

MEMORY OF NATIONS

Democratic Transition Guide

[The Argentine Experience]



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EDUCATION AND PRESERVATION OF SITES OF CONSCIENCE

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INTRODUCTION

How newly democratized nations deal with their authoritarian past is a crucial aspect of a successful political transition. The construction of a collective memory to make visible past human rights violations is a difficult, but a fundamental task in the consolidation of democracy. There are many instruments transitional societies can use to recover the memory of state terror atrocities and to strengthen a democratic culture, among these education and preservation of sites of conscience stand out. In spite of a long history of military coups, conflicts and political violence during the 20th century, Argentina had never developed national policies aimed at preserving sites of conscience.

It has been rather recently, starting with the transition to democracy in 1983, that the preservation of memory has become an issue of public debate and of policy design and implementation aimed at uncovering the truth about the experience of state terror under the last military dictatorship that ruled Argentina from 1976 to 1983. However, we are still a long way away from consolidating a process of memory building by the implementation of a comprehensive and systematic set of public policies to preserve sites of conscience and promote democratic education. This is a process still very much in the making in Argentina, and not exempt from potential reversals.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

With the return of democracy on December 10, 1983, under the Presidency of Dr. Raúl Ricardo Alfonsín of the Radical Party (UCR – Unión Cívica Radical), the State began to deal with the issue of human rights violations by revising the activities of the dictatorship that governed Argentina for seven long years (1976–1983). Under the President Alfonsín administration, the chief members of the military Juntas, from that time, were put on trial. This was made possible due to a comprehensive investigation carried out by the National Commission on the Disappearance of Persons (CONADEP – Comisión Nacional de Desaparición de Personas), a special commission established by presidential decree.¹

The CONADEP commission worked with human rights organizations, political parties and other political and social groups that were already involved in investigating state terrorism under the dictatorship to elaborate a special report. The report was titled NUNCA MAS (Never Again) and compiles a significant number of cases of human rights violations, torture, disappearances and murder, which served as the basis for the trials of the military Juntas.²

Later on, Congress passed two laws to settle the matter: *Punto Final* (Full Stop Law 23.492, 1986)³ and *Obediencia Debida* (Due Obedience Law 23.521, 1987).⁴ These two laws were in response to the military resistance to the trials. It is important to mention

that at the time these laws were passed, the military still had significant political veto power and had threaten to oust the democratically elected government of President Alfonsín.

Between 1989 and 1991, under the Presidency of Dr. Carlos Saúl Menem of the PJ (Peronist Party), 10 (ten) decrees were issued to grant pardon to all participants involved in actions of state terror under the dictatorship. As a result, late in 1998 the *Punto Final* and the *Obediencia Debida* laws were finally repealed.⁵

By the turn of the century, however, official policy on this matter shifted once again. On August 21, 2003, under the Presidency of Dr. Néstor Kirchner of the PJ (Peronist Party) a new law (25.779) superseded the *Punto Final* and *Obediencia Debida* laws as well as the pardons previously issued by President Menem.⁶

Starting in 2005, by a Supreme Court decision, any action framed under the figure of “state terror” became a crime against humanity and imprescriptible.

One of the most interesting examples paralleling this shifting political environment with regard to memory policies is the changing criteria for the commemoration of March 24, a key date for building collective memory against state terrorism. In effect, March 24 is a landmark in Argentina history; it is the day of the military coup of 1976 that inaugurated the most brutal dictatorship the country had ever experienced. After the return to democracy in 1983, the first mobilization to remember the military coup was on March 24 of 1986, three years after the transition. This mobilization was organized by the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo (Madres de Plaza de Mayo), the group of mothers of the disappeared by the dictatorship, which eventually turned into the most salient human rights social movement of the country. There were no official commemorations of March 24 in 1984 or 1985, even though citizens did mobilize to support the Mothers.

In place of an official commemoration, on March 24, 1984, the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo published in the *Clarín* newspaper their position regarding President Alfonsín's policies on state terror. The Mothers demanded: 1) forced disappearances be considered a crime against humanity; 2) the establishment of a bicameral Congressional commission to investigate state terror; and 3) trials through civil courts and not through especial military courts.

A year later, in 1985 a commemoration of March 24 was convoked in the City of Cordoba, organized by the Movimiento de

1 Comisión Nacional sobre la Desaparición de Personas, Decree 187/83, 15. 12. 1983, <http://www.derechos.org/ddhh/arg/ley/conadep.txt>

2 Code of Military Justice, Law 23.049, 9. 2. 1984, <http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/25000-29999/28157/norma.htm>

3 Punto Final Law, 23.492, 23. 12. 1986, <http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/verNorma.do?id=21864>

4 Obediencia Debida Law 23.521, 9. 6. 1987, <http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/verNorma.do?id=21746>

5 Law 24.952, 17. 4. 1998, <http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/verNorma.do?id=50364>

6 Law 25.779, 21. 8. 2003, <http://servicios.infoleg.gob.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/85000-89999/88140/norma.htm>

Juventudes Políticas, and several human rights organizations; about one thousand participants attended the event.

In short, since the beginning of the transition, the way of remembering, keeping memory, and making memory, not only constantly changed, but was also disorganized, and sometimes even violent. These mobilizations were not organized by the state, but instead by various human rights organizations.

The crucial year for institutional inertia to change was 2001. For the first time in history direct action was organized by the State: March 24 became “Día Nacional de la Memoria por la Verdad y la Justicia” (National Day of Memory, Truth, and Justice). A year later, on August 1 of 2002, Congress sanctioned Law 25.633,⁷ which declared March 24 a non-working day; a year later in 2005 it was also declared a non-working day, a national holiday and non-changeable in the calendar.⁸ This decision was first resisted by human rights organizations, which wanted to avoid the day becoming a national holiday, but to no avail. In 2017, the government of President Mauricio Macri tried by decree to change March 24 to a movable commemoration date, but civil society organizations mobilized and aborted the initiative, so March 24 continues to be celebrated as established in 2005.

ORAL HISTORY AND MEMORY

As the previous section shows, building collective memory is not an easy task, and the instruments available for doing so are of various kinds. The process is anything but linear. In addition to attempts by human rights organizations, and the state, to preserve memory, several historians tried to contribute to the process through their academic work. Among academic contributions, it is worth mentioning the field of “Oral History”, through the work of the Institute of Oral History, housed in the Department of Philosophy at the University of Buenos Aires since 1995 (Instituto de Historia Oral, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad de Buenos Aires).

Several historians of the Institute worked to transform oral history into a vehicle to give voice to the voiceless victims of state terror, and to change the official story of how the events unfolded under the dictatorship.

Within the framework of oral history, the testimonies of the victims of state terror are considered crucial to understand the truth of what really happened under the dictatorship. Some of the testimonies were collected during the dictatorship, but the bulk after the return of democracy. Memory acts in the present to represent the past. That representation of the past is complex, and not just a simple reproduction of events; it entails an interpretation. Memory as a historical document has a peculiar character since it is retrospective and highly fluid. It does not exist as “pure memory,” but as reminiscence because memory always starts in the present toward the past.⁹

BUILDING MEMORY OF STATE TERRORISM IN 21ST CENTURY ARGENTINA THROUGH SITES AND MONUMENTS

Argentina had to wait until the beginning of the 21st Century for the state to design and implement a public policy systematically aimed at building memory of the experience of authoritarianism

and state terror. In this newly designed policy, “sites of memory” and “monuments of memory” have a very important role.

Following the criteria of the Institute of Public Policies for Human Rights of Mercosur (IPPDH – Instituto de Políticas Públicas en Derechos Humanos del Mercosur), sites of memory are considered places where serious violations of human rights were committed, or where those violations were resisted, or places that victims, their families and communities associate with those violations and are used anew to recover, rethink and transmit traumatic processes and/or commemorate or provide reparation to the victims.¹⁰

The year 2003 is a landmark for building memory with the creation of the Memory Archive (Archivo de la Memoria).¹¹ This Archive is complemented with the archives of several human rights organizations, of CONADEP, of University of Buenos Aires (UBA), and of other Universities throughout the country.

Later on, in 2011, under the administration of President Cristina Fernández de Kirchner, the passing of Law 26.691¹² was a turning point in the history of the preservation of memory and of the events that occurred under state terrorism between 1976 and 1983. The National State in agreement with Provincial governments, municipalities and human rights organizations decided that the motto “Memory, Truth and Justice” would become national public policy to precisely preserve the memory of that time.

This new “Memory, Truth and Justice” national public policy was to be carried out through the preservation of the sites used by the dictatorship as clandestine centers of detention and torture, or where emblematic events of illegal repression developed until the return of democracy in 1983. With the passing of Law 26.691, the state together with human rights and social organizations surveyed the sites mentioned in the CONADEP report by human rights organizations and by the organization *Family Members of Detained and Disappeared Person for Political Reasons* (Familiares de Detenidos y Desaparecidos por Razones Políticas) as places of detention, torture, disappearance and murder of persons in the entire country. In this way, a national network of “spaces of memory” became established. This network includes military sites, health centers and even private housing. The map of sites or “spaces of memory” at the national level can be consulted through the official web site of the government, which includes a catalog of all sites of memory and related themes.¹³

The City of Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina, is where the most important space of memory is located: *Space for Memory and Promotion and Defense of Human Rights-ex-ESMA* (Espacio para la Memoria y para la Promoción y Defensa de los Derechos

7 Law 25.633, 1. 8. 2002, <http://servicios.abc.gov.ar/docentes/efemerides/24marzo/htmls/presentacion.pdf>

8 Non-changeable date means it cannot be celebrated on a Friday or Monday to extend the weekend.

9 Dora Schwarzstein, “Historia Oral: memoria e historias traumáticas”, in *HISTORIA ORAL*, 4, 2001, 73–83, <http://arpa.ucv.cl/articulos/memoriaehistoriastraumaticas.pdf>

10 IPPDH-Mercosur: *Principios fundamentales para las Políticas Públicas sobre Sitios de Memoria*, 2012.

11 Decree 1259/2003, 16. 12. 2003, <http://servicios.infoleg.gov.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/90000-94999/91115/norma.htm>

12 Law 26.691, 29. 06. 2011, <http://servicios.infoleg.gov.ar/infolegInternet/anexos/180000-184999/184962/norma.htm>

13 Map of sites of memory, <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sitiosdememoria/mapacentrosclandestinos>

Humanos – Ex ESMA). This location is considered the most important space of memory due to the number of testimonies of detained persons that point to this site.

The space is located in the ESMA, Naval School of Mechanical Engineering (Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada), on Libertador Ave. 8100, in the upper class north side of Buenos Aires. In 1924, the Buenos Aires City Council gave the land to the Ministry of Navy to be used as a training camp for its forces. With the military coup of 24 March 1976, ESMA became a center of operations to implement a systematic plan by the dictatorship to repress, torture, disappear and murder people. A clandestine maternity ward also operated at ESMA where babies of detainees were born, and later appropriated by families of the perpetrators of state terror.

Today, the National Archive of Memory is located within ESMA, in the building where the School of Navy War used to function. As already mentioned, it was created by Law in 2003 to “preserve and classify the documents related to violations of human rights in Argentina, the testimonies recorded by CONADEP, and all testimonies that the Secretary of Human Rights of the country still receives.”¹⁴

The Museum of Malvinas e Islas del Atlántico Sur (Malvinas and Islands of the South Atlantic) has also been located at ESMA since June 2014. This site is not related to state terrorism directly, but aims to recognize the value and history of the Malvinas war in 1982, which was initiated by the military dictatorship against Great Britain to maintain legitimacy. The defeat in the war precipitated the transition to democracy. Many abuses by the military were committed during the war against regular soldiers, showing the various ramifications of state terror. This Museum has no heritage but it has the important goal of promoting thinking and reflection of the recent past. The fact that this museum, created by a Presidential decree, has no heritage is a favorable point: it allows the museum to be “a live museum” that grows up with donations, and calls upon citizens to think about its true meaning.¹⁵

The City of Buenos Aires has other important sites of memory; the “Space for Memory and Promotion of Human Rights: Automotores Orletti” (Espacio para la Memoria y la Promoción de los Derechos Humanos: Automotores Orletti) is located in the Floresta neighborhood on the west side of the City at Venancio Flores Street 3519/21. This site, located inside an old car-repair garage, was a clandestine center for detention, torture, disappearance, and murder of persons. The site was rented and refurbished by the Secretary of Intelligence SIDE (Secretaría de Inteligencia del Estado), and became the headquarters of Argentina “Operation Condor” (Operativo Condor), an Operation run in agreement with various intelligence and security forces of the Southern Cone countries of Latin America. Since 2006, by Law 2112 of the City of Buenos Aires Legislature, subject to expropriation and recovery, the site was declared a public use site. In 2009, it was transformed into a site of memory, and starting from 2014 is under the administration of the National Secretary of Human Rights. By Presidential decree 1762/2014 it has also been established as a “National Historical Site.”¹⁶

Another site of memory worth mentioning in Buenos Aires is “Athletic Club” (Club Atlético), which was under the command of the Air Force during the dictatorship. This site of memory shows how the three military branches, the Army, Navy and Air force, colluded between them the actions of state terrorism. Athletic Club is located in the south of the city, in the historic San Telmo

neighborhood at Ave. Paseo Colón, between Cochabamba and San Juan Streets, under the Highway Autopista 25 de Mayo. This location under the Highway was a late attempt at deleting its very existence. Law 1794 of the City Legislature declared it a “Historical Site”; and decree 1762/2014, a “National Historical Site.”¹⁷ Passing by, underneath the Highway, one can see that the memory is very much alive, viewing the decorations and signs placed on the site.

Yet another site of detention, this one under the control of the Federal Police was “Virrey Cevallos” (Virrey Ceballos Street 628/30). This site is emblematic, because it was recovered by the collective action of neighbors of San Cristobal where it is located. Organized under the “Association of Neighbors of San Cristobal against Impunity” (Asociación de Vecinos de San Cristóbal contra la Impunidad), neighbors, families, human rights and civil society organizations denounced the site, and in 2004, achieved City Legislature sanctioned Laws 1.454 and 1.505, which declare the site a “public use, subject to expropriation and historical site.” Since 2014, it became a “National Historical Site” by Presidential decree 1.762.¹⁸

Another site of memory, difficult to imagine, is the Church of Saint Cross (Iglesia de la Santa Cruz, Estados Unidos Street 3150), it unfortunately became so because it was where several of the founding members of Mothers of May Square were kidnapped, together with two French nuns that were helping them, between December 8 and 10 of 1977. The forced disappearances occurred during a, now well-known, military operation commanded by the Navy.

Finally, in the City of Buenos Aires memory has become embodied in the natural environment: the Río de la Plata coastal line is a symbolic space, in whose waters many Argentines were drugged after being tortured and dropped still alive from planes into the river. The *Park of Memory and Monument for the Victims of State Terror* (Parque de la Memoria-Monumento a las Víctimas del Terrorismo de Estado), is located at Costanera Norte, Rafael Obligado St. 6745. This site of memory was designed in 1997 from a proposal of several human rights organizations. In 1998, Law 46 of the City of Buenos Aires ordered its construction, and an international bid was put forth for the several sculptures that are central to the landscape of the Park. In 2001, on August 30, during the International Day of the Detainees and Disappeared persons, the square that serves as main access to the Park was inaugurated. The Park was finally inaugurated in 2007 and since 2014 has become a “National Historical Monument,” and its sculptures “a public good of historical interest.”¹⁹

OTHER SITES OF MEMORY

Laws and Decrees issued by initiative of the state, cities, social organizations, families of the victims, or the victims themselves, are not the only representations of the memory of state terror

14 *Espacios de Memoria en la Argentina*, Ministerio de Justicia y Derechos Humanos de la Nación, Secretaría de Derechos Humanos, Buenos Aires, 2015.

15 Ibid.

16 Ibid.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid.

19 Ibid.

being constructed in Argentina. Other actions forming the building blocks of a collective memory are leaving an imprint on the urban landscape, without being a site of memory, a museum, or a monument. An example of this is the work organized by the association “Coordination of Neighborhoods x Memory and Justice” (Coordinadora Barrios x Memoria y Justicia) in the City of Buenos Aires, and in others cities throughout the country. This association was created at the end of 2005 to make visible popular activists detained, disappeared, and murdered by state terror, right before and during the last dictatorship in neighborhoods all over Argentina. The organization’s aim is to reconstruct the life history of those grassroots activists in their neighborhoods and, in this way, give proof of their existence in the streets they used to walk around. This is being done by the installation of tiles with their names and dates of disappearance on the sidewalks. These cement tiles transform the materials in live history and memory, and allows the socialization and communication of personal sentiments as public and collective signifiers. In doing so, they make visible, the invisible, for those who were unaware of what was happening during those years in their own neighborhoods. The first activity of “Coordinadora Barrios x Memoria y Justicia” was held on December 2 of 2005 at Saint Cross Church, where the first cement tiles were installed on the sidewalks in memory of the twelve persons kidnapped and disappeared in 1977.²⁰

NETWORKS OF SITES OF MEMORY

Up to now, we have made reference to “sites of memory,” “monuments of memory,” and “Memory Tiles” located in the City of Buenos Aires. But it is important to remember at this point that the jigsaw puzzle of building collective memory began to take form very slowly with the first testimonies collected by human rights organizations, mainly by the “Permanent Assembly for Human Rights” (APDH – Asamblea Permanente por los Derechos Humanos). During the dictatorship this organization formed by a broad multi-party constituency had the capacity to record testimonies and take action against state terror through requesting the legal figure of *habeas corpus*. As we have also shown, since 2014 with a series of new laws, a survey of “sites of memory,” allowed drawing a national map to locate most of them.²¹ This process of building memory has developed slowly through the years and is still in the making.²²

It is important to stress that until 2015, the sites of memory were referred as to “spaces of memory,” but since then it is preferred to use the term “sites of memory” following international classifications, including the one proposed by Mercosur (Common Market of the South) we have already mentioned above.²³

SITES OF MEMORY AND EDUCATION

All sites of memory, including the monuments and memory tiles, have an intrinsic pedagogic goal. The sites of memory, since their original denomination by the Decree 1762 of 2014, which instituted them as “official” sites of memory at the national level, are “spaces of memory and promotion of human rights”. This promotion of human rights entails the idea of education on human rights, for children and adults likewise. By reading the documents of Mercosur’s Institute of Public Policy

and Human Rights (Instituto de Políticas Públicas de Derechos Humanos), we observe the deep pedagogic character of sites of memory, besides their primary goal of keeping memory of past atrocities. This pedagogic or educational character has a formal side based on the Ministry of Education of Argentina and an informal side based on the multiple actions undertaken by the sites of memory themselves.

In the case of the formal institutional environment, starting in 2014 the sites of memory gained political leverage since the government decided to give them status of state policy. The sites of memory became an integral part of the “Education and Memory Program” (Programa Educación y Memoria) of the National Ministry of Education for secondary schools.

By the National Education Law, secondary education is mandatory in Argentina and one of the main axes of action of the Ministry of Education.²⁴ The relevance of secondary education made it a crucial environment to further develop a comprehensive program to link education and memory. Since 2003, the National Ministry of Education began to develop an education policy of memory whose goal would be to facilitate the difficult task of teaching in schools the recent past. This policy is based on the National Education Law 26.206 and as it says in article number 3: “Education is a national priority and a state policy to build a more just society, consolidate national identity and deepening the exercise of democratic citizenship, the respect of human rights and basic freedoms and strengthen the economic and social development of the nation.”²⁵

Within this framework, the Program of Education and Memory (Programa Educación y Memoria) targets three fundamental themes: 1) State Terror: memories of the dictatorship; 2) Malvinas: memory, sovereignty and democracy; and 3) Teaching of the Holocaust and other genocides.

LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Without a doubt, since the transition to democracy in 1983, the road to building memory has been a long and winding one. The process has not been linear; there have been many advances and a few setbacks. The past 35 years have been years of learning. The experiences of state terror recovered by the creation of various sites of memory have had the pedagogical value of showing that democracy, even with its flaws, is the most preferable political regime. As a result, democracy has endured in spite of military coup attempts, economic crises and low quality governments. Democratic institutions are stronger, and the construction of a collective memory a continuous process. In many ways, the sites of memory are an achievement of democracy and, at

20 Nahuel Gallotta, “Día de la Memoria: Homenaje a los desaparecidos: ya hay más de 1.200 baldosas que los recuerdan en Capital”, in *Clarín*, 23. 3. 2018, https://www.clarin.com/ciudades/homenaje-desaparecidos-200-baldosas-recuerdan-capital_0_HkjEzem9G.html

21 Map of sites of memory, <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/sitiosdememoria/mapacentrosclandestinos>

22 Sites of Memory, <https://www.argentina.gob.ar/derechoshumanos/sitiosdememoria>

23 IPPDH-Mercosur: *Principios fundamentales para las Políticas Públicas sobre Sitios de Memoria*, 2012.

24 “Lugares de Memoria”, Equipo Programa de Educación y Memoria, Ministerio de Educación de la Nación, Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires, 2015.

25 Ibid.

the same time, one of its main sources of legitimacy. In these sites, memory and education are intertwined and complement each other. The sites of memory linked to education programs, formally and informally, are a pedagogic creative practice to re-think new forms of learning at school and in everyday life. In a nutshell, they contribute to understand the past to improve our lives in the present and avoid the same mistakes. As the experience of Argentina shows:

1/ It is crucial to secure the sites of memory and the concomitant educational programs through national legislation to avoid any regressions or nostalgia of the authoritarian past.

2/ It is also crucial that civil society groups work closely with government officials to demand accountability of all actors involved in the creation and administration of the sites.

3/ The previous recommendations are a way to shield the construction of collective memory from short-term changes in governments' ideological preferences.

It is a moral imperative to remember those who suffered the atrocities of state terror and transmit this memory to the new generations by way of education, so as the Prosecutor of the Military Juntas Dr. Julio César Strassera expressed at the end of the trials, this NEVER AGAIN! (NUNCA MAS!) happens in Argentina.

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CEVRO

EDUCATION AND PRESERVATION OF SITES OF CONSCIENCE

SAVINA SIRIK

MEMORIALIZATION OF THE DIFFICULT PAST

Memorialization has been a prominent practice in societies emerging from war, genocide and mass atrocities. The use of memorialization as a tool to unite state subjects is especially evident in transitional states. However, memorialization practices can be very politicized. For example, one can regard memorials as sites of power struggle; where power relations interplay and different actors are involved in the process.

Memorials have often been constructed in order to produce a collective memory. Given that memorials are important symbolic sites in the articulation of nation-statehood, the decision to commemorate or dismiss the past is frequently made by individuals or institutions of authority or power. Indeed, many prominent memorials constitute official or state-sanctioned practices designed to promote a particular version of the past in an attempt to provide legitimacy for the present and future rule. This is especially true in the case of Cambodia, where sites of violence, including prisons and mass graves, were immediately converted to official memorials for genocide remembrance. Consequently, the public landscape has been used by the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) government to serve the politics of memory, rightly observed by Dwyer and Alderman, that "historical representation is not only a product of social power but also a tool or resource for achieving it."¹ Therefore, commemoration and education of past atrocities is often linked to the construction of national narratives and memories that serve the state interest in enforcing state legitimacy and political power.

These processes have suppressed personal memories for a long time. However, this has begun to change in the context of Cambodia. Recent initiatives by local civil society organizations have supported and promoted processes through which individual accounts and experiences of survivors have been brought to the fore. Memorials and history education have increasingly included personal accounts into their content and structure, providing individual voices and spaces for survivors to get involved in the process. Thus, the process of remembrance of past atrocities have gradually moved from state-sponsored to local-driven initiatives, with support from civil society organizations, who are important actors in the transitional process.

