

Project	COURAGE. Cultural Opposition: Understanding the Cultural Heritage of Dissent in the Former Socialist Countries
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## D29 Country Reports

Including Annex 1) Full country reports in alphabetical order of countries



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## Summary

This deliverable reports on the preparation of Country Reports, which are core documents for creating policy recommendations for the European Commission. The COURAGE country reports provide nation-specific data in a European frame of reference to categorize and compare the various collections on cultural opposition in the former socialist countries. In principle, each former socialist country in Europe is treated in one report. To produce comparable data and categories for further analytical work, the country reports provide answers to a standardised set of questions. These questions are designed to produce comprehensive information on the collections. Questions address how the institutions which collected the records and products of cultural opposition in the former socialist countries were established, the concepts on which they were based, and the ways in which they have evolved from the late socialist period to the present day. Major actors, goals, and strategies are mapped, and major changes are put in the context of the political, legal, financial, and cultural conditions of the collections.

## 1. Preparation of the Country Reports

IOS Regensburg was responsible for collecting and editing the country reports from the national task managers and for designing the final set of recommendations on cultural policy and exhibitions based on the recommendations of the national task managers. Other participants prepared the individual country reports on the countries of study on the basis of the COURAGE Registry and their own research; and they prepared recommendations for the final set of recommendations.

The first step in the preparation process was to establish and communicate the frames for the categorization of the collections and establish regional groups which would cooperate in the analytical work. The “Workshop on Categorizing and Framing the Collections of the Cultural Opposition” of the Horizon2020 COURAGE project (“Cultural Opposition – Understanding the Cultural Heritage of Dissent in the Former Socialist Countries”) fulfilled this task. This workshop was held in Budapest on 25 September 2017. The purpose of the workshop was to discuss with all partners the remaining questions of the Questionnaire (which formed the basis of the Country Reports) and to fine-tune questions with the final objective in mind, namely to answer questions in a way that will produce country reports that could serve as bases of comparison. For the questionnaire and for details on the discussion see the **D16 Collection Workshop Report**.

Consortium members were asked to deliver the first drafts of their country reports by 10 September 2018. They were asked to establish the major turning points and explanations for changes in the institutional systems; study the major actors, social pressure groups, political interests groups, and civic society and professional groups that shaped the collections; provide analyses of the financial backgrounds and the funding and legal frameworks in which the collections operate; and determine which kinds of groups (visitors, professionals, politicians) use the collections and for what purposes (leisure, networking, research, community building). The first drafts of the country reports were subjected to a strict feedback process. The results of the feedbacks and the comments of WP leader IOS were mediated to consortium members. The revised country reports were submitted via Redmine in proofread versions by 25 November.

Summaries of the country reports clustered around key problems and themes will be provided in **D33 Shorter versions of country reports**.



## 2. List of Country Reports

Ulf Brunnbauer; Anelia Kassabova:	BULGARIA
Saulius Grybkauskas; Vladas Sirutavičius:	THE BALTIC STATES (LITHUANIA, LATVIA, ESTONIA)
Josip Mihaljević; Teodora Shek Brnardić:	CROATIA AND SLOVENIA
Miroslav Michela; Michaela Kůželová:	CZECH REPUBLIC
Laura Demeter:	GERMANY
Péter Apor:	HUNGARY
Andrei Cusco:	MOLDOVA
Barbara Tołłoczko-Suchańska:	POLAND
Cristina Petrescu:	ROMANIA
Milena Dragičević Šešić; Jacqueline Nießer:	SERBIA, BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA, MACEDONIA, MONTENEGRO, KOSOVO
Magdaléna Stýblová; Vladimír Zvara:	SLOVAKIA
Orysia Maria Kulick:	UKRAINE

## **Annex 1)**

**Country Reports in alphabetical order of  
countries or regions**

**- full pdfs -**

# COURAGE

Cultural Opposition: Understanding the Cultural Heritage of Dissent in the Former Socialist Countries

## *Country Reports*



# BULGARIA

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## Table of Content

Abstract .....	3
1. Introduction.....	4
2. Contexts.....	6
2.1 Researching Opposition under State Socialism.....	6
2.2 Institutions and Legal Foundations of the Preservation and Interpretation of the Past ....	10
3. Analysis of the Collections in the COURAGE Registry .....	14
3.1 Typology .....	14
3.2 Themes, Actors, Users.....	15
4. Conclusion and Recommendations.....	19
Bibliography.....	22
Appendix.....	24
Selected Further Reading .....	24
List of Collections.....	25
List of operating institutions and owners.....	26
List of people researched .....	26
Map: Location of the Bulgarian COURAGE Collections .....	28

## Abstract

This report explores the context of researching opposition under state socialism in Bulgaria, with a particular focus on cultural opposition. After a brief discussion of the development of research on state socialism and dissent in Bulgaria, it presents the major institutions involved in researching and documenting the socialist past. It highlights the importance of the legal and political framework. It argues that Bulgaria, in contrast to other post-socialist countries, lacks a strong government-initiated engagement with the socialist past. This is why there are not specialized public research institutes for that purpose. On the other hand, the lack of political intervention also means that there are no dominant interpretations imposed on scholars. The second part of the articles analyses public and private efforts to maintain the material legacy of cultural opposition. It describes the Bulgarian collections in the EU funded “COURAGE” Project, which deals with the history of cultural opposition in state socialism. These collections are an illustration of the wealth of artefacts on dissent that should be maintained and prepared for research. The authors conclude with recommendations, such as the necessity to provide more financial means to preserve this heritage.

**Key Words:** Bulgaria, state socialism, opposition, dissent, memory, historical research, collections, archives

## 1. Introduction

Just after the COURAGE project started, the Bulgarian National Assembly on 23 November 2016 passed the Bill for a “Law on the Removal of Communist Symbols” (*Zakon za premahvane na komunisticheskite simvoli*) in the first reading. One hundred and four deputies voted in favor, forty-six against, and three abstained. According to the bill, symbols that celebrated the communist system would be banned in the public space. Its sponsors claimed that in this way, the many victims of communist rule would be accorded tribute. The law would have made the removal from the public eye of monuments, sculptures, signs, paintings and photographs, produced during and in order to commend communism, mandatory. Such images and objects would be moved to the “Museum of Socialist Art” (a small such museum exists, as part of the National Gallery in Sofia).<sup>1</sup> The law would also prohibit the public display of signs that showed the communist period in the “wrong” light and of symbols endorsing the activities of the Bulgarian Communist Party. If it appeared impossible to remove a monument, an information plaque would be allocated to it for the time being. The text of the plaque would read: “The communist regime from September 9, 1944, to November 10, 1989, and the activities of the Bulgarian Communist Party, have been declared a crime by a law passed by the 38<sup>th</sup> National Assembly.”

This legislative initiative triggered a lively yet short-lived debate about how to deal with the socialist past. The conservative sponsors of the bill claimed that the communist regime had been criminal and responsible for massive violations of human rights. Left-wingers deplored the law as an attack on the freedom of speech, or as an attempt to falsify history. More reasoned voices pointed to the impracticability of the bill, whose vague language made it next to impossible to implement as it failed to define which symbols were communist and thus should be removed. Some observers ironically suggested that major buildings constructed during state socialism, such as the National Palace of Culture in Sofia or the socialist town of Dimitrograd, as well as whole factories and residential neighborhoods, would have to be eradicated as well, since they reminded people of the achievements of socialism.<sup>2</sup>

The bill never made it through a second reading and thus did not become law. Hence, the original law, which it was intended to amend, remained in place. In 2000, parliament had passed the “Law on the Declaration of the Communist Regime in Bulgaria as a Criminal.”<sup>3</sup> This law was sponsored by conservative deputies who had taken note of similar initiatives elsewhere in eastern Europe. The first article of the law states that the rule of the Bulgarian Communist Party had led the country “into a national catastrophe”. It accuses the communist regime of deliberate mass violations of human rights, of initiating the “economic decline of the country”, of destroying the “traditional values of European civilization”, of uninterrupted terror, of the “destruction of the moral values of the people”, of “environmental vandalism”, etc. The whole regime was thus declared to be criminal and the Bulgarian Communist Party was

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<sup>1</sup> <https://nationalgallery.bg/visiting/museum-of-socialist-art/>.

<sup>2</sup> <http://skandalno.net/закон-срещу-комунизма-приеа-герб-и-рб-172913>.

<sup>3</sup> Published in *Durzhaven vestnik*, no 37, May 5, 2000.

defined as a criminal organization. Article 4 declared that all citizens who had opposed the regime and its ideology were “just, morally right and deserve respect.”

While the law had no legal consequences and – except for episodes such as the attempted amendment in 2016 – remained a more or less dead document, it is illustrative for the difficulties Bulgarian policymakers face when addressing the socialist past. There is a notable disconnection between the increasingly nuanced scientific treatment of this period and the polarized, black-and-white approaches of most policymakers and newspapers. For them, the interpretation of communist rule more often than not is a tool of identity politics – in lieu of substantial programmatic disagreements, the attitude towards communism represents a litmus test for the right-left divide. Accusations that individuals were informants for the notorious State Security service have been repeatedly used as a political weapon (though voters have not seemed to care much). Policymakers have not only disagreed on the interpretation but also on the means of how to deal with the communist period.

This lack of consensus and political will has had institutional consequences and impeded an informed public debate about the nature of state socialism outside scholarly circles: neither has a special public institution to study the socialist past been created, nor is there a museum devoted to this topic. It took until 2007 – and pressure by the EU during the accession negotiations – for citizens and researchers to obtain access to former secret police files (see below). The government even failed to create a genuine memorial complex on the Danube island of Belene – the location of the most infamous labor camp under Bulgarian communism (next to that at the Loveč stone quarry). The country, thus, has hardly any official *lieux de memoir* for the period of state socialism and the victims of state suppression. Only the conservative government of Ivan Kostov made a real effort: a memorial complex was erected in the centre of Sofia in front of the socialist-era National Palace of Culture in 1999. It commemorates the victims of the communist regime (the so-called “Memorial Wall and Chapel in Memory of the Victims after 1944”).<sup>4</sup> Every year on September 9, the day on which the “Fatherland Front” took power in 1944, a commemoration and religious ceremony is held there. The same government, albeit with difficulty, had the Dimitrov Mausoleum in Sofia blown up in 1999.<sup>5</sup>

Hence, when discussing efforts to preserve and study the memories of opposition and dissent, we need to take into account the effects of political disinterest. Initiatives to build up collections, create memorials or establish specialized research facilities, usually cannot count on support by the state, neither on the local nor the national level (Bulgaria has no substantive regional policy-making level). They might find the backing of politicians with their own agenda but no systematic institutional interest in dealing with the socialist period beyond political debates. On the positive side, there is little evidence of a systematic instrumentalization of the past by anti-communist forces, as can be observed in countries such as Hungary and Poland where right-wing regimes are crudely re-writing history. The lack of systematic policies may also create openings in the absence of firmly established paradigms that constrain initiative. However, this also translates into a substantial lack of funding for historical research

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<sup>4</sup> “Bulgarien”, in Kaminsky et al, *Museen und Gedenkstätten*, 60.

<sup>5</sup> Todorova, “The Mausoleum of Georgi Dimitrov,” 377–411.

which is even more troublesome in view of the fact that Bulgaria is the poorest country in the EU and its government operates with limited budgetary possibilities.

## 2. Contexts

### 2.1 Researching Opposition under State Socialism

After the end of communist rule in November 1989, Bulgaria, like the other formerly socialist countries, experienced an explosion of interest in the “true” history of socialism. While much of this public thirst to learn about the communist past was satisfied by journalists and publicists with an emphasis on sensationalist revelations (and new mystifications), and by “old” communists justifying their deeds in memoirs, serious research on previously forbidden or taboo topics soon began as well. These researchers benefitted from the opening of archives, which included access to material of the Bulgarian Communist Party (whose archive had been moved to the State Archives) and the Ministerial Council up until 1989. To date, many important aspects of communist rule and the changes in Bulgarian society under it have found meticulously researched treatment.

An important initial focus of the critical reassessments of communist rule was its establishment and its early years. Was communism “only” an import imposed by the Soviet Army or also based on local traditions? How violent was the “Revolution of the 9<sup>th</sup> of September”? Well-known contemporary historian Nikolay Poppetrov, together with Pavlina Meshkova and Dinyo Sharlanov, produced for example a well-documented account of the infamous People’s Courts, which in the early years of Fatherland Front rule sentenced almost 3,000 people to death, among them many members of the pre-September 1944 political elite.<sup>6</sup> Martin Ivanov wrote an early account of armed resistance against communist rule which lasted until the 1950s, opening up a theme that in the next years would find repeated treatment.<sup>7</sup> Another important episode of early communist rule, which had triggered opposition and renewed state repression and that now found scholarly treatment, was collectivization. In the early 1990s, it was studied by Vladimir Migevev.<sup>8</sup> All these works were thoroughly researched using the newly gained access to archives. More recently, Aleksandar Vezekov produced a powerful account of the events at, and leading to, September 9, which in communist mythology was the day of revolution.<sup>9</sup>

In general, a lot of research interest was devoted to exploring political oppression and resistance. This was not only conditioned by the wish to establish a revisionist, or anti-communist, narrative but also by the traditional focus of Bulgarian historiography on political history and by the understandable urge to uncover events, which had been “forbidden” until

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<sup>6</sup> Poppetrov et al., *Bălgarskata gilotina*.

<sup>7</sup> Ivanov, “Goryanskoto dvizhenie,” 74–80.

<sup>8</sup> Migevev, “Kolektivizatsiyata,” 53–83. ; *ibid.*: Migevev, *Kolektivizatsiyata na bălgarskoto selo*.

<sup>9</sup> Vezekov, *9 septemvri*.



1989. While some of these works came to questionable conclusions, for example by exaggerating the numbers of victims or by using problematic terminology (“genocide”), they substantially increased the available evidentiary basis. In this regard, document editions contributed greatly, for example the important series “The Archives Speak” by the Central State Archive in Sofia. New evidence helped not only to uncover previously unknown phenomena but also to produce more nuanced narratives and to move to new approaches, stimulated also by the increasing international cooperation of Bulgarian historians.

While during the 1990s research on opposition focused especially on the early years of communist rule, the time frame but also the thematic scope was largely extended in the 2000s. Natalia Hristova, the pre-eminent Bulgarian expert on dissent, published her seminal book on the “Specificities of Bulgarian ‘Dissent’” in 2005.<sup>10</sup> Her book refutes the assumption that there was no “dissent” in Bulgaria – an idea also promoted by former members of the State Security service – while making clear that dissent in Bulgaria adopted very specific forms (which can be said about any country). Hristova stressed that not only the specific nature of communist rule had impacted on forms and expressions of opposition but that also pre-communist cultural and intellectual traditions played an important role. Her book offers a broad tableau of intellectuals, artists, journalists, and scholars who challenged, in very different ways, either the political premises of communist dictatorship or its claimed monopoly on the production of meaning. A particularly important innovation is her highlighting the many grey zones between affirmation and dissent. The party leadership drew the lines of the (un)acceptable differently and not all censors were able to see the critique expressed in-between the lines. An intellectual or artist could find some of his or her work praised and other banned – as shown by one of the collections described in COURAGE (Binka Zhelyazkova Collection).

Some personalities associated with opposition against communist rule attracted particular attention, most of all Bulgaria’s best-known dissident author, Georgi Markov, who was murdered by the Bulgarian secret police in his exile in London.<sup>11</sup> Another focal point of research investigated developments in the late 1980s, when critical individuals began to form informal but publicly visible organizations. The probably most numerous opposition group comprised parts of the Turkish minority that resisted forced assimilation in the late 1980s, also triggering support by critically minded Bulgarian intellectuals.<sup>12</sup> The first “public” dissident committee, the Club for the Support of Openness and Reconstruction (*Klub za podkrepa na glasnostta i preustroystvoto*), is frequently mentioned in literature on the end of communist rule; scholarship also stresses the role of Zhelyu Zhelev, one of the leading dissidents at that time and first non-communist president of Bulgaria after 1989.<sup>13</sup> The nascent ecological movement that started in Ruse in 1988 and then developed into the *Ekoglasnot* organization, and first steps towards independent trade unionism (*Podkrepa*), have been covered as well.<sup>14</sup> Thus, the notion of Bulgaria as the “most quiet barrack” of state socialism, which actually had been nourished by the communist regime itself, has been fully refuted.

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<sup>10</sup> Hristova, *Spetsifika na bälgarskoto “disidentstvo”*.

<sup>11</sup> Hristov, *Ubiyte “Skitnik”*.

<sup>12</sup> Angelov, *Borba bez orazhie*.

<sup>13</sup> Hristova, *Spetsifika na bälgarskoto disidentstvo*, 141–7.

<sup>14</sup> Dimitur, *Politicheskoto protivopostavyane*, 124–39.; Aleksandrieva et al., *Nezavisimo sdruzenie Ekoglasnost*.

While much of the mentioned literature focuses on more or less well known personalities, there was also a noteworthy trend to reconstruct the life-worlds of ordinary citizens in order to understand popular accommodations with, and everyday subversions of, communist rule. This research has been strongly inspired by oral history and ethnological methods, and included historians, ethnologists and sociologists. One center of oral history research on Bulgarian socialism emerged at the University of Sofia's Department of Cultural Studies (*Kulturologiya*). Daniela Koleva, for example, showed how official tropes shaped biographical narrating as well as how individuals asserted their own interests.<sup>15</sup> The second center was established at the South-West University of Blagoevgrad, where an interdisciplinary group of enthusiastic scholars and their students embarked on large-scale oral history recordings, which were often published and used for analysis (their activities are described in the collection "Everyday Life in SW Bulgaria during Socialism").<sup>16</sup> One of their main achievements was to record the mundane experiences of marginalized groups, especially the Muslim and Roma communities in southwestern Bulgaria. Research conducted by ethnologists, especially at the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences' Institutes for Ethnology and for Folklore Studies contributed importantly to the extension of interest towards perspectives "from below" and to everyday life under communism. Another valuable source of information on everyday life in – but not limited to – state socialism is the private "Ivan Hadzhiyski" Institute for Sociology in Sofia. It was established in 1997 and collects diaries, memoirs, autobiographies, letters and other ego-documents.

The research on mundane practices of "ordinary" people highlighted the inappropriateness of binary visions of state socialism. Few people were in either total opposition or total conformity. It also showed that cultural opposition was not confined to intellectuals and artists, who more or less openly criticized the government and challenged its aesthetic or political norms. "Ordinary" people resisted official cultural norms as well without necessarily challenging the underlying political principles. Karin Taylor for example showed that one could be a good young communist but at the same time engage in alternative youth music culture.<sup>17</sup> Not only in the arts but in much of everyday life, life moved between zones of acceptance and conformity on the one hand, and of re-appropriation, manipulation and the refutation of official norms on the other. Research approaching its themes both 'from the top' and 'from below' has created, therefore, a nuanced picture of dynamic and ambivalent everyday cultural practices.

It has become clear that the state tried to use culture to build legitimacy but that at the same time, culture remained a contested field. Ivan Elenkov's comprehensive account of the "Cultural Front", in which he analyses the institutions and instruments used by the state to enforce its monopoly on meaning, clearly showed how important culture was for the communist government.<sup>18</sup> History writing during communism also came under investigation, because history was one of the main legitimizing devices used by the communist government. Communists understood very well that those who control the past also control the future. Already in 1995,

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<sup>15</sup> Koleva, Daniela: *Biografija i normalnost*.

<sup>16</sup> Vodenicharov, *Iskam chovekat.*; Vodenicharov, *Moeto dosie.*; Koleva, *Släntseto na zalez pak sreshtu men.*

<sup>17</sup> Taylor, *Let's Twist Again*.

<sup>18</sup> Elenkov, Ivan: *Kulturniyat front*. Sofia, 2012.

the grand dame of Bulgarian Historiography, Vera Mutafchieva, co-edited a collection of documents on the party's attempts to bring historians in line.<sup>19</sup> The past also played an important role in Ludmila Zhivkova's idiosyncratic cultural policies, which combined an opening towards the world with an increasingly patriotic but also esoteric message. Her policies and personality found repeated interest by scholars.<sup>20</sup> This episode also showed the double-edged nature of official cultural policies: they imposed certain interpretations but also created opportunities for critically minded intellectuals who were able to exploit the umbrella of patriotic rhetoric for their own messages. Official nationalism also produced critical narratives. Research has convincingly shown that in the field of culture, boundaries between opposition and affirmation were blurred and volatile.

This research, thus, is a powerful warning against interpretations that paint the period of state socialism only in black and white. Real life was more complicated than that, and official politics more variegated and flexible than it might seem at first glance. Nevertheless, the Bulgarian "*Historikerstreit*" about the "correct" version of socialist history has been characterized by attempts to come up with one single narrative, which often suffers from a certain teleology.<sup>21</sup> More generally, the field can be divided into two groups: on the one hand, those scholars who stress the oppressive nature of Bulgarian communism and the interventionist nature of the state. This current also tends to regard the communist period an economic failure. The well-known philosopher and founder of the Institute for the Study of the Recent Past, Ivaylo Znepolski, is probably the most influential representative of this current.<sup>22</sup> On the other hand, there are narratives that stress the modernizing nature of communist rule and its socio-economic achievements (which are often measured against the rapid economic decline and social malaise of the 1990s), without ignoring the fact that it was a dictatorship. Iskra Baeva and Evgeniya Kalinova, in their seminal book on the Bulgarian transitions, have produced the most eloquent and best researched overview in this vein: they detail repression but also stress the socio-economic achievements of the period.<sup>23</sup> Corresponding with these Bulgarian accounts are works by foreign historians, which highlight complex state-society interactions as defining features of state-socialism.<sup>24</sup> Less nuanced are publicist and Internet forums to deal with the communist part, some of which display a high degree of nostalgia whereas others engage in crude anti-communism.

The nuances, shades and ambivalences as well as the stubbornness of individuals and their creative tactics in challenging a powerful state, such as those that emerge from the descriptions of collections in the Bulgarian section of the COURAGE database, can serve as a good example – and as empirical material – for a history of state socialism that highlights ambiguity

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<sup>19</sup> Mutafchieva, *Sădăt nad istoritsite*.

<sup>20</sup> Baeva, *Kulturnoto otvarjane*.

<sup>21</sup> Vezenkov, "Za nenormaliziraneto na komunizma," 245–273.

<sup>22</sup> Znepolski, Ivaylo. *Bălgarskiyat komunizăm*.

cf. also the multi-faceted collection Ivaylo Znepolski, ed.: *Istoriya na Narodna Republika Bălgariya. Rezhimat i obshtestvoto*. Sofia 2009.

<sup>23</sup> Baeva, *Bălgarskite prehodi*.

<sup>24</sup> An attempt at that direction is Ulf Brunnbauer's book on the societal policies of Bulgarian communism from 1944 to 1989, which was translated also into Bulgarian: Brunnbauer, Ulf. "Sotsialisticheski nachin na zhitov. Ideologiya, obshtestvo, semejstvo i politika v Bălgariya, 1944–1989". Ruse, 2011.

and complexity. The collections also put historical agents very much at the center of attention: they stress alternative outcomes of history and the power of humans to change things and challenge the status quo, instead of telling the story with a preconceived end-point in mind.

## 2.2 Institutions and Legal Foundations of the Preservation and Interpretation of the Past

In Bulgaria, there is no single specialized public institution devoted to the research of state-socialism, comparable to such institutions in Germany, Poland, Romania and the Czech Republic. This reflects the fact that despite political polarization over the use of the socialist past, society and government do not consider the socialist era as a “big” issue that warrants special treatment. The significant nostalgia for socialism, as measured in polls and evident from ethnographic surveys, takes any political urgency from official efforts to revisit the socialist past – most people probably just do not want to do it. In 2002, Daniela Koleva summarized the state’s attitude: “The Bulgarian state (unlike others, e.g. neighboring Romania) has been dealing with its recent past quite hesitantly. The trials against former communist leaders failed, lustration laws have been applied on a very limited scale (in university education and partially in the juridical system).”<sup>25</sup>

It is telling, therefore, that the single most prolific institution studying the history of state socialism is a non-governmental academic initiative, the Institute for the Study of the Recent Past (*Institut za izsledvane na blizkoto minalo*).<sup>26</sup> The institute was established by the philosopher Ivaylo Znepolski in 2005 and is funded mainly by donations and project grants. The Institute runs the most important book series in Bulgaria specialized on the exploration of the socialist past (in partnership with Ciela Publishers). It has published several seminal books on repression and opposition, and how cultural life developed between these poles. A good example is Plamen Doynov’s discussion of the paradigm of Socialist Realism in Bulgarian literature and how it was challenged by writers (2011) and his book about literary scandals during communist rule (2016);<sup>27</sup> another excellent publication on culture during state-socialism published by this institute is Ivan Elenkov’s book “Cultural Front” (2008), and his last book on socialist everyday life (2018).<sup>28</sup> Not least, the institute’s director has contributed to the understanding of Bulgarian communism with important publications.<sup>29</sup> Another important center for research on the socialist period is the privately run Center for Advanced Studies (CAS) in Sofia.<sup>30</sup> The CAS facilitates academic and public debates on state socialism. In its book series, it publishes important studies such as Rumen Avramov’s book on the disastrous economic effects of the so-called “Rebirth Process”, i.e. the forced assimilation of the Turkish and other Muslim minorities.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> Koleva, “Belene”.

<sup>26</sup> <https://minaloto.bg>.

<sup>27</sup> Doynov, *Bălgarskijat sotsrealizăm.*; Doynov, *Literatura na sluchaite*.

<sup>28</sup> Elenkov, *Kulturniyat front.*; Elenkov, *Orbiti na sotsialisticheskoto vsekidnievie*.

<sup>29</sup> E.g. Znepolski, *Kak se promeniat neshtata*.

<sup>30</sup> <http://red.cas.bg/news.php>.

<sup>31</sup> Avramov, *Ikonomika*.

The lack of state-run institutes commissioned to explore the socialist period is evidence of the lack of political consensus on the best ways of how to deal with the past. On the positive side, this also means that scholars can engage with studying the socialist period without the straightjacket of an institution that was commissioned by the government to establish the “truth”. Neither is there in Bulgaria a state-run museum devoted to the socialist period: here, exhibiting socialism depends on individual initiatives (see for example the COURAGE registry entry on “Forms of Resistance in Fine Arts”). There is a plurality of voices and no state-sanctioned display of just one possible interpretation. One downside of this – probably due to neglect and not intention – liberal approach by the state is that local initiatives to commemorate repression and build memorials often face financial problems. Daniela Koleva comments that: “Commemoration of its victims remained largely limited to the sporadic activities of political and civic organizations, and monuments to them were left to the discretion of local authorities in response to civic initiatives.”<sup>32</sup> The developments on the location of the former labor camp on Belene Island are a good illustration of this. This camp is probably the best-known place of memory of massive repression and human rights violations under communist rule in Bulgaria. Yet, initiatives to create an appropriate memorial so far have been organized only by private groups (such as the Union of Repressed People and the Belene Island Foundation).<sup>33</sup> None of these initiatives have received substantial government support. Hence, there is no large-scale documentation center in Belene. Similarly, the modest memorial (plaques) in the equally notorious former labor camp in Lovech is a testimony of the state’s lack of interest to honor the victims of communist rule.<sup>34</sup>

While the Bulgarian state has so far failed to establish specialized research or commemorative centers dealing with state-socialism and opposition to it, it has taken measures to preserve documentary evidence (mostly in the framework of “regular” archival work). The Law on the National Archival Fond of 2007 created a new legal framework for the preservation of documents stemming from public authorities and the work of state archives, building on previous legislation. At the helm of the system of state archives, it established the “Archives State Agency” that carries out the state’s objectives in the field of archival documentation.<sup>35</sup> The Agency is responsible for a well-organized network of two central and 27 regional state archives, which existed already before the new law. The Central State Archive in Sofia also holds the archives of the Bulgarian Communist Party, which were declassified already in 1993.

State policies relating to archives do not especially target the socialist period, but the established framework has made it possible to safeguard “official” documentary heritage. It also gives archives enough space – though not funding – to set out their own programs. Access is handled relatively liberally. The archives hold invaluable information about the institutions of communist rule and their interaction with citizens, including information on opposition and dissent. The vast archives of the Bulgarian Communist Party, of the Fatherland Front and of the Ministerial Council, kept at the Central State Archive in Sofia, are indispensable for any

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<sup>32</sup> Koleva, “Belene”.

<sup>33</sup> See <http://beleneisland.org/>; <http://pametbg.com/index.php/bg/mesta-na-pamet/belene>.

<sup>34</sup> See Kaminsky, *Museen und Gedenkstätten*.

<sup>35</sup> <http://www.archives.government.bg/index.php>.

historical account of state socialism. The same can be said of the archives of local authorities and the local branches of state-wide organizations kept in the regional state archives, which are usually well organized. Naturally, given the pedigree of most documents preserved in a state archive, the authorities' perspective dominates. Yet, state archives also collect private legacies, among them of dissidents and critical artists, such as Blaga Dimitrova, Todor Tsonev, Zhelyu Zhelev, Radoy Ralin, etc. (See also the Petko Ogoyski and Hristo Ognyanov collections described in the COURAGE registry, all kept by the Central State Archive in Sofia).

The existence of functioning state archives is essential for the professional maintenance and registration of documents (although, because of underfunding, this is not always the case). They make these documents accessible to readers under transparent conditions, in accordance with the Law on Access to Information and with other normative rules. Thus, they fulfill vital services for the research community but also for the public (e.g. citizens tracing back ownership in order to reclaim nationalized properties). Not least, state archives enrich our knowledge about the past through their own publications. Especially noteworthy is the series "The Archives Speak", launched by the State Archive in 1998, which includes volumes of importance for the exploration of communist rule and opposition against it. The series, for example, helped to put into the public domain important documents on topics that were "prohibited" before 1989, such as armed resistance against communist power (vol. 64, *Goryanite*) and the forced assimilation campaign against Bulgaria's Turkish minority (vol. 55, *Văzroditelniat protses*).

A major development in the accessibility of documents concerning communist repression and opposition was the opening of files from the Interior Ministry and especially its infamous State Security service, the former political police. In Bulgaria, that process took much longer than, for example, in neighboring Romania or in Germany, not least because there was no official lustration. Eventually, in late 2006, the parliament passed a law establishing a new archive with probably the most unwieldy name ever invented for such an institution: "Committee for Disclosing the Documents and Announcing the Affiliation of Bulgarian Citizens to the State Security and the Intelligence Services of the Bulgarian People's Army", the Bulgarian abbreviation of which is equally catchy, *KRDOPBGDSRSBNA*.<sup>36</sup> The Committee, colloquially called *Comdos* (Committee of Dossiers), started operations in April 2007. It serves two main purposes: to carry out lustration procedures in connection with people seeking an elected office or an important public function and to provide citizens with access to "their files".<sup>37</sup> Researchers can access documents on institutions as well. Surprising for a Bulgarian institution charged with such a sensitive task, the Committee has so far operated without any significant scandals, which speaks of the high level of professionalism and dedication of its staff.

Comdos has substantially increased knowledge about the workings of the State Security service and its attitudes towards dissidents.<sup>38</sup> It has initiated new research on communist rule. Secret police files not only allow us to reconstruct how the state identified opposition and

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<sup>36</sup> [https://www.comdos.bg/Нормативна\\_основа](https://www.comdos.bg/Нормативна_основа).

<sup>37</sup> See Troebst, "Vergangenheitsbewältigung auf Bulgarisch."

<sup>38</sup> Eg. Metodiev, "Darzhavna sigurnost."

how it traced suspected individuals (see the collection “State Security and the Bulgarian Intelligentsia” in the registry); they also contain abundant information on the everyday transgressions of “ordinary” people at the workplace, in public and in their private lives; and they help us to understand the epistemology of the communist state: what did it perceive as problematic, how did it construct truth, and how was information managed (and invented)? Comdos also launched its own book series publishing selected and annotated documents on specific themes (“From the Archives of the DS [State Security]”), which now runs into more than 40 volumes.<sup>39</sup> The series has become another essential tool for the study of the socialist period and especially its political history.

Other important reservoirs of information and artifacts from the socialist period are the archives of major cultural institutions. The National Library (*Narodna biblioteka*) in Sofia, for example, is supposed to receive a copy of each print publication in Bulgaria; during communism, it had a hidden fund of “forbidden” literature – illustrative of censorship practices. It has a collection of *samizdat* publications, described in the COURAGE registry. The Bulgarian National Film Archive (*Bălgarska natsionalna filmoteka*) holds a vast collection of movies and materials about their production and reception, documenting the vitality of Bulgarian cinema during the socialist period. Cinema became an important medium for the articulation of veiled – or not-so-veiled – critique of socialist conditions and of contradictions between ideology and reality. This is exemplified in COURAGE by the Binka Zhelyazkova collection. An important source of information on developments in the sphere of science during socialism is the archive of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences.<sup>40</sup> It holds, for example, many personal legacies of Academy members and its scientists, which help to uncover the strategies of scholars as they navigated between “official” truths and scientific scrutiny.

These important state institutions are not exactly lavishly funded. Comdos’ budget, for example, was set at 3.48 million Leva, i.e. 1.7 million Euros, in 2018. Some of these institutions also lack storage capacity, so that the Central State Archive, for example, is forced to use storage outside its main building. However, these institutions are able to at least fulfill their primary functions to the public and even develop dissemination activities on their own. This cannot be said of most of the private collections, almost all of which struggle with severe financial problems and face more existential questions. They often lack the capacity to professionally maintain their contents, not to mention substantial dissemination activities. A sad but illustrative example is the uncertain fate of the highly interesting Tower Museum built by dissident writer Petko Ogoyski (see the COURAGE registry). Ogoyski donated the exhibition materials to the local Cultural Community Center “Napredak”, which operates under the umbrella of the Ministry of Culture. However, it lacks the means to maintain or even develop this important initiative (at the moment of writing, there are discussions at the town hall about how the collection may be better preserved and presented in a new building).

Bulgaria has not established a working system of providing financial support – neither on a grant nor institutional basis – to such initiatives. The state seems not to feel responsible for

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<sup>39</sup> [https://www.comdos.bg/Нашите издания/sbornitsi](https://www.comdos.bg/Нашите_издания/sbornitsi).

<sup>40</sup> <http://archiv.cl.bas.bg/>.

nourishing and supporting private initiatives, and actually struggles to provide enough financial support to its own cultural institutions. Given the budgetary constraints faced by the central and – even more so – local governments in Bulgaria, and the lack of genuine political engagement with the socialist past, this bleak situation does not come as a large surprise and offers little hope for future improvement.

Existing legislation even supports “public-private partnerships” with regard to the preservation of documents. The above-mentioned archive law includes the provision that the Archives State Agency and its structures will methodologically support private archives and control the “observation of the provisions of this law” (Art. 38). Private archives must, for example, register “documents concerning the history of Bulgaria” with the Agency (Art. 36). However, it seems that these provisions so far exist only on paper – despite the declared goodwill of the Agency, whose experts are ready to support private collection. Nevertheless, the state archives are busy enough maintaining their own core activities under conditions of scarce funding and have few effective resources to support private archives. Owners of the latter, on the other hand, seem usually not to take the existing law into consideration – and most likely do not know of it. The law also suffers from the extremely vague definition “documents concerning the history of Bulgaria”, which can cover practically anything gathered in private collections. Collectors can be forgiven for being reluctant to register such documents with the State Agency, as they fear to lose control over them. There is also hardly any systematic exchange of information and networking between state and private archives. At least the latter problem can be alleviated by COURAGE.

### 3. Analysis of the Collections in the COURAGE Registry

#### 3.1 Typology

The description of Bulgarian collections in COURAGE neither covers all collections of potential relevance nor does it aim to be representative in a statistical sense. The goal was to include particularly important and insightful collections on the one hand, and to represent the scope of oppositional phenomena and of initiatives to maintain memory on the other. We, therefore, aimed at showcasing the most important types. The Bulgarian collections (see appendix) present a number of important categories and types of collection concerning cultural opposition. First of all, they highlight the fact that both different state institutions and private actors (associations and individuals) have initiated and own collections. Seven of the described collections were organized by public institutions, while seven were created by private initiative and are owned privately (one moved from private to public). Public can mean different things: collections emerging from the legally stipulated mission of a state-run institution (such as an archive), or exhibitions organized by the curator of a public gallery on his/her own initiative, for example; further, ad-hoc collections described for the purpose of the COURAGE registry by putting together thematically coherent materials that are not stored separately. The described collections also differ substantially in size – from very small, literally housed in the attic of a private home, to the largest archives in Bulgaria. We also tried to achieve a geographic spread: Bulgaria is a very centralized country and Sofia hosts almost a fifth of the country’s



citizens and most of its national cultural institutions. Yet, there was cultural opposition also outside of the capital city – and collection initiatives as well. So, while eight collections are located in Sofia, five were included from other parts of the country. One collection (on the resistance of the Turkish minority against forced assimilation) is located abroad (in Bursa, Turkey). It is the so far sole illustration of another important feature of opposition against communist rule: it was not limited to activities in the country but had a strong transnational element, not least because people who were forced to leave continued their struggle against communism from abroad.

The described collections represent the broad range of possible items handed down from the past: archival documents, *samizdat* and official publications, movies and audio materials, physical artifacts, transcripts and more. They include materials that survived as a legacy from the socialist period, and others (interviews) created through the initiative of scholars or activists. Maybe most importantly, they highlight the different arenas where cultural opposition was expressed (be it in literature, painting or filmmaking, or through religious, minority or environmental activism); the different genres and media used to express critical attitudes; and the variety of people and interests involved both in the practice of opposition and its documentation. Taken together, the described collections are a powerful manifestation of the variations, ambivalences and differences of human experiences under state socialism.

### 3.2 Themes, Actors, Users

The collections from Bulgaria in the COURAGE registry do not aim to impose “the truth” about the socialist period and dissent. The aim is to present the manifold forms of cultural opposition, to increase the possibilities for comparison and to link collections with research efforts and make them known to a wider public. While the selection of Bulgarian collections does not allow for a genuinely sociological survey (e.g. of ownership patterns), it does indicate the huge variations that exist in collecting practices.

A remarkable communality of the collections described in the registry is the fact that most of them came into existence thanks to the tireless efforts of individuals. As mentioned above, in Bulgaria there exists no state institution charged with the task of researching state socialism and, in particular, of documenting dissent and opposition. The only institution that comes close to such an official mission is the so-called Committee of the Dossiers, but this does not specifically explore cultural opposition. More characteristic are individual efforts, be they by a specialist in the national archives, a curator at a city gallery, a former dissident putting together his own museum, or the daughters of a stubborn, independently minded teacher of literature in a provincial town. What unites these initiators is not only their general belief in the importance of freedom, but also their wish to preserve traces of the past that hint to the existence of alternative futures and show the power of individuals in challenging undemocratic governments. Their energy in a way seems to be driven by the lack of “official” policies in this field and to act as a substitute for state neglect; on the other hand, the sustainability of their efforts is certainly endangered due to the lack of state support, especially for private initiatives.

The selection of collections for Bulgaria followed two main criteria: firstly, to present the diversity of institutions and collectors; secondly, to present different arenas, genres and forms of cultural opposition. Overall, the achievements in collecting, storing and promoting material pertaining to the socialist period in Bulgaria can be seen as substantial. The leading role belongs to state “institutions of memory”: the Archives State Agency (ASA), the National Library “St. Cyril and Methodius” (NLCM), and the Bulgarian National Film Archive (BNFA). Pursuant to the Law on the Compulsory Deposit of Printed and Other Works and the Law on the National Archival Collections, these institutions store large material resources relating to the development of culture during the socialist period. They also undertake research activities and, within their limited financial resources, purchase new materials. The registry includes several collections from these organizations devoted to notable critics of communist rule and the realities of state socialism, such as the collections on Hristo Ognyanov and Zhelyu Zhelev at the State Archive in Sofia<sup>41</sup> and the ad hoc collection on Binka Zhelyazkova at the BNFA. These collections reveal expressions of counter-adaptive or corrective positions in several cultural fields: journalism, philosophy, and cinema. They highlight the importance of exile (Ognyanov) and the potential political pathways of dissidents (Zhelev).

So-called ad hoc collections were created in the process of describing collections. They refer to short-term events (which did not result in a physical collection or refer to documents stored in an archive, but not in a single coherent collection. An example for the former is the exhibition “Forms of Resistance” held at the Sofia City Art Gallery in 2016 – the paintings shown as examples of deviation from Socialist Realism are now back with their owners. An example for the latter is the “collection” of banned newspapers and *samizdat* journals kept at the National Library. While it does not exist as a separate collection, the COURAGE entry “Only the forbidden newspapers will be remembered!” (a quote from an interview with a repressed editor) brings them to life. Thus, our collections put artifacts into new contexts and create relationships that open new perspectives on the history of cultural opposition.

Some of the collections give a good overview of how the Bulgarian Communist Party tried to maintain absolute control in the sphere of culture. This was not only the task of the secret police but included the establishment of economic dominance and institutional structures. The collections reveal how the Bulgarian government followed the Soviet model of organizing culture, which aimed to establish state ownership over all cultural institutions. The centralized state founded institutions with a clearly hierarchical structure in order to act as gate-keepers. Professional associations, such as the Bulgarian Union of Writers, the Union of Bulgarian Artists, etc. were placed under direct party control and were charged with distributing material privileges to their members but also to act as overseers. Meanwhile the state tried to liquidate private initiative in the cultural sphere.<sup>42</sup> The collections contain examples of penalties imposed on recalcitrant writers and artists by the state, such as expulsion from the BCP and from

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<sup>41</sup> As with collections in the State Archive, not all relevant are yet accessible, because they are still being processed. The personal funds of intellectual dissidents such as Radoy Ralin and Todor Tsonev are not yet open for use.

<sup>42</sup> Elenkov, *Kulturniyat front*.

professional unions (which amounted to prohibition on carrying out an artistic profession). Protagonists of our collections were subject to bans on displaying their work; they experienced dismissals and other forms of censorship.

The State Security service was one of the regime's main instruments of maintaining control over intellectuals who were always suspected of being potential critics of the government. The collection of the Commission for the Disclosure of Documents and Announcing the Affiliation of Bulgarian Citizens with the State Security and Intelligence Services of the Bulgarian People's Army (the so-called Commission on Dossiers) gives insight into the recruitment of members of the intelligentsia. In some cases, cooperation with the State Security service was voluntary, based on "patriotic grounds". But there are also examples of people being solicited on the basis of threats to discredit them or their family. The small private collection "Seeds of Fear", for example, shows how authorities exerted pressure on the immediate family of people classified as politically "unreliable" or as "enemies of the people".

Still, the collections give powerful evidence that despite surveillance and persecution, many people dared challenge state power through cultural means. The range of possible oppositional activities was broad. As stated by Teodora Panayotova, the initiator of one of the collections, opposition could be: "expressed through a series of inconspicuous acts, gestures and words, such as the unconventional reading of a work; an 'inappropriate' statement at a teacher's meeting; a reference to a forbidden fact or author in front of students; reading forbidden or semi-forbidden books with students; education in fearlessness and disobedience; the singing of Russian White Army songs; giving lessons for free, i.e. refusal to participate in the natural exchange of services for goods". Teodora Panayotova, together with her sister Boryana, created the family archive "Life Beyond the Pattern of Communism". Private collections also reveal diverse "seeds of courage and freedom", such as the efforts of individuals to defend their principles and faith. These took place in the framework of esoteric movements, such as the mystical "White Brotherhood" movement, or in the sphere of rock music.

These experiences should not be belittled as "just" personal stories.<sup>43</sup> Rather, they help us to arrive at a more complex and nuanced picture of socialist Bulgaria. Assessing communism requires self-critical consideration. Edvin Sugarev stated that we need to "destroy the Berlin Wall in ourselves". Despite the manifold examples of conformism and accommodation with the communist regime, this period can hardly be summed up as one marked by "indifference, cowardice and absurdity."<sup>44</sup>

One aim of the selection of Bulgarian collections in the registry is to highlight the plight of ethnic minorities and the activities of those who fought for their rights under communism. A private collection, so far unknown in Bulgaria and kept in in the Turkish city of Bursa, contains interesting material on one the most researched but also debated topics in Bulgarian historiography: the regime's attempt to assimilate the Turkish minority by force. The collection of more than 100 autobiographical video interviews documents the fate of Turks who fled the

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<sup>43</sup> Sugarev, "Berlinskata stena e oshte v nas."

<sup>44</sup> Ibidem.

country mainly in 1989. Some of the terms used by the collection's author, such as "namecide" and "ethnic genocide", may provoke heated responses. But it is important that the registry also documents the self-presentation of participants in cultural opposition – an interesting field of study in its own right. The registry is a source which, like any other historical source, must be subject to critical analysis.

In general, one of the aims of the Bulgarian collections is to shed light on lesser known moments of everyday life and forms of everyday opposition through lifestyles as documented, for example, in the collections "Everyday Life in Southwestern Bulgaria" and the "Roma Archive". Both were created by one of the first centers for oral history in Bulgaria, the NGO Balkan Society for Autobiography and Social Communication at the University of Blagoevgrad. These collections present the point of view of "ordinary people" from different religious and ethnic communities. The personal stories reveal little-known moments of everyday life, such as experiences of collectivization and resistance against it, or state encroachment on cultural traditions in villages and hidden forms of resistance. Especially valuable is the presentation of the daily life of the Roma minority, whose experiences are largely excluded from official historical narratives.

All Bulgarian collections reveal the constant pressure exerted by the state on free-thinking artists and intellectuals but also their practices of self-assertion and opposition. They reject the myth of the total obedience and conformism of Bulgarian intellectuals, which was purposefully created by the communist authorities. The collections also reveal new aspects of the emergence of mass protests and informal dissident organizations in the late 1980s. The collection "Ecological Protests against Chlorine Pollution" at the Regional Museum of History in Ruse shows how the activities of museum curators can lead to the enrichment of collections with new materials revealing new perspectives on well-researched phenomena.

It is also important to underline that all the represented institutions promote their collections by various means: they organize exhibitions, conferences, public presentations and seminars; they participate widely in media events and search for ways to attract young audiences and the general public. Private collectors are also increasingly showing trust in state institutions (archives, libraries, museums). Petko Ogoyski, who created his own "Tower Museum" with original artifacts from his incarceration in the Belene labor camp, is a case in point: he donated the bulk of his original documents to the Central State Archives in 2012. Many collection founders and collectors feel a sense of mission; they are developing numerous activities to promote the compiled knowledge, also by using new technologies. It is indicative that some of the collections – both private and public – reach a wide audience and in doing so stimulate critical thinking and public activism today when we "have crashed into one place, with (our) dreams broken", as two famous Bulgarian music journalists recently commented.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> "BG rokat na 80te paleshe revolyutsii. Intervyu na Iskra Krapacheva s Rumen Yanev i Emil Bratanov," *Standart*, June 7, 2015.

## 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The collections described in the COURAGE registry (and those not yet described or not even known) are an impressive manifestation of the creativity and sheer will of individuals and groups to document and explore the socialist past, despite difficult framework conditions. The main challenge is obviously the lack of funds – not only a result of generally small public budgets but also of a lack of state interest in this specific area. Even with a little more support, much could be achieved. Hence, the list of recommendations must start with the most fundamental issue: money.

But there are also other areas of possible improvement, not all of which directly depend on increased funding (although this would certainly help, too). Our research has shown, for example, that there is little systematic networking between the collections and the responsible institutions, although people running these initiatives very often know each other (historians in Bulgaria are a community still widely based on personal connections). Better networking would not only help to circulate useful information and support processes of learning from each other but could also serve lobbying purposes. Not least, it might help to create firm collaboration that could be used for project applications, especially with respect to international (European) funding. Active networking would also increase visibility and, thus, help to identify previously unknown collections. Owners of materials worth preserving might be encouraged to either pass them on to a pertinent institution or even to build their own collection, if they see that there are experts to whom they can turn for advice. A recognizable community of individuals and groups, documenting the heritage of cultural socialism and organizing joint efforts, could stimulate new initiatives.

Given the limited financial means of many collections, dissemination is usually a problem. Some of them, such as the Central State Archives, Comdos and the Institute for the Study of the Recent Past, can afford to publish their own book series. The latter institute may be highlighted as an example of best practice for combining academic research and publishing with events that target academic and non-academic audiences, and initiate public debates. It is also a successful fundraiser. What seems to be lacking, though, is systematic communication between relevant collections and the research community. A possible model for this can be seen in the activities of the Blagoevgrad-based “Balkan Society for Autobiography Research and Social Communication” which created its own collection mainly out of oral history interviews (described as “Everyday Life in Southwest Bulgaria in Socialism” in COURAGE). It has developed novel research and dissemination activities on the basis of these interviews. The Society has continually found funds, many of them project-based, for conducting oral history research and preserving its results, and for carrying out research based on these materials. It is a good example, therefore, of the productive aspect of combining collection and research.

Based on these general remarks, we would like to present a short list of recommendations that we consider of primary importance:

1. In view of the importance of collective memory, and of the rootedness of collective identities in notions about the past, European programs should continue to provide support for collaborative projects in that area, in which partners from different countries work together. Since the humanities in “new member” and associated states face particularly difficult conditions, the European Union has a strong responsibility to nurture reflective programs in these countries.
2. Primary responsibility for funding historic research in Bulgaria, however, rests with the Bulgarian state. Public and private initiatives to document cultural opposition during socialism should receive more funding. The responsible authorities could, for example, earmark project funding to that purpose, while established cultural institutions should devote more attention to this topic.
3. Another area in which state institutions could be of help concerns providing advice and support to the organizers of collections with regard to European grants. Application requirements for European funding are usually so complicated that especially smaller and private organizations (though not only), face almost prohibitive barriers for submitting applications.
4. Collaboration is also a responsibility of those working in the humanities in Bulgaria: organizations and individuals active in exploring cultural opposition under socialism should more systematically interact and network. This would help information and experience to be shared more widely, and result in the provision of advice to government bodies in relation to how the state could best support such activities.
5. Collectors and institutions should do more to reach out to the research community, including students at university, in order to underline the importance of their materials for research. This would help increase the number of stakeholders and, through the presentation of research results, the visibility of such initiatives.
6. Attempts at cooperation between the State Archives and private collectors should be expanded and supported in order to provide the latter with the necessary expertise to safely preserve documents. Expert archivists could also advise on the systematic description of data, which should follow established standards.
7. One important area in which knowledge can be extended is the identification of existing materials that have not yet been described. The COURAGE ad hoc collections, for example, have achieved this. Archives and institutions should be encouraged to generate cross-collection descriptions of content on the theme of opposition under socialism, which would help to locate relevant materials.
8. Finally, little of the available legacy of opposition has found its way into museums, as the socialist period usually receives only scant treatment. The permanent exhibition of the Bulgarian National History Museum in Sofia, located in the former residence of

Todor Zhivkov, breaks off in 1946.<sup>46</sup> It should be a priority for museums covering general history to systematically include the socialist era, and to showcase its contradictions and ambivalences. The described collections contain enough material to generate a nuanced picture, extending the focus from “important figures” to “ordinary people”. The section on dissent in the European House of History in Brussels serves as a good example of how this history can be presented, using original materials from Eastern Europe in the socialist era. COURAGE will support such initiatives.

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<sup>46</sup> <https://historymuseum.org/en/exhibitions/permanent/>.

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## Appendix

### *Selected Further Reading*

*Research literature on the nature of the communist regime in Bulgaria, on culture and opposition, and on the memory of socialism.*

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## List of Collections

1. Binka Zhelyazkova Film Collection (Sofia) – <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n33627>
2. Hristo Damyanov Ognyanov (Sofia) – <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n4920>
3. Life Beyond the Pattern of Communism (Sofia, Chepelare) – <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n11002>
4. Roma Archive Digital Collection (Blagoevgrad) – <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n25058>
5. Seeds of Fear (Sofia) – <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n30092>
6. Zhelyu Zhelev Collection (Sofia) – <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n43477>
7. State Security and the Bulgarian Intelligentsia (Sofia) – <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n8947>
8. Tower Museum of Petko Ogoyski (Sofia) – <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n8041>
9. Ecological Protests against Chlorine Pollution in Ruse (Ruse) – <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n6845>
10. Resistance of the Turkish Minority (Bursa, Turkey) – <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n242>
11. Forms of Resistance in Fine Arts (Sofia) – <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n31185>
12. Everyday Life in SW Bulgaria during Socialism (Blagoevgrad) – <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n17193>
13. Only the Forbidden Newspapers Will be Remembered (Sofia) – <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n17910>
14. The Word of Master Petar Danov (Varna) – <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n17481>

### *List of operating institutions and owners*

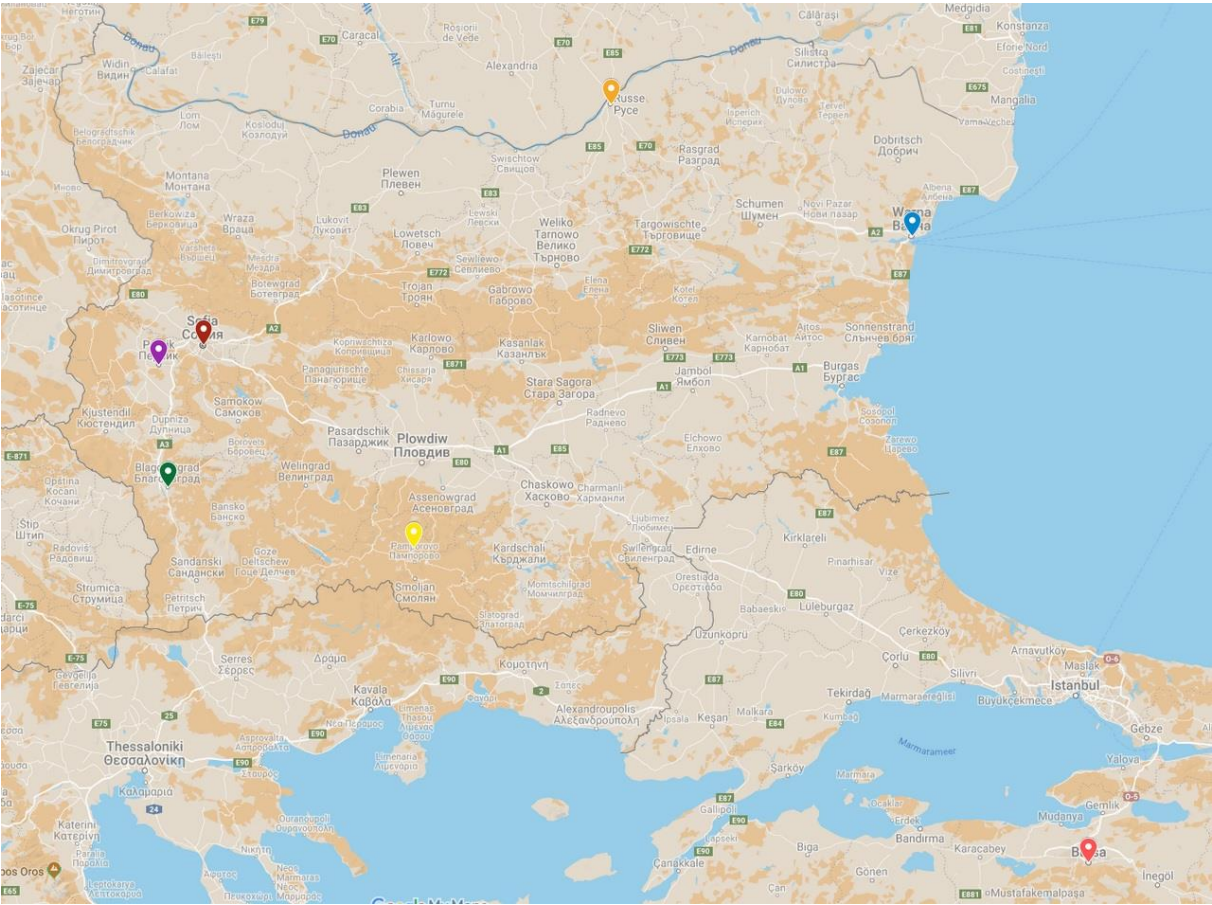
- Archives State Agency, Republic of Bulgaria
- Bulgarian State Security
- Government of the Republic of Bulgaria
- Microfond Sofia Foundation
- Bulgarian National Film Archive
- CRDOPBGDSRSBNA (Commission for Disclosure of Documents and Announcing Affiliation of Bulgarian Citizens with the State Security and the Intelligence Services of the Bulgarian National Armed Forces, *Comdos*)
- Balkan Society for Autobiography and Social Communication
- Open Society Institute – Sofia
- Cultural community center "Napredak"
- Sofia Municipality
- Rousse Regional Museum of History
- St. Cyril and St. Methodius National Library
- Intelligence Services of the Bulgarian People's Army
- Sofia City Art Gallery
- Abagar Bulgarian Catholic Literary Archive
- "Neofit Rilski" Southwest University, Blagoevgrad

### *List of people researched*

- Aleksandar Dyakov
- Anastasia Nikolaeva Pashova
- Antonia Kovacheva
- Artum Dinç
- Atanas Vasilev Patsev
- Binka Dimitrova Zhelyazkova
- Boryana Panayotova
- Boyko Kiryakov
- Christo Vladimirov Javachef (Christo)
- Dimitar Vasilev Stoyanov
- Elena Yanakieva
- Embiya Çavuş
- Galin Malakchiev
- Georgi Eldarov
- Georgi Yordanov Bozhilov
- Hristo Damyanov Ognyanov

- Hristo Kostadinov Ganev
- Hristo Vatev
- Iskren Velikov
- Ivan Georgiev–The Rembrandt
- Ivan Manolov Petkov–Turkata
- Krasimir Iliev
- Kristina Miroslavova Popova
- Lika Yanko
- Marika Vladimirova Stoyanova
- Mariyana Piskova
- Milena Angelova
- Nikola Tanev
- Nikolay Nenov
- Nurie Muratova
- Petar Asenov Vodenicharov
- Petar Konstantinov Danov
- Petko G. Mihaylov Ogoyski
- Sevdalina Petrova Panayotova
- Teodora Panayotova
- Vantzeti Dimitrov Vassilev
- Vasil Georgiev Akyov
- Ventseslav Terziyski
- Vildane Dinç (Alieva)
- Vladimir Lyubomirov Levchev
- Yordan Radichkov
- Yulia Karadachka-Simeonova
- Zhelyu Zhelev
- Ziyatin Nuriev

Map: Location of the Bulgarian COURAGE Collections



# COURAGE

Cultural Opposition: Understanding the Cultural Heritage of  
Dissent in the Former Socialist Countries

*Country Reports*



## The Baltic Countries

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## Table of Contents

Introduction .....	4
1. The legislative framework for preserving documents from the Soviet past....	5
2. Institutions.....	8
3 Support mechanism.....	11
4. Historiographical trends .....	11
5. Analysis of the collections in the COURAGE registry .....	15
Conclusions .....	22
Recommendations: opportunities and challenges .....	23
Summary .....	24
Bibliography .....	26
Appendices	
1. List of collections .....	30
2. List of owners and institutions .....	33
3. List of personal names .....	37

## Introduction

Even though 28 years have passed since the collapse of the USSR, the Soviet legacy continues to be a topic of heated debate in Baltic society. The international conferences organised in Estonia show that research into the late Soviet period,<sup>1</sup> not forgetting the complicated but already rather widely studied Stalinist period, is becoming more prevalent.

In the other two Baltic republics, memories and discussions about the Soviet period are expressed to an even greater extent. It seems as if the younger generation has grown up, and is again asking questions about the Soviet regime's crimes and unfinished problems regarding de-Sovietisation. The Latvian Scientific Commission for the Study of KGB Materials, which was founded in the summer of 2014, stepped up its activities in 2017 and 2018.<sup>2</sup> Experts from the Commission were granted the right to take photographs of files in Latvian archives for free; other archive visitors only received this right in the spring of 2018. In Lithuania, the KGB was legally recognised as a criminal organisation in 1998,<sup>3</sup> and only the avoidance of applying the principle of collective responsibility limits the legal persecution of former KGB staff and their secret collaborators. Material about people, including well-known cultural workers, who collaborated with the KGB is being publicised in Lithuania. The lack of accurate information, and, it appears, misleading and later denied accusations of having collaborated with the KGB, arouse even more arguments in the public.<sup>4</sup> In 2018, a resolution was passed by the Lithuanian parliament (Seimas) identifying the former Communist Party of Lithuania (CPL) as a criminal organisation.<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, the draft law initiated by Laurynas Kasčiūnas and Audronis Ažubalis, parliamentarians and members of the Conservative Party, on the criminalisation of the CPL did not even receive support from their own Conservative Party leaders. The fact that 2018 was declared the Year of Adolfas Ramanauskas-Vanagas, the Lithuanian partisan leader of the armed resistance against the regime, who was

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1 E.g., in November 2018, at the University of Tartu in Estonia, an international conference 'From Destalinisation to the Global Sixties: The Baltic Union Republics in the 1950s–1960s' will be held.

2 For more details about the Commission, see:

[//lv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latvijas\\_PSR\\_VDK\\_zin%C4%81tnisk%C4%81s\\_izp%C4%93tes\\_komisija](http://lv.wikipedia.org/wiki/Latvijas_PSR_VDK_zin%C4%81tnisk%C4%81s_izp%C4%93tes_komisija)

3 See the Lithuanian law of 30 June 1998 'On the assessment of the USSR State Security Committee (NKVD, NKGB, MGB, KGB) and the current activities of cadre personnel of this organisation'.

4 <http://alkas.lt/2018/05/21/liustracijos-komisija-nei-s-sondeckis-nei-d-banionis-su-kgb-nebendradarbiavo/>

5 [http://www.lrs.lt/sip/portal.show?p\\_r=25318&p\\_k=1&p\\_t=174811](http://www.lrs.lt/sip/portal.show?p_r=25318&p_k=1&p_t=174811)

sentenced to death in 1956, shows that history is still a focus of attention. After the discovery in June 2018 of his remains, which had been buried by Soviet Chekists, plans were made for a ceremonial burial, while associated events related to Vanagas arouse interest in society and provoke discussions about the Soviet past. It would appear that this interest in our historic but not so distant past is very favourable as far as research on the cultural opposition in the Soviet period in the Baltics is concerned. Nonetheless, as we will learn later on, the situation is not as simple or as unambiguous as it seems at first glance, meaning that a broader definition of the cultural opposition and memories of the phenomenon are worth our attention.

### 1. The legislative framework for preserving documents from the Soviet past

When the Baltic countries restored their independence in 1990, it was not long before the laws regulating state archives were changed. Even before then, activists in the national revival movements started to raise the issue of removing 'white stains' in history. In other words, they started demanding the lustration of archive documents that gave information about the most tragic events in the three countries, primarily the repressions by the Stalinist regime against the peaceful population, and the deportations. It was at this time that the first memoirs by deportees started being published (in Lithuania, extracts from the memoirs of the deportee Dalia Grinkevičiūtė were published in the Writers' Union weekly *Literatūra ir menas* in May 1988).<sup>6</sup> The Estonian Heritage Society was founded in Estonia in 1987, and collected the life stories of Estonians. (Between 1988 and 1990, around 2,000 manuscripts were collected, recording the characteristics and special features of the repressions, deportations, and socio-economic and cultural life in Soviet Estonia.)<sup>7</sup> For as long as documents kept in Soviet state archives were practically inaccessible to broader society and researchers, activists in the Baltic national revival movements tried other ways of revealing the Soviet history of the three nations. In fact, it is worth noting that institutes of history and literature, which had the first chance to access Soviet documents, belonged at the time to the academy of science structures in all three Soviet republics. It is likely that this

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<sup>6</sup> Laurinavičius and Sirutavičius, *Lietuvos istorija. Sėjūdis*, pp. 61-65.

<sup>7</sup> Kirss and Hinrikus, *Estonian life stories*, VIII.

spontaneous liberalisation was a result of the circumstance that the staff in these institutes and manuscript departments were themselves activists in the national revival movements.

Nevertheless, the largest body of documentation that reflected the Soviet period in the three nations, as well as the phenomenon of cultural opposition, lay in state archives. Their reorganisation began in around 1990. The process took place in the three countries in several directions: first, the liberalisation of archives; archive documents became accessible to society and researchers. Second, there was a reform of the archive system itself. In Latvia, the Law on Archives was passed in March 1991. From 1993, the management of state archives was placed under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Justice. (From 2001, the Ministry of Culture started administering archives in Latvia.) When Latvia became a member of the European Union, the archive system and its management were again reorganised. In 2010, a new Archives Law was passed, which came into effect in 2011. According to this law, the former state archive system of Latvia was reorganised within one body, the National Archives of Latvia.<sup>8</sup> Article 20 of the law states that the National Archives of Latvia reports to the minister for culture. Also, that the government appoints the director of the National Archives of Latvia for five years, at the behest of the minister for culture. The law also foresaw the establishment of an advisory institution, the Archives Council (the minister for culture confirms the Council's members).<sup>9</sup>

The reorganisation of the archive system in Lithuania and Estonia took place in a similar way. In Lithuania, the government passed a resolution in April 1990, by which the General Directorate of Lithuanian Archives was established under the government. The liberalisation of the activities of archives began at around the same time, and a new law was passed in 1995 replacing the General Directorate of Lithuanian Archives with the Department of Archives, which also functioned under the Cabinet of Ministers. Procedures for access to archives and restrictions on their

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<sup>8</sup> Archives Law, 2010, <http://www.arhivi.lv/index.php?&1924> [04 08 2018].

<sup>9</sup> Based on a law passed in Latvia, the Archives Council consists of five representatives from the National Archives of Latvia, two representatives from the Archivists' Association of Latvia, one representative from the State Chancellery, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Culture, as well as from the Institute of Latvian History at the University of Latvia and the Latvian Association of Local and Regional Governments.

use were outlined in the Law on Archives in a much clearer, more precise and comprehensive way.<sup>10</sup> A new version of the Law on Archives came into effect in January 2011. It formulated the same administration system as in Latvia. (Archives are under the direct administration of the chief archivist, who is appointed by the government and is accountable to the minister of culture.) The law also foresaw the founding of an expert institution, the Archives Board. The Board's statutes and composition, as in the case of Latvia, had to be confirmed by the minister.<sup>11</sup> That same year, a similar law, the Archives Act (effective from 2012), was passed in Estonia, which regulated the work of the archives system. (In Estonia, the state archivist is appointed by the minister for education and research. The Ministry also has an Archives Board, and its function is to review the main directions in the development of archives, and to make proposals for their further development.) In this way, in 2011–2012, a unified national (state) archives administration system was formed.

The procedures for using documents kept in archives were discussed thoroughly in the newly passed laws in all three states. The laws stipulate that access to archival records preserved in the National Archives is unrestricted, except in cases where access to documents is restricted by law. The same kind of general provision is outlined in all three laws. Nonetheless, there are some formal differences in the regulations regarding access to documents. The Estonian Archives Act states: 'Access to archival records preserved in the National Archives is unrestricted, unless restrictions established by the Public Information Act, the Personal Data Protection Act, the State Secrets and Classified Information of Foreign States Act, or another act, extend thereto.'<sup>12</sup> The Lithuanian version outlines that the right of access to documents in the National Documents Collection can be restricted only by laws and in a few other cases. (Seven cases are indicated in the law where access to documents is restricted, e.g., for reasons of national security, defence, international relations, public safety, privacy, etc.)<sup>13</sup> The law also discusses documents that reflect the activities of various

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10 Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Archives, 05 12 1995, <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.23066?jfwid=q8i88m52x> [04 08 2018]

11 Law of the Republic of Lithuania on Documents and Archives, 18 06 2010, <https://e-seimas.lrs.lt/portal/legalAct/lt/TAD/TAIS.376352> [04 08 2018]

12 Archives Act, 2011, <https://www.riigiteataja.ee/en/eli/ee/504032016002/consolide/current> [05 08 2018]

13 Lithuanian Law on Documents and Archives. Consolidated edition, 2017, <https://www.e-tar.lt/portal/lt/legalAct/TAR.1FEF229DA7C6/azGpUSPzKH> [05 08 2017]

Soviet repressive structures, the Communist Party, and also 'resistance to the Soviet and German occupying regimes'. This 'special section of the National Documents Collection', as it is stated in the law, is also accessible, except in cases where documents contain information about individuals who have admitted to secret collaboration with the USSR's special services and have been registered as having confessed; and also in cases where an individual who suffered at the hands of the special services has expressed the desire that information concerning him or her be restricted.

There are more differences which regulate access to Soviet documents. For example, the Archives Law in Latvia notes that accessibility may be restricted to documents which contain 'sensitive personal data or information regarding the private life of a person [...] if the use of personal data or information contained therein can significantly affect the private life of that person'. In these cases, the restrictions may apply for as long as 30 years after the person's death. If it is not possible to determine the date of the person's death, then accessibility is restricted for a period of 110 years. And if the dates of birth or death of the person cannot be determined, then access can be restricted for 75 years from the creation of the document. The situation is a little different in Lithuania and Estonia. In Lithuania, the periods of restricted access for documents that contain personal data are shorter: 30, 100 and 70 years respectively. The most liberal conditions exist in Estonia, as closure periods there have been abolished since 2011, and documents that contain personal data are accessible for research purposes to everyone, under the same conditions, after the death of the subject of the data. Also, some Soviet security structure documents that contain personal data are freely accessible. Access to documents may be restricted only in cases where it is the will of the subject who suffered at the hands of the Soviet repressive structures. In summary, it can be said that, regardless of the differences in and features of accessibility to information in the three states, the majority of documents describing the Soviet period that are held in state archives are freely accessible to society and researchers, even though more than 20 collections have restricted access (see below). The same applies to documents which reflect the phenomenon of cultural opposition.

## 2. Institutions

After the restoration of independence, specialised research institutions started being established whose main goal was to examine the nature of the repressions applied by the Soviet regime. These institutions researched the scale of the postwar repressions, the activities of Soviet repressive structures, and also the phenomenon of the armed resistance and the partisan war. In time, the field of research of these institutions widened: researchers started to become more interested in forms of unarmed resistance to the Soviet regime. At present in Estonia, the main institution carrying out this kind of research is the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory. The Institute was founded in 2008. In terms of its structure, the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory is similar to its predecessor, the Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity (also known as the Max Jakobson Commission), which was established by decree by President Lennart Meri in 1998. The Estonian International Commission for the Investigation of Crimes against Humanity investigated the crimes against humanity committed in Estonia during the German and Soviet occupations. The field of research of the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory is wider. The Institute not only examines the crimes carried out as part of Soviet repressions, but also devotes a lot of attention to analysing violations of human rights. It also collects documentary material in which this kind of repression applied by the regime was expressed. The aim of the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory is to determine the nature and scale of human rights violations in Soviet Estonia. Some changes to the Institute's structure were introduced: in 2017, the Institute merged with the Unitas Foundation into a new organisation. The newly created institution continues to conduct academic research, analyse repressions by the regime, and the political-economic-ideological features of how these repressions worked, and also actively engages in educational activities.<sup>14</sup> The new organisation has kept the title the Estonian Institute of Historical Memory.

In Lithuania, the main institution researching the crimes of the Nazi and Soviet regimes is the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania. The Centre is a state

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<sup>14</sup> The Unitas Foundation (formerly the Foundation for the Investigation of Communist Crimes) was established in 2008 by M. Laar, M. Niinepuu and D. von Stauffenberg. The Foundation focused on: education and raising awareness, training teachers and young people; developing informative and teaching methods and material concerning human rights; organising study programmes about history and human rights for young people; organising conferences and public discussions.



institution, whose main fields of activity are: the study of genocide and war crimes in Lithuania, the study of the armed and unarmed resistance to the occupying regimes, and the initiation of the legal evaluation of the activities of the organisers and implementers of genocide. The Centre also actively participates in organising various events and memorial celebrations to honour activists in the partisan movement and the victims of Soviet repressions. The idea to establish a state institution to examine resistance activities, primarily the armed resistance, and the repressive nature of the Soviet regime, arose in Lithuania soon after the declaration of independence. In 1992, the parliament adopted a special law, and established the the State Residents Genocide Centre of Lithuania. In 1993, the Centre underwent reorganisation and became the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania. The activities, tasks, functions, legal status, structure and work procedure of the Centre are described in a special law which was adopted in 1997. The Research Centre consists of three divisions: the Genocide and Resistance Research Department, the Memorial Department and the Museum of Occupations and Freedom Fights (from 1992 to 2018, the Museum of Genocide Victims), and the Special Investigations Unit. The institution is managed by a director-general, who is proposed by the prime minister and appointed and dismissed by the Seimas. The Centre is accountable to the Seimas and the government for its activities. It publishes the academic journal *Genocidas ir rezistencija* (Genocide and Resistance), which features articles by Lithuanian and foreign researchers.<sup>15</sup> In 2011, the centre was assigned a new function, the publication of KGB documents. To this end, a special website was created.<sup>16</sup>

In Latvia, the Centre for the Documentation of the Consequences of Totalitarianism was established in 1992. The Centre not only preserved the documentation of the former KGB, but also had the right to publish scientific research papers based on the material at its disposal. It cooperated with the Latvian Commission of Historians (established in 1998). In 1995, the Centre for the Documentation of the Consequences of Totalitarianism moved from the Ministry of Justice to the Constitutional Protection Bureau (the Latvian domestic intelligence

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<sup>15</sup> Official page of the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, <http://genocid.lt/centras/en/298/c/>

<sup>16</sup> See: [www.kgbveikla.lt](http://www.kgbveikla.lt)

service.) This institutional reform had a negative impact on its research work. In the end, in 2008, its historical research activities practically ceased.<sup>17</sup> The Centre's archive was partially transferred to the State Archive, and its main task is to provide illustration-related information. (Publications prepared by the Centre for the Documentation of the Consequences of Totalitarianism and the Latvian Commission of Historians are freely available to the public on the website of the Latvian National Library.)<sup>18</sup>

There are more research institutions in the Baltic States that are not only limited to researching the partisan war and Soviet repressions against the peaceful population. The activities of Soviet political structures, such as the Communist Party, are also studied, as are the Party's economic and cultural policies, the dynamics of relations between the Soviet 'centre' and the republics, the consequences of the policies of the 'centre' on the socio-ethnic structure in the republics, etc. In Latvia, this kind of research is conducted by the Institute of Latvian History at the University of Latvia. After the declaration of independence, the Institute functioned as an independent, academic, state-funded institution; however, from 2006, it became one of the university's branches. The Institute's main directions in research include (among others) the 20th-century history of Latvia, which covers not only the interwar period, but also the history of the Soviet period. In Estonia, the Institute of History and Archaeology at the University of Tartu is known for its Soviet-period research. The Institute was established in 2007 on the basis of the Department of History, as part of structural reforms at the University of Tartu. Researchers from two of the Institute's departments, the Department of Estonian History and the Department of Contemporary History, conduct political and social research into the Soviet regime. In Lithuania, much like in Latvia and Estonia, research into the Soviet period is conducted at Vilnius University, in the Department of Contemporary History.<sup>19</sup> Several of the department's researchers

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<sup>17</sup> Pettai and Pettai, *Transitional and Retrospective Justice*, p. 83.

<sup>18</sup> See: <http://gramatas.lndb.lv#collectionitems?id=281>

<sup>19</sup> Research that analyses the activities of various informal groups in the late Soviet period is also conducted by groups of researchers from the Vilnius University Institute of International Relations and Political Science. In Latvia, the Social Memory Research Centre, a unit of the faculty of Social Science of the University of Latvia, examines social memory and identity issues, the politics of memory, and history. Its research covers the Soviet period too.

specialise in the socio-political history of Soviet Lithuania, and examine the situation of the Catholic Church in the Soviet period, and various non-violent forms of resistance to the Soviet regime. Unlike Estonia and Latvia, there is another institution in Lithuania that studies Soviet history, the Department of 20th-Century History at the Lithuanian Institute of History. The Institute is a state-funded research institution, and the country's main historical research centre, concentrating largely on the history of Lithuania and its historic neighbours. The Department of 20th-Century History was set up in 2001, after the departments of the History of the Republic of Lithuania and Contemporary History were reformed. A group of scholars at the department conducts research into the social, political and cultural history of the Soviet period.

The establishment of research (science) councils in the three Baltic States (the Research Council in Lithuania, the Council of Science in Latvia, and the Science Foundation in Estonia were established in 1991) created conditions for researchers and groups of researchers to initiate various research projects in the Soviet period field. This also helped them to become better acquainted with each other's work, and also to initiate new tasks. What is also important is that the framework of Soviet-period research was widened, raising new topics and issues. One such platform gathering Baltic researchers and generating new research was the Vilnius Symposium on Late Soviet and Post-Soviet Issues, initiated by the Lithuanian Institute of History. Several research conferences were organised, involving researchers from the Baltic States and other countries.

Bearing in mind the different affiliations of research institutions that study the Soviet period (some are university departments, while others are state institutions), their administration and accountability also differ. The activities of institutes which are university departments are regulated by university statutes and the statutes of the research institutions themselves, which define the nature of their activities, goals and objectives. Ministries of education and science often regulate the activities of university history departments which have institutes working within their structure (as is the case in Latvia and Lithuania, and in Estonia the Ministry of Education and Research). The Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania has a special status. As was already mentioned, the Centre's activities are regulated by a special law passed by the Seimas. The founder of the Lithuanian Institute of History is the Government of the Republic of Lithuania, while the

supervisory functions of the Institute's activities are carried out by the Ministry of Education and Science. The Institute is accountable to the ministry for the research programmes it implements.

### 3. Support mechanism

National archives and research institutions in the Baltic States which research the Soviet period receive funding from their respective state budgets. (In 2017, the state allocated a little over eight million euros to Lithuanian archives.)<sup>20</sup> In all three countries, humanities and social science research is funded through the research (science) councils (the Research Council in Lithuania, the Council of Science in Latvia, and the Science Foundation in Estonia). Research (science) councils were established in the Baltic States soon after the reinstatement of independence.<sup>21</sup> The councils fulfil the role of expert institution for government institutions. The councils advise the government and/or parliament on research and researchers' training issues, implement programme-based competitive funding of research, administer the most important research development programmes, evaluate research performance, and represent research in various European institutions and other international organisations.

### 4. Historiographical trends

Soon after the restoration of state independence, we saw the publication of the first works by historians, in which most attention was given to the armed resistance and Soviet repressions of peaceful citizens.<sup>22</sup> Research of this nature

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20 The Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania, financial report for 2017, [http://www.archyvai.lt/lt/veikla/finansines\\_ataskaitos.html](http://www.archyvai.lt/lt/veikla/finansines_ataskaitos.html) (at present, the Lithuanian State Archives System consists of the Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania and nine state archives, of which four are regional archives with branches).

21 The Estonian Research Council Foundation was established by the Republic of Estonia on 1 March 2012 by merging the Estonian Science Foundation with the Research Cooperation Centre of the Archimedes Foundation, with the Ministry of Education and Research (MER) exercising the rights of founder.

22 Truska, *Lietuva 1938–1953*, 125–176; Strods, *Latvijas nacionālo partizānu karš*. In 1999, a joint paper by three Baltic historians was published which was devoted mostly to the partisan war: *The Anti-Soviet Resistance*

became even more popular in the Baltic States, practically simultaneously, in 1998, with the establishment of state-international historians' commissions, to examine crimes committed by the Nazis and the Soviets.<sup>23</sup> (Major compilations of documents were also published that reflected the activities of the Soviet repressive structures.)<sup>24</sup> Even though the research supported by international historians' commissions was primarily aimed at analysing Soviet repressions and the partisan war, works gradually started to appear that discussed non-violent forms of resistance as well.<sup>25</sup> Later on, studies and monographs were written that analysed various movements and groups among the intelligentsia who struggled in the name of believers' rights. These topics were traditionally of greater interest to Lithuanian historians (primarily, the conditions under which the *Chronicle of the Catholic Church of Lithuania* was published); however, scientists from the other Baltic States also engaged in writing such papers.<sup>26</sup> This new research, unlike that conducted by emigre authors, was based on the rich archival material that became accessible to researchers after the archives of the KGB and the Communist Party were opened.

At the beginning of 2000, Baltic historians published major collective monographs about the Soviet period, which discussed various political, economic and socio-cultural aspects characteristic of that time. They analysed the partisan war, and also various forms of unarmed resistance: not just the political dissident movement (the activities of the Helsinki Group) or movements for believers' rights, but also various forms of 'civil opposition' (also called 'passive'), such as the folk

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*in the Baltic States*, ed. Arvydas Anušauskas, Vilnius: Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania, 1999.

23 The International Commission for the Evaluation of the Crimes of the Nazi and Soviet Occupation Regimes in Lithuania, see <https://www.komisija.lt/en/tyrimai/>; Estonian International Commission against Humanity, see <http://www.historycommission.ee/>; The Commission of the Historians of Latvia, see <https://www.president.lv/en/activities/commissions-and-councils/commission-of-historians>. All these commissions were established by state presidential decree.

24 Tininis, *Komunistinio režimo nusikaltimai Lietuvoje 1944–1953*.

25 See, for instance, research conducted by Latvian historians: Bleiere, 'Resistance of Farmers to the Soviet Policies in Latvia (1945–1953)', pp. 509–553; Rimšāns, 'Manifestations of Youth Resistance against the Communist Regime in the Latvian SSR (1965–1985)', pp. 116–132.

