms of Constructing the Past* (2010), *Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives* (2011), *Shadows of Trauma: Memory and the Politics of Postwar Identity* (2016), and others.

The issue of historical oblivion was also mentioned by other authors. The French ethnographer and anthropologist Marc Augé in 1998 wrote the work *Oblivion* (2004), where he discussed the point that oblivion is necessary for people like memory is. The French philosopher Paul Ricœur in his work *Memory, History, Forgetting* (2004) discusses the issues of oblivion and forgiveness, unites them, and at the same time separates them (since they belong to different problem areas: for forgetfulness, it is memory and fidelity to the past; for forgiveness, it is guilt and reconciliation with the past).

The very important term for Memory studies is postmemory. This term professor at Columbian University Marianne Hirsch firstly used in her essay *The Generation of Postmemory* (2008). Hirsch further developed this issue in her works: *Family pictures: Maus, Mourning, and Post-Memory* (1992), *Family frames: Photography, Narrative, and Postmemory* (1997), *Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Postmemory* (2001), and others.

Also important for Memory studies the book *The Collective Memory Reader* (2011) with selected articles of Maurice Halbwachs, Marc Bloch, Émile Durkheim, Jan Assmann, Aleida Assmann, Pierre Nora, Paul Ricœur, and other famous memory researchers. There are some parts in this book: Precursors and Classics; History, Memory, and Identity; Power, Politics, and Contestation; Media and Modes of Transmission; Memory, Justice, and the Contemporary Epoch. We must separately note the article written by Jay Winter: *Remembering War: The Great War between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (2011).

In 2019, the student book *Historical Memory: An Introduction* (2019) (written by Yulia Safronova) was published at European University at Saint Petersburg. This student book collects information about all the major memory researchers listed above (Halbwachs, Nora, Assmanns, Hirsch, and others) and also separate chapters about the politics of memory, memory and media, and public history.

### 1.2.2. Politics of Memory and History Politics

Considering our research, we should mention some researches related to issues of politics of memory, history politics, and memory wars in the Soviet Union and post-soviet Russia.

The most significant researcher of this field in Russia is Alexei Miller, professor at the European University at St. Petersburg. For instance, his works: *History Politics and its Features in Poland, Ukraine and Russia* (2008), *Russia: Power and History* (2009), *History Politics in Russia: A New Turn?* (2012a), *Political Symbols and History Politics* (2012b), *The Politics of Remembrance in Russia: The Year of Shattered Hopes* (2014), *The Politics of Remembrance in Post-Communist Europe and its Impact on the European Culture of Memory* (2016), and others.

Alexei Miller also was an editor of several collections related to issues of politics of memory and history politics. For instance, *History Politics in the XXI century* (2012) and *Politics of Memory in Modern Russia and the Countries of Eastern Europe. Actors, Institutions, Narratives* (2020).

In addition, Olga Malinova from the Higher School of Economics is also involved in the politics of memory. The following works on this topic can be distinguished: *The Political Use of the Past as an Instrument of Symbolic Politics: the Evolution of the Discourse of the Ruling Elite in Post-Soviet Russia* (2012), *The Problem of a Politically "Fit" Past and the Evolution of Official Symbolic Politics*

*in Post-Soviet Russia* (2013), *Relevance of the Past: History, Memory and Identity Politics* (2016), *Commemoration of Historical Events as an Instrument of Symbolic Politics: the Possibilities of Comparative Analysis* (2017), *The Politics of Memory as an Area of Symbolic Politics* (2018), and others.

Among international researchers, we mention Mariëlle Wijermars from the University of Helsinki (Finnish Center for Russian and East European Studies), and her book *Memory Politics in Contemporary Russia: Television, Cinema and the State* (2018). The monograph *The Politics of War Memory and Commemoration* (2000) edited by T.G. Ashplant, Graham Dawson, Michael Roper in its theoretical part reveals important aspects of the politics of war memory (the collection was also reissued in 2017 under the title *Commemorating War: The Politics of Memory*).

### 1.2.3. The First World War and Memory

The majority of the First World War memory researchers are published in English. The following authors are the most significant in this field.

Historian, literary critic and World War II veteran Paul Fussell and his book *The Great War and Modern Memory* (2009) which was published in 1975. The book examines the work of the most prominent “trench writers”, both in the general context of English literature and in the context of the realities of the Great War.

It is also important to note the works of the American historian Jay Murray Winter, whose main research interest is the First World War and its impact on the 20th century. These works are *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* (1998), *The Great War in History: Debates and Controversies, 1914 to the Present* (2005), *Remembering War: The Great War Between Memory and History in the Twentieth Century* (2006), *Sites of Memory and the Shadow of War* (2008), *War Beyond Words: Languages of Remembrance from the Great War to the Present* (2017).

We also should mention works written by some other researchers. These are not only professional historians and researchers of memory, but also linguists, literary critics, political scientists, art critics. They investigate the issues of both the memory of the First World War in general and regional characteristics (for example, in Germany or Belgium). For example, this is the book *The Great War in German Memory* (Bessel, 1988), the collection of articles edited by Evans and Lunn *War and Memory in the Twentieth Century* (1997), the article *Paul Fussell's The Great War and Modern Memory: Twenty-Five Years Later* (Smith, 2001), *Media, Memory, and the First World War* (Williams, 2009), *Nation, Memory and Great War Commemoration: Mobilizing the Past in Europe, Australia and New Zealand* (Wellings, Sumartojo, 2014), *Languages and the First World War: Representation and Memory* (Declercq, Walker, 2016), *Experience and Memory of the First World War in Belgium: Comparative and Interdisciplinary Insights* (Warland, 2019), and others.

#### 1.2.4. The First World War and Russian Memory

Studies of the historical memory of the First World War in Russia on an ongoing basis are limited to a few names, which we will list separately. However, it is important to note that in the anniversary years 2014-2018, this issue was repeatedly raised by the same researchers, for whom the First World War is not a constant research interest.

First of all, let us turn to those authors who deal with the issues of memory of the First World War in Russia on an ongoing basis, as well as those whose works are the most significant for this study.

Karen Petrone, professor of history at the University of Kentucky, published her research on Soviet memory of World War I in Russia in 2011 under the title *The Great War in Russian Memory* (2011). Although the title of the book mentions Russian Memory, the text refers directly to the memory of the First World War



during the Soviet Union. Petrone, like many Russian researchers, discusses the real degree of oblivion of the First World War in Soviet times.

It is also worth noting Professor Vera Tolz from the University of Manchester and her article *Modern Russian Memory of the Great War, 1914-20* (2014). In his article, Professor Tolz examines the memory of the First World War from the point of view of contemporary Russian politics.

Elena Senyavskaya, a specialist in 20th-century Russian military history, deals with military anthropology, history and psychology. For this study, her following works are important: *Heroic Symbols: Reality and Mythology of War* (1995), *The Problem of Heroic Symbols in the Public Consciousness of Russia: History Lessons* (2002), *Historical Memory of the First World War: Features of Formation in Russia and the West* (2009), *World War in the Historical Memory of Russia and the West* (2009), *The Historical Memory of Twentieth-Century Wars as an Arena of Ideological, Political, and Psychological Confrontation* (2010), *Battlefield: Historical Memory Military History of Russia of the 20th Century in the Context of Psychological Warfare and Modern Geopolitics* (2010).

Olga Porshneva, professor of UrFU (Ural Federal University), a historian has Russia in the First World War as one of her areas of research. We are interested in her works: *The Phenomenon of Historical Memory of War* (2005), *World War I in the Context of Russian and World History: Panel Discussion* (2012), *From Anniversary to Anniversary: Interpretation of the Russian Military Revolutionary Crisis of 1914-1922 in the Context of Two Significant Dates* (2018), *The Napoleonic Wars and the First World War in the Politics of Memory and Historical Memory of Peoples: Reflections of Russian and Foreign Historians* (2018), *Anniversaries of the First World War in the Early Soviet Period: Problems of Modern Scientific Comprehension* (2019), *“Imperialist War” in the Bolshevik Politics of Memory: The Institutional Aspect (1920s-1930s)* (2020), *Study of the Politics of Memory: Towards Overcoming the Methodological Dichotomy (on the Example of the First World War)* (2020), *10th Anniversary of the First World War in the Comintern’s*

*Politics of Memory* (2020), *The Politics of Memory vs Historical Memory of the First World War in Soviet Russia / USSR* (2020).

Konstantin Pahalyuk, a political scientist, lecturer at MGIMO University (Moscow State Institute of International Relations) of the Russian Foreign Ministry, a member of the Russian Association of Historians of the First World War, deals a lot with the memory of the First World War and its connection with Russian politics. The following works are important for this study: *Defense of the Osowiec Fortress: Genealogy of Heroic Narrative* (2016a), *Discursive Foundations of the Anniversary Commemoration of the First World War in Modern Russia* (2016b), *Global Culture of Memory: in Search of a Teleological Perspective* (2016c), *Memory of the First World War and the "Soft Power" of Modern Russia* (2017a), *World War I and Memory about it in Modern Russia* (2017b), *World War I in the Context of the Cultural Dimension of the Foreign Policy of Modern Russia* (2018), participation in a collective monograph *Teaching Military History in Russia and Abroad* (2018).

In 2020, Pahalyuk and several other researchers took part in the collective monograph *War, Politics, Memory: The Napoleonic Wars and the First World War* (2020). This book examines in detail the historiography of the problem of the anniversary commemoration of the First World War, differences in the memory of different countries, the politics of memory and other issues.

In 2014, a three-volume monograph *The First World War: Historiographic Myths and Historical Memory* was published (2014). The monograph sets out modern approaches to the study of the history of the First World War, and also considers modern views on the war in different countries of the world. Particular attention is paid to Russia's participation in the war. The first book is dedicated to Russia and the nations of the Russian Empire. The second book is devoted to the formation of historical memory of the First World War in the main countries participating in the opposing blocs: the Entente (France, Great Britain, USA, Italy, Serbia) and the Quadruple Alliance (Central Empires: Germany, Austria-Hungary,

Turkey, and Bulgaria). Particular attention is paid to the origins of the emergence of stable national myths about the First World War. The third book examines the historiographic issues of the First World War in Russia. It also presents the changes that have occurred in these countries over the past decades in the views and assessments of the First World War.

Separately, we can single out several authors who talk about how much the First World War in Russia was forgotten. For example, an article by Vladimir Gorskiy *Was “Forgotten War” Forgotten in the USSR? On the Issue of Embedding the Historical Memory of World War I into a New Ideological Concept* (2015) and Boris Kolonitsky's lecture *Forgotten War? The Memory of the First World War in Russia* (2020) and the article *The Forgotten War? The Politics of Memory, Russian Culture of the First World War and Cultural Memory* (2014).

