

## **Tony Judt receives the Erich Maria Remarque Peace Prize for 2007**

### **Special award for Grigori Pasko**

Every two years since 1991, the City of Osnabrück has been awarding the peace prize, named after the internationally renowned writer Erich Maria Remarque, who was born in Osnabrück. This year, the prize will be presented for the ninth time. The Erich Maria Remarque award which is remunerated with 15,000 Euros will be presented to Tony Judt, who was born in London in 1948, a historian and the director of the Remarque Institute for European Studies at the New York University. Grigori Pasko, a journalist, born in Ukraine in 1962, will be awarded the special prize which is remunerated with 5,000 Euros.

The presentation of prizes will take place at the Friedenssaal of the historical city hall of the City of Osnabrück on Friday, 21 September at 11 a.m.

Tony Judt excelled himself as a mediator between European and US American politics and culture by convincingly demonstrating the learning process of the Europeans during the war-determined 20<sup>th</sup> century and the policy of cross-national compromise and orientation towards social values in his comprehensive historical presentation "Post-war" (German: "European History from 1945 to present").

Tony Judt has also become well known for his political journalistic work in US American media, lectures and congresses as a critic of a war-orientated American foreign policy and an increasing liberalism in the American public. As a pragmatic liberal, he emphasises the role of the UN in global conflicts, opposes unilateral political action and strives for discursive understanding on all levels of political and cultural action.

DER OBERBÜRGERMEISTER

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PRESS RELEASE  
Tuesday, 15 May 2007

Particularly because Tony Judt's committed advocacy for freedom of opinion, multilateralism and peaceful conflict resolution has resulted in sustained discussions and sometimes also in obstructions of his work, the majority of the members of the jury decided to give the Erich Maria Remarque Peace Award to the work of this historian and political journalist.

The reason to award the special prize of the Erich Maria Remarque Prize to Grigori Pasko, was his prison diary "The Red Zone", a literary masterpiece of great linguistic power and intensity, which, however, is at the same time a document of powerlessness and lack of access to rights and justice of the individual towards the Russian state power and the secret service that has never stopped trying to suppress the freedom of opinion. Furthermore, this prize appreciates Pasko's great commitment in the protection of the environment, civil and human rights.

After returning from research work in Japan in 1997, Grigori Pasko, a former marine officer and military journalist, was arrested by the secret service FSB for an alleged "attempt to take confidential military documents abroad". As a matter of fact, those documents were critical articles on atomic pollution in the Russian Far East caused by the Pacific fleet and his reports on the war in Chechnya that made him a criminal and a public enemy in the eyes of the Russian secret service. A 21 month odyssey through several prisons followed, without any court hearings. In 1999 he was sentenced for the first time for "violation of professional powers" and then set free for some time after an amnesty by Boris Jelzin. In appeal proceedings, Pasko was then sentenced to four years imprisonment in a labour camp and arrested again in 2001. In 2003 his sentence was suspended. Since then, he has been fighting for his rehabilitation.

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The Erich Maria Remarque Peace Prize, as provided for by its name-giver, is awarded for literature and journalistic or scientific work dealing with subjects of peace in a specific country or on an international level and for exemplary commitment to peace, humanity and freedom of man against oppression.

The Chairman of the jury is Prof. Dr. Claus Rollinger, the President of the University of Osnabrück and its members are Prof. Heinz Ludwig Arnold, Prof. Dr. Hans Mommsen, Lea Rosh, Prof. Dr. Rita Süßmuth, Dr. Hubert Winkels and Prof. Dr. Tilman Westphalen as representative of the Erich Maria Remarque Association, Lord Mayor Boris Pistorius as the representative of the City of Osnabrück, Jutta Sauer, Manager of the Literaturbüro Westniedersachsen and Dr. Sven Jürgensen, the press spokesman of the City.

Up to now, the Erich-Maria Remarque Peace Prize has been awarded to Lew Kopelew (1991), Hans Magnus Enzensberger (1993), Uri Avnery (1995), Ludvik Vaculik (1997), Huschang Golschiri (1999), Swetlana Alexijewitsch (2001), Prof. Dr. Dan Bar-On and Mahmud Darwisch (both in 2003) and Leoluca Orlando (2005).

Special prizes were awarded to Anja Lundholm (1991), Dörte von Westernhagen (1993), Miljenko Jergovic (1995), the German-Czech Commission of Historians 1997), the foundation committee of the Iranian Writers' Association (1999), MEMORIAL, an international historical, educational and charitable society (2001) and Juri Andruchowitsch (2005).

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