26 Streikus, *Sovietu valdžios antibažnytinė politika Lietuvoje*. See also works by Latvian and Estonian historians: Altnurme, 'Soviet Religious Policy towards the Lutheran Church in Estonia (1944–1949)', pp. 269–277; Zikmane, 'Relations between the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Latvia and the State', pp. 287–298.

movement, various non-conformist youth movements (hippies), and illegal rock festivals.<sup>27</sup> These studies did not discuss questions like the process of the politicisation of these various forms of 'civil opposition', or explain what determined the regime's approach and policies, such as why the relatively tolerant approach towards the folk movement was replaced by a more repressive one. At around the same time, several comparative history syntheses of the Baltic States were also published. We should add that in these studies, the Soviet period usually made up only one part of a fragmented historical account. This explains why they contained practically no new insights or assessments of the non-violent resistance (cultural opposition).<sup>28</sup>

The accessibility of archival data that was previously out of reach to researchers, the emergence of new directions in research, such as, for example, cultural memory studies, and the application of new methodological approaches (e.g., social network analysis), had an influence on Soviet research in the Baltic countries. Several research topics can be distinguished to which historians have given special attention and continue to do so. Latvian historians have studied rather intensively the phenomenon of Latvian national communism in the 1950s, interpreting it as a kind of goal towards independence in relation to Moscow in the way it took political and economic decisions, and developed the national culture. These attempts were repressed by Moscow, which had an impact on the subsequent political and national-cultural development of Latvia.<sup>29</sup> There were studies which discussed more than just the cultural policy of the Soviet regime and the attempts by various government institutions to control creative processes, such as censorship; they also analysed the aspirations of separate intellectuals or groups of them to preserve creative autonomy, to resist pressure, and/or overcome the

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27 Anušauskas, *Lietuva 1940–1990*, pp. 516–533; Bleiere et al., *Latvija navstrechu 100-letiju strany*.

28 Kasekamp, *A History of the Baltic States*. Plakans, *Concise History of the Baltic States*.

29 Bleiere, 'Latvijas Komunistiskās partijas etniskais sastāvs un nacionālkomunisma problēma 1944–1965 gadā', pp. 148–161; Butulis, 'A Few Expressions of National Communism in Magazine *Zvaigzne* (1956–1959)', pp. 696–708. About national communism in Lithuanian, see: Grybkauskas, *Sovietinė nomenklatūra ir pramonė Lietuvoje*, pp. 111–138; Sirutavičius, 'National Bolshevism or National Communism: Features of Sovietization in Lithuania', pp. 3–28.

established ideological canon.<sup>30</sup> Researchers are becoming increasingly interested in the nonconformist position of artists, and how they experimented with various art forms. On the other hand, this experimentation was a way of trying to highlight the importance of national traditions.<sup>31</sup> These trends were expressed in Soviet culture in the Baltic States to different degrees, but they became more pronounced in the 1960s–1980s.

Currently, two research trends are gaining popularity among Baltic scholars. The first critically reflects the model of Soviet modernisation in the Baltic republics. Researchers interpret modernisation/sovietisation from the perspective of post-colonial studies. They discuss not only the establishment of structures of Soviet colonial power, but also the continuity between Soviet and tsarist rule, and the legacy of Soviet colonialism in the post-Soviet Baltics. Scholars are interested in Soviet norms and rules which were imposed on Baltic societies, and gave birth to new social and cultural identities.<sup>32</sup> The second is cultural memory studies. The ‘cultural and communicative memory’ idea suggested by two German researchers, Jan and Aleida Assmann, has allowed researchers to take a deeper look at the phenomenon of the Soviet and post-Soviet cultural memory. The first studies appeared at the beginning of the 2000s. They tried to identify similarities and differences characteristic of post-Soviet Baltic societies.<sup>33</sup> Later on, the cultural memory research field was extended. It is believed that the culture of Soviet remembrance (postwar repressions and deportations) is one of the main elements for identity building in Baltic societies.<sup>34</sup> The experience of Soviet occupation is usually used as ‘a filter through which meaning is attributed to the entire twentieth

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30 Urtāns, ‘Soviet Censorship in Latvia until 1990’, pp. 50-76; Švedas, *Matricos nelaisvėje*; Ivanauskas, *Jrėmintą tapatybę: Lietuvos rašytojai tautų draugystės imperijoje*; Satkauskytė, *Tarp estetikos ir politikos. Lietuvių literatūra sovietmečiu*.

31 Naripea, *Estonian Cinescopes: Spaces, Places and Sites in Soviet Estonian Cinema*; Matulytė, *Fotografijos raiškos ir sklaidos Lietuvoje sovietizavimas*.

32 Annus, ‘The Problem of Soviet Colonialism in the Baltics’, pp. 21-45; Annus, ‘Layers of Colonial Rule in the Baltics: Nation-Building, the Soviet Rule’, pp. 359-384; Annus, *Soviet Postcolonial Studies*.

33 Mihkelev and Kalnačs, *We Have Something in Common: the Baltic Memory*.

34 Zelče and Kaprāns, *Pēdējais karš: Atmiņa un traumas komunikācija*; Kaprāns et al., *Padomju deportāciju pieminēšana Latvijā*; Zake, ‘The Exempt Nation. Memory of Collaboration in Contemporary Latvia’, pp. 59-80.

century in a sense transforming other, less dramatic periods into commentaries on the occupation experience'.<sup>35</sup> The 'traumatic memories' of national minority groups in Baltic societies are also being intensively researched, in an attempt to explain the interaction of the cultural-historical memory between the titular nations (Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians) and the national minorities; scientists are analysing how the understanding of the Soviet period has changed in the post-Soviet memory culture; memory regimes and memory politics are being discussed.<sup>36</sup>

Another theoretical paradigm which has also been popularised in recent years, and thus significantly extended cultural opposition research, is social network analysis. In seeking to explain the emergence of social movements in the Baltic republics under the conditions of *perestroika*, researchers have studied networks of various informal cultural circles, popular and professional groups.<sup>37</sup> In this way, the object of research has not only become politicised groups of opposition, such as defenders of the rights of the Catholic Church, or illegal (*samizdat*) publishers, but also various ethno-cultural movements that were tolerated by the government, clubs representing youth subculture and informal intellectual-artist communities, heritage protectors, and so on. According to researchers, as far back as in the late Soviet period, this formed the conditions for social mobilisation, an outcome of which was the independence movements in the three Baltic States.

## 5. Analysis of the collections in the COURAGE registry

The cultural opposition collections in the Baltic States can be divided into two types. The first is material regarding cultural activists and opposition figures.

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35 Joesalu and Koresaar, 'Continuity or Discontinuity: On the Dynamics of Remembering "Mature Socialism" in Estonian Post-Soviet Remembrance Culture', pp. 177–203.

36 For a comprehensive and comparative analysis of memory regimes in the Baltic States, see: **Pettai**, *Memory and Pluralism in the Baltic States*. **Also, for a comparative analysis, see:** Pettai, 'Debating Baltic memory regimes', pp. 165–178; Davoliutė and Balkelis, *Trauma, Identity and Exile in Deportation Memoirs*. About the cultural memory in the urban space, see: Nikžentaitis, *Atminties daugiasluosniškumas: miestas, valstybė, regionas*.

37 Ramonaitė and Kavaliauskaitė, *Sąjūdžio ištakų beiškant*; Ramonaitė, *Nematoma sovietmečio visuomenė*.



The second group is material from the government's ideological or repressive institutions about the activities of the cultural opposition. Both types are important in terms of our heritage, as one supplements the other. Government institution documents are often evidence of the regime's persecution of a specific opposition figure. It could be that material about the cultural activists themselves can be found in private collections, while information about government institutions would be in state archives, library and museum storage facilities. Nonetheless, from the very beginning of the national revival, we have observed the transfer of private collections to state archives and museum storage facilities. This may be an indicator of the state memorialisation of the historical memory. This phenomenon is logical, and quite understandable, as it is quite difficult for private individuals to organise, assemble and establish private institutions that can handle the material entrusted to them, and to organise its publication. Only a handful of private organisations can be mentioned which carry out the management and protection of cultural opposition collections. These are: the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia (Latvijas Okupācijas muzejs), which opened thanks to funding from the Latvian diaspora, the Museum of Occupations and Freedom Fights in Lithuania, which was initiated by the Lithuanian Union of Political Prisoners and Deportees, and the collection belonging to the Lithuanian Catholic Church, assembled by the Catholic priest and monk Fr Stanislovas.

In all three Baltic countries, cultural opposition collections owned by state institutions prevail. These organisations keep the collections and organise their publication. An important point to note here is that the collections were privately collected, and later handed over to state archives or library manuscript departments by the cultural opposition figures themselves or their heirs. We see a trend whereby private collections become public. During this transfer process, the collections are handled with the assistance of their former owners. Among these, we can mention the collections of Romualdas Ozolas, Vaclovas Aliulis, Meilė Lukšienė, Rimantas Jisas, Rimantas Vėbra and others that were already in some kind of order. Sergei Soldatov's wife gave his papers to the National Library of Estonia in 2006. Thus, we can see a clear process whereby private individuals

approach an archive, museum or manuscript department, often through personal connections or recommendations, and give material to a state institution for safekeeping. This ensures that the material, and the memory of the activities of the cultural opposition, will be protected, and that historians and students will be able to access and study it. On the other hand, this alone does not guarantee that the collections will rapidly be made available to the wider public.

Of the private collections (not including collections where parts are already in state archives and parts are in private hands, but are planned to be transferred to archives), we can mention the Strazdelis University collection kept by V. Andriukaitis. There are plans to present it to the Lithuanian State Central Archives once it has been put in order as well. Some of Andriukaitis' documents (unrelated to the activities of the underground university) have already been transferred to state archives.

State archives are the main body keeping cultural opposition collections. This centralised management system has basically been inherited from the Soviet period. Unlike private individuals, archives that have professional staff, the means and space can accept even large-scale collections. Some collections have over 15,000 files, such as the Completed Investigative Files of the Soviet Estonian KGB. The Incomplete Investigative Files of the Soviet Estonian KGB, kept in the same archive, contains over 13,000 files. The collection of Documents of the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party has over 11,000 documents.

State museums, libraries and research institutions have fewer collections about the cultural opposition.

Of the 70 Baltic country collections, ten are private and four are mixed: some material is in private hands, while some is in state archives, museums or libraries. All the rest, a total of 56 collections, are kept and used by state organisations. Archives and museums dominate among the latter: they have 26 and 22 collections respectively. Fewer collections can be found in libraries (six), and universities and research institutions (seven).

According to country. In Estonia, of the 15 collections, 11 are used by state institutions. Of them, three are in archives, one is in a library, and seven are in museums. One institution that has a larger number of collections is the National Archives of Estonia.

Of the 13 collections in Latvia, ten belong to state institutions, and three belong to private institutions. Of the state collections, two belong to the archives system, seven to museums, and one to a library. All three private collections are kept at the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia.

In Lithuania, out of the 42 collections, four are private. As many as 21 collections belong to the archives system, four belong to the Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, six belong to institutes and Vilnius University, and seven belong to museums.

Thus, the ratio between private and state collections in all three Baltic States is quite similar: they do not even constitute a tenth.

Of the 70 collections, the material in 24 of them covers the Brezhnev (or stagnation) period (up to the Gorbachev period), which began in 1965 and lasted for 20 years. Two collections are from the Khrushchev period, five span the rule of Khrushchev and Brezhnev, i.e., from the middle of the 1950s to the middle of the 1980s. Three collections (one from Estonia and two from Latvia) span the period when Gorbachev was in power from 1985 to 1990. The Stalinist period is covered by 13 collections (of them, one covers the Stalin and Khrushchev periods). The other 23 collections cover the whole Soviet period.

The storage, use and dissemination of most of the collections is financed by the state. Their maintenance and management are funded from the annual budgets of institutions. European funds or funds from other competition tenders or project financing are used less often. The logic and reasons behind the transfer of private documents to state archives and libraries is obvious: personal archives are handed over to state archives in the expectation that these documents will be managed, described and used, all funded by the state. The case of Latvia is probably an

exception, as some of its collections also belong to the Museum of the Occupation of Latvia. Even though state institutions have part of their budget set aside for this purpose, some still apply for special funding. For example, when seeing to the management, compilation and restoration of partisan documents, the Lithuanian Special Archives applied for additional funds to the Lithuanian Council for Culture, and in several years have been successful. However, this kind of practice is not very widespread.

All the collections are essentially organised and kept by professional specialists. Volunteers are not used for these activities. The most important role of private, usually former, owners, who have transferred their material is important during the transfer of the actual material, and when cooperating with archivists during the description process. Nonetheless, there are too few library and archive staff, meaning that when some material is accepted from a private person, it is only described and catalogued some time later. As a result, a significant number of collections in even the larger archives and libraries only have preliminary file lists, while the collections are not completely described or inventorised.

Even in cases where descriptions do exist, they are usually in paper format: there are no digital versions. There used to be a search option through the collections in the Lithuanian Central State Archives, and it was possible to download a scanned inventory. This was, in effect, a digital copy of the paper format inventory. However, for some unknown reason, this opportunity was revoked in 2018.

Of the 70 Baltic State collections, only seven have online inventories. Of these, four collections are from Estonia, and three are from Lithuania. None of the private collections have been digitalised or have online inventories.

A rather large number of collections are inaccessible to researchers or society. Out of the 70 collections, as many as 24 are inaccessible. These are collections that have not been fully compiled or put in order in archives, libraries

and museums, or which, because of certain restrictions, such as the personal data contained in the material, are accessible only with the individual's permission.

The date when a collection was established is only a partial indicator allowing researchers to trace certain memory policy trends, or important moments in politics that were important in the expression of cultural opposition in the Soviet period, or in today's remembrance of the cultural opposition. This should not be considered strange, as there are only a small number of private collections that were ultimately established in response to a clear personal or institutional resolution to actually create and establish a collection. Quite conversely, the beginning of collections dates from specific events, or the moment in time of the first document. Archives and museums, most of which are state institutions, essentially carry out the regular, planned collection of material based on the field of activity they have been instructed to by the government. Even though there are political and administrative proposals to search for and collect cultural opposition artefacts and documents, these proposals are doomed to remain unrealised due to a lack of funds. For example, the Strategy of the Lithuanian Art Museum outlines plans to acquire and collect works of art that could not be exhibited during the Soviet period; however, the limited material resources have not yet allowed for the implementation of this idea.<sup>38</sup> Even larger archives, with considerably larger budgets, do not initiate projects or measures through which relevant material which today is scattered in private hands might be collected. These archives usually satisfy themselves with the storage of existing material, its archival management, and dissemination.

Nonetheless, there are examples, albeit not many, where the decision to begin a collection was the direct outcome of political circumstances, or a decision by a private individual influenced by these circumstances. For example, quite early on, in 1988, collections of documents relating to the dissident Vytautas Skuodis, and the former political prisoner and regional history researcher Gediminas Ilgūnas,

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<sup>38</sup> See the concept of the National Gallery of Art, 10 September 2002, [http://old.ldm.lt/Parodos/Muziejusirpadaliniai/Nacionalines\\_galerijoskonceptija.htm](http://old.ldm.lt/Parodos/Muziejusirpadaliniai/Nacionalines_galerijoskonceptija.htm) [2018 11 06]; interview with Lolita Jablonskienė (see the Lithuanian National Art Gallery collection).

started being kept at the LSSR State archives (today the Lithuanian Central State Archives and Lithuanian Archives of Literature and Art). Their compilation began even before the national revival. This was evidence of the increasing liberalisation of the Soviet regime during Gorbachev's reform period. Later, during the national revival period (1988–1990), more collections were established, concerning other cultural activists who were political prisoners or victims of Stalinist repressions. These included the collection of Antanas Miškinis, who wrote poetry while imprisoned in Siberian labour camps, and the unexpected discovery of material about the partisan fighter Bronius Krivickas, who died in the resistance struggle in 1952. Secondly, there are a number of collections that have material documenting the first processes of the national revival movements in the Baltic States under Gorbachev's rule. Of these, we can mention the collection on Latvian protests against the Daugavpils power plant. The emergence of an institution important to our historical memory, the Lithuanian Genocide and Resistance Research Centre, should be mentioned separately. Even though it is a state institution today, its origins go back to an initiative by the cultural opposition towards the end of the Gorbachev period, when it was decided to collect and systematise material about people who had suffered at the hands of the Soviet regime. Today, this institution is active in forming memory policy, and carries out the digitisation of documents of Soviet repressive organs (see the KGB documents online collection).

Nonetheless, a majority are so-called 'trophy' collections. These are the archives of former partisan organisations or security organs, which were accepted by the government after the reinstatement of independence. The fourth group consists of exclusive collections that provide probably the best illustration of state policy on historical memory. They reflect the government's steps in reacting to international policy, especially amid the tense relations with neighbouring Russia. Some time ago, this brought the theme of the partisan resistance into an ideological conflict with indoctrinators from Russia, and the attempts by the latter to relate the anti-Soviet armed partisan resistance to accusations of collaboration with the Nazis, the murder of civilians, and similar condemnations. For them, the founding of the

partisan collections and the special attention given to archives is a testimony to state policy.

Nevertheless, besides these four important historical circumstances, there are still quite a number of collections whose establishment and management depends a lot on initiatives by private individuals. These are usually collections where material about a cultural opposition figure was transferred to an archive following their death. They are expressions of the will of the heirs to memorialise these figures, more than a reflection of the cultural opposition as a phenomenon. As a result, these kinds of collections require a certain degree of refinement, the separation of material relevant to the theme of cultural opposition from other 'routine', less significant material, and the deeper study of these selected documents.

Finally, there are a number of ad hoc collections initiated during the course of the project. They show that the papers of private individuals contain quite a lot of material that could prove to be relevant in preserving the memory of the cultural opposition.

The description of these collections during the course of this project has revealed that personal papers, usually in disorder and not inventorised, contain volumes of interesting material on cultural opposition. As an example, we can mention the cooperation between Vilnius University history students' research society and historians from Estonia's University of Tartu, and their organisation Noor-Tartu (Young-Tartu) (see the Young-Tartu and Students Science Society of Vilnius University collections), which, due to the historical topics that were raised and the social and personal links between active students, attracted the attention of both research administrators at the time and Soviet security. During the project, the researcher was given letters and other interesting material, based on which a new cultural opposition collection was compiled in the Manuscript Department of the Lithuanian Institute of History. This example proves that cooperation between archives, museums and researchers is very important for the preservation of the legacy of the cultural opposition, and it is important to today's society to

understand its significance. On the other hand, this also indicates the willingness of institutions to participate in memory politics. The Lithuanian Special Archives and the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre could be mentioned here. In the case of the latter, the collection eventuated at the initiative of its director, and was a unique innovation for its time: as former KGB secret informers were less than willing to admit to having collaborated with Soviet security organs, and with the lack of archival material that could serve as legal evidence of collaboration, KGB documents started being published on the internet, revealing not only material from agents, but also the persecution of cultural figures by the KGB.

Both the political circumstances and biographical information about the founders of the collection proved to be important. The Fr Stanislovas collection started in 1966 when he was 'deported', to serve as a priest in a far-off parish (see the Fr Stanislovas collection). His activities and collections of religious and national objects, and sermons, turned into a significant point of attraction.

The collections are mostly read by students and historians.

Most of the collections are in large, state archives, which is why issues surrounding their management and expansion are usually resolved in a routine way, just like many of the other collections kept in these archives. Some of the smaller archives have an established procedure whereby an experienced staff member is allocated to a specific collection. This method is justified when working with collections received from personal papers, as specially delegated rather than constantly rotating staff members can maintain closer links with the former owner of the collection, or a family member or close acquaintance, who takes a deeper interest in the former activities of the member of the cultural opposition, and who is keen to acquire more material for the archive or museum. This kind of individualised work by collection owners is especially effective in institutions that compete against other establishments for new material. Take, for example, the Maironis Literature Museum in Kaunas (Lithuania), which competes against the Lithuanian Institute of Literature and Folklore for the archival legacy and manuscripts of this famous writer. The professional staff are interested in the cultural heritage, and so they can exploit their personal connections or acquaintances to enhance collections. In this way, a collection has its own patron or



guardian who looks after it. Thus, the staff member Daina Rutka from the Museum of the River Daugava (Latvia) looks after three cultural opposition collections in the museum about the protest campaigns launched against the building of the Pļaviņas Hydroelectric Station in 1958–1959, and the Daugavpils Hydroelectric Station in 1986–1987, and about the first Daugava River Festival in 1979. Most of the archives in the Baltic States belong to larger state structures, such as the Office of the Chief Archivist in Lithuania. The shared experience of repressions applied by the socialist regime encouraged inter-institutional cooperation between the three countries. This has led the Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania to become a member of an association of related East and Central European organisations.

Having reviewed the situation regarding collections in the Baltic States, we can see that they receive insufficient attention from both politicians and society. There is a real threat that documents, letters, photographs and material artefacts, as well as other documents testifying to the memory of the cultural opposition scattered across several private collections, will not be found by researchers, and may remain outside the field of vision of museums and archivists. At a project seminar held in Riga on 2 July 2018, in which historians, politicians and museum representatives participated, recommendations were made to government institutions and foundations asking them to initiate special invitations whereby private individuals could submit applications and present individual collections, whose acquisition could at least be partially funded within the framework of this kind of programme. There is no doubt that such invitations alone will attract the attention of the owners of these kinds of documents, and are likely to encourage them to manage, collect and inform society of their existence. A recommendation made in another seminar was to create a database, a kind of register, allowing information to be concentrated in one system. We believe that our project could serve as a kind of basis or foundation for this type of register.

It is important to evaluate the personal contributions of patrons of art, archivists and historians. Examples where personal efforts have allowed objects, paintings and documents to reach museums, and thus become widely available to the public, show that work done in this direction should be more effective, encouraging public initiatives. The Paul Kondas painting collection and the Kurts Fridrihsons collection are good examples of state

institutions and private initiatives joining together to preserve and show the importance to society of the opposition in the visual arts. While the paintings by the Estonian amateur artist Paul Kondas and the Latvian Kurts Fridrihsons were not accessible to wider audiences during Soviet times, Rein Joost, the former director of the Museum of Viljandi (Estonia), and the writer Gundega Repše (Latvia), initiated the acquisition or donation of works from private collections to state museums, making them available to society. We believe that various state and institutional awards or prizes could serve as an encouragement for historians, museum staff, archivists and members of other professions to be bolder in defining and clarifying relevant collections, and to ensure their survival and accessibility to a wider public.

Such collections are directly related to attention by researchers and society. There are a number of collections where scientists conducting their own research have contributed to the discovery and management of material, which eventually goes into a collection. That is why it is critical to initiate research projects and themes covering the late Soviet period (1953–1988). It was precisely in this period that the cultural opposition was most extensively expressed. Unfortunately, there is insufficient research on this period. If in Lithuania, and to an extent in Latvia, there are historians, and literature and culture researchers, actively involved in studying this theme, then in Estonia, late Soviet-period research is practically non-existent. The project participants from the Baltic States meeting on 27–29 August 2018 stated that, at present, there are no government, university or other institutional programmes involved in research into expression by the cultural opposition; nor are there any dissertations being prepared on this theme.

## Conclusions

We could say that not enough attention is being given today to the preservation of the legacy of the cultural opposition and the understanding of its significance in society in the Baltic States. This is partly because of the historical memory policies in these states, which stress Soviet repressions, such as the murders and deportations conducted by USSR secret security organs, and the armed partisan struggle against this Soviet policy, or the open anti-Soviet dissident

movement. For this reason, the more sophisticated cultural opposition that operated in a grey area, in terms of negotiating with the government on interpretations of the cultural heritage, language and history, is harder to notice, while the documentation of its activities has practically been left to private initiatives. State archive and museum systems are oriented towards documents with special collection status, such as the protection of documents in Lithuania that belonged to the Communist Party, Soviet security and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and the search for and archiving of anti-Soviet armed resistance sources, which national legislation has delegated to the Lithuanian Special Archives.

Secondly, the dominant historical discourse is focused on the Soviet government's terror, and the resistance towards the regime by armed groups. This narrative overshadows the activities of the cultural opposition. This kind of approach by government institutions, and the still-prevailing totalitarianism approach, in the Baltic States devalues the cultural opposition, and raises questions about its importance. This can be said especially about the attempts to put activists into three categories: those who collaborated, those who adapted, and those who fought against the system. This kind of categorisation does not allow for an adequate understanding of the period, as life simply does not fit into three boxes or categories; it was more varied. In addition, it would be misleading to take a person's whole life, and attribute just one model of behaviour, for life is undeniably varied: at different times, one could have made mistakes, opposed, or lived with the system.

Attempts at classifying a person's behaviour during the Soviet period based on a stereotype creates a one-sided view. This classification merely inhibits the initiatives by former activists, as they become disoriented and lose track of how to assess their own former activities. The lack of a clear struggle against the Soviet regime, or not having documentary evidence supporting that struggle, forces former cultural opposition figures to be resigned, to avoid possible accusations by remaining reserved, or to avoid being attacked for engaging in self-promotion.

Given this situation, the owners of collections are left to pursue their own initiatives.

### **Recommendations: opportunities and challenges**

Most state archives in the country administer and store documents already existing in their lists of collections, without looking for new documents. This is why it should be the concern of private individuals, cultural opposition figures and their heirs, to see to the survival of their collections, ensuring their accessibility to researchers and the public. The description of these collections during the course of this project has shown that collections of personal papers, which are usually in disorder and not inventorised, contain volumes of interesting material on cultural opposition.

There is no doubt that the theme of active, armed resistance is more convenient to government institutions and schools searching for clear examples of heroism. However, the process of civil maturity can only take place if questions encouraging critical thinking are asked, and if answers to difficult questions are looked for, inspiring a combination of knowledge from various fields and disciplines. There is a lot of scope for interdisciplinary initiatives. Even in lessons in school, it raises more complicated questions on ethics, collaboration and reconciliation.

The theme of cultural opposition can offer discussion topics, where determinism under conditions of a lack of political freedom, a person's creative imperative and heroism, wilful decision-making and choices, and the survival instinct versus a comfortable life, can be raised. As no research similar to this project is being conducted in the Baltic States, which might combine archive documents and interviews with their authors or close circles, expert opinions on the emergence of collections and their future development, and the role of the state and influential political, social and cultural figures in constructing the historical

memory, we suggest continuing the activities conducted in the course of this project in finding and describing new collections.

### Summary

Not enough attention is being given today to the preservation of the legacy of the anti-Soviet cultural opposition, and the understanding of its significance in society in the Baltic States. This is partly because of the historical memory policies in these states, which accentuate Soviet repressions, such as the armed partisan struggle against Soviet policy, and the murders and deportations conducted by USSR secret security organs, or the open anti-Soviet dissident movement. For this reason, the more sophisticated cultural opposition that operated in a grey area, in terms of negotiating with the government on interpretations of the cultural heritage, language and history, is harder to notice, while the documentation of its activities has practically been left to private initiatives. State archive and museum systems are oriented towards documents with special collection status, such as the protection of documents in Lithuania that belonged to the Communist Party, Soviet security and the Ministry of Internal Affairs, as well as the search for and archiving of anti-Soviet armed resistance sources, which national legislation has delegated to the Lithuanian Special Archives. Other state archives in the country administer and store documents already existing in their lists of collections, without looking for new documents. That is why it should be the concern of private individuals, cultural opposition figures and their heirs, to see to the survival of their collections, ensuring accessibility for researchers and the public. The description of these collections during the course of this project has shown that collections of personal papers, which are usually in disorder and not inventorised, contain volumes of interesting material on the cultural opposition.

Secondly, the dominant historical discourse is focused on the Soviet government's terror, and the resistance towards the regime by armed groups. This narrative overshadows the activities of the cultural opposition. This approach by government institutions, and the still-prevailing totalitarian approach in the Baltic States, devalues the cultural opposition, and raises questions as to its importance.

This can be said especially about the attempts to put activists in three categories: those who collaborated, those who adapted, and those who fought against the system. This kind of categorisation does not allow for an adequate understanding of the period, as life simply does not fit into three boxes or categories; it was rather more varied. In addition, it would be misleading to take a person's whole life and attribute just one model of behaviour, as life is undeniably varied: at different times, one could have made mistakes, opposed, or lived with the system.

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## 1. List of collections

1. Action of Light collection
2. Aldona Liobytė collection
3. Antanas Miškinis collection
4. Antanas Sniečkus collection
5. Augustinas Janulaitis collection
6. Auseklis periodical collection
7. Balys Sruoga collection
8. Bronislava Martuževa collection
9. Bronius Krivickas collection
10. Catholic Press in Soviet Lithuania collection
11. Circle of History collection
12. Collection of documents of the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party
13. Completed investigative files of the Soviet Estonian KGB
14. Elza Rudenāja's and Vladislavs Urtāns' collection on the preservation of the local cultural legacy
15. Estonian Student Building Brigade collection at the National Archives of Estonia
16. Fr Stanislovas collection
17. Files of political prisoners in Latvia (1940-1986)
18. First River Daugava Festival in 1979
19. Gediminas Ilgūnas collection
20. Glavlit (Lithuania) collection
21. Hardijs Lediņš collection
22. Heldur Viires' art collection
23. Ignas Jonynas collection
24. Incomplete investigative files of the Soviet Estonian KGB
25. Indrek Hirv's art collection
26. Invisible society of Soviet-era Lithuania

27. Jonas Jurašas collection
28. Juhan Aare collection
29. Justas Paleckis collection
30. Karl Laantee collection at the Estonian Cultural History Archive
31. Kazys Boruta collection
32. KGB documents online collection
- 33.** Knuts Skujenieks collection
34. Kurts Fridrihsons collection
35. Lithuanian Communist Party Central Committee collection 1944-1953
36. Lithuanian Communist Party Central Committee collection 1953-1962
- 37.** Lithuanian National Gallery of Art
38. Lithuanian partisans collection in the Lithuanian Special Archive
39. Manuscript magazines in the Estonian Cultural History Archive
- 40.** Meilutė Lukšienė collection
41. Mērija Grīnberga Jr collection
- 42.** Modris Tenisons' mime troupe collection
43. Paul Kondas' painting collection
44. Protest campaign against the construction of the Daugavpils HPP in 1986-1987
45. Protest letters against the construction of the Pļaviņas HPP in 1958
- 46.** Research Archives of the Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation
47. Rimantas Jāzeps collection
- 48.** Rimantas Vēbra collection
- 49.** Romas Kalanta collection
- 50.** Romualdas Ozolas and the opposition by Lithuanian philosophers
- 51.** Saulė Kisarauskienė collection
- 52.** Second Directorate of the Soviet Lithuanian KGB
53. Sergei Soldatov collection
54. Sirje Kiin private archive

- 55.** Soviet Lithuanian amateur film collection
56. Stasys Matulaitis collection
- 57.** Strazdelis Underground University
- 58.** Students Science Society of Vilnius University
- 59.** Union of Artists (Soviet Lithuania) collection
60. Union of Writers (Soviet Lithuania) collection
- 61.** Vaclovas Aliulis collection
- 62.** Vanda Zaborskaitė collection
63. Various documents from Lithuanian KGB departments
- 64.** Veljo Tormis' manuscript collection at the Estonian Theatre and Music Museum
65. Viktoras Petkus collection
- 66.** Vilnius University Party Committee collection (1945-1986)
67. Vincas Kisarauskas collection
68. Vincas Mykolaitis-Putinas collection
69. Vytautas Skuodis collection
- 70.** Young-Tartu private collection
- 71.** Kart Lantee's personal papers at Tartu University Library

## 2. List of owners and institutions

Owner/institution	Collection
Department of Lithuanian Communist Party documents, a branch of the Lithuanian Special Archives	<p>Antanas Sniečkus collection</p> <p>Justas Paleckis collection</p> <p>Lithuanian Communist Party Central Committee collection (1953-1962)</p> <p>Stasys Matulaitis collection</p> <p>Vilnius University Party Committee collection (1945-1986)</p>
Estonian Cultural History Archive	<p>Karl Laantee collection at the Estonian Cultural History Archive</p> <p>Manuscript magazines at the Estonian Cultural History Archive</p>
Estonian History Museum	Juhan Aare collection
Estonian Literary Museum	Sirje Kiin private archive
Estonian Theatre and Music Museum	Veljo Tormis' manuscript collection at the Estonian Theatre and Music Museum
Genocide and Resistance Research Centre of Lithuania	<p>Catholic Press in Soviet Lithuania collection</p> <p>KGB documents online collection</p>
Indrek Hirv	Indrek Hirv's art collection
Institute of International Relations and Political Science of Vilnius University	Invisible society in Soviet-era Lithuania



Institute of Lithuanian Literature and Folklore	<p>Balys Sruoga collection</p> <p>Kazys Boruta collection</p> <p>Vanda Zaborskaitė collection</p> <p>Vincas Mykolaitis-Putinas collection</p>
Latvian State Archive of the Latvian National Archives	<p>Collection of documents of the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party</p> <p>Files of political prisoners in Latvia (1940-1986)</p>
Museum of Literature and Music, Latvia	<p>Broņislava Martuževa collection</p>
Lithuanian Archives of Literature and Art	<p>Gediminas Ilgūnas collection</p> <p>Jonas Jurašas collection</p> <p>Vincas Kisarauskas collection</p> <p>Modris Tenisons' mime troupe collection</p> <p>Saulė Kisarauskienė collection</p> <p>Union of Artists (Soviet Lithuania) collection</p> <p>Union of Writers (Soviet Lithuania) collection</p>
Lithuanian Central State Archives	<p>Glavlit (Lithuania) collection</p> <p>Romualdas Ozolas and the opposition by Lithuanian philosophers</p> <p>Soviet Lithuanian amateur film collection</p> <p>Vaclovas Aliulis collection</p> <p>Vytautas Skuodis collection</p>
Lithuanian Institute of History	<p>Bronius Krivickas collection</p> <p>Romas Kalanta collection</p> <p>Students Science Society of Vilnius University</p>

Lithuanian Special Archives	<p>Lithuanian Communist Party Central Committee collection (1944-1953)</p> <p>Lithuanian partisans collection in the Lithuanian Special Archives</p> <p>Second Directorate of the Soviet Lithuanian KGB</p> <p>Various documents from Lithuanian KGB departments</p>
Madona Local History and Art Museum	Elza Rudenāja's and Vladislavs Urtāns' collection on the preservation of the local cultural legacy
Maironis Literature Museum, Kaunas	<p>Aldona Liobytė collection</p> <p>Antanas Miškinis collection</p>
Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation	<p>Mērija Grīnberga Jr collection</p> <p>Research Archives of the Museum of the History of Riga and Navigation</p>
Museum of the River Daugava	<p>First River Daugava Festival in 1979</p> <p>Protest campaign against the construction of the Daugavpils HPP in 1986-1987</p> <p>Protest letters against the construction of the Pļaviņas HPP in 1958</p>
National Archives of Estonia	<p>Circle of History collection</p> <p>Estonian Students Building Brigade collection at the National Archives of Estonia</p> <p>Completed investigative files of the Soviet Estonian KGB</p> <p>Incomplete investigative files of the Soviet Estonian KGB</p>
National Gallery of Art	Lithuanian National Gallery of Art

National Library of Estonia	Sergei Soldatov collection
National Library of Latvia	Knuts Skujenieks collection
Kondas Centre of Naive Art	Paul Kondas' painting collection
Latvian Centre for Contemporary Art	Hardijs Lediņš collection
Museum of the 1863 Uprising	Fr Stanislovas collection
Museum of the Occupation of Latvia	Action of Light collection Kurts Fridrihsons collection Auseklis periodical collection
Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences	Augustinas Janulaitis collection Ignas Jonynas collection Meilutė Lukšienė collection Rimantas Vėbra collection Rimantas Jisas collection
Venclova House-Museum	Viktoras Petkus collection
Heldur Viires	Heldur Viires' art collection
Vytenis Povilas Andriukaitis	Strazdelis Underground University

### 3. List of personal names

1. Aare, Juhan
2. Agurkis, Vaidas
3. Aliulis, Vaclovas
4. Andriukaitis, Vytenis Povilas
5. Anušauskas, Arvydas
6. Asmer, Vilve
7. Astahovska, Ieva
8. Bambals, Ainārs
9. Barysas-Baras, Artūras
10. Boiko, Juris
11. Boruta, Kazys
12. Borutaitė-Makariūnienė, Eglė
13. Burauskaitė, Teresė Birutė
14. Čekavičiūtė, Nijolė
15. Dimbelytė-Mchichou, Jolita
16. Dobrovolskis, Algirdas Mykolas
17. Doroņina-Lasmane, Lidija
18. Egliena, Anna
19. Eller, Kalle Istvan
20. Elza, Rudenāja
21. Fridrihsons, Kurts
22. Gaigalas, Vidmantas
23. Gailis, Zigmārs
24. Gailiša, Anita
25. Galvanauskienė, Alina
26. Gasiliūnas, Virginijus
27. Gečiauskas, Geistys
28. Grīnberga, Mērija
29. Grünberg-Soldatova, Ludmilla

30. Grybkauskas, Saulius
31. Gubanovas, Nikolajus
32. Hirv, Helgi
33. Hirv, Indrek
34. Ilarienė, Inga
35. Ilgūnas, Stanislovas Gediminas
36. Ilmet, Peep
37. Isotamm, Jaan
38. Ivanauskas, Vilius
39. Īvāns, Dainis
40. Jablonskienė, Lolita
41. Janaitis, Gunārs
42. Jankauskas, Algimantas
43. Janulaitis, Augustinas
44. Jاسas, Rimantas
45. Jonynas, Ignas
46. Juozėnaitė, Justina
47. Jurašas, Jonas
48. Kalm, Mart
49. Kärner, Kaja
50. Katilius, Algimantas
51. Kiin, Sirje
52. Kisarauskas, Vincas
53. Kisarauskienė, Saulė
54. Kits, Elmar
55. Kļaviņš, Paulis
56. Klivis, Edgaras
57. Kokneviča, Taiga
58. Kondas, Paul
59. Koppel, Taavi

60. Krivickas, Bronius
61. Kuliešienė, Erika
62. Kuljus, Ene
63. Kuusik, Külli
64. Kuzmickas, Vincas
65. Laantee, Karl
66. Laar, Mart
67. Lankutis, Jonas
68. Lapin, Leonhard
69. Lasmane, Daina
70. Lediņš, Hardijs
71. Liivik, Olev
72. Liobytė, Aldona
73. Lubyte, Elona
74. Lukas, Tõnis
75. Lukšaitė, Ingė
76. Lukšienė, Meilė
77. Markauskienė, Virginija
78. Martuževa, Bronislava
79. Maslauskienė, Nijolė
80. Matulaitis, Stasys
81. Merkys, Vytautas
82. Mintaurs, Mārtiņš
83. Mykolaitis-Putinas, Vincas
84. Ohakas, Valdur
85. Ohmann, Valdur
86. Ozolas, Romualdas
87. Paleckis, Justas
88. Pavel, Louis
89. Petkevičiūtė-Labanauskienė, Danutė

90. Petkus, Viktoras
91. Pliopa, Adas
92. Ramonaitė, Ainė
93. Rasa Sperskienė
94. Remeika, Kęstutis
95. Roode, Henn
96. Rutka, Daina
97. Saarts, Lembit
98. Samulionis, Algis
99. Simanavičius, Mindaugas
100. Šīrants, Rūdofls
101. Skujenieks, Knuts
102. Sniečkus, Antanas
103. Soldatov, Sergei
104. Sooster, Ülo
105. Sruoga, Balys
106. Stonytė, Virgilija
107. Strautniece, Vaira
108. Streikus, Arūnas
109. Tamkevičius, Sigitas
110. Tammela, Mari-Leen
111. Tark, Triin
112. Tenisons, Modris
113. Tormis, Veljo
114. Tūrna, Tõnis
115. Umbrasas, Vytautas
116. Unt, Jaan
117. Unt, Kersti
118. Urtāns, Juris
119. Vagrienė, Birutė

120. Vahkal, Anniki
121. Vahtre, Lauri
122. Valk, Heiki
123. Vallikivi, Mari
124. Vanaga, Lilita
125. Viires, Heldur
126. Vint, Toomas
127. Vladislavs, Urtāns
128. Zaborskaitė, Vanda
129. Žeikare, Māra
130. Žemaitytė, Rūta
131. Zepa, Līvija
132. Zigmārs Gailis
133. Žilys, Saulius
134. Žižys, Dalius
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## **COURAGE**

Cultural Opposition: Understanding the Cultural Heritage of Dissent in the Former Socialist Countries

### *Country Reports*



# **CROATIA SLOVENIA**

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## Table of Contents

Table of Contents .....	3
1. Introduction.....	4
2. Contexts.....	6
2.1 <i>Researching Opposition under State Socialism</i> .....	6
2.2 <i>Institutions and Legal Foundations of the Preservation and Interpretation of the Past</i> .....	8
2.2.1 <i>Legislative Framework</i> .....	8
2.2.2 <i>Institutions</i> .....	11
3. Analysis of the Collections in the COURAGE Registry .....	15
3.1 <i>Typology</i> .....	15
3.2 <i>Themes, Actors, Users</i> .....	16
4. Conclusion and Recommendations .....	21
Summary .....	24
Bibliography.....	26
Appendix.....	31
<i>List of Collections Described</i> .....	31
<i>List of Operating Institutions and Owners</i> .....	34
<i>List of People Researched</i> .....	37
<i>Map: Location of the Croatian and Slovenian COURAGE Collections</i> .....	42

## 1. Introduction

This text focuses primarily on an analysis of the situation in Croatia, while the situation in Slovenia is covered on a much smaller scale.<sup>1</sup>

Croatian society is still struggling to come to terms with the consequences of the legacy of undemocratic regimes and systems of the 20th century. In the Croatian public sphere, there are different interpretations of the past, which are not always rooted in the scholarly research and debate. It may be said that Croatian society is deeply burdened by the past, with a “verbal civil war” (Ivo Banac) still being waged. Newspapers and daily news programmes have been full of debates steeped in deeply polarized interpretations of the past, primarily the Second World War, but also of the subsequent communist period. A basic consensus on the interpretation of these historical events and phenomena is even absent in academia, but the lack of a genuine academic dialogue in the debates about these problems is genuinely troubling.<sup>2</sup>

The evidence that this situation has become untenable is the fact that the Croatian Government under Prime Minister Andrej Plenković decided to establish the Council for Dealing with Consequences of the Rule of Non-Democratic Regimes from World War II to Croatian Independence in March 2017, and thus finally begin the long-awaited process of officially dealing with the past. Eighteen persons with different worldviews and academic and institutional backgrounds, mostly legal experts, political scientists and historians, who had already dealt with these issues in their professional careers, were appointed to the Council, which is chaired by the President of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts, Zvonko Kusić. The Prime Minister emphasised in the rationale for the Council’s establishment that “an understanding of the tragedy of systematic violations of human rights during the reign of undemocratic regimes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century must be conveyed to new generations.”<sup>3</sup> Therefore, the main task of this Council was to provide the Croatian government with recommendations on the preservation of the culture of memory, scholarly research, documentation, the policy for naming streets and squares, access to archival materials, and the education of children and young people about violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms under undemocratic regimes. The point of departure in this Council’s work was supposed to be a clear break from every form of totalitarianism, both fascist and communist.

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<sup>1</sup> The reason is that the HIP COURAGE team conducted most of its activities (especially in the search for potential stakeholders and dissemination activities) in Croatia. Also, the writers of this report are much better acquainted with the situation in Croatia than with the situation in Slovenia. Situation in other post-Yugoslav countries is described in Milena Dragičević Šešić, Jacqueline Nießer: “Serbia, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo”, COURAGE Country Reports. Regensburg, November 2018, <http://doi.org/10.12345/cr-serbiaetal>.

<sup>2</sup> Mihaljević and Shek Brnardić, “The Communist Legacy and Public Discourse in Croatia: the Example of Archives.”

<sup>3</sup> “Predsjednik Vlade: Brinemo o budućnosti, a ne o prošlosti.”

However, due to the rumours that not only the symbols, but also the nature of public discussion of these past systems will be regulated, a group called "Croatian intellectuals for the freedom of thought," consisting mostly of historians, art historians and literary historians headed by Prof. Ivo Banac, issued a public appeal on 11 October asking the Croatian public and all responsible authorities to refrain from the political, legal and judicial restriction of academic research and any attempt to enforce a desirable and ideologically orthodox truth.<sup>4</sup> The appeal opens with this statement:

"For quite some time now the Croatian public has witnessed the attempts of political leaders and parties to turn themselves into supreme interpreters of national and world history, especially that of the twentieth century, and then most especially of the Second World War. These attempts are manifest not only by endeavors to manipulate the public, but notably in aspirations to prescribe the historical truth by way of resolutions and declarations made by political institutions and their para-political offshoots, and sometimes in attempts to limit scholarly research and interpretations by decisions of judicial bodies that are relevant for individual, concrete cases."<sup>5</sup>

In February 2018, the Council for Dealing with Consequences of the Rule of Non-Democratic Regimes, which was set up earlier in 2017 after the dispute erupted, adopted two documents with recommendations (to the Government) for a comprehensive legal solution. The recommendations were called a "dialogue document."<sup>6</sup> They included suggestions on how to deal with the arduous past of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, primarily the symbols of totalitarian regimes. The slogan "For home (land) – ready!" (*Za dom – spremni*), which was used during World War II by the Ustasha movement, was proclaimed unconstitutional, while communist symbols (e.g. the red star) were declared ambiguous, with the negative connotation of the human rights violations and mass crimes of the communists, but also a positive connotation in the antifascist struggle. The next step by the Government (in the legislative sense) is still being awaited.

Keeping in mind this context, it is obvious that researchers face many difficulties when dealing with the period of socialism in Croatia. Most policy-makers adopt a black and white approach when it comes to the history of the socialist era. The attitude toward communism and the socialist past is contingent upon the political divisions between the political left and right, and therefore the scholarly research of that period is often neglected due to a lack of understanding by the creators of politics. This lack of consensus and political will has institutional consequences: there is no separate public institution that studies the socialist

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<sup>4</sup> "Hasanbegović, Banac i drugi apeliraju: Suzdržite se od propisivanja ideološki pravovjerne istine."

<sup>5</sup> "An Appeal of Croatian Intellectuals for the Freedom of Thought."

<sup>6</sup> "Dokument dijaloga."

past (an institute or museum). Therefore, when discussing the efforts to preserve and study the memory of dissent and opposition, we must consider the consequences of political indifference, such as a general lack of funding. Moreover, the cultural legacy of dissent did not get much public attention, except for socialist neo-avant-garde non-conformism in the history of art, which was the topic of many exhibitions, especially in the contemporary art museums in Zagreb and Rijeka.<sup>7</sup>

In Slovenia, the situation is slightly better, but some similar political (and academic) debates regarding the socialist period of Slovenian history still exist.<sup>8</sup>

## 2. Contexts

### 2.1 Researching Opposition under State Socialism

After the fall of communism in Croatia 1990, scholars studying the history of the socialist period could write about it freely. However, the frameworks of the newly established states after the break-up of Yugoslavia placed some new (albeit different) barriers before researchers. In Croatia (and in Bosnia and Herzegovina), the war was an additional aggravating circumstance. In Croatia, research in the first decade was mainly focused on cases of communist repression (e.g., the murder of the émigré dissident writer Bruno Bušić). Although some important papers were published only the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century intensified the research of socialism.<sup>9</sup> For historiography, the last two decades were a period of opening new themes, acclimating to new work conditions and confronting the challenges of interpreting the recent past.

In Croatian historiography, although many books deal with the socialist period,<sup>10</sup> the seminal book *Hrvatska u Jugoslaviji* (Croatia in Yugoslavia)<sup>11</sup> by Zdenko Radelić is the only comprehensive monograph that covers the socialist period of Croatian history exclusively. Over the past decade, some valuable exhibitions on the socio-cultural aspects of socialism have emerged, such as the exhibition *The 1950s in the Croatian Art* (Zagreb, Croatian Fine Arts House, 2004), or the exhibition *Socialism and Modernity: Art, Culture, Politics 1950-1974* (Zagreb: Museum of Contemporary Art, 2011-12).<sup>12</sup> A good example of co-operation between institutions from several post-Yugoslav countries is the exhibition on Yugoslav

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<sup>7</sup> See for example, Milovac, *Neprilagođeni*.

<sup>8</sup> Prijon, "Slovenian Communist Legacy"; Flere and Klanjšek, "Was Tito's Yugoslavia totalitarian?"; Dežman, "Communist Repression and Transitional Justice in Slovenia"; Sputnik, "Mediating communism: Slovenian media coverage of the recent past and historical reprogramming."

<sup>9</sup> Duda, "Nova istraživanja svakodnevice i društveno-kulturne povijesti jugoslavenskoga socijalizma," 577.

<sup>10</sup> For example, Bilandžić, *Moderna hrvatska povijest*; Goldstein, *Hrvatska 1918-2008*.

<sup>11</sup> Radelić, *Hrvatska u Jugoslaviji*.

<sup>12</sup> Kolečnik, *Socijalizam i modernost*.

architecture and urbanism, *Unfinished Modernizations: Between Utopia and Pragmatism. Architecture and Urbanism in Socialist Yugoslavia and the Post-Yugoslav Countries* (2012-14), which was first opened in Maribor and then hosted in Belgrade, Zadar, Ljubljana, Sarajevo, Cetinje, Skopje, Tirana and Zagreb.<sup>13</sup>

Extensive research has also been conducted on the Croatian Peasant Party (*Hrvatska seljačka stranka* - HSS) and on the activities of the remains of Ustasha formations after the end of World War II ("Crusaders").<sup>14</sup> The resistance of Stalin's supporters against Tito has also been relatively well researched. There are also several studies on the opposition of the Catholic Church. Research into the Croatian national movement (the "Croatian Spring" in 1971/1972) has begun relatively recently, and significant progress has already been made.<sup>15</sup> Marko Zubak recently published an important book about the significant transformation of the Yugoslav youth press from the late 1960s.<sup>16</sup>

A comprehensive study of dissent as a phenomenon in Croatian historiography is still lacking. Positive exceptions are the article written by Katarina Spehnjak and Tihomir Cipek,<sup>17</sup> and the proceedings of the international scholarly conference *Dissent in Contemporary History*, which was held in Zagreb in 2009.<sup>18</sup> The book analysed various examples of opposition, dissent and similar phenomena, and includes the article by Katarina Spehnjak, in which she discussed the phenomenon of dissent as a research topic in Croatian historiography and in the historiographies of other countries that have emerged from the collapse of Yugoslavia. Spehnjak stressed that the low number of books and articles written on the topic of dissent and opposition in Croatian historiography is due, along with certain social reasons, to methodological problems, namely the lack of a proper definition of dissent and a research paradigm.<sup>19</sup> The book also contains an important article by Slovenian historian Aleš Gabrič on dissent and dissidents in Slovenia. Gabrič, who is a crucial scholar of Slovenian dissidents,<sup>20</sup> offered a typology that is applicable to the whole Yugoslav and Central

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<sup>13</sup> Duda, "Nova istraživanja svakodnevice," 583.

<sup>14</sup> Radelić, *Križari - gerila u Hrvatskoj 1945.-1950.*; Radelić, "Hrvatska: komunisti i oporba nakon rata 1945"; Radelić, "Opposition in Croatia 1945-1950"; Radelić, "Projugoslavenska protukomunistička gerila u Hrvatskoj nakon Drugoga svjetskog rata: problemi istraživanja."

<sup>15</sup> Klasić, *Hrvatsko proljeće u Sisku*; Dukovski, *Istra i Rijeka u Hrvatskome proljeću*; Batović, *The Croatian Spring*. Matica hrvatska, the oldest Croatian cultural institution and publisher, regularly commemorates the legacy of the Croatian Spring, which is also reflected in the gatherings it organizes (see, for example, Zidić, *Hrvatska i Hrvatsko proljeće 1971.*) and the publications that it publishes (e.g. the series "Sources for the History of Matica hrvatska").

<sup>16</sup> The Yugoslav youth press grew from a communist propaganda tool into a media space for rebellious standpoints opposed to official standpoints. Zubak, *The Yugoslav Youth Press 1968-1980*.

<sup>17</sup> Spehnjak and Cipek, "Disidenti, opozicija i otpor - Hrvatska i Jugoslavija."

<sup>18</sup> Kisić Kolanović, Radelić and Spehnjak, *Disidentstvo u suvremenoj povijesti*.

<sup>19</sup> Spehnjak, "Disidentstvo kao istraživačka tema - pojam i pristupi," 20.

<sup>20</sup> Some of the most important of his articles on dissent include "Opposition in Slovenia in 1945"; "Slovenska kulturnopolitična razhajanja med kulturno ustvarjalnostjo in politično akcijo 1980-1987"; "Odnos oblasti do kulturne ustvarjalnosti slovenske emigracije."

European context as well.<sup>21</sup> Generally, Slovenian historiography covered dissent and cultural opposition more than its Croatian counterpart.

## *2.2 Institutions and Legal Foundations of the Preservation and Interpretation of the Past*

### *2.2.1 Legislative Framework*

Open access to archives is a civilizational achievement of democratic societies. Unfortunately, the practice implemented in Croatia from its independence until 2017 – that is, in the past 27 years – did not entirely adhere to these principles. Evidence to this is that, until recently, the amount of classified archival documentation in Croatia was much greater than in other EU countries.<sup>22</sup>

Since it gained its independence at the beginning of the 1990s, Croatia amended its legal framework regarding access to archival materials. Until the new Archival Materials and Archives Act<sup>23</sup> was adopted several months ago, the previous Archives and Archival Institutions Act, adopted in 1997, was still in force. It was later supplemented with the Regulations on Use of Archival Materials (1999), the Personal Data Protection Act (2012), the Freedom of Information Act (2013, 2015), the Data Secrecy Act (2007, 2012) and the Information Security Act (2007). This framework placed many obstacles before researchers of the history of socialism in Croatia, because some of these regulations were in collision.

Historians were seeking open access to archives because their profession necessitates the use of sources in order to support their interpretations with objective evidence. However, over the last ten years, there have been many complaints and objections by historians regarding the availability of archival materials created during the period of communist rule. The collision of the aforementioned legislation put archivists between “two fires,” that is, between users (mostly historians) and regulations, which limited the access even to material that are not sensitive at all. A further aggravating circumstance for historians of communism was the fact that special permission for the use of materials of the Central Committee (CK) of the League of the Communists of Croatia (SKH) had to be obtained from the current Social Democratic Party (SDP).

A major event which focused public attention on the question of accessing the archives of the former Communist Party was the “Perković case.” Germany launched the process in 2008 by issuing a European Arrest Warrant for Josip Perković and Zdravko Mustač, former officers of the Yugoslav State Security Service (*Služba državne sigurnosti* – SDS) accused of involvement in the murder of Stjepan Đureković, a Croatian émigré in Wolfratshausen in

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<sup>21</sup> Gabrič, “Disidentsvo u Sloveniji.”

<sup>22</sup> “Grmoja: Izmjenama Zakona o arhivu prevladati podjele u društvu.”

<sup>23</sup> “Zakon o arhivskom gradivu i arhivima.”



1983. The arrest warrant became legally binding for Croatia only after 1 July 2013, that is, after Croatia's accession to the EU. A scandal broke out when the Croatian Parliament (when SDP's Zoran Milanović was prime minister) enacted an amendment to Croatia's extradition law just days before formal EU accession, preventing the extradition of its citizens for crimes committed prior to 2002 when the new EU extradition rules came into effect. This amendment was even called "*Lex Perković*" by its critics because they claimed that the law was amended explicitly to protect Perković. Under pressure from Brussels, the Croatian law was finally rescinded. The European Justice Commissioner Viviane Reding accused the Croatian Government of "protecting the communist killers of Croatian dissidents."<sup>24</sup> After much haggling, Perković was extradited in January and Mustač in April 2014. The court in Munich presided by Judge Manfred Dauster issued a sentence of life in prison in August 2016, with this explanation:

"This case was brought before this court only because it was not prosecuted before in Croatia. We do not ask why this was so. We hope that in countries that have emerged after the collapse of Yugoslavia will come to terms with this historical period in a reasoned manner. How neglected this field of history is there is demonstrated by the fact that we had to summon a Danish and a German historian as experts. Future generations will pass judgment on why the process of dealing with this strange history has not yet happened."<sup>25</sup>

This trial highlighted the issues regarding access to the archival materials created during communist rule.

The most critical archival funds, which are also the primary objects of dispute, are the collections of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Croatia (CK SKH) and the archives of the State Security Service (SDS) of the Republic Secretariat of Internal Affairs, which are kept in the Croatian State Archives (HDA) in Zagreb. The collection of documents of the State Security Service for Croatia was formed on the basis of their formal transfer from the public authorities and security and intelligence services of the Republic of Croatia in the period from 1991 to 2015. In 2015, the Security and Intelligence Agency (*Sigurnosno-obavještajna agencija* – SOA) had handed over the documents from the socialist period to the HDA. The documentation covers various areas of the prior service's activities: internal affairs, emigration, foreign intelligence services, the service's operations, analytical reports and assessments, significant information and other materials, including files on dissidents, the opposition and enemies of the state.<sup>26</sup>

It should be noted that most of the documentation was originally marked by degrees of confidentiality. In September 2015, the SOA issued a decision on the declassification of the SDS materials in the Croatian State Archives. As stated in the Agency's 2016 report, "SOA's intention is to make this valuable archival material available to the scholarly and general

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<sup>24</sup> "Josip Perković." Croatia was also threatened with economic sanctions from Brussels.

<sup>25</sup> "Pročitajte kako je sudac obrazložio presudu Perkoviću i Mustaču."

<sup>26</sup> "Javno izvješće 2016.," 24.

public and to provide greater insight into that period of Croatian history."<sup>27</sup> The archival fund (collection) has become more accessible to the public. In a statement dated 25 September 2015, published on the SOA website, it was also stressed that the submission of the SDS archival material to the HDA "is a departure from linking SOA with the operations, methods and traditions of the former SDS."<sup>28</sup> The year 2015 was especially dynamic as far as public pressure for declassification of materials is concerned, which may be related to the publicity given to the Perković case and the willingness of the Social Democratic government to clear their name and prove its commitment to democratisation.

The other important archival collection is that of the Central Committee of the League of Communist of Croatia (CK SKH). The CK SKH collection is a massive body of 1630 l/m of archival materials. It was assumed by the State Archives in two ways: by merging the former Archives of the Institute for the History of the Labour Movement (*Institut za historiju radničkog pokreta*) and by directly assuming it from the current Social Democratic Party (both in 1995). In the Handover Protocol, a clause was added stating access to and use of some segments of the materials require the permission of the SDP, which explicitly listed said materials. These were, among other things, documents on the members of the SKH and other personal files. Furthermore, there was a restriction on classified materials (labelled "confidential"). Due to a negative public image and the announced amendments to the Archives Act, the Social Democratic Party relinquished this right in March 2017.

In Croatia, rumours have been circulating for years that a major part of the Party materials was "purged" before it came to the Archives. When the truth of these allegations was investigated, the Croatian State Archives replied that it was evident that some of the materials are not complete, but that the exact number and amount of the missing documentation is unknown. The processing, consolidation and verification the materials are ongoing. In a similar vein, the State Security files on citizens were "abridged," especially the files of prominent people, which makes lustration impossible. Today, the archival collection of the State Security Service, which includes intelligence files on 68,800 citizens, is open to the public and described in the COURAGE registry.

Unfortunately, practice in the first two decades of Croatia's independence shows that there were severe obstacles in Croatia if one wanted to research the history of the socialist period (1945-1990). This was primarily because the relevant archival materials were not available. These obstacles were a consequence of the serious lack of political will of the most prominent political parties to approach this matter seriously. However, the Munich trial prompted a new political and social development in Croatia. Soon an initiative by a relatively new political party (MOST) emerged in Croatian political life which set in motion amendments to the Archives Act in the direction of their full disclosure. At their initiative in May 2017, the Croatian Parliament enacted the Amendments to the Archives Act. The Amendments formalized the tendency to make the materials produced during the

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 42.

<sup>28</sup> "Vijesti."

communism period accessible whenever possible and put an end to many former restrictions.<sup>29</sup>

The impact of these legislative changes still needs to be seen in research practice. Time will show how important archival accessibility is to deal with the socialist past. It is certainly important as a practical step, but even more as one of the democratic and civilizational principles long advocated by almost all historians in Croatia. How many historians will take advantage of the increased availability of archival materials and how many of them will find documents that will form the basis of some new and different interpretations of a troubled past should be seen in the coming years.

Slovenia had similar problems with “missing materials.” Materials collected by the former State Security Service (in democratic Slovenia transformed and renamed the Slovenian Intelligence and Security Agency - *Slovenska obveščevalno-varnostna agencija* SOVA) were gradually transferred to the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia (ARS) pursuant to a Government Decree. A part of the Archives of the Interior Ministry containing documents from the State Security Service was incorporated in 1992 and 1998, respectively.<sup>30</sup> However, most of the archives of the secret political police were destroyed in the late 1980s and early 1990s (according to some estimates, over 2/3 of the materials were destroyed).<sup>31</sup> The “materials concerning the so-called internal problems, such as protesters, dissidents, and religious communities,” were destroyed in the last phase in 1990.<sup>32</sup> The Historical Archives of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Slovenia was incorporated into the ARS in 1996.<sup>33</sup> As for the situation in Slovenia regarding the use of and access to archives in the first 25 years of its independence, it is far better than in Croatia. Many Croatian historians who could not get certain Party documents in Croatia visited the ARS and found the documents they needed there.<sup>34</sup> Access to archives in Slovenia is regulated by the Archival Institutions Act that was adopted in 2006.<sup>35</sup> Protection of classified information in Slovenia is regulated by the Classified Information Act, adopted in 2001.<sup>36</sup>

### 2.2.2 Institutions

After the fall of communism in Croatia, a specialised institutional body was established whose main goal was to examine the nature of the repression exacted by the communist regime. The Commission on Wartime and Post-war Victims was established on the basis of

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<sup>29</sup> A few months ago the new Archival Materials and Archives Act based on these amendments was adopted. “Zakon o arhivskom gradivu i arhivima.”

<sup>30</sup> Dornik Šubelj, “Opening or Closing the Archives in Slovenia?,” 61-2.

<sup>31</sup> Valič Zver, “Political and Social Confrontation with the Totalitarian Past in Slovenia.”

<sup>32</sup> Dornik Šubelj, “Opening or Closing the Archives in Slovenia?,” 62.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 61.

<sup>34</sup> Marijan, “Koga ugrožava otvaranje komunističkih arhiva?.”

<sup>35</sup> “Zakon o varstvu dokumentarnega in arhivskega gradiva ter arhivih.”

<sup>36</sup> “Zakon o tajnih podatkih.”

the Law on the Determination of World War II and Post-war Victims Act adopted in October 1991.<sup>37</sup> This law defined the relevant issues to ascertain the historical facts about the number of people killed in World War II and its immediate aftermath, and the circumstances in which they died. The Commission's task was to establish the historical facts about the number of wartime and post-war victims in Croatian territory, and in other places if there were casualties caused by the war and post-war operations. The Commission had to determine the circumstances in which these crimes occurred, regardless of the national, racial, religious, ideological, political or any other affiliation of the victims and regardless of who killed them. It had to arrange for suitable marking and the eventual transfer of bodily remains and their burial. The Commission was entitled to demand information and documents relevant to its task from archives, museums, ecclesiastical institutions, political organisations, companies, government bodies and other institutions. On the other side, Croatian citizens were obliged to respond to the Commission's summons and to divulge relevant information. The Republic of Croatia provided funding for the Commission, which consisted of over 60 members (historians, lawyers, physicians and other professionals) appointed by the Croatian Parliament. The Commission began its research in February 1992,<sup>38</sup> but provoked numerous public debates, especially in high politics, because it was registering previously (in Socialist Yugoslavia) unregistered victims, mostly those who had opposed the communist authorities.<sup>39</sup> The Commission submitted its Report to the Croatian Parliament in 1999,<sup>40</sup> but Parliament sent it back for revision due to the objections raised by members of the Croatian Social Liberal Party (*Hrvatska socijalno-liberalna stranka* – HSL).<sup>41</sup> Perhaps this is one of the reasons why it was officially abolished by the left-centre coalition government in June 2002.<sup>42</sup>

A similar parliamentary research commission on post-war mass killings was founded in Slovenia in 1992, led by Jože Pučnik.<sup>43</sup> Due to many obstacles, the Commission has not been able to complete its work in full.<sup>44</sup> Significant work in the field of so-called transitional justice has been done by the Slovenian Government Commission on Resolution of the Question of Concealed Mass Graves (field research, probing, exhumation of victims, in some cases

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<sup>37</sup> "Zakon o utvrđivanju ratnih i poratnih žrtava II. svjetskog rata."

<sup>38</sup> "Poslovnik Komisije za utvrđivanje ratnih i poratnih žrtava."

<sup>39</sup> The Commission used a selective methodology, listing mostly victims who were Croatian by nationality in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, and who were not included in the previous official (Yugoslav state) list of human losses in the Second World War made in 1964. Geiger, "Ljudski gubici Hrvatske u Drugom svjetskom ratu koje su prouzročili 'okupatori i njihovi pomagači,'" 710-11.

<sup>40</sup> *Izvešće o radu Komisije za utvrđivanje ratnih i poratnih žrtava od osnutka (11. veljače 1992.) do rujna 1999. godine.*

<sup>41</sup> "O radu saborske komisije za žrtve rata i poraća."

<sup>42</sup> "Zakon o prestanku važenja zakona o utvrđivanju ratnih i poratnih žrtava II. svjetskog rata."

<sup>43</sup> "Vmesno poročilo o raziskovanju povojnih množičnih pobojev Preiskovalne komisije Državnega zbora Republike Slovenije o raziskovanju povojnih množičnih pobojev, pravno dvomljivih procesov in drugih tovrstnih nepravilnosti."

<sup>44</sup> Jančar and Černič, *Poročilo o pobojih.*

identification and burial) which was led by Jože Dežman.<sup>45</sup> It was more successful and completed a massive amount of fieldwork.<sup>46</sup>

Although the previously mentioned Commission of the Croatian Parliament was the only institutional body formed by the Croatian state to researching any aspect of the socialist past, an important institution was established recently. Thanks to the efforts of a few enthusiasts in Pula to strengthen the research into the socialist era, the Centre for Cultural and Historical Research of Socialism (*Centar za kulturološka i povijesna istraživanja socijalizma* - CKPIS) was established at the Juraj Dobrila University in Pula in 2012. "Its researchers have focused on history, ethnology and anthropology, musicology, literary history and cultural studies."<sup>47</sup> So far, they have accomplished respectable results with their research projects and international cooperation. The Centre published a series of monographs and edited volumes, and organised the biennial conference "Socialism on the Bench" with a hundred participants from all over Europe. We can say that the Centre is an important meeting place for researchers of Yugoslav socialism and related topics.<sup>48</sup>

There are many research institutions in Croatia and Slovenia which deal with the socialist past, but are not exclusively dedicated to that period of history, like the Study Centre for National Reconciliation (*Študijski center za narodno spravo*) and the Institute of Contemporary History (*Inštitut za novejšo zgodovino*) in Ljubljana. Also, there are many universities and institutes with history programs which include the history of state socialism, such as the Croatian Institute of History (*Hrvatski institut za povijest*) in Zagreb.

The support mechanism for the institutions and programs that preserve the cultural heritage in Croatia and Slovenia is mostly limited to the tenders posted by the State. Slovenia allocates more funding for cultural activities than Croatia. In 2015, Slovenia allocated €275.3 million for cultural services (including national and local budgets), or 0.7% of GDP. This places Slovenia in the upper echelons of European countries, which on average set aside 0.4% of GDP for culture. The budget of the Slovenian Ministry of Culture in 2017 was €155,222,162.<sup>49</sup>

In 2016, Croatia allocated 0.26% of GDP for cultural activities.<sup>50</sup> The 2017 budget of the Croatian Ministry of Culture, which is responsible for the preservation of the natural and cultural heritage of Republic of Croatia, was approximately €152 million, which is 0.92 per cent of the Central Budget.<sup>51</sup> From that amount, 10 per cent goes to the activities of

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<sup>45</sup> Dežman, *Tranzicijska pravičnost*.

<sup>46</sup> Jambreč, *Crimes committed by totalitarian regimes*.

<sup>47</sup> Duda, "Nova istraživanja svakodnevice," 591.

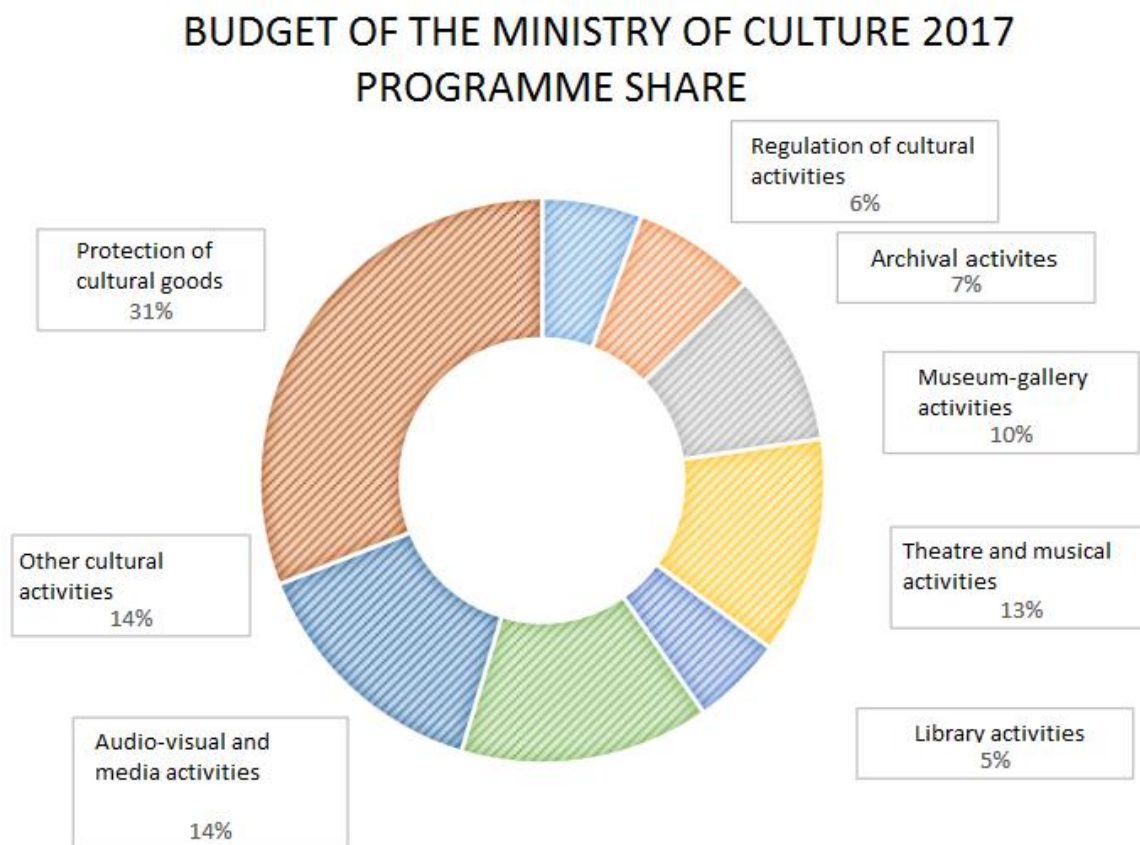
<sup>48</sup> Centre for Cultural and Historical Research of Socialism.

<sup>49</sup> "Analiza financiranja kulture"; "Proračun Ministarstva za kulturo Republike Slovenije 2017."; Total GDP in Slovenia was US\$48.77 billion in 2017. "Slovenia GDP."

<sup>50</sup> "Možda nismo prvi po gospodarskom rastu, ali nam u ovome nema premca u Europi."

<sup>51</sup> The central budget for 2017 was approximately €16.4 billion. Total GDP in Croatia was US\$54.85 billion in 2017. "Croatia GDP."

museums and galleries, 7 per cent to archival activities and 5 per cent to libraries.<sup>52</sup> The annual budget of the Croatian State Archives is €4.5 million.



*Picture 1: Share of cultural activities in the Central Budget of the Republic of Croatia in 2017.*

Most public collections are rarely funded with direct or special funding. Collections that are held in public institutions (archives, museums, libraries) are usually financed by the state (Ministry of Culture) through the financing of these institutions. Very few collections are privately funded. The same applies to the collections described in the COURAGE registry – most of the public collections do not have a separate legal status, which means that they cannot apply for funding at the local, national or European level.

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<sup>52</sup> "Proračun Ministarstva kulture Republike Hrvatske 2017."

## 3. Analysis of the Collections in the COURAGE Registry

### 3.1 Typology

The Croatian COURAGE team tried to cover most of the topics that were defined in the COURAGE project. The goal was to include those collections that will represent the most important oppositional phenomena of the socialist era in Croatia and Slovenia. However, the description of the Croatian and Slovenian collections in the COURAGE registry neither covers all collections of potential relevance nor does it aim at being representative in a statistical sense. It may be noticed that some important collections on cultural opposition cannot be found in the registry. There are many factors that caused this, but the most important is that some of the owners did not want their collections to be included in the COURAGE registry or to participate in the project at all.<sup>53</sup> The Croatian collections prevail in the registry because most of the researchers in the Croatian COURAGE team were experts in Croatia. There are 54 described collections from Croatia, 11 from Slovenia and 6 from abroad (4 from the USA and 2 from Italy).

We can analyse the collections on the basis of several categories and types. If we glance at the ownership category, most of the described collections are held and operated in public institutions (61), and the state is usually their owner. A smaller number (10) is owned privately and mostly created at private initiative. The public collections described in the Registry are mostly the archives of the state institutions and associations. If we look at the type of operating organisations, 32 collections are held in archives, 9 in libraries, 9 in museums or galleries, 8 in academic institutions, and 3 in NGOs.

It was not unusual for collections to move from private to public ownership. This was common with the personal papers of individuals whose heirs (or they themselves) donated their collections to archives. This was the case with many collections after the fall of communism, when many private collectors donated their collections to state archives and other institutions because these institutions have the professional staff, necessary means and usually adequate storage space.

Most collections in Croatia are found in public archives (48.14%), libraries (14.81%) and museums and galleries (12.96%). To a much lesser extent, the operators of collections are NGOs (5.5%) and academic institutions (3.7%). 14.81% of these collections are in private hands. In Slovenia, approximately 45.4% of the collections are operated by archives, 18.18% by libraries, and 9% by museums, 9% by academic institutions, and 18.18% by private owners.

Most of the described collections are held in the capital cities – Zagreb (46 or 64.78%) and Ljubljana (11 or 15.49%). This is due to two factors. First of all Slovenia, and Croatia to an

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<sup>53</sup> Perhaps the best example is Marinko Sudac, who owns the most significant collection on neo-avant-garde art in Central and Eastern Europe. Marinko Sudac Collection.

even larger degree, are highly centralized countries (Zagreb is home to almost a fifth of the country's citizens) so they host most of the national cultural institutions. The second reason is that our COURAGE team is in Zagreb and the collections in Zagreb were more accessible for research. However, 8 collections were included from other parts of Croatia (Pula, Zadar, Rijeka, Solin, Split, Osijek, Vinkovci, Koprivnica). The Croatian COURAGE team described 4 collections that are located in Stanford (California, USA) and 2 in Rome (Italy).

If we look at the geopolitical scope of the collections, the majority has an international character (53.3%). Around 13.3% were created in the diaspora, 6.7% has national and 3.3% has a regional character. The Slovenian collections are equally distributed between international, local and national (33.3% each).

The described collections also differ substantially in size. The size of the collections varies from tiny collections, such as the *No Art Collection* of Vladimir Dodig Trokut's Anti-museum, which numbers only ten items, to collections of more than 100 archival boxes of documents, such as the Rudi Supek Personal Papers in the Croatian State Archives. We can say that most of the collections may be regarded as relatively large.

The COURAGE registry also contains 7 *ad-hoc* collections from Croatia and 1 from Slovenia. These collections do not exist as independent units but as part of more extensive collections which contain various materials. This is the case with the sizeable archival collection of the State Security Service of the Socialist Republic of Croatia at the HDA, which contain four *ad-hoc* collections that are in fact the subdivisions of a single archival unit. The situation is similar in the collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb

Since most of the described collections in Croatia and Slovenia are held in archives and libraries, the most common content types are archival documents and publications. However, many other content types can be found from self-published publications, movies, video and audio materials, physical artefacts, transcripts, photographs, artworks, paintings, graphics, even furniture as in the case of the Zvonimir Kulundžić Collection at the State Archives in Osijek.

The described collections cover all the socialist period of Croatian and Slovenian history from 1945 to 1990. In the Croatian case, a significant number of collections (4) were founded in 1945, when the communists seized power in Yugoslavia. The average date of establishment of the collections in Croatia is 1967.

### *3.2 Themes, Actors, Users*

The collections from Croatia and Slovenia that are described in the COURAGE registry vary in themes, actors and users. The aim of the registry is to present the multifarious forms of cultural opposition, to increase the possibilities for comparisons and to link collections with



research efforts, and to make them more visible to a wider public. The described collections reflect the diversity of collecting practices.

In collections that were created through the work of institutions and organizations, the history of collecting and preserving generally does not involve significant cultural-opposition stories. In most of the cases, the law mandated the acquisition of these collections by the state archives. In Slovenia, the only institution founded by the state and charged with the task of researching themes close to dissent and opposition is the Study Centre for National Reconciliation. Its primary task is not to research cultural opposition and dissent but to examine recent Slovenian history with emphasis on the study of all three totalitarian systems present in the Slovenian territory: fascism, Nazism and communism.<sup>54</sup> In Croatia, we have the Miko Tripalo Centre for Democracy and Law<sup>55</sup> (Centar za demokraciju i pravo Miko Tripalo) which was founded by a group of citizens in 2003 as a civil society association dedicated to the rule of law and promotion of democratic ideas, adhering to the ideals and values for which Miko Tripalo strived even in the socialist era.

However, many collections described in the registry were founded thanks to the efforts of individuals, such as the Bogdan Radica Collection.<sup>56</sup> Radica's daughter Bosiljka and Ivo Banac organized the transfer of the Bogdan Radica Collection from the United States to Zagreb on three occasions (in 1996, 2001, and 2006). Today the collection is preserved, well organised and open to researchers and the broader public. This is not the only such case. Many Croatian collections that were founded in the diaspora were transferred to the homeland after the fall communism (9 collections). Moreover, 5 collection are still abroad, and one collection (Foreign Croatica Collection) was founded in Croatia but its scope is completely oriented toward the diaspora. This tells us that the activities that were opposed to

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<sup>54</sup> They collect and study documents, stories and recollections from witnesses of that time and publish research papers and books, such as Čoh Kladnik and Strajnar, *Represivne metode totalitarnih režimov*. They also organise consultations and discussions on the topic of Slovenian history in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and are involved in educational process. The Centre tries to increase understanding of recent historical events which have marked Slovenian people and highlight not yet explored and often secretive topics. See Study Centre for National reconciliation.

<sup>55</sup> Ante (Miko) Tripalo (Sinj 1926 – Zagreb 1995) was one of the most prominent figures among the Croatian communists in the Croatian Spring. He made efforts to democratise the social and political system of socialist Yugoslavia. Despite being touted as one of the potential successors to Josip Broz Tito, in 1971 Tripalo took a stand at the forefront of the Croatian reform movement and remained consistent in his reformist views and demands for crucial social changes. After the fall of Croatian Spring, he was dismissed from all posts and excluded from public life until the end of the communist era in Croatia. COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Tripalo, Ante (Miko)."

<sup>56</sup> Bogdan Radica (Split 1904 – New York 1993), writer, journalist and historian, was one of the most prominent Croatian émigré after 1945. In 1940, he relocated to Washington, DC and as of 1941 worked in the press bureau of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia in New York. During the Second World War he distanced himself from the Yugoslav Government, which was in exile, and advocated for the Partisan movement. After the end of the war in 1945, he came back to Belgrade where he worked for a time in the Ministry of Information. He was soon disappointed with the new communist authorities in Croatia and Yugoslavia, and decided to settle in the USA. In his writings, he was critical of the communist regime in Yugoslavia, also becoming a defender of the idea of Croatian statehood. He worked as a professor of modern European history from 1950 to 1974 at Fairleigh University in New Jersey. During these years, he wrote a high number of essays and several books, which were banned by the communist regime, as they had criticized the Yugoslav political and social system. COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Radica, Bogdan."

communist rule were not limited to activities in the country, because people who were forced to leave or did not want to live under communist rule continued their struggle against communism from abroad. There are probably some relevant collections in the Slovenian diaspora but they were not found due to the financial and staffing limitations of our COURAGE team.<sup>57</sup>

The variety of the described collections highlights the different arenas where cultural opposition was expressed: from alternative lifestyles, through environmental activism, literature, art and filmmaking, religious activities, to open dissent and opposition. They also show the variety of people and interests involved both in the practice of opposition and its documentation. When we talk about topics that are represented in the Registry, it is difficult to provide firm statistics. Namely, most collections are not limited to one topic, as their materials are related to many of them. That is why no numerical statistics are available here. However, we can say something more on the topics as well.

In the case of collections in Croatia, the topics related to the diaspora, national movements (the Croatian national movement), and state and party control are the most common. Furthermore, the Croatian national movement is represented in most of the émigré collections and in the vast majority of collections on state and party control and censorship. The most representative collections of Croatian émigrés are the Vinko Nikolić<sup>58</sup> Collection at the National and University Library in Zagreb and the Bogdan Radica Collection in the Croatian State Archives (HDA). The national question preoccupied Croatian intellectuals in Croatia who were also the key figures behind the national reform movement (the so-called Croatian Spring). In this movement, the most influential organization was Matica hrvatska, the Croatian cultural institution which was founded in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the archives of which are located in the HDA. In addition to institutions, political dissidents also left a significant mark on the Croatian Spring. That was the case of Miko Tripalo, whose collection is held in the Center for Democracy, which was named after him. Cultural societies that cultivated national culture have also been suspended, as evidenced by the case of the Prosvjeta Serbian Cultural Association (Srpsko kulturno društvo Prosvjeta) and its collection, which is held in the HDA.

The topic of state and party control is well covered in the registry. Such collections are mostly found in state archives, such as the HDA in Zagreb (e.g. the Collection of the

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<sup>57</sup> Janez Arnež, the founder of the Studia Slovenica Archives Research Institute in Ljubljana - the biggest and the most relevant Slovenian émigré collection - declined to co-operate with a project co-ordinated by the Croatian researchers.