## **Chapter 2. The Politics of Memory of the First World War in USSR and Russia before 2014 (Introduction in Context)**

### 2.1. Soviet Case

#### 2.1.1. Study of the First World War in the USSR

The most common period in studying history and historiography of the First World War is the interwar period. In that period culture of memory of war and policy of memory were formed. When it comes to Soviet society between two wars, historians analyze official discourse, the historical policy of the Soviet government, special aspects of the policy of memory, commemoration campaigns (e.g., Nikonova, Raeva, 2011; Porshneva, 2020c).

Soviet government aspired to create a “new soviet man” with a new identity. That is why the government used to utilize the policy of memory and historical policy so militantly. We also can remember Aleida Assmann’s sentence that the adoption of the new identity possible as long as the affective assimilation of one's history through the historical myth (Assmann, 2011: 39).

Not long after the end of the First World War, the Soviet government started to not only create the new soviet identity but also study the war itself. Indeed, the study of the First World War’s history was not only a scientific thread (it was but to a lesser degree). First of all, the new government saw a necessity not only to create its army but to put it on a war footing with a study of modern war experience (Doklad rukovodstva Vseroglavshataba, 1918)

For these reasons, the Military-Historical Commission for the Description of the War of 1914-1918 was created in August 1918 (to describe the war experience with a view to practically use it in future). In 1921, right after the end of the Civil War, the Commission was dissolved. However, the Commission was reconstructed as a new World and Civil War Research Commission. The Commission employed military specialists from the Russian army (who were in the

country after the Civil War and emigration) with military higher education and experience in military historical work (Tarhova, 2006).

The main aim of the Commission (both Commissions) was the compilation of a short outline of the First World War. Moreover, the Commission prepared a periodization of the war (6 periods). Another important point of the Commission's work was a popularization of the war's experience (the Commission organized public sessions with reports).

The Commission was finally dissolved on May 29, 1921. During this period, the Commission prepared 39 works about the First World War and 13 works about the Civil War and published 44 works. The book *The strategic outline of the war 1914-1918* (1920-1923) (in 7 books) was based on these works.

A massive campaign on the jubilee of the First World War took place in USSR on July 27 – August 4, 1924 (10 years since the start of the war). These events were aimed at:

1. To explore the reasons and the background of an “imperialistic” war,
2. To present an argument for convert an imperialistic war into a civil war on behalf of achieving peace, that is the victory of the proletariat (Imperialisticheskaya vojna, 1924: 5).

The main figure in the documents published during the campaign (books, newspapers, articles, manuals, etc.) was Vladimir Lenin and his conception of just war and unjust war. According to the conception, the authors of these documents defined the First World War as an unjust, fratricidal and imperialistic war. In that case, Soviet Russia's withdrawal from the war was a good decision.

Altogether, the jubilee campaign of 1924 was agitation and propagandistic. Besides, it was referred to confirm the new image of the war in social conscience. This new image was needed for the legitimization of the soviet authority and justified the political decisions that were made (the result of these decisions was lost war) (Vdonina, 2016).

Works about the First World War also were published in the 1930s (e.g., *Mirovaya vojna v cifrah*, 1934; *Poletika*, 1935). However, in the 1940s researchers returned to the First World War research because of USSR's entrance into Second World War. As an example of comparison of both wars can be mentioned collection of documents *The Atrocities of the Germans in the War of 1914-1918* (1943) and the book *German Military Robbery in Europe (X-XX centuries)* (1945). In the following years (down to the collapse of the Soviet Union), scientific works about the history of the First World also were published. Due to this, Russian historian V. Gorskij throws into question if the First World War was a “forgotten war” in USSR (Gorskij, 2015).

According to historian V. Goldin, factors, which prevented studying of the First World War in the Soviet Union, were:

1. Soviet historian's isolation from the world-historical science
2. Absence of information about the development of the world research in this field
3. Absence of communication with colleagues.

According to soviet researchers, this research field was in the background of the revolution and was regarded as a prologue, reason, and catalyst for revolution (Goldin, 2015: 7)

#### 2.1.2. Heroic Symbols of the “Imperialistic” War

Despite the publication of scientific works about First World War history in the USSR, the majority of historians agree that First World War was mentioned as an “imperialistic” and “illegitimate” war and stood far from official myth and soviet culture (Petrone, 2011: 5). British historian and writer Catherine Merridale notes that deaths in First World War were replaced by “millions of more important bodies – red heroes of the civil war” (Merridale, 2002: 99). However, Karen Petrone points that ignorance of the First World War by soviet official commemoration does not

mean the full oblivion of the war (Petrone, 2011: 6). Individual experience of war was discussed in soviet literature (mostly in memoirs and diaries) and press repeatedly.

Contemporaries mentioned the war as Great, Patriotic, People's War. But it was rethought in the Soviet period as an "unjust war" and a "war of conquest". According to Soviet ideology, First World War was alien to the new Soviet society. The negative image of the war was militantly formed in the historical memory of the nation. Heroes of the war could not wear tsarist orders and were counted as war heroes.

According to historian Senyavskaya there no stable historical symbols undestroyed in people's memory. It was connected mostly with followed Civil War, which overturned the people's consciousness. The old symbols were replaced by new ones (Senyavskaya, 2009: 4).

A prime example is the story of the life and death of general Brusilov, commander of the Brusilov (Lutsk) offensive of 1916. Despite his gentlemanhood and longstanding service to Russian Empire, Brusilov supported the displacement of Nicolas II and the rise to power of the Russian Provisional Government in the February Revolution. Brusilov served to Workers' and Peasants' Red Army since 1920. He was a head of the Special meeting with the commander-in-chief of all the armed forces of the Soviet Republic (the main aim of this organization was the developing of best practice in the strengthening of the Red Army).

After Brusilov died in 1926, Kliment Voroshilov, People's Commissar for Military and Naval Affairs, noted in a memoir in Pravda newspaper that Brusilov was able to understand the importance of the social transformations and to fight with enthusiasm for the Republic of Workers and Peasants (Pravda, 1926). As long as Brusilov was an Orthodox believer, yet while alive he received the permission to be buried in Novodevichy Cemetery in Moscow under Orthodox traditions (and with ribbons of the Order of Saint George). The orthodox priest was on this burial but the burial itself was behind the cemetery's closed gates. Despite these facts, the

Soviet government noted that Brusilov was an old-time person, but he served truly to the Red Army and the Soviet Union (Sokolov, 1994: 154). From there, Brusilov was the heroic tsarist and soviet general. He also might be the Orthodox believer if it was secretly.

Nonetheless, Soviet life was not so easy for Brusilov and his family. Despite the fact he had his military pension and even was able to have medical care abroad, his scientific works were not published, and he could not prevent the arrest of some of his friends. Despite everything, Brusilov was associated with the tsarist army.

After Brusilov's death, the Soviet government took under control his legacy. The memoir was published and translated into English and French. However, in the 1930s the reediting of the memoirs was cancelled, mostly because of Brusilov's wife Nadezhda non-returning from Czechoslovakia after her medication. Historians imminently remembered numbers of fallen soldiers during the offensive and decided that it was not so successful (Chaadaeva, 1934: 119). In the 1940s interest in Brusilov raised again because of the start of the Second World War. His memoirs were published, as well as works about him. However, by the early 1950s, he was forgotten again (Mavrodin, 1963).

The Soviet government made a lot to destroy the positive image of the war (for instance, merit beyond the call of duty). Herewith, the "right" examples were Bolsheviks' agitators' actions, decay of the army, desertion. The government also actively propagandized the October Revolution and the Civil War (in mass media, literature, and culture). The new heroic symbols were implemented in people's minds – red officers, commissars, partisans.

Elena Senyavskaya notes the dependence of the "official" historical memory from the ideology and politics, and, at the same time, the separateness of "accidental" memory of the collective consciousness (made of the experience of masses and separated persons (Senyavskaya, 2009: 12).



### 2.1.3. The “Forgotten” War and the “Alien” War

The First World War was officially declared as a Russian Empire’s military defeat and mistake. However, many heroic narratives were implemented into Soviet reality.

In 1928-1929 Comintern (The Communist International) declared August 1 as the International day against the imperialistic war. Authors of Methodological guide for speakers and agitators *August 1 is an international red-letter day against the imperialist war* (1929) noted that reason to create this banner day is not a jubilee (15 years since the start of the war and 5 years since the Treaty of Versailles). But the international political situation with a danger of a new world war.

In the 1930s’ discourse about “imperialistic” war (and in the whole political discourse of that time) the national and antimilitary elements existed. The “Soviet patriotism” as a committal to the socialistic motherland and readiness to throw it was also propagandized (Porshneva, 2020c).

It is important to note, that the name of the war changed in different period of the XX century because of differences in official governmental positions. For contemporaries, the war was the Great War (because of untold proportions of losses, new weapons, and so on). The Great War indeed well known in international memory and historiography. Commonly the war was named the German war (because of the main opposing force) and the Second Patriotic War (after the Napoleonic War).

The different meaning can be found in the notion of “imperialistic war” too. On the one hand, it was the war of empires, significant coalitions, world’s major economies. This is a very indication that it was a clash of imperialistic ambitions in name of geopolitical reasons and the remaking of world order. On the other hand, Bolsheviks lined the imperialistic sense of the war to punctuate its anti-national pattern, which leads to the defeat of all governments.

Because the war overtook not only Europe but also the whole world, it became World War soon. After the start of the new one in 1939, it became the First World War (Goldin, 2015: 6).

Karen Petrone in her work *The Great War in Russian Memory* notes that the First World War was a part of the Soviet memory of the 1920s (usually as an introduction to the Revolution). According to Petrone, the First World War was not only a “forgotten war”. It was “remembered, then forgotten, then remembered once more, and finally forgotten” (Petrone, 2011: 244) after the Second World War which became the most important event in Soviet military history.

The purges of the 1930s also played a crucial role in process of “forgetting” the war. Some of the works published in 1934 (the 20th anniversary of the war) were not republished again because of its authors who became the victim of a purge.

Down to the dissolution of the Soviet Union, the memory of the First World War was fragmentary and appeared only if such a need arises. This leads to the situation mentioned in Catherine Merridale’s book *Night of stone: death and memory in twentieth-century Russia*: when she asked in 1997-1998 Russians to name three of the main fatal wars in Russian history, almost no one named the First World War (Merridale, 2002: 100).

However, it is important to note that the term “forgotten war” gained popularity in the 1990s (after the Soviet Union’s dissolution). In that time the process of rehabilitation of the pre-revolutionary past began in Russia. In this case, they decided that Bolsheviks destroyed the memory of the First World War for a reason (Orlovskij, 1999: 49). In the 1990s, this attitude was relevant to the official position of President Boris Yeltsin’s Administration (its aim was the negotiation of the Soviet legacy).

## 2.2. Russia’s Case

With the dissolution of the Soviet Union huge reinterpretation of the Russian past started. In the 1990s-2000s, the main topics were the Second World War, Stalin's purges, and the Civil War. The point of relation to the Soviet past was (and remains) the central issue. Because of it, the imperial period (which includes First World War) became the ideal. It must be said, the war itself still was under-explored by the broad audience.

