

4<sup>th</sup> European Historical Forum

## 1914-2014: History in the Service of War and Propaganda

The European History Forum took place in the Heinrich Böll Foundation for the fourth time on November 13 and 14. Since 2011 the symposium, which was created in cooperation with the Russian Scientific Information Centre Memorial serves the purpose of bringing together, historians, museum professionals, journalists and NGOs from Eastern, Southeastern, Central and Western Europe to critically engage with the history of violence of the 20th century and its mediation.

This time the event with the title "1914-2014: History in the Service of War and Propaganda" on the one hand looked back to the outbreak of the First World War, 100 years ago; on the other hand, to the beginning of the Second World War, 75 years ago, and last but not least the Yugoslav Wars in the 1990s. The focus was on the question of whether and how these historical events are exploited in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans for propaganda purposes. Unfortunately there was more than enough illustrative material for the question - a large part of the current supplied Ukraine crisis.

### Central and Eastern Europe and the First World War

The two-day meeting was opened with the introductory lecture "A War Without End. Instrumentalizations of Science in Central and Eastern Europe since 1914" by **Dr. Maciej Górny** from the German Historical Institute in Warsaw. Right at the beginning of his remarks Górny turned to the question of what role the First World War assumes in the collective memory of East Central Europe. The answer sounds very sober and distinct from the established culture of memory in Western Europe: "This time has not really imprinted in the collective memory of the Poles, Czechs, Slovaks, Belarusians, Lithuanians and Ukrainians". The bloodiest battles were fought right there. Rather, there the first gas attacks took place, and millions of people were forced to evacuate. "For some groups and walks of life - especially Jews and landowners - the First World War was a disaster." A disaster that would later be overshadowed by more tragic disasters.

But it is not only a collective memory culture lacking in East Central Europe. Lost is the transnational history of political engagement of intellectuals who had been called "War of the Ghosts" in the west of the continent already in 1915 and its representative's authors such as Thomas Mann, Henri Bergson, Émile Durkheim and Gerhard Hauptmann.

But according to Górný's research, the "War of the Ghosts" existed in the East as well, and was in no way inferior to the one in the West: The actors, often supported by political groups and activists, accused each other of brutality, barbarism and treachery and delivered racial and national identity theories in order to legitimate the territorial claims of ownership for their respective people. Some of the theories were received as arguments in political practice, even after 1918. Thus, the eastern "War of the Ghosts" is not just a conflict run in print media, but rather an announcement of the postwar order. It should therefore not be considered as a footnote in history.

### **The Western Balkans and the First World War**

While the First World War plays only a marginal role in the culture of memory in countries such as Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, the situation in the Western Balkans is very different. On the occasion of the 100th anniversary **Dubravka Stojanovic** of the University of Belgrade and **Amir Duranović** of the University of Sarajevo dealt with the analysis of the current historical and political debates on the First World War which took place in this region. Dubravka Stojanovic started the analysis which highlighted the situation in Serbia. According to her, 2014 was a very emotional year. The Great War and the crisis of July seemed omnipresent. "It was easy to get the impression that Serbia again is faced with a war and is surrounded by enemies." On June 28, 2014, the 100th anniversary of the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand and his wife Sophie, there were two main commemorative events that took place in Bosnia-Herzegovina: one in Sarajevo and one in the Republic of Srpska. At the event in Sarajevo the Government members of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina remembered the assassination as a tragedy and the consequences of this fact; the second event, which was dedicated to the assassin Gavrilo Princip, was attended by Serbian politicians to celebrate Gavrilo Princip as a Serbian national hero. "Once again, the government leaders of the rival states took a contrary position. And once again, the story has been abused to express current problems" says Stojanović.

