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THE ROLE OF MASS-MEDIA IN DEVELOPING
ANTITOTALITARIAN CONSCIOUSNESS.
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GERMAN AND RUSSIAN
EXPERIENCES

I would like to thank the Office of Information and Press of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization for the opportunity to participate in the Democratic Institutions Fellowship and to do the of the problem I am interested in.

For the last 3 years I have been intensively working in Moscow libraries and consulting well-known Russian and German journalists and editors. I made two visits to Federal Republik Germany where I also worked in libraries and had long interviews with scientists and newspapermen. I have established direct contacts with specialists from the Universities of Moscow, Berlin, Hanover, Freiburg, Konstanz. I have also got a considerable help from Mr. Michael Thumann, the correspondent of *DIE ZEIT* in Moscow.

In the process of my research came to the conclusion that it is necessary give precise expression to the subject-matter I am working on, that it is very important to compare the value and degree of the democratic potential of the influential weeklies of liberal trend: *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA* - Moscow and *DIE ZEIT* - Hamburg. In the course of long discussions I had with the editorial boards of

OBSHCHAYA GAZETA and *DIE ZEIT*, my concepts, ideas and plans gained support among the editors in Moscow and Hamburg.

In my decision I was guided by the following reasons:

- *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA* and *DIE ZEIT* both belong to the same category of no-local independent high quality mass-media, acknowledge the fundamental democratic values and which set as their primary concern developing in their own countries as in the whole world;

- both newspapers represent the liberal constructive opposition to the the actions and police of their governments and very often they put forward their own democratic alternative projects;

- *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA* and *DIE ZEIT* are powerful speaking-trumpets for the most influential politicians, scientists and publicists;

- the correspondents of both newspapers are highly respectfull towards their readers whose opinions they present in the editions;

- both editions are characterized by predominance of analitical materials, the percentage of the current events' accounts is quite low;

- the pages of the papers carry in equai proportions the rational, emotional, reasonable and psychological fundamentals that grables to influence the public opiniom more effectively.

My research work is based on the comparsion of the content of the *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA* and *DIE ZEIT* after the period of 1990-1991, i.e. during the period of a new stage in the history of Russia (state sovereignty, launching new reforms) and Germany (state reunion) which gives similar tasks to the democratic press in the new situation.

I am certainly aware of considerable differences in history and culture conditions in which the *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA* and *DIE ZEIT*

live and work, as well as of differences in developing antitotalitarian consciousness in Russia and Germany. Germany is a stable democratic society, but Russia is still suffering from the crisis all over the country. Though the popularity and circulation of the *OBSHCAYA GAZETA* today leave much to be desired, I have no doubt the newspaper is turning into the analogue of the *DIE ZEIT* and is likely to take a leading position in Russia's democratic press and will be able to effectively influence the public opinion.

My comparative study of the *OBSHCAYA GAZETA* and *DIE ZEIT* goes in the following directions:

- evaluation of the role of totalitarian past in Germany and Russia, analysis of the ways out (for Russia) and summarizing the experience of overcoming of totalitarianism (for Germany);
- analysis of the problems connected with the events of W.W.II, with destroying the image of enemy;
- analysis of the legislative institutions' activities in both countries;
- considering the role of culture in developing antitotalitarian consciousness, of cultural cooperation between European countries;
- comparing the nature and tact of political discussions, that are permanently carried by *OBSHCAYA GAZETA* and *DIE ZEIT*.

Intensive development of mass media is a natural result of social progress in the XXth century. The mass media has the ability to influence the processes of forming and keeping the information fund, as well as the basis of human's activity. It is the mass media that involve a man into the social communication process, changes his consciousness and psychological characteristics.

Emergence of the two weekly newspapers was closely connected with crucial events in the history of Germany and Russia. The first copy of *DIE ZEIT* (publishers got the licence from the British military Government) was issued in February 21, 1946. Editors of the newspaper proclaimed their anti-Nazi program. Publishing of *OBSHCAYA GAZETA*, which became the symbol of free Russia's press, was started by Egor Yakovlev in August 19, 1991 as a response to illegal prohibition of democratic press issued by the leaders of the *putsch*, who wanted to restore the former regime.

There is no doubt that *DIE ZEIT* and *OBSHCAYA GAZETA* belong to the category of high-quality editions. This can be proved by both the content of the articles and the way of presenting the materials. The average volume of the weeklies' articles is approximately 250 lines.

Both editions have a critical attitude towards their governments' activity; their political orientation is liberal. Countess Marion Dönhoff (the co-publisher of the newspaper since 1973) defines the ideology of the edition in the following way, 'For a liberal it cannot be essential as it is for a conservative, to strive for preserving the existing regime, he should always think the phenomena over, give up certain things, to add up something, and always keep up with the current changes'¹. I think, Egor Yakovlev shares the same opinion.

Similarly, countess Dönhoff could probably say the following words of Yakovlev, 'Tomorrow has always been the only hope for a human being. And when the hope failed us, the joyless Present is to be faced again. And again we rush upon Tomorrow. I also believe in Tomorrow. I believe that morality, honesty, shame, conscience, duty and

honour will celebrate victory in this world . Do not even try to dissuade me' ².

The readers of both editions live in large cities and can be referred to humanitarian and technical intelligentsia. In dialogue with readers the journalists consciously identify themselves with the audience. The authors resolutely defend their viewpoint believing that their opinion is right.

But unlike its German analogue *OBSHCCHAYA GAZETA* does not possess significant financial support. *DIE ZEIT* is the largest and the most popular weekly newspaper in Germany. *OBSHCCHAYA GAZETA* is one of the weekly political editions. The average volume of *DIE ZEIT* is 85 pages, while *OBSHCCHAYA GAZETA* has only 16. The *DIE ZEIT* circulation is 490-500 thousand copies, *OBSHCCHAYA GAZETA* issues no more than 260-280 thousand.