<sup>58</sup> Vinko Nikolić (Šibenik 1912 – Šibenik 1997), writer, poet, journalist, and literary critic, was one of the most prominent Croatian émigré intellectuals. During the Second World War he was involved in the public life of the Independent State of Croatia, where he dealt with issues of culture and propaganda for the Ustasha regime. After the downfall of the Independent State of Croatia, he moved abroad and lived in Austria, Argentina, France and Spain. Although he remained anti-communist, during his life as an émigré, Nikolić distanced himself from the Ustasha regime, and became critical of the Ustasha movement. He advocated for historical reconciliation between communists and nationalists and for a democratic Croatian state, free from every ideology and historical burden. He is mostly known as the editor-in-chief of one of the most renowned Croatian émigré journals, *Hrvatska revija* (Croatian Review). COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Nikolić, Vinko."

Commission for Ideological and Political Work of the People's Youth of Croatia) and the Archives of the Republic of Slovenia (the Collection of the Slovenian State Security Service on monitoring Slovenian scientists in the period from 1945 to 1962). Collections of a similar type are held in state archives in other cities (Vinkovci, Sisak, Pula). The collection on the notorious labour camp for political prisoners on Goli Otok documents the repressive character of the system (the collection is held at the Croatian History Museum).

One topic related to state control is censorship. Censorship in film is documented by the holdings in the Collection of Forbidden Films of Nikša Fulgosi, which is held in the archives of the Croatian Radio-Television. The HDA contains the Iljko Karaman Collection of Court Records on Censorship and the Aleksandar Stipčević Personal Papers. Of the works which were censored, the most in both Slovenia and Croatia were books. The press clipping collection of writer Ivan Aralica offers insights into the situation in Croatia, and the Edward Kocbek Collection shows the case of the author who wrote a volume of short stories entitled "Fear and Courage" in 1951, which made him a *persona non grata* in Slovenia.

Several collections concerning the art scene are also described in the registry. In Croatia, the neo-avant-garde visual and conceptual arts had many essential representatives. Works by these artists are found in several collections of the Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb, in the EXAT 51 and New Tendencies Collection at the Tošo Dabac Archive, and in the No Art Collection of the Vladimir Dodig Trout Anti-Museum. The Gordana Vnuk Collection (EUROKAZ) bears witness to neo-avant-garde art in the performing arts.

Intellectual dissent in Yugoslavia is palpable in the phenomenon of neo-Marxist philosophy and sociology, which had a significant legacy in Croatia. The relevant material for this phenomenon in Croatia is found in the Rudi Supek Personal Papers and the Praxis and Korčula Summer School Collection.

The theme of opposition to the regime by religious institutions in the COURAGE registry is primarily related to the Catholic Church in Croatia and Slovenia. In Slovenia, the most important collections are the Antun Vovk Collection and the Alojzije Šustar Collection. In Croatia, there is a rich collection of the Catholic priest and journalist don Živko Kustić and the Smiljana Rendić Collection.

Youth sub-culture and music are represented in the FV 112/15 Group Collection, which testifies to the Slovenian alternative music scene, which was the strongest in Yugoslavia.<sup>59</sup> In Croatia, there is a significant collection of rock and disco culture in Rijeka (Velid Đekić Collection), and the photo archive of Goran Pavelić Pipo offers thrilling insights into youth sub-culture and the new wave music scene of Zagreb. The theme of the student movement is covered in Operation Tuškanac in the Croatian State Security Service Collection in the State Security Service files of the Socialist Republic of Croatia (at HDA).

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<sup>59</sup> It should be emphasized that through research, we also discovered some other important collections containing materials relevant to the counterculture and artistic scene in Slovenia, especially concerning the creative group *Neue Slowenische Kunst*, but the owners of the collections did not want to collaborate with the COURAGE project.

The theme of counter-cultural activities of sexual minorities is covered in the LGBT collection in the Peace Institute – Institute for Contemporary Social and Political Studies in Ljubljana and the Collection of LGBT interviews at the Domino Association (Queer) in Zagreb. The feminist movement is represented in the collection of the Centre for Women's Studies (*Centar za ženske studije*) in Zagreb. There is also the Lydia Sklevicky Collection at the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research (*Institut za etnologiju i folkloristiku*), which contains the personal papers of one of the pioneers of the feminist movement in Yugoslavia.

Human rights movements were strongest in Slovenia, as reflected in the collections. The topic can be explored on the basis of the Alenka Puhar Collection, the Collection of Testimonies at the Study Centre for National Reconciliation Certifications, and the Archives of the Peace Movement in Ljubljana. The Alenka Bizjak Collection testifies to the existence of the environmental movement in Yugoslavia, and the Ivan Supek Collection shows the development of the antinuclear movement and the influence that the Pugwash Conferences on Science and World Affairs had in Yugoslavia.

The fall of communism is the most important event in the history of most of the collections in Croatia and Slovenia. It meant the end of an era after which people were able to begin gathering testimonies about cultural opposition and dissent. Institutions opened their doors to the public, and many individuals handed over various materials and collections to archives, museums, and research institutions. The collapse of Communism was a call for those people who had amassed collections in secret, far from the prying eyes of the communist authorities, to open their collections to the public or donate them to institutions that would make them more accessible.

If we analyse the operators, then the largest is the Croatian State Archives in Zagreb, which administers most of the described collections (19). The Museum of Contemporary Art in Zagreb holds 5 (*ad-hoc*) collections and the National University Library in Zagreb owns 4 collections. In Slovenia, the National and University Library in Ljubljana operates with 2 of the described collections.

All of the described public collections are organised and operated by professional specialists. Volunteers are usually not used for these activities. In Croatia most of the operator's staff are female (64.13%), while in Slovenia it is roughly 50% (49.33%).

Most of the collections described in the Registry, however, are rarely used, even after the fall of communism. The potential of these collections has not been sufficiently exploited academically, and even less so socially. Most of the people who have used the collections are researchers, primarily historians. Although most of the collections are fully or partially available for research, only a few (7 in Croatia) are available online. A good example is the Praxis and Korčula Summer School Collection, which is entirely digitized and available to the public.

In Croatia most (90%) of the described collections have some kind of catalogue. They are mostly (53.30%) printed, but there is also 26.70% of those in digital form. Only 3.3% have

online inventories. In Slovenia, all of the collections have a printed catalogue.<sup>60</sup> Some of the collections only have preliminary file lists, while the collections are not completely described or inventoried. This is the case mostly in larger archives or libraries which have a large inflow of new collections but not enough staff to organise collections faster. That was the case with the *Nova Hrvatska* Journal Collection in the National and University Library in Zagreb, which has still not been classified or inventoried although the collection was donated by Jakša Kušan in 1994.

Another significant problem stressed by the operators is the serious lack of storage capacity. Over 40% of the owners and operators have stated in the interviews that their storage capacity is either insufficient or completely inadequate.

If we look at the data on user/visitors, it is very difficult to say what the average number of visitors per year is, because many of the operators do not keep records of visitors on a specific collection in the institution. However, we can say that these collections are not used very much. Most typical visitors are academics and researchers (76.7% in Croatia, 84% in Slovenia). In Croatia there is also a respectable number users from the general public (13.3%), as well as students (3.3%) and journalists (3.3%). It is hard to say anything more about the age, gender or place of residence of the users because the operating institutions (and owners) do not track this kind of information.

Regarding the impact of the collections we must say that it is very low. The general public is mostly unaware of the mere existence of most of these collections. The larger public institutions, such as archives or libraries which keep these collections, rarely promote or undertake any lobbying efforts for those collections exclusively. In the social sense, only a few collections have attracted substantial media coverage. In Croatia, notable public interest was triggered by the exhibition “A Century of Croatian Periodicals from the Croatian Diaspora from 1900 to 2000” in 2002. In Slovenia, the exhibition “FV: The Alternative Scene of the 1980s,” which was held in 2008, reached out to the public.

One of the reasons why the impact of the described collections is so low is that they are poorly networked. Besides the fact that there are very few donor networks which they can possibly join, we have the problem that most of the collections do not have a separate legal identity because they are only a part of organisations that hold many different collections.

## 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

We can conclude that not enough attention is being accorded to the preservation of the legacy of dissent and cultural opposition in Croatia and Slovenia. Moreover, the theme of dissent and cultural opposition is marginal not only in public but even in academic circles.

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<sup>60</sup> This data should be different when all the listed collections are described.

One of the most significant problems in conducting our project was the related to the COURAGE terminology and concept. Many of the stakeholders were not familiar with the terminology and concepts of cultural opposition and dissent. Some of them even opposed the COURAGE definitions and concepts and did not want to participate in the project (for example, one of the potential stakeholders opposed to our use of the phrase “Croatia in communist times” or “communist Croatia”). The significantly different position of Yugoslavia in the Cold-War era (after 1948) that distinguished the Yugoslav version of socialism from the Soviet sphere is one of the reasons why many people believe that Yugoslavia had a system which can be defined as “socialism with a human face.” That is why some of the potential stakeholders refused to collaborate in the project because they believe that, for example, rock music in Croatia did not have any features that opposed the communist regime. The character of the communist regime in Croatia and Slovenia is still provoking many debates and disputes.

We can say that both Slovenia and particularly Croatia have not dealt sufficiently with their own pasts. The legislative framework in Croatia over its first quarter century placed many obstacles to research into the socialist period. However, changes in the legislative framework in Croatia in the last several years came at the right moment for the COURAGE project, since we could present previously unavailable collections to the public. The Freedom of Information Act (2015), pursuant to which the SOA decided to declassify the materials of the former State Security Service, and the initiative of MOST in 2017 resulted in new Amendments to the Archives Act that have put an end to many former restrictions.

The Croatian COURAGE team attempted to increase public awareness of the valuable historical and cultural heritage which is hidden in these collections. Also, our team secured significant cooperation with some of the key stakeholders. The best cooperation was with the Croatian State Archives (HDA), with whom our team organised the National (Croatian) Exhibition “Archaeology of Resistance” in October 2018. Two archivists from the HDA also participated in the project as researchers describing some of the collections in the HDA’s possession. Moreover, inspired by the COURAGE project, the Croatian State Archives has decided to publish a guide to the Cultural Opposition Collections that are held in the Archives. This can be a model for other archives and institutions that should be encouraged to generate similar cross-collection descriptions which will help to locate relevant materials. Our cooperation with the HDA can also serve as a model of good practice.

The collections described in the COURAGE registry are poorly networked. There are very few donor networks which they can join. Generally, we can say that the most of the operators do consider networking of these collections important, but our impression is that they do not undertake many efforts to improve their networking. The positive example is the Museum of Contemporary Art, which continuously participates in various forms of networking: exhibitions, digitisation, dissemination, projects and education in collaboration with other institutions. Another good example is the ŠKUC-LL's Lesbian Library and Archive which is a part of the IHLIA LGBT Heritage network (formerly known as International Homo/Lesbian Information Center and Archive – IHLIA) which curates the largest LGBT collection in Europe.

However, these examples are more an exception to the generally poor networking of collections in Croatia and Slovenia.

Since most of the collections do not systematically collect information on visitor statistics, it could be useful (and we recommend) to seek and maintain this information in order to focus on attracting less represented social groups (depending on age, gender, occupation, etc.).

The collections described in the COURAGE registry vary in many parameters. Many of them exist because of the creativity of individuals and groups who wanted to document their own (or someone else's) opposition to the communist regime or the ruling cultural policy or worldview. A significant problem in preserving the cultural heritage of dissent in private collections is that most of them do not have any financial support to preserve their collection and to make them more usable. There is also a danger that some of the collections could be destroyed after their owners pass away.

Besides the fact that the public is generally not interested in the topic, the primary cause of the unenviable position of the theme of dissent and cultural opposition is the lack of funding. The institutions that maintain the collections should try to apply at the national or European level. Most of the collection operators regularly apply for tenders and calls from the Ministry of Culture, and other nation-wide tenders, and some of them even at the EU level. However, their applications are largely not related to a specific collection. It would be a significant step forward if a few institutions like the Croatian State Archives, the Centre for Cultural and Historical Research of Socialism and the Peace Institute (Mirovni inštitut) in Ljubljana would jointly attempt to apply for EU funding on a topic pertaining to cultural opposition.

Although the lack of funding is a problem that is very hard to solve, some actions may be taken by the operators and stakeholders of the collections to alleviate the problem somewhat. The severe lack of storage capacity could possibly be solved even without some large sums from the State if the government (especially in Croatia) grants (or leases for a small amount) some of its extensive unused real estate and properties to archives and other institutions.

Collection staff members who work as professors at the university level could do more to reach out to the students at their institutions. This would help increase the number of users in the group of academics who will probably always be the group of users most interested in the topic of cultural opposition.

It would be useful to achieve better cooperation between the local and State Archives and private collectors, in order to ensure that private collections do not vanish after their owner passes away. Perhaps the archives can organise a workshop for the owners of private collections.

## Summary

Unlike many other East European societies, Slovenia and, even more so, Croatia are still struggling to come to terms with the consequences of the legacy of the undemocratic regimes and systems of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In the public sphere, there are different interpretations of the past, which are not always rooted in the scholarly research and discussions. Bearing in mind this context, it is evident that researchers face many difficulties when dealing with the period of socialism in Croatia. The attitude towards communism and the socialist past is contingent upon the political divisions between the political left and right, and therefore scholarly research into the period is often neglected due to a lack of understanding by the creators of politics. This lack of consensus and political will has institutional consequences: there is no separate public institution that studies the socialist past (an institute or museum). Therefore, when discussing the efforts to preserve and study the memory of dissent and opposition, we must consider the consequences of political indifference, such as a general lack of funding. Moreover, the cultural legacy of dissent did not get much public attention. Although some valuable contributions had been made so far, a comprehensive study of dissent as a phenomenon both in Slovenian and in Croatian historiography is still lacking.

Some of the reasons for this unfortunate situation are methodological (theoretical), namely the lack of a proper definition of dissent and a paradigm that would help in researching the phenomenon of dissent and cultural opposition. The other important issue was access to archives, which was not completely open and free. Practice in the first two decades of Croatia's independence shows that there were severe obstacles in Croatia if one wanted to research the history of the socialist period (1945-1990). This was primarily due to the unavailability of the relevant archival material. Since it gained its independence at the beginning of the 1990s, Croatia amended its legal framework regarding access to archival materials several times. However, the latest changes are user-friendly and enable more accessibility to the archives, which was already exercised within the COURAGE project.

There are many research institutions in Croatia and Slovenia which deal with the socialist past, but there are only a few of them which deal with the socialist period exclusively, like the Centre for Cultural and Historical Research of Socialism in Pula, or the Study Centre for National Reconciliation in Ljubljana. None are dedicated to the theme of dissent and cultural opposition.

Most public collections in Slovenia and Croatia are rarely financed with direct or special funding. Collections that are held in public institutions (archives, museums, libraries) are usually financed by the state (Ministry of Culture) through the financing of institutions. Very few collections are privately funded. The same applies to the collections described in COURAGE registry – most of the public collections do not have a separate legal status, which means that they cannot apply for funding on the local, national or European level.



The Croatian COURAGE team attempted to cover most of the topics that were defined in the COURAGE project. The goal was to include those collections that will represent the most critical oppositional phenomena of the socialist era in Croatia and Slovenia. There are 54 described collections from Croatia, 11 from Slovenia and five from abroad. Most of these collections are held and operated in public institutions (60), and the state is usually their owner. A smaller number (10) is owned privately and mostly created at private initiative. The public collections described in the Registry are mostly archival funds of state institutions and associations. If we look at the type of operating organisations, 30 collections are held in archives, 10 in libraries, 9 in museums or galleries, 8 in academic institutions and 3 in NGOs. The described collections differ in size, type of operation, geographic scope, actors, users and in the themes which they cover. In the case of collections in Croatia, the topics related to the diaspora, national movements (the Croatian national movement), and state and party control are the most common. The collections in Slovenia are more diverse, and none of the themes stands out significantly, except perhaps the theme of human rights movements. In the collections that were created through the work of institutions and organisations, the history of collecting and preserving generally does not involve significant cultural-opposition stories, because in most of the cases, the law mandated the acquisition of these collections by the state archives.

The fall of communism is the most crucial event in the history of most of the collections in Croatia and Slovenia. It meant the end of an era after which people were able to begin gathering testimonies about cultural opposition and dissent. Institutions opened their doors to the public, and many individuals handed over various materials and collections to archives, museums, and research institutions. However, most of the collections described in the Registry are rarely used, even after the fall of communism. The potential of these collections has not been sufficiently exploited academically, and even less so socially. The most significant problem is the lack of funding, which is not very easy to solve. However, some actions may be taken by stakeholders that can alleviate the problem somewhat.

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Zubak, Marko. *The Yugoslav Youth Press 1968-1980. Student Movements, Youth Subcultures and Alternative Communist Media*. Zagreb: Srednja Europa 2018.

### **COURAGE Oral History Collection**

COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Radica, Bogdan," by Stipe Kljaić, 2017. Accessed: October 01, 2018.

COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Nikolić, Vinko," by Stipe Kljaić, 2017. Accessed: October 01, 2018.

COURAGE Registry, s.v. "Tripalo, Ante (Miko)," by Albert Bing, 2017. Accessed: October 01, 2018.

## Appendix

### *List of Collections Described*

1. Aleksandar Stipčević Papers on Censorship
2. Alenka Bizjak Environmental Collection
3. Alenka Puhar Collection on Human Rights Movement
4. Ante Ciliga Collection
5. Anton Vovk Collection
6. Archives of the Peace Movement in Ljubljana
7. Augustin Juretić Papers
8. Bishop Alojzij Šuštar Collection
9. Bogdan Radica Collection
10. Casual Passer-by Collection at the Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb
11. Cinematography Commission of the Government of People's Republic of Croatia (1947 – 1951)
12. Classic Gymnasium Collection
13. Collection of Testimonies at the Study Centre for National Reconciliation in Ljubljana
14. Commission for Ideological and Political Work of People's Youth of Croatia (1945-1962)
15. Commission for the Examination of Nationalist Phenomena in the Emigrant Foundation of Croatia (1964-1967)
16. Commission on Religious Matters of the Vinkovci Municipal Assembly (1963-1993)
17. Croatian State Security Service Collection on Religious Communities

18. D-Fund Prohibited Literature (1945-1991)
19. Dinko Tomašić Papers (Hoover Institution)
20. "Đilas Followers" Collection
21. Environmental protests in Omiš in 1979, ad hoc collection
22. Edvard Kocbek Papers
23. EXAT 51 and New Tendencies at the Tošo Dabac Archive
24. Exploitation of the Dead Collection at the Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb
25. Fištrović Collection
26. For the Democratization of Art Collection at the Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb
27. Foreign Croatica Collection
28. Frane Franić Personal Papers
29. Franjo Tuđman Website
30. FV 112/15 Group Collection
31. Goli Otok Collection
32. Goran Pavelić Pipo Photo Archive
33. Gordana Vnuk Personal Collection
34. Grand Jubilee 1976 Collection
35. History of Homosexuality in Croatia Collection
36. Homage to Josip Broz Tito Collection at the Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb
37. Ideological Commission of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Croatia (1956 - 1965)
38. Iljko Karaman Collection of Court Records on Censorship
39. Intelligence Files of the State Security Service for Croatia
40. Istrian Fighter Digital Collection
41. Ivan Aralica Collection of Press Clippings
42. Jakša Kušan Personal Papers
43. Jere Jareb Collection
44. Jozo Kljaković Collection
45. Krunoslav Draganović Collection on World War II and Post-war Victims
46. Lesbian Library and Archive ŠKUC-LL
47. Lydia Sklevicky Feminist Collection



48. Mass Movement in Zadar, ad hoc collection
49. Matica hrvatska Collection
50. Mihajlo Mihajlov Papers (Hoover Institution)
51. Miko Tripalo Personal Papers
52. Milovan Đilas Papers (Hoover Institution)
53. Miroslav Brandt Papers
54. Nikola Čolak Collection
55. Nikša Fulgosi's Collection of Documentary Films
56. No Art Collection
57. Operation Tuškanac in the Croatian State Security Service Collection (1971)
58. Pavao Tijan Papers
59. Praxis and Korčula Summer School Collection
60. Prosvjeta Collection
61. Pugwash Movement Collection
62. Rudi Supek Personal Papers
63. Rusko Matulić Papers (Hoover Institution)
64. Smiljana Rendić Collection
65. Slovenian State Security Administration's Surveillance of Maks Samec
66. Velid Đekić Collection of Rock and Disco Culture in Rijeka
67. Vinko Nikolić Collection
68. Vjesnik Newspaper Documentation
69. Woman and Society Feminist Collection
70. Živko Kustić Personal Papers
71. Zvonimir Kulundžić Collection

## List of Operating Institutions and Owners

Institution/owner	Collection
Alenka Bizjak	Alenka Bizjak Environmental Collection
Alenka Puhar	Alenka Puhar Collection on Human Rights Movement
Archdiocesan Archives in Ljubljana	Anton Vovk Collection
	Bishop Alojzij Šuštar Collection
Archdiocesan Archives in Split	Frane Franić Personal Papers
Archdiocesan Archives in Zagreb	Smiljana Rendić Collection
Croatian Cinematheque	Nikša Fulgosi's Collection of Documentary Films
Archive of the Republic of Slovenia	Slovenian State Security Administration's Surveillance over Maks Samec
Association Domino-Queer Zagreb	History of Homosexuality in Croatia Collection
Centre for Democracy and Law Miko Tripalo	Miko Tripalo Personal Papers
Centre for Women's Studies Zagreb	Woman and Society Feminist Collection
Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts	Pavao Tijan Papers
Croatian History Museum	Goli Otok Collection
Croatian Institute of History	Jere Jareb Collection
Croatian Philosophical Society	Praxis and Korčula Summer School Collection
Croatian State Archives	Bogdan Radica Collection
	Cinematography Commission of the Government of People's Republic of Croatia (1947 – 1951)
	Commission for Ideological and Political Work of People's Youth of Croatia (1945-1962)
	Commission for the Examination of Nationalist Phenomena in the Emigrant Foundation of Croatia (1964-1967)
	Croatian State Security Service Collection on Religious Communities

	Ideological Commission of the Central Committee of the League of Communists of Croatia (1956 - 1965)
	Ijko Karaman Collection of Court Records on Censorship
	Intelligence Files of the State Security Service for Croatia
	Krunoslav Draganović Collection on World War II and Post-war Victims
	Nikola Čolak Collection
	Prosvjeta Collection
	Rudi Supek Personal Papers
	Vjesnik Newspaper Documentation
	Aleksandar Stipčević Papers on Censorship
	Environmental protests in Omiš in 1979, ad hoc collection
	Grand Jubilee 1976 Collection
	Matica hrvatska Collection
	Operation Tuškanac in the Croatian State Security Service Collection (1971)
	“Đilas Followers” Collection
Fran Galović Library and Reading Room Koprivnica	Fištrović Collection
Goran Pavelić Pipo	Goran Pavelić Pipo Photo Archive
Gordana Vnuk	Gordana Vnuk Personal Collection
Group of persons	Franjo Tuđman Website
Hoover Institution Library & Archives	Rusko Matulić Papers (Hoover Institution)
	Dinko Tomašić Papers (Hoover Institution)
	Milovan Đilas Papers (Hoover Institution)
	Mihajlo Mihajlov Papers (Hoover Institution)
Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research	Lydia Sklevicky Feminist Collection
International Centre of Graphic	FV 112/15 Group Collection

Arts	
Ivan Aralica	Ivan Aralica Collection of Press Clippings
Jakša Kušan	Jakša Kušan Personal Papers
Library of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts	Pugwash Movement Collection
Lucija Mihaljević	Živko Kustić Personal Papers
Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb	Casual Passer-by Collection at the Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb
	EXAT 51 and New Tendencies at the Tošo Dabac Archive
	Exploitation of the Dead Collection at the Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb
	For the Democratization of Art Collection at the Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb
	Homage to Josip Broz Tito Collection at the Museum of Contemporary Art Zagreb
National and University Library in Ljubljana	D-Fund Prohibited Literature (1945-1991)
	Edvard Kocbek Papers
National and University Library in Zagreb	Ante Ciliga Collection
	Foreign Croatica Collection
	Miroslav Brandt Papers
	Vinko Nikolić Collection
Pontifical Croatian College of St. Jerome	Augustin Juretić Papers
	Jozo Kljaković Collection
ŠKUC-LL	Lesbian Library and Archive ŠKUC-LL
State Archives in Osijek	Zvonimir Kulundžić Collection
State Archives in Vukovar	Commission on Religious Matters of the Vinkovci Municipal Assembly (1963-1993)
State Archives in Zadar	Mass Movement in Zadar, ad hoc collection
Study Centre for National Reconciliation	Collection of Testimonies at the Study Centre for National Reconciliation in Ljubljana
The Peace Institute in Ljubljana	Archives of the Peace Movement in Ljubljana

The University Library of Pula	Istrian Fighter Digital Collection
Velid Đekić	Velid Đekić Collection of Rock and Disco Culture in Rijeka
Vladimir Dodig Trokut Anti-museum	No Art Collection
Vlatka Horvat	Classic Gymnasium Collection

### *List of People Researched*

- Akrap, Gordan
- Aplenc, Andrej
- Aralica, Ivan
- Aralica, Tomislav
- Babić, Stjepan
- Balta, Ivan
- Banac, Ivo
- Bebić, Toma
- Beljo, Ante
- Benažić, Marina
- Benyovsky, Lucija
- Bešker, Irena Galić
- Biletić, Boris Domagoj
- Bizjak, Alenka
- Bosanac, Gordan
- Bosnar, Marijan
- Brandt, Miroslav
- Budak Kulundžić, Nevenka
- Bukvić, Nenad
- Burić, Mladen
- Ciliga, Ante
- Ciliga, Milan
- Crnković, Zlatko
- Čolak, Nikola
- Ćirilov, Jovan
- Ćorić, Šimun Šito
- Ćosić, Stjepan
- Dabac, Petar

- Dabac, Tošo
- Despot, Blaženka
- Dimitrijević, Braco
- Dobrić, Bruno
- Dobrović, Zvonimir
- Dodig Trokut, Vladimir
- Draganović, Krunoslav
- Dučmelić, Željko Ivan
- Dukić, Josip
- Đekić, Velid
- Đilas, Milovan
- Elez, Petar
- Fabekovac, Mario
- Finka, Božidar
- Fištrović, Olivija
- Franolić, Branko
- Gaj, Boris
- Glavan, Mihael
- Gotovac, Tomislav
- Greif, Tatjana
- Grižinić, Marina
- Gverić, Ante
- Hančić, Damjan
- Hanž, Branko
- Horvat, Vlatka
- Hren, Marko
- Iveković, Rada
- Janežić, Helena
- Jareb, Jere
- Jareb, Mario
- Jenuš, Gregor
- Jurčić, Martina
- Juretić, Augustin
- Juričić, Vedrana
- Jurjevčič, Mirjam
- Kadić, Ante
- Kalapoš, Franjo
- Karaman, Iljko
- Kocbek, Edvard
- Kogovšek Šalamon, Neža
- Korda, Neven
- Korsky, Ivo

- Kosić, Ivan
- Kovačić, Slavko
- Kratina, Radoslav
- Krznar, Tomislav
- Kulundžić, Zvonimir
- Kušan, Jakša
- Kušen, Dražen
- Kusić, Zvonko
- Kusin, Vesna
- Lešaja, Ante
- Lopušina, Marko
- Lorković, Tamara
- Lovrenčić, Željka
- Lučić, Melina
- Luetić-Tijan, Nedjeljka
- Lukas, Filip
- Malevich, Kazimir
- Mandić, Dušan
- Marošević, Toni
- Marotti, Bojan
- Matan, Branko
- Matijević, Mario
- Matvejević, Predrag
- Medak, Tomislav
- Mihajlov, Mihajlo
- Mihajlović Trbovc, Jovana
- Mihaljević, Lucija
- Mihaljević, Nada
- Milovac, Tihomir
- Mirković, Igor
- Mladineo, Vanja
- Modrić, Ljiljana
- Moguš, Milan
- Mokrović, Nikola
- Molnar, Marijan
- Nevistić, Franjo
- Nikolić, Vinko
- Novak, Božidar
- Omerza, Igor
- Omrčanin, Ivo
- Oset, Željko
- Otrin, Blaž

- Papić, Dragan
- Papić, Krsto
- Papić, Žarana
- Pavelić Pipo, Goran
- Pavlovici, Florin Constantin
- Pažin, Drago
- Peić Čaldarović, Dubravka
- Pešut, Jasminka
- Petener-Lorenzin, Marija
- Petričević, Jure
- Petrović, Asja
- Petrović, Gajo
- Pintar, John Ivan
- Piškurić, Jelka
- Podhraški Čižmek, Zrinka
- Popović, Koča
- Prpić, George J.
- Puhar, Alenka
- Radica, Bogdan
- Raditsa, Bosiljka
- Razum, Stjepan
- Rev, Jona Veronika
- Rotblat, Joseph
- Rožanc, Mira
- Rubić, Mislav
- Sabolović-Krajina, Dijana
- Samec, Maks
- Simčić, Zorka
- Sirc, Ljubo
- Sklevicky, Lydia
- Smoljan, Ivo
- Sršan, Stjepan
- Stančić, Nikša
- Starčević Štambuk, Anamarija
- Stepinac, Alojzije
- Stilinović, Mladen
- Stipančević, Mario
- Stipanov, Josip
- Stipčević, Aleksandar
- Stipčević, Anđelka
- Strčić, Petar
- Supek, Ivan



- Supek, Olga
- Supek, Rudi
- Šarić, Tatjana
- Škrjanec, Breda
- Škrobonja, Ante
- Šore, Grgo
- Šore, Stjepan
- Šuštar, Alojzij
- Tijan, Pavao
- Tomić Tripalo, Vinka
- Tripalo, Ante (Miko)
- Tuđman, Franjo
- Turić, Gordana
- Tutavac-Bilić, Pero
- Valent, Milko
- Valentić, Mirko
- Valič Zver, Andreja
- Vasilj, Kvirin
- Velikonja, Nataša
- Vnuk, Gordana
- Vovk, Anton
- Vrbić, Josip
- Vučenović, Dane
- Vukojević, Vice
- Vuković, Ana
- Vuković, Marinko
- Vukušić, Bože
- Zec, Svetozar M.
- Zupanič, Miran

Map: Location of the Croatian and Slovenian COURAGE Collections



## **COURAGE**

Cultural Opposition: Understanding the Cultural Heritage of Dissent in the Former Socialist Countries

### *Country Reports*



# **CZECH REPUBLIC**

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## Table of Content

1. Introduction.....	4
2. Background and framework .....	5
2.1 <i>Legislation and the political articulation of “dealing with the communist past”</i> .....	5
2.2 <i>Researching opposition under state socialism and afterwards</i> .....	7
2.3 <i>Institutions and the legal foundations of the preservation and interpretation of the past</i> .....	11
3. Analysis of the collections in the COURAGE Registry .....	13
3.1 <i>Typology</i> .....	13
3.2 <i>Themes, actors, users</i> .....	15
3.3 <i>Financial background</i> .....	17
4. Conclusion and Recommendations .....	18
5. Appendix.....	21
5.1 <i>Bibliography</i> .....	21
5.2 <i>List of Collections Described</i> .....	23
5.3 <i>List of Persons Researched</i> .....	25
5.4 <i>List of Persons Interviewed</i> .....	29
5.5 <i>List of Operating Institutions and Owners</i> .....	29

## 1. Introduction

The history of Czech and Slovak cultural opposition during the communist period is usually represented abroad through literary works and their authors. Among the most important and frequently translated authors is Václav Havel, the first post-communist president of Czechoslovakia and an important representative of the dissident movement. Like Havel, many dissidents became active in politics after the “Velvet Revolution”, and several of them became particularly influential. At the beginning of the 1990s, many unofficially distributed literary and musical works were published and became an iconic part of the recognized cultural production and anti-communist legacy of the new political order.

It is important to stress, however, that the types, actors and chronology of Czech and Slovak dissident cultures were quite different. Such divergences are also represented in the quality and range of historical scholarship on cultural opposition, dissent, and exile issues for the period 1948–1989 in the two successor states – the Czech and Slovak Republics. In the Czech Republic, topics relating to opposition and dissent enjoyed much more attention than in Slovakia. This information gap is also visible in the processing of opposition collections, a general understanding of the themes, and the public’s demands to deal with these issues. The differences are rooted in the different developments after the Second World War. After 1989 the most influential group was the so-called “sixty-eighters”. The generation affected by the atmosphere of the “Prague Spring” and “occupation” became of key importance. In his book about how the “Velvet Revolution” has been represented, James Krapfl pointed out that ordinary citizens from Czechoslovakia did not want to abolish socialism because of their strong identification with the ideals of reform socialism.<sup>1</sup> In post-communist Slovakia, in addition to the reform-socialist heritage, politics was heavily influenced by the Catholic and populist legacies maintained predominantly by the nationalist section of the Slovak community in exile.

As for the overall discourse concerning “communist rule”, two different periods of the suppression of non-official cultural production are usually identified in relation to Czechoslovak opposition activities and movements in the socialist era.<sup>2</sup> The first one, connected with the years of establishing communist rule in the country after 1948, is usually called the anti-communist resistance. The second period was the so-called Normalization, which followed the socialist attempts at reform in the 1960s and the Prague Spring in 1968. From the 1970s, any clear opposition inside the Communist Party was almost completely absent. On the other hand, civil opposition began to grow in various milieus, ranging from political-oriented intellectual opposition to alternative youth scenes. Such chronologies are, however, only a starting point towards a deeper understanding of the conceptual changes and

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<sup>1</sup> Krapfl, *Revolution with a Human Face*.

<sup>2</sup> Blažek, “Typologie opozice a odporu proti komunistickému režimu,” 10–24; Tůma, “Czechoslovakia,” 29–49; Veber, *Třetí odboj ČSR v letech 1948-1953*.

various individual stories inside the composite groups of cultural opposition. Despite the decisive efforts of the state and party representatives towards cultural homogenization, not even the official culture represented a static, unified system. The boundaries between official culture and that which was forbidden or tolerated were flexible and sometimes not very easy to grasp.<sup>3</sup>

## 2. Background and framework

### 2.1 Legislation and the political articulation of “dealing with the communist past”

Apart from the rehabilitations and restitutions that were supposed to remedy past injustices, lustration became a major issue in the new politics of history in 1990. Czechoslovakia was the first post-communist country to introduce lustration legislation. An act which was ratified by the Federal Assembly in October 1991 banned the following groups from higher administration offices and public functions: former dignitaries of the Communist Party, members of the *Lidové milice* (People's Militia) and the *Státní bezpečnost* (State Security; StB), their secret collaborators, the alumni of certain Soviet universities, and other representatives of the former regime.<sup>4</sup>

Since 1993, Czechoslovakia has been divided into separate Czech and Slovak republics. The different development in the Czech and Slovak parts of the country was also visible in terms of their de-communization practices. The Czech Republic is generally considered as an example of the active de-communization process. In the Czech Republic these topics enjoyed much more attention, which is visible on an institutional level, in historiography, but also in public life. Divergences are also visible in the quality and range of historical scholarship on cultural opposition, dissent, and exile issues for the period 1948–1989. The "Act on the Unlawfulness of the Communist Regime and the Resistance against it (Nr. 198/1993 Coll.)", ratified by the Czech Parliament in July 1993, declared the former regime as illegitimate and worthy of condemnation, as opposed to the resistance against it – all forms of which were to be regarded as legitimate, morally warranted and respectable.<sup>5</sup> According to this theory, the period of Czechoslovak communist rule from February 1948 to November 1989 was one of continuous totalitarian rule, an aberration from the “democratic traditions” set out in the interwar period and restored after 1989.<sup>6</sup> As a result of this trend, in January 1995 the Úřad dokumentace a vyšetřování zločinů komunismu (Office for the Documentation and Prosecution of Communist Crimes; ÚDV) came into existence under the auspices of the

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<sup>3</sup> Alan, “Alternativní kultura jako sociologické téma,” 13.

<sup>4</sup> Kopeček, “Czech Republic.”

<sup>5</sup> Act on the Unlawfulness of the Communist Regime and the Resistance against it (Nr. 198/1993 Coll.) URL: <http://www.ustrcr.cz/data/pdf/normy/sb198-1993.pdf>.

<sup>6</sup> Kopeček, “Czech Republic.”

Ministry of the Interior. This institution is still in existence and its objective is to “detect and prosecute crimes” committed in the above-mentioned period of 1948–1989.<sup>7</sup> The office has documented hundreds of cases of crimes committed by the communist state administrative and political apparatus against its own citizens and describes the mechanisms of state terror and repression.

From the beginning of the 2000s, a new wave of politicizing the “communist past” began with an emphasis on the fact that de-communization had not yet finished in light of the success of the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia in elections, and that a new politics of memory that strove to re-educate the nation about the “totalitarian past” was needed.<sup>8</sup> In 2001 the government rejected the Senate amendment to the Act on the Declassification of State Security Files with a reference to inconsistencies with the Charter of Fundamental Rights and Freedoms, the Personal Data Protection Act and the Lustration Act. In 2002, the law no. 149/1996 Coll. was amended by the relatively broad act 107/2002, which allowed the study of those materials to people over the age of 18.<sup>9</sup>

A very important institution, based on political will, was established by parliament in 2007 by its “own law” – no. 181/2007 Coll. concerning the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes and the Security Services Archive, to examine the era of communism and the Nazi occupation. Inspiration from similar “institutes of national memory”, especially in the Slovak Republic and Poland, can also be seen in its multi-task mission of science, education and popularization.<sup>10</sup> Another result of the effective collaboration between the founders of the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes and right-wing politicians was the law no. 262/2011 Coll. concerning resistance fighters and resistance against communism, which was ratified and came into effect on the symbolic date of 17 November 2011, the anniversary of the “Velvet Revolution” in 1989. The aim of the law is defined as: “to express respect and gratitude to the women and men who actively defended the values of freedom and democracy during the communist totalitarian power with the deployment of their own lives, personal freedoms and property”.<sup>11</sup> People who had been engaged in the resistance were entitled to the status of war veterans and the social advantages and financial aid which went with that status. The legislative motion caused heated debate within the Czech Parliament. The implementation of the law and its practical consequences came with a significant increase in the administrative agenda – the result of which a special department was established in the Security Services Archives (Department of the Act no. 262/2011 Coll. concerning resistance

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.policie.cz/clanek/urad-dokumentace-a-vysetrovani-zlocinu-komunismu-679905.aspx>

<sup>8</sup> Kopeček, “Czech Republic.”

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/2002-107>

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.ustrcr.cz/en/about-us/>; Kovanic, “Institutes of Memory in Slovakia and the Czech Republic – What Kind of Memory?,” 81–104; Sniegon, “Implementing Post-Communist National Memory in the Czech Republic and Slovakia,” 97–124.

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.zakonyprolidi.cz/cs/2011-262>



and resistance to communism). According to information from the website of the Ministry of Defence from 30 July 2018, more than 1,600 people have been recognized for their activities.<sup>12</sup> The above-mentioned legislative measures were strongly linked to the political atmosphere within Czech political culture. The politicization was visible in various forms of mobilizing the media, usually framed by the strong anti-communist attitudes.<sup>13</sup> From the point of view of collecting and archival practices and research, these legal measures resulted in some changes and the significant support in establishing one influential institution which specializes on the topics of state oppression and opposition practices – the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes. On the other hand, these acts did not have a significant impact on the activities of many other important and very productive players dealing with the issue of cultural opposition.

## *2.2 Researching opposition under state socialism and afterwards*

The origins of historical research into opposition in socialist Czechoslovakia dates back to the end of the 1960s and stemmed from the military invasion of the Warsaw Pact troops in Czechoslovakia in 1968, which was followed by mass expulsions from the Communist Party in 1969-1970, when more than half-a-million members did not have their party membership renewed. Many reformist intellectuals and artists lost their jobs and the opportunity to engage with the public. Some of them were even forced to leave the country.

Many historians had publicly come out in favour of the reform called the “Prague Spring” in 1968 and, therefore, after the occupation of Czechoslovakia by the Warsaw Pact troops, were surplus to the new regime’s requirements. Shortly after the occupation, Milan Otáhal and Vilém Prečan, historians from the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, collected key documents about the first seven days of the occupation of Czechoslovakia and published them as study material for internal use in the documentary publication *Seven Prague Days 21-27 August 1968*, the so-called “Black Book”. The authors of this book encountered many problems and Vilém Prečan, like many others, later went into exile. Czech and Slovak historians emigrating after 1968 thus joined their colleagues who had already left Czechoslovakia after the Communist takeover in February 1948. This was not a negligible group, as 106 Czechoslovak historians emigrated after February 1948 and later created the basis for Czechoslovak exile historiography. The violent suppression of the Prague Spring in 1968 then forced another 56 historians to emigrate. Monika Mandelíčková calculated that 35 historians and archaeologists employed by the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences went into exile during the 1970s and 1980s. In addition, the number of Czechoslovak emigres from the field of technical and natural sciences was much higher, amounting to hundreds of scientists.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> <http://www.veterani.army.cz/vydana-osvedceni>

<sup>13</sup> See for example: Mayer, *Češi a jejich komunismus*; Gjuričová et al., *Rozdělení minulostí*; Hrubeš and Návrátil, “Constructing a Political Enemy,” 41–62.

<sup>14</sup> Mandelíčková, *Historie v exilu*, 52–53.

By the early 1970s, the vibrant civil society in Czechoslovakia had been heavily subdued. The period of Normalization, i.e. the attempt to reverse the political reform process initiated during the Prague Spring of 1968, was also followed by different forms of control and repression, limitations to the freedom of movement, the restoration of censorship, bans on publications, blacklisting, etc. In the everyday life of Czechoslovak society this led to the strict differentiation between private and public positions.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, many historians who had been dismissed from their jobs, as well as other scientists and writers, published their works in samizdat form (see for example the samizdat journal *Historical Studies*).<sup>16</sup>

These ostracized historians then became influential in Czech and Slovak academic developments and also public debates about contemporary history and the recent past after 1989. The position of historians during the transformation era in Czechoslovakia was also symbolically underpinned by the establishment of the Historical Commission of the Coordination Centre Civic Forum in 1989, which was run by dissident and exile historians, for example, Jan Křen and Milan Otáhal. Many of them obtained leading positions after the development of new academic institutions.

Immediately after the fall of the Iron Curtain, topics which had been taboo began to open up in Czechoslovakia, with discussions about various practices of oppression in the 1950s and the liberalization of the late 1960s. The 'sixty-eighters' and dissidents became widely recognized and very active in the process of building a new post-socialist society. Just after the fall of the communist regime, new and very influential institutions were established with the aim of examining the history and memory of dissent and cultural opposition.<sup>17</sup>

The Institute of Contemporary History, as a part of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences, was established in early 1990 and headed by Vilém Prečan in a type of personal union with the Czechoslovak Documentation Centre in Scheinfeld. The institute was established with the aim of documenting and analysing contemporary Czech history and became very influential in forming the academic discourse surrounding the "communist era". From the outset, the institute, which dealt with Czech history from the Munich Agreement in 1938 to the 1990s, made a great effort to expand its own archive and library. Over a relatively short period the institute acquired many interesting archive collections. Another very important step was the opening of the Libri Prohibiti library in 1990. The library was headed by Jiří Gruntorád and became a leading library and archive, administering different kinds of valuable sources connected to the various opposition activities in Czechoslovakia and abroad. Academic institutions and archives such as the Museum of Czech Literature and the Czech National Archive, which had been established prior to 1989, played an important role in collecting, processing and discussing the activities and heritage of dissent and exile at that time.

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<sup>15</sup> See e.g. Simecka, *The restoration of order*.

<sup>16</sup> *Minulost a dějiny v českém a slovenském samizdatu 1970-1989*.

<sup>17</sup> Kolář, Pavel - Kopeček, Michal. "A Difficult Quest for New Paradigms," 217–226.

The official recognition of various representatives of the cultural opposition also came through official (commercial) publications or exhibitions of their works. In 1992 an exhibition of exile and samizdat publications was organised by the Museum of Czech Literature in cooperation with the Institute of Contemporary History, with an extensive accompanying programme. The provision of information on various activities of the cultural opposition in Czechoslovakia and later in the Czech Republic continues more or less interrupted to this day. An important role here is played by many well-established academic and memory institutions, and also very active individuals who were in some way personally involved in the anti-communist counter-cultural activities (for example, members of the alternative or underground movement).

During the 1990s, research connected to opposition practices was focused mainly on the period which followed the Second World War and the 1950s, and geographically rooted within the Czechoslovak state. More precisely, most of the works focused on the political issues of the communist seizure of political power and the methods they used to govern. However, there were also publications dealing with the historical background to the Prague Spring in 1968 and the history of the origins of Charter 77.<sup>18</sup> From the mid-1990s, researchers began to focus on various civil and youth initiatives and movements during Normalization. Also some controversies concerning the interpretation of the role of the dissidents emerged.

The turn of the millennium, which was also marked in Czech historiography by a generational conflict publicly expressed at the Congress of Czech historians in Hradec Králové in 1999,<sup>19</sup> brought a thematic and methodological extension to historiographical publications, accompanied by conceptual and methodological discussions. A new discipline – oral history – was also established in the Czech Republic by Miroslav Vaněk, the current director of the Institute of Contemporary History, which augmented the traditional historical heuristic with the voices of the “ordinary people”, such as rock fans and musicians and environmental activists. Vaněk came up with the concept of small “islands of liberty” in the normalizing society, which were supposed to be spaces in which the actors managed to escape the closed society to create free space for free behaviour. This concept became influential in the interpretation of Czechoslovak cultural opposition before 1989.<sup>20</sup> In the new century, researchers from the Institute of Contemporary History have published many articles and books related to dissent and various forms of opposition. This was not just about expanding our knowledge of significant events and groups in a traditional way, but it also saw the

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<sup>18</sup> About the discussion on Czech contemporary history publications see: Schulze Wessel et al., *České soudobé dějiny v diskusi*.

<sup>19</sup> Svátek, “*Pokus o bilanci*,” 78–94.

<sup>20</sup> Vaněk et al., *Ostrůvky svobody*; Blažek, Laube and Pospíšil, *Lennonova zeď v Praze*.

introduction of some comparative and methodologically innovative works.<sup>21</sup> Almost 30 years after establishing the institute, these topics remain key for its researchers.<sup>22</sup>

Another important publication came out one year before Vaněk's collective work. Former sociologist Josef Alan built up a team of insiders and produced a dense and very informative book called *Alternative Culture: The Story of Czech Society 1945 – 1989*. It was the first comprehensive attempt to summarize the various independent cultural streams in Czechoslovakia before 1989. Alan delineated the traditional view of culture (as official and unofficial), and highlighted the ambivalence of the social contexts and the normalization regime.

One strong influential factor behind the research into dissent, communist repression and the different kind of opposition attitudes was the establishment of the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes, which has published various books about the history of the Czech underground movement and hippies.<sup>23</sup> The efforts of the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes to raise awareness about the so-called "third resistance" among the population have been supported by its political patrons from right-wing political parties. However, one former employee of the institute, historian Vítězslav Sommer, argued that the "third resistance" is a highly controversial, nationalist and ahistorical concept which uses sharp dichotomies and a vulgarized theory of totalitarianism to portray Czechoslovak historical reality.<sup>24</sup>

From a conceptual point of view, in comparison with the 1990s when the regime and society were often depicted as two separate spheres, there is an interpretive shift emphasizing the importance of social consensus and negotiation routines. Within the context of analysing alternative culture, this shift is visible in the monograph by Přemysl Houda about the folk festival in Lipnice.<sup>25</sup> But the most extensive discussion, both on an academic and popular level, about the character of the communist dictatorship and the possibilities of escaping it, is connected with the work of historian Michal Pullmann, who criticized the so-called totalitarian approach. In his book "The End of the Experiment", Pullmann distanced himself from those approaches and highlighted the consensual dimension of Normalization. After publishing the book he was attacked by the mass media as a revisionist.<sup>26</sup> The division of the community of historians on this issue is still apparent today.

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<sup>21</sup> Blažek, Laube and Pospíšil, *Lennonova zed' v Praze*; Vaněk, *Byl to jenom rock'n'roll?*; Vilímek, *Solidarita napříč hranicemi*; Otáhal, *Opoziční proudy v české společnosti 1969–1989* and many others.

<sup>22</sup> Plato et al., *Opposition als Lebensform*; Suk and Andělová, *Jednoho dne se v našem zelináři cosi vzbouří*; Pažout, *Trestněprávní perzekuce odpůrců režimu v Československu*; Suk et al., *Šest kapitol o disentu*; *Antologie textů z disentu a exilu (1969–1989)*, online: <http://www.disent.usd.cas.cz/>.

<sup>23</sup> Among others see: Stárek Čuňas and Kostůr, *Baráky*; Machovec, „Hnědá kniha“ o procesech s českým undergroundem; Machovec, *Pohledy zevnitř*; Pospíšil and Blažek, „Vratte nám vlasy!“.

<sup>24</sup> Sommer, „Cesta ze slepé uličky "třetího odboje",“ 9–36.

<sup>25</sup> Houda, *Intelektuální protest, nebo masová zábava?*, 206–207. See also Vaněk, *Nedalo se tady dýchat*.

<sup>26</sup> Vrba, „The Debate about Michal Pullmann's Book.“

Very recently the Institute of Czech Literature of the Czech Academy of Sciences published an important book entitled *The Czech Literary Samizdat 1969-1989*. Recent research into the Czech samizdat phenomenon shows that despite the long-term interest and systematic work of many kind of agents, cultural opposition as a research topic still has great research potential.<sup>27</sup>

### *2.3 Institutions and the legal foundations of the preservation and interpretation of the past*

Material connected to the history of cultural opposition in Czechoslovakia can be found in collections owned by state-owned or state-supported institutions, independent foundations, or are part of private collections. Most of these institutions do not specialize in opposition activities, but by the archival law have to collect historical artefacts and documents. The Czech state also supports institutions through a grant system. There are also internationally recognized specialized foundations which continue to energetically collect and distribute information about dissent and exile before 1989.

However, these collections would not exist today without personal courage, and the ingenuity of the actual members of dissident and non-conformist circles. These collectors ranged from state institutions to individuals who were often dissidents. As an example of the good practice of official institutions, we might mention the Museum of Czech Literature, where materials produced by banned authors were purchased before 1989 as well as after the fall of the communist dictatorship.<sup>28</sup> The significant role of this institution in preserving the heritage of pre-1989 cultural opposition is illustrated by the fact that artists, in particular writers, offered their own documents to this museum. Before 1989, these purchases were officially carried out through antiquarian bookshops. Therefore, the employees of these bookshops participated in the collections as well. The purchases were a means of support for the banned artists and writers, and were carried out thanks to the employees of these state institutions (the best known is Marie Krulichová from the acquisition department of the Literary Archive of the Museum of Czech Literature). Similar purchases were also made by the National Museum. In addition to the financial support for opposition artists, these activities also led to the preservation of valuable historical sources for future generations.

The Czechoslovak liberalization period of the 1960s witnessed a significant development in art collections, including works by non-conformist artists, including photographs, manuscripts, illustrations, paintings, and graphic art. For example, the Benedikt Rejt Galery was founded at that time with the aim of reflecting contemporary trends in the visual arts. The head of the gallery, Jan Sekera, was known for supporting the purchase of works by unofficial artists. Another notable art collector was Jiří Hůla, who established the Fine Art Archive in 1980s.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Pribáň et al. *Český literární samizdat: 1949–1989*.

<sup>28</sup> <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n2077>

<sup>29</sup> <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n4043>

This collection is now stored in the popular and frequently visited DOX gallery in Prague. Important collections of art were also purchased in exile. In 1968, Jan and Meda Mládek bought a substantial collection from an exhibition of Czechoslovak art organised in Washington, and began to establish their own collection of unofficial Czechoslovak and East European art. After 1989, Meda Mládková moved back to her homeland and her collection became the basis for the Kampa Museum, now a very popular and important institution.<sup>30</sup> Nowadays, pre-1989 works by unofficial artists can be found in private galleries and museums, but also in public (regional) galleries all over the Czech Republic. Some art collections are stored in academic institutions. This is the case with the video-archive of the Academic Research Centre of the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague, which also includes many pre-1989 non-conformist works.<sup>31</sup>

The variety of today's collections would not have been possible without the courage of several dissidents who risked their own freedom. The persecution of samizdat producers and distributors was mostly based on accusations of "anti-state," "anti-government," "anti-socialist," or "anti-Communist" attitudes. This was the case of Jiří Gruntorád, a publisher and collector of samizdat literature and signatory of Charter 77, who was imprisoned twice as a result of his samizdat activities. His pre-1989 samizdat collection has been significantly expanded since the fall of the communist regime in Czechoslovakia and now constitutes only a fraction of the current samizdat and exile collections of the Libri Prohibiti library founded by Gruntorád in 1990.<sup>32</sup>

Libri Prohibiti was established as a foundation which aimed to collect exile and samizdat literature in one place and make this accessible to the public in order to spread a "message about the past" and show how the communist regime in Czechoslovakia operated. Jiří Gruntorád was convinced that such a library should be private and independent. Libri Prohibiti's collection of samizdat periodicals was listed by UNESCO in the Memory of the World Register. Alongside Jiří Gruntorád, another iconic collector was Jaromír Šavřda, a Czech writer, dissident and signatory of Charter 77, who was also imprisoned for many years for distributing samizdat literature in the 1970s and 1980s.<sup>33</sup>

The role of Czechoslovak exiles was very important for spreading information about the suppression of human rights in Czechoslovakia, as well as for preserving alternative cultural material. For example, we might mention the activities of the Czechoslovak Society of Art and Sciences based in the United States with several branches around the world, or exiled politicians such as Jiří Pelikán and Pavel Tigrid. A very special institution in this sense, the Czechoslovak Documentation Centre for Independent Literature, was founded in 1986 in the Federal Republic of Germany by prominent individuals in exile. The centre combines the

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<sup>30</sup> <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n2875>

<sup>31</sup> <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n1393>

<sup>32</sup> <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n4518>

<sup>33</sup> <http://cultural-opposition.eu/courage/display/n24744>.

functions of a literary archive and specialized library with research, study, information and publishing facilities. Original samizdat texts and periodicals were copied there and regularly distributed to large western libraries. The centre also smuggled books, magazines, documents and technical equipment for producing samizdat literature back to Czechoslovakia. The collections of this centre are now stored in the Archives of the National Museum.<sup>34</sup> Several foreign institutions played important roles in preserving Czechoslovak (or East European) collections. These were mainly academic institutions or libraries, for example, the Research Centre for East European Studies in Bremen, the Library of Congress, the British Library, the Royal Library of Belgium, the University of Nebraska – Lincoln,<sup>35</sup> and the Hoover Institution at Stanford University.<sup>36</sup>

### 3. Analysis of the collections in the COURAGE Registry

#### 3.1 Typology

Today, literary materials probably make up the most numerous type of collections documenting unofficial Czechoslovak cultural activities before 1989. For example, in the Literary Archive of the Museum of Czech Literature, dozens of collections of banned, unofficial or non-conformist writers, poets and journalists can be found.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, it is characteristic for the Czech Republic that a large number of (not only literary) collections are stored in large state or public institutions (the Museum of Czech Literature, the National Archives, the National Museum, the Security Services Archive). As the majority of these are situated in Prague, this system can be defined as being quite centralized. For example, experts from the National Archives have collected a large number of private and institutional papers from members and organizations of the dissident and exile communities.<sup>38</sup> Useful materials concerning cultural opposition can also be viewed in institutional collections such as the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Czechoslovakia, now stored in the National Archives – e.g. documents from the political bureau or secretariat meetings, or materials from the ideological commission of the Communist Party. The security services also produced and collected a large amount of data which became part of much public controversy after the establishment of the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes in 2007. Although there are no specific collections in the Security Services Archives dealing primarily with cultural opposition, many materials connected to this topic can be found in various collections, e.g. in

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<sup>34</sup> <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n37719>

<sup>35</sup> Especially the Charter 77 Collection.

<sup>36</sup> For example, Private collections of the Czech poet Karel Šiktanc, the journalists Stanislav Budín and Ferdinand Peroutka, the historians Vilém Prečan and Karel Kaplan, the writer Josef Škvorecký and many others.

<sup>37</sup> For example, Private collections of Ivan Blatný, Ferdinand Peroutka, Dominik Tatarka, Jan Zahradníček, Ludvík Vaculík, Václav Černý, Jiří Kolář, Ladislav Mňačko, Jan Lopatka, and many others. Apart from private collections, the video and audio library of the Literary Archive of the Museum of Czech Literature is also an important source of materials documenting Czechoslovak cultural opposition before 1989.

<sup>38</sup> For example, Private collections of the Czechoslovak dissidents Petr Uhl and Milan Hübl or the materials of Jazz Section.

the documents of State Security Units or in operative files (mainly materials related to people under surveillance). The Central Press Supervision Authority Collection, which documents the control of the press and newly issued publications in Czechoslovakia from 1953 to 1968, is an example of a more specialised collection.<sup>39</sup>

This does not mean, however, that private or smaller institutions, or institutions outside Prague are not important in preserving pre-1989 cultural heritage in the Czech Republic. As mentioned above, private institutions such as the Libri Prohibiti library and the Kampa Museum are crucial to the process of storing, preserving, and disseminating the heritage of Czechoslovak cultural opposition. As many Czechoslovak dissidents were writers whose books had been banned in Czechoslovakia in the 1970s and 1980s, cultural opposition is usually seen from a dissident-literary perspective. This perspective is embodied in a very dynamic private institution – the Václav Havel Library. The library was established by Václav Havel’s wife Dagmar Havlová, with the involvement of sociologist Miloslav Petrušek and the politician Karel Schwarzenberg. The library is gradually gathering, digitizing and making accessible written materials, photographs, audio recordings, and other materials linked to Václav Havel, and is very active in popularizing Havel’s legacy and organizing public discussions about opposition movements. Important personal collections dealing with cultural opposition are also to be found in the Moravian Museum and the Moravian Provincial Archive in Brno, as well as in the Brno and Ostrava City Archives.

Lastly, we cannot omit the role of academic and research institutions. Several Czech universities, for example the Archive of the Charles University in Prague<sup>40</sup> and the Archive of Masaryk University in Brno,<sup>41</sup> also preserve materials dealing with cultural opposition, mainly from the students’ point of view. The Jan Patočka Archive, focusing on the famous Czech philosopher’s legacy, is run by Charles University and the Czech Academy of Sciences within the Centre for Theoretical Study. One unique oral-history collection, partly related to cultural opposition, is administrated by the Oral History Centre of the Institute of Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences. Czechoslovak exile activities can be studied in specialized institutions such as the Centre for Czechoslovak Exile Studies, part of Palacký University in Olomouc,<sup>42</sup> or the private Museum of Czech and Slovak Exile of the 20th Century in Brno.

However, during Normalization, underground music also gradually became a visible symbol of cultural opposition in Czechoslovakia. Although it is naturally easier to preserve written material than unofficial music, some collections dealing with alternative music can be found:

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<sup>39</sup> <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n168343>

<sup>40</sup> For example, Private collection of Czech philosopher and dissident Ladislav Hejdlánek or Student movement collection.

<sup>41</sup> For example, Personal collection of Czech historian and dissident Jaroslav Mezník.

<sup>42</sup> For example, Radio Free Europe Collection, The Council of Free Czechoslovakia Collection, Exile periodicals and publications Collection.



for example, in the audio-visual section of the Libri Prohibiti library<sup>43</sup>, in the Literary Archive of the Museum of Czech Literature, in the National Archives, and in the Popmuseum, a private institution which specializes in the history of pop and rock music.<sup>44</sup>

Recently a new trend has been emerging in the use of the internet for disseminating collections. In the first instance, some institutions focus on digitizing their collections – for example, the private Václav Havel Library, the public Security Services Archive and the website Scriptum.cz.<sup>45</sup> In the second instance, some institutions create databases, registries or online catalogues, usually intended for both the general public and professionals. These online activities thus help to popularize collections and pre-1989 cultural heritage. These databases deal mostly with art collections (Artlist.cz, Artarchiv.cz).<sup>46</sup> In addition, several oral-history collections are currently online, such as the collection of the above-mentioned Oral History Centre of the Institute of Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences,<sup>47</sup> or the online collection of interviews – Memory of Nations – of the non-profit organization Post Bellum.<sup>48</sup> Apart from institutions, individuals also use the internet as a platform for presenting cultural opposition materials, such as František Stárek Čuñas, a former dissident, journalist, and politician, whose website Cunas.cz contains many unique digitized materials.<sup>49</sup>

### *3.2 Themes, actors, users*

Democratic opposition, samizdat and tamizdat, emigration and exile, the human rights movement, literature and literary criticism, underground culture – these topics are frequently featured and described as such in the registry of Czech collections dealing with the history of cultural opposition in Czechoslovakia.<sup>50</sup> The most common type of material in the collections are manuscripts (manuscripts make up more than 50% of the collections) – this stems from the fact that the majority of the collections are stored in “traditional” archival institutions. More than 10% of the collections predominantly consist of art works (especially “art collections”, for example, the Art Collection of the Museum of Czech Literature and the Jan and Meda Mládek Collection). It is important to note that many Czech regional galleries also usually contain some works by pre-1989 unofficial artists, to a greater or lesser degree. Music recordings also make up a similar share in the collections (e.g. Popmuseum, the audio-visual section of Libri Prohibiti etc.). Publications dominate in the collections of Libri Prohibiti. Only small part of the collections are available online.

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<sup>43</sup> <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n932>.

<sup>44</sup> <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n27337>.

<sup>45</sup> <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n41370>.

<sup>46</sup> <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n13849>.

<sup>47</sup> <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n105041>.

<sup>48</sup> <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n15530>.

<sup>49</sup> <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n1857>.

<sup>50</sup> The registry contains at least 78 descriptions of Czech collections; it is however only a fragment of the total number of collections dealing with this topic which are stored in the Czech Republic.

The majority of the collections are situated in Prague, though many of them are also stored in Brno, with one in Ostrava and three in other smaller cities. For the website collections, the location is irrelevant. This high centralization is due to the fact that the large national institutions situated in Prague (e.g. the Museum of Czech Literature, the National Museum, the National Archive of the Czech Republic, etc.) have been successful in collecting materials concerning cultural opposition. About one quarter of the collections are private (the Libri Prohibiti library's collection is particularly extensive). A huge number of collections related to Czechoslovakia and exile activities are located abroad.

All of these institutions, both private and public, promote their collections using various means: they organize exhibitions, conferences, public presentations, seminars; they often participate in media events and look for ways to attract potential visitors.

For the majority of the collections, the most typical visitors are researchers and university students (usually collecting materials for their master's or PhD thesis, mostly students of history, literary criticism, or others related disciplines). The exceptions are art collections (visitors are usually the general public or tourists) or specialized collections. For example, the Centre for Queer Memory is usually visited by the LGBT community and senior citizens.

It is important to note that collections dealing with the history of cultural opposition in Czechoslovakia are very numerous and the majority are personal collections. This means that the legacy or materials collected by one person often form one collection. Let us take the example of the Literary Archive of the Museum of Czech Literature. The registry describes 12 collections from this archive and 10 of them are personal collections. However, about 60 collections dealing with cultural opposition are stored in the Literary Archive of the Museum of Czech Literature (the majority of them are again personal collections). The situation is similar for the private Libri Prohibiti. In the registry we can find 9 collections which are operated (and owned) by this institution. Nevertheless, the Libri Prohibiti library contains far more collections, including many private collections which are even not mentioned on their website.

It is important to mention that the structure of institutions and collections are very different. For example, the above-mentioned Libri Prohibiti is described more as containing several collections. On the other hand, the Václav Havel Library, which is no less important in terms of its material, forms one large collection according to the structure of the institution. Moreover, institutions operating personal collections usually have a larger number of collections than institutions operating thematic collections. For example, the Popmuseum, a "one-collection institution" (according to the registry), collects material about popular music. The Popmuseum contains recordings and other materials from many artists. A similar situation can also be found in art collections which usually contains works by several artists.

### *3.3 Financial background*

Public collections, or more precisely the public or state institutions which administer these collections, are usually funded from state or regional resources. For example, the Museum of Czech Literature, as well as the National Gallery in Prague, the National Museum and the Museum of Romany Culture, are primarily financed from the budget of the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic. The Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic funds and controls the state archives, including the National Archives of the Czech Republic. The Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes, as well as the Security Services Archive, which is part of this institution, is financed by the government. Institutes from the Czech Academy of Sciences (e.g. the Institute of Contemporary History which administers the Oral History Centre) are financed from the state budget, whereas Czech public universities (e.g. Charles University in Prague, Masaryk University in Brno) are funded by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport of the Czech Republic. However, this does not mean that these institutions do not also look for support from other sources. They apply for grants from the Czech Grant Agency or from the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic (especially the NAKI grants). These projects are often part of a broader group including other institutions (e.g. cooperation between archives, universities, institutes of the Czech Academy of Sciences, etc.). Although international grants are not the main source of their budgets, some public institutions are already involved in international cooperation within this field. The Museum of Czech Literature was part of an international project financed by the Hungarian Scientific Research Fund (OTKA); the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes participates in a project supported by the European Union's Erasmus+ programme, etc. Public regional institutions are usually administered by the region. For example, the Comenius Museum in Přerov is operated and supported by Olomouc Region. Other sources also come from the city of Přerov, including special grants. Therefore, public institutions operating on a national scale usually receive financial sources from state organizations, whereas institutions with a regional remit can acquire sources from regional authorities. However, this division is not always the rule.

State agencies not only finance public institutions, but private ones as well. Grants and contributions from the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic are (to a greater or smaller extent) part of the financial budget of the Václav Havel Library, Libri Prohibiti, the Centre for Contemporary Arts Prague, the Fine Art Archive, the Kampa Museum, the Popmuseum, Post Bellum, and others. Private institutions also use grants and contributions from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic (e.g. Libri Prohibiti, Václav Havel Library or Post Bellum) or from the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport of the Czech Republic (e.g. Post Bellum). Collections situated in Prague also usually receive contributions from the City of Prague (e.g. Václav Havel Library, Libri Prohibiti, Popmuseum, Post Bellum, Kampa Museum, Society for Queer Memory, Fine Art Archive, Centre for Contemporary Arts) and/or from the Prague City Districts (e.g. Popmuseum, Post Bellum, Kampa Museum, Centre for Contemporary Arts). Regional cities support private collections as well – for example, the Exodus Association based

in Třemošná in the Pilsen region. This association, which operates the website [scriptum.cz](http://scriptum.cz), is supported by, among others, the city of Pilsen and the Pilsen Region.

Private institutions also often use sources from private foundations (e.g. the Fondation Zdenek et Michaela Bakala is the main sponsor of the Václav Havel Library) or from private companies (for example, several important Czech companies are among the sponsors of Post Bellum). Several institutions are also (partly) supported by foreign sources, e.g. by the US Embassy in the Czech Republic (Václav Havel Library, Post Bellum), by the Stiftung Erinnerung, Verantwortung, Zukunft (projects of the private Post Bellum or the public Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes). Lastly, some private institutions are also financed by private donors, for example, Libri Prohibiti (individual donations ranging from thousands to hundreds of thousands of crowns).

## 4. Conclusion and Recommendations

The collections held in the Czech Republic and described in the COURAGE online registry illustrate the various activities and background to a culture which did not follow the official state ideology. The stories behind these collections show how the specific activities and actors were interconnected at a regional and international level. It is important to note that the topic of cultural opposition in Czechoslovakia before 1989 is of international significance, and there already exist frameworks and contacts across borders (especially Czech-German and Czech-Polish cooperation). However, the “national perspective” still dominates in the Czech Republic. Narratives focused on dissent and exile became an integral part of constructing a post-socialist Czech identity. They became part of regular public commemorations, often framed within a contemporary political context.

The current Czech research which examines this phenomenon, including the popularization of material stored in Czech institutions, is highly productive and has the strong potential to attract a wider public. In addition to academic and highly analytical texts, a significant number of activist/witness outputs have been produced, such as books, exhibitions, documentary films etc. The Václav Havel Library has been very active in connecting academic discourse with former participants, along with current discussions on recent political and cultural issues concerning cultural opposition.

In general, the history of Czechoslovak dissent, democratic exile and cultural opposition is one of the main fields of interest in studying and discussing the contemporary history of Czechoslovakia. Therefore, many Czech institutions also continue to be interested in the work of Czech studies abroad. The connection of academics and their work with institutions administering the relevant collections is usually a very good means for presenting and popularizing the topic, in addition to helping to propose ways to interpret and research

contemporary Czech/Czechoslovak history. The dominant historical discourse still focuses on the communist government's terror and the resistance by armed groups to the regime and the totalitarian approach, but there are also new, very influential approaches inspired mainly by Western academia.

Czech archivists and stakeholders have already made great efforts to preserve the heritage of dissent, exile and cultural opposition. In that respect, we have identified a variety of successful practices in acquisitions, communication, preservation, and popularization that have been changing over time and place. At the beginning of the 1990s, the successful collection work was predominantly connected to the personal ties of those engaged in the opposition movement. They established highly specialized, and in the case of preserving cultural opposition heritage, very important and successful institutions such as Libri Prohibiti or the Institute of Contemporary History of the Czechoslovak (later Czech) Academy of Sciences. Others, such as Czechoslovak Documentation Centre, were already in existence abroad.

Nowadays, many non-specialized institutions have a large number of collections, one especially successful example being the archivists from the National Archives and the National Museum (where the archive of the Czechoslovak Documentation Centre is also held) and the Museum of Czech Literature. Most of the collections are stored in Prague in well-equipped, large, nationwide institutions run by the state. In these institutions we can find a huge number of personal collections, which is related to the question of trust towards the institutions and their social function.

The Stakeholders and archivists from both public and private institutions administer collections who deal with cultural opposition are usually very professional and show an enthusiastic attitude to this topic and stored artifacts. However, a significant part of this material is not officially accessible because it has not yet been processed. Despite that, the will usually exists to support researchers and they have the opportunity to access materials which have not been fully processed. In some cases, access to the collection is denied due to the protection of personal rights or permission from the heirs is requested. Moreover, copyright issues pose a great challenge following the adoption of the new EU GDPR regulation. Sometimes archives also have problems with storage capacity. Many buildings were reconstructed in the 1990s and some new buildings were also built at that time. However, many buildings are now in such a condition that costly reconstruction is required.

Institutions usually present their activities to the wider public through the media (Czech Television, Czech Radio) or through various kind of events such as exhibitions, public discussions, conferences or articles in the press. The opportunities for promotion are strengthened by collaboration between a variety of institutions. This cooperation in collecting, preserving, disseminating and analysing the topic is usually very good and can also be seen on various occasions, including mutual promotion. Institutions sometimes even share information about new acquisitions and give instructions on how to work with them.

These institutions often organize special programmes for pupils and students or children in general. Some institutions, for example the Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes, have developed their own educational activities based on recent trends in the methodology of history teaching. Many educational materials dealing with the topic of dissent and culture in Czechoslovakia before 1989 can be found at the <http://dejepis21.cz> website. Another very successful website is [moderni-dejiny.cz](http://moderni-dejiny.cz), run by the civic association PANT, which has received support from, among others, the European Union. These educational materials are often created by teachers or through close cooperation with other institutions, e.g. the Libri Prohibiti library. Many educational documents for students contain primary sources – images (photos, scans) of material stored in various Czech archives and libraries. The use of these educational materials (e.g. working papers) or the digitalization of material helps to significantly raise awareness and acquire knowledge on the topic of cultural opposition in Czechoslovakia before 1989, including a better understanding of authoritarian forms of governance and the means of opposition.

The inclusion of the collections in the COURAGE registry provides great potential for increasing the national and international profile of this topic, such as the use of internet search engines, which is a very common practice nowadays, especially among the younger generation and students. Therefore, it is essential for archives and libraries not only to organize events such as exhibitions (which are often visited mainly by professionals), but also to have financial sources for broader popularization, especially on the internet. For example, the activities of the Security Services Archives are already in this direction. In addition to the preservation and extensive digitalization of archival sources, this archive is also very active in presenting such topics to a wider public.

Digitalization has received a great amount of attention in this respect, and numerous projects have been carried out to facilitate the digitalisation process of collections and other materials as it enables wider public access to these collections. The websites of the Security Services Archives, Libri Prohibiti, the Czechoslovak Documentation Centre or [vons.cz](http://vons.cz) and [scriptum.cz](http://scriptum.cz) offer a great deal of useful information. However, the adaptation and interpretation of the topic is not always attractive for the public. The “Memory of Nation” project run by the Post Bellum association is an example of a successful approach. As part of this project, short biographical stories, including links to original sources, have been published in the mainstream media.

On the other hand, there is also the question of how to attract offline visitors to a collection which cannot be digitized. One possible way of encouraging visitors to a museum is to include places in state-funded tourist schemes which would be available to state employees in the form of free vouchers to be used in designated places.

Even if the normative and institutional frameworks have been well designed for creating satisfactory conditions for the preservation and popularization of the topic, we have a few suggestions to be discussed on a national level which have arisen from discussions with the interested parties:

- Special financial funding by public institutions for purchase and transport of archival and other material from abroad to the Czech Republic would be useful. For example, an agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is already very helpful in this regard.
- Strengthening cooperation with Czech centres abroad is needed
- An increase in financial support (on the basis of the recent Archival Law) for private collections and owners is required. Otherwise some material will not be retained as some actors/owners/witnesses do not want to donate/sell their documents and material to state/public institutions. – Private institutions have to be able to maintain and fulfil the role of cultural heritage preservers (supported by the state), as well as public institutions.
- Better conditions for the research activities of archivists are needed (changing the content of their work).
- In order to acquire EU grants, know-how and well-trained administrative staff are needed. Salary levels in state and public institutions are usually not compatible with the financial requirements of qualified and experienced project managers.

## 5. Appendix

### 5.1 Bibliography

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## 5.2 List of Collections Described

1. Art Collections at the Museum of Czech Literature
2. Artist
3. Audiovisual Section of the Libri Prohibiti
4. Benedikt Rejt Gallery
5. Black Book – Documentation Collection
6. Božena Komárková Collection at the Moravian Museum
7. Centre for Czechoslovak Exile Studies Collection
8. Central Press Supervision Authority Collection at the Security Services Archive
9. Charter 77 Collection of the Czechoslovak Documentation Centre
10. Charter 77 Foundation Collection of the Czechoslovak Documentation Centre
11. Cunas.cz
12. Czech Exile Collection at Libri Prohibiti
13. Czech Samizdat Collection at Libri Prohibiti
14. Czech Sci-Fi Fanzines Online Collection
15. Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences Collection
16. Czechoslovak Writer Publishing House Collection
17. Dominik Tatarka Collection at the Museum of Czech Literature
18. Egon Bondy Collection at the Museum of Czech Literature
19. Exile Collection of the Czechoslovak Documentation Centre

20. Ferdinand Peroutka Collection at the Museum of Czech Literature
21. Fine Art Archive (Czech Republic)
22. Foreign Exile Collection at Libri Prohibiti
23. Foreign Samizdat Collection at Libri Prohibiti
24. Interviews Collection of the Oral History Center
25. Ivan Blatný Collection at the Museum of Czech Literature
26. Ivan Dejmál Collection at Libri Prohibiti
27. Ivan Jirous Collection at Libri Prohibiti
28. Ivan Medek Collection of the Czechoslovak Documentation Centre
29. Ivana Tigrádová Collection of the Czechoslovak Documentation Centre
30. Jan and Meda Mládek Collection
31. Jan Čep Collection of the Czechoslovak Documentation Centre
32. Jan Hus Educational Foundation Collection
33. Jan Patočka Archives
34. Jan Tesař Collection at the Moravian Museum
35. Jan Trefulka Collection at the Moravian Museum
36. Jan Zahradníček Collection at the Museum of Czech Literature
37. Jaromír and Dolores Šavřda
38. Jaroslav Mezník Collection at the Archive of the Masaryk University
39. Jaroslav Seifert Collection at the Museum of Czech Literature
40. Jaroslav Šabata Collection
41. Jazz Section Collection at the National Archives
42. Jindřich Chalupecký Collection at the Museum of Czech Literature
43. Jindřich Štreit in Sovinec Collection
44. Jiří and Běla Kolář Collection
45. Jiří Gruša Collection at the Moravian Museum
46. Jiří Lederer Collection of the Czechoslovak Documentation Centre
47. Jiří Ruml Collection
48. Ladislav Mňačko Collection at the Museum of Czech Literature
49. Masaryk Society Collection at the Archive of Masaryk University
50. Memory of Nations
51. Milan Hübl Collection
52. Milan Jelínek Collection at the Moravian Museum
53. Milan Knížák Collection at the Museum of Czech Literature
54. Milan Šimečka Collection of the Czechoslovak Documentation Centre
55. Milan Uhde Collection at the Moravian Museum
56. Mojmír Vaněk Collection
57. Museum of Romani Culture Collections
58. Opus Bonum – Symposiums in Franken
59. Original Videojournal Collection
60. Pavel Kohout Collection at the Moravian Museum
61. Pavel Tigrád Collection of the Czechoslovak Documentation Centre

62. Polish Underground Library at Libri Prohibiti
63. Popmuseum
64. Rudolf Mihle Collection
65. Samizdat Collection of Czechoslovak Documentation Centre
66. Scriptum.cz
67. Skilling H. Gordon Collection of the Czechoslovak Documentation Centre
68. Society for Queer Memory Collections
69. Strike Committee Collection at the Archive of Masaryk University
70. The society of students of Faculty of Arts, UJEP Brno collection at the Archive of Masaryk University
71. Václav Havel Collection at the Museum of Czech Literature
72. Václav Havel Collection of the Czechoslovak Documentation Centre
73. Václav Havel Library
74. Video and Audio Library of the Literary Archive of the Museum of Czech Literature
75. Video Archive of the Academic Research Centre of the Academy of Fine Arts
76. VONS Collection at Libri Prohibiti
77. VONS Collection of the Czechoslovak Documentation Centre
78. Vons.cz

### *5.3 List of Persons Researched*

- Blatný, Ivan
- Blažek, Petr
- Bondy, Egon
- Boudník, Vladimír
- Brabenec, Vratislav
- Chalupecký, Jindřich
- Chvatík, Ivan
- Čep, Jan
- Dejmal, Ivan
- Diestler, Radek
- Drábek, Jaroslav
- Durec, Ivo
- Dzurko, Rudolf
- Eliáš, Jan
- Feierabend, Ladislav Karel
- Fiala, Jiří
- Filla, Emil
- Ginsberg, Allen
- Gruntorád, Jiří
- Gruša, Jiří

- Grygar, Milan
- Haloun, Karel
- Hauková, Jiřina
- Havel, Václav
- Havlíček, Dušan
- Havlová, Dagmar
- Havlová, Olga
- Hendrych, Jan
- Higgins, Dick
- Hlaváček, Josef
- Hlaváček, Ludvík
- Hlavsa, Milan
- Holomek, Miroslav
- Hrabalik, Petr
- Hübl, Milan
- Hůla, Jiří
- Hýbl, František
- Janouch, František
- Janoušek, Vladimír
- Janoušková, Věra
- Jelínek, Milan
- Jirous, Ivan Martin
- Kalinovská, Milena
- Karlíková, Olga
- Kmentová, Eva
- Knížák, Milan
- Knowles, Alison
- Kocábová, Darja
- Kocman, Pavel
- Kohout, Pavel
- Kohoutová, Jelena
- Kolář, Jiří
- Kolářová, Běla
- Komárková, Božena
- Kotyk, Petr
- Kouba, Pavel
- Kratina, Radoslav
- Kytnar, Josef
- LaVigne, Robert
- Lederer, Jiří
- Marek, Vlastimil
- Mašita, Karel

- Meacham, Frances
- Medek, Ivan
- Medek, Mikuláš
- Mezník, Jaroslav
- Mihle, Rudolf
- Michálek, Jiří
- Michalski, Krzysztof
- Mládek, Jan
- Mládková, Meda
- Mňačko, Ladislav
- Načeradský, Jiří
- Nekvindová, Terezie
- Němec, Rudolf
- Nepraš, Karel
- Opekar, Aleš
- Otáhal, Milan
- Palcr, Zdeněk
- Pallas, Jiří
- Patočka, Jan
- Peroutka, Ferdinand
- Peroutková, Slávka
- Pešta, Andrej
- Petrusek, Miloslav
- Petříček, Miroslav
- Pitaš, Stanislav
- Placák, Petr
- Polívka, Jiří
- Potůček, Martin
- Prečan, Vilém
- Průša, Sandra
- Rambousek, Jiří
- Reiner, Martin
- Ruml, Jiří
- Růžičková, Renáta
- Seidl, Jan
- Seifert, Jaroslav
- Sekal, Zbyněk
- Sekera, Jan
- Serke, Jürgen
- Schwarzenberg, Karel
- Sisel, Václav
- Skilling, Gordon Harold

- Slávik, Dušan
- Slavík, Otakar
- Sobotovičová, Sláva
- Srp, Karel
- Stárek, František
- Svoboda, Miroslav
- Šabata, Jaroslav
- Šavrda, Jaromír
- Šavrdová, Dolores
- Šimečka, Milan
- Šimečková, Eva
- Šimotová, Adriena
- Šimsa, Jan
- Šimsová, Milena
- Škácha, Oldřich
- Škvorecký, Josef
- Šmarda, Jan
- Štefančíková, Alica
- Štreit, Jindřich
- Tasinato, Oto
- Tatarka, Dominik
- Teige, Karel
- Tesař, Jan
- Tigrid, Pavel
- Tigridová, Ivana
- Topol, Filip
- Topol, Jáchym
- Trefulka, Jan
- Trinkewitz, Karel
- Třešňák, Vlastimil
- Uhde, Milan
- Vaculík, Ludvík
- Vaněk, Miroslav
- Vaněk, Mojmír
- Veit, Vladimír
- Veselý, Aleš
- Vladislav, Jan
- Wilson, Paul
- Zahradníček, Jan
- Zajíček, Pavel

#### *5.4 List of Persons Interviewed*

- Bielešová, Štěpánka
- Diestler, Radek
- Dvořák, Karel
- Frei, Jan
- Gruntorád, Jiří
- Habrovcová, Jana
- Hlaváček, Jiří
- Hlaváček, Ludvík
- Hůla, Jiří
- Hýbl, František
- Janošová, Lenka
- Jeřábková, Eleonora
- Kotyk, Petr
- Konečný, Karel
- Malaťák, Demeter
- Opekar, Aleš
- Prečan, Vilém
- Průša, Sandra
- Rendek, Peter
- Růžičková, Michaela
- Sobotovičová, Sláva
- Stárek, František
- Svoboda, Miroslav
- Šmíd, Michal
- Štreit, Jindřich
- Tymr, František
- Vaněk, Miroslav
- Vidlák, Martin

#### *5.5 List of Operating Institutions and Owners*

- Academy of Fine Arts in Prague
- Archive of the Masaryk University
- Archives of Ostrava
- Benedikt Rejt Gallery
- Centre for Contemporary Arts Prague
- Centre for Czechoslovak Exile Studies
- Centre for the Documentation of Totalitarian Regimes
- Centre for Theoretical Study

- Civic Association Fine Art Archive
- Comenius Museum in Přerov
- Committee for the Defence of the Unjustly Prosecuted
- Czech Television
- Czechoslovak Documentation Centre
- Czechoslovak Society of Arts and Sciences
- Czechoslovak Writer Publishing House
- Exodus Association
- Institute for the Study of Totalitarian Regimes
- Institute of Contemporary History
- Moravian Museum
- Moravian Provincial Archive in Brno
- Museum Kampa – Jan and Meda Mládek Foundation
- Museum of Czech Literature
- Museum of Romany Culture
- National Film Archive
- National Gallery in Prague
- National Museum of Czech Republic
- Oral History Centre
- Original Videojournal
- Popmuseum
- Post Bellum
- Security Services Archive
- Society for Queer Memory
- Society of Libri Prohibiti
- Václav Havel Library



# COURAGE

Cultural Opposition: Understanding the Cultural Heritage of Dissent in the Former Socialist Countries

## *Country Reports*



# German Democratic Republic (GDR)

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## Table of Content

1. Introduction.....	4
2. Context .....	6
2.1 <i>Researching Cultural Opposition under State Socialism</i> .....	6
2.2 <i>Institutions and Normative Frameworks for Preservation and Dealing with the Recent Past</i> .....	7
3. Analysis of the Collections in the COURAGE Registry .....	16
3.1 <i>Typology, Themes and Actors</i> .....	16
4. Conclusions and Recommendations .....	19
Summary .....	23
Bibliography.....	24
Appendix.....	30
<i>List of Collections</i> .....	30
<i>List of Operating Institutions and Owners</i> .....	30
<i>List of People Researched</i> .....	31

## 1. Introduction

Dealing with the recent past was a significant initiative of the newly established political structures in Germany after 1990. In this sense one can argue that a massive, state-supported industry emerged for dealing with the past. At first, an increased attention was dedicated to issues such as the Berlin Wall, the Ministry for State Security (informally known as the Stasi) and the repressive character of the SED regime. As the authors argue, such initiatives aimed at the consolidation of an official history of the SED, its repression and of the GDR regime.<sup>1</sup>

However, the role of the state in addressing the legacy of the recent past has changed over time. While during the 1990s state institutions, such as the Bundestag (German Parliament), were actively involved in officially addressing the recent past, this eventually shifted towards facilitating wider societal participation in the process of engaging with the GDR legacies.<sup>2</sup> State support manifested in numerous ways. Among the most significant initiatives were either the funding or establishing of institutions with the purpose of addressing the recent past, including the Federal Foundation for the Reappraisal of SED Dictatorship in East Germany (GDR) (*Bundesstiftung zur Aufarbeitung der SED-Diktatur*) in 1998, and the Federal Agency for Civic Education (*Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung*), at present extant in 15 of the 16 federal states. The Federal Commissioner for the Records of the State Security Service of the former German Democratic Republic (BStU) was created in order to facilitate the preservation of Stasi documentation and provide wider public access to its holdings. A further significant contribution in addressing the GDR's legacy was made by financially supporting grassroots organisations and foundations, such as the Robert-Havemann Society (*Robert-Havemann Gesellschaft e.V.*) in Berlin and the Civic Movement Archive in Leipzig (*Archiv Bürgerbewegung Leipzig*). Additional non-academic research institutions, history museums, and memorials emerged as a consequence of public and private engagement with the past.<sup>3</sup>

Soon after reunification, two parliamentary enquiries (1990s) and expert committees (2005- 2006) made significant contributions in these pursuits. These were created to discuss the future of GDR remembrance culture and its institutions. The special parliamentary enquiry commissions from 1992 to 1994, "The Reappraisal of the History and Consequences of the SED Dictatorship in Germany (*Aufarbeitung von Geschichte und Folgen der SED-Diktatur in Deutschland*); and from 1995 to 1998: "Overcoming the Consequences of the SED Dictatorship in the Process of German Reunification (*Überwindung der Folgen der SED-Diktatur im Prozeß der deutschen Einheit*) aimed at addressing the 'totalitarian nature of the GDR'.