But why does the First World War play such a special role? For Serbia it is a formative event like no other: Twice the Serbs emerged victorious, in 1914 they fought off the first attack by the Austrians; in 1918 they won on the Macedonian front; but also an enormous number of people, almost a quarter of the population died during the war. Last but not least the war stands for the diplomatic skills of the Serbian government in the creation of Yugoslavia after the war. However, the events of the First World War were more than just historical facts. They provided the basis for the founding myth of Serbia. Linking the national idea with the First World War was not always given. The idea started after the disintegration of Yugoslavia. Literary works, films, plays and history were involved in the creation of the founding myth; their contents and myths are again passed into the textbooks and thus form the official memory culture and national identity of Serbia today. This includes, for example, that Serbia is a generous, self-sacrificing people, a victim nation that was in a defensive war during the First World War, and also a hero nation whose army has won victories.

But since Slobodan Milosevic's fall in 2000, a new national discourse on the memory culture began in Serbia, a cultural and educational reform to date is still pending. The battle for the

interpretation of the First World War taking place in 2014 is therefore to be understood as a struggle for national identity, concludes Stojanović. What makes up the national identity has so far remained unsaid. Rather, this free space, which is called identity, is being filled with old emotions and political programs that are hungry for new opportunities. Talking about the history therefore has little to do with the past, but rather serves as a metaphor for the future of Serbia and Southeastern Europe. Will one be able to invent a new society that is democratic and peacemaking? Or will Southeastern Europe face new conflicts? Whether the region is developing into a democratic future or not, stands or falls with the serious commitment to culture and education, says Stojanović.

With similar emotion as in Serbia, the debates of the First World War were held in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The expectations of this historic anniversary were very high, according to Amir Duranović. But the result was rather meager. Even the central memorial event in Sarajevo, which has already been mentioned in Stojanović's versions, occurred differently than planned. Since 2013 already, it was mentioned in the press that Europe's leaders, including Angela Merkel and François Hollande, would participate in the ceremony. A unanimous peace message should be sent to the world. Unfortunately the attendees however were only the ambassador, "diplomatic representatives, we always see anyway," said Duranović. Thus, the hoped for attention was not achieved.

In addition to the central memorial event, various conferences, exhibitions, public and media debates and various rallies also took place. But unfortunately, according to Duranović's analysis, no one wanted to engage in a wide-ranging debate. Rather, the First World War had been reduced to the Gavrilo Princip assassination. The question of whether he was a terrorist or not, was discussed everywhere; it was even part of surveys given to the population. Other topics were set but not discussed in public. Moreover, various actions remained very limited locally often they were also highly politically influenced. The hoped-for effect, the Bosnian society that is deeply divided since the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s, bringing them together in this celebration, never materialized. Rather, based on Duranović's conclusion the society is even more divided.

### **The Western Balkans and the Reappraisal of the 1990s**

Historian **Nicolas Moll** spoke about to what extent the historical events of the 1990s split not only society but also the historiography in Bosnia-Herzegovina and other countries of the former Yugoslavia.

Generally three tendencies could be recognized in post-conflict regions dealing with the processing of crises: 1. the subject is avoided, 2. the subject is considered ideologically, 3. the subject is considered non-ideologically. A strict separation between the three approaches does not exist, of course, rather, they would flow into one another explained Moll.

What does this mean for the countries of the former Yugoslavia, especially in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia? In all three countries the first tendency dominates - to ignore the issue. Even in textbooks the Yugoslav Wars were not addressed a decision that was taken deliberately and had also been recommended by the European Council.

Why many historians do not touch the topic of the 1990s, is due to the fact that it was difficult due to the political context and the very strong nationalist tendencies to approach the subject easily. "Whoever approaches this as a scientist knows that he steps into mined terrain." Thus, the political scientist Dejan Jovic, for example, was recently forced to leave his post as a political advisor, because he questioned the independence referendum in Croatia in an article. Another historian refused the offer to write a thesis about the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as too much pressure would be exerted on him and he would not be able to work at ease. "Now he's working the Middle Ages, or the 17th century, or whatever."

