

## Sixth Russian History Competition

### “Man in History. Russia in the 20th Century”

2004/2005

#### *Report*

*Memorial* announced the 6th competition for high school students in April 2004. As in 2005 Russia commemorated the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Second World War, the main topic of this competition round was “Man and the War. The Price of the Victory”. Within this framework a special focus was laid on the following subtopic: “The Price of the Victory. Man behind Barbed-Wire Fence. Fate under the Sign OST”. The aim of the organizers of the competition was to draw the student’s attention on the fates of “ordinary” people, not on battles and high ranking army officers. The students were expected to think about those people for whom the victory did not simply bring freedom but marked as well the start of new suffering. Among those were children who lost their parents during the war, widows, invalids. A special group were those people who after the war were regarded as “ideologically unreliable - former Soviet Prisoners of War, former inmates of concentration camps, survivors of Jewish Ghettos and extermination camps, and the so called “Ostarbeiter”, i.e. forced labourers.

Apart from this focus other topics were suggested that were already known from previous competition rounds: “Individual and Society“, “Man and Homeland,“, “Friends and Aliens: Another Nationality, Another Religion, Different Beliefs” and “Man and Power.” The deadline for papers was January 10, 2004.

Every competitor who approached the Steering Committee received a methodological guide by mail. Besides, the Steering Committee experts in Moscow and the competition coordinators in the Russian regions gave hundreds of one-on-one consultations to school students and their teachers/advisors (by correspondence and at meetings).

We received 3.520 papers from more than 4670 students. 56% of the papers covered the topic of the Second World War. On 13 April 2005 the final jury held its evaluation meeting. 135 competition works reached this final stage, 55 of them were awarded with a prize which meant 78 students received a prize. The Panel chaired by Sigurd Ottovich Schmidt from the Russian Academy of Education (RAE) included RAE Academician Alexander Asmolov, writers Daniil Granin and Svetlana Aleksievich and other prominent figures of science and culture.

This year moreover 7 initiatives from Russia and Germany awarded special prizes in various fields of research:

- four works about “History of political repressions in the USSR” were awarded with prizes of the Moscow Government,
- three works about gender history were awarded with prizes of the Heinrich Böll Foundation
- three works were awarded with a prize of the International Centre of Research on Jews in Russia and East Europe
- the Euro-Asian Congress awarded a special prize,
- the Friedrich-Haas-Society offered a special prize (a travel to Germany),
- the representative of Tatarstan in Moscow handed over a special prize,
- the internet provider “Kavkazskij uzel” awarded 31 special prizes.

The authors of 80 works that reached the final stage of evaluation but were not awarded with a prize were awarded with a book prize that was sent by mail. Upon agreement with the competition Panel, the Körber Foundation selected five candidates among the winners to take part in the international Summer Academy for the winners of European history competitions within the “Eustory” network, which also includes the competition held by *Memorial*.

Moreover 50 students were awarded with a special prizes: they have the possibility to participate in a summer school in Russia, organized by *Memorial*.

All participants received a confirmation of participation and information about the new competition round 2005/2006.

Special confirmation letters and book prizes were sent to those schools and teachers who stood out from the others because of their activity.

The 7th competition of history research for 2005/2006 was announced in April 2005. The participants may choose between the following subtopics “Family History”, “Individual and Society“, “Man and Power“, “Friends and Aliens: Another Nationality, Another Religion, Different Beliefs“, “Man and Homeland”.

### **Advertising and Information**

On the occasion of the award ceremony a booklet was published that listed the awardees of this 6<sup>th</sup> competition round and provided information about the new competition to come. More information about this 7<sup>th</sup> competition round will be printed in the “Teachers’ Newspaper” June 7 and of course on the website of MEMORIAL. More than 3000 posters will be printed for advertising the new competition. In August 2005 a new methodological manual will be published.

How important it is to provide such methodological information showed a questionnaire that the awardees filled out during their stay in Moscow. They pointed out that most important difficulties for writing their research papers were: getting access to public archives, lack of literature about history of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Russia, lack of methodological literature. They wish more information about how to deal with sources and oral history and about how to compose a research paper.

The information about the new competition round will be sent to schools, regional ministries, regional departments of education, universities, libraries and civil organizations.

*Dr. Irina Sherbakova*  
Competition co-ordinator