The irony of it is that although the process of recollection of the First World War started in the 1990s, the process was not complete. It did not lead to the formation of some general beliefs of the war. It is connected to the fact, that First World War was a tool for solving some specific agendas. However, the academic historiography of the First World War also developed during this period (Pahalyuk, 2017b).

#### 2.2.1. New appearance of the First World War in XXI century

Vera Tolz in her work *Modern Russian Memory of the Great War, 1918-1920* notes that the First World War appeared again in Russian public discourse in the 2010s as a "soft power" and patriotic rhetoric tool (Tolz, 2014).

On June 27, 2012, Vladimir Putin in his speech in the Federation Council mentioned the First World War. The president said that during the First World War there was an approach of "geopolitical interests of the warring nations". Vladimir Putin also noted that the "forgetting" of the First World War was connected with loss to the losing side ("the unique situation in world history", as he said). According to his speech, this loss was a result of the "national betrayal by the government of this period", in other words, by Bolsheviks (Zasedanie Soveta Federacii, 2012).

In December 2012, Vladimir Putin raised the point of the "forgotten" war again in his message to the Federal Assembly (Poslanie Prezidenta Federal'nomu Sobraniyu, 2012). He aimed to pay a debt of memory to all who fell in the First

World War. Till the end of the year, the Federal Act for creating the Day of Remembrance of Russian Soldiers Who Died in the First World War 1914-1918 (also known as Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the First World War, August 1<sup>st</sup>) (Federal'nyj zakon N 32-FZ, 2020).

Besides, some of the researchers note that the memory of 1914-1918 became a new opportunity for the self-esteem of the nation. That is the point of the Russian official history's perception (Makarkin, 2014).

The characteristic of the official symbolical policy was the reconstitution of the discourses and symbols if it fits the official line of the formation of the state patriotism. It might be seen in Vladimir Putin's speeches. The most important aim was the creation of the "heroic" symbols.

According to official historical position, there is some "objective" history of the First World War, which was "forgotten". Now is a time to renew this war and make it the property of the people. This leads to the result where the authorities perceived only one "true" history with merely heroic connotation.

As a result, the commemorative events, which we should discuss as a performative, look like a "historical truth". In other words, they lead to the historical realm, not to our attitude (as they have to) (Pahalyuk, 2017b).

Certainly, this shot to refresh the memory of the First World War was connected with current historical narratives, such as Civil War and Second World War. Over and above, they also tried to renew the old ideas.

There were two reasons to loan the old images, which were invented by a military propaganda agency in 1914-1918. On the one hand, heroic symbols of the First World War were created by mass media that was similar to current ones. It was easy to retail these symbols even though one hundred years. On the other hand, the military history of the First World War still the poorest side of Russian historiography of this period. In that case, it is easy to renew old heroes and topics instead of trying to find a new one.

Moreover, very often the propaganda materials were used as a base for the exhibitions, dedicated to the war. Hereby, the propaganda visual materials, which were more available, created the official image of the war (Nagornaya, 2014).

In one of his public speeches in June 2014, Vladimir Putin mentioned the topic of the First World War and added the names of Mikhail Alexeev, Lavr Kornilov and Anton Denikin into one line with general Alexej Brusilov (Priem v chest' vypusnikov voennyh vuzov, 2014). However, all of them (except Brusilov) better known as the white army's generals. A similar narrative is also at the cinema. More or less, we can meet it in the series *Ruin of Empire* (2005), then movie *Admiral* (2008). On the top the movie *Heritage of Love* (2016), where this narrative is dominant.

At last, there are two points in making these parallels between two world wars. Firstly, to mention that the Second World War was a consequence and legacy of the First World War. Secondly, to make the symbolic value of the First World War strongly. In some cases, there was the widening of the context. For instance, in Voronezh in 2013 was erected the commemoration stele in memoriam of the victims of the war with Napoleon, First World War, and Second World War (Pahalyuk, 2017b).

Although the topic of the First World War in Russia firstly was mentioned only in 2012, there were discussions on an international level. According to the official Kremlin webpage, for the first time, President Putin went to the topic in 2005, during the joined interview with German chancellor Gerhard Schröder to Bild magazine. President Putin gave an example of “right war” from his own family's history (Putin told about his grandfather who deadly shoots the Austrian soldier and then helped him to stanch the wound (Sovmestnoe interv'yu..., 2005).

Promoting the First World War in the context of international relations started in the 2000s in embassies of some countries (Lithuania, Latvia, Czech Republic, Austria, France, where are the graves of Russian soldiers). In certain instances, the call was from foreign organizations or citizens. A really interesting

example was in Australia, where the participation of ANZAK soldiers (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps) in the Gallipoli battle is an official myth of the creation of the nation. Among the ANZAK volunteer fighters were also Russian immigrants. Russian commune in Australia and New Zealand started to restore their memory (Pahalyuk, 2018).

Moreover, it is important to note that the Kaliningrad (Königsberg) region became the place of cooperation. Mostly because of burial sites of that period, but also because of the Battle of Gumbinnen (which took place near the town Gusev in Kaliningrad region, former Gumbinnen). Europeans were more interested in military graves on this territory. Since the very start of the 1990s, the German War Graves Commission (Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge) began to regularly carry out activities for the arrangement of various mass graves.

### 2.2.2. The Debates about Forgetfulness

Contemporary First World War's researchers discuss if it is possible to call this war a "forgotten" war.

In his article *Was the "forgotten" war forgotten in the USSR? On the issue of embedding the historical memory of World War One into a new ideological concept* (2015), historian V.V. Gorsky notes that the thesis that the First World War was forgotten was questioned by professional historians. He lists monographs and scientific works published in the Soviet period. The author also notes the presence of the First World War in Soviet history textbooks.

Researcher Dorogova L. N. in her article *Is World War I Forgotten? (historiographical sketch)* (2014) lists many Soviet publications dedicated to the First World War: memoirs, diaries, correspondence, military research, fiction.

However, the vast majority of researchers (both Russian and international) agree that there are some reasons to talk about First World War in Russia as a “forgotten war”.

American historian Daniel Orlovsky notes in his article *The Great War and Russian Memory* that there was no cult of the Great War in Russia. Also, there are no movements for preserving the memory of its victims, significant monuments, war memorials and cemeteries (Orlovsky, 1999: 51). It is important to note that this article was written in 1999. Since that time, there were some changes in this field, which we will discuss further.

Head of the State Historical Museum in Moscow Alexei Levykin in his speech on conference World War I. View through the century: the pre-war years notes the Soviet attitude on the war led to the situation when the museums did not collect funds for an exceptionally long time. There was some museological work with topics of the Russian revolution or some personalities, but not with First World War at all (Aleksandrov, 2013).

In the article *To the 100th anniversary of the First World War: The First World War as seen by our contemporaries* (K 100-letiyu Pervoj mirovoj, 2014), there are 11 interviews with professionals from Germany, Austria, Hungary, and Russia. All respondents from Russia (doctors and candidates of sciences<sup>1</sup>, professors from the universities) agree that Russian knowledge (especially students’ and pupils’) about the First World war is extremely limited.

In 2013, the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies (RISS) made a research *Images and Symbols of the First World War and patriotic education of Russian youth* (Mal'tsev, Borodin, 2014). 763 first grade students from Russian universities took part in the research. Questionnaires (same for all respondents) had some

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<sup>1</sup> In Russian system, Candidate of Sciences is UNESCO ISCED level 8 and officially translated into English as Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). Doctor of Sciences has European equivalent as a Habilitated Doctor (in Post-Soviet European countries and Germany).

questions, which had to specify basic knowledge about war and students' attitudes to it. Also, were questioned resources of knowledge about the First World War.

The results of the research were followed. Answering the question “Who do you consider the outstanding military leaders of the First World War?”, the vast majority of respondents mentioned Alexei Brusilov and Lavr Kornilov. It is important to note that these two leaders were also named in the survey about Second World War. So, we can say that they are part of the historical master narrative and do not refer to one particular war in the mass consciousness.

Moreover, we can see the regional segmentation of the answers. For instance, in Novosibirsk (the biggest Siberian city) admiral Kolchak (Head of the Omsk / Siberian government during the Civil War) was named more often, like General Mikhail Alekseev (the creator of the Volunteer Army in the South of Russia) in Rostov-on-Don (Southern Russian city). The head of the Provisional Government Aleksander Kerensky was mentioned only by students from Moscow and St. Petersburg. As a result, every third of respondents mentioned no one.

There also were named basic sources about First World War. On the top were student books, then (by a wide margin) teachers, the Internet, movies, and fiction. Only 7% of students named computer games as a source of knowledge (Mal'tsev, Borodin, 2014).

First World War's researcher Konstantin Pahalyuk in his article *First World War and its Memory in Modern Russia* (2017b) notes that over a hundred years, very solid historiography has been formed, and the definition of “forgotten” rather indicated a gap between the significance of the war itself for the history of Russia and its weak reflection in social and cultural memory. The point is not that people do not know about this war in principle. Rather, it has no “face” of its own, remaining absorbed in the revolutionary events of 1917 and the civil war (Pahalyuk, 2017b: 107). He uses the concept of commemorative density by Yael Zerubavel (2011: 19) to describe the memory of the First World War in Russia as a “low commemorative density”.



### 2.2.3. Important Events before 2014<sup>th</sup>

Commemoration events regarding the First World war in Russia mostly run quietly, without media coverage. For instance, the creation of official memorable days (public holiday) somehow connected with the war. In 1999, the day of December 23<sup>rd</sup> was officially named as a Day of Long-Range Aviation of the Russian Air Force (now it is Russian Aerospace Forces). Exactly on this day, in 1913, the world-biggest (on that moment) plane, four-engine heavy bomber Ilya Muromets (aircraft designer Igor Ivanovich Sikorsky) had its very first test flight. A year later, on 23<sup>rd</sup> December 1914, Emperor Nicholas II signed a decree of the Military Council on the formation of the first squadron of Ilya Muromets aircraft.

On 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2010, the international conference *Russia and the Great War: Experience and Prospects for Understanding the Role of the First World War in Russia and Abroad* was organized by the Russian World (Russkij Mir) foundation (with the support of the Administration of the President of the Russian Federation)

The executive director of the Russkij Mir Foundation noted that at the moment there is neither a single all-Russian monument in Russia nor a single specialized museum dedicated to the history of the First World War. So, Russia is the only one war country, where nothing was mentioned related to war (Morozov, 2010). As a result of the conference, the collection of articles *Russia and the Great War: Experience and Prospects for Understanding the Role of the First World War in Russia and Abroad* was published. According to annotation, there are “articles written by authors from Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Latvia, Bulgaria, USA, and this collection has to become an important step towards closing the gap in the studies of the First World War, reviving and preserving the memory of it in the space of the Russian World” (Rossiya i Velikaya vojna..., 2011).

