

# In Search of a Modern Mnemonic Narrative of Communism: Russia's Mnemopolitical Mimesis during the Medvedev Presidency

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**Abstract:** *This article examines the politics of memory in Russia during the Medvedev presidency (2008–12). It suggests an understanding of the proposals for a “new historical doctrine” in Russia during this period through the lens of mimesis. Russia’s search for a “modern” mnemonic narrative of communism could be interpreted as an attempt to “normalize” the country as an actor in international politics. The paper engages critically the question of whether the calls for mnemonic modernization subscribe to, or rather challenge, the Western power to define the normative meaning of what constitutes the proper way of coming to terms with the violent past. It problematizes the link between “mnemonic modernization” and international “normality” in contemporary Russian politics. The article argues that the emphasis on the volume of national suffering and martyrdom has not been matched with the discussion of the issues of responsibility in the calls to establish a “new historical doctrine” about communism in contemporary Russia.*

## “We Need a Modern Narrative”

Russia’s eclectic reckoning with its communist past and its glaring eschewal of transitional justice has received a fair share of criticism

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