MEMORY INSTITUTIONS

Immediately after the fall of the Democratic Kampuchea (DK) regime in 1979, a new state, the People's Republic of Kampuchea (PRK) was announced. This new government faced significant challenges in the reconstruction of the country, as there was scarcely an adequate infrastructure remaining. Despite these challenges, the most important task for PRK leaders was to initiate a political agenda to justify its invasion of the DK regime,

and thus legitimize its right to exist. The PRK realized a political opportunity through recognition of the landscapes of violence left behind by the DK regime. This landscape of violence provided evidence of the crimes committed against Cambodians by the Khmer Rouge government. Thus, in the early period of their occupation, the PRK began memorializing past violence through the transformation of sites of violence into memorials of memory.

One of the first major memorial initiatives was the transformation of two significant sites of the violence perpetrated by the DK state: the S-21 Khmer Rouge prison and the killing fields and mass graves at Choeung Ek. The PRK government saw a new opportunity in legitimizing the regime through establishing official narratives. As David Chandler argues, memories of the DK period and what was written about it were channeled by the new regime to suit the 'demonizing' policies favored by the regime.² Among the sites of violence left behind by the Khmer Rouge, the PRK quickly memorialized the two prominent sites mentioned above, and several other local prisons and mass grave sites. The S-21 Prison was transformed into the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum; the killing fields and mass graves at Choeung Ek became a memorial site. Ultimately, the PRK used these two places as major landmarks, and 80 other local memorials, to convey the national narrative for remembrance and memorialization of "genocide".

TUOL SLENG GENOCIDE MUSEUM

Before the DK regime, Tuol Sleng had been a high school in the inner city of Phnom Penh. The Khmer Rouge converted it into a security center designated as 'S-21' – a facility utilized by Khmer Rouge security forces for imprisonment, torture and interrogation. David Chandler has extensively examined the role and function of S-21 and notes that the facility functioned as a place of incarceration, investigation, punishment and counterespionage.³ During its existence from 1976 to 1979, Chandler estimates that the prison processed approximately 14,000 prisoners.⁴ Approximately 300 people are known to have survived the prison.⁵ Soon after Phnom Penh was captured by Vietnamese forces and

1 Owen J. Dwyer, Derek H. Alderman, "Memorial landscapes: analytic questions and metaphors", in *GeoJournal*, 2008, (73), 3, 171.

2 David Chandler, "Cambodia deals with its past: Collective memory, demonisation and induced amnesia", in *Totalitarian Movements and Political Religions*, 2008, (9), 2-3, 358.

3 David Chandler, *Voices from S-21: Terror and history in Pol Pot's secret prison*, University of California Press, 1999, 15.

4 *Ibid.*, 36. The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) provides an update list of S-21 prisoners with a total of 12,272 victims based on the documentary evidence available to the court.

5 Dacil Keo, Nean Yin, *Fact Sheet*, Phnom Penh: Documentation Center of Cambodia, 2011.

the National Salvation United Front, S-21 was discovered by two Vietnamese journalists who had been accompanying the troops, and were drawn to the site by the smell of decomposing bodies.⁶ The journalists took photographs of the bodies remaining in all of the interrogation rooms; some of those photos are now exhibited throughout the Tuol Sleng Museum. A few days after the initial discovery of the prison, vast stacks of documents – including thousands of pages of documented confessions, mug-shot photographs, and notebooks of cadres – were found in the S-21 compound.⁷

Realizing the importance and potential propaganda value of these discoveries, the PRK government officials proceeded to have the documents organized and archived, and to convert the site into a museum. Mai Lam, who had extensive experience in legal studies and museology, arrived in Phnom Penh in March 1979 to lead the transformation of the site into an internationally-recognized museum of genocide.⁸ A couple of weeks after the renovation of the site, the museum hosted its first group of foreign visitors. As asserted in PRK documentation, “the site was intended primarily to show... international guests the cruel torture committed by the traitors against the Khmer people.”⁹ By January 25 – a mere two weeks after the “discovery” of Tuol Sleng – a group of journalists from socialist countries was invited; these were the first official visitors to Tuol Sleng.¹⁰ The museum was officially opened to the public in July 1980. Local Cambodians were transported from various places throughout the country to visit the museum and learn about the crimes against humanity, as well as other crimes committed by the Khmer Rouge. Cambodians were indoctrinated by the PRK government with such political messages to justify the government’s legitimacy and to promote a reliance on the PRK, thus preventing the return to power of the Khmer Rouge. Prominently featured throughout the curation of S-21 were clear messages of legitimacy; in addition to this display, exposed display of skulls and bones were featured at the Choeng Ek mass graves site. Displays in the museum feature mug shots of victims and Khmer Rouge cadres, graphic images of torture and the corpses of prisoners, and a map of Cambodia depicted in skulls and bones which was later removed from the exhibition due to controversies around skull display.¹¹ Through these images, the curator intended to establish a connection between the DK regime and the atrocious crimes that took place at S-21 and Choeng Ek.

In March 2015, a Memorial to the Victims of the DK regime was unveiled inside Tuol Sleng, dedicated to the victims of the DK regime, especially to the 14,000 victims who were detained and executed at S-21 prison, and the Choeng Ek killing site. The memorial, designed and erected by Cambodia’s Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts,¹² replaced an old stupa memorial that was built in the 1980s, and destroyed by a storm in 2008. While the memorial was warmly welcomed, the inscription of the names of the victims of S-21 prompted debate over whether the inscribed names represent victims or perpetrators.¹³ Given that the majority of the victims at S-21 had been former Khmer Rouge cadres, survivors and academics were concerned that the name inscriptions would offend other victims and their surviving families.¹⁴ The Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC) approved the memorial project as symbolic reparation for the victims and survivors of the Khmer Rouge regime in ECCC’s Case 001 against the S-21 prison chief, Kaing Guek Eav or Duch.

CHOEUNG EK MEMORIAL CENTER

The history of the Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum is directly linked to the killing fields of Choeng Ek, located approximately 15 kilometers southwest of Phnom Penh. The mass graves at Choeng Ek were selected for excavation, also under Mai Lam’s supervision. Over 9,000 bodies were exhumed from the graves and initially placed in a wooden structure, which was later replaced with a monumental memorial stupa made of concrete and glass, built in the style of a Khmer Buddhist stupa. The memorial was inaugurated and opened to visitors in 1988. The excavated pits were left exposed, forming open-air exhibitions with signs attesting to the horrific activities that took place on that landscape. Along with the Tuol Sleng Museum, the Choeng Ek Memorial reinforced the political message of the PRK in condemning the genocidal crimes committed by the Khmer Rouge. Due to the lack of background information on the site, a museum was later built and opened to the public to provide additional information and historical context on the Khmer Rouge regime. Audio tours containing a history of the site as well as personal stories of victims and former Khmer Rouge guards were added to the site. In addition, public ceremonies are held annually at the memorial site to celebrate the May 20 day of remembrance. The site still represents the official narrative of the genocide, which occurred during the DK regime.

LOCAL MEMORIALS

While sites such as Tuol Sleng and Choeng Ek provide visible evidence of memorialization, many other sites of violence have scarcely been memorialized. Only about 81 sites of the innumerable documented sites of mass violence that are widespread throughout the country, including 196 security prison sites, 300 burial sites, and 200,000 mass graves,¹⁵ have been memorialized. Hundreds of other burial sites and labor camps stand as silent testimony to the pervasive violence, which took place in Cambodia. These sites constitute unmarked, violent landscapes, identifiable only by local residents, and remain invisible to visitors who merely pass by the area. This is especially true for members of the younger generation who were born after

6 David Chandler, *Voices from S-21: Terror and history in Pol Pot’s secret prison*, University of California Press, 1999, 2.

7 *Ibid.*, 3.

8 *Ibid.*, 4.

9 *Ibid.*, 8.

10 *Ibid.*, 4.

11 See the discussion in Wynne Cougill, “Buddhist cremation traditions for the dead and the need to preserve forensic evidence in Cambodia”, Documentation Center of Cambodia, http://www.dccam.org/Projects/Maps/Buddhist_Cremation_Traditions.htm

12 “Inauguration of the Memorial to Victims of the Democratic Kampuchea Regime at Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum”, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH, 26 March 2015, <http://giz-cambodia.com/inauguration-of-the-memorial-to-victims-of-the-democratic-kampuchea-regime-at-tuol-sleng-genocide-museum/>

13 Poppy McPherson, “Memorial plan prompts debate about victims and perpetrators of genocide”, in *The Phnom Penh Post*, 9 May 2014, <https://www.phnompenhpost.com/7days/memorial-plan-prompts-debate-about-victims-and-perpetrators-genocide>

14 *Ibid.*

15 Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam), *Mapping Report*, unpublished report, 1998.

the atrocities. The potential for these sites to become memorialized or representative of past violence have largely been associated with the politics of memory, which have been employed as a tool to justify the political regime. Most local memorial sites have decayed over time since they have not been properly taken care of. A few of them are maintained and developed into community learning centers.

WAT SAMROUNG KNONG, BATTAMBANG

Following the consultation process on memory initiatives in 2009, Youth for Peace (YFP)¹⁶ – a local organization, based in Phnom Penh, working to promote peace and social justice through youth development – started a memory project at Samroung Knong commune, Battambang province. A community memorial committee was established and a vocational training program was developed. Funded by a Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation through the Victims Support Section of the ECCC, the Samroung Knong Community Peace Learning Center was built, with the purpose of preserving the mass grave site in Wat (Buddhist Temple) Samroung Knong, for its rich history and transforming it into a place where intergenerational dialogue and peace education can take place.¹⁷ Wat Samroung Knong was turned into a prison by the Khmer Rouge. The majority of prisoners were former soldiers, government officials of the Lon Nol regime and their families and relatives. In 1980, approximately a hundred mass graves were excavated to recover victims' remains.¹⁸

In 2015, the Community Peace Learning Centre was in the process of developing an information center, so that the community could access information and participate in the key activities of the Center. Some of these activities include public forums, vocational training programs for youth (such as computer training courses), film screening, radio programs, religious festivals, fundraising and documenting historic cities.¹⁹ The Peace Learning Center has been approved by the ECCC as symbolic reparation for victims and survivors of the Khmer Rouge regime in the Case 002/01 against Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea.

GENOCIDE EDUCATION AFTER THE KHMER ROUGE REGIME

The education system and infrastructure were revived and rehabilitated after the fall of the Khmer Rouge regime. Under the PRK government, the Khmer Rouge history education was integrated into political education, which emphasized the importance of socialism and civic revolution. Khmer Rouge history was subsequently developed and taught to promote a political agenda and ideology to which the PRK subscribed.²⁰ The school curricula outlined political contents that condemned the Khmer Rouge's brutal violence, while praising the revolutionary figures, who liberated the country from the Khmer Rouge's occupation. The textbook content, at the time, included language that provoked anger and vengeance toward the Khmer Rouge leaders including phrases such as "Pol Pot-Ieng Sary-Khieu Samphan genocidal cliques" or "KR genocidal massacres of innocent people."²¹ Consequently, such political propaganda was emphasized and utilized as a tool to maintain the political survival and legitimacy of the state.²²

From 1993 to the early 2000s, the contents of Khmer Rouge history became marginalized and at times disappeared from

the textbook. During this period, Cambodia faced continued challenges in resolving its internal political conflict and building peace and reconciliation. Even so, politics continued to dictate Cambodian history content to the extent that the Khmer Rouge history was kept silent or marginalized. When the curriculum and teaching materials were being revised, the content on Khmer Rouge atrocities were not prioritized. During the academic year of 2000 and 2001, social studies textbook for grade 9 and 12, for example, was revised to include a modern history of Cambodia from 1953 to 1998 with a brief narration of the Khmer Rouge regime, which did not provide a clear account of what had happened or allow for a critical or in-depth understanding of the historical events at that time.²³ Also, in the middle of academic year of 2002, the government withdrew the social studies textbook from the curriculum. The textbook did not return until 2011.²⁴ Thus, the national interests in teaching Khmer Rouge history during that time slowly decreased and the Khmer Rouge history content became marginalized due to internal political conflicts and efforts to integrate different political fractions into society.

Nonetheless, increased international interests and influences in the concepts of human rights and genocide in Cambodia during the transitional period contributed to the reconstruction Khmer Rouge history education, and development of a local genocide education initiative.²⁵ The works of NGOs, the flow of human rights concepts, and the global influence of Holocaust education became one of the driving forces for the emergence of a local genocide education. Local NGOs that devote their work to promoting democracy and human rights in the country stepped up and worked in collaboration with the government to develop genocide education. Among local civil society organizations, the Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam) took the initiative in establishing Cambodian genocide education, particularly developing the Khmer Rouge history content for the secondary high school level. DC-Cam has worked in collaboration with the Ministry of Education to provide formal education on the Khmer Rouge history for young people. This effort represents one among many local initiatives to formalize Khmer Rouge history education through the formal education system.

DOCUMENTATION CENTER OF CAMBODIA (DC-CAM)²⁶

Established in 1995 as a field office of Yale University's Cambodian Genocide Program to facilitate field research on the Khmer Rouge's crimes in Cambodia, DC-Cam became an independent research institute in 1997. DC-Cam has collected, catalogued, and disseminated information on the DK regime to survivors, researchers, students, and the general public. Its archive stores a million pages of Khmer Rouge documents, photographs, interviews, and physical evidence of the genocide. The documentary

16 See Youth for Peace, <http://www.yfpcambodia.org/>

17 Ibid.

18 Documentation Center of Cambodia (DC-Cam), *Mapping Report*, unpublished report, 1998.

19 Youth for Peace, <http://www.yfpcambodia.org/>

20 Khamboly Dy, *Genocide Education in Cambodia: Local Initiatives, Global connections*, Rutgers University, PhD Dissertation, 2015, 143.

21 Ibid., 97.

22 Ibid., 144.

23 Ibid., 163.

24 Ibid., 166.

25 Ibid.

26 See Documentation Center of Cambodia, <http://d.dccam.org/>

collections held by the Center have informed much of the preparation for the prosecution cases against the former Khmer Rouge leaders in trials underway at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia.

DC-Cam has played an important role in the dissemination of Khmer Rouge history education to the public. It has made a significant effort to educate the public about the Khmer Rouge regime through outreach, public education forums, exhibitions, and genocide education programs. As part of the genocide education program, DC-Cam published a textbook, in 2007, entitled *A History of Democratic Kampuchea 1975–1979*, and distributed hundreds of thousand copies to all secondary high schools throughout the country. In addition, the Center has integrated the textbook and the lessons of the Khmer Rouge regime into the formal curriculum at the secondary high school level and provided training to all history and social science high school teachers.²⁷ The integration of Khmer Rouge history in the formal curriculum has become a major initiative in institutionalizing genocide education in Cambodia's education system. In addition to these efforts, DC-Cam has also initiated other memory and education efforts through establishing of two institutions: Sleuk Rith Institute and Anlong Veng Peace Center.

SLEUK RITH INSTITUTE²⁸

The Sleuk Rith Institute is intended to be a permanent site for DC-Cam. SRI aims to preserve the memory of the Khmer Rouge genocide, provide a sense of justice, and contribute to the healing of Cambodian society. SRI plans to expand its archival core by incorporating a genocide museum, a research center, and a school of genocide, conflict, and human rights into an integrated research institute focused on the studies of human rights and sustainable development. The project is supported by an architectural partner of the renowned London bureau, the Iraqi-born architect Zaha Hadid. She calls her design a structure of hell, earth, and heaven, tracing the hoped-for progression from the silence of the present generation of Cambodians about their unthinkable past, to a future of openness and vitality. The new SRI building, to be established alongside a respected and still functioning high school in central Phnom Penh, is intended to support deeper research into the past atrocity and to disseminate information through the country's educational system.

The Sleuk Rith Institute also plans activities and events at the heart of the capital, which will promote healing through cultural revival and celebration. The SRI plans to incorporate into its programs the issues of culture, history, gender, and environment. In addition, SRI plans to present to the future generations of Cambodians and global tourists the ways in which Cambodian survivors and their children may strive to deal with the horrendous tragedy through acts of commemoration and genocide education.

ANLONG VENG PEACE CENTER ²⁹

Situated in Anlong Veng district, the last stronghold of the Khmer Rouge regime, the Anlong Veng Peace Center is a new initiative of the Documentation Center of Cambodia. Created in 2014, the Peace Center aims to achieve memory, reconciliation, and peacebuilding through peace studies, genocide education, and sustainable tourism. Peace studies and genocide education represent the Center's efforts in promoting a critical understanding

of different forms of violence, conflict resolutions, and root causes of what happened under the Khmer Rouge regime. Guided tours to historical sites and meetings with local community members provide space for interactive discussions and shared understanding of individual stories. These concerted efforts are critical to peacebuilding, education, and rule of law in the country.

Using the Center's core approach of historical empathy, key activities that have been conducted at the Peace Center include a variety of educational and tourism related programs that help preserve the oral and physical history of the region, as well as building peace and reconciliation between generations and across society.³⁰ In order to achieve the stated objectives, the Center works in close collaboration with the local community, schools, and tourism officials in order to implement these activities. In addition to providing an understanding of the past, its main activities also involve providing guided tours of historical sites, conversations between local community members and students, as well as developing a curriculum that utilizes individual stories to promote an understanding of different human experiences.

LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to memorialization at the state level, such as the construction of the major memorial sites of Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum and Choeung Ek Memorial Center, memorialization has emerged from the concerted effort of local civil society organization and local communities, which is essential in the larger process of memory construction, peacebuilding and reconciliation in Cambodia. As discussed above, the preservation and development of historical sites such as Wat Samroung Knong and Anlong Veng, initiated by YFP and DC-Cam, in collaboration with local communities and other stakeholders, can contribute to promoting local ownership of the process of establishing historical truth, reconciliation, and bridging the generational divide. On the one hand, memorial sites serve as significant means through which to commemorate victims of atrocities and preserving memories of the past; on the other hand, providing history education of past atrocities to the younger generation and engaging them in the processes of memory preservation are critical to processes of building peace and democracy in post-conflict societies.

Furthermore, creating fair history content on a difficult past requires political commitment and support from a variety of actors, including domestic and international actors. Historical content can only provide an accurate historical account to young people, if it is created and developed based on scientific research. Such a difficult history should be delivered to the younger generation in such a way that helps promote harmony, empathy, reconciliation, and critical thinking, rather than serving as a propaganda tool to achieve a certain political aim. Cambodian genocide education must go through many years of turbulence and political

27 For further details see "Genocide education 2004–present", http://d.dccam.org/Projects/Genocide/Genocide_Education.htm

28 See The Sleuk Rith Institute, <http://www.cambodiasri.org/>

29 See Anlong Veng Peace Center, <http://d.dccam.org/Projects/AVPC/avpc.htm>

30 Ibid.

controversy, before it can begin to establish historical content that is more objective and scientific. This is just the beginning of a long journey toward peace and reconciliation that Cambodia has to make.

What we can learn from the Cambodian experiences is that local actors who initiate and develop local genocide education program, formally or informally, could benefit from working with various actors at multiple levels to provide legitimacy and effectiveness to the processes. These actors may be formal or non-formal, global or regional, state or local. More importantly, working with a variety of actors will help improve the capability

of local implementers and to balance the dominant power of the authorities or political elites. Furthermore, the institutionalization of genocide education will be complemented by other transitional mechanisms, whether they are formal or informal efforts (such as criminal prosecution and memorialization), to educate younger generations about the past. Developing public education to teach children about the Khmer Rouge regime is well resonated among survivors of the atrocities, many of whom are mainly concerned that their children will not receive a proper education about their horrendous past, and thus fail to acknowledge their sufferings.

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MEMORY OF NATIONS

Democratic Transition Guide

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EDUCATION AND PRESERVATION OF SITES OF CONSCIENCE

MARKÉTA BÁRTOVÁ

INTRODUCTION

The ways the society reconciles with its past, *remembers* it, what it leaves out or *forgets*, have always been a subject of constant political pressure on the shaping of the content of the *collective conscience*.¹ These days as well, the collective conscience becomes a subject of pressure and manipulation of power and not even today's democratic societies are protected against the dangers of a gradual forgetting of the period of non-freedom.

SITUATION IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

After the fall of communism in Czechoslovakia in November 1989, the idea to create a conscience institution in the new democratic state was not born in the minds of its political representatives, but came out of a private initiative. Over the years, several conscience institutions have been created this way, some of which have built up a very strong and irreplaceable position in the given area. An institution directly governed and financially funded by the state was created only in 2007 after long debates and disputes at the political and expert level, almost twenty years after the fall of the communist regime in the country.

The following overview introduces the institutions focusing on the period of the communist regime in the former Czechoslovakia between 1948 and 1989, specialised web sites – projects of non-profit organisations concentrating mainly on the collection of and making accessible the memories of witnesses, and educational programmes, as well as planned projects and in the end, purely commercial projects.

I. INSTITUTIONS

LIBRI PROHIBITI,² PRAGUE

After several months of preparations consisting especially in searching for suitable premises and getting the necessary financial support, it was finally possible to open for the public a completely unique library Libri prohibiti in October 1990. The aim of the whole project was to concentrate and make accessible the production of samizdat and exile publishers, i.e. books and various printed materials in general, the production and dissemination of which was banned by the communist regime for ideological and political reasons and judicially punished. The collection originally consisted of 2,000 books, magazines and other documents written by authors who were the leading Czechoslovak dissidents, including the founder of the library. Today, it accounts for more than 100,000 items kept in several collections. These are the Czechoslovak samizdat of 1960–1989, the Czechoslovak exile literature of 1948–2008, the Polish samizdat literature of 1979–1989 and foreign literature linked to

the former Czechoslovakia. Besides these, the library provides access to literature of the Czechoslovak war exile of 1939–1945 and literature of Russian and Ukrainian exile of 1920–1990.

In 1993, an audio-visual department of the Libri prohibiti was created, collecting and making accessible music records of groups banned under the communist regime (more than 3,000 music supports), audio records of lectures and seminars organised by political opponents of communism at that time (approximately 570 records), video documents and amateur film production (over 1,260 records). Moreover, the library is gradually converting all the records into a digital form, thus conserving them for the public, as the quality of records on audio-cassettes and tapes deteriorates over time and they could be lost forever.

Besides this, the library has a wide archive collection including written documents created mainly by the activity of independent initiatives – Charter 77, Committee for the Defense of the Unjustly Prosecuted (VONS), East-European Intelligence Agency (VIA) and others which informed about the violation of human and civil rights at that time not only in the former Czechoslovakia, but also in the whole Soviet Bloc. Petitions with the signatures of signatories, various letters, non-published manuscripts, posters and fliers of the Polish and Czechoslovak opposition, photographs and other unique documents from the period of persecution belong to other unique documents of the period of persecution. The library also managed to gain several private collections of the Czechoslovak dissidents to add to its collections.

The library of the “banned books” has been and still is in private hands, which gives it freedom and independence mainly as regards the projects it focuses on. Besides the above mentioned activities, it cooperates in various educational and cultural programmes, organises many author's readings and exhibitions of works of art by artists who could not officially publish or exhibit before November 1989.

The absolute uniqueness of the documents conserved in Libri prohibiti is proved by the placement of its collection of Czech and Slovak samizdat periodicals of 1948–1989 into the UNESCO register Memory of the World in 2013.³

THE CZECHOSLOVAK DOCUMENTATION CENTRE,⁴ PRAGUE

It is a non-profit organization following up on the activity of the exile Czechoslovak documentation centre of independent

1 Hana HAVLŮJOVÁ, Jaroslav Najbert a kol., *Paměť a projektové vyučování v dějepise*, Praha: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů, 2014, 5.

