The fetters of victory

How the war provides Russia with its identity

Lev Gudkov
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Victory in the "Great Patriotic War" is the most potent symbol of identification in present-day Russia, and the sole prop for national self-belief. Victory legitimated Soviet totalitarianism; now, the more the memory of Stalinist repression fades, the more public opinion turns in the dictator's favour. The commemoration of the war serves above all the centralist and repressive social order that has been imposed in the post-totalitarian culture and society under Vladimir Putin. Here, Lev Gudkov describes the taboos in Russia surrounding the underside of victory.

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