
THE WEIMAR RUSSIA: HOW EASTERN AND WESTERN EUROPE SEE THE POST-WAR MOSCOW

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The ongoing war in Ukraine started a year ago as a regional conflict with the future of Ukraine at stake. Yet, after a year, it became a continental one with the future of Russia being at the center. Europe, by the simple fact of geographical proximity, is affected by what happens in Ukraine and influences the situation on the ground. The expected outcome of the war already raises dissonances between Western Europe and Eastern Europe which have incompatible visions as to the future geopolitical shape of Russia and its role in the European system after the war and how to achieve this goal. The great discussion about the newly arisen Russian question goes on and thus it seems intellectually (if not politically) useful to reveal its main discrepancies.

Differences between Eastern and Western Europe about how to deal with Russia during the Ukraine war and after are numerous. It would not be of any use to enumerate them or plunge into a discussion about the exact classification of all tactical disparities between the two groups of states. One criterion is crucial to determine the difference in the attitude of both groups towards Russia: the historical one, that is, the experience of Russian/Soviet direct influence in the past. This conflict once again recalled the fact that thirty years after the fall of the Iron Curtain, Europe is still politically and mentally divided by the river Elbe and that physical proximity to Russia is still a key factor in thinking and making of international politics in Europe. Geography takes its revenge indeed, as Robert Kaplan would say.

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