Since 2011, because of the approaching anniversary, the First World War has become increasingly relevant in the context of foreign policy activities. The ideological basis of the “anniversary” activities (first of all, “diplomacy monuments”, to a lesser extent - local actions) was structured by a growing patriotic discourse within Russia, based on the idea of the value of serving the state. Therefore, the restoration of the memory of the First World War was supposed to justify the role of Russia as one of the key members of the Entente, unjustly excluded from the winners (Pakhalyuk, 2018). The theme of the First World War was most actively used in the framework of bilateral relations with Serbia, France, and Slovenia. On the whole, this corresponds to the general vector of Russian foreign policy towards the EU: to build networks of bilateral relations with individual members. The choice of these particular countries is determined not so much by the “suitability” of the First World War topics as by the importance of these countries for Russia (Serbia is a key partner in the Balkans, France and Slovenia are EU and NATO members with which fairly close political and economic ties have been established). Back in 2009, together with representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church in Serbia, the question of the reconstruction of the cemetery of Russian emigrants who participated in the First World War was raised. This is how the Russian Necropolis project was born. By the fall of 2012, 191 graves were restored through the efforts of the Lisitsyn Foundation and Gazprom. After funding from the Ministry of Culture of Russia appeared, about 800 graves were restored by the 100th anniversary. The theme of the First World War was also promoted within the framework of relations between Russia and France. In this case, the stake was also made on “monumental propaganda”, and the history of the Russian Expeditionary Force, namely two Russian brigades, which in 1916 were sent to the French theatre of military operations, was taken as a basis. The first monument appeared back in 2010 in the museum of the First World War in Reims (one of the brigades was fighting near it). The following year, a monument was erected in Paris, and it was opened by Vladimir Putin.

It became more difficult to attract public attention to the Russian victory at Gumbinnen (Battle of Gumbinnen, 20 August 1914). This topic was especially actively promoted by a local public figure, businessman and employee of the diocese M.V. Cherenkov. In 2010 and 2012, he managed to organize commemorative events at the burial in the village Sovhoznoe (the largest on the field of the Gumbinnen battle) with the participation of diplomatic representatives from France. In 2012, the latter expressed their unwillingness to focus on “celebrating victory” and to assist in organizing large-scale actions in 2014 (Pakhalyuk, 2018).

In July 2012, a member of the Federation Council A.I. Lisitsin proposed to supplement the law “On Days of Military Glory and Memorable Dates of Russia” with a new date August 1, the Day of Remembrance of Russian soldiers who died in World War I. On December 26, the Federation Council approved a new memorable date. Since 2013, August 1 has been the Day of Remembrance for the Victims of the First World War. In the same year, the official opening of the monument to the Heroes of Three Wars (the Patriotic War of 1812, the First World War, and the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945) took place in Voronezh.

In 2013, official preparations for the celebration of the anniversary of the First World War began. At the federal level, an Organizing Committee was established to prepare for the 100th anniversary of the First World War, chaired by Sergei Naryshkin, Speaker of the State Duma and Chairman of the Russian Historical Society. The organizing committee included representatives of the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Telecom and Mass Communications, the Ministry of Defense, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Economic Development, Rosarkhiv (Russian Archive), Rossotrudnichestvo (Federal Agency for the Commonwealth of Independent States, Compatriots Living Abroad, and International Humanitarian Cooperation), Rosvoentsentr (Russian State Military Historical and Cultural Center), chambers of the Federal Assembly, the Public

Chamber, executive authorities of the subjects of the country, the Russian Academy of Sciences, as well as representatives of the media and several other organizations. While the Organizing Committee focused on coordinating scattered events and initiatives, the Ministry of Culture and Russian Military Historical Society, headed by Vladimir Medinsky (Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation in 2012-2020), took over the main work. The result of their activities was the creation of a state “infrastructure of memory” of the First World War.

In 2013, the Russian Institute for Strategic Studies developed the project *100 years of the Second Patriotic War. 1914-1917*. Its goal was “to restore historical truth, refute long-standing myths and return to modern Russian historical science and the public consciousness of citizens of the true forgotten name of the war, the Second Patriotic War” (Petrovskaya, 2014: 10). The authors and compilers note that in Eastern Europe the memory of the First World War is much weaker than in Western Europe, especially in Russia. There are many reasons for this, but the main ones are the deliberate replacement of the memory of the war with revolutionary events in Russia itself and the unwillingness to recognize the importance of the Eastern Front in the West (Reshetnikov, 2014: 4).

## Chapter 3. Historical Memory of the First World War in Russia in 2014-2018

### 3.1. Russian Opinion Polls about the First World War 2014 and 2018

Despite discussions about the real oblivion of the First World War in Russia (Grebenkin, 2014; Gorskij, 2015; Lektorij CGK, 2020), the most important indicator of historical memory is the knowledge about the war of the public who are not professionals in the history or politics of the past.

Similar polls were conducted in other countries as well. Even though the results of the First World War were no better for Russia than for Germany, the results of a representative survey commissioned by the Hamburg magazine *Stern* show that the Germans were much more interested in the First World War. According to 69 percent of respondents, they have a large (35%) or some (34%) interest in the events of that time. At the same time, young people aged 14 to 29 are especially curious. 77 percent of this age group is very (38%) or to some extent (39%) interested in what happened during the First World War (Statista, 2014).

In our opinion, the results of polls conducted by VCIOM (All-Russian Center for the Study of Public Opinion) and FOM Polls in 2014 and 2018 are much more revealing. In contrast to the German survey, the researchers asked questions about the knowledge of the First World War.

VCIOM (2014) reports that a third consider Russia the winner of the war (34%), and the same share (35%) of the respondents believe that our country has lost the war. A quarter of the respondents (24%) find it difficult to answer the question. In addition, 40% of Russians believe that Russia would have won the First World War if there had not been a revolution. 27% of the respondents are inclined to express the opposite point of view, they believe that Russia in any case could not have emerged victorious from the war.

Infographic of VCIOM (2014) shows the results of answers to the following questions: What caused the First World War to start (15% answered correctly, 58% found it difficult to answer)? Who started the First World War (9% answered

correctly, 47% found it difficult to answer)? Who fought against whom in the First World War (12% answered correctly, 53% found it difficult to answer)?

In 2018, a similar survey was conducted (VCIOM, 2018), which demonstrates the following results: more and more Russians think that Russia won the First World War. This is the opinion of 49% of the respondents, while four years ago this answer was chosen by only 34% of the respondents. The opinion about the loss of Russia in the war is now expressed by 33% of Russians (35% in 2014). The number of those who found it difficult to answer the question of whether Russia won or lost in the First World War has halved over the past few years (11% in 2018 versus 24% in 2014). According to the majority of Russians (52%), more tragic pages of history are associated with Russia's participation in the First World War. 29% of the respondents speak about the heroic pages of the history of Russia in this war. The topmost famous events of the First World War among Russians included the Brusilov Offensive (10%), the use of chemical weapons, the “attack of the dead” in the defence of the Osowiec fortress (6%).

FOM Polls in 2014 received the following results: only 21% of Russians were able to correctly name the date of the end of the First World War. Those whose ancestors participated in it are no better informed than others. But they more often than others report that they know the events, battles of this war, that they read books about it or watched films and that they know who were allies of Russia in the First World War. 15% said that it ended in 1917 and the same number named other dates: 8% 1915 or 1916, 7% 1919 or later. 49% of the respondents did not undertake to answer this question. It is worth noting that representatives of the younger age (18-30 years old) who graduated from high school recently, in the 21st century, give the correct answer less often than others (18%) and more often refuse any “hypotheses” (57% of the respondents found it difficult to answer).

Two-thirds of the respondents (68%) said they did not know which countries were Russia's allies in the First World War, and among young people, the percentage is 76%. The rest (32%), in response to a clarifying open-ended question,

named mainly countries that were really on the same side with Russia: more than half of them mentioned Great Britain and France (19 and 18% of all respondents, respectively), quite a few the United States (5%), and some named Serbia and Italy. Sometimes the term “Entente” also appeared.

However, erroneous answers are often encountered. For example, 2% of respondents mention Germany and Austria-Hungary (or Austria or Hungary separately) as Russia's allies. Moreover, quite often in the same remarks, countries from the opposing coalitions “unite”: “Germany, Great Britain”, “France, Italy, Germany, Poland”, etc. It is obvious that such answers, despite the mention of the Entente countries in them, testify not to “partial knowledge”, but to complete ignorance of the course and historical meaning of the war.

16% of those surveyed (26% among those with higher education) said that they can “recall some events, battles, military operations of the First World War.” Moreover, it is indicative that among those who are less than 30 years old, there are only 10% of them, and among those who are over 45 years old 20%. Meanwhile, quite a few survey participants (29%) confidently stated that some of their ancestors took part in this war (and among the representatives of the older generation, who usually know family chronicles better at such a historical depth, 38%). True, any relics associated with this (photographs, letters, documents) were preserved only by 8% of the respondents.

The only battle mentioned by a more or less significant part of the respondents (5% of all respondents, that is, a third of the number of those who gave one or another answer) was the Brusilov Offensive. Relatively often it was said about the first use of gas weapons in history: out of 163 people who answered an open-ended question about the events of the First World War (and in total, 1000 respondents were interviewed), 15 said this. Several respondents said about the first use of tanks. In addition, 11 people remembered Russia's withdrawal from the war, about the revolution, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, and 3 people mentioned the murder in Sarajevo. As for the specific battles of the First World War (besides the

Brusilov Offensive), 6 people named battles on the Eastern Front (battles in East Prussia and near Baranovichi), 11 people named battles in the West (battle of Verdun, battles of the Marne and battles of the Somme). At the same time, the events of other wars, and sometimes completely different eras, were often mentioned. So, 11 people named battles of the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). Moreover, the battle of Tsushima was mentioned in 6 replicas, just as often as Verdun. Some of the answers listed the battles of the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945) (“the battle of Stalingrad”, “the charge of the Reichstag by Soviet troops”, etc.), but there were relatively few of them (6). There were also statements in which certain realities of the Russian Civil War (1917-1923): “Chapayev 25th Rifle Division”, “charge of the city of Perekop”, “destruction of the Basmachi”. Significantly more often (in 15 responses) the events of the war of 1812 and other wars of the Napoleonic era were recalled. The Battle of Borodino was mentioned by 8 respondents, but both Austerlitz and Waterloo were named.

Almost two-thirds of the survey participants (63%) say that they had to “read any books or watch films about the First World War,”. However, most of these respondents did not answer the open-ended question, which sounded like this: “Please name some work of art (a book, film or play) about the First World War that you remember, and which made an impression on you.” But quite a few also answered: 27% of all respondents. Most often, two novels (and their adaptations) are mentioned: 3% of respondents named Mikhail Sholokhov’s *And Quiet Flows the Don* (this is a book about the Don Cossack during the First World War, the Revolution and the Civil War in Russia) and Lev Tolstoy’s *War and Peace* (a book describing Russian society in the era of wars against Napoleon in 1805-1812). 2% each mentioned Alexey Tolstoy’s *The Road to Calvary* (about the Russian Revolution) and Mikhail Bulgakov’s *The White Guard* (about the Civil War in Ukraine in late 1918). 1% of respondents name these works: movie *Admiral* (which mostly about the Civil War), Mikhail Bulgakov’s play *Flight*, soviet movie *Chapaev* (both about the Civil War), and movie *Battleship Potemkin* (about the uprising on the battleship Potemkin during the first Russian revolution 1905-1907).