The phenomenon of antitotalitarian agreement comes together with the notion of *Bewältigung der Vergangenheit*, which has become for several generations of the Germans a sign of a long lasting, contradictory process of the national analysing the history of the *Third Reich*; and demand for moral self-clearing, perceiving and realising the truth about fascism and war, working out immunity to the totalitarian infection and any forms of racism, expansionism, aggressive militarism. It's not all about passive reflection of the tragic past, but of seeking the factors that actively influence the future and the present of the German

nation, the degree, at which these factors have rooted in social psychology, mentality and political culture.

In August 1996 a book by American political scientist Daniel Jonah Goldhagen 'Hitler's Willing Executioners' was published in Germany. Goldhagen accuses 'very ordinary Germans' of criminal pursuit and mass extermination of the Jews during the years of the Nazi regime and W.W.II. The author's attention is primarily focused not on the Nazi fanatics like Heydrich or Eichmann, but hundreds of thousands and millions of law abiding ordinary Germans. What compelled them into taking pains to carry out felonious orders? What was the mechanism of the dictatorship influence on people who either took part in the acts of brutality or silently pandered to the executioners' whims?

In Goldhagen's book the majority of the Germans are described as obedient performers of the insane orders of *Führer*. The author names anti-Semitism 'the German national project', and he brings the complex of the Nazi crimes to Holocaust.

The book caused a real intellectual shock in Germany. Again the Germans came face to face with an absolutely undesirable and allegedly long ago solved problem, that the issue connected with 'collective guilt' and 'collective responsibility'.

According to Robert Leicht, chief editor of *DIE ZEIT*, during all the prior discussions concerning the Nazi dictatorship the participants argued not only about the results of scientific researches, but 'mainly about the perspective, from the point of which different historical events are being analysed' ³.

Volker Ullrich, a contributor of *DIE ZEIT* was right to say, 'we can judge the level of historical consciousness of the Federal Republic according to how the book, rather frightening and confusing, will be perceived by us' ⁴. Unfortunately, Hans-Ulrich Wehler was probably the only debater who having provided undisputable facts reminded his opponents that 'Hitler's willing executioners' had been killing not only the Jews but also millions of Slavs claimed to be *Untermenschen*. As Wehler pointed out, 'if they had managed to perform the *Generalplan Ost* up to the Urals, the Nazi would have made a cold-blooded calculations of the 'loss' of more than 30 million Slavs' ⁵.

... Hamburg, Jarresstrasse, half-an-hour way from *DIE ZEIT* editorial office building. A noticeable from faraway and striking the eye board at the entrance with not traditional for Germany words on it: 'War at extermination. Crimes of *Wehrmacht*, 1941-1944'. This is the title of an exhibition held by the *Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung* opened on March, 1995. The title is somewhat shocking, because sufferings of the Soviet people, brought by the Germans, aims and methods of Hitler's aggression against the contry are written and spoken of in FRG these days but not so encouragingly.

DIE ZEIT was the first German newspaper which responded to the opening of the exhibition. The weekly published an article by Karl-Heinz Janßen. The author calls the exhibition 'significant and terrifying'. Janßen believes, its creators 'cross the Rubicon, which some war historians have not found enough strenght to cross before'. 'On every wall, in every corner', the publicist goes on, 'we can see one word MURDER... They, our fathers and grandfathers, knew or could know what was going on.

Now it's time to recollect. This is how the myth of 'innocent *Wehrmacht*' having no connection with the Nazi crimes is destroyed. There are no good reasons to justify millions of soldiers who supposedly knew nothing, saw nothing, but bravely defended their *Vaterland*. Now it is time to reveal the shocking truth that could not break through the wall of coordinated silence to the German public' ⁶.

When the Germans hear something about Holocaust they immediately associate it with concentrations camps. But before 'the *Auschwitz* crematory incinerators started smoking' *Wehrmacht* took a significant part in extermination acts of the Jews, which began in the summer of 1941. '*Wehrmacht* and Holocaust are notions that seemed to be incomparable. Now they cannot be separated from each other' ⁷. 'Purge of the territory' before extermination of the Jews was performed by special sub-units of the German army and their actions often went ahead the 'planned' genocide of Himmler and Eichmann.

Concerned discussion of the problem of *Wehrmacht*'s crimes during W.W.II has become an integral part of the Federal Republic's history, one of the constituent elements of its political culture. Debates concerning the exhibition 'War of extermination' which led to a certain degree of polarization of public attitudes, in their social significance and emotional tension can be compared to the '*Historikerstreit*' in 1986-1987.

In 1995 in Germany there was published a book by Joachim Hoffmann the very title of which - 'Stalin's War of extermination' was to widen the influence of the exhibition organised by the *Hamburger Institut für Sozialforschung*. The Author is well aware that the war

against the USSR was thoroughly planned by Hitler and his generals. This issue is too difficult to disprove, and Hoffmann resort to the propagandistic stunt unworthy of serious scientist and asserts that in 1941 *Wehrmacht* Command allegedly were had to begin a preventive war against Stalin.

But historical consciousness of the FRG cannot be firmly characterised by the opinions of the kind. *DIE ZEIT* has published the confession of Klaus von Bismarck, a former *Wehrmacht* colonel, who fought at the Soviet-German battle front. He suggest, 'we lived on an island of self-deceit. We belived that it was possible to remain decent soldiers in the war that was run for the sake of malevolent objectives' ⁸.

The experience showed that reflecting the essence of the totalitarian Third *Reich* by the German Society can only take place in the conditions of discursiveness and inter-enrichment of different social and age groups, in the atmosphere of pluralism and free exchange of opinions.