However, these parliamentary commissions did not claim ultimate authority in addressing the past. Rather, they aimed to further encourage and complement academic, judicial, public and

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<sup>1</sup> Hogwood, Patricia. "Selective memory", 37.

<sup>2</sup> Beattie, "The politics of remembering the GDR," 33.

<sup>3</sup> East Side Gallery, GDR Museum and Check Point Charlie Museum in Berlin; Museum of the Lies in Radebeul also discussed by COURAGE, Memorial of the Berlin Wall.

private debates. Their contribution was ultimately the emergences of 'state-mandated memory' debates.

Hence, following the first enquiry commission a series of considerations came to the fore supporting institutional mechanisms for promoting 'critical memory work' and encouraging 'didactic public history' initiatives. The first parliamentary commission highlighted that opposition and resistance were expressed in various ways during the GDR. A volume was dedicated to this issue and contains numerous expert analyses and testimonies of contemporary witnesses.<sup>4</sup>

As a consequence, the second commission further elaborated on the idea of memorialisation of the past, 'Erinnerungspolitik', contributing significantly to addressing how the GDR was to be remembered in the future by museums and memorials, coining the term 'Gedenkstättenkonzeption' (Memorial Concept).<sup>5</sup> A significant role in developing, funding, researching and promoting in this direction was attributed to the newly established Federal Foundation for the Reappraisal of the SED Dictatorship.<sup>6</sup>

Nevertheless, most initiatives from the 1990s (histories, museums, memorials, etc.) focused on the illegitimacy of the GDR and its repressive power structures, often comparing it with Nazi Germany, imposing a state-promoted 'Diktaturredächtnis' (memory of the dictatorship) as defined by the historian Martin Sabrow.

State involvement in the politics of addressing the legacy of the past resulted in a further expert commission led by the historian Martin Sabrow, Director of the Centre for Contemporary History in Potsdam. This was organised in 2005 and 2006 as the History Alliance for Coming to Terms with the SED Dictatorship, to address the SED regime and its relationship to society and the opposition. This commission sought to undertake a reconsideration of the institutionalised memory landscape in Germany. One of its major contributions was a recommendation to emphasise everyday life under the regime and opposition, which eventually did not find much support. This proposal was rejected on the basis that it downplayed the dictatorial nature of the regime and failed to adequately draw parallels between the GDR and Nazi Germany.

In that spirit, this chapter within the framework of the COURAGE project is not limited to only addressing the extent to which the recent past was dealt with in Germany from 1990 on, but rather, aims to expand debates concerning the legacies of the recent past, by highlighting the significance of cultural opposition. Consequently, the GDR chapter briefly introduces first the context and conditions that facilitated the preservation of the legacies of the socialist regime, thereafter focusing specifically on the aspects of cultural opposition as a subject for preservation before and after 1989.

After a short introduction to the state of the arts concerning research on cultural opposition under state socialism, the general conditions of institutions and normative frameworks for preservation in the context of regime change will be briefly discussed. The extent to which legacies from the socialist past became the subject of debate to ensure its further preservation, legal protection and

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<sup>4</sup> Enquete-Kommission "Aufarbeitung," 21.

<sup>5</sup> Beattie, "The politics of remembering the GDR," 27.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibidem*.

institutionalisation will be highlighted. The report will focus on more specific issues, by briefly summarising the significance of the collections identified as cultural opposition in the GDR by the COURAGE project. Finally, it will conclude by summarising a series of recommendations for the EU Commission.

## 2. Context

### 2.1 Researching Cultural Opposition under State Socialism

In Germany, research after 1990 concerning opposition in the GDR and Eastern Europe most often related to the terms opposition, resistance and dissidence, and their comparison to the Nazi regime, or the analysis of various forms of opposition and resistance. These received a great deal of attention among academics, political parties and former opposition members.<sup>7</sup> Thus, numerous academic publications, reports and statements followed, and it is not the aim of the report to provide a comprehensive summary thereof.<sup>8</sup>

Publications were issued with the support of various federal institutions, foremost among which the Federal Foundation for the Reappraisal of the SED Dictatorship, and concerned specific topics related to cultural opposition, such as: the civic, human and environmental rights movements, alternative forms of education and lifestyle, or personalities.<sup>9</sup> Another institution thoroughly involved in similar pursuits is the BStU. Such publications have detailed documentation created by former Stasi officers and informants, and the institution throughout the life of the regime.<sup>10</sup> Another example is the collaboration of these institutions with additional organisations holding archival documentation on opposition in the GDR and on various personalities, such as the Robert-Havemann Society.<sup>11</sup> Further institutions published documentation on opposition in the GDR or were based on the holdings of the archives, such as the Civic Movement Archive in Leipzig.<sup>12</sup>

A detailed publication including all archives preserving documentation on the opposition was issued by the Robert-Havemann Society, under the supervision of Bernd Florath. This publication offers a comprehensive overview of all institutions that currently hold documentation on opposition in the GDR. These include independent archives, those of parties and organisations,

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<sup>7</sup> Poppe et al., *Zwischen Selbbehauptung und Anpassung*. Killingsworth, *Civil Society in Communist Eastern Europe*. Euchner, *Politische Opposition in Deutschland*. Eckert, *Opposition und Repression in der DDR*. Apelt, *Die Opposition in der DDR*. Geisel, *Auf der Suche*. Weisheit-Zenz, *Öffentliche Meinung im Dienste des Regimes?*. Eichwede, *Das andere Europa*. Von Plato, *Opposition als Lebensform*. Richter, *Norm und Eigensinn*. Pollack, *Politischer Protest*.

<sup>8</sup> Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, *Wir bleiben hier!* Ehrhart, *Geschichte der Opposition in der DDR*. Veen, *Lexikon Opposition und Widerstand*. Henke, *Widerstand und Opposition*. Moritz, *Gruppen der DDR-Opposition*. Miethe, *Frauen in der DDR-Opposition*.

<sup>9</sup> Theuer, *Aktenlandschaft Havemann*.

<sup>10</sup> Gieseke, *Staatssicherheit und Gesellschaft*. Auerbach, *Hauptabteilung XX.Staatsapparat*. Halbrock, *Freiheit heißt, die Angst verlieren*. Kowalczuk, *Fasse dich kurz!*. Aktion 'Gegenschlag' Die Zerschlagung der Jenaer Opposition 1983. Einblicke in das Stasi-Unterlagen Archiv. Dokumentenheft. Der Bundesbeauftragte für die Unterlagen des Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik.2013; Habermeyer, *Zwischen Opposition und Anpassung*.

<sup>11</sup> Polzin, *Aktenlandschaft Havemann*.

<sup>12</sup> Rudolph, *Weg in den Aufstand*.

local, regional and state archives, church repositories, university archives, libraries, museums, memorials, and media archives.<sup>13</sup>

However, one notices a great attention paid by research to themes focusing on political opposition and various personalities. Among the first contributions with state support to research cultural opposition have been already mentioned, meaning the reports issued by the two parliamentary enquiries (during the 1990s) and later the expert committee (2005, 2006).

Topics such as alternative lifestyles, social, environmental, human and civic movements, youth, religious, subversive and alternative art scenes, have recently become a subject of attention.<sup>14</sup> Research focusing on such themes, or holdings<sup>15</sup> contributed to enlarging the discourse concerning opposition, dissidence and resistance during the GDR, by moving beyond the realm of politics and instead highlighting alternative and subversive ways of criticising, opposing or disengaging from the regime. These draw attention to groups of artists on the periphery, Boehmiennes, and youth and civic movements among others, who expressed their disengagement or dissatisfaction with the socialist regime through their activities. Such networks and critical communication channels emerged among artists, poets, writers, musicians, youth, religious groups, and environmental groups, among others.

Recent publications addressing cultural opposition have focused on specific topics related to dissidence and opposition, in the fine and performing arts, theatre, literature, political and artistic samizdat, cinema, photography and music.<sup>16</sup> These addressed the phenomenon as such, discussed various artists and their contribution to the arts and opposition in the GDR, or compared them to the greater Eastern European context<sup>17</sup> forming subjects of analysis for various disciplines from art-history to history, or political science, either centrally, or within the wider context of opposition.<sup>18</sup>

Additionally, catalogues have been issued following exhibitions which displayed GDR artists, dissidence and subversive artistic creations.<sup>19</sup>

## *2.2. Institutions and Normative Frameworks for Preservation and Dealing with the Recent Past*

In order to better understand the preservation and interpretation of the socialist regime's legacies, one has to adopt a *longue duree* approach. This means that the multitude of institutions and normative frameworks responsible for the preservation of the socialist regimes' legacies must be addressed in the context of continuities and change.

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<sup>13</sup> Florath, *Selbstzeugnisse*.

<sup>14</sup> Wolle, *Die heile Welt der Diktatur*. Seeck, *Das Begehren*. Ehring, *Schwerter zu Pflugscharen*. Mühlen, *Aufbruch und Umbruch in der DDR*.

<sup>15</sup> Such as those described by COURAGE

<sup>16</sup> Niethammer, *Bühne der Dissidenz und Dramaturgie*. Mann, *Untergrund*. Kowalczuk, *Freiheit und Öffentlichkeit*. Bertram, *Hauswald Harald*. Schmid, *Fotografie zwischen Politik und Bild*.

<sup>17</sup> Hamersky, *Gegenansichten*.

<sup>18</sup> Kuhrt, *Opposition in der DDR*. Weisheit-Zenz, *Öffentliche Meinung*.

<sup>19</sup> Kaiser, *Boheme in der DDR*.

Following German reunification in 1990, dealing with the legacy of the GDR became a major subject of debate. Yet the conditions for the preservation of the GDR's legacies, in certain cases, predated the fall of the SED regime, such as the environmental movements libraries in Berlin and Großhennedorf (1987), or the collections of artists books preserved in the Saxon Library demonstrate.

Consequently, this report is not limited to addressing institutions and actors involved in the historical interpretation of the GDR regime after 1989 generally, but rather, more specifically those concerning cultural opposition. Moreover, this subchapter aims to highlight to what extent the institutional and normative reforms starting with 1989-1990 created the conditions for the legacies of the recent past, in general, to be addressed or not. Within the wider framework of preserving the legacies of GDR regime, this report highlights that not only socialist realism and propaganda belong to the GDR's legacy, but also dissent and opposition which manifested in various ways in East German cultural life.

Therefore, providing a general overview of the conditions and eventually on what became (or did not become) heritage within the context of regime change in Germany is significant in order to better understand the contribution of the COURAGE project to expanding debates concerning the GDR's legacies and its relevance for heritage preservation.

Consequently, this sub-chapter introduces conditions and actors that facilitated the preservation of cultural heritage associated with the GDR in general, from a *longue duree* perspective. Subsequently, within this framework, it will question the significance of cultural opposition and the conditions which facilitated its preservation.

The institutional framework and the normative conditions for preservation were set and revised by the socialist regime throughout its existence (1949-1990). Conditioned by geo-political, economic, administrative and cultural changes following the Second World War and the division of Berlin (1961), the SED regime engaged in processes of developing an administrative mechanism, as well as the institutionalisation and regulation of heritage preservation and its protection. This meant that a centralised state apparatus was created under the Ministries of Culture (1954) and the Interior (e.g. for the central archives administration). Cultural heritage became a matter of state, divided between local, regional and central authorities in Berlin, facilitating bureaucratisation of the preservation and protection of cultural heritage. This model was consolidated until the end of the regime.

In addition to the various local and regional levels of heritage administration and expert bodies, cultural heritage preservation became a field of interest among the public through various civic organisations or volunteers, among which were the Association for Culture (Deutsches Kulturbund) and the Society for Monument Preservation (1977) among others.

Hence one can identify that after the Second World War a complex institutional and administrative network was established, connecting state interest, experts and society at the local, central and regional levels, in order to ensure a comprehensive and uniform approach to heritage



preservation in the GDR. Nevertheless, a series of debates emerged regarding development of overarching approach to ensure the preservation of valuable museal and archival assets as well as those of libraries, together with built monuments, and movable assets such as works of art, museum collections, and documentary heritage. These eventually became subject to separate administrative and legislative priorities, and only during the 1980s were reconsidered.

As legislation became more comprehensive, the GDR regime contributed to the further elaboration and consolidation of such structures by adapting to the social, political and economic conditions in the country. The understanding of cultural heritage (Kulturelles Erbe) as a concept, evolved throughout the regime with the normative framework providing an overview on this matter (the Law of 1952<sup>20</sup>, Decree of 1961<sup>21</sup>, Law of 1975<sup>22</sup>, Law of 1980<sup>23</sup>).

All decrees and laws issued by the GDR (1952, 1961, 1975, and 1980) coined the conceptual understanding of heritage for possessing an historic, artistic, historic, and scientific value. These decrees and laws have contributed to the creation and framing of a unitary and systematic approach towards heritage preservation in the GDR. Furthermore, the concept of cultural heritage (kulturelle Denkmale) possessed an overarching meaning by relating equally to both categories of movable and immovable objects. *Denkmale* were also considered movable assets preserved by national and local museums, collections, archives and libraries. These included works of arts, paintings, graphics and sculptures of exceptional significance, among others, and were protected by the regulations governing institutions that preserved them, such as the decree of 22.2.1951 concerning the reorganisation of the education system, and the implementing rule on scientific museums from 10.4.1953 (Ges. Bl.S.607). Additionally, the decree concerning the protection of ownership of arts and of scientific documents and materials, issued on the second of April 1953, introduced regulations concerning the export of protected cultural objects.<sup>24</sup>

In comparison to the preservation norms governing built monuments, coherent laws concerning the preservation of museum artefacts as national heritage were elaborated relatively late starting only near the end of the 1970s, continuing throughout the 1980s. In April 1978, the regulation concerning the state museum's fund was issued.<sup>25</sup> Its main contribution was to guarantee the 'registration, preservation, conservation, development, protection and use' of all objects and collections held in trust by museums in the GDR.

The lack of a legal framework to encompass the preservation of both built monuments and movable assets was highlighted throughout the course of the regime, raising questions concerning the necessity for a comprehensive law to address the preservation and protection of material

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<sup>20</sup> Verordnung zur Erhaltung und Pflege der nationalen Kulturdenkmale vom 26. Juni 1952. In Gesetzblatt der DDR, nr. 84/1952.

<sup>21</sup> Verordnung über die Pflege und den Schutz der Denkmale, Gbl. II, 23.Oct.1961, Nr.72, S.475.

<sup>22</sup> Gbl.I/75, Nr.16, S.453.

<sup>23</sup> Gesetz zum Schutz des Kulturgutes der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik vom 3. Juli 1980, GBL.I Nr.20

<sup>24</sup> Hammer, *Verordnung zum Schutze*, 351.

<sup>25</sup> Verordnung über den staatlichen Museumsfonds der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik- Museumsforschungverordnung, GBL.I 1978, Nr.14, S.165.

cultural heritage in the GDR. This was proposed to include: monuments, museums, archives, libraries, and cultural artefacts in private ownership, as well as archeological remains.

It was only during the 1980s that the common law introduced the concept of 'cultural goods'. This was aimed at both movable and immovable assets under a single legal framework.<sup>26</sup> The main contribution of this law was referring to the intervention of the state concerning valuable assets independent of ownership, including state-owned, religious assets in addition to privately-owned cultural goods (§6 Law of 1980). These laws did not exempt assets associated with the GDR's history or its achievements from being officially included in the GDR's national heritage.

In summation, the normative framework introduced in the GDR did not only prioritise the centralisation of the administrative mechanisms to deal with heritage, but also elaborated the hierarchisation of the heritage, such as those items of national and international significance, to which also contemporary assets from the GDR period were considered for protection. Furthermore, comprehensive normative frameworks evolved towards addressing the preservation of contemporary GDR achievements including movable and immovable assets.

Heritage-making in the context of regime change in Central and Eastern Europe in 1989 was conditioned by a series of continuities and breaks with normative and institutional frameworks. In the case of Germany these added to the discourse on the significance of the regime's legacy for processes of democratisation and reunification.

Following the unity agreement between the GDR and the Federal Republic (31.08. 1990), the legislation and institutions of the former regime became obsolete. Eventually, these were transferred, transformed or discarded in the process of reunification (03.10.1990). Thus, the centralised structures of the GDR were dismissed, and reformed institutions submitted to the Western German legislation, preventing an institutional and legal vacuum in the field of preservation, as experienced in Romania, for example. As a consequence, the basis for the functioning of the institutions contending with cultural heritage protection was laid, centred on the re-instated federal administrative system in (now) Eastern Germany.

Consequently, after German reunification, new federal administrative structures adopted their own cultural heritage preservation laws which clearly addressed the built environment and movable assets separately. These developments ushered in major changes relating to the GDR's conception of movable and immovable heritage. Here, one must make a distinction between what was already acknowledged as part of the GDR's national heritage, and new processes set forth in the context of regime change, which led to a re-evaluation of the GDR's legacies and the legitimisation of a 'new heritage'.

The process of reunification led to a revision and recontextualisation of the material legacy of the regime, however, the procedure encompassing the evaluation and selection of assets from the GDR and the identification of a new heritage associated with the regime reflected predominantly the politics of discussing the GDR in the frame of an authoritarian regime.

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<sup>26</sup> Gesetz zum Schutz des Kulturgutes der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik vom 3. Juli 1980, GBL.I Nr.20

Besides the consolidation of institutional and normative frameworks at federal and state levels, the premises of heritage-making manifests itself in the active process of engaging with the past legacy so that one identifies and legitimises what is or is not necessary for conservation and preservation. However, this is conditioned by the context within which the significance of certain values and assets is legitimised. In addition to the institutional and normative transformations, as Boesler argues, the transformation of societal values is relevant in heritage preservation.<sup>27</sup> As such, Boesler suggests that one can speak of an altered, albeit not necessarily wholesale change of certain values. The regime change in the GDR and Central and Eastern Europe after 1989 exposed societies to a re-assessing of the values from the past, as much as to a re-orientation towards new 'democratic' principles and values. Along with the new institutional and legal frameworks came a new heritage reflecting the values of the society, within which memorial politics attracted considerable attention, and strongly influenced the politics of preservation.

Therefore, one must question to what extent, in the context of regime change, a paradigm shift occurred extending the understanding of cultural heritage, and of the politics of preservation. In respect to the GDR's past, after 1990, the focus was set on consolidating a discourse which predominantly depicted the GDR as a dictatorship. Thus the emergence of the 'dissonant heritage' (Tunbridge, Ashworth, 1996), 'unbequeme Denkmale' (Schmidt, 2008), 'unerwünschtes Erbe' (Steinkamp, 2008) associated with painful past events, trauma, and underlining negative characteristics from the past, have marked the manner in which one engaged with the legacy of the GDR regime from the 1990s on, to a certain extent, becoming the predominant frameworks within which the legacy of communism in CEE was addressed.

The regime change of 1989 and addressing the legacy of the past shared similarities with the processes encountered in societies in post-revolutionary times.<sup>28</sup> In those contexts, important initiatives were taken, such as: reinstating commissions to evaluate what determines artistic and historic value, or even questioning the financial burden to retain or remove objects, and pursuit of their musealisation and archiving. As such, various assets from built monuments to museum artefacts, documentary material, and arts were subject to debate concerning their retention or dismissal. The newly constructed legal frameworks for the preservation of cultural heritage provided new provisions ensuring a clear division between movable and immovable heritage and its protection without any prioritisation, between national and local heritage. In place of hierarchical ordering and listing, inventories were introduced. A similar appreciation and procedure came about for movable assets which were registered in inventories of the respective institutions to which they have been entrusted, such as museums, collections, archives, libraries etc.<sup>29</sup>

Germany's reunification also meant overcoming cultural differences between East and West. As such the first parliamentary commissions (1992, 1996) made the preservation of cultural heritage

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<sup>27</sup> Boesler, "Wertewandel und Denkmalpflege," 254.

<sup>28</sup> Petzet, "Denkmäler im Umbruch?," 11.

<sup>29</sup> For more details see Demeter, *Picking up the Pieces*.

a matter of debate and interest for the state. Following the first parliamentary commission meetings, a report was issued addressing cultural heritage in a broader way. The report delivered an analysis on the role and contribution of cultural heritage in employing and promoting party ideology in the GDR.

It was only in 1996 that the second parliamentary commission addressed the condition of the arts in the transformation process after 1990. Particular attention was paid to state-commissioned art (Auftragskunst) and state agency. In addition, this commission extensively elaborated on the role of memorials and memorial culture in addressing abuses of the past regime. Despite the fact that it was only briefly addressed in the report, archiving the legacy of state-commissioned art was deemed worthy of pursuit, similar to monuments, graphic art, and commemorative plaques which undoubtedly had a strong 'political character'. The purpose was to prevent their destruction while at the same time also ensuring their accessibility as 'historical testimonies' to the GDR (historische Zeugnisse).<sup>30</sup>

According to the report, works of art produced during the GDR and state-commissioned art should be collected and preserved, as they are 'significant testimonies for the contemporary history and for the artistic developments in divided Germany over the past 40 years.'<sup>31</sup> Also, the commission suggested that GDR state-commissioned art should be researched and evaluated for its particularities, and not limited only to appreciation as kitsch or political propaganda.

A further contribution of this commission was to address transformation processes affecting the arts in Eastern Germany after 1989, specifically, the impact reunification had upon the cultural policies of the former GDR, such as repealing all state-run cultural organisations, agencies, and galleries where ideological intervention in the production of culture was significant. The difficulties encountered by artists from the former GDR in establishing themselves in a liberal market defined system was highlighted.<sup>32</sup> However, according to the report, a re-modernisation of GDR cultural structures was not foreseen.

Criticism raised by members of the former socialist party regarding the assessment of cultural production in the GDR delivered by the report was linked to the fact that it limited and focused on its ideological and political aspects by discussing commissioned art, state art and artists, without taking into account positive developments such as its dissident character or international orientation.<sup>33</sup>

The substantial initiative of this commission was to develop and elaborate an overarching memorialisation programme (Gedenkstättekonzeption) supported by the federal government. Further, it set the conditions for a memory politics for dealing with the 'two dictatorial pasts', the Nazi and the Communist regimes.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Bericht der Enquete-Kommission "Überwindung der Folgen der SED-Diktatur im Prozeß der deutschen Einheit", eingesetzt durch Beschluß des Deutschen Bundestages vom 22. Juni 1995, Drucksachen 13/1535, 13/1762)-10.06.1998: 183.

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>32</sup> Bericht 1998, 187.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid. 189.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. 226.

A further goal pursued by the parliamentary commission was the internationalisation of the memorialisation practices. Consequently, the commission engaged in promoting exchange and international networking. In particular, countries in Central and Eastern Europe were addressed that aspired to join European structures and pursued reform and democratisation. More precisely, it suggested a series of exchanges with foreign institutions, responsible for addressing the abuses of dictatorial regimes, such as the memorial Sighet in Romania.<sup>35</sup> The international collaboration among memorial sites and museums in particular, and the development of educational projects have been considered essential steps in the process of addressing past abuses and coming to terms with the past.<sup>36</sup>

Although the parliamentary commission addressed the GDR's cultural heritage generally, there were a series of expert commissions which treated the fate of various categories of material culture associated with the GDR questioning their retention or dismissal. The expert commission called by the Senate for Urban Development in East Berlin in February 1992 provides one such example concerning its debates on the future preservation of the so-called 'politische Denkmälern der Nachkriegszeit im ehemaligen Ost-Berlin' (Post-war political monuments in former East Berlin) in Berlin's public space.<sup>37</sup> The expert's commission was initiated alongside the parliamentary commission, while each of the eastern federal states was given autonomy to deal with such issues on their own terms and within the legal framework.

However, the built environment was not considered by the Berlin commissions. The preservation of the built environment was addressed nationally and internationally by numerous conferences, symposia, and expert meetings throughout the 1990s. The modification of the built heritage legislation of 1995 in Berlin, for example, created the legal condition for protection of contemporary modern architecture, despite political-ideological and aesthetic criticism that was initially voiced concerning the GDR's architectural legacy.

The diversity of the legacy associated with the GDR regime that made the subject for preservation cannot be limited only to state-commissioned arts, public monuments and architecture. The complexity of the regime and its legacies must also be discussed in terms of opposition and dissent as they manifested variously in all cultural spheres.

In the aftermath of regime change, museums and their collections experienced the same fate as built monuments, namely: some were closed and replaced by new institutions committed to new legitimisation processes, or new private initiatives emerged. The handling of the museums and their collections, in addition to the acquisition policies of items from the GDR must be individually addressed. Some museums such as the German Historical Museum in Berlin for example not only inherited the collections of the defunct GDR Museum for German History, but also numerous works of art from GDR artists who either stood in opposition to the regime, or supported it. In addition, the museum acquired new artefacts associated with the GDR. In some cases, the

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<sup>35</sup> Ibid. 256.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. 257.

<sup>37</sup> Staroste, "Politische Denkmäler in Ost-Berlin," 7.

museum was approached by artists themselves, offering to purchase their art, such as the photography documentation by Jürgen Nagel and discussed by COURAGE. State museums which depicted the GDR under various themes from history to arts and everyday life, have predominantly adopted the same narrative, namely being committed to highlighting the criminal nature of the past regime. Nevertheless, themes of dissidence and cultural opposition emerged in various contexts. In addition, one must also note private initiatives that aimed at capturing either the history of the GDR, or adopted a critical stance towards museal developments in Eastern Germany, such as the Museum of Lies discussed by COURAGE.

In terms of normative frameworks that guarantee heritage protection for movable assets, including museum funds, an overarching law concerning the protection of cultural goods only entered into power in 2017. This introduced the concept of national cultural goods and aimed at governing the transfer of cultural goods abroad, which nevertheless met with strong criticism.<sup>38</sup> Thus, a specifically tailored legal framework that addressed the handling of items in museums linked to the GDR and specifically to opposition and dissent was not adopted, as the legal provisions foresee that all museum objects enjoy the same protection status.

At the same time as the cultural goods law from 2017 was issued, a general governing legal framework for archives also came into being, seeking to deal with archives at the *Bund* level in terms of use and safeguarding<sup>39</sup>, in addition to the respective *Länder* archival laws. By law, public access to state archival documentation is restricted for 30 years following its creation, except in the *Länder* of the former GDR, where archival records created before October 2, 1990, can be accessed without restrictions.<sup>40</sup> The *Länder* laws task archives to manage governmental documentation and have a consultative role for public institutions on managing and keeping their records.<sup>41</sup>

One of the major questions addressed by COURAGE is how and what records have been preserved not only in state institutions, but also which initiatives could be identified that go beyond state interests and testify to opposition and dissent in the GDR. More precisely, how and where can we trace records on the social, freedom, humanitarian and ecological movements, dissent, subversive arts scene in the GDR, among others?

State archives that preserved records on opposition and dissent were initially organised in order to preserve written documentation for the authorities, and individuals linked to various institutions or personalities that acquired public recognition or had scientific relevance.<sup>42</sup> Among the most significant initiatives at the federal level that facilitated the preservation of cultural opposition documentation one has to note the holdings of the former Stasi currently in possession of the BStU. The law concerning Stasi documentation was passed by the German *Bundestag* in November

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<sup>38</sup> Gesetz zum Schutz von Kulturgut, KGSG, BGBl. I S. 872, 890. 13 April 2017

<sup>39</sup> Gesetz über die Nutzung und Sicherung von Archivgut des Bundes, (BArchG), 10.03.2017, replacing the Law of 1988. (BArchG) vom 6. Januar 1988

<sup>40</sup> Kluttig, "Trends in the Creation and Appraisal", 3:330.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. 337.

<sup>42</sup> Florath, "Wo liegen die Selbstzeugnisse der Opposition?."

1991 and enabled wide access to archival documentation issued by the state's surveillance mechanisms. This had the consequence of increasing public and private initiatives to trace and collect material that demonstrated not only the repression of the state and its surveillance, but also its monitoring of opposition and dissent.

However, according to the report issued by the Union of German Archivists from 2016<sup>43</sup>, there was no state-mandated strategy to encourage and support archiving records, for instance, documenting social movements. Under such conditions the so-called 'Freie Archive' which aimed at preserving the documentation of opposition and dissident groups, in a manner apart from the classical understanding and functioning of state archives, assume a critical role.<sup>44</sup> According to the report, as of 2016, there are nearly 90 'free archives' in Germany dedicated to the opposition, protest, and civic rights movements in the GDR. The diversity and size of the material preserved varies and is impressive, considering the amount of assets dedicated to social movements on hold by state-managed archives. These range from artwork, films, photos, posters, grey literature, samizdat, interviews, pressfiles, etc. The aim of these institutions is not to establish a new type of archive, but rather to record specific civil movements, regions, or subject areas. The status of such archives has been detailed by Bacia and Wenzel and will not be detailed here. However, according to the authors in comparison to the 'free archives' dedicated to social and political movements that likewise emerged in the West starting the 1960s, the Eastern German archives seem to be better positioned. The so-called 'Aufarbeitung' archives were set up after 1989 and received state funding which allowed them to engage in professional archival work. Among the most prominent archives dedicated to documenting civic movements in the GDR is the Archives of the GDR Opposition curated by the Robert Havemann Society in Berlin which has in the interim added various other collections applying to the heading of 'opposition archives' under its structure; the Civic Movement Archive in Leipzig and the Thuringian Archive for Contemporary History 'Matthias Domashk' in Jena. The history and development of such archives has been thoroughly studied and published.

However, not all free archives sought state support or aimed at carrying on archival work regulated according to normative frameworks of the state. These entities did not submit to state regulations, and instead follow their own practice of documenting, systematisation, and defining what is, or is not relevant for preservation. Some of these operate under constraints given the precarity of the working conditions, human capacities to sustain such archives, and inadequate financial resources. Moreover, the lack of a long-term strategy raises questions concerning the accessibility of their records, their sustainability and that of the records on hold.

Discussing the legacy of the GDR means also addressing the debate surrounding the complexity of relationships with the socialist regime and their shifts, by focusing particularly on the opposition and subversive forms of creation during the regime as part of a common heritage in Central and

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<sup>43</sup> "Zur Zukunft der Archive von Protest-, Freiheits-, und Emanzipationsbewegungen. Positionspapier des EdA zu den Überlieferungen der neuen sozialen Bewegungen", In: Mitteilungen und Beiträge des VdA, Archivar, 69 Jahrgang, Heft 02, Mai 2016.

<sup>44</sup> Bacia, *Bewegung Bewahren*.

Eastern Europe. Tracing and preserving such records is challenging and will be discussed based on the COURAGE collections in the following section.

### **3. Analysis of the Collections in the COURAGE Registry**

#### *3.1. Typology, Themes and Actors*

The GDR collections included in COURAGE should not to be understood as the most significant manifestations of cultural opposition in the GDR, but rather a selection aimed at highlighting as much diversity within the phenomenon as possible, specifically as these represent initiatives which emerged owing to a desire to safeguard such collections, and are the result of positive collaboration with institutions which showed interest in sharing information with us.

We aimed at tracing the origins, processes, and actors who contributed to raising awareness concerning the significance of the included collections and took measures to ensure their safeguarding. This allowed us to address and highlight various and changing social, political and cultural contexts in which such collections emerged, operated and how their meaning and function developed over time. In addition, we sought to cover a great diversity of manifestations of cultural opposition from fine arts to music, literature, cinema, theatre, and social movements, among others. These highlight the complex relationship with the state, and the dynamics of cultural life, its shifting borders and the often-blurred lines between official and non-official engagement, refusal, co-option and opposition to the socialist regime. Ultimately, the selection of the collections for the GDR was motivated by the main objectives of the COURAGE project, namely, to document the diversity and wealth of cultural opposition in state socialist countries and to present their significance following the events of 1989.

The GDR chapter includes 24 collections, among which only one is an ad-hoc collection, meaning it is not preserved as a collection, but described as such owing to its characteristics. This is the photography collection of Jürgen Nagel, held by the German Historical Museum images' archive. The themes most represented by the GDR section highlight the rich and diverse forms cultural opposition and its manifestation. These span from avant-garde arts, to alternative education, critical science, emigration, ethnic movements, film, music, human rights, independent journalism, minority movements, national movements, peace movements, philosophical movements, religious, samizdat, surveillance, visual and media arts, underground and popular culture, party dissidents, censorship, and student movements.

Given the rich manifestation and diversity of the material associated with the cultural opposition, we wanted our presentation of the initiatives which safeguard it to be equally manifold, spanning from private to public, from small state institutions to major institutions, from the local and regional levels to the federal, and those which are not only state archives. Moreover, we identified that cultural opposition manifested geographically and temporally across the GDR, and had various degrees of intensity and forms of manifestation. Thus, our geographical selection did



overemphasize Berlin, but aimed at covering various places from Dresden to Leipzig, Meißen, or Radebeul.

Apart from the diversity of regional and thematic representation, another key aspect which we identified is the generational context. For example, artistic means of production embraced during the 1970s were challenged by artists from the 1980s who had their own local specificities. Here, the collection of artist books preserved by the Saxon Regional-, State- and University Library Dresden (SLUB) which reflect a series of local conditions are key to mention.<sup>45</sup> Changes in the conditions of the artists and their own reaction towards the cultural policies of the regime must likewise be taken into account from a *longue duree* perspective. Such an example has been provided to us by analysing the art collection of Roger Loewig, currently held by the Federal Foundation for the Reappraisal of the SED Dictatorship.<sup>46</sup>

We laboured to identify best practice solutions for managing significant collections for the cultural opposition. In this respect, we addressed initiatives that benefit from sizable state support such as the Federal Foundation for the Reappraisal of the SED Dictatorship, or BStU, which in addition to managing the documentation of the Stasi archives also operates a museum. These actively contribute to providing support to smaller initiatives and to organisations that emerged at first privately, yet also evolved towards institutionalisation of their collections, such as those on hold by the Archives of the GDR Opposition at the Robert Havemann Society and Civic Movement Archive in Leipzig.<sup>47</sup> Even more, the example set by the BStU became a model for the safekeeping and securing of the archival holdings of the former secret police adopted by other post-socialist countries. One notices that despite the structure of the institutions, the revised cultural goods legislation of 2016 (updated in 2017) provided the basis upon which the collections of the Archives of the GDR Opposition have been included in 2017 on the national lists of cultural goods.<sup>48</sup> Likewise, we shed light on private initiatives that hold collections, which nevertheless showcase difficulties in managing and preserving holdings that address cultural opposition, such as the Museum of Lies in Radebeul.

According to our data, most institutions holding collections for cultural opposition described in COURAGE were founded in the beginning of the 1990s. As mentioned earlier, we addressed the issue of continuity and change, aspects which impacted the outcome of many of these collections after 1989. By presenting the collection of artist books acquired by the Saxon Library already prior to 1989, we highlight the need to address the historical provenance and impact of institutional and normative changes not only after 1989, to better understand how these collections have been subsequently dealt with. This shows great potential for further research and highlights the rich variety of sources available for identifying the provenance of collections. Some collections were created already prior to 1989, although given different significance. In this particular case, we can

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<sup>45</sup> 'Artist publications from the GDR' Collection COURAGE

<sup>46</sup> <http://cultural-opposition.eu/registry/?uri=http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n5690&type=collections>

<sup>47</sup> <http://cultural-opposition.eu/registry/?uri=http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n1003&type=collections>  
<http://cultural-opposition.eu/registry/?uri=http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n2300&type=collections>

<sup>48</sup> [https://www.havemann-gesellschaft.de/fileadmin/robert-havemann-gesellschaft/aktuelles/presse/PM\\_Nationales\\_Kulturgut.pdf](https://www.havemann-gesellschaft.de/fileadmin/robert-havemann-gesellschaft/aktuelles/presse/PM_Nationales_Kulturgut.pdf)

better understand the complexity of the state institutions in handling cultural opposition prior to 1989, but also the change of their significance in the context of political developments.

Given the different typology and legal organisation of the institutions involved in addressing, preserving, and documenting cultural opposition in the GDR, the capacities for caring for such collections differ substantially. Over the course of the project, we addressed a wide variety of actors that currently maintain such collections. The most predominant covered by COURAGE were museums and educational institutions, followed by archives and foundations, libraries and unfortunately only few by private persons and communities. The collections identified by COURAGE are predominantly operated by institutions that receive government support and have been organised as associations, or public foundations. A limited number of collections are currently held in private hands, public trust or corporations. What we could identify nevertheless, in our specific cases, is the limited public and private collaboration in this direction, or the involvement of non-profit organisations. With a note on gender, according to our data, within institutions addressing cultural opposition we noticed a predominant female representation of over 70%.

These statistics are not representative for the entire phenomenon of cultural opposition in the GDR, but cover only a small sample discussed by COURAGE opening the potential for further research. Also, in terms of budget allocated to supporting such initiatives in CEE, Germany stands out as one of the countries which invests the largest amount of financial resources in supporting initiatives and institutions which address cultural opposition, in comparison to its CEE partners. Nevertheless, great differences have been noted in terms of funding and preservation capacities within Germany as well.

## 4. Conclusions and Recommendations

This report aimed at highlighting the contribution of COURAGE in addressing the legacy of the socialist regime in Germany and in particular, the topic of cultural opposition. By identifying various collections in private or public trust this report sought to highlight the significance to preserve the material and immaterial heritage of cultural opposition and dissent in Germany. By framing the debates concerning the relevance of the recent past in Germany and highlighting the normative and institutional setting, the significance of the preservation of legacies of the regime from a long duree perspective has been treated.

Alongside discourses on addressing the past, normative and institutional settings were influential in creating the conditions for preservation. Furthermore, public and private initiatives contributed to supporting initiatives in the research, communication, preservation, and conservation of legacies of the recent past. However, how various regions and institutions in the former GDR managed to address and preserve varies greatly, specifically concerning the legacy of cultural opposition.

Given the particular political situation encountered after 1989, the state played a central role in promoting and supporting policies to address the preservation of the regime's legacies by pursuing the reunification of Germany and reinstating the federal system.

If these aimed, at the outset, to legitimise the reunification of Germany and democratisation processes, over the past thirty years, we have subsequently identified a greater diversity of initiatives in this direction involving public and private stakeholders seeking to address the complexity of the recent past. Furthermore, not only grassroots initiatives emerged, international cooperation was also further developed.

Therefore, several pillars should be considered when addressing a series of recommendations at national, European and stakeholder levels in order to overcome deficits and to improve the decision-making mechanism when dealing with the legacy of cultural opposition in Europe. Furthermore, these will highlight also best-practices in Germany which successfully contributed to ensuring the safeguarding of such legacies.

After a consultation with various stakeholders who manage holdings and records that testify to cultural opposition and dissent in Germany, we draw our final conclusions and recommendations, focusing on challenges and opportunities. These recommendations address issues including the sustainability of collections (funding, role of digitalisation), networking, carrying capacities (professionalisation), and audience development (youth involvement).

### *Sustainability of Collections and Institutions: Funding*

Given the diversity and volume of assets associated with the legacy of the socialist regime, the financial responsibility for its preservation, conservation, interpretation, and communication is daunting. The new federal administrative structure in Germany sought to divide responsibility regionally among the *Länder*, yet given the weak economy in the (eastern) region(s) after 1989, at

first, state support was unavoidable in overcoming the massive institutional and normative reforms in the region. This ensured that no legal and institutional vacuum was generated and created central structures to address and deal with the legacies of the GDR, such as the BstU, and the Federal Foundation for the Study of Communist Dictatorship in East Germany (GDR). The latter eventually provided further support to grassroots initiatives which lacked substantial financial means to preserve various collections, such as the Civic Movement Archive in Leipzig, the Archives to the Opposition of the GDR, or the Thuringian Archive for Contemporary History “Matthias Domaschk”.

Although there are many more funding structures available in Germany in comparison to CEE countries, one notices the precarious and fragile financial stability of grassroots initiatives which often rely on project funding, sponsorship or donations in order to ensure their functioning. Furthermore, initiatives which do not perpetuate the state narrative concerning the meaning and significance of the regime in the current political landscape of Germany, tend to fail to ensure their long-term financial stability (i.e. the Museum of Lies in Radebeul).

Also, as COURAGE has demonstrated, the legacy of cultural opposition is encountered in various forms, from archival documentation to art objects, to installations, film and photography, music, etc. Thus, the preservation of such diverse material falls under the legislation and competences governed by various institutions or initiatives, public and private, with different funding structures. Funding for such assets often faces the same impediment, namely the lack of long-term strategies for ensuring the necessary resources for their preservation and facilitating accessibility. Also, one notices that distinguishing between the funding support provided to institutions per se, and for the collections itself is often not defined clearly. Given the fact that project-based funding schemes have grown to become the most common means to ensure financial support for various initiatives, these are unfortunately time constrained.

In this respect, a consistent and long-term financial plan which complements state support (or its absence) for grassroots initiatives is welcome, in order to overcome establishment of a dominant narrative but also to encourage a plurality and diversity of initiatives for the preservation of the legacies from the recent past.

Here too, promoting and encouraging the funding of projects that promote cultural opposition is another means which could support various issues linked to the topic, such as education, preservation, conservation, interpretation or dissemination. Assistance in elaborating such projects and training could enable institutions that lack the capacities to manage projects or complete applications to secure additional funding.

### *Sustainability of Collections: The role of digitalisation*

Linked to the issue of funding, the sustainability of such collections is a key aspect to be taken into consideration. This is connected not only to the institutional and financial sustainability of a collection, but also the items themselves. Digitalisation has received a great amount of attention and numerous projects have been carried out to facilitate the digitalisation of collections or

various items. These allow instant and remote access, even though their use can be limited due to copyright and user fees. Indeed, digitalisation seeks to ensure greater public access to the collections, yet beyond the emerging opportunities, major challenges exist given the rapid technological shift and costs linked to its maintenance, skills (software complexities), and support.

Therefore, digitalisation has proven to be a major financial investment, but nevertheless, it provides a series of solutions to increase the accessibility to information and items. However, digitalisation cannot be considered an alternative to preservation, but a supplemental one which further increases financial pressures. Also, copyright issues present greater challenges and restrictions following the adoption of the new EU regulation limiting wider accessibility of information.

### *Networking*

Cultural opposition cannot be studied only locally and our research has highlighted numerous connections between its proponents. Given the transnational significance of the topic, the exchange between various actors internationally is encouraged. Major state-funded institutions actively engage in such exchanges, however, at the local level one notices that smaller institutions or individuals have benefited less. This is conditioned partly on the lack of capacities and funding. These often tend to address local phenomenon, linked to local histories. Therefore, encouraging and supporting local communities and individuals to share their knowledge, and encouraging public and private cooperation, can prove a solution. This can ensure a more encompassing and diverse approach to the recent past. Also, facilitating extensive exchange between the initiatives emergent not reliant on state support should be encouraged and supported.

### *Carrying Capacities: Professionalisation*

Preservation of the past is a matter of concern not only for the present but raises challenges for the future. The rapid technological changes, unstable political climate, high diversity and the state of the conservation of assets associated with the topic of cultural opposition raise a series of challenges for their adequate safeguarding. Moreover, additional difficulties have arisen in the context of private initiatives which lack the means and knowledge to handle such collections. These often require expert knowledge and are subject to interdisciplinary approaches. We have noticed that throughout the past significant collections set up by various private initiatives emerged or evolved towards institutionalisation. This necessitated a professionalisation of the individuals involved in these initiatives and of the tasks necessary to ensure the safeguarding of such legacies. Nevertheless, promoting interdisciplinarity can unlock innovative approaches to better enhance the significance of the collections dealing with cultural opposition.

### *Audience development: Youth involvement*

Preservation of the legacies of the recent past is to be addressed not only in the present, but long-term. For this, reaching out and ensuring a more active involvement of young generations and facilitating the generational exchange of knowledge, must be addressed. Thus, digitalisation is not

the only means of raising awareness among youth. Moreover, facilitating the acquisition of knowledge in the thematic area and promoting critical thinking, in addition to acquiring new technological skills, are essential to better understand the nuances of authoritarian forms of governance and the means of expressing opposition.

## Summary

This report begins by providing the reader with an introduction to the context and state of the arts concerning research on cultural opposition and dissent in Germany. By framing the debates concerning the relevance of the recent past in Germany and highlighting the normative and institutional setting, the significance of the collections in addressing the preservation of the legacies of the regime from a long durée perspective is discussed.

Moreover, the report aims to provide a more thorough and broader understanding of the conditions which facilitated the preservation of the legacies associated with the GDR. Consequently, by also including dissent and opposition, the need to expand debates concerning heritage preservation and the legacies of the GDR is revealed. Moreover, the report identifies that, in addition to the discourses which addressed the significance of the past, the normative framework and institutions are to thank for creating the conditions which allowed assets testifying to dissent and opposition in the GDR to be safeguarded and preserved.

The significance for the preservation of heritage associated with opposition and dissent during the GDR is discussed based on the collections identified by COURAGE. By delivering an overview of the actors, themes, and typologies of assets, the potential of the topic to expand discourses on the material legacy of the GDR and its significance for preservation is highlighted.

Finally, this text concludes by offering recommendations on how to further proceed with such assets at local, national and European levels, focusing on both challenges and opportunities. Various solutions to improve decision-making mechanisms by focusing on the sustainability of the collections and institutions (funding, digitalisation), network and carrying capacities, and audience development with a focus on youth involvement are suggested.

With an outlook on the future, ensuring the financial sustainability of a plurality of institutions and collections ranks highest among the recommendations which this research has produced. Furthermore, supporting and promoting international exchange is a must given the transnational significance of the topic. In this sense grassroots initiatives require greater backing. Digitalisation is likewise discussed as an important tool to facilitate access to information and items, but also as a challenge proving that its implementation alone cannot be understood as a silver bullet, but that additional means to secure and access information are also required. Knowledge transfer and supporting interdisciplinarity are essential to further ensure youth involvement as a guarantee of long term preservation for the material legacy of the GDR.

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## Appendix

### *List of Collections*

Archive Citizens Movement of Environmental Library Grosshennersdorf  
Archive of the GDR-Opposition at the Robert Havemann Society  
Archive Song and Social Movements  
Archives of Suppressed Literature in the GDR  
Artists' Publications from the GDR  
Brigitte Reimann Archive  
Document Collection of the Civic Movement Archive in Leipzig  
Erich Loest Archive  
Everyday life East. A digital guide to everyday life in the GDR  
Ex.Oriente.Lux - Experimental Film Archive East  
Gino-Hahnemann Archive  
Harald Hauswald Photography Collection  
Heiko Hahnwald Breakdance Collection  
Heiner Müller Archive / Transitroom  
Jan-Faktor-Archive  
Jürgen Nagel Photography Collection  
Museum of Lies Collection  
Roger Loewig Collection  
Stasi records  
Substitut. Punk in the GDR 1979-1989  
The Soft Geometry Archives  
Theatre in the 'Wende' Collection  
Theatre Performances Documentation  
Thuringian Archive for Contemporary History 'Matthias Domaschk'

### *List of Operating Institutions and Owners*

Boehlke, Michael  
Hahnwald, Heiko  
Hauswald, Harald  
Löser, Claus  
Nagel, Jürgen  
Zabka, Reinhard  
Artists for Others  
Academy of Arts in Berlin  
Civic Movement Archive Leipzig  
Centre for Theatre Documentation and -Information  
Environmental Library Grosshennersdorf

Federal Agency for Civic Education  
Federal Foundation for the Reappraisal of the SED Dictatorship  
Federal Commissioner for the Records of the State Security Service of the former German Democratic Republic (BStU)  
Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media  
Foundation Poster EAST  
The Foundation for Culture and Environment Leipzig  
German Federal Cultural Foundation  
German Lottery Foundation Berlin  
German Historical Museum  
Humboldt-University Berlin  
Institute for German Literature at the Humboldt-University Berlin  
Kooperative Berlin  
Museum of Lies  
Neubrandenburg Literary Center  
OSTKREUZ Agency of Photographers  
Regional Commissioner for the Documents of the State Security of the former GDR  
Roger Loewig Association  
Union for the Theatre Producers in the GDR  
The Saxon Regional, State and University Library Dresden  
Robert-Havemann-Society  
Song and Social Movements Association  
Substitut Agency

### *List of People Researched*

Becker, Erika  
Birthler, Marianne  
Boehlke, Michael  
Bohley, Bärbel  
Domaschk, Matthias  
Ebert, Frank  
Eckert, Edeltraud  
Elten-Krause, Elisabeth  
Faktor, Jan  
Fiebeler, Carsten  
Fiedler, Lothar  
Florath, Bernd  
Führer, Christian  
Gauck, Joachim  
Geipel, Ines  
Gericke, Henryk

Hahnewald, Heiko "Hahny"  
Hahnemann, Gino  
Hampel, Heide  
Hauswald, Harald  
Havemann, Robert  
Hörnigk, Frank  
Ilse, Andreas  
Jahn, Roland  
Kirchenwitz, Lutz  
Kretschmer, Thomas  
Krenkman, Alfons  
Krolkiewicz, Ralf-Günter  
Krone, Tina  
Loest, Erich  
Loewig, Roger  
Lokatis, Siegfried  
Mayer, Brigitte Maria  
Müller, Heiner  
Nagel, Jürgen  
Paul, Saskia  
Reichenbach, Maik  
Reimann, Brigitte  
Saab, Karim  
Schmieding, Leonard  
Schleime, Cornelia  
Schulz, Kristin  
Schwabe, Uwe  
Sello, Tom  
Stötzer, Gabriele  
Theuer, Werner  
Zabka, Reinhard  
Walther, Joachim  
Wolf, Gerhard



# COURAGE

Cultural Opposition: Understanding the Cultural Heritage of Dissent in the Former Socialist Countries

## *Country Reports*

# Hungary



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## Table of Contents

Summary .....	4
Introduction.....	5
Background and framework.....	5
Aggregate information from the registry and background information.....	7
Best practice and recommendations .....	13
References:.....	17
Collections .....	18
Persons researched .....	21
Persons interviewed.....	29
Operators, owners.....	32

## Summary

The theme of cultural opposition has not emerged as a means of framing public politics in Hungary. The cultural legacy of dissent, however, has been an object of vivid public interest since the early 1990s. Oppositional culture is largely associated in Hungary with the emerging circles of intellectual dissent in the 1980s and the semi-legal, non-conformist art produced since the 1960s. Nonetheless, groups that cultivated non-communist and critical cultures were more numerous and had existed practically since the rise of the dictatorship in the country in 1948–49. In addition to (1) intellectual dissent and (2) non-conformist art, these groups included (3) religious associations and (4) underground youth subcultures.

The infrastructure and institutional frames of archival and museum collections in Hungary are regulated by two major laws: the 1997 museum, library and archives act and the 2010 modifications of the 2001 act on cultural heritage. In principle, access to the documents of the communist era is fairly liberal in Hungary. Academic researchers enjoy open access to documents in public archives with the formal support of any academic institution, with reasonable restrictions pertaining to privacy rights. However, recent government initiatives to reorganize the major institutions of Hungarian culture (including museums, archives, and libraries) created unanticipated hindrances to practical public access to the documents. This situation increases the value of other types of collections, in particular the Historical Archives of the Hungarian State Security Services, regional and local archives, libraries and museums, and recently discovered private collections.

Until 2018, archives, libraries, museums, universities, and academic institutions were maintained by the Ministry of Human Capacities (this is the official English title of the ministry, though its Hungarian name would be more accurately translated into English as the Ministry of Human Resources). Hungary spends a relatively high percentage of its GDP on culture (roughly 2 percent, compared with the EU average of 1 percent). Collections suffer from insufficient support, however. Public budgets normally cover the sustainability costs (salaries, technical maintenance) of public museums, libraries, and archives and rarely allow for innovation or new acquisitions. Public collections can submit applications for funding to, for instance, the National Research Fund and the National Culture Fund, which regularly support these institutions. However, due to the relatively limited resources of these two foundations, larger-scale innovative initiatives or research programs are often pursued with the assistance of international public or private funding agencies such as the European Union or the Soros Foundation. Smaller and, particularly, regional and private collections are often unprepared to handle such complex application procedures, and, thus, they are frequently left to their own devices.

## Introduction

In Hungary, debates on dissent and cultural opposition gained momentum right after the collapse of the socialist dictatorship, when two political-cultural groupings organized in the two major post-communist parties of the country (the leftist-liberal Alliance of Free Democrats, or SZDSZ, and the conservative-nationalist Hungarian Democratic Forum, or MDF,) competed for governance as well as for the legacy of anti-communism. Both groups could mobilize credentials of dissent and both tried to discredit the other by casting doubt on the authenticity of the oppositional records of their opponent. SZDSZ was the direct successor to the democratic opposition of the 1980s and enjoyed the support of many individuals from avantgarde art and underground rock and youth culture networks as well as from unofficial social activist groups and bodies of academic research. MDF was headed by populist intellectuals who before 1989 often criticized the regime of having ignored the cause of Hungarian minorities abroad and allegedly authentic national culture at home. Conservative nationalists were more radical in their attacks on their rivals, as prominent members of the party accused SZDSZ politicians of cultivating a radical leftist Maoist and reform communist legacy and even of having direct ties to the communist secret police. Leftist liberals, in turn, although milder in their tone, highlighted the compromises populists allegedly had made with the communist party after 1956.

This short interlude notwithstanding, the theme of cultural opposition has not emerged as a means of framing public politics in Hungary. The cultural legacy of dissent, however, has been an object of vivid public interest since the early 1990s. This is especially true of the field of art. Publications, documentaries, TV-films, and exhibitions on illegal and non-conformist art recurrently feature showrooms and media. Literature and underground rock had a similar status. Many unpublished or samizdat manuscripts and music recordings were first published or were republished by major publishers after 1989. While Hungarians were interested in counterculture and cultures of dissent, the theme of cultural opposition hardly figured as the focus of such interest. Whereas non-conformist and alternative cultures were deeply politicized both by participants and the communist authorities before 1989, they were not directly political and were not intended to create political alternatives to the one-party state. This factor helped Hungarians perceive the communist era in terms of culture and downplay the often embarrassing and uncomfortable memories of politics in the period.

## Background and framework

In principle, access to the documents of the communist era is fairly liberal in Hungary. Academic researchers enjoy open access to documents in public archives with the formal support of any academic institution, with reasonable restrictions pertaining to privacy rights. However, recent government initiatives to reorganize the major institutions of Hungarian culture (including museums, archives, and libraries) created unanticipated hindrances to practical public access to the documents. The government sees the castle district in Budapest,

which for decades has been home to important Hungarian academic institutions, as a future centre of government institutions. Therefore, academic institutions, including the National Archives (which holds party and government files of the communist era), have been moved out of the area. The National Archives was closed to researchers in 2016 and began to operate in 2018 in a location that is more difficult to access than the previous one (“Traffic by tram 17 and 61 in Villányi Road. Get off at stop Alsóhegy street. In Alsóhegy street walk one minute by the railway tracks to get to the building”).<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the administrative process through which a prospective researchers can gain access to the archives has been made more complex. In a similar manner, files of the Communist Youth Federation, which belonged to a public foundation of the Hungarian Socialist Party, were taken into custody by the National Archives. This act of centralization might have served the objective of securing better and safer access to the documents. In reality, however, the Communist Youth papers have now long been inaccessible due to the arrangement of the files into the new system of the National Archives.

This situation increases the value of other types of collections. The most spectacular and, in many ways, unexpected institution to open as a collection on cultural opposition was the Historical Archives of the State Security. The Archives, which began to function as a public institution in 1997, left researchers and the public inundated with oceans of unknown records on groups and individuals which the state police had once considered opponents of socialism. In addition, regional and local archives, libraries, and museums which often hold materials which had belonged to or concern groups or individuals who had been part of local forms of cultural dissent are being discovered by both researchers and broader audiences.

Currently, there is no specialized academic institution that focuses exclusively on contemporary history. Research on contemporary history is part of specialized departments at universities and the Academy of Sciences. The Institute for the History of 1956, which was an independent institution until 1994 and a public foundation until 2010, lost its status in 2010 and was reduced to the status of a department of the National Library. Money taken from the 1956 Institute was used by Viktor Orbán’s first government to found the House of Terror in 2002. In 2014, Orbán’s second government established a set of new institutions (the Committee of National Memory, the Veritas Institute of History, the Research Institute and Archives for the History of the Hungarian Regime Change) formally to balance research on the communist period. These institutions were founded and are monitored directly by the Prime Minister’s Office, and their Founding Documents compel them to pursue duties set by the government. These factors cast serious doubts on their capacity and willingness to perform independent academic research and decisively exclude them as specialized academic institutions.

Until 2018, archives, libraries, museums, universities and academic institutions were maintained by the Ministry of Human Capacities. The Hungarian Academy of Sciences, which has an extensive network of research institutions, regularly received a budget of 40 billion HUF

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<sup>1</sup> Information on accessing the National Archives on its official website.  
<http://mnl.gov.hu/mnl/ol/elerhetosegek> (Accessed 21 Nov 2018).

(12 million EUR). This was divided in two in 2018 and a new ministry, the Ministry for Innovation and Technology, has now been designated as the recipient of almost half of the original budget. This allows the ministry to control directly a substantial part of academic spending in Hungary. The Ministry of Human Capacities oversees museums, archives, and universities. Chancellors appointed directly by the government to the universities occasionally can hinder independent academic research. Chancellors, formally charged with the task of safeguarding the financial sustainability of universities, often block research budgets won from public research funds and can press academic decision makers not to initiate innovative but potentially not profitable study programs, such as gender studies.

Hungary spends a relatively high proportion of its GDP on culture (roughly 2 percent, compared to the EU average of 1 percent). Collections suffer from insufficient support, however. Public budgets normally cover the sustainability costs (salaries, technical maintenance) of public museums, libraries, and archives and rarely allow for innovation or new acquisitions. Public collections can submit applications for funding to, for instance, the National Research Fund and the National Culture Fund, which regularly support these institutions. However, due to the relatively limited resources of these two foundations, larger-scale innovative initiatives or research programs are often pursued with the assistance of international public or private funding agencies, such as the European Union or the Soros Foundation. Smaller and, particularly, regional and private collections are often unprepared to handle such complex application procedures, and, thus, they are frequently left to their own devices. Civic initiatives in culture were supported by the Soros Foundation until Hungary's entry into the European Union in 2004. Since then, particularly these local, community, and private initiatives have found it extremely difficult to obtain funding for their initiatives.<sup>2</sup>

## Aggregate information from the registry and background information

Geographically, collections are centred in Budapest. However, there are interesting local and regional collections, particularly concerning alternative youth and art cultures and literary societies, in regional centres, such as Pécs and Szeged. State ownership is an important form of keeping collections on dissent and counterculture. National museums, archives, and libraries hold a spectacular array of relevant materials. The National Széchenyi Library and Petőfi Museum of Literature have among the most sizable collections of clandestine literature. The collection of contemporary art in the National Gallery is an indispensable component of Hungarian avantgarde and non-conformist art from the communist period. The Budapest City Archives holds important files on former opposition activists and samizdat producers György Krassó and Gábor Demszky.

State ownership, however, is not the dominant form of preserving such collections. This is especially true of the field of art. The most relevant collections of dissent art are held by

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<sup>2</sup> Ébli, "From Ivory Towers."

private individuals or communities. Artpool was created by artist György Galántai and Júlia Klaniczay. The C3 Video Archives was a private initiative launched by Miklós Peternák. Similarly, art historians László Beke in Budapest and Géza Pernecky in Bremen created essential collections of neo-avantgarde and performance art. Religious collections are, likewise, often kept by private individuals and communities. The persecuted religious groups of Bokor and the Pasarét Protestant communities preserved their material via private efforts and community solidarity. One of the most important archives of religious dissent in Hungary, the Archives of the Jesuit Order, was saved by clandestinely transporting it abroad. It is kept by the Order today. The most important sites to the study of underground youth and counterculture are the private collections of journalist Tamás Szőnyei and historian Gábor Klaniczay. Hungary also has a unique asset relevant to dissent cultures. The Blinken-OSA Archives founded by philanthropist George Soros is part of Central European University, a private institution in Budapest (which has now been compelled by the Hungarian government to move parts to Vienna). OSA contains important samizdat material from Hungary and also from other former socialist countries, such as Poland.

Collecting began almost immediately after the communist takeover, as autonomous cultural groups and bodies began to be persecuted. These activities did not necessarily mean the deliberate and purposeful collection of material with regard to cultural opposition. Instead, they represented the will to preserve and save important material and forms of expression with which groups which were then persecuted identified. The typical collections that were generated in this era, hence, either consisted of materials gathered privately and often clandestinely or were archives created by people in exile. Church and religious groups were particularly active in these activities in this period. György Bulányi, the founder of Bokor, initiated the gathering of manuscripts and other unpublished materials created by the members of the community in 1945.

The anti-Stalinist revolt in October 1956 constituted an important turning point in the history of collections of cultural opposition. Several former participants who were persecuted after 1956 resolved to preserve the memory of the revolution and began collecting records and documents related to the events. In institutional terms, these collections were strikingly similar to their predecessors: they were kept by private individuals either in hiding or in exile. The most important people to create and maintain these kinds of private archives were Árpád Göncz and István Bibó. The leftist Marxist revisionary exile community established the Imre Nagy Institute, an archive in Brussels. In addition, the post-1956 period was crucial in shaping a nationalist-populist oppositional culture in Hungary. Many of the populist intellectuals were banned from publishing due to their involvement in 1956 and, as a result, they retreated to smaller, private, hidden social networks and particularly into rural areas, as for instance the collection of Miklós Galyasi in Hódmezővásárhely illustrates.

The mid-1960s bore witness to the emergence of interesting new forms of collections. More and more intellectuals and artists began to realize that they had little or no chance of having any kind of public presence in the official sphere and, thus, of having ties to official institutions of memory. Several of them set out on their own paths and decided to create collections of



materials related to the (counter)cultures in which they were active (for instance György Galántai, the Orfeo art group, László Beke). In many ways, silent cooperation among private individuals and state institutions remained the rule of collecting alternative cultural products in Hungary in the last decades of the socialist period. This applied also to the nationalist-populist oppositional culture, which could often benefit from the ethnographic and folklore collections. There were concerned individuals who themselves were also part of the emerging underground and punk youth subcultures and who documented the performances and everyday lives of these networks (for instance Gábor Klaniczay, Tamás Szőnyei, Ferenc Kálmándy in Pécs). In the 1980s, nationalist-populist critical culture started to be institutionalized as public foundations like the Gábor Bethlen Foundation were either tolerated or given permission to function openly by the end of the decade.

The collapse of state socialism constituted an important turning point in the history of the collections on cultural opposition in Hungary. Clandestine, hidden, secretly kept collections suddenly were openly recognized as important assets which might well offer intriguing insights into other parts of cultural life in socialist Hungary. This meant, first, the growing institutionalization of these kinds of collections. Many hidden collections suddenly became mainstream. Galleries and museums of fine art in particular realized that some of their previously marginal collections had now become mainstream and, indeed, could provide ammunition for carving out progressive and often also anti-communist identities.

The infrastructure and institutional frames of archival and museum collections in Hungary are regulated by two major laws, which correspond not only to two separate approaches to legislation, but also to two ways of understanding the roles of the collections and public administration. Whereas the initial 1997 Act on museums<sup>3</sup> was passed virtually unnoticed by the general public and even by political decision makers, the 2010 initiative for a substantially modified new law proved largely controversial and was met with remarkable criticism, both by the political opposition and various professional organizations.<sup>4</sup>

Post-communist parties came to agree on one of the most important principles of the new model: the limitation of state intervention into the activities of the collections in order to reshape them as non-political, public institutions, openly accessible to all members of society. Furthermore, the common emphasis on cultural diversity, a European focus, and visions of cultural policy among the new parties served to draw attention to the importance of protecting and fostering indigenous national cultural values and perspectives.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> 1997. évi CXL. törvény a muzeális intézményekről, a nyilvános könyvtári ellátásról és a közművelődésről [Act no. CXL 1997 on Museum Institutions, Library Services and Public Access to Culture].

<sup>4</sup> On the debate: *Heti Világgazdaság* (5 November 2010) and the roundtable of cultural periodical Magyar Szemle [Hungarian Review]

[http://www.magjarszemle.hu/cikk/tudomanyos\\_kozintezetek\\_vagy\\_kozmuvelodesi\\_intezmenyek\\_-\\_vitaest\\_az\\_orzagos\\_muzeumok\\_jovojerol](http://www.magjarszemle.hu/cikk/tudomanyos_kozintezetek_vagy_kozmuvelodesi_intezmenyek_-_vitaest_az_orzagos_muzeumok_jovojerol). and the debate of Batthyány Circle: Távlatok és teendők [Perspectives and Tasks].

<sup>5</sup> A nemzeti megújulás programja [The Program of National Rejuvenation]. Elefánt a porcelánboltban [Elephant in the Chinashop].

At the same time, there were remarkable differences between the conservative-nationalist and liberal-leftist approaches. Conservative-nationalist cultural policy saw cultural institutions as important means of constructing, preserving, and protecting national culture. "National culture" had a double meaning for the conservative-nationalists. On the one hand, it reflected the priority of the domestic canons of arts, intellectual thought, creative thinking, and cultural traditions. On the other hand, national culture was conceived in broader linguistic-ethnic terms and was understood as embracing all Hungarian-speaking cultures and traditions. As a consequence, this type of cultural policy, while acknowledging cultural diversity in the form of various regional, linguistic, and ethnographic subcultures, emphasized unity and homogeneity as important aspects or allegedly conditions of social cohesion and equal accessibility to cultural capital, thereby at the same time downplaying the importance of ethnic or linguistic cultural minorities such as the Roma or recent migration tendencies from Southeast Europe, Southeast Asia, and Africa, as well as differences between contemporary urban subcultures and more rural-based popular cultures.

The liberal-leftist alternative, in turn, highlighted the roles of museums, archives, and libraries as crucial fora of civil society. This policy program considered cultural institutions as the asset of various autonomous social and cultural groups and as important tools with which these groups could construct and maintain their identities. Museums and similar institutions should have been inherently associated with various civil social groups, and governments should have encouraged them to construct their priorities and institutions freely. The liberals, however, did not regard this proposal as a step that would lead to a decrease in central state funding. The state was supposed to maintain its commitment and resources to keep the institutions running, and it was expected to do so according to three principles. First, the state was called to support the cultural demands of social groups with insufficient resources to fund their own activities. Second, state financing would supposedly take the cultural diversity of Hungarian society into consideration. Third, cultural policy was expected to encourage the private sponsorship of cultural institutions.

The principle of the state as responsible for the creation and maintenance of the institutional frames of culture but not their direct oversight or control was part of the program of the second democratic, socialist-liberal government, which proposed the first post-communist professional legislation concerning collections in 1997, the "no. CXL 1997 Act concerning the Protection of Cultural Property, Museum Institutions, Public Library Services and Public Education." Although the liberals, who were responsible for the cultural policy of the government under the leadership of Bálint Magyar, the SZDSZ Minister of Culture, cultivated the ideal of autonomous civil cultural activism, employees of museums, libraries, and other public institutions demanded institutional guarantees for funding for these activities. This social demand contributed to the preparation of the comprehensive professional regulation of policies on collections. As municipal administrations in the country were increasingly lacking in funding, which threatened not only the continuity of cultural activities, but also workplaces within the system, the government decided to develop a system of central funding and institutional guarantees for collections. The 1997 legislation thus served to guarantee basic

state funding for museums, archives, and libraries to cover personnel and basic infrastructural costs, and a special public fund was created under the administration by the Ministry of Culture for the occasional expansion of collections.

The 1997 legislation treated the collections as institutions associated with cultural heritage, universal as well as and national, and, because free access to the common heritage was considered a fundamental democratic right, it also sought to provide spaces for the study of this heritage. Policy makers appreciated the new law as crucial in securing the function of the collections in the preservation of this cultural heritage and the tasks of interpreting it and making it available to the public. Accordingly, the law regulated property rights with regard to objects considered part of this cultural heritage: the sale of such objects was prohibited without special permission from the minister. The law maintained the principle of free foundation and operation of collections, particularly museums, allowing both private and public bodies to engage in collecting and museum activities. However, the Ministry retained the right to supervise and withhold permits in the case of unprofessional management. In order to secure professional operation, institutional collections were obliged to employ adequately qualified staff only.

The law was intended to provide the necessary funding from the state budget to ensure the secure management of collections. State-owned collections were funded by the budget of the Ministry of Culture, regional and territorial collections from the budget of the Ministry of Municipal Autonomies, and all public and private collections alike were entitled to apply to the Ministry of Culture for acquisition funds. However, the law only guaranteed the covering of personnel and management costs for the collections, which, while creating a predictable future for staff and administration, rendered acquisition policy unpredictable and tedious. In 1998, the Ministry of Culture established the Directorate of Cultural Heritage for the purpose of supervising and monitoring the protection and definition of cultural property within the country. In effect, this organ, which served as a department of the Ministry, oversaw not only the operation of the collections, but also the protection of monuments and architecture.

Conservative criticism continued to produce ideas about the involvement of the state in cultural production. The conservative suggestion, this time already shaped by Viktor Orbán's Fidesz, was to centralize the tasks and organs of cultural activities and to increase state participation in the process. The conservatives understood heritage as embracing culture, monuments and architecture, and tourism, while education was viewed separately. Fidesz, therefore, largely with reference to the British model, established, after its electoral victory in 1998, a new Ministry, the Ministry of National Cultural Heritage, which would go on to shape institutional practices related to collections. The museums, archives, and libraries were expected to play a special part in accordance with the Fidesz program: they were intended to shield citizens from the alleged damages expected to be inflicted by global culture by creating firm grounds for cultural identities and subsequently confirming and strengthening these identities.

The concept of cultural heritage, which was also instrumental to the 1997 legislation, was crucial in framing the collection policy of the new conservative-nationalist government in the context of a broader cultural policy. The parliament elected in 1998 passed legislation on protecting cultural heritage in 2001. The 2001 legislation differed from the 1997 law in two important aspects. First, it concerned the concept of cultural heritage as the subject of cultural policy, shifting the emphasis from tangible collection practice to a more abstract philosophical-ideological notion. Second, it also shifted the emphasis on the balance of national and universal culture to a distinctly and uniquely national heritage, to which the government accorded special protection since this heritage was allegedly subjected to the menace of globalization. These transformations implied the idea of a homogeneous and unitary national culture, which, in turn, appeared clearly demarcated from other sets of national heritage.

The subsequent socialist-liberal government from 2002, however, would attempt to restore the balance between universal and national heritage by introducing the concept of “global heritage,” which also implied an approach to the global system of world heritage sites. Envisaging Hungary’s accession to the European Union, this government expressed grand plans to improve the infrastructure of public collections and accessibility to people within the country. It promised to apply for the title of European cultural capital, and it introduced free entrance to state-owned museums. This measure, while in principle rendering museums more accessible, in practice deprived the system of important income for which it would prove very difficult to find and adequate substitute. The government emphasized its European priorities and its intention to guarantee the autonomy and diversity of cultural activities. Symbolically, perhaps, major investments in the museum field were a manifestation of this: the establishment of the Ludwig Museum of Contemporary Art (Ludwig – Kortárs Művészeti Múzeum), which has since developed into an important European centre of contemporary arts.

The conservative-nationalist government elected in 2010 (Viktor Orbán’s second government) announced its intention to modify the legislation on collections. The severe budgetary crisis of the Hungarian state, however, prevented the government from implementing its ambitious plans. On the contrary, public collections were hit with serious budgetary cuts in 2011, which in many cases endangered their basic operations.<sup>6</sup> In contrast, massive centralization was implemented in the field of public collections. In 2012, the government brought regional archives into the infrastructure of the National Archives, a step which formerly was intended to preserve documents of central political, economic, and cultural organs. Similarly, the two important state-owned art museums, the National Gallery and the Museum of Fine Arts, were unified. Formally, the centralization was meant to provide collections with better services, infrastructure, and IT facilities. As an important drawback, several collections, which were already losing their earlier independence, also lost opportunities to participate in applications and fund-raising and acquisition activities at their own initiative, which hindered access to

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<sup>6</sup> *Magyar Múzeumok* (11 November, 16 November 2011).

important professional and material resources. Also, since digitalization is not a legally defined duty of public collections, many important projects involving the digitalization of holdings in order to make them more accessible to digital users can be done thanks to voluntary efforts, particularly in cases of regional collections.

Up to the present day, there has been little effort to use counter-archives as sources in the writing of histories of the socialist period. Histories that were produced on the basis of cases of cultural opposition, for instance on Galántai's alternative art studio, remained known only to a more specialized audience and were not used to make their messages broadly available. In fact, the typical users of collections on the cultural opposition are academics who are interested in pursuing their own research agendas. In other cases, for instance the archives of the secret police, individuals who were once subjected to surveillance form an important group of users. Museums and galleries can reach out to audiences who normally visit museums, typically tourists or school groups, beyond the usual consumers of art. There are many reasons for this. First, these collections resist nationalist framings of history-telling. They do not speak of victimized nations suffering under imperialist great powers. In contrast, they tell the stories of courageous individuals who dared pursue their own agendas of creating and preserving culture, which were comparable in many countries and often also occurred in a transnational context. Second, these collections also often undermine the totalitarian framing of the socialist past, which is often too quick to divide societies into victims and perpetrators. As the records of counterculture show, being victimized was not the only viable alternative: there were always individuals and groups which chose actively to defend their values and causes. Indeed, highly popular and well-promoted public representations of the socialist era, such as the House of Terror, use none of the records from these collections, and possibly no authentic records at all.

## Best practice and recommendations

### *a) Challenges*

One of the first difficulties of rendering the collections of cultural opposition more accessible is that stakeholders, collectors, and owners of hitherto less familiar private holdings do not necessarily trust state archives and, therefore, are reluctant to approach these institutions and place their materials in them. The reasons for such distrust are manifold, but three factors clearly stand out. First, many private collectors do not sense the clear advantages of professional archiving. They do not see how institutions could further conditions of preserving and making accessible their holdings. Second, recently central archives, particularly, the National Archives, had to restrict access to its materials significantly due to reorganization efforts instigated at the initiative of the government which were poorly planned and mismanaged. The complete inaccessibility of the most important archival documents of modern and contemporary Hungarian history for more than a year has certainly not served to foster trust in the professional capacities of state archives. Third, the precedents of the loss

and destruction of material in state archives due to mismanagement have made prospective donators unsure of the competence of these institutions.

A second difficulty is that many stakeholders both in private and public collections tend to hide their material or, more precisely, are not interested in promoting their assets in public. The first important reason for this is that, in general, they lack the human resources to respond to prospective visitors' demands. Second, in general, they are not interested in international collaboration. In smaller archives as well as larger state collections, international projects would simply mean more work for the same, generally, below-average salary. International cooperation entails a complicated process of work in which most staff have no expertise, particularly in regional and local collections. Such work requires a command of the professional and bureaucratic languages of the European Union, and these languages often have an alienating effect on local stakeholders. Also, local EU offices which were established to bridge this gap sometimes can provide only general guidance, since their staff changes all too often. Archives would need more specific advisors who have expertise in cooperation with local cultural institutions. Funded trainee programs in grant management for the staff of local cultural institutions would be welcomed. Furthermore, the applications also demand considerable investments of time and effort from the employees with only a low rate of success. In the Hungarian context, especially for local and regional collections, it proves more useful to foster informal connections with local and national politicians, which often leads to the development of regionalist, nationalist, and, in some cases, anti-Europeanist agendas. As a consequence, most of the collections have only a low networking potential. They also often consider digitalization projects an extra burden, since they lack the necessary human resources (including funding), and they also often work with outdated technologies.

The third difficulty concerns the general low level of prestige enjoyed by research in the humanities as a contribution to relevant public achievements. This is connected partly to the relatively low level of electronic repositories and digital research tools in Hungary, which are the most community-oriented research activities today. Despite this, research and hiring bodies and committees often tend to undervalue these initiatives. Scholars and education personnel, hence, are also less interested in contributing to such digital humanities projects. These factors all lead to a general lack of sustainability, and electronic research projects and initiatives often end abruptly.

## *b) Opportunities*

The first set of recommendations, therefore, concerns the fostering of trust in state-managed archives and public collections. On the one hand, this requires improving archival culture. Public archives should be more attentive to advertising themselves as repositories of important information. They should use their collections to promote a culture of evidence which clearly links the authenticity and authority of public statements to grounded proof and knowledge. It would be helpful to develop public programs which focus on exciting pieces of archival evidence and, thus, promote the archives as places of trusted knowledge. These

archival programs could be fostered by specific European Union and national cultural policy initiatives that would offer resources and expertise to grass-roots initiatives. In addition, the culture of trust should be shored up by new legislation, which would guarantee that no government or governmental body could introduce drastic restrictions on access to archival holdings on a permanent basis. Such legislation could be initiated on a European level, but national governments should be strongly encouraged to design their own national legal frameworks to address the problem

Second, it is important to develop strategies to make stakeholders more interested in collaboration. These kinds of strategies could emerge on three levels: European, national, and regional. They could include European Union programs encouraging the use of local and private collections for pan-European and international exhibitions and online and printed publication, as well as national museum and library initiatives that integrate such material into their national narratives of the communist period and local programs that shore up regional identities for citizens.

Third, international standards should be set that clearly acknowledge digital humanities and online resources as genuine scholarly contributions. European Union and national policies could encourage the development of higher education curricula (the Courage curricula offers one such example) and could support the wider use of digital resources in higher education in the humanities. Professionals and in particular school teachers should be also encouraged to use digital data focusing on local collections to bring young people close to history and civic values.