Among the works mentioned by other respondents, there are also *The Good Soldier Švejk* by Jaroslav Hašek, *A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway, *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque, and even *The Guns of August* by Barbara Tuchman. But along with this many films about the Great Patriotic War (*The Dawns Here Are Quiet*, *Only “Old Men” Are Going Into Battle*, *Seventeen Moments of Spring*, etc.) books and films about the Civil War.

We can say that historical events that have been updated in one way or another in recent times and, accordingly, are widely presented on the television screen, in the minds of quite many Russians are not in any way “fixed” in the historical context and arbitrarily “adapt” to the informational occasion that is asked from the outside, in this case, interviewers asking about the events of the First World War (Kertman, 2014).

FOM leading analyst Grigory Kertman sums up: “Apparently, the share of people who know at least something about this war does not exceed 10-15%. The rest, although assuming that they know something, do not have even the most general ideas and images that would allow identifying information that has some bearing on this war and cutting off extraneous ones” (Kertman, 2014).

In 2018, FOM conducted a similar study asking similar questions: How many families have ancestors who fought in WWI? And what do people know about this war? (FOM, 2018)

To the question “Did any of your ancestors take part in the First World War?” 33% of respondents answered positively (29% in 2014). 11% keep letters, documents, photographs, relics, memorabilia related to the participation of their ancestors in the First World War (against 8% in 2014). 19% of the respondents (against 21%) gave the correct answer to the question in what year the First World War ended. At the same time, 49% found it difficult to answer.

Only 16% of respondents (the same as in 2014) answered that they could name any events of the First World War. They were asked the open-ended question

to name these events. 5% noted the Brusilov Offensive, 3% the first use of chemical weapons. 3% noted the battles of other wars.

The survey participants also answered the question, what works of art (literature, cinema) they can name on the topic of the First World War. The most popular response was again *War and Peace*, then *And Quiet Flows the Don* and *The Road to Calvary*. Only 1% of respondents named works that relate to the First World War: for example, the Russian film *Battalion* or *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque. 35% of respondents did not answer or found it difficult to answer.

Thus, we can conclude that the past anniversary years, despite the release of a large number of artistic and documentary works, the holding of exhibitions and events, had little effect on the historical memory of the First World War of Russians, as well as on their knowledge of the events of the war.

### 3.2. Governmental Project “100 Years of WWI”

The Russian Historical Society and the Russian Military Historical Society were the main coordinators of the Anniversary project 100 Years of the First World War.

In 2014, the Russian Historical Society launched a “people's” project Images of the Great War. All those who have photographs, letters from the front and other interesting materials illustrating the history of the First World War in their family archives are invited to participate in this project. The project received a great response, the Russian Historical Society received hundreds of photographs with participants in the First World War, films, copies of letters and stories (100-letie Pervoj mirovoj vojny, n.d.).

Also, under the auspices of the President of the Russian Federation, the Ministry of Defense of the Russian Federation, the Russian Historical Society and

others, the project In Memory of the Heroes of the Great War was created ([www.gwar.mil.ru](http://www.gwar.mil.ru)). On the site, you can see scans of military photos, atlases, and battle schemes, steps of the Russian army, lists of those awarded with various orders and medals (about three million of them). The portal has some useful functions for researchers and those interested in the history of the First World War: you can overlay old maps on new ones, find a soldier by name, surname, patronymic and area of residence, make a list of war participants from a specific city/village. The documents for posting on the site were taken from various Russian archives: the Military Historical Archive in Moscow, the Archive of the Navy in St. Petersburg, the Russian State Historical Archive, and the State Archives. All these documents are in the public domain in the archives, but many people consider the use of the site as more obvious.

The most resonant event of the celebration of the anniversary of the First World War at the government level was the transfer to Russia of the ashes of Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich Romanov, Supreme Commander-in-Chief of all land and sea forces of the Russian Empire at the beginning of World War I, and his wife, Grand Duchess Anastasia Nikolaevna.

In 2013, to the Chairman of the State Duma, Chairman of the Russian Historical Society, Chairman of the Organizing Committee for the preparation of events related to the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War, S.E. Naryshkin was approached by representatives of the Romanov family (Grand Dukes Nikolai Romanovich and Dimitri Romanovich Romanov). They proposed an initiative to transfer from France to Russia the ashes of Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich and his wife, Grand Duchess Anastasia Nikolaevna, nee Princess of Montenegro. That time, the ashes of the Grand Duke and his wife were in the crypt of the Archangel Michael Church in the city of Cannes.

N.R. Romanov (1922-2014) and D.R. Romanov (born 1926) are considered the closest relatives of the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich, who is his great-uncle; represent the Nikolaev branch, the oldest in the male line of the dynasty. They took

an active part in organizing the ceremony of transferring from the Kingdom of Denmark and burying the ashes of the Dowager Empress Maria Feodorovna, the wife of Emperor Alexander III, in the Peter and Paul Cathedral in St. Petersburg. N.R. Romanov was the chairman of the Association of members of the Romanov family. After the death of N.R. Romanov September 15, 2014, the eldest in the Romanov dynasty is D.R. Romanov.

According to the family legend, the last will of the Grand Duke addressed to his relatives was the desire to find peace in his native land, in Russia, next to his soldiers.

As per the instruction of the President of Russia to the Government of Russia on December 1, 2014, an interdepartmental working group was formed to organize the ceremony of transferring the ashes of Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich and his wife from France and burial in Moscow. The head of the working group was the Chairman of the State Duma S.E. Naryshkin.

On April 30, 2015, the ashes of Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich and his wife were buried in the memorial complex of the heroes of the First World War in Moscow.

The Russian Military Historical Society, together with the People's Archive organization, has opened the People's Archives of the First World War project. The web page The Great War (<http://pomnimvseh.histrf.ru/>) invites any project participant voluntarily to create his page about the participation of his relatives in the First World War and place on it those materials from the family archive (photos, documents, stories, comments, etc.). Thus, a social network of people who are not indifferent to their history, to the history of their family will be formed. In general, a national archive will be formed, supplemented by state and other information resources.

The official website of the Administration of St. Petersburg has published a plan for holding citywide events dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the outbreak

of the First World War of 1914-1918 (2014). These are exhibitions in museums, roundtable discussions and conferences, educational programs.

Although this project was declared the main project dedicated to the First World War in Russia, the events held throughout the country were much broader.

### 3.3. Attack of the Dead Men as a Heroic Narrative

The so-called Attack of the Dead is part of the defence of the Osowiec fortress (present-day Poland) by Russian troops, a counterattack by the 13th company of the 226th Zemlyansky regiment on July 24 (August 6) 1915 while repelling a German gas attack.

The authors of the term “attack of the dead” can be considered two people. In 1939 S.A. Khmelkov, head of the department of land fortification and fortified areas of the Military Engineering Academy of the USSR and a participant in the Osowiec defence wrote in his book *The Struggle for Osowiec*: “The 13th and 8th companies, having lost up to 50% of the poisoned, deployed on both sides of the railway and launched an offensive; The 13th company, meeting parts of the 18th Landwehr Regiment, rushed into the bayonets with a cry of ‘hurray’. This ‘attack of the ‘dead’, as an eyewitness of the battle reports, so amazed the Germans that they did not accept the battle and rushed back, many Germans died on wire nets in front of the second line of trenches from the fire of fortress artillery” (Khmelkov, 1939: 76-80).

The very expression “attack of the dead” (with both words in quotation marks, and not “attack of the ‘dead’”, as in Khmelkov), probably belongs to the journalist Vladimir Voronov from the monthly *Sovershenno sekretno* newspaper. In his article in 2009, prepared for the 95th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War, he writes: “But when the German chains approached the trenches, from the thick green chlorine fog ... the counterattacking Russian infantry fell upon them. The sight was terrifying: the soldiers went to the bayonet with their faces wrapped

in rags, shaking from a terrible cough, literally spitting out pieces of lungs on the bloody gymnasts. These were the remnants of the 13th company of the 226th infantry Zemlyansky regiment, slightly more than 60 people. But they plunged the enemy into such horror that the German infantrymen, not accepting the battle, rushed back, trampling each other and hanging on their barbed wire. <...> This battle will go down in history as an “attack of the dead” (Voronov, 2009).

However, Voronov's 2009 article went almost unnoticed. In 2011, the *Bratishka* magazine published an article by Artyom Denisov *Osowiec. Attack of the Dead* (2011). It was with this publication that the rapid spread on the Internet of the term “attack of the dead” and the retelling of the story of a dying Russian company that put a German regiment to flight began. In addition to reprints in numerous blogs, quotes from Denisov's article appear on many historical forums, both in Russian and English. In 2012, a music video was shot on this topic, where the roles of officers and fighters are performed by members of the St. Petersburg military-patriotic club Pekhotinets. Screenshots from this clip, often stylized as an old image, are also widely used on the Internet.

This informational phenomenon re-attracts the attention of historians to the events of the attack and the historicity of the details added by later publications. Based on the results of archival research, the article *Dead Men Attack (Osowets, 1915): Archive Sources Approach* was published first in Russian (Cherkasov, Ryabtsev, Menjkovsky, 2011), and later in English (2011). This work introduced many new documents from the funds of the Russian State Archive of Foreign Affairs. The general conclusions of the researchers are as follows:

The counterattack on August 6, 1915, certainly took place and was an example of the courageous and successful actions of the Russian troops. All quotes and statements circulating on the Internet represent versions of Denisov's article in 2011 and quotes from Khmelkov's work in 1939. The appearance of the attackers is historically reliable, except for the shouts of “hurray”, which were unlikely with the affected lungs and on the run. However, all the brightest artistic details of the

attack belong to publicists writing almost 100 years after the events, and not at all to their direct eyewitnesses. At the moment, there are no German documents that allow judging the assessment of the counterattack and the losses incurred by the opposite side.

In general, this topic attracts a lot of attention from researchers. It is worth noting the works of Mokshin G.N. *226th Infantry Regiment Zemlyansky: History and Modernity* (2018), Gusarov Yu.V. *World War I: Chronicle of the Defense of the Osowiec Fortress* (2018), Molev D.N. *Battle of Osowiec on July 24 (6 August) 1915: the Heroic Page of the First World War* (2021) and others.

The appeal to the history of Osowiec in the media space allows us to talk about the formation of a myth (Zenkin, 2014). These events, which have their internal logic, structure and sequence, turned into a signifier of ideas borrowed from patriotic discourse, thereby acquiring additional connotations alien to the original history. In other words, the story of Osowiec presented in this way serves not only to testify about the historical events themselves but also to legitimize other ideas and meanings. Our attention focuses not only on the transformation of the symbolic significance of Osowiec, but also on the process of mythologization itself: the genealogy of a stable narrative that is present in the public space, and the principles of its formation (Pakhalyuk, 2016).