2 For more, see <http://www.libpro.cz/en/index/contact> (citation to the date of 29/05/2017).

3 See <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/flagship-project-activities/memory-of-the-world/register/full-list-of-registered-heritage/registered-heritage-page-5/libri-prohibiti-collection-of-periodicals-of-czech-and-slovak-samizdat-in-the-years-1948-1989/> (citation to the date of 23/05/2017).

4 For more see <http://csds.cz/en/csds.html> (citation to the date of 23/05/2017).

literature which was founded in March 1986 in Hannover by a group of Czech exiles. The institution cooperates very closely with the National Museum⁵ and the centre of its activity is to support the scientific research, promote the historical research and shape the historical conscience of the society in general. The aim of its efforts is to contribute to the knowledge of the national and exile anti-totalitarian resistance in the period of communist Czechoslovakia between 1948 and 1989. The centre has a wide archive collection, consisting among others of the personal estate of the prominent Czechoslovak dissidents who were politicians and artists. It owns and makes accessible to the public a huge amount of samizdat national and exile literature, contributes to publishing its own publications and co-organises technical conferences and exhibitions. The centre is also a co-founder of the International Samizdat [Research] Association (IS[R]A) based in Budapest.⁶

THE MUSEUM OF THE THIRD RESISTANCE,⁷ PŘÍBRAM

The Museum of the Third Resistance ranks among the conscience institutions in the CR and its origins go back to 1990 when it was being created within the initiative of the former political prisoners. In various negotiations, they strived for the museum to be created directly in the capital; however, the capital did not react to these efforts. That is why the museum was finally built in 1992 in Příbram, i.e. in the home town of the local branch of the Confederation of Political Prisoners with the financial support of the government of that time.⁸ The declared objective of the museum is to document the anti-communist resistance of 1948–1989. During that time, approximately 250,000 Czechoslovak citizens were sentenced in politically motivated trials and the majority of them were used as cheap workforce in uranium mines or in production during the service of their term of imprisonment. The exposition called *Political prisoners in uranium mines of 1948–1968* shows, via more than 400 documents and collection objects including objects of the every-day use of the prisoners, mining tools, personal objects of a reminder nature and others, the atrocious living conditions in prisons the convicts had to face. The exhibition includes aerial photos of labour camps that operated at the beginning of the 1950s, mainly in the Jáchymov, Slavkov and Příbram regions, as well as models of the main camp buildings. Other specialised exhibitions can be found in the museum: *Women in the Third Resistance behind the Bars of the Prisons 1948–1968* and *From Bohemia into the Gulags of Siberia* documenting the imprisonment of Czechoslovakia citizens in the USSR between 1944 and 1969.

However, the uniqueness of the exposed objects, but also the phenomena of the anti-communist resistance ignored by the Czech society until recently would deserve bigger support of the state, mainly from the financial point of view. Rather modest expositions consisting more or less of glass show-cases and glazed notice-boards are, as regards today's requirements and possibilities of presentation of historical material and precious artefacts, very old-fashioned and unfortunately rather unattractive for the young generation living hand in hand with technological progress. The existing situation of the museum which has virtually not been changed from the beginning of the 1990s shows the lack of interest of the state in such projects.

THE VOJNA MEMORIAL,⁹ PŘÍBRAM

The former political prisoners have sought a reconstruction of the only, authentically preserved prison site and the making of it accessible to the public already from the beginning of the 1990s. It was at their instigation that in 1998, the government adopted a resolution which transformed the camp owned by the army into a memorial area.¹⁰ Originally a camp for German war prisoners situated between the former uranium shafts served in 1949–1951 as a forced labour camp and until 1961 as a prison facility for the opponents of the governing regime.

Two years after the Czech government adopted the resolution to preserve the premises and build a memorial there, designed as a memorial area commemorating the suffering of citizens imprisoned by the communist regime, the memorial was pronounced a cultural monument and a very demanding reconstruction began. The best preserved buildings were reconstructed, some buildings were built again as replicas of the original ones. A barbed wire fence was built around the whole area and watchtowers were erected to evoke, or rather to preserve the mood of that time. In the buildings, we can find exhibitions documenting the everyday life of prisoners. The Corrective Labour Camp Vojna, as the facility was called from 1951, was opened up to the public in 2005.

INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY HISTORY, THE CZECH ACADEMY OF SCIENCES (ÚSD AV ČR),¹¹ PRAGUE, BRNO

The Institute was created at the beginning of 1990 and since then, it has been focusing on the research of the most recent Czechoslovak history in the period 1938–1989. The research of the only recently finished communist era which was systematically accompanied by the ideological surveillance, cadreship and censorship, appeared to be an actual and urgent need of the society after November 1989. The liberated society perceived the knowledge of the communist past as one of the conditions of its inclusion into the European democratic community.

A specialised library opened to the wide public was created in the Institute. From the beginning of its creation, the Institute focused on its own publication activities, it founded the editorial series *Sešity ÚSD (Notebooks of the ÚSD)*, *Prameny k dějinám čs. krize v letech 1967 až 1970 (Sources to the history of the Czechoslovak crisis in 1967–1970)* and *Svědectví o době a lidech (Testimony*

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8 Jakub Jareš, "Český 'komunismus' v muzeu. Mapování muzejní krajiny a konstitutivní faktory pro její formování", in Radka Šustrová, Luba Hédlová, eds., *Česká paměť. Národ, dějiny a místa paměti*. Praha: Památkář Lidice, 2014, 361.

9 For more, see <http://www.muzeum-pribram.cz/en/vojna-memorial-lesetice/from-history/> (citation to the date of 29/05/2017).

10 Jareš, *Český "komunismus" v muzeu*, 364.

11 For more, see <http://www.usd.cas.cz/en/> (citation to the date of 29/05/2017).

about the era and the people). It has its own magazine called *Soudobé dějiny* published since 2013 with its English mutation called *Czech Journal of Contemporary History*.

Today, the Institute is divided into three departments according to their chronological focus, covering the periods from 1938 until today: the department of the history of the occupation and capitalism creation, the department of real socialism and the department of late socialism and post-socialism. In parallel with this structure, there are smaller and flexible working teams and centres that sometimes exist only for a given period of time. It is the Centre of Oral History, the Centre for the Study of the Cold War and its Impacts, the Centre for the History of Minorities, the History of the Communist Party working group, the Czech Society 1938–1948 working group, Society and the Regime working group and others.

After its creation, the Institute has built the position of a well-respected academic institution, which is proved by the prestigious international Hannah Arendt Prize in 1999 received from the Institute für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen and Koerber-Stiftung. The Institute develops international contact, its cooperation institutions are the National Security Archive in Washington, D.C., the Forschungsstelle Osteuropa an der Universität Bremen, the Instytut Studiów Politycznych Polskiej Akademii Nauk and the Instytut Pamięci Narodowej in Warsaw or the Hannah-Arendt-Institut für Totalitarismusforschung an der Technischen Universität Dresden and others. In cooperation with these organisations, the Institute organises international conferences, specialised symposiums, workshops and exhibitions.

INSTITUTE FOR THE STUDY OF TOTALITARIAN REGIMES¹² AND SECURITY SERVICES ARCHIVE,¹³ PRAGUE

The proposal to create a conscience institution which was supposed to provide the institutional framework for the reconciliation of the Czechoslovak society with its own totalitarian past was first discussed in the Parliament of the CR only in 1999. Its working name was “the Memorial of the Non-Freedom Era” and its aim was, following the example of similar institutions in the world (National Holocaust Museum, Yad Vashem), to document, educate, scientifically research, collect and provide information about the non-freedom era mainly of 1939–1989. The memorial should have been given powers that would enable it to gather evidence and documents from national bodies, public administration bodies and eventually from citizens needed to fully and impartially evaluate the era of the Nazi and communist totality.¹⁴ Its main goal was to analyse the reasons for the loss of freedom and the way it was carried out, manifestations of totalitarian regimes and ideologies, to systematically collect and expertly process all kinds of information. The memorial assumed broad cooperation with all the interested national and foreign institutions, especially with scientific institutions, resistance memorials, libraries and museums. The most important role of the planned institution was to publish and provide access to information about the non-freedom era and the promotion of ideas of freedom and defence of democracy against totalitarian regimes.

However, the necessary political consensus was not reached at that time and it was not until 2005 that the idea of creating the state memory institution in the Czech Republic was revived. The “Nation’s Memory Institute”, which was the newly

considered name of the institution, was to be created on the basis of a newly enacted act that stipulated the rights and obligations of the given institution and which stipulated such conditions allowing for a qualitative new approach to documents of the repressive forces of the Czechoslovak state. Documents of the given origin were to be set aside into a special archive which would be an impartial, but to a certain extent independent institution of the Institute. The Czech Republic drew the inspiration from the already created institutions of a similar character in the neighbouring post-communist countries – Germany, Poland and Slovakia. According to its legislative intention, it was to be awarded the competences of an administration office for processing information about both the Nazi and communist totalitarian power and their application for the protection of the democratic rule of law and the base of a democratic political system.¹⁵

After complex negotiations and discussions, the Act No. 181/2007 Sb., *on the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes and the Security Services Archive*,¹⁶ was enacted and came into effect in August 2007. On 1 February 2008, the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes (ÚSTR) and its subordinate Security Services Archive began their operation.

The supreme authority of the ÚSTR was the Council of the Institute, consisting of seven members named by the Senate of the Czech Republic on the basis of proposals of the President of the Republic and the Chamber of Deputies of the CR. The Council of the Institute has, among others, powers to appoint and revoke the head of the institution. The ÚSTR gained the position of an individual organisational unit of the state, the activity of which can be intervened with and modified only on the basis of the enacted act. The activity of the Institute is controlled by the Chamber of Deputies or by the Senate by discussing its annual reports on its activity.

Besides other obligations, the Act No. 181/2007 Sb., *on the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes and the Security Services Archive*, imposes on the Institute the following:

- to examine and impartially assess the non-freedom era and the period of communist totalitarian power, examine the non-democratic and criminal activity of the state bodies, especially of its security forces, and the criminal activity of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, as well as other organisations based on its ideology;
- to analyse the causes and the way of elimination of the democratic regime during the communist totalitarian power era, to document the participation of national and foreign persons in supporting the communist regime and resistance to it;
- to gather documents testifying about the non-freedom era and period of the communist totalitarian power, especially about the activity of the security forces and forms of persecution and resistance and opening up these documents to the public,

12 For more, see <https://www.ustrcr.cz/>, <http://old.ustrcr.cz/en> (citation to the date of 29/05/2017). See also *Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů a Archiv bezpečnostních složek*. Praha: Ústav pro studium totalitních režimů, 2009.

13 For more, see <http://www.abscr.cz/en> (citation to the date of 29/05/2017).

14 See Pavel Žáček, *Memory of Nations in Democratic Transition. The Czech Experience*. Praha: CEVRO, 2015, 40.

15 Žáček, *Memory of Nations in Democratic Transition. The Czech Experience*, 41.

16 The full text of the act available on-line: <https://portal.gov.cz/app/zakony/zakonPar.jsp?idBiblio=64947&nr=181-2F2007&rpp=15#local-content>.

- to convert the collected documents into an electronic form without undue delay,
- to provide the results of its activities to the public, especially to publish information about the non-freedom era, the period of the communist totalitarian power, acts and fates of individuals, publish and spread publications, organise exhibitions, seminars, specialised conferences and discussions,
- cooperate with scientific, cultural, educational and other institutions in order to exchange information and experience regarding technical issues,
- to cooperate with foreign institutions or persons with a similar focus of activity.

To sum up, the basic tasks of the Institute are research activities regarding the non-freedom era (1938–1945) and the period of the communist totalitarian power (1948–1989). Besides the scientific and editorial activities, the employees of the Institute participate in a social discourse about totalitarian regimes by organising conferences, movie zones and conference cycles for experts and the lay public including schools. The Institute also regularly publishes two expert review periodicals – the revue *Paměť a dějiny* and the almanac *Securitas Imperii*. Both of them present the results of the research of the historians working at the Institute or of their external colleagues. Once a year, the Institute publishes the *Almanac of the Security Forces Archive*, presenting other research findings from the cycle of topics that the act imposed on the Institute to process. The ÚSTR administers its own huge library named after Ján Langoš, the important Czechoslovak and Slovak politician and founder of the Nation's Memory Institute in Bratislava.

One of the most important tasks of the Institute is to convert the documents from the archive collections and ABS collections into an electronic form, enabling the necessary protection of archive documents, as well as creating a digital archive the aim of which is to provide quick and quality access to archive documents to the researching public.

MEMORIAL TO THE VICTIMS OF COMMUNISM, PRAGUE

Even though they are not institutions as such, memorials, too, can be ranked among the *sites of conscience*, and therefore, we shall mention at least one memorial representing all the memorials (and there are not many of them) that are built in the Czech Republic today to commemorate the victims of the communist regime: it is the Memorial to the Victims of Communism in Prague. The Memorial is situated at the foot of the Petřín hill in the centre of the capital and it was unveiled in 2002, that is more than 10 years after the fall of the regime (!). Its sculpture part was created by the Czech academic sculptor Olbram Zoubek, the architectural design was made by the architects Zdeněk Hölzl and Jan Kerel. The memorial is made of a massive tapering staircase with seven more or less torso-like human figures made of metal alloy and situated in its upper part. The first of the walking figures is almost complete, the others are gradually more and more crippled, but still standing. The figures symbolise the everyday torture of political prisoners, as well as their bravery and resilience. It represents men and women, liquidated by the state power, but still standing and resisting.

At the bottom part of the memorial, there is a signature imprinted in metal plaques reading *“Victims of Communism*

1948–1989: 205,486 sentenced – 248 executed – 4,500 died in prisons – 327 died on the borders – 170,938 citizens emigrated.”

II. WEB PROJECTS OF NON-PROFIT ORGANISATIONS

The organisations listed below, presenting themselves mainly, but not only, via their web projects, work with the concept that the *sites of conscience* can contribute to disrupt the “master narratives”, i.e. official, linearly narrated history, as it is traditionally taught at schools. They strive to affect and disrupt the classical approach to history education which was determined by a selection of historical reality and learning about heroic political acts, rather than by a critical analysis of the history.¹⁷ They emphasise the concept of discovering the life of an ordinary person, which represents a new approach in history education: *“instead of famous heroes and battles, the cultural conscience promotes the perspective of ‘ordinary’ people who found themselves in unprecedented situations exposed to incomprehensible suffering which at least some of them have been more or less lucky to be able to survive. Thus, the memories of the witnesses become on the one hand the source of sadness, and on the other hand both a warning and a lecture for the future.”*¹⁸

Besides collecting, making accessible and evaluating historical documents witnessing the persecution of opinion opponents and their persistent efforts to resist the Communists, the above mentioned institutions try to capture the testimony itself of these people by the method of oral history.

POLITIČTÍ VĚZNI.CZ¹⁹

The non-governmental and non-profit project called *Politíční vězňi.cz* (*Politicalprisoners.eu*) is an example of such efforts. Its objective is to ethically record and preserve the memory and life experience of the former political prisoners and prisoners in the territory of the former Czechoslovakia and abroad. The aim of the project with the motto *“Each interview with a victim of Stalin’s repression recorded in a methodologically correct way represents a living memory of the European past”* is mainly to document the life stories of the former political prisoners and to present them to the wide public in an accessible way. Besides the database of interviews with political prisoners accessible on-line, the association also publishes freely available publications thematically connected with the period of the communist regime in the Czechoslovak Republic. Moreover, it organises visits to former uranium mines in Jáchymov and to criminal labour camps with a trained guide, or accompanied by one of the witnesses who were imprisoned in the Jáchymov region.

17 Milan Hlavačka, Místa paměti a jejich postavení v historickém a společenském “provozu”, in *Místa paměti česko-německého soužití. Sborník příspěvků z konference pracovní skupiny Česko-německého diskusního fóra Místo paměti v Chebu 5. 6 2010*, Praha: Antikomplex pro Collegium Bohemicum, 2011, 17.

18 Hana Havlůjová, Jaroslav Najbert a kol., *Paměť a projektové vyučování v dějepise*, 6.

19 For more, see <http://www.politicalprisoners.eu/> (citation to the date of 23/05/2017).

DCERY.CZ²⁰

A unique project which was founded in 1999 is the *Spolek Dcery 50. let (Daughters of the Enemy Association)* associating the daughters of political prisoners of the 1950s. These daughters, bound by similar life experiences, decided to get their personal testimonies over especially to the young generation, to give lectures about the impact of the communist era on the environment and life of families where usually one of the parents did not agree with such a communist ideology and opposed the ideology via various forms of protest and fight. These persons were punished for their opinions not only by a long-term imprisonment, but their whole family was punished, too. The aim of this association is to lecture future generations so that a terror of this kind would never take place in our country again, which is expressed in the motto of the association: "Who can map their past, can control and govern their future as well." They cooperate with various national and foreign non-profit organisations, participate in the creation of film and radio documentaries, give lectures at schools, participate in miscellaneous meetings and discussions with the public and publish.

POST BELLUM,²¹ PRAGUE

The non-profit organisation with a fitting name was founded in 2001 by several activists, mainly journalists. The fundamental goal of this organisation which is still operational and the activities of which are known to the wide public, is to record the memories of the witnesses and to make them accessible on the internet website *Paměť národa*.²² Today, there are more than 6,000 memories of the war veterans, holocaust victims, prisoners and opponents of Nazism and communism, victims of collectivisation, victims of brutal physical and psychological terror by the former security forces of communist Czechoslovakia. The recorded memories of the participants of the historical events are supposed to enable the recognition of the essence of totalitarian regimes of the 20th century, but also to examine the motivations and decisions of individuals who found themselves in a limit situation. It is the widest publicly accessible database of memories in the whole of Europe. Gradually, the base and number of collaborators of the Post Bellum organisation widened and it organises various conferences, exhibitions and discussions, participates in document creation, publishes thematic publications and is pedagogically active. Within its sectional project *Stories of Our Neighbours (Příběhy našich sousedů)*,²³ it instructs the pupils of higher classes of secondary and high schools to find a witness, record his or her life-time memories, digitalise their photographs, explore the archives and finally create a radio, TV or written report or document.²⁴ It also organises the biggest documentary competition in the country called *Stories of the 20th century*.²⁵ The Post Bellum organisation aims to simplify and at the same time to diversify the ways of mediation of historical events via its own application for mobile phones with a fitting name *Memory of Nations Sites*.²⁶

ONE WORLD IN SCHOOLS²⁷ – STORIES OF INJUSTICE PROJECT²⁸

One World in Schools is one of the educational projects by the People in Need organisation and it was launched in 2001.

Its aim is to contribute to the education of young people so that they are able to orient themselves well in the contemporary world and to take an open and critical approach to information. The educational materials are provided to students and teachers in more than 3,300 secondary and high schools that are involved in the programme. Films, discussions and educational activities within this project mainly bring the topic of human rights and civic engagement to schools.

One of the important projects of this programme is the Stories of Injustice project. It was created in 2005 when a need to react to the contemporary situation in the Czech Republic was felt, as, despite their experience of living in dictatorships for decades, people seemed to forget that freedom cannot be taken for granted and it is necessary to protect it. Thus, the Stories of Injustice project gives students an idea of the time of non-freedom, via documentary and feature films, lectures and discussions with the witnesses and historians, publications and exhibitions. Since 2009, students have been awarding the Stories of Injustice Award for brave positions and acts during the communist regime era.

PANT²⁹

The civic association PANT, founded in 2007, focuses on similar activities as the above mentioned project with the objective to be active in the field of the development and promotion of public awareness about human rights issues and their violation by totalitarian regimes of the 20th century. Its activity focuses above all on education, film documentary and journalist production, support of activities that are mapping and developing the cultural heritage in the Czech, Central-European and European regions. The flagship of the association is the educational website *Moderní dějiny.cz (Modern History.eu)* providing high quality content to the public with increasing web traffic.³⁰ The association cooperates intensively with primary, secondary and high schools and universities, historical and political science institutions, archives, associations of witnesses and other non-governmental organisations with a similar orientation. In the international field, it develops a rich cooperation with

20 For more, see <http://www.enemysdaughters.com/> (citation to the date of 24/05/2017).

21 For more, see <https://www.postbellum.cz/english/> (citation to the date of 29/05/2017).

22 For more, see <https://www.memoryofnations.eu> (citation to the date of 29/05/2017). See also Kol. autorů: *Memory of Nation. Post Bellum, Praha 2015*. Available on-line: http://www.pametnaroda.cz/data/page/File/PN_promo9.3_CZn.pdf (citation to the date of 29/05/2017).

23 For more, see <https://www.pribehynasichsousedu.cz/> (citation to the date of 29/05/2017).

24 For more, see <https://www.pribehynasichsousedu.cz/> (citation to the date of 23/05/2017).

25 For more, see <https://www.pribehy20stoleti.cz/> (citation to the date of 23/05/2017).

26 For more, see <http://www.mistapametinaroda.cz/?lc=en> (citation to the date of 23/05/2017).

27 For more, see <https://www.jsns.cz/en/home> (citation to the date of 23/05/2017).

28 For more, see <https://www.jsns.cz/projekty/pribehy-bezpravri> (citation to the date of 23/05/2017). See also Adam Drda, *Příběhy bezpráví – příběhy vzdoru. Člověk v tísni, Praha 2009*.

29 For more, see <http://www.pant.cz/english.html> (citation to the date of 23/05/2017).

30 For more, see <http://www.modern-history.eu/> (citation to the date of 23/05/2017).

educational institutions, schools and historical departments in Poland, Hungary and Slovakia.

III. UNREALISED PROJECTS

Over the last two decades, there have been many museums and memorials being discussed and not created or built until today, let's mention at least two of them.

PRISON IN UHERSKÉ HRADIŠTĚ³¹

The site of the former prison has a troubled history: during the occupation of the Czechoslovak Republic by the German army, Czech patriots and anti-fascism fighters were imprisoned here, during the communist regime, its opinion opponents were imprisoned and brutally tortured here. In 1960, the prison was closed and the site, now owned by the Ministry of Justice, has been deteriorating ever since. The state has not been able to decide yet what to do with the former prison and the building is in quite a dilapidated state today.

In 2009, the civic association called *Initiative for a dignified use of the prison in Uherské Hradiště (Iniciativa za důstojné využití věznic v Uherském Hradišti)* was created. Its aim has been to support the solution of the in-the-long-term unacceptable situation of the object which the association considers to be an important monument commemorating the years of terror of the two totalitarian regimes of the last century. The goal of the association is to preserve the prison and to rebuild it, with an appropriate reverence, into a memorial to the victims of the totalitarian regimes and a museum of the power persecution. However, this has not happened yet and it remains a question whether the expensive reconstruction of the prison in order to build the monument instead will ever be carried out by the state.

RED TOWER OF DEATH, OSTROV NAD OHŘÍ

The tower for sorting the uranium ore situated near the uranium mines in Jáchymov where many political prisoners worked as slaves under atrocious conditions is one of their most significant symbols now. Thanks to long-term efforts, this site was pronounced a national cultural monument in 2008 and handed over from private ownership into the hands, or administration of the Confederation of Political Prisoners (KPV). The organisation was thinking about creating an "International Museum of Slave Labour", as was the working title there, however, this objective was not carried out because of a lack of financial resources and staff capacities. Recently, the confederation has been striving for the state to take the monument directly into its ownership and administration, whereas the costs of the overall reconstruction of the site and creation of expositions are estimated at CZK 60,000,000. After the completion of the reconstruction, the exposition on communist camps together with the necessary facilities for visitors should be created here on the basis of the consultation of the former political prisoners and experts.