One of the most important models for best practices in Hungary is the Blinken-OSA Archives (originally the Open Society Archives) at Central European Society. It is unique in two ways. First, the activities of the Archives are funded by private donations, primarily by philanthropists George Soros and Donald and Vera Blinken. Second, the OSA is a regional archive that collects material relevant to countercultures from all over Eastern Europe. OSA is a counter archive in two ways. First, its core collection contains the former research and records of Radio Free Europe, which created counter archives itself by observing the Cold War other. Second, OSA actively collects materials from participants in communist-era countercultural activities. OSA has exceptional opportunities to receive private funding on a level that is unavailable to most Hungarian collections. Essentially, however, the way in which OSA makes use of its holdings to promote free access to information and to open its collections to broad audiences via exhibitions, public discussions, film shows, and short-term residency programs for scholars is a model that other collections may want to follow. By serving local and specialist audiences, other collections could also develop their capacities to connect to prospective private funders, donators, or in-kind voluntary contributors.

A possible model for working out licensing and copyright issues in Hungary is the unique photo collection of Fortepan. Fortepan is an extensive online collection of photos documenting the twentieth century until 1990. All photos fall under creative commons license. Started as a private non-profit initiative, Fortepan grew out of a core collection of 5,000 images, and it has

been dynamically expanding as both institutions and private individuals continue to donate photos to the collection. Images are largely about scenes of life in Hungary, but there is a growing number of photos taken in other countries. Fortepan is the largest free-to-use digital photo collection covering, among other things, cultural opposition under communism in Eastern Europe. Underground music scenes, alternative theatre and film, grey zone cultural activities, and the democratic and populist opposition are all topics covered in the collection. In contrast to state owned collections, which normally charge high fees for photo reproductions (even for programs of public use) and, thus, seriously limit access to visual heritage, Fortepan uses discarded material and private donations and gives permission to reuse its already digitized material free of charge. It thus has emerged as the unmatched source of visual material for works related to the history of the region in the twentieth century. Its successes may encourage other public collections to make their material more open-access as they start losing income due to the competition set by Fortepan, an income that was previously generated by the overpriced sale of photographic reproductions. Fortepan also collects and digitizes negatives that archives are not prepared and legally not obliged to collect in Hungary, but which constitute a part of visual cultural heritage that is has undergone destruction on a mass scale. Saving photo negatives would require immediate action by cultural politicians.



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# COURAGE

Cultural Opposition: Understanding the Cultural Heritage of Dissent in the Former Socialist Countries

## *Country Reports*



# MOLDOVA

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## Table of Content

1. Introduction: Shifting Attitudes to the Communist Past after 1991 .....	4
2. Context.....	5
2.1. Research Trends and Historical Policy in Moldova after 2009 .....	5
2.2. Institutional and Legal Framework .....	12
3. The COURAGE Collections: Typology, Topics and Actors . <b>Hiba! A könyvjelző nem létezik.</b>	
4. Conclusions and Policy Recommendations .....	18
Summary.....	21
Bibliography.....	22
Appendix.....	23

## 1. Introduction: Shifting Attitudes to the Communist Past after 1991

In the first years following the dissolution of the USSR, coherent attempts were made in newly independent Moldova to radically revise the attitude toward the Soviet past and to rethink the country's history through the prism of the "national paradigm." The sphere of official symbols and the public space were mostly "nationalized" relatively quickly and without significant resistance. These tendencies were expressed in several concrete forms, including: 1) the removal of most Soviet-era monuments or their transfer to special depositories, out of the public eye. This was applied, first of all, to the statues of V. I. Lenin and of other Soviet leaders. However, this process did not uniformly affect all Moldova's regions (e.g., the Soviet monuments were preserved in the Gagauz autonomous region in the south of the country). At the same time, some monuments associated with the Soviet past were left standing even in the republic's capital (e.g., the monument of the 'Komsomol heroes' or the statues commemorating the 'revolutionary fighters' Sergei Lazo and Grigorii Kotovskii); 2) the "de-communization" of the public space, which found its expression in the massive renaming of streets and institutions and in the gradual displacement of the Soviet "places of memory" from the broader public sphere. In contrast to the Ukrainian case, the symbolic "nationalization" of space did not result in a wave of protests and public discontent. The new nomenclature, heavily borrowed from the Romanian national canon, did not resonate with a large part of Moldova's population, both in the case of the majority Romanian-speakers and in that of the national minorities. The latter group, in particular, perceived the new names as 'foreign' and were unable to decipher their symbolic meaning. A concrete example concerns the elements of the purported continuity of the Romanian ethnicity on Moldova's current territory symbolized by the use of ancient Roman names and notions referring to the time of Dacia's conquest by the Romans while renaming streets, schools, public institutions etc. The same applied to the "symbolic rehabilitation" of little-known militants of the Moldovan national movement from the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The majority of the population perceived these innovations either neutrally or with outright indifference; 3) the radical revision of educational programs and curricula, particularly in the field of the humanities and social sciences.

On the whole, however, Moldova was very slow to move towards confronting its communist past since proclaiming its independence 27 years ago. Although some initial legal redress for the victims of Soviet-era repressions was undertaken during the early 1990s, when the interest for reclaiming the suppressed memory of the communist regime was high on the public agenda, no political action followed. Politicians were either avoiding sensitive issues due to their association with the former regime or citing low public interest to justify their reluctance to effectively engage with the communist past. The political stalemate was matched by a clear lack of interest and apathy of the public. Demand for open access to the files of the secret police was almost non-existent, aside from the occasional private initiatives and low-intensity lobbying promoted by victims' groups or professional associations (notably, the National Association of Historians). The main political stakeholders also had a shifting attitude to the communist past. The Declaration of Independence,

passed by the Moldovan Parliament on August 27, 1991, referred to the “liquidation of the political and legal consequences” of the Soviet-German “conspiracy” of August 23, 1939<sup>1</sup> and to the “illegal state of occupation” of the Republic of Moldova by the Soviet Union, starting from 1940/44 (the parallels with the context of the Baltic countries are obvious).<sup>2</sup> However, these radical tendencies did not lead to any corresponding sweeping political decisions. Moldova’s “transition” can be best described in terms of a gradual movement toward a compromise between the moderate elements of the “Old Regime” and the moderates within the nationalist opposition. Another important event occurring in this period (with long-term political impact) was the reemergence of the Party of Communists, which was based on a platform of communist “re-foundation.” Although the “national question” was the main point of contention on the Moldovan political landscape in the 1990s, after the Party of Communists came to power in 2001, it focused its attention on the communist era as well. The symbolism, rituals and rhetoric of the Moldovan Communists continued to effectively employ the Soviet legacy as a foundation for legitimizing their own political identity. If the solemn commemoration of the Soviet founding moments and memorial dates (e.g., November 7<sup>th</sup>) or Lenin’s glorification had the character of ‘intra-party’ rituals, other elements of the politics of memory promoted by the PCRM directly touched on the public sphere. Thus, a central motive for the symbolic space that the PCRM leadership strove to (re)construct was linked to the ‘Great Patriotic War.’<sup>3</sup> The war memorial complexes were perceived as especially significant places of memory, and the war itself was to become a stimulus for “national reconciliation.” On the other hand, the memory of the war was cultivated much more intensively than the memorial practices dedicated to the victims of the communist regime. This emphasized the asymmetry and one-sidedness of the PCRM-supported version of the politics of memory. On the whole, such a policy hardly contributed to the closing of the ‘memorial rupture’ between various groups in Moldovan society, which continued to cultivate starkly opposed visions of the recent past.

## 2. Context

### *2.1. Research Trends and Historical Policy in Moldova after 2009*

During the 1990s, only fragmentary research was carried out on the late Soviet period. Most scholars focused on the traumatic experiences of mass deportations, famine and collectivization occurring in the late 1940s and early 1950s or discussed the armed insurgency active during the

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<sup>1</sup> Here the Declaration implies the provisions of the secret Soviet-German protocol dividing the spheres of influence in Eastern Europe, annexed to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact signed on August 23, 1939.

<sup>2</sup> Declaration of Independence of the Republic of Moldova. Available at: <http://www.presedinte.md/declaration>. Accessed October 10, 2018.

<sup>3</sup> The ‘Great Patriotic War’ was the officially approved designation of the Soviet-German war (22 June 1941- 9 May 1945) during the Soviet period. It was meant to underscore the defensive and genuinely popular character of the hostilities emphasized by the Soviet politics of memory.

same period, thus disproportionately emphasizing the Stalinist era. Some noteworthy oral history projects were undertaken, but the published output was still minimal as of the late 1990s. The prevailing view within the established historiography was that open displays of cultural and political opposition were conspicuously absent in the Moldavian SSR, aside from several isolated cases of critical intellectuals who attempted to articulate an anti-regime message, mainly in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Even undeniable milestones in the Moldovan historiography of the communist period (such as the collection *Cartea Memoriei* [The Book of Memory]<sup>4</sup>, published in the late 1990s and early 2000s in order to inventory, catalogue and record the names of the victims of the Soviet regime) mostly dealt with the active phase of armed resistance. The editors of this collection aimed at a thorough coverage of the whole Soviet period (up to the late 1980s). The smaller proportion of the post-Stalinist victims in this catalogue is a consequence of the decrease in the scale of mass violent repressions after 1953 and cannot be interpreted as an editorial failure. However, this fact cannot entirely justify the lack of interest for the post-1953 period displayed by the Moldovan historiography as a whole, at least up to the early 2000s. This situation was complicated even further by the slow process of the opening of local archives, particularly of specialized depositories holding some of the most extensive materials dealing with cultural opposition activities (e.g., the former KGB Archive, transferred in 1992 under the jurisdiction of the reformed Intelligence and Security Service (SIS) or the Archive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs). Even the in-depth study of the narrowly defined cultural sphere (i.e., the literary and artistic field) and its relations with the regime, including open articulation of criticism and (quasi-)dissident positions, got under way only in the early 2000s. Only certain cases of the relatively few high-profile dissidents (such as Mihai Moroșanu and the Usatiuc-Ghimpu-Graur group) were extensively covered in the media and thus received public attention. However, this seemingly clear-cut picture of the local historiographical consensus gradually underwent a shift, which became noticeable by the early 2000s, when several scholars began systematically examining the late Soviet period in the MSSR. Among the scholarly works focusing on cases of cultural and political dissent and opposition in Soviet Moldavia, one should especially emphasize the monographs, studies and collections of documents produced in recent years by Igor Cașu<sup>5</sup>, Gheorghe E. Cojocaru<sup>6</sup>, Sergiu Musteață<sup>7</sup>, Petru Negură<sup>8</sup>, Valeriu Pasat<sup>9</sup>, Elena Postică<sup>10</sup>, and Mihai Tașcă<sup>11</sup>. This growing historiography benefitted from the gradual opening of previously inaccessible archival collections and from an intensive and fruitful communication with their peers abroad.

These developments in the sphere of scholarship coincided with important changes in the political landscape after 2009, which led to the first and (until this moment) only full-fledged debate on the

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<sup>4</sup> Postică, *Cartea Memoriei*.

<sup>5</sup> Cașu, "Political Repressions in the Moldavian SSR," 89-127; Musteață and Cașu, *Fără termen de prescripție*.

<sup>6</sup> Bahnaru and Cojocaru, *Congresul al III-lea al Uniunii Scriitorilor*.

<sup>7</sup> Musteață, *Basarabeanul bruiat de KGB*.

<sup>8</sup> Negură, *Nici eroi, nici trădători*.

<sup>9</sup> Pasat, *Православие в Молдавии: власть, церковь, верующие*.

<sup>10</sup> Postică, *Cartea Memoriei*.

<sup>11</sup> Tașcă, „Manifestări de rezistență antisovietică și anticomunistă,” 939-969.



communist regime and its legacy, as well as to the first attempts at institution-building and coherent policy recommendations regarding the communist era. After the previously ruling Party of Communists lost the parliamentary elections of July 2009, a group of Moldovan historians launched the initiative to create a “Commission for the Study and Evaluation of the Communist Totalitarian Regime in Moldova”, a project openly supported by a part of the new governing coalition. The authors of this idea were inspired by the relative success of similar endeavors in other East European countries (e.g., Romania and the Baltic States) and suggested to apply this experience in the Moldovan context. This initiative was supported by Moldova’s acting president, Mihai Ghimpu, who agreed to place the new institution under the aegis of the Presidency (a clear analogy to the Romanian case). In the context of the escalating political crisis throughout 2009 and 2010, caused by the failure of the new governing coalition to elect a president, due to its insufficient parliamentary majority, Ghimpu sought to play the card of a radical historical policy. Although his political weight was not significant enough to impose his vision on the other coalition partners, he tried to follow in the footsteps of the Ukrainian president Viktor Yushchenko by advocating a radical break with the communist past. History in general, and the Soviet legacy in particular, thus became a prominent factor in the ensuing political battles and was used as a potent rhetorical tool to undermine one’s political adversaries.

The Commission for the Study and Evaluation of the Totalitarian Communist Regime in the Republic of Moldova was established by a special decree of the interim President of the Republic, Mihai Ghimpu, on 14 January 2010<sup>12</sup>. Its mandate was initially limited to a six-month period, expiring on 1 July 2010. In its preamble, the decree referred to the founding acts of Moldovan statehood – the Declaration of Sovereignty, adopted on 23 June 1990, and the Declaration of Independence of 27 August 1991, - which “signified for the Republic of Moldova not only the removal of the communist totalitarian regime, but also a chance for the construction of a democratic society.”<sup>13</sup> The document strongly emphasized the need to establish “the truth concerning the totalitarian communist regime” and to inform the public “objectively and multilaterally”<sup>14</sup> about its essence. It appealed to two potential precedents in international law: Resolution 1096 (1996) of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe on measures to dismantle the heritage of the former communist totalitarian systems and Resolution 1481 (2006) on the need for international condemnation of the crimes of totalitarian communist regimes. No details were provided on the chronological framework and the concrete aspects of the former regime’s activities to be investigated. This vagueness later resulted in controversies over the Commission’s mandate, mission and recommendations. The institution was conceived as a “truth commission,” but its relationship to the state authorities was loosely

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<sup>12</sup> Decret privind constituirea Comisiei pentru studierea și aprecierea regimului comunist totalitar din Republica Moldova (nr. 165-V, 14 ianuarie 2010) (Decree concerning the creation of the Commission for the Study and Evaluation of the Communist Totalitarian Regime in the Republic of Moldova), in: *Monitorul Oficial al Republicii Moldova* (Official Bulletin of the Republic of Moldova), Nr. 5-7/ 19. 01. 2010, 3-4.

<sup>13</sup> Decret privind constituirea Comisiei, 3.

<sup>14</sup> Decret privind constituirea Comisiei, 3.

defined: the decree stated only that “the ministries and the other central and local administrative authorities will provide the Commission will all necessary assistance.”<sup>15</sup>

The Commission’s mandate, as defined in the decree issued on 14 January 2010, was limited to ‘truth revelation.’ The new institution had the following goals: “to study the documents and materials concerning the activity of the main institutions involved in the establishment and perpetuation of the communist totalitarian regime” while assessing its atrocities and human rights abuses<sup>16</sup>; “to inform the public, periodically, on its activity” and results<sup>17</sup>; to draft “a study, a collection of documents, and an analytical report regarding the historical and political-legal evaluation of the communist totalitarian regime;”<sup>18</sup> to submit recommendations to the President of the Republic until 1 June 2010.<sup>19</sup> A general provision also allowed the creation of subcommittees (‘working groups’) within the institution. The Commission was supposed to formulate policy proposals that would eventually lead to political and legal consequences, but was not granted any effective instruments to promote their enforcement.

The Commission included thirty members, being one of the largest institutions of its kind in the region. Of its overall membership, two-thirds were academic historians; the other ten members were divided between three lawyers / legal scholars, two political scientists, a linguist, a sociologist, a philosopher, an economist and a prominent writer (the only person without an academic background). The leadership of the Commission consisted exclusively of historians. It was headed by Gheorghe Cojocaru, an expert in 20<sup>th</sup>-century history, who was close to Acting President Ghimpu by his political views and orientation. One should emphasize the uncertain institutional status of the Commission. This uncertainty was enhanced by the absence of a permanent headquarters and by the lack of state funding. While the latter feature increased the Commission’s potential autonomy vis-à-vis the authorities, it also deprived it of an effective organizational framework. The work format of the Commission was based on monthly general (‘plenary’) sessions and on smaller working meetings, held in subcommittees twice a month.

Most of the Commission’s members were not directly affiliated with political parties, but shared a broad political agenda and consensus on the necessity of a radical break with the communist past. This often led to (partially justified) accusations that “anti-communism” was the main driving force behind the whole project. The public interest for the Commission ebbed and flowed according to the political situation and the immediate concerns of the local actors. The Commission’s leadership (entitled to represent the institution in its dealings with the authorities and the public) launched a vigorous press and PR campaign, which reached its apex during the late winter and spring of 2010. This resulted in a series of regular press conferences, interviews, round tables and TV shows which increased the Commission’s visibility and impact in the local media. The first press conference of the Commission on 18 January was immediately followed by a strongly worded reply from the

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<sup>15</sup> Decret privind constituirea Comisiei, 4.

<sup>16</sup> Decret privind constituirea Comisiei, 4.

<sup>17</sup> Decret privind constituirea Comisiei, 4.

<sup>18</sup> Decret privind constituirea Comisiei, 4.

<sup>19</sup> Decret privind constituirea Comisiei, 4.

Communist leader, Vladimir Voronin, who called the whole project a “stupidity” and a “heresy,”<sup>20</sup> viewing the intention of condemning the communist regime as a “slap on the face of those who fought against Fascism.”<sup>21</sup> This was followed by a concerted attack in the PCRМ-affiliated press against a number of the Commission’s members (mostly senior historians, including the chairman, Gheorghe Cojocaru). They were accused of having actively collaborated with the former regime and of lacking any credibility as moral judges or neutral investigators of the communist past. Finally, the PCRМ attacks culminated with Voronin’s demand (in May 2010) to abolish the Commission, as a first step towards future political negotiations with the authorities for solving the ongoing political crisis.

However, the direct political consequences of the Commission’s work proved to be minimal and were generally not followed by concrete actions. This outcome was to be anticipated, given the unfavorable political conjuncture and the growing discord and controversy among the Moldovan political elite. Due to the limited duration of the Commission’s mandate and its scarce resources, its main achievements were related to the gradual broadening of the access to previously unavailable archival files (including those of the secret police). Its members benefitted from some government assistance (e.g., through the special committee on de-classifying official documents), and they were granted access to previously restricted departmental archives (e.g., the Archive of the Ministry for Internal Affairs, the Archive of the Prosecutor General’s Office and the former NKVD / KGB Archive, now hosted by the Intelligence and Security Service (*Serviciul de Informații și Securitate*, SIS). The access to the relevant documentary collections of the specialized historical archives was significantly improved (although problems persisted). A second dimension of the Commission’s activity concerned the organization of public events for the dissemination of its findings. Several symposia and scholarly conferences were organized (with the participation of international experts). The intermediary results of the Commission’s research were made public on this occasion. Possibilities of institutional consolidation were also discussed with foreign colleagues. Starting from late spring of 2010, the political climate in Moldova became less congenial for the Commission’s activity, while the political pressures increased. This became obvious once the deadline for the submission of the analytical report and the related policy recommendations approached. The initial vagueness of the Commission’s tasks (conflating the academic and policy dimensions, while depriving it of any effective legal tools and financial resources) led to serious limitations placed upon its effectiveness. These weaknesses were aggravated by the short period of its operation (barely four months).

In the closing stages of the preparation of the final report, serious internal disagreements emerged among its members. A group of younger academics with a Western educational background advocated a more neutral and scholarly-oriented report, without obvious value judgments and focusing on the concrete cases of the Soviet regime’s human rights abuses. A more militant faction,

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<sup>20</sup> Vladimir Voronin, “Osnovnaia tsel’ “komissii Gimpu” - ustranit’ PKRM s politicheskogo polia” (The Basic Aim of “Ghimpu’s Commission” Is to Eliminate the PCRМ from Politics). *OMEGA News Agency*, 19 January 2010. Available at: <http://archive.omg.md/Content.aspx?id=6577&lang=3>, accessed on 20 November 2018.

<sup>21</sup>Voronin, “Osnovnaia tsel’ “komissii Gimpu” - ustranit’ PKRM”, <http://archive.omg.md/Content.aspx?id=6577&lang=3>

supported by the majority of the Commission's members and its chairman, Gheorghe Cojocaru, insisted on a radical anti-communist message and on wide-ranging and comprehensive policy proposals. This controversy resulted in the postponement of the publication of the full report and the drafting of a short (sixteen-page) analytical report summarizing the main "crimes, horrors, atrocities, abuses, and injustices"<sup>22</sup> of the communist regime and advancing several recommendations for the state authorities. This text amounted to a barely veiled accusatory act against the Soviet past. The Commission also elaborated several policy recommendations that are an excellent illustration of its version of historical policy. These included the following points: the condemnation of the communist totalitarian regime in Moldova for crimes against humanity, followed by a moral condemnation of their perpetrators; the ban on the use of the term 'communist' for political parties and institutions, as well as the elimination of all Communist and Nazi symbols from the public sphere; the urgent drafting and adoption of the Lustration Law; the complete legal, moral and material rehabilitation of the regime's victims and their descendants; the creation of memorial complexes and museums for the commemoration of the regime's atrocities; the introduction of special 'days of mourning' commemorating the regime's victims and the traumatic pages of the country's history under Soviet rule (deportations etc.); the creation of a special group of experts for the evaluation of the material damage caused by the former regime; the transformation of the former Party Archive into the Archive of the Communist Totalitarian Regime in Moldova, with the transfer of all relevant funds from the departmental archives to the new depository; the creation of an Institute for the Study of Totalitarianism and the elaboration of a school textbook and courses on the history of communism; the organization of special debates on the 'inhuman essence of the totalitarian (Communist and Nazi) regimes'<sup>23</sup> in the mass media etc. This report was submitted to the acting President in late May 2010.

Although the Decree of 14 January 2010 is still valid (meaning that the Commission's period of activity has not officially expired), in fact it suspended its activity as a coherent institution in the late summer of 2010. The initial interest in its work, displayed by the media and a part of Moldovan society, has all but faded. The impact and effectiveness of the Commission's work were limited by several factors, including: the vagueness of its mandate; the short time span of its operation; the lack of effective legal tools (subpoena powers) and the absence of a corresponding legal framework; the limited political support for its work and the tendency of certain political forces to make it instrumental for their own purposes; the under-representation of the civil society and of certain social groups (victims' associations) and ethnic minorities within the Commission; the contradiction between the scholarly and political components of its activity.

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<sup>22</sup> "Raportul Comisiei pentru studierea și aprecierea regimului comunist totalitar din Republica Moldova" (Report of the Commission for the Study and Evaluation of the Communist Totalitarian Regime in the Republic of Moldova), *Timpul.md*, 2 July 2010, Available at: <https://www.timpul.md/articol/raportul-comisiei-pentru-studierea-i-aprecierea-regimului-comunist-totalitar-din-republica-moldova-12814.html>, Accessed on 14 November 2018.

<sup>23</sup> "Raportul Comisiei pentru studierea și aprecierea regimului comunist", <https://www.timpul.md/articol/raportul-comisiei-pentru-studierea-i-aprecierea-regimului-comunist-totalitar-din-republica-moldova-12814.html>

However, it achieved several important breakthroughs in the Moldovan context, notably through the opening of previously inaccessible archival (including secret police) files, which amounted to a local “archival revolution,” and the growing public awareness of the nature and consequences of the former regime. Although the height of the public debate on the communist legacy was reached during the active phase of the Commission’s operation in 2010, its long-term role in shifting the attitude of the public opinion toward the Soviet regime should be emphasized. This relative success was achieved on several levels. First, up until 2014, several Moldovan TV channels and radio stations, such as *Jurnal TV*, *Publika TV*, *Moldova 1*, *ALT TV*, *TVC 21*, etc. hosted a series of regular shows presenting the main findings of the Commission and discussing the most prominent cases of anti-communist opposition. A number of the Commission’s members featured as speakers and invited guests, taking advantage of this opportunity to publicize the Commission’s research and recommendations. Another lasting result of the Commission’s activity was the inauguration of a weekly two-page column in one of the leading dailies of that time, *Adevărul*. This column, published between 2010 and 2014 under the title *The Archives of Communism*, was devoted to discussing prominent cases of anti-regime resistance during the Stalinist era, but also extensively reflected upon the post-1953 cultural opposition. The daily *Timpul*, another important newspaper, was also instrumental in disseminating the information collected by the members of the Commission. Second, another significant consequence of the Commission’s activity was the revision of the school history curriculum, implemented as part of its general recommendations to the authorities. The new history textbooks for the ninth and twelfth grade, dealing with the twentieth century, included many of the materials and insights resulting from the Commission’s work and the newly accessible archival sources. These mandatory textbooks, published in 2013 in Romanian and Russian, are still in use. They propose a relatively balanced and comprehensive perspective on the totalitarian regimes of the twentieth century, adequately reflecting on both the communist repressive policies and on the Holocaust. By avoiding both the ‘externalization of guilt’ and excessive national victimization, as was the case in other instances in Eastern Europe, these textbooks marked an obvious progress in the sphere of school education regarding the communist past in Moldova.

Although many other recommendations of the Commission were ignored, some of them were eventually put into practice in the political sphere. This point refers to the reemergence of the issue of the communist past in July 2012. One of the coalition partners suggested some legislative changes which boiled down to the ban on the use of the communist symbols and the propagation of the totalitarian ideologies in the Moldovan public sphere. In the informative note, which accompanied the initiative, its authors advocated the necessity of “the condemnation of the illegal acts of the totalitarian regimes: Nazism, Stalinism, Bolshevism (Communism), which committed crimes against humanity via genocide, deportations, organized famine, forced collectivization, political repressions etc.”<sup>24</sup> Parliament passed the law on 12 July 2012. The adopted version banned explicitly only the communist symbols, while Nazism did not get a clear mention: “ban the use by the political parties of the symbols of the Communist totalitarian regime (hammer and sickle) and any items carrying

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<sup>24</sup> Available at [http://particip.gov.md/public/documente/131/anexe/ro\\_1083\\_NOTA-INFORMATIVA-simboluri-comuniste-05-09-2013.pdf](http://particip.gov.md/public/documente/131/anexe/ro_1083_NOTA-INFORMATIVA-simboluri-comuniste-05-09-2013.pdf). Accessed October 10, 2018.

these symbols, as well as the propagation of totalitarian ideologies.”<sup>25</sup> The Party of Communists challenged the law in the Constitutional Court, claiming that it violated the Constitution of the Republic of Moldova and the constitutional rights to free expression and free association. The Court reached a decision on the case on 4 June 2013, ruling that the law did not correspond to the constitutional norms.<sup>26</sup> The tendency to discard the model of the anti-communist historical policy found its embodiment in the decision of the Parliament of 7 May 2015 to repeal the law on the ban of the communist symbols. To this end, Parliament elaborated a bill (quickly passed), which would rehabilitate anyone found guilty of breaking the 2012 law.

Thus, after the brief upsurge of interest toward the communist past during 2010-2012 (mainly due to reasons of political expediency), this topic again disappeared from public view, despite the efforts of professional historians, who did their best to preserve and promote public interest for the Soviet past during the following years, through all the channels available to them. The gradual dwindling of this subject in the public sphere coincided with the curtailing of the freedom of the press, especially after 2014. One of the main reasons for this situation is the total disinterest of political stakeholders, who, aside from occasional opportunities to exploit the subject for instrumental purposes, are reluctant to seriously engage with the communist past and its legacy.

## *2.2. Institutional and Legal Framework*

Contrary to most other countries covered by the COURAGE Project, there is no special institution devoted to the study of the communist past in Moldova. Until the establishment of the Ghimpu Commission in 2010, the efforts to systematically research the communist era were mostly limited to the low-intensity lobbying efforts of specialized victims’ associations (e.g., the Association of Former Political Prisoners) or professional organizations (e.g., the National Association of Historians). In recent years, mainly after 2010, several small research centers affiliated with major educational establishments and specifically dedicated to the study of recent history and the communist experience have emerged. As a relevant example in this regard, I would mention the Center for the Study of Totalitarianism and the Cold War, founded on 9 October 2010 and headed by Igor Cașu, which is affiliated with the History and Philosophy Department of the State University of Moldova. The following topics are among this center’s research priorities: political repressions in the Moldavian SSR (1941/1944 – 1989); everyday life under communism; corruption during the communist period; the memory and legacy of the communist regime.<sup>27</sup> Cașu also registered an NGO under the same name to provide a legal cover for his center. Despite its founder’s efforts to systematically research cases of cultural and political opposition in the MSSR during the Soviet era

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<sup>25</sup> Available at <http://lex.justice.md/md/344744/>. Accessed October 10, 2018.

<sup>26</sup> Available at <http://lex.justice.md/md/349032/>. Accessed October 10, 2018.

<sup>27</sup> More details are available on the center’s webpage: [http://istorie.usm.md/?page\\_id=2327](http://istorie.usm.md/?page_id=2327) . Accessed October 10, 2018.

(also reflected in Igor Cașu's private collection in the COURAGE Registry), its operation is small-scale, while the institutional impact is minimal. Another similar example is the *Pro Memoria* Institute of Social History, an informal research center affiliated with the History and Philosophy Department of the State University of Moldova. Headed by historian Anatol Petrencu, this organization focuses more specifically on issues of collective memory, the commemoration of the victims of the communist regime and certain oral history projects aimed at recuperating the voices of those who suffered under totalitarian and authoritarian rule<sup>28</sup>. The establishment of both institutions was a direct consequence of the operation of the Commission for the Study and Evaluation of the Communist Regime, in which both Cașu and Petrencu were actively involved. Similarly to the previous example, this institution is rather an "umbrella" for carrying out various research projects than a formal establishment dedicated to the systematic study of the communist regime. Both these institutions lack the necessary funding and personnel, thus underscoring the general lack of interest of the Moldovan authorities and of the wider public for creating specialized research units with a well-defined legal status and adequate resources.

The biggest depositories of materials relating to the communist period are the Moldovan archives and state museums. The status of the country's archival depositories is regulated by the Law on the National Archival Fond of the Republic of Moldova (*Legea privind Fondul Arhivistic Național al Republicii Moldova*), which was passed by the Moldovan Parliament on 22 January 1992 and frequently revised afterwards. According to this law, a special institution for supervising and managing the National Archival Fond was created – the State Archival Service (*Serviciul de Stat de Arhivă*), which became the main state authority responsible for all the archival holdings in Moldova. The law also guaranteed, in principle, the free access of all interested citizens to the archival holdings, provided that the concerned persons "aim at obtaining objective information"<sup>29</sup> and are "responsible for the physical integrity"<sup>30</sup> of the documents (article 20). However, this presumed freedom of access was immediately curtailed by the provisions of the "legislation concerning the protection of personal data"<sup>31</sup> (art. 20), as well as by specific restrictions applying to a variety of cases, notably: security threats impinging on the national interest, endangering the physical integrity of the original documents and violating the fundamental rights and freedoms through unauthorized access to personal data (art. 21, p. 2). The same article (art. 21, p. 4) refers to the state secret, the status of classified documents and the procedures for declassifying them, setting a limit of maximum twenty-five years in this regard<sup>32</sup>. However, throughout the 1990s and the early 2000s,

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<sup>28</sup> More details on the institution's activity and research profile are to be found at its website: <http://promemoria.md/>. Accessed October 10, 2018.

<sup>29</sup> The Law on the National Archival Fond of the Republic of Moldova, in its most recent version, is available at: [http://www.arhiva.gov.md/attachments/019\\_Lege.PDF](http://www.arhiva.gov.md/attachments/019_Lege.PDF). Accessed October 10, 2018.

<sup>30</sup> The Law on the National Archival Fond, [http://www.arhiva.gov.md/attachments/019\\_Lege.PDF](http://www.arhiva.gov.md/attachments/019_Lege.PDF). Accessed October 10, 2018.

<sup>31</sup> The Law on the National Archival Fond, [http://www.arhiva.gov.md/attachments/019\\_Lege.PDF](http://www.arhiva.gov.md/attachments/019_Lege.PDF). Accessed October 10, 2018.

<sup>32</sup> The Law on the National Archival Fond, [http://www.arhiva.gov.md/attachments/019\\_Lege.PDF](http://www.arhiva.gov.md/attachments/019_Lege.PDF). Accessed October 10, 2018.

the Moldovan authorities abused these clauses, frequently denying access to sensitive sources or to documents from institutional archives.

The main Moldovan archives (represented in the COURAGE Registry) have in fact pursued different approaches in granting access to their collections. For example, the access to the files stored in the Archive of Social-Political Organizations of the Republic of Moldova (*Arhiva Organizațiilor Social-Politice din Republica Moldova*, AOSPRM) is completely free, securing the possibility of unrestricted research of the materials concerning the activity of the local party organizations and professional associations. The National Archive (*Arhiva Națională a Republicii Moldova*, ANRM) has also gradually opened its collections for the interested researchers, especially after the transfer of some important materials relating to notable cases of anti-regime opposition, in 2011. By contrast, due to its institutional specificity, the Archive of the Moldovan Intelligence and Security Service (*Arhiva Serviciului de Informații și Securitate*, SIS) has a stricter policy regarding public access, which is possible following a prolonged bureaucratic procedure and is subject to the approval of the agency's director. Although in principle the archival files dealing with cultural opposition and KGB surveillance can be consulted by interested researchers, access remains difficult. The SIS Archive holds the most comprehensive and representative sample of archival evidence relevant for the topic of anti-Soviet opposition. Therefore, full public access to this category of files would be essential. Initially, access to these materials was only possible because of the activity of the Commission for the Study and Evaluation of the Communist Regime in the Republic of Moldova, which functioned during 2010 and was granted unlimited access to all institutional archives. Despite certain recent efforts to improve the situation, it has not fundamentally changed. Most public operators (archives / museums) are reluctant to provide relevant financial data and other types of information viewed as sensitive (e.g., funding data). According to Moldovan laws, this type of information is considered classified and can only be disclosed under certain specific circumstances (e.g., a court decision or an official inquiry). These difficulties could be overcome only through private interviews with certain stakeholders.

The position of another important repository, the National Museum of History in Chișinău, is somewhat more ambiguous. On the one hand, it displays a permanent exhibition on the communist period, which features a representative selection of textual evidence and artifacts pertaining to the Soviet era, including a wide array of samples relating to the phenomenon of cultural opposition. On the other hand, the overall concept of the exhibition heavily emphasizes the topic of national victimization and oppression under communist rule, giving pride of place to the traumatic experiences of the Stalinist period, which is heavily over-represented. This results in a lopsided reflection of the late Soviet period. The public exhibition is abruptly interrupted in the late 1950s/early 1960s, without due attention to aspects of everyday life after 1960. This could be easily corrected, given the richness of available materials regarding the period of late Socialism, including examples of political and cultural opposition. This situation reflects not only the reluctance of the museum administration to revise the general concept of the main exhibition, but also the inadequacy of local networking and the lack of cooperation between the public institutions and the (admittedly few) private collection owners.



### 3.The COURAGE Collections: typology, topics and actors

A total number of fifteen Moldovan collections have been described in the COURAGE Registry. This is roughly similar to the case of the smaller Baltic states (Latvia and Estonia), reflecting some specific problems encountered in the Moldovan case, mainly the relative scarcity of relevant private collections and their overwhelming concentration in the capital city, Chişinău. Among the most frequent topics, I would mention: national movements, censorship, democratic opposition, human rights, surveillance and all its varieties, literature, film, and music. The main types of featured collections fall under the following categories:

1) collections based on archival files, focusing on various individual and collective forms of anti-Soviet resistance and opposition. The peculiar feature of these collections, stored in the main Moldovan depositories (the National Archive of the Republic of Moldova, the Archive of Social-Political Organizations of the Republic of Moldova and the Archive of the Intelligence and Security Service), is their emphasis on open acts of defiance against the regime. Therefore, most of them resulted from secret police (KGB) investigations carried out after the arrest of the protagonists. Although this kind of evidence is crucial due to the richness of information and the coherence of the narrative structure, its inherent bias should be taken into account, especially when the written accounts cannot be corroborated with the direct testimonies of the participants. This type of collections includes both articulate forms of opposition, originating from intellectual circles, and various cases of opposition from below. The most relevant examples within the first subcategory include the Usatiuc-Ghimpu-Graur, Alexandru Şoltoianu and Nicolae Dragoş Collections, which discuss the most important anti-Soviet groups emerging in the MSSR in the 1960s and early 1970s. In the second subcategory, I would highlight the cases of Gheorghe Muruziuc, Arsenie Platon and Zaharia Doncev, which focus on individual displays of anti-regime protest expressed by people originating from a peasant or working-class environment;

2) archival collections focusing on institutions / professional associations (mainly from the Archive of Social-Political Organizations of the Republic of Moldova), which allow a diachronic perspective on the dynamics and evolution of the relations between these associations and the Soviet state and party apparatus. The emerging picture of opposition, tacit subversion and compliance is rather complex, emphasizing the shifting strategies of their members and the changes in the balance of power within and outside these institutions from the early 1950s to the late 1980s. The collections focusing on the Moldavian Writers Union (MWU) and the Moldavian Union of Cinematographers (MUC) are especially relevant in this regard. Thus, the MWU Collection materials draw on several Party meetings, writers' congresses and national conferences which discussed significant issues related to the local cultural heritage, the language question, and the relations between the literary milieu and the Soviet regime;

3) private collections belonging either to direct protagonists and initiators of anti-regime activities (e.g., Mihai Moroşanu, also see above) or to researchers dealing with the subject of anti-Soviet resistance / opposition in the MSSR. The two subcategories highlight different perspectives and interpretations of the phenomenon of cultural opposition, but also serve as complementary examples of a more personal attitude. For example, Moroşanu's collection, reflecting the experience of one of the few authentic dissident figures in the Moldovan context, consists of personal files, interviews, photos and judicial materials and spans a longer period, from the early 1960s to the early 1990s. By contrast, Petru Negură's and Igor Caşu's private collections reflect their authors' scholarly preoccupations and feature both otherwise inaccessible archival documents and oral interviews conducted with prominent figures of cultural opposition active during the Soviet period. It should be noted that the above-mentioned examples do not entirely compensate for the relative scarcity of meaningful private collections in the Moldovan case. This is due, on the one hand, to the small number of people who had preserved their personal archives and related materials documenting their anti-regime attitudes and, on the other, to the reluctance of many protagonists to talk about their earlier experience. However, these private collections are especially valuable due to the alternative data (published and oral interviews, visual materials, fragments from the contemporary press, a variety of personal archives) which provide a different perspective from the official point of view prevailing in the archival files.

The rest of the Moldovan collections cover two forms of cultural opposition that are fundamental for understanding the full picture of the anti-regime activities in the MSSR. The first area is touched upon by the collection dealing with the *Noroc* musical band. It focuses on more elusive forms of everyday resistance and alternative lifestyles during the late Soviet period, with a peculiar emphasis on the musical sphere, which was especially difficult to control from the authorities' point of view and provided a meaningful space for forms of self-expression frowned upon or officially disapproved by the regime. The second field of interest concerns religious dissent and opposition to the Soviet system. Such examples could be found mainly within minority non-conformist religious communities (e.g., Jehovah's Witnesses and the Inochentist movement), while the official church entered a phase of *de facto* collaboration with the authorities after the mid-1960s. Despite the limited societal impact of most manifestations of cultural opposition, the Moldovan collections attest to their diversity (especially during the 1960s and 1970s) and allow the recovery of certain forgotten acts of defiance, frequently initiated from below.

A notable peculiarity of the Moldovan case is the relatively large number of ad-hoc collections. This is mostly due to the structure of the archival funds, which frequently focus on institutions rather than individual cases. Thus, the most representative examples of cultural opposition had to be often separated from the existing archival units, forming ad-hoc collections.

The size of the collections varies widely, reflecting differences in the provenance and intensity of oppositional activities. The largest examples in the Moldovan case are the Usatiuc-Ghimpu-Graur and the Nicolae Dragoş Collections. The first contains archival files (eleven volumes in total) from the depository of the former KGB (currently preserved in the National Archive of the Republic of

Moldova). The main types of documents within the collection consist of trial records (interrogations of the accused and of relevant witnesses), official reports, other categories of judicial files, and documents produced by the members of the organization prior to their arrest (memorandums, reports, letters, correspondence, private notes, etc.). The files also include a number of photos, mostly private photos of the defendants in various contexts or official photos taken during their arrest. The Dragoș Collection, which includes essentially similar content, consists of seven large volumes reflecting this oppositional group's activities. The typical size of an archival-based collection is several hundred pages, i.e., one or two volumes of investigative materials. On the contrary, private collections, if more diverse in their contents, are typically smaller in size. Thus, the Mihai Moroșanu Private Collection features several types of documentary materials (including archival documents, a number of interviews and newspaper articles from the protagonist's personal archive). Besides these two "extremes," the Moldovan case also includes more eclectic institutional collections of an intermediary size.

The geographical distribution of these collections is uneven, reflecting the centralized character of most institutions involved in their preservation, as well as the disproportionate concentration of the open manifestations of cultural opposition in the capital. Aside from Chișinău, another important territorial focus of anti-regime activities centered on the second-largest city of the republic, Bălți, situated in the northern part of the MSSR (a fact confirmed by the Gheorghe Muruziuc and Arsenie Platon Collections). Although the protagonists of the collections hailed from all over the MSSR (and beyond), they overwhelmingly operated in the capital, which provided an adequate environment for this type of actions. The variety of actors involved in the anti-regime cultural and political opposition in the Moldavian SSR should be especially emphasized. Contrary to the initial expectations, our research showed that, while not having a broad impact on local society, the forms of oppositional activity were rather diverse. Besides the intellectuals' discontent or some forms of institutionally organized dissent, which were generally known and are easier to record, the COURAGE Registry includes a number of cases of opposition from below, articulated by persons of peasant or working-class background. This could represent one of the most promising avenues for future research, thereby making it possible to broaden the research agenda in this field.

The number of users of the collections depends on the open access provided by the responsible institutions or on the willingness of private collectors to share their materials with a wider public. The latter category is generally open to making their collections available to interested audiences. However, the primary beneficiaries of the collections are specialized researchers and academics, due to the absence of a developed memorial infrastructure in the Republic of Moldova. Since there are no official statistics on visitors, it is difficult to estimate their numeric range. In the case of private collections, the usual number does not exceed several persons a year, while the archival collections are typically consulted by several dozen people per year. This lack of impact has only partially been compensated for by the National Museum of History exhibition, open to a potentially much more diverse audience.

## 4. Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

In contrast to the picture that seemed to prevail in Moldovan historiography in the early 2000s, the displays of anti-regime opposition in the MSSR (mainly in the guise of a nationally oriented opposition activity, discontent in the cultural sphere, but also occasional examples of dissent coming from below) were neither as rare nor as insignificant as previously thought. Certainly, there were ups and downs in this process (with the late 1950s and the late 1960s and early 1970s probably being the most prominent periods of anti-regime discontent). However, the Moldovan case is specific not so much due to the absence of substantial anti-regime activity (the collections in the Registry are the best proof to the contrary) as due to the almost universal lack of interest of the political stakeholders and of a large portion of the civil society in preserving and institutionalizing the memory of opposition and dissent under communism. In fact, aside from the case of the Commission for the Study and Evaluation of the Communist Totalitarian Regime (discussed above) and several sculptural projects, no enduring state initiative was undertaken in this regard in the post-independence period. The absence of a special research institution devoted to the study of the Soviet past is especially regrettable, making Moldova one of the few countries without such an establishment. Another major issue seems to be the lack of funding, which is a derivative of this broader situation.

A particularly serious problem concerns the low institutional capacity of most Moldovan public repositories to publicize and disseminate their collections. Only a handful of larger institutions (such as the National Archive, the National Museum of History and the Archive of Social-Political Organizations) have the necessary personnel and resources to set up permanent or temporary exhibitions or to organize public events with a noticeable impact. In terms of access to communist-era materials and their dissemination to the wider public, two examples that fall under the category of best practices could be invoked. First, the work of the Commission for the Study and Evaluation of the Communist Totalitarian Regime, despite its shortcomings, represented a high point of interest toward the communist past and was significant at least from three points of view: 1) the articulation of a serious public debate on the communist legacy; 2) the (temporary) opening of previously inaccessible archives and the ensuing "publication boom" and growing interest of professional historians for the subject and 3) the involvement of political stakeholders. However, the ultimate failure of this endeavor points to the inefficiency and inherent limits of such provisional arrangements. Another positive example is the policy of the Archive for Social-Political Organizations (AOSPRM), which provides unrestricted access to its holdings and is a researcher-friendly institution. The situation is rather mixed in the case of other archival repositories and museums, which, despite some recent progress, are still reluctant to lift all the restrictions concerning their materials. These repositories are also quite inefficient at networking, both among themselves and in establishing connections with potential private collectors. This is an especially salient issue in Moldova, where most private collections originate either with interested scholars and specialists or with a handful of prominent dissidents. However, no systematic efforts were undertaken to preserve these materials for the wider public or to make them available to potential

users in the future. A related problem is the opacity and reluctance of institutional stakeholders to share information about their operation (including budget data, information on ongoing projects and even, occasionally, personnel statistics). Although most of these problems could be overcome through personal interviews, the Moldovan institutions still lack openness toward the public, which hampers their occasional efforts at dissemination.

These conclusions could be the starting point for several policy recommendations (some of them country-specific and others more general):

1. A special institution devoted to the study of the communist period and its legacy should be established. In order not to be subordinated to the state and to avoid its transformation into a tool for official historical policy, this institution should be granted professional autonomy and allowed to apply for non-state (including foreign) funding, for academic purposes. Some of the smaller existing initiatives (research centers) could serve as an institutional basis during the initial period.
2. The existing repositories of relevant materials (primarily the above-mentioned archives and the National Museum of History) should be encouraged to explore and disseminate their collections more systematically. This could be achieved through a broader opening toward the research community, including through the easing or abolishing of still existing restrictions, and through increased funding from the government, aimed at stimulating the organization of permanent and temporary exhibitions, applications for international collaborative projects, networking and exchange with similar institutions abroad, etc. Another, related, priority should be the opening to the research community and the public of important departmental archives (especially the former KGB/ SIS Archive and the Archive of the Ministry of Internal Affairs), which hold essential materials pertaining to anti-regime opposition. In this sense, the ongoing transfer of the relevant documentary collections to the National Archive should be continued and accelerated.
3. An enduring partnership between the public repositories and potential private collectors should be established. In this sense, the public institutions should be much more proactive, seeking out potential donors and small-scale partners instead of simply relying on individual voluntary donations. Although this might be logistically challenging, it could work especially in those cases where the institutions in question have specially trained personnel able to fulfill these tasks (e.g., the National Museum of History would be a relevant case).
4. The universities and research institutes dealing with the history of the communist period should not only stimulate the students' interest for that era through curriculum development, but might also support their faculty's and research staff's efforts to publish relevant works based on their earlier investigations. In the case of Moldova, there is already the partially successful example of the Commission for the Study and Evaluation of the Communist Totalitarian Regime, whose work led to the emergence of a whole series of scholarly publications, textbooks, didactic aids, oral history collections, etc. Provided that

the necessary institutional support is given, external (including EU) funding is a viable solution, especially taking into account the constant and growing interest in the field of recent history (including the communist period).

5. The results achieved during the COURAGE Project represent an essential roadmap for further cross- and trans-national research initiatives on cultural opposition. This could serve as a viable model, especially for smaller countries like Moldova, where chronic lack of funding and weak state institutions enhance the relevance of international collaborative projects. More should be done to explain the relevance and benefits of international cooperation to the relevant stakeholders, who are often reluctant to engage in such endeavors either because of skepticism or because they perceive such projects as a low priority. Given the quasi-total indifference of state actors toward the legacy of cultural opposition under communism, such an approach from below, enhancing the visibility of local repositories and private collection owners, could prove more efficient in the long run.

## Summary

During the first years after independence, when an increasingly nationalizing agenda prevailed in Moldovan politics, research on the communist era focused on the traumatic experiences of mass deportations, famine and collectivization occurring in the late 1940s and early 1950s or discussed

the armed insurgency active during the same period, thus disproportionately emphasizing the Stalinist era. In contrast to the picture that seemed to prevail in Moldovan historiography in the early 2000s, the displays of anti-regime opposition in the MSSR (mainly in the guise of a nationally oriented opposition activity, discontent in the cultural sphere, but also occasional examples of dissent coming from below) were neither as rare nor as insignificant as previously thought. The variety of actors involved in the anti-regime cultural and political opposition in the Moldavian SSR should be particularly emphasized. Certainly, there were ups and downs in this process (with the late 1950s and the late 1960s and early 1970s probably being the most prominent periods of anti-regime discontent). However, the Moldovan case is specific not so much due to a lack of substance of the phenomenon itself as due to the general lack of interest of the political stakeholders and of a large portion of the civil society in preserving and institutionalizing the memory of opposition and dissent under communism. In fact, aside from the case of the Commission for the Study and Evaluation of the Communist Totalitarian Regime – a short-lived, politically inspired “truth commission” established in 2010 – and several monuments erected to the regime’s victims, no enduring state initiative was undertaken in this regard in the post-independence period. The absence of a special research institution devoted to the study of the Soviet past is especially regrettable, making Moldova one of the few countries without such an establishment. Another major issue is the lack of funding, which is a derivative of this broader situation.

A total number of fifteen Moldovan collections have been described in the COURAGE Registry. This is roughly similar to the case of the smaller Baltic states (Latvia and Estonia), reflecting some specific problems encountered in the Moldovan case, mainly the relative scarcity of relevant private collections and their overwhelming concentration in the capital city, Chişinău. Among the most frequent topics, one could mention: national movements, censorship, democratic opposition, human rights, surveillance and all its varieties, literature, film, and music. The main problems uncovered during the project period were the following: 1) the low institutional capacity of most Moldovan public repositories to publicize and disseminate their collections; 2) the inefficiency of networking, both among public repositories and in establishing connections with potential private collectors; 3) the reluctance of institutional stakeholders to share information about their operation (including budget data, information on ongoing projects and personnel statistics). Despite the (admittedly not very successful) model of the above-mentioned Commission or several cases of “best practices” (e.g., the policy of the Archive for Social-Political Organizations (AOSPRM), which provides unrestricted access to its holdings and is a researcher-friendly institution, or the more ambiguous, but still generally open-access approach pursued by the National Museum of History), the general situation in Moldova is far from satisfactory. Several policy recommendations could improve this situation, including: 1) the creation of a special institution devoted to the study of the communist period and its legacy; 2) the systematic encouragement (both by state agencies and by professional historians) of existing repositories of relevant materials (primarily the main Moldovan archives and the National Museum of History) to explore and disseminate their collections; 3) the establishment of an enduring partnership between the public repositories and potential private collectors; 4) the increase in the number and quality of relevant publications in the field, including

through targeted institutional policies aimed at encouraging applications for external funding; 5) an emphasis on international cooperation and on its benefits for the relevant stakeholders, despite their reluctance to engage in such projects.

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organized on 14-16 May 2012], edited by Gheorghe Cliveti and Gheorghe Cojocaru, 939-969. București: Editura Academiei Române, 2014.

## Appendix

### *List of Collections*

Alexandru Șoltoianu Collection at National Archive of the Republic of Moldova (founded in 1971)  
Arsenie Platon Collection at SIS Archive Moldova (f. 1961)  
Documents of Moldavian Union of Cinematographers (MUC). Fond P-2773 at AOSPR Moldova (f. 1962)  
Documents of Moldavian Writers' Union (MWU). Fond P-2955 at AOSPR Moldova (f. 1946)  
Gheorghe Muruziuc Collection at SIS Archive Moldova (f. 1966)  
Gheorghe Zgherea Collection at SIS Archive Moldova (f. 1953)  
Igor Cașu Private Collection (f. 2006)  
Mihai Moroșanu Private Collection (f. 1961)  
Nicolae Dragoș Collection at National Archive Moldova (f. 1964)  
Noroc Collection at AOSPR Moldova  
Pavel Doronin Collection at SIS Archive Moldova (f. 1972)  
Petru Negură Private Collection (f. 2001)  
Usatiuc-Ghimpu-Graur Collection (National Patriotic Front) at National Archive Moldova (f. 1972)  
Viktor Koval Collection at SIS Archive Moldova (f. 1982)  
Zaharia Doncev Collection at SIS Archive Moldova (f. 1957)

### *List of Operators / Owners*

National Archive of the Republic of Moldova (ANRM) (operator / owner)  
Archive of the Intelligence and Security Service of the Republic of Moldova (SIS Archive) (operator / owner)  
Archive of Social-Political Organisations of the Republic of Moldova (AOSPRM) (operator / owner)  
Soviet Moldavian KGB (initial owner)  
Moldavian Union of Cinematographers (MUC) (initial owner)  
Moldavian Writers' Union (MWU) (initial owner)  
Igor Cașu (private operator / owner)  
Mihai Moroșanu (private operator / owner)  
Petru Negură (private operator / owner)

### *List of persons researched*

David, Gheorghe  
Dolgan, Mihai  
Doncev, Zaharia  
Doronin, Pavel  
Dragoș, Nicolae  
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# COURAGE

Cultural Opposition: Understanding the Cultural Heritage of Dissent in the Former Socialist Countries

## *Country Reports*



# POLAND

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# Table of Content

- 1. Introduction** ..... 4
- 2. Politics of Memory in Poland** ..... 5
  - 2.1. The Institute of National Remembrance: Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation ..... 5
  - 2.2 Cultural Opposition in the Institutional Context ..... 9
- 3. Analysis of the Collections in the COURAGE Registry** ..... 11
  - 3.1 Typology ..... 12
  - 3.2 Funding..... 18
  - 3.3 Operators ..... 19
  - 3.4 Time frame ..... 20
  - 3.5 Users..... 22
  - 3.6 Stakeholders..... 23
  - 3.7 Impact of collections ..... 24
  - 3.8 Networking..... 25
  - 3.9 Obstacles and challenges ..... 25
- 4. Conclusions and Policy Recommendations**..... 26
- 5. Bibliography, Further Readings, Annex** ..... 29

## 1. Introduction

The history of opposition in socialist Poland is internationally associated with the turbulent decade of the 1980s: the shipyard strikes, expanded net of samizdat publishing, the activity of the “Solidarity” Trade Union and Catholic Church support, and ultimately: defeating the socialist regime. Apart from this strictly political activity, the Polish opposition in Western Europe is also associated with the intellectual circles, thanks to the émigré circles activity - writers, philosophers, artists, and actors continued to leave the oppressive system and seek freedom in the West (usually supporting the opposition activity from outside). Therefore, it seems that the topic of cultural opposition in the socialist Poland is quite well-recognized internationally, and even more so locally. However, the discourse tends to concentrate just on some aspects which makes it difficult to fully recognize other oppositional phenomena.

For example, the heritage of the “Solidarity” movement serves as political legitimization, institutional basis, touristic product, and a never-ending argument in barren socio-political debates evolving around the arguments of “who was who in »Solidarity«; was he or she at all in the movement or how can one go into politics without this experience”. Polish Presidents, Prime Ministers, and top politicians started their careers in the opposition and built their political capital on fighting the socialist regime. Numerous of today’s most important decision makers – now strongly divided into two parties – come from the same milieu. The “Solidarity’s” success shaped the Polish post-transformation reality. A specific ideological system, based on the merge of patriotic activism, democratic values, religious (Catholic) beliefs and intelligentsia circles stepped into power – both in terms of symbolic power, and the direct impact on the politics of memory and the way of portraying the opposition. As an important part of public discourse, the topic of opposition under socialism is well explored, however, it predominantly tends to concentrate on one of the many paths in the trajectory of oppositional past.

Thus, in this seemingly well-described research area, COURAGE proved to have a lot to investigate into. Most of all, researching cultural opposition under state socialism meant looking deeper than the prevailing narration, expressed mainly through presenting the heritage of dissent with samizdat publications and protests. New approach required focusing on the borders between *political* and *cultural* activity. Bearing in mind that those two spheres of social world are ultimately intertwined, we asked ourselves<sup>1</sup> whether all the dissent efforts had some political agenda. Eventually, we were able to recognize that the discourse related to the “Solidarity” is also monopolizing the image of the cultural diversification under state socialism, which especially in last decades offered much more than just a choice between

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<sup>1</sup> Besides the author, the Polish COURAGE research team was composed of Hanna Gospodarczyk, Xawery Stańczyk and Piotr Szenajch.

official and intelligentsia culture. Moreover, even though intelligentsia-inspired opposition was itself strongly diversified in terms of form – activists of the democratic movement used to organize illegal lectures, concerts, art exhibitions, film screenings, theatre plays – the content was quite monothematic and concentrated on the similar problems of Poland’s independence and freedom. It should be finally recognized that besides the patriotic and democratic cultural activity, there were numerous subcultures and phenomena which were essentially counter-cultural, however, they did not directly focus on fighting the system, like music subcultures or artistic neo-avant-garde. Their goal was rather connected to the freedom of expression, not strictly to the systemic changes. It should also be noted that there were many nonconformist groups without any agenda whatsoever (like punk groups) or being against any institutionalized movements (like the anarchists). This is the activism absent in the public discourse, yet well-represented in preserved collections.

## 2. Politics of memory in contemporary Poland

### 2.1. The Institute of National Remembrance: Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation

Since recent history and the opposition under state socialism are the elements of an on-going political arguments, they have a real impact on what elements and which heroes of the history of dissent are underlined in the public debate. Depending on the government, the funding for historical and cultural institutions is differently distributed; different institutions and figures get public recognition. What is interesting, the two inter-changing political forces, the Civic Platform [*Platforma Obywatelska*] and the Law and Justice [*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość*] parties, despite coming from similar post-“Solidarity” environment – have a distinctly unlike approach towards commemorating the history of opposition in Poland. Since the Law and Justice party stepped into power in 2015, a more martyrdom vision of the past has been forced, with flourishing of monuments and memorial boards all over Poland – emphasizing one side of oppositional environment and keeping silent about the other one. Let the example of current conflicts between the ex-opposition members be the annual celebrations of signing the September Agreements of 1980 – which are organized separately by the former “Solidarity” groups who are unable to unite even for this special commemorative day.

Political changes influence important research and cultural institutions, which is well presented on the example of the Institute of National Remembrance: Commission for the Prosecution of Crimes against the Polish Nation, the most important public body acting in the field of politics of memory. The institution was founded with the parliamentary act in 1998<sup>2</sup>,

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<sup>2</sup> The Parliament that voted for creating the institution was dominated by the former “Solidarity” members who formed the party of “Solidarity Electoral Action” [*Akcja Wyborcza Solidarność*].

as a state body appointed for multiple tasks within the historical policy, including research, educational, archival, investigative, popularizing and vetting activities. After an intensive period of preparations, it started to operate in 2000. From the beginning the Institute of National Remembrance was developed as a powerful institution, generously and continuously financed by the government (its operations do not depend on grants which is rare for the Polish research and cultural institutions). Its vast operations are handled by the head office in Warsaw, as well as 11 branch offices in other larger Polish cities and 7 delegations in smaller ones. Currently the archives of the Institute, gathered in the Office for Dissemination and Preservation of Archival Records, contain over 90 kilometers of files. What is especially meaningful, the Institute took into possession the documents created and gathered by the former secret services – and in a way inherited its political legitimacy<sup>3</sup>. According to the parliamentary act the institution's goals include for example<sup>4</sup>:

- Collecting, processing, analyzing and sharing the documents left after the Polish People's Republic's secret services, produced between 22 July 1944 and 31 July 1990; as well as all the documents left after the Third Reich and USSR, from the period of 8 November 1917 – 31 July 1990, concerning: Nazi crimes, communist crimes, Ukrainian nationalists' crimes, and political repressions against Polish citizens;
- Educating the public within this thematic area;
- Organizing commemorative celebrations;
- Protecting "the good name" of Poland and the Polish Nation.

Institute of National Remembrance collaborates closely with the State Archives, veteran organizations, historical associations, scientific institutes, and foreign agendas involved in research and commemoration of recent history, especially the history of Central-Eastern Europe.

Throughout the years, a certain duality within the Institute's functioning may be pointed out: there has been many controversies around its changing authorities and engagement in ongoing politics, yet, the institutions has always continued to carry out extremely important historical studies, research projects, and archival works. Let us focus first on narrative structures used in official events and dissemination activities, which cause the fact that the Institute of National Remembrance hardly ever loses the public attention.

During the first years of operating institute's narration seemed quite radical in criticizing the socialist past, not taking into consideration problematizing this issue. It based its actions on

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<sup>3</sup> The Institute received the materials left after civil and military state security institutions, including e.g. the Security Services of the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Military Information, regional commissions and courts, prosecutorial and punitive institutions.

<sup>4</sup> Journal of Laws 1998 No. 155 position 1016.



quite direct reminders of the traumatic events: persecutions, imprisonment, suffering – in the extreme cases associated rather to the Stalinist period, rather than the last decades of the Polish People’s Republic<sup>5</sup>. It left little space for questioning the transformation, and seemed to influence collective imagination using black-and-white arguments. Opposition leaders were presented as heroes, dissent actions as undeniable bravery. The Institute’s actions came down to prevent the possibility of collective amnesia about the horrors under state socialism<sup>6</sup>.

The main day-to-day task of the Institute may be described as archival work which in practice means storing and processing the documents. Thus, the institution has been dealing with an issue of accessing the classified files. Since 2007 the documents may be accessed by the people mentioned in them in any role (and their relatives), as well as by the researchers and journalists, although with certain limitations. However, before it was not a public right to get an access to those documents, not even to own files of the interested party. The issue of declassifying the files most visibly entered public debate in 2005 when a rightist journalist Bronisław Wildstein shared in the media a list of 162 000 names mentioned in the documents of secret services. A document, obtained in unclear circumstances from the Institute of National Remembrance, without knowledge and consent of the institution, became known as the “Wildstein list” and had wide repercussions, both in terms of funding and managing the Institute and in the public discussion on settling with the socialist past. As the list did not state what was the role of a person mentioned, it became a basis for unjust accusations and slandering. In result, more than a decade after the transformation, the question of lustrations became an important, widely discussed social issue. Janusz Kurtyka, director of the Institute between 2005-2010, was “a supporter for deep vetting and de-communization”<sup>7</sup>. In 2006 the “lustration act” was appropriated by the Parliament and the Institute of National Remembrance was once again given a very important role which included handling a vetting process of the public figures<sup>8</sup>.

In the turbulent decade of the 2000s the Institute was still close to the simplified narration of black-and-white oppositional past. Socialist times were presented as the era of state persecutions and bravery of dissent activists. The martyrdom narration of the Institute of National Remembrance changed in 2010, after Łukasz Kamiński had been chosen as its president. For the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of institution’s opening a conference “Without Leniency” [*Bez taryfy ulgowej*] was organized in Lodz in 2010, where numerous scholars presented a critical approach towards past operations – they were judged as being too politically involved

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<sup>5</sup> See: the first issues of the official magazine: *Bulletin of the Institute of National Remembrance*, e.g. No 2 (2001) or No 3 (2001).

<sup>6</sup> However, it might be argued that such approach is also likely to cause social trauma and makes it harder to cope with the difficult past. See: Sztompka, *Cultural Trauma*.

<sup>7</sup> Klich-Kluczevska, “Goodbye Communism”, 9.

<sup>8</sup> Journal of Laws 2006 No. 218 position 1592.

and not sufficiently research-focused<sup>9</sup>. Soon afterwards the institution started to apply a softer approach towards settling with the past. It started to develop its image as a modern research center, participating also in various cultural events (exhibitions, film screenings, popular science publications, etc.), and even publishing educational board games for the younger audience. It seemed that to some extent the institute ceased to be a flash point in a public debate.

However, the political changes in Poland in 2016 greatly influenced the *modus operandi* of the Institute. With a new president stepping into office, many staff members were dismissed, especially the younger employees. The editorial board of the Institute's periodic magazine "Memory and Justice" was almost completely replaced with new members. Institution seems to be used directly to perform the goals of politics of memory, very often in quite controversial way.

As it was already mentioned, the involvement of the Institute of National Remembrance in the public discourse should never undermine its impressive activity within the field of recent history, including the history of opposition. The institution engaged in countless research and educational activities. It has been incessantly engaging in activities such as: organizing conferences, conveying research, processing historical document, digitalizing archives, publishing scientific works and historical books, conducting queries (not to mention performing many public duties related to lustration issues). To show the scope of addressed issues within the subject of cultural opposition it is definitely worth mentioning for example:

- A research project "Authorities of the Polish People's Republic towards the artists, journalists and scientists" led by Sebastian Ligarski. It is one of 14 Central Research Projects, huge scientific undertakings which are conducted non-stop by the Institute's workers, and co-workers from other research centers and universities. This particular project discusses the state security's interventions and influences in the cultural circles<sup>10</sup>.
- An educational project "A year of independent culture" completed in 2009-2010 in several Polish cities in a form of lectures, film screenings, exhibitions. It introduced to a wider public the topics of the late 1970s and the 1980s such as underground post, independent literature, artistic photography, street performance, underground radio, etc.
- A book series "In the cultural circle of PPR" [*W kręgu kultury PRL*], separately discussing different spheres of culture under state socialism.

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<sup>9</sup> The transcription of the conference was published in: Czyżewski et.al., *Bez taryfy ulgowej*.

<sup>10</sup> The findings are discussed in the series of publications, see for example: Ligarski and Majchrzak, *Nadzorcy*.

## 2.2 Cultural opposition in the institutional context

The history of the Institute of National Remembrance illustrates how Poland has been dealing with its socialist past in an institutional way. According to Barbara Klich-Kluczevska, after the transformation the Polish elites (researchers or decision-makers) were not calling for historical settlement and lustration processes<sup>11</sup> – partly because many politicians came from the post-communist circles, and partly due to following the rule of putting past behind the “thick line” (*gruba kreska*), which was insisted on by the new Prime Minister of a contract government, Tadeusz Mazowiecki, in his exposé in 1989. However, in the late 1990s a need for lustration and proving that he or she was not a part of the regime became a crucial factor of political legitimization, probably in relation to the growing polarization of political parties which came out of one environment of the democratic opposition. It may be said that founding of the Institute of National Remembrance was a repercussion of a social need to deal with the socialist past and to bring a notion of “historical justice”. In the delicate matter of historical policy the Institute proved to be a dangerous and controversial tool influencing the image of the past, but also current political beliefs<sup>12</sup>.

The particular status of the Institute of National Remembrance, a well-funded national institution with a high social esteem, shows how much conscious the Polish authorities are towards the heritage of ancient regime. However, the common knowledge rather associates the “cultural opposition” with a certain type of intelligentsia culture, with some political agenda and usual connection to patriotic and Catholic values, and relating to the practices of a high culture in a traditional understanding (like classic literature, theatre or painting). Such sphere of dissent activity was appropriated by political elites. Grzegorz Ekiert and Jan Kubik described the problem in the following manner in the late 1990s: “(...) the preoccupation with elites, party systems, and the relationship between political and economic changes has resulted in considerable gap in democratization literature”<sup>13</sup>. As they point out, even in the academic environment used to exist a sphere of the marginalized cultural phenomena. Those counter-cultural activities which have never entered mainstream – like punk music, artistic neo-avant-garde or LGBT movements – are the phenomena which were particularly interesting for the COURAGE team in Poland. As it turned out, collections containing counter-cultural heritage were relatively easily accessible and well operated, despite functioning apart from the main discourse.

There are various means of accessing collection of cultural opposition and they mostly depend on the type of cultural phenomena, as well as on the type of the stakeholders which operate them. The easiest to access are the documents in the public institutions, as (with some

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<sup>11</sup> Klich-Kluczevska, “Goodbye Communism, Hello Remembrance”, 37-57.

<sup>12</sup> Klich-Kluczevska, *Ibid*; Stola, “Poland’s Institute of National Remembrance: a Ministry of Memory?”, 45-58.

<sup>13</sup> Ekiert and Kubik, *Collective Protest and Democratic Consolidation in Poland, 1989-93*, 9.

restrictions) they are obliged to share their materials for the research purposes. As it was already mentioned, the Institute of National Remembrance received all the documents left after the secret services. Like in most of the other post-socialist countries, with transformation just round the corner, many documents were destroyed by the officials or transported to the Soviet Union. However, plenty of documents were left in various state offices – they are now easily accessible in the State Archives, a net of public archives which connects agencies in over 70 Polish cities. Many of the documents and memorabilia are now available in various museums (like the European Solidarity Centre, Museum of Modern Art, Polish Rock Granary or the Modern Museum Wroclaw) and their archives. The general trend seems to be characterized by the accumulation of materials by the state institutions which buy them from private owners or receive them through donations. However, there are also numerous private initiatives that operate in an institutional manner, as museums or galleries, and which depend on grants or own entrepreneurship. In most cases their collections consist of rare original materials, which were obtained through personal connections. Usually, founders of such private associations and foundations are the former activists themselves. A special case is made by the people who keep home archives full of unique memorabilia left after their (or their relatives) activity in socialist times. Those stakeholders are very eager to talk about their collections, however they tend to be the hardest to reach. As they do not focus on disseminating their materials, many of their collections remain unknown. It was COURAGE's great effort to reach such stakeholders and make their archives public.

Summarizing the context of Polish collections, it must be stated that the field of dissent heritage is extremely diversified. The phenomenon of cultural opposition as such is well-known in Poland, however it is often seen in the context of the democratic movement and intelligentsia culture. The heritage of opposition under state socialism is an important part of current politics; the state archives and cultural institutions dealing with recent history are a subject of constant interest of the decision makers. Thus, they are highly funded from public money, and their expositions and archives are generally open to the public. However, there are also numerous private initiatives disseminating collections whose stakeholders have never decided to cooperate with public institutions (for various reasons which will be discussed in further part of the report). They strive to get some support for their activity from various Polish and international grants, and operate mainly within the net of personal connections. Lastly, there are countless anonymous owners of private archives who often do not even recognize the historical value of their collections and therefore – they are not present in the scope of cultural opposition. It was a huge part of COURAGE duties in Poland to reach those yet unknown stakeholders and encourage them to share their collections with the wider audience.

### 3. Analysis of the collections in the COURAGE Registry

Before presenting the actual analysis it is necessary to characterize the thematic field of cultural opposition in Poland. As it was already presented, the subject is prevailed by the heritage of the patriotic and democratic activity, through empowering the narrative structures referring to the “Solidarity” movement, and religious and intelligentsia vision of cultural practices (understood mostly as high culture, in a traditional terminology of social sciences). However, especially during last decades of the Polish People’s Republic, one could observe a proliferation of subcultures and alternative cultural practices.

Since the 1970s alternative subcultures started to develop on the outskirts of cultural opposition which earned them a name of the “third circuit” [trzeci obieg] – because of their existence outside both official culture and the environment of the “Solidarity”-related democratic movement (known as the “second circuit”), concerning mostly politically engaged samizdat and socio-philosophical publications<sup>14</sup>. The music scene was entered by more and more bold rock bands, with Jarocin festival being organized annually since 1970<sup>15</sup>. In the end of the decade punk subculture flourished. Numerous punk bands were formed in the bigger cities, gaining popularity among the youth with their loud music, energetic concerts, and intriguing image in the times of unification and dull clothing. The art world was enriched by neo-avant-garde, with the visual artists like Zbigniew Libera and the KwieKulik duo (Przemysław Kwiek and Zofia Kulik) who explored new ways of expression in conceptual and performative art<sup>16</sup>. Alternative theatre was expanded by Jerzy Grzegorzewski and Tadeusz Kantor. All those artists and musicians entered into dialogue with the existing standards of beauty, aesthetics and normality forced by the official culture. Many artists became problematic for the authorities and were often persecuted, due to constant undermining of the regime’s authority. Many exhibitions, performances and concerts took place in semi-official venues, and were organized through the net of connections within “second” and “third circuit”. In the 1980s new social movements were created. They openly criticized or even mocked the system, like the anarchistic Movement of Alternative Society (*Ruch Społeczeństwa Alternatywnego*) formed in 1983 in Gdansk or the Orange Alternative (*Pomarańczowa Alternatywa*) which throughout the 1980s gained a huge popularity with their ridiculous performances and graffiti executed in Wroclaw, Lodz or Warsaw<sup>17</sup>. With rock bands entering mainstream and official radio charts, alternative music was further developed, offering not only punk, but also genres like ska, reggae or new wave. Polish cultural opposition under socialism offered much more than just engaged art and patriotic culture. There was a whole

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<sup>14</sup> Pęczak, *Mały słownik subkultur młodzieżowych*, 96.

<sup>15</sup> Polish Rock Collection, including the history of Jarocin festival, is described here: <http://cultural-opposition.eu/registry/?uri=http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n14266>

<sup>16</sup> <http://cultural-opposition.eu/registry/?uri=http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n57244&type=collections>

<sup>17</sup> <http://cultural-opposition.eu/registry/?uri=http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n29277>

spectrum of cultural activities questioning the state of affairs and challenging the establishment.

### 3.1 Typology

The Polish team faced various difficulties when deciding on the collections to be described. With the extensive field of cultural opposition in Poland it was obvious that it will not be possible to keep the quantitative representativeness within framework of the project. It was decided to balance the amount of better known collections (concerning more often described activities) with those containing the heritage of less famous artists and activists. Therefore, it might be said that the idea was to maneuver between the “second” and the “third circuit”. However, since the underground activity of the democratic social movements is thoroughly described and commemorated (e.g. by the institutions like the Institute of National Remembrance), we decided to focus on the “Solidarity”-related materials in a specific way: by understanding their political agenda as a general context, and contemplating the cultural and artistic side of applied phenomena. In this way we were able to recognize for example “Solidarity” posters and badges in a framework of *cultural* opposition – as a visual identity of the movement or an artistic expression of the creators.

The following collections have been described throughout the project<sup>18</sup>:

- Aniela Mieczysławska Raczyńska Collection
- Archive of the Alternative Theatre
- Archive of the Studio Theatre
- Archives of National Commission of the Solidarity Trade Union
- Archives of Weeks of Christian Culture / Artists’ Priesthood
- Artists’ Archives of the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw
- Barbara Fatyga Archive
- Collection of Association of Documentalists “The Road”
- Eastern Archive of the KARTA Centre
- Erazm Ciołek Papers at the Hoover Institution
- Eustachy Kossakowski Archive
- Exchange Gallery
- Exhibits of European Solidarity Centre
- Film Archive of the Video Studio Gdansk
- Film Notations of European Solidarity Centre

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<sup>18</sup> Several collections were published after this report had been written, therefore they are not included in the analysis. Excluded are the collections of: Barbara Fatyga, Tomasz Sikorski, Paweł Konnak, Radio Free Europe, Zbigniew Libera, as well as the émigré collections of Erazm Ciołek, Aniela Mieczysławska Raczyńska and the British Library.

- Filмотека of the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw
- Fuck 89 Collection
- Institute of National Remembrance Archives
- Jerzy Ludwiński Archive
- Kowalnia Archive at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw
- Krzysztof Skiba Private Archive
- KwieKulik Archive
- Lodz Kaliska Archive
- Museum of the Orange Alternative
- National Film Archive – Audiovisual Institute Collection
- Paweł "Końjo" Konnak Private Archive
- Photographic Collection of European Solidarity Centre
- Piotr "Pietia" Wierzbicki Collection
- Pitch-In Culture Archive
- Polish Performance Archive of the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw
- Polish Punk Collection by Anna Dąbrowska-Lyons
- Polish Rock Collections at the Polish Rock Granary
- Polish Section of the Radio Free Europe
- Poznan Anarchist Library Archive
- Queer Archives Institute
- Solidarity Collection at the British Library
- Tadeusz Rolke Archive at the Museum of modern Art
- The Archive of the Opposition in KARTA Centre
- The Archives of Transition 1989-1991
- The Oral History Archive of KARTA Centre Foundation
- Theatre Gardzienice Collection
- Tomasz Sikorski Collection on Art on the Street
- Tomasz Sikorski Collection on Biennale of Spatial Forms in Elbląg
- Tomasz Sikorski Collection on Dziekanka Workshop
- Tomasz Sikorski Collection on Mospan Gallery
- Tomasz Sikorski Collection on P.O. Box 17 Gallery
- Trasa W-Z Archive
- Underground Postage Stamps of Michał Guć
- Wojciech Zamecznik Collection at the Archaeology of Photography Foundation
- Zbigniew Dłubak Collection at the Archaeology of Photography Foundation
- Zbigniew Galicki Photographic Collection
- Zbigniew Libera Archive

Collections of cultural opposition make a very diversified matrix of information.

They vary from one another considering their thematic scope, time lineout, organizational structure, archiving practices, openness towards the public and financial possibilities. However, described collections share some features and may be grouped based on the:

- Type of ownership: private and public
- Content:
  - Democratic opposition (samizdat, persecutions, internment, visual identification)
  - The fine arts (painting, performance, graphics, experimental music)
  - Music, lifestyles, subcultures
  - Theatre, film, photography
  - Minorities (ethnic, sexual)
  - Religion (the Catholic Church)

## Ownership

In terms of ownership there is a predominance of public collections, but this might be very misleading as many of described entities come from the same institution or owner (which proves that a quantitative analysis does not make much sense in regards to this report). There is a general trend of absorbing private collections by the public organizations, however the idea of personal archiving and disseminating own materials stands strong within the group of private stakeholders – especially those who were personally engaged in the events documented by their collections. Therefore, we can observe several forms of private ownership: there are associations, foundations, and informal ownership (which has never been institutionalized). In some cases private and public institutions founded collections on similar topics independently from one another. Institutions' goal is to document forms of cultural opposition in Poland and preserve its heritage. Private owners founded their collections for similar reasons, however there is an element of personal history and emotional engagement involved. Frequently the private collections were founded “coincidentally”, through accumulation of materials coming from own activities. Interestingly, among private founders there are only two groups (the Association of Documentalists “The Road”<sup>19</sup> and the

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<sup>19</sup> <http://cultural-opposition.eu/registry/?lang=en&uri=http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n29172&type=groupsandorgs>



Archaeology of Photography Foundation<sup>20</sup>). All the others were founded by individuals (who nevertheless benefited from the help of some friends and coworkers).

### Geographical distribution

The geographical distribution is centered around the Polish most important cities in the history of cultural opposition, that is: Warsaw, Gdansk, Krakow, Wroclaw, Lodz (with the most collections present in Warsaw – due to the fact that the most important public cultural institutions are situated in the capital city). There is a single collection operated from the country side (a collection of Artists' Priesthood, owned by the retired priest<sup>21</sup>).

### Size of collections

The collections of public institutions are very big and constantly growing, as all of them are in the process of acquiring new items and expanding their archives. The biggest collections are owned by the institutional heir of the past regime: the Institute of National Remembrance which keeps over 90 kilometers of files (and a huge set of artefacts related to the persecutions and the democratic movement). A huge set of documents is also kept in the State Archives (over 345 kilometers), however they are dispersed within the net of 33 archives and 41 external branches, and therefore should be treated separately as multiple collections. Big and diversified collections are owned by major Polish museums: European Solidarity Centre, Modern Museum Wroclaw, Museum of Modern Art – all of them, apart from holding exhibitions, put much effort in archival work and digitalization of their materials.

Private collections are much smaller for obvious reasons, like having limited storage space, funds and dissemination possibilities. Moreover, the content of those collections usually come from a personal engagement of the founders and is based on the materials from his or her own activity under socialism. Such collections are usually expanded through private connections with other former activists. However, there are private collections which managed to gather very big archives and share them effectively with the wider audience. The best example is probably the Museum of the Orange Alternative, but the Lodz Kaliska Archive has an impressive amount of materials as well. Both of them operate as private foundations, ran by individuals, and gather tens of artefacts (publications, painting, brochures, clippings, memorabilia), film materials and hundreds of photos.

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<sup>20</sup> <http://cultural-opposition.eu/registry/?lang=en&uri=http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n11685&type=groupsandorgs>

<sup>21</sup> <http://cultural-opposition.eu/registry/?uri=http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n5966&type=collections>

## Collections' content

The most common type of the archived materials are the paper ones, which means grey literature and underground publications (samizdat). In case of the "second circuit" (referring mostly to the topic of the democratic movement) it means illegal books (censored or banned), newspapers and magazines, manuscripts, leaflets, bulletins, brochures, posters. Many collections contain both materials printed on paper and ready for dissemination, as well as the tissue-papers used for copying the publications. This type of materials may be found in every collection that refers to the topic of the "Solidarity" movement, democratic changes, intelligentsia culture, human rights and national movements. Many written documents are also a part of the archives related to the neo-avant-garde, as they often include artists' memoires, notes or theoretical essays.

Among the "third circuit" collections, the paper materials are also the most typical content, in the form of zines referring to the punk music (collections of Piotr "Pietia" Wierzbicki<sup>22</sup> or Polish Punk by Anna Dąbrowska-Lyons<sup>23</sup>), but also less frequently in a form of manifestos or written programs (Museum of Orange Alternative or the Fuck 89 collection<sup>24</sup>).

Based on a criterion of frequency the next type of materials are the visual materials, mainly photographs. There are some collections composed almost solely from photographs and negatives (collections of the Documentalists "The Road", the Archaeology of Photography, Eustachy Kossakowski, Tadeusz Rolke). All of the museums and other public institutions possess separate photographic archives, and many smaller collections include some photographic documentation apart from other materials. The photographs are sometimes accompanied by some video materials, however it is not that frequent. There are several types of video materials, such as film notations (recorded interviews) in the collection of European Solidarity Centre in Gdansk<sup>25</sup>, film documentation (original footages) – from the happenings of the Orange Alternative, or some performances (Polish Performance Archive<sup>26</sup>). Vast video documentation of the protests is available in the Video Studio Gdansk archive. There are some produced films – found in the archives of the Video Studio Gdansk, European Solidarity Centre,

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<sup>22</sup> <http://cultural-opposition.eu/registry/?uri=http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n11744&type=collections>

<sup>23</sup> <http://cultural-opposition.eu/registry/?uri=http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n16681&type=collections>

<sup>24</sup> <http://cultural-opposition.eu/registry/?uri=http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n55412&type=collections>

<sup>25</sup> <http://cultural-opposition.eu/registry/?search=notations&lang=en&uri=http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n2686&type=collections>

<sup>26</sup> <http://cultural-opposition.eu/registry/?uri=http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n57244&type=collections>

the “Roads to Solidarity” Foundation, and in the biggest amount: in the National Film Archive – Audiovisual Institute.