On the pages of *DIE ZEIT* democratic forces of unified Germany constantly and clearly express deep anxiety concerning the process of transition from 'Bonn Republic' to 'Berlin Republic' that will possibly lead to the renunciation of the Germans, the blame in the eyes of the people of Europe and the world; lead to renunciation of learned lessons of totalitarian past. Robert Leicht writes, "The time will come when there will be no more people who are partially guilty in nazi crimes, when the last victims of these crimes will die. Will then these heinous crimes of Hitler's regime influence the history or not? Or we - Germans - will not stay any more in the shadow of evil deeds and again will feel as 'normal'

and 'grown-ups'... But it would mean to renounce our history that is - responsibility' ⁹.

Daniel Cohn-Bendit and Rupert von Plottnitz certify, 'In Europe it is rather often argued that a name 'Berlin Republic' will become a synonym of neo-nationalism and over-free treatment of the history' ¹⁰. Konrad Wiedemann is sure that it will not happen. 'New generation of Germans is not aggravated by personal blame, but still it will have to live in the shadow of Nazi crimes committed earlier. German youth should learn the lessons of Nazi past and in any case it should never minimize this process to just formal ritual. It is necessary that awareness of the blame of German quite naturally will become the part of self-consciousness' ¹¹. Freimut Duve thinks that a process of stabilization in Germany (a so-called 'normalization') after the Unification and liquidation of German Democratic Republic should not lead to "manipulation of historic mythology" ¹². Authoritative philosopher Jürgen Habermas agrees with him. 'For a new born republic it is really worth to remember about the catastrophic history of the XXth century' ¹³.

In our country the stage of overcoming the totalitarian regime lasts too long. With deep regret a famous German journalist Klaus Harprecht writes about it, 'It seems as if in Russia there are no executioners, no victims, no tormentors, no martyrs... It seems the past vanished, and the legacy of Stalin impended over the country as a leaden weight vanished too' ¹⁴.

After 1985-1986 due to the efforts of many Russian authors the original analysis of the Stalinism phenomenon, which led to realising the crimes of the regime, was started. Despite all the Prohibitions and skillfully organized turns to restalinization the stage of emotional and

phenomenological naming and describing the regime has begun. Only the next step of social cognition - the phase of conceptual approach to the past and intensive analysis of the major causes for the events - resulted in understanding of not only the leader of the regime, but also the system itself.

In this respect the fund of modern Russian social and political Journalism to the avant-garde to which *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA* belong, should be taken into special consideration.

The epochal work of Alexander Solgenitsin 'Archipelago GULAG', Which has discovered the anatomy of Stalin's repressive regime, finished by the author in 1968 and published in the West in 1973, reached its Russian audience too late - only in the beginning of the 90-s. Solgenitsin's hopes that the book would provoke overturn in public consciousness, unfortunately, dashed. In the Publications of the great humanist of the century, the Nobel Peace Prize winner, Andrey Sakharov, totalitarian regimes were called the 'ultimate reflection of the dangers of the modern Society'.

Maintaining the traditions of Solgenitsin and Sakharov, *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA* goes on investigating the crimes of Stalin's totalitarian regime. For several decades the starvation tagedy of 1932-1933 was kept in secret. As Vladimir Kovalenko has managed to indisputably prove it on the pages of the newspaper, the disaster was not a natural calamity. The starvation had a discriminatory and punitive character and was organized by Stalin and his myrmidons.

The most painful lot was prepared for the Ukrainans, Kunan Cossacks, Volga Germans, Kalmyks, Kazakhs - 'those ethnic and social

groups, which because of their individualistic traditions more than others resisted collectivization or were 'tarnished' by supporting or taking part of the White movement' ¹⁵.

Among the bloody and unexpiated crimes of the regime a special place is occupied by the deportation of the Caucasians implemented in the beginning of 1944 by Stalin's direct order under personal control of Beria, Serov, Kobulov. At that time about 500,000 Chechen and Ingush were deported. Half of them tarnished on the way and in the places they were casted. *OBSHCAYA GAZETA* was the first to publish a collection of documents proving the act of brutal extermination of Chechens living in the village of Hibakh, locked in a stable.

Commenting upon this evidence Anatoly Pristavkin comes to the following conclusion, 'Nazi executioners were taken to court and were damned by the international community that helped them to get rid of the 'fascistic filth'. If the culprits of at least one act of extermination of Caucasian civilian population had been no Chechen war. Immunity multiplies new crimes. Our society will not come to repentance until it accuses the atrocities of the Caucasian executioners. Of course we can leave the case for history, which brings everything to light. But who can guarantee that before that moment there will not happen any new Hibakh of some zealous general, ready to carry out the given order at any cost, on any measure. Giving this crime a legal asserment to our mind, is for both Public Presecution Office and society in general, is a matter of honour and responsibility for the future' ¹⁶.

In his book 'Archipelago GULAG' Alexander Solgenitsin tells about Norilsk uprising of prisoners in May - August 1953 with more than 20,000 participants. Sergey Bukin makes valuable additions to

Solgenitsin narrative using the materials of German archives (in Norilsk camps there was a large group of German war-prisoners sentenced to different terms of imprisonment.) Bukin points out the rebellious influence on the ethical political significance of the prisoners` protest, 'There is a strong ground to think that Khrushchov`s criticism of Stalin`s personality cult and rehabilitation of the repressed turned out to be the result of not only political and economic calculations of 'revisionists' but also fierce resistance of the imprisoned. That was the voice of the nation, and several years later it was heard by the public. Rather ironic (as it had happened in history before) captives defended not only their rights but also the rights of those who were free. The power did not learn the Norilsk lesson and very soon weapon was harnessed against 'rebels' of Tbilisi, Temirtau, Grozny, Novochoerkassk' ¹⁷.

After Stalin`s death the Soviet Union went through erosion of anti-democratic regime. Nevertheless the regime`s metastases survived the 'period of *Perestroika*' and 'the time of reforms'. The battle for overcoming totalitarianism was extremely unsuccessful and till the present time we still feel the impact of totalitarianism and its metastases.