IV. COMMERCIAL INSTITUTIONS

In 2001, a private *Museum of Communism* was opened right in the centre of Prague. At the time of its creation, it aroused many

reactions, mainly due to the fact that it was the first (and unfortunately, the only) museum of communism in the capital city, on top of this it was created on a commercial basis and without consulting the experts on history.³² Its owner focuses mainly on tourists and the turnout of 60,000 visitors a year proves that people show interest in the museum.

A similar project is the *KGB Museum in Prague* created in 2010, with a smaller range of exhibited objects, and the Iron Curtain Museum in Valtice in South Moravia. The second listed museum focuses on the border surveillance in the former Czechoslovakia and attempts at its illegal crossing.

CURRENT STATUS AND LESSONS LEARNT

After the fall of communism, we can observe a steady and in some periods even increasing tendency to feel nostalgic about the life "during communism", despite the criminality of the communist regime and the constant efforts of the memory institutions that have been created in the Czech Republic so far. However, this fact, for some even incomprehensible, is in various degrees of intensity observable in most of the post-communist countries. This is reflected in different surveys and opinion polls, as well as in the political sphere. Public opinion polls confirm such a prevailing phenomenon, especially for persons of the lower social class of the older and middle generations; the majority of this category of respondents emphasises the material and social securities that the former regime in their opinion ensured.³³ Today, they do not consider the predominant "mainstream problems" of communism, such as the ban on crossing the borders of your own country, the ban on presenting opinions of one's self, or even on having them, the ubiquitous censorship and a lack of consumer goods, to be that important. Usually, on the grounds that today, they can travel and buy things, but they do not have enough financial funds for it. It seems that the creation or demonstration of their own opinion is not that important to them. They approve of, condone or ignore the crimes of communism. Unfortunately.

As far as the current political situation in the Czech Republic is concerned, the successor party of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia (KSČ) entitled the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSČM) is a kind of a permanent element of the Czech political scene at the national, as well as local level. The long-term research continues to attribute to the party important electoral preferences that are, moreover, rather increasing (today, up to 13 % of legitimate voters would vote for the party).

Also due to these warning results, it is important for the state to fight for the establishing or innovating of the sites of conscience that are related to the long-term period of the non-democratic regime rule in Czechoslovakia. These sites of conscience are meaningful not only for preserving the nation's memory, but for the future of the nation as well – for the viewpoint it will take. All the projects mentioned above draw attention to recognize the injustice and violence not only as the attributes of the past

31 For more, see <http://www.veznicehradiste.cz/> (citation to the date of 24/05/2017).

32 See Jakub Jareš, *Český "komunismus" v muzeu*, 365.

33 See for example Stanislav Hampl, Jaroslav Huk, Sametová revoluce po dvaceti letech, in Jiří Šubr, ed., *Historické vědomí jako předmět badatelského zájmu: teorie a výzkum*. Kolín: Historická sociologie, Nezávislé centrum pro studium politiky, ARC – Vysoká škola politických a společenských věd, 2010, 107-122.

communist regime, but of any authoritarian system that suppresses the fundamental freedoms and rights of a person, and teach the new generations to do so. Remembering the past events and victims of the fight for democracy and freedom in our country can be perceived as one of the key factors of preventing their repetition. Unfortunately, democracy is still not a state programme in the Czech Republic, the successor state of the former Czechoslovakia, and the priority of its citizens is still not an unshakeable certainty there.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Each democratic state, or its political representatives should consider the maintenance and reinforcement of democracy and freedom in their country as a priority. This approach must be reflected in the financial and staff support of memory institutions and projects alike, as these can significantly influence the opinion orientation and political direction of the whole nation in the future.

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MEMORY OF NATIONS

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EDUCATION AND PRESERVATION OF SITES OF CONSCIENCE

MEELIS MARIPUU

INTRODUCTION

After the reign of totalitarian and criminal regimes, education and the perpetuation of memories have an extremely important role. The thorough legal study of the past period, the punishment of the offenders guilty of crimes, and the rehabilitation of victims makes it possible to restore the legal status of aggrieved individuals. The commemoration of sites of conscience and the appraisal by society of what has taken place at those sites are particularly important for restoring the moral dignity of the victims and for society to cope with its history. The field of education has to bear the brunt of educating the new generation. There is no direct experience from the prior regime, and for this reason, there is also no understanding of the dangers connected to such criminal regimes and of their operational mechanisms that seem absurd today. The field of education and commemoration faces a particularly complex task, of great responsibility, in societies that have lived under more than one criminal regime, which have also been hostile towards each other. In Estonia, the Soviet Union's communist regime and the German national socialist regime alternately dominated. By virtue of the end results of the Second World War, where the Soviet Union belonged to the coalition of victors, the receptions of the communist and national socialist regimes are extremely varied and at times outright diametrically opposite. This leads to situations where bringing the crimes of communist regimes to light is labelled as an attempt to diminish the importance of Nazi crimes.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DEFAULT SITUATION

During the last decades of its existence, the Soviet regime softened somewhat and at the same time stagnated. Active political terror against its inhabitants ended with the death of the Soviet dictator Jossif Stalin in 1953, and in 1956, Nikita Khrushchev, the new leader of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, denounced the preceding terror. This was admittedly followed by the staggered release of prisoners and deportees from penal institutions, but not by the explicit condemnation of the preceding political terror or the punishment of those who participated in it. The regime's new leaders, who had already risen through the ranks during Stalin's reign, washed the blood off their hands and turned the deceased dictator into a scapegoat. They attempted to continue developing society on the basis of communist dogma and the same applied to their depiction of the past. The official history of Soviet society was the history of class struggle, the writing of which was regulated by the state. Depiction of the Soviet regime in a negative light was an absolute taboo. Even after Stalin's death, the regime simply kept silent about the condemned dictator, he was "written out of history".

The regime attempted to consolidate a society that had suffered for decades under harsh domestic political terror by

modelling the image of a foreign enemy, whose imagined activity was supposed to justify domestic terror and the extensive restriction of human rights until the end of the 1980s. Hitlerite Germany who had lost the Second World War was placed in this role, and when the Cold War broke out, the role was transferred to the entire "imperialist Western world" headed by the Soviet regime's recent ally, the USA. This scheme functioned successfully in regions of the Soviet Union that had fallen under communist rule immediately after the fall of the Russian Empire in 1917. In the case of Estonian and other nations that had managed to fight their way out of the grasp of the communists upon the collapse of the tsarist empire and to gain independence, fell under Soviet occupation after the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, such an approach did not work. In addition to being a taboo topic, the geographical remoteness of the sites of terror and conscience hindered the ascertainment, under the conditions of Soviet rule, of the fate of tens of thousands of compatriots who had lost their lives or freedom in the course of political terror. Most of the punishment camps and sites where deportees were forced to settle, which have symbolic value were situated in distant eastern and northern regions of the Soviet Union, access to which was complicated or altogether forbidden. The memory of victims of terror could be preserved and passed on only in the narrow circle of the family and close friends. A few people had secretly drawn up and preserved their own lists of fellow sufferers. All of the pertinent archival documents were in the administrative field of the Soviet Union's Ministry of Internal Affairs, and only a few researchers who were loyal to the regime and whose writings were used for propaganda purposes had access to them.

DESCRIPTION OF THE TRANSITION

The political changes of the latter half of the 1980s in the Soviet Union enabled social activists and the first historians on their own personal initiative to start eliminating history's so-called blank patches during the last years of the Soviet regime. These referred to formerly taboo topics that obscured the communist regime's domestic political terror and political murders that had continued for decades. As long as the state authorities completely controlled access to the archives, this type of knowledge was primarily based on people's memories and indirectly relevant documents that access was possible to gain. Heritage conservation associations that set about actively gathering the memories of victims of repression played an important role in the transitional period. The fact that throughout the exposure, remembrance and making sense of the communist regime's crimes in Estonia, society has consensually proceeded from the principle of the legal continuance of the Republic of Estonia, must be pointed out as an important point of departure in this entire process. In the given context, this means that neither researchers nor society at large consider the Estonian Soviet Socialist Republic, formed by

the Soviet Union and which existed *de facto* as the power structure in occupied Estonia in 1940/1941 and 1944–1991, as their “own country”, but rather as a foreign state that was part of the invading country’s administrative structure. This gave researchers unrestricted access to the archival materials of Soviet institutions that had been left in Estonian archives and made the moral assessment of their actions considerably easier.

During the final years of the Soviet Union’s existence, as the regime sought a way out of its impasse, it started admitting its earlier domestic political terror step by step and rehabilitating its victims. This new policy made it possible for former victims of political terror to organise legally and founded the Eesti Õigusvastaselt Represseeritute Liit “Memento” (Estonian Memento Association of Unlawfully Repressed Persons) in Estonia in 1989, two years before Estonia regained its independence from its forcible annexation by the Soviet Union. The Eesti Memento Liit (Estonian Memento Association), an umbrella organisation for the non-profit associations and societies united persons who had fought for Estonia’s independence, persons who were repressed during the Soviet era and members of their families, operates as the legal successor of that association since 1999. Typically of associations uniting victims, standing for their rights, the preservation of the memory of what has happened, and drawing up lists of victims and ascertaining their fates have been at the centre of their activity from the very start. The centre for ascertaining victims has been the Memento working group known as the Eesti Represseeritute Registri Büroo (Registry Bureau of Estonian Repressed Persons), which was created in 1990.¹ By 2017, data concerning several hundred thousand persons, who have suffered under the communist regime in various ways, has been gathered from archival documents and other sources, and published as the result of their work. Of this total, over 25,000 persons lost their lives in the course of this terror.²

The political regime in contemporary Russia does not support the treatment of former penal institutions and other sites connected to political repressions, all of which are tied to the fates of millions of people, as memorial sites. Victims of political terror and their supporters from Estonia and other countries that were captured by the Soviet Union have both separately and jointly organised expeditions to former penal institutions in Russia’s northern and eastern regions, and have tried to commemorate the victims in those places in a low-key manner. These opportunities, to a great extent, depended on the disposition of Russia’s local organs of power, which can be more favourable than that of the central government. Due to political obstacles and their geographical remoteness, these sites of conscience do not play a direct role in the shaping of today’s culture of memory in Estonia, although they are important to the victims of terror themselves.

The thorough study and use of the heritage of criminal regimes from the aspects of education and the culture of memory requires the scholarly treatment of the whole subject matter in addition to ascertaining the victims. After independence was regained in 1991, the opportunity emerged for society to coordinate important subject matter research. In 1992, the Okupatsioonide Repressiivpoliitika Uurimise Riiklik Komisjon (Estonian State Commission on Examination of the Policies of Repression) was formed to operate under the jurisdiction of parliament. A whole series of very different studies emerged as the result of their work, and the book *Valge raamat. Eesti rahva kaotustest okupatsioonide läbi 1940–1991* was published as the summary of their work in 2005.³

The Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity was founded with a narrower scope of investigation at the initiative of President Lennart Meri in 1998. The Commission set as its objective the investigation of crimes against humanity committed in Estonia and/or against citizens of the Republic of Estonia, which were committed from the occupation of Estonia in June of 1940 onward. The Commission proceeded in its work from the definitions of crimes against humanity, war crimes and genocide in the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court passed in 1998. The objective of the Commission’s historical investigation work was to ascertain what crimes have been committed and their historical background.⁴ The research studies that formed the basis for the Commission’s reports have been published in the form of two books.⁵ The Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity completed its work in 2008.

The Estonian Institute of Historical Memory, founded at the initiative of President Toomas-Hendrik Ilves in 2008, has adopted the UN General Declaration of Human Rights as the basis of its work and continues the work of the previous Commission in researching the Soviet era in Estonian history.⁶

Universities as institutions have not developed into leading centres in this field of research in Estonia. At the University of Tartu, which is Estonia’s leading university in the field of history, 76 doctoral dissertations in history have been defended after the restoration of independence and only 6 of them are connected to this subject field to a greater or lesser extent.⁷ This is the case in a situation where the examination of the criminal Soviet regime has been the theme that has aroused the greatest interest in society as a whole during those years. Historians working at universities have been involved in researching this theme within the framework of other projects or scientific grants. The Estonian Literary Museum and the Estonian Life Stories Association, that operates as part of the museum has played the leading role in gathering and publishing memories.⁸

Within Estonia, primarily a few isolated buildings connected to Soviet repressive institutions, where victims of political terror were interrogated or imprisoned, can be viewed as sites of conscience. A KGB prison cells museum was opened in Tartu,

1 Eesti Memento Liit, <http://www.memento.ee/> (5 June 2017)

2 Memento books, <http://www.memento.ee/trukised/memento-raamatud/> (5 June 2017)

3 Valge raamat. Eesti rahva kaotustest okupatsioonide läbi 1940–1991. Okupatsioonide Repressiivpoliitika Uurimise Riiklik Komisjon, Justiitsministeerium, Eesti Entsüklopeediakirjastus, Tallinn 2005. The English version of the book was published the following year. The White Book. Losses Inflicted on the Estonian Nation by Occupation Regimes 1940–1991, Estonian State Commission on Examination of the Policies of Repression, Republic of Estonia, Estonian Encyclopaedia Publishers, Tallinn 2005. <https://www.riigikogu.ee/wp-content/uploads/2015/02/TheWhiteBook.pdf> (5 June 2017)

4 International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity <http://www.mnemosyne.ee/hc.ee/> (5 June 2017)

5 Estonia 1940–1945. Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity (Tallinn 2006); Estonia since 1944. Reports of the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity (Tallinn 2009)

6 Estonian Institute of Historical Memory, <http://www.mnemosyne.ee/> (5 June 2017)

7 Doctoral dissertations defended at the University of Tartu. <http://www.ut.ee/et/oppimine/doktoriope/doktoritood> (5 June 2017)

8 Estonian Life Stories Association. <http://www2.kirmus.ee/elulood/index.html> (5 June 2017)

Estonia's second largest city in terms of population, in 2001, as a branch of the local municipal museum. It is located in a building where the Estonian SSR Ministry of State Security Tartu Department operated in the 1940s and 1950s. An exhibition is open to interested visitors in the preliminary investigation prison cells located in the building's cellar. A small exhibit will be opened in the summer of 2017 on Pagari Street in Tallinn in the cellars of the Estonian SSR Ministry of State Security internal prison. The most monumental site of conscience associated with the fates of thousands of Estonia's people is the prison situated in Tallinn that became known under the name of Patarei (Battery), where victims of terror were held in custody during their preliminary investigations and after their penalties had been imposed, until they were sent to the Soviet Union's penal institutions. The Patarei complex is currently the most important site of memory in Estonia on an emotional level, yet the government has not had the means for fixing it up. Patarei operated as a provisional museum over the course of several years, where the preserved prison atmosphere was demonstrated for visitors, but since the building is in such poor condition, it is in danger of collapse; it is now closed to visitors. Europe's leading heritage conservation organisation Europa Nostra and the European Investment Bank Institute have added the Patarei complex to the list of 14 monuments that are considered to be the most endangered in Europe.

In addition to the above-mentioned buildings, as sites of memory connected to the crimes of the Soviet regime, large numbers of memorial plaques and other such reminders have been mounted in local communities throughout Estonia in memory of local people who fell victim to political terror. There is hitherto no central memorial in memory of the victims of communism with national status in Estonia. Popular initiative has already launched the erection of a heap of stones in memory of the victims in Pilstvere at the centre of Estonia in 1988 at the end of the Soviet regime. The heap of stones has grown considerably over the intervening decades. Memorial stones in memory of victims from different counties of Estonia have been erected there. Furthermore, everyone has the opportunity to add a stone to it in memory of those who were close to him or her. As such, the heap of stones at Pilstvere is thus far the only site of memory that unites all of Estonia. Similarly to the lack of a memorial, a central national museum or exposition for perpetuating the memory of the victims of communism and for organising educational work has not been created in Estonia. The Museum of Occupations founded in 1998 through private initiative has filled this gap. This museum's permanent exhibition and films provide an overview of the occupation era, repressions, the nationalist resistance struggle and the Singing Revolution in Estonia in 1940–1991, when Estonia was occupied, alternately by the Soviet Union, Germany, and once again by the Soviet Union. After the opening of this museum, the government has supported it by covering its fixed costs as a contribution from the Estonian state.

Changes have already begun in the treatment of this topic in general education in the final years of the Soviet regime, when strict ideological control of the content of the teaching of history disappeared and preparations began for developing an entirely new concept and new course syllabuses for teaching history. This process took place through productive cooperation between progressively-minded officials in education, working teachers, lecturers from schools of higher education, and others. The transitional period of 1989–1992 coincided with stages

in the restoration of national independence. The establishment of new course syllabuses was nevertheless only the beginning of the journey; liberation had been achieved from the Soviet regime's ideological pressure and control, but new content had yet to be created. For years, the content of the teaching of history in schools depended on the personal views of the teachers and their wish and capability for gathering and systematising information. Lecture courses given by university historians on the most topical themes played a very important role in the in-service training of teachers. The more active teachers gathered substantial additional material on an ongoing basis from the media as such material was publicly disclosed. This was especially connected to the recent history of Estonia itself, the research of which had been impossible from a non-communist point of view until the last few years of the Soviet period due to the inaccessibility of the archives. The cycle of the completion of new academic treatments of history and of textbooks corresponding to such treatments was a process that lasted many years.⁹

CURRENT STATUS

Compared to the 1990s, the situation concerning speaking about the political terror and violation of human rights perpetrated by the communist regime, and the preservation of the memory of its victims, has changed in various ways. The changing of generations affects this as an inevitable factor. The new generation that is now already becoming actively involved in shaping society, and the young people currently in schools have no direct experience of the Soviet regime. Society's general interest in this theme has decreased along with the retirement of the preceding generation that has directly experienced the most virulent political terror. Thematic educational work has to a great extent been left as the responsibility of the school system, yet contemporary educational policy favours more exact sciences and language learning. The position and scope in terms of hours allotted in school to history and social studies, as the primary subjects that introduce the heritage of the past and society's values, have declined considerably. Since 2014, these subjects are no longer among the national exams required for graduating from secondary school.

Tying education to political objectives has never been popular in Estonia. Thus German-type political foundations for operating in the sphere of civic, political or historical education, for instance, have not emerged in Estonia.¹⁰ The annual public commemoration of remembrance days on 25 March and 14 June marking the mass deportations carried out by the Soviet regime in 1941 and 1949 has acquired a certain positive role in trans-generational involvement in dealing with the heritage of the communist regime. Young people are included in organising remembrance events through organisations and student governments at secondary schools and universities. One of the few non-student organisations that has organised work in this field

9 Oja, Mare. Muutused üldhariduskooli ajalooõpetuses alates 1987. aastast – nõukogulikust tänapäevaseks (Changes in History Teaching in General Education since 1987 – from Soviet to Modern). Tallinn University, Dissertations on Humanities, 2016. <http://www.etera.ee/zoom/22811/view?page=466&p=separate&view=0,0,1932,2834> (5 June 2017)

10 The larger German political foundations (primarily the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e. V. and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung) admittedly operate in Estonia at varying levels of activity, but do so in order to fulfil their own aims.

among young people is the Unitas Foundation, which has successfully involved young people in various projects.¹¹ The initiative *Kogu me lugu*¹² can be highlighted as a distinctive project, in the course of which the stories of Estonian families through the years of Soviet and German occupation are gathered as video clips, studied and shared. Young people are carrying out this project and at the same time, young people can also be found among the people telling their stories, telling about how the stories of their families have reached them and how they make sense of these stories.¹³

This year in 2017, Estonia is preparing to erect a national memorial to the victims of communism in its capital Tallinn, which is to be completed in the country's centenary year of 2018.¹⁴ In the course of these preparations, accessible archival sources will once more be thoroughly examined in order to ascertain the victims of political terror by name, and the public will be involved to perpetuate the memory of the victims in the memorial that is to be built. The completion of a national memorial is, on the one hand, in honour of the tens of thousands of victims and the hundreds of thousands who have suffered, yet at the same time it has to bear a message for subsequent generations.

The new era needs an educational and memory political approach to the heritage of the communist regime that differs from previous approaches in order to put the message concealed in that heritage into words for current generations, and to find a way to convey this message to its recipients.

Regardless of the fact thirty years will soon have passed since the collapse of the Soviet Union, there are still blank gaps in the research of the activity of the communist regime in Estonia. This refers to the internal operational mechanisms of the occupying regime as well as the social mechanics manipulated by governmental agencies to force people to obey, adapt and collaborate. The research of these themes requires the active continuation of both local and international comparative studies.

LESSONS LEARNT

POSITIVE EXAMPLES

Estonia has by way of shaping its national policy and social attitudes clearly and unambiguously uncoupled itself from the legacy of its communist regime. This has provided historians with unrestricted access to archival documents so that academic studies and the memories of contemporaries of the events in question, together, would form as broad a base as possible for the people's culture of memory and for the clear-cut historical treatment of this theme in school. With the financial support of public funds, the Eesti Represseeritute Registri Büroo has succeeded in documenting by name the lion's share of the victims of the communist regime and those who suffered under it. Work on further ascertainment of their fates will also continue in the future.

Very large numbers of the memories of those who suffered under the regime have been published as books. Massive collections of memories have additionally been deposited at the Estonian Literary Museum, the Museum of Occupations, and other

institutions. The greater part of the population has an overview of the extent of the political terror that has taken place. There were few families that it did not affect at all. This fact is surely one factor that has not allowed political nostalgia for communist ideology to emerge in Estonia, regardless of political crises and the squabbling between the political parties. After the restoration of Estonia's independence, the legal successor to the Communist Party (under the name of the Eestimaa Ühendatud Vasakpartei (United Left-wing Party of Estonia)) has managed to exceed the election threshold in parliamentary elections only once, in 1999.¹⁵ Currently, the party has become utterly marginalised.

NEGATIVE EXAMPLES

A large Russian-speaking community remained in the country after Estonia regained its independence in 1991. The overwhelming majority of the members of this community, either they themselves or their parents, had come to live in Estonia during the Soviet era. Their relative proportion of the population had risen to about one third; today it has declined to about one fourth. The Russian-speaking community continues, to a great extent, to function in society as a detached segment of the population that is in the information field of neighbouring Russia on a daily basis by way of the mass media. Russia's media channels transmit an image of history that for the most part been approved by the Russian state and in its assessments is more often in the position of trying to justify the previous communist regime and its crimes. Thus the treatment of the heritage of the communist regime in school, and as a theme in society as a whole, is often complicated and generates contradictions. Through the effect of Russia's propaganda, nostalgia is noticeable in the Russian-speaking community, especially among its more elderly members.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In the case of Estonia, we are reaching the time where due to the temporal factor, the possible judicial punishment of the offenders from the criminal regime is becoming unlikely. The interpretation of the heritage of the past criminal regime for the new generation that has no direct contact with it, therefore becomes all the more important. It is unlikely that this task will be accomplished only on the strength of victims' associations or civil society activists. This requires the existence of an apolitical institution with guaranteed long-term financing that is capable of coordinating undertakings relevant to this theme in different fields: the organisation of research work, the support of educational activity, the conduct of remembrance events, etc.

11 Unitas Foundation. <http://mnemosyne.ee/en/about-us/> (5 June 2017)

12 Kogu Me Lugu (translates as Collect our Story, We're Collecting the Story, also Our Entire Story).

13 Kogu me lugu. <https://kogumelugu.ee/en> (5 June 2017)

14 Memorial to the victims of communism and the monument to officers <https://ajaveeb.just.ee/kommunismiohvitrememoriaal/> (5 June 2017)

15 National Electoral Committee, Riigikogu (Estonian parliament) election of 1999. <http://vvk.ee/varasemad/?v=r99> (5 June 2017).