The next common type consists of the physical objects: artefacts and memorabilia, which make an extremely diversified category. There are objects used to show support for various movements or subcultures that exist in many copies and may be found in numerous collections: badges, pennants, banners, etc. A very interesting example of this type is made by the underground postage stamps described on the basis of Michał Guć’s collection. Furthermore, there are also some truly unique things, like those coming from the internment camps, as well as the clothing pieces or personal objects that belonged to activists and artists.

Finally, the last type is composed of a special case of material objects: the art works (paintings, graphics, sculptures, artistic photographs, designs, etc.). It is a vast set of materials, as the Polish team focused a lot on the artistic environment of neo-avant-garde in the 1970s (which was an important phenomenon nation-wide). Many of art pieces are in the archives of the described museums: the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw and the Modern Museum Wrocław. There are also some collections of the creators who themselves built up their archives (not all of them decided to donate or sell their art). The art works are kept in their original form, so they are very diversified in their form, however more and more of them is also available in the digitalized form (which is more common in case of the public institutions).

The main topics covered by the collections may be grouped in the following way (accordingly to their frequency)<sup>27</sup>:

1. Initiatives for the democratic changes:
  - Democratic opposition;
  - National movements;
  - Human rights;
  - Independent journalism;
  - Peace movements;
  - Social movements;
  - Surveillance;
  - Survivors;
  - Party dissent.
2. Alternative lifestyles and underground culture.
3. Art:
  - Avantgarde and neo-avantgarde;

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<sup>27</sup> The topics were worked out during the process of describing collections. Thus, the categorization and the used terms were prior to this report.

- Fine arts;
  - Visual Arts.
4. Theatre.
  5. Youth culture and student movements.
  6. Music.
  7. Film.
  8. Religion.
  9. Environment.
  10. Minorities.

As presented above, the most popular topics of collection are related to the democratic changes, social movement and persecutions of the activists. This was to be expected in the country of protesting traditions and the heritage of “Solidarity”. It was usual for the artists and culture personalities under socialism to engage in various movements and support social postulates, and therefore – experiencing some repercussions. This is the very core of intertwining between the spheres of culture and politics. Items related to the topics of freedom or democratization may be found in most collections.

Alternative lifestyles and underground culture refer primarily to the music and artistic subcultures (like punks in Warsaw or artistic bohemia from Lodz). Art topics divide into fine arts, and more progressive genres like modern visual arts and neo-avant-garde activities (conceptual art, performance, *post-art* concepts). Youth culture and student movements stay in close relation to the topic of music (rock, punk, reggae, ska), but also anarchistic initiatives (Fuck 89, Poznan Anarchist Library), mail art, protests and street performances (Orange Alternative). Theatre and film topics are connected to searching for the new ways of expression (experimental and alternative theatre) and taking the risk of raising the subjects “inconvenient” for the authorities. Also, some film topics refer to the documentation practices, more available since the 1980s. The least frequent subjects, present in only a few collections, are religion (Catholic), minorities (LGBT) and environment (ecological movement).

### **3.2 Funding**

The biggest supporter of the collections is the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage which funds not only public institutions, but also supported several private collections. The sum given to the museums and cultural centers changes every year, as it is annually adjusted to the recent priorities of the Ministry and the government. Therefore, this is a very fluent issue, highly dependent on the judgement of the decision makers. However, public institutions operating the collections on cultural opposition are funded from several sources which correspond with different levels of authority. The good example is the European Solidarity

Centre which benefits from several supporters. Its creation was co-funded with a big EU grant (European Regional Development Fund) in 2010 and ever since it has been supported by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, the Pomeranian Voivodeship, as well as the bodies not dependent on the government: the City of Gdansk, present „Solidarity“ Trade Union and the Solidarity Centre Foundation. Therefore, it seems that for an active public institutions, which act as a multi-purpose cultural center, there are many possibilities to get support (from the central and local authorities). However, it must be once more underlined that the decisions on funding are quite volatile.

As for the private collections, there are some examples of getting financial support, most commonly through the programs of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, and in less frequent cases from municipal authorities or public cultural institutions (e.g. Lodz Kaliska). However, support for private collections is never constant. It is always targeted on a specific goal, like digitalizing and disseminating owned materials (e.g. Museum of the Orange Alternative) or organizing some artistic events (e.g. Lodz Kaliska). Moreover, none of the private collections described have ever benefited from some international grants (like EU). Furthermore, in case of private collections the biggest support does not seem to be of financial nature – they mostly benefit from donations of private owners who give away their memorabilia. As a result, private stakeholders have big and varied collections, but they constantly experience lack of funds, necessary for digitalization, dissemination and storage. Quite many collections are taken care of solely from the private funds of their stakeholders.

As a special case here should be mentioned the KARTA Centre which leads an extensive archive of social documents and has a status of a public benefit organization. It is a non-governmental foundation, however it has been operating for decades and managed to earn high public esteem in the field of culture and research. Therefore, the KARTA Centre is regularly supported from the state funds.

### **3.3 Operators**

The operators of collections may be divided into two groups: there are public and private ones. Among published collections 17 are operated by public operators and 16 by private ones. Public operators are the cultural institutions, officially founded as: museums, archives, institutes and theatres. However, all of them fulfil several duties, including: archiving, exhibiting, disseminating, organizing cultural events, educational projects, conducting research queries, organizing conferences, etc. Most institutions have special department to deal with all those tasks, however in some cases the staff is required to do a vastly multi-tasking job (e.g. in the theatres). Thus, despite relatively good funding that the public institutions get, their staff is often unhappy with working conditions (especially in the archives,

as their employees deal with the biggest number of items). The most of the executive workers of the public institution dealing with described collections are well-educated, holding Masters diploma or, in several cases, a PhD. There is a strong pressure on organized cataloguing (expending inventories) and digitalization of the collections, however the biggest obstacle is the deficiency of staff which is burdened with other tasks. The most available online archives may be found on the websites of the Museum of Modern Art, European Solidarity Centre, Modern Museum Wroclaw. More and more documents are also digitalized in the State Archives and the Institute of National Remembrance, although they are not as much available online, as rather in the institutions' libraries. It is most common for the public institutions to have inventories and online data bases (except for the theatres).

Private operators divide into registered associations or foundations, and unregistered (not institutionalized) individuals. Polish law differs associations from foundations by several characteristics. In general, the associations are less official and refer to a group of people joined by the common interest or purpose. Foundations additionally assume that the initiative will try to gain some funds and thus reach chosen goals. Therefore, the foundations are of more socially "active" nature. Among 16 private collections only 1 is run by an association (Association of the Documentalists "The Road"), 6 by foundations and 9 by individuals (who act as owners, operators and stakeholders in one person). This shows that there is some reserve in the environment against institutionalization of the collections. As we found out during the seminar organized in April 2018 by our team, it is most commonly connected to the fact that there are numerous private operators who pursue completely different careers or deal with their collections as a hobby. Their attitude is not professionalized. However, many of them (e.g. Piotr Wierzbicki, Anna Dąbrowska-Lyons, Karol Radziszewski) make an excellent work disseminating the collections and digitalizing their content with own resources (because as the non-registered initiatives they cannot apply for funding, even if they wanted to). On the other hand there are some operators who do not have any intention to share with the wider audience, like Michał Guć or the anarchists (from Fuck 89). Regardless of that, all the private operators suffer from insufficient funds, time resources, and often they lack proper archiving space – which results in keeping the collections in own homes, however some do it intentionally. The foundations have difficulties with getting grants and very rarely employ any workers. The successful ones used the funds mostly for digitalization, creating their websites, and less frequently – to share their collections in the Internet through data bases.

### **3.4 Time frame**

The average date of founding collections is 1999 (counting together both private and public ones). It seems that during the first years of transition, a social euphoria of tasting what was not available before and a preoccupation with building a new order have caused some

reluctance towards dealing with the past<sup>28</sup>. Little was done towards organizing the institutional way of dealing with the collections on political opposition – let alone on cultural opposition. A decade later some sobriety came which was accompanied by the rising disagreements between the politicians coming originally from the same oppositional circles. Some crucial events preceding the transformation, like the “Round Table talks” (*Okrągły Stół*) started to be questioned<sup>29</sup>. Such atmosphere influenced a need to take care of the recent history heritage. The late wave of establishing public collections came in the late 2000s and even later, when many multi-media cultural institutions were founded and developed as tourist attractions (like the European Solidarity Centre, Museum of Modern Art or the Modern Museum Wroclaw).

Many private collections were founded much earlier, in the 1970s (Weeks of Christian Culture, Exchange Gallery, Polish Punk), and most of them were founded in the 1980s (like the collections of: Michał Guć, Karta Centre, Krzysztof Skiba, Piotr Wierzbicki or Fuck 89). Those early collections were started in a “natural” and rather unintentional way - from keeping documentations on the current activities of owners and stakeholders. From personal, home archives they were gradually developed into fuller collections. It took longer for the group initiatives to organize collective collections, probably due to the fact that it required establishing legal entities (foundations of Łódź Kaliska, Orange Alternative, Archaeology of Photography, and the Association of Documentalists “The Road”).

Private collections refer almost entirely to the 1970s and 1980s, as those were the decades of an extensive proliferation within alternative cultures and dissent activities, and therefore – it was the period which in Poland interested the COURAGE team the most. The 1970s, known as the “Gierek’s epoch” (*epoka Gierka*), were a decade of a relative prosperity and cautious opening towards the West. This let the society enjoy some forms of leisure activities – treated by the authorities as the “safety valves”<sup>30</sup>. New cultural phenomena appeared in the Polish People’s Republic. Punk groups emerged, rock festivals expanded and the artistic neo-avant-garde explored new forms of expressions. The “third circuit” activists operated not through confrontation with the system, as rather through disregarding its existence.

More confrontational attitude is observed in the collections from the 1980s. As it proved out, the 1970s’ prosperity was done on credit, which had huge economic consequences. The Polish society entered the 1980s with disastrous shortages and social anxieties. A brief success of the political opposition, crowned with the “Solidarity” Trade Union official registration, was abruptly ceased with introduction of the martial law and mass arrests in 1981. It is visible in the collections’ content that all those events had a great influence on the cultural opposition.

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<sup>28</sup> Klich-Kluczevska, *Ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Lipiński, “Mitologizacja czy dyskursywna reprezentacja?”

<sup>30</sup> Pęczak, “Badanie Jarocina: 1983–1984” ; Zieliński, *Scena rockowa w PRL: historia, organizacja, znaczenie.*

It showed that there is space for change, especially since the regime's power was weakening every year. Dissent activists and artists pushed the boundaries of allowed behavior and tested the limits of the authorities.

### 3.5 Users

There is very limited data on the number of users of the described collections, so there is little sense in describing the quantitative aspect. The private owners do not tend to keep track of the number of visitors and the case of public institutions is more complicated, as in most cases the available data is counted based on sold tickets (e.g. in the European Solidarity Centre). This means that we can only gain some knowledge on one type of institutions' activity, like the exhibitions or screenings with paid entrance, but there is little data on the number of people who visited the archives, came for lectures, participated in festivals. They are usually taken care of by different departments and there is no cumulative data on the visitors.

There are several types of users which depend on the collections' topics, but also on its direct availability. The collections on phenomena which are less commonly known nation-wide (conceptual art, punks, underground postage stamps, experimental theatre, queer activity) are usually visited by academics. Private operators share their collections mostly with the local researchers, whereas the public institutions often convey some queries for the foreign ones. This is probably connected to the better dissemination and availability of the public collections. The exception is the KARTA Centre which is a private foundation very popular also with international research parties. The topics related more closely to politics (democratic opposition or social movements) are also frequently explored by journalists. The collections documenting the socialist reality are also used for research by the consultants of the film and theatre productions.

As it was already mentioned, the availability of the collection greatly increases the number of visitors and the diversity of the audience. The first factor here is having a permanent location and long opening hours. This is of course far more typical for the public institutions, however the foundation of Archaeology of Photography successfully runs a permanent gallery in its headquarters. Having a permanent exhibition space attracts tourists, and some of the public operators managed to become one of the most important touristic destinations in their cities (European Solidarity Centre in Gdansk, Modern Museum in Wroclaw, Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw). Permanent space allows also to organize various dissemination events attracting the wider audience: festivals, lectures, tours, film screenings, educational projects. Another factor increasing the number of users is having an online content (or at least the data base).



Apart from most of the public collections, a successful example of sharing the collection online is the virtual museum of the Orange Alternative<sup>31</sup>.

To summarize, the number and types of visitors strongly vary among the collections, however it might be said that generally in case of private collections the most common audience are the researchers and journalists, and in public collections the audience composes of: researchers, journalists, tourists and school groups.

### 3.6 Stakeholders

It is very hard to describe some general features of the stakeholders as one group, as they very strongly differ from one another. Stakeholders are state institutions, public figures and private people; they have different motivations, different level of engagement in everyday operations and play various roles.

However, there are some common features which might be described. First of all, if a collection received some funding, an institution which delivered it becomes a stakeholder. The most frequent one is the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. Apart from supporting the collections financially, the state stakeholder do not intervene in the operator's day to day business – it rather requires some reports after the funding period. Other type of stakeholders are public figures, recognized personalities of culture and politics – people who engaged in cultural opposition. Many of them donated their own home archives and memorabilia to public operators (mostly museums), and some are members of the institutions' boards. Another group of stakeholders are the employees of the institutions – operators of the collections. Usually they are too young to have been personally engaged in the oppositional activity under state socialism. They are well-educated (holding a Master degree or a PhD) professional specializing in the field of alternative culture or recent history.

What connects private stakeholders is that every one of them is personally connected to the events documented in the collections - they documented them, co-organized or actively supported. The most important remark that should be stated here concerns the stakeholders of the smaller private collections. In all cases they play all the important roles by themselves: they are owners, operators and supporters; they deal with dissemination, digitalization and organization. It's a multi-tasking job which rarely is treated as a profession, rather as a long-life passion. All of those people (like Piotr Wierzbicki, Anna Dąbrowska-Lyons, Michał Guć, Krzysztof Skiba, Waldemar Fydrych, Zofia Łuczko) personally engaged in the dissent culture and they have made it their mission to preserve its heritage, and to present cultural diversities

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<sup>31</sup> <http://www.orangealternativemuseum.pl/#homepage>

of the 1970s and the 1980s from their own perspective – not through the narrative offered by the institutionalized politics of memory.

### 3.7 Impact of collections

Again, the topic of cultural opposition is no novelty in Poland, however it has been overshadowed by the stories of the strictly political dissent initiatives and persecutions. The success of the “Solidarity” Trade Union is one of the biggest Polish accomplishments recognized worldwide and therefore – a big opportunity for tourist attraction which is used well in Poland, especially by the Gdansk authorities. It seems that the collections on cultural opposition related to the democratic movement and social protests are used as touristic attractions in the museums - even though sometimes rather as an addition to the expositions on political opposition (like in the case of the European Solidarity Centre, visited by masses of international tourists). Many works from some of the art collections also serve as attractions in the museums, however for less “massive” tourism, more specialized locally oriented (in Museum of Modern Art or Modern Museum Wroclaw). An interesting case is made by the Polish Rock Granary, holding a very thematically narrow exhibition – focusing on the history of rock music and the Jarocin festival – which nevertheless operates with a big success. In general, most of the collections took part in some exhibitions or festivals, but very often they were just some small events, accompanying the thematic-events, like the conferences (organized e.g. by the Institute of National Remembrance). It is often a frequent case that the collections are showed to a very focused audience, and not to a general public.

Apart from being touristic attractions (mostly in the public institutions), the collections serve some other purposes, related to research, education, artistic inspiration, etc. Especially the archives like the KARTA Centre and state institutions are often used for queries. Professionals (journalists, researchers) also frequently use the photographic collections for their work.

It must be stated that in the case of private collections, an often cause for keeping the archives is not to introduce them to the audience, but rather to preserve the memory of past events. Some of them are just fulfilling their passions. Therefore, there are little initiatives to advertise collections. They are often limited to running some sort of a website (like a Facebook page). Apart from the art works, which function within different rules, the collections’ content is hardly ever used to capitalize on it, which illustrates two things: the scope of the stakeholders’ intentions and the notion that the items documenting the cultural opposition are not attractive collectibles or do not have much monetary value due to their multiplicity.

### 3.8 Networking

As it was stated above, some of the stakeholders do not care for their collections to be publicly recognized. Thus, they do not search for institutional support or networking opportunities. However, many of the stakeholders know each other personally, as they come from the same social circles or participated in the same events in the socialist times. Those relations are mainly of a private nature and do not reflect on professional cooperation. The environment of private stakeholders of cultural opposition is not as much a scheme of networking practices, as rather an unofficial net of helpful connections.

On the other hand, there are stakeholders who undertake very effective cooperation initiatives, like Karol Radziszewski who managed to show his Queer Archives on several international exhibitions around the world. Moreover, a bit different practices are visible in the registered foundations and associations, as they also employ younger staff members who do not base so much on own experience, but rather try to use the funding opportunities and dissemination possibilities.

As the materials shows, the public collections are ran by institutions which recognize the advantages of networking and regularly cooperate with each other in various projects, as well within some coalitions (like the Open Education Coalition). Museums are also in constant partnership with other state and municipal institutions, as well as the media.

### 3.9 Obstacles and challenges

The obstacles encountered by the stakeholders mostly refer to the lack of resources: in the form of money, space and time.

The money problems are more frequently experienced by the private stakeholders. Some private collections are operated solely with the private funds of their owners, who do not even have an intention of applying for support. They treat operating the collections' as their hobby or after-work activity. The other reason for the lack of funds within private collections is the fact they many of stakeholders do not officially register their activity – and thus they cannot apply for funding. The money problems are most severely experienced by the foundations, which except for taking care of collections, additionally have to find funds to cover the rent and salaries. In most cases they operate from project to project, whenever they manage to get some public funding, and in-between they rely on private donations which allow to cover the operational costs of keeping a minimal staff and working conditions.

The situation of public institutions is much better, however it does not mean that those institutions do not experience funding problems. Some of them are jointly founded by different levels of governance, but some are state institutions, funded centrally. They are able to cover the regular operating costs, nevertheless, those institutions also have to function on a “project to project” bases. After applying for funding they may be given funding for completing some initiatives, which are crucial for their development: only through projects they can convey new dissemination, educational or research ideas. It means, that some goals may be only realized using additional funding. This brings some instability in the field and often limits the institutions’ possibilities to the traditional ways of archiving and exhibiting.

The exception in the scope of public institutions is the Institute of National Remembrance which was already described at the beginning of this report. The institution gets stable and high funding for its operations. Such distribution of resources shows how politically important this institution is – as an organization performing the politics of memory it is a helpful legitimization tool for any government.

In terms of time and space resources, the obstacles met by private and public stakeholders are experienced equally often, however, they occur in different proportions and for different reasons in those two cases. Many private operators pursue careers in different fields and therefore have little time to handle the collections. Foundations operate with limited staff and cannot afford additional initiatives (which would be helpful for dissemination purposes). However, the workers of public institution also experience burdening with work, especially the workers of the archival departments of the museums, which have to deal with an enormous amount of documents and objects, at the same time dealing with digitalization, queries and other duties. The archiving spaces only in single cases are seen as sufficient – the problems with keeping the collections is a common problem. In case of institutions and bigger collections, insufficient archiving capacity causes problems with proper organization of the collection and difficulties with finding proper items when they are needed. In case of the private collections, their content tend to invade the living space of their owners, as they usually keep them in their own houses which makes it difficult to catalogue all the items.

#### **4. Conclusions and policy recommendations**

The experience of the Polish team within COURAGE might be distinguished by the fact that the field of cultural opposition under state socialism was not as much explored, as rather approached from a different perspective. Because the subject is quite well described in social and historical sciences, we have less discovered new phenomena, but rather managed to reach and describe some new examples and manifestations. In the collections descriptions we question the existing narration and read the events, activists and items in a new context. The

cultural factor of preparing the systemic changes is often overshadowed and not properly represented in public narration of the transformation. Hopefully, switching the focus onto the cultural aspects will add a new perspective for interpreting the socialist reality – so eagerly described as grey, dull, and monotonous. Some signs of the new paradigm are already visible in Poland, as the year 2017 was celebrated as a “Year of Polish Avant-garde” through a series of cultural events organized by tens of museum, research institutes, theatres, and galleries in numerous cities<sup>32</sup>. The neo-avant-garde scene under socialism was an important part of those celebrations.

As much as it would help to form some conclusions, it is not possible to identify what are the best and the worst practices in dealing with collections on cultural opposition. It is connected to the fact the extensive group of social actors in this field, recognized as stakeholders, are an extremely diversified set of entities and represent unlike interests. Good and bad practices are seen differently by the policy makers, public institutions, foundations, emotionally engaged private owners – yet alone by the historians and theoreticians, audience or former activists.

It seems that the clashes of different visions may be expressed through the problem of institutionalization of the collections. After recognizing the importance of this issue, in April 2018 we organized a seminar for private stakeholders<sup>33</sup> to discuss their attitudes (as the perspectives of public stakeholders and the policy makers was readable from available sources). It turned out that they have plenty of reservation towards handing their collections into the institutions’ repositories, and even towards cooperating with public museums, galleries and archives. Their reluctance referred for example to the belief that:

- their collections may be misused (e.g. by journalists or for political purposes);
- items will be kept in archives and never displayed;
- they have sufficient exposure possibilities (thanks to the Internet);
- the collections will lose the opportunity to be ever displayed as a whole entity.

Interestingly, the above remarks are the opposites of what is commonly believed to be the perks of institutionalizing collections, like gaining a better access to the items for the public or good exhibition and dissemination opportunities. It seems that the crucial issue is the lack of trust towards institutions. In spite of the fact that some of them were highly appreciated by the stakeholders, for the reasons mentioned above they would not like the institutions to be operators of their collections. The unspoken, yet easily recognizable was also the notion that no institution is able to get to know a collection equally well as its creator. Therefore, our

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<sup>32</sup> <http://rokawangardy.pl/>, 16.10.2018.

<sup>33</sup> All of them were individuals who never registered their activities: private stakeholders, fulfilling the role of creators, owners, operators and sole supporters.

biggest recommendation is to solve the issue of public distrust, induced by problems of fluid working staff (discontent with mediocre salaries and excess of work) and unstable funding – strongly depending on the governments' changes.

## Recommendations

Based on the problems recognized within COURAGE the following issues should be addressed by the policy makers:

1. Communication between stakeholders.

Both public institutions and private owners seem to be communicating in parallel circles which depend on personal relations and knowledge. As a result, the stakeholders may experience the same problems or exploring the same subjects, but they do not know about each other. Information on workshops, conferences, and even funding is not easily found by all the parties interested. The solution would be to create a digital communication platform.

2. International possibilities for private owners

Private owners do not use foreign funding or international networking channels, probably because they have little (or no) knowledge about such possibilities. It would be advantageous for them to organize some workshops or information meeting.

3. Little trust towards public institutions

Private owners do not want to share their collections with public institutions, because they are afraid of misuse or the possibility that the materials will be forgotten. Cultural institutions need stable funding to build up the trust of the private stakeholders.

4. “Cultural opposition” in school curriculum

As the consultations with high-school teachers proved, the topic is very interesting for the youth, yet absent in the school program – which is a part of a bigger problem of neglecting the last years of socialist Poland in schools due to the extended teaching program. Some extracurricular educational projects may be organized based on COURAGE materials.

5. The value of private archives

Due to the extensive underground publishing culture in the last decade of socialism there is still a huge number of publications and tissue-papers in the hands of private owners. Very often people do not recognize the historical value of their private archives, which consists of old leaflets, posters, photographs or samizdat publications. There is a need for a social campaign raising awareness to this issue, before the materials will be lost forever.

6. Maintaining the COURAGE Registry

The Registry is a helpful tool to diminish a dispersion of the collections. It would be beneficial for the stakeholders to maintain the Registry (or in a worse case to build a

new one) and create the tools enabling them to use the platform by themselves. The materials would be preserved and the mapping of cultural opposition would continue.

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## **Annex:**

### **List of Collections:**

1. Aniela Mieczysławska Raczyńska Collection
2. Archive of the Alternative Theatre
3. Archive of the Studio Theatre
4. Archives of National Commission of the Solidarity Trade Union
5. Archives of Weeks of Christian Culture / Artists' Priesthood
6. Artists' Archives of the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw
7. Barbara Fatyga Archive
8. Collection of Association of Documentalists "The Road"
9. Eastern Archive of the KARTA Centre
10. Erazm Ciołek Papers at the Hoover Institution
11. Eustachy Kossakowski Archive
12. Exchange Gallery
13. Exhibits of European Solidarity Centre
14. Film Archive of the Video Studio Gdansk
15. Film Notations of European Solidarity Centre
16. Filmoteka of the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw
17. Fuck 89 Collection
18. Institute of National Remembrance Archives
19. Jerzy Ludwiński Archive
20. Kowalnia Archive at the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw
21. Krzysztof Skiba Private Archive
22. KwieKulik Archive
23. Lodz Kaliska Archive
24. Museum of the Orange Alternative
25. National Film Archive – Audiovisual Institute Collection
26. Paweł "Końjo" Konnak Private Archive
27. Photographic Collection of European Solidarity Centre
28. Piotr "Pietia" Wierzbicki Collection
29. Pitch-In Culture Archive
30. Polish Performance Archive of the Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw
31. Polish Punk Collection by Anna Dąbrowska-Lyons
32. Polish Rock Collections at the Polish Rock Granary
33. Polish Section of the Radio Free Europe
34. Poznan Anarchist Library Archive
35. Queer Archives Institute
36. Solidarity Collection at the British Library
37. Tadeusz Rolke Archive at the Museum of modern Art
38. The Archive of the Opposition in KARTA Centre
39. The Archives of Transition 1989-1991

40. The Oral History Archive of KARTA Centre Foundation
41. Theatre Gardzienice Collection
42. Tomasz Sikorski Collection on Art on the Street
43. Tomasz Sikorski Collection on Biennale of Spatial Forms in Elbląg
44. Tomasz Sikorski Collection on Dziekanka Workshop
45. Tomasz Sikorski Collection on Mospan Gallery
46. Tomasz Sikorski Collection on P.O. Box 17 Gallery
47. Trasa W-Z Archive
48. Underground Postage Stamps of Michał Guć
49. Wojciech Zamecznik Collection at the Archaeology of Photography Foundation
50. Zbigniew Dłubak Collection at the Archaeology of Photography Foundation
51. Zbigniew Galicki Photographic Collection
52. Zbigniew Libera Archive

#### **List of Described Organisations and Institutions:**

1. "Solidarity" Trade Union [*Związek Zawodowy "Solidarność"*]
2. Academy of Movement [*Akademia Ruchu*]
3. Academy of Theatre Practices Gardzienice [*Akademia Praktyk Teatralnych Gardzienice*]
4. A-Cyclists Group [*A-Cykliści*]
5. Alternative Theatre [*Teatr Alternatywny*]
6. Archeology of Photography Foundation [*Fundacja Archeologia Fotografii*]
7. Archives of National Commission of "Solidarity" Trade Union [*Archiwa Komisji Krajowej Związku Zawodowego "Solidarność"*]
8. Artists' Priesthood [*Duszpasterstwo Środowisk Twórczych*]
9. Association of Documentalists „The Road” [*Stowarzyszenie Dokumentalistów "Droga"*]
10. Association of Polish Art Photographers [*Stowarzyszenie Polskich Artystów Fotografików*]
11. British Library [*Biblioteka Brytyjska*]
12. Chancellery of the President of the Republic of Poland [*Kancelaria Prezydenta RP*]
13. Chancellery of the Senate of the Republic of Poland [*Kancelaria Sejmu RP*]
14. City of Culture Foundation [*Fundacja Miasto Kultury*]
15. City of Lublin [*Miasto Lublin*]
16. City of Warsaw [*Miasto Warszawa*]
17. Committee for the Defense of Workers [*Komitet Obrony Robotników*]
18. El Gallery in Elbląg [*Galeria El*]
19. European Network for Remembrance and Solidarity [*Europejska Sieć Pamięć i Solidarność*]
20. European Solidarity Centre [*Europejskie Centrum Solidarności*]
21. Film Archive Foundation [*Fundacja Archiwum Filmowe*]
22. Foksal Gallery [*Galeria Foksal*]
23. Freedom and Peace Movement [*Ruch Wolność i Pokój*]

24. Gardzienice Theatre [*Teatr Gardzienice*]
25. Gazeta Agency [*Agencja Gazeta*]
26. Gdansk City Council [*Rada Miasta Gdańska*]
27. General Headquarters of State Archives in Poland [*Naczelna Dyrekcja Archiwów Państwowych*]
28. History Meetings House [*Dom Spotkań z Historią*]
29. Hoover Institution [*Instytut Hoovera*]
30. Independent Publishing House NOWA [*Niezależna Oficyna Wydawnicza NOWA*]
31. Jarocin Regional Museum [*Muzeum Regionalne w Jarocinie*]
32. Józef Piłsudski Institute in London [*Instytut Józefa Piłsudskiego w Londynie*]
33. KARTA Centre Foundation [*Fundacja Ośrodka KARTA*]
34. "Kowalnia" Studio of Audiovisual Space [*Pracownia Przestrzeni Audiowizualnej „Kowalnia”*]
35. Krakow Anarchist Federation [*Krakowska Federacja Anarchistyczna*]
36. Lodz Kaliska [*Łódź Kaliska*]
37. Lower House of the Parliament of the Republic of Poland [*Niższa Izba Parlamentu RP*]
38. Ministry of Culture and National Heritage of Poland [*Ministerstwo Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego RP*]
39. Mospan Gallery [*Galeria Mospan*]
40. Museum of Modern Art in Warsaw [*Muzeum Sztuki Nowoczesnej w Warszawie*]
41. National Commission of the "Solidarity" Trade Union [*Komisja Krajowa Związku Zawodowego „Solidarność”*]
42. National Digital Archives [*Narodowe Archiwum Cyfrowe*]
43. National Film Archive – Audiovisual Institute [*Filmoteka Narodowa – Instytut Audiowizualny*]
44. Open Education Coalition [*Koalicja Otwartej Edukacji*]
45. Orange Alternative Foundation [*Fundacja Pomarańczowa Alternatywa*]
46. P.O. Box 17 Gallery [*Galeria P.O. Box 17*]
47. Pitch-In Culture [*Kultura Zrzuty*]
48. Polish Catholic Church [*Polski Kościół Katolicki*]
49. Polish Film Institute [*Polski Instytut sztuki Filmowej*]
50. Polish Institute and Sikorski Museum [*Instytut Polski i Muzeum im. Gen. Sikorskiego*]
51. Polish Library POSK in London [*Biblioteka Polska POSK w Londynie*]
52. Polish Radio [*Polskie Radio*]
53. Polish Rock Granary [*Spichlerz Polskiego Rocka*]
54. Polish Section of the Radio Free Europe [*Polska Sekcja Radia Wolna Europa*]
55. Polish Social and Cultural Association [*Polskie Stowarzyszenie Społeczno-Kulturalne*]
56. Polish Society of Authors and Composers [*Związek Polskich Autorów i Kompozytorów – ZAiKS*]
57. Poznan Anarchist Library [*Poznańska Biblioteka Anarchistyczna*]
58. Queer Archives Institute
59. Repassage Gallery [*Galeria Repassage*]
60. Rozbrat Collective [*Kolektyw Rozbrat*]
61. Security Service of the Ministry of Internal Affairs in Poland [*Służby Bezpieczeństwa Ministerstwa Spraw Wewnętrznych*]
62. Shoah Foundation [*Fundacja Shoah*]
63. State Archives in Poland [*Archiwa Państwowe*]

64. Studio Theatre [*Teatr Studio*]
65. The Zbigniew Raszewski Institute [*Instytut Zbigniewa Raszewskiego*]
66. Theatre of the Eighth Day [*Teatr Ósmego Dnia*]
67. Video Studio Gdansk
68. Wrocław Contemporary Museum [*Muzeum Współczesne Wrocław*]
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# COURAGE

Cultural Opposition: Understanding the Cultural Heritage of Dissent in the Former Socialist Countries

## *Country Reports*



# ROMANIA

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## Table of Content

1. Introduction
2. National and Transnational Contexts
  - 2.1 Public Remembering and Professional Reconstructions
  - 2.2 Legal Framework and Institutional Actors
3. Romanian Collections in the COURAGE Registry
  - 3.1 Typology and Topics
  - 3.2 Actors and Prospective Users
4. Concluding Remarks and Policy Recommendations

### Appendix

Map of the Romanian Collections

## 1. Introduction

The communist past is a continuous presence in Romania, in electoral campaigns, public discourses, and historical writings. Yet, there is rather public agreement than controversy over the narrative on the communist regime in Romania. This state of affairs is directly influenced by: (1) the characteristics of the pre-1989 single-party political system, (2) the nature of the 1989 regime change, and (3) the early transition from communism. The pre-1989 regime began its 45 years of rule with a massive wave of terror and repression, which is estimated to have touched directly 10% of the population and indirectly approximately half; while repression was a taboo topic until 1989, many individuals had personal or intermediate experiences of state political violence. The political regime established by the Romanian Communist Party was not only undemocratic as all the other similar regimes in East-Central Europe, but also largely unpopular for it failed to establish any type of welfare system. This regime ended with a violent popular revolt in which more than 1,100 individuals died, but the former communist bureaucrats preserved power through elections, while those responsible for the crimes committed in 1989 remained unidentified to this day. Thus, it is widely believed that the Revolution of 1989 did not represent a genuine break with the past. The transition from communism was more difficult in this country than in any other in the region, so opinion polls illustrate that some people regret what they perceived as social security provided by the former regime, yet few regret the regime change of 1989. Consequently, public remembering and professional reconstructions are almost unanimous in emphasizing the “criminal and illegitimate” nature of the communist regime in Romania, while few who lived under the communist dictatorship question Romania’s membership to the European Union. The huge anti-governmental demonstrations in the last years and the massive boycott of the referendum of 6-7 October 2018, which tried to consult the population on the issue of the so-called “traditional family,” meaning in fact to ask support for introducing a ban on gay marriages in the constitution, clearly illustrate that the pro-European option is equally strong in the new generation. For the communist regime in Romania, unlike in other countries of East-Central Europe, was also nationalist in its latest phase, the opposition to this regime was fundamentally democratic and anti-nationalist. Its legacy lives on in the next generation who manifests an increasingly active political participation from a pro-European perspective. At the same time, the coming of age of the generation who does not have the direct experience of communism illustrates that the consensus on the interpretation of the pre-1989 past is about to fade away. This change does not announce the development of the much-needed plurality of views, but the increasing popularity of an idealized image on the communist past which emerged out of disappointment with the grim present of the faulty democracy, and represents the exact opposite of the hitherto dominating consensus on the past as “criminal and illegitimate.” In short, if the Romania’s democratic future is largely imagined only entangled with Europe,

Romania's undemocratic past generates confusion about the fundamental differences between democracy and dictatorship. The COURAGE project which offers an enormous open database of collections of "cultural opposition" remind that the communist past was "another country" in which the secret police did exist to harass legally innocent but non-conformist individuals, the human and citizen rights were constantly violated, the citizens could express their critical opinions only through underground media and street demonstrations. In other words, the COURAGE project illustrates that the type of modernization proposed by the communist regimes in East-Central Europe lacked the fundamentals of western modern democracies, i.e. mechanisms of limiting power, granting political representation, guaranteeing basic rights. Briefly put, the COURAGE project teaches the difference between dictatorship and democracy, while emphasizing that in spite of the European memory divide of the twentieth century, there is a common cultural heritage which still cherish the fundamental values of democracy. The cultural legacy discovered in the frame of this project is thus part of the European heritage and should be protected from public oblivion.

## 2. National and Transnational Contexts

### *2.1 Public Remembering and Professional Reconstructions*

In post-communist Romania, the particularities of the pre-1989 regime, the nature of the Revolution, as well as the post-1989 political developments made amnesty impossible and amnesia undesirable. While retribution was considered the crucial step in dismantling the legacies of the past, its adoption was nevertheless late and its application incomplete. As a reaction to this, the preservation of the memory of the wrongdoings committed by the defunct communist regime was turned into a societal priority. The recollections of the victims that survived the Romanian Gulag emerged as the most powerful vector of memory, which essentially influenced the representation of communism, generating a historical narrative on that period of the recent past centered on prisons, surveillance and shortages. The very production and reproduction of this public representation constituted yet another way of taking distance from the communist past. The widespread perception in Romanian society—according to which the Revolution of 1989 did not lead to a genuine break with the communist past and thus to a moral regeneration of society—has triggered the following responses: (1) retribution for the past wrongdoings has become synonymous with the moral regeneration of society; (2) remembering the past sufferings has become a surrogate for the never-fulfilled transitional justice; and (3) a hegemonic public representation of communism—centered on prisons, surveillance and shortages—emerged, and has become an expression of anti-communism and a surrogate break with the non-democratic past.

As the blood spilled during the popular revolt of 1989 made any reconciliation with the past impossible, the genuine break with the past could not have been accomplished otherwise than by punishing the perpetrators, i.e., those who inflicted immense sufferings on their fellow citizens under the defunct communist regime. It was in Timișoara – the city in which the Revolution in December 1989 sparkled – that a document asking for the institutionalization of lustration was made public soon after the regime change, on 11 March 1990. Known as the “Proclamation of Timișoara,” the appeal included the famous “Article 8,” which requested the banning of all former nomenklatura members, party activists, and officers of the former secret police from running in the next three elections. It was also the issue of lustration that triggered the first major wave of protests in post-communist Romania that took place in downtown Bucharest in the spring of 1990 and it is known since as the “University Square” phenomenon. Between 1990 and 1996, as long as politics was dominated by the so-called neo-communists, the idea of lustration gained momentum. In popular understanding, lustration meant above all the unmasking of the former secret police employees and collaborators. The instrumental force behind this interpretation of lustration was the Association of the Former Political Prisoners in Romania – AFDPR, which represented a considerable force with its almost 100,000 members and a most active component of civil society. Yet, the first legal frame for transitional justice was issued by the Romanian Parliament only in 1999, while the archives of the former secret police became really available only after 2005.

As long as the communist perpetrators remained unpunished, and the wrongdoings of the past unmasked, political and societal conflicts were shaped by the battle of memory over amnesia. “When justice does not succeed in being a form of memory, memory itself can be a form of justice,” this is how former dissident Ana Blandiana formulated the priority of recording for the next generations the recollections of those who survived the Romanian Gulag. In order to finally put the communist past behind it was of paramount importance to make public the atrocities committed under communism and reveal the criminal nature of the system to the generations that were too young to have experienced directly the terror. Unlike in other former communist countries, the living memory of the sufferings in the Romanian Gulag was never allowed to surface into publications, but remained underground as “counter-memory,” transmitted between friends, family and unofficial networks. A publicly untold story until 1989, this counter-memory was institutionalized as the type of remembering communism most consistent not only with the violent essence of the former regime, but also with the priorities of the transition from communism. The preservation of the testimonies by those who suffered was considered an act of moral responsibility. A few drawer books and testimonies recuperated from exile opened the process of recuperating the inhumane experiences of the former political prisoners from the 1940s and the 1950s. Many started to write down prison memoirs after 1989, while almost all post-communist oral history projects focused on the memory of the Romanian Gulag. The story of suffering was complemented by a story of bravery, which

comprised the recollections of those who had tried over the years, in various forms, to say “no” to the communist regime and thus clashed with the secret police. Through association with the memoirs from prisons, the more recent memories of the hardships of everyday life endured in Romania during the last decade before the collapse (1980-1989) also receive a moral significance that they in essence lacked, since protests against the system in this period were really scarce. Remembering the “normalized” 1960s seems indecent not only compared to the prison memories, but also to the memories of late communism. In short, remembering communism in Romania meant remembering sufferings, for everyone suffered, though in different ways. The common denominator in the two stories of suffering is the former Romanian communist secret police, the Securitate: it was the omnipotent and omnipresent institution that is taken responsible for the great terror of the early period, as well as for the surveillance to which it subjected the entire society through its huge network of informers.

Remembering communism as exclusively a period of suffering has generated a common place according to which Romanians experienced the most atrocious dictatorship in the Soviet bloc, which remained in power for 45 years due to the Securitate. This view has definitely shaped the memorialization of the communist past. The main museum of communism is to this day that organized in the former prison of Sighet, where a majority of the interwar politicians found their death and were buried in a common grave. This year, the Sighet Memorial received the European Heritage Label in recognition of its importance as major site of European remembrance. The very name of this *lieu de mémoire* – “Memorial to the victims of communism and of the resistance” – illustrates what part of the dictatorial past is worth remembering during the period of democratic consolidation: it is the part that speaks about the sufferings and bravery of the Romanians and which would teach the present-day generations about the dignifying past of their nation. Apart from the monuments commemorating the victims of the Revolution of 1989, memorials dedicated to the victims of the communist regime were erected mainly by the association of former political prisoners, AFDPR, sometimes with the help of the local authorities, near most of the former communist prisons. To sum up, in post-communist Romania, anti-communism is widely considered the morally correct perspective in publicly representing the communist past. What is more, this interpretation of the communist past was codified into an officially and politically endorsed historical account. At the request of civil society organizations, the then president of the country, Traian Băsescu, established in 2006 the Commission for the Analysis of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania, which produced by the end of the same year a report of around 700 pages. The report is consistent with the collective memory of the miserable 1980s, and the memory of the Romanian Gulag, very actively promoted in the public sphere by the generation of the former political prisoners in the late 1940s and the 1950s, with the instrumental support of public intellectuals from the next generation. On this basis, the report characterized the communist regime in Romania as “illegitimate and criminal,” while the head of state took it as basis to

officially condemn the human rights violations committed under communist rule a few days before Romania's accession to the European Union. That public gesture was meant to symbolize the final break with the communist past. Otherwise, the report did not highlight new research, but aggregated the knowledge on communism produced in post-communist Romania. At the same time, the report reflects the lived experiences of two different generations, those of 1945 and those of 1968 considering the time of reaching political maturity. Both reinforced each other's perspectives on communism and influenced the professional writings on the recent past authored largely by the third generation of historians, those of 1989 considering the same criteria of defining a generation as above.

The post-communist historical writings on the communist past were initially shaped by the works of Western authors or exiled Romanians, which at the time of the collapse were the only works on the period which were free of ideological interference. In other words, the field of communist studies emerged after 1989 due to these transnational transfers of knowledge, unfortunately in terms of missing information rather than concepts and methods. The domestic input in this field came mostly from "re-qualified" historians, who had concentrated up to 1989 on distant periods of the past for the simple reason that those epochs were more likely to be addressed in a professional manner and with less official interference. However, these historians' professionalism suffered greatly because of Romania's cultural isolation in the 1970s and the 1980s, when the circulation of ideas and individuals across the borders was controlled to a much greater degree than in other countries of the region. Thus, the large majority of historians in Romania still consider the archives as the hallmark of their discipline and the ultimate repository of "historical truth." The next generations of historians educated after 1989 widely reproduce the same model of historical writing. As a consequence, the large majority of works on the communist period can be characterized as event-oriented political histories, which are based on archival sources. Writings that take into consideration other type of sources, apply innovative methodologies, employ explanatory theoretical models or interdisciplinary approaches, and focus on "unusual" topics do exist, but are very few.

If before 1989 the official narrative on the postwar history of Romania conveyed the idea that this was the happiest period in national history, the prelude of the final historical stage of communism, post-communist historical writings quickly re-converged to a new consensus by turning upside down the previous imposed consensus. The largest majority of the historians did not contradict the above-described public remembering of communism in Romania, as the ideas conveyed in their works can be summarized as following: the communist regime meant the darkest period of the national past, possible only due to the instrumental intervention of the Soviet Union which brought to power a small group of ill-intended apparatchiks who managed nonetheless to gain control over society and maintain their rule for 45 years. The major question that shaped historical writings is related to the way the communist domination

over Romanian society was actually imposed and preserved. In this respect, public discourses and historiography provide a similar answer: it was due to the ability of the secret police, the infamous Securitate, the third most famous communist institution of the kind, after the KGB and Stasi. Given this view, one might say that the largest majority of the post-communist narratives on Romanian communism perfectly fit the totalitarian paradigm, in spite of the fact that most historians only adopted the concept without really understanding the methodological implications. Their works usually portray the communist period as a confrontation between the perpetrators in the communist elite, among whom the secret police officers and collaborators rank high, and the rest of the society, which included only innocent victims who tried desperately but inefficiently to oppose.

This wide consensus was not reached on the basis of archival documents, for the new law regulating the access to these records, which was passed only in 1996, stipulated a closure of 30 years that was maintained as such in spite of several subsequent amendments. As mentioned, it was the enormous amount of testimonies by the former political prisoners about the extreme experiences of sufferings that shaped not only the public perceptions of the past, but also the professional narratives. The provision of the archival law is also greatly responsible for shaping the historians' agenda: to this day, the late 1940s and the 1950s are far better researched than the later periods of communism, for which archival documents only gradually became available for research. Implicitly, most historical writings convey the same story about communism as the Sighet Memorial; it is story of suffering and bravery, which includes only victims and heroes, worth remembering and researching. This unbalanced research rightfully revealed the dimensions of repression in Romania, although the actual number of the people arrested, tortured, and imprisoned is still a matter of debate. Records of imprisoned population were poorly kept by the regime, but most estimates indicate that around one person in 10 was directly touched by repression in communist Romania, mostly during the period of terror that came to an end in 1964, when all political prisoners were quietly released. As a tribute to those who suffered, several series of dictionaries cataloguing not only the names of the victims, but also those of the torturers were published. However, studies on the secret police rather overlooked the collaboration of a significant segment of the population with this institution in late communism, in spite of the fact that the archives of this institution revealed that collaboration was by no means compulsory. Many secret informants were unmasked after the opening of the Securitate files in 2005, but their cases remained mostly in the domain of media headlines, and only rarely triggered systematic research.

Another important question that shaped historical writings refers to the response of the Romanian society to the communist rule; the answer is resistance. Opposition and dissidence in late communism were much less developed than in Central Europe and cannot not illustrate such view. Most researchers, however, concentrated on the early communism and

demonstrated that Romanians were also anti-communists. Indeed, in the aftermath of WWII, many former officers of the Royal Army, peasants, students, members of the former political parties organized themselves in small groups that tried to hide in the mountains in the hope that the Americans would start a new war against the Soviet Union and implicitly restore the Romanian monarchy. This form of reacting to the establishment of the communist rule faded away, especially after the defeat of the Hungarian Revolution, so the Securitate suppressed it by the early 1960s. Resistance in the mountains did never develop into a movement at the country scale. However, it offered to the Romanians the privilege of arguing that in spite of the feeble opposition to communist rule in the 1980s, a fierce opposition to the communist rule took place beginning in the late 1940s, that is, allegedly earlier than in any other country of East-Central Europe. In fact, the so-called “resistance in the mountains” represents the most popular topic of research in post-communist Romania, as it is the very source of restoring a sense of national dignity. If one evaluates Romanian communism on the basis of what has been researched so far, it might have the impression that all the mountains in Romania were filled by the courageous anti-communist resisters. By contrast, later protests against communism by students, workers or intellectuals – fewer, indeed, than in other countries, but which did exist – received less attention. Briefly put, due to the fact that post-communist historiography concentrated primarily on the first two decades after WWII, one is given the impression that Romanians are an exceptionally heroic people, who resisted communism adamantly, and it was only the unparalleled intensity of the repression that crushed them.

Finally, it must be emphasized that there is no disconnect between the mainstream academic discourses on the communist past and the coverage of that period in textbooks. Both focus on communist repression and condemn its crimes. This view underpins democratic consolidation by highlighting differences between a democracy based on the rule of law, and a dictatorship that imprisoned innocent people. To learn what democracy is means to recognize what it is not, and detect derailment from the path to democratic consolidation. However, delivery of school curricula depends on teachers, who can transmit different messages that reflect their own experiences and memories of communism. Thus, knowledge of communism acquired in school or family might be disconnected from the professional reconstructions of the past presented in academic writings and textbooks. Teachers or parents might transmit to generations that never experienced communism a conflicting message that depends not on the way they once experienced communism, but on their memories of that time, which are influenced by their experience of post-communist transition. The more painful the transition, the happier the memories of the pre-1989 period. These selective memories of the past — an alleged social security, an illusory better education or medical care, or a presumed lower crime rate — imply that some aspects of life were better before 1989. Some young people, whose chances of social and professional success are grim, buy into these memories. The disconnect between historical writings and personal memories exists also because the former do not fully integrate the latter.



Most historical writings hardly illustrate that people who never experienced repression perceived the communist regime in neutral or even positive terms because it increased their living standard by moving them from village to city. As long as these experiences are not integrated in the narrative on the communist past, the disconnect between history and memory will continue to disorient the young generation. The COURAGE research represents a much-needed different perspective on communism in Romania, which might finally trigger debates due the open access descriptions in the national language from the registry.

## *2.2 Legal Framework and Institutional Actors*

Chronologically, the first institution exclusively dedicated to the study of the recent past in post-communist Romania was the National Institute for the Study of Totalitarianism (INST), which was established in 1993, under the patronage of the Romanian Academy of Sciences. This institute mirrors the representation of the communist past promoted through the joint efforts of the former political prisoners and the public intellectuals, i.e., focusing on the repressive character of the regime. The name of the aforementioned institute might imply that it deals not only with communism, but with fascism as well. Its program of research, however, focuses mainly on the former type of “totalitarianism.” In fact, in Romania, the very term totalitarianism is generally employed as synonym for communism. As argued, the regime that ended in 1989 is selectively remembered as a terror period dominated by the secret police, and no other concept seems to epitomize better its total control over the population than the term “totalitarianism.”

As for the legal frame for researching the past, the main battle fought by the Romanian historians has been, in fact, not for reconstructing the past, but for the complete opening of the archives covering the communist period. Aside the repressed forms of memory, such as those of the former political prisoners, official records from various archives represent a major source for the reconstruction of the recent past. Quite naturally, the breakdown of the communist regime was followed by debates concerning the role of archives and archivists in supporting the widely claimed need for writing the “true” history of Romania. The break with the past meant also pressing for the issuance of modern regulations to govern not only the reorganization and development of archives, but also the difficult problems related to the access to documents. A post-communist law regulating the functioning of the National Archives was adopted in only in 1996, but following the communist legislation of 1971 it stipulates that documents belonging to the Romanian National Archives can be consulted only after 30 years from their creation. Furthermore, Article 22 states that the documents which could affect “the national interests, the citizens’ rights and liberties” because of the information they contain or “those whose physical state is endangered” cannot be released for research. Nevertheless, the 1996 law does

not state very clearly the procedure of defining which documents fall in these categories, but simply stipulates that the decision has to be made by their legal owner. Such an ambiguous formulation facilitates the abuse of power and contributes to the making of arbitrary decisions regarding the access to some documents. Moreover, it fuels an old dispute in Romania between archivists, who regard themselves as preservers of documents, not as those meant to make them available for research, and historians, who are the main users of such documents. Numerous organizations, associations, and individuals have questioned the usefulness of any general closure period. Many historians specializing in recent history asked the reduction of these periods, including the general closure period of 30 years, arguing that the opening of documents related to the communist past is crucial for coming to terms with a troubled past. Nothing changed significantly since the law was issued, but in the meantime almost 30 years have passed since the collapse of communism, so the archives of this recent past have become anyway increasingly available. However, the research of the early communist period is to this day far more consistent than that on the later period, as argued above.

A breakthrough in the making archival material available for research occurred with the opening of the former secret police files for research. This was a rather long and gradual process, yet more successful than in the case of the files of the former communist party files, which are subject of the general archival law of 1996. After the defeat of the so-called neo-communists in the elections of 1996, when for the first time in post-WWII Romania political power was peacefully transferred from the communist bureaucracy to non-communist politicians, a draft law envisaging lustration was debated in the parliament and was finally sanctioned in 1999, after three years of polemics. The instrumental force behind this law was the Association of the Former Political Prisoners in Romania – AFDPR. The Law 187/1999 regarded solely the former employees and informers of the secret police, and was inspired by the Stasi Records Act of 1991, based on which Der Bundesbeauftragte für die Stasi-Unterlagen (BStU) functions. The Romanian law also established a new institution under parliamentary control, the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives (Consiliul Național pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității – CNSAS) to take over the files of the former secret police in order to make them publicly available and at the same time assess if the candidates for public offices were involved in the activities of “the Securitate as political police.”

The principle that stayed behind the law was that of individual responsibility, and by no means that of collective guilt, based on the simple association of certain individuals with the Securitate. In other words, the Romanian law disqualifies individuals on the basis of what they did, similar to the German legislation, and not according to the position they occupied, like in the case of the Czecho-Slovak lustration. The board of CNSAS was empowered to assess to what extent the activity of an individual resulted in the violation of the basic human rights, which were guaranteed by the Romanian communist constitution. Thus, it did not imply any

retroactive application of justice. Moreover, the law guaranteed the right to appeal to a court of law. In addition, disqualification was not automatically triggered by the law. Only those persons that failed to acknowledge their collaboration prior to their acceptance of the public office were subject to disqualification, which makes it similar to the Polish law of 1997. In short, this law was conceived to be as consistent as possible with the rule-of-law principles.

As compared to societal expectations, Law 187/1999 produced limited results, but it triggered important public debates on the meaning of collaboration with the secret police and led to increasingly restrictive provisions of the law. In fact, the ups and downs of its subsequent application can be separated by means of three chronological landmarks, as follows: 1999 – very limited implementation of legislation due to the fact that a majority of the documents produced by the former Securitate were practically withheld by the institutions that preserved them; 2005 – transfer of the bulk of the Securitate archives to CNSAS and de facto opening of the files; a wave of public exposure of former Securitate collaborators and agents followed suit; 2008 – change of legislation meant to defer to a court of law the final assessment concerning the quality of collaborator or agent, which prolonged the process of public disclosure, but the process of opening the files has continued ever since. However, the rather insufficient personnel could not do wonders with an already disorganized archive due to the mission-oriented handling by the Securitate and the successive reorganization by three different institutions after 1989. Nonetheless, the most remarkable cases of collaboration with the Securitate were revealed not by personal files, which were generally not preserved, but by the files of the victims, in which evidence of collaboration (usually copies of informative notes) were found. In other words, even in the absence of personal files, informative notes can still be found in the files of those on whom the respective persons provided information. Thus, the files of the victims contributed to the public exposure as former collaborators of some public figures, mostly politicians. Gradually, CNSAS began to touch more and more persons from among all the segments of society, from politicians to the higher clergy, and from all fields of activity, ranging from the judiciary to the academia. Besides applying transitional justice, CNSAS is also a public archive open for research and a research institute. Especially the former type of mission is directly related to the role of CNSAS as operator of several collections described in the registry, as it is analyzed below.

Finally, the third institution dedicated to the study of the communist past is the Institute for the Investigation of the Communist Crimes in Romania. The declared scope of this new public institution – whose independence in terms of research agenda is debatable since it is directly financed from the Chancellery of the Prime Minister – is to “investigate and identify the crimes, abuses and violations of human rights during the period the communist regime was in power in Romania.” Besides, it is intended to “calling the attention of the authorized institutions to the above instances for adequate measures to be taken.” Although this institution was meant to

enlarge the rather narrow focus of CNSAS on the secret police, it only managed to supplement the CNSAS mission, especially by disclosing individuals directly involved in repression. Indeed particular in Romania is that, while amnesty was ruled out from the very beginning, the belated transitional justice legislation focused solely on the former secret police agents and collaborators, while the communist apparatus was left in peace after several aborted attempts of legalizing their purge from public life. The Securitate haunted the Romanians not only until the revolution, but also after it: before 1989 it was believed to control everything and everyone, while after 1989 it was believed to have staged and carry out the regime change to its own benefit, manipulating an entire country. This explains the disproportionate attention given to the secret police in designing new institutions for researching and representing the communist past in post-communist Romania.

### 3. Romanian Collections in the COURAGE Registry

#### *3.1 Typology and Topics*

On the road of discovering collections of cultural opposition in Romania, the following working definition guided the field research: collections of material or digital items which preserve traces of past actions or discourses that illustrate the existence of a critical, alternative, non-conformist, independent thinking in relation to the system of ideas and values imposed by the party-state at a given moment (since the latter was subject of recurrent change). These collections must reflect a systematic activity of conservation rather than an occasional one, which was carried out in Romania or in exile in the purpose of creating a transnational link with an activity of cultural opposition in the country. These collections must refer to activities from before 1989, but they could have been created even after 1989 in the purpose of preserving the publicly suppressed but privately preserved memory of the communist period (in particular that of the repression in the late 1940s and the 1950s). These collections could deal not only with officially prohibited or marginalized activities, but also with tolerated or even supported activities, as long as these conflicted partly with the official system of meanings. These collections could be a separate assembly of items, preserved for their historical significance as part of the cultural heritage which the members of cultural opposition created, but they could be part of larger collections, created with a different purpose than preserving valuable traces of non-conformism. The latter are the so-called ad-hoc collections, which the COURAGE researchers redefined by selecting only those items which illustrate thinking which differed, consciously or not, from the official vision. This is primarily, yet not exclusively, the case of the

ad-hoc collections from the former secret police archives, which in Romania represent the largest category of collections of cultural opposition, yet insufficiently explored.

Taking into account the above-mentioned definition and conditions, the three-year COURAGE research in Romania was conducted in such a way as to cover the canonical actors of dissent and opposition under communism, but also to illustrate the widest variety of topics and implicitly operators in the given research period. The UB team managed to describe **67 collections** in the registry by 1 November 2018. Each of these collections refer to more topics than one, but altogether they refer to the following **27 topics**: alternative forms of education, alternative lifestyles and resistance of the everyday, avantgarde, censorship, democratic opposition, emigration/exile, film, folk culture, human rights movement, independent journalism, literature and literary criticism, minority movements, music (rock, punk, alternative, classical, etc.), party dissidents, philosophical/theoretical movements, popular culture, religious activism, samizdat and tamizdat, scientific criticism, social movement, student movement, surveillance (various), survivors of persecutions under authoritarian/totalitarian regimes, theatre and performing arts, underground culture, visual arts, youth culture. These collections are to be found in several cities. The largest number are preserved in the capital city of Bucharest, many are in private possession, while the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives (CNSAS) preserves the files created by the former secret police and grouped by the UB team in several ad-hoc collections. In the large cities of Romania, such as Cluj, Sibiu, Timișoara, Brașov, Iași, there is more than one collection housed by public institutions or private collectors. Finally, collections related to cultural opposition exist in smaller cities, such as Sighet, Târgu-Mureș, Alba Iulia, Oradea, Brad. There was insufficient time to explore the existence of such collections in rural areas. Finally, the UB team also explored a few collections preserved in exile, in Paris, Berlin and Gothenburg (Sweden).

The COURAGE research in Romania started by covering the openly confrontational discourses and activities, the direct collisions with the communist authorities, which were already known but essential for the overall picture of cultural opposition in this country. This category includes political dissent, which manifested in two separate waves, first immediately after the communist takeover and then prior to the regime change. In the methodological frame of the project, the former category is reflected in collections which were created after 1989 in the purpose of preserving the memory of the innocent victims of the repression, as well as that of those who organized an armed resistance in the mountains in the hope of carrying on a guerilla warfare. In this category are the Sighet Memorial Collections, which preserve not only post-1989 testimonies, but also an impressive number of artifacts in former place of detention for political prisoners that was turned into a major site of European remembrance. Besides, the Memorial of the Revolution in Timișoara is primarily a collection of artifacts and oral testimonies related to the popular revolt of 1989, which highlights that the communist regimes

never ceased to use violence against citizens. Finally, the CNSAS Archives include an enormous number of files related to cases of open dissent, ranging from groups and movements to isolated individuals. The COURAGE research highlighted a number of such ad-hoc collections in order to offer a research guide for those interested in understanding how the secret police perceived and acted against those who did not conform with the patterns of behavior imposed by the communist regime. Worth a special mentioning due to its significance in a history of Romanian opposition to the communist regime is the Goma Movement Ad-hoc Collection at CNSAS, which has also an interesting corresponding private collection that writer Paul Goma preserves in Paris.

Beyond these already known cases of open confrontation and direct collision with the communist regime, the broader definition of the COURAGE project discovered a wide range of forms of non-conformism originating from various professions and occupations. These were tolerated and even supported types that include those alternative forms of thinking and acting which only partially conflicted with the official views. Their practitioners were able to survive professionally and even get support by presenting their endeavors as fully complying with the value system of the regime in that given moment by downplaying the aspects that might have been inconvenient. Representatives in this category carried out a wide spectrum of cultural oppositional activities, ranging from literary works which by-passed censorship to samizdat and tamizdat publications, from visual arts to independent journalism, from religious activism to ethnographic research. They followed different strategies of pursuing a professional career by-passing the system. The most radical form was to completely ignore the state institutions and live as a freelance intellectual, as reflected in the Adrian Marino Collection of books, manuscripts and correspondence gathered from the activity of this literary critic, who survived professionally without any institutional affiliation.

Besides such a rare case, there were the artistic and creative occupations which enjoyed a greater freedom of expression than those which required a regular employment in a state institution. In communist Romania, writers, artists, composers and cinematographers were organized in professional associations, which were responsible for organizing the distribution and retribution of their works. For example, the Writers' Union paid royalties for the published books, but also administered a special fund from which writers could contract huge loans. Few individuals who fit into this category preserved collections of their own, the most important repositories were either created in exile or by the secret police. The literary critics in exile created and maintained by their programs at Radio Free Europe an alternative literary canon and thus offered an alternative legitimacy to those whom the former regime marginalized. The Monica Lovinescu-Virgil Ierunca Collection preserved in the National Archives of Romania in Bucharest represents one of the most important assembly of items related to literary non-conformism in communist Romania.

As for visual arts, the state system of collecting such works and distributing them to museums, while systematically marginalizing avantgarde or experimental works, allowed the establishment of only few contemporary art collections in the same institution. The Art Museums in Timișoara and Brașov include such collections, due to the existence of local non-conformist artists whose works were not directly confrontational with the communist esthetics. Private contemporary art collections were far more difficult to constitute due to the price barrier, yet Sorin Costina Collection is worth mentioning because the passion of the owner helped many marginalized artists survive when no museum wanted to include their non-conformist works. Even less significant was the production of non-conformist films, for directors rather used to resort to self-censorship in order to assure the circulation of their works rather than risking to be banned. The activity in theater and film of the most interdicted and simultaneously most internationally acclaimed Romanian director of that time, Lucian Pintilie, is reflected by the secret police files gathered in the Censored Theater and Film Ad-hoc Collection at CNSAS, which is an example of surveillance of an individual who did not fit the category of openly criticism of the communist regime.

Compared to the artistic and creative occupations, professions which required full employment in a state institution had less liberties. Such professionals must speculate the inconsistencies in the official views to pursue their research interests, which sometimes required supplementary financial support from the local authorities that had larger liberties than those at central level. Among collections which reflect this type of bargaining are those preserved by the ASTRA Museum in Sibiu, the Cornel Irimie Collection and the Ethnographic Research in Dobrogea Ad-hoc Collection. Both include documentation about the rural cultural heritage that was saved from the total destruction to which the modernization drive of the communist regime condemned it, by presenting monuments of the peasant architecture as landmarks of national identity. In the same category is the collection related to the Black Church Restoration, which is preserved the Library and Archive of this parish community in Brașov. This collection tells the sinuous story of a Gothic monument of highest significance for the collective identity of the Saxon community in Transylvania, which was restored to its former glory under communism despite the atheist system of values and the policy of so-called of “urban systematization.” The latter implied massive demolitions in urban areas, including the razing of Romania’s historical and architectural heritage, and hit hard many cities, above all Bucharest, where professionals reacted by carrying out an unusual activity of cultural opposition: the translation of churches in less visible locations in order to save them from total destruction.

The demolitions in Bucharest and other cities also triggered the most significant activity of passive clandestine resistance to Ceaușescu’s absurd policies, which is currently preserved mostly in private archives. While pursuing their professional careers within tolerated boundaries, some individuals acted in their spare time totally independent and immortalized on

photo, film or in paintings historic monuments about to be destroyed. Examples of this kind are the Alexandru Barnea and Andrei Pandele Private Collections of Photographs, which include vanished urban landscapes and demolition sites, and the Gheorghe Leahu Private Collection, which preserves the owner's watercolors capturing architectural landmarks and ordinary streets from Bucharest before their complete razing. In fact, most professionals in the fields of history or social sciences adopted the same kind of dual strategy, separating between a conformist profession and a non-conformist hobby. The most interesting example, due to its post-communist societal impact, is the Zoltán Rostás Private Collection of Oral History, which illustrates the transformation of a passion that developed before 1989 in the grey zone of tolerance into a profession after 1989.

The ethno-cultural diversity of Romania is also reflected in the collections described in the COURAGE registry. The Hungarian and German communities in Transylvania created and preserved numerous collections which testify for their struggle to produce items meant to reproduce and/or redefine their collective identities. The minority rights struggle of the Romanian-Hungarian Ellenpontok group is reflected in two collections, one privately preserved in Gothenburg and one identified as ad-hoc collection in the CNSAS Archives. The quest of the Romanian-German literary circle Aktionsgruppe Banat for articulating a social and cultural criticism of the communist regime in their literary works is similarly reflected in a private collection preserved in Berlin and an ad-hoc collection at CNSAS. The diversity of the religious communities in Romania, which the communist regime did not openly persecute, with the exception of the suppression of the Greek-Catholic community by forceful integration into the into Greek-Orthodox Church, is also highlighted in the COURAGE registry. The collections of cultural opposition corresponding to the Catholic or Calvinist denominations of the Hungarian minority are to be found either in the archives of the secret police or the archives of ecclesiastic institutions, such is the Áron Márton Collection from the Archiepiscopal Archives in Alba Iulia, or in the János Dobri Collection from the Archives of the Calvinist Parish Church of Dâmbul Rotund (Cluj). Similarly, the activities of the Lutheran community of the Germans in Romania are preserved in the collections held by the Teutsch Haus in Sibiu, as well as in the CNSAS Archives. In addition, the archives of the former secret police are extremely important in preserving documents related to the resistance of the religious groups which are characteristic to the Romanian majority, respectively to the clandestine activities of the suppressed Greek-Catholics and the alternative groups created by the Greek-Orthodox denomination, which had no alternative repositories to conserve traces of their activities.

Quite a number of private archives preserve the memory of the parallel worlds of non-conformism that existed for a limited time during holidays and more generally during spare time. The Andrei Partoș – Radio Vacanța Costinești Private Collection illustrates the activity of a seasonal radio station and its associated activity on the Black Sea coast, which represented an



epitome of the alternative culture of the younger generation. Besides, the clandestinely procured Western music made young people forget about the restrictions in their everyday life and act as if the communist regime did not exist. Similarly, the mountains represented a space of liberty, where social conventions and political control ceased to exist for a while. The Anonymous Mountaineer Collection of self-made escalade materials and other technical equipment for alpinism demonstrates the creativity of those who wanted to climb the mountains but lacked the necessary items, as the Romanian state factories did not produce equipment for leisure alpinism, but only for military purposes. Finally, the Irina Margareta Nistor Private Collection shows how everyday spare time was transformed into a time of liberty. This collection reminds of the Western-produced films that were introduced clandestinely into Romania between 1985 and 1989, to be translated and dubbed and then distributed on video cassettes (semi)clandestinely. The spare time as a time of temporary liberty is also illustrated by several private collections of posters, LPs, and photographs on the jazz, rock, punk and other non-conformist music, most notably in the Club A – Mirel Leventer, Mihai Manea and Nelu Stratone Private Collections.

The above cartography of collections which reflect non-conformist thoughts and actions is inevitably incomplete, but it suggests a large variety of activities which can be considered under the methodological umbrella of cultural opposition and allow a first evaluation of this concept. Three main conclusions can be drawn from this sketch. First, the collections which made the object of COURAGE research in Romania are highly polarized in terms of ownership. The largest category of such collections is that created and preserved by the former communist secret police, the Securitate, currently in the custody of CNSAS. The secret police carried out a systematic activity of collecting information about, and confiscating items from, prominent members of what the project names cultural opposition. Unlike the latter, its activity of collecting had a different rationale than preserving items for their historic, intellectual or artistic value, so the largest majority of the CNSAS collections are ad-hoc, as defined by the COURAGE researchers. In fact, many non-conformist activities of the past left no other collections, so they can only be documented from such CNSAS ad-hoc collections identified in the frame of the project from the larger archive of the former secret police, in the purpose of offering a guide for further research on cultural opposition. At the other end of the spectrum, there are the private collections of cultural opposition. These are conserved by individuals who have not hitherto been associated with an activity worth researching, and which have been featured for the first time as valuable sources for the study of communism in Romania in the frame of the COURAGE project. In between, there are a few collections of cultural opposition operated by libraries, museums or other archives, which received them as donations from various private individuals. Worth underlining is the absolute novelty of the private collections of cultural opposition discovered by the COURAGE project, which were not part of the canon of remembering communism in Romania, so relevant institutions ignored their importance, while

their owners are rather reluctant to donate their collections for the same reason. The direct consequence of this situation is that the private collections remain of very limited geographical interests, while the CNSAS collections became nationally and internationally relevant, especially after serving as primary source for the Report made in 2006 by the Presidential Commission for the Analysis of the Communist Dictatorship in Romania. Such dichotomic cartography of the collections might be criticized as simplistic, for it obviously duplicates the long-contested view that the communist societies were separated between “them” and “us,” between those in power and those who were powerless. Yet, the collections in Romania fit more or less this view because there were no mediating structures in between the individual and the secret police, for no networks of dissent and only a few and short-lived groups of cultural opposition acted against Ceaușescu’s regime and none was still active in 1989.

### *3.2 Actors and Users*

As dissent was feeble in communist Romania, the canonical collections are very few. As preservation of such items implied greater perceived or existing risks in communist Romania than in other countries, only few individuals ventured to systematically collect such materials, while only very few state institutions involved in such venture apart from the ubiquitous secret police, the Securitate. Thus, the most important actor in the preservation of collections related to cultural opposition during the former communist regime in Romania is the National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives (Consiliul Național pentru Studierea Arhivelor Securității – CNSAS). The circumstances of the 1999 establishment of this official authority in Romania that operates under the control of Romanian Parliament and administers the archives of the former communist secret police, the Securitate, have been presented above. As international actor in preserving the heritage of cultural opposition in former communist countries, the CNSAS Archive is the third largest archive of its kind in Europe, after those of BStU in the Federal Republic of Germany and IPN in Poland. According to the law, the CNSAS has a triple mission: (1) archive; (2) public authority entrusted with transitional justice; (3) research institute; from among which the first mission is the most relevant for this report. As an archive, CNSAS ensures the free access of individuals – Romanian citizens and foreign nationals who were citizens of Romania after 1945 – to their personal files devised by the former Securitate during the period 6 March 1945 to 22 December 1989. Regarding the accessibility of these archives, a major change occurred when a massive transfer of documents to CNSAS was made during the period March–December 2005, and consequently the holdings of the CNSAS Archives increased from approx. 9,400 files comprising approx. 19,000 volumes (around 700 linear metres) to some 1.3 million files comprising over 1.5 million volumes. Currently, the archival holdings amount to over 2 million volumes (around 25 km). The CNSAS Archives are arranged according to the logic of its founder, that is, the former Securitate. The main collections which preserve documents related to activities of cultural opposition are: the Penal Fonds (files of those put on trial), the

Informative Fonds (files of those put under surveillance), the Documentary Fonds, the Romanian Exile Fonds, and the Manuscripts Fonds (confiscated materials). To these collections of documents created before 1989, either by the secret police or by those it kept under surveillance, we may add the Oral History Collection at CNSAS, which includes interviews with former victims of the Securitate who came to consult their files. From the documents included in these collections, COURAGE research defined – to the benefit of potential researchers – a series of ad-hoc collections, which gather all those records related to the repressed cultural activities of a certain groups or isolated persons. This is especially important in the case of those individuals who did not or could not preserve anything related to their pre-1989 underground cultural activities. It is also relevant to compare the archives preserved by the persecuted individuals or groups with those created by the secret police about them; the late dissidents Doina Cornea and Éva Cseke-Gyimesi or the Goma Movement for human rights, the Ellenpontok samizdat group and the literary circle Aktionsgruppe Banat can be studied from both perspectives due to descriptions for both types of collections in the COURAGE registry.

As a public authority entrusted with transitional justice, CNSAS contributes to the process of restitution by providing to victims in search of legal compensation and rehabilitation the necessary documentation on the basis of Law 221/2009 regarding political sentences passed between 1945 and 1989. In addition, as analyzed above, CNSAS discloses on the basis of its founding legal frame and additional legislative changes former agents and informal collaborators and exposes the repressive actions of the former communist secret police. As a research institute, the CNSAS creates and disseminates knowledge on the repressive dimension of the communist regime, playing a fundamental role in the process of coming to terms with the communist dictatorial past. Its political, social and cultural role resides in educating younger generations, who do not have a direct experience of the communist past, in the spirit of democratic values by emphasizing the non-democratic essence of the former regime, which is epitomized by the acts of violation of human and citizen rights and liberties. Accordingly, CNSAS is engaged in a wide range of dissemination activities. The institution reaches the general public through travelling exhibitions on the communist period, of which the most popular are “The Securitate as instrument of the dictatorship” and “My youth under communism.” CNSAS addresses in particular the young generation by offering internships to university students and organizing documentary visits in collaboration with high-schools and universities. The most efficient dissemination is performed via on-line resources. The CNSAS has devised an educational section of its website dedicated to digital resources, where it posts original documents from the Securitate archives, as well as scholarship and teaching support materials produced by its own researchers. All materials can be downloaded for free and are described in the registry as CNSAS Online Collection.

The second important actor in preserving the collections of cultural opposition in Romania is the Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes and the Memory of the Romanian Exile (IICCMER). It was established in 2005 under the coordination of the Romanian Government as the Institute for the Investigation of Communist Crimes in Romania (IICCR). The current institution is the result of the merger in November 2009 between IICCR and the National Institute for the Memory of Romanian Exile (INMER). The main purpose of IICCMER is to investigate and identify abuses and violations of human rights during the communist regime in Romania and to notify the official bodies to take action in these cases and to preserve the memory of the Romanian exile through the archiving, researching and publishing of documents related to the Romanian exile community from 1940 to 1989. IICCMER hosts more than 30 archival units with a historical-documentary character, coming from personal donations and acquisitions made by the institute. Some of these fonds have been part of a digitization process, which facilitates the access of researchers and public interested in the phenomenon of the post-war Romanian exile community.

Among the other institutions that operate more than one collection is the Lucian Blaga Central University Library in Cluj-Napoca (BCU Cluj-Napoca), which is also one of the most important university libraries in Romania; it is financed by and subordinated to the Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research. BCU Cluj-Napoca has a collection of almost 4,000,000 books and periodicals. During the communist regime, BCU Cluj-Napoca underwent a process of staff purging, and public access to many books was forbidden, as they were placed in the so-called Special Collection. After the collapse of communism, BCU Cluj-Napoca managed to attract quite a number of collections which were preserved in private ownership before 1989, so today it hosts many collections which reflect various forms of cultural opposition against the communist regime, such as the collections of Adrian Marino, Mircea Carp, Éva Cseke-Gyimesi, or the Rațiu–Tilea Archive and the Rațiu-Tilea Library. Between 1999 and 2018 the library implemented an ample digitization program, with the result that that many documents of heritage value and old periodicals have become accessible online, but the collections of cultural opposition are not yet digitized.

The ASTRA National Museum Complex (ASTRA Museum) in Sibiu is one of the largest ethnographic museums in Europe. Its open-air exhibition includes over 400 monuments of peasant architecture and technology covering a surface of approximately 40 hectares. The origins of the museum can be found in the ethnographic collections assembled by the Transylvanian Association for Romanian Literature and the Culture of the Romanian People (Asociațiunea Transilvană pentru Literatura Română și Cultura Poporului Român or in short ASTRA), an institution that played a major role in the cultural emancipation of Transylvanian Romanians after its establishment in 1861. In 1950, two years after the establishment of the communist regime, the ASTRA Museum was closed because the ASTRA Association was

perceived as a cultural institution of the Romanian bourgeoisie in Transylvania, while its collections transferred to the Brukenthal Museum. In 1963, on Cornel Irimie's initiative, the open-air Museum of Folk Technics (Muzeul Tehnicii Populare) was established on the outskirts of Sibiu. In the frame of this newly established museum, researchers and museologists conducted ethnographic field research on the religious beliefs of the rural population, as well as on rural settlements across the country. The collections gathered illustrate how ethnographers managed to negotiate the autonomy of their research activity with the communist state institutions and conduct research in contradiction with some of the official cultural policies. These collections include more than 300 files of personal documents, student notes, field research notes and reports, drafts of academic works, acquisition reports, and exhibition drafts, as well as a unique collection of windmills, dismantled from Dobrogea and moved to Sibiu in order to be rescued from the destruction to which the communist modernization condemned these items of the cultural rural heritage. The ASTRA Museum, which was reestablished after the collapse of communism, overtook all these collections, which apart from the CNSAS ad-hoc collections represent the only types of collections of cultural opposition preserved in a Romanian state institution from before 1989.

The above-presented state-run operators of collections are far from exhausting the list of the researched operators. They are only particular examples of creating and preserving collections of cultural opposition before 1989 or attracting such collections from private ownership after 1989. Otherwise, the largest majority of the operators are private, as the list in the appendix illustrates. In fact, the particularity of COURAGE research in Romania is that most of the collections discovered and described in the COURAGE registry were previously unknown for they are still in private ownership and visited only by appointment. Thus, the most important achievement of the COURAGE research in Romania is the identification of these collections which are part of the common European cultural heritage, while the researched persons represent some of those silent agents of change who were instrumental in re-Europeanizing Romania. These previously unknown collections of material or digital items bear witness today to the diverse forms of critical thinking and independent action from the system of meanings imposed by the former communist dictatorship. Neither heroes nor mere opportunists, these "common" individuals simply refused to think and act as the communist regimes imposed, because they let themselves influenced by the values of the European Enlightenment from before the regime change of 1989. Thus, these individuals understood before others the fundamental difference between a dictatorship and a democracy. As the Romanian communist regime adopted an increasingly nationalist rhetoric and policies in the 1970s and the 1980s, those who used to think and act independently were implicitly anti-nationalists and pro-Europeans. Sometimes without realizing this, they turned after 1989 into the social segment which actively contributed to Romania's transformation into a feeble, yet uncontested democracy willing to integrate into the European Union. In short, the unforeseen long-term

legacy of cultural opposition to Ceaușescu's national-communist regime was its profound Europeanism. This legacy must be preserved. Yet, its preservation is endangered, so action must be taken for their rescue.

#### 4. Concluding Remarks and Policy Recommendations

The endemic lack of financial resources allocated to culture in one of the poorest countries of the European Union is no surprise. There is little to be done in this respect. What could be done though in order to (A) safeguard the preservation of these collections and (B) enhance their national and transnational visibility is to: (1) better access the private and external sources of funding, (2) better use of the existing financial and human resources, and, last but not least, (3) better educate the next generation to whom this heritage must be transmitted. Some examples of best practices reveal how some of these goals could be achieved and highlight what are the problems still to overcome. It was from discussions with the stakeholders approached in the frame of the project that possible legal and practical solutions to these problems have been suggested.

In terms of archiving and collecting, one example of best practice is the Sighet Memorial, which represents today a major site of European remembrance, recipient of European Heritage Label. The museum collection was established by the Civic Academy Foundation, which made skillful use of private donations and grants offered by private foundations to set up a unique museum collection on communism in Romania. Minimal state funding was assured by a special law, which thus guarantees the continuity in the functioning of the museum. In short, it is an example of good mobilization of public and private resources following a private initiative. Also remarkable is the capacity of the operating foundation to inspire the trust of the private collectors: all items displayed in the museum collection were the result of public collects of objects, all items originate from private collections. The museum is one of the most visited in Romania with more than 100,000 visitors every year, so it is a place where these private collections achieved the highest possible visibility. This particular achievement illustrates how private operators can make better use of private financial resources to safeguard the preservation of private collections in the frame of a museum. However, this type of museum, which is dedicated to the victims of, and the armed resistance to, the communist regime, mostly covers the late 1940s and the 1950s, while it represents the entire pre-1989 past by emphasizing the state violence against citizens and the citizens' response to these violent acts. Thus, in this museum there is practically no place for the largest part of the collections discovered by COURAGE research, which refer to a different period in time, mostly the 1970s and the 1980s, and speak mostly about non-confrontational tactics, about ways of by-passing

the system or developing parallel worlds. In this purpose, new permanent exhibitions on the communist past need to be established, either in the frame of an existing museum, like the National Museum of History, or by establishing a new institution able to absorb and rescue all these private collections of items of the past which cannot be preserved in digital copies in an electronic repository. This is a direction in which powerful lobbying is needed.

