

Title: Stalingrad: Visual Memory of the Battle in Russian and German Documentary Film
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My paper presents a comparative analysis of two documentaries made in 2003 in commemoration of the 60th anniversary of Soviet victory/German defeat at Stalingrad – a Russian film *Nepobezhdennye* by T. Donskaia and A. Liutenkov and a German trilogy *Stalingrad: The Attack, The Kessel, The Doom* by Sebastian Dehnhardt. The two films, for the first time in non-fiction discourse on the subject, provide both Russian and German viewpoints of the events. For this purpose, they employ multiple interviews with the former Soviet and Wehrmacht soldiers. The two films attempt at truth and reconciliation, as well as present traditional perspectives on the events of August 1942 – February 1943. The essay examines how these attempts fit with sustainment of major war representation tropes.

The Russian film focuses on a tragedy of the city and its inhabitants and acknowledges the facts previously ignored by the Soviet propaganda, such as heavy civilian losses due to evacuation prohibition. It also traditionally portrays the Battle as a heroic feat of the Red Army soldiers and reestablishes the trope of war-time heroism as a result of genuine patriotism.

The German movie constructs the Battle as a conflict of two 20th-century demons – Hitler and Stalin – for whom the fate of the city was a matter of personal prestige. It presents the German troops as victims of both Hitler's authoritarianism and Russian frost and, thus, continues the long established in the West German cinema trope of the innocent Wehrmacht.