OBSHCAYA GAZETA agitates to save the memory of Warsaw Treaty organization countries' invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968. The newspaper publishes a poem of Eugeniy Evtushenko written on the third day of occupation:

Tanks come along Prague`s streets in the blood of sunset`s daybreak.

Tanks tear the truth, which is not a newspaper.

Tanks crush the temptation to live out of stamps - dictatorship.

Tanks mince the soldiers who are within those tanks.

Rather timely the newspaper reminds about the almost forgotten demonstration of eight human rights activists in Red Square in August 25, 1968 under the following slogans 'For the sake of your and our freedom!', 'Stay away from Czechoslovakia!', 'Down with occupants!'. Among the demonstrators protesting against the invasion there were famous dissidents Larisa Bogoraz, Pavel Litvinov, Victor Fineberg, Vadim Delone and others. They were all sentenced to different terms of imprisonment. The verdict was nullified only several years ago. Larisa Bogoraz argues, 'I do not know whether it is good to celebrate the disgraceful event in the history of the country. But it is worth remembering. After the intrusion into Czechoslovakia my friends and I felt ashamed for our country and the false slogans 'Support and Approve!', that enrolled the press and broadcasting. It was impossible to put up with the fact that someone speaking for us was proclaiming a flagrant lie... The feeling of shame and outrage which compelled me to go to the Red Square is still alive in my heart' ¹⁸.

Unleashed at the end of 1994 Chechen war became a disgraceful event in the modern history of Russia. The discussion regarding the war events between Ruslan Aushev and Anatoly Pristavkin possesses a great convincing power. 'Chechnya proved that the power claiming itself to be democratic was actually absolutely imperial', Aushev says. 'Our society is ill with cruelty and indifference – this is where our miseries come from. Russian government does not understand that the best citizen is the one who is free, independent and proud.... Of course, it is easier to manipulate the state of intimidated citizens, but finally we will

get our country pauperized, which will only be able to demonstrate its excessive imperial complexes. If the power wants to alter and to change the attitude of different nations towards itself, it must publicly confess the arbitrariness it performed in Chechnya'. It is painful to read Pristavkin's words, 'It has been written many times that our governors did not want to take heed of Tolstoy and Lermontov. In this conflict we lost not only thousands of human lives and millions of dollars, but our belief in Army, Freedom, and ourselves too. Present day Chechnya is the land of those whose lives began under the bombings. We cannot turn them immediately into our friends. But what is more terrible that nobody in Russia makes an attempt to' ¹⁹.

Writer Boris Vasilyev thinks that one of the main Russian problems is back of realizing one's own guilt for the committed crimes. The author continues, 'I feel ashamed of what we have done in Chechnya. I feel ashamed, because there cannot be bad nations, there are only bad governors. I am ashamed to look into those mothers' eyes, who lost their sons in this disgraceful for Russia war. Being an officer's son, who became a soldier at the age of 17, I am ashamed, because our generals wear the uniform of the army that swept away Nazi Germany' ²⁰.

A special role in *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA* publications is given to the problem of the overcoming the totalitarian past, finding ways out of the deadlock of the totalitarian consciousness. Now we are surviving the agonizing period of recovery from totalitarian schizophrenia. It will take us long to form a mass democratic consciousness and we all have to resist the remains of Stalinism in our genes and our social formation. We all need to eradicate in ourselves those traits of totalitarian behavior which became an integral part of our mentality in the time of our recent

experience that lasted more than 70 years.

Russia's and Germany's transition from totalitarian regimes towards democracy are actually the acts of universal drama separated in historical time and space. Lev Kopelev called the German experience of overcoming totalitarian past 'ultimately important and necessary for Russia for the sake of society's recovery and healing of the hard-suffering country'²¹. Kopelev's words published in Russian press posthumously became a spiritual will of the untiring advocate of mutual understanding between our countries.

Unlike modern Germany we are now probably at the very first stage of getting rid of totalitarian filth. Russia had neither denazification nor the Nuremberg trial. The governing elite, having changed its externals, has remained the same. The publicist Maxim Artemyev asks, 'Where are the trials over NKVD and MGB criminals? Aren't there few comely old men-executioners warming their bald-patches under the sun on the benches near their houses and lulling their grandkids? In his 'Archipelago GULAG' Solgenitsin has the right to write about a disgraceful lot to be benefactors of our own tormentors, to cherish their fame and take care of their elderly life. Russia will not be able to achieve any progress in practising reforms as long as we have not yet made a fair and uncompromising settlement with the past'.

Artemyev continues, 'Let us remember the romantic years of Perestroika. How fast we forgot about the anti-Stalinism excitement giving us hope that Russia would follow the reliable way of presently prospering democratic powers and would not forgive and forget the least of anti-human crimes of the regime. But we had nothing like German post-war denazification. This is the reason for tenacity and

power of communist movement in Russia. We are talking not only about punishing some particular people, although it is also very important, but about creation of such mentality in society which will make it impossible to perform any kind of defense of Lenin-Stalin regime' ²².

Sergei Grigoriev carries on speaking about the settlement with the totalitarian past on pages of *OBSHCAYA GAZETA*. 'For some reason, we suprizingly quickly forgot about what gloom we started coming out from just 7 years ago. When Russia had suddenly fallen into freedom, the boundlessness of future reforms looked unique even against the background of chronicles of the XX century. Today we are living in a whole lot different country, but the past still does not let us go. Those are mistaken who believe that the reforms are irreversible...Western Germany has condemned fascism, Hitlerism and is still persuing the exposed Nazi criminals. We have not convicted people guilty of bloodshed not only in Berlin-53, Budapest-56, Prague-68, but in Novocherkask-62, Riga and Vilnius-91. Extermination of intelligentsia, peasantry, virgin territories, grinding tens of millions of human lives, blood frozen in gold and diamonds on orders of the party leaders and Soviet military commanders - no one turned out to be responsible for these things. The most notorious criminals of the century imagine themselves to be the mind, the honor and the conscience of the epoch. We didn't find enough courage to say that fascism and communism rank with each other, and to say that everything based on hatred has no right to exist. In order not to find ourselves back to stables we should remember that political extremism and terrorism once led both our country and us to the edge of the precipice. If our memory happens to be short the restoration will sink in blood' ²³.