This also brings into discussion the question of trust in public institutions, as many of the private collectors clearly expressed the idea that they would like to donate what they collected in order to make them available, but they cannot decide what is the best place. This dilemma is the result of significant differences between central and local archives, libraries or museums, large and small repositories of collections, traditional and new operating institutions. There is no general solution to this dilemma. Often, the central institutions function better, because they had more and better trained personnel, capable of inventorying the new collections and make them available in shorter time. For instance, the National Archives in Bucharest received as donation the Lovinescu-Ierunca Collection created by two prominent members of the Romanian exile community in 2012 and made it available for research in 2015, while the Iași branch of the National Archives received a similar donation, the Mihnea Berindei Collection, in 2013 and it is not yet available for research; practically, the UB team made a pioneering work when describing this collection. The newly established and specialized institution in the collections created by the exile community, the Institute for the Investigation of the Communist Crimes and the Memory of the Exile (IICCMER) managed to attract many collections created by the diaspora. However, the institute lacks adequate storage space and it is short of professionally trained staff, so most of the collections in its custody are hardly available for research. In other cases, local institutions, large or small, but with well-established tradition in the local community, inspire trust and individuals from that community prefer to donate their collections to such local repository. That is the case of Central University Library (BCU) Cluj-Napoca or Teutsch Haus Sibiu, both housing more than one collection of cultural opposition. At the same time, the visibility of these collections is much lower in a provincial repository than in a central one, as the case of the Eginald Schlattner Collection at Teutsch Haus illustrates: although the founder is a best-selling international author, his archive was visited by one single individual. A good practice of a local operating institution which was able to make visible efforts not only to build a museum collection by public collect of items in private ownership, but also to increase the visibility of its collections is the Memorial of the Revolution 16-22 December 1989 in Timișoara. Mostly with private funding, the association which operates the museum has erected 12 commemorative monuments in the urban perimeter of the city, while building partnerships with local schools and promoting educational programs tremendously increased the visibility of the museum collection at local level. Yet, this collection which refers to a major and tragic event of recent history has only limited societal impact at national level. The inclusion in the COURAGE registry definitely increases the national and transnational visibility of

this collection, yet the question is to also attract offline visitors to a collection which cannot be digitized. One possible way of encouraging visitors to the museum is to include such places in the state funded tourist schemes available for state employees in the form of free vouchers to be used in designated places.

Finally, many other collections of cultural opposition consist of documents that can be digitized and made worldwide available online. Although governmental funding for institutional investments is severely limited since the economic crisis of 2008, several institutions initiated such programs by applying for special grants, among which the National Archives in Bucharest, where special and expensive equipment able to digitize rare and precious documents now operates slowly but steadily. The difference between old and fragile manuscripts and the documents related to the recent past is that the former category includes fewer items but all requiring special handling, while the latter consists of numerous items but these can be scanned faster and even using less costly equipment. An example of good practice in digitizing and disseminating documents is CNSAS, which in a period of 8 years made available in digital format more than 10 million pages, including documents from several fonds in its custody. Those documents not requiring anonymization, especially those from the documentary fonds, are now available online. These resources were integrated in university curricula, while students were attracted to stages of internship. The project of digitization was possible with few human resources (three employees), ingenious low-cost technical solutions and a special partnership with an external institution, the US Holocaust Memorial Museum, which was co-interested in supporting this process with new equipment. However, the digitization of an archive of 25 linear meters will require many years at this speed. Besides, the emerging digital archive requires the creation of metadata standards for easier management of these electronic resources and easier identification of the relevant digital material. This is a general problem with Romanian collections, which cannot be solved without adequate programs of personal training. In short, such ample programs of digitization need more funding, more and better trained personnel and better knowledge to create metadata on the newly established digital repositories. A solution can only come by changing the legal frame as to allow the use of the turnover from the photocopies released to researchers, which now goes entirely to the state budget, for purchasing digitizing equipment, and permit the transformation of the successful students' internships into limited-time and conditioned work contracts and then into permanent employment with clear missions. These provisions allow a state-run non-profit institution to use the financial resources it actually produces, and motivate prospective employees to train themselves for a position that triggers changes instead of perpetuating the status quo. Of course, these are policy recommendations which require further lobbying for their implementation.



## Appendix

### *Collections in Romania in the COURAGE Registry (67 researched and uploaded by UB as of 1 November 2018)*

Adrian Marino Collection at BCU Cluj-Napoca  
Aktionsgruppe Banat Ad-hoc Collection at CNSAS  
Alexandru Barnea Photograph Private Collection  
Alexandru Călinescu Private Collection  
Andrei Pandele Photograph Private Collection  
Andrei Partoş – Radio Vacanța-Costinești Private Collection  
Anonymous Mountaineer Private Collection  
Áron Márton Memorial Collection in Alba Iulia  
Aurel and Emil Cioran Collection at ASTRA Library  
Bethlen Foundation Collection  
Black Church Restoration Ad Hoc Collection in Braşov  
Braşov - Oraşul Memorabil Collection  
Censored Theatre and Cinema Ad-hoc Collection at CNSAS  
Club A - Mirel Leventer Private Collection  
CNSAS Online Collection  
Confiscated Manuscripts Collection at CNSAS  
Cornel Chiriac and Fans of Alternative Music Ad-hoc Collection at CNSAS  
Cornel Irimie Collection at ASTRA Museum Sibiu  
Culianu & Petrescu Private Library  
Doina Cornea Ad-hoc Collection at CNSAS  
Doina Cornea Private Collection  
Eginald Schlattner Collection at Teutsch Haus Sibiu  
Ellenpontok Ad-hoc Collection at CNSAS

Ellenpontok–Tóth Private Collection

Ethnographic Research in Dobrogea Ad-Hoc Collection at ASTRA Museum Sibiu

Éva Cseke-Gyimesi Ad-hoc Collection at CNSAS

Éva Cseke-Gyimesi Collection at BCU Cluj-Napoca

Gheorghe Leahu Private Collection

Goma Movement Ad-Hoc Collection at CNSAS

Hans Mattis–Teutsch Collection at Braşov Art Museum

Hans Otto Roth Collection at Black Church Archives Braşov

Herta Müller Ad-hoc Collection at CNSAS

High Consistory Collection at Teutsch Haus Sibiu

Ion Dumitru Collection at IICCMER

Ion Monoran Private Collection

Irina Margareta Nistor Private Collection

Kiáltó Szó – Sándor Balázs Private Collection

Lovinescu–Ierunca Collection at Central National Historical Archives (ANIC) Bucharest

Lovinescu–Ierunca Collection at Oradea University Library

Marian Zulean Private Collection

Memorial to the Revolution of 16–22 December 1989 in Timișoara

Michael Shafir Collection at BJC Cluj-Napoca

Mihai Manea Private Poster Collection

Mihai Stănescu Caricature Collection

Mihnea Berindei Collection at the A. D. Xenopol Institute of History in Iași

Mihnea Berindei Collection at the Romanian National Archives - Iași Branch

Mircea Carp Collection at BCU Cluj-Napoca

Nelu Stratone Private Musical Records Collection

Oral History Collection at CNSAS

Paul Goma Private Archive

Rațiu–Tilea Archives of the Romanian Exile Collection at BCU Cluj–Napoca

Rațiu–Tilea Personal Library Collection at BCU Cluj–Napoca  
Revolution of 1989 in Timișoara – Private Photograph Collection  
Romanian Greek Catholic Church Ad-hoc Collection at CNSAS  
Sanda Budiș Collection at IICCMER  
Sanda Stolojan Collection at IICCMER  
Sighet Memorial - Museum Collection  
Sighet Memorial - Oral History Collection  
Sorin Costina Art Private Collection  
Ștefan Gane Collection at IICCMER  
Transnational Roma Networks Ad-hoc Collection at CNSAS  
Varieties of Religious Dissent Ad-hoc Collection at CNSAS  
Victor Frunză Collection at IICCMER  
William Totok Private Collection  
Youth Subcultures Ad-hoc Collection at CNSAS  
Zoltán Kallós Ethnographic Private Collection  
Zoltán Rostás Oral History Private Collection

### *Operators, Owners*

A. D. Xenopol Institute of History in Iași  
ASTRA Library Sibiu  
ASTRA Museum Sibiu  
Association Memorial to the Revolution of 16–22 December 1989  
Alexandru Barnea  
Alexandru Călinescu  
Andrei Pandele  
Andrei Partoș  
Antal Károly Tóth and Ilona Tóth  
Áron Márton

BCU Cluj-Napoca (Central University Library Cluj-Napoca)  
Bethlen Foundation  
Black Church Library and Archive  
Braşov Art Museum  
BJ Cluj (Cluj County Library)  
Central National Historical Archives (ANIC) Bucharest  
Civic Academy Foundation  
CNSAS (National Council for the Study of the Securitate Archives)  
Dan Petrescu and Thérèse Culianu-Petrescu  
Dragoş Petrescu  
Gheorghe Leahu  
ICUB (Research Institute of the University of Bucharest)  
IICCMER (Institute for the Investigation of the Communist Crimes and the Memory of the Romanian Exile)  
Ion Monoran  
Irina Margareta Nistor  
Leontin Juhas  
Marian Zulean  
Mihai Stănescu  
Lucian Ionică  
Memorial to the Revolution of 16–22 December 1989 in Timișoara Association  
Mihai Manea  
Mirel Leventer  
Nelu Stratone  
Oradea University Library  
Paul Goma  
Romanian National Archives - Iași Branch  
Romanian Order of Architects–Braşov, Covasna, and Harghita Branch

Sándor Balázs

Sorin Costina

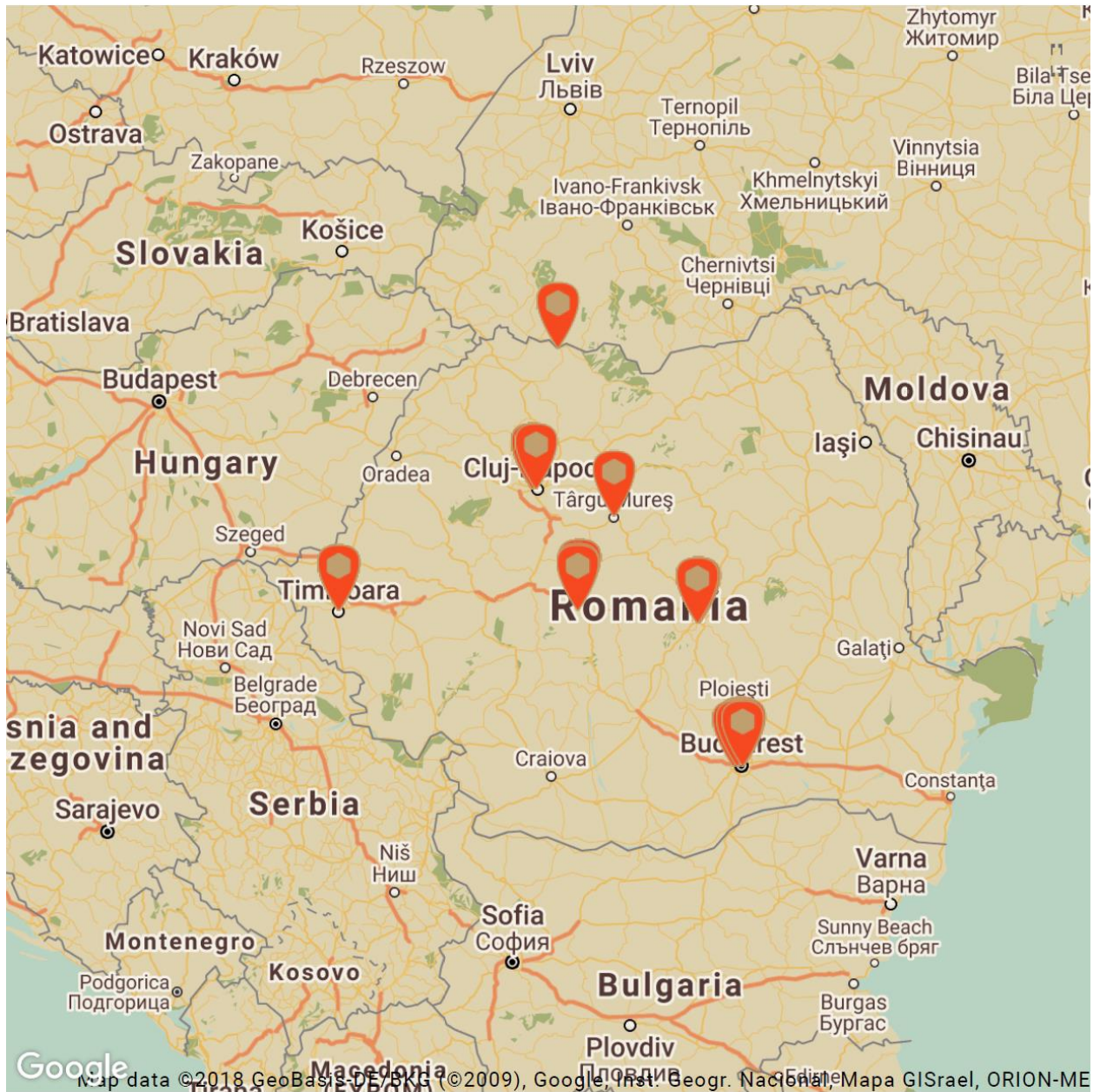
Teutsch Haus Sibiu

William Totok

Zoltán Kallós Foundation

Zoltán Rostás

Map of Collections in Romania



Map data ©2018 GeoBasis-DE/BNL (©2009), Google, Inst. Geogr. Național, Mapa GISrael, ORION-ME

## **COURAGE**

Cultural Opposition: Understanding the Cultural Heritage of Dissent in the Former Socialist Countries

### *Country Reports*



**SERBIA**  
**BOSNIA AND**  
**HERZEGOVINA**  
**MACEDONIA**  
**MONTENEGRO**  
**KOSOVO**

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# Contents

- 1. Introduction** ..... 4
- 2. Contexts** ..... 7
  - 2.1 Cultural Opposition under Socialism in Yugoslavia ..... 7
  - 2.2. Concepts and Research on Cultural Opposition under Socialism after Yugoslavia..... 9
  - 2.3 Institutions and Initiatives for the Preservation and Interpretation of the Socialist Past in Serbia 12
- 3. Bosnia and Herzegovina** ..... 17
- 4. Republic of Macedonia** ..... 19
- 5. Montenegro** ..... 22
- 6. Kosovo** ..... 25
- 7. Analysis of the Collections in the COURAGE Registry** ..... 27
  - 7.1. Topics..... 27
  - 7.2. Actors, Users, Networking Capacities ..... 29
- 8. Conclusions and Best Practice** ..... 31
- 9. Recommendations** ..... 32
- References**..... 35
- Other ..... 39
- Appendix:
  - List of Collections Described.....40
  - List of Institutions and Owners.....41
  - List of Persons Researched.....42

## 1. Introduction

Since 1990, Yugoslavia has broken into the new states of Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, and Serbia. The following report focusses on Serbia as the biggest successor state of Yugoslavia with brief references to Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, and Kosovo. Croatia and Slovenia are covered by our partner in the COURAGE project, the Croatian Institute for History, in a separate report.<sup>1</sup>

Public discourse on the socialist past is, in all the successor states, dominated by anti-communist and nationalist stances, legitimating the independence and sovereignty of the new post-Yugoslav countries'.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, generally, when it comes to dealing with the cultural heritage of socialist Yugoslavia, research on the legacy of anti-communist and nationalist activities is politically favoured and funded. The existing research follows basically two opposing perspectives. On the one hand, there are researchers who, despite its censorship and deprivation of (human) rights, see socialist Yugoslavia as a space where "grey zones" were possible, and who emphasize the progressive and developmental features of the socialist period against the limitations of creative expression and liberties. On the other hand, there are those who see nothing but evil in the socialist period. As already mentioned, public discourse favours such anti-communist statements, which through different media, especially TV, reach wide audiences. The exhibition *U ime naroda: Politička represija u Srbiji 1944-1953* [*In the name of the people: political repression in Serbia 1944-1953*], curated by Srđan Cvetković and presented in the Museum of Serbian History, was one of the most visited cultural events in 2014 in Serbia, although it was highly controversial and was met by the protests of different historians.<sup>3</sup> These historians criticized how the exhibition equated innocent victims of post-WWII revolutionary revenge with Nazi collaborators who were on trial and even executed.

An ideological and cultural polarisation in Serbian society is omnipresent and severely impacts research on the cultural heritage of Yugoslavia, as well as all sorts of cultural practices like writing and publishing in daily and weekly press and publishing houses, and taking part in debates at different cultural institutions and festivals.<sup>4</sup> The ideological divide between researchers leads to the same historical events or data being presented in opposite narratives. Rare are platforms that would truly confront those polarisations academically. Accusations are often severe: leftist intellectuals call right-wing ones 'fascists', while right-wing

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<sup>1</sup> Mihaljević: "Croatia and Slovenia."

<sup>2</sup> At the same time those narratives consider liberal capitalism and Western democracy as a norm.

<sup>3</sup> See for instance <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/u-ime-naroda-antikomunisticka-podvala-ili-istorijsko-istravanje/27161587.html>

<sup>4</sup> Thus, on one side, there are journals such as *Danas* [Today] and *NIN - Nedeljne informativne novine* [Weekly Informational Newspaper], publishing houses Clio, Arhipelag, XX vek, and Fabrika knjiga [Book Factory]; on the other side one finds *Pečat* [Seal], *Nova srpska politička misao* [New Serbian Political Thought], etc.

intellectuals call left-wing ones ‘anti-patriots’, ‘traitors’, or “Soros people”<sup>5</sup>. Right-wing intellectuals, such as Lompar, Đurković, and Avramović support each other by giving positive feedback to each other’s texts<sup>6</sup>, while left-wing intellectuals can be very critical of each other.<sup>7</sup> These fights between leftists could be best understood in the debate between Markovina and Kapović (*Novi plamen*, 2017), although this was mostly linked to the Croatian scene. Most leftists focus their attention on antinationalism and anticlericalism (like Markovina), while those who claim that they are the only “real” leftists (like Kapović) focus on anti-capitalism.<sup>8</sup>

Latinka Perović’s book *Dominant and Unwanted Elites (XX-XXI Century)* for instance raised a lot of debate: it was welcomed as a capital contribution to understanding Serbian intellectual life and the political reservations of different regimes toward its most outstanding critical thinkers. At the same time Perović was criticized and addressed as the mother of the ‘Other Serbia’ that looks at history only through ideological lenses. The ‘Other Serbia’ has become a term for contemporary counterculture that assembled anti-war, anti-nationalist, and cosmopolitan stances. But Latinka Perović is also criticized from the left, for instance in the works of Mirjana Bogdanović and Zlatko Paković, “for promoting the de-legitimization of a vision of society based on social justice, for propaganda of capitalism”. For them Perović’s thinking was that “yesterday was for a better tomorrow while today she is for a better yesterday. With those that criticized her work from rightist-nationalistic positions, she shares an anticommunist attitude”.<sup>9</sup>

An important forum for intellectual exchange during the 1990s was the Belgrade Circle [*Beogradski krug*]. Many non-conformist intellectuals from the socialist period like film director Lazar Stojanović, sociologist Nebojša Popov, philosopher Dragoljub Mićunović, dramaturge Borka Pavićević and art historian Dunja Blažević, gathered there debating current issues and controversies. One objective of those discussions was to oppose the ongoing devaluation of the ‘Brotherhood and Unity’ paradigm that was promoted in socialist Yugoslavia, but had become obsolete during the wars. Serbian cultural counterpublics wanted to prove that ‘Brotherhood and Unity’ was a positive value and that still makes sense, so that

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<sup>5</sup> In the discussion about possible new members of Serbian Academy of Arts and Sciences in fall 2018, those accusations are very present from the right wing. Časlav Očić in his writing (*Danas*, daily, September 2018) accuses the leadership of SANU of lobbying for “Soros intellectuals”.

<sup>6</sup> Zoran Avramović states about Milo Lompar’s book “Self-defamation”: “a book that illuminates the wrong paths taken by Serbian cultural consciousness. The spirit of self-abnegation, the spirit that rejects national cultural identity, is anchored in Yugoslavian identity and Titoist communism. It was the spirit of subordination, not of freedom.” Lompar, Milo. *Duh samoporicanja. Prilog kritici srpske kulturne politike*, Novi Sad: Orpheus, 2011. Lompar writes about Avramović: “Avramović deals with very sensitive issues – patriotism and topic of betrayal. Betrayal of those who are transferring all guilt on Serbs”.

<sup>7</sup> Zlatko Paković in his texts and theatre performances would attack prominent intellectuals like Gojko Tešić for his criticism of civil society, and even intellectuals like Filip David, for not being radical enough, although David expressed how uncomfortable he feels in presence of the President of the State (from the right-wing populist party) while receiving the prize for the most read author at the National Library of Belgrade.

<sup>8</sup> “[...] the issue of nationalism and clericalism could not and will not be solved prior to changes in economic relations. Economic and social relations, inequity, poverty and exploitation, are preconditions for other changes.” Kapović, *Novi plamen*, 7.1.2017.

<sup>9</sup> Bogdanović, *Dissidents*.

cultural activities concerned with re-establishing the broken links referred to it, like for instance during the Flying Classroom Workshop [*Leteća učionica radionica – LUR*], that brought Serbian artists to Mostar and other parts of former Yugoslavia, or Dibidon and Kontradibidon that engaged different artists from underground and alternative scenes in Serbia and Slovenia in 1994, supported by the Open Society Foundation. An important testimony of that counter-cultural continuity of the 1990s against the backdrop of the disintegration of Yugoslavia is the book *Vjetar ide na jug i obrće se na sjever* [The Wind Goes to the South and then Turns Northward] by the women Radmila Lazić, Biljana Jovanović, Rada Iveković, and Maruša Krese, containing their correspondence from the wars.<sup>10</sup> The primary aim of these intellectuals here was to respond and to react to authoritarianism<sup>11</sup> and not to re-think their previous period of so-called “petitionism” (usually linked to the 1980s when liberal intellectuals in Belgrade organized numerous petitions advocating for intellectuals such as Dobrica Ćosić, Vojislav Šešelj, and Dragomir Olujić, among others, imprisoned during the Open University affair). The women’s open engagement for peace was seen as a betrayal of the new independent states, like in the case of Croatia, and as betrayal of a state based on ethnic belonging in the case of Serbia. In Croatia and Serbia these women and other female activists were publicly villainized as witches.<sup>12</sup>

For counter-cultural activities new spaces were created like the Centre for Cultural Decontamination [*Centar za kulturnu dekontaminaciju*] and Rex in Belgrade, but also some public cultural institutions dared to host controversial public debates dealing with the culture of dissent. Lazar Stojanović’s film *Plastic Jesus* was screened in presence of its author. In 2005, he found himself under attack again for his new movies about the war criminal Radovan Karadžić and the Bosnian war. Želimir Žilnik continued to make movies that were anti-establishment especially as they criticised capitalism and the transition period, such as in the film *The Old School of Capitalism* [*Stara škola kapitalizma*] (2009) involving eminent cultural dissidents such as Lazar Stojanović.

Within those circles which followed the socialist self-management pattern around some dissident media (*Republika*, the radio stations B92 and Index, *Borba*, and later *Naša borba*)<sup>13</sup>, cultural counterpublics emerged whose activists also engaged in memorializing dissent. Activists were often also academics, so research on the ‘culture of dissent’ evolved too. This continuity of a ‘culture of dissent’<sup>14</sup> does not follow the polarized pattern of pro- or anti-

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<sup>10</sup> Jovanović, *Vjetar ide na jug*.

<sup>11</sup> cf. Milan Podunavac, Caesarism and democracy; In: Udovički and Ridgeway. *Burn This House*.

<sup>12</sup> Vesna Kesić, Jelena Lovrić, Slavenka Drakulić-Ilić, Rada Iveković, and Dubravka Ugrešić were villainised as witches in Croatia, while in Serbian activists like Sonja Biserko, Nataša Kandić; Biljana Kovačević Vučo, Borka Pavićević, and Jelena Milić were slandered as “non-governmental witches” (B92, 3. 12. 2002). Contemporary left-wing perspectives on such women-led peace movements completely neglect the class dimension.

<sup>13</sup> Due to the privatization of media, the only remaining media cooperative, *Republika*, was unable to survive on the market. However, artistic collectives and NGOs within the counter-public sphere have continued the culture of participative governance.

<sup>14</sup> Dragičević Šešić, *Umetnost i kultura otpora*.

communist perspectives, but looks at dissent and freedom in socialism without depreciating the positive contributions of socialist Yugoslavia, like self-management.<sup>15</sup> One paradigmatic example from the cultural sphere is the performance “Everyman Đilas” in the Montenegrin National Theatre in Podgorica. Until recently, both socialist Yugoslavia and Đilas were equally well evaluated among researchers who discussed their importance in the development of Montenegro. But within the discussions raised around the 100-year anniversary (1 December 2018) of the foundation of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes), there have been more and more Montenegrin researchers that portray the socialist period as a period of humiliation, in spite of the fact that Montenegro was a Republic. However, it did not have its autonomous church, and the language was Serbo-Croatian, thus, they claim that Montenegrin identity was suppressed.

In brief, although alternative spaces and media for counter-cultural activism and thinking exist, mainstream public debates are limited to the described ideological polarization between pro- and anti-communist stances which impacts research on the cultural heritage of socialist Yugoslavia, in all of its complex modes of representation.

## 2. Contexts

### 2.1 Cultural Opposition under Socialism in Yugoslavia

In order to contextualize research on the cultural legacy of socialism in Yugoslavia, it is important to stress that Yugoslavia was a very heterogeneous construct. Tito’s socialism was an experiment that tried to regulate a multi-cultural reality which embraced ambivalences and syncretism. Those multiplicities were also the heritage of a conglomerate of people and a unique geopolitical synthesis that had emerged from the ruins of two multicultural polities, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire. Tito’s experiment was to manage those multiple identities through a state policy based on “Brotherhood and Unity”. Therefore, despite the one-party political system of Yugoslavia’s socialism, culture in socialist Yugoslavia could hardly be subordinated to only one paradigm. Additional heterogeneity was possible as in 1953 the Federal Culture Ministry was abolished and ministries of culture existed only on the level of Yugoslavia’s republics.<sup>16</sup>

Therefore, cultural life in socialist Yugoslavia was more pluralistic than the political sphere with its continuous monopoly of the Communist League.<sup>17</sup> The most important reasons for this cultural opening were the Tito-Stalin split in 1948, Yugoslavia’s leading position in the

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<sup>15</sup> Jakovljević, *Alienation*.

<sup>16</sup> The only former republic of Yugoslavia that did not have a Ministry of Culture was the Republic of Montenegro. It created a separate ministry only in 1992, in the same moment when Yugoslavia (what was left of it), re-created a federal ministry, which only lasted until 1995.

<sup>17</sup> Due to the federalization of the country, variations of communist rule on different levels were possible, so that the monopoly of the Communist League did not necessarily translate into monolithic practice.

Non-Aligned Movement from the 1960s, trade and travel with and to the West and a reinforced federalization of the country in the 1970s. The Belgrade historian Radina Vučetić coined the term “Coca-Cola Socialism” to describe Yugoslav popular culture of the 1960s, and the processes of the Americanization and development of consumerism that followed.<sup>18</sup> At the same time the Cold War should not be neglected in analysis of dissidence in Yugoslavia.<sup>19</sup>

Another crucial specificity of the Yugoslav system was self-government, which also concerned the cultural sector. The public sphere in Yugoslavia was largely controlled by self-governing forces, which made it possible that dissenting opinions could be publicly presented through artwork, reviews, and books. However, once private initiatives became organised, as happened with the Praxis Group in the late 1960s/early 1970s and with the Open University Movement in the 1980s, the system intervened and prevented further operation.

Cultural production offered alternatives to the political sphere, but the cultural sector can rarely be regarded in clear opposition to Yugoslavia’s politics. Many dissenting voices and expressions were possible within the establishment, or despite it.<sup>20</sup> Belgrade had for instance a state-funded avant-garde theatre, Atelje 212 [Atelier 212], whose director, Mira Trailović, never became a member of the communist party. Trailović can be described as an “aesthetical dissident” as she introduced cutting-edge dramaturgy and theatre expression to Yugoslavia’s theatrical realm. Tito promoted a “state-ordered freedom” in culture (A. Vujanović), for which the Belgrade International Theatre Festival (BITEF) also serves as a good example.<sup>21</sup>

Ambivalences were hence the most remarkable feature of Yugoslav cultural policy, for which the story of the writer Danilo Kiš is another example. Kiš won the prestigious NIN award for Yugoslav literature for his novel *Hourglass* [*Peščanik*] in 1972. But literary political circles raised numerous issues around his next book *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich* [*Grobnica za Borisa Davidoviča*] in 1976. Kiš was accused of plagiarism (such accusations were first made in *Oko* magazine, based in Zagreb, and *Književne novine*, based in Belgrade). Kiš responded to the accusations with the book *The Anatomy Lesson* [*Čas anatomije*] in 1978. The key leader of this polemic, Dragan Jeremić, responded with the book *The Narcissus Without a Face* [*Narcis bez lica*] in 1980. During the promotion of Jeremić’s book, 400 people gathered to listen to both authors, as well as to Nikola Milošević (at the time, the most popular dissident, who used public cultural centres for lectures and debates). Milošević defended Kiš while another participant, Zoran Gavrilović, kept a sarcastic distance (“Kiš is not a plagiarist, he is an

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<sup>18</sup> Vučetić, *Koka-kola socijalizam*. The book received severe criticism for certain imprecisions and use of American references that neglected Yugoslav contributions and interests in the development of cultural cooperation, for instance for bringing important American exhibitions of abstract art to Belgrade. It was also criticized for not even mentioning the role of Marko Ristić as the head of the Committee for International Cultural Relations (Kršić 2013).

<sup>19</sup> Bogdanović, *Dissidents*.

<sup>20</sup> Vučetić, *Monopol na istinu*, 17.

<sup>21</sup> Vujanović, “Nove pozorišne tendencije,” 377. See also Radulović, Ksenija, *The foundation of Bitef* (1967) and *Cultural Diplomacy of Socialist Yugoslavia*. In, Dragičević Šešić, *Cultural Diplomacy*.

epigone"). The polemic still raises ongoing interest in contemporary literary debate.<sup>22</sup> The journalist Dragoljub Golubović also participated in this debate, and accused Kiš of defamation. The accusations were dismissed, but the public attacks continued. Kiš described two types of pressure against "politically suspect persons": a dumbing down by constant repetition of false accusations and moral disqualification of the pressured person. "Those two are typical phenomena of the totalitarian heritage, and the application of this heritage in practice may one day serve a sociological analysis of our literary life."<sup>23</sup> Kiš left Yugoslavia, but nevertheless, his ex-wife Mirjana Miočinović stressed in an interview with COURAGE that he never perceived himself as a dissident, but rather as a non-conformist writer.<sup>24</sup>

Although the period after Tito's death in the 1980s brought more freedom of expression, a massive yearning for the lost strong leader occurred resulting in a re-emphasis of the personality cult. This "freedom" facilitated also the raise of nationalism, media war, and hatred among Yugoslav nations. Censorship was very rare, but still occurred as was the case with the agency *Novi kolektivizam* [New Collectivism], a part of the collective *Neue Slowenische Kunst* [New Slovenian Art] (1987); the journals *Vidici* [Views](1981) (the case of Glossary of Technology); and the journal *Student* (1984) in Belgrade. The *White book*, compiled by Stipe Šuvar in Zagreb, brought these controversial cases out into the open.<sup>25</sup>

## 2.2. Concepts and Research on Cultural Opposition under Socialism after Yugoslavia

Historical research on cultural opposition in former Yugoslavia applies the concepts of censorship (Vučetić), non-conformism (Miller), and 'dissidents' (Cvetković).<sup>26</sup> Art historians frame cultural opposition through (neo-)avant-gardes as "excessive, experimental and emancipatory art practices that most frequently developed [...] in the Cold War climate of a high modernism in the political West and the dominating socialist modernism in the political East".<sup>27</sup> According to Radina Vučetić, research on avant-garde culture in socialism helps decipher what she refers to as the "deep schizophrenia of Yugoslav society."<sup>28</sup>

In her landmark book about censorship in Yugoslavia, Vučetić describes censorship as heterogeneous, because within the country, various realms of freedom and of repression existed resulting in manifold formal and informal censorship practices at different places, differing throughout time as well.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> For instance Nebojša Vasović, 2014, *Zar opet o Kišu*, Nebojša Vasović, 2005, *Lažni car Šćepan Kiš*, and Politika supplement *Ko se boji Kiša još*, 2014.

<sup>23</sup> Kiš quoted in Miočinović 2004: 82-83.

<sup>24</sup> Miočinović Mirjana, interview by Sanja Radović for the COURAGE project, January 14, 2017 and December 26, 2016.

<sup>25</sup> Šuvar, *Bela knjiga*.

<sup>26</sup> Miller, *The nonconformists*. Cvetković, *Portreti disidenata*.

<sup>27</sup> Šuvaković, "Novavangarda i Neoavangarde," 281. See also: Đurić, *Impossible Histories*.

<sup>28</sup> Vučetić, "Između avangarde i cenzure," 705.

<sup>29</sup> Vučetić, *Monopol na istinu*, 21.

Applying the term 'dissident' when researching socialist Yugoslavia is largely misleading for at least three reasons. First, key intellectuals who called for reforming Yugoslav socialism were of leftist (Đilas) and not civic provenance (Borislav Pekić and the democratic youth in 1950s were marginalized, imprisoned, and without any public voice during this period). The most prominent assembly of such leftist intellectual opposition was the Praxis Group. It gathered Marxist philosophers and sociologists, and from 1964 onwards published the Praxis journal and opened a summer school on the island of Korčula, in which Yugoslav intellectuals and some of the most prominent philosophers from around the world participated. In their work, the Praxis intellectuals critically discussed the policy of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia (LCY) and they were therefore labelled "anarcho-leftists" and condemned by the party. After ten years, in 1974, the "Praxis Group" was forced to cease activity.

Second, the strategy of the regime to fight opponents was not completely inhibiting them, but partially embracing or winning them over. Although books and journal issues were forbidden, professors had to change their position or their work place, and although some film directors or authors faced trials, the consequences of opposing Tito's system did basically not threaten life, but predominantly the freedom of expression.<sup>30</sup> The ambiguity of Yugoslavia's cultural policy has, one may conclude, produced 'conformist dissidents', if one absolutely wants to apply the concept to this region at all.<sup>31</sup> Art historian Branislav Dimitrijević warns: "Yugoslav dissidence is a quite intangible phenomenon. Who were dissidents? People that were linked to Communist Party as it was Milovan Đilas. Only in one moment they were excluded [from the party]. But he really was a dissident. There are only few more examples. Most of those that presented themselves as dissidents in reality were part of the system. What we call today dissident culture in reality was official culture. The case of [the painter] Mića Popović proves that - he went with state scholarship to France in 1950 [and depicted Yugoslav society and Tito critically at the end of sixties and in the seventies]. Most of dissident movies were financed and shot in state studios."<sup>32</sup>

Third, from the perspective of the new post-Yugoslav countries, clearly those Yugoslav 'dissidents' who embarked on nationalist paths became most prominent later.<sup>33</sup> That is how the term 'dissident' alludes to some kind of betrayal for many people who yearn for the cultural pluralism of Yugoslavia that was overthrown by the nationalist monism of the new states. Nick Milller and Jasna Dragović-Soso have shown how important having a cultural research perspective is to explain such developments. Borislav Mihajlović Mihiz, for instance,

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<sup>30</sup> However, up to about 400 political prisoners incarcerated at the Goli Otok [*Bare Island*] prison between 1949 and 1956 died due to poor living conditions and exhaustion. <http://www.noviplamen.net/dosije-o-golom-otoku/>

<sup>31</sup> Interview with Katarina Ristić, Institute for Philosophy and Social Theory, Belgrade, 09.05.16 by J. Nießer.

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.slobodnaevropa.org/a/intervju-branislav-dimitrijevic/28499038.html>.

<sup>33</sup> Interview with Predrag Marković, Belgrade, 10.05.16 by J. Nießer.



a writer that became famous for his nationalistic ideas (expressing that Serbian people were endangered in socialist Yugoslavia), has been re-evaluated as this type of cultural dissident.

For Miller, Dobrica Ćosić's intellectual and political career for instance illustrates "that nationalism was more than a tool for cynical and needy politicians and less an ancient bequest than an unsurprising response to real conditions in Tito's Yugoslavia. [...] In their very humanism the seeds of failure sprouted, since the Tito regime was unwilling or unable to satisfy this one's desire to develop a new universalist culture, that one's faith in the regime's commitment to social justice."<sup>34</sup> Miller hence shies away from reducing the path from non-conformist, dissenting intellectual engagement towards a nationalist stance only to personal choice (or failure), but he puts the intellectual trajectories in the broader social and political context of a disintegrating state. Dragović-Soso also reminds us that the national question was not invented or imagined either by intellectuals or by Milosevic in the 1980s, but that nationalism "is the structural legacy of the region's historical development and the Yugoslav communists' federal division of the country's territory."<sup>35</sup>

In Serbia, the interest in studying alternative cultural and artistic movements and related censorship began immediately after transition<sup>36</sup> when several MA theses were written.<sup>37</sup> But the major research started only in the first decade of the twenty-first century, resulting in several books and films.<sup>38</sup> The contributions of the historians Dubravka Stojanović and Radina Vučetić to the understanding of the social and cultural history of Serbia within Yugoslavia are ground-breaking.<sup>39</sup> In the framework of the promotion of Vučetić's book on censorship, the Clio publishing house together with the curators from the Museum of Yugoslavia, Marija Miletić and Mirjana Slavković, have organized the exhibition *Art in a Bunker* (in the military bunker at Belgrade's fortress Kalemegdan between April and November 2017). Serbian state radio and television broadcasters made a documentary about the censorship phenomena that Vučetić described, thus showing growing interest in the issues of dissidence, censorship, and repression in the Serbian public sphere.

Numerous dissertations have also covered this period, from those defended at history departments and arts schools in Serbia, and at foreign universities.<sup>40</sup> A few independent

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<sup>34</sup> Miller, *The nonconformists*, xi.

<sup>35</sup> Dragović-Soso, *Saviours of the nation*, 255.

<sup>36</sup> Pašić, *Mira Trajlović*; Dragičević Šešić, *Umetnost i alternative*.

<sup>37</sup> Bobić, "Cenzura i ideologije"; Prnjat, "Kulturna politika."

<sup>38</sup> Film „Zabranjeni bez zabrane“ [Forbidden without Forbidding] 2007, dir. Milan Nikodijević and Dinko Tucaković, „Cenzura“ [Censorship] 2016 dir. Milutin Petrović; Cvetković, Srđan. *Portreti disidenata*, 2007.

<sup>39</sup> Stojanović, *Noga u vratima*; Vučetić, *Monopol na istinu*. However, censorship in architecture has not been documented, although since Tito's speech in Split in 1962 for several years, balconies of apartment buildings were "censored", mostly in Belgrade where, at the time, New Belgrade was being constructed. "Censoring balconies" meant that they were deleted although planned, or their size was reduced.

<sup>40</sup> Milivoj Beslin 2014; Cvetković, *Portreti*; Suša, "Beogradsko pozorište." Greg de Cuir's dissertation about the Black Wave Movement (defended at the Faculty of Drama Arts) was printed by the Serbian film centre in 2011; Spasovska, *The Last Yugoslav Generation*.

authors have conducted thorough research about specific cases of censorship, like in theatres<sup>41</sup>, and alternative writing between the fifties and nineties<sup>42</sup>. This documentation was mostly inspired by the wish to preserve the memory of such phenomena happening at the margins of public institutions.

### 2.3 Institutions and Initiatives for the Preservation and Interpretation of the Socialist Past in Serbia

Only a few public institutions devote their attention to the heritage and legacy of socialist Yugoslavia: first the Museum of Yugoslavia, which has a permanent programme called *Discussions about Yugoslavia* that has already held more than twenty events. However, the Museum of Yugoslavia devotes more attention to the mainstream or dominant features of Yugoslavia such as Tito's diplomacy in the post-colonial world, the non-aligned movement, self-government, development of consumerism (social gatherings with Vespas and the first Yugoslav car, Zastava 750, Fića). More recently they have turned their attention to the history of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1918-1941). Issues of dissidence, and alternative and vanguard movements are treated within more general exhibitions there (i.e., an exhibition of Russian avant-garde art was complemented with exhibits related to the journal *Zenit* that was published in the same period in Yugoslavia).

Academic journals from time to time pay attention to Yugoslav history, and currently Tatomir Toroman, an anthropologist, and Aleksandar Raković, historian, are preparing a thematic issue of the journal *Kultura* [Culture] devoted to the culture of socialism (to be published in January 2019). Another team, consisting of the art historian Branislav Dimitrijević, the anthropologist Ildiko Erdei, and, again, Tatomir Toroman, is preparing a book about Yugoslavia for the Museum of Yugoslavia, and have expressed interest in including topics such as dissidence and cultural policy.

Public institutions prefer to preserve their organizational histories as "stories of triumph", so that censorship cases have not been thoroughly documented in institutions themselves; one may conclude that they tend to erase those traumatic events from their institutional memory.<sup>43</sup> Nevertheless, research has started to explore dissident and non-conformist artists that were linked to public institutions such as the playwright Aleksandar Popović<sup>44</sup>, the dramaturge Mira Trailović<sup>45</sup>, the writer Branko Ćopić<sup>46</sup>, the film director Dušan Makavejev<sup>47</sup>, and the painter Miodrag Mića Popović<sup>48</sup>.

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<sup>41</sup> Novaković, *Kako je Tito razbijao tikve*.

<sup>42</sup> Petrović B. 2008 & Peković, *Sudanije Branku Ćopiću*.

<sup>43</sup> Dragičević Šešić, "How theaters remember."

<sup>44</sup> Ljustanović, *Aleksandar Popović*.

<sup>45</sup> Pašić, *Mira Trailović*.; Dragičević Šešić *Umetnost i alternative*.

<sup>46</sup> Peković, *Sudanije Branku Ćopiću*.

<sup>47</sup> Dimitrijević, *Slatki film*.

<sup>48</sup> Živadinović, *Miodrag Mića Popović*.

There were also efforts to document and write about dissident movements that were not directly connected with arts.<sup>49</sup> In addition to the huge efforts undertaken by Ante Lešaja in Croatia, the work on the Praxis movement has also inspired authors in Serbia.<sup>50</sup>

The Centre for Politics of Emancipation [*Centar za politike emancipacije*] is an NGO that organises a Studies of Socialism programme in order to fight against the erasure of the socialist theoretical perspective from higher education's social sciences and humanities curricula.<sup>51</sup> A few choirs in Belgrade today attempt to preserve the heritage of socialist Yugoslavia through songs (*Naša pjesma*, *Horheškart*<sup>52</sup>).

The 2018 exhibition "Towards a Concrete Utopia: Architecture in Yugoslavia, 1948–1980" at the MOMA in New York demonstrates foreign interest in official Yugoslav culture. The exhibition also showed the ambiguities of culture in socialist Yugoslavia. Most of the architects that built important projects in Yugoslavia (like Stojan Maksimović, who designed Belgrade's Sava Centre or Bogdan Bogdanović, who designed numerous memorials) cannot simply be considered "state architects". Their work was often questioned in Yugoslavia and usually resulted in emigration or inner emigration. Somehow architecture stayed outside of discussions related to the culture of dissent, and the most important example of architectural dissidence, the *New School of Bogdan Bogdanović*, lasted only a few years (1970-1973), before it was forced to "emigrate" from the Faculty of Architecture to Bogdanović's private house in the village of Mali Popović. The Centre for Cultural Decontamination has been exploring the heritage of the *New School* and why it was rejected by the state, but it seems that there is still much research and better documentation to be done.

When the history of Yugoslav arts is written, there is often a lack of research on independent initiatives in the history of theatre<sup>53</sup>, publishing and literature<sup>54</sup>, and visual arts.<sup>55</sup> Thus, it is very important to train artistic collectives and civil society groups to archive their own projects and achievements. It is also crucial that funding is provided for heritage preservation and for research on such initiatives.

The politics of cultural memory has meant that only the works of the public cultural sector is followed and archived, and only of those artists who were officially recognised in their times. The semi-periphery of Europe has had many opportunities to develop innovative and creative

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<sup>49</sup> Also, a few cases had been explored from legal perspective like Todorović and Trkulja, *Zločin nad mišljenjem*. Trkulja, *Slučaj "Crveni kralj."*

<sup>50</sup> Popov, *Sloboda i nasilje*.; Jakšić 2012; Olujić, Stojaković 2012.

<sup>51</sup> Most of those programmes are supported by the German foundation of the Left party – Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung South East Europe.

<sup>52</sup> Since 2006 known as "Horkestar" (<http://horkestar.org>)

<sup>53</sup> For instance there is no research on the series of theatrical initiatives of Radimir Stević Ras: Ras Endowment in 1956; or of the *Ovako* club for synthesis of arts of 1959 which later became Theatrical Playground, then Theatre of National Drama and, at the end, the Belgrade Summer Festival [*Beogradski letnji festival - BELEF*].

<sup>54</sup> Like for instance on the Independent Publishing Program of Slobodan Mašić.

<sup>55</sup> First private galleries in Belgrade: Az, Lada, etc.

projects and campaigns but has never had the capacity to record the memory of them, to organize the transmission to following generations and to make them living archives (used for inspiration but also for research).

In 2016, researchers have launched the transdisciplinary Centre for Yugoslav Studies [*Centar za jugoslovenske studije - Cejus*] at Belgrade's Faculty of Media and Communication.<sup>56</sup> Cejus aims to "to go beyond the dichotomies in the paradigms that has [sic] marked the discourses on Yugoslavia: the 'totalitarian' and the 'Yugonostalgic' examples. Rather, we would like to illustrate the complexities and ambivalences that characterised Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav societies."<sup>57</sup> Like Cejus, such research is based on individual's engagement seldomly supported by public institutions. Many researchers therefore cooperate with NGOs such as the Centre for Cultural Decontamination<sup>58</sup> or the Centre for Public History [*Centar za primenjenu istoriju*]<sup>59</sup>. Public cultural institutions such as the Belgrade Youth Center [*Dom omladine*] or Parobrod, the cultural centre of the Belgrade's old town, host such events.

Another independent initiative to begin Yugoslav studies comes from the art historian Branislav Dimitrijević, who advocates, like *Cejus*, to overcome dominant (revisionist) discourses about the totalitarian character of the Yugoslav socialist system. Dimitrijević collaborates with the Museum of Yugoslavia and other professionals and artists, such as Igor Grubić, who share such views. Regarding the example of socialist monuments which continue to attract global interest, Dimitrijević illustrates how the socialist system in Yugoslavia enabled visual artists to express themselves freely, but he also devotes attention to the work of film artists who were censored (Ž. Pavlović) or forced to leave (Makavejev, Žilnik).<sup>60</sup>

Today there are only a few archives that are digitalised and accessible to wide variety of users. The Institute for Theatre, Film, Radio and Television in cooperation with the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts [*Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti - SANU*] has digitalised the journal *Filmske sveske* that in itself was not seen as dissident but gathered important materials related to film theory and history.<sup>61</sup> The Archive of Alternative Films and Videos of the Student City Cultural Centre [*Dom kulture "Studentski grad"*] holds important films of the Belgrade and Serbian alternative club scene from 1960s including early works of Živojin Pavlović, Dušan Makavejev, and many others.<sup>62</sup> In September 2018, the Belgrade International Theatre Festival (BITEF) launched a specific website for its digital archive in cooperation with

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<sup>56</sup> <https://www.facebook.com/cejus.jus/>. Before that, there was another initiative named "Yugoslavology, independent research centre for Yugoslav studies" [*Jugoslavologija.eu*] in Belgrade, but it has ceased to exist.

<sup>57</sup> Petrov, "Introduction: Towards Yugoslav Studies," 2.

<sup>58</sup> <https://www.czkd.org/>.

<sup>59</sup> <http://www.cpi.rs/en/>.

<sup>60</sup> Dimitrijević, *Potrošeni socijalizam*.

<sup>61</sup> <http://filmskesveske.mi.sanu.ac.rs/>.

<sup>62</sup> [http://www.dksgrs/afc\\_arhivAlternativnogFilmaIVideoa.php](http://www.dksgrs/afc_arhivAlternativnogFilmaIVideoa.php).

Belgrade's University Library.<sup>63</sup> These are only few cases of digitization that indicate what more has to be done.

An important prospect for intensifying research on the culture of dissent in Serbia is the COST project CA16213: *New Exploratory Phase in Research on East European Cultures of Dissent*. In 2018, the Institute for Theatre, Film, Radio and Television of the Faculty of Dramatic Arts joined the Institute for Mathematics of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts as representatives of the Serbian research community in this research project on resistance and dissent in former socialist Europe 1945–89.<sup>64</sup> The consortium began with the premise that the dissident movement constituted “a remarkable chapter of Europe’s recent past, which not only informs in a decisive way the identities of post-socialist societies, but has also reshaped the continent as a whole and still provides an important reference for contemporary social movements worldwide”. The main aim of the COST project is to re-evaluate this legacy through new, reflexive approaches and interpretations. It should be a valuable interface between three communities of practice: researchers and archivists, art and cultural heritage curators and IT experts with humanities and social science expertise.<sup>65</sup> The project intends to build upon the results of the COURAGE project and of the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) for encoding humanities data in electronic form, the Collaborative Digital Archival Research Infrastructure (CENDARI) for virtual research environment for historians, and Pelagios. Within the COST project the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Belgrade will realize several sub-projects based on oral history methods as well as on artistic, practice-based research.<sup>66</sup> The project also aims at breaking the “shameful silence” which occurred around film director Živojin Pavlović following his demotion from professor to the position of coordinator of learning tools at the Faculty of Dramatic Arts.<sup>67</sup> A special project group, led by art historian Branislav Dimitrijević will create artistic-based research devoted to the curatorial work of Pavlović.

The journal *Hereticus. Časopis za preispitivanje prošlosti* [Hereticus. Journal for Re-examining the Past] is the only journal completely devoted to legal and political issues linked to dissidence, such as the rehabilitation of political prisoners, lustration, restitution of confiscated property etc.<sup>68</sup> It is published since 2003 by the NGO Center for Advanced Legal Studies [*Centar za unapređivanje pravnih studija*] (est. in 1998). The journal is interdisciplinary, open for authors of different political and theoretical orientation and may offer a forum where different perspectives on the socio-political and cultural changes in Serbia can be evaluated

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<sup>63</sup> <http://digitalniarhivbitefa.unilib.rs/>.

<sup>64</sup> The Faculty of Dramatic Arts team consists of Milena Dragičević Šešić, Nina Mihaljinac, Ljiljana Rogac, Ivan Medenica, Ksenija Radulović, Vlatko Ilić, Irena Ristić, and Ana Martinoli.

<sup>65</sup> There are six working groups: Culture under Surveillance, Culture in the Grey Zone, Alternative Cultures, Cultural Memory of Dissent, Mediating Research through Technology, and Art and Cultural Heritage Curation.

<sup>66</sup> For instance, on October 8th 2018 in Belgrade's cultural centre, Parobrod, four focus groups collected testimonies directly from the persecuted participants of certain events: 1) repercussions of *Plastic Jesus* affair for students; 2) Student Cultural Centre as a grey zone of negotiation levels of freedom; 3) theatre and censorship, and 4) open university and the persecution of the Group of Six.

<sup>67</sup> Dragičević Šešić, “How Theaters Remember.” *Etnoantropološki problemi*, 621-640.

<sup>68</sup> <http://hereticus.org/arhiva-casopisa-hereticus/>.

and assessed. The accent of the last published issue in 2017 was on the authoritarian aspects of the Serbian present. Since then however, no other issue appeared and the future of the journal seems to be unclear.

Another recent development comes from the former editorial staff and journalists of the journal *Student*, who organized three public discussions at Belgrade's Studentski grad [Student City] in spring 2017 to recall the importance the journal once had for youth in Yugoslavia. The most notable and attended discussion was titled *Student Journal in the History of the 1968 World Revolution*, which was held in June 2017. In October 2017, an exhibition of reproductions of *Student* cover pages was organized under the title *Visual Identity and Visual Narration*. The exhibition also displayed cartoons and critical texts created mainly at the end of the 1960s, when *Student* had its highest circulation and greatest influence. There are plans to print a monograph, which would contain the written memories of collaborators and contributors, and if funds allow, the making of a film about the history of the journal. Additionally, in June 2018, at the occasion of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of 1968 several events were organized, like the gathering *Right to Rebellion, 1968 Here and in the World* [Pravo na pobunu – '68. kod nas i u svetu] at the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts.<sup>69</sup>

To sum up, there is actual public interest in the topic of cultural opposition and the heritage of dissent in Yugoslavia in contemporary Serbia. The organisers of cultural events, research, and discussions are mainly either eyewitnesses of the bygone Yugoslav cultural sphere who are interested in preserving the memory of their activities, or activists from leftist youth movements. Institutional support comes predominantly through personal contacts in public institutions (like the Museum of Yugoslavia, SANU, and the Belgrade Youth Centre) and from NGOs (like the Centre for Public History). However, efforts to preserve and investigate the cultural heritage of dissent in socialist Yugoslavia is not a priority in cultural and educational policies.

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<sup>69</sup> Other discussions were: "What Has Stayed from 1968 / Where Are Those Actors Today" (19 June), "Student in 1968 – 1968 in the Journal *Student*" (20 June), "1968 Resonating in Arts – Film, Literature, Music, Design" (21 June), and "Student Movements in the World" (22 June). <https://www.sanu.ac.rs/wp-content/uploads/2018/05/pravo-na-pobunu-program.pdf>. <https://www.sanu.ac.rs/68-u-studentu/>.

### 3. Bosnia and Herzegovina<sup>70</sup>

During the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) between 1992 and 1995 about 100,000 people were killed and severe destruction of cultural heritage took place.<sup>71</sup> According to Nedad Memić, cultural politics in BiH mirror the destruction of the common cultural sphere, because cultural policy lies not in the responsibility of the entire Bosnian state anymore, but is in the hands of the entities and the cantons since the war's end.<sup>72</sup> There is no Ministry of Culture that covers the entire state of BiH. Instead the Ministry of Civil Affairs deals with culture on a state level sometimes. In the two entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina cultural politics is differently managed: Republika Srpska (literally "Serb Republic") organizes cultural affairs centrally through the Ministry for Education and Culture [*Ministarstvo prosvjete i kulture*]. The Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (FBiH) which forms the other entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina in contrast regulates cultural policies decentralized within its ten cantons. Its Federal Ministry for Culture and Sport [*Ministarstvo kulture i sporta*] supports activities on a cantonal level, but also has its own activities.<sup>73</sup> This set-up indicates that cultural politics in Bosnia and Herzegovina are strongly divided along ethno-political lines.

Cultural institutions that are relevant for the entire country therefore are in a state of neglect. The state does not support them, because doing so would imply acknowledging the existence of a common cultural and historical heritage. Seven such institutions of national significance struggle for survival: the Country Museum [*Zemaljski muzej*], the National and University Library [*Narodna i univerzitetska biblioteka*], the Museum of Literature and Theatre Art [*Muzej književnosti i pozorišne umjetnosti*], the Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina [*Historijski muzej BiH*], the Art Gallery of Bosnia and Herzegovina [*Umjetnička galerija BiH*], the National Film Archive [*Kinoteka*], and the Library for the Blind and Visually Impaired [*Biblioteka za slijepa i slabovidna lica*].<sup>74</sup> The Council of Europe, in 2002, published a report on cultural policies in BiH suggesting that the legal status of these institutions be clarified.<sup>75</sup>

Regarding engagement with the cultural heritage of socialism, the fate of the Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina deserves particular attention. The institution was created directly after the end of World War II under the jurisdiction of the National Government of BiH. Originally, it was called the Museum of National Liberation, but then the name changed to Museum of the Revolution in BiH. The names underpinned the promotion of the socialist state's values, which based its narrative on the antifascist struggle, achievements of the Second World War, international solidarity of the working class, and the dogma of Brotherhood and Unity among Yugoslavia's peoples. Along with the breakup of the Socialist

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<sup>70</sup> by Jacqueline Nießer

<sup>71</sup> Tokača, *Bosanska knjiga mrtvih*, 107-108.

<sup>72</sup> Memić, „Zwischen Politik und Festival,“ 179.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.cultureshutdown.net/> Pearce, S.C. und Mujanović, J. (2014), Local Challenges, Global Implications: Bosnia-Herzegovina's Cultural Institutions in Crisis. Washington: Emerging Democracies Institute.

<sup>75</sup> <http://www.cultureshutdown.net/cultural-policy-in-bosnia-herzegovina-experts-report-council-of-europe/>.

Republic of Yugoslavia and during the siege of Sarajevo, the Museum in 1993 was renamed again. However, its objectives and commitment to collect, study, professionally process and maintain, and promote the cultural and historical heritage of Bosnia and Herzegovina remain unchanged.<sup>76</sup>

Like the six previously mentioned cultural institutions relevant to the entire country, the Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina has no resolved legal status, and no financing accordingly.<sup>77</sup> Due to this ongoing crisis (since 1995), the museum's entire collection and building have been at risk, its staff future unknown, and it faces potential permanent closure to the public.

Despite the legal vacuum and lack of regular financing, the Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina with its library, archive, photo and art collection, mostly related to the 20th century history (dominated by material related to the Second World War) continues to be used regularly by researchers for academic purposes. The mere existence of the Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina can be viewed as an act of cultural resistance to the political deadlock of the country. It survives due to the idealism and engagement of its staff.

The Museum's objectives in the last years have been focused on community engagement and funding projects from external donors. All the activities carried out in the museum are focused on raising awareness of the museum as the property of all people (under the slogan 'This is your museum!') and on promoting the museum as a platform for dialogue and for the exchange of ideas and knowledge.<sup>78</sup> The cultural campaign *I am the Museum*, received the Europa Nostra prize in 2016. Started by the *Action for Culture* group in 2014, this campaign invited citizens and artists to guard the museum and its collections [*dežura*]. The activists have also organized a series of cultural events to raise awareness about the museum's status quo and about cultural policy in Bosnia and Herzegovina in general. The *Action for Culture* group has raised concerns about "the welfare of the people looking after the artefacts that remained inside the closed museum, which had no heating and unreliable electricity and water sources".<sup>79</sup> A statement from the group warned: "What we witnessed was a deep humanitarian crisis among workers – no salaries, no health or social insurance and bad working conditions."<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> E-Mail exchange with Elma Hasimbegović, director of the Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 09.09.2018 with Jacqueline Nießer.

<sup>77</sup> Only a part of the cost for maintaining the museum is provided by the canton of Sarajevo and the state of BiH. Marzia, *Bosnia*.

<sup>78</sup> E-mail exchange with Elma Hasimbegović, director of the Historical Museum of Bosnia and Herzegovina, 09.09.2018 with Jacqueline Nießer.

<sup>79</sup> See more in: Methods of Institutional Agency in the Public Sphere: Cultural Policy Challenges and Achievements, in: Tanurovska, *Modelling Public Space(s)*, 55.

<sup>80</sup> <https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/24092015-the-national-museum-in-sarajevo-has-reopened>.



However, also other public cultural institutions that are not of national significance, but operate on the entity or cantonal level, work on shoestring budgets.<sup>81</sup> Librarians and archivists struggle to preserve their collections under precarious financial conditions. Additionally, the divisions within the cultural sector impede cooperation and prevent a systematic indexing of cultural heritage for all of Bosnia and Hercegovina.<sup>82</sup> Memić sums up the challenges that the cultural sector in contemporary BiH faces: a lack of resources, ethno-political instrumentalization of culture leading to a non-transparent and politically one-sided distribution of public funds, lack of coordination between cultural agents, and lack of long-term vision and institutional capacity.

Festivals, private engagement of individuals and international funding offer somewhat of a solution from the ongoing state of emergency of Bosnia's cultural sphere. Through festivals that receive public funding, and projects that operate mostly through international funding, cultural work that goes beyond ethno-political divisions in Bosnia and Hercegovina is possible. However, the spaces of freedom created through the "festivalisation" of culture also has its downside, as it camouflages the lack of public vision for the steady development of the cultural sphere and it supports the commercialization of culture.<sup>83</sup>

Private engagements in collaboration with religious groups are another way to help the preservation of cultural heritage. For example, the Bosniak Institute – Adil Zulfikarpašić Foundation in Sarajevo, a private foundation of the Bosnian émigré Adil Zulfikarpašić, is well equipped to maintain its rich collection of Bosnian cultural heritage artefacts stretching back to the 13th century in its archive and library. It operates thanks to the support of private donations and charitable Islamic endowment known as *waqf*.

Due to the lack of a national cultural policy, the preservation of cultural heritage of socialism in BiH has been largely privatized and localized. One may conclude that culture only survives in Bosnia and Herzegovina when it serves either political or commercial (festivals) purposes.

#### 4. Republic of Macedonia<sup>84</sup>

On September 2011, on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Republic of Macedonia's declaration of independence, the Museum for the Macedonian Struggle for Statehood and Independence – Museum of the Internal Macedonian Revolutionary Organization and Museum for the Victims of the Communist Regime opened. The museum is part of the government-launched Skopje 2014 project, which plastered the centre of Skopje with neo-neo-classicist buildings, monuments and facades. The thirteenth section of the Museum

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<sup>81</sup> The budget for culture in the Republika Srpska amounted 6.7 million euro in 2015, in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina it was 12.2 million euro in 2015. Memić, "Zwischen Politik und Festival," 180.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid, 195.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid, 196–197.

<sup>84</sup> By Ulf Brunnbauer

contains an exhibition on the victims of communism. This is how the official website describes its content: “Through museum exhibits, the Golgotha is shown which Macedonian citizens had to endure, of their opposition against communist dictatorship, sacrificing their lives for an independent, united and democratic Macedonia.”<sup>85</sup> The exhibition mainly consists of wax figures of opposition figures and communists as well as evocative oil paintings showing the “horrors of communist oppression.”<sup>86</sup>

While this exhibition is as histrionic as the whole Skopje 2014 project, it also represents the ambiguous place of the communist period in Macedonian collective memory. Even anti-communist nationalists, who are behind the creation of the museum, can hardly disavow communist rule entirely. After all, it was thanks to the Yugoslav and Macedonian communists, that a modern Macedonian state was established in 1944 as part of the Yugoslav federation, that the Macedonian nation was officially recognized and the language standardized, a national history written, and an autonomous Macedonian Orthodox Church established. Even the scientific and cultural institutions that are officially commissioned to create national Macedonian culture are legacies of communist rule (with some additions after independence).

So, total condemnation of the socialist period would risk throwing the baby (the affirmation of the Macedonian nation) out with the bathwater (communism). Furthermore, the majority of Macedonian society appears to have positive views of the socialist period, many feeling genuine nostalgia for it. The post-communist Social Democratic Union political party, which named several prime ministers after 1990 (and in power again in 2017), has viewed the socialist past positively as well. During periods in power, it did not provide institutional support to public activities to ‘come to terms with the communist past’.

These attitudes explain why the study of socialism has not really taken off in Macedonia and why there is not much public debate about the nature of the socialist system. Scholarly interest is limited as well. Since 2000, only 3 out of the more than 310 books of the leading research institute in Macedonia, the Institute for National History in Skopje, have been devoted to the socialist period in Macedonia.<sup>87</sup> The institute’s journal *Glasnik* [Messenger] has also only published a few articles on the socialist period over the last decade – less, for example, than on the ancient and medieval history of Macedonia. The period of communist rule plays only a minor role in the work of most Macedonian historians writing on national history.

The only theme related to communist rule that has attracted more interest is the repression of Macedonian nationalists and their activities in exile. Historian Violeta Achkoska, for example, has published an analysis and the personal documents of repressed Macedonian intellectuals and activists.<sup>88</sup> The most prominent of them, Metodija Andonov-Čento, president

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<sup>85</sup> Translation from Macedonian by Ulf Brunnbauer. Official website of the museum, <http://mmb.org.mk/index.php/mk/музејска-поставка-мк/вовед>.

<sup>86</sup> For images see the official website, <http://mmb.org.mk/index.php/mk/музејска-поставка-мк/2016-01-28-16-45-14/тринаесетто-одделение>.

<sup>87</sup> Official website of the institute, <http://www.ini.ukim.mk/index.php?m=7>.

<sup>88</sup> Violeta, *Demnechki duh*. Violeta, *Represijata i represiranite*.

of the first Macedonian parliament, fell out with the communists in 1946 and was imprisoned. In revisionist accounts after 1990, he became a founding father of independent Macedonia. These people, including writers and intellectuals, were persecuted because they demanded independent statehood and unification with the Bulgarian and Greek parts of Macedonia. The most systematic research efforts into the history of political opposition, in Macedonia and among émigrés, have been those of historian Marjan Ivanovski. He has published, for example, a multi-volume collection of texts by one of the most prominent Macedonian dissidents and exiled opposition activists, Dragan Bogdanovski (1929–98). Bogdanovski managed to leave Yugoslavia after internment in a camp in 1951, but was captured by the Yugoslav secret police in Paris in 1979, and put in jail in Yugoslavia; after his release in 1989 he became one of the founders of the VMRO-DPMNE party.<sup>89</sup> Sometimes such research is guided by sympathy for the conservative-nationalist VMRO-DPMNE party, which was founded in 1990 and has repeatedly held power since independence.<sup>90</sup>

There is little research on other aspects of opposition against the communist regime. Violeta Achkoska's early studies from the 1990s in which she explored the communist transformation of the countryside and policies towards the Muslim population, both of which provoked resistance, found no follow-up.<sup>91</sup> The electronic catalogue of the Macedonian National Library renders just one hit for the title word "opposition" pertaining to the socialist period. This is also the result of the lack of any government and public interest in the social and cultural history of the socialist period.

Some of the most valuable work on repression comes from the Archive of Macedonia in Skopje and pertains to primary documents. Its multi-volume publication of the *Dark Pages of UDBA* contains many documents on repression that are helpful in reconstructing the strategies of dissent.<sup>92</sup> The archive also contains relevant personal collections, such as that of the dissident poet and journalist Jovan Koteski (1932-2001).<sup>93</sup> It should be noted that generally access to documents in state archives is handled relatively liberally in Macedonia. According to the 1990 Law on Archives and its subsequent amendments, the embargo period is 20 years after the creation of a document.<sup>94</sup> However, there are important exceptions. Documents that can "violate the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity" of Macedonia, and documents from the spheres of foreign policy, defence, and state security must not be accessed until 75 years after their creation, and for those that "harm national feelings" access is blocked for 100 years.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> Bogdanovski: *Mojata borba*.

<sup>90</sup> E.g. Todorovski: "Politichkata opozitsija," 43–48.

<sup>91</sup> Violeta, "Emancipacijata na muslimanskata zhena," 17–28.; *Ibid.*: *Zadolzhitelniot otkup*.

<sup>92</sup> Petrovski, *Crnite stranici*.

<sup>93</sup> See the Wikipedia entry, [https://mk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Јован\\_Котески](https://mk.wikipedia.org/wiki/Јован_Котески).

<sup>94</sup> Apart from the central one in Skopje, there exist regional archives in Bitola, Ohrid, Veles, Kumanovo, Prilep, Shtip, Strumitsa and Tetovo.

<sup>95</sup> Official website of the archive, <http://www.arhiv.gov.mk>.

Another relevant archival development concerns the question of secret police files. By law, personal files of the former state security became accessible for citizens in 2000.<sup>96</sup> However, this was not accompanied by any systematic research and documentation effort about the practices of suppression. On the contrary, lustration became a political weapon when the VMRO-DPMNE government established the so-called Commission for Verification of Facts [*Комисијата за верификација на фактите*] in 2008. The constitutional court repealed several provisions of it because they violated human rights and privacy laws. A second lustration law, adopted by parliament in 2012, was opposed by the opposition parties as lustration became a political instrument, not one for establishing historic facts.

Researching the cultural aspects of opposition, thus, could be a good starting point for more nuanced interpretations of the socialist past in Macedonia.

## 5. Montenegro<sup>97</sup>

Montenegro became an independent country only in 2006 via referendum. During the socialist period in Yugoslavia, many Montenegrin intellectuals considered Montenegrin culture as part of Serbian culture. This was mirrored in the lack of a Ministry of Culture for Montenegro within Yugoslavia. The Ministry of Culture of Montenegro was created in 1992.<sup>98</sup> The major contribution for the construction of a new Montenegrin cultural identity has been offered by Montenegrin artists and intellectuals that left Belgrade cultural institutions and academia (Branislav Mićunović, Radmila Vojvodić, Branko Baletić, etc.). By the second part of the 1990s official cultural policies, mostly led by such individuals, started to reflect the needs of the future independent state. New cultural institutions were created in order to promote Montenegrin national identity. The Academy of Fine Arts and the Academy of Music were later joined by the Faculty of Dramatic Arts in Cetinje. The Budva City Theatre and Montenegrin National Theatre with their repertoires for the first time reflected mostly nationally relevant issues and dramaturgy.

In the first part of 1990s, when Serbia and Montenegro stayed together in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, scarce academic and research resources in Montenegro did not deal with issues of cultural opposition under socialism. The new political status at this time divided Montenegrin society, especially researchers. The first group was the one that saw Serbia and Montenegro as one and the same culture (and people). The Montenegrin Academy of Arts and Sciences [*Crnogorska akademija nauka i umjetnosti – CANU*] defended this position. The second group asked for the creation of a completely independent state of Montenegro with a specific Montenegrin cultural identity. The Doclean Academy of Sciences and Arts [*Dukljanska akademija nauka i umjetnosti - DANU*] was created in 1999 to fight against the ‘Serbisation’ that was implemented by the CANU. Several members of the CANU helped to create DANU

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<sup>96</sup> Henri, “Coming to Terms.”

<sup>97</sup> By Milena Dragičević Šešić.

<sup>98</sup> [Http://www.mku.gov.me/ministarstvo](http://www.mku.gov.me/ministarstvo).

(e.g. Jevrem Brković, Sreten Asanović, Šerbo Rastoder, Zuvdija Hodžić, and Vojo Stanić), becoming in that moment “dissidents” regarding the official policy whose discourse still underlined the unity of Serbian and Montenegrin culture.

Thus, neither researched or prioritised the question of dissidence except DANU’s efforts to re-evaluate those Montenegrins that were excluded from public life in the Kingdom of Yugoslavia due to their fight for an independent Montenegrin state, like the *Zelenaši [Greens]* movement for confederal state<sup>99</sup>. Therefore, socialist dissidents, most of them Stalinist (from the conflict in 1948), have not been studied or ‘rehabilitated’. The most well-known among them is Radovan Zogović that, together with Đilas, in 1930s participated in the famous conflict of the literary left (then rigidly defending the communist party position). In 1948 Zogović withdrew from political life and stayed on the margins of cultural and social life, always considered a communist dissident as numerous other Montenegrin intellectuals that opted for Soviet policy.

Through different efforts the time came for a re-examination of the key dissident figures of Montenegrin descent through academic and artistic work. Radmila Vojvodić, dean of the Faculty of Dramatic Arts and later rector of Podgorica University wrote and directed the play *Everyman Đilas* (a drama in five scenes). The drama (staged in November 2013) explores the nature and consequences of Milovan Đilas’ works (*Anatomy of a Moral, New Class*) as well as the fall of utopian vision alongside that of the Berlin wall. *Everyman Đilas* rehabilitates Đilas’ thoughts as an invitation to see the morality of contemporary humans in enlarging the spaces of freedom. However, contemporary historians such as Mira Bogdanović are challenging Đilas’s contribution to dissident reflection. Her book titled *The Constant Features of Converts: From Đilas to Đilas* disregards him both as a dissident and as a thinker.<sup>100</sup> Her works are often present in academic discussions but are contested.

In 2015 a new law merged the two academies of arts and sciences under the name of CANU. This coincided with the dominant policy of unification of the society and might bring some new research topics related to minor, alternative opinions from the past and present. As Montenegrin identity was in that moment in the process of intensified formation only since the twenty-first century, numerous contradictions and policy priorities in different areas have become visible. Radmila Vojvodić’s and Janko Ljumović’s research project on Montenegrin culture and identity resulted in the publication of a book, which examines the factors, conditions, and cultural patterns that influenced the creation of Montenegrin identity since the nineteenth century throughout life in different Yugoslavian states, but focuses on the last twenty-five, formative years when most of the features of Montenegrin identity had been

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<sup>99</sup> Only recently has the academic community started to explore from different standpoints the unification of Montenegro within the Yugoslav state (Pavlović 2008) and the national identity of Montenegrin confederalists (Stamatović 2007).

<sup>100</sup> Bogdanović, *Dissidents*.

canonised. Artists have contributed a lot to outlining new features of a Montenegrin identity through films, music, and text.

The contradictory processes of national separation from Serbian culture were led mostly by national cultural institutions. Conceiving of Montenegrin culture in opposition to, and separated from Serbian culture is a contradictory process because many Montenegrin writers, like Mihajlo Lalić or Matija Bećković, perceive themselves as Montenegrin *within* the corpus of Serbian literature.<sup>101</sup>

However, when it comes to language, the separation was a political decision. In the book of Vojvodić and Ljumović, the only texts that introduce some dissident works from the previous epoch relate to the Montenegrin language. This is a polemical issue even today among Montenegrins as many Montenegrins claim to speak the Serbian language and make ironic comments on the canonization of a dialect as national language. Another controversial text deals with issues related to Montenegrin multiculturalism and demands of the three major ethnic minorities: Serb, Muslim (Bosniak), and Albanian. Although Montenegrins make up the majority of the population, the memory of Serbian and Yugoslavian repression during the Kingdom of Yugoslavia stirs up their perception of victims because Montenegrins themselves had not achieved their cultural rights for an independent church, language, or culture. The majority and minorities in Montenegro therefore can be portrayed as “captive minds”, or prisoners of history.

The major issue of contemporary dissidence in Montenegro is linked to religion: the question of two orthodox religious communities. The abolishment of Patriarchate in Pec during the Ottoman Empire led to the creation of an autonomous Montenegrin Metropolitanate. The creation of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats, and Slovenes in 1918 incorporated the Montenegrin episcopate within Serbian Orthodox Church. Today both churches exist in parallel dividing the population.

All texts in the book by Vojvodić and Ljumović reflect problems that Montenegrin society is facing today while attempting to constitute itself as contemporary multicultural and multi-religious state. Beside discussing the issue of faith, the book deals with the architectural heritage ruined by ‘culturalisation’ and investors’ urbanism, the intangible heritage that is ‘de-ethnicised’ and localised (like Boka Night),<sup>102</sup> and it also presents Montenegrin artists and practices that are accepted and interpreted as common heritage of the Yugoslav space (from

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<sup>101</sup> In November 2018, the Montenegrin government forbid entrance to four Serbian intellectuals, among whom was the poet Matija Bećković, considered an “enemy of Montenegro”, dangerous for the state’s stability and security. <https://www.blic.rs/vesti/politika/povodom-zabrane-ulaska-u-zemlju-vlada-crne-gore-stitimo-stabilnost-i-bezbednost-od/2vhdzmp>.

<sup>102</sup> Cities in the Bay of Kotor [*Boka Kotorska*] were mostly populated by Croats that today represent less than 1%. Numerous traditional customs are derived from Croatian heritage in the Montenegrin town of Kotor, including Boka Night [*Bokeljska noć*], which is currently celebrated as a city event without reference to the Croatian minority.

film director Veljko Bulajić to Marina Abramović) or those who are rejected as unacceptable due to political incorrectness (Njegoš's epic *The Mountain Wreath*, which celebrates war against the Muslim community).

In brief, for the state of Montenegro, the primary issues in contemporary cultural policy and public discussions are concerning the construction of its identity (language, alphabet, church autonomy, etc.). Thus, the culture of dissent in socialist Yugoslavia seems to be a minor point of reference, and is not seen as an important theme to be studied and discussed.

## 6. Kosovo<sup>103</sup>

Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in 2008.<sup>104</sup> Dealing with the cultural heritage of former Yugoslavia in Kosovo is confronted with the question about the relationship between Yugoslav and Albanian heritage. More precisely, the cultural heritage of Yugoslavia is overshadowed by the legacy of repressing Albanian cultural identity in Kosovo.<sup>105</sup> Sometimes, Yugoslav heritage is additionally oversimplified as Serbian, with the aim of pointing towards the hegemonic cultural stance of Serbs towards Albanians in socialist Yugoslavia.<sup>106</sup> This constellation strains any mentioning of a Yugoslav heritage in Kosovo. The culture of dissent in Kosovo therefore tackles mainly the struggle for the recognition of Albanian identity.<sup>107</sup>

However, there would be space for a more nuanced picture of cultural legacy of socialist Yugoslavia in Kosovo. Kosovo rapidly developed its infrastructure, education, housing, and cultural institutions during socialist Yugoslavia. Unfortunately, this development was based on the severe destruction of cultural heritage. The capital Pristina was modernized by destroying the Ottoman bazaar and large parts of the historic centre, including mosques, Catholic churches, and Ottoman houses. But Kosovo received also massive investments in state institutions like the then newly founded University of Pristina, in new apartments, and an industrial zone on the outskirts of Pristina, which attracted many new inhabitants leading to a rapid growth of population.<sup>108</sup> Also, Albanian-language education and the institutionalization of Albanian culture in Kosovo took place during socialist Yugoslavia: the Academy of Science and Arts for instance was founded in the 1970s and the Institute for Albanology was enlarged.

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<sup>103</sup> By Jacqueline Nießer.

<sup>104</sup> The Republic of Serbia does not recognize Kosovo's independence. More than half of all UN member states have recognized Kosovo.

<sup>105</sup> Keçmezi-Basha, *Të burgosurit politik*.

<sup>106</sup> Limani, "Kosovo u Jugoslaviji," 251–78.

<sup>107</sup> Hetemi, „Student Movements in Kosova (1981).“

<sup>108</sup> Ströhle, *Aus den Ruinen*.

Currently Pristina displays a variety of concrete socialist blocs, modernist buildings, and socialist monuments that silently bear witness to Yugoslav ideology. Therefore, in everyday life, socialist concrete architecture is an omnipresent reminder of Yugoslavia in Kosovo. Despite a still-explosive sensitivity when mentioning Yugoslavia, research on the architectural heritage of socialist Yugoslavia in Kosovo may be a starting point for addressing the Yugoslav cultural legacies in Kosovo from a less nationalistic perspective, holds art historian Vesa Sahatçiu: “It’s clear these monuments, even today, are not Serbian, Croatian, Slovenian, Montenegrin, Macedonian nor Albanian. For evidence, one need only to notice that they are neglected by their host countries and left to crumble in all the regions of the former Yugoslavia. We are all ambivalent, if not outright antagonistic, toward these monuments. Resurgent nationalist sentiments leave no room for monuments with no national identity. [...] They could, however, be viewed, at least from the perspective of art history, as testimonies to Kosovar modernism.”<sup>109</sup>

The preservation of modernist architecture in Kosovo has just recently raised public attention. The plans to build a concert hall in the centre of Pristina follow the paradigm of “destroying the old to build the new” applied by the Yugoslav authorities to modernize Kosovo. This would include destroying the former Gërmia shopping centre, a modernist building inaugurated in 1972 in the heart of Pristina. After DoCuMoMo, an international committee for the Documentation and Conservation of the Modern Movement launched an online petition to protect the Gërmia building, the Kosovo Architecture Foundation and other important organizations active in protecting cultural heritage like the NGO EC Ma Ndryshe requested that the former shopping centre be included on the Cultural Heritage List Under Temporary State Protection of the Ministry of Youth and Culture.<sup>110</sup> This list was launched in 2017 by Kosovo’s Ministry of Youth and Culture with 1567 assets, among which one finds ‘Yugoslav’ buildings.<sup>111</sup> The activists succeeded in including Gërmia in the list on 10 October 2018. However, although temporarily protected assets are under the same protection (for one year) as those under permanent protection, the restoration and conservation can only develop once the assets move from the temporary to the permanent protection list.<sup>112</sup> Whether this will happen, remains unclear, but the activism and public debate around the preservation of modernist architecture of socialist Yugoslavia in Kosovo opens a window towards ways of assessing Yugoslav cultural heritage constructively.

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<sup>109</sup> Vesa Sahatçiu (2014), Monuments Without a Home, <http://kosovotwopointzero.com/>

<sup>110</sup> Cristina Mari. Gërmia Controversy Signals Division on How to Grow Prishtina. 24.10.2018.

<https://kosovotwopointzero.com/en/germia-controversy-signals-divisions-on-how-to-grow-prishtina>.

<sup>111</sup> Cultural Heritage List for Temporary Protection: <https://www.mkrs-ks.org/?page=2,153>.

<sup>112</sup> National Strategy for Cultural Heritage 2017-2027 in Kosovo. <https://www.mkrs-ks.org/?page=2,162>.



## 7. Analysis of the collections in the COURAGE Registry

### 7.1. Topics

The collections in the registry from Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia and Montenegro do not cover all collections of potential relevance and they are a selection of material pertaining to cultural opposition in socialist Yugoslavia. The selection followed criteria of feasibility, availability, and accessibility of collections and their owners within the research period of about two years (mid-2016 to mid-2018) undertaken by the Institute for East and Southeast European Studies in Bavaria, Germany.

Most of the collections of those five post-Yugoslav countries described in the registry are located in Serbia. Additionally, most of the described collections in all the countries are held in public institutions in the capital cities. The collections cover the topics of censorship, avant-gardes in the fine arts and theatre, cultural dissidents in film, non-conformist writing, intellectual dissent, youth subcultures, post-modernist music, feminism, democratic opposition, national movements, and exile.

The topic of censorship is well covered by collections in Croatia (see separate Country Report on Croatia and Slovenia). Informal and self-censorship are also worth mentioning, although these are more difficult to track historically. Such forms of limiting free expression occurred through telephone calls, informal talks, professional “advice” by theatre and film committees and editorial boards, and through media campaigns.<sup>113</sup> In the COURAGE registry, incidents of informal and self-censorship are told in oral history interviews and in debates in the collections of literary and cultural journals, like *Književne novine* [Literary News], *Vidici* [Views], *Polja* [Fields], *Új Symposion* [New Symposium] and ARS.

In Serbia, we covered several ad-hoc collections at the Museum of Contemporary Art in Belgrade (Mića Popović, Goranka Matić, Tomislav Peternek, and The Group of Six). At the Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina, we described the ‘The Continuous Art Class, The Novi Sad Neo-Avantgarde of the 1960s and 1970s’, a project that referred to the ‘Public Art Class’, a campaign realized by the leaders of the Novi Sad conceptual art scene on the Danube Quay in Novi Sad in 1970. A still-existing commune in the countryside of Vojvodina is described as another continuing niche of freedom in the collection of the ‘Family of the Clear Streams’ of Božidar Mandić.