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MEMORY OF NATIONS

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EDUCATION AND PRESERVATION OF SITES OF CONSCIENCE

IRAKLI KHVADAGIANI

INTRODUCTION

During the last stage of “Perestroika”, especially after the tragedy of the 9th of April 1989 in Tbilisi, which was due to rise of mass protests and a sense of system crisis, it came time for public discussions on a variety of formerly forbidden issues, including Soviet crimes and mass terror. As communist state censorship was weakened, enough testimonies and memories of the victims of Soviet repressions began to be published and a few formerly forbidden books were published for the first time. The last years of Soviet rule in Georgia were accompanied with the humiliation and the destroying of Soviet symbols – monuments of Soviet leaders and architectural details of Soviet ideology. During the transition time – 1989–1991, there were demands for marking memory about the victims and preserving sites of conscience, but the complex problems of political and social life after the re-establishment of the independence of Georgia created an unfriendly environment for developing such ideas and projects.

THE NEED FOR THE PRESERVATION OF WITNESS MEMORY

The first initiatives concerning identification and preservation of sites of conscience began in Georgia in 1989. In March 1989 the “Commission of Supreme Council of Georgian SSR for the re-establishing of justice for the victims of repressions, which took place in 1930–40 and 1950’s” was founded. One of the aims of the Commission was the identification of mass gravesites of the victims of Soviet repressions. However, the Commission has yet to find such places, and public society started to organize a campaign of identification based on appeals in the press, but without definite success.

At the same time, a movement to create symbolic sites of conscience started to appear; one of the first initiatives was from Tamaz Kvachantiradze’s article published in the “Literaturuli Sakartvelo” (Literary Georgia). The basic idea of the article was to construct a symbolic grave in memory of repressed Georgian public figures on the Mtatsminda Mountain pantheon. This idea gained active resonance and even led to the beginnings of specific projects, but none of them has been realized.¹

The same kind of initiative was expressed by a group of Georgian writers and poets who published an open appeal to the minister of culture of the Georgian SSR in July 1989, asking to order a network of Georgian museums to prepare and open new expositions about the tragedy of 9 of April. The group further demanded the creation of “Museum of National Tragedy”, which should focus on tragic dates of Georgian modern history – 1921, 1924, 1936–37 (*sic*), 1956 and 1989² and should be placed in national art gallery on Rustaveli avenue, the former “Temple of military glory of Russian Empire”. However, the initiative was neglected and only existed on press papers.

Besides a few examples of initiatives by civic activists, who were trying to localize places linked with the Soviet state security apparatus, and preserve them as sites of memory, there was no common understanding of the meaning of such activism, as well as there being a lack of readiness in political circles and society for making the first step. On one hand, topographic dimension of Soviet terror was possible to explore based on the interrogation of eyewitnesses; however, it needed to be linked with the necessity of having a wide network of researchers and modern methodology. Deep historical research based on original documentary sources seemed another solution, however, such research demanded the transparency of KGB archives and was problematic until 1990. Moreover, many of the former offices of state security and prisons were already destroyed, or were still used as state structures.

Consequently, there were no successful examples of identification and preservation of sites of memory in Georgia, neither during the transition time 1989 – 1991, nor during the 1990s.

After the 1990’s, only a few examples of establishing memorial sites linked with 20th centuries mass tragedies exist. Some of them resulted from an alternative public initiative; others were developed with assistance of central or local governments. Here is a list of those examples of symbolic memorials of mass graves of victims of Soviet repressions:

The Kutaisi memorial of the victims of the Anti-Soviet uprising in August of 1924 – A symbolic memorial sign is installed in the Mukhnari forest, South-East of Kutaisi city, at the supposed area of a mass shooting during the August uprising of 1924.

The Telavi memorial of the victims of Anti-Soviet uprising in August of 1924 – A symbolic memorial sign is installed at “Gigog Gora” little hill, South-East of Telavi city, at the supposed area of a mass shooting during August uprising of 1924.

The Shorapani memorial of the victims of the Anti-Soviet uprising in August of 1924 – A symbolic memorial sign is installed in Shorapani village, close to Zestafoni city, at supposed place of mass shooting of victims during August uprising of 1924, the victims were captured in Railway carriages and shot with a machine guns.

The Chiatura memorial of the victims of the Anti-Soviet uprising in August of 1924 – A symbolic memorial sign was installed in the year 2014, in Chiatura city center, where on 28 August 1924 an Anti-Soviet uprising started.

The Zugdidi memorial of the victims of the Anti-Soviet uprising in August of 1924 – A symbolic memorial sign was installed in 2017, in Zugdidi city center, in the Dadiani palace yard, the supposed place where the victims of 1924 August Anti-Soviet uprising were shot.

1 Only a small memorial wall with a few names of repressed writers and artists was constructed there in 2010’s.

2 Occupation of Georgian Democratic Republic by Soviet Russia; Anti-Soviet uprising; Big Soviet terror; Suppression of Stalinist demonstration in Tbilisi – 9 of March; Suppression of Anti-Soviet demonstration in Tbilisi – 9 of April.

Also, only small part of GULAG network in Georgia is marked due to the German prisoner of war's (POW) traces; During 1990–2000's German War Graves Commission (Volksbund Deutsche Kriegsgräberfürsorge in German) memorialized 24 places in Georgia. The majority of the memorial signs are not installed in the correct location of the POWs camps or cemeteries, but generally mark the areas. Here is a list of those memorial places:

- **Tbilisi, Sairme hill**
- **Tbilisi, "Veli"**
- **Rustavi, Zedgenidze Street**
- **Gardabani, close to Gardabani Electrical station**
- **Ksani**
- **Gori**
- **Bulachauri**
- **Khrami Hydroelectric station**
- **Jvari pass**
- **Stepantsminda**
- **Chitakhevi (2)**
- **Kvabiskhevi (2)**
- **Surami**
- **Sagarejo**
- **Telavi**
- **Zugdidi**
- **Bolnisi**
- **Chiatura.**
- **Sairme**
- **Tkibuli**
- **Makhinjauri**
- **Kutaisi**

The Rose revolution in 2003 brought a new perspective to the memory policy in Georgia. Within a few years, the state managed to realize its agenda concerning modern history issues, illustrated by the founding of the Museum of Soviet occupation in Tbilisi, renaming streets with the names of victims of Soviet terror etc. The state became even more active in this field after the Russian–Georgian war in August 2008, as the rethinking of the Soviet legacy was included into the state-lead anti-Russian propaganda campaign. Up until 2012, there were several activities attempting to create memorial signs in public spaces – for example building a memorial wall of repressed writers and artists in Mtatsminda pantheon, founding “Commission of Historical Truth”, creating the memorial desk of Kote Abkhazi.³ However, all those efforts were characterized as superficial and slightly propagandistic. For example, in the inscription at the memorial desk of Kote Abkhazi, there is a factual mistake about his rank. Moreover, he is named as a victim of the Russian occupation, not as a victim of the communist regime.

Since 2010, new civil organizations such as the Soviet Past Research Laboratory (SovLab) and the Institute for Development of Freedom of Information (IDFI), started to create an alternative agenda in the culture of remembrance and memory policy, including memorialization of places of conscience.

In 2011, SovLab created a city tour “Topography of Red Terror”, about Soviet terror in Tbilisi in 1921–1950's.

In 2015–2016, the IDFI began installing memorial desks in houses of so called “military center” members, who were executed by the Soviet regime in 1923. The IDFI was also advocating for the creation of their memorial, but due to a lack of will and proper understanding of the importance of the installation of memorial, it is still in progress.

Since 2011, SovLab is trying to raise attention and sensibility about the most valuable historical building of the 20th century and place of memory, the house of “Cheka”⁴ of the Georgian SSR, which is still standing in the center of Tbilisi city, on #22 Ingorokva street. There is not any real feedback from the state regarding the form of preservation and memorialization of the building.

In 2014, the Soviet Past Research Laboratory identified another former POWs camp and cemetery in Kutaisi city, near a former auto mechanical plant. Further, with the assistance of the south Caucasus and Turkey office of the DVV international, a cemetery of POWs in Rustavi city was identified in 2016–2017, close to Zedgenidze street (see list of memorials up). In 2017, the first test excavations confirmed the findings. A new stage of excavations is planned in 2018.

In 2017, SovLab participated in the founding of the initiative, the “Last Address – Georgia”, which is a partner project of the post-Soviet network of remembrance – “Последний адрес”. It aims to install metal memorial signs on houses of victims of Soviet repressions. “Last address – Georgia” is still in the process of getting permission from Tbilisi city hall for installing the first memorial signs.

TYPES AND ROLES OF MEMORY INSTITUTIONS

The last years of Soviet rule in Georgia were a time of an “explosion” of the founding of a variety of civic and political organizations, parties etc. However, similar activities were not observed regarding groups of the victims of Soviet repression and the successors of their families; during the 1990's only two memorial organizations were founded.

The first of them was, **Einung**, the Association of Germans in Georgia was founded in August 1991. The association collected successors of German settlers in Georgia. The association started a variety of activities for the research and preservation of material and the cultural heritage of Germans in Georgia. It aims at understanding the memory of mass deportation of Germans to the Soviet Union in 1941.

Another and very important society was “**Memoriali**”, the Georgian society of victims of Soviet repressions. “Memoriali” was established in 1992. The organization was founded by the successors of families of victims of Soviet political repressions. The society began with archival research for the identification of the fates of victims, collecting documentary sources and information from families. During the 1990's the society was publishing its own newspaper “Memoriali”. The society organized several public exhibitions about Soviet repressions.

Throughout the 1990's “Memoriali” was actively trying to influence state policies towards guaranteeing social protection to the victims of Soviet terror and the successors of their families. The society started to collect information about the victims of Soviet terror based on sources from the KGB archives and published them in the newspaper. Memoriali led a civic campaign to prompt the government to create a memorial complex on Tbilisi–Rustavi road. The memorial complex was supposed to

³ Former military commander, one of founders of Georgian National Democratic party, member of committee of independence after Soviet occupation in 1922–1923. He was arrested by Cheka and was shot on 20th May 1923.

⁴ ЧК (Чрезвычайная Комиссия) – Extraordinary Commission – Soviet State security service in 1917–1922.

stand on the place of mass graves of the victims of Soviet terror, which was marked⁵ by historian Giorgi Tsitsihvili in 1990. However, the initiative was neglected by state and mobilization of society has also failed.

During the 1990's, as a result of the collapse of economic and social life of the Georgian state, permanent political crisis, and the restoration of the communist political elite in state structures, there was an extremely unfriendly environment for developing strong movements of research into the Soviet totalitarian state's mass crimes, and the memorializing of sites of memory. All groups and institutions founded at beginning of 1990's were facing complex problems and challenges and until 2010's there were no new initiatives for the rethinking of the Soviet past.

LESSONS LEARNT

It can be concluded that the failure of the process of the preservation of sites of conscience in Georgia after the end of Soviet rule, as well as a minimal degree of development of memorial institutions, the low impact on state policy and low mobilization of society can be considered a result of the crisis among historians, who were not ready to give input to society in order to understand the importance of sites of memory. At the same time, a disastrous breakdown of the economy, a political crisis, and war at the beginning of the 1990's almost destroyed the field for

the development of a proper civic activism towards the rethinking of the Soviet past. The state itself began to be passive about the prosecution of Soviet crimes, as it was partly dominated by former communist elite. The deadlock of this combination almost closed the door for any kind of progress in this field until 2010's.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is necessary to lead a wide civic campaign, record testimonies of victims and witnesses of mass crimes. Moreover, physical traces of the regime's inhumanity, mass graves of the victims, prisons, offices of state security units should be identified. These places have ethical meaning as places of conscience and memory, and are educational resources guaranteeing the keeping of a collective memory for future generations. This is all necessary for the resolution of the legacy of the totalitarian state and supporting prosecution of its crimes
- Civil society should initiate the preserving of sites of memory as a part of complex agenda towards dealing with the legacy of the former regime. However, at the same time, civil society should actively push state institutions to create a friendly environment for developing such activities and initiatives.

⁵ Till today there are no evidences about validity of this conclusion.

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EDUCATION AND PRESERVATION OF SITES OF CONSCIENCE

ANNA KAMINSKY

INTRODUCTION

Apart from the criminal prosecution of the perpetrators and responsible people as well as the rehabilitation and compensation for the victims, the educational and memorial work counts as an important element for historical clarification. By passing on historical wisdom and knowledge about the injustice that has been committed, we may at the same time ensure that society acknowledges the suffering and honors the victims with empathy, also acknowledging their courage to stand up against the dictatorship. The discussions in the early stages following the reunification of Germany were characterized by a climate of fear that was expressed both at home and abroad. This fear referred to the situation that Germany now might try to evade its historical responsibility for the Nazi regime and the crimes that had been committed – trying to portray itself as the victim of two totalitarian regimes. It was especially during the 1990s that many discussions were characterized by the issue to what extent people should deal with the second German dictatorship.

Following almost thirty years of focusing on the communist dictatorship and its impacts on Germany, we can say that the fear of the Nazi crimes being relativized didn't manifest itself. Rather, and in a parallel to the communist dictatorship reappraisal, people started considering the Nazi dictatorship more as well. In 1996, January 27th became the official National Holocaust Memorial Day. Following an extensive public discussion, the central Holocaust Memorial was built in the center of political Berlin, in the vicinity of the German parliament – the Reichstag – and the Brandenburg Gate. It was the Inquiry-Commission entrusted with the communist (SED)-dictatorship reappraisal that recommended providing for the stable state funding of the former Nazi concentration camps in West Germany also known as the “Topography of Terror” that would be organized from the capital of Berlin. The Inquiry-Commission succeeded in formulating a principle that's hitherto been characteristic in relation to reappraising both dictatorships in Germany from the 20th century: “Nazi crimes mustn't be relativized by the acts committed after the war, yet the injustice in the aftermath of the war mustn't be minimized by pointing to the Nazi crimes.”¹ This is the Federal Republic of Germany's main motto when reappraising any of the dictatorships.

GDR COMMUNIST DICTATORSHIP REAPPRAISAL INSTITUTIONS

There were numerous institutions founded in the Federal Republic of Germany whose aim was to reappraise the communist past. These institutions cover numerous topics and organizations, including both civil society initiatives and clubs that frequently emerged from former GDR opposition groupings such as, for example, the Robert-Havemann-Gesellschaft (*Robert*

Havemann Society), the Umweltbibliothek Großhennersdorf (*Environmental Library Großhennersdorf*) or the Leipzig Civil Movements Archive. Victims associations were founded that portray the spectrum of repression and persecution by the communist dictatorship. But also state-funded museums such as the Forum of Contemporary History in Leipzig which mainly focuses on displaying opposition and repression within the GDR were founded. Furthermore, regional museums increasingly address recent history in their exhibitions documenting repression and persecution in people's everyday lives.

Institutions were founded both at the level of individual states and at the federal level. They focus on reappraising the second dictatorship. Among these institutions, there were the institutes of the State Commissioners for the Records of the State Security Service of the Former German Democratic Republic and the Federal Commissioner for the Records of the State Security Service of the Former German Democratic Republic (est. in 1991) as well as the Federal Foundation for the study of communist dictatorship that was established in 1998. The reappraisal topics are also being governed by the Federal and State Political Education Headquarters, by adult education centers and many other institutions whose task is to perform political-historical educational work with these institutions coming from the sphere of churches, trade unions or political foundations close to political parties.

Since its foundation in 1991, the largest of these reappraisal institutions has been the office of the Federal Commissioner for the Records of the State Security Service of the Former German Democratic Republic. It has 1,600 employees and a budget exceeding € 100 m. The first act on approaching the Stasi documents already comes from the GDR period and was adopted on August 24th 1990. Each person in question was thus to gain access to the files issued in relation to them. Furthermore, the files were to be used for the criminal and legal as well as the historical reappraisal. Last but not least, people who would be proven guilty according to these documents were to be withdrawn from public life.² The GDR People's Chamber representatives thus laid down the fundamental issues for the Act on the Stasi Documents (*Stasi-Unterlagen-Gesetzes*, hence the abbreviation *StUG*), which was approved by the all-German Bundestag. Retrospectively, Joachim Gauck, the first Federal Commissioner for the Records of the State Security Service of the Former German Democratic Republic summarized the Volkskammer's motivation this way: “These checks are to be carried out because within this part of Germany not a single person has ever had a positive experience since 1933 with the representatives of state power,

1 See Bernd Faulenbach: Probleme des Umgangs mit der Vergangenheit im vereinten Deutschland. Zur Gegenwartsbedeutung der jüngsten Geschichte, in Werner Weidenfeld, ed., *Deutschland. Eine Nation – doppelte Geschichte. Materialien zum deutschen Selbstverständnis*, Köln: Verlag Wissenschaft und Politik, 1993, 190.

2 Act of 24. 8. 1990, a.a.O. (see Fn. 4).

parliamentarians, judges, policemen, officials. (...) We as the representatives figured that the aid of establishing trust into the new democratic structures might consist in removing the Stasi supporters from the offices and parliament.”³

Yet approaching the Stasi files was not quite an undisputed issue both in the Western and Eastern part of Germany. Thus, some spoke in favor of entirely closing the files or even destroying them altogether while others wanted these documents to be comprehensively opened and this legacy of the dictatorship to be preserved. The argumentation lines did not sharply correspond to the former border between the eastern and western part of the country. Looking back, we can say that this discussion was one of the first all-German discussions regarding the future approach towards the dictatorship. Politicians from both the former East and West Germany, such as, Friedrich Schorlemmer or Wolfgang Schäuble, the then Minister of the Interior in the Federal Republic of Germany presented arguments for destroying the Stasi files or at least locking them up in a federal archive for a minimum of several decades. It was a hunger strike and the repeated occupation of the former Stasi Headquarters which in 1990 caused the opening of the files to be codified in the reunification treaty of both German states.

The tasks carried out by the Archive of the Federal Commissioner for the Records of the State Security Service (*das Archiv des Bundesbeauftragten für die Stasi-Unterlagen*, hence the abbreviation *BStU-Archiv*) do not merely refer to the safety and administration of the Stasi files. It also served for providing files that were used in order to check employees in the public service, especially in the former GDR territory. Yet one of its most important tasks was to enable the affected persons to look into the files. The Stasi had collected information on more than six million people.

Influenced by the “fierce debate led in relation to the Stasi file opening during the nineties,”⁴ especially GDR-opposition representatives in the All-German Bundestag argued in favor of establishing an inquiry commission that would focus within the subsequent two legislation periods between 1992 and 1998 on the causes, the history and the impact of the communist dictatorship in the Soviet Occupation Zone and in the GDR. The expertise and eye-witness reports collected in 34 books comprising of more than 30,000 print pages do not merely reflect the then state of knowledge and debates. They also represent the only source for the historical reappraisal. The commission not merely presented far-reaching recommendations on the memorial work regarding both the Nazi- and SED-dictatorships. It furthermore recommended establishing a federal foundation for the study of communist dictatorship that was agreed upon by a vast majority across different political parties. This federal foundation was to support the society, science and political education permanently focusing on the causes, the history and the impacts the dictatorship had on the Soviet Occupation Zone and the GDR. This institution has 25 employees and an annual budget of approximately €5.4m with more than €3m being assigned to supporting third party projects.⁵

RESEARCH AND EDUCATION

On the one hand, the GDR public image during the 1990s appeared to be primarily influenced by revelations regarding the Stasi and the so-called Ostalgy-phenomenon (*i.e. a pun on the words “nostalgy” and “east” that are very similar in German*)

shows; on the other hand, GDR research at universities and research institutions witnessed a real boom. As Ralph Jessen put it in 2010, the comprehensive opening up of the archives and the accessibility of the documents about the dictatorship “(...) placed the historization of the GDR on entirely new foundations (...)”⁶ Almost the entire dictatorship’s archive heritage was available for history research without blocking periods. Although the files of all ministries and administrations in the GDR became accessible, it was especially the secret service documents being opened that created an interest which goes on until today. Until the end of the 2000s, more than 1,500 projects had been carried out. Ralph Jessen found out in relation to his assessment published in 2010 that more than 16,000 contributions appeared during the period from 1990 until 2010 – with 6,000 of these being books. Furthermore, there were more than 900 doctoral theses on the GDR history written between 1990 and 2008.

Apart from the inquiry commissions in the German federal parliament (the Bundestag) whose subject of research was GDR-history, also non-university institutes such as the Center for Contemporary History (*Zentrum für Zeithistorische Forschung*, hence the abbreviation *ZZF*) in Potsdam or the Hannah-Arendt-Institute für Totalitarismusforschung (*HAIT*) in Dresden or research centers such as the Union for researching the SED-country (*Forschungsverband SED-Staat*). The Institute of Contemporary History (*Institut für Zeitgeschichte*, hence the abbreviation *IfZ*) established a branch office of the German Federal Archive in the Berlin district of Lichtenfelde to be primarily focused on GDR research. The Military History Research Office (*Militärgeschichtliches Forschungsamt*) focused on the GDR. The Special Commissioner of the Federal Government for Stasi Documents named in 1990 and transformed into the office of the Federal Commissioner for the Records of the State Security Service of the Former German Democratic Republic established in 1991 received its own research department.

GDR history research has made significant advances especially as far as research into the power structures and the mechanisms for “Durchherrscher der Gesellschaft” (*i.e. approximately “total governance of society”*) are concerned. Meanwhile, even everyday issues of the SED became more and more important in spite of critiques at the onset saying the investigation of everyday issues would further boost the trivializing and glorifying of the dictatorship. Sabrow stated retroactively regarding the Nazi regime research drawing thus a parallel to dealing with the SED dictatorship that “No suspicion could have proven more false: it was the everyday history which gave us a deeper understanding of the cumulative radicalization of the Nazi-regime.”⁷

3 Joachim Gauck, Akten und Gerechtigkeit. Gedanken zum Umgang mit der Vergangenheit, in *Rostocker Philosophische Manuskripte N. F. Booklet 1* (1994), 10, cited according to Jörn Mothes, Jochen Schmidt, *Die Aufarbeitung der DDR-Vergangenheit. Eine Zwischenbilanz*, in Hans-Georg Wehling, ed., *Deutschland Ost – Deutschland West*, Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 2002; see http://www.buergerimstaat.de/4_00/ostwest03.htm

4 See www.bundestag.de/dokumente/textarchiv/serien/23690862_enquete_serie/22090534_kw34_enquete3/

5 See *Tätigkeitsbericht 2011 der Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur*, Berlin: Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur, 2012, 21.

6 Ralph Jessen, Den Zusammenbruch der SED-Diktatur erklären, in Martin Sabrow, ed., *Bewältigte Diktaturvergangenheit? 20 Jahre DDR-Aufarbeitung*, Leipzig: Akademische Verlagsanstalt 2010, 21.

7 Martin Sabrow, *Erinnerungsorte der DDR*, München: C. H. Beck Verlag, 2009, 7 and recommendations made by the Expert Commission for the Establishment of the History Union “Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur” 15. May 2006.

In spite of this vast research activity, there have remained some blank spots in relation to the dictatorship. This refers to the everyday mechanisms that serve in order to stay in power and range from loyalty, inclusion and adaptation on the one hand,⁸ as well as intimidation and repression on the other. Furthermore, the previous years have witnessed a rise in investigations about rebellions, opposition and resistance.