The atmosphere of tolerance towards totalitarian legacy, which is revealed in everything, has spread all over Russia these days. Yuri Rost reminds us about it, 'just on the eve of the 9th anniversary of Sakharov's death a school teacher brought a group of school up-graders to the Sakharov's museum and public center in order to give them a lesson in the history of human rights movement and political camps. The local guide asked the children whether they knew who Sakharov was. The kids knew nothing. They had heard nothing. Neither from their parents nor from their teachers. That is a pity. Conscience is a burden. Not everyone can live with it. It is not people's fault that nature did not give them such an inconvenient for an easy living trait of character. In most cases people just do not know what conscience looks like if there is no evident example for it. Example is not a messiah or a shepherd. And its leaving is only a release from fragile and thin moral trammels' ²⁴.

A publicist and diplomat Boris Pankin says that one of the reasons of permanent political crisis in Russia is the illusory easiness of the democratic forces' victory in 1991. 'A while ago when the communist regimes in Eastern Europe collapsed, the Communist Party of the Soviet Union sank into oblivion and conscience' captives got free, it seemed as if there was no one or nothing left to fight against'. As to the present powers, 'They demonstrate complete indifference to criticism and denunciation; they use freedom of speech, expression and meetings as locks and still remain invulnerable' ²⁵.

A deep analysis and profound description of the modern political structure of Russia can be found in works of writer and publicist Daniil Granin. On the one hand, there are evident gains of democracy. 'We have acquired the things of the uppermost value; freedom of spirit and

freedom of speech, freedom of thinking and movement and freedom of creativity. We are to hold onto it and fight for it if we have to'. On the other hand, 'We have lost our trust in everybody, starting with our President and his advisors and ending up with the Duma, banks, politicians and political organizations of all kinds. Common people can not live without having faith in someone or something, they can not live without hope. Optimism, both individual and collective, is in scarcity today; the reality does not possess it. How hard the road to freedom has happened to be, how hard it is to be the master of your own house' ²⁶.

Granin draws a special attention of the audience to the ethical aspect of the present political crisis. 'Russia suffers without love. It is especially palpable in the atmosphere of envy, irritation and suspicion. We have too much hatred and too little love' ²⁷. The common crisis of confidence is the subject for consideration of philologist Vyacheslav Ivanov. 'The reason for Russia's misfortunes is that at a crucial moment in this outstanding country there are not enough people who are ready to think about the interests of the nation and not their own' ²⁸.

OBSHCAYA GAZETA points out a still existing danger of communist revenge in Russia. Unfortunately, the democratic press has to admit that today the Communist party is the only truly widespread, the most experienced and disciplined political party in Russia. The newspaper constantly publishes different opinions concerning the reasons for this phenomenon.

Yuri Burtin sees the reason for the left-wing authority in the crisis of the democratic foundations. 'Russia is again ruled by the oligarchy, a group of people, which is comparatively small, stable in its membership and practically irremovable... The fewer signs of the actual multi-party

system and political pluralism can be found nowadays in Russia, the more the ruling clique is interested in simulating both... Agitating the deprived to march and hold meetings under red banners and Stalin's portraits, the Communists provide the masses with the flagrantly false alternative to the present outrage. They turn the nation's discontent in deliberately inadequate, vain and idle forms not affecting the governing group in any way, and thus directly compromise the very idea of social protest.' ²⁹.

Vyacheslav Ivanov underlines that the most serious danger comes not from further existence of the communist ideas and organizations, but from ideological vacuum of the Russian youth. 'In the time of still lasting Soviet epoch I am disturbed not by the fact, that someone goes on outraging at communism being good. It will soon pass. What is really terrible is that the majority of the young people do not have anything that is worth taking seriously' ³⁰.

Alexei Kara- Murza, a political scientist thinks, "The Communist party is sort of an inert reaction formation, the biggest fragment of the former absolute 'party of power'... Present day Russian opposition has most probably a negative self-identification working according to the principle 'from the opposite.' Its gist is 'down with all that, we will see then...' Traditionalists – *pochvenniki*, Marxist ideocrats, Sovereignty adherents, xenophobia's of all kinds, syndicalists and mostly the 'just discontented', who need no programmed manifest are united only by 'friendship' against the 'anti-public regime'... The Communist Party of Russian Federation (CPRF), which leaders not having managed to take revenge hurried up to take roots in the present system, are not considered the power able to lead the 'final and resolute battle'

anymore' ³¹.

Vasily Lipitsky also underlines heterogeneous and eclectic character of the communist movement. 'Having unwillingly refused the idea of the working class dictatorship and painfully accepted private property, CPRF turned quickly to the national supreme power and Orthodox values, which before were considered to be incompatible with the Marxist tradition... Not less resolutely CPRF changed its political behavior by entering the Parliament system and becoming one of its constituent elements. Besides it does not actually perform the role of the Parliament opposition while giving the power everything the latter demands and sometimes even more... The party's parliamentary policies together with the ideological disarray produce strong tension within itself. The actions of the leaders are not clear and even disgusting to the party mass, but the former dare not explain them the true intentions or at least they are incapable to do so' ³².

One of the indices of the permanent political crisis in Russia in November 1998 was the assassination of the State Duma deputy Galina Starovoitova. The crime, like a great number of similar murders, remains unexposed and impunitive. Egor Yakovlev believes that the political elite of Russia, the body politic of the country are guilty of Starovoytova's death, 'President Yeltzin, one having obtained the power over Russia, has not managed to fulfil his duties. He has revealed neither ability nor skill, nor wish to save us from the dark force, which executes our best people with tremendous elaborateness day after day, year after year'.