Initially, it was a story of another feat, devoid of striking distinctive features: this is true both for popular publications of the tsarist period, and for research work of the 1920s-1930s. Only since 2009 (the 95th anniversary of the First World War), thanks to the efforts of journalists and Internet users, the formation and development of a modern myth takes place, in which the story of Osowiec appears as a unique feat.

This narrative, which attracted the wide attention of enthusiasts from history, creative circles and then the common reader, was further disseminated and developed thanks to the Internet (as a communication channel). The myth begins to live as if its own life: from a call to remember the First World War, it becomes self-

sufficient vivid evidence of the true heroism that Russian soldiers, despite everything, have always shown.

In 2014–2015, Osowiec becomes a part of popular culture as a testament to heroism. Russian famous rock band Aria released in 2014 the song *Attack of the Dead*, with the refrain “nowhere to retreat”. Russian heavy metal band Aventail also creates the song *Attack of the Dead*. Later, in 2019, the Swedish band Sabaton performed the song *Attack of the Dead*. The day before the release, this song was released in Russian by the Russian cover artist Radio Tapok.

In June 2014, at the Times and Epochs reenactment festival (<https://historyfest.ru>), the defence of Osowiec became one of the three “reconstructed” key battles of the First World War (along with the Brusilov Offensive and the Nivelles Offensive).

The Osowiec myth has already taken shape when, with the active support of the state, its promotion and commemoration begins. Probably, against the background of growing international tension, the image of Russian soldiers, ready to defend their positions to the end, turned out to be attractive. At the same time, the state does not offer some central and unified interpretation, limiting itself to approving Osowiec precisely as a heroic symbol.

In 2015, the main commemorative events took place not on August 1 (the official day of remembrance), but on August 6, on the 100th anniversary of the Attack of the Dead. Thus, the RVIO organized rallies and the laying of flowers at the previously erected monuments in eight regions of the country. A group of Kaliningrad social activists, with the support of the Russian Military Historical Society and the administration of the Gvardeisky district, went to the Osowiec fortress itself and laid flowers at the mass grave (Majtakova, 2015).

As a result of joint state and public efforts, Osowiec began to gain a foothold in the space of collective memory. Of course, in terms of its objective significance, this story is hardly capable of competing in Russia with the Brusilov Offensive, the



Battle of Borodino or Stalingrad, but it has every prospect of becoming an integral part of collective ideas about the First World War, as well as entering the symbolic space of individual regions of Russia (Pahalyuk, 2016).

#### **Chapter 4. Commemoration of the First World War in Russia in 2014-2018**

It is difficult to say exactly how many monuments associated with the First World War are located on the territory of Russia. Many monuments are located in very small towns and villages, some can be dedicated to the memory of the inhabitants of the town (village) who participated in all (or some) wars.

The only region of Russia in which a more or less systematic registration of monuments, and memorials of the First World War is kept is the Kaliningrad region. This is the only region of Russia where military operations took place in 1914-1918. For example, a list of World War I monuments can be found on the website of the administration of the Guryevsky urban district (formerly Neuhausen) (Gur'evskij gorodskoj okrug, n.d.), in the Valentin Milovsky's project *Traces of the Past* on the website of the Kaliningrad Regional Scientific Library (2013), in the project *Guide to Traces of the First World War in the Kaliningrad region* (2014). Various researchers from the Immanuel Kant Baltic Federal University made attempts to collect information about the memorial places of the First World War in Kaliningrad (for example, ZHirov, 2015; SHepel', 2020).

The Wikipedia page Monuments to the Heroes of the First World War lists (n.d.) 13 monuments and one commemorative plaque. 10 of them were opened in 2014-2015. This is not a complete list of monuments opened during the anniversary years. Also, a list of monuments of the First World War in Russia can be found in the appendix to the collection *Problems of Preserving the Memory and Memorialization of the Legacy of the First World War* of the Center for Military and Maritime Heritage. The appendix entitled *Information about Memorial Structures in the Territory of the Russian Federation, Erected in Memory of the First World War* includes 32 monuments, with mark "and others" (Mozgovoij, 2019).

A similar problem is with the museums of the First World War. Officially, there is only one museum of the First World War in Russia. However, it cannot be

ruled out that in various local museums there are (or were located in the jubilee years) sections dedicated to the participation of residents in the First World War.

Entertainment activities related to the First World War in Russia are limited to the formats of historical festivals and historical (or pseudo-historical) films.

#### 4.1. Commemoration Events

##### 4.1.1. Museum Russia in the Great War, and Others

Officially, the only WWI museum in Russia is located in Ratnaya Palata (Martial Chamber) (n.d.). This is an architectural monument of the neo-Russian style in the city of Pushkin (formerly Tsarskoe Selo) near St. Petersburg. Ratnaya Palata was built in 1913-1917.

Initially, it was planned to locate a museum of the history of Russian troops in Ratnaya Palata. The collection is based on a collection of paintings, icons, weapons, and documents on the history of the Russian wars. However, with the outbreak of war with Germany in 1914, it was decided to create a museum of the current war in Ratnaya Palata, placing in it a gallery of portraits of St. George's cavaliers and trophies brought from the battlefields. In 1916, especially valuable trophies of the ongoing war were transferred from the Artillery Historical Museum to Ratnaya Palata. They were installed in the courtyard. A shot down German plane Albatross was installed near the museum. In addition, the museum was supposed to give lectures with visual materials, for which there was all the necessary equipment, right down to the screen.

In 1917 the museum received a new name, the People's Museum of the 1914-1917 War. But a year later it was abolished. The exhibits were transferred to other museums and depositories or were destroyed.

In the early Soviet period, the Ratnaya Palata building housed a leisure club where famous Russian poets and writers performed (S. A. Yesenin, V. A.

Rozhdestvensky, F. Sologub, O.D. Forsh and V. Ya. Shishkov). Further, the building was converted into a dormitory for students and workers and was badly damaged during the Second World War.

In 2009, the building was transferred to the management of the Tsarskoye Selo State Museum-Reserve. In 2011-2014 the Ratnaya Palata building has been renovated. The Museum Reserve housed the Museum of the History of the First World War in Ratnaya Palata, which was inaugurated on August 4, 2014.

At the moment, the museum has the following sections, each of which is equipped with an information kiosk with electronic screens and tablets, where you can get information about the main episodes of the war, its participants, uniforms and weapons of those years: Gosudareva Ratnaya Palata and the Museum of the Great War; The Beginning of the War; Military Operations; Fortress Osowiec; Aeronautics and Aviators; Fleet; Military Clergy During the War; Red Cross and Prisoners; Trench Warfare; Nicholas II is Supreme Commander-in-Chief; The Imperial Family during the War. Charity; Gallery of the Cavaliers of St. George; The Home Front. Revolution, Way out of War (Carskoe Selo, 2014).

The museum houses more than a thousand unique exhibits: the original regimental banner of the 112th Ural Infantry Regiment, military weapons, the recreated office of Nicholas II at the Supreme Commander-in-Chief's Headquarters in Mogilev, an exact copy of the French Nieuport-17 fighter, a genuine Ford headquarters vehicle, uniforms of the royal family and uniforms of soldiers and officers from different countries, awards, photographs, documents, and personal belongings of soldiers. The museum staff collected the exposition *Russia in the Great War* not only from its storerooms; ordinary Petersburgers also took part in replenishing museum collections (Golubkova, 2014).

The first project in the newly opened museum was the exhibition *The First World War. Russian Army in France*, organized by the Tsarskoye Selo State Museum-Reserve together with the French Institute at the French Embassy in Russia and the Agency for Communication and Audiovisual Defense Products of

the French Ministry of Defense, in 2015. 21 photographic copies were selected and printed, dedicated to the finding of the Russian Expeditionary Force in France in 1916-1918. The materials presented at the exhibition were divided into three sections: Arrival in Marseille, Combat Training in Military Camps, and Life in the Trench and at the Front. The motto of the exhibition was the words of Marshal Ferdinand Foch: “If France was not erased from the map of Europe, it was primarily due to the courage of Russian soldiers” (Krymova, 2015).

In 2016, the museum hosted an exhibition of photographs *The Heroes of the Past Now Have no Names*. The author of the photographs was Konstantin Anatolyevich Dobrokhotov (1885-1964), who participated in the Great War as a military doctor of the 46th (park) artillery brigade. Since negatives had not been developed for decades, the printed photographs could not be attributed, which explains the name of the exhibition (Man'kov, 2019).

The next was an exhibition named *The Sisters of Mercy of the First World War*, which was a collection of postcards of the war years on a medical theme. The postcards reflected the image of sisters of mercy (nurses) from different social strata of pre-revolutionary society, who found themselves in a variety of circumstances: at the forefront when providing first aid to the wounded under fire, nursing crippled and sick soldiers in infirmaries, hospital trains, hospitals.

Simultaneously with the exhibition *Sisters of Mercy of the First World War*, the exhibitions *New Arrivals* and *Russian Anzacs: Threads of Lost History* were held in Ratnaya Palata. The exhibition *Russian Anzacs: Threads of a Lost History* has been an external project initiated by the Australian Embassy in the Russian Federation.

In 2018, the museum held two monographic exhibitions: *Children in the Great War* and the *Anglo-Russian Hospital in Petrograd, 1915-1918*.

In general, the commemorative language and forms of display are quite typical for Russian military history museums. A characteristic feature of which is a

certain “conservatism”, insufficient use of multimedia products, modern technologies, interactive and installation elements when organizing temporary exhibitions. Memorial, monographic, collection-thematic, and photographic types of exhibitions prevail.

In 2014, the State Historical Museum in Moscow hosted an international exhibition *World War I. The Last Battle of the Russian Empire*. The collection related to the history of the First World War began to be collected in the Historical Museum immediately after the outbreak of hostilities: in August 1914, the Department of the Current War was created in the museum. Subsequently, museum funds were replenished with materials from trophy commissions, collections of the Military Historical and Artillery Historical Museums, complexes handed over by the families of war participants, as well as items brought from expeditions from the battlefield. As a result, a fairly large collection of monuments on the history of the First World War was formed in the Historical Museum. Among the exhibits preserved in revolutionary times are the relics of the regimental museums of the Russian army, telling about the participation in the combat operations of the famous regiments, the Life Guards of the Preobrazhensky regiment, Finland regiment, the 4th Infantry Imperial Family regiment, and some other military units and military schools.

Many Russian and foreign museums and archives provided their materials for the exhibition in the Historical Museum: the Imperial War Museum (London), the Army Museum (Paris), the Bavarian Army Museum (Ingolstadt), the Polytechnic Museum, the Putilov Plant Museum, archives of the Historical and Documentary Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, State Archives of the Russian Federation, Archive of Film and Photo Documents, Political Archives of the German Foreign Ministry, and others (GIM, 2014).