Following the end of this boom and the passing away of people who had been focusing on research for a very long time such as the doyen of communism research, Prof. Dr. Dr. hc. Hermann Weber, the respective professorships and departments were abolished without being replaced. Currently, research facilities focusing on issues such as the GDR, Germany and communism research as such are almost exclusively located in the extra-university area, i.e. at institutes such as the ZZP Potsdam, the IfZ München or the HAIT Dresden.

Although research witnessed a boom that manifested itself especially in the 1990s, educating this topic at universities and colleges became criticized during the 1990s. It was not merely about criticizing GDR history appearing in university curricula too little. Further reproaches were that the approach towards the Socialist Unity Party dictatorship was too uncritical.⁹ Pasternack's first evaluation made in 2001 listed the sobering resumé that "the intensity of teaching GDR history is gradually decreasing". According to him, dealing with GDR history as such was said to have dropped down to the level of 1989/1990 just as the research had done – yet without reaching a top level in between. For example in 2001, 62 % of all German universities didn't offer any course about the GDR.¹⁰ Just as the low number of courses were, also the topics of courses about the GDR offered at universities were critically analyzed. While the researchers especially focused on uncovering the structures because there was such a multitude of sources available from the top governing and power group within the dictatorship, the research was dominated by Stasi topics. On the other hand, the GDR was significantly reflected via literary reflections written by Christa Wolf, Erwin Strittmatter or Stefan Heym. Yet authors who were forced to emigrate such as Rainer Kunze or Sarah Kirsch etc. received significantly less attention. Currently, more recent research regarding "education" is to follow.

The picture of research into the second dictatorship being pushed aside more and more at least within the academic sphere, is completed also by the fact that the renowned German magazine *DeutschlandArchiv* (Germany Archive) that had been the only platform for publications and most recent research on GDR history and German policy, ceased to edit paper versions at the end of 2012 being only available as an online platform since 2013.¹¹

In 2016, the German Bundestag decided to provide €30m until 2021 in order to strengthen university research and courses and thus, bringing especially the younger generation closer to the topic of communist dictatorships and the German partition. It's especially the younger generation that has not experienced life within the GDR dictatorship on its own, yet unfortunately, it's being informed about it by the schools too little. Thus, the known deficits within the sphere of university education are to be counterbalanced.

EDUCATIONAL WORK AS PART OF CURRICULAR AND EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

In contrast to the business cycles of research on the communist dictatorship within the GDR, the curricular education activity

has an anticyclical shape. The radical changes of 1989/1990 required "(indispensably) that the curricula be revised (...)", as it had also been stated in a first research paper at the end of the nineties.¹² Already in the middle of the 90s, the curricula in most federal states were adequately adapted and thus, the teaching books were adapted as well.¹³ The actual exchange of the teaching materials took a bit longer. According to research on curricular content and teaching that was carried out at the beginning of the 2000s, the issue of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany's dictatorship and the German partition was hardly mentioned. Many pupils left school, without having reached the topic of post war history in classes. Furthermore, even 15 years following German reunification, "a more holistic approach to German post-war history" was regarded as missing.¹⁴ Later, these findings were confirmed by, for example, Klaus Schroeder's findings in 2008.

Yet these studies revealed positive aspects as well: 80 % of the interrogated pupils indicated that they wanted to get to know more about the second dictatorship. Furthermore, and in spite of the missing factual knowledge, 80 % proved to be aware of the difference between a democracy and a dictatorship. It was proven in this survey that the knowledge of pupils living in the former GDR territory regarding the dictatorship was less developed than that of pupils in the western part of Germany (Schroeder 2008). This corresponds to findings from respective polls carried out among adults. There are manifold reasons for this: On the one hand, the pupils perceive their knowledge from their homes first. Taking the general questions that have been posed as a starting point, the opinion "not everything was bad and now it's also the way that not all that glitters is gold" appears to be reflected directly in the pupils' attitude.

Given this impression resulting from the poll results, curricula and coursebooks in all German federal states have been reworked again and newer research results incorporated into them. At least as far as the framework conditions are concerned, the topics of German post war history have been made more easily accessible. Several didactic materials serve to support teaching in classes.¹⁵ The Conference of Cultural Ministers (*Kultusministerkonferenz*, hence the abbreviation *KMK*) has issued a recommendation for dealing with the SED-dictatorship and called for a so-called

8 Christoph Klessman, Überforscht? Verklärt? Vergessen? Zwanzig Jahre nach dem Mauerfall ist die DDR-Geschichte noch immer ein Streitthema, in *Die ZEIT Geschichte*. 1989. *Die geglückte Revolution*, 2009, (2), 86.

9 Ulrich Arnsward, *Zum Stellenwert des Themas DDR-Geschichte in den Lehrplänen der deutschen Bundesländer. Expertise im Auftrag der Stiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur*, Berlin: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, 2004.

10 Peer Pasternack (with Anne Glück, Jens Hüttmann, Dirk Lewin, Simone Schmid und Katja Schulze), *Gelehrte DDR. Die DDR als Gegenstand der Lehre an deutschen Universitäten 1990–2000*, Wittenberg: HoF Wittenberg – Institut für Hochschulforschung an der Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, 2001.

11 See <http://www.bpb.de/geschichte/zeitgeschichte/deutschlandarchiv>.

12 Karl-Heinz Holstein, Die Schulbuchuntersuchung aus der Binnenperspektive der Schulbuchverlage, in *Buchstab*, 1999, 15.

13 In: 1990 Bavaria, 1994 Baden-Württemberg, 1993 North Rhine Westphalia etc. Ibid; Arnsward, *Zum Stellenwert des Themas DDR-Geschichte in den Lehrplänen der deutschen Bundesländer*.

14 Peter Lautzas, Vorwort, in Ulrich Arnsward, Ulrich Bongertmann, Ulrich Mählert, eds., *DDR-Geschichte im Unterricht. Schulbuchanalyse – Schülerbefragung – Modellcurriculum*, Berlin: Metropol Verlag, 2006, 9.

15 See *Bildungskatalog der Bundesstiftung Aufarbeitung mit über 120 thematischen Angeboten*.

project day to be organized on each November 9th – this project day would be about democracy and dictatorship in the schools in order to encourage the people to deal with German 20th century history.

Furthermore, there have been several initiatives during the past few years that have served for the pupils dealing with German and European post war history more in the classes. This strategy includes that this topic was included as one of the final exams topics with this change being initiated by the Cultural Minister Conference. It's natural that only topics which could become part of the tests were taught at school. The educational reforms put through during the previous years, according to which the so-called MINT subjects (i.e. mathematics, IT, natural sciences and technology) are being extended at the expense of teaching history proved to be another complicating factor. Also the fact that the educational reform in many federal states actually led to cutting school time from 13 to 12 years significantly limited the space available for shaping history lessons. Furthermore, the fact that the education of teachers in teacher training courses now has to include the topic of the time of communism, is an additional factor. Also in this context, the following becomes valid: The teachers will hardly be able to teach the pupils what the teachers themselves don't learn as students in teacher training courses.

EXTRACURRICULAR EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS

The curricula offer is being supplemented by extracurricular offers provided by e.g. memorials and museums providing information at historical places such as the former Stasi headquarters, camps or prisons or along the former German-German border or the Berlin wall about repression, political injustice and partition. These historical places have been witnessing new visitor records in recent years. By now every federal state capital in the former East Germany territory has its own memorial at a history-relevant location which makes up for the frequent deficits in the offer provided by schools through offering project days for children and the youth.¹⁶ Furthermore, the State Centers for Political Education, the Evangelic and Catholic academies as well as political foundations are focusing on topics such as the Socialist Unity Party dictatorship, on the German partition and its impact. In comparison to this, East German institutions are devoting one fifth of their offer to these tasks, whereas in the case of West German ones, it's about 6 %.

ARRIVAL AT THE CENTER OF SOCIETY?

What does the resumé following almost 30 years of reappraising and dealing with the second dictatorship now look like? Lately, Martin Sabrow has stated that there is a "Processing consensus" in Germany due to which the "historical burdens from the time after 1945 are being shifted to the center of attention (more and more)".¹⁷ There are actually numerous offers. Cinema movies such as "The Lives of Others", "Good bye Lenin", "Sonnenallee", "We Wanted To Go To the Sea" or "Barbara" became hits. Best-selling candidate books that have been awarded prizes such as Uwe Tellkamp's "The Tower" influenced the picture of the collapsed state from the literary point of view. Renowned

theatre stages such as the Maxim Gorky Theater in Berlin focus on GDR topics in several productions as was the case, for example, at the occasion of the 60th anniversary of the uprising of June 17th – there was a whole theatre festival planned here.¹⁸ Also music bears some steps of this reappraisal such as, for example, the song "Little Paris" made by the young band "Meisterdeep" from Leipzig.

On the one hand, formal political acts organized at the top level on the occasion of memorial days such as the uprising of June 17th 1953 or the construction of the Berlin wall and that have a manifold shape prove that there is a broad political support provided for dealing with the communist dictatorship. On the other hand, they are a proof of the fact that the collective commemoration of the second dictatorship is on its way to gaining ground in the all-German memory and becoming part of the way the united Germany perceives history, although polls regarding the communist dictatorship reveal a partially different result. On the one hand, there are still differences between the East and West. Life in the dictatorship is perceived more critically by West Germans than by East Germans. Thus, 75 % of West German respondents in a poll answered the poll question whether "the GDR was a country of injustice" positively, whereas in the East, only 37 % shared this view.¹⁹ Furthermore, the East and the West still show differences in their interest in dealing with the second dictatorship in Germany. Most reappraisal institutions are located in the former East Germany.

LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Transitional Justice processes do not merely serve for answering questions arising with respect to the criminal prosecution of the perpetrators on the one hand, and for rehabilitating and compensating the victims on the other hand. Moreover, they also serve for making the awareness of the crimes that had been committed, of the perpetrators and the victims but also of different forms of resistance, courage displayed in the public and courage in general a part of the national culture of memory.

Doing this, the different actors and civil society need to be supported in carrying out educational work independently on the political parties. This includes, among others.

- Establishing institutions which promote educational work regarding the previous regime on a safe financial basis through various activities, doing so independently of everyday political interests and in a manner independent of party-political instrumentation.
- It is especially important to support research and scientific activities that build up on a factually based approach on the structures as well as the responsible people within

16 See Anna Kaminsky, *Orte des Erinnerns. Gedenkzeichen, Gedenkstätten und Museen zur Diktatur in SBZ und DDR*, Berlin: Ch. Links Verlag, 2016. This volume contains more than 900 places of remembrance, memorial places and museums across the whole of Germany. These places focus on repression and resistance against the communist dictatorship.

17 Martin Sabrow, Reiner Eckert, Monika Flacke u.a., eds., *Wohin treibt die DDR-Erinnerung? Dokumentation einer Debatte*, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007, 15.

18 See <http://www.gorki.de/spielplan/und-das-beste-zum-schluss-einabschluss-spektakel>

19 Thomas Petersen, "Auch die 'Mauer in den Köpfen' fällt", in *FAZ.net* on 25. 11. 2009, 5.

the repressive mechanisms and on their representatives as well as the committed injustice and the crimes.

- This represents the basis for passing on knowledge at schools, at universities systematically as an obligatory curriculum topic and within teacher training and it also forms the foundation for working at extracurricular educational facilities.

All this repeatedly requires societal and political negotiation processes to be carried out; knowledge can't be ordered, but needs to be understood as an inclusive subject of formation of opinion through education, through dialogues and the willingness to listen to an opposing opinion. Yet this does not mean that one would admit any kind of topic.

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MEMORY OF NATIONS

Democratic Transition Guide

[The Polish Experience]



National Endowment
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EDUCATION AND PRESERVATION OF SITES OF CONSCIENCE

RADOSŁAW PETERMAN

After 1989 very significant changes in the memory of the past in Poland have occurred. Back then the dispute had already arisen over what kind of state Poland was during the years of the communist rule, and what conduct and attitudes at that time should be considered proper or reprehensible. In the 1990s there was much discussion about the balance sheet of the People's Republic of Poland [*Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa, PRL*] which was joined by historians, sociologists, economists, and political commentators. Discussions were held in specialist publications as well as in the weeklies and daily journals. The following list of the most important questions surrounding the dispute stems from these debates:

Did the PRL meet the sovereignty criterion so that it could be considered one of the forms of Polish statehood?

Was the PRL a totalitarian state, or did it have such features throughout its duration, or only in the Stalinist period?

Was socio-economic progress achieved during the period of the People's Republic of Poland, or did the system of government suppress modernization?

There are various answers to these questions, both in journalistic discussions and in scientific monographs. However, one can try to extract some regularities, opinions shared almost by all.

Almost everyone agrees that until 1956 Poland's sovereignty was so limited that it resembled the status of a protectorate. This is confirmed by many published reference documents and symbolic facts, such as the results of the first post-war elections (1947) dictated by Stalin, leading the Polish army by generals seconded from the Red Army, Stalin's amendments to the draft of the 1952 Constitution of People's Republic of Poland. Almost everyone also agrees that after 1956 Poland gained significant level of autonomy. However, among the participants of the dispute, there is an outstanding opinion expressed by Professor Tomasz Strzembosz: "Personally, I think that Poland was under a specific occupation, both internal and external, from 1944 to 1990". At the same time prof. Krystyna Kersten emphasizes: "We will not understand the history of the People's Republic of Poland if we do not know the mechanism of dependence on Moscow. Today we do not know how this mechanism worked, what decisions were made first in Warsaw and only accepted (or rejected) by the headquarters, what decisions were taken in Moscow and delivered for execution to appropriate comrades in Poland". In the People's Republic of Poland there were no free elections, freedom of speech, free press or freedom to erect monuments according to the sympathies of individual political movements. Politicians and social activists noticed the potential to build on the images of the past and to create a sense of community around it. The emergence of museums, monuments, associations of history fans, films and books are the result of the renaissance of interest in the past. State institutions, political parties and social associations have their own "historical policies". They take action on the borderline of academic learning, education, propaganda, and sometimes also entertainment, to create a strong group identity.

The fundamental directions of changes in Polish memory after 1989 was determined by the following processes: gradual differentiation of memories and interpretation of the past; introducing events related to the past harm caused by Poles to representatives of other nations and minorities into the public discourse of the past and to the official memory; popularization of this type of approach to the past, in which the relationship of individuals to the past is no longer mediated by the state and nation; increased importance of reference to local and regional traditions and the change in the way they are invoked.

With such a varied perception of the recent past it is difficult to build a uniform historical policy. Under such circumstances the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) was also created, which in addition to storing archives produced by the security authorities of the communist state and the prosecution of communist crimes by prosecutors of the Main Commission for the Investigation of Crimes against the Polish Nation, also had the task of conducting historical education and research in the history of the People's Republic of Poland.

From the very beginning of the existence of IPN, opponents of this institution often repeated the thesis that the Institute is the tool of a political environment centred around the Law and Justice Party [*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość (PiS)*], which uses it in the ongoing political struggle. This claim was untrue, because politicians representing PiS did not participate in the creation of this institution. It was created on the sole initiative of politicians stemming from the NSZZ "Solidarność" Trade Union. It was in this environment that discussions about the need to establish an institution like the German Gauck's Office were held in Poland from the early 1990s. Indeed, the Institute of National Remembrance was created in 1999 primarily thanks to the involvement of three persons: Minister Janusz Pałubicki, who wrote the bill together with a group of experts, including lawyers – prof. Witold Kulesza and prof. Andrzej Rzepliński as well as historian prof. Andrzej Paczkowski. IPN has always been a thorn in the flesh of the post-communist camp.

In 2001, post-communist politician Leszek Miller from the Democratic Left Alliance [*Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej, (SLD)*] stood for the election promising to liquidate the Institute. On the other hand, President Aleksander Kwaśniewski, who also came from the post-communist side, did not find the liquidation of IPN favourable to him. One of the main reasons was the participation of President A. Kwaśniewski in the run for re-election, as well as issues related to the investigation of the murder of the Jewish population of 10 July 1941.

Thus, what was done was to make cuts in the budget, which effectively suppressed the process of creating a material base of IPN, without which it was simply impossible to take over hundreds of thousands of files from the security authorities of the People's Republic of Poland. The work of the Institute in 2000–2006 took place in three divisions, which logically complemented each other and allowed scientific, legal and

moral reconciliation with the past. In 2006 the fourth division – the Lustration Office – replaced the previous lustration authority, namely the Commissioner for Public Interest [Rzecznik Interesu Publicznego].

In terms of structure, the IPN differs significantly from similar institutions operating in Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary and in the Baltic states. The question of whether the assignment of such a variety of tasks to a single institution was deliberate remains the subject of the dispute.

The Educational and Research Division of IPN conducts scientific research and educational and publishing activities. It organizes scientific conferences and collects reports of witnesses of history. It publishes scientific and popular books and journals. It organizes training, lectures, film shows, exhibitions and competitions for various audiences, prepares educational materials, including multimedia and internet materials, for students and teachers. For more than 15 years, more than 2,000 publications have been created, including books and magazines (“Biuletyn IPN”, “Pamięć i Sprawiedliwość”, “Pamięć.pl”, “Aparat Represji w Polsce Ludowej 1944–1989”, “CzasyPismo”). There have been almost 500 exhibitions, which have been presented around 7000 times in Poland as well as abroad. In order to popularize scientific research, more than 800 conferences were held within IPN. If one takes into account all forms of educational activities of the Institute (competitions for youngsters, lectures, teacher trainings, workshops, historical film shows accompanied by lectures, educational rallies, tutoring classes, preparatory courses for high school graduates, etc.), there have been 35,000 of them!

In addition, the Educational and Research Division of IPN has created 30 educational websites. Another area of IPN activity is research carried out in 11 national projects. Documentation projects in the form of competitions for non-governmental organizations are also being implemented.

In order to commemorate the fate of the Poles during World War II and the time of communism, IPN has created an Internet Index of Poles murdered and repressed for aiding Jews and the project “Personal losses and victims of repression under German occupation”. The education activities are equally important – these include the provision of schools with very carefully prepared – also on the basis of archive resources – educational packages, devoted to many important topics of recent history.

Conducting educational and scientific activities and restoring remembrance has allowed the truth about the period of Nazism and communism to be conveyed. For nearly half a century the truth about Polish history was distorted, and the heroes of the struggle for independence were left to oblivion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Preserving the memory of the vastness of the number of victims, loss and damage suffered during and after World War II.
- Commemorating patriotic traditions of struggles with occupiers, Nazism and communism.
- The obligation to prosecute crimes against peace, humanity and war crimes.
- The obligation to make sure that all those victimized by the state violating human rights have been redressed.

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MEMORY OF NATIONS

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CEVRO

EDUCATION AND PRESERVATION OF SITES OF CONSCIENCE

ȘTEFAN BOSOMITU

During the communist era, the memorialization practices excluded everything that had any connection with the old regime, favoring a new typology of symbols that advocated the communist party's policies and ideals. City and street names were changed, and places that had connections with the short but eventful history of the communist party became places of memory – such as Doftana prison (an important penitentiary where communists were incarcerated on political grounds during the inter-war period), and the Tg. Jiu Camp (a concentration camp where several communist party members were detained during World War II). The situation reversed with the fall of the communist regime in 1989. The transition period involved a set of practices that were supposed to mark the end of the dictatorship and the total disavowal of a dictatorial and traumatic past – renaming localities, public squares, streets, institutions by replacing the names of former communist leaders with new ones dedicated to the fight against communism and democracy. In this respect, special attention was granted to former repression sites – as places of memory that marked the resistance and the struggle against the dictatorship. Thus, several projects intended to commemorate the communist past ensued, most of them related to different sites that illustrated the traumatic existence during the late regime.

From this perspective, the Romanian case presents some curiosities. The first initiatives emerged and developed from civil society, as the political power installed after the fall of the Communist regime failed to engage in the unfolding of the traumatic experience of communism. These unofficial initiatives marked a turning point that prompted, and later influenced, official advancements in the field. Still, the major and the most important project requested and advanced by civil society is still unfulfilled – as of today, a Museum of Communism in Romania is nothing but a project. In the same respect, educational projects related to the traumatic past tend to suggest a similar pattern. Even if important steps were made, and significant projects implemented, the overall image remains confuse. As will be explained, the impact of these projects is inconclusive, while a new generation of nostalgia for the communist regime proliferates.

The first initiative that intended to curate and memorialize communism as a traumatic past occurred in early 1990's, and it was an unofficial enterprise, introduced by civil society. Ana Blandiana, poet and former dissident, president of the Civic Alliance, at that time, advanced the idea of founding a Memorial dedicated to the victims of communism. The Memorial for the Victims of Communism and to the Resistance was established in 1993, as an initiative of the Civic Academy Foundation (*Fundația Academia Civică*). The Memorial consists of an International Center for Studies in Communism, based in Bucharest, and a Memorial Museum, established in 1995, within the precinct of the former prison of Sighet; a small town in North-Western Romania. The project of the Memorial was submitted to the Council of Europe in 1993 and, after two field visits by the CE

experts, the Memorial was taken under the aegis of the Council of Europe in 1995. The Memorial Museum was inaugurated in 1997, when the Romanian authorities recognized the Memorial as a *site of national importance*. One year later, the Memorial was recognized as a “site of conscience” by the Council of Europe, along with the Auschwitz Memorial, and the Peace Memorial in France. Even if initially, the Memorial Museum focused mainly on the traumatic history of the Sighet penitentiary during Communism, the curated themes evolved, and were supplemented over the years; thus, nowadays, the Memorial Museum intends to offer a comprehensive overview on, the history of Central and Eastern Europe under Communism, the establishment of the Communist rule in the Soviet Bloc countries, the Stalinist terror, the 1956 events in Poland and Hungary, the “Prague Spring” of 1968, and the history of “Solidarność” in Poland.

Since 1998, the Civic Academy Foundation organizes each year a summer school dedicated to students aged 14–18. In this event, the former prison becomes a non-traditional classroom where youngsters have the opportunity to learn about different aspects related to the communist past. The students attend conferences and seminars introduced by prominent historians, participate in round tables and debates, and visit the thematic exhibitions presented during the summer school.

Another important actor of the civil society that launched several projects related to the traumatic communist past is the Association of Former Political Prisoners (AFDPR). Founded in January 1990, the Association gathers former political prisoners, deportees, and other persons who suffered different types of persecutions during the communist regime. The Association is organized as a central organization, based in Bucharest, with subsidiaries in every county. Since 1990, AFDPR initiated the largest and most important “memory project”, erecting more than seventy-five monuments dedicated to the victims of communism, and posting several other marble plaques in places considered to be sites of memory and consciences related to communist repression. Such monuments and/or marble plaques were constructed adjacent to famous political prisons or labor camps: Aiud, Gherla, Târgșor, Poarta Albă, Căvnic, Pitești, Miercurea-Ciuc. Other monuments were erected in villages where armed resistance fighters fought Securitate troops, and in villages where uprisings occurred against collectivization: Teregova, Caransebeș, Sâmbăta, Nucșoara, Răstolnița, Ibănești, Mesentea, Oravița. Moreover, monuments dedicated to the struggle against communism were also constructed in different towns and cities around the country: Alba-Iulia, Bistrița, Brăila, Cluj-Napoca, Craiova, Cugir, Călărași, Drobeta Turnu Severin, Oradea, Râmnicu Vâlcea, Reșița, Satu Mare, Târgoviște, Timișoara. Two monuments were also erected abroad, in Paris and Thonex (Geneve).