Daniil Granin found precise and irate words about possible consequences of Starovoytova's murder. 'The axe is lifted over the election system, the left and the right – over the remaining elements of

democracy, which are being exterminated by criminal brawls. Galina Starovoytova understood this probably better than others. In the last years her personality was perceived as an uncompromising support of resistance... If this crime, which was the last drop to overflow the cup, does not teach us anything, we hence deserve our destiny' ³³.

In the country, which beat the fascism, the origins and consequences of its influence upon the nation remained beyond its analysis. The victory over the '*Third Reich*' won at the expense of uncountable victims has not become a guarantee of genetically acquired immunity to fascist infection. A well-known publicist, a constant author of *OBSHCAYA GAZETA* Dmitry Furman points out the following in this respect, 'It is very difficult to estimate the real power of fascist organizations such as the Russian National Unity (RNU). By having organizations of this kind Russia does not differ from most stable democratic countries in the West. What we are principally different in is the widest spreading of not just directly fascist but also very close to them 'faschisoid' ideas, slogans, moods' ³⁴.

The things that seemed impossible several years ago now have become possible. In present day Russia there is a distinct fascist danger based on large pervasiveness of authoritarianism and nationalism complexes, on social dissatisfaction immersed in the mixture of right-wing conservative, radically fundamentalistic values, on passiveness of the legislative and executive branches of power in the country. If a solid barrier is not constructed on the way of nationalistic-extremist ideology and ethnical intolerance, the contagion can spread with a speed of a virus infection. The possibility to oppose legislatively to the threat has

been sabotaged. Three times the overwhelming majority of the State Duma (in July 1995, in April 1996, in March 1997) voted down the bill on banning the activity of extremist organizations, and then flatly refused to condemn the anti-Semitic calls of Makashov. More than once a sanctioned picket of the Black Cossack Squadron was set up at the main entrance to the Russian Parliament. In the capital – in the situation of impunity from the legal institutions – the marches of the Russian National Unity were boldly held. The membership of RNU (especially in the provinces) keeps growing. No one has bothered himself with explaining to people who can tomorrow become supporters of Barkashov and treat him as the Nation's Savior, the fact that the activity of thugs with the swastika is aimed not only against the so-called 'aliens' but – mostly! – against the Russian people. The attempts to justify and even glorify Stalin's terror do not stop.

Andrew Vorobyev laments, 'In the country that has lost millions of sons and daughters in the war with fascism, the fascists openly march. They openly organize military squads, announce their plans to come to power, and meanwhile a representative of the government speaks about impossibility to define 'fascism', about absence of the law authorizing fight against it' ³⁵.

Constant demands for setting up a united anti-Nazi front are heard on the *OBSHCAYA GAZETA* pages. 'All democratic forces must immediately unite to form the common anti-fascist block. We can all adhere to our own views of economic programs, we can come from different social groups, different territories. But we all must integrate against dictatorship' ³⁶.

The painful and long lasting process of seeking the Future and establishing the democratic society in Russia finds its vivid reflection in the discussion of the *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA* journalists with the representatives of St. Petersburg's intelligentsia. One of the problems discussed was the Chechen war. What was the reaction of the Russian intellectuals to the lawlessness? Answering the question dramatist Alexander Volodin says, 'We came out in the streets to protest defending the new power in 1991 and did so in 1993, but we felt shy to say no to its illegal actions... That is when the roll back began. The corner stone of the civil society – the process of forming an independent public opinion, was distorted and undermined'. 'Freedom is a dangerous and burdensome thing, if there is no habit to it- many believe so. The present state of Russia is often compared with the painful post-narcotic tremor. And still some hope is left: the ability to survive (in scientific language – ability of self-regulation) has always saved Russia in the times of historical breaks'³⁷.

The anxiety of Russian democratic community is fully shared by the authors of the German weekly Stephanie Schiffer justly notices that 'first of all Russia is in need of political culture and democratic control'. 'Until democracy in Russia takes root prolonged and fruitful relationship between Russia and Germany will be impossible'³⁸.

OBSHCHAYA GAZETA keeps resorting to the images of famous figures in Russian culture whose creative activity was negation of totalitarianism, and goes on resisting it. According to Egor Yakovlev, Alexander Solgenitsin withstood the regime 'by the courage of his personality; he had won the battle having surrendered nothing to the

regime that had ruined many lives'. And in spite of the remaining danger of the communist revenge the most outrageous exposure of the Bolshevik terrorist regime – 'Archipelago GULAG' – is written. No one has the power to change it! Solgenitsin`s whole life proves the fact that the time never goes back'.

The member of the Russian Academy of Science Sergei Averintsev is sure that 'Excessive admiration and disrespect should turn into non-dreamy, sensible and acutely interested attention to the very otherness of Solgenitsin`s image; to the fact that he is not like any of us and to what no one will say better than him'. Literature critic Lev Anninsky recalls what Solgenitsin`s works were a few decades ago, 'Those were not just texts describing the reality. It was a demand for the final truth. An outraged urge of it... Russia is a part of universal integrity, harboring in itself the puzzle and the clue of the unity. Russia is like a lesson, a duty, and a requital'. Solgenitsin has taught us, as Egor Vinogradov believes, 'to see the world with different eyes, to feel it with another soul, to embrace it with a new mind" and thus he let us appropriate his personality through the world created by him, which has condensed his vision and reflection of life' ³⁹.

Another spiritual standard to us is the late outstanding poet Bulat Okudzhava and the well-known modern prosaist Viktor Astafyev. Yuri Rost found and published in *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA* the momentous words about Okudzhava. 'We celebrate Victory Day on his birthday and this is not a coincidence. The war was part of his life and then of his prose and poetry. It was he who quietly, cordially, with no pathos, with humor and talent sang us his and our lives. He offered us the solutions, which were too good for the time hardened by people' ⁴⁰.