Those historians and scientific institutions, which officially deal with the war years, have a very ideological approach and use the mainstream discourse, "he who emphasizes his own suffering and his own heroism and sees crimes always just on the other side" - for example, the Croatian Memorial Documentation Centre of the Homeland War in Zagreb, the Bosnian Institute for Research of Crimes Against Humanity and International Law or the Republika Srpska's Centre for the Investigation of War and War Crimes and the Search for Missing Persons. Although some facilities also occasionally include good works, but by and large, the institutions are extremely politicized, according to Moll's conclusion.

Scientific contributions, in which the Yugoslav wars are viewed from non-ideological perspectives, currently are rare and created slowly. But this process should not be heavily criticized according to Moll. It takes time to come to terms with conflicts. "How long has it taken in the Federal Republic, until a critical approach to the National Socialism in the historiography was developed?" Some of these non-ideological works are created abroad, others in the field of memory studies, in which the 1990s are not directly discussed, but rather the memories of those years. Even outside of historiography there are many efforts to actually come to terms with the war years. Important contributions and publications provide non-governmental organizations, journalists, sociologists, lawyers, artists and educational projects that are carried out in collaboration with historians.

### **For Propaganda Purposes Russia Instrumentalization of the First World War**

While there are efforts on analyzing history, whether of the First World War or the 1990s in the Western Balkans, the exact opposite trend emerges from Russia: where history on the background of Ukraine crisis is used as propagandistic means. The extent, to which the Russian propaganda uses the historical narrative of the First World War or modifies it for its own political purposes, was delved into by historian **Nikita Sokolov** in his lecture "The First World War in the Course of Russian Perception". He made it clear that up to the year 2014, the First World War had played no role in the cultural memory. Rather, the war was seen as forgotten as a war without heroes. Also in the field of science the historical event is regarded as researched, although several publications have appeared in the past ten years, which mainly deal with anthropological issues. Also in school textbooks, the historical narrative is described clearly and in line with the European perspective: that the First World War was an imperial war, Russia and all other states had interest to re-divide the world and that all parties carry equal war guilt; that Russian authorities acted ineffective and broke in the war; that Russia was eliminated as a loser with the signing of the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk and had to renounce all claims to victory.

A century later, in August 2014, President Vladimir Putin gives a completely opposite interpretation of the First World War during the inauguration of the monument to the "Heroes of the Great War" in Moscow. In a television report, which was presented by Sokolov before his lecture, he speaks of "heroic battles" of the "truth" that is finally told by a Russia that Europe wanted to protect against a war, especially Austria-Hungary and Serbia. But no one had heard Russia at that time - and so it had to act, not least to also save the brother-Slavic people, "Honor belongs to the Russian arms," said Vladimir Putin.

Unbelievable and absurd as these words appear, but Putin is serious, but they showed which way Russia will follow in the future, stated Sokolov. On 5 November, Putin met with previously chosen young historians, which confirm the President in front of television cameras that Russia has not been beaten at the front in the First World War, but was betrayed by internal enemies. What type of enemies they were, is not revealed by the young specialists. These are revealed by name only a few days later on November 13 during the talk show of Vladimir Solovyov on "Rossiya 1". His guest, the pro-Putin writer Nikolai Starikov says: "Why we, who had everything, did not win the First World War? Because there were traitors. And these were not the Bolsheviks. In February 1917, the Liberals betrayed Russia. Together with the British Embassy, they ensured a coup."

Putin's propaganda is already so pervasive. What is the goal that Russia pursues, Sokolov had no answer. He is a historian after all and not a psychiatrist. What can be determined is that the Russian propaganda in its apparent spontaneity without perspective and illogical actions of their players is a dangerous phenomenon that has already modified the culture of remembrance of the First World War in Russia and probably reinterpreted the textbooks in the near future. "And then what ...?"