The Russian Museum (a museum of Russian art in St. Petersburg) hosted an exhibition *World War I in 2014. 1914-1918*. At the opening of the exhibition,

Evgenia Nikolaevna Petrova, Deputy Director of the Russian Museum for Research noted: “This exhibition is unique not only because this is the first exhibition in our country dedicated to the First World War in an art museum. It is also unique because it opens little-known pages, works of famous artists, for example, Kazimir Malevich, whom everyone knows as the author of the famous Black Square, the ideologue of Suprematism, is presented at this exhibition with amazing caricatures, popular prints. However, even famous paintings, such as *Our Lady of Tenderness of Evil Hearts* by Petrov-Vodkin, in the context of this exhibition ‘sound’ differently. After all, few people associate it with the era of the First World War, and, meanwhile, it was created precisely during these years” (Elagina, Medved', 2014).

A large number of Moscow museums also hosted exhibitions dedicated to the beginning of the First World War. For example, the exhibition *War, Like Thunder from Heaven...* at the Museum of Heroes of the Soviet Union and Russia, the exhibition *The War That Ends with Peace* at the Multimedia Art Museum, the exhibition *Moscow during the First World War* at the Museum of Moscow, the exhibition *World War I* in the Museum of the History of Religion, etc.

Many regional Russian museums also held the events. We can name the exhibition *1914-1918. The First World War: 100 Years of Oblivion* in the Kursk Regional Museum of Local History, the exhibition *The Unknown Great War. 1914-1918* at the National Museum of the Republic of Tatarstan (Kazan), the exhibition *The First World War. The Feat of Forgotten Heroes* in the Voronezh Regional Museum of Local History, the permanent exhibition *World War I and Tankograd* in the Historical Museum of the Southern Urals (Chelyabinsk), and others.

#### 4.1.2. Monuments

The most significant monument of the First World War in Russia is the Monument to the Heroes of the First World War in Moscow. It was opened on

August 1, 2014. The initiator of the installation of the monument and the organizer of the competition was the Russian Military Historical Society. It was decided to install the monument on Poklonnaya Hill between the Arc de Triomphe and the Museum of the Great Patriotic War.

On August 1, 2014, the opening ceremony of the monument took place. This was one of the main events timed to coincide with the 100th anniversary of Russia's entry into the First World War. The ceremony was attended by Russian President Vladimir Putin. Among the guests were Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu, Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin, Patriarch Kirill.

The monument consists of two elements: a Russian soldier who went through the war, and a multi-figured composition that personifies the flag of Russia. The bronze figure of a soldier, mounted on a high pillar, is executed in the classical style. A roll of an overcoat and a three-ruler is thrown over his shoulder, and St. George's crosses adorn his chest. On the pedestal is the St. George's Cross, covered with gold leaf. Behind the soldier there is a composition: against the background of the Russian flag, an officer is raising a soldier to attack. Nearby, a sister of mercy rescues a wounded man. In a group of soldiers, the Cossack Kozma Kryuchkov, the first to be awarded the St. George Cross in the First World War. In the image of the sister of mercy, one can recognize the Grand Duchess Elizabeth Feodorovna.

At the opening of the monument, sculptor Andrei Kovalchuk spoke about his idea: "The main soldier is a collective image, and, while creating it, I deliberately did not make a young man, but wanted to show a little deeper, to reveal this theme of defending the Motherland. And now a Russian soldier, XX century, this is the Russo-Japanese War, the First World War, the Civil War, and the Great Patriotic War, and this man could go through all these wars. And such people are real heroes, heroes who are paid tribute to the memory today, because for many years, many decades, in our country there was not a single monument dedicated to the First World War and these people" (Ermolaeva, 2014).



A little earlier, in May 2014, there was also a monument to the First World War in Kaliningrad. According to the idea of its author, People's Artist of Russia Salavat Shcherbakov, a Russian officer, a young soldier and a peasant should symbolize national unity in the defence of their Fatherland. The figure of a sister of mercy bending over a wounded person pays tribute to the memory of Russian women who carried wounded soldiers on their shoulders (Majtakova, 2014).

On November 7, 2018, a solemn meeting was held at the Manezh Central Exhibition Hall, timed to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War. During the meeting, the results of the work of the National Organizing Committee on the preparation of events related to the 100th anniversary of the First World War were summed up. The Minister of Culture of the Russian Federation Vladimir Medinsky said that more than 30 monuments to the participants of the First World War have been installed by the Russian Military Historical Society (RVIO) since 2014. V. Medinsky noted: “Five years ago in Russia, there was not a single monument to the heroes of the First World War, there was not a single feature film, during these years 34 monuments in Russia and abroad were installed by the Russian Military Historical Society with the support of the public, public organizations” (Buranov, 2018). According to the minister, the first national monument to the heroes and victims of the First World War was opened by the RVIO in Moscow on Poklonnaya Hill in the presence of Russian President Vladimir Putin on August 1, 2014. Also, monuments to the heroes of the First World War were installed in Volgograd, Gusev, Kaliningrad, Kirov, Pskov, Lipetsk, Saransk, Tula and other cities. Monuments were also opened in France, Slovenia, Serbia.

It should be noted that neither the monument in Kaliningrad nor the monument in Moscow were the first monuments of the First World War in Russia. For example, in 2008, a Monument to the Heroes of the First World War was unveiled in the city of Pushkin. In 2009, in Noginsk, a monument was unveiled to the Soldiers of the 209th Bogorodsky Infantry Regiment who Fell in the First World

War. But the monuments in Kaliningrad and Moscow can be considered as the most significant places of memory, decorated in the jubilee years.

Researcher Ya.G. Shepel in his database of memorial sites of the First World War in the Kaliningrad region names 10 modern monuments installed in the last decade (Shepel', 2020).

The study of modern Russian monuments of the First World War, which was carried out by a senior researcher at the Russian Institute of Art History A.V. Korolev, demonstrates the significant dependence of the authors of the monuments on propaganda rhetoric. The images for the monuments in most cases were taken from propaganda postcards during the war. And only one author turned to Christian themes in the Monument to the Memory of the Forgotten War that Changed the Course of History in Gusev. The monument calls to the memory of the victims of the war, directing the consciousness towards Christian values (Korolev, 2020).

Along with the opening of the monument to the First World War in Moscow, the reconstruction of the Moscow City Bratsky (Fraternal) Cemetery can also be noted as an important commemorative event. The Moscow Patriarchate believes that this memorial park should be the main place in Russia for the memory of warriors of the First World War (RIA Novosti, 2017). Basically, in 2014-2018, work was carried out to improve the memorial and park complex, several gravestones of the cemetery destroyed in the 1930s were restored.

The cemetery was opened in 1915 and closed in 1932. In 1948, a park was laid out on the site of the cemetery, which is now called the Memorial Park Complex of the Heroes of the First World War (Pirogov, 2014). In recent decades, some memorials have appeared in the park and a chapel has been built in memory of the war victims.

By the 100th anniversary of the outbreak of the First World War, the park was undergoing improvement and restoration of memorial signs. New lampposts and benches were installed in the park, and structures at playgrounds were

renovated. At the same time, in the course of excavation, there were cases of the opening of burials.

As a result of the closure of the cemetery, all the gravestones (except for one, the most massive, over the grave of student Sergei Shlikhter) were destroyed. In recent years, there has been a gradual return of headstones over the graves, which can be personalized.

In 2014, a tombstone was restored for two sisters of mercy (who served with Schlichter), Olga Shishmareva and Vera Semenova. In 2018, the gravestone of the cadet Maria Vrutsevich, the driver of an armoured car, who died in battles with the Red Guards at the Trinity Gate of the Moscow Kremlin, was also restored.

## 4.2. Entertaining Events

### 4.2.1. Festival Times and Epochs

Times and Epochs (<https://historyfest.ru/>) is an annual history festival presenting world history from Antiquity to the 1980s.

It has been held in Moscow since 2011. Until 2017, each festival was dedicated to a particular era and was held in the Kolomenskoye Museum-Reserve in Moscow. Since 2017, the festival has welcomed visitors with various venues in the centre of Moscow, on the Boulevard Ring and in parks.

This is an urban history festival that combines high reliability and reconstruction as a way of transferring historical knowledge with free access and a comfortable environment of a modern metropolis. The author's project of the Ratobortsy agency has received support from the Moscow government for almost ten years. Every summer, historical sites appeared in Moscow, representing the everyday and heroic aspects of life from different eras (Ratoborcey, n.d.).

In 2014, the festival was completely dedicated to the First World War. The central events were the demonstration performances of the reenactors Brusilovsky

Offensive, Attack of the Dead and Nivelles Offensive. The festival was attended by 2,100 reenactors from 14 countries: Russia, Great Britain, Germany, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Bulgaria, Belarus, Ukraine, Hungary, Poland, Slovenia, Czech Republic, and Japan. There were 10 thematic sites: Aristocracy, Proletariat, City, Village, Horse parade ground, Armored vehicle park, Fair, Stage, Demonstration camps, Battlefield.

In 2017, the festival changed its format under the name *Times and Epochs. Collection* was held at 30 venues in Moscow. Various historical epochs were presented at these sites: Youth of the Russian Empire, 18 century; Ancient Rome and Antiquity; Russia and the Horde of the 13-15 centuries; 1812, and others.

The site called the Eve of the First World War was located in the memorial park complex on the site of the former cemetery. During the opening of the site, a review of troops and a memorial flower-laying ceremony took place.

On the site were: a field camp, a field kitchen, an artillery crew, a training camp, an exhibition of military equipment, a communications centre, a field hospital, park games (croquet, cerseau, and petanque), bicycles, and a cab. The site "military equipment" presented a Renault FT-17 tank, Austin-Putilovets and Mannesmann-Mulag armoured vehicles, mock-ups of Fokker and Ilya Muromets aircraft, a Russian regimental cannon and a German infantry support gun Ie.IG.18. Among the exhibits of the exhibition of weapons were inoperative military copies of the Maxim machine gun, Mosin rifles, revolvers, carbines.

Not only Russian reenactors were invited to participate in the site, but also reenactors from France and Slovenia.

In 2018 (and in 2019; in 2020 it was not held) the festival worked in the same format with venues dedicated to the beginning of the 20th century.

#### 4.2.2. Movies

According to a survey on knowledge of Russian history conducted in 2001, 60% of respondents (out of 2,400 people) expressed their opinion that feature films are a source of knowledge about the past (Istoricheskaya pamyat 'naseleniya Rossii, 2002).

Researchers distinguish two types of historical feature films. First of all, these are films in which their authors, using artistic means, try to truthfully embody the images of real historical figures and events on the screen. But there are films of a different plan. They depict fictional images of the past, but at the same time against the backdrop of a believable display of historical time. The creators of such paintings demonstrate typical situations with fictional characters that could well have happened at one time or another in history. Of course, a feature film may not fully correspond to historical facts, but it is capable of embodying the aesthetic and ideological truth of history (Volkov, Ponomareva, 2012).

A feature film conveys, on the one hand, knowledge, on the other hand, myths about the past. Cinema is also a useful source of information about people's ideas about their history, their mentality and ideology, and culture in general. Films are facts of society's self-awareness and collective memory.