Another important project launched by the AFDPR is the monument dedicated to anti-communist resistance recently assembled in a central public square in Bucharest. Initiated in 1997, the project was only finalized in May 2016, when the 30

meters high monument “Wings” was inaugurated. The monument was built on the place where a statue of Vladimir Illich Lenin used to rise during the communist regime. The statue was removed in 1990 (not by the authorities, but through a private initiative) with applause from the crowd. The granite pedestal of the Lenin statue was recuperate in 2014 and used for the pedestal of the new monument; as a historical reparation, this intended to exorcise Romanian society from the evil of the communist dictatorship.

The existence, and activity, of the Sighet Memorial, supported by the continuous efforts and advancements of the AFDPR, preceded and anticipated the official condemnation of the communist regime as “criminal and illegitimate” (December 18, 2006). The condemnation was based on an official and comprehensive report compiled by several experts that formed the Presidential Commission for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania.

The official report, compiled by the Presidential Commission, included several recommendations related to issues such as condemnation, memorializing, legislation and justice, research and archives, and education. The recommendations related to the need to memorialize the traumatic communist past referred to establishing a National Day for the Commemoration of the Communist Victims, the erection of a Monument of the Victims of Communism in downtown Bucharest, the establishing of distinct sections dedicated to the “communist horrors” within history museums in the country, the establishment of a Museum of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania, the organization of conference series within the major Romanian universities, discussing themes related to the Communist past, the review of the final report within an abridged and adapted to didactic purposes form, in order to be used as a high school textbook. The recommendations also stated the need to institute twelve presidential scholarships, to be awarded to young researchers interested in the study of the communist past.

Simultaneously with the presidential initiative, another similar initiative was instituted, but by the Government. This parallelism was due to the political rivalry between the President Traian Băsescu (member of the Democrat Liberal Party) and the Prime Minister Călin Popescu Țăriceanu (member of the National Liberal Party). The above-mentioned parties ran together in the 2004 elections, as a coalition and managed to defeat the Social Democrat Party with a powerful anti-corruption and anti-communist discourse. In once, of the disputes between the President and the Prime Minister, both institutions tried to capitalize on the major theme of the electoral campaign – anticommunism. The Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes and the Memory of Romanian Exiles (IICCMER) is a government organization founded in December 2005. Formerly named the Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes in Romania (IICCR), the institution was created when governmental ruling 1724/2005 was passed. The merger in November 2009 between the latter (IICCR) and the National Institute and Memory of Romanian Exiles (INMER) represents its current form. The objectives of the Institute include, but are not limited to, investigating and identifying human rights violations and abuses during the dictatorship, providing appropriate resources for those wishing to take action in such cases, preserving the memory of the Romanian exile, and of the crimes, which had transpired during the regime in all former communist countries. Since its foundation, IICCMRE became one of the most important institutions

that dealt with the communist past, introducing and promoting several memorialization and educational projects.

The “Prison of Silence” Memorial in Râmnicu Sărat and the Educational Centre on Communism in Romania are two of these projects. IICCMRE aims to transform a former place of isolation into one of reflection about the criminal nature of Communism. The prison in Râmnicu Sărat had operated for several years as a transit point for political prisoners who were being transferred to other detention centers to serve their sentence. A series of representatives of political parties, clergymen, as well as other unwanted persons were incarcerated for longer periods of time in “The Prison of Silence”. Among the most famous prisoners were former leaders of democratic parties. In June 2007, IICCMRE took over the administration of the former prison in Râmnicu Sărat and initiated a series of actions destined to raise awareness among policy makers, and inform the public about the commemorative value of the site, but also aiming to reach practical solutions in regard to the restoration of the building that is now in an advanced state of decay.

Another important project developed by IICCMRE was the establishment of a Museum of Communist Crimes in Romania. According to IICCMRE, the necessity of such an initiative lays in the low levels of interest about the recent past among the younger generation and the pedagogical challenge of transmitting historical data. Moreover, such an undertaking concerns the process of strengthening the rule of law by offering a more detailed knowledge of the mechanisms of an arbitrary state rule. IICCMER undertook numerous actions in order to raise awareness for the necessity of founding a Museum of Communist Crimes in Romania (MCCR), such as the campaigns *The Right to Memory*, *The Reasons for Building a Museum of Communism in Bucharest*, organized in partnership with the Romanian Television, and the debate for *The Right to Memory. The Museum of Communism in Romania* aired for four months on Adevărul LIVE, the online platform of the most popular Romanian newspaper. An international workshop was also organized to gather and analyze the rationales behind building the MCCR in Bucharest.

Beside these museum projects, IICCMRE organizes various educational programs for secondary school pupils, college students, and teachers: summer schools (e.g. The Summer University from Râmnicu Sărat and Făgăraș-Sâmbăta de Sus Summer School), as well as workshops, seminars, competitions, conferences, exhibitions and other events dedicated to young people from Romania and abroad. The IICCMRE’ educational activity is focused on professional cooperation with schools and institutions of higher education, in order to enrich the supply of pedagogical materials and facilitate the teaching of recent history. Considering the lack of both curriculum and handbooks dedicated to the history of communism in Romania, IICCMRE sought to become a lobby agent for the implementation of an adequate program of study on Romanian communism. In July 2008, in response to IICCMRE’s recommendation, the Ministry of Education drew up the syllabus for an optional course entitled “A History of Communism in Romania”. The same year, IICCMRE in collaboration with experts from the Advisory Presidential Commission for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania, the National Council for the Study of the “Securitate” Archives, and the Ministry of Education, published a first textbook on communism in Romania; a first such initiative at the European level. The textbook offers a package of lessons related to communism during the interwar, the taking over of

power, state institutions, the destruction of civil society, political repression, the economy, private life, resistance and dissidence. In 2008, IICCMRE launched a methodological teacher-training program, which intended to promote specific teaching methods in the area of the history of communism. These trainings were based on school curriculum and the didactical materials put at their disposal by the Ministry of Education.

Another important educational project implemented by IICCMRE refers to a MA program on Communist studies. Initiated in collaboration with “Al. I. Cuza” University of Iasi, a MA program on the “History of Communism in Romania” was launched in 2008. The partnership between the two institutions also involved the founding of a Center for Communist and Post-Communist Studies in Iasi. The program was dismantled in 2014, due to the lack of interest from both students and the university administration. In 2014, a similar program was launched through an initiative by the Faculty of History, University of Bucharest. The MA program in Bucharest is still functional.

The collaboration between IICCMRE and the Advisory Presidential Commission for the Study of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania, and their lobbying towards the authorities led to another important advance related to the memorialization of the communist past. Law No. 198, which passed on November 11, 2011 established that August 23 became the National Day for the Commemoration of the Victims of Fascism and Communism, while December 21 became the National Day for the Memory of the Communist Victims in Romania.

Besides the state founded initiatives, several private projects that in the recent years aimed to memorialize communism were launched. An interesting fact is that all these memorialization projects doubled by educational initiatives.

An important initiative was linked with a preeminent former prison – Jilava. The prison started to function at the beginning of the 20th century, within the precinct of a former military fort; part of a defense belt built around Bucharest in the 1870's. The Jilava Fort 13 became one of the most important prisons in Romania in the 20th century, being decommissioned only after the fall of the communist regime. Several official and unofficial initiatives attempted to transform the former prison into a museum or a memorial. The most recent one was promoted by the Association of the Former Political Prisoners (AFDPR), and the Romanian Foundation for Democracy – a NGO managed by the former President Emil Constantinescu. In 2013, the former prison administration was transferred from the National Administration of Penitentiaries to the Ministry of Culture, with the explicit task of inaugurating a memorial to the victims of communism. The project of the Jilava Fort 13 Memorial was thus launched as an initiative of the Romanian Foundation for Democracy, with the support and the assistance of the Association of Former Political Prisoners, and the Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes in Romania. Further collaborations were also initiated, the most important one was with the Ministry of Education. As a result, in 2016, an educational pilot center was established within the precinct of the former prison – the Center for the Study of Recent History in Romania. The educational pilot center is aimed at high school and college students, and provides a space equipped with IT and multimedia devices. From an educational point of view, this project intends to capitalize on the long and complex history of Fort 13 Jilava, which is a place of memory, representative of the 20th century, with all the horrors of totalitarianism. According to a press release, “the educational

approach is primarily aimed at young people who are obliged not to forget history and keep alive the memory of those who have paid with their life and freedom, and for their courage to face the abuses and crimes of the communist dictatorship”.

Another similar initiative is related to the Pitești prison. Established in 2011, the Foundation Pitești Prison Memorial purposes to transform the precinct of the former Pitești prison into a memorial. The Pitești Prison Memorial was opened in 2014 and its main task is to develop educational projects and exhibitions related to anticommunist resistance and the communist penitentiary system. In 2014, the former prison was opened to the public; visits are available by prior appointment, on request. The Memorial intends to develop a permanent memorial museum. In partnership with the Center for Studies in Contemporary History, a summer school project was launched in 2014 – “The Pitești Phenomenon” Summer School, which intends to “preserve the memory of what people suffered and the people who suffered, through a series of lectures held by renowned researchers, important personalities in the field of culture, and former political prisoners”.

Another private/unofficial initiative was related to the Făgăraș Fortress (built in 1310), which was used as a prison for political detainees between 1949 and 1960, and became a museum of the city in 1968. Since 2004, the Negru Vodă Foundation initiated the founding of a Memorial within the precinct of the fortress – the Memorial Museum of the Anticommunist Resistance Făgărași.

This succinct overview of the major museum and educational projects initiated in post-communist Romania may allow us to draw some conclusions related to the positive and negative aspects of these advancements. The memorialization and educational projects related to the traumatic communist past were implemented as early as the 1990's, both by official (the state authorities) and unofficial (civil society) actors. These advancements implied both positive and negative consequences.

A major issue related to these problems of the removal of communism and its symbols from public spaces after 1989, was that they were sometimes replaced by national and chauvinistic symbols; this refers to the interwar fascist Iron Guard and/or the figure of pro-fascist Marshal Ion Antonescu (ruler of Romania during World War II), mainly due to their relentless anti-communism. This type of symbolism is sometimes also associated with the anti-communist resistance and the Romanian gulag – still several of the political prisoners were related to the fascist Iron Guard movement.

In the same respect, post-communist society also experienced the emergence of a new generation of nostalgia for communism. Some of them are nostalgic for their youth, others because they believe that the communist regime offered them social and economic stability that post-communist democracy failed to deliver, and others identify themselves with the nationalism promoted by the Ceaușescu's regime. The nostalgia for communism is also due to the inability of the authorities, historians, and civil society to document and explain the crimes of communism, and its intrinsic totalitarian nature. The evolution of political elites after 1989 also influenced the process. The fact that most of the political leaders were, in fact, members of the second (or third) echelon of the former communist ruling class, their ignorance and refusal to discuss the recent past, their reluctance to pass laws on lustration, access to the Securitate files also explain the growing numbers of the nostalgics.

Another important issue to emphasize relates to the fact that the hegemonic discourse on the traumatic past was strongly shaped and influenced by political power. After the fall of the communist regime, Romanian authorities ignored and even refused to challenge and debate the recent past; a situation that led to the radicalization of civil society's narratives on communism. Thus, the major narratives related to this issue were generally both simplistic and "Manichean", as it portrayed the communist past as a confrontation between "good" and "evil". The symbolic narrations on communism appear as the expression of the triumph over it, as in a winner's version of the past. It speaks about what should be remembered from the past, and what should be forgotten. Subsequently, with the official initiatives related to the "discussion" of the communist past (the Presidential Commission established in 2006, and the government agency - IICCMRE, established in 2005), the situation did not necessarily improve, as the two institutions were considered as "actors" of political disputes between the parties, many of the achievements of these institutions were ignored or considered as politically biased. Still, the recent advancement of the historiography seeks to balance the type of narratives that are strongly influenced by the traumatic past, in order to provide a scientific account on the illegality and criminality of the communist dictatorship, raise awareness on the constant violation of human rights, and restore the dignity and the memory of the victims of the regime.

Moreover, another major theme that these memorialization projects illustrate is that of communism as an accident in the history of Romania, induced by external forces (i.e. the Soviet Union), and maintained during half of century through violence and terror. In this respect, the responsibility for the horrors of communism is transferred to an amorphous group of foreigners and aliens, while the Romanians are exonerated by any responsibilities or blames.

Although a Museum of Communism has not yet been established in Romania, there are several initiatives that intend to accomplish the task. Still, all these initiatives do not attempt to complete the projects independent from the authorities, considering that it is the state's responsibility to commit to and finance such an enterprise. Even if there are several politicians that consider the founding of a Museum of Communism as a stringent necessity, a vast majority ignore the issue, while the economic and social problems of the Romanian society serve as an alibi for their disregard. Moreover, on this particular issue, it is important to highlight the preference of the major actors for quantity, and not necessarily for quality. The existence of several competing projects related to the establishment of a Museum of Communism proves the lack of consensus between

the important institution on themes and issues: the name and location of the projected museum, the mission of this museum, what it should highlight, how the traumatic past should be displayed, etc. It also proves the existence of a competition between the different actors regarding this endeavor for official/unofficial primacy over the project. Even if a Museum of Communism in Romania remains a problematic issue, such a project could be facilitated by the collaboration of all the actors involved in these types of undertakings, but also by a consequential involvement of the authorities, that could accelerate the project.

LESSONS LEARNT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Related to the educational projects developed during the past years, a few comments are necessary. A cursory overview of these achievements may suggest that, even if tardily, many important projects were implemented. But the implementation of these projects was both lengthy and inconclusive. Despite the efforts of IICCMRE and the Ministry of Education, which led to the introduction of an optional high school course, and their constant interest in providing constant and meaningful feedback to schoolteachers on the latest didactical materials and methodological upgrades, the success of this project was limited. This situation is due to the school curricula's planners' permanent lack of interest and consideration for the history courses, in general (the number of history courses dramatically declined over the past years - resulting to a single course/week), the congested curricula that hardly approves the introduction of new courses, and the lack of interest/knowledge of teachers, who were supposed to gain new qualification. Moreover, the optional high school course "History of Communism in Romania", introduced in 2008 was distress by the introduction in 2015 of a new optional course - "The Recent History of Romania" (a project funded by the EU), which practically annulled the previous course. A similar pattern of lack of success refers to the MA program on Communist studies introduced in 2008 at the University of Iasi. The program concluded in 2014, due to the lack of interest of both the students and the university administration. However, another similar program was introduced in 2014 at the University of Bucharest, a project in progress. These educational projects ineffectiveness is due to several causes: the late and lengthy implementation, the lack of interest from both students and teachers, and a congested and inadequate curriculum. But by far, the most severe cause relates to their optional status in the curricula. For more coherent and more efficient politics on education and on preserving the memory of the traumatic past, extensive and compulsory programs need to be introduced.

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MEMORY OF NATIONS

Democratic Transition Guide

[The Russian Experience]

EDUCATION AND PRESERVATION OF SITES OF CONSCIENCE

THE MEMORY OF REPRESSIONS. THE ROLE OF EVIDENCE, MEMORABLE PLACES, INSTITUTIONS AND EDUCATIONAL POLICY

NATALIA KOLYAGINA

SOVIET TIMES

In the Soviet times, before the era of Glasnost and Perestroika, the memory of repressions was rather private in nature.

Under Stalin's rule the transfer of the information about repressions was hindered by the environment of fear, suspiciousness and silence. Those few proceedings mentioned in the official press were represented as a necessary step to liberate the society from the internal enemies of the people. A doubt regarding the justifiability of repressions alone could be the reason for detention. Speaking of arrests and the GULAG was often an off-limits subject even inside the family. They were afraid to be informed on by family members or that children could let it slip unintentionally at school, for instance.

When Stalin died in 1953, the era of mass arrests ended. In his report at the 20th Communist Party Congress (1956) Nikita Khrushchev officially explained the past events in the country by the side effects of the cult of personality of Joseph Stalin. The era of the Thaw started. In 1961 after the 22nd congress the body of Stalin was removed from the Mausoleum (the body of Lenin still reposes in the Mausoleum by the Kremlin wall).

It shall be mentioned that the official recognition of repressions alone significantly changed the public views. The Soviet government, however, did not intend to radically change the relationship between the government and the public. Just in a few months after the confidential report, the uprising in Budapest was put down involving Soviet tanks. The rule of Khrushchev did not end the era of repressions, but created a space for talking about it – in private conversations, in self-published press, in public literature, especially poetry, readings (where this topic was often addressed allegorically). Living eyewitnesses began to return from the camps. Most of them first had no right to live in large cities, and in case of rehabilitation they signed a pledge of secrecy promising not to disclose what had happened to them. However, many people started telling what had happened to their friends and relatives, and the information about camps slowly spread. People were slowly becoming aware of the events of the mass terror time. The story by Alexander Solzhenitsyn *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* (1962) was published. Whereas, lots of literary works about repressions never made it to the official press. However, the fact that Solzhenitsyn's story was published alone gave large hope of the restoration of justice and initiated the writing of many personal memoirs. Eyewitnesses were striving to extend the issues brought up by Solzhenitsyn sharing their experience. All works created in the 1960s contained quite fresh memories including a lot of important details of what happened.

Irina Scherbakova, researcher of the memories of the GULAG, highlights that “it is namely memoirs and other personal documents (letters and diaries) that were the main source of information about the system of repressions then, while archives containing documents concerning repressions were completely secret and historians did not even have a general idea of what could be kept archived”.¹ Yet in the times of Khrushchev and later, camp memoirs and belles-lettres on the topic of camps were still not published, just circulated in script and later were published underground or abroad.²

These manuscripts could see the light of day only under Perestroika. The topic ceased to be taboo, the media started publishing articles about camp experiences and interviews with former prisoners, famous people who had made it through the GULAG.

The dissident movement played a particular role in the commemoration of repressions in the Soviet time. The core of the dissident activity was the fight for the rights of the individual in the USSR. Organizations and non-official print media founded by dissidents documented the arbitrary rule in Russia and in other Soviet countries. Dissidents used the underground press to give coverage to the movement of repressed people for their rights, to tell the readers about the events in modern camps, to publish uncensored works of literature, which information was “parallel” to the official data, testimonies concerning the GULAG, in particular. In this respect the publications prepared for Samizdat (underground publications) and Tamizdat (publications abroad) by the participants of the dissident movement were a dramatic proof of the repressive system that existed in the USSR in the post-Stalinist times. In 1958–1968 Alexander Solzhenitsyn wrote his novel *The Gulag Archipelago* (first published in Paris in 1973, in USSR – since 1989). For this work Solzhenitsyn collected a kind of anthology of eyewitness memories. He used his own experience, but even more leaned on the written and oral testimonies of his contemporaries who had made it through the GULAG.

Summing up, the very reading, storing and distribution of testimonies concerning Soviet repressions in the times before Perestroika can be considered a sort of memory of repressions in the USSR.

1 Irina Shcherbakova, *GULAG Memory Map: Problems and Gaps*, in *Laboratorium*, 2015, (1), 117.

2 Irina Shcherbakova gives a detailed timeline of the transformation of GULAG memories in her article *The GULAG in Memory. An Experience of Researching Memoirs and Oral Testimonies of Former Prisoners*; <http://urokiistorii.ru/memory/oral/2009/05/pamyat-gulaga>

THE PERIOD FROM 1986 TO THE BEGINNING OF THE 2000s

A number of researchers³ point out that the term “transition period” cannot be applied to Russia. This term implies “transition” from totalitarianism to democracy and this scenario has been never implemented in Russia. However, we may speak of an attempt at such a “transition” after the year 1986. Many actions initiated then had a large importance for the social and political climate, influenced the formation of the collective memory of the totalitarian past over time. A variety of significant projects and initiatives started in the 1990s still continue or retain influence in the today’s society.

The period of Perestroika and Glasnost is associated with the boom of recollections of the GULAG and post-Stalinist repressions. At that time, memoirs were published, the public interest to the testimonies grew, first monuments to the victims of repressions were installed. On the one hand, the era of Gorbachev’s “glasnost” rather meant some censor liberalization. It was allowed to speak aloud of the Stalinist times, but prohibited to doubt the “Socialist choice” of the country. But even this was enough to radically change the world perception of the people of that time.

NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

On the wave of the public interest in the tragedy that had been disguised for decades the **Memorial Society** (www.memo.ru) was founded in 1989.

Memorial emerged as an association of sympathetic individuals interested in searching for and filing the scattered data concerning repressions in the USSR and in the commemoration of the victims. The very name of Memorial reflects a social attempt to create the first public memorial to the victims of Soviet repressions. Initially under the conditions of classified archives members of this society were able to collect these data questioning eyewitnesses, analyzing written and oral memories. Gradually the archive of the Society started filling up with originals and copies of personal files, which relatives of the victims and former prisoners have been able to request and receive from the state archives since the end of the 1980s. Memorial represented a network of regional associations connected by the common charter. This network regional type of organization was also imposed by the history. The desire to know the truth about the repressions in the USSR joined thousands of people all over the country, some of them started to study history professionally. Now Memorial is one of the largest and oldest non-profit organizations in Russia where professional historians majoring in the GULAG and secret services of the USSR are engaged. It also includes activists who search for the burial places of the prisoners, identify the remains, arrange reburial, conduct expeditions to the former places of detention, transfer and work of camp prisoners, install memorial signs at the places of terror, collect, publish and study testimonies, collect and investigate documents and items related to the GULAG and the history of the dissident movement in the USSR. The members of Memorial Society were involved in the elaboration of the State Rehabilitation Law (adopted in 1991), developed recommendations for government agencies regarding the actions necessary to change the public consciousness toward repressions in the USSR. The team of the Society

defends human rights and engages in the rehabilitation of repressed persons, renders legal assistance to the victims who applied for recognition and compensation. Sometimes they help with confirmation of the status of participant of the war / victim of Nazi crimes (deportation to Germany for compulsory labor), as very often this was connected with the following repression experience. This work was especially active in the 1990s after the adoption of the Rehabilitation Law. Moreover, until recently Memorial had been collecting contributions to support old people who had lived through camps (now the generation of these people has almost completely passed away). Even today it is essential to consult the relatives of the repressed persons who wish to know the fate of their relatives who had “disappeared” after arrest.

Dealing with the issues of the violation of human rights in the USSR, Memorial could not escape being involved in the mass abuse of the individual rights in contemporary Russia. Therefore, activists of the organization monitored the Chechen wars in the 1990s discovering, disclosing and analyzing the information about crimes against civilians, defending the interests of the aggrieved parties in the ECHR. The members of Memorial Society were involved in peace-making of ethnic conflicts (e.g. Sergey Kovalev and Oleg Orlov, board members of Memorial, took part in the hostages release negotiation in Budyonnovsk).

Memorial stood at the origins of the first public campaigns in memory of the repressed. On October 30, 1989, the proclaimed Day of Remembrance of Victims of Political Repressions, a chain of people holding candles in their hands surrounded the building of the KGB at Lubyanskaya Square in Moscow. In 1990 a stone brought from the islands in the White Sea, where one of the first Soviet camps for political prisoners was situated, was installed on the same Lubyanskaya Square. It became the first memorial to the Soviet regime’s victims.

Already in 1988–1989 newspapers started publishing the lists of victims of Soviet repressions, often according to the information received from the regional divisions of the KGB. Later the researchers from different regions started searching archives, and thus **Memorial Books** appeared containing lists of names with biographical profiles of the victims. Today the consolidated database of the repressed persons numbers 2.6 million names: <http://lists.memo.ru/>

Since the beginning of the 1990s **Associations of Victims of Political Repressions** have been emerging all over the country. These appeared naturally: such associations gave the opportunity to the people with a similar fate to get acquainted, to support each other and to fight for their rights.