Moscow historian and philologist **Gasán Guseinov** dealt with the political language of the Russian government within the current Ukraine conflict. Above all, he tried to find an answer to the question why the Ukraine crisis is referred to as a "crisis" or "conflict", but not as a war, even though we are dealing with one. "Everywhere we hear crisis in Ukraine, crisis, but what kind of a crisis? Why crisis? How can we describe the action our country, our state, which is supported by the majority of the population, takes that occupies a part of our neighboring country? With the help of people without apparent badges (...). Then any armed gangs are sent to the east of Ukraine, as a kind of militia, people who are reported in Moscow and are Russian citizens are waging a war in the neighboring country. And that is a so called crisis", noted Gusejnov.

Why Putin's government does not refer to the conflict as a war, could only be understood in the context of the Soviet past, in which there was only a single war since 1945: the Great Patriotic War, from which the Soviet power has emerged as the winner. Neither the Civil War nor the First World War or the war in Vietnam, Africa and Laos were called wars. "The Soviet Union conducted officially no wars, there were none", according to Gusejnov. In addition the war in Afghanistan from 1978 to 1989 was never mentioned by name, but said in the official political jargon a "temporary stay of a limited quantity of Soviet forces in Afghanistan on the invitation of its legitimate government." It was only in the 1990s, and thus after the collapse of the Soviet Union and its centralized propaganda more freedom was possible in the political language that things were called by their name - the namesakes of two wars in Chechnya first and second Chechen war.

But since 1999/2000, a new era has dawned with a new military propaganda in an authoritarian regime, "that we do not always understand," said Guseinov. He gladly would describe the current events as crazy or insane. But with medical terminology you do not get ahead at this point. "You have to see logic the madness." And at the center of this logic is the First World War - and in consequence the outbreak of the October Revolution of 1917, the takeover of the fascists in Italy in 1922 and the Nazis in Germany in 1933, etc. - which Putin's Russia is using as a propaganda means to create an emotional state in which we can lead the people. In this talk Putin propaganda not only speaks to a small circle of people, but to all post-Soviet citizens who are dissatisfied with the state of their country.

### **Ukraine and the Stimulus Figure Stepan Bandera**

One of the propagandistic means of the Kremlin is, among others, the assertion that Ukraine would be ruled by fascists. The breeding ground for this assertion is provided by the historical figure of Stepan Bandera, a figure that is very controversial in Ukrainian society. Who this Stepan Bandera was and the different roles he has taken in the history of Ukraine is explained by **Volodymyr Maslychuk**. Since the 1930s, Stepan Bandera was one of the leaders of the Organization of Ukrainian Nationalists OUN. During the Second World War, in February 1940, the OUN was divided into two camps: one led by Andriy Melnik, who had the goal of collaborating with Nazi Germany; the other camp was built around Stepan Bandera. The "Banderites" hit it off. Revolutionaries, whose goal was the establishment of an independent Ukrainian state. Followers for the national idea were found mainly in western Ukraine. In 1941 the Bandera supporters proclaimed in Lviv Ukraine's independence, on the assumption that Nazi Germany would accept it. But it was different: A few weeks later, Stepan Bandera, was arrested by the SS and sent to Sachsenhausen concentration camp, where he was detained until 1944.

A few months later, in 1942-43, the Bandera wing founded the Ukrainian Insurgent Army UPA that conquered some areas of Poland, with German help. These conquests were part of the less glorious history of the rebellion army, according to Maslychuk. They went with ethnic cleansing, the so-called massacre of Volhynia. A historical fact that Ukraine has not officially admitted until today.

At the end of the war, in 1944, the OUN and UPA fought against the Soviet Army. Later, it was a struggle to collectivization and the Soviet system in general.

With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the situation changed for the memory of Stepan Bandera: The struggles of the OUN and UPA for an independent Ukraine were first recognized officially. As early as 1989 the first monument was set for Stepan Bandera. Anywhere in the Ukraine, the image of Bandera prevailed as a freedom fighter. This was maintained in movies, books, and textbooks. In politics, the memory of the OUN / UPA in the 1990s, however, played a very ambiguous role: Bandera monuments were still dedicated in the west of the country and streets renamed after him; in the east, however, the homage of the cult of the Great Patriotic War continued to take place.