In the period 2014-2018, several films related to the theme of the First World War were shot in Russia. First of all, it is worth noting films directly about the First World War (first type).

In 2015, the film *Battalion*, dedicated to the women's death battalions, was released. These are military formations, consisting entirely of women, created by the Provisional Government, mainly for the propaganda purpose, to raise the patriotic mood in the army and to shame the male soldiers who refuse to fight by their example. Despite this, the women's battalions had limited participation in the First World War. One of the initiators of their creation was Maria Bochkareva.

According to the plot of the film, the action takes place in the spring of 1917. The February Revolution has already changed the life of Russia, Nicholas II has already abdicated the throne. In the trenches, the Bolsheviks are conducting their propaganda with might and main. They call for peace with the enemy. The Russian officers practically cannot decide anything without the approval of the so-called soldiers' committees. The army is on the verge of final decay. But with its service, the battalion of death sets an example of courage and calmness, raises the spirit of the soldiers, and proves that each of these women heroes deserves the title of a soldier of the Russian army.

Most professional history scholars were critical of this film. Historian A.I. Fursov, in his lecture on the armed uprising in Petrograd, called the film propaganda “lies about Bolshevik villains and heroic women” (Fursov, 2016).

In 2016, at the pitching of the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation, a draft film was presented under the working title *Monitor*. It was filmed in 2018 but released worldwide later, in 2019, under the title *Russian Youth*. In Russia, the premiere took place even later, in 2020. According to the plot of the film, a village guy Alyosha volunteers to the front of the First World War. After a gas attack in the first battle, he loses his sight but does not return home. The guy is nailed to the anti-aircraft battery and becomes a listener, a sentinel who must warn the others about the approach of enemy aircraft. At the same time, the storyline about the rehearsals of the Tavrishesky Orchestra in modern St. Petersburg, which is preparing to perform Concert No. 3 and Symphonic Dances by Sergei Rachmaninoff, is developing.

For the part of the film that depicts the First World War, the director chose a stylized image of faded grainy film or painted black-and-white cinema, similar to Peter Jackson's documentary *They Shall Not Grow Old*, compiled from rare newsreels. The creator delicately approaches the depiction of bodily wounds and other physiological details of the horrors of war. The footage looks like a faded

photograph, where even if one wants to, it is impossible to see the wounds in detail (Filippov, 2019).

It was important for the director to show the Russian male environment, which was in the army of the Russian Empire. Since it was based on workers and peasants, people with specific characters and destinies, they approached the selection of performers very carefully. They were found on the streets, in factories, in orphanages and among the cadets of military schools. Therefore, in the film, most of the actors and those involved in the crowd scenes are not professionals. Thanks to this, the image of not typical courageous soldiers is created on the screen, but the most ordinary people. Their speech and mannerisms leave no doubt that the action takes place during the First World War (Gorelikov, 2019).

The editor-in-chief of the *Iskusstvo Kino* magazine and well known Russian film critic Anton Dolin, in his author's column, noted the strong visual and conceptual side of the picture, compared the plot with a parable, called the leading actor impressive, and excellent camera work (Dolin, 2019).

In 2018, the short film *Attack of the Dead: Osowiec* was released. The film shows two battles, one of which later became known as Attack of the Dead. The film was shot by order of Wargaming, the manufacturer of the computer game World of Tanks.

Andrey Muravyov, head of the publishing department of Wargaming in the CIS, expressed the motives for creating the film with the words: “A hundred years later, textbooks, black-and-white photos and video chronicles can no longer convincingly convey to today's viewers all the horrors of war. I hope that the film will fulfil its task: through the use of modern artistic language, it will make the viewer think and share our conviction that there is no place for war in the real world” (Ataka mertvecov: Osovec, 2018).

The next two films do not belong to the genre of historical cinema (the second type of films). This is a comedy and love story related to the theme of the First World War only by the time in which they occur.

In 2014, the film *Christmas Trees 1914 (Yolki 1914)* was released. This is a New Year comedy film, a continuation of the films *Yolki*, *Yolki 2* and *Yolki 3*, popular in Russia. The plot of the film contains 6 short stories that take place at the very beginning of the First World War. Novella *House* tells about the purchase of an estate on the Black Sea coast. The owner of the house cannot tell his family that their house has been sold. In the novel *The Tsar's Christmas Trees*, an officer lying in the hospital collects signatures to return the Christmas tree. In the novel *The Figure Skaters*, the police officer has to choose between his girlfriend, his interest in figure skating, and his service. In the novel *The Bear*, a country boy is friends with a yard bear. In the short story *The Volunteers*, two friends volunteer for the front. In the short story, *Shalyapin* meeting with the famous Russian opera singer Fyodor Shalyapin helps a boy and a girl, whose mother is sick and whose father is missing at the front.

As conceived by the creators of *Christmas Trees 1914*, the main action of the film takes place on the eve of 1915, and the initial and final episodes are already in the current time.

In 2016, the film *The Heritage of Love* was released (in the Russian version, the name of the film is *Hero*).

According to the plot of the film, in 1914, the young princess Vera Chernysheva and the lieutenant of the Life Guards Cavalry Regiment Andrei Dolmatov meet. Soon the war begins, Dolmatov goes to the front, and Vera goes to the hospital, where she serves as a sister of mercy. In March 1918, Captain Dolmatov forced Vera to leave her dangerous job in a military ambulance and, against her wishes, put her on a private train to emigrate to Paris. In parting, Dolmatov promises Vera to find her in Paris after the war.



In 2016, Andrey Kulikov, a specialist in vintage cars, travels from St. Petersburg to Paris to examine the first-ever Russian car of the Russo-Balt brand. It puts up for sale by a Russian Parisian, an emigrant of the first wave, Princess Elizaveta Ivanovna Ezerskaya. During a meeting with her at the Parisian cemetery of Sainte-Genevieve-des-Bois, he notices a photograph of a beautiful woman on one of the tombstones. Later, already walking around Paris, Andrei meets the beautiful Vera, who very much reminds him of the woman's face on the monument. It seems to him that once, a hundred years ago, he already loved this girl. In this second, events move into the past. Vera turns out to be the great-granddaughter of the woman whom his great-grandfather loved. Andrei's great-grandfather is Andrei Dolmatov, a white officer who heroically died in March 1918 in battle during the First Kuban campaign (General Kornilov's Ice Campaign). A century later, tender feelings flare up between the great-grandchildren of Andrei Dolmatov and Vera Chernysheva.

The authors of the film “unite two elements: military-patriotic and pop” (Arhangel'skij, 2016). The military-patriotic direction is embodied by the main character of the film: Lieutenant Dolmatov, an officer of the tsarist army, an honest character with his own story. The performer of the role of Dolmatov, the famous Russian singer, winner of the Eurovision Song Contest, Dima Bilan, is responsible for the mass character of the film. During the preparation of the film and filming, the Military Historical Society provided support, in particular, concerning costumes, although the audience noted some disagreements, for example, the hussar uniform on Dolmatov, who, however, introduces himself as a lieutenant of the Life Guards Cavalry Regiment.

Thus, we can say that films shot in the jubilee years can also be divided into two types: historical dramas and films that use the historical context as a background. Both those and others were supported by the Russian Military Historical Foundation and the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation.

## Conclusions

In this work, we tried to analyze the historical memory of the First World War in Russia.

In 2014-2018, some events related to the centenary of the First World War took place in Russia. It could be assumed that these events would help restore the memory of the First World War not only in the political but also in a wide public field.

Several researchers argue that the First World War cannot be called a truly forgotten war in Russia. However, despite this, opinion polls conducted in 2014 and 2018 show that the past events did not have a significant impact on Russians' knowledge of the First World War. Knowledge of war does not remain low enough. At the same time, in the minds of Russians, many historical events are not divided according to belonging to one or another war: respondents confuse the events of the First World War, the Patriotic War of 1812, the Civil War, and others.

In 2014-2017, an attempt was made in Russia to return the memory of the First World War at the official level. In general, the work was carried out in the directions outlined in the *Concept of Memorialization of the Military-Historical Heritage of the First World War* (authors Mozgovoj S.A., Ryabov S.A.):

- preservation of memory, that is, the formation and development of memorial sites in places of former battles, as well as burials of their victims, perpetuating the memory of the First World War;
- creation of memorials, installation of monuments;
- construction of memorial complexes (territories with architectural structures placed on them);
- installation on buildings of memorial plaques dedicated to the heroic events of the First World War and outstanding participants in the war;

- installation of memorial signs and inscriptions on objects, including memorial toponymy;
- providing for all interested persons access to archival documents and other materials, following the requirements of the legislation of the Russian Federation;
- development of educational and educational programs on the theme of the First World War with their subsequent inclusion in the general education programs of basic general and secondary general education, as well as in the country's television and radio broadcasting network;
- carrying out research works and cycles of events aimed at perpetuating the memory of the victims of the First World War;
- strengthening the base of museum, archival, educational and other organizations for conducting research, scientific and archival, library, museum and memorial, educational work in the field of studying the history and lessons of the First World War, as well as for the patriotic education of youth;
- ensuring the placement in the relevant museum institutions of expositions reflecting the history of the First World War;
- archaeological and research work to identify places of battles, areas of mobilization activities and training of troops, keeping prisoners of war, organizing a hospital base, as well as burials;
- creation of an all-Russian information system for the museum and memorial network, a unified multimedia book in memory of the First World War;
- search for directions and ways of representing the historical memory of the First World War in works of monumental art, painting, literature, cinema, and museum activities (Mozgovoĵ, Ryabov, 2019).

Following the provision of this concept, the main attention was paid to the institutions traditional for working with the past: universities, libraries, museums, exhibition halls, cemeteries, places of memory (monuments). Many Russian

museums presented their expositions dedicated to the First World War. A fairly large number of monuments were also discovered. However, practices related more to the field of public history were less affected.

In 2014-2018, only a few films were shot that can be considered truly historical dramas, and a few more films related to the First World War only indirectly. According to modern researchers, cinema is one of the most important sources for the formation of historical memory, along with historical science, literature, other types of art, and personal experience (Mazur, 2013). Feature films not only actualize memories of past events but also draw public attention to debatable historical topics.

Based on the results of the study, several conclusions can be drawn:

1. Active work to restore the memory of the First World War was carried out mainly in 2014. Russia's withdrawal from the war in 1918 practically did not figure in the public arena. And in general, 2018, as the year of the end of the First World War, was not particularly celebrated in Russia.

2. Official institutions working with history and memory do not exert sufficient influence on public consciousness to somehow influence the position of memory of the First World War in Russia.

3. The use of images, heroes, and events of the First World War to develop patriotic sentiments does not attract interest in the war itself, and most importantly, does not distinguish it from other wars in the history of Russia.

4. Despite the efforts made, it can be considered that the knowledge of Russians about the First World War has remained practically unchanged after the centenary. As was the case in Soviet times, the history of the First World War is mainly of interest to professionals (historians, archaeologists, anthropologists, etc.) and a narrow circle of those who interested.

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