In 1990 the first steps were made to found the **Sakharov Center**. In the middle of the 1990s the Archive of the famous Academy Member Andrey Sakharov, a museum and social center were opened. Alongside the museum and archive activity dedicated to the history of freedom and captivity in the USSR, the center has become an essential discussion platform, where cultural and social problems of the past and present are discussed. These discussions are conducted in the form of public lectures, seminars, narrated film shows, theatrical performances, exhibitions (including such famous ones as *Forbidden Art* or *Caution! Religion*).

3 Arseny Roginsky, Lev Ivanov. Watch, for example, the record of the conference *The Long Echo of the Dictatorship* held in September 2014 in Memorial Society, Moscow: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xfqn1lrl7WI&t=25s>

MUSEUMS

There are only a few topical **museums** in Russia **related to the issue of repressions** in the USSR. In the 1990s all these museums emerged owing to the endeavors of local historians who collected the testimonies of their countrymen, examined the burial places of the victims, evidence from the places of detention, searched for documents in local archives, etc. As a rule, these are small museums or small exhibitions in local history museums.

The only museum in the country that was created on the place of a former camp is **Perm-36 Memorial Museum**. It was founded in 1994 in the village of Kuchino, Perm Krai, on the place of the correctional labor colony Perm-36, where political criminals had been “reformed” since the beginning of the 1970s. The museum was founded by a group of local historians. The barracks were renovated (display items were placed there), a part of the camp facilities were rebuilt (flag towers, fences, precautionary facilities, etc.), deep research work was performed. However, under the latest political conditions the museum was literally seized from the group who had founded it and transferred to the state (later in detail).

The **NKVD House of Detention Museum in Tomsk** is located in the basement of the building where the secret prison of the Tomsk city department of OGPU/NKVD was situated in 1923–1944 (200 sq. m display area).

Other topical museums created in the 1990s occupy tiny spaces provided by local authorities. As independent museums they just slightly differ from the exhibitions of the GULAG in local history museums. A perfect example of such museums is the **Memory of Kolyma** Museum, in Yagodnoye settlement, Magadan Oblast, opened by the efforts of the local enthusiast Ivan Panikarov. Until 2005 the museum was located in a two-room apartment bought by Panikarov for this purpose. Panikarov had been personally gathering the museum collection since 1989. The full list of museums can be found on the website Virtual Museum of the GULAG developed by the team of the St. Petersburg division of Memorial Society.⁴

It is remarkable that the former Soviet prisons for political prisoners, which still exist, usually also have their own museums. These possess the spirit of succession – contemporary sentence execution services carry on the “glorious traditions” of the Soviet prisoner oversight bodies. They point out the merit and professionalism of prison employees, portraits and service records of the “veterans of the movement” are displayed at the place of honor, the word “repression” is usually not mentioned and the very phenomenon of political prisoners in the USSR is also concealed. A good example of this is the **Museum of the Butyrka Prison in Moscow**.

NECROPOLES

As for today approx. 700 places of execution and/or burial of USSR terror victims have been revealed.⁵ The number of such places of burial of arrested, detained, resettled persons is obviously bigger, most of them are still not found due to the remoteness of the places of detention from the modern populated settlements, due to the unavailability of the archives of the Federal Security Service and of the Ministry of the Interior to the researchers, as well as due to the lack of consistent and centralized actions in this field. Most of the mentioned burial places were found by chance, during excavation works for the construction

of commercial facilities and residential houses. The disinterment and identification of the deceased are usually performed by local historians and public activists who sometimes fail to find out the story of the burial. Some large burials have obtained the status of Memorial Burials of the Victims of Political Repressions by the efforts of non-governmental organizations (e.g. Makarikhka (Arkhangelsk Oblast), Sandarmokh (Karelia), Levashovo (Leningrad Oblast), Butovo Firing Range (Moscow) etc.). Memorial signs/monuments (personal – by family members or collective) are installed at the places of discovered burials and memorial events are arranged.

MONUMENTS TO THE VICTIMS OF POLITICAL REPRESSIONS

It is impossible to establish the number of such dedicated monuments, memorial plates and signs installed since 1991. The difficulty is caused by the lack of a uniform register of monuments in Russia, the disunity of organizations (and individuals) initiating the installation of monuments in different regions of Russia and also by the complexity of definition of a monument. Nevertheless, as of today the Sakharov Center recorded on a designated web portal 714 monuments in the country (http://www.sakharov-center.ru/asfcd/pam/?t=list&c=Russia&id_c=1 – this list is constantly updated). In 2007 the St. Petersburg Memorial Society recorded 587 monuments and memorial signs.⁶

Most of these monuments were installed by individuals or non-governmental organizations of victims and their relatives and not by the government. For this purpose, they need to get consent from the authorities regarding the place of installation and the appearance of the monument. Local authorities will usually give their consent to the installation of such monuments on the outskirts or at the places of the discovered burial, rather than on central streets of a city or town. The authorities resist greatly the installation of memorial plates on the existing buildings and facilities related to the history of terror (e.g. places where decisions had been made) or to the deportation of prisoners (railway stations), places where prisoners had worked (secret R&D laboratories, factories) or items constructed by prisoners.

This difficulty inspired the creation of the memorial project *The Topography of Terror*, where places associated with the history of political repressions in Moscow and the Moscow region are plotted on an online map. The reference map contains descriptions of over 740 locations organized topically.⁷ The project exists online and in the form of signposts installed in the city.

TEXTBOOKS

In the first years of the Russian Federation schools did not receive new Russian history textbooks. Teachers who worked at the very beginning of the 1990s clearly perceived the mismatch between the Soviet textbooks and the reality that was freely discussed in

4 <http://www.gulagmuseum.org/search.do?objectTypeName=museum&page=1&language=1>

5 See the topic section of the website Virtual Museum of the GULAG: <http://www.gulagmuseum.org/search.do?objectTypeName=necropolis&page=1&language=1>

6 <http://www.gulagmuseum.org/search.do?objectTypeName=monuments&language=1&page=1&objectTypeName=monuments&language=1>

7 <http://topos.memo.ru/>

newspapers and books and often looked for the sources of information personally, brought newspaper clippings and available publications to the lessons. By the mid-1990s book houses prepared different teaching aids at the discretion of the school administration.

Before 2000 there was no uniform state educational standard in history, there were only state requirements in respect of the minimum attainment level of the school graduates. There were textbooks “recommended” and “permitted” for teaching at school (the label was given by the Ministry of Education). Thus, in the first 10 years after the collapse of the Soviet Union it was mainly teachers who took responsibility for the contents of the historical education. Textbooks “permitted” for teaching at school included quite brave and pioneering projects. For example, the Soviet history textbook for secondary schools by Igor Dolutsky, a historian from Moscow, was aimed at “education of a responsible citizen” or as the author explained in an interview at “teaching a student to resist the government”. On the other hand, teachers of history could choose textbooks with strong nationalist connotations. An extreme example of this kind was the textbook for high school students of history by A. Barsenkov and A. Vdovin, professors of the Moscow State University (2004). Alongside conspiracy theories, anti-Semitic insults and distasteful opinion regarding the Caucasus people, it found excuses for the crimes of Stalin. The latter were represented as necessary side effects on the way to a radiant future. After a public outcry in 2010 the book lost its label of “recommended textbook”.

At the same time there were attempts to accumulate the best teacher’s experience in the discipline. In 2001 the Sakharov Center launched a national contest for the teachers of history, social science and literature, Lesson Topic – History of Political Repressions and Resistance to the lack of freedom in the USSR. The best guidance papers sent to the contest were published in books and sent out to regions, contest winners were invited to the annual conference in Moscow. This contest has existed for 10 years. Since the beginning of the 2000s the St. Petersburg division of Memorial Society systematically posted study manuals by lessons on the topic of repressions on their website.

In 1999 International Memorial in Moscow launched a contest for school students – A Man in History. Russia 20th century (still exists). The contest induced school students from all Russia to collect evidence from the period of repressions. The contest receives from 1,200 to 3,000 works annually. The participants interview eyewitnesses, work with photographs and documents from family archives and address regional archives. During the years of its existence unique previously unclaimed materials associated with the regional history of repressions have been collected.

Several years were used to elaborate the method of talking about the period of totalitarianism. Many projects were launched when the hope for the possible democratic development of Russia was alive. However, starting from the end of the 2000s the free space for historical studies at school has been gradually getting narrower (later in detail).

2000s–2017 / CURRENT STATUS

As already mentioned above it is impossible to define clearly the time of the “transition period” end in Russia. Basically, speaking of the public climate in the country after the year 2000

the parallel existence of two tendencies may be mentioned – the continued movement toward democratization (especially in the first term of V. Putin and the term of D. Medvedev) and conservative trends. Obviously the democratic course would be impossible in Russia, but for the changes made in the 1990s.

Currently the main civil rights and liberties are obviously restricted. Foreign and Russian foundations engaged in the expansion of liberal education are being gradually forced out of the country.

In 2012 the State Duma of the Russian Federation adopted amendments to the Non-commercial Organization Law, where NCOs engaged in “political activity on the territory of Russia” or receiving “monetary funds and other property from foreign states, international and foreign organizations” were acknowledged as being “foreign agents”. The law predetermined legal prosecution of organizations put on the list of “foreign agents” by force, complicated the procedure of tax inspections and was basically aimed at the reputational damage of a number of NCOs.⁸ In 2015 the Sakharov Center was included in the list of foreign agents, in 2016 – International Memorial. Both organizations are currently in litigation concerning this status.

In 2015 the US embassy in Russia was compelled to close cultural exchange programs, all American foundations stopped their programs on the territory of the Russian Federation.

In 2012 Perm-36 Memorial Museum was basically dissolved and liquidated. Alongside its main role, commemoration of the terror in the USSR, the Museum was gradually becoming a free discussion platform for the problems of the contemporary society. The authorities of the Perm Krai found a formal reason to dismiss the management of the Museum and to appoint their “own people” to the vacant jobs. As a result, the Museum was not closed, but ceased to be the commemoration place of repressions. For example, the guides now are former guards, the exhibition is dedicated to the efficiency of the penal system, only general information from the history of the GULAG is represented.

The current historical period also meant the end of the free press in Russia. Today there are no free TV channels in Russia (except just a few available under paid subscription and working under the risk of being closed at any time). Popular online media experience strong pressure as these may be blocked by internet providers anytime upon the decision of the dedicated state committee (Rosпотребнадзор). In the sense of the policy of memory, all this news means an actual lack of memorial initiatives regarding terror history in the media agenda, the press, especially TV, lacks critical discussion of the Soviet period of history in general, the period of Perestroika and the 1990s is being defamed. And on the contrary we can talk about the nostalgia of the Soviet times fostered in the media. The leading TV channels manipulate the ideas of the imperial glory of the USSR, praise the technical and foreign policy achievements of the Soviet Union, first of all, the victory in the Great Patriotic War or confrontation with the USA in the Cold War. Moreover, some TV channels make an information attack on NGOs engaged in historical education.

Since the end of the 2000s, initiated by the government, the project of introduction of a single history textbook for schools has been actively discussed. In 2009 the so called “Textbook by

⁸ Discussion of the situation in detail – see e.g.: http://www.bbc.com/russian/russia/2016/04/160420_gosduma_ngo_law

Filippov⁹ was introduced as a pilot project. This teaching aid was an attempt to literally rehabilitate the name of Stalin. Repressions and terror were justified in this book by a historical need and declared a rational and pragmatic method of managing politics and the economy, the number of persons repressed by Stalin was decreased approx. 10-fold. The textbook lacked chapters concerning the famines, the deportation of nations inside the USSR, the Katyn massacre. The publication was severely criticized by the academic community, and the Ministry of Education was forced to reject it as a single mandatory textbook for schools.

However, in 2015 the talks about creating a uniform state standard for teaching history, sociology and literature at school recommenced. The elaborated standard was trying to account for the whole diversity of social attitudes in the most controversial issues. Thus, the standard incorporated such painful topics as repressions, the Holocaust and collaborationism during the Great Patriotic War. However, the list of essential topics made the standard so cumbersome that as a matter of fact it is impossible to use it in practical education.

A peculiarity of contemporary schools is their growing political engagement. Since the middle of the 2000s “lessons of courage” and “lessons of patriotic education” have been introduced at schools, where the idea of the necessity to defend the state from external enemies is promoted and military-oriented values are asserted. Representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church, veterans of the Great Patriotic War, of the Afghan and Chechen Wars are invited to such lessons. Today’s programs and out-of-school activities pay special attention to the cult of the Great Patriotic War, and first of all, the victory of 1945, which is perceived as the main achievement in Soviet and Russian history. Celebratory assemblies, parades and meetings with veterans have become compulsory on Victory Day, May 9th. Teachers often have explanatory political conversations with school children during humanitarian lessons – history, sociology and economics.¹⁰

Since the end of the 1990s one more serious actor appeared on the Russian stage of the memorial policy – the Russian Orthodox Church. On the one hand, the ROC is often perceived by the public as an institution joined with government agencies. The government takes a lot of measures aimed at the growth of the material wealth of the church, engages in a declarative advocacy of Christian values in the mass media, education, in the speeches of leading politicians... On behalf of the believers, new legislative initiatives related to the restriction of civil rights and freedoms have been introduced (Law on the Protection of Feelings of Religious Persons, victimization of homosexuals, introduction of Orthodox subjects at school, show trial against Pussy Riot 2012). On the other hand, the Church now is a powerful ally of public institutions in the issues of the commemoration of terror victims and a critical attitude toward the Soviet legacy. In particular, through the mediation of the Church a lot of monuments were installed to the victims of repressions all over the country, cemeteries were defined and consecrated. The point is that the concept of New Martyrs is important for the modern ROC, honoring of the churchmen executed or arrested in the times of terror. The representatives of the Church install memorial signs on the churches (meanwhile only in Moscow and the vicinity of Moscow) in commemoration of those who suffered for their faith. For the first time in Russia the Orthodox church in honor of the New Martyrs was opened at the Butovo Firing Range (in the south of Moscow).¹¹

LESSONS LEARNT

In a very primitive way, we can speak of two antagonistic paradigms of memory present in the community. One of these focuses the historical attention on the individual, his/her inherent rights, and the other on the interests of the state, which sometimes can be more important than the rights and liberties of individuals. Critical comprehension of history, respect for civil values in the past and present are common to the people who dream to see their country on the way of social transformation. Such a trajectory finally implies transparency and responsibility of government institutions in front of the individuals, real functioning of the election system, free press and civil society institutions.

This system of values is alien to the contemporary political elite of Russia. The political agenda itself, the values communicated by the media controlled by the government, the methods of commemoration suggested by the government, all of these evidence that it is rather the idea of the individual development path of Russia, the Eurasian program, the imperial philosophy that are popular.¹²

In practice it means a parallel existence of different commemoration methods in respect of the totalitarian past in society.

The civil society today successfully advances important initiatives in the memorialization of the GULAG experience. There is a whole range of interesting online projects popular among the internet audience. Thus, the project Bessmertny Barak (rus. The Immortal Barrack) created by the efforts of volunteers and financed by donations of the readers gained much interest: <http://bessmertnybarak.ru/> Since May 2015 the biography of one repressed person is posted daily on this web page, including photos and abstracts from available documents. The number of the website readers registered at Facebook amounts now to almost 55,000 persons.

Posledny Adres [rus. The Last Address] (www.poslednyadres.ru) is the most important offline project of recent years. It involves the installation of small memorial plates on the houses where the arrested people were taken from. The installations are initiated by private individuals who have to pay a definite contribution covering the costs of the manufacturing of the plate. The team of the project working in Memorial Society checks the story of the repressed person, agrees on the installation of the plate with the inhabitants or the owner of the house. The first plates of Posledny Adres were installed in Moscow on December 10, 2014. “Until now over 460 plates have been installed in 30 cities, towns and villages of Russia in the framework of the Posledny Adres project,” the website of the project informs us. As of today, the Posledny Adres Foundation has already received and registered over 1,500 applications for the installation of memorial plates in different localities of Russia.¹³

9 A. V. Filippov, *Contemporary History of Russia. 1946–2006. Teacher’s Book*, Moscow: Prosveshcheniye, 2007; A. Filippov, A. Danilov, eds., *The History of Russia. 1900–1945*, Moscow: Prosveshcheniye, 2009.

10 See the article in the Novaya Gazeta: Your Son Took Part in a Meeting. Behavior Unsatisfactory. // <https://www.novayagazeta.ru/articles/2017/04/10/72095-dnevnik-oppozitsii-vash-syn-byl-na-mitinge-zapovedenie-neud>

11 See Church of Russian New Martyrs and Confessors in Butovo: <http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/243827.html>

12 On the topic of the two paradigms of the historical consciousness in Russia see the analytical report of the Free Historical Society What Past Does the Russian Future Need (January 2017): <https://komitetgi.ru/analytics/3076/>

13 <https://www.poslednyadres.ru/about/>

The issue of political repressions in the USSR is not popular in the pro-government historical discourse. The memorial policy of the government is aimed rather at the glorification of the achievements of the USSR (victory in the war of 1941–1945, space exploration) or the revelation of cultural heroes of the past. They create the history of the state, which one should be first of all proud of. The fact of repressions cannot be concealed, but it is still preferable not to recall them. The unworked issue of “how one should treat the totalitarian past” induces much stress in the community.

This acute social split in respect of the attitude toward the Soviet legacy results for instance in an ideological confrontation concerning the issue of the installation of Stalin monuments. Since 2010 approx. 100 Stalin monuments emerged in the country (far from all in public spaces of the cities, approximately one third of the total amount is concentrated in the North Caucasus). But even more frequent than the actual installation of Stalin busts, heated discussion of another application for such a monument in different populated localities of Russia is taking place.

According to the polls conducted by sociologists, the ranking of Stalin reached its historical highest point in post-Soviet Russia in February 2017. According to the latest data¹⁴ 46 % of respondents treat the Secretary General of the Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party Stalin with admiration, respect and affection. At the same time the number of those who treat Stalin absolutely negatively grew compared to the previous years. “Whereas at the beginning of 2016 he was treated with dislike, fear, disgust and hatred by 17 %, in 2017 it was already 21 %,” sociologists of the Levada-Center mention. This evidences the growing polarization of the public moods in the country.

It needs to be said that the government is probably aware of the problem of the society split and makes attempts to balance it. Thus, in 2015 Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev approved The Concept of the State Policy on Memorializing the Victims of Political Repressions.¹⁵ The concept was initiated by the Human Rights Council under the President of the Russian Federation, Memorial Society and some public persons who approached President Medvedev with the respective proposal in February 2011 announcing the so called Destalinization Program.¹⁶ The discussion of the Program by its authors and the President ended in the same year 2011, however a number of important proposals from this document formed the basis of the Concept of the State Policy adopted already under Putin’s third term as a president. Regrettably this concept is obviously more of a declarative instrument. For example, almost all provisions in the section Lines of Activity to Memorialize the Victims of Repressions are still not implemented. The program of archaeological search for burial places and memorialization of the places of repressions failed to be implemented, we lack free access to archives, developed research and educational programs to teach the respective topics at schools and high schools, and so on according to the document text. Nevertheless, a few steps have been made to implement this program. In particular, the Museum of GULAG underwent significant revamping and they started to work on the creation of a monument to the victims of totalitarianism in Moscow.

The State Museum of GULAG was opened in 2004. Its exhibitions were formed according to the principle of emotional immersion of the visitor in the horror of repressions, the small number of authentic exhibits was compensated for by installations and interactive effects. This place did not enjoy special fame or popularity among city dwellers and tourists. In 2015

the Museum of GULAG received from the government a new modern four-story building and the possibility to increase the area of exhibitions 4-fold, including a library, a conference hall and a teaching center. Basically the new exhibition complies with the standards of a modern Western museum, it is supported by scientific facts, includes oral testimonies, historical exhibits and features a spectacular design. The museum organizes sets of lectures, traveling exhibitions, theatrical performances and readings. In other words, it is designed to catch the fancy of a young sophisticated audience. However, the opened museum faces criticism on the part of the academic community, as well as of public institutions. The criticism is aimed at the general historical concept communicated by the museum. For example, one of the authors writes, “Having walked through all the halls, at the end the visitor sees a video featuring Vladimir Putin, Sergey Sobyenin [the mayor of Moscow] and Patriarch Kirill, where they bless the policy of memory now embodied by the museum. This policy of memory strives to put a symbolic period to the history of repressions. According thereto repressions are something that had happened in the past, and although this past still distresses us, it is only residual pains and all we need is to heal these pains, as the original source of them does not exist anymore. But we know that of all people the current President, the members of the United Russia [political party] and the Patriarch have no moral right to say that political repressions have become a thing of the past, because we see exactly the opposite.”¹⁷

The idea to install the main **Monument to the Victims of Repressions** expressed by Putin personally in 2015 also faced a severe rebuff, in the first place, from the public that seemingly should advocate the installation of such a monument. The community was confused by the extremely brief terms of the best design tender, the ill choice of the place for the future monument and worried that the government would try to close the discussion of the topic of repressions by the installation of the monument. But the main question is the same as for the Museum of GULAG – can the government that continues to exercise political repressions install a monument to the victims of repressions?¹⁸

Meanwhile, the tender has been completed, the design chosen, the foundation established that is collecting the public part of the money for the monument.¹⁹ “The memory of the victims of political repressions unites and reconciles the Russian society, reinforces the sense of responsibility for oneself and for the state”, is included in the motto of the new foundation. The new monument is expected in October 2017.

The Russian society has not lived through the experience of parting with the Soviet past. The state feels like the successor of

14 Poll by the Independent Public Opinion Center Levada-Center: <http://www.levada.ru/2017/02/15/lyubov-rossiyan-k-stalinu-dostigla-maksimuma/>

15 Full text of the concept is available at the RF’s Government website: <http://government.ru/media/files/AR59E5d7yB9LddoPH2RSIhQpSCQDERdP.pdf>

16 The text of the Proposals on the Creation of the National Governmental and Public Program “Memorialization of the Victims of the Totalitarian Regime and National Reconciliation” is available under: <http://urokiistorii.ru/1766>

17 A. Vlasik, M. Esipchuk, G. Nepreyenko. This Museum, Perfectly Functioning, Attractive. What is wrong with the new Museum of the GULAG History // <http://www.colta.ru/articles/art/12980>

18 See detailed analysis of the discussion around the new monument in the material by G. Revzin – Memorable History // <http://kommersant.ru/doc/2678868>

19 Memory Fund: <http://memoryfund.ru/>

the USSR, the government includes people who have previously worked in the KGB.

In Russia it is young people and a scarce number of civilians who are engaged in the elaboration of the topic of the totalitarian legacy of the Soviet Union and governmental violence. The discourse of the elaboration of the totalitarian past is related to the experience of the critical comprehension of the nature of power, discussion of the main human rights and liberties. This is exactly why the handling of the past often becomes the basis for critical discussion of the contemporary social problems related to fundamental rights.

The current government suggests two strategies: to keep a silence in respect of repressions or to reconcile with the past. Both ignore the public trauma of the modern society. Instead

of a thorough understanding of what happened to the Russian/Soviet community in the 20th century, they suggest accepting what happened, leaving the history in the past and to move on.

At the same time recent years are distinguished by a tougher political regime, enhanced attacks on civil institutions, including organizations engaged in memorial activity. The Concept of the State Policy on Memorializing the Victims of Political Repressions is implemented under such conditions that Stalin is glorified and Memorial Society is called a “foreign agent” and their work is complicated in every possible way. This makes one think that the modern government is attempting to monopolize the right to talk about repressions and fight against the attempts to speak of the past in an alternative way.

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