The discussion about Bandera gained a new dimension only with the "Orange Revolution" and President Viktor Yushchenko. Yushchenko, who made no secret of the fact that he represented a nationalist view of the history, wanted to appoint the UPA as a heroine of the Second World War. For this purpose he founded, the "Ukrainian Institute of national Memory" in 2006, which was to deal with the analysis of the history of the OUN and UPA. But a serious work-up never materialized, the Institute was nothing more than a propaganda tool. So the result was hardly surprising: the problems with the participation of the UPA and OUN in the Holocaust and the massacre of Volhynia were played down, the UPA was celebrated as freedom fighters. In addition, Yushchenko posthumously declared Bandera a hero of the nation in 2010. Russia's comments on Yushchenko's policies were already then of harsh nature: the Ukraine was governed by nationalists who rehabilitate fascists - a form of propaganda that is currently at full bloom, according to Maslychuk.

As President Viktor Yanukovich came to power in February 2010, his first official act, again was to withdraw the tile from Stepan Bandera. He declared himself a fighter of Ukrainian nationalism and had all references to national movements removed from school books. Yanukovich had thus caused great confusion, according to Maslychuk. Nationalists such as Liberals appointed Stepan Bandera as a symbol of the fight against Yanukovich regime. The battle for the additional recognition of Stepan Bandera, the OUN and UPA was part of the election program of the right-wing populist "Freedom" party, which thereby during the parliamentary elections in 2012 received more than ten percent of the vote.

Also during the Maidan movement 2013/14 Stepan Bandera was again a symbol of an independent Ukraine - but not for the great masses, emphasizes Maslychuk. The majority of the Maidan participants wanted and wants not to live in any past, but in an independent European state. The Ukrainian propaganda will not move away from the image Banderas as freedom fighters. Rather, as Maslychuks guesses, the glorification of the OUN and UPA will grow well in view of the fighting in the east of the country.

### **Fighting Propaganda - Chto delat? / What to do?**

The big question that the participants in the fourth history forum have made after analyzing the current historical and political controversies in Eastern Europe and the Western Balkans, was: What can be done about propaganda? This problem was discussed in three parallel **Working Groups** (WGs).

In the **first WG** it was explained what can be done in education and youth work in this field. The participants presented best practice examples from their region. Amir Duranović, for example, explained the work of the European Association of History EUROCLIO-HIP BiH in Bosnia-Herzegovina. The Association consists of history teachers, historians, students of historical science and museum educators. The total of 177 members deal with the didactic analysis of the history of the 20th century. Together they create work and study materials for primary and secondary schools and organize workshops for teachers.

Another initiative, which also deals with the development of teaching materials, is the Joint History Project from Belgrade, which was presented by Nikola Mikilić. The international project

was launched by historians from South Eastern Europe. Together, the scientists create history books in which historical events are described from multi-perspective view. Already published and translated into various languages were workbooks for the Ottoman Empire, the Balkan Wars, World War II and the situation of the states during the Soviet era.

Natalia Kolyagina reported about the projects the Memorial Moscow organized on past history. Since 15 years, the Memorial guides the student competition "Man in history", in which students are asked to work up their family history in a scientific way. In addition, Memorial organizes thematic training seminars for teachers.

The Youth Initiative for Human Rights Project from Bosnia-Herzegovina is aligned in working with young people. The initiative brings together young people from the Balkans in workshops and camps to come to grips with the help of historians and witnesses of the events of the 1990s. In addition, young people are made sensitive to issues such as human rights and past history in general, said Nedim Jahić.

The **second dealt WG** worked with the question as to what function art can take in times of crisis or in post-conflict societies. Anton Dubin of Memorial Moscow opened the discussion with some negative examples from Russia, which showed that sculptors, musicians and visual artists participate on the current Putin's propaganda. Among other things, he showed excerpts from the St. Petersburg staged in the summer "participatory" opera "The Crimea", which, as the title already suggests had the Ukraine on the subject. The attack of the fascist junta Kiev on the Russian people was shown, the audience symbolized the Russian people.