(Neo-)avantgarde in theatre is relevant, as this part of Yugoslav culture seemed particularly free, with Samuel Beckett’s *Waiting for Godot* being staged in Yugoslavia as early as 1956, for instance. As the collection of the Belgrade International Theatre Festival (BITEF) at the Historical Archives of Belgrade shows, however, such festival culture served to maintain a certain liberal image relevant for Yugoslavia’s position as a non-aligned country.

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<sup>113</sup> Vučetić, *Monopol na istinu*, 48–49.

Cultural opposition in film must be linked to the Black Wave movies – a movement that tackled the darker sides of socialist realities in Yugoslavia. Among many important filmmakers, Lazar Stojanović stands out from the second generation of the Black Wave, not for his artistic oeuvre, but for his destiny as cultural dissident. His film *Plastic Jesus* (1971) was declared anti-communist propaganda and led to Stojanović's imprisonment for three years. COURAGE managed to interview Lazar Stojanović before he died in March 2017 and described his private collection which he assembled over the course of the previous decades consisting of books, newspapers, posters, catalogues and video materials/films, including *Plastic Jesus*, which became one of the most famous acts of cultural dissidence in socialist Yugoslavia. In order to cover the prolific work of the most important Black Wave film directors like Želimir Žilnik, Dušan Makavejev or Živojin Pavlović, the Archive of Alternative Films and Videos of the Student City Cultural Centre [*Dom kulture "Studentski grad"*] should be described by future projects.<sup>114</sup>

Of the works which were censored in Yugoslavia, most were books.<sup>115</sup> However, as mentioned above, censorship rarely occurred in a direct way, as the Danilo Kiš collection at the Archives of the Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU) exemplifies.

Intellectual dissent in Yugoslavia was palpable for instance regarding the phenomenon of the neo-Marxist philosophy and sociology, of which there is significant heritage in Yugoslavia. In Serbia, the Ljubomir Tadić Collection at SANU and the Nebojša Popov Collection at the Historical Archives of Belgrade represent the Belgrade circle of the Praxis orientation in the COURAGE registry.

Youth subculture and music are illustrated by the Zenit Đozić Collection on New Primitivism [*Novi primitivizam*] in Bosnia and Herzegovina, containing material on a subcultural movement established in Sarajevo which found expression in music and comedy on radio and television in the 1980s. Post-modernism in music is described in the COURAGE registry through the private collection of Srđan Hofman, the most influential composer of electro-acoustic music in Yugoslavia.<sup>116</sup>

The feminist movement is represented in the Žarana Papić Collection at the centre for Woman Studies in Belgrade, and the Women's Activism Collection of the Kosovo Oral History Initiative.

The national movement of Albanians in Kosovo is covered through ad-hoc collections at the Archives of Kosovo about the demonstrations of 1968 and 1981. There is also a private collection on the Albanian underground groups, Illegalia. A collection on the notorious labour

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<sup>114</sup> [http://www.dksg.rs/afc\\_arhivAlternativnogFilmaIVidea.php](http://www.dksg.rs/afc_arhivAlternativnogFilmaIVidea.php).

<sup>115</sup> Nikolić, *Bela knjiga-1984*, 20.

<sup>116</sup> The highly important composer and multimedia artist Vladan Radovanović also needs to be mentioned here, whose voco-visual works are in a private collection.

camp for political prisoners on the island of Goli Otok [literally: Bare Island] in the Adriatic documents the repressive character of the system, particularly in its first decade. The collection is held at the Serbian Academy of Sciences (SANU). Tackling Goli Otok in the arts and in literature in particular was “one of the biggest taboos of the Yugoslav public sphere” during Tito’s reign, as exemplified by the 1969 ban on the play *When the pumpkins blossomed*, based on the novel by Dragoslav Mihajlović, who created the Goli Otok collection at SANU.<sup>117</sup> Another national movement described in the registry can be found in the Bosanski Pogledi [Bosnian Views] collection at the Bosniak Institute – Adil Zulfikarpašić Foundation in Sarajevo. Bosnian Views was intended for Bosnian and Herzegovinian Muslim emigrants, and it strove to keep its readership informed of political and social events.

From Yugoslav exile collections, we described the private collection on Yugoslav Cominformist émigrés in Prague during the period 1971–76, owned by the historian Ondřej Vojtěchovský. The significance of this collection lies in its analysis and criticism of the Yugoslav socialist regime from the radical leftist point of view by emigrants in an Eastern bloc country.

Descriptions of much more existing material, particularly in private hands, should be ensured by future projects led by institutions throughout former Yugoslavia.<sup>118</sup>

## 7.2. Actors, Users, Networking Capacities

Most of the collections are kept in public institutions, usually owned by the state. Most are found in public archives. These collections are usually archival funds of the state institutions and associations and personal funds of individuals whose heirs donated their collections to the archives. Libraries and museums also hold many of the collections in the Yugoslav successor states. Questions by COURAGE to those institutions on the institutional set-up, finances, management issues, and networking strategies were mostly unwelcome, although one would understand transparency to be part of a public institution’s function. Mistrust towards a project funded by the European Union (‘who wants to teach us what is right or wrong without understanding the specificities of Yugoslavia’) and the lack of personal resources have led to low amount of data on those items examined in COURAGE’s research in Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Kosovo.

In collections that were created through the work of institutions and organizations, the history of collecting and preserving generally has not significantly involved stories of opposition. In most of the cases, laws mandated the acquisition of these collections by the state archives, and it was thusly applied. However, when the historian Branka Prpa became director of the Historical Archives of Belgrade under Zoran Đinđić, it was her personal initiative to collect the

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<sup>117</sup> Münnich, “Jugoslawische, literarische Geschichtskonzeption,” 207.

<sup>118</sup> Highly important but missing are for instance the Archive of Alternative Films and Videos of the Student City Cultural Centre [*Dom kulture “Studentski grad”*]. See also the Goran Đorđević Kunsthistorisches Mausoleum private collection, Belgrade and Igor Grubić – *Anđeli garavih lica*.

bequests of intellectuals and personalities in the cultural sphere of Belgrade to preserve their legacy for future generations in the Historical Archives of Belgrade.<sup>119</sup> The already mentioned Nebojša Popov fond, the bequest of the theatre director Jovan Ćirilov, and the materials of the ballet dancer and peace activist Jelena Šantić, are now available, amongst others, for research in the archives.<sup>120</sup>

Regarding private collections, the situation is different and usually far more interesting. Perhaps one of the best examples is the story of the Lazar Stojanović Collection. Some parts of his collection, especially the most politically sensitive items, were confiscated during several police investigations of Stojanović in the 1970s and 1980s, and they have not been recovered. Other parts have been lost due to his changing residences. The story of Stojanović also illustrates how cultural opposition can become a lifetime activity despite changing political systems. After Yugoslavia, the author and film director returned to Serbia from abroad to engage in the anti-war movement and participate in the activities of human rights groups.

The size of the collections varies from only several items to collections of more than 100 archival boxes of documents. The COURAGE registry also contains several ad-hoc collections. These collections do not exist as independent units but are often part of more extensive collections containing various materials. This is the case with the four collections at Belgrade's Museum for Contemporary Art, which contain works criticizing and depicting the social, political, and aesthetic conditions in Yugoslavia (Mića Popović, The Group of Six Artists, Goranka Matić, Tomislav Peternek). Also, the collections of the magazines *Vidici* and *Student*, and *Književne novine* do not represent a separate library unit, but are kept as part of the periodicals collection in two institutions, the National Library of Serbia and the University Library of Belgrade. Literary and cultural magazines from Yugoslavia are relatively well represented in the registry, not only because they are well preserved (excepting 'forbidden', still unavailable issues), but also because they illustrate the wealth of intellectual activities unfolding within and despite a restrictive system.<sup>121</sup>

Some of the essential collections are in private hands and are now unavailable to the public. Suzana Jovanović, the widow of Lazar Stojanović, is the owner of his collection, with no financial support from any additional source. Zenit Đozić has plans to establish a cultural centre to commemorate the phenomenon of New Primitivism, but the financing is still uncertain. Anti-authoritarian activists, like Borka Pavićević and Dragomir Olujić (Open University collection), have valuable materials but no institutional capacity to archive and store them, which are held in their private flats or houses. Other collections are in the private hands of researchers (CADDY bulletin collection, Mysticism in Macedonia, Srđan Hofman

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<sup>119</sup> Prpa Branka, interview by Jacqueline Nießer for COURAGE-project, June 24, 2017.

<sup>120</sup> <https://www.arhiv-beograda.org/en/legacy-of-jelena-santic>.

<sup>121</sup> Other important journals that could not be covered within the COURAGE project period, but deserve attention are *Književna reč* [Literary Word] and *Delo* [Piece], and youth publications such as *Mladina* [Youth], *Polet* [Enthusiasm], and *NON*.

electronic music collection). These collections are significant in the history of cultural opposition, but their fate is uncertain because they are funded mostly by the owners themselves, who may have limited means.

Most public collections are rarely funded with direct or special funding. In this sense, the Zoran Đinđić Library, which was financed by the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany in Belgrade, is more of an exception than a rule. Collections that are held in public institutions (archives, museums, libraries) are normally financed through state institutions (Ministry of Culture). Direct funding occurs for special events, such as publications or exhibitions on anniversaries, as happened for the 40th anniversary of the Belgrade International Theatre Festival (BITEF collection) at the Historical Archives of Belgrade.

Most of the collections described in the registry, however, are rarely used. For instance, COURAGE researcher Sanja Radović was the first person to access the Zoran Đinđić collection at the Archives of Serbia.<sup>122</sup> The potential of these collections is not sufficiently exploited academically, and even less so socially. Most of those who have used the collections are researchers, primarily historians. Although most collections are fully or partially available for research, only a few are available online. This is the case with the Zoran Đinđić Virtual Museum, which is partially digitized. The entire *Polja* – Magazine for Culture and Art collection is digitalized and the BITEF poster collection now is online available, too. The most original elements of the COURAGE research project however may be found in the oral history interviews.

## 8. Conclusions and Best Practice

The ideological polarization of the Serbian public sphere can be seen as a main obstacle for mapping, preserving, interpreting, and making accessible the cultural heritage of the socialist period, in all of its complex modes of representation. This is how censorship, dissent, and non-conformism in Yugoslavia is often interpreted through a very narrow lens, reducing ambivalences, interdependences, and discontinuities to simple explanations of pro- or anti-communist stances.

Although all five countries experience cultural struggles to consolidate their identities after the dissolution of Yugoslavia, public funds for culture and education in general are relatively low. Within this already underfinanced cultural public sector, the topic of the cultural heritage of socialist Yugoslavia is very marginally treated.

Another problem is that research institutions on the one hand and cultural institutions on the other hand are functioning within their own worlds, separated from each other, as in these countries, museums and archives are not seen as research institutions, but as ‘belonging to’

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<sup>122</sup> Kostić, “Đinđićeva zaostavština.”

(being under supervision of) the respective Ministry of Culture. Also, the division between research and primary and secondary education should be overcome – the results of research should be introduced into the curricula of primary and secondary schools as soon as possible.

Major challenges are related to the necessity of transdisciplinary approaches for researching cultural opposition. There is a lot of lip service paid to collaboration in multidisciplinary teams, but in reality, transdisciplinary research is not really supported in the academic world. The university system of career development mostly favors disciplinary research and publishing; cooperation happens mostly among the same ‘kind’ of researchers, while transdisciplinarity is seen as a threat, or ‘escape path’ for ‘bad academics’.

### **Best practice**

The preservation of the BITEF collection at the Historical Archives of Belgrade, its outreach events in form of several exhibitions and a major publication, as well as the recent digitalization of some of its material with the support of the University Library Belgrade form an excellent example of how public institutions should engage with the past and make it accessible to wider audiences.

## **9. Recommendations**

### **A – Recommendations for Developing a Transnational Perspective on the Cultural Heritage of Dissent**

1. BUILD UPON existing research on the culture of dissent and of the socialist period through EU research projects (Horizon 2020, COST, etc.) (after evaluating challenges and achievements) as well as the Creative Europe programme to support projects that bring these missing perspectives to light (memory documentation, new interpretations, digitalization, etc.) in a transdisciplinary approach, that connects historians, anthropologists, sociologists, political scientists, and researchers of culture and media;
2. SUPPORT the preservation of collections from public television broadcasters, “film journal” organisations [*Filmske novosti*], film archives and cinematheques, archives of film schools, etc., helping to digitalise and make accessible materials for researchers and the wider public;
3. DEVELOP a network: The Museum of Yugoslavia in Belgrade, as the strongest institution of this kind, should be consulted and supported to initiate and lead a network linking relevant institutions in the region that preserve the heritage of Yugoslavia, such as Kadinjača (Užice) Memorial Museum; Tjentište (Foča) Memorial

Complex; Tito’s Museum in Drvar, AVNOJ Museum Jajce, AVNOJ Museum Bihać, Franja Partisan Hospital, Slovenia (recognized as an EU heritage label), Kumrovec, Tito’s yacht *Galeb* situated in the port of Rijeka (owned by the city), among many others.

4. PROMOTE: Utilize existing festivals in the region to stimulate public discussion about the topic of cultural opposition under socialism (for instance at the festivals of Na pola puta [Halfway] and Bez prevoda [No Translation] in Užice, Krokodil [Crocodile] in Belgrade, the Motovun Film Festival, Sarajevo Film Festival, etc.).

## B – Recommendations for Governments and Public Institutions

<i>Challenge</i>	<i>Recommendation</i>
1. Lack of <b>institutions</b> in charge of documenting and researching dissident movements.	1. Create a <b>public centre for research and documentation of the culture of dissident</b> under socialism covering agents, practices, movements, temporalities, and instruments of repression.
2.1. Lack of <b>institutional memory practices</b> . Culture of memory linked to celebrations and ‘glorious’ moments of institutional past. 2.2. Cultural management is unaware that institutional memory is crucial part of organisational culture and that it is its duty to enable intergenerational transmission.	2.1. <b>Support research including individual memories (oral history)</b> , collective memories (jokes, anecdotes, and storytelling) enabling transfer toward cultural memory. 2.2. Raise public institutional capacity to archive, interpret, and digitalise. 2.3. Incorporate training into organisational culture development within management.
3.1. Lack of systemic archiving of <b>independent initiatives</b> . 3.2. Lack of accessibility even for those that are kept in private or organizational archives. 3.3. Low level of awareness of the utility of archiving and preserve memories for maintaining organisational identity and values.	3.1. Mapp existing resources; supporting its digitalisation and accessibility. 3.2. <b>Capacity building of civil society organisations</b> to archive, interpret, and digitalise. 3.3. Raising level of endorsing organisational cultures within civil society and private organisations.
4. Lack of <b>transdisciplinary approaches</b> to research cultural phenomena such as the culture of dissent, non-conformism, avant-gardes, etc.	4. Stimulate <b>creation of transdisciplinary teams</b> to address those issues. In addition to historians and art historians, research groups should include cultural policy

	experts, experts in political science, anthropologists, sociologists, etc.
5. Cultural policy and cultural management research does not take in account importance of <b>bottom-up cultural policies</b> (contributions of individuals and independent initiatives).	5. Exploring <b>phenomena of “temporary and permanent working communities of artists”</b> that marked the 1970s and 1980s in Yugoslavia <sup>123</sup>
6. 1. <b>Audio-visual sources:</b> Public television and radio have huge archives that are only sporadically available.	6.1. Within <b>public radio and television archive, systematically explore and map</b> all materials related to dissident movements. 6.2. Specific emphasis should be placed on their own programmes that were informally censored
7. The <b>mobility of dissident artists</b> and intellectuals and their mutual solidarity and empathy is not followed up by research. The Yugoslav dimension of many of those trajectories is neglected by present interpretations.	7.1. <b>Collaborative international research teams</b> should be engaged to assess and evaluate different phenomena of social practices, institutional responses, and individual gestures of solidarity. 7.2. Networks of student cultural centres, of film clubs, theatre organisations, etc., should be explored as organisations of Yugoslav relevance, not appropriated by one of the former Yugoslav republic due to their location <sup>124</sup> .

<sup>123</sup> From theatres such as *Pod razno* [Diverse Issues] in 1974 to *Nova osećajnost* [New Sensibility] in 1981 or PPP in 1989, or film companies such as Art Film, cultural animation collectives *Znaci kulture* [Signs of Culture], etc.

<sup>124</sup> MAFAP - *Međuklupski i autorski festival amaterskog filma* [Inter-Club and Authors' Festival of Amateur Film] - was part of common Yugoslav history and thus important as much for Serbian as for Croatian film history for instance.



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## List of Collections Described<sup>125</sup>

1. Archive of Student Cultural Center (SKC) (Serbia)
2. ARS - First Series Collection (Montenegro)
3. BITEF (Belgrade International Theatre Festival) collection (Serbia)
4. Bosanski pogledi (Bosnian Views Journal Collection) (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
5. CADDY (Committee to Aid Democratic Dissidents in Yugoslavia) Bulletin Collection (Serbia)
6. Danilo Kiš Collection (Serbia)
7. Days of Pain and Pride, Goranka Matić Collection (Serbia)
8. Family of Clear Streams - Art Commune (Božidar Mandić i Porodica bistrih potoka) (Serbia)
9. Former Tito Archive (Serbia)
10. Goli Otok Collection (Serbia)

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<sup>125</sup> As of February 2019. This also concerns the List of Institutions and Owners, and People Researched.

11. Group of Six Artists (Serbia)
12. Illegal Groups in Kosovo (1945 - 1990) collection (Kosovo)
13. Književne novine (Literary News) (Serbia)
14. Kosovo 1968 Demonstrations (Kosovo)
15. Kosovo 1981 Demonstrations (Kosovo)
16. Lazar Stojanović Collection (Serbia)
17. Ljubomir Tadić Collection (Serbia)
18. Museum Macura (Serbia)
19. Mića Popović - The Scenes Painting (Serbia)
20. Mysticism – Bektashi Collection (Republic of Macedonia)
21. Nebojša Popov Collection (Serbia)
22. Novi Sad Neo-Avant-garde Collection (Serbia)
23. Polja (Fields), magazine for culture and art collection (Serbia)
24. Srđan Hofman's Music Collection (Serbia)
25. Student – Journal (Serbia)
26. Tomislav Peternek Collection (Serbia)
27. Új Symposion Journal Collection (Serbia)
28. Vidici (Views) – Journal (Serbia)
29. Women's Activism in Kosovo (Kosovo)
30. Yugoslav Cominformists in Prague (Czech Republic)
31. Žarana Papić Collection (Serbia)
32. Zoran Đinđić Library at the Zoran Đinđić Foundation (Serbia)
33. Zoran Đinđić Personal Collection at the Archives of Serbia (Serbia)

## List of Operating Institutions and Owners

Archives of Kosovo  
 Archive of Student Cultural Center Belgrade  
 Archives of Serbia  
 atelje 212  
 Belgrade University Library  
 Bosniak Institute – Adil Zulfikarpašić Foundation  
 Center for Women's Studies Belgrade  
 Cultural Center Novi Sad  
 Historical Archives of Belgrade  
 Kosovo Oral History Initiative  
 Literary Municipality of Cetinje  
 Matica Srpska Library Novi Sad  
 Museum of Contemporary Art Belgrade  
 Museum of Contemporary Art Vojvodina  
 National Library of Montenegro  
 National Library of Serbia  
 new media center\_kuda.org  
 Newspaper Rilindja  
 Serbian Academy of Sciences and Arts (SANU)

Student Cultural Center Belgrade  
Tribina mladih (Youth Tribune) Novi Sad  
Zoran Đinđić Foundation

## List of People Researched

Abramović, Marina  
Albahari, David  
Balić, Smail  
Bogdanović, Slavko  
Ćirilov, Jovan  
Ćopić, Branko  
Ćosić, Dobrica  
Debeljak, Aleš  
Dobruna, Vjosa  
Draganović, Krunoslav  
Dragila, Dušanka  
Dragila, Petar  
Drča, Čedomir  
Đuzel, Bogomil  
Fenyvesi, Ottó  
Gashi, Shukrije  
Hodžić, Alija  
Hofman, Srđan  
Jovanović, Suzana  
Kiš, Danilo  
Lompar, Mladen  
Makavejev, Dušan  
Mandić, Božidar  
Marković, Mihailo,  
Mašić, Slobodan  
Matić, Goranka  
Mihailović, Dragoslav  
Milivojević, Era  
Miočinović, Mirjana  
Mladenović, Tanasije  
Papić, Žarana  
Paripović, Neša  
Pavićević, Borka  
Pekić, Borislav  
Perović, Slavko  
Pilav, Muhamed  
Popov, Nebojša  
Popović, Mića  
Popović, Milorad  
Popović, Zoran  
Poznanović, Bogdanka  
Prpa, Branka



Ristić, Ljubiša  
Šalamun, Tamaž  
Sinanovič, Ivan  
Stojanović, Lazar  
Sulejmani, Arben  
Tirnanić, Bogdan  
Tišma, Slobodan  
Todosijević, Raša  
Tolnai, Ottó  
Tomislav Peternek  
Trailović, Mira  
Urkom, Gergelj  
Vagapova, Natalija Mihajlovna  
Várady, Tibor  
Veselinović Hofman, Mirjana  
Vukshinaj, Drita  
Žilnik, Želimir  
Zulfikarpašić, Adil

# COURAGE

Cultural Opposition: Understanding the Cultural Heritage of Dissent in the Former Socialist Countries

## *Country Reports*



# SLOVAKIA

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## Table of Content

1. Introduction .....	4
2. Background and Framework.....	6
3. Collections in the COURAGE Registry .....	8
3.1 Basic Aggregate Information.....	8
3.2 Background of Collections .....	9
4. Best Practice and Recommendations .....	12
Summary.....	12
Bibliography.....	<b>Hiba! A könyvjelző nem létezik.</b>
Appendix.....	15
List of Collections Described .....	15
List of Operating Institutions and Owners .....	16
List of People Researched .....	16

## 1. Introduction

In 2018 Slovakia and the Czech Republic commemorate 100 years since the foundation of the Czechoslovak Republic. In addition to the projects of various smaller institutions (non-profit organizations, museums) and individuals, a large Czechoslovak exhibition<sup>1</sup> was prepared by the National Museums of both countries. A successful interactive exhibition focused mainly on pupils and students also included the period of socialism.

The remembrance of the communist period in Slovakia is connected mainly with the anniversary of the entry of the Warsaw Pact troops (August 21, 1968), the anniversary of the Velvet Revolution (November 17, 1989), and the anniversary of the Candle Demonstration (March 25, 1988). On these anniversaries, discussions, film screenings, photo exhibitions, and interviews with dissidents take place. Prevailing forms of reflection on the past relate to a nostalgic recall of a sense of security and cheaper food. In the grocery stores, retro-weekends are organized, where food with packaging from before 1989 is on offer, and people believe that it tasted better then. Gradually, a narrative emerges that life was better during communism.

On a more positive note, we are still looking for **new forms of remembering and the recollection of our past**. One example of this can be seen in the successful interactive project of three women (filmmaker Barbora Berezňáková, graphic designer Pavlína Morháčová and PR manager Eva Vozárová) based on oral history. The project's title is Ask your family.<sup>2</sup> The core of the project is the questions posed to respondents (and their family members, neighbors, friends) about what they were doing on August 21, 1968, and how the dramatic events affected their lives and those of their families. Responses to the questions can be made in the form of photos, video, written text, or audio, and these are then posted on the website. This project has shown that changing the way of communicating commemorative events is essential.

Thus, the representation of the previous regime is contradictory. In post-1989 Slovakia the period of the Second World War and the history of the Slovak Republic (1939-1945) were the most visible themes rather than the communist period. Even though socialism is considered by law to be a criminal regime in Slovakia, the institutions that would investigate the persecutors and persecuted in our country emerged significantly later compared to other states.<sup>3</sup> This may be partly due to the fact that Slovakia was provincial in comparison with the capital, Prague, where repression and control was more extreme. One institution that deals with the communist past in Slovakia is the **Nation's Memory Institute**<sup>4</sup> (Ústav pamäti národa - NMI), the public-law institution founded by the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic. 553/2002 Coll. on Disclosure of Documents Regarding the Activity of State Security Authorities from 1939 to 1989 and on the Founding of the Nation's Memory Institute and on

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<sup>1</sup> More on the exhibition can be found at its website: accessed November 6, 2018, <https://cesko-slovensko.eu/en/home-3/>

<sup>2</sup> For more on the project see its website: accessed November 6, 2018 <https://spytajsavasich.sk/>

<sup>3</sup> See Kovanic, "Institutes of Memory" and Sniegon, "Implementing Post-Communist National Memory," 97-124.

<sup>4</sup> See their website: accessed November 6, 2018, <https://www.upn.gov.sk/en/mission/>

Amending Certain Acts. There were attempts to establish this institution since the fall of the communist regime in November 1989, but the political and social will for it was found only in 2002.

The NMI is a good example for the topic of **coping with the past in Slovakia**. After the split of Czechoslovakia in 1993, Slovakia coped with the past mostly "in silence" when compared with Czech society. The establishment of the NMI was accompanied by marked political disinterest, but it deserves to be recognised as the first significant act that interrupted the silence about the past. Its founding is due mainly to Ján Langoš,<sup>5</sup> the first President of the Board of Directors.

Coping with the communist past in Slovakia moves slowly over long periods of time. Since the 1970s the artist Peter Kalmus has been an original actor in the underground scene in Košice. He also organized the first democratic demonstration in Košice in 1989. In February 2016, together with Ľuboš Lorenz, he doused the monument of the communist official Vasil Biľak with red paint and wrote "swine" on it. The monument was erected by the Slovak Communist Party in Biľak's native village in Eastern Slovakia only a few days before. Biľak was one of the the politicians who invited the Soviets to invade Czechoslovakia in 1968. This event is significant because it shows that opinion about the communist past is still divided in Slovakia. Whereas Kalmus was obviously critical of the monument to Biľak, the mayor of the village allowed the monument to be installed, the prosecutors and judges of Kalmus showed little sympathy for the artist, and social media overwhelmingly condemned Kalmus. Thus, the political elite in the village, the courts, and social media all took positions against Kalmus and, by implication, in support of the monument to a communist figure. Kalmus was in the headlines again in August 2016: he was accused of having chiselled off the hammer and sickle symbols from the Košice memorial monument to Soviet soldiers who died during the liberation of Košice in 1945 (the symbols had been chiselled off already so many times previously that now there are just plastic replicas in place of the bronze originals). Kalmus argues that he did so in 1989 for the last time, although he agrees with people who continue to remove communist symbols from the monument of "innocent young men who lost their lives in the war and should not be identified with the cruel communist dictatorship".<sup>6</sup> He was sentenced conditionally to four months in prison.<sup>7</sup>

## 2. Background and framework

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<sup>5</sup> Ján Langoš (1946-2006) was dissident and samizdat publisher in the 1980s and became involved in politics after 1989.

<sup>6</sup> See the article in the Slovak daily paper *Sme*: <https://kultura.sme.sk/c/20613967/vytvarnik-peter-kalmus-moze-skoncit-za-mrezami.html> (accessed 23.11.2018).

<sup>7</sup> See the article in *The Slovak Spectator*: accessed November 6, 2018, <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/20658107/artist-gets-conditional-sentence-for-damaging-communist-memorial.html>

**Access to archive documents** is regulated by the Act of the National Council of the Slovak Republic no. 395/2002 Coll. on archives and registers and the Decree of the Ministry of the Interior no. 628/2002 Coll., which implements certain provisions of the Act. The Slovak National Archive allows access to archive documents by making write-offs, extracts, confirmations and copies of archival documents. According to the Archive, access to archive documents shall be subject to a written request. The applicant shall indicate in his application his or her personal data, data on the required archival document which are known to him/her and the purpose of the use. Access to archival materials pertaining to state socialism is officially open, however, the archive has the right to restrict access to archival documents if this would jeopardize the security of the state, threaten the rights and the legitimate protected interests of the living person, if the archival documents would be damaged if the applicant violated the rules of inquiry and if the restriction of access is determined by the conditions under which they were imposed by the archive.<sup>8</sup>

The lack of the material processing, the lack of digitization, communication via Internet or social networks, etc., are real barriers to exploring materials from the period before 1989 in Slovak archives. This seems to be specific to Slovakia: compared to Czechia, Hungary, and Poland, those who believe it important to study and learn from history have less power to influence the functioning of archives; as a result, there is less money and support for institutions dealing with socialist history, and there is limited presence of such topics in the media. Another obstacle is the short opening hours of archives and the poor physical condition of the buildings and technical equipment. Archives, which fall under the Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic, are listed on the Ministry's website, but the website is unclear and incomplete. The websites are mostly in Slovak and often not updated. Due to the lack of digitization, any users must wait for the documents for a long time. Moreover, due to the missing catalogs<sup>9</sup> on the Internet, the researchers must order the documents directly in the archive, wait several days until they are prepared, and then return to study them. For a variety of operations, a fee, mostly in cash, is payable. Sometimes it is necessary to meet employees who are willing to help if one wants to successfully study the documents. Fortunately, there are some employees willing to help.

Archives in Slovakia do not process **archive material focused thematically on cultural opposition**. There are collections of institutions, personalities, and organizations, for example, where opposition and period material not relevant to opposition are often mixed. The above-mentioned Nation's Memory Institute (NMI) is one of the main public, state-run institutions that is devoted to the periods of political oppression between 1939 and 1989, and it stores also security documents of the communist state. Research on the socialist period is also conducted by the Institute of History of the Slovak Academy of Sciences, as well as history departments in universities; these other institutions outmatch the production of the NMI in both quality and quantity. With respect to the NMI, the principal task of the Institute in the

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<sup>8</sup> See the Minister's website: accessed November 6, 2018, <https://www.minv.sk/?pristup-k-dokumentom-8>

<sup>9</sup> For Slovak collections there are printed catalogues (5) and online catalogues (3) available. In one case there is no catalogue.

present time, among its multitude of duties prescribed by § 8 of Act No. 553/2002 Coll., is to make available to individual applicants any documents about the persecutions carried out by Nazi or communist security agencies. To meet this challenge, the structure of the Institute has been adjusted appropriately.

The First Section is the Archive of the NMI; other sections handle Disclosure, Documentation, Registers, Scientific Research, Audiovisual Work, and Information Technologies. Delimitation of archival documents and holdings started in 2003. The NMI Archive successively took over archival material from State bodies and natural persons corresponding to 1.800 metres. The most coherent and extensive file that was acquired contained agency, operation, and investigation files of the communist State Security amounting to 62.000 items. Aside from paper documents, the archive stores 70.961 microfiches, equivalent to approximately 2 million pages of documents as well as 466 promotional and educational films. In all, the archive manages documents of nearly 12.5 million pages. The archive currently administers 638 archival holdings and collections. The archive's research premises are used by historians, archivists, journalists and the general public from Slovakia and from abroad.

The main task of the Section of Disclosure is, upon receiving the individual requests, to disclose the state security agencies' records, created in 1939-1989, to the applicants. The NMI fulfils the task of publishing information on persecutors and their activities and prompting criminal prosecution of crimes and criminal offences. Namely, it reconstructs personal and organisational structures of the State Security network. This task correlates with further acquisition of archival documents, especially personal files of State Security personnel.

The Institute creates and processes registers from data contained in the acquired materials produced by security authorities. Concurrently, it fills in data from other information sources, e.g. from materials of other repressive authorities, which are located in State archives. It also focuses on research on the political background that was necessary for activities of repressive authorities. It thus allows for a more complex review of the activities of non-democratic regimes. In addition to this, the NMI produces and edits video recordings which depict stories of people who lost their lives during war or during the communist regime.

The NMI has been conducting systematic historical research of the period of oppression within its dedicated section since 2007. Scientific researchers focus on the activities of State authorities, the repressive framework of Security authorities, and the persecution of citizens by non-democratic regimes. They attend to mapping the activities of State Security authorities with special attention. They try to enrich our knowledge of the State Security and its repressive apparatus in the framework of a non-democratic state. Researchers of the Institute represent the NMI at domestic and international scientific conferences and present their results in monographs, collective publications, scientific and academic studies published in many domestic and international academic periodicals. The NMI also organises scientific conferences, seminars, training and exhibitions. Scientific workers extend the NMI's publication portfolio by writing publications and by compiling document editions and conference anthologies. They also give expert counsel to external authors and they present



their expert standpoint representing the Institute in scientific discussions with the media. In the field of scientific research NMI cooperates with partner scientific institutions, as well as with universities and higher education institutions, where it presents topics relevant to the Institute by giving lectures or teaching specialised courses.<sup>10</sup> There is no other such specialised public institution in Slovakia. However, as mentioned, research in this area is also taking place at the Slovak Academy of Sciences, especially at the Institute of History, in the Department of Contemporary History.<sup>11</sup>

### 3. Collections in the COURAGE Registry

#### 3.1 Basic aggregate information

The aim of the Slovak team was to include the widest possible representation of topics important for Slovakia in the Registry. Both private and public collections are represented, from the smallest private collections to extensive collections in state institutions. They cover a diversity of themes: student movements, popular culture, samizdat, religious movements, minority movements, folk culture, democratic opposition and censorship. The following collections have been published so far:

[First Slovak Investment Group's collection](#)

[Bratislavské listy Editorial Office Archive](#)

[Czechoslovak Hungarian Workers' Cultural Association \(CSEMADOK\) Archive](#)

[József Gyönyör Legacy](#)

[László A. Arany Papers](#)

[Michal Šufliarsky Collection](#)

[Printer Krumpholtz](#)

[Public Against Violence](#)

[Rezső Szabó Personal Collection](#)

[Slovak Office for Press and Information](#)

[Slovak Samizdat Online Collection](#)

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<sup>10</sup> Information can be found at their website: accessed November 6, 2018, <https://www.upn.gov.sk/en/organizational-structure/>

<sup>11</sup> See their website: accessed November 6, 2018, <http://www.history.sav.sk/indexenglish.php?id=department-of-contemporary-history>

Public<sup>12</sup> and private collections on the territory of Slovakia are predominantly located in Bratislava and its surroundings, copying the archives of major institutions. These collections showcase a number of important categories and types of collections of cultural opposition: some of these collections are owned and organized by public institutions, others were created by private initiatives and are owned privately.

But there was, of course, cultural opposition also outside of the capital city – and collection initiatives as well. Accordingly, while 25 collections are located in Bratislava, 5 were included from other parts of the country. It should be emphasized that some topics related to cultural opposition in Slovakia can be also found in the territory of today's Czech Republic and vice versa.

### 3.2 Background of collections

**The content of the collections in Slovakia** consists mainly of publications or samizdats and grey literature, manuscripts (legal or financial), graphics, music (or voice) recordings and photos. A variety of samizdat was published in Slovakia. For example, since 1973, a philosophical-theological samizdat called *Orientácia* [Orientation] was published. Later František Mikloško, Ján Čarnogurský and Vladimír Jukl initiated *Náboženstvo a súčasnosť* [Religion and Present]. Other known samizdats were, for example, *Bratislavské listy* [Bratislava Papers], *Katolícky mesačník* [Catholic monthly], *ZrNO* etc.<sup>13</sup> Liberal journals were *Kontakt* [Contact] (1980-1985), *Altamíra* (1985-1987) and in 1988-1989, *Fragment K*.<sup>14</sup> The most famous samizdat coming from Slovakia was the *Bratislava/nahlas* [Bratislava/aloud] brochure, published in 1987 by Slovak dissident Ján Budaj, which drew attention to the catastrophic situation of the environment. The publication inspired a considerable response. Approximately 30,000 brochures were circulating in the form of copies, and the State Security police were unable to effectively prevent their spread.<sup>15</sup>

The most prominent collections of cultural opposition connected with samizdats are in the NMI, including “The Collection of Samizdat and Exile Literature”, “The Independent Culture Collection”, “Printer Krumpholtz” and “*Bratislavské Listy* Editorial Office Archive”<sup>16</sup>, a Christian-political samizdat that was created between 1988 and 1989.

The strong **religious activism in Slovakia**, which went hand-in-hand with the production of samizdat, can be seen in the online collection, samizdat.sk.<sup>17</sup> The collection began its activity in 2016 and its contents are the reproductions of dozens of Slovak Catholic samizdats from

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<sup>12</sup> Public means that collections are in the state-run institution such as an archive, gallery or museum.

<sup>13</sup> Šimulčík, *Svetlo z podzemia*, 15-26.

<sup>14</sup> Čarnogurský, “Zárodky otvorenej spoločnosti,” 113-117.

<sup>15</sup> See *Bratislava/nahlas*.

<sup>16</sup> See the collection [Bratislavské listy Editorial Office Archive](#).

<sup>17</sup> See the collection [Slovak Samizdat Online Collection](#).

1982-1989, which are freely accessible. Religious activities are also related to the creation of songs that have been created gradually and their authors are mostly anonymous. This so-called gospel music had its origins in Slovakia in the 1970s<sup>18</sup>. It began with the preparation of tapes with prayers and music, later with spiritual songs. The tradition of these songs continues to this day. Examples can be seen in a collection of the “University Library of the Catholic University in Ružomberok”<sup>19</sup> or the “Collection of gospel music”<sup>20</sup> at the Music Museum of the Slovak National Museum. In addition to institutional collections, we also record private collections of people active in this gospel-music sphere, such as in the “Anton Fabian Collection”.<sup>21</sup>

In Slovakia, there is still a significant amount of **private collections**. Private collections have their own rules. While some find it uncomfortable to make their collections available to the public or for research purposes and exhibitions, others are happy to share their memories and opinions. Owners of the private collections usually do not have a systematic approach or written records about their collections because they often do not see the collections as an archivist would. They see it as a part of their memories kept in objects, recordings, papers, or photos. On the other hand, there are individuals who see value in their collection, whether financial or historical. Owners constantly finance their own collections, but often they cannot estimate the total budget for the collection.<sup>22</sup>

After the fall of the communist regime, many collectors of materials documenting Slovak cultural opposition before 1989 got rid of their collections for various reasons, including lack of awareness of the importance of their materials, lack of resources, or lack of space. Others handed over their collections to **public institutions or non-governmental organizations**. An example of such a well functioning non-profit public non-governmental organization in Slovakia is the Forum Minority Research Institute<sup>23</sup>, founded in 1996. Its mission is to research national minorities living in Slovakia, and to document their history, culture, and related monuments. In its archive we can study collections of personalities, such as “Rezső Szabó Personal Collection”<sup>24</sup>, “László A. Arany Papers”<sup>25</sup>, “József Gyönyör Legacy”<sup>26</sup> and “Sándor Varga”. There is also the “Czechoslovak Hungarian Workers’ Cultural Association (CSEMADOK) Archive”<sup>27</sup>, which contains various documents from the provenance of the largest cultural organization of Hungarians in Slovakia.

The collections that provide a picture of the period of communism from the point of view of the regime and have great importance for researchers are the “Fund of the Central Committee

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<sup>18</sup> Kajanová, *Gospel music*.

<sup>19</sup> Collection of the University Library of the Catholic University in Ružomberok, <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n12736> (forthcoming)

<sup>20</sup> Collection of Gospel Music, <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n6302> (forthcoming)

<sup>21</sup> Anton Fabian Collection, <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n20123> (forthcoming)

<sup>22</sup> See for example the [Michal Šufliarsky Collection](#).

<sup>23</sup> Information is available at: accessed November 6, 2018, <http://foruminst.sk>

<sup>24</sup> See the [Rezső Szabó Personal Collection](#).

<sup>25</sup> Collection of the [László A. Arany Papers](#).

<sup>26</sup> Collection of the [József Gyönyör Legacy](#).

<sup>27</sup> Collection of the [Czechoslovak Hungarian Workers’ Cultural Association Archive](#).

of the Communist Party of Slovakia” and the “Fund of the Slovak Press and Information Office, which are examples of the mixed collections that contain some artifacts of opposition”<sup>28</sup>. On the other hand, the Slovak National Archive offers samizdat collections of significant importance, such as “Collection of Vladimír Jukl samizdats”. The “Public Against Violence Collection” contains correspondence that can be used to find the personal testimonies and life stories of people who declared their belonging to opposition or cultural opposition before 1989.<sup>29</sup> Documents related to the cultural opposition can be found also in the archives of other state institutions, such as the archive of the Slovak Radio, Slovak Television, the National Film Institute, the Monuments Board of the Slovak Republic, the Theater Institute, the Slovak National Museum, the Bratislava City Museum, the Museum of the Slovak National Uprising, or in the libraries.

Public collections are funded mainly by the state. It is difficult to quantify the exact **budget** for a specific collection, because such information is not kept by Slovak institutions. Archives keep a budget for the entire workplace. For example, for the Slovak National Archive, it was difficult to ascertain the total budget of the institution, as this information was not provided to us even after our request. During the dissemination of collections through exhibitions or publications, archives receive money from sponsorship, grants, or advertising too.

The main **user groups** in Slovakia (to the extent that we are aware) are young professionals, academics and others. It is difficult to know the exact numbers of users, since the institutions record the total number of researchers in a research room, and not for the individual collections.

When it comes to **making historical documents available online**, the Slovak National Gallery has been a pioneer. In 2010 it launched the website *Web umenia* (“Web of Art”),<sup>30</sup> an on-line catalogue of artworks from the collections of Slovak galleries registered in the *Centrálny katalóg diel* (Central Register of Artworks),<sup>31</sup> with precise information about the artworks including the copyright. Also the project samizdat.sk (cf. p. 9) is one of the recent painstaking and successful attempts to make historical documents available online.

Another important project, which is fundamental for the **networking** of most important cultural institutions, stakeholders of collections of art, and of other historical cultural documents from the territory of today’s Slovakia is “Slovakiana – Cultural Heritage of Slovakia”.<sup>32</sup> Launched in November 2015 by *Národné osvetové centrum* (“The National Cultural Centre”), Department of Informatization, it makes the results of digitization of Slovak cultural heritage available to both experts and the general public. The portal forms a part of a network of European culture portals led by the Europeana portal. The content of the portal

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<sup>28</sup> Accessed November 6, 2018. <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n28131>

<sup>29</sup> Accessed November 6, 2018. <http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n5779>; See also Abaffyová, “Dopisovanie s revolúciou.”

<sup>30</sup> Accessed November 6, 2018, <https://www.webumenia.sk/en/informacie>

<sup>31</sup> Accessed November 6, 2018. <https://www.sng.sk/en/collections/central-catalogue>

<sup>32</sup> Accessed November 6, 2018. <https://www.slovakiana.sk/>

will be continuously updated in line with the progress of the digitisation of documents of cultural heritage.

## 4. Best practice and recommendations

While there has been real progress achieved in online documentation in selected areas in the most recent decade, the **public archives in Slovakia**, which remain the main source of historical documents and knowledge, are stagnating and are at a clearly insufficient level. They are extremely underfinanced and their superordinate authority, the Ministry of Interior, shows very little interest in their development. The scientific activities of archivists, including research and necessary business trips to other archives, have been hardly supported by the Ministry during the past decade. The public presence of public archives and their communication to the public should be intensified and the archive catalogues should be made accessible online as soon as possible.

The Nation's Memory Institute (NMI), and other public institutions dealing with the communist past, should be given **more resources and support**. This has not been the case to date, and also the location of the NMI does not reflect its importance. This might be related to the fact that there are still former communists and even communist secret police agents among politicians in Slovakia, as well as supporters of the wartime Slovak Republic. Slovak laws condemn totalitarian regimes and ban totalitarian ideologies, but there is obviously still no consensus of opinion about the communist past and sympathy for it is still widespread among the public and political elite.

If the economical and personal situation of public archives and research institutes would improve, they could also make more **effort to take over valuable private collections**, which are threatened by the changing situation of their owners, lack of interest among their heirs, and other challenges.

## Summary

A short list of recommendations of primary importance:

1. The public sphere – the government, public institutions, public mass media – should strongly support initiatives and projects contributing to the history of Slovakia, especially concerning the periods of communist rule. Independent teams of researchers have proven to be very effective in oral history, in collecting digitized documents and making them available online, but also in reinterpreting the historical material using methods of modern historiography, and communicating current research findings to the broad public.

2. The public archives, the NMI, and research institutes should gain much more support from the government, partly related to individual projects, but also relating to necessary long-term competence development of the staff, and to individual research.
3. The public archives and the Nation's Memory Institute should be enabled and motivated to take over valuable private collections including collections of cultural opposition, and to make them available to researchers.
4. Public discussion on the communist past of the country, the opposition against non-democratic regimes, but also collaborationism, should be enhanced. Sometimes it would seem enough to find inspiration in efforts made by institutions and media (public television) in the Czech Republic, which have been much more positive and successful.
5. Collections and their stakeholders in general should give more effort to reach out to the research community, including students at universities.

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Accessed November 6, 2018, <https://spectator.sme.sk/c/20658107/artist-gets-conditional-sentence-for-damaging-communist-memorial.html>

## Appendix

### *List of Collections Described*

1. Anton Fabian Collection (forthcoming)
2. Benčuriková, Martina. *Bratislavské listy Editorial Office Archive*. Accessed November 6, 2018. <http://sk.cultural-opposition.eu/registry/?search=Nation%2527s%20memory&lang=sk&uri=http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n1964&type=collections>
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9. Collection of Gospel Music (forthcoming).
10. Collection of the University Library of the Catholic University in Ružomberok (forthcoming).
11. Stýblová, Magdaléna. *Michal Šufliarsky Collection*. Accessed November 6, 2018. <http://cultural-opposition.eu/registry/?lang=en&uri=http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n6836&type=collections>
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### *List of Operating Institutions and Owners*

- Catholic University in Ružomberok
- Dominican Book Institute
- First Slovak Investment Group
- Forum Minority Research Institute
- Gyönyör, Józse
- J&T Group
- Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic
- Nation's Memory Institute, Slovakia
- Post Bellum
- Sikora, Rudolf
- Slovak National Gallery
- Slovak National Museum
- Šimečková, Eva
- Šimečka, Martin Milan
- Šimulčík, Ján
- Šufliarsky, Michal
- The Slovak National Archive
- TZ SEVERKA

### *List of Persons Researched*

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- Čarnogurský, Ján
- Duray, Miklós
- Endel, Marek
- Gyönyör, József
- Koller, Július
- Mikloško, František
- Sikora, Rudolf
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- Šimečka, Milan
- Šimulčík, Ján
- Šufliarsky, Michal
- Varga, Sándor
- Végh, László

## **COURAGE**

Cultural Opposition: Understanding the Cultural Heritage of Dissent in the Former Socialist Countries

### *Country Reports*



# **UKRAINE**

*Authors*

Orysia Maria Kulick

Regensburg 2018



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## Table of Contents

Summary – 4

Introduction – 4

Background and Legislative Framework – 5

Major Collections in Ukraine – 7

Ukrainian Collections in the COURAGE Registry – 10

Aggregate Information from Registry and Background – 12

Best Practice and Recommendations – 15

Further Reading – 17

## Summary

The Ukrainian collections in COURAGE challenge traditional chronologies of cultural opposition to Soviet rule, as they demonstrate the importance of culture in questioning dominant narratives promoted by the Bolsheviks since 1917. They also underscore the role of diaspora communities in preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of cultural opposition. Collections in Ukraine generally struggle with inadequate levels of funding and staffing, despite the fact that narratives of opposition feature public political discourse prominently. The radical shifts in Ukrainian memory politics with regard to the communist past significantly conditions the operational trajectory of state institutions in the country.

## Introduction

In Ukraine, the theme of cultural opposition to communism has considerable public relevance, particularly in recent years. New legislation passed in the wake of the Euromaidan protests of 2014 thrust memory politics more forcefully into the public sphere and to the forefront of politics. With the country at war and bracing for its next presidential election in 2019, the past has become politicized and historical amnesia about complex and complicated events more prevalent.

Ukraine's relationship to communism was complex, as Ukrainians were both involved in the building of the communist utopia, and were among the Soviet regime's fiercest opponents at the same time. Like many former Soviet and socialist countries, the nation-building process involved a concerted distancing from the communist past, including the adoption of new symbols and the elevation of figures who were involved in oppositionist movements. Dissidents entered into politics in the late 1980s, archives opened after 1991, but evaluation of the crimes of communism did not proceed quickly. Lustration, understood as the vetting of public officials for links to communist-era security services, did not take place in Ukraine, not only preventing public discussion of the crimes of communism, but also allowing the old guard to transition fairly seamlessly into leadership positions after independence.

The massive social unrest that led to the ouster of President Viktor Yanukovich and his government in February 2014 also set in motion numerous legislative changes. Among the new laws was a lustration bill aimed at removing officials in the Yanukovich government who had engaged in corrupt practices. This was a narrow interpretation of a process that in some Central and East European countries resulted in a broad-based social and political reckoning following the collapse of communism in 1989, and ultimately was not successful. The Ukrainian government also passed in April 2015 a far more controversial packet of "decommunization bills" that were formally enacted by President Poroshenko the following month. Most critics have argued that these laws intervened too aggressively in memory politics by prioritizing nationalist historical narratives and promoting as heroes controversial figures, while also prohibiting open discussion of these matters. These laws also introduced

freer access to archival materials, particularly to documents held in the archives of the Soviet state security services and other repressive organs.

For researchers, this improved archival access has been beneficial, but scholars, human rights activists and others wonder about the longer term effects. For instance, the materials from the state security archives are now under the jurisdiction of the Ukrainian Institute of National Remembrance, a research institute that was initially created during Viktor Yushchenko's presidency as a central governmental institution with special status, which was then made into a research institute under Yanukovich within the budget of the Cabinet of Ministers. Although no documents have been transferred, the priorities of the institute's leadership, particularly its director have been a source of concern.

The full impact of these legislative changes remains unknown, particularly in light of Ukraine's highly polarized political context. Nonetheless, they have allowed for greater access to materials that focus on cultural opposition to communism and were previously not open to the public.

## **Background and Legislative Framework**

Alongside the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Ukrainian parliament (Verkhovna Rada) abolished the Soviet-era Communist Party of Ukraine (CPSU) as well as the KGB, symbolically relegating these institutions to the dustbin of history without actually demanding accountability or assigning responsibility for what had happened under communism. Though the KGB was replaced with the State Security Services of Ukraine (SBU) in 1991, roughly two-thirds of the officers remained. Ukraine saw the same kind of continuity across many institutions, with many holdovers from the old system taking on leadership positions in the new Ukraine.

Scholars who have studied the evolution of Ukraine's legal framework and its engagement with lustration, like Cynthia Horne, suggest that this continuity is the main reason why the country did not seriously undertake retributive or restorative justice measures. Opening up the KGB archives would have exposed the extent to which the leadership (and also the average citizen) was complicit in systems of surveillance and repression. Moreover, many files had either been transferred to Moscow in 1991 or destroyed by the SBU, purportedly out of fear of self-incrimination. Alexei Trochev notes that 2010 estimates suggested that just 2% of classified documents from the post-1953 period remained in the hands of Ukrainian authorities. Although Ukraine had a file sharing agreement with Russia, it was

apparently never exercised and given the rapid deterioration of the relationship between the two countries that is unlikely to change soon.<sup>1</sup>

Lustration bills were proposed regularly during the Yushchenko and Yanukovich presidencies to no avail, likely due to low public support and even lower political will. The events of 2014 reopened the issue of lustration and introduced additional “decommunization bills” into Ukraine’s legal framework. They include the following four laws, submitted to the Verkhovna Rada only a few days before they were adopted in their first and final reading (without public or parliamentary debate) in April 2015.

- Law No. 2558: “On the condemnation of the communist and national socialist (Nazi) regimes, and prohibition of propaganda of their symbols.”
- Law No. 2538-1: “On the legal status and honoring of fighters for Ukraine’s independence in the 20th century.”
- Law No. 2539: “On remembering the victory over Nazism in the Second World War.”
- Law No. 2540: “On access to the archives of repressive bodies of the communist totalitarian regime from 1917-1991.”

This legislation was controversial, and, as Oxana Shevel indicates, was criticized instantly by the Russian government, Ukrainian and international human rights groups, political factions in Ukraine, including the Communist Party (established anew in 1993 as a successor to the CPSU), the Party of Regions (based largely in south-eastern Ukraine) and Opposition Bloc (formed in 2014 as the successor to the Party of Regions, which disintegrated along with the Yanukovich presidency), as well as Ukrainian and Western scholars. It was thought that these laws would further foment conflicts in Ukraine, infringe on free speech and free academic inquiry, and prioritize certain historical narratives over others in a country already deeply divided about the communist past.<sup>2</sup>

Developments regarding memory politics and archival access should be watched closely by interested parties in and outside Ukraine, as the situation remains in flux. The full impact of this legislation remains to be seen and, with Ukraine bracing for another round of elections in 2019, further changes are likely on the horizon.

However, formalizing greater access to communist-era archival materials with the 2014 legislation has made it easier to find documents related to dissent and cultural opposition to communism in the party and state archives from the Soviet period, as well as those formerly

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<sup>1</sup> Horne, Cynthia M. *Building Trust and Democracy: Transitional Justice in Post-Communist Countries*, Oxford Studies in Democratization. Oxford University Press, 2017; Trochev, Alexei. “Ukraine,” in *Encyclopedia of Transitional Justice*, ed. Lavinia Stan & Nadya Nedelsky (Cambridge University Press, 2013), 490-497.

<sup>2</sup> Shevel, Oxana. “Decommunization in Post-Euromaidan Ukraine: Law and Practice,” PONARS Eurasia Policy Memo No. 411, January 2016. URL accessed September 8, 2018: <http://www.ponarseurasia.org/memo/decommunization-post-euromaidan-ukraine-law-and-practice>.



affiliated with the KGB and other Soviet repressive organs. Even with the documentation that was taken to Moscow in 1991 or destroyed on site, there are still ample rich collections to work with that are preserved in state institutions. Ukrainian archivists are working to make maximally accessible what documents they can under the current legislative framework.

## Major Collections in Ukraine

In the author's conversations with SBU archivists in the summer of 2014, it was revealed that the archives were found in a chaotic state after the ouster of the Yanukovych government. Files had been unbound and disorganized, suggesting yet another purge of the documentation, although this would have to be verified. The author of this report was able to work freely with fully digitized copies of files from *opis* 16, largely made up of KGB reports to the Central Committees in Kyiv and Moscow. Figuring prominently among those documents were surveillance reports relating to Ukrainian dissidents, as well as unrest in factories, cooperatives, among the youth. There were also regular reports on the comings and goings of foreigners and any other expressions of discontent among the populace, some of which were tied directly to the Prague Spring in Czechoslovakia in 1968. The SBU has prioritized making public *fondy* and *opisi* in the digital reading room that focuses on the research priorities of its new leadership (like the collection titled *The Fight Against Anti-Totalitarian Resistance, 1950-1991* and *opis* 16). However, the archivists are also responsive to requests for other kinds of materials.<sup>3</sup>

Greater access extends beyond the SBU files to collections in other state archives from the Soviet period, like the Central State Archive of Public Organizations of Ukraine (TsDAHOU) and the Central State Archive of the Higher Organs of Power and Administration of Ukraine (TsDAVOVU). These are not specialized institutions researching state socialism, but archives of core institutions, or organs of government, that organically produced collections based on their own bureaucratic systems. They also became much more open in the wake of the decommunization laws. In the summer of 2014, the author accessed many hitherto classified files, mostly classified Ukrainian politburo files and military-industrial production, but also *obkom* level protocols dealing with intraparty democracy, collective leadership, education and recruitment of cadres, problems with discipline and production in key sectors of the economy, and the implementation of new civilian defense protocols (also possibly in response to the Prague Spring). At the local level, archival practices and access at party and state archives have been slower to change.

Ukraine took ownership of its archival heritage in 1991, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. As documents of great "historical, scientific and social-legal value," materials from the archives of the Communist Party of Ukraine were subordinated to the Cabinet of

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<sup>3</sup> Based on Orysia Maria Kulick's experiences in the SBU archives in July-August 2014.

Minister of Ukraine in 1991 and “its local institutions together with its premises, technological equipment and employees.”<sup>4</sup> It was the responsibility of the Cabinet of Ministers to secure and keep safe the Community Party archives at all rungs of the hierarchy. As early as 1993, the Rada passed legislation allowing repressed persons to access “manuscripts, photographs, and other personal items,” which were confiscated from them and kept in their files.<sup>5</sup> In some cases those retrieved materials made their way into other collections in Ukraine over the years, both private and state supported, as in the case of the Prison on Lonskogo Street and the Sixtiers Museum.<sup>6</sup>

State-run archives remain largely centralized, subordinated to a National Archival Fond, whilst also replicating at the national, state, and local level the bureaucratic structures of the relevant government body. These institutions rely upon state funding and normally do not engage in fundraising, grant writing, or any other searches for external funds. The sources and documents such institutions hold, reflect the perspective of the Soviet state, each bureaucracy’s self-justifying logic and view on a variety of societal issues and each government office’s place within the larger hierarchy. Therefore, collections about cultural opposition and dissent in state-run archives have an authorial voice shaped strongly by Soviet bureaucrats.

Among the many collections that are supported from state budgets include those at TSDAHOU, which cover documents dealing with the activities of Communist Party leadership, its role in the political, economic and cultural life of the Republic. Topics relevant to cultural opposition include the politics of Ukrainization and the development of Ukrainian culture in the 1920s, and the consequences of the reversal of those policies in the 1930s, Stalinist repressions of Ukrainian intellectuals, the clergy, and cultural figures, ideological changes affecting social and political life in Ukraine during 1960s- 1980s and the concerted struggle by the party against various forms of dissent.

Similar topics are covered in the SBU archives, as already mentioned, but from the perspective of KGB operatives. There are also other vast state-supported archives, such as the Central State Archive-Museum of Literature and Arts (TsDAMLM), which has collections related to a number of important cultural figures involved in oppositionist activities, including O. Dovzhenko, M. Stelmah, I. Kalynets, I. Svitlychnyi, D. Shumuk, I. Dzyuba, V. Stus, L. Kostenko, N. Svitlychna, M. Horyn and others. Documents from the post-World War II era include criminal cases filed against writers and artists for engaging in anti-Soviet propaganda and agitation, critical reviews of their artistic and literary works by their peers, stenograms of interrogations of members of the creative intelligentsia suspected of anti-Soviet dealings, as well as interviews with witnesses. They also include official responses to publications like Ivan Dziuba's “Internationalism or Russification.”

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<sup>4</sup> *Archival Legislation of Ukraine, 1991-2011*, 5.

<sup>5</sup> *Archival Legislation of Ukraine, 1991-2011 (fourth extended edition)*, The State Archival Service of Ukraine, Kyiv 2012.

<sup>6</sup> COURAGE Registry, “Prison on Lonskogo Street.” Accessed April 5, 2018. <http://cultural-opposition.eu/registry/?uri=http://courage.btk.mta.hu/courage/individual/n6390>

For the purposes of COURAGE, these archives were far too vast for us to engage in greater depth, given our resources and focus on the provenance and histories of individual collections. These institutions are mentioned here, because they are part of a vast and valuable network of archives produced by the Soviet state and subsequently supported by Ukrainian governmental budgetary resources, which are difficult to quantify without in-depth quantitative research and much more extensive interviewing of hundreds if not thousands of archivists and directors at the national, regional and local level. The archivists we did manage to interview, declined to answer questions about financing, largely because that knowledge is outside their purview.

We did engage several collections about cultural opposition that are part of this larger tapestry, including the Vasyl Stus and Zina Genyk-Berezovska collections at the T.H. Shevchenko Institute of Literature of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in Kyiv and the emergent collection at the National Museum-Memorial to the Victims of Occupation “Prison on Lonskogo Street” in Lviv. The Institute of Literature has the status of a national heritage repository, and thus receives funds from the state to ensure its facilities are up to date.<sup>7</sup> The Prison on Lonskogo Street has the designation of a national museum-memorial and also benefits from financial support from the state.

The creation of the museum-memorial at the prison was possible because of the shift in political climate that followed President Viktor Yushchenko’s election in 2004, which precipitated a change in leadership at the SBU and its archives. Support from then SBU chief Valentyn Nalyvaichenko and the newly appointed head of the SBU archives Volodymyr Viatrovych was crucial for pushing the project forward and transforming the prison into one of Ukraine’s most visible sites of public memory. Viatrovych has been criticized quite vociferously by scholars both in Ukraine and outside the country for his myopic views of the past, particularly with regard to the role of Ukrainian nationalist insurgents. Nalyvaichenko was also condemned for statements made during the museum’s opening in 2009 for lumping together the Polish police, the Gestapo and the Soviet NKVD, all of whom used the prison to hold inmates. Nevertheless, interviews conducted with curators and other researchers in the context of the COURAGE project indicate that they are trying to counteract some of this on the ground, with more thoughtful and inclusive representation of former inmates, which were of many nationalities, in their exhibits and events.

As there were many underground networks and cultural, religious, political and artistic communities that existed outside state structures, there are also collections that exist independently of state institutions. Some remain in private hands, while others have been donated to newly established archives, like the Sixtiers Museum in Kyiv. After Ukrainian

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<sup>7</sup> Amar, Tarik Cyril "Memory of a Prison or a Prison of Memory?" English version of “Лонцького: пам’ять про тюрму чи ув’язнена пам’ять?” published on Zaxid.Net, 3 August 2009. Accessed September 10, 2018: [https://www.academia.edu/3610895/Tarik\\_Cyril\\_Amar\\_Memory\\_of\\_a\\_Prison\\_or\\_a\\_Prison\\_of\\_Memory](https://www.academia.edu/3610895/Tarik_Cyril_Amar_Memory_of_a_Prison_or_a_Prison_of_Memory) ; McBride, Jared. “How Ukraine’s New Memory Commissar Is Controlling the Nation’s Past,” *The Nation*, August 13, 2015. URL accessed September 8, 2018: <https://www.thenation.com/article/how-ukraines-new-memory-commissar-is-controlling-the-nations-past/>.

independence in 1991, former political prisoners created an NGO called the “Sixtiers Museum” with the express intent of gathering materials about the dissident movement that would eventually be displayed in a museum-archive. This museum took 18 years to open. Yushchenko issued a presidential decree in support of the Museum right after becoming president in 2004, but parliament and the local authorities stalled on implementation, even after he reissued the decree a few times. MPs from Rukh (People's Movement of Ukraine, founded in 1989 as a civil-political movement), like Ivan Drach and Mykhailo Horyn, who were also sixtiers, were advocates of the project in the Verkhovna Rada. The first tranche of money that was secured for the Sixtiers Museum from federal funds was reallocated to open a different museum in Kyiv. Quite paradoxically, the museum finally opened under President Viktor Yanukovich in 2012, but only as an affiliate of the Kyiv History Museum, which encompasses a network of eight museums throughout the city. The curator believes that the Sixtiers Museum should be given the status of a national museum, given the scope and reach of the sixtiers work, which would allow the institution to tap into alternative sources of budgetary funding.

Organizations like the Kharkiv Human Rights Group (the successor to the Kharkiv branch of “Memorial”) have their own independent archives, both on paper and online, and are supported largely through external grants from a variety of sources. These include the UNHCR, the French and American embassies, the International Renaissance Foundation (IRF), the European Union, the National Endowment for Democracy, and other similar organizations.<sup>8</sup> Apart from collecting interviews, biographies and other documentation for its virtual online museum to the dissident movement, KHPG has actively monitored human rights violations in Ukraine and has attempted to influence legislators to improve the political and social climate since independence.

The Centre for Urban History in Lviv is a research center with a digital urban media archive, which also finances its activities through external funding. The Centre sets its own agenda regarding the preservation of collections, some deal with cultural opposition and dissent as a matter of course, but they include these collections in the database because they enrich understanding of urban milieus under socialism.<sup>9</sup>

## Ukrainian Collections in the COURAGE registry

The main types of collections about Ukraine in the registry are large state-run institutions, non-governmental organizations supported by the state as well as those that finance their activities with other sources of funding. Ukrainian collections are also found in research centres drawing on a wide range of financial and in-kind supporters and in private collections

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<sup>8</sup> “Plan stratehichnoho rozvytku Kharkivskoyi Pravozakhytsnoyi Hruppy (KHPG) 2016-2019 rr., (Onovleno), *KHPG.org*, Accessed September 10, 2018: <http://khp.org/index.php?id=1489698369>.

<sup>9</sup> Interview with Bohdan Shumylovych at the Centre of Urban History in Lviv, March 2017.

that have only recently begun to surface. The collections in the COURAGE registry and handbook are by no means representative. Nonetheless, they provide an important window into a much larger world of public and private repositories documenting the history and heritage of cultural opposition to communism.

Our coverage was limited to twelve collections located in three Ukrainian cities—Kyiv, Lviv and Kharkiv—and three North American cities—Stanford, California; Cleveland, Ohio; and Waco, Texas. Preliminary research was done about archives and collections about cultural opposition and dissent in UK (London), Germany, Canada, US (Chicago, Washington D.C.), as well as other Ukrainian cities, such as Dnipro (former Dnipropetrovsk), Odesa / Odessa and Kharkiv, but our capacity to conduct the in-depth interview and background research on those collections was hampered by time constraints and limited personnel.

Nevertheless, the material gathered about our 12 collections illuminated a great deal about Ukraine's legislative framework shaping archival access. We also learned a great deal about how cultural opposition to communism in Ukraine differed from its East-Central European neighbours.

Collectively these collections underscore the fact that Ukraine's long-term engagement with communism, and opposition to it, began in the early twentieth century with the onset of the Russian Civil War in 1917.<sup>10</sup> Many émigré collections (Zina Genyk-Berezovska, Ukrainian Museum Archives of Cleveland) originated at this time, as anti-Bolshevik refugees relocated to European and North American capitals as well as cities further afield. The Special Collection at NAMU and the Marian Kropyvnytskyi papers were a by-product of the late 1920s and 1930s, and deal with themes central to the onset of Stalinism and cultural orthodoxy in the Soviet Union and the crushing of the avant-garde. The Prison on Lonskogo Street's collection is shaped largely by the cataclysmic confrontation between the Nazis and the Soviets during World War II, while also including materials from Lviv dissidents held there in the 1970s. The Vasyl Stus, Smoloskyp, Sixters Museum collections were also formed during the post-Stalin period, when Ukrainian human rights and cultural activists were reinvigorated by Khrushchev's Thaw. (They were suppressed later.) The Keston Collection's documentation of religious persecution also largely focuses on the 1960s-1980s. The Kendzior collection captures activism that took place on the cusp of dissolution, filming demonstrations, religious services, meetings of political prisoners, cultural events, and many other happenings in Western Ukraine as Soviet authorities slowly lost their grip.

These collections were chosen to demonstrate Ukraine's unique position within the larger COURAGE project. The Ukrainian collections served as an important reminder that temporalities and geographies of opposition are different in Soviet core. The Ukrainian case represents a century of cultural opposition rather than simply a post-war and Cold War phenomenon. Therefore, the Ukrainian collections enrich the registry in important ways, and point the way toward other potentially fruitful avenues of archival exploration.

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<sup>10</sup> Mykhailo Minakov, "(Not Only a) Russian Revolution: Centennial Meditations," *Kenan Institute: Focus Ukraine*, November 7, 2017.

## Aggregate Information from Registry and Background

The main types of collections from Ukraine that were described in the registry are public, or private with some public access. The most common founders are government organs, private individuals or non-governmental organizations. Four of the described collections are located in large government-run institutions—the Special Collection at the Ukrainian National Museum of Art in Kyiv, the Vasyl Stus and Zina-Genyk Berezhovska collections at the T. H. Shevchenko Institute of Literature of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine in Kyiv, and the general collection at The National Museum-Memorial to the Victims of Occupation “Prison on Lonskogo Street” in Lviv. The Smoloskyp Collection was formed in the Ukrainian diaspora by the Smoloskyp Publishing House and repatriated to Kyiv from the US after independence. The collection is now held at the Museum-Archive and Documentation Centre of Ukrainian Samvydav in Kyiv and is supported in part by the SMOLOSKYP International Charity Foundation. As mentioned earlier, the Kharkiv Human Rights Group’s (KHPRG) created the *Virtual Museum of the Dissident Movement in Ukraine* online, where it is accessible in two languages Ukrainian and English. This organization is funded entirely by outside sources and exists independently of state funds.<sup>11</sup> The Sixtiers Museum is an affiliate of the Kyiv History Museum and relies on funds from the capital city, but desires to be given national status. The Yaroslav Kendzior Collection is a private collection still owned by Kendzior himself in Lviv, Ukraine. It is made up of 54 boxes of SVHS tapes from the late 1980s and early 1990s that Kendzior recorded. One of these boxes was digitized by the Centre of Urban History in Lviv and is available to researchers in the reading room. The remaining three collections are held in the United States. The Andrei Siniavskii Papers (Stanford, California, USA) and the Keston Center for Religion, Politics, and Society Collection (Waco, Texas, USA) are held in university archives, at Stanford University and Baylor University, respectively. The third North American collection belong to the Ukrainian Museum-Archives of Cleveland (Ohio, USA), a registered non-profit organization whose operations are financed through donations, member dues, and a variety of governmental and non-governmental grants and in-kind and volunteer support.<sup>12</sup>

Though small in number, the geographic and thematic scope of these collections was vast. Most of these are large collections, with documents, photos, and other materials numbers in the thousands. Not as abundant were artifacts, handicrafts, embroidery, clothing, typewriters and other similar items.

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<sup>11</sup> For more information see the website of the organization at <http://museum.khpg.org/en/>. Accessed, September 5, 2018.

<sup>12</sup> Institutions in Western Europe with sizeable Ukrainian collections include, but are not limited to: Ukrainische Freie Universität in Munich, Research Centre for East European Studies, University of Bremen (Forschungsstelle Osteuropa), the Archive of the Ministry of the Interior of the Czech Republic, the Departmental Office for the Documents Accessibility and Filling in Gdansk, Institute of National Remembrance, The Shevchenko Library and Archive of AUGB in London, and many others.

The life trajectories of the creators of archival materials extended deep into hard labour camps in Siberia (locations including Kuchino, Mordovia, Perm, and others), exile near Mongolia and China, émigré communities in Paris, London, and Prague, deported persons camps in Austria and Germany, as well as new communities in North America. Thematically, these collections focused for the most part on human rights activism, émigré life and exile, the production of *samizdat* and *tamizdat*, folk art, fine art, opposition within official structures like the writers and artist unions in the Soviet Union. Other prominent themes include nationalist opposition, severe punitive measures enacted by the Soviet regime, the idea of internal exile and solidarity forged between nationalities in the camps.

In terms of events stimulating the creation and development of collections, one can readily point to moments of tumult and migration from Ukraine (the Russian Civil War, World War II), which created many collections in émigré communities, as well as the dissolution of the Soviet Union, which inspired a number of individuals to send materials back to Ukraine. The post-Stalin conjuncture was also important as it resulted in a renewed flourishing of local and national cultures. Another wave of activism followed the passage of the Helsinki Accords, which focused the attention of the cultural opposition on international institutions and norms. Domestic political upheaval has also had a direct impact on the preservation and promulgation of information about collections in Ukraine. The 2004 presidential elections ushered into power Viktor Yushchenko, who entered into memory politics quite forcefully and supported major shifts in the organization and leadership of the SBU (former KGB) archives. The 2014 Euromaidan protests provoked further transformations, therefore, we can only assume that further domestic tumult will lead to new developments.

The collections are mostly run by full or part-time professional archivists, but also volunteers. All the archives are underfunded and understaffed, some more critically than others. The state-run institutions have more catalogued collections, while collections in private hands or managed by NGOs tend to be less systematically organized. Digitization is uneven and pursued intermittently by most of the institutions surveyed. The most active in this regard are NGOs whose activities are financed by outside funds, and also the SBU archives, which prioritizes maximum public access to Soviet-era documents. Access to all collections listed in this report is transparent. One must typically contact the archivists and reading room in advance, and provide the necessary documentation or justification, but there are no major hurdles to overcome.

Most of these collections attract an academic audience, students, historians, and researchers focused on the issue of cultural opposition to communism. The Ukrainian Museum Archives in Cleveland and the Sixtiers Museum also engage the general public and school children that come on field trips. For the most part, working conditions are more than adequate, with ample desk space and reasonable access to documents. Each institution determines how many documents and items can be viewed at any given time. At TsDAHOU, for instance, the archivists release 10 *delo* per day, while at the archives of the T.H. Shevchenko Institute of Literature, archivists will provide materials as fast as they can be

processed. For the SBU archives and also the Centre for Urban History in Lviv, digitized materials are made available in the reading rooms on computers, but they can only be copied with permission from the institutions themselves. Online content for these collections is sparse, but intermittently available. The major hurdles for digitization are funds, personnel and permissions from the original copyright holders.

The key stakeholders in these collections tend to be individuals who have a sense of the historical importance of the materials found therein. They are typically individuals close to the source. For instance, Mykhailyna Kostiubynska was a *sixtier*, a literary scholar, the niece of a major modernist Ukrainian writer and a mentor to Vasyl Stus, the poet and political prisoner, and very close friend to Zina Genyk-Berezovska, a Czech Ukrainian literary scholar with whom she exchanged hundreds of letters. Kostiubynska was instrumental in bringing both the Stus and Genyk-Berezovska collections to the Institute of Literature in Kyiv, clearly recognizing their value not only personally, but professionally, and ultimately historically for Ukraine. Proximity to the people and institutions involved in creating collections defines most of the stakeholders in these collections. Rarely is there an outsider, who comes into the situation and determines whether something is valuable. These decisions are part of an internal and intimate process.

The Ukrainian public cares about the COURAGE collections that are known. However, general awareness about the existence of collections related to cultural opposition and dissent remains limited. Smaller institutions and NGOs tend to seek out visitors—students, scholars, and the general public—in order to draw attention to the subject matter. The Ukrainian public, researchers in the West, and even specialists in East-Central European studies do not always know the names central to Ukrainian resistance. Alla Horska, Vasyl Stus, Mykhailyna Kostiubynska, Iryna Stasiv-Kalynets, and others are mysteries to be discovered by broader European audiences, while domestic audiences have yet to discover the depth and complexity of cultural opposition in Ukraine in the Soviet period. They are hardly to be faulted as these stories were suppressed in Soviet times and were not discussed in detail in public during the tumultuous post-Soviet period either.

Most collections in Ukraine have limited networking potential. This mostly has to do with the institutional and legal framework in which they are operating, but also with the additional burden imposed upon the country by the war with Russia. Large state-run museums and archives are largely dependent on state funds, and they are also more exposed to the radical zig-zags in Ukrainian memory politics since 1991 than smaller, private collections. There are professional organizations, but the use of social media and other forms of promoting individual collections is very limited. There are notable exceptions to this trend including the Centre for Urban History of East Central Europe in Lviv, which has a substantial international network of partner institutions, runs various events, hosts scholars through a scholarship scheme and promotes some of its collections through various means. The networking potential of diaspora collections depends largely on the host environment in which they are operating. Some North American collections, such as the Cleveland Museum-Archives were



successful in tapping into various funds, establish partnerships with prominent institutions and promote their collections through educational activities as well as through social media.

## **Best Practice and Recommendations**

Museums, archives and private collections in Ukraine generally suffer from the same structural problems: the lack of funding, the shortage of space, and the shortage of trained personnel. They also struggle to cope with the sometimes unpredictable shifts in Ukrainian memory politics. The institutions that seem to navigate the troubled waters of Ukrainian cultural heritage well include the Centre for Urban History of East Central Europe that runs digitization projects, promotes its collections domestically and to an international audience, and taps into various networks in Ukraine as well as abroad. Among the diaspora collections explored by COURAGE, the Cleveland Museum-Archives deserves special mention due to the successful networking, digitization and educational projects that were organized in the last few years. The Hoover Institute at Stanford University, which contains numerous collections relevant to COURAGE, is an exceptional organization with funding and staffing levels most Ukrainian collections could only dream of. While its professional practices could serve as an example for institutions in Ukraine, their implementation would require a radical improvement in the financial situation of museums and archives, which currently seems unfeasible.

Significant improvement of the social function of collections of cultural opposition in Ukraine could only be expected if the following conditions are met: 1) significantly increased funding levels; 2) a radical decrease of political pressure; 3) increased professionalization; and 4) an increase in networking activities and the sharing of best practices. Although in the context of war funding levels are unlikely to increase, it is very important to create a legal, political and financial framework which creates stability and predictability. Such an environment would reduce the collections' exposure to shifts in memory politics and would pave the way for the enhancement of professional practices at the respective institutions that take the specific conditions and needs of the collections into consideration. Professional practices at the various institutions could also be enhanced by the intensification of networking activities at a domestic as well as an international level. Increased networking could potentially result in the sharing of best practices, the wider visibility of the collections and increased funding opportunities for joint projects. It is inevitable that state institutions reach out to smaller collections run by private individuals or organizations in order to raise awareness of the different conditions in which collections operate and increase trust between state actors and non-state associations or private individuals. Although all stakeholders have a role to play in promoting the heritage of cultural opposition in Ukraine, the state should make the first radical step towards the de-politicisation of the topic and the creation of a professional atmosphere that takes the needs of the relevant collections into consideration. The

development of a long-term strategic plan that leads in that direction and is observed by the current and subsequent governments would be highly advisable.

## Further Reading

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## List of Collections Described

1. Kharkiv Human Rights Group's (KHPG) Virtual Museum of the Dissident Movement in Ukraine (Kharkiv, Ukraine)\*
2. Marian Kropyvnytskyi Personal Archive (Kyiv, Ukraine)
3. Prison on Lonskogo Street (Lviv, Ukraine)
4. Sixtiers Museum Collection (Kyiv, Ukraine)
5. Smoloskyp Collection (Museum-Archive and Documentation Centre of Ukrainian Samvydav in Kyiv)
6. Special Collection (NAMU) (Kyiv, Ukraine)
7. Vasyl Stus Collection (Kyiv, Ukraine)
8. Yaroslav Kendzior Collection (Lviv, Ukraine)
9. Zina Genyk-Berezovska Collection (Kyiv, Ukraine)
10. Andrei Siniavskii Papers (Stanford, California, USA)
11. Ukrainian Museum-Archives of Cleveland (Ohio, USA)
12. Keston Center for Religion, Politics, and Society (Waco, Texas, USA)

## List of Operating Institutions and Owners

- Andriy Bojarov (Hryt'sko Porytskyi (a.k.a "Greg" and "Greg Ostrozkyi") Collection)
- Anonymous Private Individual (Marian Kropyvnytskyi Personal Archive)
- Centre for Urban History of East Central Europe (Yaroslav Kendzior Collection, Mykhailo Frantsuzov Collection, Hryt'sko Porytskyi (a.k.a "Greg" and "Greg Ostrozkyi") Collection)
- Hoover Institution Library and Archive (Andrei Siniavskii Papers)
- Leonid Bachynsky (Ukrainian Museum Archives of Cleveland)
- Evhan Batchinsky (Ukrainian Museum Archives of Cleveland)
- Mykhailo Frantsuzov (Mykhailo Frantsuzov Collection)
- Zina Genyk-Berezovska (Zina Genyk-Berezovska Collection)
- Iryna Stasiv-Kalynets (Prison on Lonskogo Street)
- Marian Kropyvnytskyi (Marian Kropyvnytskyi Personal Archive)
- Yaroslav Kendzior (Yaroslav Kendzior Collection)
- Keston Center for Religion, Politics, and Society (Keston Collection)
- Keston Institute (Keston Center for Religion, Politics, and Society)
- Kharkiv Human Rights Group (KHPG) (Virtual Museum of the Dissident Movement in Ukraine)\*

- Museum-Archive and Documentation Centre of Ukrainian Samvydav (Smoloskyp Collection)
- National Art Museum of Ukraine (Special Collection (NAMU))
- The National Museum-Memorial to the Victims of Occupation "Prison on Lonskogo Street" (Prison on Lonskogo Street Collection)
- Valentyna Popeliukh (Vasyl Stus Collection)
- T. H. Shevchenko Institute of Literature of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (Zina Genyk-Berezovska Collection, Vasyl Stus Collection)
- Sixtiers Museum (Sixtiers Museum Collection)
- Vasyl Stus (Vasyl Stus Collection)
- Ukrainian Museum Archives of Cleveland (Ukrainian Museum Archives of Cleveland)
- Yaroslav Kendzior (Yaroslav Kendzior Collection)

## List of People Researched

- Leonid Bachynsky
- Evhen Batchinsky
- Zina Genyk-Berezovska
- Kost' Genyk-Berezovsky
- Oleksandr Bohomazov
- Mykhailo Boichuk
- David Burliuk
- Viacheslav Chornovil
- Aleksandra Ekster
- Petro Grigorenko
- Dmytro Gorbachev
- Ivan Horbachevsky
- Alla Horska
- Ihor Kalynets
- Iryna Stasiv-Kalynets
- Yaroslav Kendzior
- Mykhailyna Kotsiubynska
- Marian Kropyvnytskyi
- Roman Lubkivsky
- Osyp Maidaniuk
- Kazimir Malevich
- Oleksandr Oles
- Aleksandr Parnis
- Mykola Plakhotniuk
- Viktoriya Poltaryeva
- Andriy Richytsky

- Stefaniya Shabatura
- Platonida Shurovska-Rossinevych
- Mariia Rozanova
- Vasyl Sedliar
- Liudmila Semykina
- Halyna Sevruk
- Yuriy Shcherbak
- Iwan Shuljak
- Andrei Siniavskii
- Dmytro Stus
- Vasyl Stus
- Yevhen Sverstiuk
- Ivan Svitlychny
- Nadiya Svitlychna
- Vasyl Symonenko
- Ivan Vrona
- Volodymyr Vynnychenko
- Opanas Zalyvakha

### **List of People Interviewed**

- Andrij Bojarov
- Galyna M. Burlaka
- Tetyana Filevska
- Andrew Fedynsky
- Kathy Hillman
- Aniza Kraus
- Olena O. Lodzynska
- Yuliya Lytvynets
- Ludmila Pekarska
- Rostyslav Semkiv
- Anatol Shmelev
- Bohdan Shumylovych
- Iryna Yezerka
- Olia Zbrozhko

\*KHPG's Virtual Online Museum was described in the COURAGE handbook rather than the registry.