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THE TABOOS OF THE FRENCH HISTORIANS **ТАБУ ФРАНЦУЗСКИХ ИСТОРИКОВ**

*В работе рассматриваются проблемы формирования коллективной памяти о Второй мировой войне во Франции. Почему товарищи по оружию, разделявшие одинаковые убеждения, помнят войну в совершенно различных версиях? Какова в коллективной памяти роль историков, которые сталкивались с давлением извне и эмоциональными табу на определенные темы? Основываясь на изучении автобиографий, интервьюировании, анализируя неизвестные ранее рукописи из французской *Bibliothèque Nationale*, монографии, газеты, материалы неопубликованных корреспонденций и архивных источников, автор сравнивает непосредственную вовлеченность известных людей в события времен Второй мировой войны и вишистской политической культуры с тем, как они (и симпатизирующие им историки) вспоминали эти события в послевоенный период.*

How did historians of World War II France shape collective memories? How did they help the «Resistance Myth» displace the remembered realities of occupation and collaboration? Why did comrades who had similar backgrounds and experiences begin to remember the war in strikingly different ways? I hope to «top off» my research of recent years by describing the role of historians in shaping of French collective memory of the war, employing new approaches to understanding French autobiographical and collective memory in this effort.

In the light of several new studies of the memories of heretofore taboo events and collective activities in France during WWII I hope to examine, in a detailed and precise way, how individuals' experiences related to their subsequent memories of them, why – often while interacting with historians – they gradually refashioned their memories. A few years ago an historian could simply describe three distinct French memories of the Second World War: the Catholic, the Fascist, and Communist. While there are monographs on the myriad and conflicting ways historians, and the general public, have remembered Second World War France, I hope to contribute something new by describing, from firsthand encounters and observation, the ways in which historians were subjected to forces and pressures when meeting taboos on sensitive subjects, and how this affected their work. My own experiences and defining confrontations were as important as archival documents in my research and I will explain, with illustrative examples, why this was the case.

Studying and writing on «the generation of 1930» in France, in introducing new material on the war-time role experiences of individuals or groups I observed the contrasting responses

of historians, and their subjects, ranging from annoyance to enthusiasm, to the new revelations on the period. I want to describe how it was through interacting with individuals, and not only through the study of published monographs, pamphlets, reviews, newspapers, and unpublished correspondence and archival sources, that I came to join revisionist historians contesting the notion that France was allergic or immune to fascism, and that the Vichy regime was simply the old political Right in power. This led to my tracing the Vichy National Revolution's creating of a new French national identity through education and medical practice, ethnic and regional studies,

popular piety, racialism and exclusionary legislation, paternalistic and elitist social thought, anti-feminist gender doctrines, methods of youth indoctrination, and an official state culture. I will explain how and why I came to realize that the Vichy government wanted to discover a new way of thinking and being, a «new man», in its efforts to create a French national identity - one in which a new form of religiousness or spirituality, a new French national collective memory were important. Why did it take decades for historians to see Vichy's National Revolution as prefiguring, «a France which might have been», a distinctive French Fascism, and to suggest that Petain's France might have been a more radically Fascist country than Mussolini's Italy? How did historians come to conclude that it was important to counter the views of the mainstream French historians by clarifying how this wartime New Order defined people, and how the Vichy period was experienced and remembered?

Adopting an autobiographical approach, citing the examples of individuals about whom I have already written [1], or on whom I have worked [2], I will compare their experiences of the war and of Vichy's political culture with what they (and sympathetic historians) remembered about it afterwards. I have studied prominent political figures, well-known writers, artists and architects, as well as lesser known figures illustrative for differing reasons but all marked by Catholic piety when they were young. Most have been the subject of admiring historical studies, and several have associations of «amis» to husband their memories. In this «topping off» of work already accomplished this study will show how memory of World War II France has been much shaped, manipulated, clarified or obfuscated by «amis» as well as by historians in a complex and little-known cultural struggle which has involved censorship and self-censorship distorting much of the scholarship. Summing up the accomplishments of recent years, I hope to provide illustrative instances involving memories of World War II France, in which there was a volatile – highly significant – intersection of religious feelings and political commitments.

While engaging in correspondence with, and interviewing a number of historians [3], I intend to study newly available primary source material [4], recent scholarship [5] and material now accessible in the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris [6] as part of an effort to contrast established and official memory of individuals, movements, phenomena – as shaped by associations and by historians – with the latest documented historical facts. Speaking from personal experience, I will draw conclusions about the role of historians and special interest groups, and the questionable sort of history they can engender. I will also discuss the enduring tensions between the demands of the discipline of History, manipulative political, professional and cultural forces, and the new vogue for heritage and commemoration as a way to fashion collective memory and identity. The lessons learned from the interactions experienced in doing research can be as important as the treasures unearthed in libraries or archives. It remains to stand back, take stock, and «top off» the experiences by writing them up. That is the goal of this project.

1. These include Bernanos, De Gaulle, Alexandre Marc, Gabriel Marcel, Christopher Dawson, Jacques and Raissa Maritain, Mitterrand, Mounier, Yves Simon, Ernst Psichari, Jacques Duge de Bernonville, Simone Weil.
2. eg. Simone de Beauvoir, Paul Touvier, Jacques Ellul, Pierre Trudeau, Lionel Groulx.

3. This will be essential for the presentation «The Taboos of French Historians» which I am making to a session I have organized for the meeting of the Society for French Historical Studies at the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris next June. The foremost authority on French memory of World War II, Henry Rousso, will serve as commentator.
4. eg. in the de Gaulle and new Mitterrand archives in Paris, in the Esprit archives at Chatenay-Malabry, as well as in the French National Archives.
5. I am particularly interested in reading a number of new graduate theses unavailable in North America, (eg. that of Herve Serry on the history of Editions du Seuil).

6. For example, new unpublished material in the holdings on Gabriel Marcel and Simone Weil in the manuscript section of the Bibliotheque Nationale. There will certainly be other things.