Nađa Bobičić in her presentation showed which topics echo the contemporary Serbian theater, Starting from the drama "Dragonslayers" of the author and dramaturge Milena Markovic (born 1974), she explained the role that the First World War plays in the current literature and drama. The Gavrilo Princip assassination would still be at the center of the conflict and since the 1980s associated with the nationalist discourse.

Nihad Kreševljaković, the director of the house spoke about the history of the war theater SARTR, Saraievski ratni teatar, in Sarajevo. SARTR was established in May 1992, a few weeks after the start of the war in Bosnia. In the founding document it was mentioned that the theater was very important for the mental defense of the city. During the war SARTR was a place where people could relax and have a sense of normalcy, humanity and peace. Kreševljaković is, not only because of his experience, of the belief that art should not only fulfill an aesthetic task, but also an ethical one. A claim that the house today presents itself.

What are the opportunities offered by the Internet and social media in the fight against propaganda? This was discussed by the participants in the **third WG**. Among them was David Kopaliani from Tbilisi. Together with another colleague, he has founded the SOVLAB (Soviet Past Research Laboratory) initiative in 2010, which deals with the investigation of the Soviet past in Georgia. Among other things, the project operates, for example [www.archive.ge](http://www.archive.ge) the publicly accessible online archive where photographs, official documents, private letters, recorded interviews with witnesses who have been the victims of the regime, and videos of people who have experienced extraordinary things, are collected. In addition, organized SOVLAB discussions, they transmit a live stream ([www.livestream.com/sovlab](http://www.livestream.com/sovlab)) on the Internet.



Documented their actions, including those that take place "offline" on Facebook ([www.facebook.com/sovlab](http://www.facebook.com/sovlab)).

A blog that deals with the subject of history in the classroom, was founded by Aleksandar Todosijević, a history teacher from Serbia.

On the one hand, he uses his <http://ucionicaistorije.wordpress.com> provided there under media such as videos, images and PowerPoint presentations for himself, on the other hand students and other teachers can access the supplementary teaching materials. In addition, there a discussion forum in the blog where interested parties can exchange ideas. Todosijević is of the belief that good history lessons today cannot do without digital media, they make the classroom more interesting. Since there was nothing on the Internet in the Serbian language he founded the project himself. What virtual attacks websites may be exposed to, was reported the journalist Natalia Konradova from Moscow. Moreover she addressed the issue of the "information war" has erupted in Russia for a long time before the Ukraine crisis. What is this "information war" about? On the one hand, a process of centralization of the media landscape has been used since Vladimir Putin took office; on the other hand, so-called "spoiler" projects by the government have been established since the 2000s, they "spoil" the content of existing projects. This happened, for example, in the anti-fascist movement "Nashi", whose name is now associated only with the, founded in 2005, state youth organization "Nashi". In addition, there are also a "spoiler" projects, the so-called "trolls" and "bots" used to spread misinformation on the Internet - whether in comment forums such as newspapers or on social media like Facebook and VKontakte. One of the most effective methods to combat this propaganda was to initiate projects that deal with the checking of facts and the uncovering of misreporting.

Such a project has launched by **Margo Gontar** from Kiev. The young journalist founded the Crowdfunding project **stopfake.org** with fellow students and graduates of Mohyla Academy of journalists at the National University of Kiev. Gontar described during her speech the absurd hoaxes editors find almost daily on the net.

Among them was a photo published on the website novorus.info in April 2014, a photo in which a Ukrainian tank was seen with a swastika. In the original image by Reuters this symbol was not available. The claim that Ukrainian soldiers had it painted on it - fake. Or spread by the TV channel Russia Today report in March, Jews would flee for fear of the new anti-Semitic government of Kiev - fake. Rather, it was the Rabbi Misha Kapustin who after the annexation of Crimea by Russia and shortly afterwards, anti-Semitic acts in his city decided to leave Simferopol.