Vladimir Egorov writes about Astafyev with emotion, 'He experienced the way of a soldier and hard worker. He is truly loved not only in Russia, but in the whole reading world. But there is one thing I want to express. It is a special admiration of him for how he could in this twisted and monstrous world never quit speaking about 'self' of each person. Not about the crowd, not the revolutionary mass, not the public consciousness, but about the personal and individual, intimate and innermost' ⁴¹.

DIE ZEIT and *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA* found appropriate words to pay homage to Lev Kopelev - one of the greatest humanists of our time, who was exiled out of Russia and found a shelter and an application of his forces in Germany. Living in Cologne, he made a start on tremendous 'Wuppertal Project'- an arrangement of the documents and materials concerning traditions and experience of Russian-German interaction primarily in the field of culture.

Countess Marion Dönhoff, a faithful Kopelev's friend during a long period of time, wrote after his death, 'Forever are closed those eyes, which were shining with kindness and were sparkling with optimism, in spite of all the horrors that he had seen and gone through himself. It is his will power that helped him overcome all the sufferings. I do not know any other person, who could feel and understand his own country, its literature and history so deeply; a person who accepts all these as the essence of his intellectual existence'. The countess quotes Kopelev's words, 'Europe is unthinkable without Russian literature. Without Russian music Europe would be poorer. But Russia also would be spiritually and politically poorer without Germany' ⁴².

The Russian weekly pins great hopes in formation of democracy

on the best part of Russian young people. *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA* published their wishes for Russian President and also their replies to the paper's questions. The young people were speaking utmost frankly. Thus evaluating not only the real situation in the country but also themselves. Their opinions of the national government system and the President speak for their deep awareness of the right to express their views openly and sincerely.

The following message from a small Russian city Pereyaslavl-Zallesky can be taken as an example. Students of one of the schools wrote the following to the President. 'When you were in the office for your first term, everything was normal. But when you were elected for the second, you made a lot of mistakes. Your actions may lead to revolution!'. 'I would like to wish our President to be more educated. I think, that the President can be called an ideal one only when he is well-educated, loves his country, leads healthy way of living, when he is humane to people around, has an ability to govern the country (especially such as Russia is)'. 'I would like to wish you health and happiness, but I don't think I am doing it because I am satisfied with your way of ruling. People do not get paid for months, miners – for years. At the same time you find it possible to ride in opulent Limousines. People are on strikes and are suffering hunger but you do not care about it, about our future and us!'.

The same students tried to answer another question 'What country would you like to live in?'. 'I am not saying that our country is bad. Maybe, it is even much better than others are. I just like it to be peaceful

and quiet without drugs and murders. I wish that living standards were a little bit higher, because a lot of problems could be solved then'. 'Since I was born in Russia and I would like human rights to be paid more attention to. I would like our state to be ruled by wise people, who do not think only about their own profit. I would like a lot of love and joyful events to be in each family. Let there be more optimistic thoughts and hopes during the tough times'. 'First of all, everyone in Russia should consider himself a personality'. 'I would like to live in such a country, which I can be proud of and citizens of which do not want to make off to foreign countries. I would like to live in Russia because I believe that we have a great Future'. 'When a person immigrates to another country he is guided by the hope to be better off there because he not happy here. But why is it bad here? And why go somewhere where it is good even without you? You would rather try to change the worse place for the better and not only for oneself, but also for the rest' ⁴³.

Students of the Chemical Department of Moscow University were asked the question 'Is there any democracy in Russia?'. The answers were different but even experienced politicians could have envied them. 'Democracy supposes that a person is dependent only on laws and should obey them. But when the President does not care about the Constitution (which he wrote, by the way), when 'honest' deputies take care only of their own well-being...This kind of situation cannot be called a democracy'. 'It is only written that Russia has become a democratic state. Although in reality it is far from being true. Democratic states do not go into self-destruction'.

The same question was asked in University of Perm, Ekaterinburgh, Novosibirsk and Samara. There were no sharp

differences in judgements of Moscow students and those from the provinces. 'Jump of Russia into democracy turned out to be too sudden and therefore it was doomed. An adaption period is needed. But the Russians are not ready to wait. They want it all and they want it now'. 'I do not want to create a gloomy picture of Russia's future. But I do not see it in bright colors either'. 'The future of Russia depends mostly on consolidation of democratic forces. It will enable the democrats to take the leading position'. 'Russia gradually turns into a 3rd World country, which only falls into debts and refuses to pay its commitments. But to revert to the communist regime would be a step back. I hope it will not happen'.

Alexander Asmolov, a well-known psychologist commented on the answers and emphasised that 'The answers reveal the features of the first generation of young people who studied at schools of new Russia' 'More than that a new generation was born in Russia. It has the right for its own opinion though has not noticed it yet, because it seems to it to be rather natural and mundane. Sooner or later these voices will become the voices of Russian history. Behind these answers, a striving for 'the right to have one's own opinion' is clearly felt. Their own voice begins to come through. It means that it is a good chance to find their place in life, it is a chance to become a personality'⁴⁴.

Boris Vasilyev shares the same opinion, 'I to believe in the Tomrrow of Russia. I believe that one day people will find out what conscience is, as I have already done myself. I believe that those people will be jonned by tens, and those tens by thosands of other people. Tomorrow we will finally understand that greatness of Russia was based not on the nuclear weapon, but on a great talent of our people that was nurished by our

great morality. And we will finally return to the place, that we forced to leave by the Soviet regime in pain and blood. We will finally return to Europe ⁴⁵.

Both Russian and German editions point out deep interdependence between the most difficult problems of Russian democracy and unsolved issues of the foreign policy. *OBSHCCHAYA GAZETA* pays serious attention to the attempts of substantiation of concept of Russia's foreign policy so that to occupy the proper place in the system of European and world international relations. At the same time it will let us maintain our own identity without being isolated from the West.