Since March 2014, both the Russian- and English-language portal stopfake.org sites are now online. Nearly 500 false reports (November 2014) have been uncovered by the editor. Daily new fakes are added. And every day new users will also visit the page: A total of nearly seven million unique visits to stopfake.org in March - a great success for this initiative.

## Closing Remarks

Since 2011, the European History Forum takes place on a regular basis. Even before all the participants were aware that talks about the history of violence in the 20th century would not be

easy. There was discussion about guilt, lack of understanding, myths, war and propaganda, "but never before did the discussions take place in such an atmosphere, in which everything that has to do with history turns into such a controversial and hot topic," stated Irina Scherbakova Memorial in her résumé. She was more satisfied that they had succeeded during the meeting "to think in a maximum way" together about what is currently happening. Walter Kaufmann of the Heinrich Böll Foundation Because noted that the war in Ukraine was "a common problem - a direct trauma to the local people, a huge problem for Russia and a problem for all of Europe." Optimism about the future is hard for him. Comfort can only be provided by pursuing your own agenda.

### **Appendix: Afternoon Excursion**

In addition to the discussion forums and working groups there was also an excursion afternoon on the plan during the fourth European History forum. Three excursions were offered: A group visited the Military History Museum in Gatow, another one the New Garrison Cemetery in Berlin-Tempelhof and another one the Soviet War Memorial in Treptower Park in Berlin-Treptow.

#### *Military History Museum in Gatow*

Captain Jan Behrendt guided the group through the Military History Museum in an unused airport led. He brought the group closer the history didactic approach of the German Armed Forces in the 21st century. Purpose of the museum is not only to bring its visitors the technical aspects in the development of aviation in detail, but also to create a place which critically reflects on air wars. For this purpose, they invite both the public and military personnel. In addition, the museum also provides a platform for historical debates. Iuliia Popova, who reported on the excursion was surprised by this history didactic approach - in a good way. From the Ukraine they do not know such military history exhibitions or museums. There would always be a grand narrative to be told about the big, heroic goals that the soldiers and the State together have achieved.

#### *New Garrisons cemetery*

The participants of the second excursion were talking about the "graveyard of a graveyard". Together with art historian Christian Saehrendt they visited the New Garrison Cemetery in Berlin-Tempelhof. This former military cemetery was founded in 1866. Right next door is the oldest Islamic cemetery in Germany, which had already been created in 1798. The occasion: The death of an ambassador from the Ottoman Empire. The Islamic cemetery is still used today, the garrison cemetery with its cemeteries is rather forgotten. Once a year, on Memorial Day wreaths are placed at the monuments - both of Bundeswehr units and right-wing parties and clubs. Saehrendt was selected based on war graves which political manuscript is to be read on them, such as whether it was set up by a Winner or Loser power. This can be recognized, for instance, on the material used. So the only winning monument to the German Wars of

Unification (1866 and 1870-71) stands on a granite base; Monuments from the First and Second World War, Germany had lost, are made of natural and limestone.

### *Soviet War Memorial*

The Soviet War Memorial in Treptower Park provoked a lively debate, which was explored by Jan C. Behrends from the Centre for Contemporary History Potsdam. Completed in 1949, it served as a memorial to the fallen soldiers in Berlin of the Second World War or the Great Patriotic War, as Josef Stalin had baptized it. Even today it attracts thousands of visitors once a year for "Victory Day" on May 9. Justified? Or false? This was discussed by the auditorium. While some felt that it is the monument to handle an artifact of history, which also conveys knowledge, others were of the opinion that it has so unquestioningly no place in public space. A third, pure voice, said that the monument should be preserved in any case, it should be provided with a comment or counter-monument, one that invites reflection.

Maria Ugojew, Berlin, November 2014