Dmitry Furman believes, 'It is absolutely evident that the West needs stable and democratic Russia with open and effective economy, not pauperized, begging for credits, defaulting, threatening with weapons and constantly trying to harm Western interests'. 'To become a prosperous and really democratic country it is necessary for Russia to obtain serene and adequate attitude to itself and Western support of those legal norms and principles by which the Western countries are ruled in their domestic affairs. It is also necessary to come face to face with the reality and psychologically adjust to it' ⁴⁶.

German weekly turns to complicated issue of interaction between the West and Russia. Professor Karl Schlögel tells that the moment of withdrawal of Russian forces from Germany was connected with a great desire of Germans to help newly born Russia. 'Spontaneous striving to make something useful and necessary for Russia was great. But nowadays dissatisfaction, feeling of hopelessness and confusion

succeeded these aspirations' ⁴⁷.

That is why it is necessary to renew the whole system of Russian-German relations. Former chancellor of Federal Republic of Germany Helmut Schmidt sees a threat of conflicts between the cultural and religious traditions in case of Russia's self-isolation from Europe. Schmidt comes to the conclusion that the Germans should find a happy medium between 'both categorical imperatives of the mankind: between the freedom on the one hand and responsibility on the other' ⁴⁸.

Today's Russia and today's Germany represent two separated in historic time and historic space phases a global process of overcoming the totalitarian past, two separated acts of drama of European and even Christian civilization.

The experience of *DIE ZEIT* is undoubtedly interesting to the Russian press. Today, in the period of reconstruction of society, there is an acute lack of current affairs analysis in Russia. That is why in this respect an edition like *OBSHCAYA GAZETA* has great perspectives.

Analysis of the content of the German and the Russian weekly newspapers of the similar political orientation allows to prove the assertion of the author of the present publication that the formation of democracy based on social agreement is a necessary condition for society to get out of the deadlock of totalitarianism. The experience of FRG reflected in press is of a special importance in this concern. The complicated process of reaching of antitotalitarian consent and learning

lessons from the tragic history of the Nazi dictatorship took several decades. This process is closely connected with the shift of the country toward democratic standards of life as well as with the contradictions of the altered situation.

Without installing the antitotalitarian consent it would not be possible for the Germans to reconcile and cooperate with their close and far away neighbours in the East and the West.

The main questions the author rises are the following:

- Does presentday Russia need German experience of establishing antitotalitarian agreement?
- Will it work in the conditions so much different from the situation in Germany?
- Will we be able to learn lessons of our own totalitarian past?
- Will it be possible for us to find the way that leads to the national harmony, to stable and humane democracy?

¹ *DIE ZEIT*, Febr. 7, 1996.

² *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA*, May 20-26, 1999.

³ *Zeitdokument*, 1996, No 1, p. 47-48.

⁴ *DIE ZEIT*, June 14, 1996.

⁵ *DIE ZEIT*, May 24, 1996.

⁶ *DIE ZEIT*, March 17, 1995.

⁷ *DIE ZEIT*, March 17, 1995.

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- ⁸ *DIE ZEIT*, March 3, 1995.
- ⁹ *DIE ZEIT*, Dec. 3, 1998.
- ¹⁰ *DIE ZEIT*, Dec. 16, 1998.
- ¹¹ *DIE ZEIT*, Dec. 10, 1998.
- ¹² *DIE ZEIT*, Dec. 16, 1998.
- ¹³ *DIE ZEIT*, Oct. 8, 1998.
- ¹⁴ *DIE ZEIT*, Sept. 9, 1998.
- ¹⁵ *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA*, Dec. 17-23, 1998.
- ¹⁶ *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA*, Febr. 2 - March 3, 1998.
- ¹⁷ *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA*, Apr. 9 -15, 1998.
- ¹⁸ *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA* Aug. 20 - 26, 1998.
- ¹⁹ *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA*, Febr. 4 -10, 1999.
- ²⁰ *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA*, May 20 - 26, 1999.
- ²¹ *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA*, June 6 - July 7, 1997.
- ²² *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA*, Aug. 29 - Sept. 4, 1996.
- ²³ *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA*, Dec. 17 - 23, 1998.
- ²⁴ *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA*, Sept. 24 - 30,1998.
- ²⁵ *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA*, Oct. 29 – Nov. 4, 1998.
- ²⁶ *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA*, Sept. 24 - 30, 1998.

²⁷ *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA*, Dec. 31, 1998 - Jan. 13, 1999.

²⁸ *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA*, Apr. 3 - 9, 1998.

²⁹ *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA*, Febr. 27 - March 5, 1997.

³⁰ *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA*, Febr. 18 - 24, 1999.

³¹ *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA*, Juli 16 – 22, 1998.

³² Ibidem.

³³ *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA*, Nov. 26 - Dec. 2, 1998.

³⁴ *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA*, Jan. 14 - 20, 1999.

³⁵ *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA*, March 29 - Apr. 12, 1999.

³⁶ Ibidem

³⁷ *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA*, May 13 - 19, 1999.

³⁸ *DIE ZEIT*, Oct. 29, 1998.

³⁹ *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA*, Dec. 10 - 16, 1998.

⁴⁰ *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA*, March 29 - Apr. 12, 1999.

⁴¹ Ibidem.

⁴² *DIE ZEIT*, June 27, 1997.

⁴³ *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA*, Oct. 29 – Nov. 4, 1998.

⁴⁴ *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA*, Nov. 26 - Dec. 2, 1998.

⁴⁵ *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA*, May 20 - 26, 1999.

⁴⁶ *OBSHCHAYA GAZETA*, Oct. 8 - 14, 1996.

⁴⁷ *DIE ZEIT*, Oct. 10, 1998.

⁴⁸ *DIE ZEIT*, Dec. 16, 1998.